

Life Story of Gideon Thompson, The Indianapolis Journalist

Man Well Known in Keokuk and in Hancock County Has had a Brilliant Career in the Newspaper Field.

INDIANAPOLIS, March 28—Gideon T. Thompson, the oldest member of The News editorial force, in point of years of service, died at his home, 1710 College avenue.

Mr. Thompson has been in failing health for six months, but his energy and zeal would not permit him to acknowledge his disability and he was at his desk at The News office, with an occasional day off, until one week ago last Wednesday, when he was compelled by reason of a severe cold, to take to his bed.

The ailment speedily developed into bronchitis, with a distressing cough and incipient pneumonia.

The direct cause of death, however, largely due to the racking cough, was exhaustion and heart failure.

Widow and Two Sons Survive.
Mr. Thompson is survived by the widow and two sons, Frank H. Thompson, of the Vandalia Coal Co., and Raymond C. Thompson, of The Indianapolis News. He is survived also by two sisters, Mrs. B. F. Hambleton and Mrs. Mary Hillis, of Keokuk, Ia., with whom he had visited almost every summer for more than forty years, and by a brother, Will E. Thompson, of Chicago.

Comrades to Conduct Services.
Mr. Thompson was a charter member of the Indianapolis Board of Trade and also of the Knights of Pythias lodge No. 27 and of Elks' lodge No. 13. He attended the Second Presbyterian church.

He was a past colonel of Encampment No. 80, Union Veteran Legion, of which he was a charter member.

He was a member of George H. Thomas post G. A. R., of which he was recently post commander. That post will have charge of the funeral, which will take place next Monday, at 10 a. m., at the home. The services will be conducted by the Rev. O. D. Odell. The burial will be at Crown Hill cemetery.

Had the Spirit of Youth.
Gideon B. Thompson had the spirit of a youth; worked with the energy of a man of forty or fifty, looked to be under sixty and in reality was more than seventy years old. He was born August 4, 1840, near Winchester, O. Those who knew his father, the Rev. Aaron Thompson, a Presbyterian minister, who lived until a few years ago, will know where the son got his spare, tall frame of iron, his indomitable will, and his fundamental strength of character.

The mother died in the son's infancy. He attended the common schools of his native county, but early began to feel the inclination to get out into the world, and there, really, he found his school. He first worked in a printing office, and when fifteen years old he set out for the west, to take care of himself. For a year or two he traveled, remaining for short terms in various communities, principally occupied about printing offices, which, from the earliest days, held an attraction for him that increased as the years went on.

Set Pace in Local News Field.
Finally he established himself in Indianapolis and for fifty years this city has been his home. Mr. Thompson became a journeyman printer while working for the old Indianapolis Sentinel. None of the established newspapers in the city, since that day, has been unaffiliated either by his direct connection with it, or by the fierce pace he set as a news gatherer and as a writer.

Patriotism His Ruling Sense.
Besides a ruling sense of patriotism one other great faculty always possessed him, and that was his newspaper instinct. The two were combined, in fact, in his service throughout the war. For a while he was an enlisted man, he was also a correspondent for the Indianapolis Journal, and wrote over the name "Shacks," by which name he was known to two generations of newspaper readers in Indiana. He said once that his opportunity as a correspondent aided him as a journalist, but damned him in the way of military promotions. This was said in the semi-humorous vein with which Mr. Thompson always kept himself young. He cared nothing for promotion, nor rank, nor precedence. He simply drove right on with his work, whatever it was.

It was so in the war. Prior to the fall of Fort Sumter Thompson was a member of Shoup's Independent Zouaves, a noted local organization in its day.

As a newspaper man Mr. Thompson's work did not fall short of the

monumental. Camp life and military service had so affected his health that he would have been justified in relaxing his labors. This never occurred to him, though in the early days, following the war, while working interchangeably in the composing room and as a reporter for the Journal, he was obliged to work an hour and rest an hour. Later he seemed to rest scarcely at all. For a long term of years he worked almost literally night and day. As a reporter and as city editor of The News he would put in a full day's work, and as correspondent of the Cincinnati Enquirer he would work far into the night. The few hours he gave to sleep and rest were taken with the telephone at his bedside.

