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Chicago: Its History and Its Builders

A CENTURY OF MARVELOUS GROWTH



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he never attended the university. His father gave him the choice of a business life or college education and he chose the former. In 1854 he went to New York, where he entered the employ of Hoyt, Tillinghast & Company, wholesale clothiers, with whom he remained for two years. In 1856 he left the eastern metropolis with the intention of going to New Orleans. While en route he stopped at Chicago where he met C. N. Henderson, the well known boot and shoe manufacturer and merchant, who offered Mr. Burke a position. He accepted it and his business ability was proven in the fact that when only twenty years of age he was holding the responsible position of cashier with the large shoe house of which Mr. Henderson was the head. His advancement was rapid and soon after becoming identified with the house he was taken into partnership and was made financial manager, in which position he continued until 1881. He inaugurated many business methods which were of marked value in the conduct and development of the business. He was the first merchant to meet with success in sending out upon the road traveling salesmen who carried samples. In 1882 he entered the wholesale dry-goods business, in which he continued for three years, when he retired on account of ill health and went abroad, spending four years in European travel.

On the 29th of August, 1877, Mr. Burke was united in marriage to Miss Alice Armstrong Lyon, a daughter of William and Katherine (Mulholland) Lyon. Her father was a well known lawyer of Bedford county, Pennsylvania. The Lyon family came originally from Scotland and the ancestors of Mrs. Burke living in America were represented in early colonial wars and in the struggle for independence. Unto Mr. and Mrs. Burke were born six children: Louise, at home; Edmund, who is now in Oregon; Alice, the widow of Albert Keep, 2d; George Lyon, a resident of Chicago; Ethel, the wife of Lawson Valentine Pulsifer, of New York city; and Mabel, at home.

Mr. Burke gave his political support to the republican party and always kept well informed on the vital and significant questions of the day. He was one of the founders of the Chicago Club and he possessed many attractive social qualities, being witty, genial and companionable. He greatly enjoyed the company of his friends and family, was artistic in temperament and found pleasure in art, general literature and history. His reading was broad and varied and the breadth of his learning and the variety of his interests lifted his conversation far above the commonplace, making his personality a force among men.

CHARLES ELLSWORTH ATKINSON.

Charles Ellsworth Atkinson, whose business career exemplified a most progressive spirit in the art of bridge building, his labors in that direction being to a large degree a step ahead of what others had accomplished in that field, rose to prominence in business circles although handicapped in youth by a limited education and a lack of financial resources at the outset of his career. He was born in Swanton, Ohio, November 28, 1862. He had hardly reached the prime of life when, on the 11th of June, 1910, his earthly labors were untimely ended in death.

His parents, John and Harriet (Skinner) Atkinson, were natives of Canada, who, removing, to Ohio, settled at Swanton, where the father became a prominent farmer. The district schools of his native county enabled Charles E. Atkinson to master the elementary branches of learning, but when only eleven years of age he left home to enter upon the struggle for those material things which have made business life likened to a battle ground on which the individual must wage constant warfare if he would come off victor in the strife. His first situation brought him a salary of three dollars per month and board. He was always eager, however, for advantages that would enable him to work his way upward, and improved every opportunity which led to taking a forward step.

At the age of sixteen years he came to Chicago and secured a position that eventually led him into the broad field of bridge building, in which he won success and distinction. The position was that of water boy in the employ of John Hart, a bridge builder who recognized the ability, industry and close application of the boy, and therefore promoted him. At the age of eighteen he became a foreman. All of his leisure time was devoted to the study of engineering problems and he built the first bascule bridge in Chicago. Among other important contracts awarded him, as he became known as a distinguished and successful builder and engineer, were the Thebes bridge across the Mississippi river, connecting Missouri with Illinois, its entire length being three thousand, nine hundred and ten feet, and the viaduct over Lawler's canyon at Vollmar, Idaho, the largest railroad bridge in the United States, being over three miles long, and which connects the cities of Vancouver, Washington with Portland, Oregon. He was also superintendent for the construction of the Ferris wheel at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago and many other famous steel structures on the grounds. He put in all the iron on the dome of the Horticultural building, Fish and Fisheries building and the large Machinery hall.

