

(Infant of A.P. and Clara) Blair **(- 12 Mar 1902)**

The Evening Star, March 13, 1902, p. 16

Placed Under Bonds

Dr. Charles E. Hagner Held for Grand Jury

Death of a Child

Physician Regarded Guilty of Inexcusable Neglect

Admits Having Deposited Body in a Garbage Can --

Believed Child Was Dead

Late yesterday afternoon the detectives succeeded in solving the mystery surrounding the case of the live white infant found in an ash can in Goat alley as published in yesterday's Star. The infant was the child of Peter and Clara Blair of 512 F street northeast, and its birth took place in the Christiani Flats at 7th and M streets northwest, where the child's mother was visiting her sister, Mrs. Ella L. Kieso. Dr. Charles E. Hagner, fifty-six years old, of 812 18th street northwest is the professional man who deposited the child in the ash can. He was arrested about 5:30 o'clock yesterday afternoon when he returned to look after the sick woman. He admitted he had put the baby in the can, and said he did so believing life was extinct. The child died at the Homeopathic Hospital about 9 o'clock last night. Dr. Hagner was released upon \$3,000 security, Mr. Randall Webb qualifying as bondsman. Today Coroner Nevitt held an inquest in the case at the sixth police station. A verdict was rendered holding Dr. Hagner for the action of the grand jury. The verdict reads:

"That the child of Clara L. Blair came to its death March 12, 1902, at the Homeopathic Hospital, as the result of hemorrhage of the brain; that said child was born alive and lived several hours; that said hemorrhage might have been caused during the premature birth. We, the jury, believe that Dr. Charles E. Hagner, who attended at the birth of said child, was guilty of inexcusable neglect, and of neglect of such child after its birth. We are further of the opinion that Dr. Charles E. Hagner should be held for the action of the grand jury."

A number of friends of the doctor were present at the inquest, including Justice Hagner of the District Supreme Court and ex-Justice Code, Attorneys A.S. Worthington and W.G. Johnson were present as counsel.

Six representative business men served as members of the jury. Precinct Detective Evans and Sergeant Sprinkle selected them. They were William H. Chambers, liveryman at 1407 9th street northwest; Barton Ewers, furniture dealer, 1320 7th street northwest; Max M. Rich, shoe dealer, 1324 7th street northwest; William O'Donnell, retired stove merchant, 1320 New Jersey avenue northwest and William H. Signol, grocer, 1000 7th street northwest.

Dr. Sharp's Testimony

Dr. John R. Sharp, resident physician of the Homeopathic Hospital, testified that about noon yesterday he received a newborn child at the hospital. The child was in a shoe box with its legs folded over its body. Policeman Wagner brought it to the hospital, witness said, and it was bleeding from the mouth. The child was so feeble that it was deemed best not to handle it. Witness had no hope for its recovery. Death occurred about 9 o'clock last night. He thought one leg of the child was broken about the ankle. The infant, he said, was white -- or very light. It was a baby of between seven and eight months. Witness identified the shoe box which was exhibited to the jury.

Ella Stanton, colored, 613 Goat alley, testified that she was sitting in the alley when a man came in and placed a box in a garbage can. Her sister, she said, called her attention to the man and shortly afterward she went with her mother and others and found the baby. When she saw the man he did not have the package.

"Did you see him?" she was asked.

"Yes, sir," he girl answered.

"Is he in this room?"

"Yes, sir," the witness responded; "There he is," pointing to Dr. Hagner.

Witness said she and those with her thought there was probably a pair of old shoes in the package when they went to the garbage can and found the baby. She said her mother opened he box and when she found the live baby in it she went for a policeman. Her mother opened the box to give the child air and left it in the garbage can until a young man came and took it away. Ella said she remained there until the police came.

"Did you have to fold the legs to get the child in the box?" asked a juror.

"We didn't take the child out," the witness responded.

The baby was crying when they reached the garbage can, the witness stated, and it cried all the way to the station.

Present at Child's Birth

Mrs. Ella Kieso, sister of the mother of the infant, was next examined. She told the jury she was present yesterday at the birth of the child. Witness said her mother was also there. Dr. Hagner was in attendance. The doctor was there to treat witness when her sister was taken sick, and he went to the latter's room and delivered the child. While the doctor was there, witness stated, her mother came.

"Do you know if the child was alive?" the coroner asked.

"I do not," was her response.

"Did it make a sound?"

"It did not."

Witness said she knew nothing about the disposition of the child, nor did she hear any conversation regarding it. She was in and out of the room during the time Dr. Hagner was there. While the doctor was in her room her sister, Mrs. Blair, called her to come to her. Her sister told her what was the matter with her and she called the doctor.

