

CAPT. JOHN WILKES DEAD

THIS PASSING OF A NOBLE LIFE.

Captain John Wilkes, For More Than Fifty Years a Resident of Charlotte, Passes Away at His Home on West Trade Street at the Advanced Age of 81 Years—Was a Son of the Noted Admiral Charles Wilkes, a Graduate of the Naval Academy and a Veteran of the Mexican War and the Great Conflict Between the States—Life of Rich Deeds and manifold Kindnesses—Funeral Tomorrow Morning at St. Peter's Episcopal Church.

Not unexpectedly, Capt. John Wilkes died at 6:10 yesterday morning at his home on West Trade street. The event marks an era in Charlotte for there is none of exactly his class left. There remain a few of equal age, a number of equal length of residence, but none who have entered into the various phases of life here so long or so largely as he, or contributed to all more of benefit. As a business man he saw a village evolve into a town and bore a hand in the transition; he saw it grow, and helped in its development from town to city, and from beginning to end has figured most largely in its religious, business, literary and social life. He was a gentleman by blood, training and association and by reason of his contact with the world spoke with authority in deed, and manner more than by word to the people about him. His influence upon the life of the community was always potent and for good, and his death is more than a loss. Of striking appearance and noble bearing, genial with his peers and considerate always in his contact with all classes, it will be many years before his good name and his memory in Charlotte—forgotten never by those who knew him best and hence loved him most.

A devout member of the Protestant Episcopal communion, his membership in the church that Captain Wilkes was most useful and conspicuous. He has nurtured St. Peter's Episcopal church as a mother nurtures her child. His labor and his means were always at its command. He was a sectarian but not a bigot—he was too broad for that.

His heart was always young and he entered with eager interest into the joys of the young. Affectionate in his family, fond and considerate of his many employees, cordial to all acquaintances, he died as he had lived, in love with all the world.

A SON OF ADMIRAL WILKES. John Wilkes was a son of Admiral Charles Wilkes, one of the most eminent commanders ever connected with the United States navy, and was born in New York City, March 31st, 1827. His early schooling was received in Washington where his father was director of the First United States Naval Observatory. In 1841, while Admiral Wilkes was absent from home making an examination of the coast and iron deposits in the Deep river section of North Carolina, young Wilkes received his appointment as midshipman in the navy. His first service was aboard the Delaware. Afterwards he was assigned to the Mississippi in the Gulf squadron and participated in the attacks upon Brazos and Vera Cruz during the Mexican war. In 1846 he was ordered to Annapolis for a special study at the Naval Academy which had just then been established. He graduated No. 1 in a class of 125 in 1847. As "No. 1 of the '41 date" he was therefore at the time of his death the oldest living alumnus of the Academy and president of the alumni association. After graduating Mr. Wilkes saw service aboard the Albany as master in the Gulf of Mexico and later as lieutenant on the station of the China station. Just prior to Lieutenant Wilkes' departure for home, Commodore Perry, who was then making ready for his Japanese expedition, asked that he accompany him as one of his officers. Such a flattering offer could not overcome his desire to return home and so he declined, reaching New York in June, 1852. On his return he was assigned to shore duty at Annapolis and there was given a year's leave of absence.

In April, 1854, he married Miss Jane Renwick Spindberg, of New York, a daughter of Charles Gustave Spindberg, a Swedish gentleman of distinguished ancestry. In October following his marriage in April, Lieutenant Wilkes resigned from the navy and moved to Charlotte, which city he made his home until his death.

MOVED TO CHARLOTTE. Captain Wilkes' abode for four years after his arrival in this section was at what was then known as the St. Catherine's Mills, about two miles from the city. In 1858, in conjunction with the late Col. W. H. Myers, he purchased the Meeklenburg Flour Mills, which were located on the railroad between East Trade and East 17th streets. These mills he was managing with success at the outbreak of the war, and they did great service in supplying the army in Virginia while the struggle lasted.

