

SEEN ON THE WATER.

ERNEST BECKER SATISFIED THAT HE SAW MR. SCHAFFNER.

The Missing Banker Was Standing Up in the Boat Quite a Distance from Shore When Last Seen — A Moment Later He Had Disappeared — Where He Got the Boat — Schaffner Met by Otto Young in the First National Bank Shortly Before He Disappeared.

"Herman Schaffner will be found in the bottom of Lake Michigan," said Capt. Shea last evening, "and all the evidence needed to establish the fact is now before us. There are a few skeptics who entertain the belief that the missing banker will turn up safe and sound, but as a matter of fact they have nothing more substantial to uphold their theory than a mysterious system of nods and winks that mean nothing at all."

All day long a force of men was engaged in dredging the lake off the foot of Diversey street and early in the day James Rosenthal, Mr. Schaffner's brother-in-law, went to the scene of the search to superintend operations. Two big boats, stationed five yards apart, with a big drag net suspended between them, and supplied with grappling irons moored from their sides, worked all day about two miles off the lake shore at the foot of Diversey street, but succeeded in bringing to the surface no additional evidence.

The theory of suicide respecting the missing banker that has been held from the first both by the police and the friends and relatives of Mr. Schaffner, received the strongest possible confirmation yesterday in the statement that Ernest Becker, No. 101 Best street, made to the Lake View police.

"I was standing on the Andries boat pier between 1 and 2 o'clock Friday afternoon when a man, whom I have every reason to believe was Mr. Schaffner, came up and spoke to me," said Becker. "He was visibly agitated, and before he accosted me he was nervously pacing up and down the pier. I am positive that this man who spoke to me was Mr. Schaffner. I expected to get a boat and go out fishing, and as I walked down to the edge of the landing he came up to me and asked where he could get a boat. I pointed out the boathouse to him and told him that I expected to go out on the lake myself. He remarked that he was going out fishing and asked if I had ever fished out there. Then he went over to the boathouse and I stood there on the pier while he rowed out in the lake. Some time afterwards I went up to the boathouse myself, but as the boat that I wanted had been taken out by some one else early in the afternoon I did not go out on the lake at all. While standing out on the pier I saw Schaffner standing up in the boat. He was then, I should judge, about one and a half or two miles from shore. I did not see him spring from the boat nor did I see the boat turn over, but when I looked again the man in the boat was not visible. I thought that the whole matter was rather singular, but I am free to confess that the thought of the man's having jumped over and committed suicide never for an instant crossed my mind."

Becker did not place any importance in the incident on the pier until he saw the pictures of Schaffner as published in the newspapers. He concluded then, however, that he was probably the last man that had seen the missing banker alive and at once went to the police with his story. Becker's description of the man whom he met on the Andries pier coincides in every particular with the descriptions sent out by the police.

One of the last men to meet Herman Schaffner down-town was Otto Young, who met him in the First National Bank Building at 1 o'clock Friday afternoon. In the bank, he says, Schaffner wandered about in a sort of aimless way for five or ten minutes. J. Bolton, a teller in the bank, saw Schaffner at the same time and remarked on his strange appearance. Both before and after that time Mr. Schaffner was seen at other banks in the down-town district, and it was thought that he went into the First National to borrow ready cash for his failing bank, but that his courage failed him. Mr. Woodcock, who was in charge for the assignee at the bank yesterday, said that the financial statement of the bank's affairs would be given out this morning.

Judge Scales yesterday commenced the legal inquiry into the affairs of Herman Schaffner & Co. Attorney Levi Mayer on the behalf of the American Trust and Savings Bank as assignee asked for leave of court to file a petition to the effect that all notes and securities held by the bank which have not been disposed of through brokerage channels should be returned to the owners. It was stated that the bank holds large numbers of notes of this kind which have been left there to be sold, but which have not yet been disposed of. The depositors who have money in the safety deposit vaults also ask leave to withdraw their money. The court thought it best that the assignee should examine all such claims and that a day should be appointed some time in the near future when such matters might be equitably adjusted. A return was made on the citation secured by Attorney Pam in favor of a creditor for \$125.

Mr. A. G. Becker, the junior member of the banking firm of Schaffner & Co., was present in court and was sworn, but no examination was conducted. The assignee is now at work preparing an inventory of the assets and liabilities of the bank, which will not likely be completed for a week or so. It was therefore agreed between the attorneys for the creditors, the assignee, and the court that the examination of Mr. Becker and other people of the bank would be taken up on two days' notice after the filing of the inventory.