

John P. Montague (- 9 Oct 1895)

The Evening Star, October 9, 1895

Killed by Escaping Gas

A Veterans Soldier Supposed to Have Died Through His Own Mistake

John Montague, an elderly white man, who for thirty years wore the uniform and carried arms for the United States, was found dead in bed this morning at Schneider's Hotel, near the navy yard gate. He was asphyxiated by escaping gas, evidently the result of an accident, as there is no reason known why he should have committed suicide.

Montague was about sixty years of age. For several years past he has made his home at Schneider's, where he was known as a jovial and happy dispositioned man who had many friends in the neighborhood and among the marines and sailors at the yard. Last night he retired to his room on the second floor of the annex, which is across the street from the main hotel, at the corner of 8th and L streets southeast, in the best of humor, though not in an intoxicated condition. About 10 o'clock this morning a maid went to awaken him, but when she rapped on the door she received no response.

She summoned aid, and finally the door was broken in, whereupon the fumes of escaping gas poured out into the hall and made it evident what had caused the death of the man, whose body lay upon the bed. It is supposed, for nothing is definitely known about it, that in some way he turned the gas on without noticing it after he had extinguished the light. The gas fixture was in good condition and the cock was not defective.

The coroner was notified and will investigate the case this afternoon. The body will be interred at government expense at Congressional cemetery. Montague served as a private in the fifth cavalry all through the war, and saw much active service. In 1872 he left the army and entered the United States Marine Corps, serving altogether for thirty years. When he received his honorary several years ago, he went to live at the hotel, which he had made his home ever since. He had two sons living in Philadelphia, who wanted him to go there, but he preferred to stay near the navy yard and his old friends.