

## Louis Gebicke

( - 3 Sep 1896)

---

*The Evening Star, September 11, 1896*

### **Louis Gebicke Dead**

### **His Body Found in a Rocky Ravine Above Georgetown**

### **No Signs of Suicide**

### **Well-Known Member of the Marine Band**

### **Funeral Services**

In an advanced state of decomposition, the body of Louis Gebicke, trombone soloist, and until recently assistant leader and business manager of the band of the United States marine corps, was found late yesterday afternoon in a deep ravine in the vicinity of a hotel conducted by Mr. Charles O. Brill, on the Conduit road, about five miles from this city. Mr. Gebicke was missing since Thursday, September 3, and the remains were found by Mr. Brill. Absolutely no indication of suicide has appeared, while there is every reason to believe that death was due to exposure to the weather at a time when the physical condition of Mr. Gebicke was weak and susceptible.

The deceased left his home on the afternoon mentioned, and his family were ignorant of his whereabouts or condition until informed of the finding of the body last evening. The police were also unaware of the disappearance until a day or two ago. Mrs. Brill, the wife of the hotel keeper, read a newspaper report yesterday of the disappearance of the bandsman, and it proved of unusual interest, for the reason that Mr. Brill and Mr. Gebicke were good friends, and the latter frequently visited the hotel. Mrs. Brill informed her husband of the reported disappearance, and from the barkeeper it was learned that Gebicke was last seen at the hotel on the afternoon of the 3d instant. On that occasion it afterward occurred to Mr. Brill, he had lunched with Mr. Gebicke, and the visitor had eaten four raw reed birds. He had also been drinking to a considerable extent. On leaving the hotel Mr. Gebicke walked in the direction of the Potomac river, explaining that he was going for a swim. That was the last seen of him alive.

### *The Body Found*

After receiving this information, Mr. Brill yesterday started in the direction taken by Mr. Gebicke, fully expecting that he had been drowned. After proceeding about five hundred yards, Mr. Brill was horrified upon seeing the dead body of his friend resting on some rocks in a deep secluded ravine between the canal and the tracks of the electric railway. It was evident that the man had been dead fully a week for the body had been somewhat mutilated by insects and hogs.

Mr. Brill at once notified the sheriff and coroner of the county, and also Capt. F.H. Harrington of the marine corps. After an investigation, the sheriff decided that an inquest was unnecessary, making it of record that "Louis Gebicke died by the visitation of God in a natural way, and not otherwise." With the exception of three one dollar bills, nothing of value or importance or in explanation of the death of Mr. Gebicke was discovered.

At the direction of Capt. Harrington, Lieut. Shaw and Drum Major Martin visited the fatal spot, and the body was turned over to them by the coroner of Montgomery county. Capt. Harrington, with undertaker Boteler, later went after the body, and it was taken to the undertaker's establishment, on 8th street southeast, directly opposite the marine barracks. The weekly concert of the Marine Band was in progress at the barracks when the announcement of the finding of the body was made. The concert was immediately discontinued out of respect to the deceased. The news caused general sorrow at the barracks, where Mr. Gebicke was much liked.

### *The Bereaved Home*

Mrs. Gebicke was almost heart-broken when the sad tidings were borne to her. She had been in a high state of nervous excitement for eight days, owing to the unexplained absence of her husband, and the fact that he was dead proved a decidedly hard blow. Many friends visited the distressed widow last evening and today at her residence, 210 F street northeast, and endeavored to comfort her and her six young children, as far as possible. According to Mrs. Gebicke, her husband had been disconsolate for some time, and especially so since he was deposed as assistant leader of the band. A week ago last Wednesday Mr. Gebicke returned to his home at the conclusion of the band concert at the Capitol,, and remarked to his wife, "My heart is broken." He would say nothing more. Mrs. Gebicke never for a moment entertained an idea that her husband had committed suicide.

Prof. Fanciulli, the leader of the Marine Band, expressed to a Star reporter deep regret at the death of Mr. Gebicke. In regard to deposing him from the assistant leadership of the band, Prof. Fanciulli explained that during the concert at the Capitol Wednesday before last Gebicke appeared to be under the influence of liquor. He made several mistakes and was reproved by the leader. After the concert Gebicke left and failed to report the next day and thereafter. Prof. Fanciulli declares that he was never unjust to Gebicke in any way.

### *The Dead Man*

The deceased was thirty-three years of age and was a powerfully built man. He was a native of Frankhausen, Germany, and had been in this country fourteen years. In Germany he was a member of Efhurt's military band, and in America joined Gilmore's celebrated organization. At the request of Prof. Sousa he joined the Marine Band seven years ago, but, becoming dissatisfied, he left and played with some local bands, finally securing an appointment on the police force. When Prof. Fanciulli took charge of the Marine Band Gebicke returned to the ranks, and by his skill and ability as a musician arose to the assistant leader. Shortly after, having trouble with the leader, he requested his discharge, but this was refused. He was a member of the Police Relief Association, the Eastern Athletic Club and the Columbia Athletic Club. His jovial disposition winning him a large circle of acquaintances.

No marks of violence or indications of suicide could be found on the body by the undertaker, who made a careful examination. Owing to the decomposed condition of the remains they were taken to Congressional cemetery by the undertaker this morning and placed in a grave. The latter will not be closed, however, until 4 o'clock this afternoon, when funeral services are to be held.

### *Funeral Services*

Capt. Harrington has determined that the body shall be laid to rest with proper honors. The full Marine Band and the entire command quartered at the Marine barracks has been ordered to assemble at 3:30 o'clock. The marines are to parade with side arms only, and will proceed to the cemetery under command of a non-commissioned officer. At the grave the band will render appropriate selections and a firing party, of sixteen, commanded by a sergeant, will discharge the customary number of volleys over the grave. The chaplain of the corps being absent on leave, an effort was made this afternoon to have the pastor of the church of which Mrs. Gebicke is a member officiate. Should this plan for any reason not be carried out Capt. Harrington will detail a commissioned officer of the corps to read the burial service.

Capt. Harrington has been very active in seeing that the caring for the body and the funeral were properly carried out, remaining awake the greater part of last night for that purpose. To a Star reporter Capt. Harrington characterized the theory that Gebicke committed suicide as being without foundation. It is the opinion of Capt. Harrington that while in a weak physical condition Gebicke was exposed to the severe rainstorm of a few days ago, which directly caused his demise.

Mrs. Gebicke and her six children are residing with relatives at 210 F street northeast, and it is understood that the family is without means other than such as is furnished by the relatives. The members of the Marine Band today made up a generous purse which is to be turned over to the widow.

*The Evening Star, September 12, 1896*

**Laid to Rest**

Funeral services over the remains of the late Louis Gebicke, assistant leader of the Marine Band, were held at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon at Congressional Cemetery. The services which were in accordance with the program announced in yesterday's Star were conducted by Rev. Mr. Hobbs of the 4th Street M.E. Church.