

EDWARD J. FILIATRAULT. Fealty to facts in the analyzation of the character of a citizen of the type of Edward J. Filiatrault, of Duluth, is all that is required to make a biographical sketch interesting to those who have at heart the good name of the community, because it is the honorable reputation of the man of standing and affairs more than any other consideration that gives character and stability to the body politic and makes the true glory of a city or state revered at home and respected in other localities. In the broad light which things of good report ever invite the name and character of Mr. Filiatrault stand revealed and secure and, though of modest demeanor, with no ambition to distinguish himself in public position or as a leader of men, his career has been signally honorable and patriotic and it may be studied with profit by the youth just entering upon his life work.

Edward J. Filiatrault was born June 11, 1876, at Faribault, Minnesota, and is the son of Edward and Rose (Payant) Filiatrault, both of whom are now deceased, the father dying in 1914, and his wife passing away the following year. Edward Filiatrault was born in Canada, where he lived until about 1855, when he came alone to Minnesota, locating first in the city of St. Paul, where he obtained employment as a tool-maker, which vocation he followed during all his active years. A year afterward he moved to Faribault, where he lived a number of years, but finally, in 1886, moved to Duluth, where he spent the remainder of his life. He bore a most excellent reputation as a man among men, observing the closest ethics of correct living, and by the strength of his own character he gave stability to the communities in which he lived. In 1856, about eighteen months after he came to Minnesota, he married Rose Payant, and they became the parents of eleven children, of which number the subject of this sketch is the fifth in order of birth, he being a twin brother of Albert, who also is living.

Edward J. Filiatrault received his educational training in the public schools of Faribault and Duluth, attending the high school in the latter city for three years and graduating with the class of 1894. After completing his education he went to Buffalo, New York, and took a two-year course in electric engineering. He then entered the employ of the Northern Steamship Company and sailed as chief electrician on the steamer "Northland" in 1896, 1897 and a part of 1898. In the summer of the latter year he came to Duluth and took charge of electrical construction work and engineering for the Burgess Electric Company, with whom he remained in that capacity until 1901. In the latter year he entered business on his own account, forming a partnership with Emil A. Nelson, under the firm name of the Mutual Electric and Auto Company, engaging in electrical contracting and engineering and in the automobile business. This partnership was continued until July, 1908, when the partnership was severed, Mr. Nelson taking the electrical business under the name of the Mutual Electric Company and Mr. Filiatrault continuing the automobile business as the Mutual Auto Company.

In 1901 the Mutual Electric and Auto Company was the first automobile firm and the pioneers in that industry in Duluth. B. E. Baker



*Philipson*

at that time brought the first car to Duluth, a single-cylinder Oldsmobile runabout. Following him, Ward Ames bought a two-cylinder Winton, which was then capable of making a speed of twenty-eight miles an hour, and at that period the Winton held the world's record, twenty-eight miles per hour. W. E. Brown then came out with a third car, a single-cylinder, five-passenger Thomas Flyer, of ten-horse power. Then the Rambler became known here. In 1903 Mr. Filiatrault and Victor Huot each purchased a two-cylinder, eighty-five-inch wheel base Model K Rambler, five passenger, which in their day were wonderful cars. Following the advent of these cars Lou Martin and D. G. Cutler purchased White Steamer cars. From that day to this the automobile industry has developed to such a point that in the city of Duluth alone it supports five thousand cars. It has made this city a big distributing center, the aggregate volume of business handled through this city amounting to over twenty million dollars annually, Duluth today being recognized as one of the most important distributing centers for motor vehicles in the United States. Until the year 1911 Duluth held but little importance as a distributing center, but through the untiring efforts of Mr. Filiatrault arrangements were made for the distribution of the Ford cars from this point. Then in 1915 the Willys-Overland Company recognized the value of Duluth as a distributing center and arrangements were made with Mr. Filiatrault for the distribution of Overland cars in northern Minnesota, Wisconsin and a part of Michigan. Previous to these events the Twin Cities (Saint Paul and Minneapolis) had enjoyed the distinction of distributing most all commodities at the Head of the Lakes, but today Duluth is holding its own with these cities as a large jobbing and distributing center. In all of this development Mr. Filiatrault has had a large share, and to him more than to any other man is due the credit for the wonderful advance made along these lines here, which has proven such an asset to Duluth.

Intensely public spirit and generous in his attitude toward young men starting in life and who show a disposition to apply themselves honestly and faithfully to their object, Mr. Filiatrault has given substantial assistance to several young men who are now numbered among Duluth's successful business men. He has also taken a keen interest in all matters affecting the civic welfare and has been active in promoting the material, educational and moral interests of the community.

He has been so intensely interested in the welfare of young men about to enter into business life that he is frequently called upon to lecture in our public schools on the essentials in life that constitutes business success.

Like all successful men in a live, thriving community, he has had his hobbies in a civic way. The promotion of good highways and farm roads, perhaps there is no better qualified man in the city of Duluth other than Mr. Filiatrault on road development, particularly in Saint Louis county and generally throughout the state. He has been most active in Legislative matters particularly pertaining to highway and farm road improvements. In 1919, mainly through his untiring efforts and ability to organize at a referendum election, St. Louis county voted, through its citizens, a seven and a half million dollar bond issue for the building of hard surfaced highways on its 270 mile highway system.

During the last few years little has been known to the general public of his affiliation with several of Duluth's industries. He has refrained from accepting any appointments on boards of directors, but nevertheless as a stockholder he is identified with, and his judgment in business matters with the companies in which he is interested is sought on numerous occasions. He is a holder of considerable real estate represented by

business and residence properties, and his success is due mainly to his keen judgment in business matters in general.

