

Ernest Beck (- 15 Jan 1898)

Beck. Departed this life on Saturday, January 15, 1898 Ernest Beck, aged 64 years. Funeral from W.H. Lee undertakers on March 13 at 2 p.m. Interment private.

The Evening Star, March 12, 1898

Ernest Beck's Body

Remains of Missing Baker Found in the River

The body of Ernest Beck, the baker, who disappeared from his home at No. 1201 New Jersey avenue southeast two months ago, was recovered yesterday afternoon. Clarence Rowland, a boy living near Giesboro Point, found the body in the Anacostia river near the shore between the asylum wharf and Giesboro. The tide was unusually low at the time and the body was exposed to view on the flats. It had probably been there for several days, as the effects of the sun on the body were plainly visible.

The body was in an advanced state of decomposition. Knights of Labor cards and other papers found in the pockets of the clothing showed that there could be no doubt of the identification. Because of the late hour at which the body was found it was permitted to remain there until this morning, when it was removed to the morgue by Undertaker J.W. Lee.

Beck, who was sixty-five years old, was last seen alive late Saturday night, January 15, when he left the house of a friend on 4 1/2 street. He had worked at Berger's bakery on L street southwest, and received his weekly salary that afternoon. The money he turned over to his wife, reserving only about 40 cents for incidentals. After supper he called on friends, as had been his custom for years and late that night he started from his friends house to return home. When his disappearance was reported, a story was circulated to the effect that there had been a struggle on the bridge crossing the canal, and, it is said, a splash followed. This, it was believed was occasioned by the throwing overboard of the baker.

Mrs. Beck, widow of the dead man, insisted that her husband had fallen or had been thrown in the canal, and at her request the water was dragged several times by Harbormaster Sutton's crew.

This morning Coroner Carr viewed the body at the morgue and decided to hold an inquest at 6 o'clock this evening. Deputy Coroner Glazebrook was directed to make an autopsy in order to determine if any violence had been inflicted before the body reached the water.

The Evening Star, January 25, 1898

The Ernest Beck Mystery

Wife of the Missing Man Offers Reward for Information

Members of the Family Believe He Was Drowned in the James Creek Canal

Mrs. Beck, wife of Ernest Beck, the baker who lately disappeared from his home, No. 1201 New Jersey avenue southeast has offered a reward of \$25 for information leading to his whereabouts, dead or alive. As heretofore stated in The Star, Mr. Beck is sixty-five years old, and is a baker by trade. He has been married forty-one years, and has lived in the house at New Jersey avenue and M street all this time. When he left home ten days ago, his wife says, he wore a suit of clothes made of mixed goods, and a fedora hat. The members of his family assert as their belief that his body is in the James Creek canal.

The missing man worked in Berger's bakery on L street southwest between 4 1/2 and 6th streets. He returned home a week ago last Saturday, and handed to his wife the weekly allowance for the house.

After supper he dressed and said he was going to call on Mr. Crimling, a fellow baker, who lives on 4 1/2 street. This had been his custom every Saturday night for years. When ready to leave the house he took from his pocket \$3 and said he would leave it at home, for fear something might happen. He had just 35 cents left, and he went away from home in unusually good spirits. He called on his baker friend, and remained until about 8:30 o'clock. He then called on Mr. Miller, another friend, who lives on 4 1/2 street.

The Start Homeward

It was about 11:30 o'clock when he left Mr. Miller's and started for home. He had just six squares to go from Mr. Miller's to his own home. It is known that he started in the direction of his home, for Mr. Miller went to the door and waited until he reached the corner of M street.

Which way he turned when he reached that corner is not known. It is believed to be possible that he turned west and went in the direction of the river instead of going east towards his home. Although the wife and children now believe he is dead, some of them remain at the window most of the time hoping every pedestrian will prove to be the missing husband and father.

Mrs. Beck says that her husband's home life was a happy one, and there was no reason why he should have gone away. The idea of suicide she is certain never entered his head, for he was always afraid of death. It was only a few weeks ago that he suffered with the toothache and was badly frightened.

Sober and Industrious Man

Mr. Beck, members of his family say, was a sober and industrious man, but Saturday nights it had been his custom to drink a few glasses of beer. Several Saturday nights colored boys, who congregate near the M street bridge, had pursued him and given him some trouble, and this, his wife says, was why he left his money at home the night he disappeared.

Since his disappearance Mrs. Beck has heard a great many rumors concerning her husband, but investigation of them convinces her that no one in South Washington has seen him since he left the corner of 4 1/2 and M streets shortly before midnight ten days ago.

As heretofore stated in The Star, the James Creek canal has been dragged twice by the members of the crew of the police boat, since Mr. Beck's disappearance, and a request is to be made that it be dragged again, as soon as the weather will permit.