

The Wilmington Messenger.

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WILMINGTON, N. C., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 1907.

FIVE CENTS

REFUSED CREDIT

C. A. Geiger, of Beaufort, S. C. Fatally Wounds Broker

THEN COMMITS SUICIDE

Double Tragedy Causes Great Sensation in Financial District

James H. Oliphant, victim of Geiger's pistol—Oliphant believed to have been mentally unbalanced—had recently lost \$75,000 in stock dealing—Refusal of broker to extend credit followed by shooting.

New York, December 20.—James H. Oliphant, senior member of the New York stock exchange, firm of James H. Oliphant & Co., is dying tonight from a bullet wound inflicted at his office this afternoon by Charles A. Geiger, a customer from Beaufort, S. C., who after firing upon Oliphant killed himself.

The men were seated in Oliphant's private office at the time, and all that is known of what immediately preceded the shooting was learned from the lips of the dying broker. Oliphant said that his refusal to extend further credit to Geiger caused the tragedy. There is reason to believe, however, that Geiger had become mentally irresponsible. A note book found upon his person contained computations by which the writer apparently had figured that he would be worth \$3,000,000 by January 1, 1908. He actually possessed, so far as his personal effects showed, less than \$11.

Geiger owed the Oliphants \$5,000 and had been asked for a settlement. He called at their office today and after explaining that he could not meet his obligation asked that the firm advance him sufficient credit to carry 5,000 shares of a certain stock until a rise in the price should yield him a profit. His proposition was refused and the shooting followed.

The offices of James H. Oliphant & Co. are at 20 Broad street, in the south of the financial district, and the shooting caused a sensation in the street and temporarily interrupted the business of the curb traders the scene of whose activity was overlooked from the big office building.

Clerks who pushed their way into Oliphant's office when they heard shots fired, stumbled over Geiger's dead body. He had shot himself in the mouth and again in the right temple. A revolver was clutched in his right hand. Oliphant had slipped from his chair and lay half concealed under his desk. A bullet had entered the stomach. The broker was still conscious. At the hospital where the operation of laparotomy was performed, it was found that the bullet had grazed the kidneys and lodged in the back. It was not removed.

Mr. Oliphant's ante mortem statement was supplemented by a talk from the broker's partner, who included Oliphant's son, Francis Oliphant. According to young Oliphant Geiger who was 29 years of age, 6 feet tall, slender, and wore a heavy dark mustache, belonged to the class of speculators known in the street as "odd lot customers." Those who always have something on the board, buying or selling in ten or twenty share lots, never investing a great amount, but frequently risking all they possess.

Papers found in a room which Geiger occupied last night in the Holland House indicate, however, that he had not less than \$75,000 in dealing in steel common and that he still owed the Oliphants \$5,000. It was also indicated by the papers, and partially confirmed by acquaintances, that Geiger had lost all he possessed and that when he went to the broker's office today it was in the hope of securing credit through which he might recuperate his fortune.

He opened an account with the Oliphant on September 5th, 1905, and operated in steel common until September 7, 1907, when he left for Beaufort, S. C. At the time his account was secured, but the recent depreciation in the prices of securities resulted in a debit balance against him of \$5,000. This he was repeatedly asked to make good.

On November 30th, while staying at the Piedmont Hotel, Atlanta, Ga., he wrote the Oliphants, asking them to send a check to the Fifth Avenue Bank, here, for \$250, to be charged to his account. The request could not be granted as he owed them money.

Last yesterday Geiger reached New York and registered at the Holland House. This morning he called on Mr. Oliphant and left it was said, without any unpleasantness. This afternoon he returned, renewed his petition and, upon again being refused, suddenly drew a revolver and commenced firing upon Oliphant while supported in the arms of his son, who was able to say:

"He shot me. I guess the poor fellow's mind was deranged." Outside of his Wall street trading comparatively little is known of Geiger here. Oliphant is prominent in business and socially. He is a director in the Lafayette Fire Insurance company, the St. Lawrence River Real Estate association, a trustee in the Title Guaranty and Trust company, a member of the stock exchange, the chamber of commerce, the New York Athletic and other clubs. He is 54 years of age and wealthy. The stock exchange firm is made up of Mr. Oliphant, his son, J. Norris, Alfred Norris and Floyd W. Munday.

Oliphant died at 2:30 o'clock this (Saturday) morning.

