

## Mary Ellen Hamilton

( - 26 Nov 1907)

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*The Evening Star, November 27, 1907, p. 8*

### **On Charge of Murder**

### **Local Police Making Search for "Duckey" Holmes**

### **Shoots Mrs. Hamilton**

### **Statement That Fugitive Was "Insanely" Jealous**

### **Attempts to End His Life**

### **Mother of Victim Witnesses The Homicide --**

### **Brother of Accused Wanted in Baltimore**

Harry L. Holmes, alias "Duckey," is alleged to have committed murder in this city last night. The police have information that his brother, George, alias "Katty" Holmes, is wanted in Baltimore to answer a similar charge. At the time the Baltimore police asked the authorities here to be on the lookout for George, it is stated that the homicide was committed because Holmes was "insanely" jealous of the woman.

Holmes, who was formerly a member of the Marine Corps, had boarded at the house of Mrs. W.H. Grove, mother of Mrs. Hamilton, the past two years. His actions toward Mrs. Hamilton. It is stated, indicated that he was in love with her, and about a year ago, when it was reported that Clarence Hamilton, her husband had died in the Philippines, Holmes' protestations of love became more pronounced. It is stated he wanted Mrs. Hamilton to become his wife, but the woman was not positive she was a widow, no official notification of the death of her husband having been received by her. Holmes had worked about the railroad depots and car sheds, and during the past two months had been employed by the G.W. Knox Express Company as a driver. Mrs. Hamilton was employed as waitress in a cafe near 8th and K streets southeast.

### *Under Influence of Liquor*

Holmes last night was about the house, it is stated, under the influence of liquor, and he anxiously awaited the return of the young woman. I was about 9:45 o'clock when she reached the house and met Holmes at the front door. Before the woman had time to enter the house the man started a quarrel with her, his language being sufficiently loud to attract the attention of persons who were more than a square away. Mrs. Grove was at home at the time and so was her seventeen-year-old son, George Grove. Mrs. Hamilton finally entered the house and the front door was closed. She was detained in the hallway, where Holmes continued talking to her.

"Don't you go to work tonight," he commanded.

"Yes, I will," the woman replied.

"No, you won't," the man added.

"Yes I will," Mrs. Hamilton declared. "I have to earn my own living. If you don't let me alone I'll put the police on you about that watch."

### *Probably Pierced Heart*

Holmes, it is declared, then produced a revolver from his pocket and began firing. Two bullets went wild, but the third entered the woman's side and probably pierced her heart. She fell to the floor of the parlor and expired. Holmes made an attempt to shoot himself in the head, but the weapon refused to work and the effort was unsuccessful. Holmes then left the house by the back way, tearing boards from three fences in order to reach the street, when the police were informed he started in a southeasterly

direction, going toward the Anacostia river. Mrs. Grove had the police notified by telephone of the shooting, but Policeman Allen (on the beat) reached the house before the squad of ninth precinct policemen arrived. Capt. Daley and Lieut. Falvey led the entire force of the precinct in an all-night search for Holmes. Detectives Baur, Cornwell, Vermillion and Barbee also worked on the case last night, Detectives Evans and Hartigan being added to the party this morning.

As soon as the policemen and detectives reached Duncan place last night they started an investigation. They learned that the family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. William H. Grove, Mrs. Hamilton and George and Ella Grove. Holmes was a boarder. During the past two weeks, the police say, they have been looking for Holmes in connection with the disappearance of a watch from the car barn. It is stated that they visited the house where he boarded, but failed to find him. Several weeks ago, it is added, Holmes and George Grove had a fight and the latter was severely beaten. Holmes was ordered to leave the house, but he was permitted to return shortly afterward.

#### *Mother Witnesses Homicide*

Mrs. Grove, who was present when the shooting occurred, was in so excited a frame of mind last night that she was hardly able to explain to the police just how the crime was committed. She saw Holmes fire his shots and attempt to take his own life.

