

John J. Peabody

(- 1 Jan 1911)

The Evening Star, December 25, 1911

Run Down By Car

Ex-Fire Chief Peabody and Mrs. Peabody Injured

Wife is Likely to Die

Burdened With Christmas Gifts, Couple Meet Accident

Crew of Car is Arrested

Motorman Unable to Avoid Catastrophe--

Put on Brakes But Struck Pedestrians

Their arms laden with packages intended for Christmas presents, John J. Peabody, 73 years old, and his wife, Mrs. Mary Peabody, were struck by a southbound Takoma Park car at 9th and L streets

northwest last night. Mrs. Peabody sustained injuries that probably will prove fatal.

The couple were on their way from a shopping tour and were but a short distance from the family residence, on L street between 8th and 9th streets.

Mr. Peabody, formerly chief engineer of the District fire department is at Emergency Hospital, suffering with concussion of the brain. He also sustained cuts about the head and body.

Physicians at the hospital believe Mrs. Peabody has sustained a fractured skull. Her recovery is doubtful.



John N. Peabody

On Way Home

The accident happened shortly after 8 o'clock. Mr. and Mrs. Peabody alighted from a northbound car at the south side of the crossing at 9th and L streets, and had started in the direction of their home. The southbound car came along

before they had crossed the tracks and struck them.

H.L. Hoffman, motorman on the Takoma Park car, tried to prevent the accident. He applied the brakes as soon as he saw the pedestrians and succeeded in stopping the car just after it had cleared the crossing.

Mr. Peabody and his wife had been knocked down however. About all the motorman and conductor, D.C. Keyes, could do was to assist the elderly couple.

Policeman Edward Kelly, detailed at headquarters, was near the scene when the accident occurred. He went to the aid of Mr. and Mrs. Peabody.

Mrs. Peabody was unconscious when picked up and carried to the porch in front of the Chinese laundry at the southwest corner of 9th and L streets. Mr. Peabody was in a dazed condition.

The auto patrol wagon from the second precinct was summoned. Policeman Bennett in charge. The quick trip from the station to the scene of the accident and back to the hospital was the means of getting the injured couple in the hospital without delay.

On the way to the hospital the husband regained his memories. He was able to discuss the affair with the policeman.

Crew of Car Ordered Arrested

Capt. Peck of the second precinct learned from the hospital that Mrs. Peabody would probably die. He directed that the crew of the car be arrested or bonded for their appearance.

Mr. Peabody, a native of Washington is well known throughout the entire District. Many years ago he was chief engineer of the fire department.

He is a son of the late John Peabody, who sailed a big ship away from the port of Georgetown about the beginning of the century and, who was afterward an auctioneer in Georgetown.

He is a retired machinist, having learned his trade in the navy yard many years ago. He went west early in life and was employed on a railroad for several years.

He was a member of the Northern Liberty volunteer fire company, joining the organization in 1843. In 1857 he joined the Columbia fire company and later was instrumental in getting a paid fire department for Washington.

He is a member of the Veteran Volunteer Firemen's Association and of Washington Lodge of Odd Fellows.

Mrs. Peabody was Miss Mary Hall of Virginia, of the well known family of that name in Virginia. The Peabody's originally came from Salem, Mass.

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Together in Death

Injuries Are Fatal to John J. Peabody and Wife

Struck by a Street Car

Had Lingered at Emergency Hospital Since Christmas Eve

Lifelong Capital Resident

Noted as a Fire Fighter and First Chief of the Paid Department

Long Navy Yard Employee

John J. Peabody and Mary J. Peabody, his wife, aged 79 and 73 years respectively, who were struck by a car at the corner of 9th and L streets northwest while returning home from a shopping tour Christmas eve, succumbed to their injuries within a few hours of each other. Mr. Peabody expiring at 3 o'clock yesterday afternoon and Mrs. Peabody at 1:50 o'clock this morning. Mrs. Peabody died ignorant of the fact that her husband was dead. Friends and relatives of the couple were at the Emergency Hospital, where the two had been since the accident, during the greater portion of last night.

The accident which caused the death of Mr. Peabody and his wife occurred shortly after 8 o'clock Christmas eve. They had been downtown to make some purchases. Alighting from a north-bound car, they started across the tracks toward their home, only half a square distant, when they were struck by a south-bound car.

Unable to Stop Car

H.L. Hoffman, the motorman, endeavored to stop the car as soon as he saw them crossing the tracks, but was unable to do so before they were struck. He and the conductor, D.C. Keyes, were taken into custody by the police, but were afterward released on bond.

