

## Charles A. Stockett (1 Aug 1848 - 1 Dec 1913)

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*The Evening Star, April 10, 1909*

### **Succeeds Mr. Herrell**

#### **Mr. Repetti Treasurer of the Eastern Building Association**

At a meeting yesterday of the board of directors of the Eastern Building and Loan Association the president, James W. Whelpley, made a fitting allusion to the death of the treasurer, John E. Herrell, who had occupied that position for twenty years, and appointed a committee, consisting of George R. Repetti, Henry K. Simpson and James E. Hutchinson, to prepare suitable resolutions. The committee subsequently reported the resolutions, which were adopted and were ordered to be spread on the minutes.



George R. Repetti, vice president, was elected treasurer and Charles A. Stockett was elected vice president. Maurice Otterback, cashier of the Anacostia Bank, a member of the association, was elected a director to fill the vacancy on the board.

*The Evening Star, November 26, 1913*

### **Struck With An Ax Then Robbed**

#### **Charles A. Stockett, Attacked in His 18th Street Store**

#### **Condition is Critical As Skull is Fractured**

#### **Negro Assailant Hunted by Police, Who Have a Good Description**

Charles A. Stockett, sixty-five years old, residing at 500 B street southeast, and in business at 2010 18th street northwest was assaulted with an ax and robbed of his pocketbook containing about \$50 in cash, and his gold watch this morning about 8:30 o'clock, shortly after he had opened his store. His skull was fractured and he is in a critical condition.

A colored man employed in the vicinity of the store found the unconscious form of the merchant on the floor of the store. He was attacked only a few minutes before he was found, the police believe, as a colored woman had made a small purchase soon after the store was opened.

Mr. Stockett regained consciousness and was able to tell of the attack and furnish a description of the robber. He was taken to Emergency Hospital, where he repeated the story of the attack to Detectives Pratt and Forteney.

#### *Assailant's Description*

"He was a man about six feet tall," said a pedestrian, who saw the assailant leave the store, "and was about thirty-five or forty years old. He had a light smooth face and wore a dark suit and light hat."

At the hospital the opinion was expressed that the blow had been delivered with the broad side of the ax, although the scalp was cut. Surgeons deemed it necessary to perform an operation.

#### *Called at Another Store*

The police this afternoon learned that a man answering the description of the assailant has been seen in the neighborhood of 18th and U streets on several mornings recently. Frequently, it is stated, he

visited the store of Mrs. Rebecca L. Wakefield, 1780 Florida avenue, and asked for articles that are not usually kept in such stores.

Mrs. Wakefield, suspecting something wrong, usually called out as if there was a man in a rear room of the store, and her ruse generally caused the colored man to leave without attempting robbery.

Should the assailant be found, it is stated, he can easily be identified. The colored man, Chandler, is positive he will be able to recognize him and several other persons also obtained a good look at him.

The story of the murderous attack recalled to the police the murder of William H. Mickle, tobacconist, near 7th and L streets northwest, two years ago, although in that case it was thought the crime was committed by a white man and the weapon used as a wrench. That mystery remains unsolved.

When Mr. Stockett reached his store, a colored man who later assaulted and robbed him, entered and asked to be shown an ax. The merchant showed him one, and the prospective customer was examining the instrument, it is stated, when a colored woman was seen walking in the direction of the store.

#### *Leaves to Get Money*

It is believed that the woman's approach prevented the attack at that time. The man quickly remarked that he wanted to see his employer and get the 50 cents for the ax, and he left the store.

Shortly after the woman entered and purchased a small quantity of oil. There had been nothing about the conduct of the man to suggest anything wrong. It frequently happens that persons inspect goods, go away, and return for them, and when the colored man did so this morning it did not arouse the merchant's suspicions.

Returning to the store shortly before 8:30 o'clock, an hour when many persons were passing along the street going to their places of employment, the colored man said, "I've come back to get the ax." And the merchant picked it up and handed it to him.

Mr. Stockett was able to recall nothing more of what happened. The force of the blow on the right side of his head back of his ear had fractured his skull and rendered him unconscious. He remained in that condition on the floor until he was found by James A. Chandler, colored, of 2323 Champlain avenue northwest.

Chandler was working at the corner below the store, and he came in to purchase supplies. When near the door he saw the merchant's assailant hurry out at the door and start away. As soon as he entered and saw the prostrate form of the dealer on the floor he sounded an alarm. Soon a crowd of curious persons were about the place.

Several persons saw the assailant about the time he left the store, and they were able to furnish good descriptions of him.

#### *Here Resident for Years*

Mr. Stockett, who has many relatives in the vicinity of Annapolis, Md., has been a resident of this city many years. He formerly was a member of the firm of Stockett & Fiske, blank book manufacturers, stationers and printers. He is a widower and resides with his brother, George Stockett, who is employed in the navy yard.

Two other brothers of the wounded man are Edward Stockett, member of a stationery firm, and John Stockett, clerk in the War Department. A sister, Miss Mary E. Stockett is principal of the Maury Public School in Northeast Washington.

Mr. Stockett is prominent in Masonic circles. He is a member of Orient Commandery, K.T., and Naval Lodge, F.A.A.M.

During the investigation of the case the police were told that the robbery and assault probably was the work of some person who was familiar with the store and its surroundings. They were told that the

hardware merchant usually carried a large sum of money in his wallet and that the wallet was carried in his inside vest pocket.

"Mr. Stockett probably had displayed his wallet while making change," said one of his friends to the police, "and the sight of the money proved the temptation to which the colored assailant yielded."

*The Washington Post, November 27, 1913*

### **Thief's Blow Deadly**

### **C.A. Stockett, Victim of Negro, Is Dying, Say Doctors**

### **Great Dagnet is Spread**

### **Police Make Effort to Capture Man Who Struck Down Elderly Merchant--**

### **Two Suspects Prove Innocence--**

### **Old Man's Skull Fractured by Ax Handle Assault Lies Unconscious in Hospital**

In the far-reaching search for the negro, who yesterday morning used an ax in assaulting and robbing Charles A. Stockett, 65 years old, in his store at 2010 Eighteenth street northwest, two men were arrested late in the day by policemen of the Fifth and Ninth precincts, but both suspects finally convinced the authorities of their innocence.

Maj. Sylvester at noon had 10,000 circulars printed, containing a description of Mr. Stockett's assailant and an offer of a reward of \$100 for his capture. Nearly all of the circulars were in the mail by nightfall, several hundred of them addressed to nearby points, going under special delivery. In addition, telegrams were dispatched to the police of cities in the South and East.

### *Struck Frightful Blow*

Mr. Stockett, whose skull was fractured by a blow with the back of the ax, is expected to die within 24 hours, it was said last night in Emergency Hospital. An operation, performed at noon, revealed a depressed fracture of unusually large extent, just above the right ear. Before the operation he was able to give the police a description of his assailant. While they expect him to die, the surgeons say he has a slight chance; it depends upon his vitality.

Stockett was alone when the negro entered and asked to be shown an ax. The kind Mr. Stockett handed him did not suit, he said, and the storekeeper had turned around to get another ax when the negro struck him. A heavy felt slouch had probably prevented Mr. Stockett from being killed instantly. When they examined the hat the police found that the brim had curled up under the blow, making a double thickness of felt where the blunt ax "pole" struck.

### *Workman Sees Escape*

As the storekeeper fell unconscious, the negro rolled him over and went through his pockets, extracting a leather wallet containing about \$50, and a gold watch and chain. The negro was fumbling at the front door, evidently bent on locking it, when another negro, James A. Chandler, a cement workman, of 2321 Champlain avenue northwest, stepped up from the sidewalk, intending to make a purchase.

Realizing he would be discovered, Stockett's assailant opened the door, pushed Chandler aside, and walked away, leisurely at first, but, as he reached the corner, breaking into a run.

