

PHYSICIAN, POLITICIAN, PHILANTHROPIST

Dr. Frank H. Bassett

of

Hopkinsville, Kentucky

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William T. Turner

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Some men spend their time on earth just trying to settle the tasks which come their way. Other men see the need for accomplishing goals which make of this world a better place in which to live. The life of Dr. Frank H. Bassett was fashioned into the latter category. His life's interests and activities were many: drygoods store clerk, hardware store associate, M. D., anesthesiologist, city commissioner, mayor, county court clerk, baseball promoter, and businessman. But the life of Dr. Bassett amounted to much more. Most of all he was a humanitarian. He was genuinely concerned about his fellow man - a concern which made him a friend of the needy, day and night, the year round. This community knew him for his bright smile, his happy manner, a good sense of humor, but most of all for having time for the unfortunates. His concern for the have-nots was the keystone of all 76 years of his life.

A politician once said to him: "Dock, what is it you do to make such a fine race when you run for office?" and Dr. Bassett replied: "Well those who run usually politic with their friends about two weeks before election and I politic the year round."

One experience among many relates his realm of activities far beyond "politicking." Late one night a young soldier from Fort Campbell and his bride to be came to the Bassett home in

the hope of obtaining their marriage license. Dock took them to his office where they secured their license, he called a minister, and then drove them to the post guest house. Upon returning his only remark was, "I felt sorry for them, they were such nice kids."

Jake Frazier, a big tobacco factory hand, was sitting on a wooden platform at the American Snuff Company. Dr. Bassett walked up, gave him a sharp kick, and asked: "What are you doing here? I thought you froze to death last winter." Jake looked up with a wide grin and remarked, "Now dat's my kind of a man, nice and friendly." World War II came and the draft caught Jamie Lee, a local Black man better known as Jelly Roll. The fellow appeared before an Army board of mental experts in St. Louis. Jelly Roll could not answer a single question until the examiner asked, "Who is President of the United States?" "Dr. Bassett," he replied.

Thus in a roundabout way the fabulous story of Frank Houston Bassett, M. D. may be revealed. For thirty-five years in local politics he never failed to lead the Democratic ticket. As a leading anesthesiologist he built a record of 35,000 operations in thirty years. To the poor he was a combined Robin Hood and Santa Claus.

Dr. Bassett was born November 1, 1873, at Stephensport, on the Ohio River, in Breckinridge County, Kentucky. He was the youngest of 10 children born to James H. Bassett, a Louisville postal clerk for forty years, and his wife, Georgia Houston.

His paternal great-great grandfather, John Bassett Sr., lived in Hunterdon County, New Jersey, and died the year American independence was declared. His son Amos Bassett left New Jersey in 1791 and settled at Cynthiana, Kentucky. Amos's son Jeremiah V. Bassett, a saddler by trade, spent most of his active life in Cynthiana, but in later years moved to Plattsburg, Missouri. Jeremiah's son James H. Bassett, the postal clerk, was once told he would die of consumption in a year. After that verdict he lived 61 years. But during an interlude of rest at Stephensport his youngest son Frank was born.

Frank's boyhood was spent in Louisville where he attended Sacred Heart parochial school and graduated from St. Xavier's College in 1887. He then came to Hopkinsville and worked for four years in the dry goods store of his brother, Col. E. B. Bassett. After a two year stint with J. M. Robertson & Co. in Louisville, he resumed work in his brothers store for another five years.

During the latter period, the young store clerk met and courted Mamie Elizabeth Thompson. They were married by the Baptist minister Rev. Charles H. Nash on February 23, 1898. She was the daughter of Charles A. Thompson, a successful hardware merchant on Main Street and owner of the landmark Thompson building. They were the parents of three children: Charles Thompson, who died of rheumatic fever at age 16, Florence, wife of John Jarrell, a prominent Atlanta clothing merchant, and Frank H. Bassett Jr., a state politician and hardware merchant.



