



Oak Leaves

Family Legacy Series

Oak Hill Cemetery Association

1705 Mt. Vernon Rd. S. E. • Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52403

Oak Hill Cemetery is non-profit lot owner association dedicated to preserving the heritage of Linn County, Iowa.

Oak Hill Cemetery – The Carpenter Family

The heritage of the Carpenter family is documented as being the descendants of Heinrich Zimmerman, who with his wife and two children, had emigrated from the Canton of Berne, in Switzerland to Pennsylvania, in 1706. Heinrich obtained a grant of land from William Penn, in which grant Penn anglicized the family name, Carpenter (being the equivalent of Zimmerman), and it is by the name Carpenter the family has since been known. Two of my great-grandfathers, both of whom were Carpenters by name and had large families, concluded to emigrate to the Northwestern territory, as all that country north of the Ohio river was then called. Both grandfathers had been soldiers in the revolution

From *Worshipful Masters Biographies: History Of Crescent Lodge No. 25, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons Cedar Rapids, Iowa 1906*

SEYMOUR D. CARPENTER.

(Master of Crescent Lodge 1853.)

Skipping the childhood information of Seymour Carpenter I will begin with the passage: I was now in my twenty-first year, and had to decide on an occupation. I wished to read law, but there was a family prejudice against the profession. I therefore concluded to study medicine. In the spring of 1849, I started west "to grow up with the country." I rode to Cincinnati on horseback took steamer to St. Louis, thence by another boat up the Illinois River to Haverville. Not liking the place, I rode west and crossed the Mississippi at Quincy and went to Kirksville in Missouri. Still not pleased, I turned north and went to Ottumwa,



Iowa, where I met Judge Greene, then a member of the Supreme Bench of Iowa. He persuaded me that Cedar Rapids was in the near future to become a metropolis, and I decided to go there. Within a week I made the acquaintance of all the people of the town.

Among the leading persons were **William and Joseph Greene, brothers of the judge, Lowell and Lawson Daniels, Homer Bishop and John Weare**, all of whom were merchants. The three stores of which they were the proprietors would not compare well with the department stores of today, but all the same they were department stores, and in their miscellaneous stocks the customer could find all he wanted from castor oil to broadaxes.

After four days' hard riding and swimming several swollen streams, I struck the town on the afternoon of the 14th of June, 1849. I crossed the river on a rope ferry operated by David King, who lived in a cabin on the west side.

I cannot say that I was very favorably impressed by the thirty or forty mostly one story unpainted houses that were scattered about near the river. There seemed to be a great deal of sand and the houses were so situated that there was no sign of a street. I was discouraged and would have traveled further but only had about ten dollars left, and from necessity had to stop.

Dr. Mansfield took me as a partner, and in company with **Judge Cook**, we had a room, 10 x 16, in a small one story

building opposite the mill. As patients and clients were not very numerous, we had a good deal of leisure. Judge Cook was a fine reader and we took turns at Shakespeare, a copy of which we fortunately possessed.

We had a mail three times a week from Dubuque and Iowa City. **The Higley Brothers** did the service in a two-horse hack. Joseph Greene was postmaster.

All the people were full of hope and ambition. We began to talk of railroads, but Cedar Rapids had to wait ten years longer for the locomotive.

In 1850 I married **Sarah Weare**, the daughter of **John Weare, Sr.** We went to housekeeping in a small one-story house, near where the old passenger depot stood. It was then the only house east of the present railroad.

The next year, 1851, was a very active one for the town. Judge Greene, who had lived in Dubuque, moved to the town. **S. C. Bever**, had driven in a two-horse buggy from Holmes County, Ohio, to Cedar Rapids. That same year, my father, **Mr. Gabriel Carpenter**, came out to see the country. After great effort on my part and many misgivings on his, he purchased of Mr. Levi Lewis 300 acres of land adjoining the town plat on the south.

From 1852, when I had abandoned the practice of medicine, I had been actively engaged in the real estate business. By one transaction I had made more than I had done in any year's practice. I sold out my medicines to Dr. Koontz and thenceforth till the war had nothing to do with the healing art.

I bought and sold a great deal of land, not only in Linn County, but in various other parts of the state. I made long journeys over the wide prairies, then unsettled, and visited Waterloo, Ft. Dodge and other places, when they were mere town sites instead of flourishing cities as they are today.

Although Seymour Carpenter is not buried at Oak Hill Cemetery, his association with Judge Greene at Ottumwa and the Master Masons followed by his arrival in Cedar Rapids and his ability to persuade his father to invest in property set much of the history of the cemetery into motion.

GABRIEL. CARPENTER.

