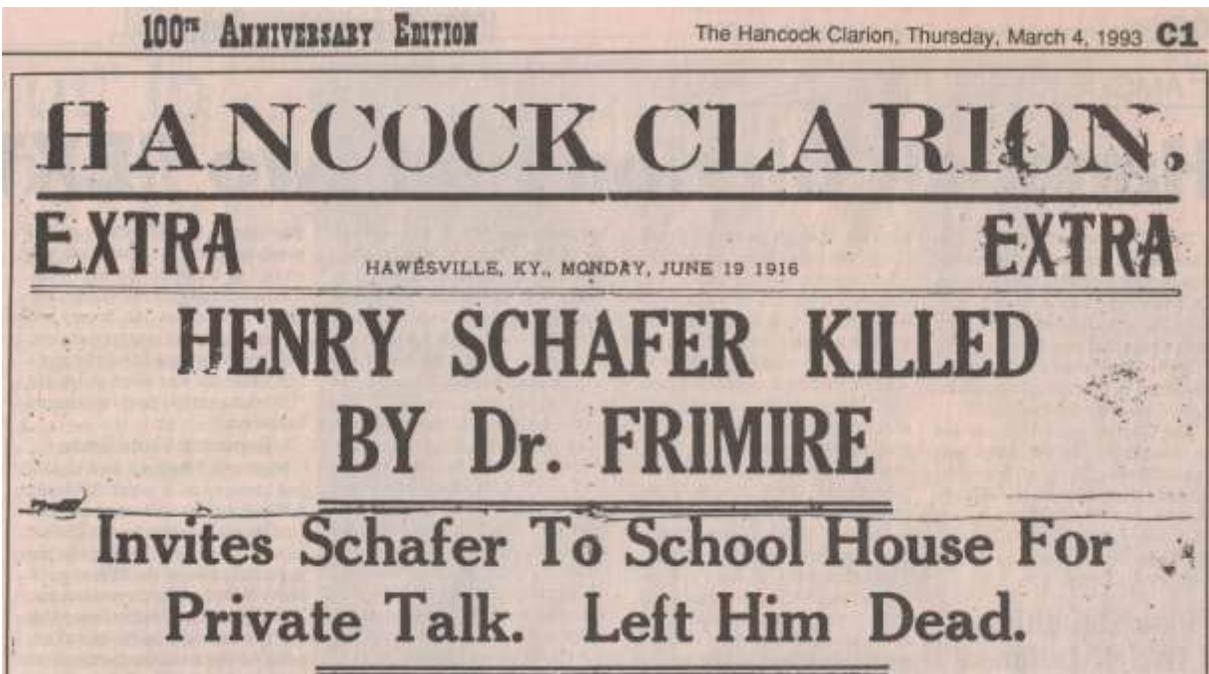


Hancock Clarion's Biggest News Story: Murder of Henry Schafer

By Jerry Long
c.2024



Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Monday, Special extra edition, 19 June 916, p.1:

Henry W. Schafer, a respected farmer of the Floral neighborhood was shot and killed in the Floral schoolhouse Monday morning about 11:30 by Dr. Frymire, u physician of Patesville. Dr. Frymire returned to this county Wednesday from Arkansas, where he has been making his home with his daughter. He remained in this city until Saturday of last week when he went from this place to Floral with the Pellville mal carrier and spent Saturday night and Sunday at that place with a friend of his. Monday morning he walked over to Baker's store and while there Henry Schafer who lives a short distance of the store went over to the store where the two men engaged in a talk after which Mr. Schafer went to his home and later was called on by Frymire and asked to walk over to the schoolhouse for a private talk. To this Mrs. Schafer objected, telling Mr. Schafer that he might get into trouble with that man. Mr. Schafer treated the matter lightly and went over to the schoolhouse where the two men entered and closed the door. A short time after Mrs. Schafer became alarmed and sent her little' six year old son to tell Mr. Schafer that dinner

was ready. He was joined on the way to the schoolhouse by a little four year old son of Mr. and Mrs. J. Van, Baker. After reaching the porch of the schoolhouse the little boy called out "papa, dinner is ready," when the door was instantly opened and closed again. In a few seconds three shots were fired and in a few minutes the door opened again and Dr. Frymire came out of the building and stood in front of the house and reloaded a pistol. He then walked over to the home of Mr. J. Van Baker and inquired for him. Mrs. Baker had been sitting in it hammock in the yard and saw the doctor come out of the schoolhouse also saw hm loading the pistol. Mrs. Baker with her woman intuition was afraid there was something wrong with him and told him that she did not know where Van was. He started off and said, "Well I will find him in a few minutes" Shortly he returned and said, "I can't find him but Tom Baker will do just as well" and started over to the home at Mr. Tom Baker, who saw him coming and thinking he was hunting trouble hid from him, and on not finding Mr. Baker he went to the home of Brag Gardner, who it is supposed advised him to come to Hawesville and give himself up. He started off walking in the direction of Hawesville. Mrs. J. Van Baker, who as stated above was sitting in her yard when Messrs. Schafer and Frymire entered the schoolhouse and also heard the shots and later saw Frymire coming out of the place alone, phoned to the home of Mr. Schafer, what she had seen and heard, and asked then if Mr. Schafer was over there. When the Schafer family heard this they ran over to the schoolhouse and found Mr. Schafer lying on the floor dead with three bullets in his head. A few seconds later Miss Mary Gardner a neighbor of the Schafer family reached the schoolhouse. In a few seconds the news spread like wild fire and in a short time the entire neighborhood was at the schoolhouse. Word was telephoned into this city for the officers and the Coroner, Joe Sapp. Daniel Foley took Mr. Sapp and a few others to the scene of the killing. Deputy Sheriff, Bertram Ewan, together with Orb Mason started out in search of Dr. Frymire. They soon learned over the telephone that he had started for Hawesville, but unfortunately they took a different road to what he did and failed to meet him. When they reached Patesville, they heard that he was on the other road and making his way to town; also that a poise of about thirty-five men were after him and not knowing the intention of his followers they doubled their efforts to reach him before he would be overtaken by the supposed mob. In this they were unsuccessful for he was overtaken by the men just alter he passed the store of Robert Rice on the Hartford road about five miles from town. Instead of a mob, as had been reported, there were only twelve of the best citizens of the Floral neighborhood, who had staired out to arrest him and then turn him over to the authorities. Among the twelve were Constable Joe Brandle, who when they caught up with him demanded that he throw up his hands, but instead Frymire went after his gun, when Mr. Brandle fired two shots at him one striking him in the side taking effect, striking a rib, which it followed for about two inches then came out of his body. The other struck his hand but did not enter his body. A few minutes after he was put, under arrest, he was taken back to Mr. Rice's store, where he was made as comfortable as possible until the arrival of the officers, and in a few minutes Dr. Harrison who at once began trying to care for the suffering man. He was put into an automobile and brought to this place where he was examined by Dr. Harrison and later by Dr. Connor of Cannelton, who pronounced the wound one that would require time to ,tell how serious it is.

The cause of tic trouble dates back more than three years.

When the doctor was member of the Floral Masonic Lodge and is said to have been in love with a young lady that was reared in the Masonic home at Louisville. A short time after the death of his wife at Patesvlhle, he applied for and secured a license to marry the lady, who was then making her home somewhere in the lower part of the state.

