

[Lane, David F.]

David F. Lane, 86, Retired Writer For Times, Expires

David F. Lane, 86, retired member of the reportorial staff of the Watertown Daily Times and one of northern New York's oldest newspapermen, was found dead in bed at his home, 177 Park avenue, about 6:30 Tuesday night.

He had been dead evidently for several hours, probably since Tuesday morning, his physician, Dr. Lawrence F. Withington, who was called, told city police. The doctor said that heart failure was probably the cause of death. Mr. Lane had been under the doctor's care for a number of years for a heart ailment.

The body was found after a neighbor, Mrs. Roland H. Fisher, 173 Park avenue, noting an accumulation of newspapers on the front porch of Mr. Lane's home, called his cousin, Mrs. Robert F. (Alice Wetmore) Caswell, 311 South Massey street. Copies of The Watertown Times for Saturday, Monday and Tuesday were still on the porch.

Mr. and Mrs. Caswell and their son, Robert F. Caswell, jr., of 1339 Richards drive, proceeded to the Lane home to investigate. When they got no response after knocking on the door and the doors being locked, Robert Caswell, jr., gained entrance through an upstairs bedroom window after climbing a ladder. He found Mr. Lane dead.

Police were notified and Patrolman D. E. Gleadle investigated.

Only cousins survive Mr. Lane.

The funeral will be Friday morning at 11 at the Cleveland funeral home. Rev. Blaine F. Hartford, pastor of the All Souls Universalist church, will officiate. Burial will be in Brookside cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home Tuesday night from 7 to 9 p.m.

Mr. Lane was an active member of The Times' reportorial staff for 52 years until Aug. 13, 1964, when he suffered what was believed to be a stroke. For a time thereafter he was a patient in the House of the Good Samaritan.

Although he retired on a pension six months later, Mr. Lane continued to write feature articles and news stories for the newspaper until the time of his death. He last visited The Times office Thursday.

David Frederick Lane was born Sept. 23, 1879 in Tylerville, a son of the late Ferdinand A. and Jeannette Corey Lane. His parents resided at Tylerville for two years after their marriage, subsequently lived for two years at Palmyra and then came to Watertown in 1883.

Ferdinand A. Lane, who was born in South Rutland, a son of Zebina and Ruth Kelsey Lane, was a carriage and cabinet maker by trade. He was employed here by the old H. H. Babcock Carriage Manufacturing company, the old Unon Carriage and Gear company, and, finally the old Excelsior Carriage company. He died suddenly at the age of 62 years on Dec. 29, 1915, at the family home, then 658 Burchard street. Mrs. Lane thereafter lived with their son, David F., until she died Nov. 29, 1951, at the age of 91 years. At that time, they lived at 623 Boyd street.

[Lane, David F.]

Mrs. Lane's death resulted from shock and injuries sustained in a fall on the floor of her home six days before she died.

Mrs. Lane, born Feb. 6, 1860, on a farm between Tylerville and Barnes Corners, was a daughter of Albert and Sarah Oakes Corey. Her father, a prominent farmer, was an early settler with his father, Parley Corey, of the town of Pinckney when it was a wilderness, clearing the farm upon which he lived until his death May 6, 1901. Albert Corey's great-grandfather, Zephaniah Babbitt, was a soldier under Benedict Arnold and died during the expedition against Canada. Zephaniah Babbitt's wife was the former Abigail Hamlin, said to have been of Mayflower stock. Parley Corey, native of New Hampshire and grandfather of Mrs. Lane, served in the War of 1812 in 1813 and 1814. Mrs. Lane's maternal grandparents Willard and Sally Bartlett Oakes, were early settlers of the town of Rutland.

David Frederick Lane was graduated from the Watertown High school in the class of 1898.¹ Mr. Lane then lived at 22 Burchard street. He was graduated from St. Lawrence University in 1903 with a bachelor of science degree.²

Mr. Lane began his newspaper career as a reporter for the old Watertown Standard, joining the editorial department staff of the newspaper following his graduation from St. Lawrence in 1903.

Leaving the Standard, Mr. Lane joined the reportorial staff of The Times in 1912. He was assigned throughout his career to the important "law beat," covering the offices of various lawyers, the county judges and supreme court justices and county officials, the sessions of both county and supreme courts and the board of supervisors and the activities of the surrogate court, as well as other vital news sources.

He reported the murder and other major criminal trials and important cases in both county [a line is missing here] century or more and his duties also included reporting regularly the grand jury sessions.

[A paragraph detailing other reporting assignments is omitted there.]

A recognized authority on the history of northern New York and especially of Watertown and Jefferson and Lewis counties, Mr. Lane was the writer of a variety of special articles of historical interest that had appeared in the columns of The Times over the years. He had also written other special or feature articles that appeared in the newspaper from time to time.

In the early 1940's he wrote a full and complete article on north country mansions and their owners for the July, 1943 issue of New York History, the quarterly publication of the New York State Historical association. Mr. Lane had collected the material for the article in a long and thorough study he had made of northern New York homes and had written extensively on the subject. Photographs he had taken of north country mansions appeared in The Times from time to time.

¹ A list of some of his high school classmates is omitted here.

² A lengthy list of some of his college classmates is omitted here.

[Lane, David F.]

He had made literary contributions to a number of leading magazines, periodicals, newspapers and other publications besides the New York History, including Collier's and House Beautiful.

[A listing of other histories, and one of other assignments for The Times, are both omitted here].

Photography being one of his hobbies, he became a skilled photographer, examples of his work appearing not only in The Times, but also in national magazines. In 1953 the Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library [in Watertown] featured an exhibit in its rotunda of 21 photographic enlargements of old outstanding Jefferson county homes photographed by Mr. Lane. The photographs had appeared in The Times during 12 years previous. The pictures were also part of the original collection of 49 outstanding northern New York homes enlarged by Mr. Lane for St. Lawrence university and exhibited there in the Ellsworth museum for a month prior to the June, 1953 commencement. The collection was later exhibited in other libraries.

Mr. Lane's interest in photography had led him to scour the north country for homes of historic interest. Subsequently he gathered a series of more than 650 pictures that were published regularly in The times, complete with captions, data for which he collected himself.

In the Masonic fraternity, he was a member of Watertown Lodge 49, F. and A.M., having joined March 19, 1919; Watertown Chapter 59, R.A.M.; Watertown Commandery 11, K. T., and Media Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S. He was the historian of the Watertown lodge, an office he had held since 1933, and a member of its Masonic relic committee, in which capacity he served for years.

He was for years a member of the board of trustees of the Jefferson County Historical society and was a former member of its board of managers. He was a member also of the society's house and grounds committee and chairman of the publicity and publications committee. In 1961 he was a member of the committee on the Sackets Harbor battlefield restoration, together with other members of the society, although the committee was not strictly a society committee.

Mr. Lane was also a member of the Asiatic society, the Sons of the American Revolution [a line is missing here] ciety of America. At St. Lawrence university he was a member of the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity.

Daily Times, Watertown NY, Wed. 18 May 1966

Transcribed on 8 Apr 2024 by Karen E. Dau of East Rochester, NY