

Blanche Hamel

(– 19 Sep 1916)

Hamel. Suddenly, on Tuesday, September 19, 1916, Blanche, beloved daughter of Mrs. Margaret Anholt. She leaves a mother and three children to mourn her. Funeral from her late residence, 1011 M street southeast, on Saturday, September 23, at 3 p.m. Interment (private) at Congressional cemetery.

The Evening Star, September 20, 1916, p. 7

Pistol Shots End Lives Of Couple

Mrs. Blanche Hamel and John W. Chism Are

Participants in Double Tragedy

One Shot On Street; Other In Rooming House

Coroner to Determine Whether It Was Murder and Suicide

Or A Double Suicide

Mrs. Blanche Hamel, thirty-five years old, who lived with her mother, Mrs. Annie Anholt, at 1011 M street southeast, died in an ambulance on the way to Casualty Hospital shortly after 10 o'clock last night, from a bullet wound in her neck. A few hours later John W. Chism, also thirty-five years old, who was with Mrs. Hamel when the shot was fired that ended her life, ended his own life with a bullet in a room at the home of Mrs. Mary Deal, 760 6th street southeast.

A note left by Chism stated that Mrs. Hamel had shot herself, although the police, after investigating the killing of the woman, had concluded that she had been slain by Chism. A coroner's inquest is to be held tomorrow to determine whether the tragedy was a double suicide or a murder and suicide.

Shot While on Street

About 10 o'clock last night Mrs. Hamel and Chism, who evidently had met somewhere else, reached the corner of 10th and M streets southeast, only a few doors from Mrs. Hamel's home. Willie Hamel, eleven years old, son of the dead woman, hearing the voices of the couple in conversation, went to where the two stood. The boy was sent home by Chism, and a few minutes later the shot was fired that ended Mrs. Hamel's life. Immediately after the shot Chism ran north on 10th street and disappeared. Police and others attracted to the spot by the sound of the shot found Mrs. Hamel on the sidewalk bleeding from a wound in the neck. She died before reaching Casualty Hospital.

From the little Hamel boy the police learned that Chism had been Mrs. Hamel's companion. It was also learned that Chism, who lived at the home of Andrew Norton, 340 13th street southeast, had been told to keep away from the M street house, and that he had met Mrs. Hamel away from her home on several occasions. Investigation showed that Chism, who was a driver, was not in his room at the Norton home, and it was not until about 1 o'clock this morning that the police learned the man was at the home of Mrs. Deal.

According to the latter's statement, Chism called there, and, telling her he was to start to work this morning at the National Capital brewery, engaged a room. Chism seemed nervous, Mrs. Deal told the police.

Shot Ends Chism's Life

Chism went to his room and nothing more was heard of him until the report of a pistol shot, followed by his body falling on the floor. Detectives Burlingame, Berman, Kelly, Springman, Mullen and

Cornwell and Precinct Detective Wise and Policemen Waters and Sergt. Davis were not far away when the shot that ended Chism's life was fired. They were on their way to the house to arrest him.

The policemen entered the house and found the lifeless body of Chism stretched on the floor. The pistol was on the floor between his legs. On a dresser in the room was found the note Chism had written to his mother. It reads:

"Dear Mother: I have gone to resting place. Blanche shot herself last night. God knows I did not do it. John W. Chism. Good-by."

Coroner Nevitt visited the house of Mrs. Deal shortly before 2 o'clock this morning, examined the body of Chism and heard statements of his visit to the house and the subsequent shooting. He also was informed of the killing of Mrs. Hamel and of the talk she had with Chism only a few minutes before she was shot.

Pistol Fired Twice

In view of the statement contained in the message left by Chism, a message that was written when he undoubtedly expected he soon would be dead, the coroner withheld action in Mrs. Hamel's case. The police today are trying to trace the weapon with which they are certain both lives were taken.

Two cartridges in the pistol had been discharged, and a supply of cartridges of the same size and make was found in the trunk that belonged to Chism.

Discussing the affair, a policeman suggested that Chism's statement that he had not shot Mrs. Hamel probably was due to a possible struggle between them for the possession of the weapon. He suggested that Mrs. Hamel tried to take the pistol from Chism when he drew it, and that it was discharged during the struggle.

Coroner Nevitt examined the body of the woman at Casualty Hospital. The position of the wound, he stated, did not suggest that the woman shot herself.

The Evening Star, September 21, 1916, p. 15

Mrs. Hamel Murdered, Coroner's Jury Finds Holds John W. Chism, Suicide, Responsible, Despite Ante-Mortem Statement Woman Shot Self

A coroner's jury today decided that Mrs. Blanche Hamel, 1011 M street, who was shot to death at 10th and M streets southeast, only a few doors from her home, about 10 o'clock Tuesday night, was murdered by John W. Chism, who later committed suicide at 760 6th street southeast, where he appeared shortly after the shooting and rented a room. The jury did not take any stock in the statement contained in Chism's note to the effect that Mrs. Hamel shot herself.

Mrs. Annie Anholt, mother of the dead woman, and Charles Hamel, a son, were witnesses at the inquest, which was held at the morgue. Other witnesses were members of the police department. Funeral services for Mrs. Hamel will be conducted at her late home at 2:30 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. Interment will be in Congressional Cemetery.

The body of Chism was removed to the home of his parents, 2210 I street, where funeral services will be held tomorrow afternoon at the same hour at which services will be held for Mrs. Hamel. His body will be interred in Rock Creek cemetery.

The Evening Star, September 29, 1916, p. 7

Hamel. I wish to extend to the many friends of the Pullman and Terminal companies and other friends and relatives my heartfelt thanks for their many floral offerings and expressions of sympathy on the occasion of the death of my daughter, Blanche V. Hamel.

Mrs. Margaret Anholt