

We are happy to name Charles E Blodgett as the 65th inductee in the Marshfield's 150: Heroes and Leaders, Past and Present register. Charles Blodgett was nominated by his great-grandson, Tim Smith.

Charles E. Blodgett (1860-1929) was a city builder and pioneer in the development of Marshfield, Wisconsin. He carved out of the circumstances of his life a career of success which was of benefit to hundreds who came within the sphere of his influence. The constructive value of that which he accomplished remains today a treasured heritage of the people of Central Wisconsin.

Mr. Blodgett was born in Millville, Grant County, Wisconsin, on June 8, 1860, a son of Erastus and Marie (Sellock) Blodgett. He was educated in the local public schools, and began his active career early in life, serving as a clerk for three years in a store in Stevens Point. When only sixteen, he went west to the Black Hills seeking adventure and perhaps fortune.



In 1880, he returned to Wisconsin, and in partnership with his brother conducted a grocery store at Stevens Point for four years. Then with a new partner, a Mr. Talmadge, he engaged a wholesale lumbermen's supplies business at Wisconsin Rapids.

In every period of his life, Mr. Blodgett strove to find the largest opportunities, both for success and for service. It was this which led him to sell out in 1886, and then after he had operated a refreshment parlor for three years in Rhinelander, move to Marshfield, which was then only a little town. It might have remained a little town if Charles E. Blodgett had not been able to communicate to others the enthusiasm which he felt over its possibilities. But he inspired confidence inevitably, and others were glad to follow where he led. The first thing he did was to take over the old Tremont Hotel, which he operated for more than thirty years as the Blodgett Hotel. Under his guidance it gained wide renown and was known as one of the finest in the country for cities of this size. In 1926 he built the Charles Hotel, a new and more elaborate hostelry. Both these hotels were centers for the traveling men of the country, and one might hear words of praise for them back in New York, as well as out on the Pacific coast. They added much to the attractiveness of the city, and contributed much to its growth.

But Mr. Blodgett's interests spread to many other fields. From 1905 to 1910 he was engaged in the lumber business as a member of the Blodgett and Booth Lumber Company of Marshfield. In 1911 he established here the C.E. Blodgett Cheese, Butter and Egg Company, which he developed into the largest enterprise of its kind in Wisconsin. As an outgrowth of this venture, cheese receiving plants were maintained in Marshfield, Ashland, Athens, Greenwood, Merriman, Osseo, Rice Lake, Stanley, Stratford, Prentice, Wisconsin

Rapids and Alma Center. In 1926, Mr. Blodgett purchased the Oneida Hotel at Rhinelander, Wisconsin, and in 1927, erected a large annex there. The bulk of his investments, however, were in Marshfield, and in this way, he demonstrated his confidence in the City of his residence. Here he became president, in 1922, of the First National Bank, and again his services were of the greatest importance to the success of this important institution. The value of his leadership in all business affairs may be judged from the following paragraph, which formed part of an editorial tribute to him at his death:

“Marshfield and Central Wisconsin will miss C.E. Blodgett's leadership. This city's steady growth has been due to him in a large measure. It is regrettable that he could not have been spared for another decade, at least, because he was intensely proud of the city and his close friends know of other plans which he hoped to materialize. Most Wisconsin Cities of this size and larger have mourned the death of a pioneer who was a business leader and an inspiration to community upbuilding. In none of these cities has there risen a man of greater foresight, more community pride, and a man with a greater record of achievement, both personal and public, than C.E. Blodgett.”

And then speaking of another phase of his life - his constant generosity and consideration for others:

While the rank and file of people in this community will miss him as a benefactor, there are scores who will miss his generosity in time of great need. Only Mr. Blodgett's close friends and those who have thus benefited know of his generosity. He was not a man to wear his heart on his coat sleeve, but those who knew him best, were aware of the fact that his heart was easily touched and that he responded generously. He spent little time at play. His was a busy life, devoid of many pleasures which surrounded the average businessman. He loved children and found pleasure in bringing happiness to sorely beset deserving boys and girls and so unostentatiously was his generosity demonstrated that few were aware of it.”

On March 15, 1888, Charles E. Blodgett married Nettie E. Booth, daughter of Andrew J. and Sarah Lydia (White) Booth, of Stevens Point, Wisconsin. They became the parents of six children: Zoa Irene, married Harry McCain; Jerrie Booth, married Genevieve Regina Burns; Pauline Florence, married Anson James Campbell; Guy Erastus, married Charlotte Anderson; Lucile Jeanette, married Wilbur M. Johnson; and Marjorie Ruth, married Ralph Warnecke.

Mr. Blodgett's death occurred on June 3, 1929, at Marceline, Missouri as he was on his way to California in the interest of his health, his passing was not unexpected, but it came, nevertheless, as a severe shock to the city where he had been a leading figure for so many years. Everywhere words of deep regret were heard as officials of Marshfield joined with those in other walks of life to pay, tribute to him who was gone.

Portions taken from an Encyclopedia of American Biography by the American Historical Society, Inc., New York 1931