

HOW CHATTANOOGA FOUGHT YELLOW FEVER IN '78

ROES OF SCOURGE IN EPIDEMIC YEAR

has been frequently suggested that Chattanooga should give a signal recognition to those who sacrificed their lives in the old days of '78.

Major Connor was the firstirman of the Relief Committee but served a very short while.

SPECIALLY in the decade 1870-1880 the builders of Chattanooga had to struggle against destructive visitations, but none more thoroughly tried the souls and hit out the fighting spirit of the city than the yellow fever epidemic of 1878.

It was Thomas J. Carlile, mayor of the city at the time, who led his post and literally laid his life for Chattanooga.

Epidemic Brought to the Front Heroes Among the Citizens Who Calmed the Fears of the Panic-Stricken, Tended the Dying and Buried the Dead

man who lost his life was the Rev. G. W. Brenner, pastor of the German Reformed Church.

Raphael Semmes. Prior to entering the priesthood he had been a practicing physician in the South—probably in Mobile.

Home—J. W. Adams, P. C. Wilson and A. J. Gahagan. Committee on Sick Physicians, Nurses and Committees—M. H. Clift, R. M. Tankesley and N. H. Burt.

of a quack who pretended to be a physician and who decamped about the time a criminal warrant against him was placed in the hands of a constable.

Chattanooga, noted for its energy and public spirit in its home interests, should not be slow in taking action.

death were not so common in the yellow fever as they had been in the cholera epidemic of 1873.

MEN WHO TOOK AN ACTIVE PART IN FIGHTING YELLOW FEVER



CHARLES D. MCGUFFEY Died in 1916. Chattanooga's Historian, Nephew of the Author of McGuffey's Readers.



THOMAS J. CARLILE The Martyred Mayor of Chattanooga in 1878.



JESSE T. HILL Secretary of Relief Committee and Later Mayor.

Iron and Steel Manufacturing Company, also were among the victims. Harry Savage, Gambler and Hero.

could not survive—he was sorry to have to advance the opinion that she would die within twenty-four hours.

One of the later meetings of the yellow fever relief committee gave official recognition to the life and work of Mayor Carlile who had died in service, a victim of the scourge.

Deserving tribute paid Mayor Carlile

Charles George, a member of the relief committee.

"Charley, I've got it," said Mr. Monger. After a look at him, Mr.



DR. ROBERT NELSON BARR First physician to declare yellow fever had foothold. Died a victim of malady.

ing disease. In the rôle of honor also were Dr. R. N. Barr, father of R. W. Barr; Miss Gertrude Barr and Mrs. May Farrington Barr—a physician of the day, who died in his home here after being stricken in Stevenson, Ala., where he had gone as a volunteer to care for a patient from Memphis.

Other physicians who lost their lives through the epidemic were Dr. J. B. Norris, who went to Vicksburg as a volunteer to care for the sick there before the epidemic appeared in Chattanooga, and Dr. Edwin M. Baird, a young physician who had just come here from Murfreesboro.



HATTIE ACKERMAN School teacher who sacrificed her life for yellow fever sufferers.

tenderness of a mother he said: "I don't know that I have ever done any good in all my life, and I would like to do a little now."

Works of Charity

After his death The Chattanooga Times published the following editorial concerning his passing:

Poor Harry! We suppose he was neither a saint nor a martyr; but he had some of the qualities out of which saints and martyrs are calling for medical aid, serving as volunteer assistant to encoffin those who had done him little kindnesses and whom he could not endure to see handled by the hired burial force.

From the very first beginning of the fever he was in its midst; helping to bury the dead and succor the living, nursing, searching for others who would nurse.

Beginnings of the Scourge. Yellow fever appeared in 1878 in New Orleans early in July. The disease soon began to spread rapidly, not only in New Orleans but also in Vicksburg, Memphis and other communities.

Up to this time there had been no panic. Several of the doctors persisted in diagnosing suspicious cases as "pernicious biliousness" fever or something of that character.

Dr. R. N. Barr was one of the few physicians in the city who stoutly insisted that this case and others were those of yellow fever.

thousands died in the mountains and other parts of the open country by whatever conveyances they could find.

Relief Committee Organized. On the day of the exodus the City Council met and authorized the organization of a citizens' volunteer relief committee.

Major G. C. Connor was the first Chairman of the committee. He became ill and E. A. James succeeded him.

E. A. James, Chairman. J. W. Jachman, Vice Chairman. T. Hill, Secretary. Will Kennedy, Assistant Secretary. C. D. McGuffey, Treasurer. G. B. Parkinson, Quartermaster. J. Carlile and P. C. Wilson, members ex officio.



THOMAS HILL A hero of the yellow fever period; brother of J. T. Hill.

W. Puckett, the Rev. A. P. Molton, Thomas Dutton, H. Nyvall, D. W. Hayes and J. W. Robinson. Headquarters over Rawlings' drug store. "Meets every day at 2 P. M."