Stockett, Chandler, and others who saw the storekeeper's assailant, said he was about 5 feet 11 inches, or 6 feet tall, weighing about 175 to 185 pounds, of a very dark color, with full, smooth face and broad shoulders. He wore a dark suit, light slouch hat, and black shoes with low heels.

*The Evening Star, November 27, 1913*

### **Stockett Still Alive; Assailant Uncaptured**

### **Hardware Dealer Reported to Have Slight Chance for Recovery**

### **All Suspects Prove Alibis and Are Released--Detectives Find But Few Clues**

In spite of the efforts of the police department to locate and arrest the assailant of Charles A. Stockett, hardware dealer, 2010 18th street northwest, and the offer of a reward of \$100 for information, leading to the apprehension of the colored man who assaulted Stockett with an ax and then robbed him of \$45 and a valuable watch, no trace of the man has been found.

It was reported at Emergency Hospital today that the condition of the injured man is extremely critical and that his chance for recovery is slight.

Half a dozen suspects, arrested yesterday and last night, were able to prove complete alibis, and the men arrested have all been released.

In the police circular offering the \$100 reward Stockett's assailant is described as "a very dark, brown-skinned negro, thirty-five to forty years old, 5 feet 11 inches or 6 feet tall, weight 175 to 185 pounds, full, smooth face, broad shoulders, wore dark suit, light slouch hat, and black shoes with low heels."

#### **Few Clues Are Found**

Detectives Pfaff and Forteney, with Precinct Detective Weber of the tenth precinct, spent the greater part of yesterday and last night running down clues and looking for traces of the colored man. The detectives today declared they are completely at sea in regard to identification of the assailant of Stockett or definite clues as to the man's whereabouts.

A minute examination of the hardware store where the assault and robbery occurred failed to disclose any fingerprints or other clues which might possibly lead to the capture and identification of the colored man.

The detectives found the short-handled ax which was the weapon used by the colored man. The hands of the ax bore a bloodstain, but careful scrutiny of the ax and handle failed to disclose any fingerprints or other marks that might have been made by the hand of the man who wielded the murderous implement.

The ax, a bit of chain broken from the watch when the timepiece was torn from Mr. Stockett's pocket and the injured man's hat, bearing the imprint of the blade of the ax, were taken to police headquarters, where they are held, to be used as evidence in case the police are successful in locating and arresting the hardware merchant's assailant.

#### ***Stockett's Survival Remarkable***

It was stated at Emergency Hospital today that the physical condition of Mr. Stockett makes the fact of his having survived the assault this long remarkable. The injured man, it was stated, has for years suffered from heart trouble, asthma, dropsy and partial paralysis, and this complication of diseases, the surgeons say, ordinarily would have militated against the man's survival even for a few hours.

Dr. Harry Lewis, superintendent of Emergency Hospital, operated on the injured man yesterday, and stated today that Mr. Stockett stood the operation astonishingly well. Under the influence of the anesthetic. Dr. Lewis said, Mr. Stockett's weak heart appeared to be more nearly normal in its action than it has been for several years, according to statements made after the operation by Mr. Stockett.

Several pieces of the shattered skull were removed, Dr. Lewis said, one of the fragments of bone being the size of a silver dollar. The nature of the injury, the surgeon said, also made it necessary to remove several small particles of the brain tissue itself.

This afternoon the police photographer visited the scene of the assault and took several photographs. Maj. Sylvester directed the taking of the photographs for use in court in event of the capture of the merchant's assailant.

*The Washington Post, November 28, 1913*

### **Victim of Thief Sinks**

#### **C.A. Stockett Unconscious and Can't Help Detectives**

#### **Wish to Show Him Picture**

#### **Rogues' Gallery Photograph Probably Never Will Be Seen by Old Merchant.**

#### **Police Baffled in Hunt for Man Who Swung Ax Pole on Storekeeper**

#### **May Have Been Nonresident**

Charles A. Stockett, the aged hardware dealer, assaulted with an ax and robbed Wednesday morning in his store at 2010 Eighteenth street northwest, sank into unconsciousness yesterday in Emergency Hospital, and his condition last night was such that the surgeons expressed no hope for his recovery.