WEEKLY REVIEW OF TRADE

Holiday Buying Improves Retail Trade—Financial Conditions Becoming Normal—Failures for the Week.

New York, Dec. 20.—Bradstreets tomorrow will say: Holiday buying has had the center of the stage, and retail business has felt very perceptibly the influence of the spirit of the season. While much more marked than some time ago, however, the volume of retail buying as a whole is well below a year at this date. The tendency in industrial lines is still toward curtailment, instances of this being found in the iron and steel bituminous coal coke, lumber and cotton goods lines, in which latter a canvass is now being made by New England manufacturers as to the future production.

Conditions in financial circles are still slowly but quite surely approaching normal. From the country at large there is reported a continued easing up of the situation as regards cash payments.

The firmness in call and scarcity of time money at New York, with the maintenance of the currency premium at or around 1 per cent., is taken to indicate the conserving of some money supplies pending the heavy first of the year disbursements.

Interior cities make more inquiry for commercial paper and quite considerable loans are made on time. Commercial collections are very slow and as yet reflect little benefit from the current holiday purchasing. Several cities report enlarged savings banks withdrawals, presumably due to holiday expenditures.

A very favorable feature in the present period of depression is the tendency toward enlargement of our export trade. This is most notable in the grain trade, and not, by the way, entirely on the east coast of the country, because the movement on the Pacific coast is very large.

Business failures for the week ending December 19, number 298 against 284 last week, 227 in the like week of 1906, 235 in 1905, 249 in 1904 and 242 in 1903.

Canadian failures for the week number 40 as against 50 last week and 29 in this week a year ago.

REVENUE OFFICER KILLED

Shot From Ambush While Engaged in Raid on Blockade Distilleries

Charlotte, N. C., Dec. 20.—While engaged in a raid on blockade liquor distilleries at Smithtown, Forsyth county, this morning with fifteen others, J. W. Hendricks, a United States revenue officer, was shot and killed from ambush. The bullet, from a Winchester rifle, passed entirely through the victim's heart. The raiding party of sixteen officers left Winston yesterday and divided into squads "of four each.

Hendricks was pushing into the woods ahead of his companions and the other officers saw the assailant as he made his escape, but have not succeeded in capturing him.

The raid today was the third that has been made on this settlement in the past few months. In the first raid 27 officers armed to the teeth, descended on the settlement and after a fierce battle with Winchesters captured several moonshiners and broke up many stills.

A short time ago a second raid by a large party was made with somewhat similar results. Smithtown is the most notorious settlement of blockade distilleries in the state.

Hendricks was one of most popular officers in the service and was a native of Elkin, N. C.

STATE'S SWAMP LANDS

Notes Orphanage at Oxford to Receive State Aid.

(Special to The Messenger.) Raleigh, N. C., December 20.—The state board of education places all its swamp lands under the direction of State Geologist Pratt. Under him will be four experts, at least, one to make the survey, a second to make estimates of the timber, make suggestions regarding the general forestry work and the judicious sale of timber, another to look after the character of the soil in these swamp lands, while the fourth will give special attention to the important question of drainage and the reclamation of this vast area of land, which lies in about ten counties.

The negro orphanage at Oxford receives state aid. Rev. R. Shepard, its superintendent, resigns to become effective January 1st, and ex-Congressman Henry G. Cheatham takes charge. Mr. Beckwith of the state board of internal improvements is investigating its affairs.

Fire works at Rehder's Fourth street bridge, Candyapps, and Market street store under Bonitz hotel.

Fire works at Plummer's, the cheap place to buy.

Buy your fire works and Xmas candles at Plummer's.

WORK OF RESCUE SUSPENDED THE PASSENGER RATE CASE

Only Six Victims of Mine Explosion Recovered Yesterday

Little of No Hope That any of the 200 or More Miners are Living—Number of Lives Estimated at Between 180 and 190.

Jacob's Creek, Pa., December 20.—From the Darr mine of the Pittsburg Coal Company, where a terrific explosion yesterday imprisoned, and almost beyond doubt killed every one of the 200 or more men who had entered the mine for the day, only six bodies had been brought to the surface up to 10 o'clock tonight. Others have been located and lie in the entry awaiting a propitious time for their removal to the temporary morgue.

Most of the men, however, are still hemmed in by heavy falls of slate and other roof formation, a mile and a half and more beyond the point to which rescuers have penetrated up to this time. There is little probability of more bodies being found tonight.

