

By, Rick Proft

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S.S. Merrill Portrait by - William Merritt Chase  
That was displayed in Mr. Merrill's "Mitchell Building" office.

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## **Sherburn Sanborn Merrill**

**Tuesday, July 28, 1818 – Sunday, February 8, 1885**

Died at age: 66 years, 6 months, 11 days or 24,302 days

### **Childhood Family**

Mr, Sherburn (*also widely spelled "Sherburne"*) Sanborn Merrill was born Tuesday, July 28, 1818 in Alexandria, Grafton County, New Hampshire, son of Moses and Sarah (*née Worthing*) Merrill. Sherburn was the eldest of five children born to this union. His four siblings were Miriam b.1820; Narcissa b.1822; Chastina b. 1827 and Moses b. 1829.

### **Brief Employment Synopsis**

Sherburn was the son of a farmer and worked on the family farm. He attended public schools until reaching the age of sixteen. As an independent young adult he soon left the New Hampshire family farm to begin life on his own and found employment for one year at a nearby Concord hotel. He then worked six years for Moses Kimball at a Boston furnishing house before moving on to where he was once again was employed for another year as a hotel servant at Troy, New York. Sherburn then returned to his home area of Bristol and briefly set-up a small hotel of his own. He then made an investment in a woolen mill manufacturing business at Bristol. In 1852 he arrived in Milwaukee, which was the beginning of his distinguished railroad career. S. S. Merrill's railroad career is chronicled in detail in the numerous attached transcribed biographical sketches and obituaries.

### **S.S. Merrill's First Railroad Job**

At the age of 33, in the fall of 1852, Sherburn arrived in Milwaukee looking for employment with the railroad. He stopped by the offices of the Milwaukee & Mississippi Road, located above the drug store at Grand Avenue and Water Street. Mr. Merrill entered the office of James Kneeland, who was president of the company. Mr. Kneeland was very struck by Sherburn's physique, posture, thin beard and especially his confident demeanor. When Mr. Kneeland asked him what he could do for him. Mr. Merrill replied, "I

want a position on your railroad.” Mr. Kneeland asked, “What can you do?” Mr. Merrill replied, “Anything that any other man do.” Mr. Kneeland said, “You seem to have a good opinion of yourself.” Mr. Merrill answered, “Yes sir.” Mr. Kneeland then asked, “What is your name?” Mr. Merrill answered, “Sherburn S. Merrill.” Both of these men continued to make some small talk for another six minutes or so. Mr. Kneeland was so impressed with his “boundless confidence” that he hired him to lead a construction gang of men. This was the beginning of S.S. Merrill’s long and distinguished railroad career.

Another memory recollection conflicts somewhat with the claim about who actually was the first person that hired S.S. Merrill for his first job with the railroad. Mr. Edward D. Holton, who had been Milwaukee County’s 1<sup>st</sup> Sheriff, and later became the founder and superintendent of the Prairie du Chien Railroad, also claimed that it was he that had given S.S. Merrill his first job working the gravel-pits and with the loading of gravel train cars for the Milwaukee and Waukesha Railroad. Afterwards Sherburn worked on the Milwaukee and Mississippi Railroad. After a merger, that railroad later changed its name to the Prairie du Chien Division of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad.

For a brief period of time, Mr. Merrill accepted a position with the St. Peter Railroad after an irreconcilable problem with a boss. However, S.S. Merrill soon returned to the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad and henceforth would be forever employed and associated with this company.

Sherburn was known for his exemplary work ethic, energy and possessing a “go-getter, and can-do-attitude”. He had the innate motivating qualities suited to be an excellent leader. His outstanding performance as foreman of the road construction crews did not go unnoticed or unappreciated by Edward H. Broadhead. Mr. Broadhead was the very well respected prominent engineer from New York State who had been hired as the chief engineer and superintendent for the railroad construction projects. In particular, he was very impressed with the manner that Sherburn efficiently ran his crews in completely the very difficult task of filling the heretofore-impassible marshland, which was successfully transformed into the Prairie du Chien yard.

Mr. Merrill’s reputation and work performance quickly earned him many promotional steps within the railroad. He worked many jobs, all of which he learned well and performed admirably, whether it was using a shovel, ax and pick, working as a train hand, conductor, assistant superintendent, superintendent, which culminated at the pinnacle of his career as the prestigious General Manager, as the man in charge of all the railroad’s operations.

Sherburn S. Merrill had come a long way since his arrival in Wisconsin. In less than ten years, from being unemployed to becoming Superintendent of the Watertown Division of the railroad. He had quickly climbed many rungs in the ladder of success within the railroad business. This was achieved accomplished through the power of his work ethic, personality, leadership and drive. During the 1860 U.S. Census Mr. Merrill’s occupation is listed as the prestigious “R.R. Superintendent.” The value of his real estate is listed as \$10,000 and having personal estate property valued at \$1,000. Also, there were two servants residing at the family residence. They were Julia Lynch, age 17, and Henrietta Milkett, age 22. Five years later, in 1865, S.S. Merrill would climb that final rung of the ladder, when he was named “General Manager” of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company, which occurred after Alexander Mitchell was elected President of the corporation.

### **Marriages and His Six Children**

In 1849, Sherburn met and married a young lady from Andover, MA, who became the first of his two wives. She was Sarah Dix (*née Kidder*) Merrill. Sarah Dix Kidder was born July 1, 1825, in Essex, County, Massachusetts and was the daughter of Francis and Nancy Kidder.

Sherburn, along with his wife, Sarah, an expectant mother, relocated to New Hampshire. On June 5, 1850, in New Hampshire, Sherburn’s first child, a daughter, Sarah Worthing Merrill was born. Daughter Sarah’s middle name of “Worthing,” is also Sherburn’s mother’s maiden surname.

On July 30, 1850, Sherburn and his wife Sarah are recorded as staying at Jon L. Prescott's hotel in Bristol, New Hampshire. No occupation is listed for either Sherburn or Sarah. The name of their seven-week-old infant daughter Sarah was not found on this census and perhaps this omission was an oversight or she was not recorded due to staying elsewhere with family. Also, recorded on this census is Thomas Frost, age 22, a railroad foreman, who was listed among the other guests at this hotel.

It wasn't too long before Sherburn probably realized that his venture with the woolen mill business was not going to yield the promising returns and meet his expectations that he had envisioned for achieving the "American Dream." He was seriously thinking about other career opportunities. Perhaps, it was Mr. Thomas Frost, the young railroad foreman and fellow lodger that inspired Sherburn with stories and insight about the available opportunities of prosperity in regards to the expansion activity of the railroads in the west. In 1852 the adventurous Sherburn traveled west in pursuit of a more prosperous life for his family and himself.

In the fall of 1852, it was likely that Sherburn left his wife and daughter behind with family during his early job prospecting days at Milwaukee. Employment with the railroad in Wisconsin was secured, however his work required constant travel that would limit his home life. On February 3, 1855, a second child was born, in Wisconsin, as evidenced by the 1860 census "Place of Birth" recording. This child was a girl named Susie Kidder Merrill, who assumed her mother's maiden surname as her middle name. It is speculated that this childbirth of Susie had complications that may have resulted in the death of her mother, Sarah—suggesting that Sherburn's wife died in Wisconsin and that her remains were subsequently transported back home to Andover, Massachusetts for burial at the South Church graveyard. No birth record for Susie K. or death record for Sarah could be found to verify this conjecture. Unfortunately Susie K. would go on to live an even shorter life than her mother had, Susie Kidder Merrill died at age 16 ½, on August 17, 1871.

Sherburn is now a widower and was looking for a new wife to care for and expand his existing family. As a railroad superintendent, Sherburn made frequent trips back east, and that is where he likely met and married his second wife, Mary Ellen Freeman. The census recorded on August 5, 1850, for the Town of Knox, New York, indicates Lois Freeman, age 50 (*mother*), and Ellen, age 19, as the only two dwellers in their household. On July 8, 1852 Mary Ellen Freeman is listed in a directory as a graduate of the State Normal College 15<sup>th</sup> Class at Albany. It also indicates that she taught school for two sessions at Albany. That same listing indicates her marriage as occurring in the year of 1858. Mary Ellen has said that she moved to Wisconsin after her marriage to Sherburn. It is likely Mary Ellen's mother Lois also moved to Wisconsin at the same time, since she died soon thereafter, and was buried in the "Merrill Family Plot" at Forest Home Cemetery, at Milwaukee, on April 26, 1859. No marriage record for Sherburn and Mary Ellen could be located anywhere. Also, no death record for Mary Ellen's mother, Lois Freeman could be found.

After Sherburn's second marriage to Mary Ellen Freeman in 1858, procreation to expand his family began immediately. On July 17, 1859, Sherburn's first son was born. He was named Sherburn Freeman Merrill. He was given his father's first name and the maiden surname of his mother for his middle name.

