

[Wagner, Mahlon Manley]

MAHLON M. WAGNER OF BROOKLYN DIES
CHIEF OF CUSTOMS BUREAU, NEW YORK POSTOFFICE
POTSDAM GRADUATE, 1875

He Was Widely Known Throughout Northern New York as a Former Resident
of This Section Who Took Prominent Part in St. Lawrence Reunions in New York

Potsdam, Aug. 3.—The body of Mahlon M. Wagner, a native of Potsdam, and probably one of the best known of the alumni of the Potsdam Normal, who died yesterday at his home in New York, will be brought here this afternoon and services will be brought here this afternoon and services will be held this afternoon at 3 in the Universalist church. Rev. D. L. Fisher will officiate.

Mr. Wagner was born in Potsdam 62 years ago. After graduation from the Normal he taught in Waddington, Lisbon Centre and Guthrie High school, and at Panora, Ia. He had been in the customs service since 1880. He married here Miss Jessie E. Fuller of Potsdam in 1877. She survives.

Brooklyn, Aug 3.—The Eagle of Thursday says:

Mahlon Manley Wagner died early today at his home, 516 Washington avenue, from heart failure. He returned on Monday from a vacation spent upon the St. Lawrence river. He was the chief of the customs bureau of the New York city postoffice, a position which he had held for many years, having come into the customs service 37 years ago, by appointment by General Edwin A. Merritt, who was then collector of the port.

Mr. Wagner was a strong Republican and active in local politics, and was a competent and faithful public official. He was connected with the Church of Our Father [First Universalist Society of Brooklyn], on Lefferts place, and had been president of the Men's Club. He was also prominent as a Mason. Mr. Wagner, however, was best known in this city because of his close connection with the many organizations representing St. Lawrence county and the North Country. He graduated from the Potsdam Normal school in 1875, and after serving as principal of a High school in Iowa for a year came to Brooklyn and has been recognized everywhere as the most active alumnus of the Potsdam Normal school.

He was one of the leading spirits in the New York City Alumni Association.

He was also one of the founders of the St. Lawrence County Society and at one time its president, and was a welcome attendant at most of the dinners of the St. Lawrence University Club, in New York. He was a writer of poetry and of prose and was a regular contributor to the Potsdam Normal school publication. Many of his poems, written in the style of the French-Canadian patois, were exceedingly clever. He was a man of fine disposition and was ever ready to help a friend. Any one from St. Lawrence county

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calling upon Mr. Wagner was always sure to receive a warm welcome and a helping hand.

He was born in Potsdam, in [September] 1855, and is survived by his widow, Jessie E. Wagner. The funeral services will be held in Potsdam either on Friday or Saturday, and will be conducted by the Masons.

Daily Times, Watertown NY, Fri. 3 Aug 1917

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M. M. WAGNER PASSES AWAY

Well Known Normal Alumnus Succumbs to Heart Failure

For Many Years Connected With the Custom House Service in New York City

Mahlon M. Wagner, a native of Potsdam, and for years identified with the Potsdam Normal Alumni, both here and in New York, died suddenly at his home in Brooklyn shortly after 9 Thursday morning. Mr. Wagner was the victim of a weak heart, his death possibly being hastened by the terrific hot wave of last week. His body was brought here Friday and funeral services held Friday afternoon at the Universalist church, Rev. D. L. Fisher officiating. Interment was made in Bayside.

Mahlon Manley Wagner was born in Potsdam 61 years ago. He entered the old Intermediate Department of the Normal School the day it opened its doors in 1868. He graduated in the classical course in 1875. He taught for several years in Waddington and Lisbon and was afterward principal of a school at Panorama, Iowa.

In 1877, the late General Edwin A. Merritt secured for him a position in the New York Custom House while he, the General, was Collector of the Port of New York. Mr. Wagner steadily advanced through various positions in the customs service until at the time of his death he was Chief of the Customs Bureau of the New York Postoffice, having charge of large importations made by jewelers through the mails.

Mr. Wagner was active in alumni affairs of the school and was personally responsible for the organization of the Potsdam Normal Alumni Association of New York City. He was, of course, very active in the Normal Alumni Association and was instrumental in starting the alumni publication, The Normal Magazine, to which he afterward became a regular contributor. He was present at every dinner the New York Association ever held, and was a frequent visitor at commencement in Potsdam. He was also one of the founders of the St. Lawrence County Society, and at one time its president.

He was also a familiar figure at the gatherings of St. Lawrence University men in New York City. A lover of the North Country, he was keenly interested in anything pertaining to it and visitors from this section were always welcome at his office.

Mr. Wagner was a man of more than ordinary ability as a writer of both prose and verse. He was the author of many poems in the French Canadian patois style of Dr. Drummond. Critics compared many of them favorably with Drummond's. He also wrote the song "St. Lawrence," which has been sung at the Normal reunions in New York for years.

Mr. Wagner was a man of ready wit and sympathetic nature. In his duties at the Customs House he built [illegible] and made hundreds of

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friends [illegible] thoughtfulness in the discharge of his duties. Mr. Wagner was wont to say that it was his policy to convince the public that the government was its friend, not its enemy.

Mr. Wagner was a strong Republican and as active in politics of Brooklyn as his federal position would permit. He was the leader in his election district for many years. Mr. Wagner was connected with the Church of Our Father [First Universalist Society] on Lefferts Place, Brooklyn, and was president of the Men's Club. He married in 1877 in this village Miss Jessie E. Fuller of Potsdam, by whom he is survived.

Courier and Freeman, Potsdam NY, Wed. 8 Aug 1917

Transcribed on 4 Jun 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY