

The Roach family leaves a legacy of serving ... business, banks, people

By Maureen Giese, Steve Dahlstrom and Kathleen Lawrence
Waterloo Area Historical Society

The Roach & Seeber Cold Storage & Creamery Plant, 1887, was located where the Municipal Building is now on N. Monroe Street. Roach & Seeber is a name that lingers in the Waterloo Historical Files. Much of the Seeber family has been explored (8.17.2006 The Courier)... now the Roach family legacy is documented.

Limited but noteworthy information, gathered by Ray Twining in the early 1900s tells us about this hard working and patriotic family—contributing to their adopted homeland and creating one of the State's outstanding businesses. In the Roach File at the Waterloo Historical Museum, along with Twinings information are obituaries of James B. Roach and other family members. James B. Roach obituary is not marked (newspaper or date). But it could be The Waterloo Democrat, the local newspaper in 1907, as James B. died at his daughter's home in Waterloo.

In this obituary the following information is taken. The name of John Roach is mentioned as emigrating from England in Colonial times. He served under George Washington in the Revolutionary War. John Roach is quoted as his grandfather. The only child listed of John-- is William. It is said William served in the War of 1812.

It also is noted that William had five sons, all fought for the Union in the War of the Rebellion. Two of his sons were James Byron Roach, and David G. Roach. That is the limited information of the first Roach, John and his son William.

This article will focus on James Byron Roach. James and Sarah Bemis Roach had a family of eleven children. Many of whom lived near or in Waterloo. All of the information documented here may be found in the Waterloo Historical society's files for verification. Information is limited, but valuable to the early years of village life.

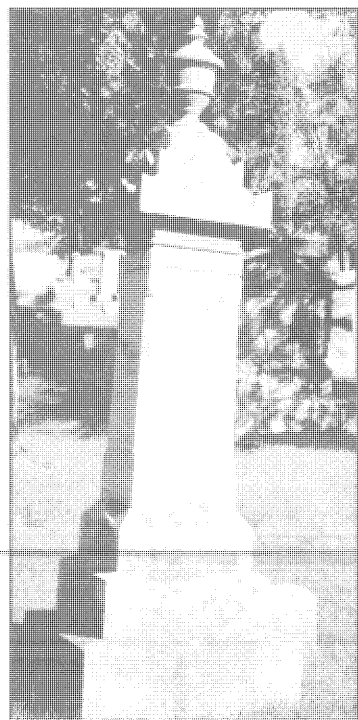
James was born June 5, 1830, in Chenango County, New York. His father William and mother (name unknown) moved to Wisconsin in 1844. We know little about the childhood of James B. Roach. He was only sixteen when he mar-

ried Sarah Perry "Sally" Bemis on May 2, 1847, at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. After their marriage, the couple were among the first settlers in Milford/Aztalan area. U. S census records show residence there in 1850, 1860, 1870.

Civil War service disrupted their lives when James enlisted September 7, 1861; a Sergeant in Company C 11th Infantry Regiment Wisconsin. Civil War Pension File notes he received a promotion to Second Lieutenant May 22, 1863; was discharged by reason of promotion at Vicksburg, Mississippi. He reenlisted October 1, 1864, as a Private in Co. E 22nd Infantry Regiment Wisconsin; mustered out of that Company June 24, 1865, at the close of the War. Upon his return home, he continued his occupation as a cooper.

By 1880, the family moved to Menomonie, Dunn County, Wisconsin, where Sarah Roach died on March 15. Burial is in the Aztalan-Milford Cemetery. The picture of the Roach Monument, courtesy of Steve Dahlstrom.

James Roach is now a resident of Waterloo, living with his daughter Janette Becker, who is caring for him. The war left him with heart and organ disease and severe deafness of both ears. An Invalid Pension was applied for to offset this disability. He eventually died at the home of his daughter, Janette Becker, of "bladder trouble" on June 4, 1907.



Picture courtesy of Steve Dahlstrom

The History of Waterloo (Radke 1959) notes that, "One of the oldest churches in Waterloo's history was St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, founded Dec. 21, 1891." A list

of members and their families contains the name of James B. Roach.

Of the eleven children of the James and Sarah Roach family were Charles*, Albert James, Adaline, Janette, Walter Scott, Emily F. *, William Ross, Elizabeth E.*, U.S. Grant*. Theodore B., and Effie. (*died in their youth).