For the next seven years Dock was associated with his father-in-law in the hardware business. One day during that period a customer came into the store and made a purchase. Mr. Thompson asked his son-in-law if he had posted the charge on the books. The young man responded by remarking that the charge was registered in his head, whereupon Mr. Thompson remarked, "Yes and when you die the books go to heaven." The hardware merchant soon sold his business and retired.

One of Dock's greatest contributions to the local recreational scene came during the first decade of this century. In the spring of 1903 he organized the baseball club, the Hopkinsville Moguls, later known as the Hoptown Hoppers. The club name came from the famous Mogul wagons manufactured by brothers J. K. and M. C. Forbes. That spring he also organized clubs at Henderson, Paducah, Clarksville, Tennessee, Cairo, Illinois, and Vincennes, Indiana. This was to become the famous Kitty League, a Class D farm club, so-called from the first letters of Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, and Tennessee. The ardent baseball promoter while umpiring in the Cotton States League, discovered and signed Charles Street, of Huntsville, Alabama, as a player on the Hoptown team for the 1903 season at \$35 a month. This was the "Gabby" Street who later attained baseball immortality as catcher to the great Walter Johnson on the Washington Senators. "Gabby" was the first man ever to catch a baseball dropped from the top of the Washington Monument. Dock was for years president of the Kitty League and was responsible for reviving the circuit in

1910, 1922, and 1935. As a promoter, player, and umpire, he was a familiar fixture at Athletic Park, corner 18th & Walnut, and at Mercer Park, located in the present West Ninth Street business section. He was replaced as president of the Kitty in 1937 and lost interest in the sport, never attending another game.

The winter of 1904-05 found the Bassett family in San Diego, California for a vacation after a swing through the Pacific Northwest. Unable to loaf, he applied to B. M. Warner for a job as a streetcar conductor, a secret yen for years. Warner was one of the head men in the great California sugar empire of billionaire Claus Spreckels, and his son John D. Spreckels.

No opening was available on the car lines, but Warner gave him the job of purser on a Spreckels ferryboat between San Diego and Coronado Beach. The purser's job was to corral passengers aboard, then collect fares. One day the driver of a White Steamer appeared to be taking his sweet time driving aboard. "Hurry up, if you want on this boat," yelled Bassett. The driver was John D. Spreckels. Thereafter, Warner never introduced Bassett by his name. It was always: "Meet the gentleman from Kentucky, the only man in the world who ever bawled out a Spreckels!"

Back in Kentucky in 1905, Bassett decided to study medicine. In the fall of 1906 he entered the University of Nashville and graduated in 1910 at the age of 36. After a year in residency, the family returned to Hopkinsville where he engaged in general

practice for three years until another restless yen hit him.

A medical journal advertisement for a doctor and drugstore operator in the little Texas town of Austwell aroused the doctors adventurous spirit to move out west in the fall of 1914. The death of their eldest son the following June prompted the family to move back home. He opened an office in the Cherokee Building on West Ninth Street from which he practiced until 1921.

That year he took Mrs. Bassett to Chicago for an operation. An untrained intern administered the anesthetic, and it nearly cost her life. Dr. Bassett, a witness on the scene, resolved to devote the remainder of his professional career to anesthesia.

He soon came to be recognized as a leading anesthesiologist throughout Western Kentucky though always maintained there was nothing to it and once cited this experience. "Several years ago, Dr. W. D. Haggard was called from Nashville to do a difficult operation in Hopkinsville. The patient's husband paid the surgeon and his assistants, but offered no pay to Dr. Bassett, the anesthesiologist. Thereupon he sent a bill for \$5, the usual fee in those days. The man was waiting for Dr. Haggard on his next visit to Hopkinsville. "Look here, Doctor," he said. "I thought I paid everybody, but Dr. Bassett wants \$5." Dr. Haggard glanced at the bill. "That's correct," he said. "Dr. Bassett is entitled to his fee." "But he didn't do anything except pour a little ether," the man exclaimed.

