

[Woodhead, Wilfred]

WILFRED WOODHEAD PASSES SUDDENLY LONG PROMINENT IN ACTIVITIES OF CANTON VILLAGE

Wilfred Woodhead, for several years one of the most active members of the community, and for five years president of the Village of Canton, died suddenly at his home here Saturday morning. Mr. Woodhead, who had not been in robust health for several years, was about as usual at his place of business, the Robinson & Woodhead coal and lumber office, Friday, and was in his usual health Friday evening, partaking of dinner at a family gathering. He went to bed at the usual hour. Saturday morning when he did not arise, his son, Albert N. Woodhead of Albany who is spending his vacation here, went to his room to call him, and found that death had come while he slept. He had apparently passed away quietly about an hour before. Funeral services were conducted yesterday afternoon at the First Universalist church at 3 o'clock, the Rev. J. [James] M. Payson, officiating. Burial was made at Evergreen.

The announcement of Mr. Woodhead's death came as a distinct shock to the people of this community, where he had been actively engaged for many years. He came to Canton something over a quarter of a century ago and was first engaged with R. T. Wells & Co. at the old Canton Lumber Co. plant here. Later he was engaged with James Spears as bookkeeper at the Spears Mill on the Island. When Canton men became associated in the formation of the Trois Pistoles Lumber Co. he was selected as bookkeeper and manager at that lumber companies [sic] headquarters in Quebec, and he remained there with his wife and son for some time looking after the interest of the company.

On returning to Canton he was for a time engaged as bookkeeper and secretary of the Seaver Medicine Co. at this place, and was with that company during its years of promise and prosperity. About fifteen years ago he formed a co-partnership with George E. Robinson of Canton, and a coal and lumber business was established in the Buck and Miner street section, and under his forceful management this quickly became a substantial business and has continued as such to this time.

In March 1916 Mr. Woodhead was elected president of the village of Canton. This was just about the time the village was attempting to find a way out of a very nasty water problem, the river water which was used for city purposes being of such condition on account of stream pollution, that its use was very undesirable. Mr. Woodhead early saw what Canton needed and at once during the first summer of his incumbency as village president joined with Judge L. [Ledyard] P. Hale, W. N. Beard and others in the campaign for good water. He was one of the most active in this campaign and made trips out of town to investigate water supply of other communities like Canajoharie, and he shared with others the large meed of praise for what the village now has in a water supply that has no superior. Mr. Woodhead was successively elected to office

[Woodhead, Wilfred]

for five terms, closing his duties in 1921 after the water problem had been closed, the plant built and most of the aftermath cleared away.

Mr. Woodhead was a man of naturally strong physique, a tireless worker, but in 1918 he had along illness during the fall of the year and this left his naturally robust health somewhat shattered. He has however given his attention to his business and was accounted one of the ablest business men of the community. His dealings with the large patronage that came to the coal and lumber yard was such that there was at all times a feeling among customers that they were getting a square deal.

Mr. Woodhead was a native of England, born in that country on Dec. 17, 1870, the son of Albert and Martha Wilkenson Woodhead. At an early age he came to Fitchburg, Mass. He was employed for a time of [sic] the Swift Packing Co. at Brooklyn and later at Middletown, N.Y. At this latter place he met and married Miss Florence Freeman, daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Noel Freeman of Crary Mills. From Middletown Mr. and Mrs. Woodhead came to this locality, and finally made their home here.

Mr. Woodhead was a member of The Club, St. Lawrence Commandery, Knights Templar, and of the First Universalist church, and at death was a trustee and treasurer of that church. He recently became a member of the St. Lawrence Golf Club.

He leaves a widow, Mrs. Florence Freeman Woodhead, and one son, Albert Noel Woodhead, a graduate of St. Lawrence University, '21, formerly of the staff of the Watertown Daily Times, but now with the Mohawk Hudson Power Co. at Albany. There is also a little granddaughter, Judith Woodhead. There are also brothers and sisters as follows: William Woodhead of Springfield, Mass.; Albert Woodhead of Hopedale, Mass.; and Harry Woodhead of Venice, California; Mrs. James Sullivan of West Fitchburg, Mass.; Mrs. William Jones of West Fitchburg, Mass.; and Mrs. Hannah Ingram of Chelmsford, Mass.

The death of Mr. Woodhead comes as a matter of deep regret to the community where he engaged so long in business and where his interest in civic duties was so marked at a period where intelligent force and interest were needed. He was the very spirit of frankness and fairness in all things. The community deeply regrets the loss.

Commercial Recorder, Canton NY, Tue. 16 Aug 1927

Transcribed on 13 Jun 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY