

George B. Unkle

(- 22 Aug 1872)

The Evening Star, August 23, 1873

A Man Shot Dead

Fatal Affray in a Bar Room

Investigation by the Coroner

Verdict "Justifiable Homicide"

About half-past 4 o'clock, yesterday afternoon an altercation occurred in the southeastern section of the city between two men named James McCarthy and George B. Unkle, which resulted in the shooting and instant killing of the latter by the former. The statements made by the friends of the deceased last evening as to

The Cause of the Affray

were to the effect that Unkle, who was employed as a watchman on Barthelow's wharf by the Board of Health, has had frequently to pass by the grocery and liquor shop kept by McCarthy, and on several occasions alleges that he was insulted by a gang of roughs there, and that they went so far at times as to assault him by throwing stones at him. Unkle had complained to the police several times of this treatment, and asked that they keep an eye on the place, and even as late as yesterday morning had entered complaint, but being informed that it would be impracticable for the officers to remain constantly about the place for his protection, he replied that he would take his own course; that he had been assaulted the night before and was afraid of the crowd about there. About 4 o'clock p.m., yesterday, Unkle, who had been under the influence of liquor for some days, went to McCarthy's.

Armed With A Revolver

and commenced a conversation with McCarthy which led to an altercation, and drawing his pistol he shot at McCarthy, missing him. McCarthy sprang into a back room and caught up a double barreled shot gun loaded with a heavy charge of bird shot, and levelling it at Unkle discharged the contents of one barrel into his face. The whole load entered the right cheek, the parties being so near each other that the shot did not scatter much, and a large hole was blown into Unkle's face, who

Fell Back Dead

his head resting on the ground, and his feet elevated on the platform, in which position the body lay until removed by the police to the 1st precinct station house. As soon as McCarthy saw what he had done he hurried to the central guardhouse and offered to surrender. Lieut. Skippon directed him to Lieut. Gessford of the 1st precinct and McCarthy hastened there and surrendered himself when he was locked up. Officer Thomas Markwood took charge of the shop and premises of McCarthy.

The Corpse

was placed in a wagon and removed to the station, where a large crowd soon assembled to look at the dead man. The face presented a ghastly appearance, a large hole being blown into the cheek, showing the jaw bone and severing the veins of the neck. The clothing was bloody, and hair was clotted with blood. The body was laid out on a plank in the back yard of the station, where it remained all night.

Unkle was about 25 years of age and unmarried, having lost his wife by death, but had two children living. He was a little hard of hearing, and is said to have been rather quarrelsome when under the influence of liquor. When removed his pistol was found in his pocket.

James McCarthy

is about the same age; he has been keeping a groggery for some time past in this place, his customers for the most part being brickmakers, both white and colored. He has a wife and four children living, all of whom visited him last night and brought his supper to him which he ate heartily of.

Both the gun and pistol were secured by the police. The gun has one load in it, and the pistol, a Smith and Weston seven-shooter, has four loads in it.

Soon after the affair occurred two young men named William Speller and Thomas Croggins appeared at the station-house and made statements to Lieut. Gessford, which that officer deeming of importance detained them both as witnesses.

The Coroner's Inquest

This morning, Coroner Patterson held an inquest, the following jurymen having been summoned by Lieut. Gessford: Wm. Brown, Geo. A. Shekell, Benjamin Wade, J.A. McCaully, David Davis, Wm. Henry, Phillip Martin, John Watt, J.S. Morse, C.C. Veale, J.G. Stafford and R.A. Walker, the latter as foreman.

Drs. Hartigan and Leach made an examination of the body and afterwards sewed up the large gaping wound in the side of the face. Besides this wound there were a large number of perforations in the side of the neck and about the nose and eyes, made by the shot.

The first witness was George Weallacher, who testified that he saw deceased go into McCarthy's store about four o'clock, and afterwards heard some words and saw Unkle come out on the porch and draw out his pistol from a side pocket; saw Mrs. McCathy come out and push him backwards with a chair, and shut the door; this was after Unkle shot off his pistol; saw deceased shoot his pistol towards the inner door; after Unkle opened the door again he discharged his pistol into the house again; did not see McCarthy shoot, but heard the discharge of the gun and saw Unkle fall.

Andrew Ohman testified that he resides with the former witness; saw Unkle standing on the platform with his pistol, and saw him shoot once; this attracted witness' attention, and he heard the report of the guard and saw deceased fall; was not near enough to distinguish any words that were spoken.