The police were told by Mrs. Grove that she ran to her daughter's assistance as soon as she realized what was going on, but she could not reach her until after the fatal shot had been fired. Then she did what she could for the dying woman, summoned a physician and neighbors, but life was extinct before medical assistance arrived. Inspector Boardman and Lieut. Peck took an active part in the investigation of the homicide and kept their men at work all night, another squad relieving them this morning.

#### *Description of Holmes*

George, alias Katty, Holmes and Harry, alias Ducky, Holmes are also known by the name Schryfogle, their stepfather's name. Harry is about twenty-five years of age and weighs about 130 pounds. His face is badly marked, due to smallpox. He has black hair, brown eyes, is bowlegged, several of his front teeth are missing, and he has a mole on his right cheek. The police were informed that he had been in the habit of visiting a saloon at Silver Hill, Md., a short distance across the line below Anacostia. His mother, Mrs. Schryfogle, is head nurse at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, and his sister, Mrs. Ida Dunn, resides at 127 East Hamburg street, Baltimore. Written on a piece of paper found in his coat that he left behind, were the addresses 1011 William street, Baltimore, and 613 3d street southwest, this city.

George Holmes, who is wanted in Baltimore for murder, is two or three years younger than Harry. He was a railroad brakeman. The charge on which he is wanted in Baltimore is the murder of George J. Gesswein, the crime, it is alleged, having been committed the morning of July 6, 1906. Search has been made for him since in Baltimore, but he has not been apprehended.

#### *Arrest at Harpers Ferry*

Inspector Boardman received a telegram from Harpers Ferry, W.Va., shortly before noon today announcing that a suspect was under arrest there who answered the description of Holmes. According to the telegram, which was signed by Town Marshal Barker, the man was in company with two other men, who were also placed under arrest at the same time. The telegram stated that the trio are being held until the arrival of a detective from Washington who can identify the prisoner supposed to be the murderer of Mrs. Hamilton. Inspector Boardman announced that Detective Frank Baur will go to Harpers Ferry this afternoon.

The police learned this morning that when Holmes fled from the scene of the killing he was without a hat. Persons residing in the neighborhood of the shooting aver that as he proceeded in the direction

of the Anacostia river he was without headgear. Nothing, it is stated, has been heard of the man since he was last seen going in an easterly direction toward the river.

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### **'Ducky' Holmes in Custody**

#### **Arrest of Alleged Murderer of Mary E. Hamilton**

#### **Found Hiding in Closet of House at Glenburnie, Md. --**

#### **Taken to Baltimore**

Harry L. Holmes, alias Schryfogle, alias "Ducky" Holmes, alleged murderer of Mrs. Mary Ellen Hamilton, did not remain at large many hours after he fired the fatal shot and disappeared from the scene of the tragedy, 1423 Duncan place northeast, having been captured last night at Glenburnie, a small town about fourteen miles from Baltimore. Detective Fred M. Cornwell of this city and Detectives Armstrong and Coughlan of Baltimore made the arrest, finding the fugitive secreted in a closet in the house of Howard Watts, superintendent of the Baltimore and Annapolis railroad.

When the Baltimore police received a request from the police here to be on the lookout for Holmes they learned that he had formerly resided at Glenburnie, where he was prominent as a baseball player. It was also ascertained that he had a sister there and the police thought he might go to her house. An officer was put on to watch and last night Holmes appeared in the town, having been unable to get a coat and hat since leaving this city. He had only a slight acquaintance with the man in whose house he was found, having played ball with him. It is said that the message received by the Baltimore police about the presence of Holmes in the Maryland town came from a former companion of the prisoner.

