

# Storm Lake Pilot-Tribune

Storm Lake, Iowa

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## **Taps Sounded for Comrade Charley Matson, Last Survivor Of Civil War in Buena Vista County**

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Comrade Charles P. Matson, only surviving Civil war veteran in Buena Vista County, passed away Wednesday morning about 9:30 at his home on Lake Avenue. He had been in failing health for some time and during the past week he had gradually declined. Funeral services will be held Friday afternoon at 2:30 at the Fiscus funeral home. Dr. Edward L. Gibson, pastor of Lakeside Presbyterian Church, will officiate. Members of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion will attend in a body. The I. O. O. F. lodge will be in charge of the services. Salute at the cemetery will be given by a firing squad composed of service men. The body will be placed in the mausoleum.

Comrade Matson ran away from home to enlist with the Union troops when he was 17. He was with the 5<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry. Later he was transferred to the 44<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Infantry, Company B, in the Army of the Cumberland under General George H. Thomas. He served 11 months between the years 1864 and 1865. His company was stationed at various points in southern Mississippi, Tennessee and Kentucky. He was in Paducah, Ky., when the war ended.

### **Native of Ohio**

Charles P. Matson, son of Frederick Matson and Cyrene Hopkins, was born near Conneaut, Ohio. They lived in Ohio until 1853, and then immigrated to Lafayette County, Wis. This move was made in wagons, as railroads through that part of the country were unknown at that early date.

They settled on a farm near Gratiot. Mr. Matson remained there until he enlisted in the army, and returned after the close of the Civil war.

Later he attended a commercial college in Chicago and thereafter was engaged in teaching for a short time, returning again to the farm.

He was united in marriage to Annie Natress on May 18, 1871. Four children were born to this union in Wisconsin. They are: J. F. Matson, now of St. Paul, Minn., J. C. Matson, Mabel E. (Mrs. Fred Schroll) and Anna L. (Mrs. H. L. Steig).

### **Endures Early Hardships**

In 1876, he took the advice of Horace Greeley and came west as far as Storm Lake, by stagecoach to Correctionville where he expected to file on a homestead. He walked over the prairies; the air filled with grasshoppers, and after spending two days went back to Wisconsin without a homestead. In

1888, he returned to Buena Vista County and purchased a farm half way between Storm Lake and Alta. He farmed there until 1908 when he retired to his present home in Storm Lake.

He equipped a part of his large garage with all types of tools and during his active years spent many enjoyable hours in his workshop.

Comrade Matson served as member of the board of supervisors of Buena Vista County. He was a member of the I. O. O. F. lodge and was active in E. D. Baker post No. 80, G. A. R., and held the distinction of always having been its youngest member.

#### **From Colonist Stock**

He is a descendant of early colonists of Connecticut who came over on the Mayflower. His great-grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War, was an uncle of Stephan Hopkins, signer of the Declaration of Independence and father of John Hopkins, founder of John Hopkins University.

Mr. Matson's last public appearance was at the Memorial Day parade in 1939. Tribute was paid to Mr. Matson on Memorial Day this year when members of the various patriotic organizations, with the high school band, gathered outside his home and the band played a special selection. He was too weak to ride in the Memorial Day parade as he had anticipated.

Mrs. Anna Matson passed away May 18, 1918. Mr. Matson was united in marriage to Mrs. Emma Highley, Nov. 10, 1926.

#### **Survivors**

Besides his wife and four children, he leaves to mourn, nine grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren. The grandchildren are Lucille Steig (Mrs. G. C. Barnes) of Milwaukee; Helen Steig

(Mrs. A. K. Ruebel), Renwick; Ruth Steig, Robert Schroll, Helen Matson (Mrs. Floyd Spooner), Maude Matson, Edith Matson (Mrs. Guy Felton) of Sioux Rapids; Lois Matson (Mrs. Kenneth Davidson) and Charles Matson.

Great-grandchildren include Ann and Jane Barnes, Sally Ruebel, Charles Harry Schroll, Barbara Felton, Jack Davidson and Janice, Delmar and Gary Spooner.