

Charles W. Havenner

(1829 – 7 Mar 1882)

The Evening Star, October 17, 1855

A Washingtonian Robbed

The Cincinnati Columbian says that on Friday evening last, Mr. Charles W. Havenner, of this city, who was stopping at the Burnet House, took a walk down by the White Water Canal, but being a stranger there, lost his way. Meeting a young man, he inquired of him the direction to the Burnet House; and was shown a contrary direction from that in which he was going, and accompanied by the young man who had given the information. They had not proceeded far before they were met by another person, who, going behind Mr. Havenner, caught him by the throat, holding him firmly, while the other rifled his pockets of their contents, consisting of a gold watch and a pocketbook containing about \$18 in money. Mr. Havenner's throat was enclosed so tightly that he was unable to utter a word or cry for help. Luckily he had left his belt, containing the bulk of his money, at his hotel. After the villains had obtained their booty, they left him to find his way home the best way he could, with the consciousness of returning minus his money and his watch.

Havenner. On the 8th of March, 1882, Charles W. Havenner, aged 52 years. The funeral will take place from his late residence, 421 M street northwest, on tomorrow (9th inst.) at 3 1/2 o'clock. Friends and relatives are invited to attend.

The Evening Star, March 7, 1882

Probably a Suicide

Mr. C.W. Havenner Receives a Serious, Perhaps Fatal, Wound From His Own Hand— Particulars of a Deplorable Affair.

A pistol-shot was heard in the building at the northeast corner of 7th street and Louisiana avenue yesterday afternoon about 4:30 o'clock. A few minutes later Mr. Charles W. Havenner, a well-known real estate broker, was found in his office on the second floor of the building lying on the floor with a pistol by his side and a pistol ball in his head. He was insensible at the time, but after he had received surgical attention recovered his consciousness temporarily. The pistol, which was handed to the police was an old-fashioned derringer. The ball had entered the right temple, passing down forcing out the right eye in its passage, and lodging in the brain. By direction of the physicians who were summoned, Mr. Havenner was taken to Providence Hospital, where he was soon attended by members of his family. There was no one in Mr. Havenner's office except himself when he was found. The indications pointed strongly to suicide. Mr. Havenner, after recovering consciousness, appeared indisposed to talk about the affair, though once he said it was accidental. This morning, Mr. Havenner appeared to be in a very critical condition, and his life was despaired of. The ball, it was said at the Providence hospital, could not be extracted.

Mr. Havenner was the last of the three sons of the late Thomas Havenner (of Havenner's bakery) and for many years was engaged as a clerk to Mr. Pinkney Brooke, then in the brokerage business. During the war Mr. Havenner served with distinction in the confederate service, in which he held the rank of major. After the war he returned here, and has been engaged as a real estate agent and broker, for the most of the time, having his office at 7th street and Louisiana avenue.

Before the Shooting

It is said that Mr. Havenner was seen near the 7th street wharf yesterday afternoon, acting strangely. Mr. W.B. Matchett says he met him on a 7th street car, coming from the direction of the river yesterday afternoon, and parted with him at the transfer junction about 4 o'clock. Mr. Havenner then was apparently clear headed and in good spirits, conversing very intelligently and showing no evidences of depression or aberration.

Cause of the Act

The theory that he shot himself intentionally seems to be accepted by members of the family. The only cause assigned is mental depression, caused by financial troubles.

What Mr. Havenner's Son Says

A publication in a morning paper intimates the presence in the case of a "mysterious woman" supposed to have had some connection with the shooting. Mr. Charles T. Havenner, son of the victim of the affair, said to a Star reporter this morning, "I wish you would deny the statement about a woman being concerned in the affair. I know there is nothing in it. The case is bad enough as it is--he having shot himself."

The reporter made an investigation together with Lieut. Eckloff, chief of the detective corps, with the view of fixing the place which.

The "Mysterious Woman"

should occupy in the case. Patrick A. Wall, a young man employed in a printing office adjoining Mr. Havenner's office, stated that he heard the shot fired just as he was leaving his office to go on an errand to 7th and G street. After returning from his errand and resuming his work, he heard a party of men pass through the hall, stop in the neighborhood of Mr. Havenner's door, and then hasten quickly down stairs, slamming the door at the foot of the stair after them. A few minutes later a woman passed through the hall, went on towards Mr. Havenner's office and quickly returning rapped on the glass door of the printing office and beckoned to Wall. When he went out she announced that there was a man shot in Mr. Havenner's office. Mr. Havenner's room was then entered and he was found lying on the floor. Wall says the woman stated that she had an engagement to meet a man on business in Mr. Havenner's office.

