

ELECTRIC WIRES NOT THE CAUSE

This Shown by Inquiry Into Origin of Meyer Fire.

MUST ENFORCE REGULATIONS

Coroner's Jury Urges Stringent Safeguards to Obviate the Dangers Incident to Defective Electrical Appliances.

The coroner's inquest over the remains found in the ruins of the Meyer store and believed to have been those of Mr. Robert Emmet Slaughter was held on Sunday in the Hustings Court room.

The inquest was conducted by Coroner Taylor, assisted by Commonwealth's Attorney D. C. Richardson, before a jury composed of Messrs. Julian Binford, Jr., Harry C. Bush, Joseph F. Merriman, H. Surr, Valentine, A. D. Jackson and J. F. B. Jurgens.

THE JURYS VERDICT

After long and patient investigation the jury brought in the following verdict: "The jurors sworn to enquire when, how and by what means the death of an unknown person came to his or her death, upon their oath do say that he or she died on the 10th day of April, 1901, from suffocation or burning while in the building, Nos. 1, 2 and 3 East Broad Street, at its destruction by fire on the 10th day of April, 1901.

"The cause of this fire they are not able to ascertain from the evidence before them, and in their opinion no responsibility for the death should be attached to any one. Furthermore, while the evidence shows conclusively that the fire was not originated by electricity, yet the evidence adduced in connection with the case convinces them of the urgent necessity of a strict enforcement of the standard regulations designed to obviate the dangers incident to defective electrical appliances."

NOT CAUSED BY WIRES

As to the origin of the Meyer Store fire the only theories considered at length were the electric wire theory and the "match and matches" Smoking and spontaneous combustion were mentioned, but not dwelt upon. The investigation clearly went to show that an electric wire was not the cause of the trouble in this instance, although the lack of proper inspection was brought out in a way well calculated to arouse and startle the public generally.

The first witnesses were Messrs. Lewis T. Pemberton and Charles Sack, who were about the first representatives of the Fire Department to reach the third floor, on which the fire originated, and where the carpet department, of which Mr. Slaughter was manager, was located. They both testified to having seen Mr. Slaughter there and stated that when they were forced from the third floor they warned Mr. Slaughter, but that when they turned and ran for life for the fire escape, Mr. Slaughter ran toward the front of the building and they saw nothing further of him. Mr. Sack stated that when on the third floor at the time of the fire, they tried to throw water on the fire. There was water in the hose, but with no power behind it. When they turned the hose on, the water went no further than five or six feet. Mr. Sack also stated that he found the remains in the afternoon hanging on the joist of the second floor, the floor below the one on which he had left Mr. Slaughter, about three feet from the front of the building, and about fifteen feet from the front of the building.

STARTED IN MATTRESSES

Three employees of the Meyer store were on the stand—Mr. Thomas Gemmill, Mr. J. McGinty and Mr. E. McLaughlin. Mr. Gemmill was employed in the furniture department, on the third floor, where the fire originated. On the third floor, about half way back from Broad Street, there was a row of five piles of mattresses from the east wall westward. Mr. Gemmill and Mr. McGinty testified that the fire started about 8:25 A. M. in the top mattress of the row. The fire started on the east wall. Mr. Gemmill thought the mattresses in which the fire started were straw mattresses. They were piled one on another ten or twelve in a pile and resting on wooden bed-springs on the floor. Mr. Gemmill stated he was standing very close to the mattresses with his back to them, having turned from them for a few moments only. He turned when he heard a roaring noise, and saw flames leaping from the top mattress. The flame was blue at the base and was not a small fire. He could not testify as to the color of the flame. It was the usual color of fire. He could not testify as to the color of the smoke, or noticed no peculiar odor of smoke or burning before hearing the roaring sound, which was the first physical impression he received.

INFLAMMABLE MATERIALS

On the floor there were no inflammable or explosive materials. Rats had frequently injured mattresses there. No smoking was allowed and he had never known of any. There was none that morning.

CANADIAN MOUNTED LIFELINES

Who Participated on the Battlefields of South Africa.

During the war between the English and the Boers, the English Government, knowing the fighting abilities of the Canadian soldiers, called upon them to participate in the different engagements in the Transvaal. They responded to the call in large numbers and a more fearless lot of soldiers never left the Canadian soil to uphold the dignity of the empire to which they belonged. They departed from their homes, several thousand going, but when their time expired only a few hundred were returned home. Many were killed, while a large number were wounded to such an extent it is impossible to tell when they will be able to leave the hospital.

