

# 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.

## C. H. Bender



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Charles A. Bender, son of Abraham and Parmola Bender, was born Sept. 6, 1843 in Sullivan, N. Y. He is a descendant of John and Thankful Tripp Cook. John Cook served as quartermaster in the Revolutionary war and at the close of the war married and settled in Oenota, N. Y., where he resided during the remainder of his life. He was the great-great-grandfather of Mr. Bender. Mr. Bender's parents left the state of New York in the year 1855 and moved to Marquette, Illinois, where they resided for a time, later coming to Wisconsin and locating on a farm near Plainfield from where they conveyed their grain to Berlin, the nearest market.

### "The Little 'Slab' School house"

Mr. Bender received his education in the district school. The first school he attended was held in a school house built of slabs, with benches made of slabs, serving as seats.

In those days hop raising was a great industry, and hop picking season was a gala time for the young people, who would pick hops in the fields. Through the day time and at night would gather at some home in the neighborhood to enjoy dancing from early evening till nearly next morning. The music for these occasions usually was furnished by one fiddler.

### Visits Here When 17

At the age of seventeen years Charles Bender made his first visit to this city, crossing the river from Centralia to Grand Rapids by boat, that being the only means of transportation at that time. Centralia boasted of no streets but was mostly dense woods and marsh land with a few shanties, and also a very few buildings in Grand Rapids. Mr. Bender remembers the time of a great snow fall when a heavy crust formed over the top of the snow strong enough to hold teams, pedestrians and animals, the latter being very numerous. Among other deer were plentiful. They would gather in groups and in their efforts to escape, would tire out, making it possible to get them with little trouble. Owing to the scarcity of other meat, venison was served quite commonly, and was not considered the luxury it now is.

Early in the seventies Mr. Bender entered into a copartnership with his brother-in-law, P. J. Johnson, in the milling business at Sagel where they owned and operated a saw mill, and where Mr. Bender moved with his family. After a time he sold his interest in the mill to Mr. Johnson and again went to Plainfield where he stayed for a while. He then went back East for a visit with relatives, after which he returned to Wisconsin.

### Served in Civil War

Mr. Bender is a Civil war veteran, having enlisted at Madison, in 1864 with Co. H, First Wisconsin Cavalry, serving as blacksmith. He contracted smallpox which laid him up for some time, and upon his recovery, he was assigned to the duties of hospital nurse. He was honorably discharged in 1866.

July 4, 1875, he was united in marriage to Miss Margaret Pellerets of Sac City, Iowa, who passed away on January 21, 1921, at their home in Wisconsin Rapids. After their marriage, the young couple lived in Plainfield from where they moved to Centralia, where Mr. Bender bought a lot, on which the Emerson school house now stands, and built a house and blacksmith shop. He afterwards sold this property, and entered into the same business with Charles Wanser, in a shop built by them on the site of the present Soo R. R. station. He also disposed of this property and his next venture was in the stone quarry business, when he bought a farm and quarry a few miles west of this city, where he lived until four years of age when owing to the failing health of his wife and his advanced age, he decided to sell, retire alto-

gether from business, and return to this city.

### Seven Children in Family

Mr. and Mrs. Bender were blessed with seven children: Mrs. Emmet Warren, and Miss Lulu Bender of Beattie, Wash.; Henry Bender of Buckeye, Arizona; Mrs. George A. Otto, Charles W. Bender Jr., Francis Bender and Leonard Bender of this city. He also has fifteen grandchildren. While nearing his seventy-eighth birthday, he is still active and enjoys good health. He spends his summers in this city with his daughter, Mrs. George A. Otto, and family, and his winters at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Emmet Warren and family in Seattle, Wash.

He is not a member of any church but has always practiced christianity throughout his life, being very philanthropic and charitable. He is a man of quiet and unassuming ways. He is a member of the G. A. R. Post No. 22 of this city, a life long republican and a man well worthy to add to the list of the sturdy pioneers of Wisconsin Rapids.

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