THE LIFE AND TIMES OF THOMAS SCOTT JOHNSON
AS REVEALED BY THE THOMAS JOHNSON PAPERS
EMPHASIS 1865-1900

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ABSTRACT: The Life and Times of Thomas Scott Johnson as Revealed by the Thomas Scott Johnson Papers—Emphasis 1865-1900.

The Life and Times of Thomas Scott Johnson as Revealed by the Thomas Scott Johnson Papers—Emphasis 1865-1900 presents a biographical sketch of Thomas S. Johnson with emphasis focused on the years 1865 to 1900. It is the author's contention that Thomas S. Johnson's life gained significance because of the time he spent teaching, ministering, and writing. The two most important aspects of Mr. Johnson's career were his years of service as a chaplain to the 127th and 36th Regiments of the United States Colored Troops during the Civil War, and the fifty year span during which time he served as pastor of the Assembly Presbyterian Church in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin. While living in Beaver Dam Pastor Johnson extended his ministry through personal correspondence, numerous articles published in a variety of religious and secular journals, and by taking an active role in bettering the life of his community.

The primary source of materials used in writing this paper was the "Thomas Scott Johnson Papers" which is composed of numerous letters, diaries, account books, journals, articles, sermons, and newspaper clippings, all relating to Thomas Johnson and his family. In the course of the research over 2,000 letters pertaining directly to the period 1865 to 1900 were read and noted as to the date written, to whom it was
written, by whom it was written, and any information of signifi-
cance to the study. The "Thomas Scott Johnson Papers" are
preserved in the Wisconsin State University, Oshkosh, Area
Research Center, and were used while on loan to the Wisconsin
State University, La Crosse, Area Research Center.
PREFACE

For anyone wishing to do further research into matters relating to Thomas Scott Johnson there are three major sources from which to choose. The most complete of these is the collection entitled the "Thomas Scott Johnson Papers", preserved in the Area Research Center in Forrest R. Polk Memorial Library, Wisconsin State University, Oshkosh. Another collection of Thomas S. Johnson's manuscript materials and articles is held by the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The third source of information concerning Thomas S. Johnson is a seminar paper entitled, "A Recollection of Chaplain Thomas Scott Johnson of the 127th United States Colored Troops and 36th United States Colored Troops During and After the Civil War", by Robert Norman Hartwig. This paper is preserved by the Wisconsin State University, La Crosse.
MAJOR EVENTS IN THE LIFE OF THOMAS S. JOHNSON

February 19, 1839--Birth.

February 19, 1839-1841--Lived in Greenville, New York.

1841-1853--Lived in Middle Smithfield, Pennsylvania.

1853-1854--Lived in Newton, New Jersey, and attended the Newton Academy.

1855-1856--Lived in Portage, Wisconsin, and taught school at the Portage City Classical Academy.

1856-1859--Lived at Meadowside with his family.


1860-1861--Taught school in Blairstown, New Jersey.

1861-1864--Attended Princeton Theological Seminary.

1864--Served as a member of the United States Christian Commission.

1864-1866--Served as a Chaplain in the United States Army.

1865-1866--Stationed in Brazos Santiago, Texas, with the Texas Expedition.

1866-1867--Headed home after leaving the army.

June 15, 1867--Became Pastor of the Assembly Presbyterian Church in Beaver Dam, Wisconsin.

1868--Proposed marriage to Emma Vail, but was refused.

1884--Marriage to Sara Elliot of Ohio.

1884--Enlisted in the Wisconsin National Guard.

1892--Resigned from the Wisconsin National Guard.

1917--Resigned as Pastor of the Assembly Presbyterian Church.

February 17, 1927--Death.
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CHAPTER I

THE EARLY YEARS

Thomas Scott Johnson was born February 18, 1839, in Greenville, New York, where his father, Baker Johnson, was a Presbyterian pastor from 1833 to 1841. Thomas, the fourth of nine children born to Baker and Electa Johnson, was affected by a continuation of his family's heritage which strictly adhered to the doctrines of the Bible as expressed in the Ten Commandments, and which emphasized the benefits of education.2

Although religious education came as a matter of course for anyone raised in a Christian home during the early 1800's, this factor became the central issue in Thomas Johnson's life.

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2 Baker and Electa's children in order of birth were Catherine, Edward, Susan, Thomas, Sarah, William, Barnabus, Caroline, and Elizabeth. The first two children died in infancy. Loose page out of the Elizabeth Pierce Bible, Johnson Papers, Genealogical, p. 3; Thomas Johnson's grandfathers, Mahlon Johnson and Barnabus King, were both college educated ministers of the Christian Gospel. Jones, sermon, p. 2.
This was true due to the influence of his parents who consecrated him to the Christian ministry and continued to guide him toward a full time service of Jesus Christ.\(^1\) A degree of the influence his parents had over him with regard to religious affairs was brought out by recollections Thomas made concerning his childhood. Some of the most interesting of these were descriptions of his father's church and the relationship he had to this church as a youth.\(^2\) One of the instances that was commented on by Thomas showed that he was a boy like most in that he was not always a perfect child and even caused his father during one church service to stop the sermon and say, "If my boy will come down to his seat in the church we will go on with the sermon."\(^3\)

The development of Thomas Johnson's spiritual life was also affected by the daily practice of personal prayer, and by family worship in which all of the members took part. The family worship which took place in the evening after the supper meal included readings from the Bible, discussions of scripture, prayers by all, and recitations by the children of verses of scripture they were to have memorized. Church and Sunday School leaders reinforced the spiritual growth of

\(^1\) Thomas Scott Johnson, "Reminiscences by Thomas Johnson," Johnson Papers, Genealogical, p. 1. Based on the quotation, "I was born of Christian parents and consecrated to the Christian ministry."

\(^2\) 100th Anniversary of the Organization of the Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church, Johnson Papers, Ephemer, 1914, p. 22. A description of the church is in the Appendix.

\(^3\) Ibid., A description of the incident is in the Appendix.
young people by confronting them with questions about their personal relationships to, and acceptance of, Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Before Thomas moved to Wisconsin he attended a public grade school and Newton High School Academy in New Jersey, where his father served as principal for the school year 1853 to 1854. This formal education was supplemented by help from both his father and mother. Because of this early education Thomas was able to teach part time in the school his father was principal of in Portage, Wisconsin.¹

The Johnson family moved to Wisconsin in 1855 when Baker accepted a position as principal of the Presbyterian Classical Institute in Portage. The family did not stay long in Portage, however, because Baker purchased 210 acres of unbroken land twenty miles from Portage, and in 1856 he accepted a position as pastor of the Presbyterian Church at Oxford, Wisconsin.² In that year Thomas and William went with their father to begin the task of clearing some of their land and constructing a suitable dwelling. The rest of the family remained in Portage until their new home was complete enough to provide them with adequate shelter. For the greater share of this time Thomas and William were left on their own to see that the work progressed and that crops were planted. During this time Baker remained at his teaching position in Portage. The two young men were not


²Ibid.
entirely alone, however, because there were neighbors nearby as well as an occasional Indian who paid them welcome visits. The rest of the family moved to their home called Meadowside, in July of 1856.¹

Thomas Johnson's family was not a rich one and it is certain that he was taught that hard work and frugality were not only good economic principles, but principles backed by the Calvinistic concepts contained in his religion.² Some of the problems faced by the Johnson family in its first years at Meadowside were:

We are truly poor in a temporal view and my father is not decently clad for one of his profession. His labors are constant. He toils every day in the week and preaches twice every Sabbath. Sometimes he has to travel twelve to fifteen miles to his appointments. He has not received $25.00 from his people since he came here, and all the while has a large and expensive family to support. The failures of our crops this year was a great disappointment to us.³

The hardships caused by this setback were faced by all of the family members with an abundance of faith in the mercy and wisdom of a God who causes all things to occur in order that an ultimate blessing will be given to His children. Thomas expressed this faith when he wrote: "... still we trust in the providence of an Almighty Father who will not let a hair of our heads fall to the ground without His knowledge."⁴

¹Ibid.
²Caroline S. Johnson Notes, Johnson Papers, Genealogical, March 3, 1929. Based on the comment, "Thomas Johnson was trained to like work ... ."
³Mary E. Johnson Notes, Johnson Papers, Genealogical, 1859-1860, p. 3.
⁴Ibid.
The family succeeded in keeping its farm through personal sacrifice and by using only that which it had or could obtain from their land. The severity of the situation was pointed out by the acknowledgement that there were:

... tremendous hard times here and all over the world this fall. The scarcity of money is greater than has ever been known. The effect of the panic on farm produce is disastrous ... We have to be extremely careful in our living and make our old clothes last a little longer ... 

By working as a farm laborer and as a teacher Thomas provided the family with the funds needed to pay the county taxes, and part of the general store debt. These experiences can be linked to the frugality that was evident in Thomas Johnson's personality during his Chaplaincy and later life.

Thomas learned early in life that it was important not only to give lip service to one's faith, but to give daily expression to that faith in actions pleasing to God. One of the actions that Thomas grew up with was that of welcoming anyone who stopped at Meadowside, and sharing with them the hospitality of the Johnson home. Thomas adopted this willingness to share with others in his own life, and that contributed somewhat to the praise he later received for service to his fellow men.

The knowledge Thomas gained from working on the home farm at Meadowside also played an important role in his ability to minister effectively for it gave him a common bond from

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1Ibid., p. 4; 2Ibid., p. 4.

which to build relationships with the Negro soldiers he served as a chaplain during the Civil War, and with the many members of his congregation at Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, who depended on agriculture for their livelihood. A further bonus that Thomas received from his time spent on the farm was the close relationship that existed between the members of his family.

Thomas left the farm in 1859 to enter Carroll College, Waukesha, Wisconsin, as a junior. He was able to start in the advanced class due to the preparation received from his father. After one year at Carroll, Thomas graduated and went to Blairstown, New Jersey, to teach at the Blair Academy where his Uncle, Henry Johnson, was principal. Although he taught at Blair Academy for only one year before entering Princeton Theological Seminary, Thomas made good use of the various teaching experiences he had encountered when he finally received his Chaplaincy.

Thomas enjoyed his experience at Princeton, and the fact he had no difficulty graduating at the end of the rigorous three year course is indicative of the quality of education Baker had given his son. During at least one of the summers when Thomas was at Princeton he traveled throughout Pennsylvania selling Bibles and giving away religious tracts to those who would accept them. This experience and other contacts he had with Pennsylvania Quakers intensified the belief he had in the inherent, God given, equality of all men regardless of their station in life or the color of their skin.¹

¹Caroline Johnson Notes.
Thomas Johnson's success as a Chaplain during the Civil War can be traced to the following factors in his early life: the influence of his parents in both his spiritual and educational development; the understanding of individuality and equality gained firsthand from his experiences on the Wisconsin frontier; the relatively high degree of education he attained; the humanizing influence of the Quakers; and his own sincere desire to minister to the needs of all men as an outward expression of his inner faith in Jesus Christ.
CHAPTER II
AND THE CHAPLAIN SHALL "PARISH"

During the time that Thomas Johnson served as Chaplain to the 127th and 36th Regiments of the United States Colored Troops, he was concerned primarily with the personal salvation of every soldier under his care and the education of those same soldiers so that when mustered out of the service they would be able to read and write.\(^1\) Chaplain Johnson directed himself toward providing this type of education to the Freedmen troops even though his "... interest was displayed at a time when it was not considered necessary for the Negro to be educated and that he was rather ridiculed for trying to help them along like other folks."\(^2\) Having worked for the Christian Commission prior to receiving his Chaplaincy, Johnson realized that he could obtain assistance from that agency, and on request, he was provided with teaching materials and a teaching assistant.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Thomas S. Johnson, Diary of 1865, Johnson Papers, January 6.

\(^2\) Caroline Johnson Notes.

\(^3\) Thomas S. Johnson, The Hand Book of the 127th Regiment of the United States Colored Troops, 1864-1866, Johnson Papers, January 31, 1865, p. 1. The United States Christian Commission was an organization in the North, during the American Civil War, which supplied material comforts, reading matter, etc., to the Union soldiers, and performed services of a religious character in the field and in hospitals.
Whenever possible school was held in a building with organized classes to provide a greater opportunity to motivate the students. At times, however, there was no meeting place available and then "The men were encouraged to study at their leisure in their quarters but without systematic instruction and with frequent interruptions of fatigue and camp duties their progress was seriously hindered."¹ When the regiment was stationed for any length of time in one place and no buildings were available one was soon provided that could be used both as a chapel and as a school. The regiment dismantled the structures and took them along whenever they were moving a short distance.² At all times Thomas continued his efforts to educate the men.