The management of Buffalo Bill's Wild West, learning of the return to Canada of these brave fellows, desired a very performance, showing their abilities as soldiers, and give an illustration of military tactics practiced in the English army. While some of these men have been offered fabulous salaries in different parts of the world, they have agreed to remain with Buffalo Bill's Wild West, and they will be seen here on the day the exhibition is booked for this city, which is Friday, April 20th, for two performances only, 7 and 8 P. M., rain or shine.

trusses. This telephone was a Richmond Company phone. There were two elevators in the building—one steam and one electric. The electric elevator had not been running for some days. There were no electric lights. The building was a No. 1 electric wire ran nearer to the mattresses than the telephone wires eighty feet away.

Mr. McGinty stated that he believed he saw Slaughter on the fire escape going down from the second floor and after a few moments he saw him in front of Cordes & Mosby's, and that there was time sufficient for him to return to the burning building.

WIRES NOT NEAR BY

Mr. McLaughlin's testimony was as to the wiring of the building. There were no wires on the third floor than the telephone, some eighty feet away. On the ceiling of the second floor there were three lines of wire—two heating wires running north and south, one of which passed under the piles of mattresses, but he was sure not under the pile that caught. The wires ran beneath an iron girder and at right angles to it. They were insulated from the girder by porcelain tube.

On the third floor there was no electric wiring near the origin of the fire. They generated their own electric currents. The generator was not at work when the fire began and had not been run for two days.

"Any electrical fire," said the witness, "would have had to have come from the outside through the telephone wires, as these were the only wire connections with the outside world, and all other electricity used was generated in the house, and the generators were not at work."

THE CAUSE A MYSTERY

Mr. Alex. H. Meyer stated that the steam pipes came up at the Broad-Street front of the building, and were at least 75 feet distant. He thought there was no gas-light within 100 feet of the point where the fire started. There were no electric wires on the third floor. There was no easily igniting or explosive substance of any kind near the mattresses or on the wires of the building. Matches were not allowed on that floor, or on any other, but kept in a tin box at a special desk on the first floor and given out one at a time. Smoking was positively prohibited. There had never been any fire in the past-time before. When asked as to whether he had any theory as to how the fire started, Mr. Meyer said: "The cause of the fire is a profound mystery."

THE VIEWS OF EXPERTS

Superintendent of the Fire Alarm, was the next witness. The three sources of danger of fire from electrical wires, he stated, were first a want of carrying capacity on the part of a wire leading to its becoming overheated and capable of starting a fire; second, a short-circuiting of the wires, which leads to an overheating in the same way; and third, a grounding of a wire by contact with a metallic or other substance. Mr. Thompson stated that an outside cause of the fire might be a short-circuiting of the wires, which leads to an overheating in the same way; and third, a grounding of a wire by contact with a metallic or other substance. Mr. Thompson stated that an outside cause of the fire might be a short-circuiting of the wires, which leads to an overheating in the same way; and third, a grounding of a wire by contact with a metallic or other substance.

CUSTOM-HOUSE NEWS

The printed record in the case of Colombian Government of South America vs. Cauca Company and Colombian Construction and Improvement Company has been filed in the clerk's office of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals. Mr. Thompson stated, had failed of the approval of the insurance inspector of the South-eastern Tariff Association, and the report of the customs, the case of any produced and read. He stated there was at this time no official inspection of wires in Richmond, and that the inspection recently provided for by the Council applies only to new work, and will not operate to remedy present defects. All old work is supposed to have been inspected. He thought the only satisfactory remedy would be to require license of parties doing electrical construction and revoke such licenses when bad work is detected. Mr. Thompson stated that from what he had heard—and he had heard all the testimony, he said—he saw no reason to attribute the Meyer store fire to electricity.

SPECIAL ROUND-TRIP RATES VIA THE S. A. L. RAILWAY

Travel via the "Capital City Line" Double Daily Service Offered to the South; Atlanta, New Orleans, Memphis, Two Solid Vestibuled Trains; the Very Latest and Most Up-to-Date Pullman Equipment.

General Missionary Conference M. E. Church, South, New Orleans, La., April 23th to 30th, 1901. Tickets to be sold on the Seaboard Air Line Railway will sell round-trip tickets from all points on its line. Fare from Richmond, Va., to New Orleans, La., \$35.00. Tickets to be sold on or before May 15th, and on payment of fee of fifty cents.

Southern Baptist Convention meeting, New Orleans, La., May 9th to 16th, 1901

For the above named occasion the Seaboard Air Line Railway will sell tickets at one first-class fare for the round-trip from all points on its line. Fare for the round-trip from Richmond, Va., to New Orleans, La., \$35.00. Tickets to be sold on or before May 15th, and on payment of fee of fifty cents.

United Confederate Veterans Reunion, to be held in Memphis, Tenn., May 28th to 30th, 1901.

