

[Bledsoe, Frank B.]

WHITESVILLE RESIDENT TOOK HIS OWN LIFE, LAST TUESDAY

Frank Bledsoe Shot Himself With Borrowed Shot Gun Early Tuesday Morning—Was Despondent Over His Sickness—Requested Rev. Herrick to Preach Funeral Sermon and the Odd Fellows to Conduct the [sic] Which Was done Wednesday Afternoon

The community of Whitesville was shocked Tuesday morning to learn of the sudden death of Frank B. Bledsoe of West Main street, caused by his taking his own life, at about 6 o'clock that morning.

Mr. Bledsoe arose early as was his custom, started the fires and after doing a few other duties, went out in the side yard, where he took a shot-gun he had borrowed, placed the muzzle to his side over the heart, pulled the trigger and death resulted instantly.

Charles, Frank's brother, heard the shot, but did not distinguish it as such until he went into the yard a minute or two later and found Frank's body in a heap, gun at his side and a big pool of blood on the ground.

There is every evidence in the world that Mr. Bledsoe had considered the matter of committing suicide for a long time. About a year and a half ago, he was taken with a ravaging attack of the grip which left him in a weakened condition. Spinal trouble developed, and at times his mind was unbalanced. All this gave him no little uneasiness, as he was a very proud-spirited person, and sensitive. He made the remark to several of his neighbors and friends that he would never become a public charge.

While in conversation with Rev. J. [James] D. Herrick, two or three weeks ago, Mr. Bledsoe asked the Reverend if he would preach his funeral sermon, to which Mr. Herrick replied he would, but cheerfully told Frank that when spring came, he would soon get well and dispel the matter of a funeral from his mind. Mr. Herrick was to have left for his new pastorate at Towanda [PA] Tuesday morning, and it is evident that Mr. Bledsoe committed suicide in order to make sure that Mr. Herrick would be secured as the officiating minister. This belief is borne out by a letter which was pinned to the under side of his coat, the contents of which read as follows:

"Charley, I thank you for what you have done for me.

"God bless my mother.

"Rev. James Herrick, preach my funeral sermon at church. Odd Fellows take charge of funeral.

"I want male quartet to sing at funeral.

"Thank Odd Fellows for what they have done."

The paper was signed "Frank Bledsoe" at top of the sheet.

This letter showed unmistakable signs of having been pinned to his coat several times before, thus bearing out the theory that the subject had been on his mind for some time.

[Bledsoe, Frank B.]

Mr. Bledsoe was born in Whitesville, Nov. 8, 1865. Besides his aged and enfeebled mother, Mrs. Fidelia Bledsoe, he leaves two brothers, Ferdinand of Wellsville and Charles N., who lived with his family and mother, all lived in the same house at this place.

Frank was a genial fellow, industrious, and had a large circle of friends.

The funeral service was held, in accordance with the instructions left by the deceased, at the Universalist church, Wednesday afternoon at 3 o'clock, Rev. J. D. Herrick officiating, the male quartette singing, and the local lodge of Odd Fellows performing their ritualistic rites.

Mr. Bledsoe had been an Odd Fellow for about eighteen months, and despite his illness, had taken a deep interest in the brotherhood.

The Odd Fellows attended the funeral in a body, the following brothers being pall-bearers: M. W. Reynolds, Frank Larkin, Grant Spicer, R. Livermore, Bert Day and Harry Taylor. Charles Deming was marshal of the funeral cortege. The remains were interred in Rural cemetery, each brother depositing a spray of evergreen on the casket.

The family has the sympathy of the entire community.

*Allegany County News, Whitesville NY, Thu. 2 Apr 1914*

Transcribed on 15 Aug 2013 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY