

Leonard Tilden Brown

(- 12 Feb 1907)

Brown. On Monday, February 11, 1907, Leonard T., husband of Della B. Brown. Funeral private, from chapel of Frank Geier's Sons, No. 1113 7th street northwest on Thursday, February 14 at 11 o'clock a.m.

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Kills Woman and Himself

Murder and Suicide the Acts of Leonard T. Brown

Double Tragedy Enacted

Harness Establishment on 14th Street the Scene

Former Attempt to End Life

Man Recently Inhaled Illuminating Gas,

But Recovered After Treatment at a Hospital



LEONARD T. BROWN.
Seated on his horse "Brownie."

Leonard T. Brown, who conducted the City Harness and Supply Company establishment at 2124 14th street, ended his life last night by shooting himself in the mouth, the bullet breaking his neck and causing instant death. Before committing suicide he fired three shots at Miss Margaret Straub, killing her so quickly that she did not move after the discharge of the weapon at her.

The double tragedy was enacted in the work room in rear of Brown's place of business, it is supposed, at a late hour last night, but it was not until about 7:25 o'clock this morning that evidences of the crime were discovered. Then the police, the coroner and relatives of Brown and of Miss Straub were notified of what had occurred. Mrs. Della R. Brown, wife of the harness dealer, heard the news over the telephone at her home, 1329 Columbia road. She remarked that she had expected he would do something of the kind. Mrs. Straub, the aged mother of the dead woman, was notified of the occurrence by

Rev. Father Donohue and her family physician, at her home in the Alexis Falts, 1731 T street. Mrs. Straub was already sick and in a nervous condition, having fallen and fractured her arm a few days ago. She had inquired regarding the whereabouts of her daughter earlier in the morning, and the sad news naturally rendered her condition worse. She knew that Margaret had been "keeping company" with

Brown, and had done her best to stop it. Mrs. Brown also knew that her husband had been going with Margaret Straub, and his conduct had caused an estrangement in the family.

Lee H. Smith, residing at 907 6th street southwest, and Claud C. Gardner of 61 Florida avenue, who were employed as clerks in the harness store, made the ghastly find this morning when they opened the store and went to the rear room to start a fire and prepare for business.

"Come here and see what's happened," Gardner called to his companion, stepping back.

Wife and Police Notified

After discussing what was best for them to do, the boys finally decided to notify Mrs. Brown and the police. Mrs. Brown received the message by telephone, and was startled, but soon recovered her composure and told the young men at the other end of the line that it was just about what she had expected. She knew all about her husband's affairs, she said, and she recalled that only a few days ago he had attempted suicide, but that he had changed his mind when he realized that he was about to lose consciousness, and then called for help. He was in the rear room at his place of business at that time, the attempt at self-destruction having been made by inhaling illuminating gas.

It was about 4 o'clock in the morning when he got up from his bed, made by spreading a blanket upon his work bench and staggered to the front door.

Neighbors heard cries of "Help" in the store and informed the police. Brown was treated at Garfield Hospital, and he fully recovered from the effects of the gas that he had inhaled. His wife said at the time that the affair was an accident, doing the best she could to shield him.

Going to Store at Night

"He had been in the habit of going to his store at night to look over his mail," she said, "and frequently he would fall asleep and remain there all night."

At that time, it is stated, Mrs. Brown knew of her husband's friendship for Miss Straub. It is added that since he recovered from the effects of the gas, he had spent most of his nights at the store, having placed a cot in there. It was upon the cot that the body of the woman was found this morning, the body of Brown lying upon the floor with the head resting against the cot. A large blood stain on the bed indicated that the head of Brown rested alongside that of the woman at the time he ended his life. The revolver used by Brown was found upon the floor near his right hand.

Police Take Charge

As soon as advised of the finding of the bodies, Capt. Doyle of the eighth precinct sent several policemen to take charge of the premises and Inspector Boardman detailed Detective Parham to the store to assist the coroner. When Coroner Nevitt reached the room in which the double tragedy had been enacted it required only a glance for him to determine that the man had committed murder and that he had then shot and killed himself. The position in which was the body of Miss Straub convinced him that she had not moved after she had been shot, and the location of the revolver was assurance that the weapon had been used by Brown. There was nothing to suggest a suicide pact, the wounds sustained by the woman indicating that she could not possibly have inflicted them. The woman had bled internally, not much blood having flowed upon the bed, but Brown had lost almost every drop of the blood from his body, the stream extending to a small stove, in the room about four feet from the body.

