

John J. Cleary BC December 31, 1997

Funeral services are to be held at Smith Funeral Home in Victor at 10 a.m., Wednesday, Dec. 31, for John J. Cleary, 69, of rural Victor, who died Sunday, Dec. 28, 1997, in Grinnell Regional Medical Center. Officiants will be the Revs. Richard Okumu of St. Bridget's Catholic Church in Victor, and Mark W. Swanson of St. Patrick's Catholic Church in Melrose. Organist Jean Fontinel will render "In the Garden" and "Daddy's Hands." Pallbearers are to be Don Hilligas, Dilly Fay, Jeff Kriegel, Jason Boots, Bill Fortner and Dan Mouchka. Interment will be at Mount Calvary Cemetery, Melrose.

John Joseph Cleary was born on July 31, 1928, in Melrose to Dennis and Mary Agnes Finn Cleary. He was raised in Melrose and attended the Melrose Catholic School.

On June 7, 1959, he was married to Shirley Ann Carlson in Lucas. Following their marriage, the couple made their home in Camforth. John farmed on the family farm for a short time and was then employed by a tree service in Des Moines. He went to work for the Burlington Line Railroad until 1952, when he began his nearly 31-year career with the Rock Island Railroad. It was from there that he retired in 1977.

He was a member of the Railroad Union for 51 years. He thoroughly enjoyed his children, his grandchildren, gardening, and a good, hot, strong cup of coffee.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one sister, Donna Scott; and a brother, Donald, who died in infancy.

Survivors include his wife, Shirley Cleary of Victor; his son, Raymond Dennis Cleary and his wife, Cindy, of Grinnell; his daughter, Nancy Ann Cleary of Cedar Rapids; his daughter, Mary Jo Cleary and her fiancé, Bill Fortner, of Brooklyn; his daughter, Amy Leann Packerham and her husband, Rob, of Marion; six grandchildren, Nicole a. Cleary, Westley J. Henry, Brianna L. Cleary-Beard, Dustin E. Henry, Amber R. Henry, and Heidi M. Packerham; four sisters, Vickie Gillaspay, Peggy Wilbanks, and Suzie Morris, all of Arizona, and Ann Swanson of Des Moines; and one brother, Paul Cleary of California.