

David Pfeiffer

(- 24 Sep 1907)

Pfeiffer. Suddenly on Tuesday, September 24, 1907, David Pfeifer. Funeral from his late residence, 506 8th street southwest, Thursday, September 26 at 11 a.m. Interment at Congressional Cemetery.

The Evening Star, September 24, 1907, p. 1

Death By Drowning

David Pfeifer Writes Note and Commits Suicide

"Good-bye. It's All Over"

Jumps Into Muddy Water of Tidal Basin and Disappears

Dragging For The Body

Recent Arrest on Charge of Making a Hand-book

May Have Caused the Act

"Dear sister: Good-bye. It's all over."

David Pfeifer, forty-nine years old, who was recently arrested on a charge of having made a handbook on the races, wrote the foregoing message on a piece of wrapping paper, tucked it away under the sweatband of his hat and jumped overboard in the muddy water at the Tidal basin about 10:30 o'clock this morning. Mrs. L.E. Greenwell, the sister to whom the note was addressed, resides at 506 8th street southwest. She was advised of the affair at her home about noon, and was greatly affected.

"Why did he do it?" she moaned. "He was here this morning, but he never said a word about taking his life."

Many friends of the deceased knew him as Dave Fugitt, the name of his stepfather. For a number of years he had been a familiar figure about poolrooms and other similar places.

All Right at Breakfast

Dave Pfeiffer was forty-nine years of age and unmarried. He occupied a room at the home of his nephew, 4 1/2 and K streets southwest, and took his meals at the house of his sister to whom he addressed the note. He was at the breakfast table this morning, as usual, and left the house shortly thereafter, not saying where he was going. The next his sister heard of him was when reporters called at the house and informed her that he had killed himself. It is supposed that Pfeifer proceeded directly from the house to the Highway bridge. He was seen walking along the wall about the tidal basin not far from the outlet, his hands behind him and apparently in deep thought.

A few minutes after he was seen on the wall he walked in the direction of the foot of 14th street. He walked across the grass, threw his derby hat under a bush and plunged, head first, into the muddy water.

"I could have saved him if I had had assistance," Michael Ready, who was working in the park near where Pfeifer jumped overboard, remarked, "but I had nothing to assist me and all I could do was to summon help."

Witnesses of Act

Thomas W. Abell, 416 G street southeast, and William White, whose home is at 480 Virginia avenue southwest, also witnessed the affair, but they were on the opposite side of the basin. Park Watchman James O'Brien, another who saw Pfeifer before he jumped overboard, picked up the hat and found the note. He notified the police of the affair, and the crew of the police boat hurried to the tidal basin to

drag for the body. Drivers and pedestrians who were on their way through that portion of Potomac Park stopped to inquire why the basin was being dragged, and several of the curious ones said that they had known Dave, as they called him.

Less than a week ago Pfeifer was arrested by Lieut. Hartley, Sergt. Lee and Detective Grant and charged with having made a handbook on the races.

The arrest caused much surprise among those who play the races through the handbooks and among the makers of books themselves. There had been no apparent activity in the crusade for several weeks and it was thought apparently that Prosecutor Given was giving his attention to the cases which had already been presented to the court and was using the officers to hunt for the witnesses in those cases.

The police and the prosecuting attorney, however, it is understood, were advised that an attempt had been made to revive the business and attention was immediately directed to the matter. The capture of Pfeifer was the result.

Placed Bets With Pfeifer

According to the police, they received information from persons who claim to have placed bets with Pfeifer, but who were not, in their opinion, fully paid off on their winnings. A pool was made up last July, and it is asserted by the authorities a lump of money was placed with Pfeifer by two men who were in the pool. The pool was placed on Wardine, a horse that was running well at Brighton Beach, with odds at 40 to 1. The pool won the bet, and the interested parties called for their money. There were several members of the pool, each anxious to get his money. The men who placed the bet maintained that the party with whom it was placed had "welched," and that they were unable to collect the winnings. The members of the pool were given promises, it is declared, and when they were not met the disappointed ones began to talk.

A jury trial was demanded by his counsel, Attorney Campbell Carrington, and bond in the sum of \$1,000 was furnished for his appearance in the Police Court. Persons who were well acquainted with Pfeifer say he was in the gambling business practically all his life, having been connected with the backers of the policy game here many years ago.

Recovery of Body

The body of Pfeifer was recovered at 2:45 o'clock this afternoon by the crew of the police boat, near the spot where the man jumped overboard, and was taken to the morgue.