

May 6, 1943

Geo. Hamlin Reaches End Of The Road

He And Twin Sister Were First Children Born In Grinnell

George H. Hamlin, who shared with his twin sister, Emma, later Mrs. H. P. Proctor, the honor of being the first child born in the infant community of Grinnell, reached the end of a long and active life at 1:20 o'clock Sunday morning. He passed away in a local hospital after a long period of failing health. If he had lived until his next birthday, Oct. 23, he would have been 90 years old.

Funeral services will be held from the home at 619 Sixth avenue at 10 o'clock Tuesday morning in charge of Rev. Ralph Beebe of Clarion and Rev. Walter North, pastor of the Congregational church, with interment in Hazelwood cemetery.

An Illustrious Family

George was a member of an illustrious Grinnell family. His father, Rev. Homer Hamlin, was one of the immortal band of pioneers who accompanied J. B. Grinnell in 1854 to the spot which was to become the city of Grinnell and planted a flag on the present townsite. When the town was actually started Rev. Mr. Hamlin was one of the four original settlers and took up 80 acres of land which included the site of the present home. The dwelling then was on the same spot where the Hamlin home now stands. The original house was mostly destroyed by the cyclone in 1882, and the present residence was rebuilt over the same cellar so that Mr. Hamlin possessed the unique distinction of living all his life long on the same spot at which he was born. The farm extended north from the present Hamlin corner and as the city grew, small parcels of land were sold off until the farm had disappeared. Mr. Hamlin very well remembered, as a boy, helping his father plant the row of walnut trees which now stand in front of the home of Mrs. I. M. Harrington on West street. As a boy George Hamlin farmed all over northwest Grinnell and hunted prairie chickens on his father's farm.

Went To Work Early

There were five children in the Hamlin family. George was the last to go. His father died when he was 13 years old and he went to work early, finding employment on farms until he was 17 years old, when he entered the employment of the First National bank, thus entering the banking field which was to engage his attention during all of his active life. Starting as an errand boy at \$4 a week he rose to the position of teller. In 1883 he went with the newly organized Merchants National bank as its cashier, later becoming its president. For many years the old

Merchants National was the Gibraltar of Grinnell's financial world. It was forced to close during the great depression of the twenties.

Mr. Hamlin never fully recovered from the blow and the grief which he felt over the failure undoubtedly shortened his life.

Celebrated Golden Wedding

On Jan. 12, 1881, Mr. Hamlin married Elizabeth R. Bonsall, a foster daughter of S. A. Cravath, then president of the Merchants National bank and one of the early editors of The Grinnell Herald. Mrs. Hamlin was a lovely and gracious mistress of his home until her death in 1936. In 1921 Mr. and Mrs. Hamlin celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. They were living in the old house as a bride and groom when it was destroyed by the cyclone.

Always public spirited Mr. Hamlin held many offices of trust in his home community. For many years he was a trustee of Grinnell college. He was also trustee of the Congregational church, served as a member of the city council and as city treasurer, was park commissioner and a member of the school board. He was a member of the Franklin club, a social organization of oldtime Grinnell business men. At the time of his death he and J. H. McMurray were the only surviving members of that historic organization. Later for a number of years he was a member of the Poweshiek club.

Mr. Hamlin is best remembered in his bank, to which he gave so much of his time and his strength. Many Grinnell people still remember his courtesy, his friendly interest and his helpful advice during the many years when he was one of the king pins of Grinnell's financial structure.

Since the death of Mrs. Hamlin his niece, Miss Emma Beebe, has kept up his home and has sustained him during the years of his increasing infirmity.

He is survived by a sister-in-law, Mrs. Fannie Hamlin of Pasadena, Calif., and eight nephews and nieces, Mrs. H. F. Underwood of Brooklyn, N. Y., Mrs. H. M. Nickerson of Los Angeles, Mrs. Ruth Manning of Pasadena, Miss Mildred Proctor of Redwood City, Calif., Harlan Proctor of San Francisco, Raymond H. Proctor of Cave City Junction, Oregon, Robert Hamlin of San Luis Obispo, Calif., and Miss Emma Beebe of Grinnell. There are also nine grandnephews and nieces.