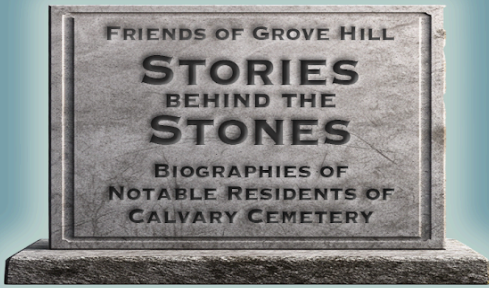


George William & Mildred Stone Saffell

May 10, 1876 - March 22, 1953 /
December 19, 1912 - October 10, 2003

Interred: Calvary Cemetery, Section B



George W. Saffell

George W. Saffell was an African-American man who was born on May 10, 1876, in Kentucky. George married Daisy Morgan Grubbs who was born on June 24, 1875. George and Daisy Saffell each graduated from the Kentucky Normal and Industrial School, which is now known as Kentucky State University. Daisy graduated from the Cincinnati School of Mortuary Science in Cincinnati, Ohio, where she obtained her "Undertaker" and "Embalmers" licenses. She became the first African-American woman in Kentucky to do so.

The first wife of Professor Saffell, Daisy, opened their first funeral home in Lawrenceburg. A few years later, the funeral home opened in Shelbyville in 1909 in a small building at Fourth and Clay Streets. It was the only funeral home where African-Americans could bring their deceased loved ones for

the wake. They not only offered burial services, they also offered ambulance services and the cemetery.

Professor Saffell, before starting the funeral business, taught in Frankfort and Lawrenceburg. Then he moved to Shelbyville to become Principal of the Shelbyville "colored" School from 1907 to 1919.



Daisy Saffell

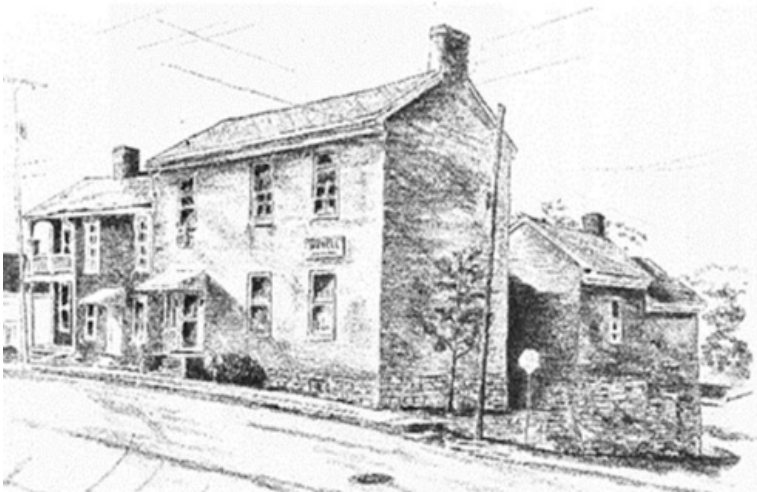
The Calvary Cemetery was built in 1910 by George W. Saffell and Daisy M. Saffell and was formerly known as Saffell Cemetery. It is located on the west side of North Seventh Street in Shelbyville, Kentucky, on land that also housed a large house where the Saffells lived.

This historic site was hidden for many years by tobacco warehouses that have since been torn down. As the African-American cemetery, it is a true symbol of Shelbyville's African-American heritage including African-American soldiers who are buried in several rows of old graves. Currently, the board of directors of Calvary Cemetery is responsible for operating and maintaining the cemetery.

After that, George became Secretary of the Shelbyville Board of Education. George was an undertaker and Daisy was a school teacher until she became an undertaker, too. George W. Saffell became the first president of the National Funeral Directors and Morticians, in 1924.

On Saturday, October 2, 1918, Daisy Morgan Saffell died of kidney disease. She was buried at Frankfort Cemetery in the colored section. After her death her husband acquired land just north of the city on Seventh Street, accumulating a total of 30 acres.

On October 31, 1939, Saffell married Mildred Stone in Frankfort, Kentucky. She was a native of Shelby County, born on December 19, 1912. Being married to Professor Saffell, she wanted to know more about the funeral business. She chose to attend the Melton Mortuary School in Louisville. When Mildred received her training, her embalming skills were put to work right away as she handled the day-to-day operation of their business.



The funeral home had a hearse and ambulance services. Saffell Funeral Home also served Eminence, New Castle, Taylorsville, Martinsville, and Bagdad. Saffell was known and respected and the business venture was a complete success.

On March 22, 1953, Professor Saffell died from a heart attack. Then Mildred continued managing the Saffell Funeral Home, as long as her health would allow. Then she decided to lease the funeral home to

others. Eventually, the funeral home was bought by Wilford E. Payne in 1988, when Mrs. Saffell was unable to run the business as she, too, lost her sight. Then, she moved to the Shelby Manor Nursing Home. Mildred also was very active in the community. She was a member of Clay Street Baptist Church and was involved in many social groups.



Mildred died on October 10, 2003. She was the daughter of Ben and Ever Stone from Shelbyville, Kentucky. When she died, she was buried with the Saffell family in the Calvary Cemetery in Shelbyville.

The Saffell Funeral Home is one of the oldest African-American institutions in existence today in Shelbyville. The Saffell's gave the Shelbyville

Community a lot to be proud of as they left donations to local churches and the Saffell Foundation. They also established Saffell Funeral Home, Saffell (now Calvary) Cemetery, Mammoth Skating Rink, and the Daisy M. Saffell Hospital. They also provided loans to students.

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SCHS students at the gravesite of George and Mildred Saffell

Stories Behind the Stones – A Project Based Learning Partnership of Shelby County High School Junior History Class 2024, Friends of Grove Hill Cemetery, Calvary Cemetery Friends, and Shelby County Historical Society.

Thanks to all the students and educators from SCHS who worked with us to provide this historical record for our community.



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