

# M. M. PRATT ANSWERS CALL

Feb. 14, 1919

## Grand Army Leader, Survivor of Gettysburg Peacefully Passes Away.

The word Wednesday morning that Col. Martin M. Pratt had "come to the end of the road" and completed life's journey was not entirely unexpected to those who through the months and years have noted his gradual decline. He himself had repeatedly expressed his belief that his days upon earth were but short. He lived a long and useful life, had witnessed many changes and was ready to close the book of life.

Martin Pratt was no ordinary man. On the contrary he was a leader among men. Born of humble parentage in the woods of New York over 91 years ago he had by hard work and toil pushed his way upward until his ability was recognized and his judgment consulted by those about him. As a boy he attended the old log school and on reaching young manhood wielded the axe in clearing the farm of his father in Montgomery county. During his career upon earth he witnessed the advancement from the days of the canal boat and the stage coach, to those of the electric driven car and the aeroplane. In his youthful days he swung the scythe and in later years witnessed the operation of the self-binder and the tractor. As a lad he poured over his school books by the light of a tallow candle. In his advancing years he enjoyed the daylight brightness of the modern electric light, communicated with distant friends by the aid of the telephone and read of the wireless that clips off the messages thousands of miles away.

During his long life human slavery was abolished and he had a part in its abolishment for with the breaking out of the Civil war he enlisted in Company B of the 15th New York Infantry, 11th army corps. As a member of this organization he participated in many of the memorable battles of that strife of over a half a century ago. Mr. Pratt had charge of a wagon train during the historic battle of Gettysburg and his thrilling experiences were greatly enjoyed around the Grand Army camp fires of twenty-five years ago as he related time and time again how he managed to bring out his ammunition wagons without having them captured. With the aid of a glass he had an opportunity of witnessing the historical charge made by the First Minnesota, a charge which even to this day has not been excelled. A charge in which 262 men were thrown into the very jaws of hell to hold the line for a moment or two until reinforcements could be secured, a charge in which only 47 men were left uninjured, their 215 companions being wounded upon the battlefield or having passed over the Great Divide.

When peace was proclaimed he returned and the war drums silenced. Commanded Pratt's eyes were turned toward the west. He was mustered out in June, 1865, and the following Octo-



Col. M. M. Pratt

ber came west to Minnesota and to Sterling township. Here he soon built up a farm and home that was known far and wide. He was a prosperous farmer and while living in the township was prominent in its educational affairs and served for a number of years as a member of the town board.

With oncoming years he felt that his days of toil were over and he finally moved to Mapleton where for many years he had been a member and for several years commander of the local G. A. R. Post and also a member of the Masonic lodge, being in point of years the eldest man in the order.

Mr. Pratt was not only a reader but a thinker. He had his own ideas on every important subject and was always free to express them and to defend his position. His ideas along religious lines were broad but he believed that in the final end, wrongs would be righted and all would have to meet upon a common level.

As a neighbor and friend he was social, companionable and liberal. In every step of life he has been a patriot. He loved the old flag and while he questioned some of the things that were done for the soldiers in the recent world's war, because such conveniences and comforts were not furnished the boys in blue during the

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*Mapleton Enterprise*

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time of service, he gave liberally to the Y. M. C. A. and subscribed heavily for liberty bonds.

"He was an old Grand Army man, whose record shall remain forever upon honor's roll without a blot or stain;

A man who heard and heeded, in dark days, his country's call,

And responded with a willingness to sacrifice his all.

So in the great hereafter in high heaven's exalted plan,

There will be a seat of honor for this old Grand Army Man."

Mr. Pratt was twice married, his first wife being Caroline Orr, a native of Cattaraugus county, New York, to whom he was married in November, 1850. Five children were born to this union, those remaining to mourn the loss of a devoted father being Mrs. G. B. Lamp of Sterling; Mrs. Ida Buell of Pasadena, California; and Mrs. M. J. Wood of Mountainair, New Mexico. Mrs. Pratt died on November 1st, 1895, and three years later he married Mrs. J. D. Hamm, who with the three children above mentioned, two brothers, Judge John Pratt of Fairmont, and Robert Pratt of Lincoln, Pennsylvania, and two sisters, Mrs. Geo. Bebee and Mrs. Edward Hawkins, of East Otto, New York, besides a number of grand children, survive.

The funeral will be conducted from the family home this Friday afternoon at one o'clock. Rev. Chas. Harris, of Beauford, to officiate. The burial will be under Masonic direction with interment in the cemetery at Sterling, within a very short distance of the farm where Mr. Pratt spent so many years of his life.