

[Felt, James M.]

JAMES M. FELT, EX-SHERIFF, DIES

HE HAD BEEN ILL BUT SHORT TIME

VETERAN OF THE CIVIL WAR

Served in Tenth New York Heavy Artillery—

Served Three Years as Sheriff and Handled Many important Cases

James M. Felt, veteran of the Tenth New York Heavy Artillery, former sheriff of Jefferson county and prominent farmer, died at 12:30 this morning at his residence on the Ives street road opposite the Tilden farm now owned by Daniel A. Barnes. He was 78 years, eight months and six days old. Death was due to heart trouble.

Mr. Felt was taken critically ill last Sunday. He had been troubled with bronchitis for several weeks, complicated with heart trouble, and his condition became critical early this week. During the past two days, relatives understood that there was little hopes of his recovery. He passed away shortly after midnight this morning.

He was born May 1, 1841 in the town of Adams, near Smithville, son of Jabez and Betsey E. Fulton felt and spent his early life there. He enlisted when 21 years old [on] Aug. 7, 1862 at Adams and was mustered in as private in Company D, First Batallion, Black River Artillery, later known as Company B, Tenth New York Heavy Artillery. He was promoted to sergeant Sept. 11, 1862 and to first sergeant Dec. 16, 1864, being mustered out with the company June 23, 1865 at Petersburg Va., having seen three years and eleven months of active service.

Mr. Felt is the third member of the Tenth New York Heavy Artillery Association to pass away since the annual reunion in August. Out of the (2,800?) in the artillery when it left Sackets Harbor for service, about 300 are now alive. Mr. Felt was elected president of the veterans' association and held this office at the time of his death. Since O. B. Cadwell passed away in February, Mr. Felt had acted as keeper of records for the association.

Upon his return from service Mr. Felt again took up farming on the family farm in the town of Adams. He married Miss Amelia Isham of Rodman about 50 years ago and in 1872 he and his wife moved from the farm in the town of Adams to the farm in the town of Watertown, where they have since resided.

Mr. Felt engaged in general farming but at one time became interested in blooded horses. He reared a number of colts that became prominent on the race track. In later years he was not associated in the rearing of fast horses but never failed to show a proper appreciation when inspecting any splendid specimen of horse flesh.

As a young man Mr. Felt became interested in politics and was always a staunch Republican. He was elected supervisor of the town of Watertown and served several years. Later through the urging of friends he became candiate

[Felt, James M.]

for sheriff in 1884. He was elected and served as sheriff in 1885, '86 and '87. Supreme Court Justice Edgar C. Emerson being then district attorney, Justice Emerson and Mr. Felt were forced to handle many celebrated cases during their association at that time and Mr. Felt proved of great assistance in executing the law. He was regarded as an expert in criminal investigations and detective work and his assistance was sought in the famous Burl case at Potsdam.

In connection with the celebrated murder case of George Allen of Sackets Harbor, charged with the killing of two women, Mr. Felt was engaged by District Attorney Virgil K. Kellogg as detective in obtaining detailed information.

"James Felt was a natural detective and was of valuable assistance in many celebrated murder cases," said Supreme Court Justice E. C. Emerson today. "He was possessed of more natural ability in this regard than any man I ever knew."

Mr. Felt had always taken an active interest in public affairs relating to the city of Watertown and Jefferson county and was a familiar figure at all meetings to promote local interests. His interest never flagged and in 1914 he announced that he would accept the nomination for sheriff again, but later withdrew from the race.

He resided in the jail building in this city during the time that he was sheriff, leasing his farm. Upon relinquishing the county office he returned to the farm which he has since conducted.

He was a member of Joe Sprait Post, No. 323, G.A.R., and was an interested and active worker in G.A.R. affairs. He was also a member of Watertown grange and was interested in grange activities.

Surviving are his widow, Mrs. Amelia Isham Felt; two sons, William J. Felt of Mousey, N.Y. and Charles J. Felt of Watertown, a rural carrier connected with the Watertown postoffice. Three grandchildren, George, Janice and William Felt, also survive.

Mr. Felt made the request before he passed away that friends refrain from sending him flowers and this request will be carried out by relatives and friends.

The funeral will be held at 11 Monday from the residence on the Ives street road, Rev. Harry Westbrook Reed, D.D., pastor of All Souls Universalist church, officiating. Interment will be in Brookside cemetery.

*Daily Times, Watertown NY, Fri. 9 Jan 1920*

Transcribed on 11 Apr 2024 by Karen E. Dau of East Rochester, NY