

Austin P. Cristy (1850-1926)

Cristy was the founder, editor and publisher of the *Daily Telegram* and the *Sunday Telegram*, from 1884 until he sold them to Theodore T. Ellis in 1919. The best source on the Telegram and Cristy is Albert B. Southwick, *100 The Story of the Telegram 1884-1984*, available at the W.P.L. Also recommended: Southwick column in *Telegram & Gazette*, Jul-09-2009: <http://www.telegram.com/article/20090709/column21/907090655>

From Charles Nutt, *History of Worcester and Its People*, p. 85:

AUSTIN PHELPS CRISTY, Founder, Owner, and Publisher of the "Worcester Telegram," was born in Morristown, Vermont, May 8, 1850, son of John Baker and Louisa Lydia (Cooke) Cristy. He is of the fifth generation from Captain John Cristy, born 1714, died December 18, 1766, a pioneer and prominent citizen of Windham, New Hampshire. He was of Scotch ancestry, his family coming from the north of Ireland with the early settlers of Londonderry, New Hampshire, in 1718 or very soon afterward. John Cristy was an inn-keeper as well as farmer. He was selectman of Windham for many years, moderator of the town meetings and held other places of honor and trust.

Mr. Cristy attended the public schools of Reading, Massachusetts, and graduated from the Reading High School in 1868. He completed his preparation for college at Monson Academy, graduating in the class of 1869, and entered Dartmouth College, from which he was graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1873. Afterward he studied law in the office of Leonard & Wells, of Springfield, for a year and a half, when he was admitted to the bar at Springfield. Immediately afterward he began to practice his profession in Marblehead, Massachusetts. After one year, however, he came to this city, opening a law office in the Taylor building, No. 476 Main street.

In 1882 he was appointed assistant clerk of the Central District Court of Worcester and filled this office until September, 1884. He resigned to engage in business, establishing the "Worcester Sunday Telegram," the first issue of which was dated November 30, 1884. Two years later the first issue of the "Daily Telegram" appeared. Both ventures proved highly successful from the beginning, and the growth in circulation was rapid and steady. The "Telegram" became the newspaper of largest circulation in Central Massachusetts and for many years has been one of the most influential and prosperous newspapers of New England. Mr. Cristy has been editor and publisher of the "Telegram" from the beginning. For a few years he conducted it through the medium of a corporation known as the Telegram Newspaper Company, but some years ago this corporation was dissolved, all other stockholders having sold their interests to him. In politics he is a staunch Republican, and his newspaper has given to the Republican party its unqualified support at all times. Mr. Cristy is as faithful as ever to his duties at the office, after more than thirty years of strenuous labor, devoting himself with remarkable energy and brilliant results to his newspaper. In July, 1899, the plant was moved from No. 386 Main street to Franklin Square, and a thoroughly modern equipment added. In November, 1910, the "Telegram" occupied its new building on Franklin street, built by Mr. Cristy for the exclusive purpose of publishing his newspaper. A new and larger press was installed, new linotype machines and equipment provided, making the printing plant most complete and efficient. The business offices and editorial rooms are both artistic and attractive, as well as convenient and well-planned for their purposes.

Mr. Cristy's home on Salisbury street is an imposing and handsome structure, of southern Colonial style of architecture, spacious and artistic, with grounds that do credit to the art of the landscape architect. He is a member of the Worcester Automobile Club, the Worcester Country Club, and the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Cristy married (first) in March, 1876, Mary Elizabeth Bassett, who died in November, 1913, a daughter of Henry and Mary (Paige) Bassett, of Ware, Massachusetts. He married (second) January 12, 1915, Katherine V. Horan. Children, born in this city: 1. Horace, born December, 1876; educated in the public schools of Worcester, the Classical High School and Dartmouth College (A. B., 1900); since then associated with his father in the publication of the "Worcester Telegram;" married Caro Ellsworth, daughter of J. Lewis and Lizzie (Richmond) Ellsworth. (See biography). 2. Austin Phelps, Jr., born December, 1878; fitted for college in the Worcester schools and entered Dartmouth, from which he was graduated in 1902; drowned at Chesterfield, New Hampshire, June 17, 1902. 3. Mary Lavinia, born July, 1882. 4. Roger Henry, born August, 1886; educated in the public schools and private schools of this city and at the Military School, Ossining, New York; now on the staff of the "Telegram." 5. Edna Virginia, born August, 1888; graduate of the Bennett School, New York.

