

## Everest & Theodosia Wells Hadley: A Brief Biography



Everest Wells Hadley was born in Chicago, Illinois in 1856, the son of Elijah Wells Hadley and Isabella Smith. He went by EW Hadley most of his life. His father Elijah, born in 1814, was the third dentist to practice in Chicago. Elijah was one of the founders of the Chicago Dental Society and was elected the Dental Society's first president in 1865; at the time he was the longest serving dentist in Chicago. His ancestors came from England to colonial Massachusetts in the mid-1600s. Elijah moved to Chicago from New Hampshire around 1840.

EW's mother Isabella Smith, born in 1821 in Scotland, married George Simpson in Scotland where they had two children, George and Margaret. After her husband George's death in 1844, Isabella and the children migrated from Scotland to Chicago, where it appears she had relatives. Her two children were raised by Elijah after he married Isabella and were EW's half siblings.

Records show EW's father Elijah Hadley was an active participant in Chicago civic life: as a dentist, investor, inventor, and an officer in the Chicago militia. There are numerous references to Elijah in early Chicago newspapers. One article depicts how Elijah, then a Junior Major, was appointed by the City to travel to where Chicago militias were fighting during the Civil War. His mission was to assess the state of the troops and the care for wounded Chicago militia soldiers. Records from 1844 show he was one of the founders of Chicago's first natural history museum. Elijah also was an inventor, receiving a medal for designing one of the first machines to perforate postage stamps. The few remaining "Chicago perforation" stamps are a rare and valuable US stamp sought by collectors. The US Postal Museum at the Smithsonian is interested in acquiring Elijah's medal for display.

Isabella Smith, EW's mother, was related to George "Chicago" Smith, a native of Scotland who played a prominent role in the development of early Chicago, Milwaukee and surrounding region. (*See Google search: George "Chicago" Smith for details.*) George Smith left King's College, Aberdeen after two years of medical school due to failing eyesight. After farming for several years, Smith left for America to seek his fortune. First spending time in New York, Smith then traveled to the Chicago area in 1834 where he recognized the investment opportunities of the developing region.

Smith operated and invested in businesses and real estate; he also represented Scottish banking interests in the area. A number of George Smith's ventures helped fund development of the Milwaukee and Chicago areas on Lake Michigan. His first venture was founding of the Scottish Illinois Land Investment Company. Later he was a significant shareholder of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St Paul and

Pacific Railroad, generally known as the Milwaukee Railroad. Most importantly, Smith founded the Wisconsin Marine and Fire Insurance Company, whose notes he circulated in his new unchartered bank, George Smith and Company. These notes were used much like currency and came to be called "George Smith's money" and by 1842 were redeemable in gold and silver. Two years later Smith's was the only bank left in Illinois and by 1854, 75% of Chicago's currency was backed by Smith. Smith, a life-long bachelor, returned to Scotland in 1860 after accruing a large fortune, eventually settling in London where he lived at the Reform Club until his death in 1899 at age 91. Smith left a significant fortune; it is believed EW and his mother Isabella were among George Smith's benefactors, before and after his death.

In 1853 the widowed Isabella (Smith) Simpson married Elijah Hadley in Chicago; their son Everest Wells (EW) Hadley was born there in 1856. Elijah died unexpectedly from a short illness at the age of 51 in March, 1865 when EW was 9 years old. After Elijah's death, Isabella moved to Ithaca, New York with EW, his half-sister Margaret, and EW's cousin James Smith. There they lived with a distant relative or teacher of Elijah's who was a retired physician. In the mid-1870s EW was sent to England to further his education; he attended King's College, London, undertaking studies in science and languages. King's College records show George Smith, who resided in London at the Reform Club, was EW's guardian while he attended King's College. After graduating from Kings College, EW returned to the Midwest where he began working as a clerk for the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. Shortly thereafter he became employed by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad.

