

In Memory of Frank C. Niles  
AN ADDRESS BY CONRAD H. MANN  
AT THE SALVATION ARMY CITADEL KANSAS CITY, MO.  
SEPTEMBER SIXTEENTH, NINETEEN THIRTY-TWO

Frank C. Niles  
1858-1932

Frank C. Niles was born in Waymart, Pennsylvania, October 21, 1858. His father was a country doctor, in active practice for over fifty years.

Frank attended the country school and took a business course in a school located in Philadelphia. At the age of sixteen he taught school during the Winter and the next two years he managed a country store. In the Fall of 1878 he started West to seek his fortune. Settling first in St. Paul, he secured a position as a traveling salesman for a wholesale grocery house.

He could and often did indulge in telling many interesting tales of the early West, for, while connected with the St. Paul corporation, his first work took him into the Dakotas and into Canada. In later years he spent a great deal of his time in Kansas.

It was about that time that he adopted a definite line of action, and having known him intimately I am satisfied that his decision was in keeping with the writing of Joshua as it is found in Chapter 24 and verse 15:

"And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom ye will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

He proceeded to carry out his newly determined course when he came to Kansas City in the early eighties, when the center of the business district was at 5th and Main. In those days he had established his home

in Wichita, Kansas, where he lived for many years, and it was there that he formed a partnership with the late E. S. Moser under the firm name of Niles and Moser, which firm opened up for business in St. Joseph, Missouri, in 1899, moving to Kansas City in 1900. Frank Niles put his whole personality into this firm and was the active director of its affairs, that had grown to enormous proportion, until the time of his death.

Frank Niles was always ready to help his friends, even at the time when he did not have the means, and having determined on this as a definite principle of his life his daily actions were governed by the words of Proverbs:

"Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it.

Say not unto thy neighbor, Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give; when thou has it by thee."

His interest in the various religious, charitable and social uplift organizations was well known. He became actively interested in the work of the Salvation Army, and the deep concern that he felt and the splendid work which he did through the instrumentality of this great religious and social uplift organization was undoubtedly due to his determination to, if possible, live up to the injunction of St. Matthew:

"Judge not, that ye be not judged.

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall

be measured to you again.

And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

It was he who, by his actual work, generated hope in the hearts of those to whom everything seemed to be hopeless. Men and women alike, who had grown desperate and who had finally reached a point where they felt all human kind was against them and who were beginning to doubt the love of God and His everlasting mercy, felt the guiding hand of Frank Niles.

Then he became interested with Doctor Richardson in a mercy ward for Negro children. It was because of the money made available by Frank Niles that Dr. Richardson was able to found the Wheatley Mercy Ward for Negro children in Wheatley Provident Hospital at 19th and Forest. He did not stop there. That was just a beginning, for the present children's wing on the hospital was built by Mr. Wm. Volker and Mr. Frank Niles.

He was always interested in underprivileged children as well as under-privileged grownups. He turned to the Negro child as the one most neglected, the result being The Niles Home for Negro Children at 1911 East 23rd Street, which he built and equipped. When the building was ready for occupancy the children had their supper in the old building and were taken over and put to bed in their new building, with everything new in the building. This home is being maintained through the Allied Charities and with the assistance of the County Court, who make available the money for its running expenses, but it was Mr. Niles who, not content with erecting and equipping the home, kept the building and the grounds in the best possible condition, at his own expense.

This work of Frank Niles makes him eligible for that selection to which reference is made in the Gospel of St. Matthew:

"Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:

For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in:

Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.'

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, 'Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink.

When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee?

Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?'

And the King shall answer and say unto them, 'Verily, I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.'"

He was very active in all the movements, charitable, social, industrial, financial, that had a tendency to make Kansas City a better place in which to live. His word was his bond.

He was an excellent companion. Wherever his travels may have taken him he quickly established contact, even in strange lands, and those who were privileged to meet and greet and know him, as we have known him here in Kansas City, have been enriched by and through their acquaintanceship with him.

His family life was a happy one. He and Mrs. Niles were not only man and wife but they were pals, they were companions, they enjoyed the finer things of life to the limit. They found

happiness in having done that which makes others happy. To them the rising sun meant just another day in which they could do good. To them the setting sun meant just another rest period during which night itself could surcharge the depleted nerve cells, generate new energy so they could start on the uncompleted task where they had left off the night before.

His was a useful life; his was a constructive existence. He was permitted to live not only the three score and ten but several years in addition thereto. At a ripe age he underwent a serious operation. He regained his health and notwithstanding the advice of his doctors and his friends he became more active than ever before in doing that which would bring greater happiness to all and especially to the under-privileged.

His life will furnish inspiration and guidance to generations yet unborn, for as long as the history of Kansas City and the Middle West shall be recorded the name of Frank C. Niles, the things that he has done, will stand forth as a beacon for others to follow and be guided by.

As a friend and one who was privileged to get a glimpse into his very soul now and then, I pay this tribute in my own humble way:

May your ashes rest in peace and your soul find that repose that was promised by the Son of God to be the reward of the faithful. You have lived up to the Biblical admonition as found in the Gospel of St. Matthew, Chapter 7, verse 12,

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets."

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