

## William McMahon

( - 26 Sep 1884)

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*The Evening Star, September 27, 1884*

### **Wm. McMahon's Throat Cut Killed in a Drunken Brawl**

#### **A Foolish Wrangle Between Two Printers Ends in a Frightful Tragedy**

A fatal affray occurred last night at the corner of 7<sup>th</sup> street and Pennsylvania avenue between two printers named Wm. McMahon and George Hough. McMahon was terribly cut with a knife by Hough, one gash extending almost ear to ear, and the other extending from the right ear across the chest. Hough and McMahon, with two companions, James B. Nelson and J.W. Campbell, met early in the evening at Tip Hoy's restaurant, on 11<sup>th</sup> street, south of the avenue, and while in there Hough and McMahon engaged in a wrestling bout, in which McMahon worsted Hough. The men after leaving the restaurant, it appears, took drinks in other places, and Hough showed much bad feeling on account of the result of the wrestling bout. At the southeast cor. Of 7<sup>th</sup> st. and Louisiana avenue Hough and McMahon got into a wrangle, and Hough, according to the statements of Nelson, made a pass with his hand towards McMahon's head, and then ran down Louisiana avenue towards 6<sup>th</sup> street. Nelson saw McMahon stagger, and went up to him to ask what was the matter with him. McMahon said, "I am done for this time, Jim." McMahon reeled and Nelson caught him and supported him to the city post office, where the wounded man fell to the ground. Nelson applied for assistance at the city post office, and then ran to police headquarters where he reported the facts. Meanwhile Dr. Toner was summoned, and did what could be done to make McMahon comfortable until the arrival of the police ambulance, which conveyed the wounded man to Providence hospital.

#### *Hough Arrested*

It appears that Hough, after cutting McMahon, went to Miller's restaurant, corner of 6th street and Pennsylvania avenue, where he washed his hands. He then came out, and was standing on the corner when he was arrested by Officers Bast, Schulze and Montgomery, and taken to the seventh precinct station. He was sullen and uncommunicative, and, apparently, much under the influence of liquor. He denied all knowledge of the occurrence. Soon after being placed in a cell he fell asleep. A two-bladed pocket-knife, having one blade about three inches long and very sharp, was taken from him by the police. It was with this weapon, it is supposed, that the fatal wound was inflicted. A woman, who gave her name as Pearl Hough, was also put under arrest and held as a witness, because she said that she had been talking with McMahon. She was in Suplee's restaurant, near the post office when the affray occurred. It appears, however, from the statements of others, that she had no connection with the case.

#### *Nelson's Statement*

Nelson was detained by the police as a witness. He made a statement at police headquarters in the presence of his counsel, Mr. John A. Clarke, as follows:

"We met--that is, the man now lying in front of the city post office with his throat cut, his name is McMahon, and I--at Tip Hoy's restaurant on the west side of 11th street, below the avenue. This was between three and four o'clock this evening. The man who did the cutting (Hough) met us at Tip Hoy's, and remarked to McMahon, "I can down you," and McMahon retorted, "You can't down me." Whereupon they wrestled, and McMahon threw the assailant down upon the floor. We all left Tip Hoy's 'Shad' Campbell, Bill McMahon, the man who did the cutting, and myself. This was about 9:15 o'clock

tonight. We walked down Pennsylvania avenue and turned into Louisiana avenue near the post office, and the man who did the cutting said to McMahon, "I will do you now," and simultaneously made a swipe with his hand toward McMahon's head, and immediately ran down Louisiana avenue toward 6th street, the southwest corner."

#### *Death of McMahon*

McMahon became conscious after being taken to the hospital, and when asked if he had cut himself shook his head. He sank again in a stupor, suffering from exhaustion, caused by loss of blood, and died about 4:50 o'clock this morning. Arrangements were made this morning for holding an inquest at two o'clock this afternoon.

#### *The "Swiper" And His Victim*

McMahon, the victim of the tragedy, came originally from Buffalo, where his mother resides. About two weeks ago he came to this city from Scranton, and has been employed occasionally in the composing room for the Post. His companions state that he was quiet and inoffensive, though addicted to drink.

Hough, who is charged with the murder, is a native of Alexandria, and has the reputation of being a quarrelsome and dangerous man when intoxicated. He left Alexandria about five years ago after cutting a man named Harman. He went south, and subsequently went to New York, where he worked at his trade. Recently he has been working in this city. He distinguished himself some time ago, it is charged, by shooting a colored man in Alexandria for refusing to drink, with him.

#### *MacMahon's Body*

was brought to the seventh precinct station from Providence hospital about 10 o'clock. It was encased in a plain coffin. The body was placed in the lodger's room.

#### *What Hough Says*

Hough was taken to Police headquarters this morning and photographed for the rogues' gallery. A Star reporter saw him in his cell this morning at the station house. He was lying on his iron bunk as if asleep, but jumped up when the reporter called his name.

"I do not care to make any statement," he said to the reporter. "My attorney, Mr. Carrington, has advised me not to say anything."

"It is stated that you said you knew nothing about the cutting?" said the reporter.