CESTER TELEGRAM

County Edition

Cloudy WORCESTER, MASS., TUESDAY MORNING, NOVEMBER 30, 1926. 20 PAGES TWO CENTS

A. P. CRISTY SHOOTS HIMSELF IN BROKER'S OFFICE; MAY LIVE

Given Difficult Prohibition Job



COL. JOHN F. J. HERBERT

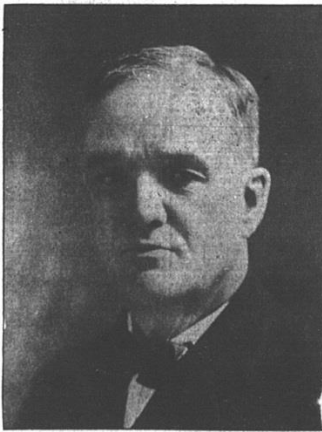
COL. HERBERT IS APPOINTED FOR DRY LAW POST

Named as Assistant Administrator For D. C. And Maryland

FACES HARD TEST
District Is Regarded as One of Wettest on United States

Col. John F. J. Herbert of Worcester, one of the widely known military men of the state, prominent in the affairs of the Argenteon Legion, and for many years a newspaper man in this city and New York, was named yesterday as assistant prohibition administrator of Maryland and the District of Columbia, according to word received here last night.

Near Death By Own Hand



AUSTIN P. CRISTY

FRIENDS UNABLE TO SUGGEST ANY REASON FOR ACT

Former Owner and Editor of Worcester Telegram Buys Revolver Hour Before Deed --- Has Not Been in Best of Health---Family and Brokers Deny Losses in Stock Market Transactions ---Age Is 76

Austin Phelps Cristy, 76, founder and for 35 years up to 1919 owner and editor of the Worcester Telegram, shot himself through the left side of his chest under the heart at 3.40 o'clock yesterday afternoon in the brokerage offices of J. S. Bachs & Co., Slater building.

ACME BUS CO. LEASES LINES OF PESCARINI

Sale of Clinton, Jitneys to Webster Firm Pending

CLINTON, Nov. 29.—The Acme Bus Co. of Webster has taken a temporary lease of the John Pesca-

FALL'S NOTE FOR A \$100,000 LOAN SHOWN TO JURY

Family and friends said they were at a loss as to a motive for Mr. Cristy's act. His weakened condition prevented physicians from questioning him on this subject. The stenogram that had marked his newspaper career of 25 years was evident even as he was carried into the hospital.

Headlines of Nov-30-1926

(continuing storyline not shown)

Cloudy WORCESTER, MASS., WEDNESDAY MORNING, DECEMBER 1, 1926. 20 PAGES TWO CENTS

A. P. CRISTY DEAD FROM SELF-INFLICTED WOUND

The next day. (Telegram)

(continuing storyline not shown)

Girl Who Wed Disabled Veteran to Marry Again

Fitchburg Nurse Who Consented to Become Wife of Invalid to be Bride of Another Former Soldier

FITCHBURG, Nov. 30.—For the second time this year, Mrs. Ruth Stoddard (Roman) Hussey, 25, of 40 Lomburg street, has sprung a surprise in the form of an engagement announcement on her friends.

Last May, sacrificing herself to a helpless invalid, she married the stricken war hero, Albert Hussey of 193 Lomburg street, whom she had nursed for many months. He died in the United States Veterans' hospital in Chelsea two months later.

U.S. DESTROYERS ARE ORDERED TO SAIL TO HANKOW

Will Aid Other Foreign Warships in Protecting Foreigners

SITUATION SERIOUS
Americans and British, Many of Them Invalids, Fear For Safety

PEKING, Nov. 29 (A. P.)—The

Medium Topic Of Clark Talk



MRS. BRANDON (MARGARET)

SKEPTICAL OF HOUDINI TALK

Dr. Crandon Says Spirits Communicate Only Years After Death

STATE DELAYS MISTRIAL PLEA IN HALL CASE

Simpson Digs For Proof That Jury Is Biased in Favor of Defense

TRIAL CLIMAX NEAR

Experts Call Alibi Entries In Henry Stevens' Dairy 'Doctored'

ROMBEVILLE, N. J., Nov. 29.—By Universal Service.—Senator Simpson, chief prosecutor in the Hall-Mills murder case, announced just before midnight tonight that he would ask for a mistrial tomorrow. His announcement followed a long conference between Gov. Moore and the prosecutor.

