

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.

Walter Seymour Gardner



WALTER SEYMOUR GARDNER

Walter Seymour Gardner, one of the well known residents, who has lived the greater part of his life in Wisconsin Rapids, is a son of Mr. and Mrs. William Gardner. His father was born in Londonberg, Canada, and came from that city to Lansing, Iowa. His mother was a native of Saxony, Germany, emigrating with her parents to this country in the early fifties, going directly to Lansing, Ia., where she met Mr. Gardner to whom she was later joined in marriage.

Their only son Walter was born in Lansing, June 10, 1859. In the spring of 1866 his parents moved to Rudolph, Wis., on what is known as the old Pat Nash farm. Walter attended the country school at Rudolph, which was known as the John Piel school.

Moved Here in 1891

In the spring of 1871 the family moved from Rudolph, to what was then Centralia, where the father had built a farm house on the river bank directly opposite the Mott & Wood Creamery. After their arrival Walter attended the Centralia public school, taught by Clarence Hamilton. The school house stood on the grounds where the west side market square now is.

Walter's first money was earned in packing shingles and catching lumber which had broken loose from the rafts coming over the rapids. At the age of fourteen, he was employed in the R.C. Lyon shingle mill, located on part of the grounds now occupied by the Consolidated Water Power & Paper company.

Worked in Saw Mill

After nine years service in the Lyon saw mill, he went to Vesper to become mill manager of the Sherry-Gerry-Cameron Lumber Co., which position he occupied for three years.

His next field of labor was Port Edwards where he packed shingles for four years at the John Edwards Shingle Mill. At the close of his four years' work at Port Edwards, he returned to Centralia when he changed his occupation to that of a carpenter, working on the E. C. Rossier residence which was being built on the lots opposite the Dixon Hotel and now occupied by the Standard Oil Station.

Went To Alaska

When the Alaskan gold craze was at its height, the lure of the gold struck him and on May 12, 1887 he left with a prospecting party composed of Reuben Lyon, Frank Houston and Henry Panter, for Dawson City, Alaska, in search for the pot of gold. The party travelled by rail to Seattle, Washington, from where they continued their journey by boat, and landed in Skaguay where they made their own boats, and portaged to Lake Lindeman, the head waters

of the Yukon river, finally reaching Dawson City, July 15. They prospected for gold during the spring and summer for three seasons, returning to the states each winter.

Returned to Northland

Mr. Gardner left Alaska on November 18, 1890, arriving in Seattle, Washington, December 23, where he remained for a short time, and then came back to this city for a ten days' visit at the home of his parents. He then returned to the east and with Kirk Blackmore, left San Jose and again went prospecting for gold, this time going 260 miles north of Scitik, Alaska. They returned the same fall to San Jose, where Mr. Gardner remained until the following spring and came back here and worked at his trade as carpenter.

Moved Out West

After the death of his parents, Mr. Gardner again heard the call of the west, with its promises and started in that direction to look for a location visiting Seattle and Spokane, Wash., and Lewiston, Idaho, finally deciding to locate at Spokane where he became a building contractor and built five beautiful residences.

His next location was at Millwood, a small station six miles east of Spokane where he worked two and a half years on the mill buildings of the Inland Empire Paper Co., and after its completion worked for one year as mill wright for the same company. The following year he again changed his residence, going to St. Mary's, Idaho, where he was employed for one year as mill wright for the St. Mary's Lumber Company.

Carpenter at Missoula

The wanderlust again seized him, and he shifted the scenes of his activities, going to Missoula, Montana, where he once more followed his trade as carpenter, and worked for three months on the completion of a large hotel being built in that city.

His next move was to Butte, Montana, where he continued his trade as carpenter until the great miners' strike of 1913. He then decided to return to this city of order and peace to spend the remainder of his life.

Served as Alderman

Mr. Gardner was appointed undersheriff of Wood county when George H. Smith was elected to the office of sheriff. He was elected alderman of the seventh ward at the election of 1918, and was reelected to serve a second term at the following election, which office he served until about a year ago, when he moved into the eighth ward, into his new home in Lyon's Park.

During his terms of office as alderman, Mr. Gardner has been chairman of the Finance Committee, chairman of the General Business Committee, and was also chairman of the committee which purchased the La France fire engine for this city.

He is a member of the First Congregational Church of this city, and was church janitor for the years 1920-21. He is a member of both the Masonic Order and the Order of Eastern Star. He is a life long Republican and has always voted the straight ticket. He is at present candidate for Assessor at the coming election, April 4.

Married in 1901

On November 16, 1904, Mr. Gardner was united in marriage to Miss Grace Carrington, also of this city.

Mr. Gardner is a man of simple, retiring habits, well liked and well known by his many friends and acquaintances in Wisconsin Rapids.

The number of motorists who stall their cars on railroad crossings is growing so fast it may overtake the brilliant jokesters who rock the boat.