

William Messer

(- 5 Dec 1882)

Messer. From injuries received on December 5th, 1882, William Messer, aged 34 years. Relatives and friends of the family are most respectfully invited to attend his funeral from his late residence, No. 612 Maryland avenue southwest, Thursday afternoon, December 7th, at 2 o'clock.

The Evening Star, December 6, 1882

Killed by the Cars on 6th Street

Wm. Messer Knocked Down by an Engine and Frightfully Mangled and Killed

Last evening, about 7 o'clock, a fatal accident occurred on 6th street at the outlet of the yard of the B & P depot, by which Wm. Messer, living at 920 Maryland avenue southwest, was instantly killed. It appears that Messer was passing southward on 6th street where the yard engine was engaged in shifting cars, and having passed over the first track, on reaching the center of the second track, down which the yard-engine was backing some empty cars, he was seen by the brakeman (Mr. Frere) on the rear of the cars and an expressman, to stand perfectly still. He was called on to get out of the way, but seemed not to hear, and the bumper of the car striking him he was knocked down, and by the break rods and wheels he was horribly mangled. The cars were stopped as soon as possible and he was found under the wheels of the second car. The remains were placed in a furniture wagon and taken to the first precinct station house, from where Dr. Patterson, the coroner, was notified, and the Lee Brothers, undertakers, were directed to dress and coffin the body, by the railroad company.

The funeral will take place from the late residence of the deceased, No. 612 Maryland avenue southwest, tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock.

The Evening Star, December 6, 1882

The Killing of Wm. Messer

The Coroner's Inquest Today

The killing of Wm. Messer, by an engine of the B & P railroad on 6th street last evening, is mentioned elsewhere in this paper.

The Coroner's Inquest

The inquest was held at the first precinct station at 11 o'clock today by Dr. D.W.C. Patterson, the coroner, the following being the jurors: W.A. Barnes, J. Harrison Johnson, C.H. Parker, John H. Wise, G.W. Smithson and Henry Steimbach. The first witness was Charles Frere. Mr. E.D. Wright, as counsel, stated he had been requested by the family to be present, and asked if there was any objection to his presence. He was told that there was not.

Mr. Frere testified that he was a brakeman, and as he was coming down on the car about fifteen minutes past 7 o'clock, he saw the deceased about ten or fifteen feet from him, as he judged, on the track; called to him "get off the track." or something to the same effect, at the same time putting on his brake. Deceased paid no attention to him, and continued to walk in the middle of the track till the car struck him, walking right up to it. This was just at the entrance to the yard. Two young ladies, and he thought a young man passed over the track, ahead of him some distance; was not certain whether the engine had hold of the cars at the time or not; it had had hold of two baggage cars.

By Jurors--There is no watchman at this point, it not being a street crossing. Witness could not have pushed him away, and did all he could to stop the car by the brakes. Witness did not know that the cars were detached from the engine or not. The man was struck right in the breast, and was inside of the curb line at the time. Don't know that there ever was a watchman at this point. It might be advisable to have a watchman there for some reasons and not for others.

Mr. Wright asked if it was not impossible for a man to walk three feet in the middle of the track from the center of where the pavement should be.

At this point the jurors expressed a desire to personally inspect the place, including the tracks.

On returning Charles Strobel, a switchman, testified to seeing deceased about the same time Frere did, and Charles Kline, an expressman, to seeing the accident, and that, deceased seemed to be oblivious to any danger.

The Verdict

The jury found a verdict that Messer came to his death about 7 o'clock p.m. on the 5th instant, near the crossing on 6th street and Baltimore and Potomac depot, on the sidewalk, by being run over by a baggage car coming in the depot attached to the switching engine. The jury believe, from evidence adduced, that the company was negligent in not having a flag-man at the crossing. If the company had exercised due precaution the accident would not have happened.

The deceased was a blacksmith by trade, but of late years had been engaged in the wholesale grocery business as a drummer. He leaves a widow and one child.