Owing to rumors that had been circulated about his treatment of his former wife and other report of his conduct a charge was preferred against him in Masonic order and Henry Schafer was appointed to investigate the charge and hunt evidence against him. He was so successful in this that the result was that his engagement with the young lady was broken off and he was dismissed from the order. It is said that he always blamed Mr. Schafer to a great extent with his dismissal as well as several other members of the lodge. It is believed that he went to Floral in hope of getting reinstated in the order, but finding Mr. Schafer firm in his conviction of his duty to his order and after a heated argument fired the fatal shots. Dr. Frymire was at one time a successful doctor and had a large practice in this county.

Henry Schafer was one of the best citizens of this county and his character was above reproach. He was a candidate for the nomination for the legislature on the Republican ticket in the recent primary. In religion he was a Baptist, a Republican in politics and a farmer and carpenter by occupation. He is survived by his wife and seven small children.

Arrangements for the funeral have not yet been made.

The Coroners verdict showed that Schafer had been stabbed three times.

The prisoner was taken to Owensboro on the 7:30 train for safe keeping.



Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Special 75th Anniversary Edition, 1968, and 100th Anniversary Edition, 4 March 1993, pp.1C & 2C:

Clarion's Biggest News Story Broke With Murder Here In 1916

This June 19, 1916 article reprinted here is, so far as is known, the second and last "extra" edition of the Hancock Clarion ever published. The first was published in 1915, only four years earlier. The event of Mr. Henry Schafer's slaying in the small community of Floral was indeed "newspaper material". The Clarion editor, Mr. John Kelly, was not, however, capitalizing on the sensational as an "outsider" may assume on first reading. He, as the newspaper, was not only reporting facts as witnesses saw them but conveying the complete shock and indignation of an entire county. Both principals involved were well known, long time residents of Hancock County. The following story recounts, from newspaper and court records, the subsequent indictment and trial of Dr. R.W. Frymire for the murder of Mr. Henry Schafer.

The slaying of Henry Schafer, as well as the events that followed were publicized throughout Kentucky and elsewhere. The newspaper accounts indicated the immediate feeling in the community where the slaying occurred was in favor of reprisal against the accused, Dr. R.W. Frymire. This reaction was soon tempered by the removal of the accused to the Daviess County Jail. The people of the Floral community that were well acquainted with both the deceased and the accused were stunned and felt the crime an affront to the confidence and friendship heretofore displayed by them toward Dr. Frymire. As County Judge W.W. Spencer, a witness at the change of venue hearing, stated, "The people seemed to be hurt over the matter."

Later, on the same day the crime was committed, and Dr. Frymire was lodged in the Hancock County Jail, an order for his removal to the Daviess County Jail was issued by County Judge W.W. Taber. The June 19, 1916 order read as follows: "The defendant, R.W. Frymire, has been incarcerated in jail at Hancock County charged with the crime of murder and it appearing to the satisfaction of the court that there is great danger of said defendant being rescued from said jail

and that said defendant is in danger of violence at the hands of unknown men. It is therefore concluded by the court that the defendant, R.W. Frymire, be transferred to the Daviess County Jail at Owensboro, Ky., for safety." Signed: W.W. Taber, Judge. Dr. Frymire was transported, by train, to Owensboro, the following day.

During the October term of the Hancock Circuit Court, 1916, Dr. R.W. Frymire was formally indicted and charged with the crime of "wilful murder". The charge was handed down by Circuit Judge R.W. Slack.

On October 28, 1916, a change of venue hearing was held on motion of the defense. Twenty-six witnesses were heard during this day long proceeding. Because both the deceased and the accused were well known members of the same community and the case had been so widely discussed throughout the county, an effort by the defense attorneys to have the trial moved to another location was inevitable. C.E. Smith, Commonwealth Attorney; M.L. Heavrin and Otto Martin, Attorneys for the defendant were examining lawyers at this hearing. The following are excerpts from some of the testimony:

Thomas Hale, witness for the plaintiff, a 15 year resident of Hawesville, in the auto business and president of the Hawesville Deposit Bank; examined first by the Commonwealth Attorney.

QUESTION: "I will get you to tell the Court whether or not there is any such sentiment against the defendant in Hancock County as that he could not get a fair and impartial trial in your judgment?"

ANSWER: "I do not think there is.

Mr. Hale's cross examination by defense counsel was quite lengthy. The Attorney, M.L. Heavrin, dwelt on the fact that Mr. Hale had discussed the case with many county residents; attempted to establish that he had an "active interest" in the case partly due to his affiliation with the Masonic Lodge in Hawesville (Mr. Schafer was a member of the Floral Lodge); and her personal acquaintance with Mr. Schafer, his family and friends. It was further established that Mr. Hale had discussed the case with Commonwealth Attorney, C.E. Smith, prior to the change of venue hearing.

In closing his questioning, Mr. Heavrin asked the witness: "And everyone (referring to the 200 or 300 people Mr. Hale estimated he had talked to concerning the case) said the man was guilty, now is that right?", to which Mr. Hale replied: "No, I can't say everyone said the man was guilty but general impression is he is guilty and that is my impression."

QUESTION: "and on that state of facts you say he can get a fair trial?"

ANSWER: "Yes, Sir." Mr. Hale remained adamant in his opinion that Dr. Frymire could and would receive a fair and impartial trial in Hancock County.

The change of venue motion was overruled by Judge Slack, who advised the defendant and his attorneys that he, Dr. Frymire, would stand trial on the charge of wilful murder during the January, 1917 term of Circuit Court in Hancock County. The defendant was returned to the Daviess County Jail.

On Tuesday, January 16, 1917, Dr. Frymire was returned to Hawesville to stand trial. Since the widow of Henry Schafer, having just given birth, was unable to appear as a prosecution witness, the case was continued to the June, 1917 term of court. Defendant was to remain in the Daviess County Jail.

Twelve months after the crime, on Wednesday, June 6, 1917, the case of commonwealth of Kentucky against R.W. Frymire, was called before Circuit Judge Slack. The selection of a jury from county residents was still a highly speculative matter. The entire day was devoted to

questioning prospective jurors and none was accepted. With this turn of events Judge Slack ordered Sheriff Baker to summon "fifty discreet, sober, housekeepers" in Daviess County and transport them to Hawesville on the evening train – that Wednesday, June 6.

Thursday, June 7, a jury was seated, all residents of Daviess County, Robert Jackson, John Oglesby, R.F. Hall, J.E. Bryant, Eli Cox, Robert Dugan, C.N. Crafton, Pearl Phillips, Ed Aiken, G.R. Davies, E.L. Rouse and John Ruby, who was chosen foreman.

The first witness called to the stand, a state's witness, was the widow, Mrs. Henry Schafer. Her testimony related to the facts immediately prior to and after the slaying. she confirmed information that had already become public knowledge, to wit: Dr. Frymire came to the Schafer home and invited Mr. Schafer to the Floral School building for a talk in private. After some lapse of time Mrs. Schafer having become alarmed at her husband's delay in returning, sent a small son to call his father home to dinner. As the youngster approached the school he called for his father, heard a door slam, a gun shot and saw Dr. Frymire emerge from the school. Mr. Schafer was found in the building lying face down in a pool of blood.