It was about 7:30 o'clock last night when the Baltimore police learned that Holmes was at Glenburnie, and it was after 1 o'clock this morning when the three detectives returned to Baltimore with the prisoner. On reaching Glenburnie the detectives went to the house in which Holmes was hiding. A knock on the door brought no response, so the detectives threatened to enter by force, whereupon the front door was opened and they were admitted. Holmes, as stated, was found hiding in a closet, being dressed as he was when he went away from the scene of the homicide. He offered no resistance and the officers drove with him to Baltimore. Detective Cornwell communicated with Lieut. Peck about 1:30 o'clock this morning, telling him of the arrest and of a statement made by the prisoner.

#### *Admits the Shooting*

"Holmes," the detective said to the lieutenant, "admits the shooting, but says his mind was a blank about that time, and he could not recall what he had done with the weapon."

Detective Cornwell says Holmes told him he left the house by the back way just after the shooting. Having been employed about the railroad yards and with express companies, he was able to get aboard an engine on the Pennsylvania railroad and ride to a point several miles from Glenburnie. He was exposed to the weather all night and yesterday, being unable to get shelter until he called at the house where he was arrested.

"I don't know why I shot her," Holmes is said to have told the detectives in Baltimore last night.

The statement made by the prisoner after he reached the Baltimore police station, the police think, indicates that he will probably set up a plea of insanity.

"My mind is all a blank," Holmes is reported to have stated, "and I don't know how it happened."

The prisoner added that when he went home Tuesday night and asked Mrs. Grove where her daughter, Mrs. Hamilton, was, he was told that she had probably gone out with another gentleman friend. Holmes said he told her he would go out and find her. He met her at a cheap show, he said, with a one-armed man. She had told him that the man conducted a restaurant, but he did not believe her. The prisoner said that after a conversation with Mrs. Hamilton, in which he told her he wanted her to go

home with him, she consented to accompany him. After leaving the one-armed man, he said, they went to a Chinese restaurant.

"Mary then consented to go home," the prisoner explained, "and we boarded a street car. Mary laid her head on my shoulder and slept until we reached 14th and East Capitol streets. When we got off the car I had to carry her all the way home."

#### *Left in Dazed Condition*

Holmes declared that Mary abused her mother and everybody else in the house. The shooting followed, and he left the house in a dazed condition. The pistol he used, he said, he had borrowed about two months ago because burglaries had been committed in his neighborhood, and he thought he would have it in the house as a precautionary measure. A warrant was issued this morning at the Police Court charging Holmes with murder, Detective Baur obtaining the paper and afterward going to Baltimore for the prisoner. Inspector Boardman is anxious to have the detectives recover the revolver that was used by Holmes, and this morning he requested that search be made in Maryland for it.

When informed of the arrest of Holmes last night Mrs. Grove, mother of the deceased, was visibly affected. She declared the deed was a cold-blooded murder. An autopsy was performed yesterday and it was found that all three shots had taken effect, two of the wounds having been necessarily fatal. One bullet had gone through the heart and the other had pierced the liver. The third inflicted a flesh wound in the neck.

Arrangements have been made to hold an inquest at the morgue at 10:30 o'clock tomorrow morning.

*The Evening Star, November 29, 1907, p. 18*

#### **Coroner's Jury Acts**

**Holds "Ducky" Holmes to Answer Murder Charge**

**Right Name Is Schrifogle**

**Letters Written By Prisoner Give Details of Tragedy**

**Intended to Kill Himself**

**Given Advice to Friends -- Testimony Submitted at the Inquest Conducted This Morning**

Charged with the murder of Mrs. Mary Ellen Hamilton, Henry L. Schnifogle, alias Holmes, was brought here from Baltimore yesterday afternoon by Detective Cornwell and detained at the sixth precinct police station. This morning he was taken to the morgue, where an inquest was held, and it required practically no consultation on the part of the jurors to reach a verdict holding Schrifogle for the death of Mrs. Hamilton. From the morgue the prisoner was taken to police headquarters to be measured and photographed before being taken to jail.