Mr. Gabriel Carpenter started upon life's journey almost at the opening of the nineteenth century, his birth occurred in Lancaster Pennsylvania, on the 11th of September, 1801. He was only a year old when his parents removed from the Keystone state to Ohio with a number of colonists who founded and named the city of Lancaster. There amid pioneer surroundings and environment his youthful days were passed. His education was acquired under difficulties, for the public-school system was in its infancy and the pioneer community afforded only such educational advantages as could be obtained in the little log schoolhouses on the frontier. His training at farm work, however, was not meager, for he was early instructed in the work of the fields and taught the best methods of plowing, planting and harvesting. He continued to carry on general agricultural pursuits in Ohio until 1852. He then removed to Cedar Rapids and became the owner of a section of land now embrace within the southern portion of the city. (*Some accounts say 300 acres, others say 500 acres.*) From that time until his death he was closely identified with the upbuilding and improvement of Cedar Rapids and contributed in large measure to its progress by laying out seven additions thereto. His real-estate operations were conducted on an extensive scale, and he had the prescience to discern what the future had in store for this growing western city.

Mr. Gabriel Carpenter was married twice, first to Miss Catherine Pearce, who died in Ohio. There were five children of that marriage: Seymour now a resident of Chicago: E. B., living in Leavenworth, Kansas; Rebecca, who died in 1883 while living with her sister, Mrs. Mary Weare, Sioux City, Iowa; and Susanna, the widow of H. B. Stibbs and a resident of Chicago.

For his second wife Mr. Gabriel Carpenter chose Mrs. Maria Wylie, nee Clifton, who by a former marriage had two daughters: Anna Wylie, living with her mother in Cedar Rapids; and Harriett, the wife of J. H. Reed, a resident of Chicago. By their second marriage Mr. and Mrs. Gabriel

Carpenter had five children, namely: Delia; Frank and John F., who have been called to their final home, and rest in the cemetery at Cedar Rapids; George, who is living in Nashville, Tennessee; and Taylor Carpenter, whose home is in Cedar Rapids.

Coming to this city in pioneer times, Mr. Gabriel Carpenter did effective work for its improvement and his public spirit was manifest in many tangible ways. He was the owner of the land at the corner of First Street and Second Avenue and upon it erected what was then the finest hotel of the city — a brick structure three stories in height. It was conducted as a model hotel and was one of the notable features of the city but was destroyed by fire in 1876. Afterward he utilized the hotel site for the erection of a fine business block, and also erected in Cedar Rapids a good brick residence, hauling the brick from Muscatine, Iowa, with teams. The house was finished throughout in solid walnut, and the family occupied that attractive frontier home until it was destroyed by fire in 1865 but afterward was rebuilt.

Mr. Gabriel Carpenter became a director in a private bank conducted under the name of Carpenter, Stibbs & Company. He was also for a number of years one of the directors of the First National Bank of Cedar Rapids, became president of the Marshalltown Gas Company, in which he owned a quarter interest, and a stockholder in the Cedar Rapids Water Company.

In matters of citizenship Mr. Gabriel Carpenter sought for all that promised substantial advancement and was deeply interested in those projects which are a matter of civic virtue and civic pride. He watched with interest the progress of events that led to the inauguration of the Civil war and although too old to render active service he sent two sons, Seymour D. and E. Brough, who both served the whole four years, put forth every effort at home to uphold the Union cause and at the first call for volunteers offered a fine town lot to the first one enlisting. The prize was taken by Joseph Perigo, who after the war built a good house upon the site. In his later years he found interest and recreation in croquet, becoming a skillful player, spending

entire afternoons with friends in the enjoyment of the game. His religious faith was indicated by his membership in the Episcopal Church, in which he served as vestryman and also as junior warden at the time of his death, which occurred on the 10th of March, 1881.

Text from *History of Linn County, From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present Time* Volume II 1911.

Gabriel Carpenter died at his residence near the city, Thursday, March the 10th, 1881. He was a quiet, unobtrusive business man, ever ready to take part in all business enterprises calculated to advance the business interests of our city, and to contribute fully and freely his share of material aid in sustaining and forwarding our public affairs.

As a citizen, neighbor, and friend, he held a warm place in the hearts of our Citizens generally, and but few men will be more missed than will be Gabriel Carpenter; and while, in the natural course of life, his presence as an active member of our business and social family could not be much longer hoped for, his death leaves a feeling of sorrow, as real as it is wide-spread, throughout the community.

His remains were looked upon by a large number of relatives and friends at his late residence, Sabbath last, at half-past one o'clock p. m., after which the funeral services were held in the Grace Episcopal church, the Rev. Mr. Ringgold, rector of the church, conducting them in accordance with the usages of that church. A large number of Free Masons, of which order he was a member, joined the funeral procession and conducted the burial services at the grave after the usages of that order.

