

Elmhurst - Biographies
F H Rohmeyer

FREDERICK H. ROHMEYER

h. ca 1838

Frederick H. Rohmeyer came to this country from Hanover, Germany, in 1857 and located at Newark, N. J. He came to Chicago a short time later and what is now State Street with high buildings was just a little street of frame shacks. He left Chicago and started for Jordan, Minn. which is about 30 miles south of St. Paul. He left Chicago by rail for Dubuque, Iowa, and then had to change to steamboat on the Mississippi river the rest of the way. He had the misfortune while on this steamboat of losing the trunk containing all of his clothing. In those days the skipper and his assistants did not always get along together and it was a common occurrence to have them steal clothing belonging to the passengers. There was a depression in those days and there was no money in circulation so he found himself quite penniless.

During the fall of this year he helped his relatives to harvest their crops and not feeling as though he wanted to become a burden to them he set out on foot to St. Paul in search of work. As night approached and as he was walking through the woods he saw a light like a bonfire and upon coming closer to it found it to be a band of Indians encamped for the night. They were very nice to him and the next day he returned to his relatives. A few weeks later, in the midst of winter, he started out with only the clothes he had on which were only of summer weight and along the road he met an Indian walking along with an ox team who put him on the wagon among a load of buffalo hides that he was hauling to a trading post. When he reached St. Paul he found employment with a wealthy family who owned a great deal of real estate but had all their money tied up as this depression was still on. The following spring he worked his way east back to Newark, N. J. Mr. Rohmeyer stayed here for a few years and later the rest of his family came from Germany.

They liked the East very much and his father secured work as foreman in a factory. Following the Civil War and the political campaigns of Abraham Lincoln running for President, factories shut down and no employment could be found. His father grew homesick for Germany and the family returned there shortly thereafter. Mr. Rohmeyer's father died a short time after his return to Germany so the rest of the family sold out and came back to the United States and in 1867 located in Elmhurst..

Mr. Rohmeyer was a blacksmith and opened up a place of business in the blacksmith shop now owned and run by Louis Balgemann, Jr. on S. York Street. They had their home and small farm on W. St. Charles Rd. in which place Mrs. Rohmeyer, who observed her 84th birthday on May 18, 1936 by having a group of old friends stop in during the afternoon for tea, and her two sons still live, Mr. Rohmeyer having passed away about 5 years ago at the age of 93 years. He was the Superintendent of the Elmhurst Light and Power Plant for 7 or 8 years. Walter and Alfred both attended grade schools in Elmhurst and Walter graduated from one of the first high school classes in the village. He attended the University of Chicago and graduated as a chemist. He worked for the Chicago Laboratories under Dr. Evans and also for the City of Chicago under Dunn's administration. Walter also worked for Nelson Morris now owned by Armour & Co. and was also a chemist for the Marquette Cement Co. and retired from active business about 15 years ago.