

# Rakish Rainwater: Riley Rainwater's Bigamy Case

*By Susan Chance-Rainwater, 13 Feb 2020*

## THE EVENTS

On 4 Apr 1867, Riley Rainwater married Cynthia Dunn. [1506] After the Civil War, the family moved from Tennessee to Missouri.

Around 1883, Riley deserted his family, which was then living in Pulaski Co, MO [1880C and 2726].

On 21 Aug 1883, Riley, under the pseudonym Henry E. Rainwater, married Mrs. Martha V. Sloan in Greene Co, MO, despite having a living wife in another county. [1336] The marriage was solemnized by Justice of the Peace 'Squire Porter.

On 11 Sep 1883, Mr. S. C. Hughes of Dixon, Pulaski Co, MO, contacted JP 'Squire Porter with a warrant for the arrest of Riley Rainwater on the charge of desertion of his family. Porter recognized the name and the charge was altered to bigamy. Rainwater was arrested, and held on \$500 bail, which he could not supply. [2726]

In Dec 1883, he was sentenced to 2½ years for bigamy at Jefferson City Jail in Cole Co, MO. [2424]

Based on the 1900 census, Riley returned to his wife Cynthia after serving his sentence and the family moved to Colorado, where he died in 1906.

## THE ARTICLES

#2726

Daily Evening Bulletin, Vol 2, No 250, pg 1, 12 Sep 1883, Maysville, KY

### **Rakish Rainwater**

His propensity for wives gets him into trouble

Springfield, MO. Sept. 11 – Henry Rainwater was examined before 'Squire Porter on a charge of bigamy and committed to jail in default of \$500 bail. 'Squire Porter himself on Aug 21 married Rainwater to Mrs. Martha V. Sloan, Mr. R. having sworn that he was unmarried and legally qualified to contract matrimony. Mr. S. C. Hughes of Dixon, MO, however, arrived with a warrant for the arrest of Rainwater for having abandoned his wife and family at that town. The charge in the warrant was changed to bigamy and the indications are favorable that Rainwater will represent Greene County several years at Jefferson City.

#2424

Daily Mail, pg 1, Nevada, Vernon Co., MO, 18 Dec 1883

### **For the Pen**

The following prisoners have been sentenced to the penitentiary: ... Riley Rainwater, bigamy, two and one-half years.

#2923

## NOTE

'Squire as in JP 'Squire Porter appears to be a local abbreviation for Esquire. This is not a first name, but a title of respect (and not a little pomposity). For confirmation of the local use of this title, see *History of Greene County, Missouri 1883* by Return Ira Holcombe via Google Books.

## SOURCES

1880 Federal Census

1336: Missouri Marriages, 1805-2002, Ancestry.com database, from original courthouse records

1506: Blount Co., TN Marriages, 1795 to 1910, Edith B. Little, Whipporwill Publications, Evansville, IN, 1982

2424: "For the Pen," page 1, 18 Dec 1883, Daily Mail, Nevada, Vernon Co., MO

2726: "Rakish Rainwater," 12 Sep 1883, Daily Evening Bulletin, Maysville, KY

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