Rescue work has been halted. A vast amount of bratticing must be done before it can proceed. The rescuing parties, 7,500 feet from the main entrance, have found conditions such that to avert an additional disaster precautionary work must be done. The poisonous gases must be forced to sections beyond and additional air and ventilation must be provided for that section.

As to the number of victims estimates vary from 175 to 250. Coroner A. C. Wynne of Westmoreland county, said tonight that after a careful investigation he was satisfied the number would be between 180 and 190.

Conrad Schuth, 48 years old, crazed by the death in the mine of his son and other relatives, ended his own life today by drowning in the river near the mine. He was a widower and leaves four small children.

Mrs. Carrie Delano was restrained from committing suicide today with great difficulty. She lost her husband and two sons in the disaster and at the inquest of the bodies was crossing the river in the "sky ferry," a basket car suspended from a cable, when she tried to leap into the stream. The efforts of three men were required to restrain her.

President John Mitchell of the United Mine Workers of America, telegraphed from Indianapolis, authorizing district officials to draw upon the national treasury for \$1,000 for families of victims.

TO GIRDLE THE GLOBE

Admiral Evans Makes Public His Sealed Orders.

New York, December 20.—By wireless message there comes the announcement of an order that sends the greatest fleet of battleships ever assembled for a cruising expedition on the longest voyage that men-of-war have ever taken.

The message came from Admiral Evans, giving publicity to President Roosevelt's sealed orders that the battle fleet, after searching the Pacific, shall continue the cruise still westward, pass through Suez canal, and make a complete circumnavigation of the globe.

In the fulfillment of this order the fleet will cover more than 31,000 miles, will show to all the civilized nations of the world, including Japan, China, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, and Great Britain, the vast naval strength which this country can muster, and will return to its native shores many months hence, assured that it has done its part in the fostering of peace on earth, if not good will toward men.

On Board United States Steamship Connecticut, noon, via New York, N. Y., December 20.—At noon the battleship fleet is 280 miles north by north-west, the island of St. Thomas. Fine weather, light winds. The Missouri left the fleet this afternoon to land Fireman B. Northway, who is ill with peritonitis.

Charleston, S. C., December 20.—The wireless station here was in communication with Admiral Evans' fleet this afternoon and the messages were received from over 1,300 miles of water.

In reference to the report which was termed "ward room gossip" by Washington to the effect that the admiral indicated that the fleet would return via the Suez canal, the following message was caught:

"On board U. S. S. Connecticut, December 20.—Afternoon: Evans has made no statement for publication. Must inquire at White House for confirmation or denial."

A still later message told of stiff trade winds and predicted arrival at Trinidad late Monday.

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Wilmington Selected as Place for Next Hearing

Less Charters Granted This Year Than Last—Cotton Mills Shuts Down Work of State Tax Commissioner, Trains Between Wilmington and Charlotte Not to be Taken Off

Raleigh, N. C., December 20, 1907. Standing Master Montgomery, having been asked by the Atlantic Coast Line to set a day to hear evidence in the passenger rate case, names the 7th of January as the time and Wilmington as the place for the hearing. The Carolina and Northwestern made the same request, and he fixes the 15th of January as the date so far as it is concerned, the hearing to be held at the headquarters of the company, Cheraw, S. C.

A commission is issued to Thomas Thomas as lieutenant of the sixth division of Naval Militia, which is at Beaufort. He succeeded Lieutenant Chamberlain, who has moved to Washington, N. C.

The report of the secretary of state shows that there are about 50 less charters this year for corporations than were issued last year.

The sheriff of this county says that the farmers tell him they cannot understand the cotton situation, that is, why cotton does not sell at higher prices when everybody knows there is so short a crop.

Today the Raleigh Cotton Mills shut down for a week. They have been running on full time thus far.

As the State Tax Commission members of the Corporation Commission can feel a great deal of satisfaction at the work of the year. The assessment of all the public service corporations was made, this bringing up the valuation from seventy millions to ninety-three millions, this being the second largest increase since the commission began its work, as four years ago the assessment showed an increase of 27 millions.

As to banks the commission makes a very fine showing, the number now being almost three hundred, with a very handsome gain in number and in resources this year. The exact figures cannot give as the resources until the reports recently called for are made by the banks.

