

"Fate of Trite Brother Uncovered"

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By Mary Ann Ashcraft

Thanks to many readers who replied to my November 23rd column about the Trite twins who died in a 1902 well accident near McKinstry's Mills, I can finish the story of their older brother, Edward. He had been the first to go down the well, been overcome by poisonous fumes but brought up, half alive, by his brothers. They, however, were dead when finally retrieved from the well a long time later. Did Edward recover? I knew he didn't appear in Maryland's death records between 1898 and 1910, but I searched for him in vain using an index to the 1910 census records.

How did he escape my notice in the census when he was right there in the same New Windsor Election District as his parents and several brothers? Ah...the perils of wanting quick answers to questions!

Census records online are a godsend to family historians and genealogists. The Carroll County Public Library subscribes to HeritageQuest and Ancestry and allows its users to access those marvelous databases for research. Ancestry is accessible only within the branches themselves, but HeritageQuest can be searched from a home computer by anyone with a Carroll County library card. Some of you may have individual subscriptions to Ancestry, but I don't, so I searched for Edward Trite from home using the HeritageQuest index to the 1910 census.

The companies which compile the census indexes employ relatively unskilled workers to decipher old, hard-to-read, handwritten census records. Those employees make mistakes but, for better or worse, we have become very dependent upon their work. "Edward Trite" became "Edward Fritz" on the HeritageQuest index. The family listed just before the Trites was named Fritz and the person indexing that page applied the name Fritz to both heads of household even though Trite was spelled correctly and the handwriting was very legible.

I didn't have a clue where to begin looking for Edward in 1910 and, without going through the census page by page, I would have spent a long time finding him. I hoped HeritageQuest would do it quickly for me but, according to the index, not a single person named Edward Trite appeared in the United States. At that point, I decided Edward's fate was a mystery and finished writing the November 23rd column. I should have checked further because "Edward Fritz," his wife and three children were living under my nose, not far from his parents' home...the one with the treacherous well!

By late 1916 or early 1917, Edward had moved his growing family into a house owned by his employer, the cement company in Union Bridge. He apparently worked with the railroad cars which hauled cement away from the plant, and there a terrible accident occurred on Monday, February 19, 1917. This time luck was not on Edward's side.

The Union Bridge Pilot of February 23rd reported he'd been "caught between two cars and had his hip crushed." He was sent to a hospital where it was thought "amputation of one limb would be necessary and even then his injuries might prove fatal." He lingered four months before dying June 27th at Springfield Hospital where he had been transferred.

His pregnant wife and the four children were obviously no longer eligible to live in company housing, so they moved to Hagerstown to live with her sister. Norman, the oldest son, then only twelve or thirteen, had to drop out of school and begin a lifetime of work with minimal education. Edward Trite who defied death in 1902 at the age of 20, met it headlong at the age of 35.

✓ 442	Trite C. Anna	Head	57	24	74	93	74	126
	— M. Ellen	Wife	74	7	74	47	74	26
	— S. Ellen	Daughter		7	74	18	S	
	— Cass R	Son		74	74	16	S	
	— William M	Son		74	74	13	S	
✓ 443	Trite Edward	Head		74	74	29	74	4
	— Ida	Wife	74	7	74	32	74	4
	— Norman	Son		74	74	5	S	
	— Ruth	Daughter		7	74	4	S	
	— Frank	Son		74	74	1	S	
✓ 449	Henson William	Head		74	74	35	74	10

Portion of a page from the 1910 Federal Census for New Windsor (Maryland) Election District showing Edward Trite and his young family.

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