

*Here Lies Kansas City* by Wilda Sandy, Published by Bennett Schneider Inc., 1984



In 1896 seventy year old Col. Thomas Hunton Swope, an earl opponent of “all this park foolishness”, g

A Kentuckian born October 21, 1827, Swope was a Yale graduate with money to invest who came west

Exceptionally mild-mannered and self-conscious, Swope was a lifelong bachelor. He lived alone until later in life when he moved into the grand turreted red brick castle of his late brother in Independence. From his sister-in-law’s household (redolent of seven nieces and nephews), the frugal millionaire commuted daily by streetcar to his downtown Kansas Cit office in the New England building until the month before his death.

Swope’s last days were preoccupied with how best to bestow his wealth. His real estate alone was worth three and a half million dollars. A sickly solitary soul given to self-doctoring, Swope fell under the spell of a middle-aged doctor who had married one of his young nieces, a suspected “gold-digger” named B. Clark Hyde.

On October 3, 1909, just 18 days short of his 82nd birthday, Col. Swope died suddenly in his sister-in-law’s home with Dr. Hyde in attendance, the aftermath of a perplexing, brief and violent illness. The great philanthropist’s body lay in state at the Public Library where thousands of mourners paid their respects. Until a tomb could be prepared in Swope Park where he had requested burial, he lay in a holding vault.



Three months after his death, Swope’s doctor/nephew-in-law, B. Clark Hyde, came under suspicion an

Eight and a half years after his death, Col. Thomas B. Swope was at last laid to rest in Swope Park. On