



PETER SCHEMM

## SCHEMM LEAPS INTO NIAGARA

The Well-Known Brewer Commits Suicide at the Falls.

BROODED OVER FAILING SIGHT

Jumped Into the River From the Goat Island Bridge and Shot Two Hundred Feet to Death.

Peter Schemm, founder of the big brewing house of Peter Schemm & Son, committed suicide yesterday morning at Niagara Falls by plunging into the water from the bridge over Niagara river which connects Bath Island with the main land. His body, caught in the tremendous current, was swept over the Falls and disappeared. Melancholia due to the almost total loss of his sight is believed by his friends to have caused that temporary aberration of mind which led him to sacrifice his life.

Mr. Schemm left his house for the last time at noon on Monday. He ordered his coachman to drive to the Reading Terminal and when he was asked whether he would need the carriage back there later answered abruptly "No." This was the last seen of him in this city by any one who knew him. He had been in the brewery for the last time on Monday morning and had not stayed there long.

### Midnight Walk to the River.

At 11 o'clock Monday night Mr. Schemm got off the Lehigh Valley train at Tenth Street Station, two miles below the Falls. He went over to the New York Central House just across the street, but instead of entering it stopped at the doorway and began talking to a porter called O'Grady. He inquired of the porter the way to the bridge across the gorge and offered O'Grady a quarter if he would show him the way there. The two men went to the bridge together, although it was near midnight, and on the way Mr. Schemm asked a number of questions as to the height of the bridge, the depth of the water and the swiftness with which it ran over the falls. On the bridge he stood for a few minutes silent. Then, as if awaking from a reverie, he said sharply to O'Grady, "Show me the way back to the hotel."

At the hotel he wrote in a clear hand, "Peter Schemm," but did not put down his address. He appeared nervous and excited. No one thought, however, of the possibility of his taking his life.

Yesterday morning Mr. Schemm arose at 7 o'clock and had breakfast. All his nervousness of the night before was gone and he seemed to have thrown off all his worry and excitement. He left the hotel at half past 7 and engaged a hackman named Hickey to drive him to the falls. Hickey states that he drove his passenger through the city to Goat Island, around the island and then back to the mainland. They stopped at the European Hotel on the riverway, and there Mr. Schemm and Hickey had a glass of beer.

### Drove to Scene of His Death.

From the European Hotel Hickey drove across the upper steel arch bridge to the Canadian side and thence through Queen Victoria Park and back to the United States side. Here Mr. Schemm told Hickey to drive back again to Goat Island. During the latter part of the drive, according to Hickey's story, Mr. Schemm began to talk about his business affairs. "I've left my son at home in charge of things," he said, "and I think everything will be all right."

On the way to Goat Island, when they were near the bridge which leads to Bath Island, Mr. Schemm stopped the carriage

and told Hickey that he would like to walk across. He ordered Hickey to drive slowly ahead and wait for him at the other side. This was at 9.15.

Thomas Birch, bridge care-taker on the State Reservation, saw the act of suicide itself. Schemm had walked to the centre of the bridge and there had paused a moment. It was here he had been with O'Grady at midnight the night before. Then Birch saw him climb the low railing and leap into the water twenty feet below. There was no chance to save him, and Birch, who ran to the side of the bridge opposite the point from which Mr. Schemm jumped, was only in time to see the body passing beneath.

### The Body Shoots the Rapids.

The body passed into a white-capped wave and a moment later swept at awful speed by the reefs which run from the mainland to Goat Island. Opposite Prospect Point the body shot from the cloud of spray and dashed on the rocks below. Then it was seen no more.

In this city Mr. Schemm lived at 931 North Eighth street, with his wife and seven unmarried daughters. His son was at Holly Beach, and immediately upon the receipt of the news of his father's death came to the city and at once left for the Falls.

### Mr. Schemm's Life.

Peter Schemm was born in Dotterhelm, Bavaria, in 1824, and when he was 19 years old crossed the ocean and came to this city. His family for some generations back had been brewers, and young Schemm brought with him all the strict traditions which surround the brewing trade in the most celebrated brewing country in the world.

Naturally enough, Peter Schemm entered upon his arrival here the trade for which his previous training had fitted him, and the young man became a journeyman brewer in the employ of Gustav Bergner, the founder later of the brewing firm of Bergner & Engel. This he left after a few years, and began business for himself in partnership with Louis Bergdoll. This lasted until 1845, and was followed by partnership with George Muller, which in turn existed until 1849.