What the Woman Said to Mr. Entwisle

Mr. J.C. Entwisle, who occupies the floor above Mr. Havenner's office, said he was standing at the 7th street entrance when Wall and the woman mentioned came hurrying out and announced that a man had been shot. He went then to Havenner's office, and was followed back by the woman. After seeing Havenner lying on the floor he asked the woman if she knew anything about it. She said she did not; that she had come there on business and found the man lying there.

The Woman Is Described

to be about thirty years of age, of medium height, and attired in a black dress almost completely covered by a light-colored ulster, and a Derby hat. She had a bundle under her arm. Thus it appears that she did not enter the building for twenty minutes or more after the shooting the police are satisfied that she had nothing to do with the shooting in any way. It is understood that her business was with a gentleman named Brant, who occupied the same office with Mr. Havenner. As Mr. Havenner did a general brokerage business he had frequently had lady visitors at his office.

No Hope of Mr. Havenner's Recovery

At two o'clock this afternoon Mr. Havenner was still alive. Dr. Bayne, his physician, appeared to have no hopes of his recovery.

At three o'clock Mr. Havenner was still alive.

The Evening Star, March 8, 1882

The Suicide of Mr. C.W. Havenner

His Death This Morning--His Farewell Letters to His Friends

Mr. C.W. Havenner, who shot himself in the head Monday afternoon, in his office, corner 7th street and Louisiana avenue, died this morning, at 9:30 o'clock, from the effects of his injuries, having been insensible for several hours before his death. It appears that before the shooting he wrote seven or eight letters to his near relatives and friends, all of the same import--that he could not resist his appetite for strong drink; that his business had forsaken him in consequence; that he had no desire to live longer, and that the shooting was his own deliberate act. A similar letter was also left for the coroner, with a request that no inquest be held. The coroner has decided that there is no necessity for holding an inquest. Arrangements have been made for holding the funeral at half-past 3 o'clock tomorrow, from the late residence of the deceased, 421 M street northwest.

One of his letters, to a relative, was as follows: "When you receive this I will be in another world; do me the favor to see me decently buried.....I can't overcome the love of strong drink, though I am now perfectly sober, and I have concluded to end my days."

The police have discovered that the supposed "mysterious woman" who appeared in the hall leading to Mr. Havenner's office, after the shooting, is a Georgetown lady, who was called to the building on business, not with Mr. Havenner, but another gentleman. She heard Mr. Havenner's groans as she was passing through the hall, and was thereby led to the discovery that he had shot himself.

Personal Sketches -- District of Columbia, p. 162

Charles W. was the first broker Washington city ever had, having been engaged in the business in partnership with Pinckney Brooke prior to the breaking out of the Civil war, which calamitous event was the cause, in fact, of his temporary withdrawal from his peaceful pursuit and of his taking up arms in the cause of the Confederacy. Having been born south of Mason and Dixon's line, his sympathies were naturally with the south, so that he was led, in 1861, to enter a company of Virginia cavalry as a private, and with this regiment he served four years, being prompted from time to time for meritorious conduct. On his return to Washington he resumed brokerage business, which he assiduously followed until his death in 1882. He was always looked upon as a first-class business man and was on one occasion selected to accompany United States Senator H.D. Moore to Russia, to prosecute an important business affair. He married Miss Margaret T. Wake, daughter of an officer in the British navy who had resigned his commission and had settled in Middlesex county, Va. This union resulted in the birth of five children, viz.: Elizabeth J., Charles T., Pinckney B., Estelle B. (wife of Charles T. Hendler of Pennsylvania) and Benjamin Charton Havenner, who passed away in 1885. The father of Charles W. Havenner was named Thomas, who settled in Washington when a young man and became largely engaged in manufacturing, filling many large army contracts during the recent war. He was one of the founders of the Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal church at Washington and contributed largely to all religious movements, being always looked to for such aid, even until the day of his death, which occurred in 1872.