

Robert Strong

(- 29 Jun 1895)

The Evening Star, July 1, 1895

Death of Robert Strong

He Had Assisted at Many Local Executions

Robert Strong, or Bob Strong, as he was familiarly known, one of the oldest members of the District jail force died at his residence, 119 Carroll street southeast, at 2:20 Saturday afternoon. His funeral will take place from his late residence at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

The deceased was seventy-nine years of age, and was born in Albany, N.Y. He had been a jail guard for about twenty-eight years, the only member of the force preceding him in length of service being Deputy Warden Russ. When quite young Strong became a seafaring man and spent many years afloat, visiting about every quarter of the globe. When he was appointed a jail guard his knowledge of ropes and knots caused him to be selected as the one to assist in the taking off of criminals sentenced to death in this District, and from the date of his appointment he officiated as hangman in every execution occurring here, about eighteen. That is, it was Strong's duty to prepare the ropes with which the condemned men were bound, the fatal rope and the deadly noose. With the spring of the trap he had nothing to do, that being pulled by some unknown person. So expert was Strong in this business that during his career here as hangman not a single mishap occurred. It is true that in 1880, when Stone, a colored man, was executed for the murder of his wife, the condemned man's head was pulled from his body, but that accident was due, so the physicians stated, to the extraordinary softness of the tissues and muscles. Strong assisted in the execution of Guiteau, and was one of those whom the assassin of President Garfield cursed. Strong's last appearance as hangman was last April a year ago, at the execution of Crumpton. At that execution the rope nearly parted, and a sickening spectacle was only narrowly averted. The rope used then had been used several times before, and the break in it had escaped Strong's usually keen inspection.

Strong was a jovial, good-hearted man, and it is a remarkable fact that he was always on more than good terms with the men he assisted into the next world. He was a brother of the late Samuel Strong, a well-known contractor here, and spent several years in California during the gold craze. It is said that his only surviving relatives are a married daughter and two children of his deceased brother.

The Evening Star, July 2, 1895

Funeral of Robert Strong

The funeral of Robert Strong, the jail guard, took place from his late residence, 119 Carroll street southeast at 4 o'clock yesterday afternoon, the Rev. Mr. Jenkins, pastor of St. Mark's Episcopal Church, officiating. The interment was made at Congressional cemetery. The floral tributes were many and beautiful. A large wreath of white roses, bearing in blue immortelles the letters "U.S.J.," was sent by the jail force. The pallbearers were Messrs. Wm. C. Crawford, H.H. Smith, James Woodward, J.E. Bell, N.H. Cole and James Coleman.

The New York Times, July 1, 1895

Death Of A Noted Hangman

Robert Strong of Washington, Who Executed Guiteau

WASHINGTON, June 30.

Robert Strong, familiarly known as "Colonel Bob" Strong, who executed Guiteau, the assassin of President Garfield, died in this city yesterday, of infirmities incident to old age, being close upon his eightieth year. He had been an officer of the District jail for nearly thirty years, and during that period executed eighteen criminals, the last one only a year ago.

He was born in Albany, N.Y., and in early life was a sailor. The knowledge he acquired at sea of ropes and knots led to his selection as the District hangman.

Before settling in Washington, he went out to California with the forty-niners, and assisted in the building of the old San Francisco Mint. He afterward took a hand in building the House wing of the Capitol.

Notwithstanding the grim nature of his professional duties, he was a jovial, kind-hearted man in private life, and sacrificed most of his own means to aid a brother in a protracted litigation of a claim of many thousands of dollars against the City Government for unpaid services as contractor. That claim was decided finally in his brother's favor, but two years after he had died.

Strong's death is a great loss to the jail officials, and it will be no easy matter to fill his place. Three executions are scheduled to take place in July.