

August Gecks (- 8 Dec 1882)

The Evening Star, December 7, 1882

Suicide at a Hotel

August Gecks Found Dead in His Bed With an Empty Vial at His Side

Early this morning August Gecks, a guest at the National hotel, was found in his bed apparently in a lifeless condition, with a vial at his side supposed to contain poison. Dr. Walsh, on C street, was sent for and found life extinct. The coroner was notified and soon arrived, when he permitted the body to be removed to Buchly's, the undertaker, where an inquest was appointed at 1 o'clock. Gecks is a German, 35 years old, and arrived here on Thanksgiving day from Dakota Territory, where he had been for several years, and where he had the misfortune last winter of freezing his feet and hands from exposure, so that most of his fingers had to be amputated. It is thought that owing to his misfortunes and reverses his mind became impaired and caused him to commit the act.

Dr. Hartigan this afternoon held a post mortem on the body at Buchly's undertaking establishment. Dr. Hartigan stated to a Star reporter that he was of the opinion that no inquest would be necessary.

The Evening Star, December 8, 1882

The Suicide of August Gecks

The Coroner's Inquest Today

Coroner Patterson, assisted by Dr. J.F. Hartigan, this morning held an inquest on the body of August Geck, who committed suicide at the National hotel, as stated in yesterday's Star. A jury of six was summoned, to meet at 12 o'clock today at Buchley's undertaking establishment, 212 Pennsylvania avenue.

The first witness was Samuel McClintock, who testified that he resides at the Soldiers' Home. He had known the deceased since October 17th last, when he was brought from the city to the hospital, sick. Witness attended him from that date up to the time of his death. While at the Home deceased seemed to suffer both mentally and physically. Witness left the Home with deceased on Thanksgiving morning for the purpose of taking him to New York in a few days. Witness intended to start on Tuesday last, but deceased was taken sick, and continued unwell Tuesday night and the following day. The last witness saw of him was between 11 and 12 o'clock Wednesday night, when witness asked if he could do anything for him. Geck replied that he could not, and told witness to close the door.

Thomas K. Sheiler testified that he put the cyanide of potash up on Tuesday evening, on prescription signed Dr. A.G., and marked it "for external use."

Rudolph Ramsberg testified that he was acquainted with Mr. Geck had never seen him drink anything himself, but it was always given him by an attendant. Witness heard of his attempt to commit suicide at the Home.

Mr. McClintock was recalled, and stated that he found the bottle which has been shown before the jury under the pillow. When witness went to bed at night, he told witness not to disturb him until late in the morning, as he wished to rest as long as possible, and it was 8 o'clock in the morning when witness entered his room.

Dr. J.F. Hartigan testified that he made an examination of the body of Geck at the National hotel. The examination internally showed congestion of the lungs and inflammation of the stomach. A lateral appearance would be such as might be expected from an overdose of cyanide of potash. There was also

a peculiar bright appearance of the tissues characteristic of this form of poison. His opinion was that death was the result of poisoning by cyanide of potash.

The Verdict

The jury found that deceased came to his death during the night of December 6, 1882, at the National hotel, from an overdose of cyanide of potash, self-administered.