A letter written by a former student reveals some of the teaching methods Thomas used. The letter was written primarily to express gratitude to Chaplain Johnson but at the bottom of the letter the soldier wrote several phrases to show how well he had learned his lessons. Examples of phrases included in the letter were: "A wise man will rise with the sun or before it . . . and good boys will use their books with care . . . ."³ Other phrases dealt with geography, physics, and English usage.⁴ By having the soldiers practice their

¹Ibid., March 31, 1865, p. 1.
²Ibid., December 31, 1865, p. 1.
³Letter, Joseph Bunch to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 26, 1865. A copy is in the Appendix.
writing with phrases of this type they were learning moral lessons and simple facts at the same time. Many of the soldiers in Chaplain Johnson's regiment attended the school and seemed to take seriously the opportunity for learning being offered them. "A large number of men... learned to read well and many... studied arithmetic and geography..." The primary significance of Chaplain Johnson's efforts in educating the Freedmen soldiers is not that he was involved in the process of education, for all Chaplains in the Second Division had been ordered to "supervise the schools and endeavor to make them as efficient as possible," but rather that he evidenced a real concern that this be done efficiently.

During periods of movement when the troops were engaged in a manuever or combat, Chaplain Johnson noted a decline in discipline, learning, and spiritual fervor. Johnson felt that the fact that no regular observances of the Sabbath could be held while the troops were involved in a manuever or combat caused the decline in discipline, learning, and religion. He felt that this problem was of enough significance to include his interpretation of the difficulty in his monthly report to Brigadier General S. Thomas by stating:

The regiment was so actively employed in the recent campaign that Sundays were used as common days and there was no time for religious worship... The morals of the regiment have undergone no improvement during the month. The excitement of the day and the weariness at night—the exposure and troubles of the soldier that were inevitable had an unhappy influence on the men in a moral point of view. Many gave

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1Ibid., January 31, 1866, p. 1.
2Ibid., December 31, 1864, p. 1.
way to peevishness and more to profanity. Men that had hitherto sustained a Christian character threw aside all restraint and swore roundly. Even when affairs seemed dubious and the regiment was in great danger—the name of God was dishonored and the being who controls all the exciting events of the day was openly insulted by the creatures whose lives he was saving and whose manhood he was establishing.¹

Chaplain Johnson involved himself in the personal and spiritual lives of the soldiers he served, and through his contact with them he effected several revivals of faith and influenced many to accept Christ as their personal Savior.² The soldiers and officers came to recognize Chaplain Johnson as a friend and trusted companion, and he moved quickly to establish this type of relationship wherever he happened to be.³ He spent much of his time talking with the men, helping them with personal matters such as writing their letters, and seeing that their money was properly sent to whomever they wished it to go.⁴ This transferral of funds involved transporting the money to be sent by express rather than by mail, and because of the relative ease with which Chaplain Johnson could leave the regiment, he was placed in charge of seeing

¹Ibid., April 30, 1865, p. 1.
²Ibid., September 30, 1866, p. 1. Based on the comment: "The revival of religion that began early in July has continued with undiminished power and many have been converted to Jesus Christ."
³Ibid., September 30, 1865, p. 1. Based on the comment: "I have had religious services in this regiment and am taking measures to become acquainted with the officers and secure my future usefulness among them and their men."
that it was done. People hesitated to send money through the mails because of the activity of mail robbers. At least when money did not arrive at its destination this was sometimes given as the cause.¹

According to a letter from William H. Hart, Chaplain Johnson was known for his "frugality and economy in the service,"² and it is probable that this and the fact that he was living his Christian faith day by day contributed to his being trusted by the men of his regiment to handle their money. Further proof of Chaplain Johnson's frugality is seen by examining the accurate records kept in his account books. Every expenditure no matter how small was recorded. When he was on his way home to Wisconsin after the war he wrote in his diary, "I have with me about $3,000 dollars in notes, checks, and greenbacks."³

Chaplain Johnson was active in caring for the sick and wounded while in the service, and he received an official commendation from Major C.P. Heichhold, Surgeon-in-Chief, Second Division, 25th Army Corps, for his aid in the hospital tents. Johnson also spent time with the sick and wounded ministering to them when the battles were over. After the United States Christian Commission left Brazos Santiago,

¹Letter, Thomas Johnson to Susan Johnson, Johnson Papers, December 14, 1868.
²Letter, William Hart to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 21, 1870.
³Thomas S. Johnson, Diary of 1867, Johnson Papers, January 16.
Texas, where Johnson was stationed after the war, he held evening church services in the hospital for those who could not attend the regular Sunday meetings.¹

There were several aspects of camp life that Chaplain Johnson felt hindered the spiritual growth of the soldiers and he set out to have them changed. Two of the factors which he was able to alter significantly were the practices of providing a liquor ration for the men and requiring them to work on the Sabbath. Johnson pointed out these concerns to Brigadier General S. Thomas in his monthly report and apparently had some success in bringing about a change for he reported the following month that, "I attribute a good degree of this improvement [in the amount of drunkeness] to the abolishment of the liquor ration for fatigue parties."² Johnson concerned himself with the problems of liquor and nonobservance of the Sabbath during his entire ministry.

Thomas involved himself with the officers of the regiment almost as much as he did with the troops, and several of the men became his lifelong friends. It is not difficult to understand why these friendships developed, for the only intellectual stimulation the officers received was from their fellow officers. Chaplain Johnson, having a greater degree of undesignated time, was often asked by the


²Ibid., July 31, 1865, p. 1; August 31, 1865, p. 1.
other officers in his regiment to spend time with them, especially after they were stationed in Texas. References made to the long horseback rides taken along the beach with a fellow officer, and frequent invitations to join one or more of them for meals, point up Johnson's involvement with the officers of his regiment. The degree of his influence on his fellow officers is shown by the relationship of a note he made that, "on New Year's Day several of the officers of his regiment took a pledge to total abstinence . . ." and the fact there had been extreme problems of drunkenness, and officers on duty while intoxicated, only one month earlier.\(^1\)

Johnson attempted to have two worship services, and at least one prayer meeting during every week that he served in the army. While stationed in Brazos Santiago, Chaplain Johnson also conducted a regular Sunday School for which he enlisted the aid of several of the officers and their wives as teachers. The rewards for his efforts came as Chaplain Johnson realized definite revivals and increased interest in the Christian Gospel.\(^2\)

Thomas retained close contact with his family, throughout the entire period that he was in the service, the

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\(^1\)George Albee, William Hart, and H.J. Hughes were three of the men who shared the experiences of the Civil War with Thomas Johnson, and Thomas Johnson received letters from them as late as H.J. Hughes, 4/25/1885; William Hart, 9/16/1894; and George Albee, 3/9, 1897; Johnson Papers. Johnson, \textit{Hand Book}, June 30, 1865, p. 1. \textit{Ibid.}, December 31, 1865, p. 1.

letters that passed between them were frequent and welcome. His family was always concerned about his welfare, but there existed an underlying current of faith that no matter what happened it would be as God willed it. Excerpts from two communications illustrate these beliefs:

I sometimes think God will change the stub-

born hearts of the traitors and bring an end to the

war. But we do not know how long it may please our

Heavenly Father to suffer the rod of affliction to

lie on the nation. We constantly remember you and the

many young men who are enduring the hardships of a

camp life. May the many anxious hearts be gratified

and the many fervent prayers be heard and answered.

You do not know how guilty I feel about these

letters of mine—you will only think of me as a kind

of "thorn in the flesh." I am sorry for you with all

your trails to bear . . . . We shall have breathing
time now to sympathize with you.1

Shortly after General Robert E. Lee surrendered,

Chaplain Johnson accompanied his regiment to Brazos Santiago, Texas, where it served as part of the Texas Expedition.2 Apparently some people were aware of the expedition's purpose because Johnson received a letter stating: "It would not take long for you to pull over into Mexico and help Juarez drive Maximillian from his throne."

1 Letter, Baker Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 11, 1865; Susan Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 14, 1865.


3 Letter, J. Robinson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 17, 1866. As activities of Chaplain Johnson during his stay in Texas have been adequately recorded by Mr. Hartwig, little else will be done with that period in this paper. Hartwig, "A Recollection of Chaplain Thomas Scott Johnson."
During the time Chaplain Johnson worked with the Negro soldiers he received several letters requesting information about, and commenting on, work done by them. One such writer inquired, "Do the blacks take hold willingly and work steadily?" This comment evidenced a belief that many held in the stereotyped Negro who was lazy, insubordinate, and in fact, biologically inferior to white men. Other letters that were sent to Johnson were highly complimentary toward the Negroes and lauded their accomplishments during their period of freedom. Although there were letters from Northerners expressing favorable viewpoints toward Freedmen, Johnson also pointed up Northern prejudice following the capture of General Robert E. Lee at Appomattox when he wrote:

Although the colored men (in the present state of popular feeling) will not receive full credit for their share in the memorable transaction of the 9th April, it is well known that if it were not for the timely presence of Doubleday's Brigade by a tremendous march the day before supporting General Sheridan's cavalry, the enemy would have continued their retreat and General Lee and his whole army escaped.

This comment, and the fact Thomas received numerous letters of appreciation from the Negro troops he served, gives

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1 Letter, J.H. Jackson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 9, 1865.
3 Letter, Theodore F. Young to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 1, 1865.
4 Johnson, Hand Book, April 30, 1865, p. 5.
definite evidence that he truly believed in and befriended the Freedmen soldiers he worked with.¹

Thomas was enjoying a satisfying life as time drew near for him to be mustered out of the army. There was a general revival of religious interest, the education of the troops was progressing smoothly, with many sharing in the benefits, and he had several friends among the officers and men. Consequently, when he was mustered out of the army there was a question in his own mind as to whether or not he would return to the service, and he was so requested by at least one of his fellow officers.²

However, Johnson felt that he needed and deserved a vacation so he put off reenlistment, and trusted that God would direct his life toward service of his fellow man. As he was about to leave the army, Thomas received a letter from a friend which indicated a possible position for him in the Presbyterian Church in Blairstown, New Jersey. This was undoubtedly a factor in his decision not to reenlist immediately.³

The church at Blairstown invited Thomas to supply their vacant pulpit for the Sunday's of December 30, 1866, and January 6, 1867, as a candidate for the ministry of their church. He was interested in securing a call from the

¹Caroline Johnson Notes.

²Johnson, Hand Book, July 31, 1866, p. 1; August 31, 1866, p. 1. Letter, George Albee to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 4, 1867.

³Letter, Charlie Vail to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, September 18, 1866.
Blairstown church, and consequently altered his homeward journey to Wisconsin in order to be in Blairstown during the two Sabbaths.  

After preaching in Blairstown, Thomas learned that he would not receive a call there, and he wrote: "I feel disappointed, but I trust that it is all for the best. The Lord has greatly blessed me thus far and I can afford to wait on Him." At the same time he noted: "I half think that my sphere of future labor will be in the West with my father." The fact Thomas turned down one offer to "take the Alexander Mission," and rejected another "to remain for some time" in East Avon, clearly demonstrated his conviction to work in the West. Both of these positions were offered to him on his way home to Wisconsin.

Thomas enjoyed the trip home and was warmly received and entertained enroute by friends and relatives. During this period of visiting, he spent several occasions with two young ladies, both of whom he was beginning to think of in terms of marriage although he was not ready to propose to either one at this time. His trip home was prolonged a few days because of heavy snowfalls which made travel impossible, but he finally reached Meadowside February 21, 1867.

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1Ibid., December 3, 1866.
2Johnson, Diary of 1867, January 21.
3Ibid.; 4Ibid., January 27.
5Ibid., February 10.
6Ibid., February 21.
On the day Thomas arrived at Meadowside he noted:

> Reached home. Was joyfully welcomed by all the people. I have a real pleasant home and I ought to be very thankful to return to it after an absence of more than two years exposure to perils and danger in the Army.¹

The first few days Thomas was home he enjoyed spending his time resting and talking with his family.² It was not long, however, before the desire for a position began to trouble him. In less than a week after he arrived home he wrote: "I feel pretty blue. No place for me yet. I have written letters today . . . . I hope the mail tomorrow will bring me something to hang a hope upon."³ These feelings of depression and anxiety were present with Johnson most of the time; however, he exhibited a deep faith in God, and consoled himself by remembering the trials of his Lord. This was evidenced by the following thoughts: "I think every day of my future and sometimes get sore perplexed. E.V. or A.B. is a point of daily thought. The Lord direct me in this and in every aspect of life,"⁴ and:

> I wonder what the Lord is to do with me? I feel sometimes as blue as possible and then I remember the Lord directs events and everything concerning me. I have two important matters weighing upon my mind—1. Where shall I preach the Gospel? 2. Who shall be my fellow laborer in the work? The Lord Direct me.⁵

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., February 23.
³Ibid., February 27.
⁴Ibid., April 6. E.V. stood for Emma Vail, and A.B. for Annie Blair.
⁵Ibid., May 13.
Thomas involved himself in the process of securing a pastoral call by preaching to a number of mission churches in need of ministers.¹ He had little response from his efforts until he was asked to supply the Assembly Presbyterian Church of Beaver Dam for several Sundays. This call to Beaver Dam came while he was attending the Presbytery of Winnebago which at that time was being moderated by his father.² 

Before Thomas received the call to Beaver Dam, he spent much of his time at Meadowside helping his brothers with their farm work. Some of the things he did were:

- Carted wood from the back forty, and cut some trees; I went out to Will's and helped him chop his trees for his fence along the road; Will, Cayen, and I got the oxen and cart and hauled manure; I went over to William's farm and sowed two acres of wheat for him; and planted potatoes with Barnie and the boys and then went over to Will's place and helped him plant his corn.³

These were pleasant times for Thomas, and he continued for many years to make visits back to Meadowside to help his brothers during the harvest season.⁴

¹ Reverend Johnson preached at Neenah and East Avon, Wisconsin; and La Crescent, Minnesota during this time. Letter, Thomas Johnson to "Dear People," April 30, 1867; Letter, Stuart Mitchell to Thomas Johnson, May 28, 1867; Letter, L. Taintor to Thomas Johnson, May 16, 1867, Johnson Papers.

