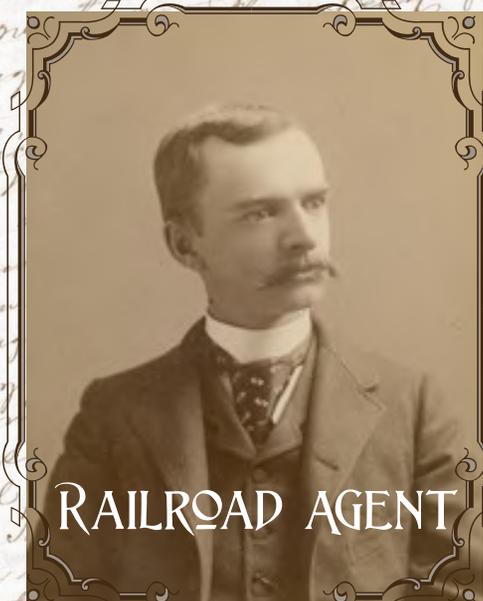




Edmond Depot, c.1890, EHSM Collections

EDMOND BURDICK



RAILROAD AGENT



EDMOND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM

2011

Booklet design by Nina Hager

Nina W. Hager

July 1892 - Dec. 1895	Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, Minneapolis, MN, General Agent
June 1893 - May 1894	Secretary of the Minneapolis Passenger Association
June 26, 1895	Edmond Burdick Marries Katherine Thayer Walker in Manhattan, N.Y.
Dec 1895 - July 1898	Engaged in Legal Business
1896	Listed in University of Wisconsin Graduates as: <i>Traveling Freight Agent, Santa Fe Route, Chicago, Illinois</i>
July 19, 1896	Elisha Burdick, Edmond's Father dies in Madison, The Madison Democrat reports at the time of his father's death he is a "prominent Railway official in Chicago."
July 1898 - March 1909	United States Agent, Mexican Central Railway, Mexico City
March 26, 1909	Edmond Burdick dies from typhoid fever in Mexico City
June 1, 1909	Maria Burdick, Edmond's Mother dies in Madison

Chronology information taken from:

Ancestry.com. U.S. City Directories [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.
<http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/hs=1577608&db=US1890censusSubstitue&indiv>.
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Busbey, Addison T., *The Biographical Directory of the Railway Officials of America*, (Chicago, Railway Age Publication, Edition of 1901), page 73. <http://books.google.com/> (accessed Nov. 2009).

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<http://forms.cityofmadison.com> (accessed March 11, 2011).

Frankenburger, David B., *General Catalogue of the Officers and Graduates of the University of Wisconsin 1849-1897*, Madison, Democrat Printing Co., 1897.

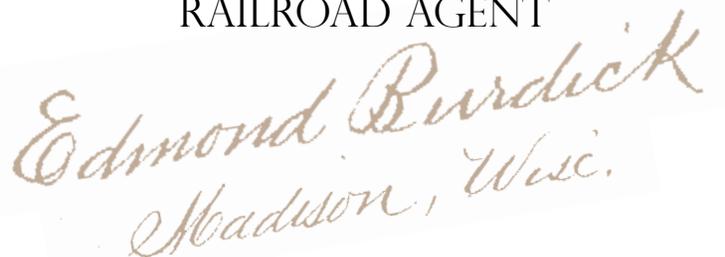
Obituary of Elisha Burdick, *Madison Democrat*, July 19, 1896, "In Death's Shadow: Home of Elisha Burdick is Grief Stricken, A Pioneer Passes Away," State Historical Society of Wisconsin Necrology, Volume 6, 52.

BURDICK CHRONOLOGY

- 1858 Edmond Schuyler Burdick, born July 16, 1858, Dane County, Madison, Wisconsin
- 1877 Graduates from Madison High School
- 1880 Graduates from the University of Wisconsin with a Bachelor of Law Degree
- 1881 Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, Commissary Engineering Department
- 1881 - Nov. 1884 Law Practice, Madison, Wisconsin
- Nov. - Dec. 1884 Trinidad Coal & Coking Company, Starkville, Colorado, Assistant Foreman
- Dec. 1884 - Mar. 1885 Southern Kansas Railway, Attorney
- March - Nov. 1885 Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, Engineering Department
- Nov. 1885 - Feb. 1886 Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, Engineering Department
- Feb. 1886 - May 1888 Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, Assistant Right of Way Agent
- May 1888 - June 1889 Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, Traffic Statistician
- June 1889 - July 1892 Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad, Traveling Agent
- 1890 Listed in the Minneapolis City Directory: *Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe R.R., Edmond Burdick, gen agt, 513 Guaranty Bldg. tel 1900.*

EDMOND BURDICK

RAILROAD AGENT



Edmond Burdick
Madison, Wisc.

NINA W. HAGER

PUBLISHED BY THE

EDMOND
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MUSEUM

2011

Above: Copy of Edmond Burdick's signature from the Roll of Attorneys, June 23, 1880. Used with permission of the Wisconsin Supreme Court Historical Records.

**EDMOND SCHUYLER BURDICK, THE
YOUNGEST MEMBER OF THE LAW
CLASS OF 1880,**

died on March 26 in the City of Mexico from typhoid fever. Following graduation he was for several years attorney for the construction department of the Santa Fe railroad and later occupied for some years the position of United States representative of the Mexican railway in New York City. For the last six years he had resided in Mexico and held an official position with the Mexican Central railway. Mr. Burdick had just returned from a voyage to the isthmus of Tehautepec, whither he had gone on account of the opening of the Pacific passenger and steamship line, when he was stricken with the fatal disease.²³

In August 1891, Burdick stated that it was a “source of pleasure” to see his namesake Edmond, Oklahoma doing so well. His greatest legacy, it seems, was fostering and sustaining new communities, in some cases, before they could be imagined.

23. Frederick W. MacKenzie, “Deaths,” *Wisconsin Alumni Magazine*, Volume 10, No. 7, published April 1909, 308. Courtesy of the Steenbock Memorial Library Archives, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

A LIFE ON THE RAILS

Edmond Burdick can be found in the city directories of Minneapolis in 1890 and Wichita, Kansas in 1891 and 1892. He listed his office addresses in Chicago in 1896 and Minneapolis in 1898. In 1900, Burdick was living in New York, but by 1903 he had moved on to Mexico City. The wide range of his addresses show that Edmond Burdick had a full and rich career. (*see Chronology*)

Living out of a suitcase and traveling the rails became a way of life. While other alumni of the University of Wisconsin settled down with families, Burdick was on the move, working the longest period of time for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe. A trail of addresses in hotels and depot offices reveal that Burdick was never able to acquire a long-term home address.

On June 26, 1895, Burdick married Katherine Thayer Walker at the late age of 36, when she was 29, in New York City, New York.²² In 1898, Burdick made another advance in his career, as a U.S. representative for the Mexican Central Railway. Edmond Burdick died on March 26, 1909 from complications of typhoid fever in Mexico City. His association with the University of Wisconsin is the only source of information about his final whereabouts. This obituary was published April 1909, in the University of Wisconsin Alumni Magazine explaining how Burdick died over 2,000 miles from his birthplace in Madison, Wisconsin.

22. Marriage License, City of New York Certificate No. 14474, New York City Department of Records and Information Services, Municipal Archives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many Thanks to the historians, scholars, and authors of Edmond's early history, upon whose research this book is founded and to whom we pay our respect and gratitude. Without their foundation, the story of Edmond Burdick's life could not be fully told.

DR. JAMES CROWDER

STELLA BARTON FORDICE

DR. STANLEY HOIG

LUCILLE WARRICK

With Special Thanks to

BURNIS GEORGE ARGO

THE EDMOND HISTORIC PRESERVATION TRUST

DR. DONOVAN L. HOFSSOMMER

SARA MEMMOTT, EDMOND GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

JOHN MOORE, JR.

