

# 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.

## Willis Elmore Dunn



WILLIS ELMORE DUNN

Willis Elmore Dunn, head of the Indian Agency in Wisconsin Rapids, was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, February 24, 1860. He is a son of Mr. and Mrs. Louis B. Dunn. He attended the city schools in Cincinnati until ten years old when his father left with the family for Wichita, Kansas, and moved in a frontier farm. At that time Wichita was a frontier town and the terminus of the Santa Fe railway where the Indian came to receive their government issues of wagons, harness and household furniture.

There was a great traffic in buffalo bones which were gathered by the settlers for sale to button manufacturers. This kept many settlers on their claims, who would have otherwise been compelled to leave their lands on account of droughts and grasshoppers, the latter even feeding on the fence posts.

Mr. Dunn attended a country school in Sedgewick county where he finished his education, after which he worked on his father's farm until twenty years old, when he learned steam fitting and stationery engineering after which he returned to his father's farm where he remained until the fall of 1904. He then became engaged in the mercantile business in Wichita, but his life as a merchant was of short duration.

### Enters Indian Service

On August 5, 1905 he entered the Indian service as a civil service appointee at San Carlos, Arizona where he had charge of the Apaches Indians of that section for about eight months. In October, 1906 Mr. Dunn changed his location on account of climate and moved near Durango, Colorado, where he assumed the same duties at the Southern Ute agency for fourteen months when he was promoted to the position of principal of the Red Moon Indian Boarding School and after one year's service as principal of the school again advanced, this time to become Superintendent and special dispensary agent of the same tribe. He continued in that position for over eight years when the Red Moon Agency was merged with the Seger agency and Mr. Dunn transferred to Sisseton, South Dakota, and placed in charge of the Sisseton and Watertown Sioux Indians. He remained there one year when he was transferred to this city where he is in charge of the Winnebago agency with twelve hundred and eighty-four Winnebagoes and a band of Potawatomes.

This agency issues to the Indians over 2500 checks annually. Mr. Dunn is very ably assisted in his work by Mr. H. D. Key, Deputy Agent and Chief clerk and Miss Isabel Sealig as stenographer and bookkeeper. A visit to this office at any time of the day between the hour of 8 o'clock in the morning and 1:30 to 5 o'clock in the afternoon will find them busily engaged in their work and usually a number of Indians waiting their turn for their checks in the outer room.

### Agency Reopened in 1918

Samuel J. Steinstra was the Indian Agent in the city from the time it was opened in 1916 until February 20, 1917, when it was closed and through the personal efforts of L. M. Nash and F. J. Wood, who, realizing the great benefit such an agency was to the city, made a special trip to Washington, D. C. in the spring of 1918 to interview Cato Sells, Commissioner of Indian Affairs who granted them an agency, and in the month of June the same year an agency was reopened here with Mr. Dunn in charge.

Mr. Dunn was married at Wichita Kansas, February 16, 1893 to Miss Agnes Critchfield of that city. Their eldest son Raymond C. is also married and lives in Chin Lee, Arizona, where the best Navajo blankets are made. He is the Indian Agency farmer at the Fort Dufrane Agency. The other two children, a daughter Ethel

A. and a son John Willis live with their parents at their home in this city at 212 Fifth street south.

### Fine Christian Man

Mr. Dunn is a professor of Christianity, is a member of the Methodist church of this city and one of its most earnest and ardent workers. He is chairman of its official board, always taking an active interest in the church meetings and social affairs. He is not a politician but casts his vote where he believes it will be of the best interests for the people. He is a member of the Masonic and Elks lodges and also of the Federation of Federal Employees.

In his work with the Indians Mr. Dunn has, by his square and honest dealings with them, won their confidence and love and they come to him for both personal and business advice and the members of the red faced tribe would do anything for him to prove their loyalty and friendship for him. He is a man of a retiring and quiet disposition, and although a comparatively new resident in this city, has formed many new acquaintances and friends who always speak of him in the highest terms.