Tom Baker, a store owner in Floral, and a witness for the Commonwealth, testified that on September 15, 1915, Dr. Frymire had told him, Mr. Baker, that if "Mr. Schafer didn't have him reinstated in the Masonic Lodge this county would witness a... crime." Mr. Baker also stated that the defendant had made other threats against Mr. Schafer.

Testimony for the prosecution was concluded on that first day of trial, June 7. Friday, June 8, Dr. Frymire took the stand in his own defense. Upon what line of defense he would embark, was a matter of much discussion out of court. It was assumed by most that he would plead innocence by reason of insanity. According to the newspaper account it was the general public opinion that the defendant had no other recourse. The defendant did not plead insanity by self defense. He testified that Mr. Schafer became abusive during their discussion at the school house and subsequently drew a knife on him. The coroner's report stated that while Mr. Schafer had died of gun shot wounds, he had also been stabbed three times and a knife had been found beside the body. The witness, Dr. Frymire, when asked if the knife did not belong to him answered, "Yes, it did." The defendant explained that during the talk he was taking notes, his pencil became dull, he removed his knife from his pocket to sharpen it. He speculated that he apparently had laid it down beside him rather than returning it to his pocket.

Court was recessed until Saturday, June 9. The following order recorded in the Commonwealth Docket Book No. 1, page 51, at the Hancock Circuit Clerk's Office, offers an account of those Saturday proceedings:

"The jury having reappeared in court at 9:00 o'clock a.m., in the charge of E.F. Ewan, Sheriff of Hancock County, and the hearing of Defendant's evidence resumed, the examination of witnesses on behalf of defendant having been concluded the attorney for the Commonwealth introduced witnesses in rebuttal, after hearing the evidence, instructions of the court and arguments of counsel the jury retired to consider their verdict, after being out some time the jury returned to the court the following verdict to wit: "We, the Jury, fined the Defendant guilty as charged in the Indictment and fix his punishment at twenty-one years confinement in the penitentiary, J.M. Ruby, Foreman." June 9, 1917.

Monday, June 12, Dr. R.W. Frymire appeared in court, and given the opportunity to "show any legal cause why judgment should not be pronounced." None being shown, the defendant was ordered taken by the Sheriff of Hancock County to the State Penitentiary at Eddyville, Ky, and there confined at labor for a period of 21 years.

That same day attorneys for the defendant filed a motion for a new trial which, upon advice, Judge Slack overruled. The attorneys were then advised, that they would be given until the 6th day of October to file an appeal. Hours of research has revealed no record of an appeal and we can only assume that none was filed.

How Owensboro Messenger Reported Henry Schafer Murder

The following account is from the Owensboro Daily Messenger of June 20, 1916, and was introduced as evidence in the change of venue hearing. We copy from the court transcript:

Dr. R.W. Frymire Is Brought Here For Safekeeping

HAWESVILLE OFFICIALS FEARED SLAYER OF H.W. SCHAFFER WOULD BE MOBBED
MURDER IS BRUTAL ONE.

PRISONER, WHO IS WOUNDED BY POSSE, REFUSES TO MAKE STATEMENT

Fearing mob violence, Hancock County officials, Monday night effected a transfer of Dr. R.W. Frymire, accused of the murder of Henry W. Schafer, near Floral schoolhouse, on the line of Hancock and Daviess counties, to Owensboro, where he is now confined in the county jail for safekeeping.

Dr. Frymire was brought to Owensboro by deputy sheriff B.E. Ewan, who stated that the removal of the prisoner was deemed necessary when information reached the sheriff's office at Hawesville that a mob of between 300 and 400 men living in the neighborhood of Floral was forming for the purpose of coming into Hawesville and taking charge of the prisoner.

Dr. Frymire, who is sixty-five years of age, was a practicing physician of Patesville, Ky., for the past thirty-five years, was dangerously wounded by being shot through the stomach by a member of the sheriff's posse making the arrest.

Prisoner is wounded

The prisoner was suffering severely from his wounds when taken from the train at the Union passenger station. He was placed in a cab and driven rapidly to the county jail, where a bed was made down for him in one of the cells on the lower floor; and made as comfortable as possible. According to statements by attending physicians, while the prisoner is dangerously wounded, his injuries are not necessarily fatal.

Dr. Frymire was questioned by a Messenger reporter upon his arrival from Hawesville, but declined to make any statement regarding the tragedy. He would talk freely about how he received his own injury, but when pressed for a statement as to the events leading up to the killing of Schafer said, "I have absolutely nothing to say. I will not discuss the matter at this time. It was purely a personal matter."

Murder brutal one

Henry W. Schafer shot and stabbed to death. Hawesville, Ky., June 19. Henry W. Schafer was shot to death in the Floral school house, eight miles south of here, this morning at 11 o'clock. He was shot through the head, in the breast and in the side, and was then given several deep stabs with a long bladed knife, which was found by his side in a pool of blood.

Coroner Joe Sapp was sent for at once, and at 1 o'clock this afternoon was on the ground and held the inquest.

The verdict was:

"We, the jury summoned by Coroner Joe Sapp to hold an inquest over the body found in the Floral school house, find that the said body is that of Henry W. Schafer, and that he came to his death at the hands of Dr. R.W. Frymire, and resulted from three or four pistol shots and several knife thrusts or from both."

Old grudge between men

The evidence showed that there had been an old grudge between them for the past six years. Schafer was master of the Floral Masonic Lodge. When (Frymire's) wife died six years ago, there were circumstances connected with the death that caused the lodge, of which Dr. Frymire was a member, to investigate. It was found that the doctor was engaged to a young woman at Corbin, Ky., and that he procured a license in the clerk's office here to marry the girl. She had been a ward of a Masonic order and had been in the care of orphans' home at Louisville.

The Floral lodge got in communication with her and made representations, it is alleged, that caused the girl to refuse to marry the doctor. Three years later he was expelled from the lodge. Schafer was the master and active in the matter of his expulsion.

T.V.T. Baker was the chief prosecutor.

After T.V.T. Baker

The two chief witnesses were Charles Michel [sic – Mickel] and Van Baker. They were also active in preventing the reinstatement of Frymire. It was known to these men that he had threatened to get even. T.V.T. Baker said in his evidence: "The old grudge was the cause of the trouble. I am sure of it. When he left the dead man and came towards my house he was after me and I knew it. That is why I fled with my wife to a neighbor's where I did not think he could follow or find me. As soon as I heard the reports of the pistol I felt sure it was death to some one and threatened death to me."

Boy heard shots

When Schafer delayed longer from home than his wife expected he would she telephoned and was told by a neighbor that her husband and Frymire were in the school house talking. She sent her ten year old son for the father and boy took another small boy with him, and they went to the school house door, which was then open. He gave his father the message of his mother and then turned to go, after the father had told him that he would go home soon. Almost at once on the boy's leaving the door it was closed and in a second the shots, four in number, rang out. Several who live nearby saw the closing of the door after the boy left it, and they also heard the shots.

It was shown that Frymire met Schafer at the Baker store at Floral about 10 a.m. and invited him to go over to the school house for a talk. The school house was only a few rods away. They went and were together for an hour or more before the shooting took place.