THE OKLAHOMA HISTORY CENTER, RESEARCH DIVISION

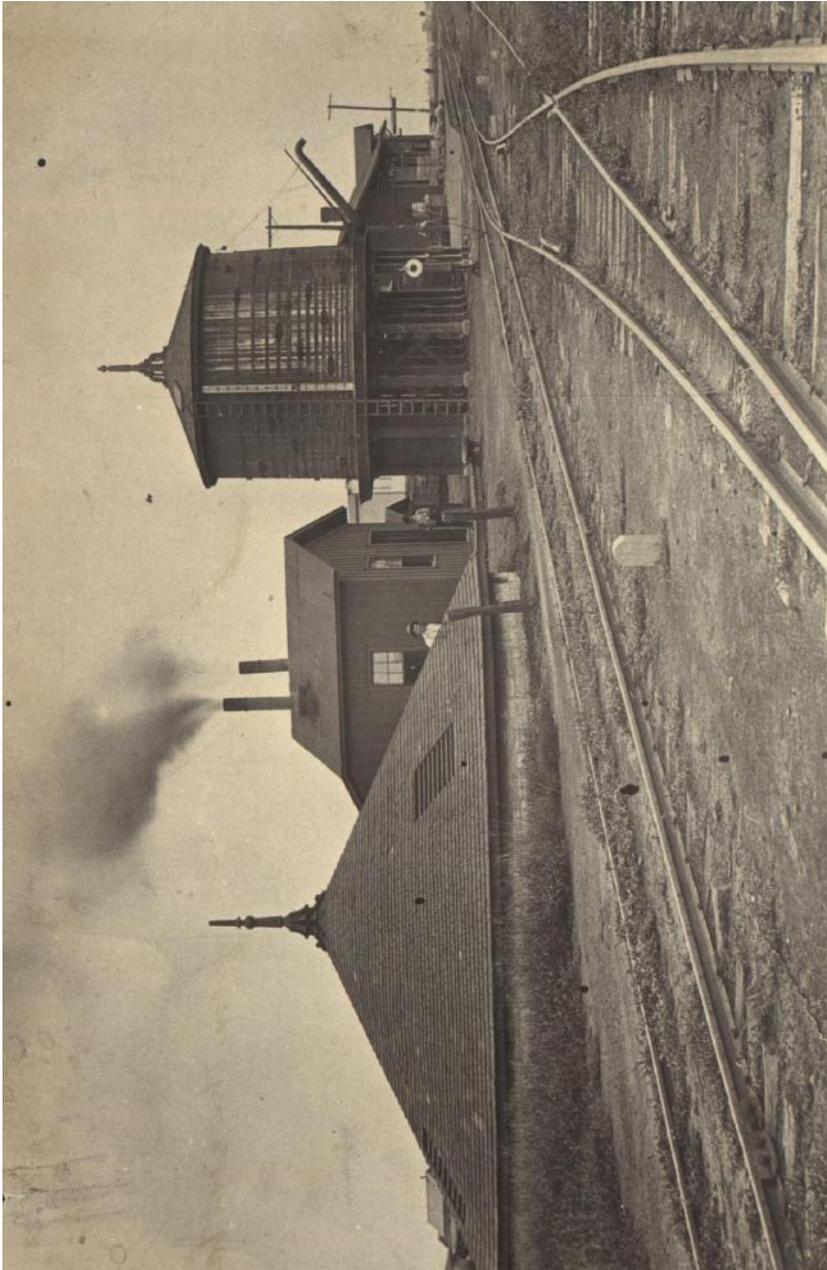
RED BEARD THE RAILROAD RAIDER

THE STEENBOCK MEMORIAL LIBRARY ARCHIVES

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THE WISCONSIN HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES



Edmond, Oklahoma, Indian Territory. Coal and watering stop. Conical covered water well, pump house with two chimneys; water tower with conical covered roof, "Mile Marker 103" in foreground. Edmond Historical Society Collections.

for Council Bluffs, then on to Omaha, Laramie, Salt Lake City and "on Monday next for San Francisco." The letter talks of horse teams, a "pretty pony," a visit to the Union Pacific R.R. workshops, meeting "Mr. Bloomer," (whose wife garnered recent fame with a bi-furcated undergarment), and other points of interest along the way. With no radio or television to entertain an impressionable 10 year old, Edmond must have cherished this letter describing the rail and the role of freight agents that would be so prominent in his professional life to come.