Captain Wilkes' great service to his country during the great conflict was the construction of the railroad from Greensboro, the terminus of the North Carolina road from the south, to Danville, Va., the terminus of the Virginia roads leading north. This job was a military necessity and was undertaken by Mr. Wilkes along with his brother, Mr. Edmund Wilkes, under the direction of Capt. A. S. Myers, an engineer of the Confederate government. Later the brothers began building a road from Raleigh to Lockville, but ceased when Sherman invaded the State.

The war over Captain Wilkes returned to Charlotte to help in the rebuilding of the city and State and make a living for his wife and four children. The foundry, known as the Meeklenburg Iron Works, which he had established in 1859, had been used by the Confederate States government during the war for the manufacture of shells and machinery and the making of repairs for vessels. In 1865 it came again into the possession of Captain Wilkes in whose hands it has since remained. Just at this time, in August, 1865, Capt. Wilkes procured a charter for the First National Bank, the first national bank chartered south of the Potomac. Having been largely instrumental in its organization, Captain Wilkes served as the bank's first president, from 1865 to 1869.

As wheat culture had almost ceased in North and South Carolina, Captain Wilkes was forced to give up his flour mill and so he entered into partnership with Gen. John A. Young, and Miles Wriston and they moved the Rock Island Woolen Mills to Charlotte to operate in the place of the flour mill. After some years, these mills met with failure and Captain Wilkes

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and General Young were financially ruined.

A RECORD OF ACHIEVEMENT.

Captain Wilkes then gave his entire attention to his foundry which speedily grew under his hand until it became one of the largest and most prosperous in the South. In 1874, when the Seaboard Air Line Railway Company offered him a handsome price for his foundry site, he promptly accepted and moved his plant to its present location on West Trade street. Here the iron works have since been conducted with a wide reputation for ability, good work and fair and generous dealing with its customers. While Captain Wilkes years ago surrendered the active management to his two sons, Messrs. J. Frank and James Renwick Wilkes, he continued its general oversight and the older employees was known until the last as "the Old Man," a term of respect and love.

In the affairs of the city, Captain Wilkes has always manifested a keen interest, having been elected several times alderman and oftentimes solicited to be a candidate for the mayoralty. To St. Peter's church, as has been said above, he has given the most loyal and loving service and steady support. A vestryman of St. Peter's parish since 1856, its senior warden since 1860, for thirty years its lay reader, as its treasurer, as Sunday school teacher and superintendent, its representative in church councils, he has always proved himself ready to spend and be spent in the Master's service.

There were born to Captain and Mrs. Wilkes nine children. Two girls died in infancy and one at 10 years of age. One son died at 15 and another at 28. Aside from Mrs. Wilkes, two daughters, Mrs. Agnes Wilkes Rankin of Hartford, Conn., and Mrs. Rosie Wilkes Jones and two sons, Messrs. John Frank and James Renwick Wilkes, survive.

The funeral services will be conducted tomorrow morning at St. Peter's Episcopal church, at 9:30 o'clock, by the rector, Rev. Harris Mallinckrodt. The pall-bearers will be Judge Platt D. Walker, Dr. M. A. Bond, Mr. W. C. Maxwell, Mr. J. M. Victor, Mr. B. D. Springs, Mr. Herbert Clark, Mr. John P. Orr and Mr. John S. Myers. The interment will be at Elmwood.

METHODIST DISTRICT CONFERENCE

Charlotte People Will Take Prominent Part in Conference of Charlotte District to Be Held at Wadesboro From the 16th to the 19th—Interesting Programme in Detail.

The Charlotte District Conference of the M. E. Church, South, will convene in Wadesboro July 16th-19th. There will be a preliminary service on Wednesday night, July 15th, at which Rev. R. H. Bennett, of Pineville, will preach. The conference proper will be called Thursday morning at 9 o'clock by the presiding elder, Rev. Frank Siler and will continue its sessions through Sunday.

The opening sermon for the Conference will be preached Thursday at 11 a. m. by Rev. L. T. Cordell, of Polkton. The general topic for Thursday will be "Revelations." Those from Charlotte who will make addresses that day are Rev. J. A. Baldwin, Rev. W. S. Hales, Rev. W. O. Rudisill, Messrs. G. C. Brinkman and J. G. Freeland. The conference love feast and communion will be conducted by Rev. Dr. W. W. Bays and Rev. J. W. Wheeler. Rev. E. L. Bam will preach at night.

