

Walter Irving Lyles (- 21 Apr 1895)

The Washington Post, April 23, 1895

To Be Buried Side By Side

The Drowned Lovers Will Rest in Congressional Cemetery

Young Lyles' Body Also Recovered -- Testimony of Another Eye Witness Given to the Coroner Proves Their Death Was Accidental

The bodies of Irving Lyles and Miss Catherine Canter, who were drowned Sunday while boating in the Eastern Branch, will be laid to rest, side by side, in Congressional Cemetery, this afternoon. Funeral services will be held in Emmanuel Episcopal Church at 5 o'clock, by the rector, Rev. W.G. Davenport. The bodies will be removed shortly before that hour from the homes of the bereaved parents, by the pall-bearers, who have been selected from the young men of the choir of Emmanuel Church. All these, because of his long connection with the choir, were intimate friends of Lyles. Miss Canter was also a member of the choir, which contains many other young ladies, and all will take part in the services.

The body of Lyles was recovered about 9:30 o'clock yesterday morning, by the crew of the police boat, who resumed their search for it at the break of day. The body was found not far from the point where the young people were seen to sink, and was taken to the Seventh street wharf and then removed to Nally's undertaking rooms. Later it was taken to his mother's home, 321 Monroe street, Anacostia.

An hour or so after Lyles' body had been taken home, Coroner Hammett visited Anacostia, saw the two bodies, and heard the statements of three witnesses to the unfortunate affair. He did not hold an inquest, as there was absolutely nothing to be gained by such a proceeding. To the coroner, James Martin, who undertook Sunday afternoon to rescue the young couple, made a statement, which differed very little from the interview with Martin in yesterday's Post. The coroner also took the statement of Mrs. Clay, of 1017 Twelfth street southeast, which was quite important.

She said that she and her husband had been boating on the river, and had gone toward the wharf at the foot of First street southeast. Mrs. Clay stated that she happened to be looking at the boat in which the young couple were rowing, and saw Miss Canter rise as if to change seats with Lyles. He rose slight, and that instant Miss Canter made a sudden grasp at Lyles, caught him by the shoulder, and then fell into the water, he following her a second later.

While Mrs. Clay's story does not agree in all of its details with the statement of Martin, her position was such that she could see all that happened, and after hearing her, Coroner Hammett issued certificates giving accidental drowning as the cause of death in each case. The giving of these certificates met with the general approval of the citizens of Anacostia, who were loth to believe that anything but an accident had caused the death of these two popular young persons.

Many friends of the dead girl and boy called yesterday at the homes of their parents to express sympathy for them in their bereavement. Mrs. Robert Perkins, the mother of Irving Lyles, is completely prostrated by her son's sudden death, and the death of the two, with the uncertain circumstances surrounding, has brought sadness to many hearts in Anacostia.