#### *Detective Disappointed*

Detective Sergt. Charles A. Evans, one of the headquarters men who are working on the case, found in the rogues' gallery a picture of a negro, who, he thought, might be of the man who assaulted Mr. Stockett. Evans took the picture to the hospital, hoping to find the injured man conscious for at least a brief interval, but was disappointed.

Although Mr. Stockett was semiconscious most of the time Wednesday, and wholly conscious at frequent intervals, he relapsed into complete insensibility early yesterday, and the doctors do not expect him to come out of that state.

#### *Police Are Baffled*

The police seem baffled in their search for Mr. Stockett's assailant. Ten thousand circulars containing a description of the negro, have been mailed and many telegrams dispatched, so far to no avail. Detectives on the case have concluded that the man is a stranger in Washington.

*The Washington Post, December 2, 1913*

### **Dead of Thief's Blow**

#### **C.A. Stockett, Aged Merchant Succumbs in Hospital**

#### **Clews To Assailant Fade**

#### **Detectives, After Talk With Mr. Stockett, Suspect That the Deed Was Committed by a Washington Negro, Probably One Employed Near the Store--**

#### **New Jersey Negro Freed**

C.A. Stockett, the aged hardware dealer who was assaulted with an ax, Wednesday morning in his store at 2010 Eighteenth street northwest, by a negro thief, and who astonished the surgeons of his remarkable vitality, died at ... His end was expected at nightfall.

#### *Assailant Still at Large*

The negro who fractured Stockett's skull with an ax is still at large, although the police have been bending every effort to find him. A suspect was arrested in Burlington, N.J., yesterday morning, but Inspector Boardman by long-distance telephone satisfied himself that the wrong man had been taken into custody.

#### *Suspect a Washington Negro*

Detectives working on the case have picked up two or three clews leading out of the city. Since their talk with the victim in the hospital on Sunday, however, they are convinced that it was a

Washington negro who perpetrated the crime and probably a man who lived or worked in the vicinity of Stockett's store.

*The Evening Star, December 4, 1913, p. 4*

### **Charles A. Stockett Buried This Afternoon**

#### **Services Held at Trinity M.E. Church by Masonic Order. Police Hunt Slayer**

Funeral services for Charles A. Stockett, hardware merchant, victim of an unidentified negro slayer, were conducted this afternoon at Trinity M.E. church, Seward square and 5th street southeast, Rev. Henry S. France, pastor, officiating. The body was escorted from the late home of Mr. Stockett, 5th and B streets southeast, to the church by members of the three Masonic organizations with which he was affiliated.

E.P. Hazelton, eminent commander of Orient Commandery No. 5, K.T., assisted by Prelate Richard P. Evans, conducted the Masonic ceremonies at the church, members of Washington Naval Chapter, No. 6, R.A.M., J. Frank Campbell, high priest, and Naval Lodge, No. 4, F.A.A.M., being in attendance

The pallbearers, selected from the Masonic Order, were: from Naval Lodge, John C. Bunn and Francis Hildebrand; from Washington Naval Chapter, J.C. Cross and C.F. Wood; from Orient Commandery, Elmer E. Wilkinson and B.A. Grist.

Members of the three organizations assembled at Naval Hall, Pennsylvania avenue and 4th street southeast, at 1 o'clock and attended the funeral in a body, Orient Commandery being in uniform, and members of the uniformed body acted as escort on the way to Congressional cemetery.

Frank H. Kramer, worshipful master of Naval Lodge, had charge of the ceremonies at the grave. Mr. Stockett was past commander of Orient Commandery, having served in that capacity in 1899.