### Schemm Found His Brewery.

In this latter year Mr. Schemm laid the foundation for the house which now bears his name, and in conducting which he has made a fortune.

Peter Schemm, in the various partnerships of which he was a member, was always a believer in Bavarian honesty in his beer. It was that honesty which made the reputation of his house and it was that which he was always interested in upholding. Mr. Schemm even carried his Bavarian ideas of what should be done with beer into the retail trade. He sold only to those retailers whose places he liked and confined his sales to one saloon in a large district. His old world ideas are thus shown in the places where his beer is sold. They are invariably the more distinctly German saloons, more nearly the "bierstube" and "kneipe" of his native country.

### Poor Eyesight Troubled Him.

The failure of Mr. Schemm's eyesight, however, made business harder and harder for him, and for several years his only son and oldest child, Peter Schemm, Jr., has done practically all the work of directing the business. This enforced idleness was unusually trying to a man who had been as active as the father, and his later years even with the consolations of a devoted wife and children had this cloud over them. He has had thirteen children in all, and leaves besides his son seven daughters, three of whom are married. He was interested beside in a number of German societies, and with a select circle of friends was accustomed every afternoon to gather in German fashion in a saloon near the brewery and stay for several hours.

It was undoubtedly the brooding over his eyesight, say his friends who met him in this social way, which caused him to think of suicide. He had been extremely melancholy lately.



PETER SCHEMM.

# PETERSCHEMM ENDS HIS LIFE

## Leaped Into the Rapids Above Niagara Falls and Was Lost

## FRIENDS MYSTIFIED OVER THE ACT

## Registered His Right Name at the Central House Before Taking His Life

Peter Schemm, the popular brewer, millionaire, a favorite in many societies, father of a large family, bank director and art patron, yesterday leaped into the rapids above the Niagara Falls from the bridge leading to Goat Island, in sight of hundreds of people. His body whirled on its way to destruction, passed over the Falls on the American side and may never be recovered.

The Associated Press dispatch from Niagara Falls was the first news to the family, at 931 North Eighth street, and to his friends at the brewery at Twenty-fifth and Poplar streets. Their worry and search for him began the night before, as they knew from the breaking off of his daily habits of life that something was wrong. All they could learn from his faithful carriage driver, named Clarke, was that he took Mr. Schemm to the Reading Terminal Depot Monday about 12 o'clock.

### HIS JOURNEY TO DEATH.

"That's all; you can go home, I'll trouble you no more," were the last words said to the driver. He spoke in his accustomed manner as the driver then thought, and disappeared in the depot. Upon his failure to appear with his coterie of merry-making associates at Massholder's saloon, near the brewery, and his failure to return home at the accustomed hour in the evening, where he was usually as punctual as the clock, an investigation was started and every effort was made to trace him. Telegrams were sent to his son, Peter, Jr., at Holly Beach, and inquiries were made of all his intimate friends in this city. None knew anything. He sometimes had business at Bethlehem and had an interest in the Warwick Iron Company, but all that could be learned was what the driver knew, that he left him at the Reading Terminal.

A distressing night and morning for his family and friends ended in the startling news that he had become the first sensational suicide of the summer at Niagara Falls.

### AT THE FALLS.

He arrived at Niagara at 11 o'clock the night before and went to the Central House, where he registered as Peter Schemm, without putting down an address. He inquired for the steel arch bridge and paid 25 cents to be conducted there at night. When he went back to the hotel yesterday morning, he said that he was from Philadelphia, and after breakfast, he hired Hackman Hickey to take him for a drive. He was taken all along the rapids and stopped many times to make examinations, out of curiosity as the driver thought, but evidently with the contemplation of jumping.



WHERE MR. SCHEMM WAS SWEEPED OVER NIAGARA FALLS

When they came to the bridge on the route to Goat Island, he got out and sent the driver across the bridge, saying he would walk across so as to get a better view. In the middle of the bridge a figure was seen climbing up and over. There was a shout from people at a distance which caused all faces to be turned in that direction. The 200 pound form of the gray bearded, 74-year-old man was that of Peter Schemm.

