

Clarence M. Wood

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The Washington Post, April 16, 1922, p. 1

Rejected, He Shoots Girl and Kills Self

Love Tragedy on Fredericksburg Turnpike Ends Quarrel Over Marriage

Clarence M. Wood, 39 years old, an inspector of the Pennsylvania railroad, living at 302 Virginia avenue southeast yesterday afternoon shot and probably fatally wounded Miss Elsie Powell, 25 years old, employed at the veterans bureau, residing at 1219 K street northwest, and then committed suicide by shooting himself through the heart.

The tragedy occurred 18 miles from Washington on the Fredericksburg turnpike. Miss Powell, was hurried to the Emergency hospital, and operated on at once by Dr. W.C. Borden. At a late hour last night physicians held little hope for the girl's recovery. Wood, was taken to the base hospital at Camp Humphries, where he died without regaining consciousness.

According to Private Perry Gray, Company C, Thirteenth engineers, stationed at Camp Humphries, who brought Miss Powell to Emergency, Wood shot his companion after a quarrel about marriage.

Soldier Tells of Shooting

Gray, at the hospital last night, said that he was within 100 yards of the scene of the fatal shooting when he heard the girl scream. Then, he said, he heard three shots. Gray said that the first shot that Wood fired at the girl, who was making an effort to escape from her suitor, missed. He said that as she turned to plead with the man not to kill her, Wood, at close distance, fired a second shot, which penetrated the girl's abdomen.

The Washington Post, April 17, 1922, p. 2

Finds Wood Killed Self and Shot Girl

Coroner's Jury Renders Verdict in Saturday's Love Tragedy, Near Accotink, Va.

Story Given By Eyewitness

Miss Elsie Powell, Victim, Shows Slight Improvement at Hospital. Bullet Penetrates Liver

The coroner's jury summoned by Frank W. Troth, justice of the peace in Fairfax county, to investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of Clarence M. Wood and the shooting of Miss Elsie Powell, which occurred just south of Accotink, Va., Saturday night, met at the base hospital at Camp Humphreys at 10 o'clock yesterday morning, and rendered a verdict that Wood came to his death by a self-inflicted gunshot wound, after first attempting to shoot and kill Miss Powell, on the Camp Humphreys road about one-quarter mile south of Accotink, Va.

James Baggett, who was apparently the only eyewitness to the shooting, stated that he was walking north on the Camp Humphreys road when he saw the couple standing in the road; that Wood was apparently trying to persuade the woman to get into his car, a coupe, which was parked at the side of the road.

Tells of the Shooting

Baggett says Wood took hold of Miss Powell's arm, and she repulsed him, striking him in the face several times with her hand. Then, he says, Miss Powell started down the road toward him, Wood

following with a revolver in his hand, and when they were about 10 feet from him Miss Powell turned, facing Wood, and Wood fired one shot at her.

Wood then walked away a short distance and placed the revolver against his breast and attempted to shoot himself, but the weapon missed fire. He then fired one shot in the air, then placed the revolver to his breast again and fired a third shot, immediately falling to the ground.

Baggett then hailed a passing car, containing several soldiers. The car stopped and some of the occupants turned Wood's body over and extinguished fire in his clothing which had been started by the revolver shot.

One of the soldiers, Private Perry Gray, of Company C, Thirteenth engineers, at Miss Powell's request, then got into Wood's car with her and brought her to Emergency hospital here, leaving Wood lying on the ground. In the meantime several cars had arrived and stopped and quite a crowd had gathered around.

Soon after this, according to Baggett, J.W. Anderson, who conducts a garage at Accotink, arrived, and he and others placed Wood in a car which was standing on the roadside and carried him to the base hospital at Camp Humphreys, where he died shortly afterward. Baggett stated that he did not see Wood placed in the car, as he turned and left the scene after seeing that Wood would be cared for.

Body Brought to Home Here

Harry M. Wood, a brother of the dead man, was present at the inquest, but did not make any statement other than to say that a Washington undertaker had been instructed to take the body to Washington. It was learned later that the body was delivered to B. Wheatley, Alexandria undertaker, and taken to Wood's home, 302 Virginia avenue southeast, Washington.

One of the jurymen stated he understood several letters had been found in the pockets of Wood's clothing, addressed to his mother and others, and suggested that they be read to the jury.

Justice Troth stated he thought they should properly read, as possibly showing whether the shooting was premeditated or done on the spur of the moment, but at the request of Wood's brother, the introduction of the letters was waived.

Pocketbook Apparently Gone

Samuel Landstreet, a relative of Wood, stated that he had known Miss Powell for four or five years, and that it had been reported that she and Wood were engaged to be married, although he did not whether the report was true. He stated that Mr. Wood had always been in the habit of carrying a sum of money, varying from \$50 to \$150, in large alligator-skin pocketbook, which was not found on the body, and asked whether this pocketbook had been found. A search of the dead man's clothing showed that he had only 4 cents when he reached the hospital.

J.W. Anderson, who was one of the men who took Wood to the hospital, but who was not summoned to testify at the inquest, was later interviewed, and he stated that a colored girl came to his place of business and told him that a man and a woman had been shot; that he immediately went to the place and saw Wood lying beside the road, and that he, a man named R.E. Brown, and another man named Anderson, placed Wood in a car which Brown was driving, and took him to the Camp Humphreys hospital.

Stuffed Bills in His Pocket

Either Brown or Anderson, he said, told him that when they arrived on the scene they saw a "big man" bending over Wood's body and saw him stuff a handful of bills into his inside coat pocket. The man then apparently disappeared, and Mr. Anderson thought no more of the matter until he heard that Wood's money was missing.

Justice Troth announced that the family of the dead man wished to make a complaint about the loss of the money he would take the matter up.

The coroner's jury was composed of Peter Fields, foreman; William Shepherd, Willard Petitt, Kelly Dove, jr.; Samuel Petitt and Lercy Taylor.

The weapon used by Wood was a 38 caliber pearl-handled revolver. He died a few minutes after reaching the hospital, without regaining consciousness.

Inquiry at the Emergency hospital last night developed that Miss Powell's condition shows a slight improvement, although she is by no means out of danger. The bullet penetrated her liver.