Dr. Bassett always had a passion for fast driving and expensive automobiles. He thought nothing of driving 180 miles to

to Louisville from Hopkinsville in 160 minutes. Thus he was a frequent target for the "speed trap" at Auburn in Logan County. On a least one occasion upon being stopped by an Auburn officer, he paid a double fine for as he told the policeman, "might as well pay twice now for I'll be back through here later in the day." Fast driving and fatigue from long hours behind the wheel almost ended his life on one trip. While returning from Atlanta in February, 1932, he lost control of the Willis-Knight he was driving, and hit a telephone pole near Greenbriar. A broken hip and several hours exposure to the cold left the good doctor confined for several months. Another near brush with death came when brakes on the automobile he was driving failed on Belmont Hill. He stopped the car by crashing into the policemen's sub-station located in the small circular room on the north end of the L & N Railroad Station.

Automobile brands, styles, and performance were of great interest to this man. During the Nashville days he drove a Reo, a curved-dash Oldsmobile and a Buick. His introduction to Cadillac came with the purchase of a limousine in 1923. A blue 1926 Lincoln followed that one with a Nash and a Willis-Knight in the early 1930's. In the latter years, Dock drove a series of Dodge coupes with a new Cadillac bought every two or three years which was reserved for Mrs. Bassett's use.

The Bassett home, located at 149 Alumni Avenue, also reflects an interest the doctor and Mrs. Bassett cultivated while on the trip to California. Local architect John T. Waller designed and



the construction firm of Meacham & Hall built the yellow brick bungalow style home in 1915 - 1916. It was completed in the fall of 1916 at an approximate cost of \$12,000. This landmark remained the Bassett residence and the family of their granddaughter Betty June, wife of Wayne Clark, occupy the home today.

Dr. Bassett became interested in politics when the City of Hopkinsville began consideration of the abandonment of the council form and adoption of the commission form of city government. In the summer of 1915 he entered the primary race as a candidate for City Commissioner. Running in a field of nine candidates, four were selected in the primary to run for two commission seats in the November general election. Dr. Bassett, William R. Wicks, R. H. Holland, and R. M. Wooldridge were selected in the primary held on Saturday, October 16, 1915. The two commissioners elected in the general election on November 2, 1915 were Dr. Bassett with 1,655 votes and William R. Wicks polled 1,612. They took office on January 1, 1916 when the commission form went into effect. Frank K. Yost, elected mayor in 1913, resigned July 1, 1916, and Dr. Bassett served as Mayor pro-tem until the election of R. T. Stowe Sr. in November. Upon taking office as city commissioner, Dr. Bassett announced that he would be a candidate for mayor in the next election, two years hence.

A staunch supporter of commission government, Dr. Bassett reviewed the accomplishments after two years in office and at the end of his term.

1. The Hopkinsville Business Men's Association with



commission support will soon erect a new White Way on Main and Ninth Streets.

2. The L & N Railroad Station shed & platform will be extended 200' to the north edge of 11th Street, thus providing passengers with covered walkways to the trains.
3. The new Mortuary Chapel at Riverside Cemetery is completed. (Built in 1916, designed by John T. Waller, it cost \$4,000)
4. The commission built a \$1,200 shed at the City Work House to cover street machinery.
5. A mile of Tarvia streets were built. A mile of Kentucky Rock Asphalt streets were constructed. The city purchased a street flusher.
6. The city assumed responsibility for sprinkling the streets. Cost is 70¢ per 100' per month.
7. Enforcement of city ordinance for property owners to put down sidewalks.
8. Steel beams have replaced wooden timbers at the fire station. The building has been extended to 8th Street.
9. The Police Department is providing good service.
10. Monthly reports of the city's financial condition are made.

