

Today in Columbus History:

On March 7, 1889, the *Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun* ran a story entitled "A Tale of Woe and Want" about the troubles of the Bryan Thomas (B. T.) Pope family of Columbus. It was a follow-up to the previous day's story "A Piteous Tale of Want." Another story entitled "The Afflicted Pope Family" followed on March 9, 1889.

B. T. Pope was born in Stewart County, Georgia in 1853. He married Sarah (Sally) Gilmore on Christmas Eve 1873 in Lee County, Alabama. He was working as a farmer, living with his family in Blount County, Alabama during the 1880 census. They eventually had at least seven children, all boys.

The earliest story, their "piteous tale of want" said that the family was starving, B.T. Pope was unable to work for several weeks, Mrs. Pope was dying, and the entire family was in a "deplorable state of wretchedness and want." The paper sought relief for the suffering family.

Several people stepped forward to help the family, but it was too late for Mrs. Pope. She died on March 6, prompting second newspaper story, with its "tale of woe and want." Neighbors chipped in and bought her a coffin; James M. Fletcher, proprietor of the Palace Stables provided the use of his hearse and carriage free of charge. His undertaking business is likely the source of the coffin, as well.

Reverend James W. Howard of the 2nd Baptist Church and his family stepped up in a big way, taking in several members of the Pope family. His daughter, Frances Knight temporarily took the baby of the family into the home she shared with her husband Jesse Knight and their own three young children. Reverend Howard performed the funeral for Mrs. Pope and took B. T. and his son Silas into his home. Coincidentally, Reverend Howard was the same James W. Howard that was in the junk business with murder victim George Gammon, the subject of my Today in Columbus History post for January 10, 2022. Howard was still in that line of work, in addition to leading his congregation. Mrs. Granberry Phillips also took two of the children (Lopez and Vastor) into her home.

Pope got back on his feet quickly. He married Ellen Hall just a few months later, on June 9, 1889, in Columbus and appeared in the 1891-92 city directory working for the New Home Sewing Machine Company. Unfortunately, Ellen passed away in 1896, leaving Bryan to marry again in 1897 to Cynthia Coleman Gullatt, the widow of Robert Benjamin Gullatt.

Pope weathered that rough patch and seemed to keep his head above water from then on. He appears in the 1894 Columbus city directory as a grocer residing in Phenix City and he remained a grocer for the rest of his working days, either in Phenix City or Columbus. His marriage to Cynthia lasted until his death in 1927, making it his longest. She outlived him by about six years, dying in 1933. Both are buried in Pine Grove Cemetery in Phenix City.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

A TALE OF WOE AND WANT.

Mrs. B. T. Pope Passes Away Surrounded by Her Sick Husband and Little Ones.

Yesterday morning an item appeared in the ENQUIRER SUN regarding the state of poverty and want in which Mr. B. T. Pope, who resides on Twenty-first street, between First avenue and the river, and his family were. It was stated that Mr. Pope was unable to work, that his wife was dying, and that several of his children were prostrated with typhoid fever and pneumonia. Further inquiries were made yesterday into the real state in which this poor and afflicted family was.

Early yesterday morning the angel of death swept over the little roof tree and the spirit of Mrs. Pope winged its flight to its master. In her last moments the devoted husband, who is only recovering from a severe attack of illness extending over eleven weeks, stood by her bedside and administered as best he could to her wants. Two bright little boys, who are barely convalescent from combined attacks of measles, typhoid and pneumonia, were around with tearful eyes and pale and emaciated faces. In their little cots lay three smaller boys so burning with fever as to be delirious. In one cot lay an infant boy wrapt in sleep and altogether unconscious of his heart-rending and sad surroundings. Besides the children already mentioned there were two others who have gone through the fever and an attack of measles and who are now slowly recovering. The sight was one never to be forgotten. Not long since this little home was one of the happiest in Columbus. Seven healthy boys were the delight and happiness of their parents. An industrious father worked from early morning until late at night and a kind and fond mother and wife completed the little paradise. Yesterday afternoon that mother was laid at rest in the city cemetery, the doctors have no hopes of saving the lives of two of the boys and the kind good-hearted Mrs. Fannie Knight has taken the baby to her home.

Several charitable people who attended the funeral yesterday generously contributed to aid the poor family. The coffin in which Mrs. Pope was buried was paid for by subscription, and Mr. J. M. Fletcher sent his hearse and a carriage free of charge.

The funeral services were conducted by Rev. J. W. Howard.



Picture of B.T. Pope and his third wife Cynthia, from Ancestry.com

J. M. FLETCHER & SON,

Proprietors Palace Stables,

Have moved their Undertaking business to No. 1204 First avenue, north-east of the postoffice, where they will keep a well selected stock of Coffins, Caskets, Burial Robes, Shoes and everything connected with the Undertaking business. We have the best make of Metalics, consisting of Rolled Steel, Zinc, and Copper, in Cedar Shells.

Mr. C. H. Herring is with us. He is a first-class embalmer and undertaker.

Telephone No. 94.

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Ad from the *Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun*, May 13, 1889, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.

A Piteous Tale of Want.

It was reported in the city yesterday that a man named Pope, who lives on Rose Hill, and his family were on the verge of starvation. The man is unable to work, his wife is dying, and parents and children are in a deplorable state of wretchedness and want. A few charitable citizens, hearing the pitiful tale, at once made up a subscription and had it sent immediately to those poor and afflicted people. The contributors desire to call the attention of the citizens to the matter in order that the stricken family may be looked after.

From the *Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun*, March 6, 1889, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.

The Afflicted Pope Family.

Several charitable people have very kindly come to the relief of the afflicted Pope family, full particulars of whose trials have already been published. Rev. J. W. Howard has removed the father and one son, Silas, to his residence on First avenue. Mr. Pope is down again with a relapse of pneumonia and the boy is in a very delicate state of health. Mrs. Granberry Phillips has taken the two little boys, Lopez and Vastor, who are also very sick. The good people who live in the neighborhood are attending to the wants of the other four children, who are now convalescent and able to be about. The kind patrons of this poor family will be thankful for any aid they receive in the good work, either in the shape of clothes or food.

From the *Columbus Daily Enquirer-Sun*, March 9, 1889, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.

Howard James, wks Eagle & Phenix Mfg Co, res Front, Brownville

Howard James H, c, Wood, Boyd nr Broadnax, res same

Howard James M, wks Museoŕee Mfg Co, res Long, Girard

Howard Rev James W, Pastor 2d Baptist Church;
Wrapping Paper, Paper Bags, and Junk, 1441-1443 1st
ave, res 1835 1st ave

Entry for Rev. James W. Howard, Baptist preacher, and junk dealer from the 1888 *Polk's Columbus City Directory* <https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/chat/ccd/pdfs/dir-columbus1888.pdf>

" William T., dentist, 945½ Broad, r Evelyn Heights

Pope A. F., wks E. & P. Mfg Co., r P. C

" Bryant T., with New Home S. M. Co., r 1725 1st av

" Charles W., grocer, r 631 4th av

" Edward, c, gardener, r ft Wynn's Hill

Entry for B. T. Pope from the 1891-92 *Sholes' Columbus City Directory* [dir-columbus1891-92.pdf \(usg.edu\)](https://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/chat/ccd/pdfs/dir-columbus1891-92.pdf).