

The Shocking Death of Roy Hislop

By Susan Hoskins: October 26, 2016

In the September 22, 2016 issue of the Pipestone County Star newspaper, Lorraine Draper ran a shocking bit in her “Days Gone By” column.

Robert Roy Hyslop, the eleven year old son of Mr. & Mrs. R. Hyslop of this city, who was so roughly handled by schoolmates on the courthouse grounds a couple weeks ago, died on Wednesday night, after having suffered terribly ever since the day he was injured.¹

This got several museum members talking and wondering what exactly happened to the boy and who were the schoolmates involved.

A search of the Pipestone County Star newspaper to find any addition coverage of the incident did turn up a few things. The article Lorraine Draper initially found and used in her “Days Gone By” column originally ran September 18, 1891.² She had reprinted it perfectly, only leaving out funeral information; Presbyterian Church by Rev. Lowe. No cemetery was mentioned.

Searching backward from that report of his death, looking for a report about the incident itself turned up an August 28, 1891 article.³ In relating what happened, it says “last Friday,” ten year old Roy Hyslop was “badly pounded.” It does not name the other boys involved but states that if the case is fatal they stand a good chance of severe punishment. This issue of the Pipestone County Star came out on Friday, August 28, 1891, so “last Friday” would have been August 21- the date the incident happened.

Searching forward from September 18, 1891 report of Roy’s death, in order to find what became of the case, a report was found in the September 25th issue.⁴ Although it mainly reports on the funeral of Roy Hislop, it again doesn’t mention the names of the boys responsible for beating him to death, but calls for them to be severely punished. It also states that Mr. Hyslop has consulted legal advice. Also, in that same issue a seperate notice appears from Mr. and Mrs. Hyslop thanking friends for their aid during the illness and death of their son.⁵

And finally, a notice reporting the arrest of Miles and James Rork and Earl Walkup for the assault and battery resulting in death of Roy Hislop appeared in the October 2, 1891 issue of the

¹“ Days Gone By,100 Years Ago” *Pipestone County Star (Pipestone, Minnesota)*, September 2016, p.6, col.3, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, 2016.

² (No Title), *Pipestone County Star (Pipestone, Minnesota)*, 18 September 1891, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, 2016.

³ (No Title), *Pipestone County Star (Pipestone, Minnesota)*, 28 August 1891, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, 2016.

⁴ (No Title), *Pipestone County Star (Pipestone, Minnesota)*, 25 September 1891, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, 2016..

⁵ (No Title), *Pipestone County Star (Pipestone, Minnesota)*, 25 September 1891, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, 2016.

Pipestone County Star. It goes on to state that a preliminary hearing in front of Judge Hitchcox resulted in the boys being discharged for lack of evidence.

Turning to the card catalog obituary index, two entries for Roy Hyslop were found. One referenced the Farmers' Leader newspaper on September 24, 1891 and another one in the same paper on September 10, 1891. The card on the September 24 date had a notation that "father died last week," maybe that was referring to the September 10 reference?⁶

Looking first to the September 24, 1891 issue of the Farmers' Leader, the article on the incident appeared to have been first reported in the Jasper Journal with the Farmers' Leader reprinting it and adding commentary.⁷ The details of the article were that Roy Hislop, age eleven, was attacked by Marshall Walkup's son and the son of E.L. Rork, also age eleven. These boys were "sprinkling trees" on the courthouse lawn with a hose, became angry and turned the hose on Roy, knocked him down and jumped on his stomach which ruptured him, of which injuries he died. This article does name Roy's father as "R. Hislop" and wonders what the father will do about this incident, which indicates that the father did not die a week previous to this as the index card claimed. The article does not name other family members, only indicating the presence of a mother. Roy was buried "from" the Presbyterian Church. Since there is no strictly Presbyterian cemetery in Pipestone, Old Woodlawn, the city cemetery should be checked. Because of the vicious nature of this attack, court records should also be checked, as this assault was certainly a crime.

Checking second the September 10, 1891 issue of the Farmers' Leader, as directed by the card catalog index, nothing was found.⁸ However, the death notice of Roy Hyslop was found in the September 17, 1891 issue of the Farmers' Leader, proving the index to be incorrect. The notice simply states that Roy Hyslop died and was buried. The reference to Roy's father in the September 24, 1891 article indicates the father did not die a week earlier but that the notice refers to Roy himself. Roy's father is also referred to in the Pipestone County Star articles.

So why have the article describing the incident after the notice of the boy's death? Because the September 24th article appears to be reprinted from the Jasper Journal, their by-line is included and Farmers' Leader commentary finishes the article.⁹ The Jasper Journal should be checked for their coverage of this incident. This article states that the boy died on Wednesday. The Farmers' Leader came out on Thursday, but if this was reprinted it would not be referring to the day before the issue came out on September 23, 1891. It would be the Wednesday before the September 17th death notice came out. Roy Hislop died on September 16, 1891.

⁶ "Pipestone County [Minnesota] Obituary Index" (card file, n.d., Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota), entry for Roy Hyslop.

⁷ (No Title), *Farmers' Leader (Pipestone, Minnesota)*, 24 September, 1891, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, 2016.

⁸ (No Title), *Farmers' Leader (Pipestone, Minnesota)*, 10 September 1891, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, 2016.

⁹ (No Title), *Farmers' Leader (Pipestone, Minnesota)*, 24 September 1891, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, 2016.

The Museum holds the Jasper Journal newspaper on microfilm. Looking to check the original article in the Jasper Journal turned up a missing issue- September 18, 1891, and no mention of the occurrence in any surrounding issues.