"The R.R. from Chicago runs to the East side of the Missouri River, which is here about a half mile wide, and there passengers are taken in omnibuses and freight in waggons [sic] - and carried to the Ferry Boat two of which fly during the day between the two sides of the river...the Transfer Company employs a large number of men and teams in the labor of carrying people and freight from one depot to another."²¹

*like nearly all new towns
people have large eyes
see big -
The R.R. from Chicago runs
the East side of the Missouri
River, which is here about a
half mile wide, and there
passengers are taken in Omnibuses
and freight in waggons - and
carried to the Ferry Boats, two
which fly during the day
between the two sides of the
river, The Transfer Com-
pany employ a large number
of men and teams in the
labor of carrying people and
freight from one depot to
another. Some of the finest
teams of horses which I have
ever seen are owned and
used in the business -*

21. Elisha Burdick, July 21, 1869, letter, Burdick, Elisha, Miscellany, 1856-ca.1910, SC 474, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives. (page 2 of original letter shown at right)

A LETTER TO EDDIE

In the summer of 1869, dignitaries of the State of Wisconsin took an unprecedented trip from Wisconsin to California by rail. The group included Congressmen, Bank Presidents, the State Treasurer, the Secretary of State, and other dignitaries, as well as Edmond's father Elisha Burdick. They traveled from July through August to make their round-trip.

James Ross, a reporter from the *Wisconsin State Journal*, also aboard, wrote a series of articles about their excursion. This passage describes the local and national pride felt by the Wisconsin dignitaries on their pioneering adventure:

*"...an enterprise creditable to the people of the United States and to the skill and confidence of the engineers and capitalists who, in 1869, had the proud satisfaction of presenting to the world one of the greatest works of the age, in a railroad passing through deserts and mountains to complete the long link needed to unite the Atlantic and Pacific oceans with the iron rail..."*¹⁹

This special excursion, that literally covered new ground at a clip of 500 miles a day, was a celebration of technological achievement and American pride. The journal of James Ross published in 1869 documented that on July 20, 1869, the Wisconsin dignitaries arrived between 8 and 9 o'clock in the morning into the city of Omaha, Nebraska.²⁰

One letter survives from father to ten year old son "Eddie," dated July 21, 1869. Elisha had written to his son the morning of their departure from Omaha, describing the new city and the first two days of the trip. The party had left Chicago

19. James Ross, *From Wisconsin to California and Return, as Reported for the Wisconsin State Journal*, (Madison, WI, Atwood & Buble, 1869), preface.

20. *Ibid*, 7.

FOREWORD

For true historians, any uncovering or confirmation of fact is exciting. But Nina Hager's systematic research and recent revelation concerning the man for whom Edmond, Oklahoma is named is truly a monumental discovery.

Perhaps the earliest citizens of the 1889 territorial town knew who loaned his name to this place on the prairie; but without an official chronicler, that knowledge was lost. Fortunately, when Stella Barton Fordice wrote her thesis, "History of Edmond, Oklahoma" in 1927, John and Cordelia Steen, the town's first residents, were still living and told her that the name came from a Santa Fe railroad official. However, that declaration was also largely forgotten and some stories found their way into print that the town's name came from Eddy Townsend, a key settler and city father.

Resident author and historian Dr. Stanley Hoig reported in his 1976 publication, *Edmond – The Early Years*, the dates and events surrounding the official naming of the town. But despite trips to Washington, D.C. and Topeka, Kansas to plow through existing Santa Fe documentation, he had to admit in his 1987 book, *Edmond – The First Century*, that no namesake "has yet to be discovered."

