

IN THE ICY GRASP OF SABLE WINTER

Wilmington and Eastern Carolina Experience Heaviest Snow in Years.

TEMPERATURES AT A MINIMUM

Street Car Traffic Practically Tied Up and All Trains Running Late—Business Practically Suspended—Weather Data

With the mercury at thirteen degrees above zero, the lowest temperature recorded in Wilmington since 1899, yesterday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock, 8.6 inches of snow on the ground last night at 8 o'clock and still falling, and with street car traffic, coal, market and grocery deliveries practically tied up throughout the day and night, Wilmington, along with other Eastern cities, felt and is feeling today the effects of the cold wave which now has the South and East in its grasp and King Winter reigns supreme.

The snowfall in Wilmington and in this section yesterday was the heaviest in eleven years, and is the first since to lie on the ground in this city since December 4th and 5th, 1907. With dawn yesterday morning a fine sleet began falling and soon thereafter this was followed by snow. By noon about five inches of the "beautiful" lay upon the ground and it was still snowing as hard as ever though ceasing a little later during the night. At times the snow fell so thick and fast that it was almost blinding and the keen wind that blew for the greater part of the day, drove it into the faces of pedestrians with a force that almost took one's breath away.

Nine inches of snow were recorded here in February, 1901, and the snow remained on the ground for four days at that time. In February, 1896, a snowfall of 12.1 inches occurred here, remaining on the ground for two days. The thermometer here at 1:30 yesterday afternoon registered thirteen degrees above zero, the coldest weather experienced here since February 14th, 1899, when the mercury dropped to five degrees. By 8 o'clock last night, however, it had risen to 15 degrees, though Mr. Geo. Felger, the observer of the local Weather Bureau, stated that it would likely drop to 13 or lower again last night. Mr. Felger was of the opinion that the worst of storm has passed over this section by 8 o'clock last night, though he stated that if the snowfall continued it would probably go over nine inches, the 1901 record.

Regular travel over the lines of the Tidewater Power Company was halted about noon yesterday and no belt line cars were run after 1 P. M. The car to Carolina Place, a suburb one mile distant, was run regularly throughout the day, although the regular schedule was by no means maintained. Four trips were made over the suburban line with great difficulty during the day, one of them to Winter Park Gardens and three to Wrightsville Sound. The last trip to the Sound was made last night at 9 o'clock, and though the Carolina Place car had preceded it over the track only a short time, it required an hour to get to Carolina Place. Beyond Carolina Place, however, in the open where the rails are above the ties, very little trouble was experienced. Gangs of men were kept busy at work on the Carolina Place track during the afternoon but it was almost impossible to keep it clear.

Mr. A. B. Skelding, general manager of the Tidewater Power Company, stated to a Star representative last night that the company would put three gangs of men to work this morning about 7 o'clock, and that it was hoped to have the regular schedule over all the lines in effect by 11 o'clock. The Carolina Place and suburban cars will start at 8 o'clock. Mr. Skelding said that it was only in the city, where the ties are set level with the pavement, that the worst trouble is experienced, and that, provided the snowfall ceased last night, he did not anticipate any further trouble.

The coal dealers, market and grocery men and other merchants in Wilmington all felt the effects of real Winter weather also. Though the coal dealers had a plentiful supply of fuel on hand, the snow and the cold weather made it impossible to secure the necessary labor to deliver the many rush orders sent in and the horses and mules, being smooth shod, could hardly draw a wagon over the streets. The grocery and market men experienced the same trouble and all of them were far behind in delivering orders. All the extra labor available was pressed into use, but there was little to be had, and for the most part the merchants and the public had to make the most of the situation.

Probably the shoe dealers and the stores that handled overshoes and leg-gings were the only business interests that profited by the snow, for the snow created an unusual demand for these goods.

Several dealers had sold out practically their entire stocks by noon and at nightfall many of the others had exhausted their supply.

Bringing with it as it did many discomforts, the snow was nevertheless,

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welcome in Wilmington for a large part of the population, and especially to the younger half. All day long the streets were crowded with merry-makers and several improvised sleighs were out yesterday afternoon. The hardware stores soon disposed of their scant stocks of sleds and then sold plow handles to make runners for home-made ones. Snowbaiting was in order, too, and though for the most part the victims bore it good naturedly or retaliated in like manner, there were some few fights on account of this. None of them, however, bore any serious results so far as is known. The sidewalks in spots were very slippery and at frequent intervals shouts of laughter could be heard from the crowds as some unfortunate sat down in a manner undignified and unexpected. No serious injuries were reported, though many bore off bruises as a result of their encounters with the icy pavements.