Belonged in Front Rank.
Mr. Thompson founded no newspaper and was not an editor and yet he belonged as distinctly to the first rank of Indianapolis journalists as any editor or owner. He gave a splendid example of the efficient work of the true reporter. No better example has been given to the fraternity. Mr. Thompson was essentially a reporter—seeing things rightly, and describing them as they were, with their proper relations to men and affairs. His first permanent connection, as a reporter, was with the Journal in the late sixties. Early in the seventies he became city editor of the Sentinel, succeeding George C. Harding.

The city editorship was not a formidable office in those days, but it involved an immense burden of real work. Those were the days called by Mr. Thompson himself "the ragged days of Indianapolis life—too soon after the war for society to readjust itself to the new condition. Indianapolis was just struggling out of the chrysalis of the village into the broader life of the city." Such conditions gave Mr. Thompson his opportunity. He ranged almost at will over the news field, and many an unconsidered trifle developed under his hand into an interesting and valuable historical incident.

Conspicuous Reporter of His Day.
He remained with the Sentinel until Richard J. Bright sold the paper, and then Mr. Thompson came to The News, which had been established shortly before that time by John H. Holliday, and which had become the city's first permanent afternoon paper. It was here that Mr. Thompson developed to the full. His inordinate capacity for work, his inventive genius in the creation of phrases, some of which have gone into literature, and his unerring instinct in ferreting out municipal evil and political skulduggery, all marked him as the conspicuous reporter of his time.

All this time he was known as Snacks. Dunn's history of Indianapolis says Thompson picked up this cognomen at Danville, where he once took part in an amateur play. He was not generally known to the rest of the east, and the young women inquired about him. He declined to satisfy their curiosity, but assured them that he "came from nowhere, was going no place and had no mission in the world."

Got Name of Snacks From Play.
Knowing nothing else about him they called him Snacks, the name of the part he took in the play. From that time he was so known.

At one time, one of the city's fire engines was named Snacks, in Thompson's honor. In those days the city editor was supposed to keep in touch with every fire alarm. For years Mr. Thompson followed this custom, and knew everything there was to know about the fire department, its history, its equipment and the experiences of its men. He rode the engines and was as faithful as the fire chief himself.

But fires did not receive his exclusive attention. He knew all the ins and outs of the police department and the police court, and everybody knew him. He was as good as a half dozen reporters, for his fame was such that men would go far to give him news. He helped give The News its bulldog tenacity in keeping after things.

Facility For Strong Phrases.
At one time a questionable auction room, located in South Illinois street, seemed to be operating under the law, but irregular conduct was discovered at the place. Mr. Thompson labeled it "the commonest kind of a common deadfall," and rang the changes on it until the proprietor gave up in disgust. Thompson's phrase lasted for years in the memory of all newspaper readers, as did another phrase he applied to a certain street commissioner. Thompson dubbed this officer a "little red wagon with a wart on it." It was Thompson who named the Slick Six—a political coterie that used to run the republican party and the city.

For a short time, Mr. Thompson, hoping to find relief from impaired physical conditions, went into the railway mail service, but he soon returned

to the newspaper field—for a short time to the Journal, and January 1, 1882, came back to The News, with which he had since been constantly identified, filling respectively the positions of city editor, state editor, exchange editor, and editorial contributor.

Worked Cheerfully to Last.
Of late years he had free range, and had contributed many valuable historical papers, which have been widely read. He had taken, in the meantime, much interest in the Grand Army of the Republic. Only recently he concluded a year of distinguished success as commander of George H. Thomas post.

Mr. Thompson once said in an address that a reporter to be successful must have at least three qualifications: "Brains, a talented pair of legs, and a nose for news." He, himself, was possessed of these in a remarkable degree, and up to the last work that he did there was no impairment of any of these qualities.

For months he had suffered much pain from chronic complaints of long standing, but no torture could quench his spirit. Until within a comparatively short time he reported daily for duty, and found contentment and happiness in his work.

ELVASTON, ILL.

Oats sowing is going on rapidly and many farmers have finished their sowing. The soil is in fine condition to work, being loose and easy to work. The acreage will be greater this year than usual. The soil is very dry and we are needing rain badly for the wheat and pastures.

Our school directors are building a new fence around the yard to be of woven wire and barb wire on top so that when the ball goes over the fence it will be lost.

Mrs. Ida Morgan of Keokuk has bought the residence property owned by E. S. Martin. Consideration \$1,900. Mark Kinnaman had just moved into the property and got well fixed up for living. Now he vacates and will move into Mrs. A. J. Newman's house, just vacated by Wm. T. Terry, who has removed to Ferris, Ill.