The campaign for the mayor's race opened in the early fall of 1917 with Dr. Bassett drawing opposition from Dr. W. E. Reynolds, a Confederate veteran from Dickson County, Tennessee, who came to Hopkinsville in 1894. Out of 1,381 votes cast, Dr. Bassett defeated Dr. Reynolds in the primary, held on Saturday, October 20, 1917, by a majority of 853 votes. Dr. Bassett was elected mayor without opposition in the general election on November 6, 1917. William R. Wicks and Robert T. Stowe Sr. were elected City Commissioners for the term 1918 - 1919, and John W. Richards and H. H. Golay served the term 1920 - 1921.

Upon assuming the office of mayor on January 7, 1918, Dr. Bassett proposed the following recommendations to the new city commissioners:

1. Sewers -

One half of Hopkinsville is equipped with an entirely adequate sewer system, but it is not municipally owned. The city must take over and extend the present system. (This goal was accomplished in 1940).

2. Marking Streets -

Each intersection should be marked with a permanent, legible, and attractive sign designating the names of the streets. (The first street signs were installed during his term).

3. Traffic Laws -

New traffic laws are imperative due to growth of city business and zones must be established where automobiles may be parked and horses hitched. (Automobile diagonal parking was established on Main Street).

4. Bridge at 9th Street -

Owing to the narrowness of Seventh Street from Main to Water (Bethel), this much traveled thoroughfare should be relieved from its congestion by building a bridge over Little River at Ninth Street, and extend Cleveland Avenue to its intersection with 9th Street, thus making an additional outlet for the people of the West Side. (The bridge, a W.P.A. project, was built during the Shelby Peace administration in 1936).

5. Market House -

In view of the high cost of living there is need for improvement of marketing farm produce and this can be done by building a farmers market where they may sell direct to the housewife, thus cutting out the middleman and making the dollar do double duty. (This was never done, though county homemakers did operate a farmers market in the I. C. Railroad Freight Depot during the 1930's).

6. Streets -

Permanent street construction should be extended to include the entire business district. (Some street building was done).

#### 7. Bath House -

The city should fit up a municipal bath house for use of the public. (This was not done, but J. H. Ware opened Ware's Crystal Pool, a private swimming pool, located on the Butler Road, in May, 1922).

#### 8. Library -

The library should be kept open at night. Working people should have an opportunity to visit the place and enjoy its benefits. (Night opening was conducted on a limited basis).

#### 9. City Building -

The present city hall is old (built in 1881), unsightly, unsanitary, with an abundance of wasted space. A building could be erected on the Main Street lot between the Court House and Fifth Street. This building would be able to house the entire paraphernalia of the City, including the Fire Department. (This was indeed a progressive idea, and it was partially accomplished when the City and County jointly erected the Armory Building (now the Court House Annex) in 1927 - 1928).

The preceeding program of recommendations represents a strong progressive minded new mayor. Though the batting average for the accomplishment of this ambitious program may have been slim, a number of important milestones of progress were achieved during the Bassett administration.

In April, 1918, the new White Way street lighting system was constructed along Main Street from Fourth to Fourteenth, and on Ninth Street from Bethel to the L & N Railroad. This system replaced the old intersection overhead street lights which had been installed in February, 1907.

The city celebrated the completion of the Belt Line railroad on July 8, 1918. This long sought for goal made a physical connection between the L & N, Tennessee Central, and

Illinois Central railroads around the south side of Hopkinsville.

After years of litigation the city finally succeeded in opening the three Wilgus playgrounds in 1919. Funds were provided the city through the terms of the will of William A. Wilgus, a former Hopkinsville postmaster, who died in 1913. The parks are located on South Campbell at East 18th, West 7th between Jesup and O'Neal Avenues, and West 18th at High Street.

In November, 1919, the city received delivery on its first motorized fire trucks. Two vehicles, a ladder truck and a hose and chemical truck, were purchased from the Obenchain-Boyer Co. of Logansport, Indiana, for \$11,300.00. With a nostalgic reflection the city retired its beloved fire horses: Snow, Dixie, Clipper, and George.