The division passenger agent of the Seaboard Air Line railway here, C. H. Gattis, says the report that after January 5th certain trains between Wilmington and Charlotte will be discontinued is untrue. There will be a slight change in schedule as to the train alluded to and there will be important schedule changes as to some other trains.

SECRETARY TAFT AT HOME

Brings Assurances of Japan's Friendliness Toward the United States. Declines to Discuss Politics.

New York, December 20.—William H. Taft, secretary of war, returned today from his trip around the world, bringing renewed assurance of Japan's friendliness toward the United States, but declining to say anything with respect to the political situation in this country. He said that he had been keeping out of intimate touch with political affairs at home to discuss them in any way. One of Mr. Taft's interviewers had the temerity to ask: "Well, Mr. Secretary, tell us who is your choice for president?"

Amid general laughter, in which he heartily joined, the secretary replied: "I guess I will have to leave that to inference."

Mr. Taft left for Washington on an early afternoon train, saying that accumulated matters in the war department would keep his nose to the official grind stone for some time to come and that the preparation of his special report on the Philippines which will be in book form, would also require much of his time in the near future.

Looking exceedingly well, the secretary said he had taken daily five mile walks on the decks of the Grant during the thirteen days trip from Hamburg.

"It is the height of foolishness to talk of possible war with Japan," declared the secretary. "Japan does not desire war with us and we certainly do not desire war with Japan. If there was any war spirit anywhere in Japan I failed to find the slightest note of it. Everywhere there was talk of continued peace."

"What about the Pacific fleet?" "The sailing must have been a magnificent sight. We have fine ships and a fine personnel, and so long as the Pacific ocean belongs to us, as much as to anybody else I see no reason why we should not send our ships there on a practice cruise. The Japanese are too intelligent and high-minded to attribute a false motive to the movement."

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VALUE OF FARM CROPS

Report Issued by the Department of Agriculture.

Washington, D. C., December 20.—The department of agriculture today issued a report giving final estimates of acreage, production, and value of farm crops, showing winter wheat acreage to be 23,132,000, production, 409,442,000 bushels; value per bushel, 88.2 cents.

Spring wheat—Acreage, 17,079,000, production, 224,645,000; value 86 cents. Corn—Acreage, 99,331,000, production, 2,592,320,000; value, 51.7 cents.

Oats—Acreage, 31,837,000; production, 754,443,000; value, 44.3 cents.

The average weight per bushel is shown by reports received by the department to be 56.9 pounds for spring wheat, 58.9 pounds for winter wheat and 29.4 pounds for oats.

TO RESUME OPERATIONS

Work on Virginia Railway Will be Pushed to Completion.

Roanoke, Va., December 20.—Work on a number of bridges and viaducts to be used for the Virginia railway east of Roanoke, which was stopped some time ago, will be completed without delay. The Virginia Bridge and Iron company of this city, which has the contract for the bridges and viaducts, today announced that orders had been received to resume work. The road is being built by Henry H. Rogers and runs from the West Virginia coal fields to Norfolk. It is said cessation of work was caused by the stringency in the money market.

ITALY FILES CLAIM

Wants Pay for Tobacco Destroyed by Night Raiders.

Washington, D. C., December 20.—A claim for reparation will be made because of the damage suffered by the Italian interests in the destruction of one of the tobacco factories in Hopkinsville, Ky., which was burned some time ago by night raiders. The loss amounted to about \$15,000. It is expected that application for reimbursement will be made with a view to its payment by the state, as the national government has no control, and is not directly interested. It appears according to the best information obtainable that the raid was not because of antipathy to the Italians or Italian labor but was a development of the issue between the American Tobacco Company and the Independent concern.

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION

Wilson Selected as Place for Next Meeting.

(Special to The Messenger.)

Raleigh, N. C., December 20.—It is decided by the Baptist State Board of Missions and Sunday Schools, of which John E. Ray is re-elected, president and Rev. Hight C. Moore secretary, that the next Baptist state convention shall be held at Wilson. Forty thousand dollars is appropriated to the various missions. Rev. W. R. Cullam, of Waake Forest, will conduct a correspondence course for ministers. N. B. Broughton, J. W. Bailey, Carey J. Hunter, R. H. Simmons, Charles L. Smith and Dr. W. C. Tyree are elected the state Sunday school board.

FOR HARBOR AT SOUTHPORT.