Then in 1991, while reading every copy of *The Edmond Sun* available on microfilm, Lucille Warrick found a small article that Edmond Burdick, the railroad's agent for "traveling freight," had just visited here in August 1891 and found the town named for him to be a "source of pleasure." Her discovery was fully noted in my 2000 illustrated history, *Historic Edmond*.

None of Edmond's past historians could have foreseen the digitization of such publications like "Railway Officials of America from 1901," held by the University of Wisconsin. Now available on the internet, the key information revealed Burdick's full name and birth date which opened the door to more documentation and actual photographs of him in the Wisconsin Historical Society.

Thankfully, Nina Hager of the Edmond Historical Society combined modern research techniques and established principles of historiography with her own passion and determination. It is very satisfying to know that Mr. Burdick is reconnected to Edmond after more than 120 years.

A WELL-CONNECTED FAMILY

Edmond's first name was a long standing family surname on his mother's side of the family. Edmond's mother, Maria Banyer Edmond, was born in New York to Robert Edmond, a prominent physician in Long Island, New York in the mid 1800's. Maria graduated from Union Hall Academy in Jamaica, New York.

Among Maria's notable ancestors, her great grandfather, William Edmond, who was a Revolutionary War veteran, attended Yale College in 1778, became an attorney and went on to serve in the U.S. Congress and Connecticut State House of Representatives and Senate.

Maria, had ties to the Livingston and Jay families of New York and had a piano in the family home belonging to her great-great uncle, John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. In 1778, Jay served as the President of the Continental Congress and later was an ambassador to Spain and France. He gained historic fame for his treaty of 1794 which secured terms of peace with Great Britain. Jay often hosted George Washington as a regular guest to his home in New York when he was governor of that state.¹⁸

Clearly, both the Burdick and Edmond family lines were well established. For them, education was an opportunity that could be afforded. With a long line of family setting an example before him, Edmond was destined to expand his legacy.



Edmond
Schuyler
Burdick
C. 1891

*Photograph
Taken in Wichita,
Kansas by
Baldwin & Sons
Studio.*

Carte de Visite

*Image Courtesy of
the Wisconsin
Historical Society*

“A FRIEND”

In the August 14, 1891 issue of the Edmond Sun, a small article appeared confirming what the Steen Family already knew: The town of Edmond, Oklahoma was named for a Traveling Freight Agent for the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad.¹ This small article makes the first link to Edmond, Oklahoma's namesake, Edmond Burdick.

1. Fordice, Stella, “History of Edmond Oklahoma” (master's thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1927), 6.

18. Mary Elizabeth Hussong, “Wisconsin Village That Drew Celebrities: Society in Early Madison Days, When Cabin Walls Had Grown Wide as Mansions,” *Milwaukee Journal*, December 21, 1925.



The Lakeside Water Cure, est. 1855, image courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society.

The Milwaukee and Mississippi Railway was established on May 18, 1851 in Madison, Wisconsin. The “Lakeside Water Cure” was designed to place Madison firmly on the map as a resort destination.

City leaders, with whom Burdick was connected, were enticing travelers to the north, lauding Madison as a city renowned for its beauty.¹⁶

Just a few years before his birth, Edmond Burdick’s father had foreseen the positive connections made through the burgeoning railroad industry. Train Tracks passed through Madison less than a city block from the Burdick’s home on Wilson Street. As a boy Edmond Burdick watched steam engines and their freight cars from the windows of his home. The train whistles and clouds of steam must have captivated a young boy’s imagination. Edmond Burdick grew up along with country’s industries, with dreams of traveling to far away places.

16. Mary Livingston Burdick, “Madison 70 Years Ago, a Health and Recreation Center,” *Madison Capital Times*, May 14, 1925, Wisconsin Local History & Biography Articles.

17. City of Madison, Wisconsin and the Wisconsin Trust for Historic Preservation. *Design Guidelines Bassett Neighborhood*, (Madison, 1997). 1-B.