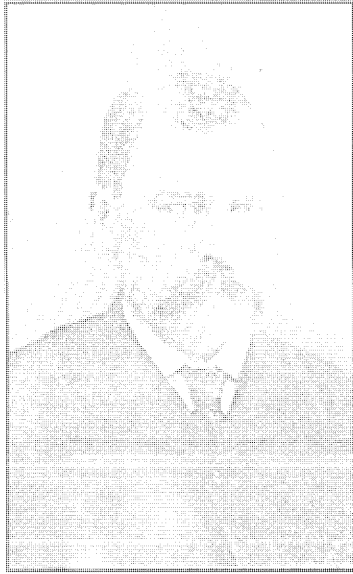


Image courtesy: Bolge r Democrat Annual
Albert J. Roach

Albert J. Roach, was born May 28, 1850, Milford, Wisconsin.

Milford until 1879. Two children were born of this marriage—Clara and Ethel. Albert J. was involved in a general store business, later moved to Johnson Creek where George C. Mausfield and Co. employed him for two years. From there he moved to Waterloo and established a general produce business, which merged into the Roach & Seeber Company. He was active in community affairs and served three terms as village supervisor; clerk of the school board for nine years. Albert J. was also known as James A. Roach.

It is noted in the Waterloo Democrat newspaper of 1885, that "A. J. Roach's Fountain Creamery, was a solid business in the village, and that a sidewalk and drainage tile were laid for the building on N. Monroe Street. James Roach advertised for turkeys, geese, chickens, and will pay highest price." It was Albert J. and William R. Roach that merged their business skills with the Seeber brothers in 1887 to form The Roach & Seeber Company.

Another son, Walter Scott Roach was born September 13, 1856. Walter was married to Caroline "Carrie" Bushell on April 24, 1884. He was also employed by the Roach & Seeber Creamery, won the grand prize among butter makers for his product at the New Orleans exposition. They had five children, two of whom, Ruth and Laura, graduated from Waterloo High School.

Later in life, Walter was engaged in the retail grocery business.

Some colorful notes were found in a 1903 High School Commencement Souvenir regarding Ruth and Clara Roach (cousins); other familiar Waterloo names.

"Inseparables.....Clara Roach and her Watch Ruth Roach and Tragedy Grace Ryder and her vocabulary Will Foley and his Distinguished Bearing"

Later Clara attended the University of Wisconsin, married Clyde L. Leppo and had one child. She eventually lived in Los Angeles, California. Ruth Roach married William Duckert from London, Wisconsin. She worked as a teacher and in retail dress sales.

The Waterloo Democrat Annual of 1897 described William Ross Roach:

W.R. Roach was born in Milford, Feb. 23, 1860, at which place he resided until 1875 when he went to Menominee, Wis., and followed the occupation of farming until 1881. Then he became engaged by G. C. Mansfield of Johnson Creek. Later was manager of Wigeman & Harvey as a clerk in Lake Mills until 1887. William R. Roach then entered the firm of Roach & Seeber co. in Waterloo.

He was married the first time to Miss Vanetta N. Squire, in 1888. There was one child, James T. of this marriage. Vanetta died in 1894. Later William R. Roach married Cora M. Johnson, 1896.

One child of this marriage is Carroll E. Roach.

James T. Roach, son of William and Vanetta graduated from the University of Wisconsin in 1913. Later, James T. was secretary of the Roach & Seeber Company from 1914-1946. He was also involved in the Farmers & Merchants State Bank. James T. Roach married Kathryn Gyneth Fries, 1916. Two children were from this marriage William R. and Alfred E. Roach.

After Vanetta died, William R. Roach married Cora M. Johnson and they had one child, Carroll E. Roach. They lived in the historic Lum house built in 1892. The Roach family moved there in 1897. The Firemen's Park is an historic landmark to the William and Hattie Lum family and others who pursued the vision of the Park. The legal plat name, Lum Addition one and two, will continue to serve this man's foresight.

Carroll E. Roach went on to become a renowned pediatri-

cian with emphasis in tropical medicine. He graduated from the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine. Carroll married Dora Ingraham and they had one child, Margaret Ann Roach.

Honors bestowed on Dr. Carroll E. Roach were the Masonic Order, F & AM#206, Greenville, Mississippi, 32 Degree Mason, Indianapolis, Indiana, plus a Master Mason's Degree from "Square and Compass" Madison, Wisconsin.

