



Thomas Jefferson Noll

On Aug. 31, 1943, the Civil War era came to an end for Grinnell with the death of 99-year-old Thomas Jefferson Noll, the last of some 200 Civil War veterans to be buried in Hazelwood Cemetery. His grave may be found near the center of the cemetery marked by the cannon and his headstone as well as those of Thomas Armstrong and of James Spencer, a black man who served in the 13th Regiment of the U.S. Colored Heavy Artillery. When Noll died, the war had been over for 78 years.

T.J. Noll had had an illustrious career. He was born on Dec. 12, 1843, in Lycoming County, Pa. When he was a child of eight, he moved with his family to Illinois. He was a young man of 17 when the Civil War broke out.

He waited until 1864 before he enlisted in the 146th Regiment of Illinois Infantry and served for one year, the final year of the war. One of the honors that fell to his regiment was to "stand guard" at the grave of President Lincoln in Springfield, Ill.

After the war was over in 1865 he decided not to return to the home of his parents, but headed west to Iowa and settled in Grinnell. He enrolled in the nearby University of Iowa where he graduated in 1875 from Iowa's law school. That year he married Sarah Stuart in Green Mountain.

Noll began his law practice in Grinnell, and continued the practice of law when he moved his family to Grundy Center where he was elected a judge of the Superior Court of the State of Iowa. In 1938 he moved again, this time to the State Capitol in Des Moines where he became more active and influential in the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), the largest organization of Civil War veterans in the country.

Immediately after the war, the GAR had over 400,000 members. By the time of Noll's death in 1943 the membership had been reduced to about 4,000.

Noll and his wife Sarah were the parents of four children: Ashley, Warren, Grace and Amy. They were the proud grandparents of eight grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Sarah Noll died on July 18, 1939, four years before her husband's death.

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