Miss Ida Pomroy returned Monday from an extended visit with relatives near Kahoka, Mo.

Mr. John Boland of the north county brought to C. B. Garud 22,000 lbs. of fat hogs, and others that Mr. Garud has bought he intends to ship tomorrow, three car loads to Chicago.

Mrs. Della Garvey is visiting relatives in Chicago.

Mrs. A. J. Newman is roofing her tenant house where Mr. Kinnaman is moving and has had the property on Ohio street improved by adding another room on the east and raising the whole structure with a new concrete foundation and will give it a new coat of paint soon.

Ding Atkinson of Cuba and Leslie Harrison of Basco were on our streets Wednesday.

Charley Rosberry and wife of Peoria are visiting with his parents.

Frank M. McGee was a passenger to Keokuk today.

Christopher Gibson is building an addition to his restaurant which makes us realize that business in Elvaston is expanding.

Only one vacant house in Elvaston that can be rented at present.

The section men had a hard fight with a fire in Mrs. Emma Carss' meadow on Friday, set by the evening passenger on the T. P. & W. R. R. which burned some hedge fence.

Miss Margie Campbell, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Campbell of near this city was married to Mr. Lloyd Bertschi, son of ex-Sheriff Bertschi, Saturday afternoon March 18 at 2:30 o'clock at the residence of H. J. Bachman of Carthage, Dr. J. Yutz officiating. There were no attendants. They left that evening for Mankato, Minn., where the groom will assist his father in the management of the farm.

Frank Poland is skimming over our streets the past few days in his new touring car.

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here with your letter and his picture taken after death. We recognized the picture instantly as James Jardine Reed.

"About eight years ago he was tried before me on a charge of murder, having killed a woman, Lena Hines. He was sent to the penitentiary for life, but subsequently the governor commuted his sentence to ten years' imprisonment, and under our good time act he was released about January 1, and called on all of us in good spirits and hopeful for the future. At the trial and ever since we were always impressed with the idea that he was mentally unbalanced, excitable, and the killing of the woman was the result of a jealous infatuation, he having conceived the notion that she was to marry him. She was a sporting woman."

"He was defended at public expense, and when released from prison had no money, and so far as we can find out had no relatives or near friends here. I think he regarded the chief of police, the county attorney who prosecuted him and myself as among his best friends, for every year he would dedicate poetry and other little trinkets to us—he having made the trinkets."

"I send this to you for your information and guidance.
"Very truly yours,
"GEORGE O. DAY"

Interior of Mexico.
Mexico's interior is a high tableland upon which are located nearly all the populous cities and the climate is so cool that the Mexicans have not yet acquired the habit of drinking cold water.

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BRANDRETH'S PILLS purify the blood, invigorate the digestion, and cleanse the stomach and bowels. They stimulate the liver and carry off vitiated bile and other depraved secretions. They are a tonic medicine that regulate, purify and fortify the whole system.

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The World's Greatest External Remedy. Apply Wherever there is Pain.

19 Men Are Killed or Maimed

EVERY day for the sake of 3 cents on a ton of coal. Think of that. For about 3 cents a ton coal-mine owners take chances which kill or injure 7,000 men a year; make 1,500 widows; 4,000 orphans. Think of that. Economy in coal digging has reached the stage where human life is the cheapest thing in the mines. Nearly all accidents can be prevented. But it's cheaper to kill men. The whole story is in Pearson's Magazine now on sale. The mine owners will probably cry "muckraking." Well, it isn't. It's cold, hard facts. It shows the common cause of accidents. It shows why the miners cannot help themselves. It shows why conditions will soon be even worse. Here's the story. Read it. It's all true. Then ask yourself if it isn't about time your Government took a hand.

Mr. Joseph Fels, millionaire soap manufacturer, explains what he meant when he said all very rich Americans were robbers, in the same issue. Another article shows how state legislatures may save the people's money—not a theory, but the practical way it is now being done in one state. Are hard times coming? Is answered in another article—an article which every man who is worried about the business outlook should read carefully. There are four other articles which will interest you, and

Seven Mighty Good Stories

Pearson's Magazine for April

A Special Medicine for Kidney Ailments.
Many elderly people have found in Foley's Kidney Remedy a quick relief and permanent benefit from kidney and bladder ailments and from annoying irregularities due to advancing years. Isaac N. Regan, Farmer, Mo., says: "Foley's Kidney Remedy effected a complete cure in my case and I want others to know of it." Wilkinson & Co.