All through the night following the accident Mrs. Peabody was unconscious, and her husband was only semi-conscious. It was thought at the time by the physicians in attendance that the recovery of either was extremely improbable, as each had received serious injuries to head and body.

Arrangements for the funeral have not been completed.

After hearing evidence of several witnesses regarding the accident a coroner's jury this afternoon declared that their death was the result of an unavoidable accident.

Mr. and Mrs. Peabody had been married more than fifty years, having celebrated their golden wedding anniversary last May. He was of New England stock, and both on his father's and mother's side

descended from active participants in the revolutionary war. He was a son of Capt. John Peabody, who a century ago sailed a ship out of Georgetown and afterward settled there, subsequently removing to this city. He was born at what is now 1416 I street.

intrepid fireman, and in more than one instance had a close call for his life. At the Baker's Hotel, Capitol-Library and Senator Benton fires his clothing was frozen on him, and at the last named he was frozen fast to the tree from which he had directed the stream. He resigned his membership in the Northern Liberties Company in September, 1855, and the same month he joined the Columbia Company on Capitol Hill, in a few months being elected first director or captain of the hose. In 1857 he was delegated to the fire department: in 1862 he became vice president of the company, and in May following president of the company; in June 1862, he was a delegate to a convention for organizing the volunteer fire department.

The councils gave power to reorganize the department and to select a chief engineer, and he was chosen to that position, entering on his duties December 20, almost immediately being in active service at a fire at 5th and H streets. In this position he continued till the organization of the paid department, when in May, 1864, he was appointed chief. He did not serve long, however, for in July John H. Sessford was named and Mr. Peabody was named as fire commissioner, but resigned. Thus he gave twenty years of active service as a fireman, during which he had been foremost in his advocacy of the adoption of the steam engine and a paid department, with fire alarms, telegraph, etc.

In 1884 Mr. Peabody called the survivors of the old volunteer system together and organized the Veteran Volunteer Firemen's Association, which is yet in existence. Mr. Peabody was the first president of this organization, and held the position of secretary at the time of his death.

Worked at Navy Yard

Mr. Peabody learned his trade of engineer and machinist at the Washington Navy Yard, and in antebellum times was employed there, and for many years subsequently was an engineer at the Capitol, hoisting the material of the new dome and the statue of Freedom. This work was then under Gen. M.C. Meigs, and when that officer erected the pension bureau he filled a like capacity there, winning the approval of Gen. Meigs and enjoying his friendship.

Some years he spent in the sporting goods business, having his store on D street near 7th. He later returned to the Navy Yard, where he was employed till his death.

In politics he was a democrat, and since his majority a member of the old Jackson Democratic Association. When the Unitarian Church was on the present site of the Police Court, he was in attendance there and personally known by the pastor, the well known M.D. Conway, and such men as Webster, Calhoun, Judge Cranch and others. He joined Washington Lodge, No. 6, Odd Fellows, when a young man and retained his membership through life, filling the chairs and becoming a member of the Grand Lodge. He was also a member of the Association of Oldest Inhabitants.

Mrs. Peabody was formerly Miss Mary J. Ball, a resident of Capitol Hill and a member of an old Virginia family. Three children survive the couple--William F. Peabody, chief engraver of the coast and geodetic survey; Miss Florence Peabody, a teacher of music, and Miss Irene Peabody.

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Peabody's Laid At Rest

Funeral Services Held for Couple Who Were Killed

Funeral services for John J. and Mary J. Peabody, the husband and wife who died Sunday and Monday, respectively, as a result of injuries sustained by being struck by a street car Christmas eve,

were held at their residence, 918 L street northwest, this afternoon. Rev. J.H. Nelms, pastor of the Church of the Ascension, officiated. Burial was in Congressional cemetery.

Honorary pallbearers were chosen from the members of the Veteran Firemen's Association, as follows: F.W. Kahlert, American Hook and Ladder Company; F.A. Lowe, Anacostia Engine Company; H. C. Thorn and Julius J. Strobel, Perseverance Fire Company; George H. Lurton, Northern Liberty Fire Company; James Brest, Columbia Fire Company; former Chief Joseph Parris, District of Columbia fire department, and John H. Middlekauf, former chief, Hagerstown fire department.

At a meeting of the association held last evening in the old firehouse at 19th and H streets northwest honor was paid to the memory of Mr. Peabody as the first president and organizer of the association and as its former secretary. A vote of thanks to the Commissioners was adopted for their action in having the flags on all the firehouses in the District at half-mast.