

## JOSEPH A. COHEN DIES TODAY AFTER A BRIEF ILLNESS

FORMER MAYOR AND PROMI-  
NENT LOCAL CITIZEN suc-  
CUMBS TO BLOOD POISONING;  
WAS ONE OF CITY'S BUILDERS

Joseph A. Cohen, former mayor and one of the leading business men of Wisconsin Rapids, died at the age of 55 this morning at Riverview hospital of blood poisoning, the result of a foot infection from which he suffered for the past ten days. The body will lie in state at the Elks club from 5 o'clock until 8:30 this evening, and funeral memorial services will be conducted by the Elks lodge at 7:30. The body will be taken to Milwaukee tonight by Nathan Cohen, a brother, who was called here by the seriousness of Mr. Cohen's condition. Members of the Masonic order will act as pall bearers.

### Was Leader Here

Mr. Cohen was a leader in the civic and business life of Wisconsin Rapids since his arrival here in 1891. Always actively engaged in business, either as merchant or banker, he found time to devote four years to the administration of city affairs as mayor, was a leader in patriotic service during the war, participated in the activities of the Masonic order, the I. O. O. F., the Rebekahs, the B. P. O. Elks and the Moose. He was instrumental in bringing about the reorganization of the local Chamber of Commerce, and was serving his second term as president of that organization at the time of his death.

### Born in Germany

Born at Alcockitz, province of Berlin, Germany, February 12, 1869, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Cohen, Mr. Cohen attended school at Brody, Austria, until twelve years of age and after leaving school commenced clerking in stores in that country. In the spring of 1889 he left his native land for the United States, coming at once to Milwaukee, where he clerked for a time in a store.

He remained in Milwaukee until early in the spring of 1890 when, with his brothers Max and Nathan, he engaged in business in a general store in Neenah. The brothers remained there for one year and then, on May 20, 1891, they removed the goods to Wisconsin Rapids and opened Cohen Brothers general store in the building now occupied by the Beardley grocery.

### Had Six Stores

Within three years time the three brothers added six branch stores, at Wausau, Stanley, Wausau, Merrill, Rice Lake and Stevens Point, all of which have now been closed except the store at Merrill. The large brick building on First street north now occupied by the Ragan furniture store was erected by Mr. Cohen to house the Wisconsin Rapids store in 1903, and he remained in personal charge of the store here until July 1, 1919, when the stock was transferred to the Merrill store.

### Mayor Two Terms

At the spring election of 1912, just twelve years ago, Mr. Cohen was elected mayor of the city by a big majority over the opposition candidate, establishing a record as the only candidate ever to carry every ward in the city against opposition. In 1914 he was reelected without opposition. His administration was marked by the taking over of the electric light plant by the city and by the extension of public improvements in the way of increased sewer and water facilities and street paving. He created a sinking fund to build the present city hall, and there was \$10,000 in the fund when he went out of office. It was during Mr. Cohen's administration also that the public swimming pool below the Consolidated dam was constructed.

### Organized Citizens Bank

During the summer of 1912 Mr. Cohen was instrumental in the organization of the Citizens National bank, of which he was president until his death. The bank opened its door on March 29, 1913, in the building now occupied by the Cox Cafe on Grand avenue, but soon outgrew its quarters with the result that the present modern bank and office structure was erected.

When the war came Mr. Cohen gave liberally both of his time and money in patriotic endeavors. He served as chairman of the local Red Cross society and as chairman of the northern division in Liberty loan drives, and