

Walter F. Sousa

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Washington Evening Star, Saturday, July 20, 1907

Walter F. Sousa and Harry A. Candee were killed Saturday evening by a live wire, which Sousa, an electrician for the Potomac Electric Co. was fixing in the drug store of Lewis Flemer, 701 Maryland Ave., N.E., where Candee was employed as head clerk. The wire which killed the two men is said to have been connected with a ground wire in the manhole conduit near the store. In this conduit there was a 2400-volt alternating current, but Sousa did not know when he went to fix the lights in the drug store that there was any trouble with outside wires. Harry Candee lived at 715 Massachusetts Ave., N.E. The funeral of Mr. Sousa will take place from his home, 1007 G Street, S.E., tomorrow at 10 o'clock. The interment will be in Congressional Cemetery.

Inquest:

An inquest found Sousa guilty of negligence. Claude Berger, Mr. Sousa's brother-in-law was present at the accident and testified along with a number of store clerks. Mr. Candee had warned Mr. Sousa to put on his rubber gloves since another man had received a shock from the wire the day before. There was no flash. Sousa moaned slightly, and his back appeared to give way as he fell. Candee grabbed for the wire as though to pull it down, placing one hand on the wire and the other on Sousa's wrist, then fell backward. Rev. Dr. Arthur F. Johns, rector of Christ Church read the service. The pallbearers were selected from members of the Protective Union of Electrical Workers. Mr. Sousa was survived by his bride of a few months, his mother Mrs. Annie Spry Sousa and his grandmother Mrs. Elizabeth Sousa, both of Maryland.

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Due to Negligence

Jury's Verdict Regarding Death of Walter Sousa

His Own Lack of Caution

Evidence That He Grasped Electric Wire With Bare Hand

Harry Candee Also Victim

Effort to Aid Sousa Cost Him His Life.

Evidence Heard by Coroner

"Due to his own negligence."

In a word, this was the sense of the verdict rendered by the coroner's jury this afternoon in the case of W.H. Sousa, the young electrician who, with Harry Candee, a drug clerk, was killed by an electric shock in the drug store of Lewis Flemer, 701 Maryland avenue, last Saturday evening. Experts in the employ of the Potomac Electric Power Company gave it as their opinion that a current of nearly 2,000 volts passed through the bodies of Sousa and Candee as the result of a defect in the "transformer," which had just been installed in the street conduit manhole a day or two before for the purpose of reducing the current to the safe base of 110 volts for use in lighting the store.

The inquest was held at the morgue by Acting Coroner Glazebrook, and the jury which passed upon the evidence included J.W. Beal, Charles Behrens, G.W. King, C.W. Tolson, John Jost and J.H. Albers. Attorney George Hoover represented the Potomac Electric Power Company and Attorney Thomas C. Bradley was present in the interests of Candee's family.

The complete verdict, as drawn by the jury, reads as follows:

"We find that W.F. Sousa came to his death at 701 Maryland avenue northeast, July 20, from electric shock from a wire in said house. The shock which caused his death was due to his own negligence in not using proper precautions."

Dr. Beistel the First Witness

Dr. Matthew J. Beistel of the staff of resident physicians at the Casualty Hospital was the first witness. He described the call for the ambulance received from Flemer's drug store, and said he found Sousa and Candee lying on the floor. The staff of the hospital worked over both men, he stated, from about 7 o'clock until nearly 9, when it was established that their lives were extinct. Dr. Beistel said he saw several small red marks on Candee's right arm.

"Mr. Candee warned Mr. Sousa to put on his rubber gloves," declared Miss Emerald Hermann, cashier in the drug store, as soon as she took the stand, and this assertion she repeated several times. "Mr. Candee told the electrician that a man received a shock there the day before, but the electrician said he thought there was only 110 volts in the wire," Miss Hermann continued. She could not give a very accurate account of the accident, she said. She became much excited when she saw the men had been hurt.

George S. Webb of 701 Maryland avenue northeast, an employe in the drug store, said that gas had been used to illuminate the store for a long time, but the building was recently wired for electricity and the current was turned on for the first time Friday night, July 19, but the lights did not work properly. Witness though the wiring was supposed to have been completed Friday. He said the National Electrical Supply Company did the wiring.

Witness testified he was not in the store when the current was turned on Friday night, but Mr. Candee, who was killed Saturday, told him there was a slight buzzing sound in a box in the cellar when the switch was turned on. Mr. Webb said an inspector of the District electrical department came to the store Saturday morning, and at the same time one of the electricians of the National Electric Supply Company arrived.

No Warning Given

"Did any one give warning to you not to attempt to use the lights in the store?" asked Acting Coroner Glazebrook.

"No; not that I know of," Webb replied.

"One of the electric supply men told Candee that there was some trouble, and he telephoned to the Potomac Electric Power Company," witness continued.

Sousa came to the store in response to that call, Mr. Webb said. He heard Sousa say the trouble on the line was outside, between the street conduit and the store.