### OVER TO OBLIVION.

Caretaker Birch, of the State Reservation was the one nearest to him and ran to the spot, but before he could reach him the suicide was up where he could jump, and as he did so, he cried "Good bye." His body struck the seething torrent as Birch looked over the rail above. A moment it sank and then the rapids turned it up and over, toying with it, exhibiting it on the crest of every reef, as it went swiftly to the American Falls.

Driver Hickey said Schemm told him that he had intended to stop at Bethlehem and had not dressed himself for a trip to Niagara Falls. After the tragedy, there were many about the hotel to recall the actions of Schemm that ought to have aroused suspicions.

### EVIDENTLY LONG CONTEMPLATED

When Mr. Schemm visited Niagara Falls some years ago he said to a friend: "What a fine place to die, if one wished to end his life quickly!" Members of his family absolutely refused to be seen, but intimate friends declared that they had not noticed any strange actions in the man. He retired from the brewing business six years ago and stopped at the office only a few minutes a day. Since 1870 he had been a director of the National Security Bank, at Franklin and Girard avenue, and when he missed the regular board meeting at the bank yesterday, they were prepared for any news, because he was the most regular attendant, and yesterday morning he had arranged to loan a man \$30,000. The transaction could not be made on account of his absence.

For years he had been troubled with cataract in his eyes. He had tried operations and treatment of the best specialists in the country in vain. He was also troubled with rheumatism, and other complaints due to age. He would frequently say, "Oh, I wish I was dead," but it was always taken as a joke, and he was the "life of the board meetings." He had a party of chums with whom he would spend hours daily telling stories and laughing and singing. Even in a party of young men, he would frequently appear the jolliest of the party.

### ALWAYS JOVIAL.

Every evening he met his friends plumber Scholl, Builder Hajback, Roofer Wahl and Undertaker Christian Kunzig, and others, at Massholder's place to swap yarns, and when he failed to meet them on Monday, they wondered what had happened to him, and were trying to find out Monday night. He often complained to Mrs. Kunzig, of feeling very nervous.

Nearly every morning he could be seen driving through the Park with his wife or some of his family. It is said that he never went out of his home or came in without giving every member of his big family of girls a hug or a kiss. He met and parted from his friends in a jolly manner.

When he ordered his carriage at Cook's stable on Seventh street, near Girard ave-

nue, Monday morning, he went into the barber shop near by to get shaved. On leaving he said to the proprietor, "You have seen me every morning for nearly ten years, but I don't think you will ever see me again." This was taken for a joke and Mr. Schemm got in the carriage and was driven to the depot.

Mr. Wittman went to Niagara last evening hoping against hope that something might be done toward the recovery of the body. The family refused to believe that he jumped off, but said he must have fallen off the bridge. He leaves a son, Peter A. Schemm, and many daughters, two of whom are at home. The married daughters are Mrs. Charles A. Baacke, wife of an attorney of Atlantic City; Mrs. Henry Kuehne, of Egg Harbor; Mrs. Joseph J. Wittman, Mrs. Eugene A. Kolb, Mrs. W. T. L. Warthman, and Mrs. Louis Wassmuth.

### A SELF-MADE MAN.

Peter Schemm was born at Dostenheim near Neustadt-on-the-Aisch, Bavaria, May 30, 1824. Landing at Baltimore in his eighteenth year, without friends or relatives in this country, he found employment as a farm hand on what was then a large farm on the Belair road, on the identical spot now occupied by the Von der Horst Brewery. After five years of service at Baltimore he left for Philadelphia, engaging with Dithmar & Butz, the celebrated ale and porthar brewers. In 1849 he entered into business relations with Louis Bergdoll, thus being one of the founders of the establishment now known as "The L. Bergdoll Brewing Co." Retiring the following year, to give place to Mr. Bergdoll's brother-in-law, the late Charles Psotta, Mr. Schemm formed a partnership with George Manger, as Manger & Schemm, at Second and New streets, a firm well known in its day, and held in happy remembrance by many an old citizen of Philadelphia. "Der Dicke George" was one of the characters of German society in Philadelphia in those days of over thirty years ago.

