

# Joseph T. Hays, Pioneer of Chester Township, Passes To Join The Great Majority.

Joseph T. Hays Is The Last of a Family of Maryland Pioneers To Locate Here in 1854

One by one the pioneers of this community are passing away. Not long ago we chronicled the death of Daniel F. Hays. It is the mission of the Herald today to chronicle the death of his brother Joseph T. who had lived in Chester, excepting a few of his later years in Grinnell, during the entire period of his active life. The Herald has so many times chronicled the good deeds of the Hays family, one of the best to locate on Chester soil, that anything we can now say of the story of their pioneer life and their many virtues and sacrifices to make Chester one of the flower spots of the earth can add little to what we have written in the past. The activities of the Hays families in church and social life in Chester is one of the remarkable tales of pioneer hardships and contributions to the worthy life of any community and to the development and progress of civilization as shown in Poweshiek county and in the State of Iowa.

The following all too short story of the life of Joseph T. Hays is the contribution of an immediate relative and is a worthy memorial to a worthy man:

Joseph Thomas Hays, one of the last of the sturdy pioneers who broke the virgin soil of Chester and made it blossom like the rose, converting it into one of the garden spots of central Iowa, passed quietly away at his home, 933 Summer street, at 4 o'clock Saturday afternoon. He had reached the advanced age of 92 years, 9 months and 10 days. A man of vigorous health all his life, he had been failing only since last Tuesday and when the end came it was in a sleep which merged quietly into death.

Mr. Hays was born in Hagers-town, Maryland, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hays. His active connection with Poweshiek county began in 1854, when he was about fifteen years old. In that year he came with his father and two brothers, Daniel F. and Thomas H. Hays and his sister Deborah. For two years they lived in Grinnell and then settled on a farm in Chester township. Thus Mr. Hays became one of the early pioneers of that township. His plow broke the virgin soil of the prairies. He was one of the frugal, substantial, God fearing men who made up the backbone of the Iowa of that early day. He was the last

surviving charter member of the Sonora M. E. church, having helped to build the first church building. He was a faithful worker in the Sunday school and for many years was teacher of the Bible class. He was always interested in every measure that looked toward the welfare and building up of the community in which he lived.

February 15, 1869, Mr. Hays was united in marriage with Maria Louise Ludwick, his help-mate for many years, who worked side by side with him in building up a competence and for many years was one of Chester's notable housewives.

In 1904 Mr. and Mrs. Hays left the farm which had been the scene of their active lives and retired to make their home in Grinnell, where they spent their declining years in quiet, rejoicing in the love of children and grandchildren and still retaining their interest in every worthy cause. Mrs. Hays passed away here May 12, 1928.

Mr. Hays is survived by his six children, William J., Albert T. and Pearl of Grinnell, Robert M. of Buhl, Idaho, Mrs. Bertha Sexton of Ferguson, and Mrs. Lizzie Smith of Newburg, also by fifteen grandchildren and four great grandchildren.

Funeral services were held Monday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the home, conducted by Rev. O. E. McBride, of Victor, former pastor of the Sonora church. The services were impressive and beautiful. Pall bearers, all grandsons of Mr. Hays, were Perry Sexton, Charles Sexton, Jr., Max Hays, Charles Smith, Ansel Hays, and Marion Sullens. Appropriate music was rendered by Mrs. Roscoe Dempster and Mrs. A. B. Cadwell. Burial was in Hazelwood cemetery.

Among those present from out of town to attend the services were Mr. and Mrs. Charles Sexton, daughter Esther and son Charles Jr., of Ferguson, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Smith, son Charles and daughter Ada Pearl of Newburg, Perry Sexton of Marshalltown, Mr. and Mrs. Ansel Hays of Chicago, Mrs. Charles Burrell and grandson, Charles Burrell of Bouton, Mr. and Mrs. Elija Stark of Marshalltown, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Findley and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Findley of Grinnell, Mrs. M. D. Davis and Mrs. Matilda Baltisberger of Malcom, Mr. and Mrs. Lon Edgington of Brooklyn, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Sanborn of Tama.