

THE KEMPER HERALD

VOL. XXXII

SCOOBA, MISS., THURSDAY, DECEMBER 27, 1906.

NO. 18

OUR WASHINGTON NEWS AND NOTES

ITEMS OF INTEREST BRIEFLY CHRONICLED.

FLEET FOR PACIFIC COAST

Plan to Send Battleship to Western Coast. Senator Perkins Urges Division of Atlantic Fleet.

A plan is under way to divide the fleet of battleships now assembled on the Atlantic coast by sending fully one half of them to the Pacific coast station. This movement is largely fostered by Senator Perkins of California, who, while expressing himself as not at all apprehensive of an approaching conflict with Japan, yet believes that our enormous Pacific coast line should not be left practically without naval defense.

There are no battleships on the Pacific coast at the present time. The principal units of naval defense there are the cruisers Charleston, Chicago, Boston, Princeton and Yorktown and a few torpedo boats. All of these vessels save the Charleston, are of old construction, and would be of very little use in a conflict with a first-class naval power. The battleship Oregon, one of the initial three battleships constructed for the navy and the battleship Wisconsin are at the navy yard at Bremerton, Wn., undergoing extensive repairs. It will be a year or more before they will be available for service.

On the Asiatic station the naval power is represented by four large armored cruisers of the West Virginia class and the old monitors Monadnock and Monterey. The Monadnock is in reserve, with a skeleton crew aboard, and the Monterey is out of commission at Cavite. Added to these are a number of more or less obsolete gunboats for use among the Philippine Islands and a squadron of protected cruisers, the Baltimore, Cincinnati, Raleigh, Galveston, and Chattanooga. These are not especially formidable either in respect to speed or otherwise.

Senator Perkins also believes the naval plants at Bremerton and Mare Island should be thoroughly equipped for the construction of battleships and minor craft, and to this end it is his opinion that one vessel, of the first class should always be under construction at each of these yards.

The experiments made recently by the government in the construction of the battleships Louisiana and Connecticut by the Newport News Shipbuilding Company and the United States government at the Brooklyn navy yard, respectively, shows that despite the handicaps imposed upon government construction generally, the time occupied in the building of these two vessels and the expense were practically the same. It takes time to assemble the needed skilled labor and the necessary appliances for the building of battleships, and it is deemed the part of wisdom to have such equipment as may turn these vessels out with the least possible delay, and in time of war enable the government to repair damage sustained in conflict and otherwise with the maximum speed.

The Color of a Filipino.
The school authorities of Washington have been called upon to decide whether a Filipino is white or "colored." The problem was brought before them by Major M. F. Waltz of the United States army, who sent a communication asking that his Filipino servant, twenty-two years of age be admitted to the white school of Washington.

Major Waltz said that his servant had been denied admission to the public schools of Atlanta on account of the prevailing race feeling. After much discussion the question was referred to a committee, which has not yet reported.

Japs Do Not Seek War.
"The Japanese do not want Hawaii or the Philippines and they do not seek war," says Bishop Merriam C. Harris of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who has spent thirty-three years in Japan, and who is home on a visit.

He offered a prayer in the Senate and then went over to the House and talked with the members.

There is no hard feeling toward the United States in Japan, he said, but an exclusion act would be resented and regarded as unforgivable, and might, he said, "lead to trouble."

To Experiment With Oil

The Bureau of Steam Engineering of the navy of which Rear Admiral Charles W. Rea is engineer in chief, has decided to experiment with oil as possible fuel for United States ships of war.

The first test will be made on the Wyoming, now at Mare Island. Should it be successful it is said that the Navy Department will be substituted for coal in a short time.

Beer in Soldier's Homes.

Beer halls in the several branches of the national home for disabled volunteer soldiers netted profits to the government aggregating \$165,454 during the last year, according to the annual report of Col John L. Chamberlain, Inspector General, whose annual report to the Secretary of War is one of the strongest recommendations made for the retention of the canteen features of these homes.

"The beer hall I believe to be a most valuable agent in determining the comfort, contentment, health and general welfare of the members. Nearly all members are of advanced age, their habits are formed and fixed beyond possibility of change. Their pensions furnish means wherewith to drink, and those who desire drink can and will get it. In the beer hall they obtain beer of the purest and best quality, and the amount consumed can be and now is strictly regulated. If the beer hall should be abolished the money now spent in the beer hall—in fact a much larger sum—will be spent in the neighboring saloons and dives. The profits which are now expended for the pleasure, comfort and convenience and general welfare of the members will be lost to them and will go into the pockets of the saloon keepers.