After five years of hard work, Mr. Schemm started a saloon at 238 Race street, still in existence and known for years as the principal place of resort of the German element of the city. In 1855 he formed a partnership with L. Hauser, as L. Hauser & Co., which was renewed after five years as Hauser & Schemm, continuing so until the death of Mr. Hauser in 1863, when Mr. Schemm purchased the widow's interest, and has continued the business ever since under the name of Peter Schemm. He was a member of the Odd Fellows, Red Men, Seven Wise Men, Masonic and other orders, and in some served as Grand Master, State Representative and other important positions. He was a member also of the German Society Turners' Schutzenverein, Saengerbund, etc. He was one of the founders and for many years president of the Philadelphia Lager Beer Brewers' Association. He was also one of the founders of the National Security Bank, the Northern Savings Fund and Trust Company, and of the Warwick Iron Company, and was a member of the Commercial Exchange of Philadelphia.

## An Employee of the Steel Arch Bridge at Niagara Reports Having Discovered It.

Special Telegram to THE TIMES.

Niagara Falls, September 15.

W. L. Effick, an employe of the steel arch bridge, had his attention called by a stranger to a nude body passing down from underneath the bridge. As he was 200 feet up he could see some depth in the water, the body being plainly visible. He notified the bridge office and glasses were directed toward the body, which was seen for quite a distance.

More than one body has instantly been disrobed by the action of the water under the falls, and the body may have been Schemm's. Gorge Road passengers report having seen a body in the whirlpool.

The Philadelphia Inquirer 17 Sep 1898, Sat

## REWARD OFFERED

### RELATIVES OF PETER SCHEMM WILL GIVE \$1000 FOR HIS BODY

Hired Boatmen Watch the Lower River at Niagara Falls in Hope of Securing the Remains

Special to The Inquirer.

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y., Sept. 16.—So anxious are the relatives of Peter Schemm, the Philadelphia gentleman who leaped from the Goat Island Bridge and was dashed over the American Falls, to recover the body that they have offered the handsome reward of \$1000 for it. The reward of \$1000 is the largest ever offered for the recovery of a body in the lower river. Joseph F. Wittman, his son-in-law, and William H. Garrett, who came to this city with Detective Murray, of Philadelphia, on Wednesday, and published notices of the reward, are still here at the Hotel Kaltenbach, and will remain until to-morrow. Detective Murray has returned to Philadelphia. Mr. Wittman and Mr. Garrett have made every effort to find some trace of the body, but so far without success. They have hired boatmen in the river near Lewiston to keep a close watch for the body, and have themselves watched along the banks in hope of seeing it.

The announcement of the big reward today will bring out all the fishermen and guides of the lower river in search of the body, and it is the opinion of men who are acquainted with the river that the body will rise in four or five days, and if such proves true there is not the least doubt the relatives of the dead will soon have their dead. There are some old river men, however, who state positively that the body will never be seen, as it will be ground to pieces on the rocks below after passing over the falls.

The Times (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) • 24 Sep 1898, Sat •

## MAY BE SCHEMM'S LEGS

The Lower Part of a Human Body Found Below Niagara Falls.

Special Telegram to THE TIMES.

Niagara Falls, September 23.

Peter Anderson this afternoon found a pair of legs floating in the Niagara river near Queenston, Ontario. He made search for the trunk in all the eddies, but it was not found. There is every reason to believe that the legs are a part of the body of Peter Schemm, of Philadelphia. There was nothing attached to them, however, to aid in identification. The foot took an 8½ or 9 shoe and is quite pointed. Both legs are badly broken, and fastened to the lower part of the abdomen, which is attached to the legs, is a piece of wire, which leads to the belief that the body was torn in two by being caught in one of the suspension bridge wrecks in the river.

A man named M. B. Marvin, of Buffalo, has been missing since September 4, but as he was drowned just above Queenston it is thought the legs do not belong to his body. Undertaker Morse, of Niagara Falls, South Ontario, has taken charge of the legs, and to-night he is treating them with a patent fluid which acts as a preservative and will keep them for years. He expresses the opinion that the legs belonged to a man of medium height, and that they were broken by being caught in rocks.

If they prove to be Schemm's legs Anderson will claim \$500, which is half of the reward offered.

## WERE NOT SCHEMM'S LEGS

The Part of a Human Body Found at Niagara Did Not Belong to the Philadelphian.

Special Telegram to THE TIMES.

Niagara Falls, September 25.