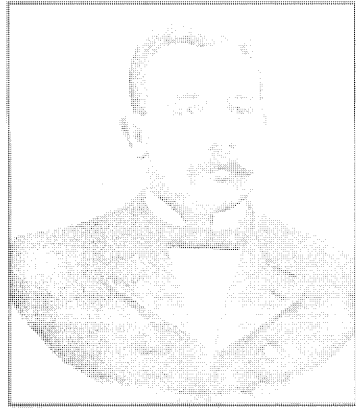


Image courtesy: Bolge r Democrat Annual
Theodore B. Roach

In researching the Roach family, Theodore B. Roach (b. May 20, 1867) is found in the microfilm, KJ Memorial Library-Waterloo Democrat newspaper 1886 and 1908. Theodore has charge of Albert J. Roach's London Creamery. He married Ida Bare September 11, 1889 in Deerfield. He also was in the Real Estate Business, Deerfield. Theodore was elected "Marshall" in Jefferson, later in Palmyra. In 1896 owned the Bridge Restaurant in Waterloo. Loved to show off his "Rambler" touring car in 1908. The car was entered into a 600-mile reliability contest in



The Roach and Seeber Bank was later renamed Farmers & Merchants Bank.

Milwaukee. He was the last of the Roach siblings to die August 6, 1945.

Albert J. and William R.

and Walter Roach with the Seeber brothers led the way to a state wide business of cold storage and trade of farm products. Butter, cheese, eggs, and seeds were stored in the main building in Waterloo. Later James T. (son of William R.) joined these men as secretary of the Company from 1914-1946. Eventually, 16 branches of Roach & Seeber spread throughout Wisconsin and the Upper Michigan peninsula.

In 1897, the Roach and Seeber men branched into the banking business. No doubt because of their successful state wide business of the cold storage company. First known as the Roach & Seeber Bank, later named The Farmers and Merchants Bank. The latter operated on N. Monroe St. A.J. Roach was the first president, and Fred A. Seeber, its cashier.

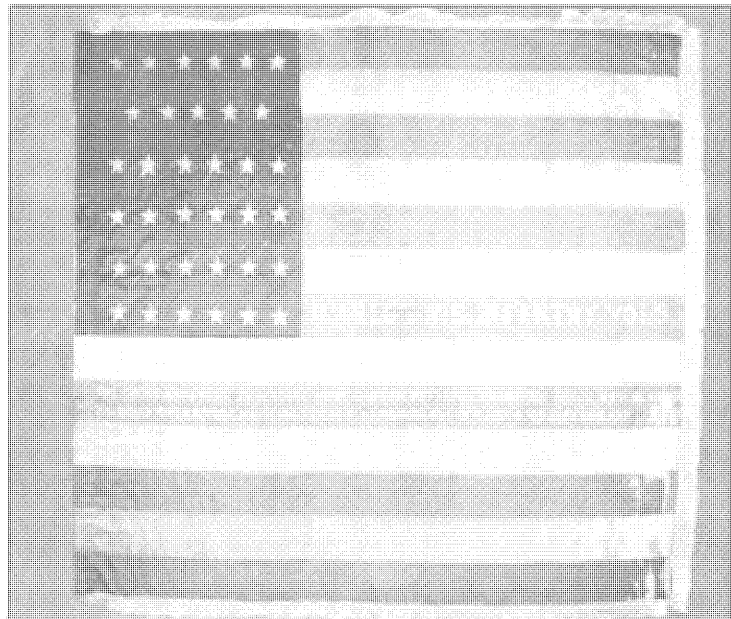
In 1903, a new bank charter was created, Farmers & Merchants State Bank. In Ray Twining's data, James T. Roach (son of William R.) is listed as vice president and Fred A. Seeber as president until 1905.

A. J. Roach was also vice president of the village in 1898. A. J. and W. R. Roach were also instrumental in providing telephone wires and the first primitive phone (1885) connection called the Waterloo Telephone Exchange. This was developed to help run the cold storage business. Later, the Interurban Telephone Company was formed (1901) due to their innovation.

From the Colonial era through the Civil War, the Roach family contributed their lives, their business acumen, their innovative ideas when life was difficult, to say the least. Co-building a successful



The Waterloo High School class of 1903.



11th Wis. Infantry Flag, courtesy of Wisconsin Veteran's Museum.

Thank you for reading The Courier