

# Samuel Nelson Death of a Pioneer Citizen Died Nov 6, 1931

Grinnell has lost another of its pioneers and a most worthy citizen. Sam Nelson, father of Mayor Will J. Nelson, died very suddenly Friday, Nov. 6th. Funeral services were held from the home this afternoon.

Samuel Nelson was born in Moy, County Tyrone, Ireland, November 26, 1844. In the fall of 1867 he emigrated to America landing at Quebec. From there he went to Kingston, Ontario, where he lived and worked until the late spring of 1872.

In Kingston he met and married Miss Annie Campbell, also born in Ireland. They were married on January 10, 1871 and came to Grinnell to make their home in the early summer of 1872. Immediately following their arrival in this community, Mr. Nelson was employed by various farmers, and he was also one of the workers on the college building later destroyed by the cyclone in 1882.

In October, 1872, Mr. Nelson engaged in business in Grinnell at the identical location of the present store of Nelson & Son. He held the unique and remarkable record of having continuously engaged in business at the same location for nearly 60 years. The first two children were born in the living apartments over the original store building on Fourth Ave., but while they were very small the family removed to the lot on which the present home stands; here the other three children were born, and on this same lot all of them were reared, and here all the living members of the family still reside. This is a record rarely equaled in America.

No citizen of Grinnell has been more signally honored for his worth and service to the community than Sam Nelson. He served several terms as member of the city council, having been a member of the first council when Grinnell became a city. He was an unassuming, modest man, never seeking public office or acclaim, yet he was repeatedly chosen to serve his fellow townsmen in positions of honor and trust.

He was a member of the city council at the time of the cyclone in 1882 and gave to the limit of his strength and ability in assisting to rebuild Grinnell after that disaster. Again, at the time of the big fire in 1889 which destroyed the major part of Grinnell's business district, he was one of the prime movers in its rehabilitation.

Mr. Nelson also served as mayor of this city during the earlier years and was one of the most valued counselors of his son, Will J. Nelson, present Mayor of Grinnell, on civic affairs. His mind remained clear and keen to the last. He had been active in the affairs of the city so constantly and for so many years his judgment and his advice were invaluable.

Next to his family, home and church, perhaps, came his loyalty and devotion to the Odd Fellows

lodge. He was probably one of the best known Odd Fellows in Central Iowa. Had he lived until March 15 next, he would have been a member of the organization fifty years, and the local order was already making plans for a Grand Jubilee in honor of his fiftieth anniversary as an Odd Fellow, and to present him with a Jewel befitting the occasion.

He has not only been a member, but an active, enthusiastic worker in the lodge, holding elective office almost continuously. He served as Noble Grand and in other capacities and for almost 50 years had been secretary of Grinnell Lodge. He also served as treasurer of Fidelity Encampment for over 45 years, and very seldom missed a lodge meeting. He will be sadly missed by the organization.

His faithfulness to the church and its interests were as truly remarkable. Few times indeed was he missing from his accustomed seat in the Baptist church. Even before he was a member of the church he was a

regular attendant and served on the building committee of the present church building. He served on the church board for many, many years, and during his later years was made Trustee Emeritus in recognition of his long and loyal service.

Sam Nelson was a friendly man. He was quick to welcome newcomers to the community—and the last to forget those who moved away. No old-timer ever visited Grinnell without calling on Sam Nelson at the store or at the home, and it seemed no matter how long they had been away he remembered their faces and could call them by name.

He was always to be found at his place of business during business hours unless some more important duty called him elsewhere. He gave to the conduct of his business the same honest, faithful attention he gave to all things he considered worthy of attention. He walked down town to the store and spent some time there the day preceding his death.

He had enjoyed his usual comfortable physical well-being practically to the end of his 86 years of life. About two weeks ago he was taken with a severe cold and was confined to his bed a few days, practically for the first time in his life. He was up and around again last week but was weakened by his illness. The end came without struggle or pain. He was moving about the living room and as he seated himself in his big leather chair, his daughter Grace noticed a slight tremor of his hands as they rested on the arms. When she reached his side he was gone.

Mrs. Nelson, his devoted wife and helpmate, passed away January 17, 1931, and no doubt the loss of the companionship and accustomed relationship of over 60 years, hastened the coming of the end for Mr. Nelson. Just a few days prior to the