

THINK HERMAN SCHAFFNER IS ALIVE.

Many Refuse to Believe Him Dead—Regarded as of Unsound Mind.

Although the dredging of the lake at the foot of Diversey street for the body of Herman Schaffner was almost completed yesterday, not a bit of evidence has been brought to the surface that would in any wise tend to strengthen the theory of suicide that has from the first been tenaciously held by all the missing banker's friends and relatives.

In spite of the fact that all the tangible evidence thus far collected either by the police or Schaffner's relatives would indicate that he had left the bank Friday afternoon and had gone at once to the lake and hired a boat, there are many friends and business acquaintances of the missing banker who believe that he will turn up sound of body but unsound of mind. Thus far creditable witnesses claim to have met Schaffner on the day of his disappearance in five different places at about the same hour of the day. Five people claim to have seen him on his way to the lake; one claims to have seen him on Washington street two hours later; J. Nelson thinks that he saw him on Milwaukee avenue at about the same time, and people claim to have seen him in Racine, Wis., in Milwaukee, in St. Joe, and on the steamer Chicora, which plies between Chicago and that point. There is one remarkable thing about these stories. They all agree perfectly on the description of the missing banker, that is, the description as first published. That description was wrong in two very important details, but the discoverers of Schaffner have adhered in the closest possible manner to the two erroneous details that were tacked onto the first published description.

The latest man to see Herman Schaffner is George W. Weber, No. 1717 Wrightwood avenue. The story that Weber related yesterday to Capt. Shea was that as follows: "Friday afternoon at about 2 o'clock I was at the foot of Diversey street fishing when a man, whom I believe to have been Herman Schaffner, came down to the pier and hired a boat. While I do not know Mr. Schaffner personally, or for that matter even by sight, I am convinced that it was he from the photographs that have been shown to me. I was close to him when he got into the boat and he rowed rapidly out into the lake. I thought it rather strange that a business man should go out for a pleasure trip on the lake when the weather was so forbidding, and I noticed too that he took no fishing tackle of any description along, if fishing had been his mission. He rowed quite well, but appeared to be in a hurry. I did not see him return nor did I pay any particular attention to him after he had rowed a little way out in the lake."

Weber's recountal follows the line of Becker's account given to the police Tuesday except that they differ half an hour as to time and one claims that Schaffner was an excellent oarsman while the other says that he rowed like a man who had perhaps never been in a boat before.

T. E. Bradley of Racine called on Jacob Newman yesterday with information that Schaffner had been seen in Racine Saturday. Like others he did not know Schaffner by sight, but only judged from the pictures in the newspapers. Newman places no credence in the story. The story that Schaffner was seen on the steamer Chicora is generally discredited by the friends and relatives of the missing banker. The cashier of a large bank said yesterday that Schaffner had been in two banks, he understood, Saturday morning early. At neither of the banks named had he been seen at that time.

"The last time that Mr. Schaffner was in our place was late Thursday afternoon," said Assistant Cashier Tillotson of the Atlas National Bank, where it was said that Schaffner had been seen early Saturday morning. "He was in here late in the afternoon, but I did not have much of a chance to talk to him. He was never in here during the days previous to the suspension of his bank to ask for assistance; if he had, although we were not desirous of taking any considerable sum from our cash, he would have got the assistance that he asked, and I believe that he could have obtained the same courtesies through any bank in Chicago at that time. He was a most careful and conservative financier and is not a man who would have fled from any condition that might confront him. I believe that his troubles caused his mind to be unbalanced and that he wandered away in that condition. I do not believe that he was the sort of a man to commit suicide."

The promised statement of the firm's condition was not given out by the bank assignee yesterday, but is being completed as rapidly as possible and will probably be ready by Saturday at the latest.