² Johnson, Diary of 1867, April 19.

³ Ibid., March 15; March 19; March 28; April 25; and May 24.

⁴ Thomas Johnson, Diary of 1868, July 28; Diary of 1869, August 1; Diary of 1870, July 25; Diary of 1871, August 3; Diary of 1872, August 5; Diary of 1873, August 6; Diary of 1874, September 8; Johnson Papers.
Johnson took keen interest in matters of concern to his family and was apparently quite knowledgeable concerning agricultural affairs as both William and Barnabus frequently asked for his advice before making a major purchase or, at times, even before they sold their crops.\(^1\) Other manifestations of the closeness that existed between Johnson and his family were the frequent visits they made to see one another, the fact that his sisters continued to make some of his clothing after he was in Beaver Dam, the willingness with which Thomas provided money to help his sister's and Barnabus' educational expenses, his frequent loans to his brothers, the expensive gifts presented to various members of the family by Thomas, and the constant expressions of concern and advice which appeared in their letters to each other.\(^2\)

Shortly after he preached in the Assembly Presbyterian Church as an applicant for the vacant pulpit, Thomas

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\(^1\) Letter, Barnabus Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, June 21, 1869.

\(^2\) Letter, Thomas Johnson to Sarah Johnson, June 21, 1869, pertains to clothing; Letter, Thomas Johnson to Susan Johnson, December 1, 1871, pertains to educational needs; Letters, Thomas Johnson to Barnabus Johnson, May 19, 1879, and April 9, 1885, and Thomas Johnson to William Johnson, December 8, 1869, March 11, 1870, December 14, 1870, February 28, 1874, September 12, 1883, and March 16, 1884, pertains to loans; Letters, Thomas Johnson to Susan Johnson, October 31, 1878, and Thomas Johnson to Electa Johnson, April 25, 1866, pertain to gifts; Letters, William Johnson to Thomas Johnson, January 27, 1870, and April 29, 1871, Barnabus Johnson to Thomas Johnson, June 21, 1869, Baker Johnson to Thomas Johnson, February 11, 1869, Thomas Johnson to Susan Johnson, September 8, 1868, and September 18, 1871, and Thomas Johnson to Barnabus Johnson, December 29, 1868, June 29, 1869, and October 17, 1873, pertain to letters of concern.
was called to serve the congregation.1 Twenty years later he recalled that:

Though Elder DeClark was afraid I was not orthodox, Elder Paddock feared I was too young, and Elder Olason was about discouraged after the repeated changes and trials of the little church, a subscription paper was carried around and enough was pledged to pay the salary of the minister for six months, and I was engaged for that time on the 15th day of June, 1867.2

When Johnson accepted the position at Beaver Dam, he had also been offered a three month position at Avon, but he declined the offer in favor of the longer term at Beaver Dam.3

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1Johnson, Diary of 1867, Reverend Johnson preached first at Beaver Dam April 28, 1867, next on May 19, and then May 26.

2Thomas Johnson, "An Historical Sermon," Johnson Papers, Box 13, Articles and Sermons, 1887, p. 6.

3Johnson, Diary of 1867, June 18.
CHAPTER III

THOMAS JOHNSON AND HIS CHURCH AT BEAVER DAM

Thomas Johnson moved to Beaver Dam in 1867 when the town was still in rough frontier condition. It was growing, however, and seemed to have good prospects for continued growth. The population as determined by the State Census of 1865, showed that the town contained 1,425 persons and when all of Beaver Dam's four wards were included the population increased to 2,770 persons.\(^1\) When Thomas took up residence in Beaver Dam:

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\text{... there were ... no restraints upon pasturing horses and cattle upon the public streets, and on dark nights no street lights to give warning of a sleeping cow or a broken sidewalk. Top carriages and light buggies were few. People came to town with oxen and lumber wagons, and several ... families were in the habit of coming to church with patient oxen and frisky steers, which needed to be chained to a stump to hold them while the family attended divine service.}^2
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Nearly every family in town owned a cow and, if fortunate enough a horse as well. Most of them used their backyard for a vegetable garden which they harvested in the fall to fill their root cellars with produce for the winter months.

\(^1\) Wisconsin, Legislative Manual Wisconsin-1865, Compiled by the Chief Clerks of the Senate and Assembly in the Year 1865, Atwood and Rublee, State Printers, Madison, Wisconsin, 1865, p. 188.

The roads were still only hard packed earth and, consequently, were troublesome during the spring thaw and when it rained heavily.\(^1\) The town was fortunate, however, in having the Saint Paul and Milwaukee Road railroad running through it.\(^2\)

In addition to preaching to the congregation in Beaver Dam, Pastor Johnson traveled about five miles into the adjoining township of Calamus where he conducted weekly services during the afternoon on Sundays.\(^3\) These trips were dependent on the weather, but instances forcing Thomas to remain in Beaver Dam were infrequent.\(^4\)

Pastor Johnson's two congregations contained a significant number of members who were directly involved in farming, and those who were not, were still very much concerned with agricultural affairs because they derived their incomes from the farmers in the surrounding area. Consequently, Johnson's background on the farm at Meadowside aided him in understanding and relating to his parishioners because he knew from first hand experience what their problems and frustrations involved.

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 4.


\(^3\)Ibid.

\(^4\)"Pay Tribute to Rev. Johnson," "Beaver Dam Argus," Johnson Papers, Box 13, Folder: Clippings re: to Johnson family, February 22, 1922. Based on the statement that Thomas Johnson was ". . . possessed of rugged physical attainment, the cold blasts of winter or the excessive heat of summer never detained him when he saw a duty to perform or an act of service to render."
In 1867 there was a Baptist, a Congregationalist, a Methodist, and a Presbyterian church in Beaver Dam.\(^1\) Johnson's church, the Assembly Presbyterian Church, was officially organized May 3, 1858.\(^2\) It was not the first Presbyterian church in Beaver Dam, but it was the first one to be organized:

... under the care of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church and not under the Presbyterian and Congregational Convention. The First Presbyterian Church in Beaver Dam was under the care of the Presbyterian and Congregational Convention and a Congregational pastor was in charge.\(^3\)

This situation had evolved because early in the state's history:

... it was thought best for the Presbyterians to unite with the Congregational churches and at a meeting at Prairieville, October 6, 1840, the Presbytery of Wisconsin was merged into the Presbyterian and Congregational Convention.\(^4\)

However, as more people moved into the area, a small group desired to have a church in Beaver Dam that would be directly under the control of the newly founded General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. After working for several years to institute a change, twenty-nine members left the First Presbyterian Church, and formed the Assembly Presbyterian Church. When Thomas took charge of the Assembly Presbyterian Church nine years later the congregation, due to deaths and transfers, still numbered twenty-nine.\(^5\)

\(^1\)Johnson, "An Historical Sermon," p. 4.
\(^2\)Ibid., p. 5.
\(^3\)Ibid.
\(^4\)Ibid., p. 3.
\(^5\)Ibid., pp. 5-6.
Beaver Dam, like many frontier towns, had a mixture of nationalities, and feelings expressed toward minority groups and nationalities different from one's own were often critical and guarded. For instance one person noted that Germans were, "Good people in their way but not just our sort of people. Very apt to make a holiday of the Sabbath and drink Lager."¹ There were others, however, who expressed concern for the immigrants. One person showed this type of concern when sympathizing with the plight of immigrants he stated, "The destruction of the poor is their poverty."² Pastor Johnson reached out to help persons in need regardless of their background or beliefs, and it was said that he was, "... a friend to all ages and conditions of society ..."³ Johnson's willingness to work with all people was shown during the Civil War in his dealings with the Negro soldiers he served, and in his later ministry as revealed in a notation relating that he, "... went with the Catholic Priest to visit sick Poles."⁴

Mr. Johnson worked well with the other ministers in Beaver Dam, and several times allowed minister's of different faiths to preach to his congregation. This type of relationship

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¹Letter, J.H. Jackson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 13, 1873.

²Letter, J.H. Jackson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, March 28, 1868.

³"Pay Tribute to Rev. Johnson."

⁴Johnson, Diary of 1869, March 22.
was unusual during the period of Johnson's early ministry, and there were several references pointing to conflicts that existed between the closely related Protestant faiths. Conflicts most often arose when two different faiths were in competition for converts. A minister friend of Pastor Johnson's exemplified this type of competitive conflict by writing:

I'm in a dilemma . . . . The Methodists here closed their meetings last week, and I have just learned, to begin with renewed energy, just when they know mine are to begin next week. We have got to put forth a wonderful effort here or this church is gone. If you can possibly excuse me Sunday night I want to hold a rousing meeting at the Grove and then bring all that new, living force of warm Christians over here Monday night . . . . Of course this is confidential Presbyterianism, not to be talked to Congregationalists or Methodists. 2

Based on the information contained in the Johnson Papers which deals with relationships of this nature it appears that Thomas was ahead of his time in desiring to work cooperatively with other ministers to bring people to Christ and not necessarily to any one denomination. 3

Thomas took up residence in the home of Mrs. Redfield as a full time boarder when he first moved to Beaver Dam, and

1Letter, Electa Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, November 10, 1873, "Rev. Mr. McChesney (Congregational) preaching at Westfield has made two appointments in the same schoolhouse and one at a schoolhouse near Oxford. That is three Sabbaths in the month on our ground."; Letter, Hiram W. Allen to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, August 3, 1867.

2Letter, L. Railback to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 6, 1873. Underlined as in original.

3This interpretation is based on the fact letters from several other ministers, including Baker Johnson, evidenced the division noted, whereas none of Thomas' writings even hinted that he felt this way.
these quarters proved to be satisfactory. There was a brief period during his life in Beaver Dam that Thomas was not able to find a permanent residence. During this unsettled time he would "... go out to a neighborhood of his parishioners and visit till noon when he would dine just where he chance to be, and stayed all night where night overtook him." Pastor Johnson took advantage of the time he lived among his parishioners to learn more about their personal lives, however, the constant moving was trying when he needed to accomplish work that took concentrated and prolonged effort. Before the summer was over Thomas again found suitable quarters in Beaver Dam.2

One of the most active parts of Pastor Johnson's ministry was calling on people to talk with them regarding their faith. Fortunately he had the ability to easily relate to people, and his parishioners enjoyed having him in their homes.3 Generally a call from Pastor Johnson was simply a time for a friendly discussion of business, family, or a similar topic interspaced with conversations dealing with personal faith and witness to Christ. There were times, however, that he went calling for more specific reasons. Those reasons being to win a new convert to the faith, to comfort

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1 Letter, Thomas Johnson to Susan Johnson, Johnson Papers, June 12, 1869; Letter, Susan Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, June 17, 1869.

2 Johnson, Diary of 1869, June 26.

3 "Serves Fifty Years as Pastor in Beaver Dam," Johnson Papers, Clippings, April 28, 1917.
the ill or bereaved, or to speak to one of his church members who was in obvious opposition to the word of God. One such incident was alluded to by Pastor Johnson with the remark: "... walked out to see David Samuel and talked with him concerning the sin of drunkeness. Cyprus Clason went with me." Cyprus Clason was one of the Elders of the church. It was common practice during the early days of the Presbyterian church to have members guilty of "major" social sins called on by the minister and one or more of the church Elders. This was done to censure the guilty party as a means of insuring that the sinner saw the evil of his actions and repented.

Pastor Johnson also called on persons not in his own church, and it was said of him that, "... people who belong to no church have great faith in him and when they go to him in time of sorrow or trouble they are sure to find comfort." When Thomas received the call to the church at Beaver Dam he became part of a group of ministers known as Home Missionaries. This group consisted of ministers who were serving in areas of the United States that were sparsely populated. These men faced the problems all Christian ministers faced during the time of Johnson's ministry. An idea of these

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1 Johnson, Diary of 1867, July 26, August 6, October 6, November 11, December 2; Thomas S. Johnson, Diary of 1876, Johnson Papers, January 1.