On July 4, 1884, The Southern Kansas Railway Company (whose securities were owned by the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Co.) was granted rights by the U.S. Congress to lay a new rail line from Arkansas City, Kansas, south into the “Unassigned Lands.” The term “Unassigned Lands” was commonly used in the 1880s referring to the last parcel of land in the Indian Territory not “assigned” to one of the many Indian tribes that had been removed to the future state of Oklahoma. The town that later would be named Edmond was known as early as January 1886, when a party of fifteen surveyors left Arkansas City to survey a new route from there to Gainesville, Texas. “Mile Marker 103” was the town’s designation for a short period of time which stipulated the number of miles

The Edmond Sun, August 14, 1891, courtesy of the UCO Archives. “The Normal” here refers to the first Territorial Normal School, the site of today’s University of Central Oklahoma Old North Tower, with first classes held 1893.

A Friend.

The Normal has a warm friend, and although an artificial person, its friendship will be beneficial and appreciated. This friend is none other than the Santa Fe railroad company who have, almost unsolicited, offered the normal communis- sioners one half rates on all stone from Augusta, Kansas.

Our people appreciate this offer, for it shows that the Santa Fe takes an interest in Edmond and will do what it can to build up the town. The traveling freight agent, Edmond Burdick, while on his way south, stopped off here last week to see the town and the site chosen for the normal. He was very much pleased with both, and said the town was named after him, and it was a source of pleasure for him to see the town doing so well.

from Arkansas City to that point. Surveyors also noted that the area had a “good spring,” which may have played a part in the town becoming a watering and coaling stop. Some accounts state that Edmond may have been called “Summit” originally, although many points along the rail with that topographical characteristic were also given that name.²

The territory took shape with new features like telegraph wires, coal storage bins and water tanks for steam engines, as a result of tremendous railroad expansion. Tracks pushed south at a rate of one and a half miles a day through the territory between the Cimarron and Canadian rivers, which eventually became the town of Edmond.³

Dirt bed tracks carried slow moving cars and railroad crews to new points along this southern line. In December of 1886, the station at “Mile Marker 103” was taking shape. A train order office, a Clifton 12-pocket coal chute, coal bin, water closet, section house, tool house, 2 small wells and a cottage were all erected at the site that was favored by surveyors earlier that year.⁴ A young John N. Steen was brought in from New Mexico’s Division of the Santa Fe to complete the massive water well required at the track’s side. The well, 24 feet across and 130 feet deep, was completed in 1886.⁵

Two years prior, before workers at “Mile Marker 103” were preparing the site to fuel and water passing steam locomotives, even as the laying of the track was not yet surveyed, an ambitious young man from the capital of Wisconsin was making his way south. On October 30, 1884, the *Wichita Daily Eagle* reported in its short announcements that a “Mr. Edward

rose early and braved the cold temperatures to build fires in the stoves of the local schools to be sure that students and teachers would be comfortable. By all accounts, Burdick’s father had a gift for public speaking, storytelling and had a beautiful singing voice,¹³ something he must have often shared with his large family.

The Burdick’s neighbors on Wilson Street included Robert M. La Follette, who served as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate and as Governor of Wisconsin. La Follette’s biography, written by his wife, explains Elisha Burdick’s oratory talent:

“Unusual in mind and character, when occasion demanded he had a power of varied and vigorous speech, which Bob used to say he had never heard equaled.”¹⁴

As one of the first real-estate developers in Madison, Elisha partnered with George P. Delaplaine, a community leader, to build “The Lakeside Water Cure,” which was a health and recreation center that brought early prominence to the city of Madison. A favorite of “pleasure and rest seekers of the middle west,” the “Water Cure” brought people from southern cities seeking a respite from the dry and hot climate.¹⁵

Locals and tourists could stand on the open roof deck of the structure to take in the beauty of Lake Monona as well as having the best view of the city. This landmark was a mile and a half from the territorial Burdick home.

