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Liljedahl, Gustaf (1859 -)

Dean Nelson

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Gustaf Liljedahl was born in Vermland, Sweden November 27, 1859, son of Charles and Lisa (Johnson) Liljedahl. Gustaf attended public school and at the age of fourteen was "confirmed" or graduated. He wanted to secure further education but due to the charges and tuition in the higher forms of education was unable to do so. Being thus disappointed in his quest of knowledge Gustaf took a job as farm laborer. He followed this with the exception of one year (which he worked as a Miller's apprentice) until 1881. In that year Gustaf embarked for America to be a citizen of this so called land of plenty. He arrived in New York and came directly to Chicago that same year. Gustaf secured his first job as a painter and this was his trade from then on. The next year he left Chicago and came to Stillwater, Minnesota. Here Gustaf was greeted by bustling activity and many progressive business institutions. There were eighteen sawmills in Stillwater and one manufacturing plant that turned out complete eleven railway box cars per day. Gustaf remained in Stillwater four years and it was here he was married to Betty Katherina Gafvert on May 18, 1884. Gustaf and Betty (Gafvert) Liljedahl were engaged in Sweden and Gustaf had preceded her to America to earn some money for her passage and a start over here.

Betty Katherina (Gafvert) Liljedahl was born in Vermland, Sweden June 11, 1858, daughter of Anders and Anna (Hjerji) Gafvert.

In 1886 Gustaf and his bride moved to Saint Cloud, Minnesota. Gustaf secured a job on the power dam and later on the Tenth Street Bridge, both under construction at that time. When this work was finished he accepted a position as head janitor at the teachers college, then called the Normal School. This position he held for ten years and at it's termination he began painting in partnership with John Olson. Together they worked for various paint contractors and then took contract work themselves. After

eleven years of painting Gustaf again accepted a position as janitor and upkeep man for the public schools of the city. This position he held until his retirement in 1930.

To Gustaf and Betty (Gafvert) Liljedahl were born seven children, one deceased, Peter who was killed in action during the World War. The living are, Lily E., Hulda M., Frank E., Mabel A., Judith, and Francis E. There are four grandchildren.

Gustaf said, "When I first came to Saint Cloud there were no homes on the East Side. The only reason that they built homes over here to start with, was the Breen Quarry. The employees of this quarry erected homes because their work was too far from Saint Cloud proper.

The original town was supposed to be where lower town was located. Even the Great Northern Railway Company built grades and surveyed the land there for the railroad. It's a good thing they never laid the rails because the town began to grow at it's present location on Saint Germain Street and the railroad would have been rather out of place," says Mr. Liljedahl.

"In early Saint Cloud there were many manufacturing places started but none of them have survived. That is one thing I can't understand, when a territory like this, with so many resources can never support and promote a manufacturing plant."

Interviewed: Gustaf Liljedahl
Date: October 19, 1936
By: Dean Nelson

FROM THE RECORDS IN THE STEARNS COUNTY COURT HOUSE

FOR THE GUSTAF LILJEDAHN BIOGRAPHY

NO LEGAL RECORDS IN THE STEARNS COUNTY COURT HOUSE