As mentioned the June 2, 1860 United States Census indicated that the S.S. Merrill family is residing in the 1<sup>st</sup> Ward of Watertown, Jefferson County, Wisconsin and Sherburn's employments listed as "Railroad Road Superintendent." His family consisted of his wife of two years, "Ellen F, age 29" (*actually - Mary Ellen Freeman*), and his three children—Sarah W., age 10 and Susie K., age 5 and Sherburn F., 11 months. Also listed were the household's two servants— Julia Lynch age 17 and Henrietta Milkette, age 22. Perhaps these ladies had been assisting Mr. Merrill with the domestic responsibilities since the death of his first wife Sarah back in 1855 and now are assisting his new wife Mary Ellen with baby Sherburn, Susie and Sarah.

Unfortunately, as common as untreatable childhood diseases were back then, baby Sherburn died on Friday, February 8, 1861, after a short life of only 1 1/2 years. As expected, no death record could be found, since very few Wisconsin Vital records were kept that early in Wisconsin history. Three more children were conceived and born from this union, they were—Marion, born on December 19, 1861 | Fredrick, born on April 1, 1865 | and Richard, born on December 27, 1868. S.S. Merrill had a total of six children, two with Sarah Dix (*née Kidder*) and four with Mary Ellen (*née Freeman.*).

## **S.S. Merrill Family Snapshot**

### **Sherburn Sanborn Merrill**

Tuesday, July 28, 1818 – Sunday, February 8, 1885

Life of - 66 years, 6 months, 11 days

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### **Wife 1 – Sarah Dix (*née Kidder*) Merrill - Married 1849**

#### **Sarah Dix (*née Kidder*) Merrill**

Friday, July 1, 1825 - \*Saturday, February 3, 1855

Life of – \*29 years, 7 months, 2 days

(\*Speculation that her death occurred during childbirth, no death record found.)

#### **Children (2)**

### **Sarah Worthing (*née Merrill*) - Mrs. Washington Becker**

Friday, June 7, 1850 - Friday, October 5, 1900

Life of – 50 years, 3 months, 29 days

#### **Susie Kidder Merrill**

Saturday, February 3, 1855 - Thursday, August 17, 1871

Life of – 16 years, 6 months, 15 days

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### **Wife 2 – Mary Ellen (*née Freeman*) Merrill - Married 1858**

#### **Mary Ellen (*née Freeman*) Merrill**

Sunday, February 13, 1831 – Tuesday, December 13, 1927

Life of - 96 years, 10 months, 1 day

#### **Children (4)**

#### **Sherburn Freeman Merrill**

Sunday, July 17, 1859 – Friday, February 8, 1861

Life of – 1 year, 6 months, 23 days

### **Marion (*née Merrill*) 1<sup>st</sup> Mrs. Grant A. Smith – 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. William Chester**

Thursday, December 19, 1861 – Saturday, May 2, 1942

Life of – 80 years, 4 months, 14 days

#### **Frederick Freeman Merrill**

Saturday, April 1, 1865 – Saturday, October 31, 1925 (d. Detroit)

Life of – 60 years, 6 months, 30 days

#### **Richard Merrill**

Sunday, December 27, 1868 – Tuesday, May 18, 1948 (d. Los Angeles)

Life of – 79 years, 4 months, 21 days



### **S.S. Merrill Family Home**

3355 Grand Avenue  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Demolished in 1927 after the death of Mrs. Merrill to make room for the Ambassador Hotel Construction.

### **Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company**

Sherburn's railroad career quickly progressed and reached its pinnacle in the year of 1865, after Alexander Mitchell was elected president of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railway Company.



S.S. Merrill



Alexander Mitchell



Mitchell Building

Mr. Mitchell accepted the presidency of the railroad with the proviso that he had sole control and authority to hire the general manager. Mr. Mitchell selected Sherburn Sanborn Merrill for that crucial position. Together these men built the largest and most successful railroad in the country, until death did them apart, on February 5, 1885, when S.S. Merrill died, at age 66 ½ years old.

Alexander Mitchell, was one of the wealthiest bankers in the Midwest. Today his legacy is known for the several Milwaukee landmarks, such as the Wisconsin Club, Makie 7 Mitchell Buildings, Mitchell Park Conservatory Domes, The Mitchell, South Dakota namesake (*Home of the "Corn Palace"*). Also his son, John Lendrum Mitchell was an U.S. Senator with a famous son, Alex's grandson, General Billy Mitchell who has the Milwaukee Airport named in his honor.

Not too long after Sherburn's appointment in 1865 to the very highly coveted, compensated, and powerful position of General Manger of Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad. The family of S .S. Merrill would soon find themselves among one of the wealthiest and elite families of whom were residing on the City of Milwaukee's "Mansion Row," located at 3355 Grand Avenue, (*then prior to the 1931 Street re-numbering*) located at the northwest of corner of Grand Ave, and 23<sup>rd</sup> St.. (*Current Ambassador Hotel site.*) The Merrill home was conveniently located close to their St. James Episcopal Church and not too far from the Mitchell Building on Michigan Avenue, which was the office workplace of Mr. Merrill. On December 20, 1926 Grand Avenue was re-named Wisconsin Avenue after most of the "Mansion Row" buildings had been demolished. By then, most of the previous wealthy mansion owners had passed on and their homes had been converted into unmaintained boarding houses that eventually deteriorated and blighted the city.

#### **Family Legacy Summary**

Sherburn S. Merrill married twice. His first wife was Sarah Dix (*née Kidder*) of Andover, Massachusetts. His second wife was Mary Ellen (*née Freeman*) of the Town of Knox, Albany County, New York.

Sherburn's first marriage with Sarah produced two children. They were Sarah and Susie.

Sherburn's second marriage with Mary Ellen produced four children. They were Sherburn, Marion, Frederick and Richard.

#### **Daughter Sarah's Family**

On June 22, 1875, Sherburn's first-born, daughter Sarah, now an adult married Washington Becker, a lawyer, who had followed in the footsteps of his father's legal and banking professions. Washington Becker became Milwaukee's most powerful and influential financier. Coincidentally, he would be the person who came to the rescue of his late father-in-law, S.S. Merrill's, former boss, Alexander Mitchell's bank, the Wisconsin Marine and Fire Insurance Company Bank, during the financial crisis of 1893, when Washington Becker became the court appointed receiver during the reorganization of the bank. Mr. Becker was also a main investor in the Milwaukee West Side Street Railway Company, which perhaps is his most notable investment of many. The marriage between Sarah and Washington produced only one child; a son, who was given his maternal grandfather's namesake, Sherburn Merrill Becker. At age 26 he would become Milwaukee's 34<sup>th</sup> Mayor.

Washington Becker's sister was Harriet Danforth (*née Becker*) Mitchell. She had been a childhood schoolmate friend with Sarah Worthing Merrill, daughter of S.S. Merrill and his future wife.

Coincidentally, when Sarah's sister-in-law Harriet married, it created an in-law connection between the families of S.S. Merrill and his boss. Alexander Mitchell's son was the future Congressman and U.S. Senator, John Lendrum Mitchell. He married Harriet D. Becker. Of course, subsequently, that union produced history's well-known Billy Mitchell, the "Father of the U.S. Airforce," who had actually witnessed a flying demonstration by Orville Wright, which began the birth of aviation. Milwaukee International Airport is named in his honor. Billy's Mitchell's sister, Ruth, was also quite famous as a reporter and author.



John Lendrum Mitchell



General Billy Mitchell

As mentioned, Mr. and Mrs. Washington Becker's marriage only produced one grandchild for S.S. Merrill, a grandson, who was given his namesake, Sherburn Merrill Becker, born November 13, 1876. Sherburn Merrill Becker had only reached age 8 ¼ years when his Grandfather, S.S. Merrill died. Unfortunately the famous railroading grandfather did not live the additional twenty-one years and two months needed to see his grandson become Milwaukee's famous mayor. On April 4, 1906, Sherburn Merrill Becker was affectionately known as "Sherbie," the "Boy Mayor." At age 29, Sherburn Merrill Becker goes down as having the most unconventional campaign and winning the largest political upset in Milwaukee election history, by unseating the popular and well-known two-inconsecutive-termed incumbent, David S. Rose. Sherburn Merrill Becker would become the last Republican Mayor that the City of Milwaukee has seen since. Currently the 44<sup>th</sup> Mayor is serving in Milwaukee.

S.S. Merrill's grandson Sherburn Merrill Becker arguably became a more prominent Milwaukee figure than his influential grandfather. On April 3, 1906, at the age of 29, Sherburn Merrill Becker, a/k/a "Sherbie" was elected Milwaukee's 34<sup>th</sup> Mayor, serving his two-year term from 1906-1908. He was dubbed the "Boy Mayor," and as of this writing, he still has the distinction of being the last Republican mayoral candidate of nine ever to be elected to that office. Currently the 44<sup>th</sup> Mayor of the City of Milwaukee's is serving.

Sherbie had a distinguished career as a financier and was a generous philanthropist.



Sherburn Merrill Becker



Sherburn Merrill Becker

### **Famous "Boy Mayor" and Grandson of S.S. Merrill**

On October 5, 1900, Sarah Worthing (*née Merrill*) Becker, the late S.S. Merrill's first-born daughter, wife of Washington Becker, and mother of the future 34<sup>th</sup> Mayor of the City of Milwaukee, Sherburn Merrill

Becker, succumbed to an untimely death at the age 50, after suffering a 60 hour illness of acute anemia and parenchymatous nephritis.

Just two years prior to the death of Sherburn's Merrill Becker's mother, Sarah Becker, Sherbie continued the family connection that had first been made by Sarah's first marriage with Grant A. Smith, that of the late William E. Smith, when Sherbie married the former 14<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Governor's granddaughter, Irene Smith, on December 12, 1898. Irene was the daughter of Ira Smith.

The Sherburn Merrill namesake legacy would continue for two more generations, ending with Sherburn Merrill Becker III. The Becker family was well known for their wealth and for their philanthropy in Manhattan, New York. On September 12, 1968, Sherbie Jr. and Sherbie III donated \$100,000 to the Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, as a tribute to their late father/grandfather and former Milwaukee Mayor, Sherburn Merrill Becker.

S.S. Merrill's second daughter Susie Kinder lived to only age 16 ½.

Sherburn's marriage with Mary Ellen produced four children. They were Sherburn, Marion, Fredrick and Richard.

S.S. Merrill's first child with Mary Ellen was born on July 17, 1859. He was his first son and was named after his father and his mother's maiden's name, of Sherburn Freeman Merrill. He died in infancy on February 8, 1861 at age 1 ½ years.

Sherburn's second child with Mary Ellen was born on December 19, 1861. It was a daughter named Marion. S.S. Merrill's health was deteriorating, however, with a couple months to spare, Sherburn did live long enough to see Marion wed again. She would marry twice. Her first marriage was with Grant Alexander Smith, on December 31, 1884, in Milwaukee. Grant was from one of the earliest affluent families of Fox Lake, Wisconsin. He was a grocer and the son of the former 14th Governor of Wisconsin (1878-1882) and 1872 Roundy Foods Co-founder, William E. Smith. Sadly, Marion would become a widow after a marriage of only 2 years, 4 months and 24 days, when Grant died on May 23, 1887, of "Fiber", at age of 28. This short marriage did not produce any offspring.

Marion would only be a widow for 3 years and 2 months. On July 22, 1890 she married Rev William Chester, in Milwaukee. This marriage produced three children; William Merrill Chester, 1891Nov – 1964 Feb3; Norman Merrill Chester, 1895Mar5 - 1986Mar21 and Leonard Merrill Chester, 1898Jun27 - 1899Jul12. William had 1 daughter and 4 sons. Norman had 2 daughters. Grandson's Chapman Department Store dynasty.

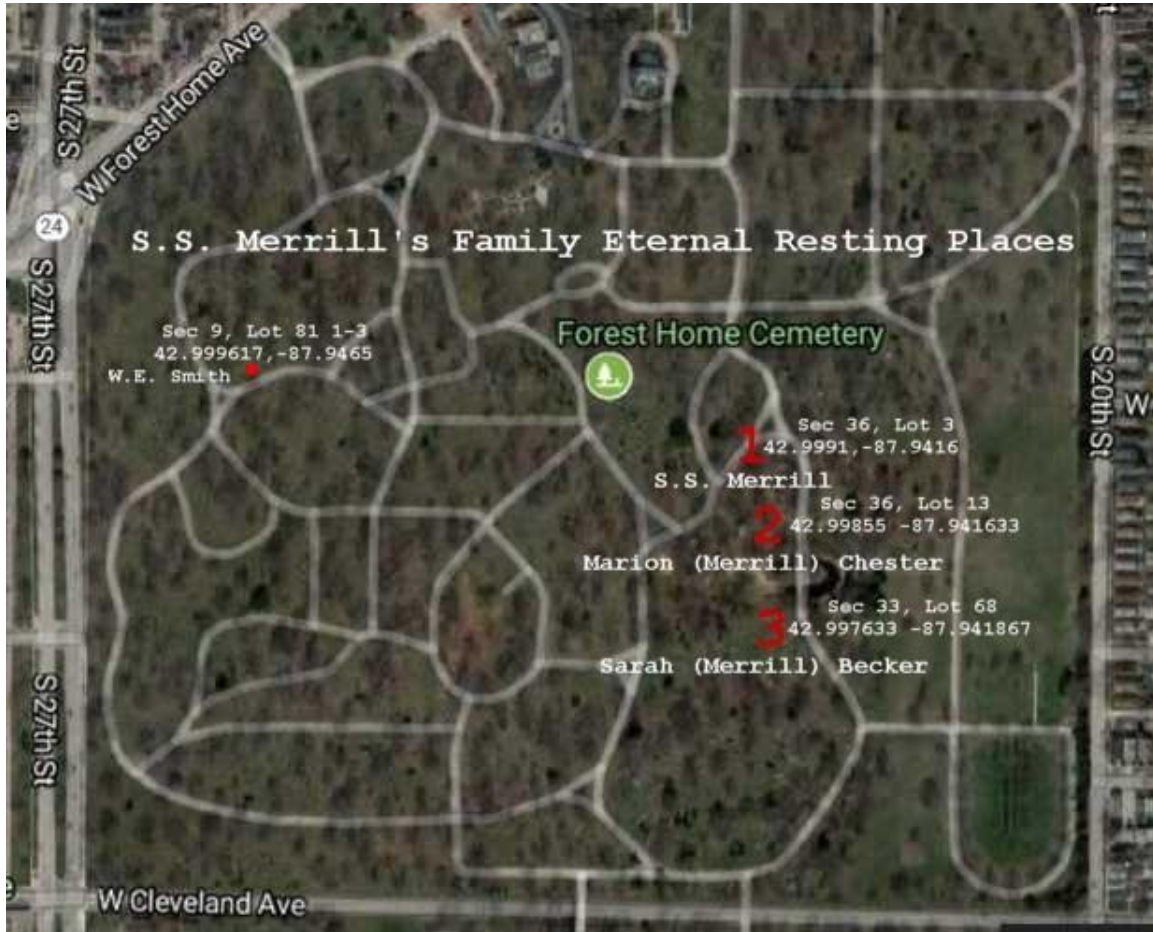
Sherburn's third child with Mary Ellen was born on April 1, 1865. He was a son named Fredrick Freeman Merrill, obviously taking his mother's maiden as his middle name. At age 38, in 1903, Fred married a girl from Norway named Karen Sunsthagen. Very few records could be found pertaining to Fred. Perhaps he was married and lived in Norway for awhile. During the 1910 U.S. Census, both Fred and his brother Richard are recorded as residing with their mother Mary Ellen, along with their respective wives, at the Merrill family home in Milwaukee. Shortly thereafter, Fred's wife passed away on May 25, 1910, at age 34 years, 3 months and 10 days. She was born in Norway on February 16, 1876. Fred died on October 31, 1925 in Detroit, Michigan at age 60 years, 6 months and 30 days.

Sherburn's fourth and last child with Mary Ellen was born on December 27, 1868. He was a son named Richard. For a time Richard sold real-estate in the Chicago area. At age 38 ½ years, on June 12, 1907, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, he married Beatrice Elizabeth (*née White*), age 28 years, 6 months and 23 days. The 1910 census indicated that no children were born to the couple. During the April 22, 1930 U.S. Census, Richard and Beatrice are recorded as residing at 420 E. Dewy Pl, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas. It is believed that no offspring resulted from this union. However, research is still ongoing. During the April 29, 1940 U.S. Census indicates this couple as residing at 519 S. Sherman Ave., Los Angeles, California. On May 18, 1948, Richard died there, at age 79 years, 4 months and 21 days. His wife Beatrice Elizabeth died on July 28, 1956, at age 77, 8 months and 9 days.



### Family Eternal Resting Place

With the exception of Sherburn's first wife Sarah Dix (*née Kidder*), who is buried at the South Church at Andover, Massachusetts, the entire immediate family of S.S. Merrill is interred within 500 feet of each other at Forest Home Cemetery, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. This includes all of his children along with their respective spouses and most of his grandchildren.



### Town of Jenny Immortalizes S.S. Merrill

On Thursday, February 10, 1881, Assemblyman Myron H. McCord introduced 515A bill, proposing to change the name of "Jenny to Lincoln", which progressed through a third reading on Thursday, March 3, 1881. On Monday, March 14, 1881, the bill was amended in the State Senate (*likely at the insistence of T.B. Scott*) to read "Jenny to Merrill" instead. Later the Assembly concurred, and it was sent on for an Executive signature. On Thursday, March 17, 1881, Governor Smith signed Bill 515A, honoring his son Grant A. Smith's, soon to be (*in 1,385 days or 3-3/4 years.*) father-in-law, S.S. Merrill, *which* upon deposit to and publication by the Secretary of State, Hans B. Warner, on Saturday, March 19, 1881, officially changed the name of "Jenny to Merrill". On December 31, 1884, Grant Alexander Smith, a grocer and the son of the former Wisconsin 14<sup>th</sup>. Governor Smith and Co-Founder of Roundy's Foods in 1872, married S.S. Merrill's twenty-three year old daughter, Marion Merrill.