Very low rates will govern from all points, and for this occasion the Seaboard Air Line Railway will sell round-trip tickets from Richmond, Va., to Memphis, Tenn., at a rate of \$15.00. The rate from Petersburg, Va., will be the same as from Richmond. Tickets will be sold May 23th, 26th and 27th, 1901, with final limit of ticket June 4th, 1901. Extension of final limit may be obtained until June 30th by depositing ticket with joint agent at New Orleans on or before May 16th, and on payment of fee of fifty cents.

Mr. A. Casine White.

They say that every dog has his day, but it has been a long time for some dogs, inasmuch as many hotels have refused to let them occupy a private suite of apartments. Tim Murphy has a dog, who appears in the "Carpetbagger," and that dog is one of the lucky few. He is printed in the case as Mr. A. Casine White. That would ordinarily be enough

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THE BIG "4."

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They sell on their individual merits and sterling qualities and genuine worth.

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We sell you direct from our factory, saving you retailer's or middleman's profit.

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THE CABLE COMPANY,

Mr. J. G. CORLEY, Manager,

213 East Broad Street.

KINGSBURY. WELLINGTON.

honor for one dog, but he receives mail regularly and doubtless feels his importance. While in Richmond Saturday he received a cordial invitation from some enterprising hotel-keeper to spend his summer at his spacious hostelry. While he was in the city, he received a similar invitation, it is gratifying to know that there is one hotel that does not object to dogs.

have the case heard in the Supreme Court of the United States.

A voluntary petition in bankruptcy was filed this morning in the clerk's office of the United States District Court by Lewis P. Meyer, of Henrico, by his attorney, William H. Beveridge. Liabilities are given at \$1,220.58. Assets reported, \$714.00, claimed as exempt under the homestead law.

Postmaster Knight will, in the near future, establish a sub-station at Twenty-fifth and Female Streets, as a convenience for the people in that section of the city.

The Board of Directors of the Richmond Tobacco Trade will hold a called meeting to-day at 11 o'clock in the Exchange building. The board is composed of the following: Messrs. C. D. Latus (chairman), T. Carrington, W. O. Keed, Charles Spicer, Samuel Tompkins, Rufus Yarbrough, George A. Haynes, R. Turner Arrington and L. B. Vaughan.

Mr. F. D. Williams, who was recently appointed chairman of the Sales Committee, has declined to serve. He takes the ground that the committees of the Trade should be appointed from the Board of Directors and embodied this idea in the by-laws recently suggested by his committee for adoption by the Trade. The president is appointed the committees from the membership. An effort will be made to induce Mr. Williams to withdraw his resignation.

A handsome certain, used in the Westminster Presbyterian Church to separate the choir from the congregation, was stolen some time between Saturday morning and Sunday morning. During the same week thieves entered West-View Baptist Church, in the same neighborhood, and stole draperies.

Richmond: David S. Carter and wife to Mrs. Mary W. Taylor, 27 feet on east side Beech Street, between Main Street and Floyd Avenue, \$250.

Charles Anderson Jones to Seaboard Air Line Railway, 61 feet on west side Concord Street, between Leigh and Washington Street, and running back to Fifteenth Street, on which it has a like front of feet.

Henrico: Mary J. Savage to Walter J. Pepper, 200 acres on north side of the Three Chop Road, \$15,000.

Director Benson Here.

An important meeting of the Board of Directors of the Carnival Association will be held at the rooms of the T. P. A. to-night at 8:30 o'clock.

Mr. George Benson, who was director-general of the Carnival last year, is in the city, at Murphy's. He will attend the meeting to-night.

Took Four Dollars.

Somebody entered Kirkwood's lunch room, at No. 1208 Main Street, some time Sunday night and carried off all the change left in the money drawer, amounting to a little over \$1. Entrance was effected by way of the front cellar door, which had been left unfastened. The police will look into the case.

The rumor that Dr. F. M. Cunningham, son of Captain F. W. Cunningham, had seriously hurt himself at Farmville, on Saturday, is without foundation. He is as well as he ever was.

WILL NOT GO AWAY FROM RICHMOND

Julius Meyer's Sons Deny That They Will Locate in Any Other City. Places for Employes.

Mr. A. H. Meyer, of the firm of Julius Meyer's Sons, said yesterday there was absolutely no foundation to the rumor that his firm would engage in business in another city. It had been rumored that the brothers would not again open a department store in Richmond after the destruction of their establishment by fire last week, but would locate in Baltimore or Chicago.

"We are going to stay in Richmond," said Mr. Meyer. "We do not know where our new store will be located, and probably will not know for some time, but we have no intention of engaging in business elsewhere, and there is little doubt that we will open up by the fall of this year at latest."

Regarding the Carnival Mr. Meyer remarked that he expected it to be a great success, and declared that he had no idea of resigning his position of president of the association or of relaxing interest in the enterprise, although he expects to be an unusually busy man for months to come.