On a revolving chair near the cot was a box containing several pieces of chocolate candy indicating that the couple had eaten the other candy from the box prior to the tragedy. Resting on a work bench, against which was the cot, were the wraps that Miss Straub had removed. They consisted of her blue coat, hat, gloves and pocket book, a box of candy being beneath the coat. It is thought that it was the intention of Miss Straub to have carried the box of sweets home with her when she left Brown's store.

Her white waist was smeared with blood, and the crimson fluid had clotted over her eyes and mouth. Detective Parham and the police from the eighth precinct searched the place thinking Brown might have left a message of some kind, but they failed to find such.

Coroner Makes Examination

Coroner Nevitt made an examination of the bodies learning that only one bullet had been fired at the man the absence of an exterior wound making plain that the bullet had entered the mouth. His neck was broken by the piece of lead. The coroner found that the bullet had entered the left side of the woman's neck taking off a piece of the lobe of the ear.

Brown, who was well known to local horsemen and business men, was regarded as a "good fellow." His friends boasting that he never indulged in intoxicants or tobacco. He was fond of horses and was frequently seen on the speedway on his horse, "Brownie." It is said that he took Miss Straub out sleighing recently and that he had frequently taken her driving. The harness dealer, it is added, had not lived at his own home much during the past year but that he did call upon his wife and child at intervals. Mrs. Brown also called at his store occasionally, it is stated, but she had not been there recently. She knew all about his conduct with the young woman. Brown was popular with many of his business neighbors.

Mrs. Straub, it is declared, had directed Brown to remain away from her home. Despite the objection on the part of Mrs. Straub, Brown, it is stated, insisted upon calling at the flat. Just when or where the couple met last night the police did not ascertain.

Escorted Her to Work

Miss Straub, who was twenty-six years of age, was four years younger than Brown. She was employed in the bureau of engraving and printing. The harness dealer, it is stated, sometimes drove her to the bureau and frequently met her when she had finished her day's work. With the exception of her mother, it is stated, her friends did not know of the friendship that existed between her and Brown. She had a quiet manner and was even-tempered. Her friends were greatly shocked today when they heard of what had happened. Miss Straub wore a diamond horseshoe pin, which, it is stated, had been given her by Brown, although his wife had made him a present of it. He also had a similar pin that was worth about \$800, the latter being found in his pocketbook.

It is the belief of the police that Brown did not intend to kill Miss Straub last night when she went to the work room in the rear of his store with him, and that his act was the deed of a man who either became insanely jealous or who feared he would have to give up the companionship of the woman. He had removed his coat and vest, collar and tie. Coroner Nevitt thinks that the woman may have been sleeping at the time the shots were fired, as her body did not move, nor was there any evidence of the slightest struggle having occurred.

Crowd of Curious Persons

Before the coroner reached the scene a crowd of curious persons gathered in front of the store and crowded against the door. They were so eager to obtain a look within that they forced open the door. Mrs. Brown called at the store after the bodies had been removed and inquired if it was true that her husband had shot himself. Capt. Doyle explained the positions in which the bodies were found, and told her just where the coroner had picked up the weapon. The widow said he had done only what she had anticipated. She added she would take charge of the body and have it removed to her home from the undertaking establishment as soon as it had been prepared for burial.

It is said that both parents of Miss Straub are living.

The police took charge of the premises and effects of the harnessmaker and the young woman and they will be turned over to the respective relatives later.

The Evening Star, February 15, 1907

Funeral of Miss Straub

Final Chapter in Said Tragedy of Two Lives

The funeral of Miss Margaret Straub, the young woman who was shot by Leonard T. Brown, the harness dealer, just before the latter took his own life in the room in the rear of his store at 2121 14th street, took place from her mother's apartment in the Alexis apartment house, 1731 T street northwest, this morning at 10 o'clock. The parents and other relatives and friends were present at the services, and they accompanied the remains to St. Mary's cemetery, where the interment was private.

Yesterday afternoon services over the body of Brown were conducted in the chapel at the undertaking establishment of Francis Geier's Sons, 1113 7th street northwest. His body was interred at Congressional cemetery, the interment being private.