Frymire leaves school

Just after the shooting, Frymire was seen to come out of the school house and cast the cartridges out of this pistol and reload. The shells, four empty and one loaded, were found and are now in the coroner's possession. He then went to the home of Van Baker and asked for him. Mrs. Baker suspected trouble for her husband and misdirected Frymire. He then started to the home of T.V.T. Baker, but soon turned and went in another direction. He met Barney Gardner in the road

and shook hands with him and asked him if he saw the body of Schafer or the knife by his side. He said he had not. He then said, as testified to by Gardner: "Well, I ,am tired and I have no horse, and I want you to tell Rom Baker to telephone Sheriff Ewan that I am on my way to Hawesville to give myself up." He then went away in the direction of his home.

Posse is organized

A posse was soon organized, with Joe Brandel in the lead, he being the constable of the precinct. After going three miles they sighted Frymire. Brandel took the lead and when within twelve feet of the murderer, the latter turned; "Throw up your hands," commanded Brandel, and upon Frymire throwing one hand up and another down to his pistol pocket, Brandel shot and sent a bullet through the doctor's stomach. He fell at once. Brandel and the posse ran up and Brandel held a pistol in his face and warned him not to try to use his weapon. He begged that they not shoot him again.

Several men caught him and took from him two revolvers, only one of which was loaded. He begged for a drink of water, which was given him. He was then placed in the car of Deputy Sheriff Bertram Ewan, who with Marshall Orb Mason of Hawesville, had come up just after the shooting, and was taken to Hawesville. His wound may not have penetrated the bowels. He was placed in jail.

There were serious fears of a mob and the deputy sheriff, after talking to Circuit Judge Slack at Owensboro, decided to take the prisoner to the Owensboro jail for safe keeping, which he did.

Schafer family large family

Henry Schafer was one of the best known men of the Floral neighborhood. He was forty years of age and leaves a widow and seven children. He was prominent in the Masonic lodge, and had a large number of friends. He was a member of the Blackford Baptist Church and prominent in the Republican politics. He had never had any previous trouble. Dr. Frymire is sixty-five years of age, that he was making preparations to marry the young girl at Corbin while, his wife was on her deathbed. He had brooded a great deal over his expulsion from the Masonic lodge.

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A good man's downfall

The compiling of a history is most difficult – but very interesting. The difficulty is that when there are no written records from which one may get the facts one must rely upon the stories gleaned from those who lived in the times or from the memory of what has been told to them from family and friends.

People are influence by many things and often have prejudices which tend to influence them in what they remember - or choose to forget. This makes it difficult for the historian – as he knows that the off-the-record stores can be and usually are colored by personal feelings.

The following story – we might say the climax of the story of Dr. Frymire – cannot be authenticated but we think deserves to be told.

According to the late Mr. Marquis Quinn, a native of Patesville, Hancock County, who was a youngster at the time of Dr. Frymire's conviction: "Dr. Frymire was a good man and a good doctor, an all around good man. I, though a youngster, new him and admired him very much. He

was a quickstepping person, ambitious – and high strung. For some 30 or more years he had been the doctor in our community. His fees ranged usually from \$1.50 to \$2.00. People in those days did not have much money, sometimes did not have any at all; and the good doctor often accepted his fee in oats, or corn-feed for his horse, because that was his means of transportation, you know."

Mr. Quinn said Dr. Frymire was in prison only a few years, and was released. He said the doctor returned to his home in Patesville but as his family had scattered he remained only a short time. He went back to Eddyville prison of his own free will and served as the prison doctor until his death some four or five years later.

Dr. Frymire's wife had died some time prior to the episode of 1916, when he developed the difficulties, the emotional problem which led to his downfall. She, Mr. Quinn told us, was buried in the Bethlehem Cemetery here. Dr. Frymire, Mr. Quinn said, died in prison, was brought back to this area and he thought he was buried in Ohio County – when his son resided; and at the written request of Dr. Frymire, his wife's body was exhumed from the cemetery where she had been buried and was placed in a grave beside him.

Neighborhood talk at the time of Mrs. Frymire's death was that she died of poison. The talk, or gossip, indicated that the neighbors thought the doctor, her husband, had administered the poison.

The cause of the doctor's emotional upheaval stems – according to reports, from romantic interest in a young woman and it was this interest which caused the Masonic Lodge, to which he belonged, to expel him from their brotherhood. Being purged from his lodge seemed to have been the final push which sent the doctor overboard. And it was in pleading, or demanding – no one will know which – with Mr. Schafer, who had been required by his lodge to expel the doctor, that the dreadful killing took place. Apparently man's values sometimes hinge upon inconsequential things. Dr. Frymire had lost his wife, he had loved and lost another woman, he had been accused of poisoning his wife and of bestowing his affections upon someone to whom he was not entitled – still he managed to keep going – but when his lodge dropped the axe on him – that did it – that brought about the explosion of this "good man", who was "high strung."

Mr. Henry Schafer was a good man, a good husband and father, was an upstanding member of his community – a good citizen.

He died at the hand of a man who had apparently betrayed the trust of his wife and children, his brotherhood lodge, his community; all for a romantic interest – and no doubt he betrayed his young woman in whom he was so interested.

By all the rules of our society one should not give more have any sympathy for the betrayer. Yet we find that our sympathy does go to those poor unfortunate persons who are so unstable they spoil their own good life, the lives of their family and the lives of others. Our sympathy is simply for that reason – that Dr. Frymire (who in the eyes of many in the community in which he served was "a good all around man") spoiled it all because of lack of restraint. His failure to abide by the rules of society and the rules of God.

Could there be a lesson to be learned from this tragedy?

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EDITORIAL NOTE: In an attempt to verify the exact date of confinement and release of Dr. R.W. Frymire from the Eddyville Penitentiary and his subsequent whereabouts the Clarion requested information from J. W. Wingo, Warden, Kentucky State Penitentiary. The following is in answer to that request:

KENTUCKY STATE
PENITENTIARY, EDDYVILLE
June 27, 1968

Clarion Publishing Company
The Hancock Clarion
Hawesville, Kentucky 42348

RE: Frymire, R. W. — No. 2685

Dear Sir:

In reply to your letter dated June 26, 1968, concerning the subject we find we have very little information.

As you indicated Frymire was received at the institution on June 18, 1917 to serve twenty-one years for manslaughter. He was listed as sixty-seven years of age, his occupation, physician and his closest relative being J. B. Frymire, Horse Branch, Kentucky.

Records further reveal that R. W. Frymire, from Hancock County, was released on parole September 8, 1925, to his daughter, Mrs. I. B. Ellington in Camden, Arkansas.

Sincerely,

J. W. Wingo, Warden
Kentucky State Penitentiary



Owensboro Messenger Owensboro, KY, 22 June 1916, p.1:

Several Hundred In Attendance At Schafer Funeral

**High Tribute Is Paid to Man Killed by Dr. R. W. Frymire
EXCITEMENT VERY HIGH**

Messenger's Exclusive Interview With Alleged Murderer Creates Interest

Hawesville, Ky., June 21. — The funeral of Henry W. Schafer, alleged to have been murdered in the Floral school house on Monday by Dr. R. W. Frymire, took place today at 11 o'clock at the Blackford Baptist church, seven miles south of here, and of which the deceased had long been a faithful member. The country church, which accommodates 300 people, was crowded to its utmost, and at least twice as many thronged around the windows and doors while the services were in progress. The full membership of the Floral Masonic lodge, of which the deceased was master, was in attendance and conducted the services at the grave, assisted by delegations from the Hawesville and Pelville lodges. The Floral and the Pelville chapters of the Eastern Star were also in attendance in their fraternal regalia. The Hawesville lodge of Woodman of the World also assisted at the services.

