

Samuel Hanson

(- 15 Jun 1866)

The Evening Star, June 14, 1866

Suicide

This morning, at ten minutes to eight o'clock, the inmates of Mrs. Smith's boarding house, at the northwest corner of Pennsylvania avenue and 4-1/2 street were startled by the report of a pistol from one of the upper rooms, and on proceeding to a room in the upper story, found that its occupant, Mr. Samuel Hanson, had committed suicide by shooting himself with a revolver, the ball entering behind the right ear and causing death instantly. When found he was lifeless, and his bed was covered with blood, the pistol, a large-sized Colt's, having fallen from his hand to the bed. The deceased was from 35 to 40 years of age, and well-known in this city, he having been born and raised in the Fifth Ward, where he resided until the breaking out of the rebellion, when he went south, and took a position in the rebel post office department at Richmond. He had been at Mrs. Smith's about six weeks, and at times appeared to be depressed in spirits, which he said was owing to the difficulty of obtaining employment, coupled with the fact that his brother has recently been dissipated, and failing to do anything to support his mother, who is now on a visit near Marlboro.

Coroner Woodward was sent for, and he this morning empanelled a jury of inquest, who heard the testimony of several witnesses. Catherine Tyler, a chambermaid, testified that the washerwoman came this morning, and finding the door of the room closed, and no answer being made to her knocks, and called her, when she opened the door and found him lying in the bed in a pool of blood. He laid in bed most of the day yesterday, and told her to get some water; also that he would be here but a short time. Witness asked him if he was going out of the city, and he replied in the negative. James Richardson, a colored servant, testified that he saw the deceased about 9 o'clock last night, when he brought him some water. Deceased thanked him several times, and he remarked it as strange. George W. Wilts testified that the deceased came to his room day before yesterday, and inquired if anyone had a pistol he could borrow, but received a negative response. Mr. D.D. Faley testified that the deceased was very pale yesterday at the breakfast table, and he thought that the deceased was ill. Mrs. Bettie Hassler testified that yesterday she had a conversation with the deceased, in which he said "it was all over, and I see no hope." He seemed in very depressed spirits, and said he was weak. He said he had no means, and his brother, to whom his mother had looked for support, was on a spree. He remarked to her a day or two since that he had seen something dead on the street and he envied it. W.M. Barker testified that the conduct of the accused was singular, that he had thought his mind was affected.

In the room was found an unfinished piece of manuscript, which was identified as being in the handwriting of the deceased, stating that circumstances over which he had no control had reduced him from comparatively easy circumstances to almost absolute want. The jury returned a verdict that the deceased came to his death by shooting himself while laboring under temporary insanity, caused by family difficulties.