Joseph F. Wittman and William H. Garrett, of Philadelphia, returned here to-day to inspect the pair of legs found in the river on Friday and decide, if possible, if they belonged to the body of the late Peter Schemm. They went to Niagara Falls, South Ontario, in company with Chief Young and Chief Dinat and after calling on Undertaker Morse, of Church, went to his morgue.

Both men looked at the legs very carefully and when they turned from the sight they unhesitatingly said the legs were not a portion of the body they sought. The feet were entirely different from Schemm's feet, they said, and the legs were not the size of the missing Philadelphian's. It was with regret they came to this conclusion, but they were firm.

There is a suspicion among the residents of Niagara Falls, Ont., that the body has been found and sunk in the river or buried along the banks with the expectation that the reward will be increased within a few days. However, there is little foundation for such a belief, as Niagara has never heard of such a generous offer as that of the Schemm family.

Messrs. Wittman and Garrett were seen this evening and stated positively the legs were not Schemm's.

Philadelphia Inquirer 01 Oct 1898, Sat

## SCHEMM'S WILL

He Left an Estate Valued at Two Hundred Thousand Dollars

Peter Schemm, the well-known brewer, who committed suicide by jumping from Goat Island Bridge, Niagara Falls, on September 13, left an estate valued at \$200,000.

Schemm's will was admitted to probate yesterday, and his vast interests go to his widow and children. There are no charitable bequests in the will.

He gives to his wife, Fredericka Rosina Schemm, all his household goods, furniture, a life interest in the distillery, at 931 North Eighth street, and one-third part of all the rest of his estate, and to his granddaughter, Louisa Mussina, child of his deceased daughter, Catharine Mussina, \$5000 is given.

The will then says: "I give the remaining two-thirds of my estate, except the legacy to my granddaughter, Louisa Mussina, to my children who may be living at the time of my death, share and share alike."

"The title to the realty of the brewery property, situated at the northwest corner of West College avenue and Poplar street, where the business in which I am engaged is conducted, as a member of the firm of Peter Schemm & Son, stands in my name as yet, but the same is the property of the said firm in which I have one-half interest, and the other one-half interest belongs to my partner and son, the said Peter A. Schemm." Provision is made for the continuance of the business.

In the will of Mary Ann Quigley, who died recently at 2028 Montrose street, leaving an estate worth \$2400, are bequests of \$100 to St. Charles' Seminary at Overbrook and \$100 to the Little Sisters of the Poor of Philadelphia.

The Times (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) • 08 Oct 1898, Sat • Page 9

## Legal Notices

ESTATE OF PETER SCHEMM, DECEASED. Letters testamentary on the above Estate having been granted to the undersigned, all persons indebted thereto are requested to make payment and those having claims to present the same, without delay, to FREDERICKA R. SCHEMM, 931 North Eighth Street; PETER A. SCHEMM, N. W. corner 25th and Poplar Streets, or to their attorney, EDWARD H. WEIL, Brown Brothers' Building.

The Times (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) 07 Oct 1898, Fri

## SCHEMM'S BODY FOUND

Mangled Corpse Believed to be That of the Brewer Taken Out of a Niagara Whirlpool.

Special Telegram to THE TIMES.

Niagara Falls, N. Y., October 6.

The body of a man was taken out of the whirlpool this afternoon. There is little doubt but that it is that of Peter Schemm, of Philadelphia. The legs are off at the knees and the flesh is gone from there to the hips. The arms are off at the elbows, and the flesh is gone to the shoulders. The skull is bare. Five of the upper front teeth are out, also four of the lower, but means of identification are found in the double teeth, which are filled with gold, as were Schemm's. The shape of the head is also like Schemm's, and it is evident the man was large while alive.

The Philadelphia Inquirer (Philadelphia, P... • 09 Oct 1898,

## Remains Found at Niagara Falls Not Those of the Brewer

NIAGARA FALLS, N. Y., Oct. 8.—The body fished out of the whirlpool Thursday, and supposed to be that of Peter Schemm, was viewed to-day by A. S. Steigerwalt, a Philadelphia dentist, who is supposed to know all about Schemm's teeth. After a careful inspection, the Doctor stated positively that the body was not Schemm's.

A reward of \$1000 for the recovery of the body has stirred up the residents along the river banks, and a close watch is kept day and night for floaters.