The work of adjusting the insurance on the stock will begin Thursday. It will be a long drawn out job. All the goods will have been removed from the ruins by that time. The work of pumping the water out of the basement was completed Sunday. It was found that the crockery and glassware in the department suffered less damage than the contents of any other section of the store. All the goods have been stored in the building at No. 9 Governor Street.

It was stated by a member of the firm yesterday that excellent positions had been secured for a large number of the recent employes in the store, and announced that the firm would give employment to every one of the former employes who had not gotten positions elsewhere. They would call at No. 9 Governor Street. This news will be most gratifying to the employes thrown out. They will be engaged to assort and classify the goods taken from the ruins.

The representatives of the companies which carried policies on the burned store met this afternoon to adjust the loss. Mr. E. Kaab, one of the owners, has not yet reached a decision as to whether he desires to rebuild.

ROBBERIES REPORTED.

Mr. Louis Miles Suffers Loss of a Watch and Some Money. Other Cases.

Several robberies have been reported in Henrico within the past few days. The authorities are hard at work trying to locate the offenders, but as yet have not succeeded in doing so.

Thieves entered the residence of Mr. Louis Miles, No. 3516 East Broad Street, some time Saturday and made off with \$21 in cash, a gold watch and chain and a watch containing some small change. It is thought that the thief secreted himself in the house during the day. Mr. Miles was awakened during the night and found his doors open, and, upon investigation, it was learned that no member of the family had unlocked them. Upon further search he discovered his loss. The chain stolen is the same one for the theft of which the negro, Woodson, who was hanged a short while ago for manslaughter, was sent to the penitentiary.

About 8:30 o'clock Sunday night Mrs. Sophia Snyder, of No. 708 Q Street, was started by a noise in her back yard. The rain was falling in such torrents that she did not investigate. About half an hour later the chickens in the yard raised a great commotion, and then Mrs. Snyder started to investigate. She found that her henhouse had been broken into and that the chickens had scattered all about the yard. She found, however, that none of them had been taken, the thief having been frightened off by the noise.

Mrs. Turner, of No. 313 North Twenty-ninth Street, was awakened Sunday night by the growling of the bulldog she keeps for the protection of herself and her property. Hearing nothing further she went off to sleep again. Yesterday morning when she went into the yard she found a pistol and a piece of trousers hanging from the fence. The dog had proved too much for the intruder.

WONDERFUL ESCAPE.

Fell Fifty Feet Through an Elevator Shaft and Was Not Hurt.

Mr. Frank Throckmorton, of No. 1012 State Street, fell fifty feet through an elevator shaft yesterday morning while at work at the plant of Milliser Manufacturing Company in Fulton, and escaped without serious injury.

Mr. Throckmorton was engaged in the third story of one of the buildings near the elevator-hole, when in some manner he fell through the hole to the first floor, a distance of about fifty feet. Mr. Throckmorton was picked up by his fellow-workmen, and in a few minutes he recovered from his shock. Later he was assisted to his home, No. 1012 State Street.

Mr. Throckmorton was badly shaken up by his fall and sustained a small cut over his eye.

His physician does not consider his injuries serious.

Thieves Enter Churches.

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Property Transfers.

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The Alarm Failed to Ring And You Overslept Yourself. This would not have been the case if you were using one of our Alarm Clocks—not the cheap 75c kind, which perhaps you get one out of a hundred to keep time.

Drink With Care. This Cut Represents the Pasteur Germ Proof Filter, ONLY GERM FILTER IN THE WORLD. HEALTH IS WEALTH. More sickness, more disease, more deaths are caused from drinking polluted water than from any other source.

House - Slippers. From the Dainty One Strap, PRICE \$1 AND \$1.50. Kid and Patent Leather to a Beautiful American Turk for the Room, 50c. With and Without Beads—all colors, and Others. "Treat Them Kindly." YOUR HEAD, NECK, BODY, HANDS, FEET. They deserve something good for Easter. GARNETT FOR HATS, GARNETT FOR NECKWEAR, GARNETT FOR SHIRTS, GARNETT FOR UNDERWEAR, GARNETT FOR GLOVES, GARNETT FOR SOCKS. MUSCOE H. GARNETT, Hatter and Gents' Furnisher, Eighth and Main Streets.

Are You Thinking About Insuring Your Life? Then buy the Largest Amount of Insurance for the Least Money by consulting EICHELBERGER & BLAIR, State Agents for Virginia, West Virginia and North Carolina, for the strong "OLD LINE" TRAVELERS' INSURANCE COMPANY, of Hartford, with assets of Thirty Million dollars to guarantee its policy. No estimates, probable results or dividends based on past experience, promised but not fulfilled. All of our figures and promises are guaranteed.