The snowfall and extreme cold weather seems to be general all over the Southeast and reports from all sections yesterday indicated that the crest of the cold wave had arrived. Snow was falling as far South as Macon, Ga., yesterday and heavy snows were reported from Columbia and Florence, S. C. Raleigh, Charlotte and Asheville all report snow and the old North State probably wears almost a complete mantle of white today.

A telephone message to The Star last night from Winnabow, Brunswick county, twelve miles southwest of Wilmington was to the effect that the snow was then over six inches deep and that the mercury stood at that time at 12 degrees, the lowest record for that point for thirty years, it is said.

Telephone Exchange Busy.

The local exchange of the Southern Bell Telephone Co., was simply swamped with calls yesterday, District Manager Stephen D. Lucas stating yesterday afternoon that the local business was 50 per cent. greater than on any previous day since the exchange had been established. Naturally this made the service slower than on days when there are only the usual number of calls, but even then it is said that none had to wait a very long period to be served and that upon the whole the patrons accepted the situation without a murmur, realizing that the trouble was one that could not be remedied by the company. Mr. Lucas said that 12 operators were kept busy at the switch boards all day answering calls and that they did not even take their usual time off for luncheon, but remained by their post for the entire eight hours each is supposed to be on duty. He spoke in the highest praise of the faithfulness to duty of the young ladies and was sure that each one did her best to give the patrons prompt service. The double number of calls is accounted for by the fact that there were comparatively few people who ventured out yesterday and practically all the business was transacted by telephone. Many of the connections were with the coal and wood yards, as hundreds had not gotten in their orders for fuel on Friday, when the rush with the wood and coal dealers began. Mr. Lucas said that he had practically no wire trouble and did not anticipate any if there was no sleet. The long distance lines were also in fine working order, he said.

Handling the Mails.

Notwithstanding the severity of the weather the letter carriers made their rounds of the city yesterday, though they found it very trying at times. Owing to the late arrival of the train from the North, only two deliveries were made by the carriers. Mr. Gore, carrier on Rural Route No. 1, made his regular trip, but upon his return he reported at the office that he fared badly from the cold. Postmaster Thos. E. Wallace said last night that Mr. Russ, carrier on route No. 2, started on his trip at the usual hour yesterday, but that after going 12 miles he telephoned the office that he could not go farther on account of the weather. His route takes him by Masonboro Sound.

R. F. D. Carrier's Experience.

One of the most faithful men in the mail service anywhere is Mr. H. L. Gray, the star route carrier from Wilmington to Bolivia, a distance of 20 or 21 miles, who has not missed a trip in three years with the exception of three days when he was off to attend Superior Court as a witness. He made his trip yesterday as usual and he made it on time, too. He is the wonder not only of the Wilmington post-office, but of the office at Bolivia and Winnabow. He even surprised them by making his trip yesterday. When his buggy stopped at Winnabow on the return trip the four wheels of the vehicle were a solid mass of ice. He was armed with a hatchet and soon cut the ice away, and after refreshing himself with a hot cup of coffee and luncheon, he continued his journey to Wilmington.

There was no mail to Wilmington from Brunswick county yesterday beyond Bolivia. Mr. Ephraim Swain, the carrier on the route from Shalotte to Bolivia, found conditions too bad for him to make the trip.

Trains Delayed.

Because of the heavy snows, all over the Southeast all traffic was delayed yesterday, every passenger train running late and all freight traffic as badly delayed as the passenger, if not worse. No. 41 from the North, due at 9:45 A. M., arrived at 12:30 P. M., the 6:50 train from Newbern came in at 9:10; No. 49, due from the North at 6:15, arrived four hours late; No. 31, from the North, due at 1 o'clock this morning, came in nearly an hour late and both the midnight trains, the Coast Line train from the South being marked up to arrive at 2:30 and the Seaboard at 1:30 o'clock this morning instead of around midnight.

The snow ceased falling last night about 10 o'clock and at midnight, though it was still cloudy and threatening, it had not commenced again.

The Weather Today.

The weather forecast for North Carolina sent out from Washington at 11 o'clock last night gives some encouragement and is as follows: "Fair and not quite so cold today; Monday cloudy and warmer; moderate north-east winds."