The topic for Friday is "Missions." Rev. H. K. Boyer, of Tryon street church, Charlotte, and Rev. C. M. Pickens, of Waxhaw, will be the speakers at the morning session. Mr. Boyer will discuss the responsibility of the Charlotte District to the laymen's work and "A Million Dollars For Missions."

The sermon at 11 a. m. will be preached by Rev. Harold Turner. The afternoon and evening will be given to the Laymen's Missionary Movement. District leader, J. B. Boyer, has arranged an attractive programme of speakers for this day. Messrs. C. W. Tillet and W. F. Harding will make the addresses at the night hour. Saturday will be education day. Prominent educators from the various schools of the State will be present and speak. Rev. W. E. Abernethy, of Wadlington, will preach the sermon at 11 a. m. Saturday.

This body licenses men to preach. It is known that there will be several applicants.

The committee to examine candidates for license to preach is composed of Rev. Dan Atkins, D. D., of Cornelius, Rev. H. K. Boyer, of Charlotte and Rev. A. J. Burrus of Unionville.

Rev. Dr. Chreltzberg, of Monroe, will preach at the morning and evening hours Sunday.

There will be a great young people's mass meeting Sunday afternoon, addressed by Professor Torbridge, of Irwinds, and others.

There are twenty-three charges in the Charlotte district. Each charge is entitled to at least six representatives at this conference, all of whom are male members. Those who have prominence will be given the work of the Woman's Foreign and the Woman's Home Mission Societies, and a number of representative women from the district will attend in the interest of this work.

On Thursday, July 16th, the Charlotte District Woman's Home Mission Society will be formed and a school of methods conducted by Mrs. Frank Siler, the conference society president, assisted by Mrs. J. W. Copeland, of Greensboro. Conference correspondents were Mrs. M. C. Sims, of Charlotte, district secretary.

Delegates from Charlotte and vicinity, will leave Charlotte for Wadesboro either at 5 or 7 o'clock Wednesday the 15th, or at 4:30 Thursday morning.

ANK FOR PENSIONS.

County Pension Board Passes Upon Numerous Applications—Takes Favorable Action Upon Thirty—Twenty Have Died During Year. The annual meeting of the county pension board, composed of Messrs. W. B. Taylor, L. J. Walker and R. A. Torrence, was held yesterday morning at 10 o'clock at the court house, Mr. J. A. Russell was secretary to the board. Applications for Confederate pensions filed since July 1st, 1907, were considered, there being before the board about thirty pensioners whose petitions received favorable action. The names of these persons will be forwarded to the State board which will take decisive action. Twenty of these were from old soldiers and ten from the widows of soldiers. The applications were all for fourth-class pensions, which amount to \$25 a year. During the past year twenty pensioners have died. Another meeting will be held by the board within ten days or two weeks to transact additional business.

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Chief W. S. Orr, who has in charge the lake at Alita Park, states that the place will continue to be open throughout the summer for bathing purposes. He does not see any reason why Sunday afternoon's accident, lamentable though it was, should have any tendency to discourage its use, as the accident which occurred, he says, is liable to happen anywhere, at sea shore or in fresh water, at any time.

Death of a Child.

Nelle, the 5-months-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. W. Conner, died yesterday morning at 1 o'clock at the home of her parents, at No. 920 North Broadway street. The funeral services were conducted yesterday afternoon at 3 o'clock from the residence.

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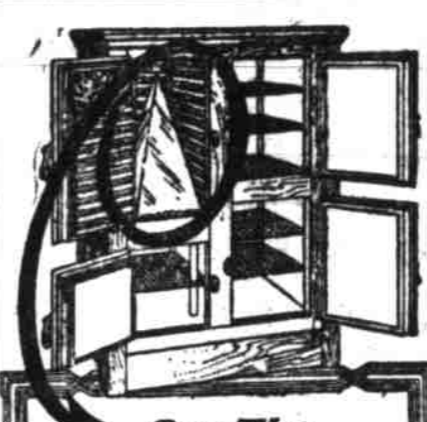
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