On Thursday, January 18, 1883 Assemblyman Peter B. Champaign introduced No. 20 A, a bill to incorporate the City of Merrill. It was approved by both houses of the legislature on February 21, 1883 and signed on March 8, 1883 by Governor Rusk, thus making the community an incorporated city. Officially becoming the City of Merrill, upon the published date. First election held was March 6, 1883, a common council meeting was held in Hoyt & Helms' office March 13, 1883 (City Attorney Hoyt)

### **Naming Honors**

Michell, South Dakota, home of the famous Palace is named in honor of S.S. Merrill's boss, Alexander Mitchell. Ellendale, North Dakota is named in honor of S.S. Merrill's 2<sup>nd</sup> wife Mary Ellen Merrill. Lennox, South Dakota is named in honor of S.S. Merrill's private Secretary Ben G. Lennox. Merrill, Wisconsin is named in honor of S.S. Merrill.

### **S.S. Merrill's First Railroad Job**

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A U.S.Census Record for the Merrill family for 1870 could not be found. The railroad continued to grow as is his family. In the 1880 Census his family was family was still growing

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The Evening Wisconsin  
Wednesday, February 12, 1885  
Page 4, Column 2

### **THE ST. PAUL'S GENERAL MANAGER**

It is typical of the swift movement of this busy age, that the men who only yesterday, in sorrowing friendship, bore the mortal part of S.S. Merrill to the safe keeping of the tomb, are to-day eagerly discussing the question, "Who shall be the dead the manager's successor?"

Whoever he shall be, the man chosen will have placed upon his shoulders a burden of responsibility such as few in the business world are called upon to bear. Mr. Merrill carried the vast load more easily than another can, because circumstances permitted him to develop his strength gradually as the weight of accumulating duties grew heavier. Yet the burden-bearing literally killed such a business giant as Mr. Merrill was known to be.

Now the tasks which he has laid down are to committed to other hands; and the man named his successor, while being given the congratulations will deserve also to be given the honest sympathy of business men and railroad men throughout the great Northwest. To stand in Merrill's place, to do the work that Mr. Merrill did-in short to be another Merrill, is the thing that will be expected of the new incumbent. By the Merrill standard he will be tried; and there are many who in loyalty to their remembrance of Mr. Merrill's splendid efficiency, will be very loth to admit even in the face of facts, that the new man and new methods and new regime are as good as the old.

All history has proved that that man never yet lived and worked, whose place could not be taken and whose unfinished tasks could not be fulfilled by some one coming after. And now, within the little limit of Milwaukee's world, this history will repeat itself. It was not a Garfield who succeeded Garfield, nor will it be the duplicate of Mr. Merrill who takes his place. One who as general manager of the great St. Paul system should seek only to imitate, would thereby prove his utter unfitness for the vacant office.

The man who has performed Mr. Merrill's work pro tem. and performed it well, and for whose appointment the WISCONSIN and every interested business element in Milwaukee hopes sincerely, is Roswell Miller, the present assistant general manager. He is first in line of succession to the vacant position. During the year of Mr. Merrill's illness, he has been tried in all its onerous duties and has not been found wanting. He has the technical training, the breadth and grasp, the decision and strength and courage which the position demand. He has an exceeding and deserved popularity wherever he is known. He is most popular and most esteemed among the railroad men of the country with whom he has brought into business relations. Their judgment upon his fitness ought to count for much.

Mr. Miller is a young man, and in some quarters that may be urged against him. But it is not a crime nor in the least a badge of incapacity that one is young. And age that is according to birthdays, is after all the most imperfect measure of real age; for those young in years, as developments of every day in every city again and again prove, are often among the oldest in the possession of all that is valuable in business or professional experience.

Whether the directory of the St. Paul Company will select Mr. Miller for the office of general manager is at present unknown. So also is it equally unknown, at least to the WISCONSIN, whether Mr. Miller would accept the great honor and greater burden which such selection would entail. The WISCONSIN knows and wishes to express only this fact: The interested business public is earnest in its desire that Mr. Miller shall be named. Milwaukee business men especially have watched his methods, and have taken his measure. They believe him to be pushing fast, by sheer force of merit, toward a prominent station in the ranks of the country's best and broadest business men.

They pay him the highest compliment within their power when they give as their deliberate judgement, that in what he is and what he promises to be, he is the fit successor of Shurburne S. Merrill.

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The Evening Wisconsin  
Wednesday, February 11, 1885  
Page 8, Columns 1 & 2

### **THE FINAL OBSEQUIES. FUNERAL OF GENERAL MANAGER MERRILL TO-DAY**

**The Last Sad Rites Over the Remains of the Venerable Railroad Manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, at St. James' Church This Afternoon-A Simple Service at the Church-No Decorations-The Line of March to the Cemetery-Prominent Railroaders in the City-Notes of the Funeral.**

The last sad rites over the remains of the late S.S. Merrill were performed to-day. Throughout the morning the body lay in state at St. James' Episcopal Church, where it was placed yesterday afternoon. It was enclosed in a casket covered with black cloth and simply trimmed with silver. Engraven upon a plate attached to the lid was the following inscription:

SHERBURN S. MERRILL  
BORN JULY 28, 1818  
DIED FEBRUARY, 8, 1885

The casket reposed upon trusses set in the space in front of the chapel. Two Knights Templar, clad in the full regalia of their order, stood on guard, one near the foot of the casket, and the other Knights, similarly accoutered, did duty at the doors by which visitors respectively entered and departed from the church. There was an entire absence of display, no floral emblems or other conventional mourning devices being anywhere to be seen; but the simple solemnity of the occasion was the more impressive on this account, and the mourners gave ample evidences by their looks and bearing of the sincerity and depth of their grief. As soon as the church was opened, at 8 o'clock, a train of people began to pass through the church to view the remains. Even in the early hours of the morning despite the severity of the cold, the attendance was noticeably larger than yesterday afternoon, and as the advanced the number of visitors steadily increased. All classes of citizens were represented, railroad men, however, of course preponderating. Not a few ladies were among the visitors to the church during the morning hours.

Toward noon, the trains brought in a great many people from a distance, who had come to the city to attend the funeral. Among the early arrivals was a large delegation of prominent Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul officials from west of the Mississippi River, including Charles H. Prior, C.W. Case, H.R. Williams, George B. Clason, William Kellie, F.T. Oakes, F.D. Underwood and P.H. Kelley, of St. Paul; James Hill, president of the Manitoba Railroad, E.B. Wakeman, general superintendent of the Manitoba road, J.H. Lakey, and a number of others. Large delegations from the chambers of commerce of St. Paul and Minneapolis, and numerous other prominent business men of those cities were also in attendance. Great numbers of persons at distance who desired to attend the funeral were prevented by the snow blockade. A dispatch was received from Selah Chamberlain, one the prominent directors of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Road, saying he had started for Milwaukee, but was stopped on his way by a snow blockade. David Ferguson, who has been in New York for several days past, also sent a dispatch proffering sympathy and regretting his inability to reach home in time to attend the funeral. Alexander Mitchell, who has been confined to his residence for nearly two weeks past, and threatened with an attack of pneumonia, was enjoined by his physicians that in his condition it would be unsafe to attempt to venture out of doors.

Long before 1 o'clock, the hour at which the funeral services were to begin, the seating capacity of the church, excepting the pews reserved for the family and other near mourners, was taxed to its utmost. Still the train of late-comers who desired a last glimpse at the face of their dead friend continued to pour through the edifice. The familiar features were shrunken somewhat by disease and long-suffering, but were otherwise natural, and wore a peaceful expression which was a source of much comfort to the beholders. At 1 o'clock the Knights Templar guard was taken off duty, and the religious services, in charge of Rev. Dr. William Bliss Ashley, assisted by Rev. Dr. David Keene, began. According to a custom of the Episcopal Church which is rarely departed from, there was no set sermon or oration, the service consisting simply of the impressive ritual prescribed in the prayer book, interspersed with hymns by a select choir. The music was in charge of W.H. Starkweather. The choir consisted of W.H. Starkweather, tenor; W.C. Harrell, basso; Mrs. W.P. Rogers, soprano; and Mrs. W.H. Starkweather, alto. Mrs. Perry Williams presided at the organ. The hymns sung were, "Lead, Kindly Light," music by Dudley Buck; and "Abide With Me," music by Troyte. The anthem, "Come Unto Me," music by Chandler, was also rendered. The casket, when borne to the hearse was preceded by the honorary pallbearers, John Plankinton, John W. Cary, E.H. Broadhead, John Lawler, H.L. Palmer and J.C. Gault. It was carried by six pall-bearers chosen from among the oldest employes of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, as follows: Andrew McKaig, foreman of the blacksmith shop at West Milwaukee; C. King, foreman of the West Milwaukee car shop; Henry Moore, engineer; Frank Lyman, conductor; J.H. Sleeper, agent at Watertown; C.F. Mitchell, roadmaster. The pall-bearer wore black gloves, but no crape or other mourning emblems.