2 Johnson, Diary of 1867, July 12.

3 "To Honor Nestor of Presbyterians," Johnson Papers, Clippings, 1907.
common problems can be gained from the following questions which dealt with areas of concern to the church.

How can we best secure a preparation for Christian work? What are the hindrances to Christ's kingdom and how can they be removed? How can we best reach and influence those who habitually neglect the sanctuary? What shall be done to secure a more general attendance of the people upon public worship? How can our devotional meetings be made more interesting and more profitable? What are the best methods of organizing and developing the Christian activity of the entire membership of the church?¹

In addition to the above problems, the Home Missionaries had to deal with the difficulties of having small congregations, greater distances between parishioners, and a lack of adequate funds. The work of a frontier minister can perhaps best be portrayed by describing a "normal" week in the life of Pastor Johnson.

Thomas started his sermon early in each week and spent two or three mornings working on it.² Even after his sermon was written Thomas generally spent Saturday evening making last minute revisions and setting the major points firmly into his mind for the next morning.³ Some weeks he had extra time to work on his sermons and he tried to "... get a little stock in trade ahead."⁴ Another activity that took up much

¹Thomas S. Johnson, "Wisconsin Letter," Johnson Papers, Box 16, Miscellaneous Scrapbook of Family Clippings 1881-1900, September, 1883. These were the central problems discussed at a Christian Convention held in Chicago, Illinois. All evangelical denominations were represented and Thomas Johnson was one of the delegates.


³Johnson, Diary of 1867, July 20.

⁴Ibid., September 4.
of each week's time was calling on the members of his congregation. At first he walked to the majority of his appointments, but later he purchased a horse in order to save time. Each week Thomas attended one evening prayer meeting, a gathering of the Female Sewing Society, a temperance meeting, and a practice session for the church choir. He was often in a leadership role at these meetings which took extra time for preparation. Thomas was concerned about the young people in his church and he set special meeting times for them, in addition to Sunday School, when he met with them to examine their faith. He wrote of the young people in the church: "I feel deeply anxious on account of the young unconverted persons of our church. I have never had such an intense desire for their salvation as I have now." Pastor Johnson spent a great deal of time in direct contact with people, but he also carried on an extensive correspondence in regards to church affairs. Thomas ended his work week by conducting two services, one in the morning at the Assembly Church, and one in the afternoon in Calamus. He then returned to Beaver Dam whenever possible and attended the evening service of one of the other churches in town.

1Johnson, Diary of 1871, April 14; Diary of 1872, May 11; and Diary of 1873, February 2.

2Johnson, Diary of 1869, January 29.

3The church affairs involving correspondence were requests for money to aid the Assembly Church, answers written in reply to questions concerning the doctrines of the church, and letters to past members.

4Johnson, Diary of 1867, July 28; Diary of 1869, June 6, June 27.
To the regular activities that took place every week there were added special occurrences such as baptisms, weddings, funerals, trips to Meadowside, Sunday School Conventions, meetings of the Presbytery, Musical Conventions, meetings of the Boards of Trustees of Carroll and Downer Colleges, trips made to visit Eastern friends, visitors calling on him, excursions to the Fox Lake Female College to spend time with his sisters while they were there attending school, and various speaking engagements for groups in the area. Then in his spare time he wrote numerous articles for Presbyterian Journals, carried on an extensive personal correspondence, and found time to read the great variety of journals to which he subscribed.¹

Pastor Johnson had been hired for only six months but, before he was forced to look for a new position, he was requested to stay for another full year with the same salary.² If he did not know it at the time he agreed to serve the church at Beaver Dam, Thomas soon learned that the salary of a frontier minister was not always paid on time and often was paid only partially in cash. Some of the items given to him in payment of his salary were hay, wood, pasture, oats, books, livery service, use of a team, breeding service for his horse,


²Johnson, Diary of 1867, November 11.
cheese, butter, corn, produce, carrots, and chickens. In the years that the church was not able to pay the full amount of the pledged salary, the indebtedness was simply carried forward to the next year. Some years the congregation fell short nearly two hundred dollars of the total salary of seven hundred dollars. These shortages occurred even though the Assembly Presbyterian Church, as a Home Mission, received financial aid to help pay Johnson's salary. Many times, when parishioners realized that they were going to fall short of raising their pastor's salary, they would have a church festival or a donation party to raise the needed money.

There were various other means, however, by which Thomas was able to increase his standard of living. One of the steadiest sources of extra income came from payments made for his services at weddings and funerals. Not everyone felt that they should pay for services of this type, and an excerpt from a letter to Pastor Johnson indicates that not all ministers charged for their services.

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2 Ibid., In 1868 there was a shortage of $182.50, and in 1869 the shortage was $195.25.

3 Ibid., In 1868 Thomas received $187.50; in 1869, $125.00; in 1870, $162.50; and in 1871, $175.00.

4 Letter, Elizabeth Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 24, 1874, "Our festival was a complete success. William and ourselves gave about 30 quarts of ice cream which brought $16.00. $60.00 cleared to pay up arrearages to our minister."; Letter, Caroline Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 10, 1879. "We are to have a church festival Thursday as we are very much behind on salary."
Reverend Johnson Sir: Enclosed pleased to find order for ($5.00) and will say here we never have to pay a minister in our poor county anything for preaching a funeral sermon and did not expect such would be the case in your rich and flourishing county and Christian churches, but ignorance of custom is excusable and hope you will excuse me for not sending it before.¹

Thomas sometimes received supplementary aid in the form of a mission box that was assembled by a church society that was desirous of helping a needy Home Missionary.² In addition to the mission gifts he received, Pastor Johnson periodically received gifts from his own parishioners.³ Thomas was also able to increase his total income through the receipt of interest paid on money he loaned to others, and interest paid on money he had deposited in a New York Savings Bank.⁴ Somewhat later in his ministry, Pastor Johnson began writing articles for a variety of periodicals which brought him some small rewards of a pecuniary nature.⁵ One further economic factor that Thomas was able to take advantage of was the fact that ministers could often receive reduced rates on many items

¹Letter, Mrs. H. Hynes to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, March 15, 1892.
²Letter, S.G. Redfield to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, December 15, 1873.
³Johnson, Diary of 1867, November 13, "In eve several of my people presented me with a nice overcoat and hat."
⁴Ibid., January 14, Thomas deposited $1,800.00.
⁵Some of the periodicals Thomas had articles published in for which he was paid were "The Philadelphia Presbyterian," "The North and West Presbyterian," "The New York Observer," "The Interior," "The Presbyterian," and the "Evangelist".
and services they desired. Some of the purchases for which Pastor Johnson received reduced rates varied from a horse buggy for his parents to a piano for his sister.¹ The service for which he most frequently received a reduced rate was that of railroad passage. Many ministers took advantage of reduced rates on different items, but Johnson was often able to obtain more economic assistance because in return he provided free advertising in several of the Presbyterian periodicals for which he was the Western correspondent.²

Although Thomas was frequently asked for financial loans by members of his family and by his friends, there was evidence of only one request being denied.³ In that instance he gave the reason that he did not have the money to loan at that time.⁴ Pastor Johnson's brother, William, appears to have been the most frequent recipient of such loans, and without the help he received, it is likely that William would not have been able to keep his farm.⁵ The degree of Thomas' desire

¹Letter, Thomas Johnson to Electa Johnson, Johnson Papers, April 25, 1868; Letter, Susan Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, November 13, 1878.

²Thomas, at various times, was correspondent for "The Presbyterian," "The Evangelist," and "The North and West Presbyterian."

³Letter, William Hart to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 21, 1870.

⁴Letter, William Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, December 14, 1870. It is interesting to note that although Thomas told William Hart he did not have the money to loan him the $100 requested, less than two months later Thomas received a letter from William Johnson noting the receipt of a $130 loan from Thomas.

⁵Johnson, Diary of 1869, August 31, "Will seems discouraged with his prospects in farming--talking of giving up."
to aid his brother is shown by an incident when Thomas sent a statement of what William owed him listing a reduction of fifty dollars simply because William had mentioned the loss of a horse and that he was experiencing difficult times. In reply to his brother's generosity, William explained:

> If we did not have some losses to hold us back a little there would be danger of our thinking too much of this world . . . . Now Thomas please accept the return of the statement of account for I should feel as though I had wronged you in accepting it.

Pastor Johnson also loaned money to his father and to his brother Barnabas whenever they requested it.

Two times that he made loans to friends, Thomas had to wait a long time to be repaid, and he was forced to press rather vigorously to receive his money. His requests for past due payments were not always received gratuitously, and one debtor, a Mr. Peck, was apparently able to gain an extension of time on his note by declaring that Thomas was the

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1Letter, William Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 28, 1868.

2Letter, Electa Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, April 21, 1868. In this letter Thomas was asked to bring up to date what his father owed him.; Letter, Thomas Johnson to Barnabas Johnson, Johnson Papers, May 19, 1879. Thomas wrote to say he would send the money needed for Barnabas' education.

3Letter, Thomas Johnson to Susan Johnson, Johnson Papers, March 4, 1873. In this letter Thomas noted that he would loan H.J. Hughes $500 at ten per-cent interest. Letter, Mrs. J.A. Peck to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, September 28, 1882. This letter brought out that E.S. Peck owed Thomas $1,500. Thomas had to wait for payment of both the Hughes and Peck loans.
person in error for not extending him more time as a Christian would.\textsuperscript{1} The extension was apparently granted at that time, but, in a note written on the back of one of Mrs. Peck's letters written to Pastor Johnson a year later requesting even more time to pay because they had no money, Thomas apparently wrote the following draft of what was to be a letter to Mr. Peck:

\begin{quote}
Dear Brother, I am sorry for you, but am obliged to have the money. Bring or send $50. My insurance must be paid as I told you long ago, and you know there is no other way for me than to place my claim against you in other hands unless you do show a disposition to deal honestly and fairly.\textsuperscript{2}
\end{quote}

The above letter, when read in conjunction with two others in the Johnson Papers, leads to the interpretation that although lenient with those who owed him money, he at times put pressure on them to pay him.\textsuperscript{3} The only evidence of this type of pressure being used, however, was when Pastor Johnson needed money to pay his own bills. Further understanding of the beliefs Johnson had concerning money matters can be derived by looking at one of his sermons when he stated:

It required but a casual glance took at the prevailing course of men in this world to see that they are engrossed in the business cares and anxieties of the world. They rise up early and sit up late to prosecute their plans for gain and pleasure. They are busy and earnest about the affairs of the

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\textsuperscript{1}Letter, E.S. Peck to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 9, 1882. The text of the letter is in the Appendix.

\textsuperscript{2}Letter, Thomas Johnson to E.S. Peck, Johnson Papers, January 12, 1883.

\textsuperscript{3}Letter, Peck to Johnson, 1882; Letter, H.J. Hughes to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 26, 1876.
\end{flushleft}
Whenever Thomas had what he felt was a good sermon, he saved it and used it again, not only in different churches, but in his own church as well. He was able to do this because he wrote out the complete text of his sermons, thus with little additional preparation he could conduct a service.

Thomas often used man's personal relationship to God as the text for his sermons and he felt this relationship was necessary for salvation. He developed this theme with emphasis on the hell fire of damnation, unless a sinner acknowledged and accepted Jesus Christ as his Lord and Savior.

Pastor Johnson's sermons were representative of the religious expression of his day, and they emphasized the vital role religion played in each individual's life. It is important to understand that religion was significant to frontier life because it not only contributed to a person's spiritual life but also to social and family relationships.

1 Thomas Johnson, "Ye are my witness, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen.", Johnson Papers, Articles and Sermons, a sermon, pp. 1-2. Thomas preached this sermon at least thirteen times from February 9, 1879, to June 3, 1917.

2 Thomas Johnson, "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me.", Johnson Papers, Articles and Sermons, a sermon, p. 1.

3 Thomas Johnson, "What shall I do, then, with Jesus which is called Christ?", Johnson Papers, Articles and Sermons, a sermon, p. 14.
Thomas admonished parents to begin teaching their children the ways of the church and the commandments of the Bible early in their lives. He believed that:

It is the duty of every head of the family to set up the whole system of its daily arrangement according to Christian rules. Every day should begin and end with an act of united worship. Every meal should have its Christian Thanksgiving. Frequent instruction should be given to the young in Christian duty and doctrine, and the matter of personal religion should be perseveringly pressed on the conscience of all. Keeping the Sabbath, the regular attendance in the Sanctuary and the prayer meetings, the use of all the means of religious growth and improvement should be encouraged. . . . When this is done the family is on a positive Christian basis. Children are trained and instructed as they should be in ways of Christian order and decorum.