Sermon By Rev. Cicero M. Corley

The sermon was preached by the Rev. Cicero M. Corley. After reading the eighth chapter of Romans he read the following facts in regard to the life of the deceased: "Henry W. Schafer was born March 14, 1870, in Hancock county, Kentucky and died June 19, 1916." Here he read January for June but corrected it promptly and added in explanation, "'ve been so torn up and disturbed since Monday that I can scarcely see." Continuing the biography he said, "He joined the Baptist

church when fifteen years old and has been a consistent member ever since, he joined the Masons when twenty-two and has been a useful member ever since. He was married to Margaret L. Mickle. February 21, 1899 by myself, and six children, four girls and two boys, have been born to them. He was noted for his usefulness in the neighborhood and county and especially in his church and Masonic lodge. He was also a Woodman of the World. No man was ever in the county who had more friends or who lived a better Christian life. I think these are facts that I need not emphasize for they are well attested by the great gathering of people here today."

The minister delivered a very forceful sermon. Among other things he said: "I don't care for any statement which was made by the man that took his life, and which I read a few moments ago. I do know some of it was untrue."

The regular choir of the Blackford church, which was augmented by several singers from a distance rendered at appropriate intervals the following hymns: "The Home of the Soul," "Wandering Nearer Home," and "Safe in the Arms of Jesus."

Messenger's Exclusive Interview

As soon as the early mail was opened here this morning and copies of the Owensboro Messenger containing the statements of Dr. Frymire were received, crowds gathered at many points listening to its reading, and excitement became much more intense as the fact was disclosed from this statement that the doctor would probably claim he did the act in self defence and that Schafer invited death by his conduct while they were in the school room alone. Similar crowds were seen gathered around those who read the paper out at the church, where the funeral was conducted and on every side were evidences of excitement and surprise at the presumption of the accused man. The minister who conducted the services read the statement to a gathering of those on the grounds and after questioning many of the statements in it, he said distinctly in the presence of several:

"I met Frymire on Monday morning before the killing and I know it was a premeditated murder."

Women are Alarmed

The rumor got afloat by the time the funeral services were concluded that the accused was to be brought back to Hawesville tomorrow for an examining trial and several of the wives of men who were said to have been threatened became almost frantic in their efforts to learn from officials and others whether or not this was true. They were assured that it was not and then they were just as eager to know if it were possible that Dr. Frymire would be sent to the insane asylum for, as Mrs. Van Baker expressed it, "I know if he goes to the asylum he will make his escape and come and kill my husband."

The general discussion as to Dr. Frymire's church relationship was put at rest today by Rev. William Towers, a Baptist minister of this place, who said, "Dr. Frymire is a member of the Baptist church. He was an ordained minister of that church and I have often heard him preach. He was for two years a student of the Southern Baptist Seminary."



Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, 20 March 2014, p3:

Remembering stories from the *Clarion*

By Donn Wimmer, editor of the Hancock Clarion

For over 50 years working at the Clarion I have seen lots of big news stories but this, "Murder of Henry Schafer," has to be one of the biggest.

Henry Schafer's son, Charles Franklin, was Hancock County school superintendent for many years. I knew him very well and can testify that he was highly respected throughout Hancock County. Charlie married Nina Snyder and they had three children: Charles Franklin, Ramona and Elizabeth.

I contacted Ramona Schafer Hood, who is the granddaughter of Henry Schafer, and asked her if she could give me more information on her grandmother, who had to raise seven children after the death of her husband. Ramona said, "She must have been an amazing woman. I never knew her since she died several years before I was born. I thought it was really something that in spite of the difficulties of the time, six of their children finished college. Aunt Lettie, the oldest, didn't but worked as a caregiver until she married and as Daddy (Charles Schafer) often said, helped all the others as they went to school. Like daddy, I think they all would work a year and go to college a year but I think it was incredible at that time."

He was survived by his wife Maggie, daughters: Lettie, Margaret, Mary - Teacher, and Sarah - Teacher, and Sons Albert - Teacher, Charles - Teacher and school superintendent and, Henry - Preacher.

... From Hawesville if you turn on Hwy 2181 and travel this crooked road, after about 5 miles you will pass Chambers. Nine and a half miles from Hawesville you will come to the Schafer Camp on the right. In 1916 this was the community of Floral which had a grocery store, post office and the Floral school.

Henry Schafer lived with his family on his farm where the Schafer Camp is located. The Clarion reported that he was one of the best citizens of the county and his character was above reproach. He was a candidate for the legislature in a resentment primary. The paper stated Schafer was a republican, a farmer and carpenter.

[In the Hancock Clarion of 27 March 2014, p.3 and 3 April 2014, p.3 second and third installments on the murder of Henry Schafer were published. Most of the text had appeared in the 1968 and 1979 articles that appeared in the Hancock Clarion.]



Floral schoolhouse where Dr. Frymire shot and killed Henry Schafer

Names And Location Of Hancock County Schools



Floral school underlined in red



Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 25 November 2006, p.1B:

Schafer descendants thankful for time as happy campers

By Karen Owen, Messenger-Inquirer

It's not unusual for big families to rent a meeting room for their holiday get-togethers. The Schafer family picks a site at Pellville that's actually part of their family history.

The descendants of Henry and Maggie Schafer share each Thanksgiving at Camp Schafer, a part of the Daviess-McLean Baptist Association that used to be their family's home.

The Schafers have celebrated indoors at the camp 20 miles east of Owensboro pretty consistently since 1990 and met there occasionally before that, said Gaynell Allen of Philpot. "It was actually my mother's idea. It was a way to go back home."

The relatives come from as far as Minnesota, Massachusetts and Seattle for the day. "It's really the only time we all get together," Allen said.

The association allows the family to use the camp for free. "They have been so gracious to let us have it every year," she said.

Her grandfather, Henry Schafer, was murdered in 1916. The killer was a local doctor who thought Schafer was responsible for him being kicked out of the local Masonic lodge for misconduct, Allen said. One of Schafer's children found his body, she said.

From prison, the killer "even sent threatening letters to my grandmother," Allen said.

Schafer left a wife and six children, with another baby on the way. Allen's mother, Sarah Schafer, was only 5 when her father died.

Maggie Schafer managed to keep her family together, and six of her seven children attended college, Allen said. "I'm proud of that."

Throughout the years, her mother and aunts and uncles wouldn't talk about the murder, though. All she knows about the case came from court records and newspaper clippings.

In 1951 the Schafer heirs donated 72 acres of land to the Daviess-McLean Baptist Association "as long as they'd run it as a camp, and they have," Allen said.

She attended Camp Schafer herself in the early 1950s. Back then, campers slept in the barn.

One of her uncles, also named Henry, was a pastor. A men's group at Eaton Memorial Baptist Church built a prayer cabin on the camp property in his honor in 1959.