Through the effort of Mayor Bassett, the city commissioners, and the Hopkinsville Business Men's Association, this community commercial club was reorganized into the Hopkinsville Chamber of Commerce on February 17, 1921. This action marked the beginning of the present Hopkinsville-Christian County Chamber of Commerce.

It was while he was mayor the people began to notice that Dr. Bassett's heart beat for the have-nots. Hopkinsville ran out of coal during the harsh winter of 1917 - 1918 and families began to suffer. Mayor Bassett browbeat the L & N Railroad out of two car loads of coal a day for a week. The people lined up for coal and they noticed each got their fair share. After World War I, Mayor Bassett went to Louisville and wrangled the Government out of \$7,000 worth of surplus shoes and canned meat.



Black people lined up for blocks to receive this bounty at his hands. They never forgot his generosity and frequently calling him "Mr. Dr. Bassett," they supported him politically to the end.

In the early days of this century, Republican Blacks outnumbered White Democrats in Hopkinsville. The city's Black vote coupled with the Republican majority out of north Christian County generally assured that parties control of most county offices.

By 1921 local Democratic leaders began to notice the following and support the Black voters were giving Dr. Bassett. That year party leaders offered him the nomination as sheriff. Not the type of person to be a sheriff, Dr. Bassett accepted his parties nod for the office of County Court Clerk. An August Republican primary selected the incumbent clerk G. B. Powell, whom Dr. Bassett defeated in the November general election, polling a majority of 316 votes out of 15,276 cast. Thus the Bassett era as County Court Clerk was launched. He assumed office in January, 1922, was reelected seven times, and served until his death.

Dr. Bassett's method of campaigning for office was quite different from other politicians of his day. He once bought 30,000 lollipops in the shape of Amos and Andy and handed them out wrapped in paper bearing the message: "It's sweet to remember your friend, Dr. Frank H. Bassett, for County Clerk." At a political rally one day his primary opponent Ed Major asked him why he was handing candy to the children for they could not vote. Dr. Bassett replied, "Hell, I've got the vote of their parents,



I'm just working on the next generation." And that was the only campaigning of the normal manner he ever did. He made no speeches, bought no newspaper or radio advertisements, tacked no campaign posters, handed out no cards, nor kissed any babies. And his secret? "You've got to be natural," he said, "You can't copy and get by with it." He campaigned by being a friend to man, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, even keeping the Clerk's Office open on Thanksgiving and Christmas Day.

More and more the have-nots discovered a true champion in Dr. Bassett. When poor people got sick, he waited on them. He delivered their babies, returned to town, and sent back a week's supply of food. He diagnosed walking cases at the clerk's office, then dispensed drugs from the shelf over his desk. To pull teeth, he'd take patients to the county courtroom across the hall, the circuit courtroom upstairs, or the vault of his own office.

And never a dime did he charge. If the sick had money, he told them to call upon other physicians and dentists. The courthouse scene practice he dispensed was rough and ready, but the people liked him all the more for it. He eliminated the frills. And all of this general practice was conducted in front of the courthouse staff and people there on business.

A Black woman about to have a baby out of wedlock once came to the "Courthouse Clinic" for prenatal care. The staff became apprehensive lest she be seized with labor pains in the clerk's office. Dr. Bassett got aggravated with her one day and asked gruffly: "What are you doing in this shape? Why didn't you

say no?" "Doctah," she replied, "ah didn't want to insult de gent'man."

In the 1925 race for reelection Dock was again opposed by G. B. Powell in the general election. This round produced a majority of 1,524 votes of the 12,476 registered. By now he was thoroughly settled in the office and it was becoming obvious to many people that he had the job for life. His annual 4th of July "ice cream treats" at country stores around the county were becoming a tradition. And stories of his generosity were growing.