The relatives were the last enter the church. They were met at the door by two officiating clergymen who preceded them, moving up the center aisle, reading the opening passages of the burial service as they advanced. The outer doors of the church were locked during the service, to prevent interruptions. Had they been left open, however, the crowd of late-comers on the outside could not have entered, as every inch of room within the edifice was occupied. The service was very solemn and impressive. On account of the extreme cold, most of that portion which is usually read at the grave was read in the church and only the committal reserved to be gone through with at the cemetery. The funeral cortege moved down Grand Avenue to Second Street, thence to Fowler Street, thence to West Water Street, thence to Reed Street, thence to National Avenue, thence to Seventh Avenue, thence to Forest Home Avenue, and thence to the cemetery. The hearse was preceded by four carriages containing the clergy and the pall-bearers. The body was placed in the reception vault at the cemetery, to await interment when the weather becomes milder.

The Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul general offices and the West Milwaukee shops have been closed during the day, and other railways closed their Milwaukee offices during this afternoon. All the prominent railway men in the city were in attendance at the church during the services. Most of the leading business and professional men were also present. The Chamber of Commerce dispensed with its afternoon session to enable its members to attend.

Among others from Minneapolis who came down to attend the funeral was a committee of twelve appointed by the Minneapolis Board of Trade. The committee consisted of F.W. Cummings, S.W. Leard, E.D. Bowen, H. Miller, J.P. Christie, F.W. Sterret, A.J. Smith, M.W. Yerxa, H.F. Bagley, M. D. Rhame, P.O. Peterson.

D.W. Keyes. Assisted by Several St. Paul office employes, acted as usher at the church. The ushers were distinguished by simple rosettes of black, worn on the left breast.

Gov. Rusk headed a large party of state officials and others who came in from Madison to attend the funeral.

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**THE END OF A BUSY LIFE  
DEATH OF GENERAL MANAGER SHERBURNE S. MERRILL.**

The Last Hours of the Great Railroad Manager Whose Death Occurred a Few Minutes After Midnight Saturday Night-An Interesting Biographical Sketch of the Deceased-The Ups and Downs of a Busy Life and the Great Success that Finally Crowned It.

S.S. Merrill, general manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway, died a few minutes after midnight on Saturday night. He sank rapidly during Saturday evening, and he passed away peacefully. He was stricken on Tuesday with apoplexy and never regained consciousness up, till the hour of his death. All the members of the family were at the bedside during Mr. Merrill's last hours. The funeral arrangements were completed today, and will be found in detail on the eighth page.

The following is the official announcement of the death of Mr. S.S. Merrill:

MILWAUKEE, Wis., Feb. 8.,-TO ALL OFFICERS AND EMPLOYES: It is my painful duty to announce the death of General Manager S.S. Merrill, which occurred at his residence at 12:18 this morning.

Emblems of mourning will be displayed at all offices of the company on the day of the funeral, which will be announced hereafter. Opportunity will be given to as many that can be spared from their duties to join in paying the final tribute of respect to their departed chief.

ROSWELL MILLER,  
Assistant General Manager

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**Biographical Sketch of the Deceased.**

Sherburn S. Merrill was born in Alexandria, Grafton County N.H., July 28, 1818. His father Moses Merrill, was a farmer and the future great railroader was bred to that profession, and educated in common schools. At the age of 16 he began to work for himself. He first found employment about a hotel in Concord, N.H., where he stayed for a year. For six years immediately following this experience he worked in the furnishing-house of Moses Kimball, in Boston. He next served as clerk in a hotel at Troy N.Y., and later set up a little hotel of his own at Bristol, in his native state. He had an interest in the woolen manufactory at the same place, and remained there until 1850. In November 1850, he came to Milwaukee and began his career as a railway man, his first experience in that capacity being gained as foreman of a gang of men employed in grading a section of the Milwaukee & Mississippi Railway, which is now the Prairie du Chien division of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul.

The energy and efficiency with which he deported himself in this humble capacity attracted attention from those higher in command, and led to his rapid promotion. From foreman in the construction department, he became a conductor, then paymaster, then assistant superintendent of the road, E.H. Broadhead at the time being the superintendent. Mr. Merrill was next appointed superintendent of the Milwaukee & Watertown Railroad, which is now, like the Milwaukee & Mississippi a part of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul system. He next became superintendent of the La Crosse & Milwaukee road, now known as the northern division of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul. This position he resigned at the close of 1864, his health becoming impaired by overwork, and with the view of recuperating, away from the trying influence of the lake winds, he accepted the superintendency of the Winona & St. Peter Railroad.

It was at the close of the latter engagement, in July 1865, that Mr. Merrill was called to the commanding position in connection with which Milwaukeeans will always associate his memory - the superintendency of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul road. The corporation was at the time was known as the Milwaukee & St. Paul, the name of Chicago being added to its title at a later date. The immense system which has since expanded until includes more miles of railroad than are owned by any other corporation in the world, has remained nominally under his charge from that day to this. His practical direction and superintendency of its affairs never for one hour relaxed from the day of his appointment as general manager until he was stricken eighteen months ago with a paralytic attack which has ended in his death.

Until the sudden breaking down of his constitution which eventually terminated his life, Mr. Merrill's whole existence was merged in his business so completely that the great railroad seem in a very real sense little more than a manifestation of his tremendous individuality. His personal superintendence was directed to every portion of the line, and his tireless energy dominated everywhere. His figure was known to every man that worked for the man in any capacity. Every one of the 20,000 employes spoke of him with affectionate familiarity as "the old man," and all felt bound to him by personal regard as strong and as enthusiast as that which the soldiers of the first Napoleon entertained for their great leader. Strict in discipline, he was recognized as being always just, and the prompt and unflinching obedience to orders which he always exacted was known to be nothing more than he would himself have cheerfully accorded, had his place had been to obey instead of command. He was never satisfied except when hard at work, and his example was an inspiration to hard work on the part of those around him. All the salient elements of his character marked him for a conductor of great enterprises-his practical clear sightedness, his grasp of details, combined with wonderful power of organization, his tireless energy and his perfect knowledge of men. He was essentially a great executive.

Had he been a military commander, his name would have gone down into history coupled with brilliant victories. The victories of peace are less renowned than those of war, so that his personal fame may not last so long as if he had worn the sword, but he has rendered a more essential and enduring service to mankind, without expenditure of treasure and blood. The great transportation enterprise to the success of which his talent and energy immensely contributed, has been an important factor in the development of the West and the enrichment of its people.

In person Mr. Merrill was of commanding height, spare and erect in figure, and in every movement nervous and quick. His light eyes were as bright as an eagle's. His complexion, in health, was florid. His hair and beard, sandy in his prime, were, in his later years, silvery gray. By many people not well acquainted with him, Mr. Merrill was misunderstood. In his position as manager of the great railway he was daily besieged by hosts of people having interested requests to prefer, many of them calling when he was busied with important affairs. He had no time to waste in superfluous courtesy. Many mistook his prompt, decisive manner for curttness, and innumerable highly-colored stories are in circulation illustrative of his vigorous treatment of reporters, beggars for passes, and unwelcome callers. But most of these stories are fictitious. Those who came into daily contact with Mr. Merrill can aver from their own experience that when any one-boy or man approached him in a gentlemanly manner upon legitimate business, and showed no disposition to waste time in getting to the point of the matter, the St. Paul's veteran manager would not uncivilly turn him away. Back of the quickness and brusqueness of his general manner, Mr. Merrill had a kindly sympathy for all of human kind, and the generous deeds which he unostentatiously performed were far more than sufficient to excuse the asperity with which he sometimes rebuked impertinence.

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The Evening Wisconsin  
Monday, February 9, 1885  
Page 8, Column 2

**MANAGER MERRILL'S FUNERAL**  
**Arrangements All Completed and it will be Simple and Without Display.**

The Mitchell building, containing the general offices of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad, is draped in mourning to-day, and the national colors are displayed from its flagstaff at half-mast, as a tribute of respect to the memory of the late General Manager S.S. Merrill. On Wednesday, the day of the funeral, the offices will be closed, and business over the entire Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul system will be as nearly suspended as is possible without discommoding the public. By all the employes of the company, as well as by Milwaukeeans in general, Mr. Merrill's death is deplored as that of a good and really great man, whose place it will be very difficult to supply. From all parts of the country the family of the late manager have received telegrams of sympathy and condolence, indicating that railway people generally feel that the loss by his death is in a certain sense their own. The funeral will indicate by its size rather than by display the esteem in which Mr. Merrill was held by the community. It is the wish of the family, and in keeping with Mr. Merrill's well-known preferences. That all appointments of the affair should be as simple as possible. The formal announcement of the funeral bears the request that no flowers be proffered by friends. The Light Horse Squadron, of which Mr. Merrill was an honorary member, offered its services to the family in any way in which they could be used. The members of Wisconsin Lodge F. & A.M., also made a similar tender. But both kind offers were declined. The funeral will be held from St. James' Church, to which place the remains will be conveyed from the residence at 12:30 o'clock on Tuesday afternoon. They will be in charge of a guard of honor composed of members of Wisconsin Commandery K.T., No. 1, to which Mr. Merrill belonged, and will lie in state from 1 to 5 o'clock Wednesday morning. The Rev. Dr. William Bliss Ashley will officiate at the funeral, which will be held from St. James' Church at 1 o'clock, Wednesday afternoon. The pall-bearers will be John Plankinton, John W. Carey, E.H. Broadhead, John Lawler, H.L. Palmer and J.C. Gault. Six additional pall-bearers, from among the oldest employes of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul railway, have also been selected - Andrew McKaig, foreman of the blacksmith shop at West Milwaukee; C. King, foreman of the West Milwaukee car shop; Henry Moore, engineer; Frank Lyman, conductor; J.H. Sleeper, agent at Watertown; C.F. Mitchell, roadmaster. As many employes of the road as can be spared from their duties will attend the funeral, which will, without doubt, be the largest that has ever occurred in Milwaukee.