The arrangements at the funeral were in charge of Messrs. A. R. West and I. N. Isham. In the procession there was a carriage filled with old settlers and intimate personal friends of the deceased, viz; S. C. Sever, John Gates, David Denlinger, and Dr. J. F. Ely. The following named gentlemen served as pall-bearers: Masonic—Wm. B. Leach, A. Mann, James L. Bever, I. N. Whittam, B. F. Howland, and M. A. Higley; citizens—J. W. Henderson, S. L. Dows, Wm. Greene, J. P. Charles, W. W. Smith and Wm. Stewart.

The funeral was largely attended by our citizens generally, each feeling that in the death of Gabriel Carpenter our city has lost a useful citizen, the poor a true friend, and the world an honorable, upright, honest man.

(The complete death notice appeared in the Cedar Rapids Daily Republican March 11, 1881 and was reprinted in The History of the Crescent Lodge, 1906)

MARIA CARPENTER.

Mrs. Maria Carpenter, a pioneer of this city died at her home, 821 Third Avenue at 3 o'clock this morning at the age of 91 years and 6 months. Three years ago she suffered a stroke of paralysis from which she recovered but never regained her strength. Previous to that time she had been a sufferer from attacks of rheumatism. Her death is attributed to a general break down after a long and active life.

Miss Marie Clifton was born at Ft. Defiance, Ohio April 12, 1820 and was married to her first husband, E. P. Wiley, in the city of her birth. From this union two children survive: Miss Ann Wiley Carpenter and Mrs. Harriet Reed of Chicago. After the death of her first husband, she was married to Gabriel Carpenter at Lancaster, Ohio, in 1850, from which union she is survived by Taylor Carpenter and George Pierce Carpenter.

In 1852 they came to Iowa and to Cedar Rapids where her husband purchased 500 acres of land which now comprises the southeastern portion of the city, including seven additions and Oak Hill Cemetery. They donated to the city a portion of the ground of Oak Hill Cemetery. (*for City Cemetery*) Their home stood at the heart of the Tyler school building. (*Metro School site*)

In Oak Hill cemetery, before his death, Mr. Carpenter reserved a lot for his burial place and that of his family.

Mrs. Carpenter was a hospitable person and was never happier than when surrounded by her friends. Her home was always a beautiful place and was open day and night to the people she knew as her friends. During the war she was always working with the aid societies for the benefit of the soldier. She was a communicant of Grace; Episcopal,

church for fifty years and was a devoted and active Christian worker.

The funeral will be held the residence at 3:30 o'clock Thursday Afternoon.

Rev. John Arthur, rector of Grace Church officiating. Interment will be in the family lot at Oak Hill Cemetery.

The Cedar Rapids Evening Gazette October 10, 1911

Famous for Her Hospitality

Mrs. Carpenter was one of the few good women who laid the social, literary and religious foundations of this city. She was especially famous for her culinary achievements and made little of setting up a turkey dinner for fifty or seventy five or a hundred persons. As Mrs. George Haman said in an article prepared for the semi-centennial edition of the Republican and Times, "Mrs. Carpenter's turkey dinners brought joy to many friends."

During the Semi-Centennial former resident General Jack Stibbs recalled the hospitality of "Aunt Maria" when the war was declared and young men gathered at Carpenter Hall to enlist. I shall never forget Uncle Gabriel as he appeared when he came to us on his way home from church. We had his boy Brough in out line. "Boys" he said "you must not attempt to do too much in one day. Now I want you all to go home to dinner with me and you can finish this job tomorrow." We accepted his view and as many as twenty of the party accepted his invitation to dinner. Aunt Maria met us at the door and she didn't keep us waiting a great while for our dinner. It was as good and as bountiful as could be expected on a week's notice.

A week ago, when she thought she was dying, she asked her loved ones to sing some of the church hymns for her. They did and then asked her if she would like Dr. Arthur to come. She replied in the affirmative and he went over. They had a short service and in the saying of the Lord's Prayer, she led them all, with a strong, clear voice. She was the oldest communicant of Grace Church and had been one of the most active and helpful members in her long and useful life.

The remarks above appeared in the Cedar Rapids Daily Republican death notice October 11, 1911

MR. & MRS. TAYLOR CARPENTER

The following news article (sorry the date and newspaper had not been saved with the clipping) detailing the Golden Anniversary of the couple reveals more about them than any obituary could.

Young men of Cedar Rapids were more gallant half a century ago than they are today!

Almost in one breath, Mr. and Mrs. Taylor Carpenter, who will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary Monday, voiced this opinion. From 2 p.m. until the door closes, maybe at midnight, on the last caller these two will be at home to their friends on the anniversary day.

