

Charles W. Golden

(1835 – 15 Apr 1897)

Golden. On Tuesday, April 15, 1897, Charles W. Golden in the 63d year of his age. Funeral from Lee's Chapel, Pennsylvania ave. between 3d and 4 1/2 street northwest, Saturday, April 17 at 10 p.m.

The Evening Star, April 15, 1897

He Inhaled Gas

Suicide of Charles W. Golden, Who Was Despondent

Discovery of His Body in a Room This Morning -- Tired of Life

Sickness, causing despondency and a fear of ending his days in the poor house, drove Charles W. Golden to end his life last night by inhaling illuminating gas. This morning his dead body was found in bed in his room at No. 457 C street northwest, the boarding house of Mrs. Chamberlain. It was nearly 9 o'clock when Mrs. Chamberlain went to his room because of the smell of escaping gas and found that life was extinct. But for fear of making a mistake a physician was sent for, and he saw that life had left the body several hours before the ghastly find was made.

Golden, who was about sixty years old, had occupied a room in Mrs. Chamberlain's house for about eight years. He had usually occupied a hall room, but being sick last winter he changed his quarters to a low room over the back building, the room in which Mrs. Chamberlain stored her trunks. The low ceiling and cramped quarters made the room anything but comfortable, but there was a wood stove in the room, which enabled him to keep the place warm and cook any little thing he might want to eat. Although he had roomed in the house for eight years he had told Mrs. Chamberlain very little of his family connections, except that his niece, Mrs. Carrie Smith, kept a dry goods store in Anacostia. In this way it was learned that he was a brother of the late Stephen M. Golden, who was at one time an assistant superintendent of the county roads. The deceased had been feeling unwell for some time, and his attending physician had said he was suffering from an attack of softening of the brain. Recently he spent about two weeks in Garfield Hospital, so it is said, and when he returned home he said the physicians thought there was not much the matter with him. And he went on the same as he had before he received the hospital treatment, eating his meals at cheap dining rooms and remaining in his room most of the time.

A Financial Delusion

Where he got his money was always a mystery to the other people in the house, but he seemed to have a small income. Occasionally he would speak of money matters, and seemed anxious to lead others to the belief that he had spent about all he had, and that he expected soon to go to the poor house. While this was not true, the poor man really believed it was, and it was this ungrounded belief that really caused him to take his life. For several months the unfortunate man had thought of ending his life, for he frequently said that death in this way was so easy. When he would hear of any one committing suicide he invariably discussed the case, and always concluded by saying that suicide was an easy way of ending life. Yesterday he was about the house and was very despondent, as he had been for several days, although he made no remark which indicated that he intended taking his life. Last night he went to his room early, and nothing more was heard of him until this morning, when Mrs. Chamberlain smelled the gas and found the body. When she opened the door leading to the room the smell of gas almost stifled her, but she went in and stopped the flow of gas and opened the windows. Then she called one of the boarders in the house, and he called in Sergt. Hamilton and Policeman

Newkirk. They reached the house after the doctor had viewed the body and made out a list of his effects.

Preparations for Death

The condition of the room made it evident that the dead man had taken his own life, for he had tied his coat about the stovepipe to prevent the escape of gas and had also put a garment over the keyhole. In his pocket was found a note, evidently written several days ago. This was addressed "Dear Ritie" and read: "If I should die bury me where you choose and if there is any money left give it to Charlie and his mother. I have taken so much medicine and it does not seem to do me any good. Charles W. Golden."

In the dead man's pocket book the police found about \$80, and papers found in his bureau drawer indicated that he had more money coming to him. The room in which he was found contained none of the comforts of life, and this was one of the results of his efforts to live economically and save his money. When the police had made a thorough investigation of the case Coroner Hammett called and gave a certificate of death. Undertaker J.W. Lee then took charge of the body and removed it to his establishment on Pennsylvania avenue. The police then communicated with the dead man's relatives, who were greatly shocked at hearing the news of his sad end.

Golden's Family

The deceased, as already stated, was a brother of the late Stephen M. Golden, who was a member of the old District legislature. He died several years ago, and for some time previous to his death he was in the dairy business in Anacostia, and his brother, the dead man, was associated with him. The Golden's came here from West Troy, N.Y., many years ago, and Charles W. Golden, who committed suicide was a farmer. He got a position on the Washington and Georgetown railroad as conductor, but left the employment of the company about the time the cable road was constructed. Being a bachelor and being of an economical disposition he saved considerable money, and it was from this money that he got his small income. "Ritie," to whom the letter was addressed, is Mrs. Maria Golden, widow of Stephen Golden, and "Charlie," who is to get his money, is a grand nephew. Relatives have taken charge of the body.