

DEATH CLAIMS LAST CIVIL WAR VETERAN

James Williams, 95 Years Old, Given Full Military Honors at Funeral

James Williams, aged 95 years, the last veteran of the Civil War in Keokuk County and Sigourney, died last Friday evening, shortly after 6 o'clock at the Sigourney hospital where he had been a patient for about 10 days.

The funeral service was held at the First Methodist church, conducted by the Rev. W. J. Fowler, pastor of the church, on Sunday afternoon. Members of the Women's Relief Corps and Daughters of Union Veterans attended in a group. The Leo R. Farmer post of the American Legion, represented in the pall bearers, color guard and firing squad, accorded Mr. Williams full military honors.

Burial was made at West cemetery. Legionnaires officiating included Ernest Stocker, Harry Kleinschmidt, Hugh Smith, Harold M. Loos, William O. Edmundson and W. H. Needham, pall bearers; Glen F. Redfern, sergeant of guards; Rev. John G. Ballensky, chaplain; Howard Shepherd, Fred Lucas, Esli Evans and Bruce Dogett, color guard and Paul Weller, Sherman Brown, Fred Thurburn, Louis Buehmann, Dr. R. D. Kelly, John J. Wilson, Harley Stephenson and Charles H. Beach, firing squad.

Mr. Burdine and Mr. Redfern presented the American flag, which

covered the casket during the service to Mrs. Alice Adams, daughter of Mr. Williams. Taps were sounded by Tom Pfaff.

Although Mr. Williams had been in failing health for about two months, he was critically ill for only 10 days. Death was caused by cancer of the stomach. The aged man retained his remarkable memory and alertness to the last. He underwent an operation for the fatal malady on June 12, 1941 and made a remarkable recovery. Last August he was critically ill with pneumonia but his vitality pulled him through. In January of this year he suffered serious infection, but again recovered and was active until his last illness.

Mr. Williams was born near Salem, Indiana on December 25, 1846, and was a son of Mr. and Mrs. James Williams. As a child, he moved with his parents to Missouri, but following the death of his father there, they moved back to Indiana.

When he was only 17 years old, he enlisted in Company K, 139th Indiana Volunteer Infantry, in response to a call from Abraham Lincoln for 300,000 volunteers to enter service to give the older men a rest. His principal service was guard and sentinel duties. He made three trips to Louisville, Kentucky from

Nashville, Tennessee, guarding prisoners taken during the Atlanta siege and also was on guard duty on the Louisville-Nashville railroad, over which soldiers and supplies went to the front lines. Their work was to keep the railroad safe from Confederate "bush-whackers."

Among his cherished memories, of which he had a rich store, was having seen Abraham Lincoln twice, the first time in 1860, when he was 13 years old when he went with his uncle and brother John to Indianapolis, Indiana, to hear a Lincoln-Douglas debate and the second time in 1864, when Lincoln visited the camp of the 139th Volunteers, which was guarding the railroad. He also had a letter from Lincoln, received as commendation for being one of the volunteers.

He was honorably discharged on September 9, 1864 and returned to Indiana where he assisted his mother on the farm and operated a team and wagon freighting service between Carthage and Knightstown, Indiana.

Mr. Williams came to Sigourney in 1870, to clerk in the J. S. White general store. He was united in marriage to Mattie A. White on February 22, 1873 at Greenfield, Indiana and brought his bride to Sigourney. He continued to work in his brother-in-law's store for 10 years. He was also traveling salesman for the old Vietch Woolen mills here and operated a grocery store with Sam Shank for several years. He served as Sigourney township clerk and was a fire insurance agent for 13 years. In 1888, the family moved to Webster, where Mr. Williams served as justice of the peace for four years. Returning to Sigourney, he was elected constable and held that office four years.

From 1896 to 1902, he was farmer and teamster and in 1902 he became

rural mail carrier out of the Sigourney post office. He continued on the mail route for 18 years, and retired in 1920, when he was 74 years old.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams became the parents of five children, two sons and three daughters. Preceding him in death were Orpha Leah, when she was six years old, James Ray, who died during the influenza epidemic in 1918 and Daniel Loren, who died in infancy. Mrs. Williams died in August 1929.

After the death of his wife, he went to Cozad, Nebraska, to be with his daughter, Mrs. Adams, but was not satisfied until he returned to Sigourney. Ten years ago, Mrs. Adams came here to keep his home, and has remained with him.

Mr. Williams was a member of the Methodist church, having joined at Webster more than 50 years ago. He was a member of the I. O. O. F. lodge, of which he had held all offices and of the Rebekah lodge. He was the last member of the Robert F. Lowe post of the Grand Army of the Republic, which had a large membership here at one time.

He is survived by two daughters, Mrs. Alice Adams of Sigourney and Mrs. Roy Smith of Spokane, Washington; six grandchildren, Emma A. Williams of Chicago, Illinois; Lt. Ione Williams, nurse with the U. S. armed forces in Australia; Dr. Harold L. Williams of Texarkana, Texas; Mrs. Perry Grier of Waterloo; Lt. Ray Parker, with the U. S. forces in the Aleutian Islands and Lt. Edward Adams, instructor at Camp Carson, near Colorado Springs, Colorado, and one great-grandchild, Sharon Lee Adams.

Among the out-of-town persons attending the funeral service were Dr. Harold Williams of Texarkana, Texas; Miss Emma Williams of Chicago; Mr.

and Mrs. Perry Grier of Waterloo; Mrs. Ray Spangler of Evanston, Illinois; Mr. and Mrs. Dolph Vermace of Hartwick; Mr. and Mrs. William Johnston of Brooklyn and Nr. And Mrs. A. L. Humes and Mr. and Mrs. H. D. Baker of What Cheer.