

John M. Hopper (- 12 Jun 1904)

The Evening Star, June 13, 1904, p. 8

Verdict of the Jury

William Jenkins Held for John Hopper's Death

The Result of a Row

Matter Referred to Grand Jury for Action

Funeral of Victim to Take Place This Afternoon --

Interment in Congressional Cemetery

John M. Hopper, who was known as "the man with a paper skull," died at the Casualty Hospital yesterday morning. His death was due to a cerebral hemorrhage following an extensive fracture of the skull, incurred Saturday night, William Jenkins being charged with inflicting the injury.

The affair occurred on the pavement in front of 472 Pennsylvania avenue northwest. Hopper was insensible when picked up and did not regain consciousness before he died. He was 41 years old, and lived at the home of his brother on 4th street southeast.

William Jenkins, who caused the fatal injury, is a huckster by occupation. He disappeared after the occurrence noted and was not seen by the police until yesterday morning, when he boarded a car at New York avenue and 11th street to go east. Policemen Halloran and Scanlon placed him under arrest.

"You are wanted to answer a charge of serious assault," one of the policemen told him.

"Yes," responded Jenkins, "I knocked down three countrymen on the avenue."

The Inquest Today

At the inquest held at the sixth precinct station this afternoon one of the policemen said he thought Hopper's appearance indicated that he had been drinking. Witnesses told the jury that Hopper and two companions entered the saloon in front of which the trouble occurred and were refused drinks. The reason given for the refusal was that they were too much under the influence.

"I'm Stonewall Jackson," one of the trio is alleged to have said, "and I'm going to clean out the place."

It was in evidence at the inquest that Hopper was in a jolly mood, and was singing, but his companions were inclined to be ugly. Jenkins, who was in the place making a purchase of liquid refreshments for Sunday use, it was testified, attempted to act as peacemaker, and advised the three men to go home. On two occasions the men were escorted to the door, and it was after their third visit that the fatal injury was inflicted upon Hopper.

Witnesses said the men tried to "get back" at Jenkins, and the latter struck at each of the trio on the pavement, hitting two of them, but missing the third one. Other witnesses said they did not see either of the men make any demonstration toward Hopper, and one of them said the conditions gave him the idea that the affair was a free-for-all fight.

When Dr. Jones received the victim at the hospital his condition was so serious that an autopsy was deemed useless. Dr. Emmons was called to see Hopper while he was lying on the pavement. He found him in apparently a dying condition and suggested that he be removed to the hospital.

John Walter's Testimony

The two men who were with Hopper were John and Edward Walter his cousins. When John Walter appeared as a witness he said he had been drinking with his cousin and told the jury:

"I had all I needed and more, too, but I wasn't terribly full."

He said his brother wanted to sing and the piano player objected. He had a slight recollection of having been invited to leave the saloon. While he did not recollect everything that happened he did remember seeing his brother and cousin knocked down.

"Then I started toward the man who knocked them down," said Walter, "but was intercepted.

"What were you going to do?"

"I thought I would get a hand in it."

The witness said they were "comfortably filled," but were not "fussy drunk." He said they had only done what most mechanics do when they get paid off -- stopped in a saloon and got a few drinks. A mechanic who does not do it, he said, is not sociable.

Edward Walter, as was the case with his brother, admitted that he had taken a number of drinks during the evening, but could not estimate the number. The witness said he attempted to assist a singer in the place.

"My brother thinks I can sing," he stated, "but I can't. If a man has any idea that he can ever sing he'll try when he has been drinking."

Witness said he was surprised when he was struck because he had had no trouble with anybody. He was the last witness examined and the case was submitted.

Verdict of the Jury

The jury returned a verdict holding Jenkins for the action of the grand jury. He was thereupon committed to jail.

The funeral of Hopper was arranged to take place at 4 o'clock this afternoon from the undertaking establishment of W.H. Scott, 409 8th street southeast. The interment will be in Congressional cemetery.

The Evening Star, November 21, 1904, p. 6

Trial Commenced

William Jenkins, Charged With Manslaughter, Faces Court

The trial of William Jenkins, indicted for manslaughter, was begun today before Justice Wright and a jury in Criminal Court No. 1. Assistant United States Attorney Easby-Smith is conducting the prosecution. The defendant is represented by Attorneys A.A. Lipscomb and George C. Meigs.

It is alleged that Saturday night, June 11, last, between 11 and 12 o'clock, while in front of a bar room on the south side of Pennsylvania avenue between 4-1/2 and 6th streets, Jenkins struck a man, named James Hopper, a blow with his fist. Hopper was felled, his skull being fractured by forcible contact with the sidewalk. Death occurred at the Casualty Hospital soon after the arrival there of the injured man.

According to witnesses, Hopper and two companions were intoxicated, and were induced to leave the bar room referred to. Outside they in some manner met with Jenkins. It was testified that the latter struck each of the three men, knocking two of them prostrate, and the third to his knees. Hopper was the only one of the trio to be seriously injured.

Jenkins will claim that he was attacked and assaulted by Hopper and the two others, and that he struck them merely in self-defense, not intending to cause them any injury.

The Evening Star, November 22, 1904, p. 2

In Hands of Jury

In the case of William Jenkins, indicted for manslaughter, in connection with the death of James Hopper, the jury, in Criminal Court No. 1, retired at 12:30 o'clock today to consider a verdict. No agreement had been reached up to a late hour this afternoon.

The Evening Star, November 23, 1904, p. 3

Criminal Court No. 1 - Justice Wright.

United States agt. William Jenkins, manslaughter; verdict guilty; attorneys, A.A. Lipscomb and Geo. C. Meigs.

The Evening Star, December 2, 1904, p. 3

Criminal Court No. 1 - Justice Wright

United States agt. William Jenkins; manslaughter; motion for new trial overruled.

The Evening Star, December 16, 1904, p. 15

Short Sentence Imposed

William Jenkins Goes to Penitentiary for Year and a Day

Justice Wright, in Criminal Court No. 1, today imposed sentence of penitentiary imprisonment for one year and one day in the case of William Jenkins, convicted of manslaughter. It was charged that Jenkins caused the death of James Hopper one night last June while in front of a saloon on the south side of Pennsylvania avenue between 4-1/2 and 6th streets. Jenkins, it was testified, struck Hopper a blow with his fist. Hopper, when he fell, struck his head on the sidewalk and fractured his skull. Jenkins contended that he acted in self-defense. The jury qualified its verdict of guilty by recommending Jenkins to the mercy of the court.