2. Dr. James L. Crowder, *Historic Edmond: An Illustrated History*, (San Antonio, TX, Lammert Publications, Inc., 2000), 7.

3. Stan Hoig, *Edmond the Early Years* (Edmond, OK, Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1976), 5.

4. John Moore Jr., *Edmond Station and Depot, Part 1*, (Albuquerque, New Mexico, 2011), 2.

5. Dr. James L. Crowder, *Historic Edmond: An Illustrated History*, (San Antonio, TX, Lammert Publications, Inc., 2000), 7.

13. Obituary of Elisha Burdick, *Madison Democrat*, July 19, 1896, “In Death’s Shadow: Home of Elisha Burdick is Grief Stricken, A Pioneer Passes Away,” State Historical Society of Wisconsin Necrology, Volume 6, 52.

14. Belle Case and Fola La Follette, *Robert M. La Follette, Volume I*. (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1953), 55.

15. History of Dane County, Western Historical Company, Chicago, 1880, 832, Delaplaine and Burdick, Records, 1836-1837, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives.

FAMILY LIFE



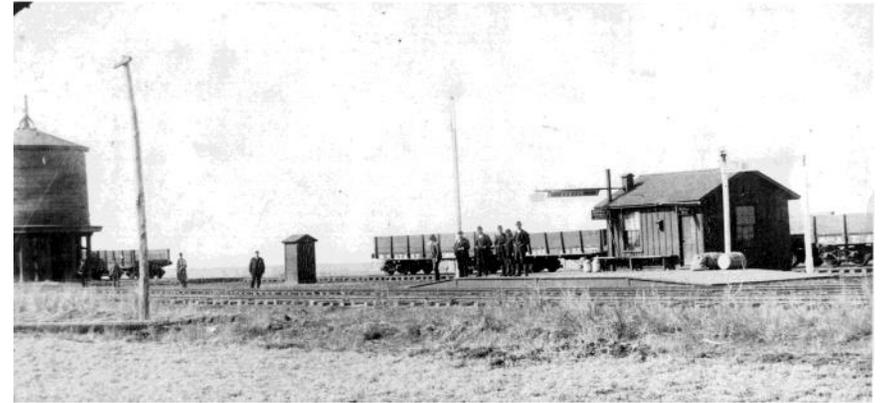
Young Edmond Burdick,
age 18, Wisconsin
Historical Society

The namesake of Edmond, Oklahoma, Edmond Schuyler Burdick, was born the eldest son of Elisha and Maria (Edmond) Burdick on July, 16, 1858 in Madison, Wisconsin. His mother's maiden name would become his first name.

Elisha Burdick was born in Brookfield, Madison County, New York December 6, 1821. He eventually settled in "Madison Village" the isthmus between

Lakes Mendota and Monona of the Wisconsin Territory in 1842. Madison later became the state capital when Wisconsin achieved statehood in 1848. As the capital city gained in population, so the Burdick family also grew. Elisha married Maria Edmond in 1856 in Brooklyn, New York and brought her to Wisconsin to begin their family. The Burdicks produced four sons and two daughters.

Also an attorney, Edmond's father was an active pioneer, a clerk of the territorial court under Judge David Irvin, and an enterprising real estate developer of the area. As clerk of the court, Elisha served for 12 years, and avidly studied real estate law. In 1856, he was touted to be "the best real-estate lawyer in Wisconsin." Elisha was also an intrinsic asset to the young community of Madison. He served for 25 years as treasurer and active member of the Madison School Board. He personally purchased supplies and made repairs to local schools. Furthermore, on Wisconsin winter mornings, he



The Edmond Train Order Office (Original Edmond Station) c. 1887, Courtesy of the Research Division of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

[sic] Burdick, of Madison, Wisconsin, is in the city on a business trip, and is registered at the Occidental." His appearance in Wichita is noted by the same paper in May 1885.⁶

