

Maxwell Bennett Richardson

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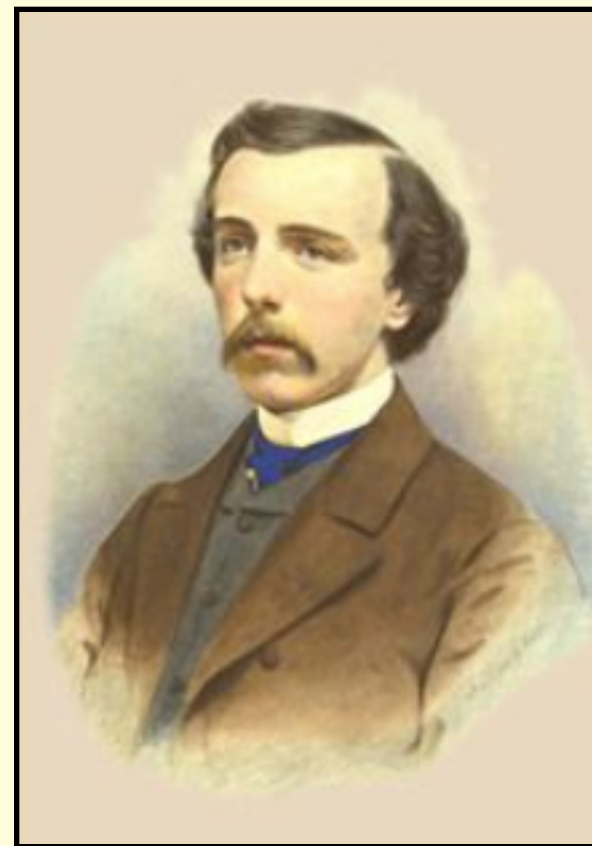
OBITUARY.

Maxwell Bennett Richardson.

Maxwell B. Richardson died at his home, East Third and Mohawk streets, at eight o'clock last evening. He was taken sick last Saturday evening. For two years Mr. Richardson had not been in good health and about two months ago was forced to take to his house for a few days, but was out again and at his office. Saturday last he appeared before Justice Wright and secured an order in a case in which he was interested. While he did not look strong and rugged, there was no indication that he was about to be stricken with his last illness. He attended to several business matters that day and went to his home at the usual time and in the evening the attack came. The physicians called diagnosed his ailment as an acute attack of Bright's disease. From the first the physicians knew that there was no hope for his recovery and that it was only a question of days when he would pass away. During the week he continued to grow weaker until the end came last evening.

Max B. Richardson was one of Oswego's most prominent, progressive and influential citizens, and his death will be a great loss to the business interests of the city. This is especially true in regard to the East side of the river, where he was the leader in building during the past quarter of a century.

Mr. Richardson was born in this city, son of the late Jacob Richardson, sixty-five years ago and has always resided here. After securing his education he studied law and was admitted to practice, following the profession for some time. He inherited considerable money and real estate and he turned his attention to the development of the latter. He also added to that which came to him and became the largest individual taxpayer in the city. While his real estate holdings extended all over the city the greater part of it was confined to the East side. He bought largely of business property which had been allowed to run down. This property he improved so that it became tenatable. He believed that the better property was improved the greater returns from it would be to the owner and he followed out this rule with the result that he was most successful.



Maxwell Bennett Richardson

Born August 20, 1838

Died July 2, 1903

Parents:

Jacob and Naomi Bennett Richardson

Mr. Richardson built several business blocks which added to the appearance of the East side, but his greatest work in the building line was the Richardson Theatre, which will stand as a monument to his achievement and public spiritedness. Oswego was without a theatre when this building was erected. The Board of Health had declared the Academy of Music unfit for use and it was closed. Mr. Richardson was attending a Deep Waterway Convention at Washington and while there attended the theatre. He has often told that it was while seated in this handsome place that the thought came to him that a similar place of amusement would be just the thing for Oswego. On his return home he commenced to look into the matter and the result was that he called in architects and had

plans and specifications for the Richardson made. For a number of years he conducted the place himself with the assistance of a manager, but a few years ago decided to rent.

He was always interested in any movement which he thought would be for the benefit of his home city, and firmly believed in its future growth, exemplifying that opinion by his large investments in realty.

He was deeply interested in the movement for a deep waterway connecting the Great Lakes with tide water, and was a constant attendant at all the conventions and meetings which had a bearing on this great work. He believed that such a movement would help Oswego. He was also largely interested in public improvements. He was one of the original organizers of the Oswego Agricultural Society in 1888, a founder of the Business Men's Association in 1892 and its President from that date until 1895. He was one of the original incorporators of the People's Electric Light and Power Company, and was largely interested in the Oswego Street Railway Company at its organization and through all the years since.

He entered politics when a young man and in 1866, when but twenty-five years old, was elected to the office of Mayor and served with distinction and credit. In 1883 he was again prevailed upon to accept a nomination for Mayor and was elected. During his first administration he signed the first contract with the Oswego Water Works Company. Two years ago when the question of purchasing the plant by the city was agitated he was one of the first to agitate the movement and spent much time in advancing the idea. He believed that city ownership would be a good thing for this city. When the Old Volunteer Fire Department was replaced by the present paid department there was a large fund in the treasury and a Fire Council was appointed to look after it. Mr. Richardson was one of the men chosen for that duty, and was a member up to within a year or two ago, when he resigned.

Mr. Richardson joined the Republican party at its organization and was always a consistent member of that political party.

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July 3, 1903
page 4

He was an enthusiastic sportsman and hunter and spent several seasons in the Rocky Mountains, the Canadian Northwest and the South and has many trophies of the hunt at his home. He was a member and an officer of the Leatherstocking Club. He was also an extensive traveler and after visiting all points of interest on this continent, made a journey to the Eastern hemisphere. He traveled through Europe and made a journey through Egypt and the Holy Land and brought back many relics. One portion of his home he set aside as a depository and there could be found Egyptian mummies, relics from the tombs of the Pharaohs and interesting firearms and swords from all over the world. His collection of war implements is said to be one of the most complete in the country. He was a collector of fine arts and his home is filled with rare paintings, costly statuary and choice and valuable books.

In his earlier days Mr. Richardson took an interest in military matters and for years was the Captain of Company H, of the old Forty-eighth Regiment, and at one time was a candidate for the office of Lieutenant-Colonel, being defeated by one vote by the late C. V. Houghton.

He was a member of the Church of the Evangelists and for many years warden and contributed largely to the support of that parish. While he never made a display of charities there are many who know him as a

liberal giver and a man with a warm heart.

Mr. Richardson was a member of the Fortnightly Club, Oswego Lodge of Elks, Knights of Pythias, and President of the Riverside Gun Club.

Mr. Richardson was a bachelor and is survived by his brother, Lawrence Richardson, sister, Mrs. Hattie Bates, a nephew, Norman L. Bates, and a cousin, William C. Richardson, of Union Springs.

- *Select a club from this article and research its history and significance in the community. (Who could be members, purpose of the club, etc.)*
- *Which of the clubs mentioned in this obituary still exist today?*
- *What club might you be interested in participating to serve your community?*

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From Left to Right, Harriet Richardson Bates, Maxwell Richardson, Naomi Richardson, Lawrence Richardson. Photograph taken August 1889 by Norman Bates. ©Oswego County Historical Society

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The Daily Palladium, July 3, 1903, page 4.

- Create a list of at least ten things you learned from this obituary? Compare your list to a classmate's. What is similar, what is different from your lists.

- Research the Richardson Theatre. What were some big names that entertained people at the theatre.

- What does the theatre look like today? How has it changed? Why did it change?

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DEATH OF MAXWELL B. RICHARDSON

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The death of the Hon. Maxwell B. Richardson, which occurred last evening, while anticipated for several days previous was, nevertheless, a shock to our citizens. He had so long been a familiar figure in our streets, that his departure from earth's scenes was somewhat like the removal of a landmark. Mr. Richardson had from early manhood been prominently identified with the interests of Oswego publicly and privately.

In Mr. Richardson's death Oswego has lost one of its most conspicuous and public spirited citizens. His decease is to be deeply regretted, not only on account of his own individual worth but the loss it will entail upon the city should the many enterprises he contemplated be abandoned.

Mr. Richardson was the soul of honor. His word was as good as a bond. He leaves the world with the sincere regret of a city full of friends. His memory will be cherished by a host of admirers.

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M. B. RICHARDSON LEAVES A WILL.

Entire Estate Goes to His
Brother, Laurence.

The Real Estate Has an Assessed
Value of About Three Hundred
Thousand Dollars — Large
Amount of Personal
Property Not Yet
Listed.

A search of the effects of the late Maxwell B. Richardson revealed the fact that he left a will, made several years ago, and that his entire estate goes to his brother, Laurence J. Richardson, who is also named as the executor of the will.

The announcement was made today by Norman L. Bates, nephew of Mr. Richardson. Mr. Bates stated that the real estate owned by Mr. Richardson is valued at about \$100,000, or about one-third of the amount of assessment paid on the Jacob and Naomi Richardson estates. Mr. Bates

said it would be impossible at this time to estimate the amount of personal property left by Mr. Richardson, because it has been impossible to list the stock and bonds and other securities which he held.

Mr. Bates said that he did not know how Mr. Richardson came to make this will, but a gentleman who claimed to know says that several years ago Max B. Richardson and his brother, Laurence J. Richardson, both executed wills in which the former made the latter his beneficiary in case he should die first, and that the latter made the former his beneficiary in case he should be first to die. These wills, it is said, were put away and not disturbed until after Mr. Richardson's death.

Mr. Richardson held a one-third interest in the estate of his father, Jacob Richardson, who died in 1854, and left personal property to the amount of \$20,000, and a like interest in the estate of his mother, Naomi Richardson, who left personal property to the amount of \$8,000, with his brother, Laurence J. Richardson, and his sister, Mrs. Harriet E. Bates. Mr. Richardson during his lifetime had the sole management of the estates.

It is said that Mr. Richardson's fortune outside of his interest in the estate of his father and mother, was

considerable. He was a man who did not spend money extravagantly and who was careful and conservative in all his business connections and invested his money in good interest-bearing stocks and bonds, many of which he has held for years. Mr. Bates said that it is his personal estate that he has willed to his brother, Laurence, and that the Richardson estate as coming from Jacob and Naomi Richardson remains intact, as it has for the past half century.

At the Assessors' office the following figures as to the value of the real estate on which Max B. Richardson paid the taxes are given:

Laurence J. Richardson, \$8,600; Max B. Richardson, \$122,550; Naomi Richardson, \$72,825; Richardson & King, \$1,300. The total, \$205,275.

Mr. Richardson is not on the assessment roll for personal property.

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The Daily Palladium, July 7, 1903, page 4.

ESTATES NOT SETTLED.

Matters in Connection With the Richardson Wealth

At the County Clerk's office today it transpired that there had never been a settlement made of the estates of Jacob and Naomi Richardson, parents of the late M. B. Richardson. Jacob Richardson died in 1854. There was no will, but the letters of administration show that the personal property left amounted to @ \$20,000, and that his wife, Naomi Richardson, Jesse and Morris Bennett were appointed the administrators and administratrix of the estate. There is nothing to show that a final settlement was ever made, or that any of the three were ever discharged from the office to which they were appointed.

Naomi Richardson, mother of Max B. Richardson, died intestate November 30th, 1890, and left personal property to the amount of \$8,000, and Max B. Richardson was appointed the administrator. There is nothing to show that this estate had been finally adjudicated. The heirs to both estates were the same, Max B. Richardson, Lawrence J. Richardson and Mrs. Harriet E. Bates, a daughter.

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- What is a will? Why is a will important?
- What are the responsibilities of the administrator or administratrix?
- What would \$20,000 in 1854 equate to in today's dollars?

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At the Assessors' office the following figures as to the value of the real estate on which Max B. Richardson paid taxes are given:

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