It was relatively easy to involve young people in church activities because it was the "accepted" thing to do and because the church was the center of the social as well as the religious life of the community.

A concern for the social aspects of life were evident in Johnson's life as he worked to improve the educational possibilities for people in his town and state. One of the most effective ways he was able to do this was by serving on the boards of directors of both Carroll College and Downer College. The meeting of Johnson's church also served to create social outings for the members who participated in

1Thomas Johnson, "The Master has come and calleth for thee.", Johnson Papers, Articles and Sermons, a sermon, pp. 4-5.

2Jones, "Reverend T.S. Johnson D.D.", p. 2; "To the Board of Trustees of Carroll College", Johnson Papers, Clippings, p. 1. This was a notice sent to the trustees at the time of Reverend Johnson's death.
sewing circles, Sunday School programs, ice cream socials, church picnics, music conventions, church festivals, donation parties, and festive meetings during the Christmas season. Although activities of this type provided a social outing, they were all directed in such a manner as to be an expression of Christian faith. For instance, the ice cream socials, church festivals, and donation parties, were all motivated by a desire to raise funds for some useful project of the church. The church picnic, an annual affair in Pastor Johnson's church, was usually held on the Fourth of July. It had a duel purpose of patriotically honoring the country and promoting the Sunday School program.¹

Music conventions provided a unique opportunity for people from a wide area to gather together and enjoy the welcome friendship provided. Pastor Johnson served for several years as President of the Beaver Dam Musical Convention, and he did a great deal to promote the convention's virtues and encourage its attendance. Thomas involved himself with this activity as a result of his love of music, and because all of the music sung was of a religious nature. As one advertisement proclaimed, music conventions were:

For the general development of Vocal Music in its various branches; the improvement of Choirs in the rendition of Church music; the formation of a correct and elevated musical taste through the study of the higher departments of Music; to excite a more earnest and intelligent interest on the

subject in the public mind; and to give opportunity for a social and genial reunion of all lovers of music...  

Another advertisement put it more simply by stating, "The object of the Convention is to awaken a higher interest in Church Music; and to instruct singers how to render it in its true devotional spirit." These conventions generally lasted from three to five days, and involved as many as 275 participants. Each person was required to pay a fee for the privilege of being part of the music convention, but they were, "entertained free of expenses during the session." Reverend Mr. Johnson took a great deal of pleasure in the musical conventions, for he was a talented singer, and he enjoyed the spirit of people joining together to raise their voices with hymns of praise to God.

Thomas Johnson's singing had helped with his army work and he had learned to sing as a child without any thought of an instrument to get the pitch. He carried a tuning fork in his pocket and could read notes anywhere and lead any number of singers. He was accustomed as a child to spend hours in singing in the twilight and on Sundays without either notes or words.


2"Musical Convention conducted by Professor L.D. Emerson, to be held from Monday evening, November 13, to Friday evening, November 17, 1871," Johnson Papers, Ephemera, November 13-17, 1871, p. 1.

3Ibid., p. 2. The text of the advertisement is in the Appendix.

4Caroline Johnson Notes.
Music was considered an important part of the church service and it served as a medium of worship that all could, and should, participate in with spiritual conviction. At an evangelistic conference which Thomas attended, it was thought important to "Get all the music there is in the church and for a chorus choir, and larger the better, and urge all to sing the best they can. The people would never be got to work until the laymen were set to singing." There was a strong feeling during Pastor Johnson's ministry that every Christian should publicly witness to his faith in Jesus Christ in order to fulfill his Christian commitment. Spirited singing of religious music was seen as one way of doing this.

There were many examples of people witnessing to their faith in letters written to Thomas Johnson, and it was considered a fault in a person if he was not able to publicly express his faith. This idea is clearly brought out in a letter from Charlie Vail in which he said of his mother and family:

"You know she is one of the kind that never speak of their religious experience or hope. In this respect she is so different from your mother and persons of that kind. This is one of the failings in all of our family. I wish it were otherwise." The willingness to profess belief in Christ was important if one desired to join the church, because new members were

1 Johnson, "Wisconsin Letter."

2 Letter, Charlie Vail to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, December 7, 1872; Letter, Charlie Vail to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, August 18, 1868; Letter, N.B. Johnson to Elects Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 14, 1869. The last two examples of witness of one's faith are in the Appendix.
questioned closely about their beliefs and their understanding of the Bible. ¹ The areas of one's faith that were most frequently used for personal witness were a child's relationship to his parents, the sanctity of the Sabbath, and submission to God's will.

The reverence held toward parents during the period from 1865 to 1900 was generally intense and unquestioning. ² As parents grew older and incapable of caring for themselves one or more of their children accepted the responsibility of doing so. This feeling of responsibility for one's parents was brought out in Pastor Johnson's family as his sister Susan faced the decision of whether to remain at home to help care for her aging parents, or to accept a teaching position she had been offered. ³ With the urging of her parents and the knowledge that her sister Sarah and her brother Barnabus would be with them, she accepted the position. Although Thomas lived nearly a day's distance from his parent's home, he too was concerned about them, and returned home whenever illness plagued his father. ⁴

¹Letter, Electa Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 7, 1875. Based on the comment: "Several persons were examined with reference to uniting with the church."

²Letter, Charlie Vail to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 7, 1869; Letter, J.H. Jackson to Cousins, Johnson Papers, October 2, 1865.

³Letter, Susan Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, December 28, 1868.

⁴Letter, Susan Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, June 5, 1882; Letter, Electa Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, June 8, 1882.
Pastor Johnson made himself quite clear concerning the sanctity of the Sabbath. No one was to do work on that day that could possibly be done on any other. Thomas expressed himself concerning the Sabbath as he cautioned his sister not to "work so hard on the Sabbath." A further aspect of the intensity with which the Sabbath was regarded may be seen in the statement that, "Two Sabbaths ago two young men twenty-four years old were out for pleasure Sabbath morning and were drowned . . . A loud sermon for Sabbath breakers." That a person should submit to "God's will," was brought out in expressions towards business difficulties, illness, love affairs, death, and life in general. Expressions of submission to God, reverence for the Sabbath and one's parents, were all influenced by the Calvanistic doctrines of pre-ordination, and the idea that God has a master plan whereby all occurrences work ultimately toward good, and thus are not to be questioned by men.

Religious belief as expressed by Pastor Johnson consisted of several definite aspects. First and foremost was
the belief that God is concerned for all men, and that by
grace through the gift of Jesus Christ all men can gain sal-
vation if they humble themselves before God, acknowledge their
sins, accept Christ as their Lord and Savior, and then proceed
to live righteous and contrite lives in awe of God's Power
and magnificence.¹ Life on earth was shown to be base, and
desirable only because it was a step toward heaven and ete­
nal life.²

Further expressions of faith expressed by friends of
Pastor Johnson showed that people viewed death as a release
from the discomforts and trials of the world, and the means by
which a man passed from earth to heaven. Consequently, death
was to be a time of hope and joy for the soul of the deceased.
To feel grief was viewed as a selfish emotion and was suppressed
by those who mourned.³

Whenever someone died there generally were comments
made concerning the chances the deceased had for gaining sal­
vation, and most had the prayers of the faithful to "help them
on their way". This was not always the case, however, as can

¹Thomas Johnson, "I am living bread that came down
from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live
forever.", Johnson Papers, Articles and Sermons, a sermon
delivered ten times between September 10, 1876, and March 1,
1908, passim.; Johnson, "Israel would none of me." This
sermon was delivered at least twelve times between December
of 1872, and July of 1916, passim.

²Johnson, "I am the living bread," passim.

³Letter, J.H. Jackson to Cousins, Johnson Papers,
June 15, 1868; Letter, N.B. Johnson to Electa Johnson,
Johnson Papers, January 14, 1869; Letter, J.H. Jackson
to Cousins, Johnson Papers, November 17, 1872.
be seen from a comment by Electa Johnson concerning the death of one of her neighbors. "I felt sad that with all the attention of friends not one could pray for her. Such a Sabbath I spent by that dying bed. Oh! that they were wise."¹ That prayer was considered important for the living as well as the dead, was brought out when Baker Johnson wrote:

In the last note to your mother you speak of having a world of care and anxiety and needing prayers of those who love you. I can assure you that you have the sympathy and prayers of your parents and it need not be added that they truly love you and moreover derive great comfort from the fact that their son is laboring so faithfully in the gospel of Christ.²

Shortly after the Civil War as Pastor Johnson was beginning his ministry, there was a general belief evidenced that the horrors of the war should be forgotten, and that a return to the business of making a living and raising a family should be made. This desire to forget issues of national concern did not really accelerate until after President Andrew Johnson finished his term in office, and the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution was ratified. The desire to forget large issues found definite expression in religion through the concern shown for individual salvation with emphasis being placed on a revival of personal faith. The reversion to affairs of a local and individual nature also found expression in the lack of concern held for the newly enfranchised Freedmen.

¹Letter, Electa Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, June 2, 1868.
²Letter, Baker Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 11, 1869.
This was largely a result of the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment in that it was seen as the final effort necessary to inscribe equality for all. One person gave evidence to this by stating:

How glad I am that the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution has so nearly reached that point of being incorporated into and being part of the Constitution for the following reasons. 1st, the vexed Negro question will be forever put to rest, we will hear no more such exclamations as "darn the nagur," "do you think that the nigger is equal to the white man," etc.; etc.; etc."¹

The desire to turn away from major issues found national expression in the decisions not to provide the Freedmen with confiscated land, and to discontinue the Freedman's Bureau.

It is worthy of note that in the "Johnson Papers" there was no evidence that Thomas spoke out concerning issues of national concern. This can not be viewed as a result of his being unaware of national issues because letters written to him spoke of a variety of matters such as the controversy over President Andrew Johnson; the passage of the Fifteenth Amendment; the disputed Election of 1876; and corruption in

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¹Letter, Unknown (from Plainfield) to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 8, 1870.
big business. In addition to personal letters, Thomas also read many papers and periodicals that would have brought issues of national concern to his attention. The interpretation that Johnson did not concern himself with national issues must be qualified, however, in that there are relatively few letters written by him contained in the "Johnson Papers." This interpretation should also be viewed in the light that it reflected a general desire to return to matters of personal concern. One of the reasons attention turned from national issues to personal ones after the Civil War was that financial difficulties were experienced by various sectors of the economy.

Farmers were hit particularly hard following the Civil War because they experienced an early drop in prices for their goods before an accompanying depression of prices reached the other parts of the economy. The drop in prices was also

1 (Concerning President Andrew Johnson): Letter, Susan Johnson to Thomas Johnson, March 17, 1866, "But your father fears A. Johnson is not quite sound."); Letter, Baker Johnson to Thomas Johnson, September 12, 1866, "We have a drunken, conceited, traitor of a president."); Letter, Kitty Tuttle to Thomas Johnson, September 17, 1866; and letter, Caroline Johnson to Thomas Johnson, September 21, 1866; (Concerning the Fifteenth Amendment): Letter, A.E. Wakefield to Thomas Johnson, June 13, 1870; Letter from (Plainfield) to Thomas Johnson, February 8, 1870; (Concerning the election of 1876): Letter, Elizabeth Johnson to Thomas Johnson, February 26, 1877, "If Hayes is safely inaugurated next Monday, the signs of relief quite a breeze through the country we think."); Letters, Elizabeth Johnson to Thomas Johnson, March 6, and March 13, 1877; (Concerning big business): Letter, (Plainfield) to Thomas Johnson, February 8, 1870. Johnson Papers.

2 A listing of the number of letters by the years, from 1865 to 1900, contained in the Johnson Papers, written by Thomas Johnson, can be seen in the Appendix. There are a total of 311 such letters.
accompanied by crop failures, increased costs of delivering their products to a suitable market, and the inability to deliver their goods at a time when advantage could be taken of high prices. Thomas was very much involved with the difficulties facing the farmers because his family and many of his parishioners were involved in agricultural matters, and because he had loaned large amounts of money to people who depended on farming for their livelihood. An incident involving Pastor Johnson's needing money to pay part of his life insurance premium revealed that the business sector of the economy was having difficulty as well.

Thomas asked his brother, William, to send him some of the money he owed him, but William replied that he had no money to send. William went on to advise Thomas:

*Draw on that insurance policy all that you can and invest it in a first class farm mortgage. Everyone is doing it and the insurance companies are bound to go up. It is worse than a lottery to trust them now. They will follow the savings banks. You have paid too much to lose it now, but if you sell out to the company and invest the money for 7% with a good just mortgage, will more than pay you without running any risks.*

The problems of business were well stated by Johnson's uncle when he wrote that, "Business is so dull that it is necessary to use considerable *chin music* and make a man believe black is white in order to sell anything."

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received several letters from people considering a move to the West in an attempt to better their economic condition.

