

Barney Brown

(- 14 May 1863)

The Evening Star, May 15, 1863, p. 3

Fatal Accident

About noon yesterday as Mr. Barney Brown, carpenter, was engaged at work on the roof of the Library of Capitol, he stepped from a small scaffold on one of the cast-iron panels of the roof of the Library, on which was a lot of copper and other materials, and the panel fell through, precipitating him to the stairway of the gallery beneath, a distance of eighteen feet, and from the fall or from the copper and rubbish falling upon him he was so injured that he died in a few minutes. When taken up his neck was found to have been broken and his body badly bruised. It is supposed that the weight of the rubbish, together with Mr. Brown's weight, was too much for the panel, which may have had a flaw in it. At the time of the accident several persons were immediately beneath the panel but hearing the crash they saved themselves by running from the spot.

The body of the deceased was removed to his residence on Twelfth street, near C street south. He was generally esteemed, and had been for many years an active member of the Franklin Fire company, and served as a volunteer in the three months' service. He leaves a widow to mourn his loss, but no children. The Franklin Fire company will attend his funeral this afternoon.

The National Intelligencer, May 15, 1863, p. 3

Fatal Accident

One of the laborers, named Barney Brown, in the employ of Mr. B.B. French, the Commissioner of Public Buildings, while engaged at his work upon the Capitol yesterday had occasion to walk over the iron ceiling of the Congressional Library room. As he stepped upon one of the cast iron panels, of which the ceiling is composed, the entire panel gave way, and the unfortunate man fell through being intercepted in his fearful descent by the iron railing and platform which surrounds the upper tier of the compartments into which the Library is divided. He survived the fall long enough to utter a few groans and immediately expired. We understand that some heavy materials had been allowed to accumulate on the panel, though not in sufficient weight, it is supposed, to account alone for the accident, which may have rather resulted from a flaw in the iron. It was the panel inserted at the northeast corner of the ceiling which fell in the way described. At the moment this panel gave way several persons, engaged in reading,, were seated around a table almost directly below, but, being startled by the sudden crash overhead, they had time to snatch themselves from the swift destruction which the falling mass produced where it struck. The damage done to the library was inconsiderable.