

C. O. 'Ab' Mason Dies Sunday, After Six-Month Illness

Clarence O. Mason, 67, known for 55 years in Nashville as "Ab" Mason, died at 4:30 Sunday afternoon after an illness of seven months. For nearly 48 years he was an employee of the Nashville News. He was forced to quit work at the end of last March, and since that time had fought a brave but hopeless battle against cancer.



"Ab" Mason

Clarence Otto Mason was born May 15, 1889, in Kalamo township, Eaton county, the son of Albert and Jennie L. (Karcher) Mason. He inherited the nickname of "Ab" from his father, and was scarcely known by any other thruout his life. He attended school at Kalamo, and moved with his parents to Nashville in 1901. He was graduated from Nashville High school in 1905 and was salutatorian of his class. He was employed by the Lentz Table company nearly three years, and in the summer of 1908 went to work at the Nashville News, then owned by Len W. Feighner.

During the 48 years since that time, "Ab" Mason has been responsible, more than any other individual, for the continued publication of Nashville's newspaper. He ran the back shop for four different publishers, with a kind of dedicated loyalty that is not often shown even by the publisher. As long as a year ago he was not well, but it was a problem to persuade him to quit working and get a medical check-up.

In his younger days, "Ab" Mason was an outstanding baseball player, the best billiard player in the community, and at least mighty close to being the best fisherman and hunter. For many years he was a member of the Nashville band, in which

he played trombone, trumpet and baritone. He was a member and Past Chancellor Commander of Ivy Lodge, No. 37, Knights of Pythias.

On June 6, 1912, he was married to Miss Gertrude Ehret, and they had two sons. She died Nov. 2, 1936, and on December 4, 1937, he married Mary Rizer Nesbet.

Besides his wife Mary, he leaves the two sons, Robert Mason of Galesburg, who is a rural mail carrier at Augusta; and Richard Mason of Ithaca, N. Y., who is an instructor at Cornell University, his mother, Mrs. Jennie Nelson of Nashville; two grandsons, and a sister-in-law, Mrs. Dora Nelson of Lansing, widow of "Ab's" half-brother, Kent W. Nelson.

Backstreet

It is late at night and we have been sitting at the typewriter a long time, thinking of Ab Mason. The front page story of his death is set in type, proof-read and corrected, but it isn't somehow, enough. We tried to make it the simple sort of story Ab would have wanted, but if he were still around the corner in the composing room, he likely would pull the copy off the hook, read it over and growl that it was too flowery.

There are many fine things we could write with truth and sincerity about Ab, but one thing that stands out above all others was his loyalty to the Nashville News. Of course that adds up to loyalty to the newspaper publisher as well, but with Ab there was a special feeling for the newspaper itself that was deeper than anything involving just a job. For close to half a century he played a major role in producing the weekly issues of this newspaper and, at least to us, he was more a part of The News than the type-setting machine he operated so smoothly, or the big press on which the paper is printed.

It is completely typical of Ab that he thought of the problems of press day even in those last days when he was dying. Last Saturday he told his wife, Mary, "If something should happen over this week end, don't have the funeral until after Don gets the paper out Wednesday." She had to promise before he would drop the subject. And so funeral services are to be Wednesday afternoon, after the paper is printed.