

"Tokens of History"

By

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This month we travel to Cottonwood, one of the oldest towns in Shasta County, and a token from its once most beloved son:



ED. G. CARTER / GENERAL / MERCHANDISE / COTTONWOOD / SHASTA, CO CAL
GOOD FOR / 10 ¢ / IN TRADE / MOISE S.F.



Edward Guy Carter moved to Cottonwood from Oroville in the early 1880's, eventually building his home on Brush Street. He was working for Becker and Foster Company until he opened his own business in 1889 in the Butterway building, which was across the street from the building pictured above. He moved to his new location in 1897, which was the vacant Logan-Wise foundry building. Business had already been booming for years, "his signs were to be seen at roadsides for miles around," when all was lost to fire in September of 1902. Carter rebuilt out of brick:

January 4, 1903:

Frank Nooner had a narrow escape from serious injury at the scene of construction of the new Carter building Monday. He stood on the ground and a brick fell from the top of the store wall upon his head. For some little time Mr. Nooner was unable to resume his labors. The new brick block of Ed G. Carter is nearing completion. It will be a neat and substantial structure. The ground floor of the department on the west side of the big fire wall will be occupied by Mrs. Behrle's saloon. The second story is a lodge room.

Around 1908, Otto Trautz established a drug department in Carter's general store. Edward incorporated in 1910 as the "Carter Mercantile Company" with Otto Trautz, W.L. Rose, and Lemiel Hencratt as additional shareholders. In 1912 Carter, Trautz, and M. T. Howell opened the Cottonwood Milling Co., Inc., returning to Cottonwood the flour mill that had been previously moved to Balls Ferry back in 1860. The flour they produced was called "Shasta's Best", and was very popular "far and wide" until the mill burned in 1932. Around that same time, Carter, Rose and Hencratt sold their interests to the McCarley-Smith Company from Shingletown, with Trautz staying on as the company druggist and Carter continuing to own the property until he passed it on to his heirs in 1926.

Ours is a Cool Store

You can come here and rest yourselves. We all have more time than money, at present, and money is what the trouble is. "Even the Earth has trouble," not about money, but it costs a "heap" to make good. Our line of summer goods for the women folks, such as Percales, Ginghams, Mercerised Goods, Indigoes Nainsooks, Embroideries, Laces, Ribbons, Belts, Skirt & etc. For the men and boys: Suspenders, Negligee Shirts, Underwear, Neckwear Socks Handkerchiefs, straw Hats & etc.

Interested purchasers should not delay as it will be impossible to duplicate any of the above goods again this season.

WE NEED MONEY, SO GIVE US A SHOW.

ED G. CARTER,
"The Merchant"

COTTONWOOD, SHASTA CO., CAL.

Add from 1906

Cottonwood Enterprise, March 31, 1906:

Ed. G. Carter Hurt

An accident of a painful nature happened to Ed. G. Carter and daughter Edna as they were returning from Redding Tuesday evening at eight o'clock. Just before entering town on their return, one of the buggy wheels struck a tree on the side of the road and threw them both out. Mr. Carter fell in such a manner that two ribs were broken and a third fractured while other portions of the body received severe bruises. Miss Edna suffered a dislocated knee and other injuries. Dr. Tabler was called after they manage to get home and reduced the fractures and they are doing as well as could be expected under the circumstances but it will be ten days before Ed gets out again.



Carter established the Cottonwood Movie Theatre in 1908 on the upstairs floor of his building on the southeast end of Front Street.



Pictured above is a second token in my collection with Carter's name, but this one does not specify that it came from his General Merchandise business. It may be that he had new tokens made up for the new movie theatre, or perhaps to purchase a "good swig" from the Palace Saloon:

From December 23rd, 1905 edition of the Cottonwood Enterprise (via Dottie Smith's History of Cottonwood):

SWEARING OFF. Two of our substantial citizens were coming down the street recently from T. R. Laffoon's livery stable. They made a solemn vow to swear off as it was nearly New Year's, and as a starter resolved to pass Ed. G. Carter's Palace Saloon without going in. They passed it all right, but after passing they stopped. "Thash was a good resolution" said one. "You bet thash was a good resolution" said the other. "Thash resolution's good nuff to treat on." So they went back and clinched the resolution with a good swig.

Carter died on June 27, 1926. Information found in the Coroner's Inquest report reflects the state medicine of the time. A statement from Edwin Carter's testimony, and the followup question from the Coroner:

Edwin- "He had been sweeping up and cleaning up around the store as he always did, and it being such a warm day-----"

Coroner- "Probably heated his blood up."

Carter's obituary:

Ed G. Carter, Foremost Citizen Of Cottonwood, Drops Dead In Street

**Makes Trip to Creamery Sunday Noon and Falls in
Feint As He Gets Out of Car—Never Regains Con-
sciousness—Was Leading Merchant of Cottonwood
Until He Retired Ten Years Ago**

Ed G. Carter, retired merchant and Cottonwood's most beloved citizen, dropped dead shortly before noon Sunday. He had motored up to the creamery to get some ice, and had got out of his car to wait his turn to get served. Creamery workers chanced to notice he was no longer in his car or standing by it. Going outside, they found Carter lying on the ground as if in a feint. He was quickly carried inside of the creamery and placed in a comfortable position on a truck. Inside of two minutes he was dead. He never spoke a word...

To Cottonwood In 1882

Ed G. Carter came to Cottonwood in 1882, then a boy of nineteen. He opened a store and from that day to this he had made his home here. He was burned out twice and was left in financial stress after each fire, but went into business again and finally prospered and amassed a considerable fortune.

"Reached The Mark"

In 1912, then doing a big business and having a large store, Carter sold out to the McCarley-Smith company. He explained that when he was a boy he vowed that he was ever worth a certain sum, he would quit business and take life easy. "I have reached the mark," he said...

Cottonwood In Gloom

It was a great shock to this community to learn of his sudden passing. It is no exaggeration to say that he was Cottonwood's most beloved citizen. Here he had spent all the useful years of his life. As a remembrance he gave the town a fine fountain a few years back...

The Family

Surviving are the widow, Mrs. Emma K. Carter, and two sons and a daughter—Harold G. Carter and Edwin Carter of Dunsmuir, and Mrs. Del Kilborn of Eugene, Oregon [there was another daughter who died in 1923]. A sister, Mrs. Isabelle Morgan, lives in Oakland. He was an uncle of Mrs. Otto G. Trautz of Cottonwood...



The old Carter buildings are still standing after 110 years.

A special thanks to Brienne Lilienthal and Jay Thompson for their help tracking down some last minute research for me while I finish this on the beaches of Santa Cruz and Monterey. As always, if the reader has any additional information about the people or businesses mentioned in this article, please contact me at: chetsunde@gmail.com, or (530) 244-4436.