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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.

Otto Richard Roenius



OTTO ROENIUS

Otto Richard Roenius, one of the best known citizens of Wisconsin Rapids, was born in Richwood, Wisconsin, August 11th, 1878. His father, Edmond Roenius was born in Concord, Wisconsin and his mother, who was previous to her marriage, Miss Amelia Snyder, was born in Richwood. Mrs. Roenius passed away December 16, 1918.

The family moved from Birchwood early in September 1882 to the town of Hansen, twelve miles north of this city, where Mr. Roenius' father built a stove and heading mill, together with a small saw mill. At that time that section of Wood county was virtually a wilderness, and the Roenius family were pioneers in the virgin forest.

Attended Country School

Young Otto attended the country school, (which is now known as the Bean school) until fourteen years of age, when he worked for a year in his father's mill and yard. He then came to this city and entered the grammar department of the Howe High school, where he finished his education, graduating with the class of 1898, under Professor Guy S. Ford, who is at present Dean of the University of Minnesota, at Minneapolis.

During his school life he was one of the most active members of the School Debating and Literary Society winning several prizes in Oratorical contests. He was also greatly interested in athletics, and played with the football team for three successive seasons, never missing a game during that time. T. W. Brasqua, local attorney, was a member of the Howe School faculty and manager of the team at that time.

Fathers Foundry Business

The family came here from the town of Hansen in 1896 when Mr. Roenius bought the F. L. Tibbitts residence property on Oak street, now owned and occupied by his brother, Fred and family. After a weeks vacation following his graduation, Otto entered into partnership with his father, who had purchased the King Brothers foundry located on the Island just below the Consolidated Dam, and now the upper end of the Municipal Swimming Pool. The new partnership changed the firm name from King Brothers Foundry Co. to the Grand Rapids Foundry Co. which name it has retained ever since. They started in the new business under the rather discouraging circumstances, doing the entire work themselves, which required great endurance, the buildings being very poor, and so cold during the fall and winter months, that it was almost impossible to accomplish much work. The usual spring floods also played sad havoc with them, oftentimes flooding the buildings to such an extent that they were compelled to vacate them until the waters receded. The buildings, together with a number of others about town, were destroyed by fire in 1906, by a band of young boys, whose motives were claimed to be benefiting the city, by ridding it of unsightly buildings. The boys were all later sent to the Reform School, not being able to convince the judge of their good intentions.

A Successful Business Man

Due to Otto's optimistic temperament and great determination, coupled with that of his father, they gradually increased from a two man plant to a corps of fifteen employees. During the year 1906 they built their present quarters at High street near the C. M. & St. P. Ry. track, moving into the building in the spring of 1906. Up to the year 1907 the company relied almost entirely on a certain repair business, consisting principally of paper mill equipment. The same year they built their first ice machine, of which this equipment and addition has gradually increased and grown and today is the principal part of their business, machines being shipped to all parts of the United States, and also to foreign countries. This business was incorporated as the American Carbonic Ice Machinery Co. and Mr. Roenius is the Secretary and General Manager of both this and the Grand Rapids Foundry Companies. The company employs seventy-five people, and are of the largest and most substantial manufacturing plants in the city of Wisconsin Rapids.

Prominent in Lodge Circles

Mr. Roenius is a charter member of the local E. P. O. E. and has filled all the offices of the order with great honor, including that of Exalted Ruler. He is an earnest advocate of the order, and has addressed many of its meetings throughout the state. For two years he served as President of the Wisconsin Elk's Association. He was also a member of the building committee of the Elk's lodge on Second Street South and was one of the most persistent and enthusiastic workers during the building of this structure.

Mr. Roenius belongs to the local Masonic orders and also is a member of the Masonic Consistory and Shrine. He is a member of the order of the Eastern Star, the W. C. T. U., the Rotary Club, and President of Riverview Hospital Association and one of the directors of the Wood County National Bank. During the year 1920 he was Scout master of the local Boy Scout Troop No. 2 and has done much to aid the Boy Scout organization through his good advice and his active work in its behalf. He is fond of outdoor sports and is a member of the Bull's-Eye Country Club and a very enthusiastic golfer.

Mr. Roenius is a regular attendant of the Congregational church and among it's most liberal subscribers.

Elected to Office of Mayor

At the spring election of 1922 Otto R. Roenius was honored by the citizens of Wisconsin Rapids, who elected him to the office of Mayor. The selection was worthy, as he is by his

high moral ideals, his good sound business judgment, his straightforward principles and fair dealings, in every way fitted to be at the head of the government of the city. His choice reflects great credit to the people who have chosen him to fill this high office.

On September 21, 1904, Otto Roenius was united in marriage to Miss Emmeline Uehling of Richwood. Two children have blessed the union, a son, Carl, 15 years of age and a daughter, Jane, 10 years.

STEVENS POINT FAIR ENLARGED

CITY ERECTS \$25,000 BUILDING AND FAIR ASSOCIATION MAKES IMPROVEMENTS IN GROUNDS AND PROGRAM

The Stevens Point Fair has been enlarged and improved over last year to a considerable extent, according to recent visitors to that city. The most important addition has been made by the erection of a combined armory, sales pavilion and show barn, at the expense of the city. This building, consisting of an 80-foot arena with three wings adjoining, is used most of the year for housing an artillery company of the National Guard, and a supply company. However, according to the terms of the lease from the city to the Guard, it must be wholly vacated during the week of the Fair, and the local companies have already departed on their annual encampment trip.

The Fair will house cattle, horses and farm products in the various parts of the building, the main arena being used for the farm crop exhibits, vegetables, etc. In former years the Fair Association often found it difficult to give proper protection to cattle and horses in bad weather and many local breeders finally gave up attempting to exhibit because of the risk to their good stock. This year a number of them will return with good exhibits and it is expected that this will be the

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