

Frank Merrill

(- 4 Nov 1905)

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Nearly Fatal Shot

Jacob Lacy, a Huckster Shot Frank Merrill Trouble Began at a Dance and Ended in Street Fracas -- Lacy's Statement

Jacob Lacy, seventeen years old, engaged in a row last night about 12 o'clock with Frank Merrill at Pennsylvania avenue and 9th street northwest. Lacy had a revolver in his pocket, and drawing the weapon, he fired at Merrill, the bullet fracturing his skull. The shot was a glance one, however, and Merrill will probably recover. He is under treatment at the Emergency Hospital, and the boy who did the shooting is locked up at the first precinct station. The trouble, it is alleged, resulted from jealousy on part of Merrill, who is employed at the new Willard.

When the report of the pistol shot was heard last night a number of belated pedestrians hurried from all directions to the scene of the trouble, and Policeman Lee within a short time placed Lacy under arrest. He had an automobile and Lacy went with him pretending he would show him the one who did the shooting, but the policeman soon learned that his pretended assistant had used the weapon. He accordingly locked him up. Lacy subsequently admitted that he had fired the shot, and claimed that Merrill was in the act of attacking him when he pulled the trigger. The wounded man had been taken to the Emergency Hospital and given surgical treatment. At first it was thought he would die, but later the surgeons found that the wound was not so serious as was first supposed and gave out the statement that he may recover.

Lacy's Version of the Affair

Lacy, who will be taken to the Police Court tomorrow, is the son of a horse dealer who lives on New Jersey avenue. The boy is a huckster and lives at the home of an uncle on Levis street. He told a Star reporter this morning that he attended a dance at a beer garden on the Bladensburg road last night and that Merrill and a companion were there. Merrill, he said, spoke to a young lady who was with him (Lacy) and asked where his picture was. She denied that she had his picture. While at the dance, Lacy stated, he noticed that Merrill paid considerable attention to the girl mentioned, but he did not anticipate trouble after the dance was over. A friend named Edward Maxwell went to the dance with him and they had an engagement to meet two girls there. They had met them at a theater Monday night, he said, and made an engagement to meet at the dance.

At the conclusion of the dance, Lacy stated, Maxwell, the two girls and himself started back toward the city. He said he purchased a revolver yesterday morning at a store on D street and had left it at the house of a friend, in order that he would not have to take it to the dance. On his way from the dance he stopped and got the weapon. He said he got off a street car at 9th and E streets for the purpose of treating the girls and Maxwell to a midnight lunch in a Chinese restaurant, but could not get what they wanted and had started toward another Chinese restaurant when Merrill and a companion appeared upon the scene. At this meeting, he said, Merrill slapped the girl who was with him (Lacy) and they were engaged in an earnest conversation when Policeman McDonald appeared and advised them to be quiet.

Trouble Renewed

When they separated, the prisoner stated, his part went south on 9th street and he thought Merrill and his companion went west on E street. Merrill was on hand, however, when the corner of 9th street and Pennsylvania avenue was reached and the trouble was renewed.

Lacy said he did not know Merrill, and was sorry he had the trouble with him, but he could not help it, as Merrill followed him up and was assaulting him when he fired the shot. He denied that he had the weapon with him when he was at the dance or that he bought it for use because he anticipated trouble. Lacy will be arraigned before Judge Mills tomorrow morning.

The Evening Star, November 6, 1905

Held for Grand Jury

Edward Lacy Before a Coroner's Inquest

Responsible for the Death of Frank A. Merrill in August Last

Edward Lacey, seventeen years old, who shot and fatally injured Frank Alvin Merrill the 23d day of August last, as heretofore printed in The Star, was held for the action of the grand jury at an inquest at the morgue this morning. Lacey, who was rearrested Friday night when it was thought Merrill was dying, was at the inquest this morning with counsel, Attorney Albert Sillers. His father was also present at the hearing. Edward Maxwell, who was with Lacey the night the shooting occurred, was an important witness in the case. He explained to the jury how Merrill had tried to start a fight when he met the witness, Lacey and two young ladies at a dance given at Beucheler's garden, on the Bladensburg road. He also told the coroner and jury of how the police prevented a fight and of how Lacey tried to get so far away from Merrill that the latter could not assault him. Maxwell told of a second meeting at a Chinese restaurant on 9th street and of the part a policeman took in the affair there. Merrill, he stated, was started toward his home by a policeman, but instead of going home he hurried around the corner, overtook them at 9th and D streets and renewed the fight that resulted in his death. Deputy Coroner Glazebrook explained that death was caused by an injury to the brain, a small piece of the skull having penetrated the brain matter. Dr. White, the resident physician at the Emergency Hospital, told of the wounded man being under treatment at the hospital three times. The last time he was there he died. His condition indicated that he was suffering from depression.