The witness was cross-examined at length by Mr. Gould. She thought the child was born about 11:30 o'clock. Witness did not see the baby at all. She saw the doctor when he left the house, but she did not notice that he carried a package. Dr. Hagner had never attended her sister before. Witness said there were several shoe boxes about her house, but she could not identify the one shown her as having belonged to her. Asked what became of the child, witness said she did not know. She did not take it away, nor did her mother. There were no servants employed about the house. Her sister was married in August. She had been complaining for several days. She fell on the ice about a month ago and injured her side.

Carried a Bundle

Alice Winifred, colored, 613 Goat alley, testified that between 11 and 12 o'clock yesterday she saw Dr. Hagner enter Goat alley carrying a bundle. She was returning home from the store. When the doctor left the alley he had no bundle.

"I told my sister about it," she said, "and she thought he had thrown away a pair of old shoes."

Witness explained that they went in search of the bundle and when they found it she was afraid to open it. Her mother came and said there was a baby in the box, because she heard it crying. Witness said her mother removed part of the paper and she saw the child's face. She did not pay much attention

to it. It was the first time she had ever seen so small an infant and she was afraid of it. The doctor went out by way of L street, walking rapidly.

Peter Blair, father of the child, gave his address as 512 F street northwest, and said he is employed at the hydrographic office, Navy Department. He was married the 15th of August. Because of his wife's condition she had been staying at her sister's home in the Christiani flats. Witness said he did not reach the house until after 6 o'clock. When he arrived he made no inquiries concerning the disposition of the child. He said he was so worried over his wife's condition that he could not recollect just what conversations he had with those in the house.

William R. Downing, 459 Florida avenue northwest, a plumber by occupation, testified that he went to Goat alley when he heard the colored girl tell of the finding of the baby. He took the box from the garbage can and opened the package.

"Was the child alive?" the witness was asked.

"Yes, sir," he answered. "It was whining."

Witness took the child to the second precinct station, where it was seen by Dr. Roman. The child whined all the way to the station, the witness stated.

Deputy Coroner's Testimony

Deputy Coroner Glazebrook testified that the child measured seventeen inches in length and weighted exactly three pounds. The body was well formed and the extremities were normal, there being no fractures. Death was due to syncope, following a cerebral hemorrhage. The top of the head was congested. The child had unquestionably breathed. Witness said that the infant was a frail little thing, and with the best of treatment and the assistance of an incubator, it would hardly have lived. It frequently occurs, he said, that infants show no signs of life immediately after they are born.

Mrs. Sarah F. Legge, mother of Mrs. Blair, was the last witness examined. She said she was present when her daughter's child was born yesterday. She said she happened to call on her daughter a short time prior to the birth.

"The child was dead," said Mrs. Legge, "For I never heard a sound."

The doctor, she said, asked what was to be done with the body, and she asked if he could not take care of it. Nothing was said to her by the doctor as to whether the child was dead or alive. She believed Dr. Hagner took the body away. The doctor asked Mrs. Kieso for a box or piece of paper. Mrs. Legge said she was so anxious about her daughter that she did not look at the child. The doctor remarked, she said, that it was a good thing for Mrs. Blair that he happened to be in the house at the time.

She heard no conversation concerning a lot in a cemetery. So far as she knew no effort was made to resuscitate the child. The doctor, she thought, was the only one who handled the baby. Mrs. Legge said she never for a moment entertained the idea that the babe was alive.

This closed the testimony, Dr. Hagner no desiring to make a statement.

After the verdict had been rendered Dr. Hagner, accompanied by his friends and Detectives Helan and Evans, went to the city hall. Mr. Gould, the district attorney, fixed the amount of the bond at \$3,000, which was given, and the accused man left the building.

The Evening Star, March 14, 1902, p. 5

Prepared For Burial

Funeral of Blair Infant to Be Held Late Today or Tomorrow

The body of the infant of Peter and Clara Blair of 512 F street northeast, as to the cause of whose death an inquest was held yesterday, was removed from the morgue this morning to the undertaking establishment of William R. Speare, where it was prepared for burial. The funeral will take place late this afternoon or tomorrow.

Mrs. Blair, the infant's mother, is still under treatment at the home of her sister, Mrs. Kieso, in the Christiani flats. Her condition has greatly improved. She has not been told of the fate of her child. The shoe box in which the child was thrown away is held at police headquarters to be used as evidence when the case is presented to the grand jury.

Friends of Dr. Hagner are fully satisfied that the latter acted in good faith in the matter and was satisfied that there was no life in the little body when he deposited it in the ash can.