There will be a special meeting of the Merchants' Association, Tuesday, February 10, at 10:30 A.M., at the usual place, to take suitable action relative to the death of General Manager S.S. Merrill.

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**THE END IS NEAR AT HAND  
GENERAL MANAGER MERRILL AT THE DOOR OF DEATH.**

**His Condition at a Late Hour this After Noon Very Critical and a General Belief that He can not Live Longer than Two or Three Hours-No Nourishment To-day and a Very High Pulse at Last**

**Accounts-Some of the Good Deeds of the Prostrated Manager Accounted.**

At a late hour this afternoon the condition of S.S. Merrill was extremely unfavorable, and it was generally considered that he had only a few hours more to live. He was still unconscious and his pulse was very high. This last symptom shows that Mr. Merrill's state is an alarming one. He has been unable to take any nourishment since last evening, and has been sinking since about midnight. The most sanguine of his friends now entertain no hope whatever of his recovery. News of his end is expected at almost any moment. The physicians, it is understood, say that he will live only a very short time longer.

Since Mr. Merrill has been lying at his home powerless to move, the boys in the general office have been thinking up all the good deeds of the prostrate manager, and enough stories of his unflinching kindness of heart are in circulation to fill a volume. A gentleman from the East called at headquarters one day to see the manager, but he was not in. He said he had some very important business to transact and must see Mr. Merrill. The reply of the clerk was that the manager was attending a funeral and could not be seen until late in the afternoon. "Has a member of the family died?" asked the caller. The reply was in the negative. "Is it anyone connected with the road?" "Yes." "Who may I ask?" "Peter, the colored porter on Mr. Merrill's private car." The man had served him long and faithfully, and Mr. Merrill was determined to be at his funeral. Some time ago complaint was made from a station forty or fifty miles west of Milwaukee that the company's wood was being stolen. "Catch the thief," was Mr. Merrill's order. He was caught a night or two afterward, and proved to be the son of a widow. The manager asked that the boy and his mother be brought to Milwaukee. "Why did you steal that wood?" asked the manager. "Because we were freezing sir," they replied in one voice. The station agent was questioned by telegraph, and replied that the woman was generally considered worthy. Dictating his reply to the operator the old man said: "Well you let her have what wood she needs for the winter," and, handing the pair passes to return, he told them he would not prosecute them, and bade them good day. An engineer on the road who has been in its employ a long time lost a favorite child, and, like many another foolish man, tried to drown his sorrow by drinking. He lost his position and became an abject drunkard. Mr. Merrill heard of his case, and one day, meeting the man on the street, he stepped up to him, offered him his hand and inquired: "Isn't about time you took to your engine again?" The engineer could only stammer out his surprise. "Now go to your engine," said Mr. Merrill, "and run her straight" You know how to do it as well as anybody. Remember now, run her straight. Will you do it?" The man promised, and he is to-day in the employ of the road, a sober and respected official.

The inspector of clerks at headquarters, whose duty it was to report and remissness to Mr. Merrill, stated that one clerk was behind in his work, and that he was frequently quite late in coming to the office. Mr. Merrill sent for the young man and said to him sharply: "Look here, young man, you are way behind in your work, and you are frequently late at the office. "What is the reason for this?" The clerk resolved to make a clean breast and said: "The truth is I got a sick wife, and I have to sit up with her and do my housework besides. I am not fit to do any work as it ought to be done." The manager busied himself with his papers for a few moments and then, turning to the young man, said: "You take your coat and go home, and stay there until your wife is better. If you need any money, come to me." The clerk tried to say something, but the old man waved him off with "Go on now and take care of your wife." The way W.G. Collins, one of the division superintendents, got employment on the road is interesting. His father was station agent at Oconomowoc, the boy had tried several times to

secure a place in the company's employ, always without success. One day Mr. Merrill came along in his car and stopped at the station a few moments. Just as he was about to leave the lad stepped up to him and said: "Mr. Merrill, can't you give me a job of some kind?" "Who are you?" "I'm Station Agent Collin's son?" "Yes; you go down there to the first bridge and watch it, and let your father know if there is anything wrong with it." The boy went to the bridge and examined it carefully every time a train crossed it. He had his meals carried to him, and day and night remained at his post. About a week later, when the old man returned, he was told the boy was still at the bridge, and was asked, what was his pleasure. He had almost forgotten the circumstance, but he was so much impressed with the boy's faithfulness that he took him to Milwaukee with him and gave him work.

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The Evening Wisconsin  
Thursday, February 5, 1885  
Page 8, Column 3

### **MANAGER MERRILL'S CONDITION**

#### **At Last Accounts this Afternoon He had Recovered Consciousness and was Able to Take Some Nourishment.**

S.S. Merrill at an early hour this morning was resting a little easier, and showed more signs of consciousness than at any previous time since his sudden attack, night before last; but the improvement was not great enough to warrant his friends in building any hope upon it, and fears of the worst continue to be entertained.

Everywhere throughout the city the utmost interest was manifested in getting the latest news of his condition. At the offices of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway solitude was manifest in the face of every employe. The men moved about their work as quietly and soberly as if they were in a sick room.

The latest reports of Mr. Merrill's condition are the most favorable since he was seized with his present attack. At last accounts this afternoon he had recovered consciousness and had been able to take nourishment in the form of beef tea.

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The New York Times  
February 5, 1885

### **A RAILROAD MANAGER DYING S.S. MERRILL, OF THE CHICAGO, MILWAUKEE AND ST. PAUL, VERY LOW.**

MILWAUKEE, Wis., Feb 4.- At a late hour last evening S.S. Merrill, General Manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad, who had been confined to his house for many months from partial paralysis, suffered a third stroke, and has been in an unconscious condition ever since. At noon it was thought life was extinct, and a telephone message from his home in the suburbs announced that the end was at hand. A little later the dying man rallied somewhat, but quickly sank into a stupor from which he has not since rallied. The reported death of this venerable and popular railroad man was received with most profound sorrow. Alexander Mitchell, who has been Mr. Merrill's lifelong friend and associate, is utterly prostrated and is lying very ill at home. It is believed that Mr. Merrill cannot survive the night.

Sherburn S. Merrill was born in Alexandria, Grafton County, N.H., February 28, 1818. He lived on a farm and received such education as the public schools afforded him until he was 16 years old, when he began life for himself. One year as a servant about a hotel, six years in the employ of Boston furnishing house,

and then, in 1850, Mr. Merrill was found first in Milwaukee, engaging as boss of a crew grading a section of what is now the Prairie du Chien division of the great St. Paul system; next train conductor, then Paymaster, then Assistant Superintendent of the Milwaukee and Watertown line, then of the La Crosse and Milwaukee, then the old Winona and St. Peter, until, in 1865, he was chosen for the duties of his present position as General Manager of the Milwaukee and St. Paul, which position he has held through all the progress in the growth of that company. Mr. Merrill's family consists of a wife, three married daughters, and a son. He is very wealthy, and his estate is worth from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000.

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Chicago Tribune  
Thursday, February 5, 1885  
Page 2, Column 6

### **S.S. MERRILL DYING** **The Well-Known Railroad Man Nearing His End**

MILWAUKEE, Feb. 4—Shurburn S. Merrill, General Manager of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company, is lying at the point of death at his home on Grand avenue, in this city. He suffered from a third paralytic shock last night, from which he has not rallied.

At 3 p.m. this afternoon Mr. Merrill regained consciousness. His relations thought this reappearing of life to be a change for the better, but they were given no hope. He recognized those around his bedside but could not speak. Later in the evening he fell asleep and at 9 p.m. was resting comfortably.

At 11 Mr. Merrill's condition was such that his physicians said he would die before 6 a.m. tomorrow.

[Mr. Merrill was born in Grafton County, New Hampshire, in 1818. He was bred a farmer, and had only common-school education. He afterward became a hotelkeeper at Troy N.Y., and at Bristol N.H. In 1850 he came to Milwaukee. He then was without means, but a bold, determined man, ready to perform any honest labor and bent on pushing his fortunes. He applied for employment to E.H. Brodhead, E.D. Holton, and the other officials engaged in the earliest work on the Milwaukee & Prairie du Chien Railroad. Being asked "what could he do," he replied that he "could handle a shovel or pick." He was made boss of a gang of hands in a gravel-pit, and from that time his industry, soul and fidelity caused him to rise with rapidity. He became a train hand, and then conductor, and afterward Superintendent of the Milwaukee and Watertown Road, the main stem and starting-point of now what constitutes the St. Paul system. In 1865, when the Milwaukee & St. Paul Railway Company was formed, Alexander Mitchell was elected President and S.S. Merrill was appointed General Manager of the new corporation. He became speedily known as one of the most energetic and powerful railroad managers in the country, not refined, but vigorous, plucky, and enterprising, he pushed the acquisition and construction and construction of the line after line of the St. Paul Road till it had greater mileage than any other railway in the country and its stock rose to far above par. He is a man of powerful frame and obdurate will, and splendid lighting qualities, which were manifested in the many wars into which he entered with rival companies. He often lived for weeks on his special car, visiting every part the widely stretched lines of his company, and he insisted to the last on controlling many of the minutest details of its vast business. His death will be seriously regretted throughout the Northwest and in all the railroad circles of the country, where he is highly admired and respected. He is very wealthy, his estate being estimated at \$3,000,000.]

