

## Frederick Springmann ( - 11 Oct 1911)

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*The Evening Star, April 25, 1898*

### Mr. Springmann's Loss

The country residence of Mr. Frederick Springmann, near Magruder's station, on the Baltimore and Potomac railroad, was destroyed by fire Saturday. The barn and other outhouses were also destroyed. Mr. Springmann was on his way to the city at the time of the fire.



All the live stock escaped, but the farming implements and harness were lost in the flames. Damage to the extent of \$2,500 was done. Mr. Springmann carried only \$900 insurance on the property. He has no explanation of the origin of the fire.

**Springmann.** Suddenly, on Wednesday, October 11, 1911, Frederick Springmann. Funeral from the chapel of J. William Lee, undertaker, 332 Pennsylvania avenue, northwest, on Saturday, October 14, at 2:30 p.m. [Evening Star, Thursday, October 12, 1911, Page 7]

*The Evening Star, October 11, 1911*

### Employee Charged with Murder of Springmann Former Expressman Dies From Injuries Received in Dispute on Farm.

Frederick Springmann, a former expressman in this city, died at his home on the Sheriff road, Prince Georges county, Md., about one mile from Chesapeake Junction, this morning as a result of an injury he received while engaged in an altercation on his farm.

Harry W. Philbrook, about twenty-one years old, who was employed on the farm, was arrested and held on a charge of murder. He is said to have admitted that he struck his employer with a club, claiming he delivered the blow in self-defense.

M. Hampton Magruder, state's attorney, was notified of the homicide, and he arranged to present at an inquest to be held this afternoon at 5 o'clock.

The deceased was struck over his eye and marks on his throat indicated that he had been choked. Dr. R. A. Schoonover of Benning was summoned to attend Springmann, but life was extinct when he arrived.

### *Arrest of Philbrook.*

As autopsy will be performed to determine just which injury caused death. Shortly after the deed was committed Francis S. Carmody went with Constable Sanderson and Magistrate West to the Springmann farm and placed Philbrook under arrest.

It is stated that the farmer and his employee engaged in a dispute yesterday, and the officers were told that Philbrook used threatening language toward his employer.

Mr. Springmann was about seventy years old. He was an uncle of Detective James Springmann of police headquarters.

*Four Brothers Living Here.*

Frederick Springmann was one of a family of seven children, and four of his surviving brothers are residents of Washington. They are John T. Springmann, senior member of the firm of J. T. Springmann & Sons, wagon builders, of 901 7<sup>th</sup> street southwest, and Charles, Samuel and George Springmann, all of whom are retired business men. Joseph Springmann, another brother, is a farmer of Lawtons Station, Va. Another brother, James Springmann, former deputy United States marshal, died about a year ago.

*The Evening Star, Thursday, October 12, 1911*

**Grand Jury Indicts**

**Holds Philbrooks for Murder of Frederick Springmann.**

**Inquest at His Home**

**Physicians Tell of Marks on Throat of Dead Man.**

**Philbrook Admits Fighting**

**But Declares He Was Forced to Choke Employer, Who Had Attached Him.**

The grand jury of Upper Marlboro late this afternoon indicted Harry W. Philbrooks for the murder of Frederick Springmann. Philbrooks will be arraigned tomorrow morning.

It is the contention of the state that Springmann was choked to death. There was no autopsy, but the physicians at the inquest yesterday afternoon told of marks on his throat and of his tongue having protruded. Philbrooks contends that he merely grabbed his employer by the throat to break the latter's hold upon him.

"I think the struggle must have been too much for him," Philbrooks told a Star reporter. "and that excitement affected his heart."

Mrs. Mary A. Springmann and Miss Frances Springmann, wife and daughter of the deceased, were the most important witnesses of the inquest. Nobody witnessed the fatal meeting, and only the version of the prisoner was heard by county officers as to just what occurred in the barn, but the widow and daughter repeated to the jury a statement they said Philbrooks made when he came to the house.

"I have killed Mr. Springmann; I choked him to death," was what they told the jury the defendant said in telling of the death of his employer.

*Said He Could Kill Him, Is Report.*

Tuesday, during an argument between employer and employee, the jurors were told Philbrooks made the remark: "I could kill you."

The dispute between them Tuesday started when the hired man was given direction about marking sacks of pears. Mr. Springmann wanting the hand-picked fruit separated from the pears that fell from the trees.

"How am I going to mark them?" Philbrooks says he asked his employer, the latter responding: "There's one of your foolish questions."