Reward for a Democrat.
The following letter was given out at the White House:

"The White House,

"Washington, D. C., Dec. 17, 1906.

"Dear Mr. Bonaparte—Some three years ago Sheriff J. L. Merrill of Carroll county, Ga., lost his chance for re-election by his action in beating off a mob of several hundred white people who were trying to take a negro out of jail and put him to death. Sheriff Merrill and his deputies fired on the mob, killing and wounding several men and beating the others off. Because of this he was defeated for reelection. Congressman Adams brought the matter to my attention, saying that he hated to see a man who had done such a service as a public official defeated because of the very fact that he had rendered the service. He told me that Governor Terrell had offered Merrill a place the best he had to give, which carried a salary of \$50 per month. I told the congressman that I thought I could beat that and get him a place for \$1200 a year as custodian of the grounds of the Federal prison at Atlanta. I hear he has done well. If he has done well can't we give him a promotion?"

"Sincerely yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

"Hon. Charles J. Bonaparte,

"Attorney General."

The Milling of Rice.

A delegation representing the rice interests of Louisiana and Texas were in Washington to confer with Secretary Wilson in regard to the effect of the pure food bill, which goes into effect Jan. 1, on rice manufacture. The members of the delegation are C. S. Knapp, president of the Louisiana Rice Growers' Association; F. A. Godchaux, of Abbeville, La.; S. Ross, of Houston, Texas, and J. E. Broussard, of Beaumont.

Secretary Wilson gave it as his opinion that the present methods used by the rice millers of the south are objectionable and will not be subject to change under the new laws. He also stated that rice milled up to January 1, 1907 will be exempt from the provisions under the bill.

Mr. Wilson's statement that glucose can not be used for polishing was good news to the Louisianians and Texans, and they say that glucose is used to a great extent by foreign rice mills which comes into competition with American millers.

An Investigation Ordered.

No advice has been received at the War Department regarding the reported firing on a car conductor by soldiers at Fort Barrancas, Fla. The matter, however, unofficially was brought to the attention of the department today, and the commanding officer of the fort has been called upon for information.

Coming so soon after the affair at Brownsville, Tex., which has received so much attention in the public press, army officers expressed their chagrin at the report of the latest disturbance. Fort Barrancas, which is located a short distance from Pensacola, is regarded as one of the most important posts in the service, five companies of the coast artillery, the Seventh, Ninth, Fifteenth, Twentieth, and the Twenty-second companies being stationed there.

Fire in the Studio Building at Boston caused \$150,000 damage.

"Newspaper Sensations."

Colorado Springs, Colo.—Gov. Herbert Hagerman of New Mexico, who is spending the week in this city, on his way home from Washington, characterized as "newspaper sensations" recent reports to the effect that certain politicians of New Mexico preferred charges against him, or have asked President Roosevelt for his removal from office.

BOAT EXPLOSION KILLS MANY

BIG DISASTER ON BENDS PACKET SCOVELL.

EXACT NUMBER NOT KNOWN

But Number of Dead Between Fifteen and Twenty, Among Whom are Capt. Quackenboss, His Son and Laval Yerger.

Vicksburg, Miss.—While the Steamer W. T. Scovell, plying in the Vicksburg and Davis Bend trade, was loading freight at Gold Dust Landing, seventeen miles south of Vicksburg, the boat's boiler exploded with terrific force and without the slightest warning, killing and maiming the crew and passengers and blowing off the entire front of the steamer.

According to survivors who arrived here on board of the steamer Senator Cordill, the dead numbers between fifteen and twenty. It is feared, however, that the exact number will not be known for some days, as the steamer was crowded with deckhands and passengers, and those who escaped were so stunned for a time that before assistance could be secured the bodies of many of the dead had disappeared down the river.

Dead and Injured.

The known dead are:

Capt. John A. Quackenboss, master of the boat, Vicksburg.

Wade Quackenboss, Vicksburg.

Laval Yerger, cotton seed buyer, Jackson.

Joe Smith, clerk of steamer, Yazoo City, Miss.

Mack Clarke, negro porter.

Two roustabouts, name unknown.

Eight or nine negro deck passengers.

The injured are:

Lennie Roberts, assistant pilot, Vicksburg, Miss., injured internally, seriously.

John Dougherty, pilot, shoulder dislocated.

Charles McKenna, passenger, painfully injured.

Butterfield, slightly injured in the head.