One of George Smith's protégées brought from Scotland was Alexander Mitchell, who became a prominent Midwestern financier, and banker and President of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad, often referred to as the "Milwaukee Road". It is believed this was how EW got his start in railroading after completing his university studies at King's College London. Over time EW moved up into progressively more responsible management positions with the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad; Hadley was the Dakota Division Superintendant responsible for building and operating rail lines in Iowa and the Dakota Territory, which also included much of present day Wyoming and Montana.

In 1879 EW Hadley married Theodosia Florence Bray (she went by Florence, Flor or Flo) in Burlington, Iowa where he was then employed by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad. Like EW, a number of Theodosia's ancestors also came to the New England area in early colonial times. EW and Theodosia had three children. Two of their children, Everest W. Hadley Jr. and his sister Evelyn were born in Burlington, Iowa. The youngest child Howard was born in Fargo, North Dakota. EW was listed as a director of the Dakota and Great Southern Railroad in 1886. Records show by 1888 EW was the superintendant of the James River Division of the Chicago, Milwaukee, St Paul and Pacific Railroad.

In May 1888 EW joined the Oregon Pacific Railroad Company, (OPR), as the superintendant of the line; he also served as the assistant to the general manager T. E. Hogg. The OPR was incorporated in 1880 as the successor of the Willamette Valley and Coast Railroad Company. The line built and operated 142 miles of track from Newport, Oregon on Yaquina Bay to Corvallis, through Albany and up the Santiam

Canyon to Idana, Oregon. The OPR line also connected to the main north/south rail line in Oregon's Willamette Valley. From Yaquina Bay, five ocean going steamships operated by the company carried freight between San Francisco and Yaquina Bay, where it was transferred back to rail. The OPR also operated a fleet of river steamboats that ran on the Willamette River from Portland to Eugene, Oregon. Ultimately the OPR line planned to cross the Cascade Mountains through the Santiam Pass, crossing the Deschutes River and then proceeding through Eastern Oregon to Boise Idaho, where it would connect with the Union Pacific Railroad main line. At that time there was no railroad operating in Eastern Oregon. By 1890 a complete grade went up the west slope of the Cascade Mountains, passed through Santiam Pass, and ran a few miles downslope. Some track also was laid on the east slope of the Cascades and in Malheur Valley to secure right-of-ways and land claims there for the railroad. When EW took over operating the OPR, its roadbed and right-of-way was progressing up the west slope of the Cascades through Santiam Pass and planned to cross the Deschutes River in 1893.

Two of the company's primary ocean-going steamships sunk resulting in OPR losing a significant share of their revenue stream. Shifting sandbars in the shallow waters of Yaquina Bay and problems crossing the Yaquina also bar also proved to be ongoing problems for OPR. Letters in historical records document EW requesting the Army Corps of Engineers to conduct more dredging operations in Yaquina Bay to deepen shipping channels. When the railroad ran into severe financial problems, the New York creditors appointed EW receiver of the Oregon Pacific Railroad. The appointment was based on his wide-ranging railroad management experience, as well as his knowledge of OPR gained as assistant to the OPR general manager, while also acting as superintendant of the line. Several regional newspapers of the time cited Hadley's experience and honesty as the reason for his appointment.

As with many railroads of the time, there were financial irregularities and also OPR had accumulated too much debt and went into default. As the OPR receiver EW implemented a number of cost-saving measures and operated the railroad for a time while OPR sought additional operating capital. Ultimately the New York creditors chose to liquidate the railroad. The Oregon Pacific Railroad ceased operation in 1894, its demise aided by the panic of 1893, a world-wide financial downturn. In 1893 EW coauthored a detailed 107 page report entitled The Oregon Pacific Railway, Its Inception, Present Conditions and Needs, With Some Suggestions for Its Future Development, (a copy is located in the Harvard Business School, Baker Library).

The Oregon Pacific Railroad became the Oregon Central and Eastern Railroad and later the Corvallis and Eastern Railroad. Eventually it became a Southern Pacific branch line. Some of the old OPR road beds exist as hiking trails around Santiam Pass in the western Cascade Mountains. Today a 20 mile section of the abandoned OPR road bed east of Idana, Oregon has been designated the Oregon Pacific Rail Road Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. It runs roughly from Idana to the Cascade Range summit. Much of the right of way is undisturbed since 1889, except for a few small sections used for highway construction in the 1930s.

