

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.

Edward Theodore Bodette



EDWARD THEODORE BODETTE

The subject of this sketch, Edward Theodore Bodette, was born in Three Rivers, Canada, November 9, 1846, and moved to Rochester, N. Y. with his parents at the age of six months, where the family lived until young Edwards was ten years old. His father then decided to go West and started with his family for Grand Rapids, Wisconsin, but they got no farther than Fond du Lac, as they were unable to find the way to their destination. Mr. Bodette, secured a place with a private family for his wife, three sons, Elijah, Veloris and Edward and two daughters Agnes and Mary, and started out on horseback to find the way here. It took him just one week to make the trip, and on his return here, he again started out with his family bound for the desired haven. Mr. Bodette said, "We took the boat at Fond du Lac and went from there to Oshkosh and up the Wolf River to Gills Landing. From there we took the stage to Plover, where we again changed conveyances and finally landed here." He says there was one sight he will never forget. When they were crossing from Fond du Lac to Oshkosh, they saw a boat coming down the river, loaded with wood, with five or six teams of horses propelling it. He states that the sight was so unusual and queer to him that it still remains fresh in his memory.

Didn't Like West

The West did not appeal as strongly to Mr. Bodette's father as he had thought it would, and when early in the fall a team from Portage, delivering goods came to Grand Rapids, Mr. Bodette thought it a fine chance to start back East. So he packed up all his worldly goods, with his family and returned with the teamster to Portage from where they continued their journey until finally they reached Rochester again.

Edward remained there until the spring of 1869, when he too fell prey to the lure of the West, and, securing a map of Wisconsin, studied it to find the most attractive place to locate, and finally decided that it would be Neillsville. He decided to go directly there. Mr. Bodette, in telling of his trip says, "I came as far as Black River Falls here, owing to the heavy snow, I found I would be obliged to wait at least three days before I could continue on my way to Neillsville, so I decided to go to New Lisbon. I stayed there for a week. While there I was told that Wonewoc would be a fine location. I went there via the C. M. & St. P. Ry to Mauston and continued by journey to Wonewoc from there by stage. I found the place so dreary and desolate looking that I did not want to remain, so I paid a man five dollars to take me back to Mauston the same night, from where I went back to New Lisbon again. I then decided to come back to Grand Rapids to see what might be in store for me there. Being a shoemaker by trade, I was naturally interested in the shoe shops and went about to see how many were located in the village. I found the first one to be owned by Charles Belknap, which was located where Huntington's Garage is now built. I next visited William Balderston's little frame shop in the block where the amusement hall now stands. I then went farther down the street and found James D. LaBreche in a shop located where Weisel's store now is.

Entered Business

"Mr. La Breche and I formed a co-partnership and we ran the business together for three years and a half, when I bought his interest, and have continued working at my trade ever since.

"I lived at the Rablin Hotel, located where the Library now stands, and which was considered at this time to be one of the best hotels in the state outside of Milwaukee. The hotel was destroyed by fire in 1880,

just two days previous to the big flood.

"The Reporter was the only newspaper here at that time. It was edited by James Ingraham, who had his office and printing room in the upper story of a building, which was located where the Gordon building now stands, and which was owned by C. W. White, who had a hardware store on the lower floor. W. S. Miller owned a general store where the Empire Saloon stands, a part of which is the original building. Next to that was a row of buildings owned by John and Antoine Arpin. The only one remaining now, is occupied by the Weeks Marble Works. Peter Vetterfille had a grocery store in the Huntington building near the Witter Hotel. It was later enlarged and remodelled and still stands on the same ground. The little old Spafford frame building just south of the New Armory stood on the opposite side of the street where the new Engine House, No. 1 is located. A block of frame buildings, called the Red Block, because of the buildings were all painted, red owned by George Neeves, extended from where the Mason Saloon now is to Reiland's Butcher Shop.

Recalls Old Stores

"The next block was occupied by the Wisconsin Hotel, built by George Neeves and managed by Henry Clinton. Next to that, on the east side of it was Joseph Homer's general store, while next to that was H. B. Philleo's Drug Store, one the ground floor while the rooms on the second floor were used as a photographic gallery by Mr. Hall. J. D. Witter had an Exchange Bank in a small building where Beardsley's Grocery now stands. A building where the old Fournier Barber shop stands, next to Daly's Drug Store was occupied by Steve Snyder for a Meat Market on the lower floor, while the second floor was occupied by a dress-making shop conducted by Miss M. G. Gordon.

"Charles Frisby owned a building where F. S. Gill's Paint Store now is which he used and occupied as a Furniture and Undertaking shop. Abner Atwood occupied a building just to the East as a Barber Shop and just beyond was a Wagon Shop run by Lucian Berard, Sr. I. L. Mosher occupied the building in which Brandt now has his Meat Market, where he conducted a general store. The small building next to Lock's Grocery Store now used as a Barber Shop was occupied by Horace Sweeney for a Tailor Shop and who also had a Livery Stable in the rear of the building. Just north of this was Henry Belanger's saloon, while in the building now occupied by the Penny Company, was the Worthington Bank on the ground floor, and the Music Hall above."

Married In This City

In October, 1872, Edward Theodore Bodette was united in marriage to Bertha Zenman of this city. Nine children were born to them, six of whom are still living, four sons, Joseph, Frank, William and Edward, Jr., and two daughters, Mabel and Laura, all of whom are married and living here, with the exception of Laura, the only unmarried one, who lives in Hammond, Indiana, where she is employed by a publishing house.

Mr. Bodette is of the Catholic



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faith. He is not a member of any secret order or organization. He says he has always voted for the man he thought best fit to fill the office, irrespective of politics.

Mr. Bodette said that although he had not accumulated wealth he had lived here in peace and contentment, and hoped to the end his days in Wisconsin Rapids, where he is now the oldest business man in the city.

OFFER COURSE IN FLYING TO YOUNGER MEN

UNMARRIED HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES GIVEN OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME LIEUTENANTS IN THE RESERVE

A chance for 500 young men to learn how to fly an airplane will soon be offered by the War Department. This opportunity is extended to all civilians between the ages of 20 and 27 who have a high school education or its equivalent and who desire to master all phase of military aeronautics. These men will be known as flying cadets and will be sent to the Air Service school at March Field, Riverside, California or to Carlstrom Field, Arcadia, Florida, where their course of instruction will begin.

Begin March First

The primary instruction in theory and the art of flying at these fields will cover a period of approximately four months. The advanced training, which consists of courses in pursuit, bombing and observation will occupy approximately six months, three months of which are spent with a Service Squadron. These latter courses are given at Rockwell Field, San Diego, California; Ellington Field, Houston, Texas; and Post Field, Fort Sill, Oklahoma. The new class, to which the 500 successful applicants will be attached begins its studies on March 1st.

Upon the completion of this course the student is commissioned a 2nd Lieut. in the Air Service Reserve Corps and discharged. Young men who desire and who are interested in



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