

WESTERN PIONEER DIES IN SHERIDAN

G-16 4-14-1925

Descendant of Earliest and Distinguished Pioneers in This Country Passes to Final Reward.

WILLIS WOLCOTT CAME OF PROMINENT FAMILY

His Ancestors Took a Prominent Part
In Establishing American
Republic

A pioneer settler of Sheridan township passed away when Willis Wolcott died early Sunday, April 5, at the Community hospital in Grinnell where he had been a patient for three months and where he was bedfast for the last six weeks of his life. Death was due to senile gangrene. He passed away at the age of 80 years, 10 months and 6 days, and was the last survivor of a family of eight brothers and sisters.

The funeral services were held Monday afternoon at 2:30 from the Sheridan church, and were conducted by the pastor, Rev. F. A. Moore, in the presence of many neighbors and friends. Music was furnished by a choir composed of Mrs. Ray Anthony, Mrs. Earl Maack, Henry Schultz and Rene Reisel to the piano accompaniment of Mrs. Rene Reisel. The pall bearers were William H. Alley, Walter Hays, J. F. Shope, Homer Herman, Lincoln E. Anthony, and Wilbur Rhodes. Interment was in the Sheridan cemetery.

Mr. Wolcott, a descendant of a prominent American family of Colonial and Revolutionary days, was born in Plattsville, New York, May 29, 1844.

Not long after, his father, Lawrence Wolcott, came west to Whiteside County, Ill., and located permanently at Polo. When Willis was five years old in 1849 the rest of the family followed the husband and father, coming by way of the Erie Canal when the boats were drawn by horses on the tow path and from Buffalo by rail to twenty miles west of Chicago where the road ended. They were met at this point by Lawrence Wolcott with his ox team and transported to the home in Whiteside County where they were to live for a long period of years.

Willis grew to manhood on the home place, later marrying Kate Berger of Sterling, Ill. In 1869, he and his wife came to Poweshiek County, locating in Sheridan Township, but a few years later he returned to Illinois. After spending 25 years in Illinois they returned to this County about 1905 and since then, Mr. Wolcott's home has been in Sheridan, most of the time living with his nephew, Charles Wolcott. There were no children to survive him but he leaves twenty nephews and nieces and many other relatives.

Mr. Wolcott, familiarly known to hundreds of friends as "Uncle Bill," was a descendant of many of the early settlers of America who acquired prominence in pre-revolutionary days and who took a leading part in laying the foundations for the American Union. The first Wolcott settled in Massachusetts in 1632, and one of them was in command of Colonial troops which aided the British in capturing Louisburg, a French fort in Canada.

It was the grandson of this colonial officer, Oliver Wolcott, who succeeded Alexander Hamilton as secretary of the treasury.

This same Oliver Wolcott was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, his name appearing near the end of the list. The family has been a patriotic family from the earliest history of this republic and as the years have passed by they have become very numerous and a reunion of the Wolcotts is held every year in New York.

Mr. Wolcott was a genial man with a wide acquaintance. For a good many years he was a familiar figure on the streets of Tama and here as elsewhere in this neighborhood all who met him had for him the kindest of feelings. He goes to his last rest without an enemy.

The Oliver Wolcott who signed the Declaration of Independence represented the State of Connecticut and his name appears in clear cut handwriting on the original document at the left edge and about half way from top to bottom.