

# Eyewitness remembers Senator Goebel assassination

## 1906 NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT OF GOEBEL ASSASSINATION

The federal crime that had disgraced Kentucky for years was committed at Frankfort Tuesday morning, Jan. 26, 1906, by the assassination of Senator William Goebel in the State House yard as he was walking to the Senate.

The shots—four or five in number—were fired from a Winchester rifle, and were fired from the window of the second or third floor of the East wing of the State House or one of the buildings on the East side of the State House yard. The assassin was not found at the time and may never be known. A man named Whitaker, from Butler county, was arrested while trying to run out of the State House.

Mr. Goebel was walking on the brick pavement in front of the State House near the fountain with Col. Jack Chinn, Col. Ebb Lillard and other friends when shot. Col. Chinn was within three feet of Goebel when the latter threw up both hands and fell. Chinn leaped to one side, but did not run.

"Are you killed?" asked Chinn.

"I think so," was the faint reply.

"Well, I'm ready to go with you," said Chinn, drawing his revolver. But no more shots came.

The wounded man was taken to his room in the Capital Hotel at once, and it was found that a ball from a .38 Winchester rifle had entered his right breast near the upper vest pocket and passing through the body came out near the spine under the left shoulder blade.

The wound is very serious, but as Mr. Goebel is a man of great courage and determination he has a chance to pull through.

### Later Reports

On Saturday, Feb. 3, 1906 Gov. Goebel died.

Those accused of the assassination were: Henry F. Yostley, who was convicted and sentenced to the State Penitentiary for life. No appeal from the sentence was ever taken to the Court of Appeals. James Howard was tried and also convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment, but on appeal his case was reversed. Caleb Power was tried and convicted, on appeal his conviction was reversed, tried again, he was convicted. In all he was tried four times and by 1908 Augustus E. Wilson, a Republican, had been elected governor of Kentucky and under the very reported itself unable to agree on a

verdict. Mr. Power made an application to Gov. Wilson for a pardon, which was granted. Yostley was later pardoned.

Gov. Goebel was at least buried upon the very crest of Cemetery Hill in Frankfort on March 12 at 5 p.m.

### My Memories of that Day

The year was 1906, on Jan. 26th, I was there with my father to attend the ceremony of his friend, William Goebel to be sworn in as Governor of Kentucky. I was 12 years old and this trip with my father, Henry Metcalfe to our state capital was the most exciting trip I had ever had. We were on our way to the ceremony, just approaching the steps of what is now known as the old capitol building when a shot rang out and my father's friend, Sen. William Goebel lay almost at our feet mortally wounded.

The controversy stemmed from the November state election in which the Republican candidate, W.S. Taylor, supposedly defeated Goebel, the Democratic nominee by 2,000 votes. Goebel immediately contended that fraud was involved and a special legislative committee was appointed to investigate. The committee's findings were to be announced in the Senate chamber on the morning that Goebel was shot. I'll never forget all the streets of Frankfort were crowded with state militia, also 12 hundred men from eastern Kentucky to intimidate pro-Goebel forces. The mountaineers were camped on the capitol grounds.

The next day as Goebel lay dying, the legislative committee, headed to meet in the Capital Hotel because the Taylor government had barred the Capitol, saying Taylor was Governor. Chief Justice James H. Hazelrigg administered the oath of office to Goebel on his death bed. My father witnessed this and was there also to help get young J.C.W. Beckham sworn in as lieutenant governor—he was just 26 and looked 28.

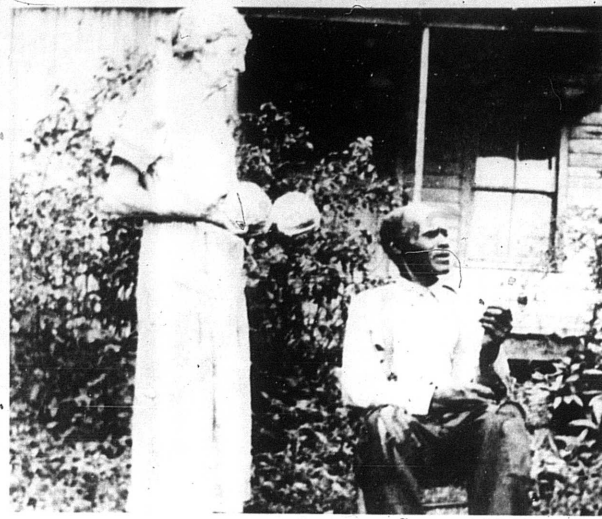
Gov. Goebel signed his only proclamation—one calling for immediate dispersal of the Kentucky State Guards. Goebel died the next day and Beckham assumed the Governorship. Taylor refused to give up the matter until it was resolved by the Supreme Court ruling that Goebel was the true Governor. Taylor fled to Indianapolis, thus ended what would have ended in a civil war.

To my knowledge, to this day the Goebel murder has never been solved.

Editor's note: Mrs. Oseskoy's father, Henry Metcalfe, lived all his life in Metcalfe Havertield was Florida State Senator for three terms, and is now Circuit District Court of Appeals, Miami.

Haverfield Oseskoy Carlisle. Her great grandfather was Thomas Metcalfe. Her son, Robert

Metcalfe, lived all his life in Metcalfe Havertield was Florida State Senator for three terms, and is now Circuit District Court of Appeals, Miami.



Uncle Charlie

Miss Lucretia (Dula) Ashley, daughter of Capt. James P. and Rebecca Kinart Ashley, and Uncle Charlie Thompson, are pictured as when Capt. Ashley went to the Union Army, he gave Uncle Charlie's father his freedom, a cabin, and a plot of ground. Uncle Charlie was a young lad at the time Uncle Charlie, an uncle of Mrs. George (Christie Thompson) Ledford with whom he lived at the time of his death, died in 1948 at around 100 years old. Miss Dula died in 1951. Picture submitted by Laura Hardin Pumphrey.



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