

# 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.

## Mrs. Clara Snyder Parker



MRS. CLARA SNYDER PARKER

In turning to the front pages of the history of Wisconsin Rapids, we find many interesting subjects among the early residents of the Wisconsin pineries out of which this beautiful city grew and developed. One name that closely follows the preface is Mrs. Clara Snyder Parker who was born in Fredona, N. Y. on July 20, 1843. Her parents were Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Snyder who left the state of New York when she was one year of age and came to Chicago, Ill., where her father bought forty acres of land which has since become part of the heart of the present big city.

The Snyder family remained in Chicago for a year when they moved to a farm of one hundred and sixty acres near the town of Greenwood in the state of Illinois. They continued to reside in that vicinity for ten years, during which time Mrs. Snyder passed away, leaving her husband with the care of seven sons and four daughters.

### Sought Fortunes Here

About this time rumors were afloat of the great wealth in the Wisconsin pineries and Mr. Snyder was persuaded to sell his farm in Illinois and come to this state where he would reach the end of the rainbow and find the pot of gold. Early in the year 1855 he arrived here with his family and settled on a farm near the Five Mile Creek where he purchased a tract of land of five hundred and eighty acres for which he paid \$1.25 per acre.

At that time Wood county was a part of Portage county with the county seat located in Stevens Point where all land owners had to go to have their papers put on record.

When Mrs. Parker arrived here she had never before seen a red man or a pine tree and both were wonders to her. The entire population consisted of about fourteen families, all very congenial people, rejoicing in each other's happiness and sharing each other's sorrows.

### Only One Store

Main Street had only one business place, a general store which was owned by T. B. Scott and managed by his brother James. After a short time a second general store was added by J. L. Mosher in the building owned by him which at present is occupied by the New Meat Market. A small frame school house consisting of one room was built at the corner of Eighth street north and Baker street to provide for the education of the younger generation. The first teacher was Miss Susan Compton who afterward became the bride of R. C. Worthington.

The school house soon became too small to accommodate the number of school children who attended and a new place was provided in the second story of the Mosher building with Miss Jane Hall as teacher who succeeded Miss Compton.

### Catholic Church First

The first church here was the Catholic Church which was built on the site of the present SS. Peter & Paul's Catholic church, after Mrs. Parker came here. Father David was the first priest here. Later new ministers began to arrive and the town began to put on a more city-like appearance.

The Comptons, the Woods and the Garrisons who came here a few years before Mrs. Parker's arrival were all former neighbors of the Snyder family when they lived in Illinois.

### The First Tragedy

Mrs. Parker described the first tragedy in this section developed by an Indian scare which came from the news of the murder of Mrs. Salter who lived near Necedah, and whose husband sold liquor to the red men. Once when Mr. Salter was absent from his home, two Indians came in the house and asked for liquor. Mrs. Salter told them she had none, but they insisted that she had some and she could not convince them that she was telling the truth. Her husband had just finished making some axe handles which stood

against the wall and when the Indians found that they could not get the wine they picked up the axe handles and pounded the body of Mrs. Salter to a pulp.

### Gets Indians Scalp

While they were still in the process of pounding her, Mr. Salter entered the room, so the story runs. He had a gun in his hand and fired at the Indians, killing one. The other escaped. He made a vow then that he would kill every Indian who ever again attempted to enter his home, and, as a warning, took the head of the dead Indian which he put on the top of a pole, and stuck it in the road near his home. No red man ever came near again. An infant child of Mr. and Mrs. Salter's was sleeping in a cradle in the room, when the mother was killed, but was unmolested.

### Remembers Birth of County

Mrs. Parker well remembers the time this county was organized. A ball was held in Stevens Point to celebrate the great event at which many from Grand Rapids and Centralia attended. Her sister Philemeda also attended.

On June 18, 1863, Miss Clara Snyder was united in marriage to Samuel Parker who was employed as head Sawyer in the Rablin Saw Mill. They at once began housekeeping in the second story of a small frame house which was erected on the grounds of the Kenneth McCamley home on Washington Avenue. The stairs led up from the outside of the house.

### Husband Entered War

In 1865, Mrs. Parker's husband joined the 46th Regiment Co. B, Wisconsin Volunteers and went south to take part in the Civil War. He served as Colonel's Orderly and was in service from February 2 until October 12 the same year when peace was declared after Lee's surrender.

### Knew All Pioneers

Mrs. Parker well remembers when the late J. D. Witter brought his bride here from Grand Rapids, Michigan, and also their first home which was a tiny frame house on the same lot which the Parkers now own and upon which their home is built. Previous to moving to their present place, the Parkers lived in their home on Washington Avenue for twenty-nine years in what is now the home of William McGlynn and family.

### Had Five Children

Mr. and Mrs. Parker are the parents of five children, three of whom are still living, two daughters; Mrs. Geo. Courtney of Milton and Mrs. Fred Stamm of Minneapolis, Minn., and one son, Charles Parker, of Biron. All were born and brought up and educated in this city. Their son is a fine musician and was one of the members of the Dana Band of Wausau with which he played in the Spanish American War.

Mrs. Parker is a Christian woman and is a member of the Adventist church. She belongs to the Women's Relief Corps of this city and is a very regular attendant at their meetings. She often takes part in the social entertainments. She is another example of one of the good citizens of Wisconsin Rapids.