

Charles J. Chipman

(- 31 Dec 1910)

The Evening Star, January 1, 1911, p. 1

Stabbed To Death

Murder Third Tragedy of the Holiday Season

Quarrel Ends Fatally

Italian Slays Man During Row Over Colored Woman

Arrested at Union Station

Caught as He Starts to Leave City

Victim Die on Way to Hospital

Tony Sacrini – the police had to guess at the spelling of the name – is blamed for a New Year eve murder, the third tragedy to be enacted during the holiday season. Tony fatally stabbed Charles J. Chipman last night about 7:30 o'clock while in the house of Mattie Coleman, colored, 711 Delaware avenue southwest. The stabbing, it is alleged, was due to jealousy over a colored woman named Minerva Polliena, wife of Tony Polliena.

Sacrini, who had run away after the stabbing appeared at Union station shortly after 11 o'clock and was about to board an outgoing train when Detective Sears arrested him on description.

When the detective placed his hand on the shoulder of Sacrini the latter did not show any signs of excitement. He submitted quietly to arrest and accompanied the officer to the police room in the big depot. Sacrini had a loaded revolver in his overcoat pocket. He had \$128.88 in cash.

He was arrested as he stood at a ticket window waiting to be given a ticket.

"You ---- fool," he is alleged to have said when the detective placed him under arrest. "You don't want me."

Identified as Slayer

At the police station witnesses identified him as the slayer of Chipman and he was transferred to the station in South Washington.

Chipman was stabbed several times, the fatal wound being in the side. He bled to death, dying in the ambulance while on the way to Casualty Hospital. Tony Polliena, the police were told, separated from his wife shortly after their marriage in the office of L.I. O'Neal, a justice of the peace, about five years ago. He then went to Pittsburg, it is stated.

Since a short while after their separation, Minerva Polliena, told a Star reporter last night, she has been known as Mrs. Tony Polliena, and her name so appears on the police record, the woman having been detained at the fourth precinct police station August 1 for alleged drunkenness. Chipman, who was formerly employed as a laborer in the parks, was released from jail December 9 after serving sixty days for shooting at William Jackson, following an alleged assault on the Polliena woman. Jackson went to the woman's assistance, and Chipman, it was said, resented what he termed outside interference. He was knocked down by Jackson and later met the latter and shot at him, according to the evidence. After he was released from jail Chipman found employment at the jail as an ironworker. Yesterday afternoon he received his pay before he left his place of employment for the day.

Said He Came For Laundry

It was after 7 o'clock when he appeared at the Delaware avenue house, where the Polliena woman had a room, and said he had come for his laundry, the woman having done such work for him. Tony Sacrini was with him. Mattie Coleman, occupant of the house, told the police what happened after the

two men came there. Very few words had been spoken, she said, when Chipman announced he and Tony were going to get a drink. He added that he would return soon for his laundry.

"When they came back," Mattie said, "both of them were drunk. They seemed to be sociable when they came. Minerva tried to hand the package of laundry through the door to Chipman, but he pushed the door open and entered."

The men then engaged in what the colored woman described as a jealous quarrel. She said the following conversation took place:

"IS that your wife?" Chipman asked Tony.

"Yes," replied the Italian, "but you may have her."

"If she's your wife," Chipman added, "she's my sweetheart."

Mattie Coleman said she scented trouble and tried to get the men separated. Tony went to the kitchen, the rear of the two rooms on the first floor of the house, but Chipman followed. The latter renewed the argument about the Polliena woman. Tony, Mattie Coleman stated, had been standing near the back wall, looking at his watch.

"I asked him the time," said Mattie, "and he told me it was half-past seven."

Quarrel Is Resumed

"Tony," said Chipman, according to the woman's account, "what do you mean to do? Do you mean to say you are going to take her?"

"You can have her if you want her," Tony answered.

Chipman then told the Italian, Mattie Coleman said, that he would cut his throat if he (Tony) fooled with him, although he exhibited no weapon, it is stated.

"You say you will cut my throat," Tony is said to have replied to Chipman. "I am a good friend of yours. Give me your hand."

Chipman extended his hand and the men apparently shook, but an instant later Chipman showed a desire to renew the argument. He was tanding with his hands uplifted, declared Mattie Coleman, when Tony, who had shown signs of impatience, dealt him a blow with his fist and knocked him down.

Mattie Coleman begged Tony to stop hitting Chipman, and she said he then cut at her with a knife. She stepped back to go to the door to call a policeman, but before she left the room the Italian pounced on the man on the floor and started using his knife.

"He kept working on him with it," said Mattie, "and the blood got all over everything. While they were struggling they knocked over a bucket of water."

Minerva Polliena left the house before the trouble became serious, she states, going away alone. She admitted she had been the common-law wife of Tony Sacriani after her husband left her, and she had also known Charlie Chipman, as she called the victim of last night's encounter.

Neighbors Rushed In

Mattie Coleman's effort to get a policeman attracted a number of neighbors to her house. Chipman was lying in a pool of blood on the kitchen floor.

The police, after a quick investigation, sent out a message stating that Tony Polliena had done the cutting. Shortly afterward the mistake was discovered and the name was changed. Chipman had been placed in the ambulance and started for the hospital, in the care of Dr. Kilgore, but he died before the hospital was reached. His body was taken to the morgue.

Inspector Boardman detailed detectives Pratt, Howlett, O'Dea and Cornwell to work with Precinct Detective Grant and other members of the squad of the fourth precinct in a search for Sacriani. The detective learned that Tony was in the employ of the Pennsylvania Railroad in Southeast Washington and that he had a pass entitling him to transportation to Philadelphia.