Committee on Money and Property of Deceased. E. A. James, J. Gahagan, O. B. Waters, C. K. Lombard, Thomas Hill and W. H. McDevitt.

extension of the Mayor of the City of Chattanooga, and an active, honorable member of this committee, died of yellow fever at his residence at 7 o'clock A. M., 29th of October, 1878, aged 45 years.

Trained to mercantile pursuits, he was so engaged at the place of his birth until the breaking out of the late war. After an honorable term of four years' service in the Army of the United States, in which he rose step by step to the rank of Major, he settled with his family in Chattanooga, and at once became identified as one of its active and enterprising citizens.

"Mayor Carlile was a man of energy, industry and fine business capacity, such a one as is always, even under ordinary circumstances, a loss to a young and growing community like our own.

"Not the least tendering incident about the last rites of burial was the affection of the colored men of the fire company that bears his name, who asked the privilege of assisting in bearing the coffin.

"His death comes with a loss to many of the homes of the poor of our city, with its accompanying family had been steadfast and kind friends.

"The coming of the yellow fever to our city with its accompanying panic, sickness, dismay, disorganization and destitution, made his position as Mayor a most responsible and trying one.

"A cool, clear head, a warm, kindly and brave heart, a firm and skillful hand, were all needed in our Chief Magistrate, and most nobly did he stand the test.

Italian priest who was sent to succor Father Ryan, who died of the fever.

foreshadow his re-election by an overwhelming public sentiment and an utter wiping out of party questions such as is seldom known.

"His labors continued to the last thoughtful, prompt, vigilant and efficient.

"The Spartan who fell on the field scorning to retreat from the last and hopeless battle, the Roman sentinel who stood at his post amid the torrents of ashes at Pompeii, the Swiss guard who bravely died at the foot of the throne of France amid the flames and blood of the Revolution, have had their names borne in honor in all times and tongues.

"We lay our garland on his tomb and keep his life in cherished remembrance recorded on the tablet of our hearts.

"To those to whom he was bound by closer ties we extend the tribute of our tears, especially to her who so sustained his hands in these, his last labors, and whose kind and loving sympathy had brought so much of relief to the sufferers from the pestilence in distant cities, even before we knew that the monster would invade our own homes and firesides.

"Resolved, That the hall of this committee be draped in mourning as a token of respect to the memory of the deceased, and that a copy of these resolutions be furnished to the family, and to THE TIMES of Chattanooga for publication."

Respectfully submitted, J. T. HILL, C. D. MCGUFFEY, A. J. GAHAGAN, E. W. MELTON, M. J. O'BRIEN, E. A. JAMES.

workers to the stricken cities of the South. On Aug. 19 a large circular was distributed calling citizens to meet at James Hall that night to plan relief for the stricken cities to the south. It read:

George B. Parkinson A. H. Green W. J. Colburn L. Swift

The foregoing call was hastily prepared, late this morning. For lack of time only a few signatures could be had. A full attendance is earnestly desired.

On Sept. 11 two circulars were issued by the Citizens' Relief Committee of Chattanooga, signed by individual members of the committee.

"The terrible suffering of our brethren at Vicksburg, Memphis and elsewhere is only too well known. Strong men, tender women, helpless children, alike fall victims. Sick ones die sometimes unattended, and bodies at times lie unburied for days.

"Those signing these appeals were G. C. Connor, Chairman; Adolph S. Ochs, Secretary; P. C. Wilson, Treasurer; M. J. O'Brien, George Sewell, C. T. Wilson, T. H. McCallie, Charles D. McGuffey and James W. Henderson. Of these, only Messrs. Ochs and O'Brien are known to be living.

For a considerable time the relief committee manifestly felt confident and without great stress take care of themselves. But soon that hope vanished, and Chattanooga appealed for aid as freely as she had ever responded when appealed to for help in any like calamity in any part of the world.

At times the relief committee encountered elements of discouragement and depression aside from the prevalence of sickness and suffering. It had to contend, for one thing, against the unauthorized efforts of certain persons to raise money, presumably for the sick, but suspected to be for their own profit.

Instances of quick and terrible

panying him to the gate and from there hurrying to committee headquarters for a doctor. He found one without much delay. The two started in haste for Mr. Monger's home, but met him near where Mr. George had first seen him, now violently crazy and evidently determined to walk until the end—to die on his feet.

Orange Leaves as a Remedy. The use of ordinary medicines was not advised as a rule by the medical men who had had experience with the disease.

The idea seemed to be that if some vital point were safeguarded to the utmost extent practicable not much more need be done. Hot tea was much valued and orange leaves were in great demand for such use.

How the country people feared contact with Chattanooga during the

Some Chattanoogaans who died in the scourge of 1878.

