

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.

Francis Palmatier



FRANCIS PALMATIER

Few of the oldest citizens of Wisconsin Rapids can claim to have attained the age of ninety-six years but to Francis Palmatier, of this city, goes this distinction, and along with it the distinction of being one of the earliest settlers who helped make history for this city. Mr. Palmatier is one of the very oldest, if not the oldest, resident of this city and in spite of his advanced years his disposition is always bright and cheerful and he enjoys most of the things that the people much less than half his age enjoy.

Born In New York

Francis Palmatier was born April 7, 1827, in Cobleskill, Schoharie county, New York. He is the son of Thomas and Martha (Davenport) Palmatier. His grandfather was a native of Paris and belonged to a class who fell into difficulties with the commoners on account of wealth and aristocratic position and fled to Holland. After the amnesty, a portion of the family returned to France, but the line to which Mr. Palmatier belongs came from that country and settled on the Holland Patent in the state of New York, where they engaged in agriculture. The mother was born in Long Island and was of English descent.

Mr. Palmatier's parents left Cobleskill when their son was four years old and went to Susquehanna County, Penn. Later they went to Broome County, New York, and remained there eight years. When the son was sixteen years old they went to Chemung county in the same state, and four years later, Mr. Palmatier of this sketch, went to Ohio, returning after a year's absence to Chemung county. He came to Wisconsin in 1855 and after passing a few months in Columbia county, he located in Centralia, where he arrived December 14, 1855. He was married July 4, 1888 at Centralia. To this union three children were born, the oldest, Francis, who married Minnie Potter. Francis, Jr. met a tragic death on August 14, 1892 when he was burned to death while asleep in the rear room in the Clark and Scott store

building in Rudolph, Wisconsin, where he was employed as clerk. The youngest son, Horace died in infancy November 1, 1857. The daughter, Ella Viola married Charles Garrison, son of Orestes B. Garrison who was also one of the pioneers of the early days in Centralia. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Garrison reside in Portland, Ore.

Came In Early Days

Mr. Palmatier stated that when he came here Centralia was in its infancy. It had one general store, a small wooden structure, located on the corner of the streets where the Nash Hardware Store stands. Another small wooden building was the Tavern which stood on the grounds where the Commercial Hotel is now located, and which was "run by Louis Meunier." Tallow dip candles lighted the house, wood fire provided the heat and the guests all used a tin wash basin for their daily ablutions, and all wiped on a big coarse linen roll towel. Emanuel Dutriest kept boarders.

Mr. Palmatier built the fourth lumber dwelling house in Centralia which was erected on the grounds where the new Consolidated Sulphite Mill is now built. It was later moved to Third Ave. North, just opposite the St. John's Episcopal Church, where it still remains. Other structures which were built on the grounds now owned by the Consolidated Water Power & Paper Company were the Whitney Saw Mill, which was torn down in 1861 to make way for the Lyon saw mill. The Geo. Weller grist mill and the P. Garrison Gang Saw Mill where Mr. Palmatier worked as a millwright with Volney Kropfer. When Mr. Palmatier first came to Centralia the Garrisons, Whitneys, Lyons, Jacksons, Browns, Dutriests, Worthingtons, Corryveaus, Rossies, Kippes, Hugh Burns, Volney Kropfer, Tim Hurley and Charles and John Sehnoek and a few Indians and French families composed most of the population.

Knew Indian Chief

A little later a band of three hundred Choctaw Indians ran away from the Kansas reservation and came to Centralia. Mr. Palmatier was well acquainted with Chief White Fish of the Chippewa tribe who camped in the woods near the town for several seasons. Two of his sons served in the Civil War.

When the Civil War broke out Mr. Palmatier made repeated efforts to enlist, and was rejected for disability. Toward the close of the war, when enlisting was pressed and recruits hastened to take the places of experienced and hardy soldiers, he was accepted and enrolled February 8, 1865, with Co. B, 46th Wisconsin Infantry at Centralia for one year. He performed military duty on the Nashville and Decatur railroad until discharged September 20th following, at Nashville,

Tenn. The regiment recruited and organized at Camp Randall, Madison, left the state March 5, 1865, and went successfully to Louisville and Athens, Ala., where the regimental headquarters were established, until the command went to Nashville to be mustered out. Four of his brothers were in the service, enlisting from Michigan, two of them sacrificing their lives.

After his return from the war, Mr. Palmatier was employed as foreman in Garrison's Gang Saw Mill where he worked for six years. He also worked as mill wright, cabinet and wagon maker and at various other trades. His handiwork shows marked skill. Mrs. Minnie Palmatier, his daughter-in-law has a rocking chair which he made thirty-five years ago from logs taken from his wood pile, and which is of some value.

Recalls Indian Scare

At the time of the Indian scare, the Weller Grist Mill was converted into a Fort, where women and children were sheltered, while the men stood on guard outside, ready to kill any red man in defense of their loved ones.

As time advanced, more residents came to the village and in March, 1874 a charter was granted, making Centralia a city. At the spring election of 1890, the city of Centralia was made a part of the city of Grand Rapids, by a majority of the voters. There was much bitter opposition, but when the votes were counted, a big demonstration was held in honor of the victory. Men, women and children formed a procession headed by a band, whose music at times was drowned out by the blowing of tin trumpets. Many of the marchers wore hats with placards printed in big letters, bearing the inscription, "We're Married," "I Told You So," and other like inscriptions. The city remained under the name of Grand Rapids, until it was decided that it would be for the best interests to give it a new name, and on August 4, 1920, it was christened Wisconsin Rapids.

Comes Back Home

Francis Palmatier resided here from 1855 until 1900 when he went to Portland, Ore., where he lived with his daughter and family for fifteen years, when he left for Danfield, Mich., to reside with his brother and family. He returned to this city last April to spend the remainder of his days at the home of his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Minnie Palmatier.

In politics Mr. Palmatier is a republican. He belongs to the G. A. R. Post No. 22 of this city. He has not only helped to make the record of this city, but is one of the many who have been heroic makers of the nation.

SPORTS

HAVE SEVERAL CHANGES FOR BOXING MEASURE

St. Paul, Minn.—Several changes in the boxing law of Minnesota will be proposed to the state legislature, it was announced here Thursday. A measure is being prepared for introduction next week.

It will provide for a new state athletic commission, to be appointed by the governor from among officers of the state national guard or naval militia; would permit 20-round bouts to a decision and limit the price of all seats to a \$3 maximum. Under the present law 10-round no-decision contests are

Announcement