

Victor Frederick Malnati **(- 3 Aug 1895)**

The Evening Star, August 3, 1895

A Boy's Sad Death

Victor Malnati Accidentally Hangs

Himself in His Gymnasium

His Sister Discovers The Body

Her Theory as to How He Lost His Life

No Idea of Suicide

There was a death by hanging in East Washington this morning, the victim of the noose not made by a hangman being Victor Malnati, who lived with his parents at No. 818, East Capitol street. The exact circumstances of the boy's death will never be known, although it is generally believed that his death was the result of an accident. Victor Malnati was fifteen years old, and was a very heavy boy for his age. Last year he attended school at the Maury building, where by hard study he succeeded in making for himself a record which entitled him to admission to the Eastern High School at the opening of the next school year in September. He was soon to take a vacation, and spend a month in the country, intending to return in time for the opening of school. The boy was a young athlete, which was the result of his exercising in a roughly made gymnasium in his back shed, and it was in this shed that he met his death at the end of the rope.

A Home Gymnasium

Suspended from a rafter in the center of the shed was a large pulley over which a rope had hung. This rope was used as a trapeze and at times a rudely constructed punching bag was tied to the end of it.

In just what condition the rope was this morning when Victor went to the shed is not known, but when his sister, Miss Jennie Malnati, found his body swinging in the air, the rope was securely fastened to the lower part of the pulley and the knot about his neck had every appearance of having been tied as tightly as possible.

Victor was not an early riser, but he had always been in the habit of going out of the house before eating his breakfast. Sometimes he would go in the gymnasium and exercise, and at other times he would go in the Chinese laundry at the corner and look at the Chinamen ironing clothes. This morning he went out as usual, only a few minutes before 7:30 o'clock, and when breakfast was ready he had to be called.

Discovered by His Sister

Miss Jennie went to the back door and called him, but there was no response. He had been seen to go to the shed and no one had seen him leave there, so the young lady went out in search of him. As she stepped in the shed a heartrending sight met her gaze. There, suspended from the small rope, was the dead form of her brother. Instead of rushing out for assistance, as many a young woman would have done, Miss Malnati ran to the kitchen, procured a knife and cut the rope. While doing this she made an outcry, attracting the other members of the family.

In a few seconds the body was placed on the lawn beneath one of the shade trees and Dr. E.S. Lothrop was at his side. Dr. Richard Kingsman was also called, but although the body was still warm means of artificial respiration applied were of no avail, and when the doctors finally concluded that the boy had passed beyond the aid of medical skill, his body was taken into the house.

Policeman Ehlers was called in and he made a report of the case to the coroner.

No Idea of Suicide

Members of the boy's family are certain that the death of Victor was the result of an accident, and do not have the slightest idea that he committed suicide. He had been in the habit of acting on the trapeze, and they think that this time he made a mistake and slipped. But the knot about his neck was tied so tightly that it is thought by others that he could not have met with the accident in the ordinary trapeze exercises. His sister thinks he had read of the recent executions at the jail and that he probably wanted to imitate what was done there, with the exception of taking his life.

The end of the rope was near the ground, so that the boy's feet must have been touching the floor when his body was found, although his sister is not certain whether such was the case, or not, as she was so much excited at the time.

How He Probably Met His Death

Resting about a foot above the floor, on some wood, was the punchbag, and its condition indicated that the boy had stood upon it. His sister thinks that he stood upon the bag, and then swung into the air, thinking he would get the benefit of the sensation of a man who is executed, and at the same time would go back on the bag and rescue himself. In letting go, however, the drop, although only a few inches, was too much for him, and rendered him unconscious, so that, had his body swung back, which is not likely, and his feet fell upon the bag, he could not have saved himself.

The sad affair caused deep sorrow to the neighbors and many friends of the family, a number of whom soon visited the house and tendered their services.

Deceased was a son of Mr. Frank Malnati of the firm of Lane & Malnati, contractors.

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His Death Accidental

Result of the Coroner's Investigation

Into the Case of Victor Malnati

Coroner Hammett has made an investigation of the case of Victor Malnati, the 15-year-old boy who met his death at the end of a rope Saturday morning, as published in Saturday's Star, and gave a certificate of accidental death. Asphyxia is given as the cause of death, and the certificate stated that it was the result of the accidental slipping of the rope while practicing gymnastics. The boy's funeral took place this morning from his parents' home, No. 818, East Capitol street. The body was buried in Congressional cemetery.