Detective Cornwell brought with him from Glenburnie, Md., the place where the alleged murderer was arrested, three letters that Schrifogle had written four days before the homicide was committed. The letters showed that Schrifogle had thought over the matter of killing Mrs. Hamilton and himself, and that he had even studied out the details of the proposed double tragedy. In the letters he wrote of his great love for Mrs. Hamilton, but said she had made him unhappy by flirting and going with other men. He also made the charge that she had spent his money for jewelry, which she gave to others. One letter was addressed to the mother of his victim, another to his mother, sisters and brothers and the third was addressed to his friends.

### *Letter to Mrs. Grove*

The letter he addressed to Mrs. Grove requested her to notify his mother of his death. After saying she had done the part of a mother by him he wrote:

"Well, no doubt you will be a little surprised when you see myself and your daughter lying dead side by side, but still at the same time you will know why I killed Mary, my sweetheart, and myself without explaining to you, as you know very well why I did this rash act:"

Schriofogle gave the information that his killing Mrs. Hamilton might prevent another tragedy in her family.

"I will swear it is not your fault, for your daughter's wrongdoings. Good-bye, Mrs. Grove, I hope we will meet in heaven."

On the other side of the paper he wrote a message to his mother, sisters and brothers. He complained to them that he had been treated so shabbily by Mrs. Hamilton, "the only girl I ever loved," that he had been worried and driven almost crazy.

"I am very sorry to think that I have got to take my sweetheart's life and my own," he wrote. "Shortly after shooting her I will turn the same revolver on myself and that will end all of my troubles."

In conclusion he asked his mother's forgiveness and requested that his last wish, that his body and that of his victim be buried in the same piece of ground, be granted.

### *Advice for Friends*

The third letter reads:

"To My Friends, Old and Young: Do not get wrapped up in any woman. If you do, I will give you a little advice. If you do and she goes wrong, it will no doubt make you do the same as I have done; that is, if you really care for her and she does wrong, you will get onto the job. Some people will say I was a fool for doing this, but I tell you when you have had the experience that I have had in this love affair you will say I do believe I would have done the same thing. Good-bye, old friends, one and all, I remain no more. H.L. Holmes."

### *Correct Name of Prisoner*

Schriofogle is the correct name of the prisoner. His father died when he was a boy, and he assumed the name Holm, the maiden name of his mother, but he enlisted in the Marine Corps under the name Henry L. Holmes. His mind, he declares, is a blank as to what occurred in his house at the moment the shots were fired. He recollected going in search of the woman Tuesday night and finding her in front of a five-cent theater on Pennsylvania avenue with a man who proved to be John E. Henderson, a saloonkeeper in Alexandria, and of going home with her. He also said he recollected that Mary and her mother became involved in a row, and that he went between them.

"I know I went upstairs," he said "and I know the pistol was under my pillow."

Schriofogle recalled that he boarded an engine in the vicinity of the Pennsylvania avenue bridge and rode to a point near Benning. The fireman gave him an old coat and hat. It was not until after his return to Baltimore that he told Detective Cornwell that he had left the coat hanging in the kitchen at the house of Howard Watts, where he had been arrested. The detective drove back there and got the garment. He found the loaded revolver and letters in the pockets of the coat. Surprise was expressed that Schriofogle did not kill himself while the detectives were endeavoring to effect an entrance to the house instead of going to the closet and covering himself with a sheet.

"If you did not intend to kill the woman," the detective said to the prisoner, why did you write them and leave them about the house, thinking they might have some effect upon her and make her change her conduct."

### *The Testimony*

Fred Sandberg, official photographer of the police department, was the first witness called. He identified photographs showing the body of the Hamilton woman as it was lying on the floor of the Duncan street house.

Policeman Allen stated that he was the first policeman to arrive at the scene of the shooting. He identified the photographs as being a correct view of the room and of the dead body lying on the floor of the parlor.