Elmer Houch, 614 15th street northeast, testified that he had known Merrill since March last, but did not know Lacey prior to the night the trouble occurred. While at the park on the Bladensburg road, he stated, Merrill tried to start a fight with Lacey and his companion. Merrill was ordered out of the place by a policeman, and it was as much as witness could do to get him out. Merrill told witness that he (Merrill) was looking for trouble, and that if he met the men outside he would give them all that was coming to them. Witness said they came to the city on a wagon and got something to drink.

"Do you know Rose Davis?" the coroner asked witness.

"Yes, sir," he answered, "I know her from meeting her at the dancing school."

"And do you know Edith Yost?"

"Yes, sir," he answered, "I know her in the same way."

Met at Chinese Restaurant

Witness explained that the party met at a Chinese restaurant on 9th street, where they had words, and Merrill struck Rose Davis. A policeman prevented further trouble there and ordered the party to disperse. Merrill said to witness: "I'm going to get that fellow, and if you are a friend of mine you'll stick to me."

Merrill then ran around 8th street and headed off Lacey, Maxwell and the two girls at 9th and D streets. He said to Maxwell: "You are with my girl," and struck him. Then he went after Lacey and the

latter shot him. Houck told the jury that the police arrested Maxwell, and when witness told him he had the wrong man the policeman struck at him with his club, and told him he wanted no "butting in."

Edith Yost, living at No. 10 Minnesota avenue, told of her visit to the dance at Beucheler's Garden and of the trouble Merrill had there. He spoke to Rose Davis about a picture, she said, and when trouble started the police sent them out. Witness told of what happened from then until the time they reached the Chinese restaurant. There Merrill renewed the trouble and the police again took a hand in it. She related the story of the meeting at 9th and D streets. While in front of the Chinese restaurant, she stated, Lacey exhibited a revolver and said he thought that would prevent trouble. Witness left the party at Pennsylvania avenue and 9th street and had started home when she heard the reports of two pistol shots.

Rose Davis, 316 Lincoln street, Anacostia, gave similar testimony.

"Merrill didn't go with me," she stated, in response to a question asked by the coroner, "but I knew him a long time ago when he lived near the cemetery on 13th street.

Witness said she and her companion, Edith Yost, had become acquainted with Lacey and Maxwell on Pennsylvania avenue the night before the shooting occurred. She was surprised when they appeared at the dance the next night. Merrill was at the dance and had a girl with him. Trouble started in the park because Merrill wanted to fight Lacey and Maxwell.

"Was he jealous?" she was asked.

"No sir."

"What was the trouble?"

"It was just his disposition."

Miss Davis told of the conduct of Merrill the several times he came up and tried to cause trouble, and said that Merrill showed the revolver in front of the Chinese restaurant. He said he thought that might prevent trouble. She said she had left the party when the last row started and did not see the shooting, but heard the reports of the weapon. This closed the testimony and the case was submitted. Merrill's body was removed to the home of his parents, 509 6th street northwest, from where the funeral will take place tomorrow morning.

The Evening Star, November 5, 1905, p. 16

Frank Merrill Dead

Man Shot by Lacey Did Not Survive Operation

The death of Frank Merrill was reported to the coroner late yesterday afternoon, and the body was removed to the morgue, where an inquest will be held tomorrow morning.

Merrill was operated upon at the Emergency Hospital for a gunshot wound inflicted by Jacob Lacey. Lacey is still held at the first precinct station. Merrill, it is said, was jealous of the attentions Lacey was paying to a young woman. He met Lacey and another man, with two women, at an outing on the Bladensburg road two months ago, and while there, it is said, Merrill asked one of the girls for his ring. It is alleged he became angry because she danced with Lacey. The latter asked Merrill not to annoy him and to keep away from him, but it is alleged he followed Lacey and his friends to the city.

Lacey had purchased a revolver before he went to the outing, he says, and left it at the home of a relative. On his way home he stopped and got the weapon to carry home. Upon reaching 9th street Lacey and his companions went to a Chinese restaurant, and upon leaving the place were stopped by Merrill. At that time, it is claimed, Merrill became violent, and a policeman advised him to go home. Instead of taking the advice of the policeman he went around the square and intercepted Lacey and his two companions at Pennsylvania avenue and 9th street. One of the girls made the statement: "He's got a revolver." Merrill, thinking the man with Lacey was the one referred to, assaulted him. Then he turned on Lacey, and the latter shot him. He was removed to the hospital and appeared to recover from

the effects of the wound. After leaving the hospital he wrote a letter for the purpose of having the prosecution against Lacey withdrawn.

Lacey was employed at the New Willard Hotel, and was arrested at the time of the shooting, but was released. Merrill's wound became troublesome a few days ago, and he was removed to the hospital for an operation. The operation was performed yesterday, and the man died. Policemen Lamson and Lee arrested Lacey Friday night.