

Jacob Randall

Jacob Randall was born in Bucks County, Pennsylvania on April 1, 1825. While yet in his youth his parents came to Massie Township near Harveysburg in Warren County, Ohio.

As he grew to manhood he learned wagon-making, and followed his trade for a number of years, at Harveysburg and Waynesville, Ohio. From his trade he entered the mercantile business with Joseph Hadden. After the death of Mr. Hadden, Jacob was in partnership with several of Waynesville's best businessmen, but at the time of his death was practically the sole proprietor of the well known store of **Randall, Ebright & Co.** In all these business relations he was thought to be the soul of honor and uprightness.

In early manhood he married **Miss Rebecca Ebright**, (March 28, 1858), who proved to be a faithful helpmate and a loving wife. They had one son, and only child, **George Edward**.

Jacob was a leading member in the Waynesville M. E. Church, as he had filled most successfully the office of Sunday-school Superintendent, steward, trustee, and class leader.¹

On Monday morning, September 15, 1897, the Village of Waynesville was disheartened by the shocking news that Jacob had committed suicide by shooting himself in the head. He lingered unconscious for about two hours before he died. There was no indication that he premeditated the act, and the supposition was that the remaining effects of his recent severe illness, combined with worry over financial matters caused temporary insanity. Jacob was one of Waynesville's oldest citizens having been in the dry goods business for about forty years, he was a prominent citizen and respected by all who knew him.²

The shock occasioned by the announcement that Jacob Randall had committed suicide was not over until it had become known that he was short in his account as Township Treasurer, this being the cause that prompted the rash act. Just two weeks before his death he had agreed to meet the trustees and settle his accounts, as his term as Treasurer had expired. Shortly before the appointed hour, he took suddenly and severely ill and the settlement had been postponed at his request until the fatal morning, when he had been told he must settle. Fearing to face the results, when it became known that he had misappropriated a large sum of money, and knowing that a long, and what to him would be a life sentence in the

¹The Western Star & Lebanon Gazette, Thursday, September 23, 1897, pg. 2.

²The Western Star & Lebanon Gazette, September 16, 1897, pg. 2.

penitentiary awaited him, he took his own life.

At the time of his death he was Treasurer of both the Township and the School Board, but the accounts were not kept separate and it was a difficult matter to adjust the discrepancy.

Jacob had held that position for fifteen or twenty years and had the complete confidence of everyone. What he did with this large sum is only conjecture as he was thought to be a model man in every respect and was not known to have speculated and only in his latter years had ever owned a horse. Probably the money was used to keep up his store.

One of the saddest things in connection with the matter was that neither his wife nor son, Edward, who were both with him in the store, knew but what they were rich and had no warning whatsoever of the dreadful cloud which was hanging over them. This was accounted for from the fact that Jacob allowed no one but himself to see the books and as that was his wish it was never disregarded. The family offered the insurance of about \$3000 on Jacob's life, which was all they had to offset the defalcation.

The Trustees were blamed, for instead of making a settlement each year, as the law provides, they simply took the word of the Treasurer as to the amount of money he had.

When he settled with the Auditor on September 4, 1897, his books showed many errors and after they had been corrected showed an amount of \$3662.40.³

Masonically, Mr. Jacob Randall was initiated an Entered Apprentice on January 26, 1850, passed to the degree of Fellow Craft on February 2, 1850, and raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on February 9, 1850.⁴ Bro. Randall was installed as the Worshipful Master of Waynesville Lodge #163 on January 7, 1853, but according to the Minutes of the Lodge, he was not again present until September 17, of that same year when he was again presiding as the Worshipful Master.⁵ Bro. Randall went on to serve eight additional terms as Worshipful Master, 1855, 57, 59, 64, 65, 69, 70, 73, more than any other Worshipful Master in the history of Waynesville Lodge.⁶

³Taken from an undated article clipped from the Western Star found in the archives of the Warren County Historical Society in Lebanon, Ohio entitled, The Randall Defalcation.

⁴1850 Annual Report of Waynesville Lodge #163 F. & A. M. to the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio.

⁵Taken from the January 7th and the October 17, 1853 "Minutes of Waynesville Lodge #163, F. & A. M. of Ohio."

⁶Information taken from the 1998 Masonic Calendar of Waynesville Lodge #163.

As a Mason, Bro. Jacob Randall was widely known. In 1856, he served as Junior Grand Deacon of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Ohio. In 1859 and 60, he held the office of Right Worshipful Senior Grand Deacon, and in 1861 he was the acting Senior Grand Deacon. He again served the Grand Lodge as Junior Grand Deacon in 1862, 63, and 64. For more than thirty years, from 1865 to 1896 he had filled the office of **Grand Tyler** of the **Grand Lodge of Ohio**;⁷ for more than twenty-five years he was **Grand Sentinel** of the **Grand Commandry** and **Grand Guard** of the **Grand Chapter of Ohio**. He reached the 32^o in the Scottish Rite and was held in high esteem by the brotherhood in this noble order.

The funeral, which occurred at one o'clock on Wednesday, September 15, 1897, at the M. E. Church in Waynesville was largely attended.

The Masonic Brethren gave their Ritualistic Services, including that matchless and impressive Scottish Rite **ring service**, in which the father's ring was presented to the son. Those who witnessed it will never forget the scene, as with a trembling, bending form he received that last token of his father's undying love.⁸

Worshipful Bro. Randall's son, George Edward, along with his wife, two children and a large circle of immediate relatives and friends were wrapped in sorrow over a loved father's sad death.⁹

Worshipful Bro. Randall was buried in Lot #11, Section "F" of the Miami Cemetery in Waynesville, Ohio.

Researched and compiled by
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⁷Information taken from the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Free & Accepted Masons of Ohio dated 1856 through 1896.

⁸Taken from an article by E. Burdsell, found in a microfilm copy of The Western Star & Lebanon Gazette, Thursday, September 23, 1897, pg. 2.

⁹Ibid