Detectives visited the railroad works and other places where they thought the man might be found, but no trace of him was discovered until he appeared at Union station. He will be detained at the fourth precinct station until Coroner Nevitt holds an inquest over the body of Chipman.

The Evening Star, January 2, 1911, p. 4

Tony Sacrini In Jail On Charge Of Murder

Held by Jury of Inquest for Fatally Stabbing Charles J. Chipman

Tony Sacrini, who was arrested Saturday night by Detective Ears on a charge of fatally stabbing Charles J. Chipman, was received at the District jail this afternoon to join the colony of slayers, a jury of inquest having referred the killing to the grand jury for investigation. Sacrini was given a cell in the north-wing of the prison, not far from those of two of his fellow-countrymen who were committed for homicide during the past ten days.

Minerva Polliena, colored, about whom the fatal fight occurred, was held at the fourth precinct station as a witness until this morning, when she was taken to the morgue to testify before the jury. Mattie Coleman, colored, occupant of house 711 Delaware avenue southwest, where the homicide was committed, also appeared as a witness at the inquest.

Greeted by His Friends

Sacrini was taken this morning in the patrol wagon from the police station to the morgue. Many of his friends gathered there to greet him and to let him know they had not forsaken him.

Undertaker J. William Lee took charge of the body of Chipman before the hearing in the case was concluded and prepared it for burial. The funeral will take place Wednesday morning at 10 o'clock and the interment will be in Congressional cemetery. Yesterday a number of Italians called at the fourth precinct station to see Sacrini. They assured him they would have counsel to look after his interests.

"I did it in self-defense," was all that Sacrini would say to the police about the affair.

Weapon Not Found

The weapon with which the life of Chipman was taken was not found. It was stated to the police that Sacrini took the weapon from his inside pocket, and that it was probably a dirk. Sacrini says he dropped the weapon on the floor in the room where the trouble occurred, but the police were unable to find it when they made an investigation.

When the Italian appeared at Union station to purchase a ticket and was arrested by Detective Ears there were bloodstains on his clothing, although he denied he had been in a fight. Sacrini had taken out citizenship paper some time ago, and he had the papers in his pocket when he was arrested.

Detective Sears was warmly commended by police official for having made the arrest on description.

The Evening Star, February 7, 1911, p. 16

Indicted For Murder

Antonio Sacrini Charged With Death of Charles J. Chipman

An indictment for first-degree murder has been returned by the grand jury against Antonio Sacrini, an Italian, held by the coroner as responsible for the death of Charles J. Chipman. The men are alleged to have quarreled over a colored woman December 31 last, when Sacrini is charged with slashing the man with a knife.

The Italian fled from the scene of the crime, but was apprehended at the Union station.

The Evening Star, February 9, 1911, p. 18

Sacrini Pleads Not Guilty

Antonio Sacrini, recently indicted for first degree murder in connection with the death of Charles J. Chipman, today waived the reading of the indictment against him and entered a plea of not guilty. He will be defended by Attorney W. Gwynn Gardiner.

The Evening Star, March 29, 1911, p. 10

Claims Self-Defense

Sacrini Murder Case May Reach Jury This Afternoon

Self-defense is the plea interposed today by Antonio Sacrini to the charge that he is guilty of first degree murder in causing the death of Charles Chipman, December 31 last, because of jealousy. Sacrini is being tried before Justice Wright in Criminal Court No. 1.

Attorney W. Gwynn Gardiner, in his opening statement for the defense, told the jury he expected to show that Chipman had threatened the life of the Italian, because of the association of the two men with the same woman. On the day of the killing, counsel said, when the men met, Chipman had the knife, and in a quarrel attempted to use it, when the Italian took it from him and killed Chipman with the latter's own weapon.

The case may go to the jury late this afternoon. Assistant United States Attorney Turner is conducting the prosecution.

The Evening Star, March 31, 1911, p. 7

Antonio Sacrini Guilty

Convicted of Second-Degree Murder in Killing C.J. Chapman

Guilty of murder in the second degree is the verdict returned late yesterday afternoon by a jury in Criminal Court No. 1, before Justice Wright, in the case of Antonio Sacrini. Sacrini was indicted for first-degree murder in causing the death of Charles J. Chipman December 31 last in a jealous quarrel over a woman.

The maximum penalty for second-degree murder is life imprisonment, with a minimum punishment of twenty years. The Italian was remanded for sentence.

Attorney W. Gwynn Gardiner defended the prisoner. Assistant United States Attorney Turner conducted the prosecution.

The Evening Star, April 7, 1911, p. 11

Sent To Prison or Life

Sacrini Was Convicted of Second Degree Murder

Antonio Sacrini, who was convicted of second degree murder in causing the death of Charles J. Chipman, December 31 last by stabbing him, was sentenced today by Justice Wright to life imprisonment, the maximum penalty under the law. The man was tried for first degree murder, but the jury returned a verdict of the lesser crime.

In imposing the maximum penalty Justice Wright said the case appeared to be a typical one of second degree murder. There was evidence of previous threats which might have sustained a verdict of first degree if the jury had taken them to have been made in earnest. By its action, the court said, the jury had evidently determined that the threat had been made in a spirit of bravado and had, therefore, reduced the crime to second degree.

Attorney W.G. Gardiner appeared for the prisoner and Assistant United States Attorney Turner conducted the prosecution.