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Lincoln County Advocate  
Tuesday, February 10, 1885

-- S.S. Merrill, died on Sunday morning last; his funeral will be today. He was the great railroad manager, and the man for whom our city was named.

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Merrill Daily Herald  
Centennial Edition  
July 1947  
Page 65, column 1

#### **First Church Bell Donated by Rail System Manager**

The first church bell to ring in Merrill was in the Methodist church, located on the southwest corner of First and Park streets, which house Al Peterman built.

When the railroad came to Merrill in the fall of 1880, a committee from the Ladies' Aid of the Methodist church wrote a letter of several pages to S.S. Merrill, General Manager of the St. Paul R.R., stating that now the name of Jenny had been changed to Merrill in his honor, and, in view of this fact, would he donate a bell to the church, and this would be the first bell to ring in Merrill. The letter was brought to Anna E. Anderson, schoolhouse located on the southwest corner of the present Lincoln school grounds for her to O.K. Miss Anderson counted the pages, and told them Mr. Mr. Merrill would consign such a letter to the waste-basket without even looking at it. So they asked her to write a letter, which she states was less than on third of a business sheet. Two days later she got a wire from Mr. Merrill to order the bell, and Miss Anderson states that she thinks Mr. Merrill paid for it, as the church never received a bill, but got the bell. This bell is now in the Scott M.E. church.

**Milwaukee County Death Records**  
**Volume 6, Page 160**  
*(Transcribed)*

**Full name of deceased:** Sherbourne S. Merrill  
**Color:** White  
**Sex:** Male  
**Age:** 66 yrs.-3mo-11days  
**Name of father of deceased:** Moses Merrill  
**Name of mother of deceased:**  
**Occupation:** R.R. Manager  
**Place of birth:** Alexandria  
**Name of wife of deceased:** Mary E.  
**Name of husband of deceased:**  
**Date of birth and date of death:** July 28, 1818 – Feb. 8-1885  
**Cause of death:** Apoplexy & Paralysis  
**Name of place, town or township and county in which person died:** Grand Ave-4<sup>th</sup> Ave, Mil  
**Name of location of burial ground in which interred:** Forest Home  
**Name of person returning certificate:** T. Crooker M.D.  
**Residence of such person:** 805 Grand Ave  
**Date of certificate:** Feb 9 – 1885  
**Date of registration:** March 14 – 1885

*(Wisconsin Law prohibits digital reproduction of the original document for dissemination.)*

<b>Registration of Deaths.</b>		01053 <sup>358</sup>	01054 <sup>57</sup>	01055 <sup>60</sup>
1. Full name of deceased.....	George Whitford	Sherbourne S. Merrill	Henry Erbacher	
2. Color.....	white	white	white	
3. Sex.....	male	male	male	
4. Age.....	16 mos - 3 days	66 yrs - 3 mos - 11 days	37 yrs - 7 mos	
5. Name of the father of deceased.....	Charles E. Whitford	Moses Merrill	Frank Erbacher	
6. Name of the mother of deceased.....	Hannah "	-	Catharine "	
7. Occupation.....	-	R.R. manager	-	
8. Place of birth.....	Wisc	Alexandria	Wisc Wis	
9. Name of the wife of deceased.....	-	Mary E.	-	
10. Name of the husband of deceased.....	-	-	-	
11. Date of birth and date of death.....	Sep 12 1885 - Feb 14 1885	July 28 1818 - Feb 8 1885	Oct 20 1857 - Feb 12 1885	
12. Cause of death.....	Stomatitis ulcerativa	Apoplexy + Paralysis	Consumption	
13. Name of place, town or township, and county in which the person died.....	Wisc	Grand Ave 4 <sup>th</sup> Ave Wisc	Wisc	
14. Name and location of burial ground in which interred.....	Forest Home	Forest Home	Forest Home	
15. Name of person returning certificate.....	James Dorland M.D.	T. Crooker M.D.	T. Crooker M.D.	
16. Residence of such person.....	202 1/2 Grand Ave	805 Grand Ave	805 Grand Ave	
17. Date of certificate.....	Feb 14 - 1885	Feb 9 - 1885	Feb 13 - 1885	
18. Date of registration.....	March 14 - 1885	March 14 - 1885	March 14 - 1885	

**S.S. Merrill Family**

Sarah Dix nee Kidder July 1, 1825 - 1855

Mary Ellen Merrill b. February 13, 1831 – December 13, 1927 M.1858

Marion Merrill December 19, 1861 - May 2, 1942

Forest Home Section 36, Lot 13, Grave 5

Married: Grant Alexander Smith December 31, 1884 (Divorced or Widowed?)

Married: William M. Chester ????????

Sons: William Merrill Chester November 4, 1891 – February 3, 1964

*Married: ?? Alice Miller Chester January 7, 1893 – July 12, 1972*

Norman Merrill Chester March 5, 1895 – March 21, 1986

*Married: ?? Mildred Hummel Chester Squire*

Leonard Merrill Chester June 27, 1898 – July 12, 1899 (Infant)

[ (Mrs. Grant Smith) – (Mrs. William Chester) (New York) Sons - William & Norman]

William Chester b. in Washington D.C. a New York Minister

1920 362 Roosevelt Dr., Manhattan, New York

1954 Son William M. Chester 407 E. Wisc. Ave. Milwaukee

Son Norman M., 1920 an Accountant chemicals, November 4, 1891-March 21, 1986

1000 W. Bradley Rd., Milwaukee, WI

Forest Home Section 36, Lot 13, Grave 5

1850 residing in Watertown, WI

Sherburn Freeman Merrill July 17, 1859 - February 8, 1861

1860

Ellen F. 29 b.1831 NY

Sarah W. b.1850 Mass

Susan K. b. 1855 WI - 8-18-1871

Sherburn Freeman. 11/12 2-11-1861

Julia Lynch 17 and Henretta Milkette 22 Servants

1880

Mary E. 46 NY

Marion 18 WI

Frederick F. 15 WI

Richard 12 WI

Frederick Merrill April 1, 1865 – October 31, 1925 (d. Detroit)

Karen Sousthagen Sunsthagen

Merrill February 16, 1876 – May 25, 1910 (born in Norway) daughter-in-law

Richard Merrill December 27, 1868 – May 18, 1948 (d. Los Angeles)

Married Beatrice Elizabeth (*nee White*) June 12, 1907 in Grand Rapids, Kent Co. Mich. (Chicago Real estate dealer)

Beatrice Elizabeth Merrill November 20, 1878 – July 28, 1956 (born in Michigan) daughter-in-law

April 29, 1940 lived at 519 S. Sherman Ave., Los Angeles, CA

S.S. Merrill Tuesday, July 28, 1818 – Thursday, February 5, 1885

Wife 1 Sarah D. b 1827 ? on 1850 Census

Wife 2 - Mary Ellen nee Freeman Merrill February 13, 1831 – December 13, 1927

Freeman Sherburn Merrill d. Feb 11, 1861

Sarah Worthing Merrill June 2, 1850 – October 5, 1900 (Mrs. W. Becker)

Susan K. b.? 1855 WI 8-18-1871

Marion Merrill December 19, 1861 - May 2, 1942 (Mrs. Grant Smith and then Mrs. W. Chester)

Frederick Merrill April 1, 1865 – October 31, 1925 (d. Detroit) Matlys Rd. Ventura CA

Richard Merrill December 27, 1868 – May 18, 1948 (d. Los Angeles)

To The Honorable Secretary of State of Michigan Marriages for Quarter Ending June 30, 1907

Page 163 - County of Kent

Record Number #752

Date of License June 12, 1907 - Date of Marriage June 12, 1907

**Groom** – Not Previously Married

Richard Merrill - Age 38 - Race W - Residence Chicago, Ill - Birthplace Milwaukee, Wis – Occupation Real Estate Dealer

Name of Father S.S. Merrill - Name of Mother Mary E. Freeman

**Bride** – Not Previously Married

Eliz. White - Age 29 - Race W - Residence Chicago, Ill – Birthplace Michigan – Occupation None

Name of Father Joseph White - Name of Mother Katherine Hartel

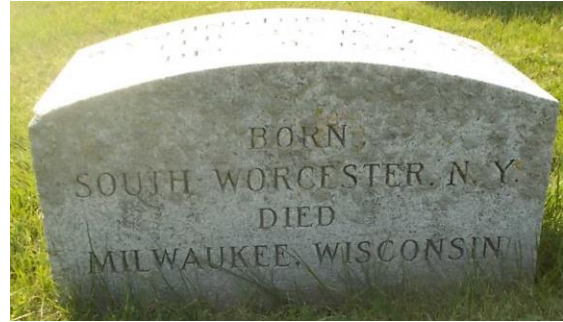
Place of Marriage - Grand Rapids, Kent County, Michigan - Person by Whom Married Rev. C.F. Hestleet