ROMBEVILLE, N. J., Nov. 29.—By Universal Service.—With all heads of the law here, as the saying is, for the closing session of the Hall-Mills murder trial this afternoon, State Senator Alexander Simpson rebuffed his hat as soon as court took

END COMES AS FAMILY WATCH AT HIS BEDSIDE

Former Owner of The Telegram Who Shot Himself Monday Fails Gradually, Breathing Last at 12.10 A. M.

Day's Developments Throw No Additional Light on Motive for Suicide—Suffered from Growing Deafness—Stock Speculation Hobby—Mayor and Prominent Citizens Pay Tribute to His Strength of Character

Austin Phelps Cristy, 76, founder of the Worcester Telegram and its owner and editor for 35 years, died at 12:10 o'clock this morning at the City hospital from the effects of a bullet wound, self-inflicted.

Mr. Cristy shot himself late Monday afternoon in the brokerage offices of J. S. Bachs & Co., Slater building.

From the first his condition was regarded as serious but physicians believed that he had a fighting chance for recovery if he would help.

The entire story from the Gazette of Dec. 1 is shown below, selected because the writer(s) had more time to prepare it, and because showing all of them would be repetitious.

The Evening Gazette

COUNTY EDITION
LATEST NEWS

W. MASS., WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1904

"THE PAPER THAT GOES HOME"

443 25 PAGES—TWO CENTS

EVE PLAN
BENEFIT IN
DR CASES

In Proposed Jury
Waiver in Bay
Reviewed by Re-
filed

ARE OFFERED
GOVERNOR'S OFFICE

ed in The Gazette
Den. L.—The Judicial
Massachusetts, created by
of the organization, proce-
of the Judicial ap-
Commonwealth, in its an-
report, that under such
of and court, review the
of a statute to give
in criminal cases, other
I show, the opportunity to
right of trial by jury in
of court and to be tried
without a jury if they so
one of the report, which is
to treat the most public al-

AUSTIN P. CRISTY IS DEAD; FUNERAL WILL BE PRIVATE

Worcester to Have New Horticultural Hall Building



THOUGHT TO HAVE LEFT BIG FORTUNE

Carries Mystery of His Last Desperate Act in
Shooting Himself to the Grave With Him—
Consulted Boston Law Firm Regarding
Draft of Will, but Is Not Known to Have
Executed Document—No Announcement
as to Time or Place of Final Services

Carrying with him to the world beyond the secret motive which impelled him to end his life with a bullet, Austin P. Cristy founder and for 35 years publisher of The Worcester Telegram, died at the City hospital at midnight as the result of a self-inflicted wound just below the heart.

Whatever confidences he may have revealed to the members of his family, who were at the bedside in his last hours on earth, the public at large can only speculate as to the cause of his final desperate act after a lifetime in which he achieved conspicuous success in the great business adventure of establishing a prosperous newspaper and gleaning an impressive fortune.

The funeral of Mr. Cristy will be strictly private. It was announced by the family this noon, through George Sessions & Sons Co. Friends are asked not to send flowers. The time and place were not stated.

Throughout yesterday there seemed to be an excellent chance for Mr. Cristy's recovery. It was in the early evening when he began to show signs of weakening and later on in the night he began to sink rapidly. Mrs. Cristy and his two sons, Horace W. and Roger, were summoned and remained at the bedside until the end. Speculation as to the real motive was but natural. Those who knew

Continued on Page Three

(adjacent column)

PRIVATE FUNERAL FOR A. P. CRISTY

(Continued from Page One)

Mr. Cristy best were inclined today to attribute his act to a combination of causes.

That he was not financially embarrassed, in spite of stories of large losses in the stock market in recent years, is considered an established fact. That he was bothered more or less by physical infirmity in his advancing years, particularly increasing deafness, is thought to have pressed upon his mind.