Just prior to the entry of the United States into the great World War Mr. Filiatrault was appealed to by the Department of Justice to organize a secret service division of volunteer Duluth citizens to assist the department in investigating pro-Germanism and all organizations or individuals who were working against our Government. Mr. Filiatrault replied by wire, accepting the responsibility, and in less than thirty days the American Protective League (commonly known as the A. P. L.), the secret service volunteer division of the Department of Justice, was organized in seven divisions, as follows: Industrial, railroad, transportation, commercial, telephone, telegraph, steamboat and docks and a flying squadron. Mr. Filiatrault was appointed chief of the Duluth district division. Each of the sub-divisions enumerated above had from twenty-five to forty members, the entire organization being made up of 208 prominent business men who volunteered their services for the cause. The activities of the Duluth Division of the American Protective League has gone down in history as being the premier organization as regards efficiency of any district in the United States. This division has the record of clearing up more cases of pro-Germanism and sedition by thorough investigation; of causing the greatest number of arrests, and detentions in a great many cases; of deportations of guilty parties to the various Federal prisons; of the rounding up of a number of army deserters, and the ferreting out in a thorough and business like manner of more obstinate cases detrimental to the welfare of the Government and the winning of the great war than any city of like population in the United States. One notable example of their work were the activities of some of the members on snow-shoe cruises in the northern wilds of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan and the rounding up of violaters of the war laws. The Duluth Division has also to its credit the discovery of seventeen wireless stations, located in the wilds of northern Minnesota, capable of receiving and delivering messages to either coast. These stations, all of which were demolished, had been operated by German ex-officers or under German supervision. The Flying Squadron, which consisted of fifteen prominent Duluth citizens owning automobiles at the disposal of the Duluth Division, covered in excess of fifty thousand miles in the performance of their duties.

One of the peculiar features of the organization in carrying out this secret work of investigation for the Government was that each division had a captain and lieutenant, and these were the only persons in each division who knew who the Chief was, he being known as C-1. The captains and lieutenants also were operating under symbol letters and each operative of each division were also assigned symbol letters and numbers and they, in turn, did not know who the other operatives in their respective divisions were, outside of the captains and lieutenants. All communications pertaining to the work of the Duluth division of the American Protective League was in written form, addressed in symbol letter and number to the proper officer and signed in symbol letter and number by the operative. The Department of Justice today has a complete record of every person living in the Duluth district who uttered words against the Government from April 1, 1917, until the Duluth division was disbanded under Federal instructions on February 1, 1919. This was a contribution made by Mr. Filiatrault to the winning of the great war which has never been made public, as the work of this division and the personnel of its membership has been maintained a closed secret until now. It may be said in this connection that Washington recognizes that

the work of the Duluth division was of such a high character that undoubtedly it was the reason that this important industrial center, with its mines and other interests that meant so much to the winning of the great war, was kept free and clear of any depredations or losses during the great struggle.

During the World War period in addition to the responsibilities, which he assumed, just enumerated above Mr. Filiatrault was an active member of Local Draft Board Number Four, and he held the title of secretary of the board, and only those who know can fully appreciate just the amount of time and sacrifice that was made by the Local Boards in the fulfillment of their duties during this trying period. Almost 5,000 drafties were entered into the service through this Local Board. It can be readily seen at a glance that he, like all other extremely patriotic Americans, more than contributed his part in this self sacrificing work, without remuneration, to assist in winning the war.

Politically Mr. Filiatrault until 1910 has been a Democrat. He is a great admirer of President Wilson, but since that time a Republican. Though taking a deep interest in public affairs, he has steadfastly refused to stand for election to any public office, preferring to give his entire time to the development of his own business. He is a member of the Commercial Club, the Rotary Club, the Elks Club, the Boat Club, the Curling Club, the Sportsman's Club and various other organizations. In 1910 he was one of the organizers of the Rotary Club, and in 1911 was elected its president. In 1919 he was again elected president; this being the first time in the history of the International Rotary that a president of any club has been chosen to that office a second time. The Rotary Club, one of the best known organizations in Duluth, represents an organization of 200 prominent business men, each member representing a different line of business. Mr. Filiatrault is a member of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks and in 1912 was elected exalted ruler of the local lodge, and in 1919 was again honored with the same office. The Duluth Lodge of Elks has a total membership of 1,150 and is distinctively American in character. During the World war the Elks took a prominent part in raising the finances necessary to carry on the great struggle and in building up and stimulating a spirit of Americanism. They raised a fund of \$45,000 for the Salvation Army. For service in the great war the Elks furnished 110 of its members, some of whom will never return. During the entire war period the Elks Lodge maintained all of these boys in good standing, fathered them on the other side in a great many ways and won the thanks and respect of all for its splendid record. Religiously Mr. Filiatrault is a member of the Catholic Church, and he is also president of the French Naturalization Club. His chief diversions from the cares and routine of business is in his fondness for hunting and fishing, in the interests of which he devotes more time to living in the wilds of Northern Minnesota than any other man in Duluth. He has a summer home and hunting lodge about forty miles north of Duluth, and there he and his family have spent their summers for the past ten years.

On January 26, 1902, Mr. Filiatrault was married to Andrea Chaput, who was born in Marquette, Michigan, the daughter of George Chaput. She was educated in the Duluth schools to the age of ten years, when she went to Montreal and took a convent and seminary course. She has been active in church work and also took a large part in the Red Cross and other war work. She has borne her husband the following children: Victor, aged nineteen years; Loren E., deceased; Loretta, aged sixteen; Rose, aged fourteen, and Doris, six years of age. Mr. Filiatrault has been one of the leading men of affairs of this city in the most important period

of its development, and he has played well his part in the progress of the same in every way possible. Possessing a genial personality, he has gained a host of warm personal friends, who accord to him the utmost confidence and esteem.