

## **William H. Barnes Jr.** **( - 15 Jun 1908)**

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**Barnes.** Suddenly on Monday, June 15, 1908, William Barnes, beloved husband of Margaret Barnes (nee Soper). Funeral will take place from his late residence, 509 E street northeast at 3 o'clock, Monday, June 22.

*The Evening Star, June 15, 1908, p. 4*

### **Leaps From The New Bridge**

#### **William H. Barnes Commits Suicide By Drowning Jumps Into Anacostia River Before Daylight This Morning -- Suffered From Insomnia**

Members of the crew of the police boat and a number of boatmen residing in the southeast section of the city were dragging the Anacostia river near the navy yard bridge early this morning for the body of William H. Barnes, who was reported to have jumped overboard shortly before 2:30 o'clock this morning.

Barnes, who was sixty-six years of age, lived at 509 E street northeast, and had been employed by the Adams Express Company for more than thirty-five years. Easter Sunday morning the body of his brother, Charles Albert Barnes, was found in his room in the E street house, death having occurred from inhaling illuminating gas. Since then William H. Barnes had worried so much that he was unable to sleep. Due to insomnia, it is believed, his mind became unbalanced and he jumped overboard while in that condition.

George Langley, employed on the new bridge, saw the man when he started across the bridge. He also noticed him when he stopped on the draw and partly disrobed. Langley shouted to Barnes, but the only response was the sound of the body splashing in the water. Before he could reach the draw the body had disappeared beneath the surface. The police of the fifth and harbor precincts were notified and members of the crew of the police boat were at work before daylight.

### ***Leaves Clothing on Bridge***

Several articles of wearing apparel, a black slouch hat and a cane were found on the draw of the bridge. The water at that point is more than fifteen feet deep at high tide. Written in a note book in one of the pockets of the coat were the name and address of Barnes, the only other articles in the book being an undertaker's receipt for the funeral expenses of his brother and a newspaper clipping giving an account of his brother's death and funeral. It was by the finding of the book and contents that Detective Smith of the fifth precinct was able to bring about the identification of the body. He went to the E street address and learned from Mrs. Barnes the supposed causes of the suicide.

From Eastern Sunday until her husband left home this morning, his wife said, he had suffered from insomnia. Last night there was a gathering of friends at the house and it was after 10 o'clock when Mr. and Mrs. Barnes retired. The husband complained that he was unable to sleep and walked about the house, returning to his bed before midnight. Mrs. Barnes thought it was between 3 and 4 o'clock this morning when he left the room and went to the lower floor.

### ***Not Alarmed by Absence***

Persons in the house heard the door close when Barnes departed, but paid no attention to it, thinking it was made by one of the sons going to his place of employment. Mr. Barnes' failure to return

home in time for breakfast made his wife and other members of the family feel that something was wrong, but it was not until Detective Smith called that they even suspected he had gone away for the purpose of taking his life.

During the many years Barnes was in the employ of the express company he had charge of one of the wagons, but two years ago he met with an accident, sustaining an injury to his leg. Since then he had been employed as messenger on one of the money wagons.

*The Evening Star, June 20, 1908, p. 10*

### **Barnes' Body Recovered**

#### **River Yields Up Corpse of Suicide Who Brooded Over Brother's Death**

The body of William H. Barnes, sixty-nine years of age, who committed suicide at an early hour Monday morning by jumping overboard from the Anacostia bridge, was recovered about 8 o'clock this morning about 300 yards south of the Benning bridge, more than a mile upstream from where he jumped overboard. The police had dragged about the vicinity of the Anacostia bridge and all the way down stream o the arsenal, but had not gone far in the direction of Benning.

William Reynolds, who hires boats and sells bait to fishermen in Georgetown, has found many bodies of victims of the river during the past few years. This morning he was seining for bait when he discovered the badly decomposed body of Barnes. He notified the police. The police boat removed the body to the morgue. Coroner Nevitt viewed the remains later in the day and gave the necessary certificate of death.

It is certain that Barnes committed suicide because of grief over the sudden death of his brother, Charles A. Barnes, who was asphyxiated May 30 in his room at the home of his brother, 509 E street northeast.

Between the time of his brother's death and last Monday morning, it is stated, William H. Barnes suffered from insomnia and had eaten but little. He had been employed by Adams Express Company for about thirty-five years.

The funeral will take place from his home, 509 E street northeast, at 3 o'clock Monday afternoon.