

Mrs. Reed Hensley Meets Tragic Death

West Sangamon united as one great heart Tuesday afternoon in mourning the death of Anna Mai Hensley, victim of burns in the most tragic accident which ever has befallen this village. The funeral services were held Tuesday afternoon at three o'clock, and despite the intermittent fall of rain and continued lowering clouds, the hundreds of friends of Anna Mai gathered in tribute. No one perhaps, in this community merited more friends than she. The floral offerings surpassed in profusion and beauty anything ever seen here before, and was but one evidence of the love of her friends. The entire front of the pulpit of the Federated church was covered with a profusion of beautiful flowers, a wreath of designs and wreaths, conveying a hint of the fragrance of the sweet departed life.

Songs that Anna Mai loved and Biblical verses which had meant most to her in her short life comprised a part of the service. Rev. J. B. Dalton of the Christian church and Rev. E. F. Williams of the Methodist church officiated. The latter read the Twenty-third Psalm, Anna Mai's favorite, and which sustained her through an operation last winter, in which life was at low ebb. Miss Mabel Atherton sang "A Clean Heart," and Buff Purvines sang "Shadows." A quartet composed of Messrs Charles and Jay Boynton, Harry Tomlin and Buff Purvines sang "Sometime We'll Understand," and "One Sweetly Solemn Thought." These were her favorite songs, and many times had she sang them in the quartet during the darkest hours of her friends who had suffered the loss of a dear one. Max Krurvel, organist of Kumler Methodist church at Springfield played the pipe organ.

The pallbearers were as follows: Otto Kundig, Lester Lehmann, Earl Purvines, Jesse Smith, Edgar Boynton and Edward Munson. Flower bearers were Mesdames Earl Purvines, Edward Munson, Lester Lehmann, A. V. Irwin, Otto Kundig, and Misses Lora Zane, Eda Brownback, Hoped Huber and Mabel Munson.

Anna Mai was burned at her home in this village late Saturday evening when she attempted to start a fire in a stove with coal oil. The accident happened at about six o'clock and she expired at the St. John's hospital in

Springfield five hours later. Her clothing became ignited and in horror she ran through the house. Neighbors hearing her sister's screams rushed to her aid and finally succeeded in extinguishing the flames after all the clothes had burned from her body and the skin burned off. She was so badly burned that there was not a place the size of a hand on her body that was not burned.

Medical aid was rushed to her assistance, but in response to her pleadings to be taken to the hospital, the evening train was stopped at the Hensley home and the young lady placed aboard and in reaching Springfield was rushed to St. John's hospital where she passed away at 11:15.

Two sisters of Anna Mai were in the home at the time of the tragic burning, but their effort to aid the suffering young lady were of but little avail. Apparently an explosion of gas occurred when she poured oil upon live coals, which she believed were

burnt out. The accident occurred so suddenly that serious burns were suffered before any one could reach her. Seldom has it been our duty to record so sudden a death. A dark gloom was spread over the whole community when it was whispered from one to another last Sunday morning that Anna Mai was gone. She was of an affectionate disposition, bright and winning in her ways so that friendship's circle was to her a large one. Anna Mai's life truly may be said to have been lived for her friends and that none knew her but to love her. Her parents dying when she was but a child, she came from North Carolina to make her home with Rev. and Mrs. W. C. Shaffer. At that time she was heard to remark that life had but little value for her. Then, as if determining to be useful to others, she continued that she would "live for Christ, and to make other people happy." How completely she attained that resolution of childhood was attested by the outpouring of sympathy by all who knew her. That deep sympathy of everyone here will be a source of strength to the stricken husband and relatives.

There is no language at our command by which we can fittingly portray the sincerity of this young lady's Christian character, but the writer hereof can safely say, he never met one who

seemed to more clearly walk hand in hand with God. Conscience guided her every act. She was a faithful member of the church. She was not only faithful to her church, but just as faithful in believing that it was her duty as a Christian to do the will of her Master at all times. She was always ready to lend a helping hand in time of need—both in acts of kindness and words. She never missed a service at church; she was always to be seen in the choir, and was a member of the mixed quartet which was always in demand at funerals and special musical programs. Truly we can say that the short life lived by this dear girl was one spent to cheer, comfort and help others.

(The following obituary was written by her foster father, Rev. W. C. Shaffer.)

Anna Mai Rector was born at Marshall, North Carolina, April 14th, 1891; departed this life Aug. 25th, 1917, at the age of 26 years, 4 months and 11 days.

Her parents both died when she was eight years of age and she, with two younger sisters, were taken to a school and home at Walnut, North Carolina, where she remained for some years, and from here she came to the home of Rev. and Mrs. W. C. Shaffer where she made her home until her marriage to Charles Reed Hensley on Nov. 1st, 1911, who survives her and mourns her departure.

She united in early childhood with the Presbyterian church and remained a true and faithful member until the great God whom she loved and trusted called her higher.

Anna Mai was of a sweet disposition and made warm friends every where she went. She was kind and gentle and always ready to help all in time of trouble. She was always faithful to her church duties; never absent from

a single service, if she could possibly prevent it. She never refused to fill any place she was called upon. No task for her Master did she count too great nor none too small. She was always ready to step in where others failed.

She had frequently in the last year expressed her readiness to go wherever her Saviour willed it so, and during the last hours of her suffering she prayed and comforted those around her, saying that if she could not come back to us we might all come to her. She was a faithful wife; a true and dutiful daughter and we truly all loved her.

We know we shall miss her. A place is vacant in our homes that never can be filled—a place in our community. She will never sing in our choir again but we believe she has joined that Heavenly Chorus.

We can trust in the blessed assurance that though this earthly house of her tabernacle were dissolved she is safe at last in that other house—that house not made with hands eternal in this heaven.

She lived but a little space here below but left her imprint for good everywhere she went. Both communities of church people (where she lived) loved her, and at last her little drama of life is done and we believe she has been promoted.

We know she lived not in vain; sweet memories of her will always remain until we shall see her with her Saviour.

Besides her husband, and foster parents, Rev. and Mrs. W. C. Shaffer, she leaves three sisters, Mrs. Pearl Prince, Ft. Wayne, Ind.; Mrs. Mollie Douglas Merri-dian, Miss; Miss Queen Rector, Tina, Mo; one brother Harold Rector, Marshall North Carolina.

Death doth hide, but not divide; She waits for us on yonder side.

Thus in humble submission we will bow our heads and dry our tears until we shall meet beyond where death and partings are no more.

D&B
4/14/1891

D&D
8/25/17

9/21/1917
(NR)