—Read The Daily Gate City.

WABASH

No. 2, daily, leaves at 4:15 p. m.
No. 4, daily except Sunday, leaves at 4:40 p. m.
No. 76, daily except Sunday, freight, leaves at 8:10 p. m.
Arrive:
No. 77, daily except Sunday, freight, arrives at 5:00 p. m.
No. 15, daily except Sunday, arrives at 11:05 a. m.
No. 3, daily, arrives at 11:05 a. m.
Nos. 76 and 77 carry passengers.

Toledo, Peoria and Western Railway
xTrain 4—Leaves 7:35 a. m.
xTrain 2—Leaves 2:00 p. m.
xTrain 3—Arrives 2:05 p. m.
xTrain 7—Arrives 6:10 p. m.
xDaily.
*Daily except Sunday.

C., B. & Q. RAILWAY CO.
Trains leave from Union Depot Berths and tickets, Fifth and Johnson streets.
South Bound.
—No. 8, St. Louis and south, leaves 12:45 a. m.
—No. 12, St. Louis and Kansas City and west, south, leaves 8:50 a. m.
—No. 4, Quincy, Hannibal & St. Louis, arrive 1:15 p. m., leaves 1:20 p. m.
*No. 10, Quincy and Hannibal, arrives 8:25 p. m.
No. 10 leaves 8:35 p. m.
North Bound.
—No. 7, Chicago, St. Paul and points west, leaves 2:35 a. m.
—No. 13, Chicago, St. Paul and points west, arrives 7:25 p. m.
—No. 13, leaves 7:35 p. m.
*No. 3, Burlington, Chicago and east, leaves 1:55 p. m.
—No. 1, Burlington, leaves 7:35 a. m.
—No. 51, Donnellson, C. B. & K. C. and North Road, leaves 3:30 p. m.
—No. 50, from Donnellson, C. B. & K. C., & North Road, arrives 11:30 a. m.
*No. 1, K. & W. west, leaves 9:05 a. m.
*No. 5, Centerville, arrives 7:85 p. m.
*No. 4, from Centerville and points intermediate, arrives 1:15 p. m. west, arrives 9:10 p. m.
*No. 3, Centerville, leaves 9:10 p. m.
*No. 6, from Centerville, arrives 11:55 a. m.
—Daily.
*Daily except Sunday.
**Sundays only.

K. & W. ELECTRIC CO.
Leaves East Arrives
Keokuk Hamilton Jr. Warsaw
7:10 am 7:25 am 7:45 am
8:45 am 9:00 am 9:15 am
10:15 am 10:30 am 10:50 am
12:05 am 12:25 am 12:45 am
2:30 pm 2:45 pm 3:00 pm
4:00 pm 4:15 pm 4:30 pm
6:10 am 6:25 pm 6:45 pm
7:45 am 8:00 pm 8:20 pm
9:30 pm 9:45 pm 10:00 pm
10:45 pm 11:00 pm 11:15 pm
West.
Leaves East Arrives
Warsaw Hamilton Jr. Keokuk
6:40 am 6:50 am 7:00 am
7:45 am 8:05 am 8:20 am
9:20 am 9:40 am 9:55 am
11:00 am 11:25 am 11:40 am
12:45 am 1:05 pm 1:20 pm
3:10 pm 3:30 pm 3:45 pm
4:30 pm 4:50 pm 5:05 pm
6:45 pm 7:05 pm 7:20 pm
8:45 pm 9:05 pm 9:20 pm
10:05 pm 10:25 pm 10:40 pm
11:20 pm 11:40 pm 11:55 pm
Note—*Daily except Sunday. All other trains daily.

Rock Island
*Train 473—Leaves Keokuk, 7:40 am
*Train 741—Leaves Keokuk, 2:55 pm
*Train 472—Arrives Keokuk, 8:15 pm
*Train 470—Arrives Keokuk, 1:05 pm
Local Freight Trains.
*Train 86—Arrives Keokuk, 5:30 pm
*Train 85—Leave Keokuk, 7:00 am
*Daily except Sunday.

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