It was no gesture when Dock gave food or coal to poor people, pulled a tramp's tooth, or gave the town bum 50 cents for a square meal. A friend admired his fine overcoat one day. Dr. Bassett took it off and gave it to him. A Bible salesman came through Hopkinsville once. The clerk loaned him his automobile to canvass Trigg County. He not only loaned his car to anybody who wanted it, but first he filled the tank with gasoline.

On a trip to Atlanta once, Dr. Bassett picked up two young fellows who were hitchhiking. Upon learning that they were headed for Florida, he loaned them his car and cash to boot, with the instructions they were to be back in Atlanta one week later. One week later, they were. The man seemed to always be a good judge of human character.

With the 1929 race for another term in office, Dr. Bassett was surprised when local Republicans ran his own brother, Col. E. B. Bassett, for the post. The Colonel never took this election seriously, never-the-less, he polled over 5,000 votes, leav-

ing his doctor brother with a 1,997 vote margin..

During the depression Dr. Bassett heard one day that eggs were bringing 6 cents a dozen. He immediately sent word to his friends in the county he would buy all the eggs they'd bring in at 15 cents a dozen. In a few days the clerk's office was stacked to the ceiling and he was out \$2,000. The clerk gave eggs to everybody and when there were no more takers he carried the surplus to Nashville and put them in cold storage for the day of higher prices.

Depression years brought greater interest by potential candidates for public office. The August, 1933, primary election generated his first opposition at that level in the figure of Ed Major. After much mud-slinging and name-calling by the newcomer to politics, Dr. Bassett slaughtered him at the polls by a margin of over 4,600 votes. Roy Davis opposed him in the general election that November, the last such opposition he would have, and again Dock collected a margin of over 1,700 votes of over 15,000 cast.

Of all the promotional ideas in which Dock was involved none was more sensational for the time than his organization of a trip by airplane to the 1935 Rose Bowl Game in Pasadena, California. By some unknown means he secured 12 tickets on the 10 yard line and offered the chance to local men to fly out to see Alabama tangle with Stanford. A veteran pilot, Rex Robbins of Texas, and his 1929 Ford Tri-Motor plane were hired to take the local football fans round trip for \$125.00 each.

When the plane finally took off from Major field (the Carloss Farm on the Cadiz Road) at 2:30 Sunday afternoon, December 30, 1934, the passenger list included the pilot and eleven "riders," from Hopkinsville, Dr. Bassett, George Duffer, Major Joe Kelly, and the winner of a coin toss for the trip, one of the <sup>Hopkinsville High School</sup> H.H.S. gridiron coaches, Ralph McRight; from Madisonville, N. E. Stone, Simon Day, and W. L. Nisbet; from Tracy City, Tennessee, A. L. Henderson and H. E. Baggenstoss; and from Sturgis, O. H. Wilcox, and A. D. Baker. After bucking stormy weather the "Daring Dozen" reached Ft. Worth and spent the night there. New Year's Eve night the group was forced down by fog at Phoenix. After a spectacular air view of the Rose Parade the "barn stormers" landed at Glendale, California, on the morning of New Year's Day just four hours before game time.

The Hoptown High Coach, a player on the 1931 Alabama Rose Bowl team, was the most proud member of the "Kentucky Flyers," when his team downed Stanford 29 to 13. Admittedly, the sights and sounds of Hollywood generated as much interest among the "Hoptown Hootowls" as did the football game.

The return trip was started at 6 A. M. January 3. Again two nights were spent in route, at El Paso and Little Rock. After a week's trip across country, the epic flight of Hopkinsville's Rose Bowl Flyers ended upon their return at 11 A. M. Saturday, January 5, 1935. The Kentucky New Era stated that a "receiving line was formed to greet the wanderers as they dismounted. They were hailed as conquering heroes as a result of triumph over fog, head winds, Hollywood lures, and air pockets."