The camp hosted 600 campers this year, and 29 of them became new Christians, according to a report at the association's annual meeting last month. The facility also had 550 guests for church retreats, a day camp for 80 children and several church picnics.

The Schafers' Thanksgiving reunion usually draws 30 to 50 people, counting children, spouses and friends who drop by.

The celebration always includes a walk, Allen said. The relatives walk to the prayer cabin and to a big oak tree. All the Schafers have carved their initials into the wood.

"No one's there on Thanksgiving," Allen said. "We get the place to ourselves."



See also Owensboro, KY Newspaper Articles

- "Boy Hears Shot Then Finds Father Dead; Slayer Shot By Posse: Dr. R. W. Frymire of Floral Ends Long Feud When He Kills Henry Schafer After Conference in School Building", Owensboro Inquirer, 19 June 1916, p.1
- "Dr. R. W. Frymire Brought Here For Safekeeping", Owensboro Messenger, 20 June 1916, p.1
- "Slayer Silent As To His Deed", Owensboro Inquirer, 20 June 1916, p.2
- "Hancock Citizens Aroused", Owensboro Messenger, 21 June 1916, p.10
- "Dr. Frymire Tells Of Facts That Led To Schafer Murder", Owensboro Messenger, 21 June 1916, p.1
- "Several Hundred In Attendance At Schafer Funeral", Owensboro Messenger, 22 June 1916, p.1
- "His 'Vindication' Is Expected By Dr. R.W. Frymire", Owensboro Messenger, 25 June 1916, p.1A
- "Continuance On Frymire Motion", Owensboro Messenger, 27 October 1916, p.3
- "Frymire Wants Change Of Venue", Owensboro Messenger, 28 October 1916, p.5
- "Denies Motion For Change Of Venue", Owensboro Messenger, 29 October 1916, p.2
- "Frymire Case Will Be Called Tuesday Morning", Owensboro Messenger, 14 January 1917, p.1B
- "Frymire Case May Be Tried Next Tuesday", Owensboro Inquirer, 14 January 1917, p.1B
- "Continuance In The Frymire Case", Owensboro Messenger, 16 January 1917, p.2
- "Trial Of Frymire Put Over Till June", Owensboro Inquirer, 16 January 1917, p.8

- “Frymire Case Will Be Called In Hancock County”, Owensboro Messenger, 3 June 1917, p.1B
- “Frymire Murder Case To Be Tried”, Owensboro Inquirer, 3 June 1917, p.1B
- “Murder Trial On At Hawesville, Owensboro Inquirer, 5 June 1917, p.3
- “Frymire Case To Be Called At Hawesville Today”, Owensboro Messenger, 5 June 1917, p.8
- “Davie County Jury To Decide Fate of Frymire”, Owensboro Inquirer, 7 June 1917, p.1
- “Having Trouble Securing Jury In The Frymire Case”, Owensboro 7 June 1917, p.3
- “Schafer’s Widow Goes on Stand In Frymire Trial”, Owensboro Messenger, 8 June 1917, p.1
- “Self Defense Is Plea Made By Dr. E.W. Frymire”, Owensboro Messenger, 9 June 1917, p.4
- “Dr. R.W. Frymire Is Found Guilty Of Murder Charge”, Owensboro Messenger, 10 June 1917, p.1B
- “Frymire Likes Sentence Given Him For Killing”, Owensboro Inquirer, 10 June 1917, p.1B
- “Frymire Ready For Eddyville”, Owensboro Inquirer, 12 Jun 1917, p.2
- “Dr. R.W. Frymire Expresses Thanks To Hancock County”, Owensboro Messenger, 13 June 1917, p.8



Notes on the Schafer Family by Jerry Long

Henry William Schafer was born 14 March 1870 Hancock County, KY. He was the son of John Gustave Schafer & Elizabeth Albert. Henry is listed in the 1870, 1880, 1900 and 1910 federal censuses of the Pellville District in Hancock County, KY.



John Gustave Schafer (1827-1880) & Elizabeth Albert Schafer (1833-1889)

John G. Schafer was born on 17 October 1827 in Baden, Germany. He arrived in the US at the port of New Orleans on 24 November 1848 on the ship, Victoria. In a box of loose Perry County, Indiana Naturalization Records it is recorded that John Gustaff Shafer on 9 October 1852 applied for US citizenship. He was born 1830 in kingdom of Germany, age 22, owed allegiance to Charles Leopold, King of Baden, emigrated to the US in 1848. A copy of the same was recorded in Hancock County, KY on 5 June 1860.

John G. Schafer married Elizabeth Albert on 5 September 1853 in Perry County, IN. She was born 10 April 1833 in New York and died on 29 October 1889. During 1856-1858 the family left Perry County, IN and moved across the Ohio River to Hancock County, KY, where they are listed in the 1860 census. John G. Schafer died on 3 December 1880 and his wife, Elizabeth, on 29 October 1889. John G. & Elizabeth were buried at the Blackford Baptist Church Cemetery in Hancock County.



Graves of John G. & Elizabeth Schafer at the Blackford Baptist Church Cemetery

John G. Schafer & Elizabeth Albert were the parents of eleven children – John Conrad Schafer (1856-1925), Josephine Margaret Schafer Crawford (1858-1929), Eva Mary Schafer Walker (1860-1935), Frances Schafer (1862-1869), Charles Labol Schafer (1864-1931), Joseph G. Schafer (1866-1889), John Albert Schafer (1868-1914), Henry William Schafer (1870-1916), Katherine Dell Schafer Henning (1872-1949), Eliza Bell Schafer Lamb Taylor (1872-after 1940) and George Washington Schafer (1874-1936).

Henry William Schafer (1870-1916) was a veteran of the Spanish American War – the war was from 21 April 1898 thru 13 August 1898. He served as a wagoner in the 19th US Infantry. He enlisted on 13 June 1898 at Springfield, IL. His enlistment reported he was age 28, born Hawesville, KY and his description was given as blue eyes, dark brown hair, ruddy complexion and 6 feet tall. He was discharged on 23 September 1898 due to disability. He applied for an invalid

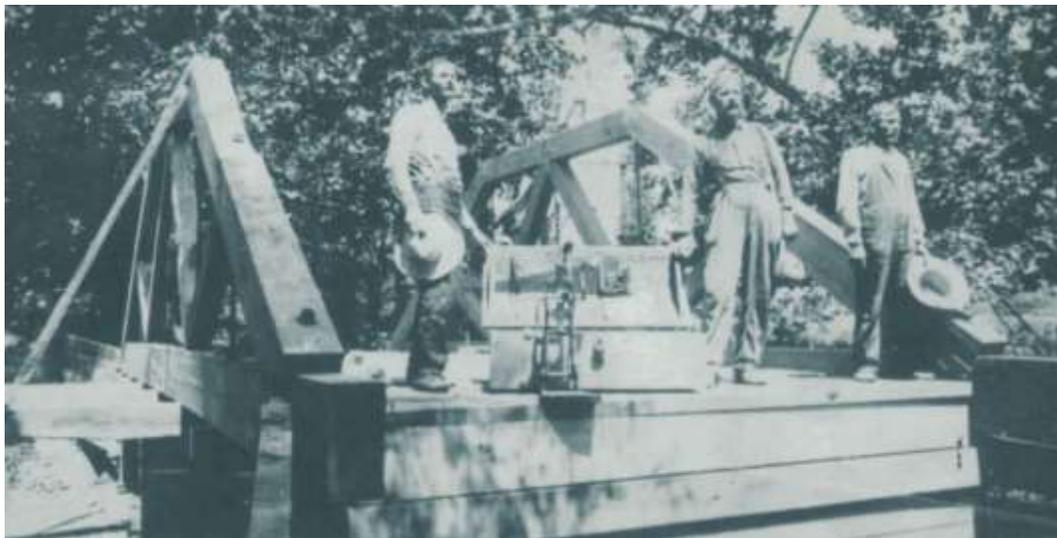
pension on 31 December 1898. His widow, Maggie L., six weeks after his death, applied for a continuance of his pension on 2 August 1916.

