

Local Residents Were Frozen to Death

Last week we read about people who were injured by the cold. Today we will hear about others who were not as fortunate.

John Conley found his 46-year-old brother, Mike, dead in his home about four miles south of Monroe on Sunday, January 8, 1905. There was no fire in John's house where he lived alone; the body was frozen stiff. John, who lived a short distance away, had seen Mike on Friday. John had passed by the house twice on Saturday and did not see anyone and noticed no smoke coming from the chimney. He went over on Sunday afternoon and forced his way into the locked house. Mike was laying across the bed partially dressed. He had placed the kindling for the morning fire behind the stove. It was believed that he had been dead since Saturday morning.

It was reported in January 1910 that Edward Norder, a 27-year-old blacksmith was frozen weeks earlier under the Banta bridge of the Milwaukee railroad about two miles west of Monroe. His body was found by George O'Meara and Dan Parmer while they were hunting. The body, which was frozen fast to the ground, was at the bottom of a steep embankment with all but one shoulder buried in the snow. Some believed that he had been lying there since the first snowfall in early December.

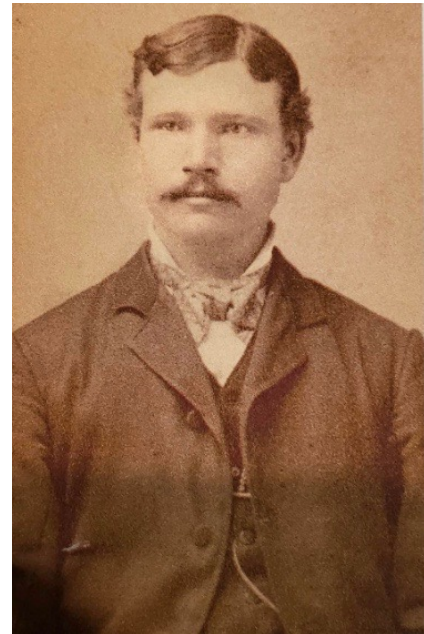
Parties who had seen Norder did not agree on the time of his disappearance. Some said he left the city on December 11 to return to the Trickle farm west of the city where he had been working, which was the night of the first heavy snow. L. H. Norder, the Jackson street blacksmith, said that he saw his brother on the following Monday. Norder said his brother was going to Iowa where he would take a job as a blacksmith. Edward had also talked of going to work for Knipschild, where he was expected to show up the following Monday morning.

It was believed Edward perished while searching for his hat. The hat was found some distance from the body. It was explained that the wind must have blown his hat off and that he went down the embankment to retrieve it. He had been cut by the wire fence he went through. He must have become exhausted while climbing back up. He was lying on his back with the overcoat collar pulled up under his face with his arms folded. That snowstorm was followed by bitter cold, making it possible that he was frozen in a short time.

Will Olson found the frozen body of Iver Gordee about two miles north of Browntown while returning home from the Norwegian church about 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 12, 1913. Gordee had ridden with the Olsons in the rain from Browntown to the Olson farm Saturday evening. Mr. Olson had one of his sons accompany Gordee part of the way home from there. "Having gone within a short distance of Gordee's house, Young Olson turned back, expecting the man would reach home safely. His clothes were wet from the rain Saturday night and froze to his body." Gordee, who lost his wife to diphtheria in January 1908, had been addicted to alcohol for some time; because of this Herman Fritz of Monroe had been appointed his guardian.

Another sad, tragic death was attributed to mental health issues. Hattie Maddrell, almost 40, from South Wayne, was found frozen to death "at a lonely spot in a field a mile northwest of the county farm" on December 30, 1917 after drinking four ounces of formaldehyde. Her body was found the next morning by a county farm patient who was setting traps for game. "Whether the slow setting poison she had swallowed took effect before the bitter cold of the night congealed her body will probably always remain an unanswered question."

Miss Maddrell had been suffering from mental health issues for the previous month while staying with her brother, Harry. After he had briefly left home that afternoon, she left the house and rode the



This photo of Iver Gordee as a young man was provided by Beth Luhman. Unfortunately, Iver was frozen to death in 1911 at the age of 48 and found near his home north of Browntown. He was buried in the cemetery at the Jordan Lutheran Church.

passenger train to Monroe. Nothing is known about her time in Monroe, except that she purchased the formaldehyde at a local drug store.

Maddrell's body was found "in a little gully that had been washed out by water, seated on a little ledge. She had broken off the top of the cork in the bottle and then had broken the neck of the bottle in order to drain its contents. After drinking the poison, she had laid the bottle an arm's reach from her and placed her muff over it."

A very short article on Friday, December 27, 1918, informed the readers that Henry Krueger, about 50, of Gratiot, was found frozen to death that morning in a cornfield near Gratiot. He was a brother of S. W. Krueger and was "last seen Tuesday night following the blizzard."

The Times reported on January 15, 1916, "Jack Hyde, the friend of all, and for the past eight or ten years a familiar character about the public square, met death last night by freezing. His lifeless body was found this morning in the alley to the rear of the east side of the square."

Jack had spent most of his time in the business district with Abe Heer's meat market being one of his favorite haunts as he was sure to get sufficient food there through the kindness of the owner. He sought a bed in some hallway at night, usually one where he could enjoy steam heat. Most commonly he would lodge in Dr. Roub's office. He apparently didn't reach there before it was closed that night.

"Jack was known to all in the city and was a friend to all. He was never known to do a mean act and so far as known was without enemies. Jack, while only a dog, had many good qualities." He was the property of Spy Hyde.