

and so badly injured he died in two or three weeks. Pat Ford was chased all over town, but finally managed to get across the line into Illinois. He was later arrested.

I will also relate another circus occurrence which happened some seven or eight years prior to the Burr Robins circus riot.

In the sixties there were no houses on the high ground south of what is now Highland ave. (at that time called Farm st.). It was all open prairie, and circus shows used to pitch their tents out on this open space. One night when the performance was going on, a violent storm blew up, thunder, lightning, and wind. The tent collapsed and blew down. The lights went out, the animals roared, and pandemonium followed. The crowd was panic stricken. I don't recall that anyone was killed, but we can imagine what a mess it was to get out of. Everybody was drenched to the skin. It was fortunate that it was no worse.

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In 1885 or 86 we had the memorable Salvation Army riot.

When the Salvationists first entered Beloit to rescue the city from the devil, they took up their quarters in the old skating rink opposite the C. & N.W. depot, and commenced to march through the streets with banners and drums, and sing any pray on the street corners. They were not at all popular. People did not like it. One night at the corner of State and East Grand ave., somebody started a disturbance upon the Salvationists, who ran for their lives.

In the midst of the tumult, Mayor Charlie Parker appeared and in

the name of the law commanded the crowd to disperse. Someone threw a pebble or stone which struck the mayor, but no harm done. The big drum was smashed and other knocks inflicted. For weeks after the fracas, the current question was "Who hit the mayor?" or "Who kicked the drum?" The general verdict was that Phil Gleason kicked the drum and no one ever knew who hit the mayor. Several arrests followed. Some pleaded guilty and paid a fine for disturbing the peace.

On October 9, 1871, we received the news of the great Chicago fire. I was then in the grammar room and had the honor post of ringing the school bell in the belfry, for opening school and at recess. I remember when we heard of the big fire, I asked our teacher, Miss Amos, if I might climb the ladder up to the belfry to see the fire. She laughed and said, "No, the fire is too far away for you to see it from here." I wish to pay a passing tribute to our two splendid teachers—Miss Amos and Miss Hinman, who for many years, taught the grammar room of old No. 2. They were thorough teachers and strict disciplinarians and maintained good order at all times with a motley crowd of youngsters.

In 1869 the first high school was built on its present site. I remember one day Mr. Brittan, secretary of the school board, came up to No. 2 to show us the plans of the new building and how fine it was going to be. Professor Kerr was then the principal. He wore glasses and was an awe inspiring figure in our young eyes. It was a terrible thing to happen if an obstreperous boy was sent down to the high school with a note from his teacher.

Chapter 5

In 1873 our family moved from Third street up to our present location at 643 Bluff street. The William Adrich family owned the house on the corner where the Second Congregational church now stands, and the Durkee family owned the fine old stone house next to us on the south. Mr. Higley, the Congregational pastor,

owned the one story red brick house at the corner of Bluff and E street, which building still stands and is a lovely house to this day. The old Episcopal rectory was at the corner of Bridge street and Bluff street where the present rectory now stands. Dr. Royce lived there for 27 years.

All these families were fine

neighbors and we had the most amicable relations. Charley Avery, for many years bookkeeper in the Hyde & Brittan Bank was then living with his sister, Mrs. Tuttle. He was a great gardener and loved to go out hunting with his gun.

I might mention here that Mrs. Pound (Miss Eva Tuttle) and her sister, Grace Tuttle, with two Pound children, lost their lives in the Iroquois Theatre fire in Chicago. I was a bearer at the funeral and it was the coldest day I ever experienced in Beloit.

Hank Talmadge was also a well-known citizen. He lived at the corner of Bluff street and E street, now St. Lawrence avenue.

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On July 4th, 1875, there had been some big celebration at Madison, Wis., A company of Chicago militia men had taken part in the celebration. That night the train carrying the soldiers back to Chicago was wrecked at the old stone quarry, three miles north of Beloit. There was a terrible storm and the rain weakened a culvert there and the train went down. The engine ran into the river. The engineer was drowned and many of the soldiers were injured but I believe none of them died. The morning after we saw the soldiers down town walking around or lying on the grass on High School hill. They all left for Chicago that afternoon.

On July 21, 1876, my father's factory in Third street was completely destroyed by fire entailing a loss of over \$60,000, with very little insurance. Most men would have given up and quit, but not so my father. He promptly decide to go ahead and build a larger and better factory and the business continued to grow and flourish.