One such person wrote:

It seems to me that I cannot do otherwise than to do my best here and if I cannot make it go then pull up and try it elsewhere. I have no doubt that I could get along much easier out West than I can here . . . . Just as likely as not [you] will see me out there, that is if things don't work right here . . . .

Thomas enthusiastically received such ideas and wrote letters in which he encouraged people to move west. 2

One issue that drew the attention of many people following the Civil War was the temperance movement. Johnson became sincerely involved in supporting the temperance societies in his locality which attempted to close all saloons and to elect only those men who supported the temperance movement. That temperance was an election issue, and influenced the outcomes of some races, was pointed out by the comments:

William lost his election for supervisor through the advocacy of Rum; Election of Town Officials ashamed to say rum's gained the day; They are working to elect "no license men" on the board this year; Barnie was not re-elected, but the winner was pledged to temperance too. 3

Thomas preached many times on opposition to drinking alcoholic beverages and provided many lectures to that effect for

1Letter, Thomas J. Davis to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, March 30, 1868.

2Letter, Thomas Johnson to Brother (Brother-in-law), Johnson Papers, February 25, 1885.

3Baker Johnson, Diary of 1870, Johnson Papers, April 2, April 5; Letter, Electa Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, May 13, 1871; Letter, Elizabeth Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, April 4, 1874.
the temperance societies in the area around Beaver Dam. Some of his ideas concerning intemperance can be seen by the following selection:

I think this is especially a woman's war . . . .
How shall we work? The wisest Generals sometimes gain bloodless victories. It is not always the part of skill or valor to march up to the enemy's front lines and begin to pelt him with bullet and ball. This kind of warfare is often necessary but strategy, flank movements, and surprises are in order in all sorts of warfare. To surround a city and cut off the supplies is often more effective than to bombard it or set it on fire. Perhaps we shall each find some work to do which shall help to cut off the supplies from the saloons where our enemy has entrenched himself so strongly . . . . You know the causes which induce our leaders to proclaim this war. Saul slew his thousands, but our enemy, Intemperance, has slain his tens of thousands; has blasted the brightest talents; crushed the fondest hopes; swept away the most princely fortunes; instigated the foulest crimes; increased our taxes; filled our jails and almshouses; built our lunatic asylums. It catches our boys and young men before they reach the church and Sunday School, or spreads its nets as they return and mars or neutralizes the blessed lessons there imparted. It violates every commandment of the decalogue; every precept of the Sermon in the Mount; every rule of life that ever fell from the lips of Christ. Its ways take hold in death.1

Temperance was only one issue of community interest that Pastor Johnson involved himself with for he devoted himself completely to ministering to the people of Beaver Dam. The fact that he was unmarried for the first seventeen years of his ministry was undoubtedly a factor in Johnson's ability to involve himself so totally in the life of his community.

1Thomas Johnson, "War Proclaimed," Johnson Papers, Articles and Sermons, a sermon, Summer of 1877, pp. V-VI.
CHAPTER IV

THOMAS JOHNSON—FAMILY MAN

When Pastor Johnson left the army he was undecided as to which of two women, Annie Blair or Emma Vail, he would ask to marry him. It seems that Miss Blair was his first choice but Johnson's unwillingness to propose before he was out of the army and had secured a pastoral call, resulted in a decision on Miss Blair's part to marry another. Therefore he turned his attentions toward Emma Vail.

Johnson still believed that he should wait to propose formally until he had secured a definite position in order that he could support a family. One interesting aspect concerning Emma Vail was that Thomas felt the wealth of her family might be a detrimental factor in their relationship. Thomas related his feelings to his uncle but was advised not to be concerned about her wealth for it could be used to do good in the service of Christ.¹

Thomas must have decided that this was good advice, and went to propose to Emma Vail in February of 1868. He apparently made the trip to New Jersey with the full expectation of returning to Wisconsin a married man. However, once again Thomas found that the woman he loved was not willing to

¹Letter, Joseph F. Tutle to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 26, 1867.
marry him. This affair caused Pastor Johnson much anguish and he confided in his diary:

Aske and refused—agony—good friends; my visit to all human appearance had been fruitless and unsuccessful, but God will work all things for the good of those who love him, I feel desolate and lonely.¹

There were a number of persons who knew of Pastor Johnson's disappointment, and they wrote to him trying to give him sympathy and advice.² Letters of this type instead of making him feel better actually heightened his distress. This interpretation is based on the fact that upon receiving a "letter from Cousin Hannah . . . [Thomas] felt mortified and pained that Aunt Hetty knew of [his] affair,"³ and after getting a letter from Cousin Sarah which indicated that, "She knew of [his] trouble", he wrote, "I am sorry so many do."⁴

A further reaction that Pastor Johnson had to his unsuccessful love experience is seen by looking at the sermon topics he chose to preach on shortly after the incident, and by his statement: "I sigh for greater faith in God. He is leading along a crooked way. I can see nothing and only

¹Johnson, Diary of 1868, February 19 and 29.
²Letter, Joseph F. Tutle to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, April 10, 1868. Based on the comment, "Whatever may be the result of the affair that now disturbs you, be sure it will be so arranged to glorify your Master and be best for you."; Letter, Hetty Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, April 14, 1868. Based on the comment, "One word about your own particular self. Don't dwell for a moment on the thought of your unworthiness of the object of your affections. I candidly disagree with you."
³Johnson, Diary of 1868, March 28.
⁴Ibid., April 8.
ought to trust." It seems as though Pastor Johnson decided to take the advice of a friend who admonished him to "keep a stiff upper lip even though you've been kicked in the chops." The seriousness of this affair can perhaps best be judged by the fact that nearly a year later Thomas received a letter from his father which expressed the concern that his son was still experiencing a "world of care and anxiety." Further evidence in support of the interpretation that Pastor Johnson's unsuccessful relationships with Annie Blair and Emma Vail had lasting implications is the fact that he did not have another serious relationship with a member of the fairer sex until the courtship and marriage of Sara Elliot sixteen years later. The reason for Pastor Johnson's long delay in pursuing a new courtship was not for lack of encouragement by his friends and relatives as can be seen by statements such as:

Now Tom why don't you wake up to your duty to the world? I have just been giving McDonald ... a going thro' for sitting and patting his knee instead of getting something on his knee worth patting. Hurry up old boy. [And]

Dear Brother, I was at Portage yesterday and I saw ... Miss Van Dusen ... Now Thomas that is the nicest girl just as near as you will ever get

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1Ibid., April 12, "Preached at B.D. from Acts 9:6—Lord what will thou have me to do?"; May 6, "Began sermon on patience, James 1:4."; April 16.

2Letter, H.M. Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, March 23, 1868.

3Letter, Baker Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, February 11, 1869.
to a perfect woman . . . . Seems you ought not to let such a chance slip . . . .

These comments could not help but cause Pastor Johnson to think about the institution of marriage. However, it is quite apparent that any thoughts he had concerning the subject were going to be kept to himself, and he was in no hurry to commit himself to any of the several women that were suggested as excellent prospects. Thomas was not unusual in his desire to keep relationships with members of the opposite sex from becoming public knowledge as is brought out by a comment in a letter he received from a female friend:

I hope to hear from you soon and I want to ask you if you will please send the letter in a plain envelope. The people I board with have seen your picture in my album and would be very apt to make remarks if they knew I was corresponding with that young unmarried minister, and you know we school-teachers have to be very careful of ourselves.

The necessity of the above comment is emphasized when one realizes that letters were generally regarded as family property no matter to whom they were addressed. A note written to Caroline included the statement that, "until you write and tell us we shall open all letters directed to you of course." Many of the letters in the Johnson Papers begin with apologies for neglecting to promptly answer letters

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1 Letter, Edward Savage to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, September 15, 1871; Letter, William Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, July 20, 1878.

2 Letter, Edna Noyes to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 17, 1872.

3 Letter, Elizabeth Johnson to Caroline Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 14, 1873.
received and end with requests that theirs be answered quickly and at length. The importance attached to the receipt of mail must be viewed in the light that it was a primary source of communication on the frontier.

Late in 1883, Pastor Johnson received a letter from his sister, Susan, which indicated that he was once again seriously considering marriage.¹ It is probable that Thomas first met Sara Elliot while she was teaching at the Fox Lake School for Girls. The opportunity was present because Sara taught at the school during the time that Thomas' sister Elizabeth was attending as a student.² The fact that Thomas frequently visited his sisters while they were at Fox Lake, and also was asked a number of times to deliver the baccalaureate address to the graduating classes, would have provided ample opportunity for him to make the acquaintance of Miss Elliot.³ Unfortunately, none of the correspondence which must have passed between Miss Elliot and Pastor Johnson during their courtship is contained in the Johnson Papers making it necessary to speculate as to the nature of their relationship during this period. The only evidence found in the Johnson Papers that Pastor Johnson spoke of Sara

¹Letter, Susan Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, December 24, 1883.

²Letter, Sara Elliot to Sister, Johnson Papers, September 27, 1874; Letter, Caroline Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, September 5, 1875.

³"Beaver Dam Argus," Johnson Papers, Box 13, Clippings, February 17, 1927, p. 8, col. 3.
Elliot before their marriage was in two letters. In the first of them he stated:

Miss Elliot is very well and is more lovely to me than ever, and it now seems that after all your old brother is to be married off. Let us hope that it may prove to be a suitable and happy union. I can truly say my dear sister, that I am not sorry that I waited for Miss Elliot . . . .

The second letter although mentioning Miss Elliot was not very informative. Thomas wrote: "I hope to stop in Ohio and pay a short visit to Miss Elliot who says that she will be delighted to welcome me." It was during the "short visit" to Ohio that Thomas Johnson and Sara Elliot were married. At the time of their marriage, June 5, 1884, Thomas was forty-five, and Sara was thirty-five.

After having been virtually self-supporting and independent for most of her adult life, it does not seem unusual that Sara Johnson was quick to assert herself in assuming leadership roles in the female societies of Beaver Dam, and to begin taking an active interest in the affairs of her husband. Sara proved to be an excellent choice for Pastor Johnson because she met him as an equal intellectually,

1Letter, Thomas Johnson to Electa Johnson, Johnson Papers, April 15, 1884.

2Letter, Thomas Johnson to Electa Johnson, Johnson Papers, May 9, 1884.

3"Beaver Dam Argus," p. 8. Sara Johnson's interest in her husband's affairs was brought out when she wrote, "My husband has never had a 'financial agent' and forgets to report to me when he receives money or where it comes from, all of which seems very odd to me, but I wait in patience knowing it is not for lack of confidence."; Letter, Sara Johnson to unknown, Johnson Papers, November 3, 1884.
had a firm foundation in the Presbyterian faith, and had an intimate understanding of the needs of a parish pastor for her father was a pastor.

Thomas and Sara were blessed with their two children, Mary and Electa, within three years after they were married. Sara began their education early, and often took them with her on visits she made back to her home in Ohio and points further East. At other times Thomas would keep one or both of the girls while Sara went visiting. The two girls were given ample opportunity for educating themselves and, in fact, both became teachers.\(^1\) Shortly after Pastor Johnson was married he purchased a house at 110 Grove Street in Beaver Dam which remained his home for the rest of his life.\(^2\)

The freedom which Pastor Johnson apparently allowed his wife to have in expressing herself was somewhat advanced for his time as regards the role of women in society. However, the idea that a women's place was in the home must have been undercut in Pastor Johnson's thinking as he saw all four of his sisters involved in teaching, two of them, Caroline and Susan, devoting their entire lives to it, and as he recognized the background Sara had in teaching and church leadership. The

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\(^1\)"Beaver Dam Argus," p. 8. col. 3-4.

\(^2\)Letter, Thomas Johnson to Electa Johnson, Johnson Papers, November 4, 1885; Letter, Thomas Johnson to Wife and Children, Johnson Papers, July 23, 1896. A description by Thomas Johnson of his home on Grove Street is in the Appendix.
interest with which Pastor Johnson viewed education was, if anything, strengthened by his marriage for Sara shared this interest with her husband.

The schools that Pastor Johnson's sisters taught in were for the most part boarding schools with the number of scholars varying from five to ten in each class. 1 The primary teaching techniques employed revolved around teacher directed activities and student recitation. 2 One of the most serious problems facing boarding schools was that of illness. Often a particular malady would strike a number of the students and teachers, and, in such cases, the school was dismissed and the students sent home. 3 The routine of the schools were rigorous and their principles were based on a Puritanical interpretation of Christian doctrines. 4

Pastor Johnson took particular interest in the work of his sister, Caroline, as her teaching was done almost exclusively in schools under the jurisdiction of the Presbyterian Board of Missions, and was for the greater part with minority groups of Indians and Negroes.

1Letter, Sara Elliot to Mary Elliot, Johnson Papers, September 24, 1873. A description of the situation is in the Appendix.

