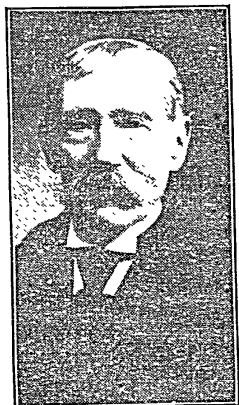


JOHN L. SEMPLE ENDS HIS LIFE WITH GUN

Famous Camden Lawyer, Unable to Stand Strain of Rheumatism, Sends Bullet Into Heart



JOHN L. SEMPLE

Famous Camden lawyer who committed suicide in his office.

John L. Semple, one time classed among the most prominent and cleverest members of the bar in New Jersey, committed suicide yesterday by shooting himself through the heart as he sat at his desk in his office, 320 Market street, Camden. He had been afflicted with rheumatism for about eight years and this is supposed to have prompted him to end his life. A widow survives him. He was 55 years old.

But a few minutes before he shot himself he was conversing with his attorney, Lawyer J. Harry Switzer. When the latter went to the rear of the building he heard a shot and hastening to where Mr. Semple was, he found the lawyer sitting in the chair while the revolver was on the floor.

"John, get a doctor quick," said Lawyer Semple, but by the time Dr. F. W. Marcy had been summoned the lawyer was dying. The police ambulance was also summoned, but its service was not needed, Lawyer Semple passing away from the self-inflicted wound.

Lawyer Semple had been afflicted with the rheumatism despite his efforts of every possible remedy for relief. In late years he was scarcely able to move about and this is believed to have so preyed upon his mind that death was preferable to continued suffering.

He was admitted to the bar when he was 21 years old and during his career was interested in a number of important cases. He won national prominence when he defended Theodore Lambert, a negro accused of shooting William Kaizer. Lambert was convicted and as Sheriff Barrett was about to place the noose over the negro's head, Lawyer Semple stayed the execution by a writ from the United States Supreme Court. He had fought the case through all the State and then the Federal courts, but Lambert was finally hanged. This secured such a reputation for Semple that he defended many murderers, not only in Camden, but in other sections of the State.

It was in 1901 that Lawyer Semple experienced the most sensational period in his eventful career when he was arrested while acting as counsel for Taylor and Bredell in connection with a notorious counterfeiting scheme. After the man had been placed in Moyamensing Prison it was found that they had been making \$20 certificates in their cells. It was charged that Lawyer Semple had suggested and advised that the two make the counterfeit money, then hide the plate and offer to tell the authorities where they were hidden in return for leniency. The lawyer was tried in the United States District Court in this city and the jury disagreed. In a second trial he was acquitted. Many men prominent in the legal profession were witnesses for him. James M. Beck was United States District Attorney and former Governor Pattison was of counsel for the counterfeiters, while Chief Wilkie, of the Secret Service, and Detective Burns figured in the case.

Second Fire Routs Family

Awakened by the smell of smoke early yesterday morning, Mrs. Lillian Scull, of 717 North Tenth street, Camden, found fire had broken out in her home for the second time within a dozen hours. Hastily arousing her two small children and a dog, Mrs. Scull climbed out of the window on to the porch roof and made her way to the home of a neighbor. An alarm was turned in and the blaze, in a closet, was quickly extinguished. Friday afternoon there had been a fire in the partition downstairs and this is supposed to have smoldered and broken out afresh later. The woman's husband, a railroader, was not at home.

Wagon Becomes Electrified

Loaded with a huge iron boiler, a wagon of Charles Smith, of 205 Erie street, became fastened beneath the bridge of the Pennsylvania Railroad, where it spans Second street near Mickle, Camden, yesterday. There was not enough space to permit the entrance of the wagon with its load. In scraping the roof and becoming jammed, the boiler knocked the insulation from the wires of the Public Service Railway Company which pass beneath the bridge. This resulted in the boiler becoming highly charged, knocking off the driver and imperiling all who approached it. The police were apprised of the predicament and it was finally necessary to send a wrecking crew to cut the wires, liberate the wagon and the boiler and permit traffic to resume.

Show Big Assessment

In an interesting report made by William Schmid, of the Camden County Board of Taxation yesterday, it is shown the various public utilities in the district total \$2,380,083 in assessed valuation. They are divided as follows: Street railways, \$992,575; gas and electric, \$926,000; water companies, \$250,530; telegraph and telephone companies, \$434,983; local gas and electric, \$81,995; sewer companies, \$54,050. The valuations for 1913 totaled \$1,759,983.

Idie, Wants License Returned

"Kindly refund fee for license, as I am out of work and marriage is canceled," was the message received yesterday at City Clerk Brown's office in Camden from John Trammel, of 3615 Helen street, Philadelphia. He took out the license to wed Miss Elizabeth Unger on January 9. Unfortunately, the law prohibits the refunding of the license fee, so that Trammel may keep his right to wed as a souvenir of what might have been.