

DEATH CLAIMS PROMINENT MAN

Benjamin F. Thomas Dies in Atlantic City.

Lawyer, Chemist and Prosperous Business Man.

**Head of Coca-Cola Bottling
Company and One of City's
Leading Citizens.**

Benjamin Franklin Thomas, aged 82 years, lawyer, chemist and capitalist, and one of the best known men in Chattanooga, died in Atlantic City, N. J., early Thursday morning, after an illness of a few months. Mr. Thomas suffered a stroke of paralysis early in January. Hoping to be benefited by a change of climate, he left this city for the New Jersey summer resort in May. He was accompanied by his wife and Dr. Joseph Johnston, his physician. The change effected no material results for the better, and about dawn today he passed to the great beyond.

He is survived by his wife, who, prior to her marriage, was Miss Anne Taylor; two sisters, Mrs. E. T. Hunter, of Maysville, Ky., and Mrs. Jones, of California, and a nephew, George T. Hunter, of Chattanooga.

Mr. Thomas was born in Maysville, Ky. His early boyhood was spent in the Bluegrass State. He received his education in the common schools and at the University of Virginia. He attended the Cincinnati Law school.

In November, 1887, he came to Chattanooga. He formed a law partnership with E. Y. Chapin and H. M. Wiltse, the style of the firm being Chapin, Wiltse & Thomas. Later he became a member of the firm of Pritchard & Sizer. The new firm was known as Pritchard, Sizer & Thomas.

Leaving his law practice, Mr. Thomas became associated with W. M. and T. H. Lasley in the paving business. He continued in this business until 1898, when he accepted a responsible position with the United States government in Cuba during the Spanish-American war.

At the close of the war he returned to Chattanooga, and soon after became associated with the late J. B. Whitehead in organizing the Coca-Cola Bottling company. Later he withdrew from the Whitehead company and organized a separate bottling company, of which he continued as practical head until his death. In truth he conceived the idea of bottling coca-cola, and is largely responsible for the large success of this company.

As an amateur chemist the deceased was well known all over the United States. Chemical research was his chief diversion. He maintained a fine laboratory for experimental work. He was a member of the National Society of Chemists, and was a prominent figure at the meetings of this organization.

He owned considerable property, principally on Lookout mountain. His new home on the mountain was in course of construction and was almost completed when he was stricken.

Mr. Thomas was one of the best known men in Chattanooga. He was a man of great public spirit, and without letting it be known gave liberally to every public need. As a barrister he achieved an enviable reputation and was ranked as a leader in the legal profession.

He was a Knight Templar and a prominent member of the Mountain City club. The Mountain club on Lookout mountain was founded by him. He also belonged to the Golf and Country club.

High tribute to the life and character of Mr. Thomas was paid by Mr. Chapin, one of his closest friends.