

A. R. WILLITS KILLED IN LOCAL FIRE

Medford Business Man Is Instantly Killed When Wall Falls in Page Theatre Fire—Fire Chief Injured—Playhouse Is Completely Destroyed By Blaze.

As a result of a spectacular fire, which originated from an unknown cause and which was practically in full blast when first discovered, the Page theatre was completely gutted Sunday, and Amos R. Willits, volunteer fireman and popular young business man and partner in the Presto-Lite Battery Service and Electrical Supplies Station, was instantly killed and Fire Chief Roy Elliott was badly injured, when the stage fire wall collapsed and fell on them.

Amos Willits was 39 years old and leaves a wife and son, Billy, about one year and a half old. He was of exceptionally pleasing character and disposition, and his tragic end is mourned by a wide number of friends, while the sympathy of the entire community goes out to the widow.

The funeral services will be held Thursday at 2 p. m., at the Perle Funeral Home, Mrs. Willits' brother being en route here from North Dakota, to attend the funeral.

BLIZZARD AND COLD SNAP HITS NORTH OF STATE

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 31.—Light snowfall last night with whistling wind gave Portland a blizzard but the snow ceased before enough had accumulated on the ground to produce drifts. Sub-zero temperatures prevailed throughout the state with temperatures ranging from eight above at Baker to 32 above at Roseburg. Portland's minimum was 19, Umatilla's 11, Eugene and Albany both reported 21, and Salem 20. The forecast for occasional snow tonight, with fair and continued cold tomorrow. The sun was shining here this morning.

2 Oregon Bank Yeggs Plead Guilty, Get 20 Years in Pen

EUGENE, Ore., Dec. 31.—Tom Murray and Eddie Walker, arrested recently at Portland, pleaded guilty today to holding up the Lane County State and Savings bank at Florence, Ore., and were sentenced to twenty years in prison by Circuit Judge Skipworth. They were taken at once to the penitentiary at Salem. An attempt to escape the jail by cutting the bars of their cell, discovered yesterday, accelerated this action.

NOW A MASS OF RUINS

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Above is shown the Page Theatre, the best and most modern playhouse in southern Oregon, which was completely gutted by fire early Sunday morning at a loss estimated at \$100,000, partially covered by insurance. The origin of the fire is still a mystery, but it undoubtedly started in the northeast corner of the building, partly shown at the extreme left of the picture.

MANY INJURED IN CALIFORNIA SCHOOL INCENDIARY FIRES

OAKLAND, Cal., Dec. 31.—A half score firemen were injured, one perhaps fatally, in a fire of supposedly incendiary origin which destroyed the Cole grammar school here today with a loss estimated at \$100,000. It was the second school fire of possible incendiary origin in Alameda county in a week's time, the Lincoln school in Alameda, Calif., being burned down a few nights ago.

3 BANK ROBBERS NEARLY ESCAPE JAIL IN EUGENE

EUGENE, Ore., Dec. 31.—Efforts to discover how a back saw reached the cells occupied by Tom Murray, Eddie Walker and Jimmy Wells, prisoners held in the county jail here in connection with the robbery of the Lane county State and Savings bank at Florence, was made today by Sheriff Fred G. Stickle, following the discovery yesterday afternoon that the prisoners had saved off one of the bars in their cell and had saved part way through two more bars. According to jail officials, the only way the prisoners could have obtained the saw was through trustees or a woman who visited them last week.

REYNA BELASCO, HURT

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 29.—Reyna Belasco, eleven year old daughter of Walter Belasco of this city and niece of David Belasco, theatrical producer, was fatally injured tonight by an automobile driven by James R. Mason, a bond broker. Mason was arrested on a charge of manslaughter.

POSTMASTER'S HEALTH MUCH IMPROVED BY RAISE IN SALARY

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec. 30.—The chief prescription today for Postmaster James E. Power, who is ill with influenza, was written on a postoffice book-keeping slip and read that his salary was to be raised from \$6000 to \$8000 a year as a result of the San Francisco postoffice passing the \$7,000,000 a year mark in receipts this year.

4 CONVICTS IN DARING ESCAPE FROM ATLANTA

ATLANTA, Ga., Dec. 31.—In the most sensational jail delivery in the history of the Atlanta federal prison, four convicts, one a partner of Gerald Ghipman, million dollar mail bandit, were at liberty today after having wormed their way through a narrow tunnel under the fifty foot concrete wall encircling the prison, late yesterday. Of the quartet the most notorious of the fugitives is George Anderson, who was serving a 25 year sentence for participation in the \$1,000,000 New York mail delivery for which Chapman was convicted. Anderson was thought to have engineered the escape.

STATE POULTRY CROP GETS ENOUGH NAMES

PORTLAND, Ore., Dec. 31.—The Pacific C6-operative Poultry Producers announced today it has been successful in its drive to recruit members representing at least 250,000 hens into the association. Manager E. J. Dixon gave the following statement to the press: "The poultrymen of Oregon and southwest Washington have decided to continue their marketing association. We received sufficient contracts in this morning's mail to bring our total to 251,112 hens."

SALEM IS FLOODED WITH APPLICATIONS FOR SOLDIER BONUS

SALEM, Ore., Dec. 21.—For the reason that today is the final day for making initial applications for the service men's cash bonus under the state bonus and loan act, the ex-service men's state aid commission has an exceedingly heavy mail today. The fact that today is the final day for this class of benefits under the act does not bar those ex-service men whose letters asking for application blanks are on file with the department, though the actual application may not have been received. In such cases the bonus may be paid at any time.

