

# Deaths of brothers a coincidence?

It could have been called an unusual coincidence of deaths. Or, perhaps, it was one of the ironies of life.

There was certainly little out of the ordinary about the obituary of one of the brothers in the *Bloomington Weekly Star* of Jan. 17, 1913. The headline — a tribute from one newspaperman to another — said, simply, "LAST ASSIGNMENT OF GEO. W. RILEY."

The deceased had been a reporter, and a controversial one at that. The circumstances of his death in the middle of the night pointed to natural causes. Charles Riley, a brother, with whom the reporter lived on South Lincoln Street, related that he heard a cry of distress and thought George was "in a stupor."

Dr. P.O. Rogers was duly summoned and declared the man dead of heart failure. He was 44 years old.



## Looking back

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The *Star* obituary included an account of Riley's career, noting that he was highly controversial and for a man his age, had certainly changed reporting jobs frequently. Commented the newspaper, "George Riley was a newspaper writer, and his articles were largely of a sensational character, which made his career a stormy one and got several newspapers into trouble."

According to the *Star*, Riley had been employed by no less than four Bloomington newspapers before taking a position on the *Louisville Herald*, a Republican paper, as cor-

respondent at Frankfort (Ky.). Presumably his stint with the *Herald* ended when he was ejected from the Kentucky governor's office for writing "exposes" about the executive's pardoning practices.

Perhaps his notoriety led him to seek reporting jobs out of state. The *Star* related that Riley had worked in Texas and Wisconsin.

His longest employment time with a newspaper was with the *Bedford Mail*, "where he kept people guessing what was coming next." There he also found a wife, Euphemia Cook, from whom he was later divorced.

Riley's last two newspaper positions were with the *Linton Call* and the *Record*, a Bull Moose Party paper. At the conclusion of the obituary the *Star* commented, "An eventful life has ended. Let the facts be buried with the dead, and let us keep to memory only the bright side

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