

Virginia Peyton Howe

(31 Oct 1877 - 11 Apr 1928)

Howe. April 11, 1928 at Virginia Beach, Virginia Peyton Knight, wife of J. Wilson Howe. Funeral services at Congressional Cemetery chapel, Washington, D.C., Monday, April 16, at 10 a.m.

The Virginia Pilot, April 13, 1928, p. 20

Widely-Known Woman Found Dead In Surf

Mrs. T. Wilson Howe Apparently Victim of Accidental Drowning

At Virginia Beach Some Time During Wednesday Night

Absence From Hotel Had Not Been Noted

Tragedy promenaded the new boardwalk at Virginia Beach Wednesday night, claiming the life of Mrs. T. Wilson Howe, niece by marriage of Woodrow Wilson.

Mrs. Howe's body, lying face downward upon the beach at high water mark near Rudee Inlet, was discovered early yesterday morning by Ike Etheridge, keeper of a ducking club. An inquest held by Coroner Robert W. Woodhouse developed the fact that she died by accidental drowning. There was no evidence of foul play.

Mrs. Howe who, with her husband, had been making her home at Virginia Beach during the summer months for the past five years, was last seen Wednesday night about 10 o'clock when she left a party of friends at the Kenilworth Hotel for a stroll along the beach. She was an enthusiastic hiker, having earlier in the evening declined to take part in a bridge game, declaring that she preferred to stroll along the beach, the inclement weather of the past two days having kept her inside the house. She first left the hotel around 8:30 o'clock and walked to the north end of the boardwalk, returning about 9:30 to see to the comfort of her husband, who has been in ill health for several years.

In Good Spirits

After seeing him comfortably retired in the suite of rooms that they occupied in the hotel, Mrs. Howe came through the lobby and borrowed a coat from one of her friends, declaring the air was chilly outside and expressing the intention of walking to the south end of the boardwalk. She appeared in excellent spirits.

This was the last seen of her alive. The theory of those viewing the body is that, becoming confused in the darkness, Mrs. Howe walked off the ocean side of the boardwalk to be swept beyond her depth by the tide that was unusually high. When found the pockets of her coat were full of sand, the coat was slightly torn and one galosh was gone. There were no marks or bruises upon the body.

The tragedy has gripped Virginia Beach society as nothing in several years. The first news of Mrs. Howe's death was received by friends upon the location of her body. Her absence from the hotel had not been noted on account of the fact that she and her husband occupy separate rooms and it was her habit to take long walks upon the beach at night.

Mrs. Howe was 46 years of age and one of the most liked members of the summer colony at the resort. For the past five years she and her husband had been spending the winters in Florida but this year they remained at Virginia Beach, having announced the intention of purchasing a residence there and making it their permanent home.

Active In Civic Life

Mrs. Howe was active in social and church affairs, being a member of Galilee Episcopal Church at Virginia Beach.

Before marriage Mrs. Howe was Miss Virginia Peyton Knight, of Lynchburg. She is survived by her husband; one son, T. Wilson Howe, Jr., of Evanston, Ill; two daughters, Misses Virginia Peyton Howe and Ellen Wilson Howe, in school at Holy Cross Academy, Washington, D.C.; two brothers, J.P. Knight, of New York, and Ethbert Knight, of Philadelphia, and three sisters, Mrs. George D. Calvert, of Washington, D.C.; Mrs. Walter Wilmer, of Morristown, N.J., and one other who is now touring Europe and whose name was not learned.

Mr. .Howe, who formerly was engaged in business in Charlottesville, prostrated with grief over the tragic death of his wife, declared yesterday afternoon that definite funeral arrangements would not be announced until the arrival of the son and daughters and other members of the family.

The Evening Star, April 13, 1928, p. 7

Body Found In Inlet

Norfolk, Va., April 13 – The body of Mrs. Virginia Howe, widow of William Howe, a nephew of the late President Woodrow Wilson, was found floating in the waters of Rudee Inlet near Virginia Beach yesterday. Mrs. Howe had not been seen since she went for a walk Wednesday night and relatives expressed the opinion that she was accidentally drowned.

The Virginia Pilot, April 15, 1928, p. 2

Funerals

Mrs. Virginia Knight Howe – The body of Mrs. Howe wife of J. Wilson Howe, who was drowned at Virginia Beach Wednesday, will be sent to Washington this morning via the Norfolk and Western Railway, for funeral services and burial. The body has been at H.D. Oliver's funeral apartments, 610-12 East Freemason street.