

Today in Columbus History:

On October 14, 1879, an ad appeared in the *Columbus Enquirer-Sun* announcing the grand opening of the millinery store of Mrs. (Mary Donnelly) Colvin and Miss (Ann) Donnelly. The wording is a bit misleading in that one might assume that the store was just starting out. In reality, Mrs. Colvin and Miss Donnelly had been operating their hat store under those names since 1873 with every anniversary considered a new "Grand Opening." The sisters had started in the hat business even earlier than that. In fact, the Daily Sun of October 14, 1865, ran an ad "To The Ladies!" that announced that the Misses Donnelly (Mary was still single, at this point) were "prepared to make, alter, bleach, press, dye and trim all descriptions of hats and bonnets..."

Mary and Ann Donnelly were the daughters of John and Catherine Donnelly. The family also included two sons, Thomas and Frank and another daughter, Beatrice. According to the 1860 census of Columbus, John Donnelly was a successful family grocer with personal estate of \$1,300. The family came to America in 1848, likely to escape the potato famine in their native Ireland. Thomas, a clerk in the store died in 1871 and his mother Catherine followed in 1873. Both were buried in Linwood Cemetery.

While Mary and Ann advertised their business extensively throughout the years, their father appeared to have avoided advertising altogether. About the only time you can find a mention of his grocery business in the newspaper is when John and his son Frank dissolved their business relationship and posted a notice to that affect in 1874.

Mary Donnelly married John A. Colvin the same month that her brother Thomas died, November 1871. Colvin was a Deputy Marshal in Columbus but left that job to work for the railroad as the baggage agent. Mary and Ann closed the millinery shop on January 1, 1885. The Colvin family moved to Atlanta and took the rest of the Donnelly family with them. John Donnelly died in December 1888 and the family returned to Columbus to bury him alongside his wife and son. John Colvin was the baggage master at Union Depot and vice president of the Atlanta Baggage and Cab Company but also got involved in Atlanta politics. He served as alderman in Atlanta for several years.

After ten years in Atlanta, Mary became ill and died in 1895. John Colvin suffered a stroke in 1900 and never fully recovered. He retired in 1901 and died in 1902. Both Mary and John are buried in Oaklawn Cemetery in Atlanta. Mary's siblings, Ann, Beatrice and Frank Donnelly remained unmarried and lived together in Atlanta. Beatrice died in 1903. Ann was last of that family, dying in 1917. They are buried in Oakland Cemetery, as well.

Frank (Francis Xavier) Donnelly worked as a clerk in the baggage room at Union Depot, undoubtedly under the patronage of his brother-in-law. He died a horrible death on January 1, 1903 when a switch engine ran over and mutilated him in the rail yard. The reporter interviewed several witnesses including a policeman and the switchman. The policeman spoke to Frank shortly before the accident and the switchman tried to pull him out of the way of the train. The most significant detail that all involved could agree on was that, at the time of his death, Frank was hatless!

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.

GRAND OPENING OF
Millinery

—
Thursday, Friday and Saturday
OCTOBER 16th, 17th and 18th.

—
Mrs. COLVIN
AND
Miss Donnelly

WILL OPEN during the week not only the largest, but the most select stock of

Millinery and Fancy Goods

ever brought to this market. These Goods have been bought at prices that will sell them.

Real Ostrich Tips

at 50 cents, worth 75 cents. **RIBBON** 5 cents, worth 10 cents; 10 cents, worth 15 cents; 15 cents, worth 25 cents, and so on. Pretty full bouquets of **Flowers** 25 cents, worth 50 cents. **All the novelties in Ribbon at astonishingly low prices.**

3-Button Kid Gloves

at 40c, worth 60c, and 60c worth \$1.00. All the novelties of the season in **NECK-WEAR** and manufactured **Zephyr Goods.**

The beauty and variety of our **Pattern HATS and BONNETS** is unequalled by any former exhibition in this market, as unusual care has been given to their selection.

Special attention has been given to the selection of **Children's HATS**, trimmed and untrimmed.

"HORSE-SHOE" and all other novelties in **Jewelry.**

Will receive this week an **Elegant Line of CLOAKS and DOLLMANS**; also **CLOAKS** for **Misses' and Children.**

oct5 daw2m


Ad from the *Columbus Enquirer-Sun*, October 14, 1879, courtesy of Georgia Historic Newspapers (Galileo)

TO THE LADIES!

THE Misses DONNELLY would respectfully inform the Ladies of Columbus and vicinity that they are prepared to make, alter, bleach, press, dye and trim all descriptions of

Hats and Bonnets,

to the latest style, at moderate prices. Call at next door north of Ballenbeck's store, Broad St, between Crawford and Thomas Sts. oc10 2w



Ad from the *Daily Sun*, October 14, 1865, courtesy of Georgia Historic Newspapers (Galileo)



The Millinery Shop by Edgar Degas (1885), courtesy of Wikipedia.org (public domain)



John Colvin from the *Atlanta Constitution* January 18, 1900.

The engine was backing at the time of the accident, the switchman having just thrown a switch and signaled the engineer to back. It is stated that the engine was moving slowly and that it had gone only 4 or 5 feet when Donnelly was struck.

No hat was found on the scene and it is believed Donnelly was hatless when he jumped in front of the engine.

Saw a Hatless Man.

Patrolman Brown, whose beat is in that section of the business district, states that a man reported to him a short while before the accident that he noticed Donnelly under the Whitehall-street viaduct bareheaded. He was evidently walking in the direction of the Broad street bridge when struck. The switchman says he did not notice him until he jumped in front of the engine.

Portion of article from the *Atlanta Constitution*, January 2, 1903