Coming to the accident itself, Webb said Candee called to Sousa, after the latter had apparently completed repairs, so that the lights in the store were burning all right, that something was wrong with the lamp inside the red globe in the drug store window, and that a man had received a shock there the day before.

"Did he not say he had nothing to do with inside work and ask if there was a soda in it if he fixed the lamp?" asked Attorney Hoover.

"Yes I told him I would give him all the soda water he wanted to drink," Webb replied.

Claude Berger of 1007 G street southeast, a splicer's helper, who worked with Sousa Saturday night, described the accident and said he tried to revive Sousa after the latter fell.

William Spire of 1120 C street southeast, another employe in the Flemer drug store, heard Candee tell Sousa to take the defective lamp out of the window, and he saw Candee point out the spot on the wire where another young man had received a shock the day before.

Spire was standing only a few feet away, and he said Sousa took hold of the lamp as though he intended to test the force of the shock by putting his little finger on the brass part of the lamp, "There was no flash," Spire declared. "Sousa moaned slightly, and his back seemed to cave in and he fell. Candee grabbed for the wire as though to pull it down, putting one hand on the wire and one on Sousa's wrist, and he, too, fell."

Inspector Breen's Testimony

P.D. Breen, an inspector in the electrical department testified the permit clerk in the department issued a temporary permit to have the current turned on in the Flemer store, and he went to the establishment Saturday afternoon to make an inspection. He found a defective switch in the basement, and left instruction that it be replaced with another. Mr. Breen received a shock from the switch, but not of heavy voltage.

When he went back to the store after the accident, Mr. Breen said, Mr. Whitehead of the Potomac Electric Power Company object to letting him in the premises.

W.C. Allen, electrical engineer of the District, stated it was customary to issue temporary permits for turning on electric current in dwellings and business houses.

"What voltage is necessary for lamps in a building?" asked Dr. Glazebrook.

"One hundred and ten volts," Mr. Allen replied.

"And how much is carried in the cables in the street?"

"About 2,000."

Test of Transformer

Mr. Allen said he made a test of the transformer which was supposed to reduce the current entering the Flemer store to 220 volts, and he said the test showed a break in the connections somewhere, so that the high current must have passed directly into the building.

Daniel Scanlon, lineman, and W.H. Memler, foreman of the Potomac Electric Power Company, described the method of installation of the transformer in the manhole on the D street side of the Flemer store.

"In your opinion what was the cause of the accident?" the acting coroner asked Mr. Memler.

"A break in the connections somewhere," witness answered; "so that between 1,000 and 2,000 volts went in over the store wires."

"As an employe of the Potomac Electric Power Company, was Mr. Sousa supposed to touch that lamp in the store?" queried Attorney Hoover.

"No. His work ended at the building line. Anything done inside the store was on his own account."

Funeral Arrangements

Arrangements have been completed for the funerals of the two victims. They are to take place tomorrow, that of Harry Candee at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, and that of Walter Sousa in the morning at 10 o'clock. An undertaker took charge of the body of Candee Saturday night and prepared it for burial. This morning the body was taken to the family home, 715 Massachusetts avenue northeast. Members of Myron M. Parker Lodge of Masons have charge of the arrangements, and the Rev. Ira R. Abbott, rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, will officiate. The interment will be at Glenwood cemetery.

The body of Walter Sousa, nephew of the bandmaster, was taken from the hospital to an undertaking establishment in the southeast section of the city Saturday night and kept there until this morning. After being prepared for burial the remains were removed to the late home of Sousa, 1007 G street southeast, where funeral services will take place as stated. Rev. Arthur S. Johns will officiate.

The body will then be forwarded to Newport News, Va., for interment.

Washington Evening Star, Wednesday, July 24, 1907

Last Rites Over Dead

Funeral of Harry A. Candee and Walter F. Sousa Yesterday Afternoon

The bodies of Harry A. Candee, head clerk in Flemer's drug store, at Maryland Avenue and 7th Street Northeast, and Walter F. Sousa, electrician in the employ of the United States Electric Lighting Company who were killed by coming in contact with a live electric wire in the drug store, Saturday night, were buried yesterday afternoon.

Services over Mr. Candee's remains were conducted at his late home, 715 Massachusetts Avenue Northeast at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. Rev. Ira Abbott, rector of the Church of the Good Shepherd, officiating. Those who acted as pallbearers were Lewis Flemer, Mr. Candee's employer the past nine years, and five members of Myron M. Parker Lodge, F.A.A.M -- Dr. S.A. Helton, Dr. C.F. Whitney, A.E. Wilson, Dr. Leon Leech and P.J. Gallagher. The body was interred in Glenwood Cemetery.

Mr. and Mrs. E.F. Berger, parents of Mr. Walter F. Sousa, and several other relatives, came here from Newport News, Va., and attended Mr. Sousa's funeral. Rev. Arthur Jones, rector of Christ Church, Navy Yard, conducted the funeral services over the remains at the late home of the victim of the accident, 1007 G street southeast. The remains were buried in Congressional cemetery, those who officiated as pallbearers being Charles Love, Allen Johnson, William Loman, Angelo Snyder and James A. Kettler.