

Frank H. Hosford (1863 – 20 Mar 1908)

The Evening Star, March 21, 1908, p. 2

Plans For Funeral

Services Tomorrow Over Remains of Frank H. Hosford

Under Masonic Auspices

Effort to End Life While Walking Along E Street

Severs The Jugular Vein

Sketch of Career of Brilliant Newspaper Man,

One-Time President of Gridiron Club

The funeral of Frank H. Hosford, who committed suicide yesterday, will be held at 2:30 o'clock tomorrow afternoon from the chapel of the undertaking establishment of George P. Zurhorst, 301 East Capitol street. Interment will be in Congressional cemetery.

As the story was told in The Star yesterday afternoon, Frank H. Hosford, who for years was one of the best-known newspaper men and correspondents in the National capital, was overcome by a sudden fit of despondency while walking along E street late yesterday afternoon. For fully a square, westward from 9th street, pedestrians had been startled by the spectacle of a man walking along the sidewalk with his overcoat, coat, vest and shirt open and pricking his bare flesh with the sharp point of a knife. In the middle of the block between 10th and 11th streets he crossed the pavement and disappeared in the vestibule of the house 1009 E street, closing the door behind him.

Noise in Vestibule

The house at the E street address is occupied by Mrs. M.L. Iffts, but the whole of the first floor, except the narrow entrance hall and a long flight of steps, issued for business purposes. Washington O. Berry, proprietor of the store, heard a noise as of a scuffling of feet in the vestibule, and Mrs. Iffts was attracted by the sounds of someone bumping against the inner door. Both went to investigate. One glance at the prostrate body of a strange man in the hallway, blood pouring from several deep gashes in the neck, frightened Mrs. Iffts and she slammed the door and ran upstairs to give the alarm to other members of the household. Mr. Berry and George R. Payne, one of his employes, were probably the first to realize the serious nature of the situation, and Mr. Berry telephoned to the Emergency Hospital for the ambulance. Harry Haight, proprietor of a restaurant on the opposite side of E street, observed the crowd gathering, and notified the police of the first precinct.

From the condition of the body as it was seen by the men first to reach the scene it was evident that Mr. Hosford, after closing the outer door to the vestibule, thus screening his intended act from the view of chance pedestrians along the street, had removed collar and necktie and thrown them aside. Then, standing against the inner door and wielding a thin-blade kitchen knife, of the sort frequently used by cooks to pare potatoes, with deadly intent stabbed himself again and again in the neck.

Absence of Calm Effort

I was obvious that the pain of the first cut simply excited the despondent man to frenzy, because there was an entire absence of calm effort to locate a vital spot, the wounds being almost in a horizontal row across the neck. By accident, probably, Mr. Hosford struck a vital spot, and as blood gushed over his clothing and the floor he gradually lost strength and fell, losing his grasp on the knife as he went down. Even then his desperate desire to end his life was not overcome, because he tried to raise himself by reaching the knob of the outer door. He succeeded only in opening the portal and falling

across the sill, and he was lying with his head hanging over the stone step when Mr. Berry and Mr. Payne ran to investigate the cause of the disturbance. As they sought to raise his body Mr. Hosford made one final effort to again gain possession of the knife, but by that time his strength was exhausted and he lapsed into unconsciousness.

A great crowd assembled almost in a moment, and for a time there were stories of murder afloat, and rumors that another man had been seen to run from the doorway where the wounded man was lying. The ambulance arrived promptly, and a record run was made to the hospital. On the way Dr. J.H. Waring attempted to assuage the flow of blood and to administer stimulants. Mr. Hosford was placed on the operating table as soon as the hospital was reached, but the surgeons realized that life was fast ebbing. Death ensued less than ten minutes after Mr. Hosford had been carried into the institution.

Because of the rumors of foul play Capt. Boardman, chief of detectives, assigned Detective Charles Evans to make an investigation, but his inquiry, coupled with the examination of the body and the surroundings by Coroner Nevitt, resulted in the latter issuing a certificate of death by suicide. Altogether there were eight deep stab wounds in Mr. Hosford's neck and an equal number of minor importance on his breast. Death was due to the severing of the jugular vein and important arteries of the neck.

