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Mr. Lloyd Garrison Wheeler

Mr. Lloyd G. Wheeler, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, died at Tuskegee Institute, Saturday, August 28 -- an event forecast in our issue of that date. Mr. Wheeler has long been ill, and only his indomitable will delayed for so long the inevitable end.

On Sunday morning, August 29th, in the family rooms, short funeral services were conducted by Chaplain J.W. Whittaker. A quartette, Mr. Bailey, Miss Bailey, Miss Childs and Mr. Brady, impressively sang a number of songs during the hour, and after Scripture reading, prayer and a short sermon the remains were taken to Cassedy Hall where they were transferred to the Tuskegee Railroad, where its train received them, for Chicago, where they were taken by Mr. Hiram H. Wheeler, youngest son of the deceased, and himself a Tuskegee Institute instructor in the Agricultural Department.

The pall-bearers, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Palmer, Mr. Kelly, Mr. Lee, Capt. Richardson and Mr. Scott, accompanied the remains to Chehaw, and placed them on the train for Montgomery.

Mr. Whittaker's tribute to the deceased is embodied in the following:

"Lloyd Garrison Wheeler died Saturday afternoon, August 28, 1909 at 3:30 o'clock, in his sixty-second year. He was a native of the state of Ohio, having been born in that state at Mansfield, May 29, 1848. His father was very active in the Underground Railroad work, and when a law was made by the state of Ohio, making it a criminal offense to secrete slaves and aid them to freedom, his father took his whole family and moved to Chatham, Canada. There Mr. Wheeler lived till the death of his mother, after which he went to Chicago to work out his future. He found employment working on the railroad, blacking shoes, and such other work as he could get to do.

But this sort of occupation was not the height of his ambition. He did these things while in preparation for something higher. It was his purpose to become a lawyer. To that end he studied law, doing most of his studying at night, while he worked in the day to get the wherewithal to support himself.

After graduating from the law school, he married Miss Ranie Pettit of Chicago. This union lasted thirty-nine years and three months, and they were years of peace and

happiness. Mr. Wheeler loved his home, and his daughter remarked to me a few day ago, saying, 'I shall never have anything but the delightful memories of my father in his home. He was a good father. All the years,' she said, 'I was away from home studying, and during the ten years I have been teaching, not a single week did he fail to write me a letter; and these letters were an inspiration to me to do my best work, to seek the highest and best in life, and to avoid all that is frivolous.' He was an attentive, affectionate husband.

Out of this wedlock, seven children were born, three girls and four boys, five of whom are now living: John Jones, a graduate of Armour Institute of Technology of Chicago, now a teacher in the city of Baltimore; Mabel Augusta, an undergraduate of the University of Chicago, now a faithful and beloved teacher in the public schools of St. Louis; Robert Foster, a graduate of the Chicago Manual Training School, now employed in Racine, Wis.; Lloyd Garrison Jr., a graduate of the Chicago High School, now a printer in Chicago; Hiram Hannibal, a graduate of the Tuskegee Institute, who took also a special course in the University of Illinois, now a teacher in the Tuskegee Institute. It was Mr. Wheeler's desire to give his children as thorough a preparation for life as they would receive. He never stopped them out of school. He wanted them to go on in their studies as far as they would. But they all decided that better for themselves. They are all well prepared to do life's work, and it is quite a significant fact that the four boys were raised in the great city of Chicago and they have never given their parents one day's trouble.

Besides his wife and five children, Mr. Wheeler leaves a brother, Robert Foster, who is a beloved Congregational pastor in the city of Hartford, Conn., where he has pastored successfully for nearly twenty-five years.

After Mr. Wheeler married he took his wife and went to Arkansas to begin his life work. He was prominent there in politics in reconstruction days. His history during that period would be interesting, but we know nothing of it.

His wife, Ranie Pettit, was brought up by her uncle, who conducted a prosperous tailoring business in the city of Chicago. After the death of this uncle, Mr. Wheeler, with his family returned to Chicago to take charge of the tailoring business, which his wife's uncle had left. From that time till he came to Tuskegee to become the Business Agent of the Tuskegee Institute, he was connected with the business interests of Chicago.

Mr. Wheeler was a thorough believer in humanity: he was ever ready to extend a helping hand; his home was always open to entertain; he aided many poor boys, black and white, to get a start in life. He was at one time superintendent of the Sunday School of the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church of Chicago and he did much to help to establish that

church. He was once also a worker in the St. Marks Episcopal Church. He was a leader in the establishment of the Provident Hospital of Chicago. It was his great and intense desire to be of service to his fellowmen that led him to come to Tuskegee. He was well informed, a most delightful companion, and a most pleasing conversationalist.

Mr. Wheeler has realized now for a year or more that he was failing. He felt that he had a short time to live. But he had no fear of death. He suffered and died like a hero; he was never sad; never out of temper; never murmured; never complained; but with patience and fortitude, he endured. He had the feeling that he had done the best he could and so was ready to take his departure. He smiled to the very last; always was cheerful.

He made all preparation for his death and planned all things necessary for his burial with the calmness and deliberation with which one makes ready for a journey. He wanted no display of any kind; all things were to be done in the simplest way possible. He wished everything to be real and expressive of the truth. After the casket was closed, it was not to be opened again. He wanted his friends to remember him as in life.

We shall always remember him as a good man, a true citizen, a faithful father, an affectionate husband, and a lover of truth.”

The funeral services in Chicago were conducted by Dr. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, pastor of Unity Church, Chicago, of which Mr. Wheeler was a member. The citizens of Chicago in large numbers attended, and paid tribute to their late friend and fellow-townsmen.

***(Transcribed and reproduced on the occasion of the First Wheeler Family Reunion,
in Chicago, July 14-16, 1995.)***