

John Alexander Washington Clarvoe

(6 May 1831 – 4 Feb 1879)

The National Republican, September 26, 1876

Wedding Celebration

Twenty Years of Married Life

Last night was the 20th anniversary of the wedding of Mr. and Mrs. J.A.W. Clarvoe, and a number of their friends determined to give them a surprise in the shape of a wedding. John, with his usual cunning, ascertained the fact, and as a good husband, having no secrets from his wife, informed her of the proposed visit. The result was that the visitors instead of the hosts were surprised. The proverbial hospitality of the Clarvoe mansion was fairly outdone, and the right royal welcome extended made the party happy beyond measure. The table was too small to hold the feast spread, and there were drinkables enough to swim a small-sized navy. The presents were as numerous as the guests, and of every conceivable variety. The good joke on the "boys," however, was that they gave it out as a crystal wedding, and made their presents accordingly. Probably the next time they have occasion to get up a "surprise" they will not fall into the same error. The affair was a grand success, and all present will remember with pride and pleasure their participation in it.

The Evening Star, January 8, 1879

Locals

We regret to learn that Mr. J.A.W. Clarvoe of the detective force is quite sick and within the last four days there has been an unfavorable turn in the disease--pneumonia.

The Evening Star, January 15, 1879

Locals

The condition of Mr. J.A.W. Clarvoe of the detective force was very much worse yesterday, but there was some change for the better during the night.

The Evening Star, January 17, 1879

Locals

Detective J.A.W. Clarvoe is still dangerously ill at his residence in South Washington. A consultation of police surgeons was held last night on his case but the results are not known.

The Evening Star, January 19, 1879

Locals

The condition of Detective Clarvoe is reported to be somewhat improved, he having rested comfortably last night.

The Evening Star, January 21, 1879

Locals

Detective Clarvoe who has been very ill of pneumonia is much better today and in a fair way to recovery.

Clarvoe. On Tuesday, February 4, 1879, at 9:10 p.m., of heart disease, John A.W. Clarvoe, in the 48th year of his age. The funeral services will take place at his late residence, No. 523 Seventh street southwest, on Sunday, the 9th instant, at 2 o'clock p.m. Friends of the family are respectfully invited to attend.

The Evening Star, February 6, 1879

Death of Detective Clarvoe.

Mr. John A.W. Clarvoe, who had been ill for some time past, of dropsy of the heart, but who was out walking yesterday, and it was hoped had entirely recovered, died last evening at his residence, No. 523 7th street s.w., shortly after returning home. Mr. Clarvoe in early life served in the merchant marine service, and also in the navy. He subsequently learned the trade of plasterer, at which he worked for some years. He served in the early part of the war as a District volunteer, and on the organization of the Metropolitan police (Sept. 11, 1861) he was appointed, and went on duty in South Washington. In October 1863, he was appointed a detective officer, and for a series of years was chief of detectives. For over a year he was detailed for service in the secret service of the Treasury, in which he rendered such service as gave him a national reputation. He leaves a wife and six children. He was a member of Dawson Lodge, No. 16, F.A.A.M., Washington R.A. Chapter, and Columbia Commandery, No. 2, K.T. It is said that Mr. Clarvoe was born on a steamboat, between this city and Alexandria, and for that circumstance was named John Alexandria Washington Clarvoe. It is thought that an extended walk up and down Pennsylvania avenue yesterday was too much exertion for him, and caused a relapse.

The Evening Star, February 6, 1879

The funeral of Detective J.A. Clarvoe will take place Sunday at 2 o'clock p.m. from his late residence on 7th street southwest.

The Evening Star, February 10, 1879

The Funeral of John A.W. Clarvoe

for many years a detective of the Metropolitan police force, took place from his late residence in South Washington yesterday afternoon, and was attended by a large concourse of people. The remains were in a handsome rosewood coffin, on which were the insignia of the Masons, and it was literally covered with floral ornaments, a number of which were sent from Baltimore, Philadelphia and other places. One of the ornaments was a shield of white immortelles with the letters M.P.D. in violets. The services at the house were conducted by Revs. Drs. Meador and Bittinger, the former making a short address. The cortege moved from the residence in the following order: Detachment of police mounted and on foot, under command of Capt. W.G. Brock; Donch's band; Columbia Commandery, No. 2; Washington R.A. Chapter; Dawson Lodge, No. 16; carriages containing our detective corps, and Detectives Sharkle, Miller, Davis and Genther, of Philadelphia; Detectives Crone, Pontier, Mitchell, Freeburger, West and Lyon, Capt. Jas. Irvin, of the jail, and Capt. Beler, deputy marshal of Baltimore, and others; carriages containing the ministers, in which was borne a floral column; hearse containing the remains; the pall-bearers, Messrs. Cavanaugh and McCarthy, on behalf of Columbia Commandery; MacFeely and Howard, on behalf of Washington Chapter; Stephenson and Clements, on behalf of the Blue Lodge, and Lieut. Skippon and Detective Coomes, on behalf of the police department. Then followed a long line of carriages containing the family and friends of the deceased. At the cemetery the casket was deposited in the vault. The Masonic funeral service was celebrated, and the Masonic choir rendered several odes in their usual fine style.

The Evening Star, April 7, 1879

The friends of the late Detective Captain John A.W. Clarvoe are respectfully invited to be present at the transfer of his remains from the vault to their final earthly resting place at 4 o'clock p.m., Tuesday 8th inst.

The Evening Star, April 9, 1879

Locals

The remains of Detective J.A.W. Clarvoe, which had been deposited in the public vault at Congressional cemetery, were interred yesterday, in the presence of the family and friends of the deceased. Rev. C.C. Meador offered a short but appropriate prayer, which was all the service performed at the transfer.

Forman, Stephen M., A Guide to Civil War Washington, Washington, DC: Elliott & Clark Publishing, 1995.

Clarvoe was one of four city detectives who went to Mary Surratt's boardinghouse on H Street on the night of April 14 looking for John Wilkes Booth and John Surratt. He told the boarders at the house that Booth had shot the president and that John Surratt had assassinated the secretary of state. Clarvoe then showed them a black scarf saying, "Do you see the blood on that? That is the blood of Abraham Lincoln."