James W. Turner, 435 1/2 Tennessee avenue northeast, from the rear of his house heard sounds of quarreling in the Groves home and heard some one cry: "He has murdered my girl." Witness went to the house, and the mother of the Hamilton woman told him that "Ducky" Holmes had shot her daughter. The sounds he heard before he went to the house indicated that someone was in distress and was pleading with someone.

In a later conversation Mrs. Groves, mother of the Hamilton woman, told the witness that Mrs. Hamilton had refused to marry Holmes and that Holmes had threatened to kill her if he ever saw her with another man.

George F. Anderson, residing at 1421 Duncan street, and adjoining his residence lived Mrs. Groves, Mrs. Mary E. Hamilton and Holmes. Witness heard quarrels once or twice in the Groves house since July 4, when he moved in the neighborhood.

Two months ago he heard Holmes threaten to kill the Hamilton woman, saying "that if she did not do what was right he would kill her." Tuesday night last witness stated, he heard Mrs. Groves begging Holmes, whom she called "Ducky," not to shoot her daughter. This was about two minutes before he heard the shots. He also heard Mrs. Hamilton cry out: "Oh! Ducky, don't shoot me, I won't tell on you." He then heard three shots, and heard Mrs. Groves cry, "Oh! my daughter is shot, and she will bleed to death." Witness then ran to the Groves house, and, being unable to get in at the door, crawled through a window into a room and found Mrs. Hamilton lying on the floor bleeding from pistol wounds.

Robert I. Warden, 1427 Duncan street two doors from the Groves house, testified he was at his home eating his supper when he heard a noise in his back yard. He went to his rear door in time to see a man, whom he thought to be "Ducky" Holmes going over a back fence. He then heard Mrs. Groves crying out her daughter was killed, and she called him to help her. The witness was the first of the neighbors to go into the house. He found Mrs. Hamilton lying on the floor. He then left the house to get a physician. Witness had heard quarreling in the Groves house. Holmes, he said was a boarder there.

Witness had never heard Holmes threaten the life of the Hamilton woman.

### *Holmes Showed Anger*

Joseph L. Baker of the Hospital Corps at Washington barracks was the next witness. He was in a restaurant Monday night, and Holmes and Mrs. Hamilton were there. Witness was acquainted with the Hamilton woman and was by her introduced to Holmes. Holmes seemed angry, and after witness left he saw Holmes shove the woman around. Later he returned and Holmes told him of his troubles with the Hamilton woman, and he saw a revolver in the possession of Holmes. Witness identified a revolver handed him as he one Holmes had. Holmes said to the witness that he would use the revolver if he saw the Hamilton girl going with any other man. Holmes was not drunk, but seemed to be very jealous. Mrs. Hamilton was employed as a waitress in the restaurant at 8th and L streets in which the witness met Holmes. The prisoner was identified by the witness as the man he met Monday night last.

Detective Cornwall, who arrested Holmes in Maryland near Baltimore, was next sworn. Mr. Cornwall then detailed the conversation he had with Holmes, which has been published.

Dr. H.L. Baker, who performed the autopsy, found three wounds on the body of the Hamilton woman. One over the apex of the heart, one through the body, passing through the lungs, and the third in the neck. Powder marks on the head near the left ear showed that the revolver had been held close to her when she was shot. Two .38-caliber balls were removed from the body. Two of the wounds were necessarily fatal.

Mrs. Groves, the mother of Mrs. Hamilton, was not present at the inquest being too ill to attend, her physician, Dr. Pickford, having notified the coroner.

The prisoner, on the advice of his attorney, J.A. Toomey, refused to make any statement when told by Dr. Glazebrook, the acting coroner, he could do so.

The district attorney's office was represented at the inquest by Assistant District Attorney Perry.

The jury consisted of Messrs. Thomas D. Walker, Gustave Linke, Henry Faur, W.A. Jenkins, James Mitchell and M.A. Tanter.