

## William E. Clark

( - d. 4 Sep 1906)

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**Clark.** On Tuesday, September 4, 1906, W.E., son of the late John F. and Bessie Clark, in his 18th year. Funeral on Friday, September 7, at 10 a.m., from Lee's undertaking chapel.

*The Evening Star, September 5, 1906, p. 11*

### **Boy Commits Suicide**

### **Wm. E. Clark Fires Bullet Into His Own Head**

### **Early Morning Tragedy**

### **Fear of Death by Consumption Prompted the Deed**

### **Brooding Over Possibility**

### **Dead Boy Had Been a Popular Usher at Local Theater --**

### **The Coroner's Verdict**

William E. Clark, eighteen years old, an usher at Chase's Theater, shot himself through the head early this morning at his home, 1408 I street northwest, dying instantly. His grandmother, Lydia G. Conkling, with whom the boy had been living, was in the room at the time, but before the shooting he turned off the light, and she did not see him raise the weapon to his temple.

Coroner Nevitt viewed the remains about 2 o'clock this morning, and issued a certificate by suicide by a gunshot wound through the head. The body was afterward removed to the undertaking rooms of J. William Lee to be prepared for burial. The arrangements for the funeral have not been made.

The boy had brooded over the fact that he had consumption. His father and his mother both died of tuberculosis, and the boy had been for some time declaring he would kill himself rather than die of that disease. Last November, his grandmother states, the boy had a severe cold, and he then threatened to kill himself, and did take chloroform, but his grandmother caught him before he had succeeded in taking a fatal quantity.

About four weeks ago, his grandmother states, the boy again contracted a cold, and since then he had been unusually despondent, and had expressed the fear that he would die of consumption. His grandmother tried to persuade him that he was not afflicted with the disease, she says, but it seemed to do no good to talk with him.

### *Talked of Suicide*

After performing his duties at the theater last night the boy returned to his home, and began at once to talk about suicide. His grandmother went into his room, which is the front room in the second story of the house, and lighted the gas. The boy thereupon took off some of his clothing, pretending to go to bed.

"I'm sick of it all, and there is nothing in life for me," he said. He continued to talk along that strain for several minutes. Finally he turned off the light as if to go to bed. His grandmother, however, fearing the boy would do himself harm, lighted the gas again, and again he turned out the light.

"I'm going to end it now and settle it all," he said.

Following that three shots rang out, and the boy fell to the floor. One of the bullets struck a camera lens on the center table, but the other two went through Clark's head, scattering his brains about the room. He was found by the police when they arrived lying in a pool of blood in the center of the room.

### *Shots Attract the Neighbors*

The shots attracted a number of persons to the house and the police arrived soon afterward. Coroner Nevitt was at once notified and viewed the body, as stated, before it was removed from the place where it had fallen.

Mrs. Conkling is nearly prostrated by her grandson's rash deed, and when seen by a Star reporter this morning was ill. She stated that she know of no reason why her grandson should have committed suicide except that he thought he would die of consumption.

Clark was highly thought of at his place of employment, Chase's Theater, and he was considered one of the most responsible ushers at the theater. He contemplated leaving his duties there next month to attend college. Mrs. Conkling, the grandmother, is a clerk in the Treasury Department.

The suicide was evidently premeditated. Clark had purchased a new Harrington & Richardson revolver of .32 caliber which he had concealed in his bed. The weapon had never been seen by his grandmother before the shooting this morning.

*The Evening Star, September 6, 1906, p. 3*

### **Funeral of Wm. E. Clark**

The funeral of William E. Clark, the young man who shot himself in his room at 1408 I street northwest early yesterday morning, will be held at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning from the chapel at the undertaking rooms of J. William Lee, 332 Pennsylvania avenue northwest. The interment will be in Congressional cemetery. The officiating pastor is not yet designated.