Two Pleasure Yachts From the North Put in There—Bound to Florida Waters.

Two pleasure yachts, both bound from northern ports to Florida waters, on account of recent stress of weather at sea have put into Southport for harbor and they will proceed to their destination within a day or two.

One of the yachts, the Whim, comes from New York in command of Captain Gates the craft is being taken to Florida where a party will board her and a cruise will be made. The Whim is owned by Mrs. M. O. Perry of New York.

The yacht Madeline owned by Boston parties, is bound from that port to southern waters also, being in command of Captain Barr.

FIRE LAST NIGHT.

Blocks and Platform at Standard Turpentine Company's Plant Burned.

A pile of wood blocks and part of the platform connected with the plant of the Standard Turpentine Company were destroyed by fire last night, the total damage not exceeding \$50.

The alarm which called out the department was sounded about 11:30 and the bright reflection seen in the southern part of the city gave appearance of a big fire. The rumor that the plant of the Standard Turpentine Co. was ablaze caused a large number to go to the scene of the fire. The hard work of the department prevented the main building of the plant from being destroyed and much credit is deserved for this.

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OPPOSITE VIEWS

Held by Williams and DeArmond

BOTH CLAIM TO BE RIGHT

And Neither Will Make First Offers for Peace

Rumors of Likelihood of Challenge to a Duel Said to be Purely Fanciful. Friends of Both Combatants Trying to Bring About a Reconciliation. Thought That the Two Distinguished Democrats Will Finally Bury the Hatchet.

Washington, D. C., December 20.—Yesterday's physical encounter between Mr. John Sharp Williams of Mississippi, and Mr. DeArmond of Missouri, on the floor of the house of representatives, had no aftermath today so far as the principals themselves were concerned, but friends of each traveled back and forth between the camps of the minority leader and the leader of the minority opposition, waving boughs of peace. It is understood, however, that they acted out of their own friendliness and of their own volition not by authorization of the combatants.

Rumors of the likelihood of challenge to a duel, floated about the corridors of the capitol today, but investigation proved them purely fanciful. Mr. DeArmond's attitude is stated to be this: He has no mind either to perpetuate the quarrel nor to make the first move toward a reconciliation. He feels that Mr. Williams was the aggressor in having intimated that he was a falsifier and in having struck the first blow and therefore that peace overtures, if any are to be, should originate on Mr. Williams' side of the line.

Mr. Williams is understood to believe himself in the right. It is contended in his behalf that he suffered from Mr. DeArmond to question his truthfulness and sought to turn his wrath aside; then suggested a less public place to pursue the discussion, and when this was ignored held himself in check until Mr. DeArmond had a second time cast at him the lie. For the sake of many things he does not desire to continue the unpleasantness, neither does he feel that an amend is due from him until first plank to bridge the breach has been laid down by the gentleman from Missouri.

Notwithstanding the exact oppositeness of these two views, it is predicted by common friends that the two distinguished gentlemen will yet clasp hands and covenant to forgive if not to forget.

In Mr. Williams' behalf it is explained today that his real reason for resigning from the ways and means committee was to make a place for his colleague, Mr. Bowers, of the committee on appropriations, that is view of the fact that Mississippi's delegation numbers only eight representatives he felt that to have two Mississippians on the two chief committees of the house would be bestowing too much preference on his own state.

Though the house was not in session today Mr. DeArmond visited the floor and sat for awhile at his desk at work. He discouraged any invitation to discuss his encounter with Mr. Williams. The latter spent most of the day at his home.

COTTON CROP GINNED

Government Estimate Places Amount at 9,231,977 Bales.

Washington, D. C., December 20.—The census bureau today issued a bulletin showing that the total amount of cotton of this year's growth in the United States ginned up to December 13 last was 9,231,977 bales, as compared with 11,112,789 bales for the same period last year and 9,297,819 bales for the same period in 1905.

The total number of active ginneries was 27,152. In this bulletin round bales are counted as half bales.

The number of round bales included for 1906 and 252,137 for 1905 is 167,485 for 1907 and 242,096 Sea Island included 65,145 for 1907 and 49,361 for 1906 and 90,836 for 1905.

The total crop for 1906 was 12,973,201 and for 1905 was 10,495,105. The per cent of crop ginned to December 13 was 85.4 for 1906 and 88.6 for 1905. For 1907 there were ginned to December 1st, 8,343,396 bales.

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