

John E. Gass

(- 4 Nov 1879)

Gass. On the 4th November 1879, John E. Gass, aged 28 years. Funeral will take place on Sunday afternoon the 9th inst. at 2 o'clock from the residence of his brother-in-law, Robert Nelson, No. 321 7th street n.e.

The Evening Star, November 6, 1879

Clubbed to Death at the Polls

The Ex-Washingtonian Who Was Killed At Annapolis

The Annapolis correspondent of the Baltimore Sun gives the following particulars of the killing of Mr. John E. Gass--formerly of this city--at the 3d precinct polls in Annapolis, Tuesday, between 4 and 5 o'clock:--A large crowd of colored men had congregated around the polling place and had several times during the day, it is said, acted disorderly and threatened a riot. Shortly after 4 o'clock the party of negroes engaged in a fisticuff among themselves. Near the scene was a young man named John E. Gass, who had only a few minutes before deposited his ballot, and was standing by looking on at the fracas. In the midst of the fight one of the colored men was seen to approach the others with a huge club in his hand, and, whether intentional or not, struck Gass over the head, felling him to the ground. By this time crowds of white men were at the scene. The colored men fled in all directions, and were pursued by citizens of the district, who succeeded in catching one of the number, who was ascertained afterward to be the wrong party and allowed to go free. Suspicion then fell upon a negro named Peter Simmons, and a search was made for him, but without avail. Upon examination it was found that Gass was badly injured by the blow from the club, which measured eight feet in length. He was taken to the home of Clemm Weedon, in whose employ he was and had been for five years, and attended to, but death resulted from the wound about midnight. Simmons, who is said to have caused the homicide, was employed on the farm of Dr. S.D. Lynch, in the neighborhood of the polls. Strong suspicion rests upon him as the guilty party, and a warrant has been issued for his arrest. Coroner Gassaway, of Annapolis, was notified of the occurrence, and will hold a jury of inquest over the body. The homicide has cast a deep gloom over the district, as the unfortunate man was well known there. Gass was 25 years of age, of rather delicate frame, and was regarded by the people of the District as a peaceable citizen and one not likely to engage in a fracas of any kind. He was originally from Washington, D.C., where he has a brother and sister living. He has also a brother in St. Mary's county. When struck the fatal blow Gass was in conversation with three of his friends, Watkins, Richardson, John Weedon, and Thomas Williams, who pursued the retreating colored men in their flight. These parties state that one of the colored men called upon the others not to run, but to go for clubs. The whereabouts of Simmons is not known, and it is thought he has left the neighborhood.

The Evening Star, November 8, 1879

The Body of John E. Gass, the young Washingtonian killed on Tuesday last at Annapolis, arrived in the city yesterday and was taken to the house of his brother-in-law, Mr. Robert Nelson, 321 7th street northeast, whence the funeral will take place at 3 p.m. tomorrow. The negro who killed Gass has been apprehended in the person of Paul alias Peter Simmons. He admits the striking of Gass with a club, but claims that it was done unintentionally, the young man having never given any offence whatever.

Messrs. Clemm Weeden and Boon, of Annapolis, who came here with the body, state that the death of Mr. Gass is greatly regretted by the people of Annapolis, both white and colored.