2Letter, Barnabus Johnson to Susan Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 23, 1866. A description of the situation is in the Appendix.

3Letter, A.S. Jackson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 2, 1865.

4Letter, Elizabeth Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, September 11, 1883. A description of the routine is in the Appendix.
The majority of women were not as actively involved in a variety of activities and services as Pastor Johnson's sisters were, but Thomas apparently saw value in this type of background, and chose a wife whose experience fit into the more actively involved role that the Johnson women took. In talking of the role women took in bettering their societies, Pastor Johnson's mother, Electa, must not be neglected.

Electa Johnson was well known to those around her for there were few homes that had not felt her presence during sickness or other times of difficulty. With her husband engaged in farming as well as ministering to his congregation, much of the planning and co-ordinating of activities in the Baker Johnson home came under Electa's care. Whenever convenient Electa accompanied Baker to meetings of the church session, and was continually involved in running the school held by Baker in their home. She would help those with academic deficiencies and at the same time make them feel at home in their new environment. A further way that Electa involved herself was by providing numerous forms of entertainment for those who shared the hospitality of her Wisconsin frontier home. However, like the "entertaining" activities of the church and community, many resulted in the accomplishment of some necessary task. At other times relief from the duties of a day's work were found in playing croquet, joining in on a molasses pull, engaging in a spelling bee, reading aloud a new book, adding one's voice to a family sing, or heading for a neighbor's home for a friendly visit. Two of the authors
being read with interest during the mid 1880's were Samuel Olemons and Jules Verne.¹

Most of the activities listed above were arranged by the women of the house, and were engaged in only after the work for the day was finished. The fact that Pastor Johnson had grown up in a family in which activities of work and fun were participated in by all, probably influenced his development toward an attitude which stressed involvement. It should be noted that although the above mentioned entertainment activities accomplished no tangible goals, they often, as in the case of reading aloud and spelling bees, were directed toward the intangible goal of broadening one's education. Of all of the forms of entertainment mentioned the one most frequently commented on was that of visiting, or having visitors.

Extended visits of two or three months were not uncommon as one or more of the members of a family would go traveling to renew old friendships, meet new family additions, and catch up on family news from distant friends and relatives along the planned route. The Johnson's particularly enjoyed returning to New Jersey where they had first lived, and where Baker and Electa had been married. When a trip East by members of the family was taken, Thomas generally accompanied the travelers as far as Chicago to insure that they made the correct transfers through the city. There were occasions when he accompanied them all the way to New Jersey, but he generally

¹Letter, Susan Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, December 12, 1869; Letter, Mary Condict to Elizabeth Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 7, 1874.
spent only a short time visiting and then returned home ahead of the rest of his companions. It should be noted that it was most often the women who went visiting. However, Pastor Johnson did far more traveling than the rest of the male members of his family. Obviously the fact that all of the other Johnson men were involved in farming limited the amount of time they could take from their farms for the luxury of visiting distant relations as long distance visiting was done during the summer months.

Shortly after Thomas was married, he enlisted in the Second Regiment of the Wisconsin National Guard and was sworn in as its Chaplain a short time later. The experiences Pastor Johnson had while in the National Guard in conjunction with those he had during the Civil War undoubtedly affected his attitude toward the military. He expressed his feelings toward war and the military in a sermon when he wrote:

War Proclaimed! The black letters stare at me from the newspaper column, and the words, at first, bring before me a vision grand and magnificent of those two armies in the splendor of battle array with glittering weapons, gay uniforms, and swaying plumes. The banners are waving; the trumpets sounding; the cool Russian and the fierce swarthy Turk meet to measure arms (and to decide the question of religious liberty). But the colors change; darkness instead of sunshine falls upon the field; the clangor of trumpets is silenced by the moans of the dying; the sublime has faded into an infinite woe and pain and sorrow.

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1 Letter, Wisconsin Governor Rusk to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, October 15, 1884; Letter, State of Wisconsin to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, December 1, 1884.

2 Thomas Johnson, "The Wisconsin National Guard, A Week in Camp," Johnson Papers, Articles and Sermons, A description from the above article is in the Appendix.
The people of America know but too well the thrill which that proclamation so lately brought to their own hearts, and except in a like religious cause, would not again be willing to shoulder the rifle and march forth to the beat of the drum ... 1

Even though Thomas felt the National Guard served a useful and necessary purpose, it clearly took a backseat to his religion. This can best be shown by examining the situation which caused Pastor Johnson to resign his commission as Captain in the Wisconsin National Guard. The incident which precipitated his resignation was an order which required his regiment of the Guard to be in motion to and from summer camp on Sundays. Thomas wrote a letter to Governor Peck requesting that the orders for the troops moving on the Sabbath be changed. Pastor Johnson's request was refused, and in protest, he submitted his resignation. In justifying his resignation Thomas stated:

I am much grieved at the orders of the Wisconsin National Guard into camp on the Sabbath Day. In time of war or riot it would be all right, and in the late Civil War it was necessary, but not now in the time of peace. I have written to Governor Peck in behalf of the soldiers and railroad men who have need of Sabbath rest and are entitled to it by the statutes of Wisconsin as well as the laws of God. The Governor has made no reply, but I notice that the soldiers are not only ordered into Camp on the Sabbath, but return on the day from Camp.

For this and the reason that I am full of work in my parish and that after eight years in the Wisconsin National Guard I might properly retire now from the service, I would take it very kindly if you would approve my resignation.2

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2Letter, Thomas Johnson to George W. Peck, Johnson Papers, July 8, 1892.
After a request that Thomas reconsider his decision brought no change, Colonel Patton accepted the resignation.¹ This incident ended Pastor Johnson's formal relationship with the military.

One of the activities that engaged a significant portion of Pastor Johnson's time after he was married was the writing of numerous articles for a variety of journals and papers.² Thomas became actively involved in writing and at one time was the Wisconsin editor of "The North and West," and correspondent for "The Presbyterian" of Philadelphia, "The Evangelist" of New York, "The Interior" of Chicago, and "The Presbyterian Journal" of Philadelphia.³ The type of writing done by him varied from articles relating news items of concern to churches in Wisconsin to descriptive portrayals of life in early Wisconsin. In addition to the news items and descriptions, Thomas also used his writing to extend his ministry. A glimpse of this type of writing can perhaps be caught from a note his sister sent him which assured him:

"That letter of yours in the 'Wisconsin' was charming, I

¹Letter, Thomas Johnson to Colonel W.H. Patton, Johnson Papers, July 15, 1892; Letter, Colonel W.H. Patton to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, July 18, 1892; Letter, Adjutant General's Office to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, August 9, 1892.

²The Presbyterian Historical Society, 425 Lombard Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, holds six scrapbooks of articles written by Thomas Johnson of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, dating from 1878 to 1899.

³This information was taken from the letter head of one of Thomas Johnson's pages of business stationary, Johnson Papers, Clippings.
guess that La Crosse man will quickly settle down after that."¹

It seems evident from this statement and other actions discussed in this paper that Pastor Johnson was ready and willing to speak his mind when he felt strongly about an issue, and, in fact, saw it as his Christian duty to speak out whenever he saw men in opposition to the word of God. The opportunity to have his ideas published meant a great deal to him, especially after he retired from the active ministry in 1917 for "he continued writing articles to the religious press and he considered these as sermonettes. Thus he kept alive to the work of preaching through these articles."²

Life did not change a great deal for Pastor Johnson when he became a family man. He continued to be active in community affairs and to attend numerous meetings in Wisconsin and the surrounding states. Two of the changes that did occur, however, were that he no longer took extended trips back to visit friends in the East and his trips to Meadowside became increasingly infrequent. The reason for the latter change was probably due to the death of his father, October 8, 1886, and his mother, April 14, 1887, and the fact that his own increasing age made it more of a task to return to help with the farm work.³

¹Letter, Caroline Johnson to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, March 5, 1879.
²"Beaver Dam Argus," p. 8. col. 3.
³Princeton Necrological Report, p. 15.
CHAPTER V

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THOMAS JOHNSON

The life of Thomas Johnson was not particularly spectacular or adventuresome. He spent most of his adult years in the small community of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin, even though there had been opportunities for him to go further west to help build new churches on the frontier.\(^1\) It can be definitely stated that the significance of Pastor Johnson will never be established by the impact he had on national or international affairs, for he had none, and he did not become a prominent figure concerning affairs even at the state level. In fact few people outside of the area of Beaver Dam probably had ever heard of Thomas Johnson unless they happened to be frequent readers of one or more of the Presbyterian journals for which he wrote. After reading the above facts, it would seem that this paper concerns a man who did little or nothing with his life. However, this certainly is not the case as a short review of some of the activities in which he engaged will point out.

He taught school both before and during the Civil War, served as a Chaplain to two regiments of Negro soldiers, ministered to his congregation in Beaver Dam for fifty years, added to the life of his community by promoting Music

\(^1\)Letters, Edward Savage to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, January 3, 1871, December 11, 1882, and May 6, 1883.
relationships he had with the people he ministered to that his significance must be measured.

An understanding of the feelings people had toward his activities can perhaps be partially seen in the following selections from articles written about him:

Short talks were given by W.E. Snyder and R.T. Mclaughlin, who told of the many good traits of their former pastor, many of which are well known to the older residents especially the most important of which were along the lines of his readiness to help the needy, rich and poor alike. . . . . In his daily life he carried out the idea that if you can say no good of a man then say nothing at all. No matter how much you dislike a man Dr. Johnson can always point out some good trait in the man's life. . . . . The Doctor's habit of always offering a ride to anyone, friend or stranger, and the pleasant greeting which he always gave us as he went about his trips in the surrounding country or as he walked the streets of our city are well known to all. 1

Dr. Johnson began his service as Pastor of Assembly Presbyterian Church on May 3, 1867, and during that time he has not only looked after the Christian welfare of his own congregation but he has been the Christian advisor and comforter of nearly all families in Beaver Dam and vicinity who were not church members. He is frequently called "Father Johnson" for the reason that nearly every man, woman and child has always known him, and if his services are called for by any of them he goes to them the same as he would to any of the members of his church. 2

As well as being respected and honored in his own immediate community, Pastor Johnson was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Divinity from Carroll College in 1914. 3 The only other noteworthy honor that was bestowed upon him was the fact that he was recognized as Pastor Emeritus from

1"Pay Tribute to Reverend Johnson."

2"Serves Fifty Years."

3"To Honor Nestor of Presbyterians," 1917.
Conventions, supporting education and advocating temperance, and preached to a greatly expanded congregation through his writings. In addition to these examples of service to his fellow men are the many ways in which he aided the members of his family with timely loans, gifts, and time freely given to answer requests for help and advice. These types of personal service were not only given to the members of his immediate family, but were extended to others such as a young man wishing to become a minister but lacking the necessary funds, a confused young girl having her Catholic faith challenged by her Presbyterian father, and a convicted murderer serving a life sentence in need of a friend.¹ All of these activities must be considered while remembering that they were in addition to the tasks which require much of a minister's time such as preaching, counseling, evangelizing, visiting, and running the everyday affairs of his church. As regards the usual duties of a minister, Pastor Johnson delivered 3,000 sermons, led 1,500 gospel meetings, officiated at 1,273 funerals, married 632 couples, baptized 514 persons, and welcomed 656 new members into his church during his fifty years of ministry.² It was in doing these types of things that Pastor Johnson came into contact with people and it was the

¹Letter, Issac Parry to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, Unknown 25, 1875; Letter, Jenie Alexander to Thomas Johnson, Johnson Papers, July 21, 1872; and Johnson, Diary of 1869, June 21.

the time of his resignation in 1917, to the time of his death, February 11, 1927. His obituaries were highly complimentary, and lauded his work with the Negro Freedmen, especially, "... the establishment of schools for the colored people, the forerunner of the schools for freedmen ..."², his lengthy service as pastor of the Assembly Presbyterian Church, his work with young people in the community, and his service as trustee of the two colleges, Carroll and Downer.³

All of these facts serve to dramatize that Pastor Thomas Johnson's long life was one of service carried out in an honorable manner and filled with doing all that he could to fulfill his duties as a Christian and as a minister of God. Duties which took him not only to his immediate congregation, but to an expended congregation which included all men in need of God's grace. He had a great deal of influence for good on those about him. Influence, which like the service he rendered cannot be measured in a tangible way, but which moved one person to write about him, "People will forget his sermons but they will never forget him who practiced what he preached."⁴

Perhaps the most valuable insight to be gained from this study is the realization that there were and are many

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²"Beaver Dam Argus," February 17, 1927, p. 1, Col. 4.
³Ibid.
⁴Ibid., p. 8, Col. 4.
people who exert a tremendous influence on others around them, but unless something spectacular occurs to draw attention to them they are quickly forgotten by a history which presses unceasingly forward to reveal the unusual and exciting events that make "history." That this lack of recognition of the "ordinary" is desirable or undesirable is not to be decided here, but simply posed as a worthy element to be mindful of when studying the history of man. Thus, had fate decided to place Thomas Scott Johnson in the light of the spectacular, an image would have been reflected worthy of the attention and admiration of history.
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B. SECONDARY SOURCES


A DESCRIPTION of the EARLY CHURCH LIFE of T.S. JOHNSON

In his most interesting history of the Middle Smithfield Church Brother Van Allen made reference to the old pulpit and the high gallery of the church. Those features of the church always made a deep impression in me. When a very little boy my good father took me up in the pulpit with him where he could watch me and where I had to sit still and be good while he conducted the service. The pulpit was high and afforded a fine view of the congregation. It was a most interesting sight to see the people coming into their pews, the men on the right and the women on the left . . . . When I was older, a seat was assigned me, just in front of the right aisle next to the pew of Judge Collbaugh and Jeremy Mackey. It was a good place for a boy and when the sermon was too long, and the boy uneasy, my good neighbors would pass me a peppermint or a little cake and all would be right.