EW moved with his wife Theodosia and their 3 children to Corvallis Oregon in 1888 when he was hired by OPR. Hadley built two homes in Corvallis, one for Theodosia and the children and another home for

his mother Isabella. It is probable EW was responsible for Theodosia's parents, Wiley Dickey Bray and Mary Jane Bray, also moving to the Pacific Northwest from Iowa; they show up in Oregon records in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is possible they may have been in the Corvallis area too; however this still needs to be verified. Theodosia's father was a nurseryman and the Willamette Valley definitely was conducive to nursery cultivation. EW, a naturally curious man, also was interested in cultivation; there are references to plants he submitted to the U S Department of Agriculture in Washington DC for study when he was living in Santa Barbara, California.

Like his father, EW possessed a technical mind and also was an inventor. He was granted a number of patents on inventions for devices related to railroading. Among these is an automatic electronic signaling system. An article EW wrote appeared in Scientific American in 1897 which documented how railroads handled deep snows from winter storms that impacted railroad operations in the Dakotas and northern states.

EW and Theodosia were part of the Corvallis social scene because of EW's position with the OPR. Newspaper articles of the time document their many activities. According to newspaper accounts in the Oregonian and Corvallis area newspapers, EW and Theodosia built a summer home on the bluffs overlooking the Pacific Ocean at Newport, Oregon and were active in the summer social scene there.

As EW traveled to California a number of times on OPR business, he grew to appreciate the temperate climate there and investment opportunities in the growing state. After completing his work as the OPR receiver, EW moved the family from Corvallis to Santa Barbara, California sometime in 1895 or 1896. An article in the Oregonian in July 1895 reported that Theodosia and the children "were in residence" at their Newport beach home, so it appears the family moved to Santa Barbara sometime later. In Santa Barbara EW built a 41 room home he named Belvoir (French for beautiful view) in the hills overlooking Santa Barbara and the Pacific Ocean. EW sold Belvoir around 1912 when he moved to San Francisco. Belvoir later served as a private home and then was requisitioned as an emergency hospital during the 1918 "Spanish" flu pandemic. Later the home served as a girl's school; unfortunately the building was destroyed by a fire in March, 1971.

EW built another three homes in Santa Barbara on view lots near Belvoir in the early 1900s, one for each of his three adult children. The 3 homes for his children still exist and are located in a desirable neighborhood in Santa Barbara. EW was listed in City Directories of the time as a "capitalist". Local records show EW was involved in real estate and other investments while he lived in the Santa Barbara.

In Santa Barbara, EW and Theodosia engaged in an active civic life. Beginning in 1902 EW served on the Santa Barbara Parks Commission as one of the original Park Commissioners. Park Commission records from 1902-04 show EW, based on his extensive experience building and operating railroads, helped guide the City of Santa Barbara to site the first electric streetcar lines. More importantly, he help guide Santa Barbara in vacating and moving much of the unsightly Southern Pacific Railroad rail yards and freight handling facilities encroaching on the Santa Barbara waterfront near Stearns Pier. Santa Barbara realized their waterfront land was too valuable to be used for these kinds of activities. The City wanted to develop their waterfront for tourism, which was becoming one of Santa Barbara's economic

mainstays. The results still are evident today; the public has unfettered access to Santa Barbara's famous beach-front and ocean views. The waterfront, yacht harbor and beaches are still today an integral part of Santa Barbara life.

While serving on the Park Commission, EW helped draft the plan for Lake Park which ultimately was ceded to the City and is now the Clark Bird Sanctuary. Besides the Park Commission, EW and Theodosia served on a number of local boards; EW was on the board of directors of the street car line; Theodosia was on the board of the local hospital and several charities. He continued investing in businesses and real estate. Spurred by son Everest Jr.'s enthusiasm for automobiles and machinery, EW became president of a machinery company in Santa Barbara and acquired the local franchise for several brands of automobiles; Autocar (cars and trucks) and Columbia cars. They also owned the first automobile garage between Los Angeles and San Francisco on what became early US Highway 101. Records revealed he also was one of the initial developers of the town Okanogan, Washington.

