



Robert H. Noble, 1855-1937

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Captain Robert Hunter Noble, well-known Paducah philanthropist, died at 1 o'clock this afternoon at his home, 2007 Jefferson Street.

Captain Noble, who was 82 years of age, had been ill three months, suffering from a complication of diseases brought on by old age. He was a patient at Illinois Central hospital for several weeks, but was removed to his home a month ago.

He had made a fortune in the operation of sand and gravel business here, but was best known for the interest he displayed in giving Paducah adequate facilities for recreation. His gift of \$10,000 enabled the city to improve the area which was named Noble Park in his honor, and he made many other gifts to beautify this property. His latest offer was to pay half the cost of acquiring the Baumer property adjoining Noble Park for the purpose of establishing a municipal golf course, but he died without seeing this dream realized.

The funeral will be held at 10 o'clock Saturday morning at the Roth Chapel, Rev. Custis Fletcher of Grace Episcopal church officiating. Burial will be in Oak Grove Cemetery. Capt. Noble was born in Louisville, Ky., in August 1855, the son of the late Col. John C. Noble and Elizabeth Pierson Noble. His father a colonel in the Confederate Army, was a publisher and printer. He operated a newspaper in Louisville when Capt. Noble was born.

In 1857, when Capt. Noble was two years old, his parents moved to Paducah, and Col. Noble established a newspaper called the Paducah Herald. It was a morning paper, and for many years enjoyed a successful business with a wide circulation in the city and county.

Robert Noble as a young man attended the public schools of Paducah, and also was a pupil in a Catholic school operated by the catholic priests (at that time there were parochial schools operated both by nuns and brothers).

Upon moving to Paducah, Col. John C. Noble built the home at the intersection of Lone Oak and Blandville roads, which is now Cedar Lawn, and the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ed D. Hannan.

As a youth, Robert H. Noble traveled for the wholesale grocery firm operated by his brother, Ed P. Noble. The firm was known as Ed. P. Noble & Company. Later, Capt. Noble was engaged in the transfer business in Paducah. In 1913 he established the Ohio

Valley Sand and Gravel Company, merging several small sand digging concerns into what was to become one of the largest industries of its kind in the South. He was very successful in the operation of the sand and gravel company, building up a wide clientele. In 1928 Capt. Noble sold the business outright to a group of industrialists, and it has since been operated as the Federal Materials Company. Capt. Noble had been retired since the sale of his business. For several years he maintained an office downtown.

Capt. Noble was a member of the Paducah Board of Park Commissioners for a number of years, and took an active interest in the development of the city's park system and playgrounds. He was associated with the late Richard Rudy, banker, on the park board. Capt. Noble made a gift of \$10,000 to the city for the purchase of a tract of 110 acres which were converted into the beautiful park which bears his name. The area has since been enlarged by additional purchases. After his original bequest, Capt. Noble made numerous additional gifts to the park, siding it in the purchase of playground equipment, and in general development. He loved the park and frequently visited it, even after his health began to fail.

Although not a member of any church himself, Capt. Noble was a man of charitable nature, and delighted to assist the city's religious advancement. He made a number of handsome gifts to Grace Episcopal church, which was the church with which his parents and other of his family were affiliated. Through the rector, Rev. Custis Fletcher, Capt. Noble made many gifts to deserving colored churches of the city. This was something of a hobby with the Captain. He often told his friends that for many years he was an employer of colored labor, while in the transfer business. He always appreciated the industry and loyalty of his colored help, and he never failed to contribute money to a colored church in need, if he found that its cause was deserving.

For many years Capt. Noble had resided at 2007 Jefferson street. He was never married. Surviving him are two brothers, John C. Noble of West Point, Miss., and W. Y. Noble of Paducah; a niece, Mrs. Will J. Gilbert, and a nephew, G. Rabb Noble, both of Paducah. Mrs. Stewart Edwards of Paducah is a great niece.

Capt. Noble was a man of vigorous temperament, a quick thinker and a quick actor. He was intensely loyal to his employees, and often befriended them, as he did any one he found in distress. It was his custom for years, while he operated the sand and gravel firm at the foot of Monroe street, to present each of his employees with a turkey at Christmas time. He had the birds dressed and brought to his office, where he personally presented them to the men in his employ. He took delight in this custom when the entrance to Noble Park was built, a bronze table was erected in honor of Capt. Noble. Carved on this table is a tribute to Capt. Noble by Irvin S. Cobb, The words reflect truthfully and accurately the rare personality and character of Capt. Noble, "a true Southern gentleman".