Witnesses To Marriage - R.G. Hill, Grand Rapids | May Thomas, Grand Rapids



**S.S. Merrill's 1<sup>st</sup> child with his 1<sup>st</sup> wife  
Sarah Dix (*née* Kidder) Merrill**

Sarah Worthing (*née* Merrill) - Mrs. Washington Becker  
Friday, June 7, 1850 - Friday, October 5, 1900  
Life of - 50 years, 3 months and 29 days



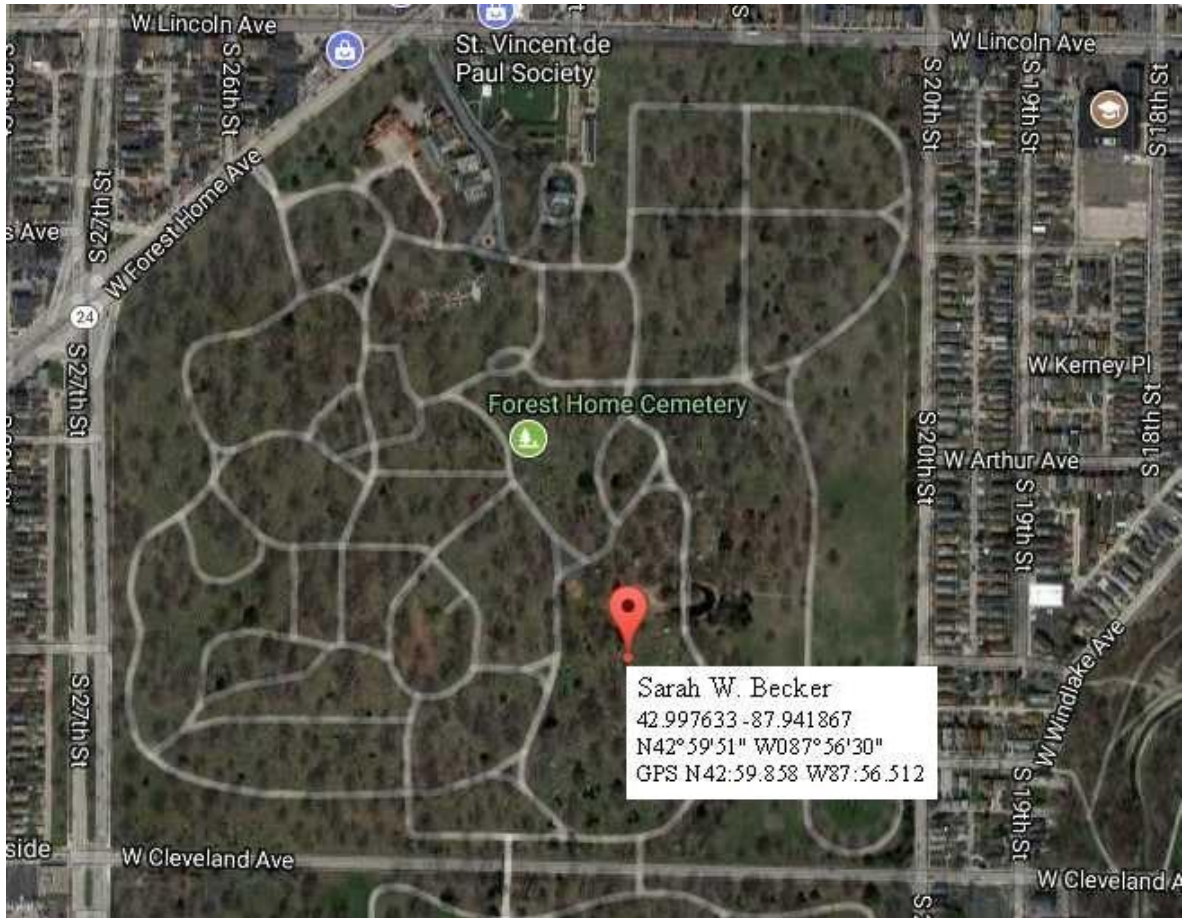
Section 33, Lot 68, Grave 2  
42.997633 -87.941867  
N42°59'51" W087°56'30"  
GPS N42:59.858 W87:56.512



**Becker Family Monument**

Section 33, Lot 68  
42.997633, -87.941867  
N42°59'51", W087°56'30"  
N42°59.858, W087:56.512





S.S. Merrill's Famous Grandson  
**Sherburn Merrill Becker**  
34<sup>th</sup> Mayor of Milwaukee  
The City's Last Republican Mayor 1906-1908



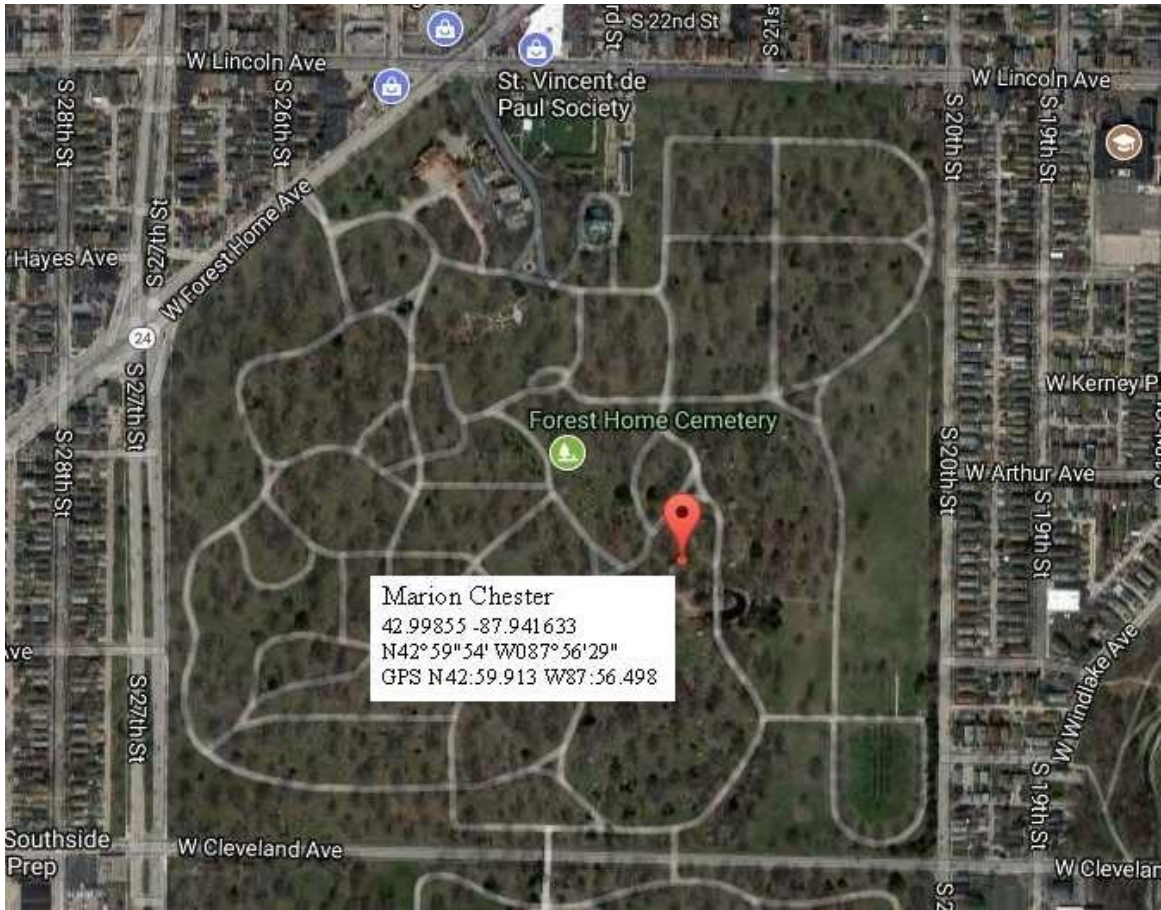
**S.S. Merrill's 2<sup>nd</sup> child with his 2<sup>nd</sup> wife  
Mary Ellen (*née* Freeman) Merrill**

Marion (*née* Merrill) 1<sup>st</sup> Mrs. Grant A. Smith – 2<sup>nd</sup> Mrs. William Chester  
Thursday, December 19, 1861 – Saturday, May 2, 1942  
Life of – 80 years, 4 months, 14 days



Section 36, Lot 13, Grave 5  
42.99855, -87.941617  
N42°59'54.0", W87°56'29.0"  
N42.59.913, W87:56.497





Marion's 1<sup>st</sup> husband, Grant Smith – Marion is buried between both of her husbands  
 Not buried in his family's - William E. Smith Family Plot at (Section 9, Lot 81)  
 William E. Smith was Wisconsin's 14<sup>th</sup> Governor serving from 1878-1882