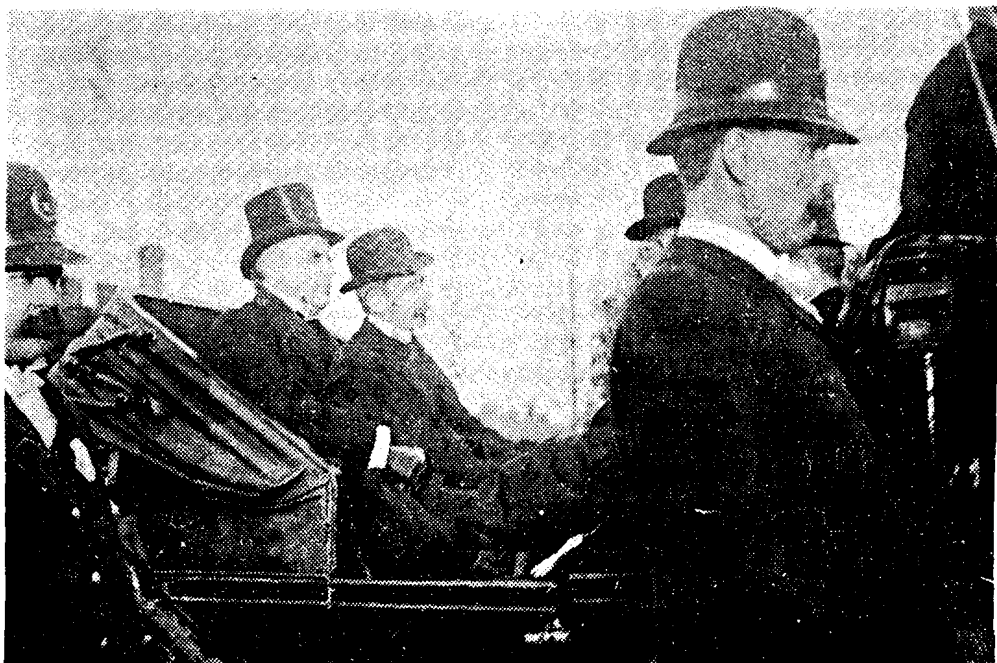


A Glimpse Of The



President McKinley was Congressman W. S. Kerr's house guest during the funeral of Senator and Secretary of State John Sherman. McKinley, in top hat, rides with Kerr in an official carriage guarded by Mansfield policemen.

By PAUL WHITE

The life story of the Hon. Winfield Scott Kerr has many interesting facets. It tells the story of the determination of a young man who lost his right arm in a railroad accident, then succeeded as a lawyer and statesman and then acquired a beautiful mansion on an estate on Park Avenue West.

Kerr served as congressman for two terms after being one of the most successful Mansfield attorneys to practice law in the local courts.

Congressman Kerr was born in 1852 of farm parents, Alexander and Ursula Kerr, on the farm of his grandfather, Solomon Glad- den, three and one-half miles east of Lucas. He attended common schools and

worked on the farm until he was 18 when he took a job as brakeman with the Pennsylvania Railroad on the Crestline - Alliance run.

A railroad collision in 1872 caused him to lose his right arm but he was determined to become educated, so he took up telegraphy. He later entered the University of Michigan School of Law and was admitted to the bar, practicing his profession here in Mansfield.

Kerr immediately became a successful attorney and his fortune grew to the point where he built a stone mansion at 353 (now 355) Park Avenue West in the 1890's.

Republican politics interested Atty. Kerr and he successfully sought the office of 27th and 29th district

state senator which he served during 1888-1892. He was then elected to the 54th Congress from this district and was re-elected to the 55th Congress.