Theodosia and EW's three children lived the rest of their lives in California. EW believed in the value of education and ensured his 3 children received a good education. Everest W. Hadley, Jr. attended college on the East coast where he studied business and then was employed in banking, various automobile-related ventures, and the citrus growing industry in Southern California. Evelyn attended Swarthmore College and later was a homemaker. Howard, the youngest child, graduated from Stanford University Law School and was an attorney in California for many years. Everest and Theodosia's great-great grand daughter, great-great grandson, and great-great-great grandchildren still live in Santa Barbara County.

Around 1912 after their children had grown and left home, EW and Theodosia moved to San Francisco. There he and Theodosia retained an architect and in 1916 completed the construction of their new home on Filbert Street in the Marina District, with views of San Francisco Bay and the Golden Gate.

EW had a turntable installed in the garage of the new home to eliminate having to back his car out the long driveway and into the street. He drove his car on to the turntable in the garage; next the car turned around 180 degrees on the turntable so it pointed back out the garage. When EW left home he just drove his car forward off the turntable, out the garage, and down the driveway into the street. This was an obvious nod to his long experience in railroads. The home on Filbert Street still is occupied as a single family residence.

Different year's San Francisco City directories show EW and Theodosia (Florence) living at their home in the Marina District on Filbert Street. His occupation is listed variously as an investor, broker, or real estate. EW continued in his investment activities - an article in the San Francisco Chronicle describes EW bringing Hupmobile automobiles to San Francisco for sale. One article noted he had offices in Seattle and Los Angeles. A. P. Giannini, the founder of the Bank of America, was one on EW's friends in San Francisco. Apparently EW also was an investor in Giannini's Bank of Italy which became the Bank of America. There are photographs of EW, Giannini, Everest Jr., and EW's grandson Robert by the entrance of EW's Filbert Street home.

Tragedy struck EW and Theodosia in 1919. Newspaper accounts describe how on the evening of May 26, 1919, EW and his wife were awakened by armed intruders in their bedroom. Aided by two ex-employees (Percy Randolph and Frank Barton), armed robbers (Barton, Frank Letterman, Elmer Sanborn) gained entry into the Filbert Street residence. EW and his wife were held at gunpoint and then bound and gagged. Newspaper reports stated the robbers made off with \$6,300 in jewelry, bonds, and cash, an equivalent of roughly \$100,000 in today's dollars. In an apparent attempt to pressure EW to disclose the location of valuables, one of the robbers manhandled Theodosia before tying her up, causing a blood clot in the brain and leaving her in serious condition. She survived the initial assault, but never recovered. Lingering until December 1919, Theodosia succumbed to her injuries at age 61. An ensuing police investigation led to the capture of all the suspects. The four perpetrators were convicted of armed robbery and murder and sentenced to San Quentin Prison.

After Theodosia's lingering injury and subsequent death in 1919, EW remarried in 1920, marrying Emma F. Siddall, an RN who had been Theodosia's nurse. Emma and EW continued living in the Filbert Street house in San Francisco until EW's death in September 1933. Emma continued to live in San Francisco until her death in 1945. Everest W. Hadley is buried near San Francisco at Cypress Lawn Cemetery beside Theodosia.

Everest Wells (EW) Hadley led full and stimulating life. He was an active participant in the opening and development of the West, whether he was building or operating railroads, a businessman and investor, or actively participating in the civic life of his community. During his lifetime EW built at least 9 homes: in Omaha Nebraska; Fargo, North Dakota; at least 2 in Corvallis Oregon; 4 in Santa Barbara; and 1 in San Francisco, California. Six or possibly 7 still are standing and occupied, tangible evidence and a record of his time and place in the West.

William J. Hadley

Great-grandson of Everest Wells Hadley

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