

History of Henderson County, KY

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MR. CHARLES WINFREY

Charles Winfree, born 1809 at Henderson, KY - died November 1864 - Murdered, Henderson, KY. He was the son of Charles Winfree and Marvell.

An old bachelor, and the largest land and slave owner in the precinct (Scuffletown), was continually annoyed by these night prowlers. He was kind to his slaves and none of them wanted to leave him. He lived in a house by himself and had his slaves quartered in different settlements on his lands. One day in November, 1864, William SHELBY, Esq., receiving information that a party from Indiana intended that night to visit WINFREY'S for the purpose of running of his Negro men, conveyed to him immediately what he had heard. Mr. WINFREY prepared himself to meet them, and for that purpose, with one or more of his men, guarded the river bank until a late hour in the night. Becoming sleepy and thinking the thieves would not cross over, he returned to his house and was soon soundly asleep. He had taken the precaution during the day to send around and notify his men, and as a greater precaution had them all come to his house that night for protection.

A short while after retiring the thieves came and were headed by a man who had prior to that time overseed for John B. DAVIS, of this county. This man knew Mr. WINFREY and knew his fearless character. The thieves were all armed, but approached the house cautiously. They soon found that the Negroes could not be driven off without disturbing their master, so the leader concluded to go near his room and call him. He approached his room, called him from his sleep and told him that they had come for his Negroes. The old man sprang from his bed and ordered them off of his premises. They declined going and directed him not to come out of his room. He put on his pants and with his double-barrelled gun came out on to a side porch, when the villain who led the party took aim and fired, shooting him through and through. At the firing of this gun, the whole party ran from the house and were soon in their boats, crossing the river without ever having encountered any of the bank patrols. Mr. WINFREY lived but a short time after he was shot. He was a very wealthy man and many ugly stories were circulated concerning some of his relatives and their association with his killing.

Charles WINFREY was one of the noblest of men. His word was regarded by all his neighbors as of equal value with any man's bond. He was a kind neighbor and master, and a man of unimpeachable integrity. His death case a gloom over the whole surrounding county and no man's death was ever more keenly regretted. William SHELBY and N. B. HILL rode to Owensboro next day after the shooting to lay the case before the military, but that branch of the government service refused to take hold of or have anything to do with the matter in any way.

At the earnest solicitation of some local as well as non-resident relatives, Esquire John E. McCALLISTER settled the estate and succeeded in bring to light some rascalities which, but for his indomitable will and energy, would have remained secrets forever.

Netta Mullin, 1st Vice President

Henderson Co. Historical & Genealogical Society

Henderson History Website:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/kyhende2/>

Henderson County Society Website:

<http://www.rootsweb.com/~kyhchgs/>

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Author of: Register of Deaths, Volume 1

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