Furthermore, inactivity in any of the fields in which he had enjoyed may have caused depression. Out of the newspaper game for a number of years Mr. Cristy has turned his attention to the stock market extensively.

Those who associated with him most closely say that he played it hard and he had played hard and worked hard in the newspaper business. But it is a pretty well established fact that he had done little trading during the past year and virtually none in the past two months.

Those who held themselves to be his friends are today inclined to feel that he just became tired of life and physicians who attended him say that had he possessed any will to live he could have survived the wound.

It is generally believed that Mr. Cristy left a large fortune. It is known, of course, that he speculated in stocks, had done so for years, but associates today expressed emphatic belief that whatever losses he may have incurred were not of sufficient size to have impaired his estate seriously. His income for years had been a very large one. It is believed that the cost of his living, including the maintenance of his Salisbury-street estate, did not by any means equal

the amount of money received from his investments. His recent market transactions, so far as anyone has been able to learn, were on a relatively small scale. Therefore they look to see the settlement of the estate yield a handsome figure.

Know Will Was Drawn

Naturally much interest exists as to the disposition which he has made of his estate. It is known that he made a will several years ago. But as to whether it has been amended by codicils or a new will was made later, seems to be known to no one unless it be the members of his immediate family or his personal attorney. Formerly, Rufus B. Dodge looked after his legal affairs. More recently they have been attended to, from time to time, by Frank C. Smith, Jr., of Thayer, Smith & Gaskill; T. Hovey Gage, of Gage, Hamilton, June & White, and Sherman L. Whipple of Boston. Mr. Whipple's office, it is understood, was consulted by Mr. Cristy in the making of a will, but not recently, and never executed such a document for him. The other law offices mentioned this morning either denied knowledge of a will or declined to discuss the matter.

AUSTIN P. CRISTY'S CAREER FOLLOWED IN HIS OWN WAY

SOME SIDELIGHTS SHED ON LIFE OF A. P. CRISTY

1850—Austin P. Cristy—1926

Grim Sense of Humor and Often Warmth of Kindliness Hidden Behind Mask-Like Countenance—Stories of Men Who Worked With and for Him Reveal Surprises—How Resourceful Employees, Aware of Human Side, Saved Their Jobs



A. P. Cristy, editor, publisher, stoic, implacable enemy, steadfast friend, intensely hated, loved by a few who knew him best, profoundly human and, what few realized a humorist, died as he lived—as his own will dictated.

...we had picked for a local sheet. It was a bad Saturday night for the scribe, followed by a bad Sunday morning and no sermon appeared in the Monday morning Telegram.

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From one end of the country to the other, in newspaper offices today, stories are being told by those who, in years past, worked for him on The Worcester Telegram. Their number is legion, for in the old days they came so rapidly and went so quickly that even those in the office could not know them all. No man whose appearance pleased "A. P." as he was known and will be remembered, ever failed to land a job and it was not uncommon for 40 reporters to be on the payroll of the old Telegram at a time when a staff of 15 was considered big on any New England paper. Forty today—perhaps only 20 tomorrow.

Those who produced the goods stayed, and the requirements were not high, and it was those who stayed who came to know the man best. Back of that stoical, masklike face, there was a sense of an enjoyment of humor that few realized and the wise employe often played upon that characteristic to save himself from embarrassment with the big boss—often to save his job.

Scooped By The Bible

There was the old timer, for instance who later became a New York newspaper man of prominence, who was assigned to cover a sermon fully in the days when Monday morning was hard picking for a local sheet. It was a bad Saturday night for the scribe, followed by a bad Sunday morning and no sermon appeared in the Monday morning Telegram.

Of course, the inevitable followed. He was called before "A. P." and dismissal was coming to him.

"Mr. Cristy," he explained, "I was at church all right, of course, and I got the sermon, but you've always given us hell if we turned in anything for The Telegram that had appeared in print before. The minister preached on 'Jonah and the Whale,' and upon investigation, I found that the Bible had a scoop on that a couple of thousand years ago, so didn't dare turn it in."

