

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1936

Mrs. Mary Grinnell Mears Passes Away

Prominent and Influential Woman Died Saturday Night in Palo Alto, Calif., Aged 77

FUNERAL ON THURSDAY IN ESSEX, MASSACHUSETTS

Mrs. Mears Was Last Surviving Member of Family of J. B. Grinnell, Founder of This City

President J. S. Nollen received a telegram Sunday from Professor Elliott Grinnell Mears announcing that his mother, Mrs. Mary Grinnell Mears, had died Saturday night in Palo Alto, Calif., at the age of 77 years. The telegram also stated that the funeral would be held next Thursday at Essex, the old Mears home.

The death of Mrs. Mears is of special significance to Grinnell, in that it marks the passing of the last member of the immediate family of J. B. Grinnell, the founder of the city which bears his name. Mrs. Mears' sister, Mrs. Cassel Grinnell Jones, preceded her death some months ago.

Mrs. Mears and Mrs. Jones both remained during all their lives a deep affection and a helpful integrity in Grinnell and in Grinnell College. Mears Cottage was named after Mrs. Mears who made its creation possible and both Mrs. Mears and Mrs. Jones showed their interest in the college by many timely and helpful gifts.

Mrs. Mears was the widow of the Rev. David O. Mears, prominent Presbyterian minister, who died in Albany, N. Y., in 1915. She had one daughter, a young woman of great promise and unusual musical talent, who preceded her in death. She had been making her home with her son, Elliott, who is a professor in Leland Stanford University.

She was one of the last surviving founders of the parent-teacher movement in the United States, having been a delegate to the national congress of parents which met in Washington, D. C., in 1897, at which the Parent-Teacher association was born.

She organized the P. T. A. in New York state and was the first state president. The New York unit was the first to be organized. It was a short time before her death, Mrs. Mears was actively interested in the P. T. A., national matters, and took part in the organization of the association's Founder's day.

GRINNELL HERALD, GR

fine scenery, but as always the quiet, pastoral beauty of Iowa looked good to us and we returned as always, firmly convinced that Iowa is the best state to live in and that Grinnell is the best town in Iowa.

An Obituary⁹³⁵ Of Mrs. Mary Grinnell Mears

DAVID

The Herald has received a copy of The Palo Alto Times containing a report of the active life of Mrs. Mary Grinnell Mears, last surviving member of the family of Hon. J. B. Grinnell, the founder of this city, notice of whose death appeared in this paper some little time ago. The article is as follows:

"Mrs. Mary Grinnell Mears, 77, widow of the late Rev. David O. Mears and mother of Prof. Elliott Grinnell Mears of the Stanford faculty, died Saturday night at her home at 361 Center street. Professor Mears left last night for the East, taking the remains to Essex, Mass., for burial in the family plot. Funeral services will be held in the Congregational church of that city.

"Of distinguished ancestry and unusual attainments, Mrs. Mears was a direct descendant of John Alden and Priscilla of Mayflower fame, and numbered five colonial governors among her relatives. She was a charter member and pioneer organizer of the parent-teacher movement in the United States, and continued her activity in the work on a national scale until her death.

"Mary Grinnell was born in Grinnell, Iowa, the town established by her father, the late Rev. J. B. Grinnell, to whom Horace Greeley issued his classic advice, 'Go west, young man, go west.'"

In response to that admonition the Rev. Mr. Grinnell went to Iowa, founding not only the town but also helping to secure Grinnell College. He served as congressman from Iowa during the administration of Abraham Lincoln. The daughter grew up in Grinnell, and graduated from the college there. In 1882 she married the Rev. David O. Mears, Presbyterian minister. They made their home for many years at Albany, N. Y., where the husband held a pastorate. He also held a pastorate in Worcester, Mass.

Mrs. Mears attended the first National Congress of Mothers at Washington in 1897. That meeting, itself an outgrowth of the Mothers' Meetings at Chautauqua, in 1890, signaled the birth of the Parent-Teacher Association movement which now has units in virtually every locality in the United States.

"My first knowledge of this project (National Congress of Mothers) Mrs. Mears explained in one of her writings, 'came from my husband who handed me a letter saying, 'This will interest you. It is a call for a Congress of Mothers to be held next January. The letter came to me in common with other clergymen of the country, asking that we preach upon the coming congress and all that it signifies.'"

"A year later Mrs. Mears organized the New York Assembly of Mothers, precursor of the P. T. A., and served as its president from 1898 to 1905. Mrs. Mears also was the originator of Founders' Day in the P. T. A. organization, all of the founders having been intimate

GRINNELL, IOWA, TUESDAY, SEP

associates of her own in the movement.

"Widowed in 1915 when the Rev. Mr. Mears passed away, Mrs. Mears later made annual visits to Palo Alto, establishing a residence here in 1921 at which she wintered dividing her time between here and Washington.

"Mrs. Mears is survived by her son, Elliott Grinnell Mears, professor of geography and international trade in the Stanford Graduate School of Business and director of the Stanford Summer Quarter. A daughter, Helen Grinnell Mears, died in 1913."

Many Varieties of Cheese
There are 18 distinct types of cheese comprising some 400 different varieties.