Many Negroes Injured.

The number of dead and injured negroes can not be stated, but of a crew and passenger list of about fifty, about half are missing. The negro dead were eared for at the place where the accident occurred, as are some of the injured.

Vicksburg is much wrought up over the accident, Laval Yerger being very popular here, and also the two Quackenbosses, who both leave families.

The cause of the explosion is in doubt at this time. The steamer had been considered in first class condition although she was delayed here a few hours by being run into by the Belle of the Bends. This, however, could not have affected her boilers.

The news of the explosion first reached this city by telephone to A. G. Russell, who heard of the steamer blowing up from Ashwood Landing.

Mr. Russell, telephoned to Ashwood, and there John G. O'Kelly, a prominent citizen, said that he had seen cotton floating down the river and he would send a man on horseback at once to Gold Dust Landing, which was eight miles away.

Gold Dust gin is twenty miles south of Vicksburg, on the Louisiana side of the Mississippi river. The Scovell left here on her trip to Davis Bend and was returning when the accident occurred. Frank Hirsch of this city is the agent and part owner of the boat.

Steam Smothers Cries.

Wade Quackenboss was heard to call for help soon after the explosion, but, according to the reports of those who were on the boat, escaping steam soon smothered his cries. Capt. Quackenboss was not seen after the accident.

Pilot John Dougherty was blown several hundred feet into the river, but despite a dislocated shoulder, managed to swim to the bank.

Murry Wilkinson, the cub pilot escaped uninjured. Engineer John T. Bruce was not hurt.

The accident occurred in about a mile of where the steamer Providence was destroyed in a hurricane and twenty people was lost several years ago.

Mr. Wilkinson's Story

J. M. Wilkinson, cub pilot of the

In a suit at St. Louis, the president of the Republic Oil Company declared that the entire business of that concern, outside of Missouri, had been turned over to the Standard Oil Company.

The garrison at Loja, Ecuador, was reported to have mutinied, killing their officers and a number of citizens.

Bishop C. C. McCabe, of Philadelphia died in New York.

Scovell, arrived here on board the Steamer Senator Cordill with others who were on the Scovell. The remains of Laval Yerger were brought here and will be sent to Jackson, Miss., for interment.

No other bodies were brought here as they could not be found, there being, according to Wilkinson's statement, about fifteen dead in all.

He says that the boat blew up while landed at Gold Dust gin, about noon. He was sleeping at the time in the rear of the upper cabin, and when he woke he found the boat blew in half and his end sinking.

He hurried out, and reached the bank, found the body of Laval Yerger under a log, where also lay the body of a negro named Williams Hall, who had been making a cotton-seed deal with Mr. Yerger when the explosion occurred.

Senator Cordill to Rescue.

Wilkinson says Dougherty, who was at the wheel, suffered a sprained shoulder and seemed to be in a bad way, but he does not believe he will die.

A young white boy named Len Roberts, who was employed as watchman on the boat, was terribly hurt internally, and Wilkinson says that he believes he may die.

Wilkinson states that as soon as he could realize that had happened he sent a negro out to hail the Senator Cordill, which was near at hand, to come to the relief of the Scovell. The Cordill came promptly, and the crew did what little it could for the wrecked steamer. All the cargo was lost, floating down the river.

Wilkinson says he investigated the wreck and found that the boiler which blew up cut through the mastpole, blowing the entire front of the boat off and two hundred yards into a field. The story of the accident as told by J. T. Bruce, the engineer of the boat, is as follows:

"We were lying at the Gold Dust Landing, taking on a cargo when I noticed a small quantity of water oozing through the boiler. I suspected that something was wrong and proceeded to make an examination.

On Top of the Boiler.

"About this time the Scovell broke her head line and drifted so that I did not have time to make a thorough examination at that moment. As soon as I got her back to the bank I crawled on top of the boiler and proceeded with the investigation. I had just got down from the boiler when the explosion occurred. The catastrophe, I believe, was due to a defective boiler plate."

When the Cordill arrived at Vicksburg, a crowd of several hundred persons met her at the wharf. There were anxious inquiries for friends and relatives.

Dead Men Well Known.

Capt. Quackenboss was one of the oldest and best-known residents of this city and was well known to every man on the Mississippi river.

L. W. Quackenboss, one of the killed, was a citizen of Vicksburg, well known in military circles throughout the state. During the Spanish-American war he served as a non-commissioned officer of Company A, First Mississippi Volunteers. On the reorganization of the Mississippi National Guard after the close of the war he was appointed captain and commissary of the Third Regiment and was later elected Colonel of the regiment, serving in that capacity but a short time, when he resigned.

Laval Yerger, another of the victims, was born and reared in Jackson, and was one of the best-known young men who ever went out from that city. He was a son of the late William Yerger and has a number of relatives in Jackson, among whom is the Assistant Secretary of State, Henry Yerger, and ex-Attorney General Frank Johnston. His family connection is extensive in Mississippi.

Hon. Charles Scott, one of the candidates for governor, is a relation. He was engaged in the hotel business for several years in Mississippi and Louisiana and made a host of friends.

The Scovell was built in 1895 at Jeffersonville. She is 160 feet long, 31 feet wide, 3 feet 7 inches deep. She was bought at Nashville only a few months ago by her new owners, the Vicksburg and Davis Bend Packet Company. The boat was insured for \$6000.

A denial of the report that President Castro of Venezuela is dying was issued from Willemstad.

French Religious Law.

Paris.—The chamber of deputies decided to take up the debate on the new religious law tomorrow.

The postponement demanded by M. Pelletan, radical socialist, led today to an energetic outburst from Premier Clemenceau, who characterized this demand as a maneuver by false friends desiring to embarrass the government.

Democratic Senators will unite to oppose the policy of centralization outlined in Secretary Root's recent speech.

Secretary Wilson received a delegation representing Louisville and Texas rice interests.

MISSISSIPPI STATE HAPPENINGS

ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM ALL SECTIONS.

AN EPITOME OF THE NEWS

Culled From Important Happenings Throughout the State During the Past Week and Reviewed in Brief for Our Readers.

Peonage Charges.

A peonage charge was filed in the Federal court by a negro named Dan January against James Patrick, a prominent Rankin county farmer who lives about seven miles north of Brandon.

The affidavit alleges that January was held in involuntary servitude, together with his wife and six children, by a man named Carter who then sold him to Patrick for the sum of \$1090.95, alleging a debt in that sum to be due, and Patrick refused to release him from custody until the debt was canceled.

January states that he was whipped by Carter with a buggy trace until he was bloody from head to heels, and exhibited to Commissioner Moseley his bare body showing huge gashes and welts across the flesh. He is still too feeble to walk, and states that he was unable to move for ten days after receiving the whipping.

Mr. Patrick was arrested before Commissioner Moseley. Judge John R. Enoch of Brandon appeared for the defense, and Hon. W. B. Banks, assistant district attorney for the government.

The evidence failed to show where in Mr. Patrick was in any way involved in the act of holding January in peonage; that he had merely purchased a debt claim from Patrick, supposing that the negro was willing to work it out, and that he knew nothing whatever of any cruel or inhuman treatment that had been accorded the negro by Carter, and that he admitted that Mr. Patrick had always treated him kindly. Commissioner Moseley then dismissed the defendant and the Federal deputies, it is understood, will next endeavor to ascertain the whereabouts of Carter.

That the negro has been inhumanly treated by some person is very evident from an examination of his body. The bruises and gashes on his body have not yet healed, and it is believed that he also sustained internal injuries from the lashing administered.

Woman Suffragists.

While men are planning and contemplating plans for the political campaign to be fought in Mississippi which are to be practically on the one-party principle (that of the white man and the democracy), there is a little band of women who are gifted with the ability to see and act for themselves, and who consider it not unseemly or unwomanly to themselves hold a meeting here on Friday and Saturday of this week, in response to a call issued some time since by Mrs. Hala Hammond Butt, of Clarksdale, President of the Mississippi Association of Woman Suffragists. It is not stated in the call that the ladies are contemplating the putting of a ticket in the field or even a candidate, unless it be for the office of Superintendent of Education, and this is only tentative and inferential suggestion. President Butt has asked the ladies to get together and take up the work of systematizing the conditions that exist and take a general survey of the horizon. If the women in convention assembled decide that it is advisable to take an active hand in the game to be played next year, then the plans will be laid for a series of meetings at the various centers, and some energetic missionary work will be provided for.

Bank Revived.

The Mississippi Savings Bank and Trust Company, a banking institution which was chartered several months ago to be located at Meridian, is being revived and will be organized in a few days. The concern was chartered about the time of the Meridian cyclone and the plans of the company were disarranged; but the incorporators have recently desired to revive the charter and establish the concern. It will have a capital of \$100,000 with \$50,000 paid in, and will be one of the strongest institutions in the state.

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