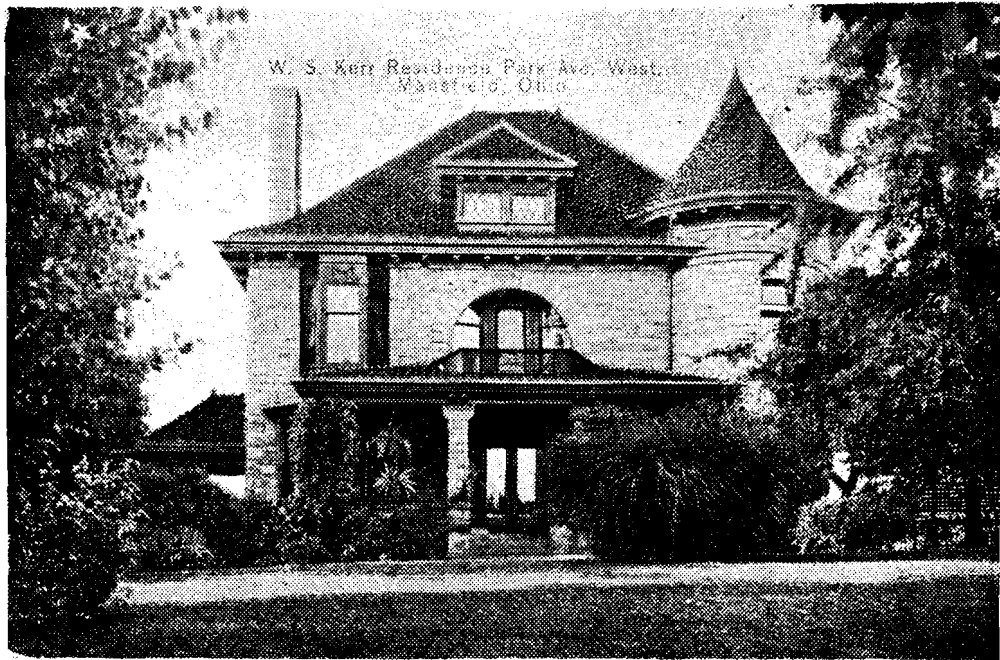
After his terms as congressman he retired from office but campaigned vigorously for other Republican candidates. He was described as having a "readiness to debate" and a "gift of oratory."

Congressman Kerr married a Lucas area farm girl, Susie E. Barr, daughter of Samuel Barr. A son, Thomas and a daughter, Mrs. Hoyt Ford were born to them.

Congressman Kerr was a close friend of Senator and Secretary of State John Sherman and also a close friend of President McKinley. He wrote Sher-

Mansfield That Was

W. S. Kerr Residence Park Ave. West,
Mansfield, Ohio.



Congressman Kerr's stone mansion at 355 Park Avenue West, is now the Mansfield Typewriter and Office Supply Co. and is preserved as a part of present building.

man's biography, "Sherman, His Life and Public Service," in 1908.

In 1900 during John Sherman's funeral here, President McKinley was the house guest of Congressman and Mrs. Kerr at the Park Avenue West mansion.

The Kerr mansion was a magnificent structure of native stone quarried near the Ohio State Reformatory. The congressman's son Thomas stabled some of his fine race horses in the carriage house at the rear of the mansion along with the congressman's fine team of driving horses. L. Kent Rummel of Lucas, a relative of Congressman Kerr, still remembers driving some of the horses.

Congressman Kerr unexpectedly died Sept. 11, 1917

after a few days illness. He was trying a case in court just a few days previous to his death and apparently suffered a heart attack.

After Kerr's death the mansion remained vacant for a short time but was occupied as home and offices of Dr. Harro Woltman from 1922 — 24. In 1924 Frank Neff, who had married the widow of Dr. J. Harvey Craig, moved into the home.

After Mrs. Neff died Mr. Neff continued to live in the home and for many years it was a familiar sight to see him about the yard wearing a towel turban on his head.

Carlton S. Fernyak acquired the mansion in 1962 from the second Mrs. Neff and remodeled it into the present Mansfield Typewriter & Supply Co. store.

Mr. Fernyak proudly shows the room in the old mansion, now part of the store, where it is said President McKinley slept while a house guest of the Kerrs.

Three beautiful fireplaces were preserved in the remodeling. One is in blue tile and bound with iron bands. The colorful stained glass, leaded windows are also preserved.

Fernyak regrets he did not get to keep the large postered bed with 10 ft. canopy which was in the home when he purchased it, as this was the bed in which McKinley slept. The former owner took the bed to Florida.

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(Photo from the archives of the Richland County Historical Society.)