

A Biography of Carl Riedesel (1854-1936)

(Believed to have been published in a Crookston newspaper or business directory, probably in the 1920s; taken from a typed transcription provided by a family member.)

This pioneer merchant of Crookston has a fundamental knowledge of his business not possessed by every man who is engaged in it by reason of his having learned the trade of shoemaking in all its features and requirements under competent instructors in his native land of Germany, and he makes this knowledge tell to his own advantage and that of his customers, because he is able to distinguish between good and poor material and workmanship in the manufacture of the goods he handles. His judgment in this respect is considered first rate and his work in reference to the quality of foot gear always carries great weight with the purchasing public.

Mr. Riedesel was born in Westfallen, Erndtebrueck, Germany, in 1854, where his parents Henry and Louisa (Wiekel) Riedesel, passed the whole of their lives. The father was a shoemaker, a sturdy and sterling citizen, and devoted to the welfare of the working people. He rendered his country good service in the Revolution of 1848 in Germany, through which many men of prominence in the Fatherland were driven to seek safety in foreign lands, some of the most prominent of them became residents of this country. Six sons and five daughters were born to the parents, but only two of the number are residents of the United States, Carl, and one of his sisters, Louisa. [Editor's note: A twelfth child died in infancy].

Carl Riedesel remained in his native land until he reached the age of twenty-six and there learned his trade as a shoemaker. In 1880 he came to America, locating in Carver county, Minnesota, and finding employment on farms in the neighborhood of Waconia. On December 29, 1882, he became a resident of Crookston, and here he worked at his trade for four years in the employ of Mr. Schwark, who carried on a harness and shoe business. In 1889 Mr. Riedesel purchased the shoe department of the business and this he has since conducted continuously, which makes him one of the oldest merchants in the city in unbroken connection with the same line of trade.

Mr. Riedesel has given the city valuable and appreciated service as a member of the city council and school board. He is a Republican in party allegiance but not an active partisan, although he is always deeply interested in the welfare of his county, state, and adopted country. Fraternally he is a Free-mason, and also belongs to the Ancient Order of United Woodmen, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the Modern Woodmen of America. In each of these organizations he has held important offices and of the Camp to which he belongs in the Woodmen he has been secretary for twenty years.

In 1883 Mr. Riedesel was united in marriage with Miss Margaret Reinhardt, like himself a native of Germany, and by this marriage he became the father of seven children, Frederick C., William E., Helen (now Mrs. Misner), Louisa, who is a school teacher, George M., Lillian and Anorma. [Editor's note: a daughter Gretchen died in childhood]. The parents are members of the German Lutheran church. They are well and favorably known throughout Polk county and in other localities, and are everywhere held in high esteem.