The informal reception will be held at 508 A Avenue NE their home for the last forty years. On exhibit in one of the rooms will be the wasp-waist heavily stayed cream satin wedding gown with point lace trim that was donned by the bride fifty years ago. How she had hoped then that it would not be too lonesome at her domicile so far from town; the home, now the Beatty Funeral Home 821 Third Avenue SE still stands on its original site. When the honeymooners moved in it was the pretentious new residence of Mrs. Gabriel Carpenter, widow of one of the pioneer builders of Cedar Rapids.

Heyday of Greene's Opera House

When young Taylor Carpenter, quite dandy with sideburns and mustache, was courting the beautiful blonde Maude Carpenter, daughter of Deputy Marshall Frank Woodman, a little over half century ago,, Greene's Opera House was at its brilliant height. Some of the greatest stars of the day appeared there and patrons of the theater always dressed in their finest. Women in gowns of silk or velvet fluttered big fans and topped elaborate coiffures with huge plumed hats that remained on their heads throughout the performance.

A gallant beau always escorted the lady of his choice to the theater and as a matter of course footed the bill. Tickets set him back at the rate of 50 cents to \$1.50 each and after the show, as well as at the conclusion of club dances, members of the younger set always gathered at a restaurant for oyster stew.

"We've heard," said one of the Carpenters in a shocked whisper last

week—maybe it was Mr. Carpenter or maybe it was his wife, but both concurred, *"that the boys of today actually sometimes allow their girls to share equally in expenses of the evening's entertainment!* That wasn't done fifty years ago."

An Office Romance

Fittingly, for Mrs. Carpenter as well as her husband has long been prominent in business circles, their romance bloomed in a business office.

He was a shipping clerk for Jones and Eaton hardware dealers. Their store was located in the middle of the block in the north side of First Avenue between First and Second streets. She was bookkeeper in the same store.

Both were members of Grace Episcopal Church where Taylor Carpenter's father was a member of the vestry at the time the building was erected and where for years he was junior warden.

The young shipping clerk's father came to Cedar Rapids from Lancaster Ohio. He bought 500 acres of land all of which has since come into the city limits. Taylor was born on the old homestead at Eighth Street and Twelfth Avenue SE present site of Tyler (Metro) School. Their farm included the tract on which Oak Hill Cemetery is now located. It extended to the alley between what is now Sixth and Seventh Avenue to Mount Vernon Road and across to the river. Today there are seven "Carpenter Additions" to the city of Cedar Rapids.

Was Excellent Dancer

Maude was born in Marengo but moved to Cedar Rapids with her parents at the age of 16 years. There is not a doubt but that she was the envy of many a local belle when Taylor began his courtship. A handsome young blade, he was an excellent dancer and cut a stylish figure on the ballroom floor in his finely tailored grass green suit into which was woven a metallic thread.

Members of a dancing club, they attended parties frequently with a group of about forty other people. Life was almost perfect when they could trip the light fantastic to the strains of music provided by the Beloit band. Occasionally several couples boarded a train and went to Belle Plaine to dance the night away and return to

Cedar Rapids by rail in the wee hours. They couldn't have driven, for those were horse and buggy instead of automobile days.

Taxicabs hadn't been dreamed of at the time. Although Taylor Carpenter's father had horses and a carriage the young folk usually walked the plank sidewalks to their Cedar Rapids dances. They splurged however on their wedding night. In style befitting the event they rode to their new residence in a hack. The bride's parental home where the wedding was solemnized was located at what is now the rear of the Paramount theater building.

Rated by Number of Cakes

Refreshments for the wedding guests included almost every cake in the cookbook, lemonade, and ice cream. As the success of an affair depended on the number of cakes provided, this ceremony ranked high among the social events. Long in advance if the eventful day Mrs. Woodman baked her daughters black cake. The crowning glory however was Angel food cake. Only one woman in town knew the secret of its concoction and the bride hired her to make one.

After her marriage, Mrs. Carpenter continued in business. For many years she was auditor and head of the woman's department of the Security Savings bank with which she became connected when M. F. Van Vechten was president. After that she went with Cedar Rapids National Bank.

Mr. Carpenter left Eaton's Hardware store seven years after his marriage and joined the Wm. King Company, building material dealers; for a time he was with A. H. Connor and company, building contractors and finally from 1903 until his retirement in 1932, he was cashier and paymaster for the Quaker Oats Company.

Both Mr. & Mrs. Carpenter were active in Masonic and Eastern Star circles. Mrs. Carpenter was also President of St. Mary's Guild of Grace Episcopal Church since its organization to assist business girls, ill at St. Luke's Hospital. She was also active in the Needlework Guild.