While funeral services for the dead man were being conducted this afternoon members of the so-called murder squad of detectives were exerting themselves to bring about the capture of the slayer. They had several suspects under surveillance yesterday, but it was stated this afternoon that an early solution of the mystery is not expected.

*The Washington Post, December 5, 1913*

### **Mason's Pay Him Respect**

#### **Three Lodges Attend Funeral Service for Charles A. Stockett**

#### **Police Still Without a Tangible Clue to Identity of Negro Assailant of Hardware Dealer**

Members of three Masonic lodges yesterday attended the funeral of Charles A. Stockett, the aged hardware dealer who was struck down by a negro with an ax Wednesday morning a week ago, in his store at 2010 Eighteenth street northwest. Mr. Stockett was a member of Orient Commandery, No. 5, K.T.; Washington Naval Chapter, No. 6, R.A.M., and Naval Lodge, No. 4, F.A.A.M.

The services were conducted by the Rev. Henry S. France, pastor of Trinity M.E. Church, and were held in the church, with the body was escorted by the Masons from Mr. Stockett's home, at Fifth and B streets southeast. The pallbearers were J.C. Bunn and Francis Hildebrand, from Naval Lodge; J.C. Ross and C.F. Wood, Naval Lodge, and E.E. Wilkinson and B.A. Grist, Orient Commandery.

The police are no nearer to finding Stockett's slayer than they were when the assault was committed. Although a score of detectives and policemen are working on nothing but the case, not one clue to the identity of the slayer has been picked up. Many suspects have been arrested, but they were all released.

*History of the Naval Lodge, No. 4, F.A.A.M.*

Charles A. Stockett, Worshipful Master during the years 1886 and 1887, was born at Birdsville, Anne Arundel Co., Md., August 1, 1848; removed to Washington, D.C., in the spring of 1849, and was educated in the public schools and Spencerian Business College of this city; was initiated in Naval Lodge, No. 4, April 1, 1871; passed May 5, 1871, and raised June 7, 1871; has filled all the offices except that of Treasurer, and is now one of the Trustees of the Lodge; was chairman of the Committee which selected the site on which the present hall is located; chairman of Committee on Certificates of Indebtedness, floated to raise funds to purchase site for hall; vice-chairman of Building Committee under whose direction the building was erected; chairman of Committee on Ceremonies for Laying Cornerstone of Building, and chairman of Board of Control of Fair held by the Lodge during April 1899; was exalted in Washington Naval R.A. Chapter, No. 6, Oct. 21, 1873; filled all the offices in the Chapter except that of Treasurer, being High Priest during the year 1900, and is now one of its Trustees; was knighted in Washington Commandery, No. 1, K.T., April 12, 1876, and continued a member of that Commandery until Oct. 19, 1895, when he became a charter member of Orient Commandery, No. 5, K.T., of this jurisdiction, of which he was elected its first Senior Warden and filled all the succeeding offices, being Eminent Commander during the year 1900, and is now one of the Trustees of the Commandery; is also a member of Almas Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S.

p. 114-115: A tragic event occurred in December, 1913, which stirred the membership to the boiling point. Past Master Charles A. Stockett was murdered and the murderer was still at large. He was assaulted and robbed in his store early in the morning of November 26, 1913 by an unknown colored man. He died in Emergency Hospital on the evening of December 1, and on the afternoon of December 4, his remains were interred with Masonic honors in Congressional Cemetery. On the evening of that day the Lodge passed a resolution supplementing the one hundred dollars reward offered by the Major and Superintendent of Police by an additional one hundred dollars for the arrest and conviction of the assassin. This action was brought to the attention of the Superintendent of Police and was published in every daily paper in the District of Columbia. The reward remains unpaid today. In 1917 a communication was received from Brother Raymond W. Pullman, Major and Superintendent of Police, advising the Lodge of the arrest of ----, colored, whom they had every reason to believe was the murderer of Past Master Charles A. Stockett. The charge of murder in the first degree against ---- was ignored by the Grand Jury on August 24, 1917.