The Museum's Biographical Index was consulted for the family name Hislop/Hyslop for any indications of who Roy Hislop's family was. Three Hislop and one Hyslop entries were found. Robert Hyslop was indexed to have an entry in the Illustrated Album of Biography of Southwestern Minnesota, 1889.¹⁰ The entry does not indicate a wife or children and places Robert in Murray County. The three Hislop entries were all indexed from the 1880 census.

Checking the 1880 census records on Ancestry.com, David and Hannah Hislop were both in their twenties and living in Rock Township.¹¹ This was initially interesting because the Jasper Journal ran the story on the attack and Jasper is in Rock Township. Robert and Katie Hislop were both in their thirties and had two sons living in Grange Township.¹² And James and Mary Hislop were both in their twenties and had a two-year-old son named Thomas R.¹³ Roy Hislop was reported as being ten or eleven years old in 1891 which would mean he was born around 1880. Thomas R. (which could stand for Roy) was about two years too old, but the only candidate thus far. However, it was entirely possible that Roy was not born at the time of the 1880 census. Otherwise it was noted that David, Robert and James were all born in Wisconsin and they all reported their father as being born in Scotland, so these three were possibly brothers.

Searching the vital record index on Ancestry.com for Roy Hislop born 1878 (+/- 2 yrs) hit on Roy Robert Hislop born October 15, 1880 in Grange Township, Pipestone County, Minnesota to Robert and Kate Hislop.¹⁴ So that answers his parentage. This led to searching the Minnesota Historical Society's online vital record index which did hit on this birth but added no additional information.¹⁵ Searching the Minnesota Historical Society's death index hit on nothing at all.¹⁶ The state did not begin to collect death records until 1908. Pipestone County does hold some death records from 1879 forward. Checking at the Register of Deeds office in the Pipestone County courthouse for a death record for Roy Hislop in September 1891 was unsuccessful.¹⁷ These records are not complete as it was not mandatory for the physicians to record deaths.

¹⁰ *Illustrated Album of Biography of Southwestern Minnesota*, Occidental Publishing Company, Chicago, 1889, page 205, Robert Hyslop.

¹¹ 1880 U.S. Census, Pipestone County, Minnesota, population schedule, Rock Township, David Hislop; image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 20 October 2016)

¹² 1880 U.S. Census, Pipestone County, Minnesota, population schedule, Grange Township, Robert Hislop; image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 20 October 2016)

¹³ 1880 U.S. Census, Pipestone County, Minnesota, population schedule, James Hislop; image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 20 October 2016)

¹⁴ Minnesota Birth Index, Roy Robert Hislop, image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>: accessed 20 October 2016)

¹⁵ Minnesota Birth Index, Roy Hislop, Minnesota Historical Society (<http://mnhs.org>, accessed 20 October 2016)

¹⁶ Minnesota Death Index, Roy Hislop/Hyslop Minnesota Historical Society, (<http://mnhs.org>, accessed 20 October 2016)

¹⁷ Pipestone County, Register of Deeds Office, County Death Registers, Roy Hislop/Hyslop.

Moving on to consult the transcription index for Old Woodlawn Cemetery, a probable burial place for Roy, did produce an entry.¹⁸

Roy R. Hislop, Block A, Lot #131, Space #5, buried September 16, 1891.

The stone transcription indicates a tall stone with a lamb and that Roy was 10 years, 11 months and 1 day old when he died. He was the only Hislop/Hyslop buried in the cemetery. Checking with the city regarding Old Woodlawn cemetery records might yield some more burial information.

The evidence attests that ten-year-old Roy Hislop was brutally attacked by three boys, also ten and eleven years old. The motive is unknown. The three boys, who officially are unknown, but named by the Farmer's Leader and Pipestone County Star newspapers as Earl Walkup, the son of the Pipestone County Marshall and brothers Miles and James Rork. They knocked Roy down and jumped on his stomach which ruptured his internal organs and it is of this injury that he died nearly four weeks later. Earl, Miles and James were not prosecuted due to lack of evidence, in particular one eye witness that was too far away to make any identifications.

1891 is very early for Pipestone, Minnesota. The town itself was less than twenty years old. There are few records available. One last thought would be to track these three families- Hislop, Walkup and Rork- to see what became of them and if this terrible incident affected their lives in any noticeable way.

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Roy Hislop was the son of Robert and Kate Hislop. The 1875 Minnesota State census records Robert & Kate with three children in the household; an 8 year old girl (name undecipherable), 6 year old Frank and 3 year old Archer. By 1880 they are living in Grange Township in Pipestone County: Robert and Katie with children Frank age 11 and Fred age 5. The girl would have been 13 years old and she is not present in the household. Roy was born that year and died in 1891. By 1895 they are living in Gray Township with son Earnest, 11. After that, by 1905 Robert and Kate are in Grant County. The whereabouts of Frank, Fred and Earnest are unknown.

Earl Walkup's father was for a time the Marshall of Pipestone County, also referred to as the Deputy Sheriff. He was the eldest of 9 children and the only boy. Father Clarence and mother Ida Walkup were living in Elmer Township, Pipestone County as early as 1881 when Earl was born. Earl was reported as 14 years old in the 1895 Minnesota State census- which would have made him about 10 or 11 in 1891. It appears that he grew up in Pipestone, married and moved to Montana.

Miles and James Rork were named in the newspaper as being arrested and released. Their parents, Earnest and Lois Rork, were living in Pipestone by 1885. Miles was 5 and James was 4, and an older brother Mark was reported as being 9 in the 1885 Minnesota State census. This would make Miles 11 and James 10 in 1891. It appears the family lived in Pipestone a while, and Miles may have married in Iowa in 1907, may have been living as a boarder in Minneapolis in 1910 and working as a carpenter.

¹⁸ "Old Woodlawn Cemetery (Pipestone, Minnesota)" Tombstone Transcriptions (binder, October 1999, Pipestone County Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota, entry for Roy R. Hislop.