One of the courthouse personalities of the 1930's was the Black minister Tom Pettus. One summer Dock heard that "Preach," as he was called, was sick. So he stopped by "Preach's" Moayon Street home one night to check on him. As the good doctor stepped up on the front porch and was about to knock on the door screen, he heard the old minister praying: "Lord, this is your humble servant Tom Pettus. I'm powerful sick and if it's your will Lord to call me home, just have the angels come after me." At that moment Dr. Bassett knocked on the door. Tom called out, "Who dat?" "The angel Gabriel, come to get the Lord's servant Tom Pettus," responded the visitor. "He gone, he ain't here, he don't live here no more," came the answer from inside the house.

The 1937 August primary brought opposition from Dock's longtime friend George N. Duffer, the Dodge dealer. The first of three contests between these two men generated an easy 3,900 vote margin of victory for the incumbent. Mr. Duffer opposed him again in August, 1941, loosing by over 3,500 votes, Morton Brashears ran against the veteran politician in August, 1945, with Dock winning that one by a margin of 2,700 votes. Mr. Duffer came back in August, 1949 to run against the clerk and again the beloved politician won his last race, polling a 3,100 vote lead over his opponent.

Late one night a farmer in the Fruit Hill section of the county called Dr. Bassett, expressing the need for a doctor - a baby was on the way. Dock drove his big Cadillac out the Greenville Road and got it stuck in the lane leading to the



house. After delivery of the baby, the new father asked the doctor if there was any charge. The response was "no." However, he did request the farmer to get his mules and pull the car back on the pike. The farmer obliged and when the doctor asked him if there was any charge, he answered "yeah, \$7.50." Promptly paid!

As the years rolled by life seemed not to take its toll on the health and vitality of this man. At age 76 he appeared and acted a good 30 years younger than his age. That year he went to Carrollton to keep a business engagement with R. M. Barker, the tobacco man. Barker remarked that he was old enough to be his visitor's father. Dr. Bassett hooted at the idea. "I'm 73, born in '76," Barker said. "And I'm 76, born in '73," Dr. Bassett replied. He was never sick, never tasted alcohol, never smoked. He was, however, a compulsive eater, though never fat.

This latter weakness may have led to his death. A visit to the South Carolina coast in the summer of 1950 brought consumption of large quantities of seafood. A gall bladder attack put him in the hospital on July 13 and surgery was performed twice. He weakened rapidly and died on Saturday morning, August 5, 1950, the off-year primary election day. Funeral arrangements were handled by his old-time friend, Dr. J. W. F. Williams, of LaFayette, who provided a walnut casket. Rev. Leslie B. Crane, then of Detriot, officiated at the graveside service in Riverside Cemetery on Monday afternoon. Hundreds of his friends, both Black and White, attended. A Kentucky New Era editorial

stated: "Life is only a narrow vale between two eternities, a mere mark calibrated on the edge of time. Dr. Bassett has unlocked the door to eternity with the key of death, and now he has moved his office upstairs."

As in the words of Jake Frazier, "he is nice an' friendly." Life kept him busy, left no wrinkles in his face and it gave him pleasures that money could not buy, for example:

"Midnight of June 22, 1949 was the deadline for candidates to file for county office. About 10 o'clock that night, Dr. Bassett checked with his chief deputy at the clerk's office, Miss Sue Morris. She told him Magistrate V. H. McKinney had not filed. Dr. Bassett got in his car and drove 12 miles to Squire McKinney's home at Red Bridge. Sure enough, he had forgotten to take his papers to town. Dr. Bassett brought them back and beat the deadline. Squire McKinney was a Republican."

April 17, 1982

William T. Turner

## B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Frank H. Bassett Jr., Personal Interview, April 8, 1982  
Marshall T. Bassett, Personal Interview, April 7, 1982  
Delmas M. Clardy, M. D., Personal Interview,  
Cordelia C. Gary, Personal Interview,  
Election Return Books, Christian County Clerk's Office  
HOPKINSVILLE KENTUCKIAN, Newspaper Files, 1915 - 1918  
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