

Joseph L. Adamson (- 21 Jun 1875)

The Evening Star, June 21, 1875

Shocking Suicide of a Young Man

He Cuts His Throat with a Razor

In a Fit of Despondency he Seeks Escape from Poverty and Misfortune

An Afflicted Family

This morning at No. 235 Second street northwest, a young man, named Jos. L. Adamson, committed suicide by cutting his throat with a razor, nearly severing his head from his body. The family consisted of the deceased, his father (about 60 years old and in poor health) his mother, about 50 or 55 years old and some other relatives. The deceased had been employed in the Patent Office and has lately been the sole support of the family. They resided in a small brick house containing four rooms and a summer kitchen and the appearance of the house and furniture is indicative of the pinchings of poverty.

Death in the Family from an Accident Last Week

Up to last week there was another member of the family circle, Frank Adamson, who was an apprentice to the plastering business. Three years ago he was so badly injured by a fall from a scaffold that he never recovered and died from the effects of the fall on Wednesday last and was buried on Friday. Joseph has been for several weeks in bad health, but remained at his business at the Patent office up to Saturday last. It was, however, apparent to the neighbors, that he was much depressed in spirits since his brother's death. On Saturday morning while in the store of Mr. W.H. Killmon, on the corner of 2d and C streets, he remarked, "I don't know what I will do."

"I am Discouraged."

This morning, about 8 o'clock, his father went into his room (the rear second story apartment) and found him dressing, and the deceased said, "I believe I will get up and see if I cannot walk around a little; I may feel better. The father advised him to take some citrate of magnesia and said that ht wold mix some for him. The afflicted father then left the room, but in a few minutes returned, only to find his son on the floor

In the Agonies of Death.

He immediately gave an alarm and some of the neighbors hastened in. Sergeant Clements was passing at the time, and going into the house ascertained the facts and sent for the Coroner. The appearance of the body on the floor would indicate that the deceased had struggled desperately. It appeared that he had got the razor out of a closet and had inflicted the wound while he was in bed, as it was saturated with blood. He had thrown himself out of the bed, where the blood continued to flow until the entire floor was covered. The razor was found near the body. The wound is a terrible one, and must have required a degree of strength to inflict it, which indicates a desperation and fierce determination almost incomprehensible considering the general weakness of the victim.

The Coroner's Inquest

The coroner, Dr. Patterson, about noon held an inquest at which the father, J.L. Adamson, Sr., testified that the deceased had been sick about two weeks, and that he worried about the bills incurred on account of the illness and death of his brother, expressing the fear that they would be presented at the office where he was employed and cause his discharge. Some of the relatives of the deceased testified that he has been mentally affected for a year or more.

The jury returned a verdict that he came to his death by reason of an incised wound inflicted by his own hand while laboring under an aberration of mind.

The deceased was about 25 years of age, and had been connected with the Patent Office for ten years past, most of the time as messenger. About two years ago he was appointed temporary clerk in the division of trademarks, and had the reputation of being a very faithful and exemplary employee.