Native of Ohio

Frank H. Hosford was born in Henrietta, Ohio, in 1863, and therefore was in the prime of life. When he was still of a tender age his parents removed to Michigan, and he remained in that state until he came to this city, about twenty years ago. At one time he was a member of the Michigan legislature, and for nearly his whole life was prominent in political work and in political writings. As a reporter he did his first newspaper work on the Grand Rapids Times, but subsequently became connected with the Detroit Free Press, and by that paper he was sent to this city as its Washington correspondent. Early in Mrs. Hosford's career in the Capital city his political stories attracted wide attention, both locally and nationally. He became acquainted with William Jennings Bryan while the latter was a representative in Congress, and his espousal of Mr. Bryan's cause ultimately led to the severance of his connection with the Detroit Free Press.

Long before Mr. Bryan's personality appeared above the democratic horizon Mr. Hosford's ability had won him a wide recognition among the members of the newspaper fraternity. He became a member of the Gridiron Club, and in 1897 was elected vice president of that organization. The next year he became president of the Gridiron Club, and both in that position and in the course of his participation in many other gatherings in the National Capital won recognition as one of the brightest after dinner talkers and raconteurs in the galaxy of the correspondents in the press gallery. For about four years he served as tally clerk of the House of Representatives. After terminating his connection with the Detroit Free Press in 1896 Mr. Hosford remained in Washington as correspondent for the Denver News, Salt Lake Herald, Anaconda Standard and Chicago Dispatch. At the time of his death he was correspondent for the Detroit Times, Saginaw News and Kalamazoo Gazette Times.

Affiliated With Secret Societies

Mr. Hosford devoted much of his time to the study of the work of secret societies and at the time of his death he was a special writer for the Star, supplying the weekly "Among the Fraternities" column.

Deceased was a member of New Jerusalem Lodge, No. 9; Mount Horeb Royal Arch Chapter, No. 7; Washington Commandery, No. 1; Almas Temple, Mystic Shrine, and also fourteenth degree Scottish Rite Mason. He was a member of Rathbone Superior Lodge, No. 29, Knights of Pythias, and was past grand commander of the District of Columbia. He was also a member of Ascalon Temple, No. 1, D.O.K.K.

Mr. Hosford's wife and three children -- Margaret Anna, seventeen years of age; Florence Helen, eleven years of age, and Francis H. Hosford, a clerk in the adjutant general's office of the War Department -- survive him.

According to the story told by his family and others who had conversed with him of late, Mr. Hosford was not inclined to be despondent, although he frequently spoke of his failing health. He left his home, 141 Massachusetts avenue northeast, at the usual time yesterday and he was last seen by several of his friends at the Masonic Temple less than half an hour before he committed suicide. At that time he seemed in good spirits and there was no written or spoken intimation of contemplated self-destruction.

Funeral Under Masonic Auspices

The arrangements for the funeral were made by New Jerusalem Lodge, and a special communication of that order will be held at the lodge room tomorrow at 1:30 o'clock. At 2:30 o'clock the members will proceed to Zurhorst's, where the services will be held. Edward S. Clarkson, master of the lodge, will conduct the Masonic service, both at the chapel and at the grave.

Arrangements for participation in the obsequies are being made today by J. Claude Keiper of Washington Commandery, Warren J. Coffin of Rathbone Superior Lodge, Knights of Pythias, and by William W. Jermane of Mt. Horeb Chapter. The pallbearers will be selected from these organizations.

Action by Gridiron Club

At a special meeting of the Gridiron Club held at noon today at the New Willard appropriate action was taken in the matter of the death yesterday of Mr. Hosford. A committee on resolutions, appointed by President Henry, consisting of Messrs. S.E. Johnson, A.W. Dunn, Richard Lee Fearn, W.W. Jermane and James Rankin Young, submitted resolutions which were unanimously adopted after brief eulogies of he deceased had been made by several members. The resolutions set forth that the Gridiron Club has lost one of its eldest, best-known and most distinguished members, who "had qualities of mind and heart which endeared him to all with whom he came in contact, and those qualities were displayed at their best at the dinners of the club and in the club's affairs generally. He was a brilliant newspaper man and was so recognized throughout the country by members of that profession and public men. His death is a serious loss to this club, and we desire to join with Mr. Hosford's other friends in an expression of profound sorrow at his death and of sympathy to his widow and children."

The executive committee was empowered to take order for such participation in the obsequies as might be desired by the family. The club will send a floral tribute, according to its custom.

The club will meet at the New Willard at 1:45 o'clock tomorrow afternoon to attend the funeral.