In the 1900 census Henry W. Schafer's occupation was given as farmer and in the 1910 census as a house carpenter. The 1910 censuses reported that he owned his own farm.

Henry W. Schafer married Margaret Luvenia Mickel on 21 February 1899 in Hancock County, KY. "Maggie" was born 1 November 1875 in Hancock County, KY. She was the daughter of Conrad Mickel & Letitia Hale and granddaughter of Johann Jost Mickel & Anna Maria Lenz and William Hale, Jr. & Ruth Elmira Bruner. Maggie Mickel Schafer was a first cousin to this writer's great-grandfather, Joseph Benjamin Young.



Henry William Schafer (1870-1916) & wife, Margaret Luvenia Mickel (1875-1937). Picture was made in 1899.



In center, Henry W. Schafer (1870-1916), on left is his brother, John Albert Schafer (1868-1914) & on right, Jesse Pulliam; during the construction of what was known as the Sam Baker bridge over Blackford Creek, on the Hardinsburg Road (now Highway 144) a short distance west of Patesville in Hancock County, KY.

Henry W. Schafer was shot and killed by Dr. R. W. Frymire on 19 June 1916 at Floral in Hancock County, KY. He was buried at the Blackford Baptist Church Cemetery in Hancock County, KY.

FORM # 8 1-1904 52912
 1 PLACE OF DEATH
 County Hancock
 Vol. Pellville Registration District No. 6045
 Inc. Town: _____ Primary Registration District No. _____
 City: _____ St.: _____ Ward: _____
 2 FULL NAME: H. W. Schaffer File No. 10539
 Registered No. 4
 (If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give the name of hospital or institution and street and number.)

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS			MEDICAL CERTIFICATE		
1 SEX <u>Male</u>	4 COLOR OR RACE <u>White</u>	3 MARRIAGE <u>Married</u> MARRIED OR DIVORCED (Write the word)	11 DATE OF DEATH <u>6</u> <u>19</u> <u>1916</u> (Month) (Day) (Year)	12 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from <u>11:30</u> , 1916, to <u>12:30</u> , 1916, that I last saw him <u>6:20</u> , 1916, and that death occurred on the date stated above at <u>11</u> m. The CAUSE OF DEATH was as follows: <u>Killed by car on road near Blackford Baptist Church</u>	
2 DATE OF BIRTH <u>3</u> <u>14</u> <u>1870</u> (Month) (Day) (Year)			13 SIGNATURE OF PHYSICIAN <u>W. H. ...</u>		
7 AGE <u>46</u> yrs. <u>3</u> mos. <u>16</u> ds. IF LESS than 1 day... hrs. or... min.?			14 SIGNATURE OF DECEASED <u>H. W. Schaffer</u>		
8 OCCUPATION (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work <u>Carpenter and farmer</u> (b) General address of industry, business or establishment in which employed (or employer)			15 SIGNATURE OF WITNESSES <u>...</u>		
9 BIRTHPLACE (State or country) <u>Hancock Co., Ky.</u>			16 SIGNATURE OF DECEASED'S NEAREST RELATIVE <u>Mrs. Maggie L. Schaffer</u>		
10 PARENTS 11 NAME OF FATHER <u>John Schaffer</u> 12 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (Name or country) <u>Germany</u> 13 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER <u>Esther ...</u> 14 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (Name or country) <u>Germany</u>			17 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, YEAR, HOME OR RESIDENT RESIDENTS) At place of death... yrs... mos... ds. State... yrs... mos... ds. Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death? <u>...</u>		
18 IN THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE (Informant) <u>Mrs. Maggie L. Schaffer</u> (Address) <u>...</u>			19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR CREMATION <u>Blackford County, Ky.</u>		
20 FILED <u>Aug 17 1916</u>			21 DATE OF BURIAL <u>6-20-16</u>		



Grave of Henry W. & Maggie L. Schaffer at the Blackford Baptist Church Cemetery

Maggie Mickel Schafer died on 25 October 1937 at her home near Floral in Hancock County, KY. She was buried with her husband at the Blackford Baptist Church Cemetery.

Henry & Margaret Schafer had seven children – Letitia Elizabeth (1901-1982), married Otis Adkins, Mary Eva (1903-1994), married Walter Herbert Storm, Margaret Ellen (1904-1988), married George Herbert Anderson, John Albert Conrad (1907-1975), married Virginia Jewel Jackson, Sarah Kathryn (1910-1999), married Roy Edward Gibbs, Charles Franklin (1913-1971), married Nina Mae Snyder, and Henry William (1916-1990), married Albertine Fulcher. Of the seven children of Henry & Maggie Schafer six were school teachers – Mary, Margaret, Albert, Sarah, Charles & Henry. Charles F. Schafer served as Hancock County, KY school superintendent, 1958-1971. Henry & Margaret's youngest child, Henry, was born posthumously and was an accomplished Baptist minister. On 1 June 1980 this writer attended a reunion at the Blackford Baptist Church in Hancock County, KY. The keynote speaker was Rev. Henry W. Schafer. He was a very fluent and forceful speaker. In 1951 Henry & Maggie's children donated their parents' farm (72 acres) at Floral to the Daviess-McLean Baptist Association for use as a camp for Baptist children. The Schafer Memorial Camp is still being widely used in that capacity today. See Internet site <https://www.campschafer.com/>



Notes on Dr. R. W. Frymire by Jerry Long

Randolph William Frymire was born on 22 July 1850 in Breckinridge County, KY. He was the son of Tobias Strock Frymire (1826-1908) & Letitia McClarty Barger. His grandfather, John M. Frymire (c1785-1863) was born in Philadelphia, PA and came to Kentucky with his father, William Frymire. William, a native of Germany, died in 1808 and was buried in the Bruner Cemetery overlooking KY Highway 144, near Frymire, 2 ½ miles northeast of Union Star in Breckinridge County, KY, near the Meade County line.

Randolph W. Frymire is listed near Union Star in the 1850, 1860 and 1870 censuses of Breckinridge County, KY.

Randolph W. Frymire married Lydia E. Board on 1 March 1871 in Breckinridge County, KY. Lydia was born in Breckinridge County in September 1849. She was the daughter of Milton Board & Margaret Pool; her father served two terms as county judge of Breckinridge County. Lydia died on 26 November 1910.

In the 1880 census R. W. Frymire was enumerated near Patesville in Hancock County, KY. In this census his occupation was recorded as physician. He had been licensed to practice medicine about 1877. The Hartford Republican newspaper in 1895 reported that he had then practicing medicine for 18 years.

Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 12 July 1895, p3:

Dr. R. W. Frymire has recently located at Deanfield, Ohio county, to practice his profession. Dr. Frymire is not only a physician of eighteen years practice, but is a regular ordained minister of the gospel, having attended the Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville winter before last. The Doctor will in a few day begin the erection of a dwelling house at Deanfield, which, when completed, will add greatly to the looks of that thriving little village. Dr. Frymire comes to Ohio county people well recommended, and we feel safe in predicting that he will soon build up an extensive practice in his surrounding communities. He hails from Hancock county, where he has practiced for several years.

By 1894 Dr. Frymire was once again residing at Patesville. The 1894 school census of Hancock County, KY lists two children of R. W. Frymire as being students at the Patesville school. He was residing at Patesville at the time of the 1900 and 1910 censuses. The census reports showed that he owned his own home on the Hardinsburg Road (now Highway 144).



Dr. Randolph W. Frymire (1850-1927). Picture on left was made about 1875 and picture on right about 1910.

On 19 June 1916 Dr. R. W. Frymire shot and killed Henry W. Schafer at the Floral school in Hancock County. Frymire was convicted of murder on 9 June 1917 and was sentenced to a term of 21 years in the penitentiary. He was incarcerated at the Kentucky State Penitentiary in Eddyville, Lyon County, KY on 18 June 1917. The 1920 census lists Randolph W. Frymire as an inmate at the prison. He was reported to be 69, widowed and his occupation was a nurse in the prison hospital. He was paroled on 13 August 1925 and was released from the prison on 8 September 1925.

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Thursday, 20 August 1925, p.4:

Frankfort, Ky., Aug. 13 (AP) – R. W. Frymire, of Hancock county, sentenced in 1917 to twenty-one years' imprisonment in the state reformatory for manslaughter, was paroled today. He was received here June 18, 1917.

Dr. R. W. Frymire died at the age of 77 on 11 November 1927 at the home of his son, Thomas Bell Frymire, in Central City, Muhlenberg County, KY. His death certificate and an item published four days after his death in the Owensboro, KY newspaper reported that burial was to be at the Bethlehem Baptist Church near Patesville in Hancock County, where his wife, Lydia, had been buried in 1910. However, burial was subsequently changed to the Fairmount Cemetery in Central City, where his tombstone rests today. On 24 November 1927 Bell Frymire had the grave of his mother, Lydia, removed from the Bethlehem Cemetery and reburied with his father at the Fairmount Cemetery in Central City.

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Tuesday, 15 November 1927, p.4:

Patesville, Ky., Nov. 14 –The body of Dr. R. W. Frymire, who died at the home of his son, Bell, in Central City, Saturday, will be brought to Bethlehem today and buried in the cemetery here. The Frymire family lived in Patesville for many years and have many friends here.

Owensboro Messenger, Owensboro, KY, Saturday, 26 November 1927, p.10:

Patesville, Ky., Nov. 25 – Bell Frymire and son, Orville, of Central City, spent Thursday and Friday here. Mr. Frymire had the body of his mother, Mrs. R. W. Frymire, buried in the Bethlehem cemetery about seventeen years ago, buried where the body of her husband. Dr. R. W. Frymire, who died two weeks, ago, was buried.



Fairmount Cemetery, Central City, KY

The 1900 census recorded that Lydia, wife of Dr. Randolph W. Frymire, was the mother of five children, one of whom was then deceased. Their four surviving children were – Florence Weaver Frymire Dean (1872-1916), Letitia Frymire Ellington (1873-1966), Ada J. Frymire (1875-1967) and Theodore Bell Frymire (1878-1965). Ada J. Frymire never married and served as the supervisor of the Western State Hospital at Hopkinsville, KY.



Hancock Clarion, Hawesville, KY, Special 75th Anniversary Edition, 1968:



The stately old home pictured above was once occupied by Dr. Randolph Frymire and his family. It was built about 1906 and still stands in the Patesville community. Dr. Frymire was a practicing physician for many years. The home is unoccupied and weather and time have taken their toll. To many it is now known as the "haunted house." By 1968 the house was unoccupied and by 2014 it was no longer standing. Photo was by Donn Wimmer, editor of the Hancock Clarion.



Owensboro Star, Owensboro, KY, 8 January 1969, p.1:

Frymire House: Grim Reminder of Crime

By Ralph Lewis

It has been said that the Frymire house in Patesville, Kentucky, is haunted. If it isn't, it should be.

A first glimpse of the building and one has a sense of gloom, especially on a dark and dreary day. The vacant windows and doorways and the bleak walls give the house a sinister look. Add to this a musty odor about the place from woodwork rotting for long years and you have a perfect setting for a horror movie.

The Frymire house was once one of the most attractive homes in the Patesville community and Dr. R. W. Frymire one of the most successful and highly respected physicians in the area'

On Monday morning, June 19, 1916, Henry W. Schafer, a most respected farmer of the Floral community, was shot to death in the Floral schoolhouse, eight miles south of Hawesville, at 11 o'clock a.m. Dr. Frymire was charged with his murder.

Dr. Frymire at the time of the murder was sixty-five years old and had been practicing physician in Patesville for 35 years. The brutal slaying received news coverage throughout all of Kentucky and feeling against the 'good doctor' ran so high that Frymire was brought to the Daviess County jail for charged with the murder, safekeeping. He was transferred to Daviess County by deputy sheriff B. E. Ewan, who said that the removal of the accused murderer was necessary when the sheriff's office had received word that 300 or 400 men from the Floral community had formed a mob with the purpose of taking Dr. Frymire from the Hawesville jail.

Dr. Frymire was tried and proven guilty and on June 12, 1917, almost one year from the date of the slaying, he was ordered to be taken by the sheriff of Hancock County to the State Penitentiary at Eddyville, Ky., and there confined at hard labor for a period of twenty-one years.

The story should end here, but it doesn't. On June 27, 1968, a letter was received by Donn Wimmer, editor of the Hancock Clarion for entry in that newspaper's 75th Anniversary Edition. We quote part of that letter:

"As you indicated Frymire was received at this institution on June 18, 1917 to serve twenty-one years for manslaughter. He was listed as 67 years of age Records further reveal that R. W. Frymire, from Hancock County was released on parole September 8, 1925, to his daughter in Camden, Arkansas." The letter is signed by the warden of Eddyville State Penitentiary.

There are many in Hancock County who say that Dr. Frymire, upon his release, returned to the old house in Patesville and finding it vacated by his family and disturbed by the people, returned to Eddyville Prison and asked to be allowed to return. This request was granted and he served as prison doctor until the time of his death.

What will happen to the old Frymire house in Patesville? Some say that it will be cleaned up and repaired, others say that it won't be. Drive over some time and see the old house. It may not be there much longer. But, be sure to visit it in the daytime. Haunted? Could be.



This desolate and bleak old house was once the fashionable residence of Dr. R. W. Frymire, Patesville physician. The house has been vacant for many years and is falling apart. It stands on Highway 144 and some people claim that it is haunted.



Painting of Dr. R. W. Frymire's home at Patesville. His office is in front of the house. The painting was done by Dr. Frymire's granddaughter, Florence Frymire Graff (1906-2004) and is owned by her niece, Mary Angela Frymire Luttrell. (1945-).