The yellow fever epidemic of 1878 in Chattanooga claimed a of 366 dead. Among the persons who died from the disease these:

- J. A. Austin Miss Katie Farmer John O'Neal Joe Adcock Mrs. Pat Fleming Mary O'Neal Miss Hattie Ackerman S. Goldstein Mattie Price W. G. Goodwin Maggie Price Arthur Griffin Reuben Perryman Mrs. Margaret Butler Oscar Gleason A. P. Rham Robert Butler Miss Graham John Parker William Butler G. H. Gledhill E. F. Ragsdale Charles Binghamhard Mrs. B. F. Ragsdale L. Hartman Ed. H. Robinson Margaret Hartman Father Patrick Ry John Hartman Porter Rose Mrs. J. Hartman R. S. Rector Thomas Hartman Thomas Singleton Harry Singleton Mrs. Lena Henley Mrs. Thomas Sing Mrs. Mary Horan Jacob Schneitman Mrs. Hunnicut Sue Schneitman William Bosley Walter Hunnicut Louisa Schneitman Mrs. Sarah Hall John Selters Albert Hammel Mary Sweeney C. D. Harkness E. Schlesinger Ed. J. Jones George Schnee E. L. Jones Stanfield (child) J. B. Jennings Fannie Stanfield Mrs. Connelly John Sullivan Mrs. Julia Kenny Henry Savage Jesse Kenny Harry Schavers Charles Kieste Ed. Swafford Ed. Stewart Thomas Lumpkin Mrs. E. Stewart Mrs. Moyle Mrs. Spencer John Mathis Mrs. Schwartz Mrs. Hoffman John Tabler Mrs. Nancy Conley John Cash Mrs. Delia Chamberlin Mrs. M. C. Chamberlin Miss Cora Chamberlin Joseph Corey Mrs. Mary Corey Mrs. Connelly Mrs. J. Calder Mrs. Delia Crandall — Crandall — Crandall Mrs. D. B. Carlin Miss Ethel Drake Mrs. Oswald Dietz William Erwin John McCallin W. J. Ewing Mrs. Sallie Farmer Mrs. O'Donnell

epidemic is illustrated in the case of the convention held that Fall to nominate legislative and other candidates. The country delegates would not agree to a convention in the city, so it was held at or near the Pleasant Grove schoolhouse.

Speaking of the epidemic Captain A. J. Gahagan said recently: "I shall never forget the last few days of the life of Mayor Carlile. The ward committees would hold their meetings usually about 11 o'clock in the forenoon, and then at 1 to 2 the combined committees would meet in the headquarters, Phoenix Hall, over the present Nos. 706-708 Market Street.

Mayor Carlile a Victim. "Robert Morrison was Chairman of the Third Ward committee and I was Chairman of the First, and we worked together in perfect harmony. A more heroic soul than Robert Morrison never lived.

"After our morning meeting one day we decided to go up to headquarters to see if there was anything out of the ordinary going on. When we got there Mayor Carlile and Jesse T. Hill were playing pool in the club-room adjacent to the committee's headquarters, and they asked us to join them. We did so for a little while, and then Mayor Carlile laid down his cue and said: 'Boys, I don't believe I ever felt so bad in all my life. We have our meeting at 2 o'clock; but I go home I shall have to lie down, and if I do that I shall not be able to get up again to go to that meeting, and I want all of you to go up to my house with me, and we will take lunch together, and you can keep me out of bed.'

"We did so. Mayor Carlile was always a genial, lovable fellow. His family was out of the city, and he had a colored man (George Penn) for cook and housekeeper. He served a nice, modest lunch, after which we went down to the committee meeting. After it was over the Mayor thanked us personally for going with him and for staying by him until after the meeting was over. Then he said: 'Now I am going back home, and I shall go to bed. I don't know whether I shall be able to attend the meeting tomorrow or not.'

mooga had a more solemn and I am sure there never in one whose death brought in universal sorrow in the community he had so faithfully served all his years of residence in the

The epidemic was officially declared past and people advised to turn home on March 2. When frost came in November the epidemic ended, and was for the disease had claimed an estimated total of 366 dead. Of these, 111 were males, 101 females, 144 male negroes and 43 female. These deaths occurred after a population of the city had increased to about 1,800 by the end of the epidemic. After thirty-eight years of its the Citizens' Relief Committee was called together on Oct. 1 to dispose of the small fund had been deposited in a local when the active labors of the committee had come to an end, who attended the meeting were J. W. Bachman and J. Hill Doty, Dr. D. G. Curtis, P. son, A. J. Gahagan, Chas. George and Henry M. Witte the business of the meeting was concluded reminiscences of the epidemic were exchanged; the suggestion of Dr. Bachman members rose and sang the song, thus passing away as a tradition of the past the Yellow Relief Committee of 1878.

Dr. Norris and six Chattanooga volunteer nurses died of yellow in Vicksburg, whether they went before the scourge had appeared Chattanooga. The nurses who died in Vicksburg were Asa Pe R. C. Blichfeldt, John Johnson, E. Messange, Joseph Allidi George Williams.