For many years he was associated with Frank J. McCain Company, and in 1896 he became vice president of the Kelly-Atkinson Construction Company of Chicago, which was incorporated in 1897. He became widely known throughout the country because of his progressiveness in bridge building. He was really a man ahead of his time in that field of construction. He became one of the country's most famous bridge builders, his work attracting the attention of expert engineers throughout North America. The evidences of his labor are seen in various parts of the country in bridges and steel construction work, which are a monument to his untiring efforts and superior ability. Although limited at the outset by meager educational advantages, earnest and persistent study, carefully pursued at every available opportunity, brought him to a place of prominence in the field of labor which he had chosen for his life work.

In 1895 Mr. Atkinson was united in marriage, in Chicago, to Mrs. Hattie J. Smith, a daughter of David Garrow and Mary E. (Brook) Smith, the former a prominent farmer of Green Bay, Wisconsin. By a former marriage Mrs. Atkinson had three children: Walter E. Smith; Dora D., the widow of Thomas F. Owens; and George W. Smith, all of Chicago. Her grandchildren are: Dora D. and Thomas Frances Owens, and Idabelle, Walter Ellsworth and Helen Louise Smith. Few men give to home ties the ideal relation that Mr. Atkinson did. His step-children were to him as his very own and he proved a kind, loving father as well

as a devoted husband. At his old home in Ohio, one sister, Mrs. Hattie Lester and two brothers, George B. and John T. Atkinson still survive, all of them being farmers.

In 1908, impaired health caused Mr. Atkinson to give up active business in the hope that a rest would restore his strength and permit him to resume the active direction of affairs. He had always looked forward to the time when he would be able to consult his pleasures in recreation and diversion from his business cares. This period had been reached and provisions made with that object in view. However, his weakened constitution did not build up. He erected on the banks of Lake George, at Hobart, Indiana, a beautiful cottage, which was planned for his recreation and rest and with the idea that it would afford him freedom from society, as well as an opportunity for indulgence in fishing and hunting, of which he was very fond. On the banks of the historic Maumee river, at Perrysville, Ohio, he built a beautiful residence which could be used, not only as a home during the heated months, but as a destination on frequent motoring trips, of which sport he was an enthusiast. He also owned a farm of one hundred and forty-eight acres near Hobart, Indiana, where it was his custom to make frequent runs in his automobile, as he was a great lover of outdoor life. Since 1905, the family home in Chicago has been at what is now 5618 Indiana avenue, where Mr. Atkinson died and where his widow resides.

In politics he was a republican, but the honors and emoluments of office were without attraction for him. He saw in his chosen field of labor the opportunity for constantly broadening effort, and he found enjoyment in the mere accomplishment of the task to which he set himself entirely aside from the financial consideration. It is true that he desired that success which is the legitimate reward of all earnest endeavor, and yet there were interests in life which to him were paramount to the mere attainment of wealth.

JAMES COTTLE HALLSTED.

Among the prominent civil engineers of Chicago is James Cottle Hallsted, who for a number of years has given his attention to the testing of materials for the construction of important buildings in the large cities of the country. Born in Seneca county, New York, November 22, 1859, he is a son of James C. and Margaret (Bunn) Hallsted, both of whom were natives of the Empire state. The father was a farmer by occupation and spent his entire life in New York state. He died in 1893 and his wife succumbed in 1884. In their family were two sons: Charles B., who is engaged in civil engineering in New York city; and James C.

After completing the regular course in the public schools of Waterloo, New York, James C. Hallsted matriculated at the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute of Troy, New York, and was graduated from that institution with the degree of C. E. in 1883. Immediately after leaving the institute he was employed as assistant engineer for a bridge works at Louisville, Kentucky, a position which he occupied for two years. He then turned his attention to inspection work, for which he has shown rare adaptability, and he has been actively connected with that branch of