Austin P. Cristy
Evening Gazette, Dec-01-1926

He won and went back to work. Then there were the two news wrestlers who were so good they had survived the firings for misconduct on the job, and came in to find the third and final "blue envelope" at the city editor's desk. They knew it was their finish, but combined capital at the moment was 10 cents, which seemed hardly enough to finance railroad fares and new jobs. Something had to be done.

Knowing the habits of the big boss, they waited until he was seated at his desk at 8 that night. They had spent the 10 cents, and marching in in lock-step, each banged a bottle of mucilage on the publisher's desk.

"Well, what's the big idea?" he growled.

In chorus came the answer: "Mr. Cristy, we'd like to stick a while longer."

They did.

Paid Debts and Lost Good Man

His human side came out as pronouncedly. There is today a man whose name is known throughout the country newspaperly who once worked on The Telegram. His pay was small, his responsibilities and bills large. One day there came an offer of the job which led to his later prominence. He turned it down because he owed so much money in Worcester that he did not feel that he could leave the town.

"A. P." heard of it, called in the reporter, and although he knew he was losing one of his most valuable employees, wormed the story from him, found out the amount of his debts and drew his check for the amount right then.

In a responsible position in Worcester today is a man who will recognize this story: For 18 years he had held his job. His record was unblemished, and then one day he was missing from his job and from his home. The matter was kept quiet for a couple of days, and then his family, hoping thereby to locate him, gave out the facts.

A Telegram reporter was assigned to work on the case, and do nothing else. Within a day, the man was found in a third rate hotel, intoxicated and in bad shape. He was got home, and cared for. The reporter had the whole story, but returned to the office and reported to "A. P." saying: "I don't want to write the story. It means dismissal to a man whose 18-year record is clean. It means disgrace and deprivation to his family with no good accomplished."

"Forget it," was the order from the big boss, yet had any member of his staff, be he managing editor or cub reporter dared "forget" a story and was caught at it, he would have lost his job.

Not always were things rosy for the publisher of The Telegram, and in the early days there were times when there was much doubt whether the next issue of the first sheet, The Sunday Telegram, would appear. Cash was little, credit was less, and it was hard scratching. Those who helped even in a small way in those days were not forgotten.

It was some years later that "A. P.'s" confidential reporter was called in one night, given a roll of bills and told to go to police headquarters to bail out a "drunk and disorderly." Orders from the big boss were only to be obeyed and not questioned. The order was, "Bail him out, cash bail, no bonds or anything, and no intimation that it is my money. Be in early tomorrow morning."

Remembered Loyal Newsboy

The man was bailed as directed, and the next morning the reporter was sent to court with cash, ordered to pay any fine imposed, and to report back with surplus cash. The fine was \$25 and was paid. The reporter returned, reported and was sent on his way without explanation.

Days later, when in one of those moods when he wanted human companionship, Mr. Cristy vouchsafed the explanation. He said:

"I suppose you wonder why I was so interested in that 'drunk and disorderly.'" The reporter, extremely curious, nevertheless denied it, and Mr. Cristy told his story.

"When I started this paper, that 'drunk and disorderly' was one of four newsboys who hustled out and sold the papers. I hired the printing done, and it was cash with the order. I hadn't money enough to pay for the printing of the whole issue, so I paid for half of it, agreeing to have the rest of the money in while they were printing. That 'drunk and disorderly' was a hustling kid. He rustled the papers out, got the pennies and rushed them back to me so I could pay the printer and get the rest of my papers. I just haven't forgotten it."

He hadn't, either, for that "drunk and disorderly" for a night rose to—well, he rose, and among the men who remained his friends and helped him rise was the man to whom he took the pennies that had saved the day, over 40 years ago.

As said above, orders were orders when they came from "A. P." and were to be obeyed without delay or question. His personal reporter was called in one day and told to go to a certain place and hire a man from another paper. He went, came back and reported that the man could not be hired.

"Why not?" came the question, shot out like the backfire of an automobile.

"He owns the paper and won't sell it," was the explanation, and The Telegram dictator had to bow to the will of a lesser editor.

Among those who knew him best, his death brings a feeling of sadness—sadness that his life contained nothing more to make it seem worth while to him to carry on, but with it is the feeling he died as he wished: that his end was, even as his life had been, as he willed it.

Apologies for the poor quality of the print.