AN EMBARRASSING INCIDENT IN CHURCH

One Sunday morning, Henry Shoemaker invited me to sit with him in the gallery. I thought it would be very nice and we went up into the high gallery and sat down on the front seat on the right side. The service was going on as usual. They got through the singing and reading Scripture. Mr. Peters and George LaBar had passed around for the offering. Father began his sermon. Henry Shoemaker and I heard the text and tried to fix it in memory for we were always asked to give the text when we reached home. The sermon went on and on. While we were whispering and showing our new suspenders, the sermon stopped and my father's voice came up to the gallery: "If my boy will come down to his seat in the church we will go on with the sermon." I came down much humiliated from that high gallery, and took my regular seat. It was a good lesson for me and for other boys, but I imagined that it ruined my reputation and the good people of the Middle Smithfield Church would never forgive me for whispering and disturbing the meeting. It was a real comfort to me that they did forgive me, and when Mr. Peter Jayne died a few years later they gave me his place as janitor, and I built the fires and swept out the church for two years to the great joy of my heart and life.
THE INHOSPITABLE FARMER

We were hastening down the bluff and proceeded some distance on our way, when an incident illustrating the inhospitability of some farmers, was brought to remembrance, that occurred on our journey along here last winter. It was snowing, and almost dark. We had been traveling forty miles, and were obliged to reach Columbus that night to take the cars for Milwaukee the next day. We stopped at a farm house to enquire the way—saluted the host pleasantly—and sat down to warm by a comfortable fire. The family were eating supper, and the table was spread with good substantial fare. The man of the house invited us to supper. We thanked him and told him we were in a hurry but if he pleased he might give us a cup of tea. This was poured out for us and despatched. When thanking him, we arose to depart. After a little hemming and hawing, he modestly informed us that we were indebted to him the amount of ten cents. Of course we paid him and left, with no high opinion of his virtues.

We were now going by the same place, and had scarcely passed the house when some person called out, "Hallo! Hold on!" we stopped, and looking around beheld our benevolent tea-seller of last winter, and the following conversation ensued.

MAN—Didn't you call at my house last winter and get a cup of tea?

AGRICOLA—Yes sir. I believe so.

MAN—I knew it was you right away. I told the old woman so.

AGRICOLA—Well sir, I have no time to parley now; but I tell you, if ever you should happen up our way and get benighted, tired and hungry, just call at our house and you shall have the best cup of tea we can muster and you needn't pay ten cents for it either.

Thus ended the conversation of the hospitable farmer and AGRICOLA.
Quartes H. M.S. C.5.
Broads Santiago, Texas, Oct. 26th 1863.

Sir Mr. Chaplin,

With pleasure that I take this

opportunity of writing you a few lines to let

know how am at this time thanks the Lord

I hope that these few lines may find you well

enjoying good health as am now enjoying thanks

I hope the Lord will be with you and bless you

me how to spell and read. I find I hope

will have good luck! I love the mean that

me how to read spell for I love to learn

wish to learn your name if you please.

Nothing more to say your fully


write man will rise with the sun or before it

sun will set at close of the day. Good boy

e the leaves with care. A man can guide a horse

bride. The earth is not quite round. it is not

from north to south as it from east to west.

is a round body or globe. For the note are the

small. We love to hear a chime of bells.

that will face in. Style not in verbose is called

phrase is a short form of speech.
Joseph H. Bunch.

Harrison Dam, James Ellison
Elgin Homes, James Clayton
James Grandy

Schools of the S.H.U.S. B.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Joseph Bunch

Joseph Bunch & wants learn you my name is chaplin. so if you and I get home I will write you a letter.
Dear Brother: I thus address you because you have been a brother and a friend. I have this day received your letter. And what a letter! What a spirit it does breathe! Can it be possible that the writer of such a letter has been meeting day after day for prayer. We are much surprised and grieved. How any person professing to be a Christian much less a Christian minister could write such a letter is more than I can conceive. Would the spirit of that letter carried out produce love and forbearance which the gospel enjoins? No! But it would produce strife, hard words and heart burnings which years could not heal. And now, what is the great crime which seems to have worked you up into such a fury? I did not come down to take up that note at the bank at the time you expected. But has Mr. Barrett been dissatisfied that the note was not taken up? You know very well that they have more money to loan than they can get out. That they would willingly extend the time on it. The trouble then would be with yourself, you would have the great trouble of having the note extended. Well! I am very sorry that I have subjected you to any inconvenience, that you should have to walk down to the bank and ask for a still further favour for me . . . . I am very sorry you are so uneasy about your money. We feel that the security you have is ample and that you ought to wait until we can make payments which we hope to do . . . . Our best wishes attend you and hope that nothing may occur to destroy the friendship so long existing. Sincerely, your Friend and Brother, E.S. Peck.
The singers of Beaver Dam are taking hold enthusiastically to make this Convention a success, and a sufficient number from abroad are expected to constitute a grand chorus of 200, and orchestra of 75.

It is hoped that all who can, will bring music and come prepared to sing solos, duets, trios, and quartets; to add increased attraction to the convention.

The Convention will close on Friday evening with a grand Concert, at which selections from the most popular oratorios will be brought out as well as other choruses practiced at the Convention, agreeably interspersed with solos, duets, trios, and quartets by the best talent in the West. Price of admission to Concert, twenty-five cents.

Members of the Convention from abroad will be entertained free of expenses during the session. Strangers are requested to report themselves upon arrival to the Committee at the Hall, who will see that they are suitably provided for.

Tickets of Membership that will admit to all the exercises of the Convention and the Concert will be sold at $2.00 each. Honorary members who wish to enjoy the privileges of the Convention and Concert, but cannot take an active part, can purchase tickets at the same rate if they desire . . . .

LETTERS OF FAITH

This is my great trial but I hope I may ever have grace given me from my Heavenly Father to enable me to submit cheerfully. I am afraid however that my Christian Experience has not yet been of such a kind as that I could say it is good for me that I have been afflicted. I sometimes tremble when I think how apt I am to murmur against God’s providential dealings whilst I ought to be praising him for his goodness to me.

I long to know you are daily learning the sweet lesson of perfect submission to the will of God! Pardon me for the manner of giving utterance to this feeling as though there might be a doubt whether you did exercise that most exalted of Christian tempers, perfect and entire submission to the will of our Heavenly Father . . . . I think of my dear companion called away . . . in the prime of life, but he had done a life's work, a long life too. My heart says Amen! to that stroke which at one blow made me a widow and my children fatherless.
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DESCRIPTION OF THE THOMAS JOHNSON HOME

I must mention a very pleasant thing which I know will interest you when I was returning from South Beaver Dam yesterday afternoon I drove through a very fine farming region and enjoyed some pleasant views of hills and vales. Both Rosa and myself were somewhat tired and dirty and warm. When we came along by a comfortable looking house with pleasant grounds and a barn in the rear. Rosa was bound to go in and before I knew it she was running in a roadway and standing against the barn door as if she wanted to go in and get away from the flies and the big two seated wagon. As she had been a good horse all day I humored her fancy and unhitched her from the wagon and led her into a vacant stall and gave her some hay. There was nobody around the house so I strolled around the grounds and picked up an apple which lay temptingly near and which I enjoyed very much as it was so ripe and fine flavored. While I was resting on the side porch I returned to try my key in the door and it fitted exactly, and I came into a well furnished apartment with adjoining rooms all comfortably fitted up with piano, pictures, and modern furniture. There was no one to hinder, and so I passed quietly through the hall into the dining room and kitchen where I found everything in order. Here were hot and cold water, refrigerator, china closet, and table all set with dishes. There was a nice sideboard and tricyole at one end of the dining room and I found some sweethead and butter in the pantry, a bowl of coffee on the table, and some fine applesauce in the refrigerator. I couldn't resist the temptation and sat down to a good supper, and ate so much that I felt sleepy and after trying to fight it off by walking around and giving Rosa some more hay and water, I went into one of the upstairs rooms out of the way and went to sleep. When I woke up it was morning. Everything was still until I heard a steam whistle and a church bell ringing, and so I got up and found Rosa all right and ready for her oats. I waited a while but nobody came around and so I got up a nice breakfast of coffee and eggs and felt much refreshed. It is so nice in this comfortable house and so rainy outside that I have made up my mind to stop a while. I am sure you will be pleased that I am so well fixed. As I was looking around the neighborhood this morning I noticed some remarkably fine people. One whose name is Shepard gave me a pail of excellent milk and a Mrs. Ross, an aged Scotch lady, invited me over to dinner with her. The bell and whistles are sounding for 12:00 o'clock, and I have to say goodbye and go over to Mrs. Ross for dinner.
The girls in school are quite young and do not seem to have much "maturity" even as girls of the same age at Painesville. The school is small. I think not quite 50 scholars, so that the boarding establishment is more nearly on the scale of Savannah than of Painesville. There is one hired girl so the girls do not do all their work, and there is not much "system" as at P. nor as much strictness. There is one thing that I must tell you. That is that we go to church in procession. Miss Shepland and myself leading the way. . . I forgot to say my classes are small--7 being the largest.

About how my time is taken up I have 3 hours recitations daily and it takes most of the rest of my time to get them. I saw and bring in wood, go down town for market and mail often so that my time is about taken up. I study mostly in Farrand's room we keep a fire there all day and study together it's more pleasant than to study alone.

The rules for cleanliness and for general ladylike behavior are just beautiful and well enforced. I have fourteen lovely girls to take care of. They room in seven rooms on either side of a long hall and mine is the eighth room. I stop at each door on my way downstairs in the morning, to see that they have aired their beds, opened their windows, and taken their lamps downstairs to be cleaned. During the day I excuse them for faults and give permission to enter rooms or walk down street. I look in their cupboards, etc; to see if they are tidy, and I kiss them all good night after the lights are out.
THE NATIONAL GUARD IN CAMP

It will be interesting to many people . . . to know that in each state there are organizations of militia which are drilled and trained by competent officers and are in readiness for any emergency that may arise in the suppression of riots or in preserving the peace of the states. The companies of militia are called the National Guard and in addition to the regular Army make a formidable body of soldiers who are ready at an hours notice for active duty . . . .

An annual meeting of the officers is held in Madison where they receive instruction and drill from competent Army officers, and once a year a Summer School of Instruction is held where the different companies of each regiment meet for a week and go in camp as they would in the regular service with guard duty, battalion drill and dress parades as in any part of the regular Army. Here they are drilled and inspected by officers appointed and a day is appointed for prize drills and a review before the Governor which attracts immense crowds of people and creates the greatest excitement and public interest . . . . The modern soldier uses a good rifle and is trained to load and fire from different positions so rapidly he is practically master of the situation and the fact of his being separated from his company lessens the casualties and allows rear and flank movements and reserves which assures the prompt rebuke of communism and the overthrow of rioters in their wild and unorganized assaults upon the community . . . .

In the afternoon an inspection and review of the troops was held before the Governor and his staff. Over ten thousand people were in attendance and the great crowd were enthusiastic in their praise of the gallant soldiers and the splendid skirmish drill of the Infantry, Cavalry, and Artillery in the same field. Blank cartridges were used in the drill and the movements of the troops, the sound of the trumpeters, and the firing of the guns gave a vivid idea of a battlefield in earnest, and it was the finest display of Military Evolution that has been seen in this part of the state.

The little city of tents of the encampment went down on Saturday and today the cattle are feeding quietly in the pasture field which was the scene of the majestic drills and parades of the Wisconsin National Guard. About 11 o'clock on Saturday the tents were struck. A tap of drums, the boom of the gun, and three hundred tents went down. The flag ran down the staff and the camp of the Second Regiment with the Cavalry and the Battery was broken up and each company marched to the railroad station to leave for home and friends to drill and attempt to do better work for the next review.