

## Lew Lewis, Hancock County's Last Civil War Veteran, Died January 5

### Funeral Rites Are Held at Church in Klemme on Wednesday

Special to Garner Leader and Signal

Klemme — Lewellyn Lewis was born Aug. 8, 1845, at Syracuse, N. Y., the second of a family of four children born to his parents, George W. Lewis and Rachel Mellisse nee Castle.

His parents were natives of New York state and were of Welch-Scotch extraction. His father owned and operated a sawmill in the woods of western New York. When he was 1 year old, his parents moved to Beaver Dam, Wis., where they went into the general merchandise business. He had just completed his common school education at Beaver Dam when President Lincoln sent out the call for Civil war volunteers. Mr. Lewis enlisted on Oct. 12, 1861, at the age of 16.

The first winter was spent in training at Camp Randall near Madison, Wis., and the next spring his regiment became part of "Sherman's Dashing Yankee Boys" who marched from Atlanta to the sea. In 1862 he fought in the battle of Shiloh, Tenn., which he said was a tough engagement and the hardest battle of his career as a soldier. He also took part at Vicksburg and was with the boys when they marched through Atlanta.

In 1865 while in North Carolina he and his squad of soldier boys were foraging for food when a party of confederate soldiers surrounded them and took them prisoners. They were sent to Richmond, Va., and placed in Libby prison. He said the prisoners were not fed too well. Twice a day they received one piece of cornbread and once a day a small piece of meat. But the war was soon over and he was only in prison for a few months. His address while in the army was Company C, Volunteer Infantry, Sixteenth Wisconsin Regiment, First Brigade, Third Division, Seventeenth Army Corps. He received his honorable discharge Aug. 25, 1865.

After the war he returned to Beaver Dam and worked in logging camps and in saw mills and even as a sailor on a river boat. When the first settlers began to arrive in Cerro Gordo County, Mr. Lewis was with them. In the spring of 1879 Lew Lewis and Miss Elmira McGrady were married at the home of the bride's parents near Clear Lake. They commenced housekeeping on a 400-acre farm south of Clear Lake and there had two children, Gertrude (Mrs. Henry Yahnke) and Charles Lewis. After five years the home was saddened by the death of the wife and mother.

Mr. Lewis discontinued his farming operation and a few years later, Dec. 29, 1886, was married to Miss Blanche McGrady, and to this union six sons

were born. They commenced housekeeping at Porter's siding, which was a sidetrack on the B. C. R. & N. railway, a mile north of where the town of Klemme now is located. They built a little home on the wide and treeless prairie where Mr. Lewis had rented many acres of grassland. This was cut for hay, baled and shipped to eastern markets by the car road.

In 1890, the spring after the town of Klemme was platted, the Lewis family moved into the new town. He built a large hay barn of 10-car capacity on the lots where the August Lau residence now stands. It is interesting to note that the railroad company built a short spur up to his barn so that he could load several bales of hay onto a handcar and push it to a side track for easy loading into cars. Mr. Lewis stated that the oats crop in 1889 was the best ever raised here. Many fields averaged 100 bushels to the acre and sold for 12 cents per bushel. Mr. Lewis and his family were among the very first settlers in the town of Klemme.

During the half century that Mr. Lewis lived in Klemme he served his community in various positions as a member of the town council, as town clerk and as secretary of the school board. It is remembered that when he resigned as secretary of the school board on account of his advanced years, the board members presented him with a gold-headed cane.

In December 1936, Mr. And Mrs. Lewis had been married 50 years and celebrated their golden anniversary at their home in Klemme. The following year Mrs. Lewis passed away and since then Mr. Lewis has continued to reside in his home with the aid of a housekeeper and the help of his three sons and their families who live nearby. Three of his sons were volunteers in the World War, Halley with the infantry in France; Verner with the Navy in the North Sea; and Ernest with the Navy in home waters. Two sons, George and Ira, died in childhood.

He leaves to mourn his passing six children, Gertrude, Mrs. Henry Yahnke of Garden City, Minn., Charles and Halley Lewis of Long Beach, Calif., Henry, Verner and Ernest, all of Klemme; also 12 grandchildren, three great-grandchildren; one brother, A. C. Lewis of Chicago; and a host of more distant relatives and friends. Mr. Lewis had reached the age of 95 years, 4 months and 28 days when he died at his home here Sunday, Jan. 5.

Funeral services will be at the Methodist church Wednesday afternoon at 1:30. The Rev. William Zabilka will be in charge. He will be buried in the family lot beside his wives and two sons at the Clear Lake cemetery. The legion and auxiliary will escort the body.

Mr. Lewis is the last Civil war veteran in Hancock County.