

Theodore J. Mayer

(- 13 Mar 1907)

The Evening Star, March 13, 1907

Death of T.J. Mayer

Prominent Business Man Succumbs After Long Illness

His Demise Unexpected

Funeral to Occur at 11 O'Clock A.M. Friday Next

Was Public-Spirited Citizen

Gave Liberally of His Means to Local Institutions and to Charity



Theodore J. Mayer.

The death of Theodore J. Mayer, member of the firm of W.M. Galt & Co. and one of the most prominent businessmen of the District, occurred at 10 o'clock last night at his home, 214 B street southeast, after an illness of about seven weeks. Although Mr. Mayer had been confined to his residence for a protracted interval, his death was totally unexpected, and the announcement of his passing away came as a shock to his numerous business associates and friends.

The funeral services will be held at the family residence at 11 o'clock a.m., Friday, and the friends of the deceased have been invited to be present. The interment will be private.

Mr. Mayer has been actively engaged in the work of upbuilding this city and increasing its prosperity since he came here in 1866. He usually took a leading part in philanthropic effort and was especially interested in the welfare of East Washington, in which his home was located. He was nearly sixty-one years of age. It is remarked that he retained his mental and physical vigor to a remarkable degree and until stricken by the ailment which ended in his death was an active man of affairs. He was a member of the Masonic fraternity, a director of the Eastern Dispensary and Casualty Hospital, and also a member of the directorate of the Central National Bank, the Union Trust Company and the George Washington University. For fifteen years he had been president of the Swiss Benevolent Association, and as such is said to have carried sunshine into many saddened homes."

Senior Member of Firm

Since the death of Mr. William M. Galt, January 3, 1889, the firm had been composed of Mr. Theodore J. Mayer, Mr. Ralph L. Galt, the active members, and Mrs. Harriet T. Galt, widow of Wm. M. Galt. Ever since the death of Mr. W.M. Galt, Mr. Mayer had been the senior member of the firm. He was described as one of the self-made men of Washington.

Mr. Mayer was born in Geneva, Switzerland in April 1846, where he received his education in the public schools, followed by a collegiate course. He graduated in 1863. From that time until 1866 he was prominently connected with a large banking concern and commercial establishment at Fridrichshafen, Germany, first as correspondent and afterward as bookkeeper.

In June, 1866, he came to this country, his total capital, it is said, being \$2 in gold. He came to Washington and for seven years filled the arduous position of clerk in a grocery store. His health finally broke down under the strain and he went to Europe to recuperate and regain his lost health.

Returning from the old world after a stay of four months he entered the establishment of Wm. Galt & Co. During his long connection with the company he was more particularly in charge of the flour department and was a widely recognized authority on all grades of flour and cereals.

Mr. Mayer married Miss Susannah Hitz, daughter of the late Florian Hitz, in September, 1876. the American centennial year. Mrs. Mayer died in 1880 and deceased never remarried. His son, Mr. Theodore Albert Mayer, who is in the real estate business survives him, in addition to a brother, who is a citizen of Ohio.

Liberal Contributions

Shortly before his death Mr. Mayer gave a practical illustration of the exemplification of his religion of humanity and charity by making certain munificent bequests. It is said he gave to the George Washington University extension and improvement funds upwards of \$200,000 while \$100,000 by his recent direction will be apportioned among the hospitals and charitable institutions of the District of Columbia.

One of the intimate friends of deceased today described his great interest and zeal in behalf of the George Washington University and his desire to see it become the greatest seat of learning in this country. It was added he studied the needs of the university for a long time and finally came to the decision that to erect the structures on the proposed 17th and B streets site would be a calamity to the city as well as to the university. He contended that as that site is on low territory and near the made ground of the Potomac flats considerable sickness would result among the students in the dormitories.

Plans Changed

This so impressed him, it is said, that, through his personal magnetism, earnestness and persistency, he induced the board of trustees of the university to change the plans as to the location of the institution. He offered the trustees, without cost to them, his site at Chevy Chase Circle as the nucleus for a building site. This place contains about four acres of ground and several buildings and is valued at about \$168,000.

The trustees declined to accept the offer, as the tract of land was deemed to be too far from the city. The Dean property was then selected, and Mr. Mayer is said to have induced to owners to take \$800,000 for it, which sum is said to be far below its real value. Mr. Mayer also announced that if the trustees would decide upon the Dean property he would give them his Chevy Chase holdings to be sold and the proceeds to be applied to the extension fund.

Mr. Thomas W. Smith, an intimate friend and associate of the deceased, spoke today of Mr. Mayer's love for charitable work and especially for his interest in the Eastern Dispensary and Casualty Hospital.

In addition to the \$20,000 he donated to this institution in the first instance when it became necessary to procure a new building for its use, he recently gave to the management of the hospital a corner lot at 8th and D streets northeast, increasing his total contribution to that institution to about \$30,000. It was his habit to visit the hospital nearly every day and take a personal interest in its management and welfare, and he was especially interested in beautifying the building and grounds with flowers, etc.

The deceased was regarded as a most loyal and lovable companion and was of such a happy and jolly disposition that he at once became the life of any company he might be in.

At the time the Eastern Dispensary and Casualty Hospital was seeking new quarters Mr. Mayer gave the management of that institution valuable assistance, and when the present structure at 706 Massachusetts avenue northeast was secured he gave \$20,000 toward the purchase money.

"These bequests of Mr. Mayer," said one of his friends today, "illustrate that he lived up to his creed, which is expressed in the immortal words of Ben Adan, 'Write me as one who loves my fellow-man.'"

Mr. Mayer was a member of the organization of spiritualists who believe in physical manifestations, it was said, and died in that faith. Some years ago he presented to that branch of spiritualists a modern building at the corner of 6th street and Pennsylvania avenue southeast for use by their society as national headquarters.