"I know nothing about it. All I know is that I left him standing at the corner, and that I did not do the cutting."

"It is true that you had words with MacMahon?"

"We had a wrestle in Tip Hoy's, and he threw me. There were no angry words, except, Tip Hoy's who told him that he would put him out if he did not behave himself."

"You had been drinking pretty deeply?"

"Yes; I had been drinking yesterday afternoon. I know nothing about the woman named Hough who was arrested," continued the prisoner. "We have no relatives, except two nephews of mine in Baltimore. I came from Alexandria, where my people lived and my father is living now. I am not a desperado," continued Hough, referring to statements made about him. "When a man is in trouble the newspapers all give him a bad name."

Hough is not a bad-looking man. He is about 32 years old of medium height, and rather stout build. He has dark hair and moustache. He stated to a Star reporter that he had been working for Gilbson Brothers for three years. Hough bears himself very coolly. When arrested the police found blood-stains on his cuffs and collar.

### *The Woman, Pearl Hough*

Pearl Hough, the woman who was detained by the police in connection with the case, stated to a Star reporter that she knew none of the parties and nothing about the affair. She supposed at first that it was another McMahan that was killed and she made a remark that she had been talking with McMahan and that led to her arrest.

### *The Witness, Nelson*

Nelson, who was taken as a witness last night, was kept at the police station until the inquest this afternoon. He declined to talk today, saying he had been advised not to. He said he had unfortunately been mixed up in the affair by force of circumstances. The statement which he made at police headquarters last night, he said, was about correct." He appeared to be considerably affected by his situation and by the sudden and enforced abstinence from stimulants after his dissipation.

### *Members of the Typographical Union*

were at the station this morning, arranging to take charge of the remains. Some friends of Hough's were there and declared it as not at all settled who did the cutting. The party were all intoxicated and no one was sure that Hough was guilty of the cutting. J.W. Campbell, who was one of the printers with Hough and McMahan, was summoned as a witness today. He said to a Star reporter that he knew nothing of the cutting, as he left the party before McMahan was cut.

### *A Bad Man Only When Drinking*

At Gibson Bros. Printing establishment, a Star reporter was informed that Hough was an unusually steady workman and bore a good reputation. He was especially liked on account of his pleasant disposition. He left the office yesterday at five o'clock, perfectly sober, having first got a ten dollar bill changed. His bad traits showed themselves only when he had been drinking.

### *An Incident of the Tragedy*

About half-past one o'clock a postal clerk arrived in the city post office, and Mr. Samuel Norris, of the registry division told him of the murder. While Norris was describing the pools of blood in which the murdered man lay, the postal clerk fainted and fell to the floor, upon which Norris cried for help. The watchman thought it was an alarm of fire, so he put on the hose, and was about to drench the building. The clerks in the registered letter room began to run out, thinking the murderer was in the building. The cause of the excitement was however soon discovered. The postal clerk was restored to consciousness, and the clerks returned to their work.

### *The Inquest*

At two o'clock Coroner Patterson held the inquest. Josiah Simpson, Albert Connell, James H. Walker, L.R. Fechtig, W.N. Croggan and J.M. Eggleston were summoned as jurors. There was quite a large number of interested persons present at the station.

After the jury was sworn the body was taken in charge by Mr. Bellew, the undertaker, and removed to his establishment opposite. A telegram has been sent to the mother of the dead man, in New York but as yet no answer has been received as to her wishes.

Before taking testimony, Drs. Hartigan and Hicking made an autopsy.

*The Evening Star, September 29, 1884*

**The Hough-McMahan Homicide  
Hough Committed to Jail--Funeral of the Dead Printer**

The inquest over the body of William McMahon, the printer, who was killed Friday night, as it is charged, by George Hough, a fellow craftsman, was continued Saturday afternoon at the seventh precinct station after The Star's report closed. The testimony of Robert Hoy, in whose restaurant the deceased and Hough engaged in a wrestling match; Pearl Hough, who talked with McMahon before the tragedy, but knew nothing of the deed, and George C. Harris, the watchman who was present when Nelson brought McMahon to the city post office in a dying condition, was taken. Henry Hurley testified that he met these men on 9th street, one of whom was Nelson, and saw one of them sneak away. This man he thought did the cutting, but it was not Hough. Elmer McIntosh, who saw Nelson and McMahon at the post office, Dr. Hartigan, who made the postmortem examination, and Officers Bast and Schultze were also witnesses.

The jury returned a verdict that William McMahon came to his death at Providence Hospital on the 27th of September from his incised wounds of the neck, inflicted with a knife in the hands of George Hough. Hough was committed to jail.

McMahon's funeral took place yesterday from St. Aloysius church, Columbia Typographical Union No. 101 having charge of the ceremonies. The attendance was very large. Rev. Father Noonan officiated. The pall-bearers were Messrs. D.W. Beach, Ed. Morgan, Hector Davidson, S.J. Phillips, William Durkin and Adrian M. Jones, all members of the typographical union. The remains were placed in the receiving vault at Congressional cemetery, preparatory to being sent to the home of the deceased in New York state.