



Newspaper Reporter
H. Francis Misselwitz

Bio & Character Sketch of H. Francis Misselwitz

July 24, 1900 - June 29, 1986

Age in April, 1923: 22 Age at Death: 85

Age when picture was taken: 22

Henry Francis Misselwitz was born in Leavenworth, Kansas on July 24, 1900. He graduated from the University of Missouri School of Journalism in 1922. His first reporting job was at the Kansas City Star but he quickly moved over to the St. Louis Post Dispatch in the same type of role.

Misselwitz's coverage of the Scott lynching in Columbia gained him wide recognition which led to his nomination for a Pulitzer Prize at the age of just twenty-three. This led to his taking a position as an Assistant Professor at his alma mater, the University of Missouri's School of Journalism under Walter Williams.

Just months later, Misselwitz resigned his post in June, 1924 to accept a position in Tokyo, Japan working for a US-based American newspaper. Soon afterward, Misselwitz became a reporter for the New York Times and the Associated Press, covering events in the far east. Upon returning to the United States, he became the White House correspondent for the New York Times during the Hoover Administration.

It was around this time that Misselwitz wrote the first of a handful of books on his experiences in the far east. "The Dragon Stirs" was a compilation of his accounts from his visits to China.

In 1941 Misselwitz married Carolyn Converse and the couple moved to San Carlos, California where he became the editor of the local newspaper. Both he and his wife were avid travelers who moved throughout the US and abroad.

Misselwitz died on June 29, 1986 at the age of 85.



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Character Sketch

Frank Misselwitz was an ambitious reporter. He took the train from St Louis to Columbia the day of the jail assault on Saturday, April 28, 1923. He was right in the thick of the action on the Stewart Bridge in the early morning hours of April 29th just as James Scott was being lynched. He even testified on behalf of the prosecution at the trial of George Barkwell.

While everything about Misselwitz's later life riques of a man who was an over-achiever, his testimony in court at George Barkwell's trial lacked the exacting and precise manner of reporting that he so keenly displayed in his later years. He was unsure that it was Barkwell he saw, though Barkwell's size and stature was unmistakable. Perhaps Misselwitz's tender age was at fault.

His Pulitzer-Prize-nominated-coverage of the Scott lynching was a precursor to what would be a sterling career in the newspaper business.

One might wonder if Barkwell's not guilt verdict ever haunted him.



Summary Justice Partners, llc

Frank Misselwitz takes the stand.

MISSELWITZ

My name is Francis Misselwitz. I am a reporter for the St. Louis Post Dispatch newspaper.

DAVIS

What did you see when you arrived at Stewart Bridge the night of the lynching?

MISSELWITZ

When I stepped out of the car, I saw men leading Professor Almstedt away. Then I waded through the crowd toward the lamppost. When I reached the front, things had gone still.

DAVIS

Could you see James Scott clearly?

MISSELWITZ

I got close enough to hear every word he said.

DAVIS

What was he saying?

MISSELWITZ

That he was an innocent man. Charles Nutter and I tried everything to make the crowd listen. I told them Scott's story made sense, that he deserved to be heard. Nobody listened.