

CAPEN, GEORGE D., son of William and Eliza (Dunn) Capen, was born in Brookline, Massachusetts, July 18, 1838. He was educated at the Eliot High School, Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts, but when only fourteen years of age he started out in life as a clerk in a wholesale hat store in Boston. In 1858 he decided to come west, and selected St. Louis as being the suitable place and the most promising city for a young man to whom the word "fail" had no significance, and who, even at that early age, had mapped out a career of an honorable and ambitious character. His first occupation in his new home (St. Louis), of which he subsequently became one of the leading men, was as a clerk in the hide and leather business. In 1863 he established a fire and marine insurance agency and brokerage business, and three years later he organized the Mississippi Valley Transportation Company, a corporation whose capital stock was invested in tow-boats and barges, built for the purpose of exporting bulk grain and the products of the West to Europe by river to New Orleans and thence by steamers.

While Mr. Capen was always connected with insurance interests, yet he was extremely aggressive in taking up other business projects. In 1878 he organized the St. Louis Club on Washington avenue, near Sixteenth street, and was a director and chairman of the executive committee for the first three years of the existence of this respected association of St. Louis capitalists and business men. Later on, said club moved to Twenty-ninth and Locust streets, where it is in a most flourishing and prosperous condition. In 1887 he assisted in organizing the Missouri Safe Deposit Company, and became its president. He was also the manager of the Equitable Building, a director in the Laclede Gas Light Company, one of the governing board of the St. Louis Jockey Club, and a member of the Board of Fire Underwriters. In 1888 he purchased the "Griswold Tract" and organized a syndicate which later on developed the beautiful Forest Park Terrace, Westmoreland Place and Portland Place, mentioned in the earlier part of this book. In 1889 he (with the

banking house of Whitaker & Hodgman) purchased the Lindell Street Railway Company, the result being the conversion of a small bob-tail horse-car line into one of the finest and most successfully operated electric lines in the world. The original purchase of this property required an outlay of \$1,050,000, and while Mr. Capen was president of the company, an additional expenditure of \$1,700,000 was incurred.

Mr. Capen came from an old New England family, being a direct descendant of the Lawrence family, who were the pioneers in New England in the successful starting and operating of the large woolen and cotton factories at Lowell, Lawrence and Manchester, where millions of dollars were accumulated through the sagacity and enterprise of these great men: Mr. Amos Lawrence having contributed during his life-time, for charitable purposes, upwards of \$2,000,000, leaving a large fortune at his death, while his brother, Abbott Lawrence, was appointed under the Fillmore administration minister to the Court of St. James, which position he filled with ability and distinction.

He married in 1862 Miss Frances Isabella Pond, daughter of Mr. Charles H. Pond (formerly of Massachusetts), a well-known architect and builder, who resided in St. Louis for a number of years. Mrs. Capen's mother was a Wentworth, being a descendant of Governor Wentworth, the first governor of New Hampshire; and many of the residents of this city, who have visited Rye Beach or Portsmouth, New Hampshire, will recollect the old "Wentworth Homestead." Mr. Capen was taken sick while in the midst of his successful career, and his death in the spring of this year was a distinct loss to St. Louis. He left seven children (four sons and three daughters). The two oldest sons — Samuel Davis Capen and George Henry Capen — graduated at Yale College in the classes of 1885 and 1890, respectively, after which the oldest son studied law for nearly three years at the Harvard Law School, and was admitted to the St. Louis bar in 1888, while the second son graduated at the St. Louis Law School in 1892.



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