

Junius B. (Boyd) Wood Biography

Junius B. Wood, Class of 1896 - b. 5-27-1877 - d. 1957

Junius was the Class President of his Class of 1896

The geographic, social, and occupational mobility characteristic of American culture has often resulted in sons departing from the ways of their fathers. A local instance of this contrast between generations can be found in the lives of Samuel S. Wood and his son, Junius B. Wood.

Sam Wood, a farmer's son, was employed as a watch factory machinist for nearly forty years, 1881-1920. He also lived in the same house at 444 Prairie Street in Elgin for most of his working years. Sam believed in staying at home, content to enjoy familiar scenes and friends. While living in Elgin, he returned only twice to his former home in Pennsylvania to visit relatives. He allowed a day for the Chicago World's Fair in 1893 and once went on an excursion to Clinton, Iowa. Another time his interest in land investment took him to the Dakotas. These were the only occasions he was known to be away from Elgin.

Because Sam hoped that every family would be able to settle down in a home of their own, he was a leader in organizing the Elgin Loan and Homestead Association (now Home Federal) in 1883. The pooled savings of its members provided the funds for low-interest home loans. Sam Wood served on the Association's board of directors for 38 years and was its president for the last 11. He volunteered his time to the Association, using evenings and Sundays to stride along the city's streets appraising property.

Sam was deeply rooted in his home, his job, and his community; his son turned out to be a world rover. After his graduation from Elgin High School in 1896 and the University of Michigan in 1900, Junius Wood became a newsman. As a foreign correspondent for the Chicago Daily News, (1907 - 1934) he covered General Pershing's campaign in Mexico - the American occupation of Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1914 and a Cuban revolution in 1917. He was an accredited correspondent with the American Expeditionary Force in Europe and Siberia, 1917-1920 (WWI).

Junius Wood's assignments included the Balkans, Scandinavia, Central and South America, Japan, China, India, the Philippines, and Arabia. He reported more than a dozen national political party conventions, flew across the country in the airship Shenandoah, and was a passenger in a pioneering air mail flight from Argentina to the United States. The younger Wood was stationed in the Soviet Union, 1925-1928; observed the Japanese army in Manchuria, 1932-1933, and witnessed the rise of Adolph Hitler in Berlin, 1933-1934.

If today's youths follow different paths from the examples provided at home, you might remember the Woods. There was a not uncommon pattern among fathers and sons, one which will occur more and more frequently in the lives of today's mothers and daughters.

E. C. "Mike" Alft, "**Elgin: Days Gone By**"