

Deaths of brothers, a year apart, merely a coincidence?

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of the life which has gone to eternal rest."

A subsequent issue of the newspaper reported that Riley's former wife, their child and his brother, James, of Washington City, were in

Bloomington for the funeral.

Less than a year later, the very brother who had rushed to the assistance of George Riley was also found dead. (The *Star* has a strange definition of the word "several," when it reported that "several months ago George Riley died suddenly in the same house while in

bed with his brother, Charles.")

Charles Riley was found dead in the cellar on New Year's Day by, "a friend who called for a visit." It was believed that he had started to go down to the cellar when he was stricken with heart failure and fell the rest of the way.

A former employee of the spoke factory in Bloomington, "Charley,"

as the *Star* called him, in that December 1913, "had been in no particular business. Since his father's death about six years ago, he had lived in the house alone and prepared his own meals."

The innocent tone of such newspaper stories gives rise to speculation about the deaths and about

the innocence of small-town Hoosiers of that era. George was 44 and Charles 38 when they died only a year apart. There is no hint of foul play in either of the obituaries, but George had certainly left a path of enemies behind him. And 38-year-old men seldom die of heart failure and fall down the stairs.