FATTY ARBUCKLE IS DIVORCED BY WIFE

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Dec. 31.—Mina E. Arbuckle, wife of Roscoe (Fatty) C. Arbuckle, was granted a divorce in the superior court here today. The case was heard before Justice Chester W. Barrows on depositions and was granted on the ground of neglect to provide and desertion. The divorce will become absolute six months from today.

Death Toll of the Automobile

SANTA BARBARA, Calif., Dec. 31.—Major George W. Fishback, formerly in the United States diplomatic service in South America, and his wife were instantly killed near this city today when their automobile was demolished by a Southern Pacific train. The couple were in a closed car and were driving toward this city from their suburban home. Mrs. Fishback was at the wheel while the major was on the back seat. The car ran onto a crossing of the main line of the railroad just as the fast northbound passenger train reached it. The couple came here from San Jose, Calif.

WIFE PLEADS FOR HUSBAND'S LIFE

SACRAMENTO, Cal., Dec. 31.—Mrs. Anne Kels of Lodi, whose husband, Alex A. Kels, is under sentence of death at Folsom penitentiary, appeared before Governor Richardson today morning and presented petitions asking that her husband's sentence be commuted to life imprisonment. Mrs. Kels informed the governor of her belief that her husband, who confessed the murder of an itinerant worker at Lodi, September last, was insane.

FRENCH DIVERS TO SEE IF THEY CAN FIND LOST AIRSHIP AT BOTTOM OF SEA

PARIS, Dec. 31.—(By the Associated Press)—As soon as the gale off the coast of Sicily abates, the French authorities will institute diving operations around the spot where the body of Lieutenant Grenadan was found last week, in an effort to determine beyond a doubt whether the airship he commanded the lost dirigible Dismude, with her fifty officers and men, went down in that vicinity or if her commander's body alone fell from the airship there.

Arizona Defeats Colorado

SAN ANTONIO, Texas, Dec. 31.—The University of Arizona's polo team is strongly favored for the southwestern intercollegiate polo championship today as the result of an easy 10 to 0 victory over the Colorado Agricultural college team here Saturday.

Local Phone Rate Increase Is Held Up for Sixty Days

SALEM, Ore., Dec. 31.—The state public service commission this afternoon ordered suspended for sixty days the proposed increase in rates of the Home Telephone and Telegraph company of Southern Oregon pending an investigation and hearing. The date of the hearing has not been set. The increased rates would otherwise have gone into effect tomorrow.

U. S. A. ACTION IS PROTESTED BY LA HUERTA

WASHINGTON, Dec. 31.—The De La Huerta faction in Mexico today filed with the state department a formal protest against the plan of the United States to sell war materials to the Mexico City government of General Obregon.

The Obregon authorities alone are recognized by the United States in this dealing with Mexico and there was no indication what consideration the communication would receive at the state department. The protest was signed by the De La Huerta confidential agent at New York.

PIERCE IS ENCOURAGED BY CATTLE OUTLOOK

SALEM, Ore., Dec. 31.—After a trip to his Union county cattle ranch Governor Pierce returned to his office today, feeling encouraged over the market outlook for beef cattle. The governor said there is no doubt that the market is starting an upward trend and that the beef cattle producer will soon be in a position to make some money. The governor said he found prosperity in eastern Oregon spotted, with the towns flourishing and the farmers disheartened.

TUNIS, Dec. 31.—A squadrone of small French war craft which put into this port for shelter from the storm in the Mediterranean, left today to renew the search along the coast of Sicily for bodies of victims of the Dix- mude disaster and for wreckage from the dirigible.

AMERICANS ARE TAKEN BY BANDITS

Mrs. Julia Kilen Is Captured and Professor and Mrs. Hoff Wounded in Raid By Chinese Bandits On Siang Yangfu—Victims Are U. S. Missionaries—U. S. Consul Protests

PEKING, Dec. 31.—Followers of the notorious bandit leader, Lao Yao-jen captured an American missionary, Mrs. Julia Kilen and wounded Professor Bernhard Hoff and Mrs. Hoff in a raid upon the town of Siang Yang, in northern Hupeh province near the border town of Siang Yangfu, according to advices received here today.

The American legation has taken active steps to bring about the capture of the brigands and the liberation of Mrs. Kilen. The Chinese government has offered a bounty for the capture, dead or alive, of the bandit leader.

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At that time missionaries at Lao Hokowa, a station about forty miles from Ltkwan-ka and a little further from Thoyuang, the station most recently raided, abandoned their establishment and sought safety in a larger community.

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SPOKANE CLUB WOMAN WOULD MAKE LEAP YEAR A PERMANENT AFFAIR

SPOKANE, Wash., Dec. 31.—Woman's right to propose marriage, theoretically hers during 1924, should be accorded her in fact, not only during leap year but at all times, Mrs. W. E. Barnhart, president of the Spokane Women's club, declares in a newspaper interview today. "The reason many girls who would build up wonderful homes go through

life without marrying is that they are not able to make their love known to the right man," Mrs. Barnhart said. "In many cases, through lack of finances or because of bashfulness, the 'right' man has held back, when if the way were made clear to him he would joyfully welcome matrimony. "Give the woman the right to propose marriage to the man she believes can make her happiest."

No Paper New Years.

Following the usual custom there will be no issue of the Medford Mail-Tribune tomorrow, New Year's Day. A full account of the sport events for that day will be printed in Wednesday's paper.