I graduated from the High School in 1877 in a class of 13 members, all of whom are now dead excepting Mrs. Julius Truesdell (the former Cornelia Riggs) and myself. Mrs. Thompson and I called on the Truesdells some years ago at their home in the Blue Ridge Mountains down in Virginia. They had a lovely home overlooking the valley below. We had a fine visit talking over old times, and Mr. Truesdell had a

great fund of stories covering his newspaper experiences in Washington where he had been engaged almost his entire life.

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In September, 1877, I left for Luther College, in Decorah, where I stayed only one year as I did not feel at home there. This was a Lutheran training school, and specialized in the study of languages—Latin, Greek and Hebrew in the ancient classics; all of which I have long since forgotten — and Norwegian, Swedish, and German in the modern languages. All of these languages are still with me, doing good service. I never took French at college, but in 1918 I took up the study of French by myself and acquired a very good reading knowledge of the language and have ever since greatly enjoyed French literature.

I might add that Luther College has since those days modernized its curriculum and is now a very good school.

For the reasons stated, I did not return to Luther College, but went to Europe in the fall of 1878 crossing the ocean in a small cargo sailing vessel commanded by my cousin, Captain Flack. It took us 23 days from New York to St. Nazaire, France. We had three violent hurricanes on the trip over.

I spent a month in France, and visited the Exposition Universelle in Paris in October, 1878. From there I went to Norway, by way of Hamburg, Germany, and spent a very pleasant year in that beautiful country. My cousins had a sailboat, a yacht, with one mast and two sails, the main sail and jib. We sailed up and down the coast and far out to sea. I became quite proficient in handling the sails and maneuvering the boat, and can do it to this day.

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In the winter we skated on the fjord. The Norwegian young folks were surprised that I could skate backwards, cut circles, and figure eights and other stunts on skates. I had a pair of American Club Skates, which they had never seen before. Their's were the old style of Dutch Skates. I also learned to slide on skis, but did not become very proficient in this sport.

The Norwegian country boys were very inept at throwing a ball. They had never had the practice of playing ball, such as we American youngsters had had almost from the cradle. I could throw a ball twice as far as they could, and they were astonished that I could throw a stone from one side of the river to the other side. That was unheard of. But

their ten year olds could beat me all hollow on skis.

The winter I was in Norway I took an extensive and thorough course in double-entry bookkeeping and accounting. The course was given by a professor of economics and accounting from the University of Christiania, and has been of great value to me all through my business career.

Chapter 6

I returned to Beloit in October, 1879, and secured a job as bookkeeper in the Citizens National bank, where I remained for about four months, until my father took me in as a partner in the business under the firm name of J. Thompson & Sons. In this business I have continued all my life and never worked for anyone else.

1881 was the year of the big flood when the dam went out. That winter there had been a very heavy fall of snow all through Wisconsin, and the snow remained until way into April. I remember there was considerable worry and anxiety over what might happen if the weather turned suddenly warm.

And this is just what happened. About the middle of the month, I think it was the 20th, the headgates at the head of the race gave way and the water rushed down the race and broke through the dikes and flooded Third Street and the down town area. It looked as though the whole business district was going to be wiped out. The water rushed around the north end of our factory building on its way to the river and cut a deep channel, but fortunately, our north wall did not collapse. I was in a boat and narrowly escaped being carried down in the torrent.

That day was an anxious day. The next night about 3 a.m. the dam broke with a great rush of water. Six men in a boat were just crossing the river above the dam, and were carried down in the rush of water. All were drowned except one man who clung to the boat and was carried down to Boney's Island, south of Beloit, where he manag-

ed to climb into a tree. The next day he was rescued. John Cunningham and some others went down in a boat and brought him to land. The dam was rebuilt and made stronger and better and has stood the strain ever since.

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In 1883 we had the big cyclone. The storm came on in the late afternoon. We could see the black clouds coming over from the west, and all of a sudden about 5 p.m. the blast came. It seemed to be all over in a minute or two, but the damage done was great. When it struck we were in our office in Third Street. Soon the water came pouring down through the roof, as the tin roofing was gone. The storm came up from the southwest and followed the path of the river and swept through the main business district. The old covered Northwestern R. R. bridge was torn from its piers and thrown into the river. Many store fronts on the south side of West Grand Avenue were blown out and demolished. Plate glass windows along the streets were shattered. The roof of Bort Bailey Dry Goods store was ripped off and the streets were littered with glass and roof materials.

Two churches lost their spires. The steeple of the Presbyterian church in Broad st. was blown down, also the 200 foot steeple of the First Congregational church. The tall steeple of the Baptist church was badly damaged but did not fall. It was bent over to one side, but seemed firm and remained standing till the church was burned. The clock in the First Congregational steeple was not injured and continued to run.