Meeting of Correspondents

A meeting of the corps of Washington correspondents was held in the Senate press gallery this afternoon to take action on the death of Mr. Hosford. Maurice Splain, chairman of the standing committee of correspondents, called the meeting to order. A committee was appointed, consisting of George Miller, Richard Lindsay and Charles S. Albert, to frame suitable resolutions to be transmitted to the family.

It was also desired to send a floral offering and appoint pallbearers to represent the Washington correspondents at the funeral.

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Last Rites Over Dead

Funeral of Frank H. Hosford Yesterday Afternoon

The funeral of Frank H. Hosford, who committed suicide Friday afternoon, was held yesterday afternoon from the undertaking establishment of George P. Zurhorst, 301 East Capitol street. Scores of members of the Gridiron Club, newspaper correspondents from the Capitol press gallery, members of the Masonic orders and of the Knights of Pythias, with all of which organizations the deceased was prominently connected, were present.

Services according to the Masonic ritual were conducted by Edward S. Clarkson, master of New Jerusalem Lodge, F.A.A.M., both at the chapel and later. The remains were placed in a vault at Congressional cemetery. The pallbearers chosen from the Masonic and other organizations, were Edward Matthews and James O., Roller of New Jerusalem Lodge, No. 9, F.A.A.M.; Claude J. Allen and William A. Kimmel of Mount Horeb Royal Arch Chapter, W.W. Jermane, Edgar C. Snyder and Arthur W. Dunn of the gridiron Club and Jacobus S. Jones and Warren J. Coffin of the Knights of Pythias.

Among the representatives of the Gridiron Club present were J.H. Aubere, P.V. DeGraw, A.J. Dodge, A.W. Dunn, R.L. Fearn, Henry Hall, J.S. Henry, W.W. Jermane, S.E. Johnson, Raymond Patterson, C.C. Randolph, F.A. Richardson, John S. Shriver, O.O. Stealey, A.J. Stofer, Alexander Mosher and John H. Nolan.

The press gallery at the Capitol was represented by Charles Hamilton, John Boyle and others.

Among the prominent business and professional men, friends of Mr. Hosford for many years, who attended the funeral were Representative Bartlett of Nevada, Commissioner of Patents Edward B. Moore, Thomas A. Walsh, T.A. Wickersham and Assistant Post Master General P.V. DeGraw.

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Body of Frank Hosford is Taken to New Grave

Appropriate Services Held Over Journalist After Transfer to Glenwood Cemetery

The body of Frank H. Hosford was transferred yesterday afternoon from an obscure part of Congressional cemetery to a beautiful site in Glenwood cemetery, about thirty former associates of the dead journalist participating in the services of reinterment.

Frank Hosford came to the National Capital a quarter of a century ago from Detroit to represent the Free Press of that city. He died five years ago and was buried in Congressional cemetery. His friends in the several organizations to which he belonged conceived the idea of transferring the body to a lot in Glenwood cemetery, the gift of Syacusian Lodge, Knights of Pythias, of the District of Columbia. Committees were appointed from the Masons, Knights of Pythias and the Gridiron Club of which he was an ex-president, to arrange the details of the transfer and to properly mark the grave with a suitable headstone.

Yesterday the transfer of the body was accomplished, Rev. Dr. William Tayloe Snyder of the Church of the Incarnation reading the prayers for the dead, J. Henry Kaiser of the Gridiron Club quartet sang "Abide With Me" at the conclusion of Dr. Snyder's Scriptural reading.

E.C. Snyder, correspondent of the Omaha Bee, chairman of the joint committee, was in charge of the ceremonies and escorted Mrs. Hosford.

The committee charged with the arrangements for the reinterment was composed of New Jerusalem Lodge, No. 9, F.A.A.M., W.J. Coffin and William McNear; Mount Horeb Chapter, No. 7, R.A.M., William A. Kimmel, F.J. Hunter and R.B. Dickey; Almas Temple, Nobles of Mystic Shrine, James T. Gibbs, Harrison Dingman and Harry Standiford; Rathbone-Superior Lodge, No. 29, K.P., L.H. Troutman, D.N. Hoover, sr., and Gus A. Schuldt; Grand Lodge, K.P., E.C. Snyder, A.J. Kahlert and W.A. Carver; Gridiron Club, E.C. Snyder, C.C. Randolph and J.R. Young.