

Last Of Civil War Veterans Here Dies

David Sisk Believed To Be Over 102

He Had Been Patient At Soldier's Home Hospital In Recent Weeks

Last of the thousands of civil war veterans who had been members of the Iowa Soldier's home since the first one was admitted in 1887, David B. Sisk, believed to have been 102 years old, died at 2:20 Thursday morning at the home hospital where he had been a patient in recent weeks.

Only four other veterans of the War Between the States are still alive in Iowa and home officials said it was unlikely any of them would ever be sent to the home.

Thus the home that was built originally for the aging and ailing veterans of the war of 1861-65, has seen the last of its "boys in blue."

The remaining civil war veterans in Iowa are State Commander John Gudgel, 98, of Shenandoah; James P. Martin, 98, of Sutherland, senior vice commander; Robert A. Millen, 99, of Melcher, junior vice commander, and Ebenezer G. McMurray, 101, of the department of Ohio who is living with a daughter, Mrs. Chester Phillips, Iowa City.

AILING RECENTLY

Sisk has been in poor health most of the past year, home officials said, and was not able to appear in Memorial Day exercises as usual this year. He had planned to ride in the parade, as he last did in 1945 but when it rained that morning this year and the parade was cancelled, his physician advised him to stay indoors all day and he missed even the program on the home grounds for the first time since his long residence at the institution.

Sensitive about his age in recent years, Sisk never admitted he was past 100 years old and the age he usually gave was too young for him to have served in the War Between the States. He entered the soldier's home three different times and each time he gave a later birth date, but home officials are inclined to credit the date he gave when he first was admitted in 1917 as the right one.

BORN IN ILLINOIS

The date listed his birth as Sept. 22, 1843, at New Boston, Ill., which would have made him 102 last September. His military record, confirmed by the adjutant general's office of the army, shows him to have served in Company H, 147th Illinois Infantry, from Jan. 31, 1865, to Jan. 20, 1866. After the war he served a hitch in the regular army, enlisting in Company E, Third U. S.

Artillery, Nov. 4, 1867, and being discharged at Fort Pulaski, Ga., June 21, 1870, because of disability.

His military record does not show the nature of his disability but whatever it was it did not prevent him from living a century, and until recent months he had been quite active, frequently being seen on down town streets, a tall erect figure of a man who looked at least 20 years younger than his accepted age.

COLORFUL FIGURE

Sisk was one of the most colorful figures of the many picturesque veterans who have frequented the home. A year ago in May he was initiated into Marshalltown aerie No. 341, Fraternal Order of Eagles, making him the oldest member of the lodge in the world. On the night of his initiation he climbed the steep stairs to the second floor club rooms of the lodge under his own power.

He was married three times, the last time in 1940; a marriage that the veteran himself later had annulled when he learned his bride was on parole from a mental institution and had never been discharged. His first wife, Hannah Parmlee, whom he married, in Des Moines, Nov. 10, 1880, died Sept. 10, 1921, and is buried in the soldiers home cemetery here. He married Lydia M. Kelley, Nov. 6, 1923, and she died March 16, 1934, and is also buried at the home.

ROMANCE BRIEF

Sisk married his third wife, Mrs. Margaret Livingston of this city, Oct. 1, 1940, but this romance lasted less than two months. On Nov. 25 the veteran returned to take up residence at the home and the following January he sued for divorce, charging that his wife was on parole from the state hospital at Mount Pleasant. Later he changed this plea to one of annulment, which was granted.

An interviewer once asked Sisk if he were afraid of women.

"Afraid of women," he scoffed. "Oh, boy, I never was afraid of women. I had a lady friend who died two years ago. She was a fine woman. I may get another one, but I don't have one right now."

ACTIVE IN G.A.R.

Before he was first admitted to the home in 1917, Sisk operated his own barbershop in Des Moines for 40 years. He was active in the affairs of the G.A.R. in recent years, served a part of one year as commander of the Iowa department, filling out the unexpired term of a commander who died in office, and last attended a G.A.R. encampment in Des Moines in 1942, boarding a bus alone in Marshalltown and then walking to his hotel.

Miss Amy Noll, grand army of the republic secretary, had planned to take Sisk to Cedar Rapids Friday to attend the state G.A.R. encampment.

Sisk came to Iowa to live shortly after his discharge. He joined the Dexter, Iowa, post 36, G.A.R., on Nov. 7, 1885. Since then he had lived in Iowa City, Davenport, Muscatine and Des Moines.

At the time of his last marriage, Sisk was understood to have a son and a stepdaughter, Mrs. Laura Avela and Willie H. Sisk, both of Los Angeles, Calif., but soldiers home officials have no recent addresses for either of them and believe the son, at least, is dead. The only relatives known at the home are a nephew, Ignatius Sisk, in Omaha, Neb., and a sister-in-law, Katie Sisk, also of Omaha.

The body is at the Pursel funeral home but arrangements for the services are incomplete, pending the location of relatives. Sisk had requested, however,

that he be buried in the soldiers home cemetery beside his first wife, and this

will be done, home officials said.

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Last Civil Vet Is Buried At Soldiers Home

Funeral services for David B. Sisk, last civil war veteran who died at the Iowa Soldiers home hospital Thursday, were held Saturday morning at 10:30 at the Pursel funeral home in charge of Rt. Rev. Msgr. A. P. Meyer. Burial was in the home cemetery.

Pallbearers were Joe Turney, Harry Giles, Edward Knox, William Thies, Richard Carpenter and Andrew Handeland. The color guard was composed Leo Woodbury, the firing squad, John Martin, Ralph Patton, Charles Fluke, Charles Prusek and William Carney, and the bugler was

Harry Malloy.

Attending the services were the state officers of the Woman's Relief Corps, members of the local chapter of that organization, members of the Ladies of the G.A.R., Daughters of the Union Veterans, Sons of the Union Veterans, American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled Veterans.

Two great nieces and one great nephew survive Mr. Sisk. They are Mrs. LaVern McFarland, 612 East Church Street, Mrs. Rose Gray, 208 North Second Avenue, and Henry Stahl, 513 Bromley Street.