

# THE GRAND RAPIDS HERALD

GRAND RAPIDS MICHIGAN, SATURDAY MORNING, MARCH 7, 1903

## PIERCED HEART

JOHN WELMERINK KILLED BY JOHN HELLHORST IN FIGHT

### MURDERER GAVE HIMSELF UP TO POLICE IMMEDIATELY

MURDERED MAN WAS DRUNK AND FOUGHT FOR LIQUOR

#### Hellhorst Claims Self-Defense – Physically Disabled – He Carried On Unique Fight With Man Mad With Liquor

John Welmerink, aged 23, living beyond the Midland Plastering mills on the Butterworth road, was shot through the heart last night shortly before 7 o'clock by John Hellhorst, a bartender at Frank Hendrick's saloon, formerly the old Skelley place at No. 183 Butterworth avenue. Hellhorst gave himself up to Patrolman William Duga and was taken in the patrol wagon to the police station, where he was locked up.

Hellhorst claims self-defense. Witnesses of the affair say that Welmerink came into the saloon intoxicated and demanded a drink. Hellhorst, seeing the man's condition refused him. That angered Welmerink and, it is stated, he walked around the front end of the bar to help himself. Under the bar the heavy butt of a billiard cue was kept and Hellhorst, who was in a weakened condition due to spinal trouble, picked it up to use if necessary. Seeing Welmerink coming at him, Hellhorst raised the club to strike, but witnesses state that Welmerink forced the weapon away from Hellhorst and threw him to the floor.

#### Ignored Threat to Shoot

Before any of the crowd in the saloon could get to the struggling men, Welmerink arose and Hellhorst managed to gain his feet. It is stated that Welmerink then struck the bartender over the eye and that the latter then secured a revolver that lay near at hand, and pointed it at his antagonist, said: "Keep back, John, or I'll shoot you dead."

Welmerink, witnesses say did not heed the warning, and jumped toward Hellhorst, and the latter fired, the bullet entering the man's heart. Welmerink fell to the floor and was carried into a back room. He was still breathing and Dr. Chamberlain was called, but death ensued, however before medical attendance arrived. Welmerink never spoke after being shot.

#### Welmerink Had Bad Reputation

Patrolman Duga was on duty in the vicinity, and hearing the shot ran to the saloon. He was met in the bar room by Hellhorst who asked the officer to take

him in charge. Patrolman Duga called the police ambulance and the patrol wagon and Hellhorst was taken away in the latter. As Welmerink was dead, the body was not disturbed, and Corner LeRoy was summoned.

The dead man is survived by a wife and 3-months-old babe. He was employed at the Eagle Plastering company's quarry. When his wife was notified of the shooting, she fainted.

Patrolman Duga says Welmerink has a bad reputation and is generally known as a hard man.

Hendricks, proprietor of the saloon speaks highly of Hellhorst, and says that he is certain the shooting was in self-defense. The revolver was a 38 caliber. Hellhorst is single and lived on Lane street.

Superintendent of Police Carr issued orders that no one be allowed to see Hellhorst at police headquarters last night. Within an hour after his arrest, Hellhorst's aged parents, Mr. and Mrs. Henry Hellhorst of No. 287 Lake avenue, accompanied by their two other sons, called at police headquarters and wanted to see him, but Lieutenant Millaley had to refuse them. The old folks did not know that Welmerink was fatally injured, and Lieutenant Millaley advised that they not be told until later, as they were very feeble and it is feared that the shock would be too much for them.

Detective Darr is working on the case. He says that Welmerink was accompanied by two men when he entered the saloon. All were under the influence of liquor, but the deceased was the only one who caused serious trouble.

Hellhorst is suffering from a badly bruised face. His right eye is swollen nearly shut from the blow that he received, and the right side of his face is cut and scratched. He admitted to the officers at headquarters that he shot Welmerink, but claims it was in self defense.

The body was removed to Steine & Platte's undertaking rooms, No. 45 West Bridge street, and Coroner LeRoy ordered an inquest. The jury will view the remains this morning at 9 o'clock.