

GRINNELL, IOWA,

S. J. SPARKS IS DEAD

Pioneer Citizen Passed Away Last Evening at Home on East Street.

7-30-1918
WOULD HAVE BEEN 85 YEARS OLD AUGUST 25.

Funeral Will Be Thursday at 1:30 P. M., From Home—Burial at Lynnville.

The oldest resident of Iowa has reached the close of a long and active life. S. J. Sparks, an old soldier and pioneer, has passed to the other shore. After an illness of a few days from pneumonia he passed away at his home on East street last evening at 8:27 o'clock. His sturdy frame, weakened by the passage of the years, was not able to resist the disease which finally attacked it.

The funeral will be held from the home, 724 East street, next Thursday afternoon at 1:30 o'clock. From Grinnell the body will be taken to Lynnville, Mr. Sparks' home for many years, where there will be services at the grave. At the request of Mr. Sparks, the Masons will be in charge of the funeral.

Mr. Sparks would have been 85 years old had he lived until August 25. He was proud of his distinction of being the oldest living resident of Iowa. In spite of his great age he was remarkably active until a short time ago, and was a familiar figure on the down town streets as he went marketing with his basket. His mind was clear and active and he took an earnest interest in the great war. Only a few weeks ago The Herald published a contribution from him telling what should be done to the kaiser.

An active, helpful, friendly man, Mr. Sparks will be missed in many quarters.

Masonic Notice.

The funeral of the late Stephen J. Sparks will occur at the house at 1:30. Masons will meet at the temple at 12:45 sharp.—Worshipful Master.

OBITUARY.

Stephen J. Sparks.

A life blessed beyond most in length and fullness of years, and in the love and respect of kinsfolk and friends, ended when Stephen J. Sparks passed away at 724 East street last Monday evening at 8:27 o'clock. He would have been 85 years of age had he lived until August 28.

Mr. Sparks was a veteran of the Civil War, a pioneer of pioneers, and has been recognized and honored as the oldest living resident of the State of Iowa; an honor which was never seriously questioned.

Born in Morgan county, Illinois, on August 28, 1833, the son of L. M. and Sara (Gesford) Sparks, both natives of Adair county, Kentucky, little Stephen was three years old when the family moved to Keokuk, and since then Iowa has been his home. He received what education he had in the public schools of Lee county and he grew up on the home farm. When he was 14 years of age he accompanied his parents to Jasper county.

On attaining his twentyfirst birthday, Mr. Sparks started life for himself. In 1858 he married Miss Martha Lawton of Lynnville. Her death in 1861 left him with two small children, Amanda, who is now the wife of S. M. White of Riceville and Martha, who died in 1862.

When the great Civil War sent out its call to arms, Mr. Sparks responded loyally. He enlisted as a drummer on August 22, 1862, at Camp Polk, Iowa City, in Company D, Fortieth Iowa Infantry, under Captain Felix Cozad. He served with credit for a period of three months as drummer and as a private for nine months and was discharged at Paducah, Ky., on account of disability. He was with the troops that fought so bravely at Columbus, Ky.

Returning to Jasper county after his army experience, Mr. Sparks took up farming again and on December 26, 1863, he was united in marriage with Mrs. Rebecca Wolf, nee Gile, a native of Boone county, Ind., the daughter of Samuel and Eliza Gile. Mrs. Wolf had two children, Eliza, now Mrs. N. E. Christie, of Spokane, Wash., and Calvin, who died in infancy.

Six children have been born to this union; namely, Sarah, now wife of Charles Munroe of Oskaloosa; William P., who lives in Grinnell; Laura M., the wife of A. N. Hockett of Grinnell; Perry M., who lives on a farm near Barnes City; Clara Belle, who died when three years of age, and Jasper S., who is still at home.

Mr. Sparks joined the Masons at Camp Polk, Iowa City, in 1862, but was not permitted to take his degree until he returned from the army. He belonged to Lebanon Lodge at Lynnville and transferred his membership to Grinnell. He was also a member of the G. A. R. From early childhood he was a member of the New Light Christian church and continued in that faith until death.

On December 26, 1913, one of the greatest joys of their married life came to Mr. and Mrs. Sparks in the observance of their fiftieth wedding anniversary. Children and grandchildren, brothers and sisters, and relations of all denominations, assembled from over a wide territory to do them honor. Guests to the number of forty gathered about the board for the bounteous wedding dinner.

Mr. Sparks was the eldest of a family of twelve children, six of whom are still living. They are T. M. Sparks and G. A. Sparks, both of Marshalltown; John R. Sparks, living in Missouri; Mrs. Angeline Potter of Lynnville; Mrs. Mary Corson of Rockwell City, and Mrs. Eliza Butrum of Lynnville.

For most of his active life, Mr. Sparks lived on his farm, two and one-half miles southwest of Lynnville. He was a stock buyer and his activities along this line gave him an acquaintance larger than that enjoyed by most men. He was respected, esteemed and

Sparks died
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liked wherever known and was so successful in business that he retired about 1907 and moved to Lynnville to live. In May, 1913, he moved to Grinnell.

During his life in Grinnell Mr. Sparks has come to be known as a neighborly man. Anything that he could do to help his neighbors he did with gladness and his neighborliness was far reaching. It extended to every one with whom he came in contact. He was always willing and eager to help. He and his little basket were familiar sights on the downtown streets and that little basket often carried home things destined for the comfort and enjoyment of his friends. Even in his last illness, when relatives and friends called to see him, the ruling passion of hospitality was strong within him and he insisted that they be entertained as honored guests.

Mr. Sparks had been unusually active in the heat of Monday, July 22, and on Tuesday he was suddenly seized by a chill so violent that it was necessary to carry him to his bed. Soon pneumonia developed, his third attack of the same disease, and he grew steadily weaker until the end, although retaining consciousness and the ability to recognize friends and loved ones until death was near.

He is sincerely mourned by a wide circle of family connections and by the many friends whom he had won by being a friend to them. Grinnell will miss active, cordial, friendly Stephen Sparks.

Rev. J. W. Sopher conducted the funeral service at the home yesterday afternoon. Interment was at Lynnville and the Masons had charge of the services at the grave. The pall bearers were M. C. Bidwell, George Sampson, F. S. Edge, N. W. Cessna, E. B. Macy and Will Zimmerman.