Philbrooks yesterday morning objected to throwing down hay for the stack, saying he had not done such work before, and later Springmann was heard to warn him about smoking in the barn. It was shortly after the warning was given that employer and employee engaged in the conflict in the barn which ended in the death of the former and the arrest of the latter.

Philbrooks says his employer picked up a long stick and raised it as if he were going to strike him. He paid but little attention to him, he stated, not thinking the stick would be used, but when he turned his head the stick struck him on his shoulder. Then it was, he stated, that they clinched and he found it necessary to strike Springmann with his fist, accounting for the injury over his eye.

Shortly afterward, he said, he found it necessary to grab his employer by the throat to make him release the hold he had upon him. After letting go his throat, he said, words passed between them. Mr. Springmann asking him if he was going to be a good boy. He responded that he was not a bad boy, and a few seconds after that Mr. Springmann fell dead.

#### *Daughter Summons Physicians.*

"I thought Mr. Springmann had only fainted," said Philbrooks, "so I got some water and put on his face and cut his shirts open. I didn't know whether to go for Mr. Magruder, a neighbor, or to tell Mrs. Springmann so she could get a doctor. I finally concluded to go to the house and tell the family."

Miss Frances Springmann drove to Benning for Dr. R. A. Schoonover, but life was extinct when the physician reached the Springmann farm. Later Dr. John E. Hansbury was summoned from Forestville, and both physicians were at the inquest. The prisoner, who had been in the lock-up at the District line during the day, was taken to Upper Marlboro by Sheriff Samuel E. Sweeney. He was not at the inquest.

M. Hampton Magruder, state's attorney, conducted the inquest before Magistrate John E. Weast and a jury. Benjamin W. Sanderson, the constable who made the arrest, was among the witnesses examined. George W. Springmann, brother of the deceased, told of the trouble Monday. Dr. Schoonover, who had been the Springmann family physician for several years, told the jury it would have been an easy matter to have choked Mr. Springmann to death.

Mr. Springmann, the physician stated, suffered from chronic bronchitis, and he was by no means a strong man. It would have required very little effort, he said, to have killed him. The inquest was conducted in the parlor of the Springmann home, the witnesses being seated directly at the foot of the corpse.

#### *Grand Jury Probe Today.*

It was about dark when the jurors reached a conclusion. Deputy Sheriff Suit summoned the witnesses to appear at Upper Marlboro this morning to tell the grand jury of the affair. Mrs. Springmann was not asked to go to court. Miss Frances Springmann volunteering to go and tell of the trouble and of the statement made by the farm hand after the death of her father.

Philbrooks told the county officers that he asked his employer for a settlement Monday night. He was willing to leave at that time, he said, but he could not well go away without his money. He declared Mr. Springmann had not spoken a kind word to him during the time he had worked for him, which was since September 27.

The prisoner says that he is from Newport, Me., and that his brothers and sisters reside there and at Bangor. He says he was a sailor on merchant vessels running between Maine ports and New York, and that later he was on the Lamport and Holt line, running between Liverpool and Buenos Aires. He afterward went to the vicinity of Richmond, Va., where he worked for the Manchester Milling Company, Richmond Cedar Works, the Forbes Packing Company and several dairymen.

Philbrooks said his employer had questioned his ability to milk cows, and he did not receive his suggestion kindly.

"I milked cows for some good dairymen about Richmond," he stated, "and none of them every questioned my ability in that line."

#### *Was Civil War Veteran.*

Mr. Springmann was a native of the city, and was sixty-eight years old. While a youth he resided in Pittsburgh a short time. He served in the 1st Virginia Calvary throughout the war. Later he was a prosperous mail contractor, and, it is stated, he used the first screened wagon that was in the mail service.

Mrs. Springmann and seven children survive him. The children are Edwin L. Springmann, in the Treasury Department; Harry M. Springmann, in the quartermaster's department of the War Department; Ernest F. Springmann, employed by the Southern Pacific Railroad Company at Big Spring, Tex.; Frederick A. Springmann, a circus man of New York; Mrs. Elizabeth O'Brien of Jersey City, N. J.; Mrs. May Gregory of Seat Pleasant, Md., and Miss Frances Springmann, who resided with her parents. Several years ago Mr. Springmann purchased the farm in Prince George's county. The tracks of the Washington, Baltimore and Annapolis line are laid through a portion of it.

The body will be brought to Lee's undertaking establishment, 332 Pennsylvania avenue northwest, tomorrow afternoon. Funeral services will be held in the chapel there at 2:30 o'clock Saturday afternoon. The interment will be in Congressional cemetery.