

Who's Who In Wisconsin Rapids

The Who's Who column will be run each Saturday in the Wisconsin Rapids Daily Tribune. It will include a brief sketch of the life of citizens who have helped make history for Wisconsin Rapids.

Archie McMillan



ARCHIE McMILLAN

What grit, energy, sound will and good Scotch determination can accomplish has been thoroughly proved in the life of Archie McMillan, a son of David and Isabella Baid McMillan. Mr. McMillan was born in Manchester, Eng., Apr. 8, 1839. When 6 years old while attending school, young McMillan had a misunderstanding with a neighbor lad about the same age which ended in a fight. In the fight Archie was kicked in his left hip which left him lame ever since.

A short time after his misfortune, it was found necessary to perform a surgical operation on the injured limb, and Dr. Braird, a noted Scotch surgeon was called to do the work. The doctor administered ether as an anesthetic. Mr. McMillan is the first person ever known to receive this treatment.

Left England in 1850

In the early part of April in the year 1850, the McMillan family left

England on board the ship Rocius, an American liner touching the American shore at New York City. They resided there for two years. When leaving England Archie had no opportunity to return his books to the school house where they belonged, so he packed them among his other belongings and brought them to this country. The books were a Day and Thompson arithmetic, a Monteith geography, a Harper's history and a slate. They all did great service a few years later.

Came To Wisconsin

After residing for two years in New York City the McMillan family moved to Pine River, Waushara County, in this state where Archie's father bought a farm near the city. His sons, Archie and George, did the chores and assisted in other farm work.

At that time there were no schools in Pine River and Archie and his brother determined they would continue their education even though they had no teacher to assist them. After their day's work was done they would take the books and slate which they brought with them and study evenings by the aid of a light from pine knots and a rag saturated with lard and placed in a saucer. There being only one slate, the boys would divide the time in its use and one of them would use it every other evening to work out his examples, while the other brother would use their mother's bread pan turned upside down. They used a piece of clay pipe for a slate pencil. In the winter of 1853, the boys had studied the arithmetic through the second time, and this year finished their education. The slate they used is still in Mr. McMillan's possession and is greatly valued by him, not only as a memento of his birthplace, but also its great aid to him in his search for knowledge.

Was Waushara Farmer

Mr. McMillan lived in Waushara county for forty years when he was engaged in farming and owned one

of the best stocks of cattle, sheep and hogs in that community.

At the fall election of 1876 he was elected by the republican party to the office of clerk of circuit court of Waushara county which office he held for six years. Durign that time the late Hon. G. L. Park of Stevens Point was the Circuit Judge. G. L. Park was the father of Byron B. Park of Stevens Point, the present judge of this circuit. During the legislative sessions of 1887 and 1888 Mr. McMillan was employed as engrossing clerk in the assembly room in Madison.

Came to Centralia

In the latter part of April 1891, Mr. McMillan disposed of his farm and stock and retired from farming and came to this city, then Centralia, and entered into a business partnership with his brother George, buying and shipping farm produce. The McMillan brothers erected the first potato warehouse in this city. They remained in business until the Northwestern Railroad was built here, when they sold their property to the railway company and retired from business altogether.

Former City Clerk

The second year after coming to this city, Mr. McMillan was elected city clerk, which office he served for three successive years. He was also one of the members of the jury commission for more than fifteen years and was obliged to retire on account of his advanced age and poor health.

On February 24, 1876, Mr. McMillan was united in marriage to Mrs. Margaret (Courtney) Moore. Their union has been blessed with two daughters, Mary Belle, who is professor of mathematics at the River Falls Normal at River Falls, Wis., and Anna, one of the faculty at the Stout Institute in Menominee where she is at the head of the Art Costume department.

Mason for 50 Years

Mr. McMillan has always been an enthusiastic republican and has voted the ticket from the time Abraham Lincoln was elected president, to the election of the present chief executive, Warren G. Harding. He has been a member of the Masonic order for half a century, taking his first degree in the Wautoma Lodge, the first Saturday in February in 1871. Only three people who were members at that time are still living. They are Mr. McMillan and his brother George both of this city and their brother-in-law, H. E. Frisbie of Pine River.

About ten years ago Mr. McMillan's health grew worse, and he has suffered greatly ever since due to the injuries he received when he was kicked by his schoolmate. For the past two and a half years he has been confined to his home, more or less. Since last October he has been unable to

go out of doors, but with all his intense suffering he is always able to greet his friends with a smile and enjoys a visit with any of them who drop in to see him. His keen intellect makes him a good and interesting entertainer. After one has been in the company of Archie McMillan they always leave with the satisfaction of a pleasant visit and having gained knowledge thru the interesting conversation.