By the year 1885, Edmond Burdick had graduated as the youngest member of his class from the University of Wisconsin in Madison with a Bachelor of Law degree in 1880. He began his railroading career in 1881, working first for the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad. Then he worked for three short years as an attorney in Madison. He then returned to railroad work as an assistant foreman for the Trinidad Coal & Coking Co., headquartered in Starkville, Colorado for one month. Then, from December 1884 to March 1885 (when he was staying at the Occidental Hotel in Wichita), he worked as an attorney with the Southern Kansas Railway Company, just at the time it was joining with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad. For most of 1885, he worked with the engineering department of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad.⁷

6. *Chronicling America*, The Library of Congress, *Wichita Daily Eagle*, October 30, 1884, <http://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045789/1884-10-30/ed-1/seg-4/> (accessed March 28, 2011).
7. Busbey, T. Addison, *The Biographical Directory of the Railway Officials of America*, (Chicago, Railway Age Publication, Edition of 1901), page 73. <http://books.google.com/> (accessed Nov. 2009).

Later, in November 1885, when the Southern Kansas was pushing their road construction south toward the Unassigned Lands, Burdick joined the engineering department of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad. He served with the ATSF Railroad until February 1886 when he became their assistant right of way agent, working in this capacity until May 1888.⁸

In March 1887, when Burdick was working as an assistant right of way agent for the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe, station points along the Arkansas City extension were named by the Santa Fe Rail-



Edmond Burdick with Moustache, c. 1887, Carte de Visite, Image Courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society

road. Guthrie, a neighboring town and later the capital city of Oklahoma, took the name from Judge John Guthrie, an Atchison, Topeka, Santa Fe attorney and stockholder. The place-names along the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Rails serve as a roster of its official personnel.⁹ Name changes of towns in the Indian Territory were quite common, including at least seven others and the town of Edmond.¹⁰ Santa Fe officials named the place Edmond on March 28, 1887. Official government recognition followed within the next four months, naming the town for the railway agent of the Oklahoma Division, Edmond Burdick.¹¹

8. Busbey, T. Addison, *The Biographical Directory of the Railway Officials of America*, (Chicago, Railway Age Publication, Edition of 1901), page 73. <http://books.google.com/> (accessed Nov. 2009).

9. John Rydjord, *Kansas Place Names*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 460.

10. Logan County History Volume II, edited by Helen Homes. Topeka, 1980, 348.

11. Stan Hoig, *Edmond the Early Years* (Edmond, Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1976), 5.

By 1887, Burdick had been employed in various capacities with the ever-expanding railway companies. Men trained as attorneys, like him, had no shortage of work with companies seeking to expand their railway access into sparsely settled land. Coming from the “big city” of Madison, (itself only 30 years old), his legal training prepared his employers to literally gain ground as their companies expanded west. Burdick’s career evolved into the duties of a freight agent as the rural areas became populated and the role of the railroad necessarily changed. In the Unassigned Lands, making legal preparations for the railroad’s expansion had given way to the rail becoming the transport for eager participants in the 1889 Land Run and eventually to supplying young towns with the lumber and equipment they would use to forge their homesteads, farms and cities. Edmond Burdick was directing freight of all descriptions, for example, among other commodities, he had a role in bringing building stones from Augusta, Kansas at a reduced rate to Edmond in 1891.

Agents like Burdick were at the forefront of westward expansion. Railroad employees lived from a suitcase for long stretches of time, spending nights in the berths of Pullman Cars and western hotels. His job required stopping at remote locations like “Mile Marker 103” all along the line.

Burdick had given a speech in his high school graduating exercises about “Industrial Development,”¹² and clearly he was living out that theme. The tight quarters of northern cities like Chicago and Madison were well known to Burdick. Their bustling activities had given way to the pristine vistas of the southwest. The coal and watering stop 103 miles from Arkansas City was graced with his family name some 800 miles from his birthplace.

12. Graduating Exercises of the Madison High School, June 29, 1877, Program, Elisha Burdick, Miscellany, 1856-ca.—1910, WIHV95-A1217, Wisconsin Historical Society Archives.