

[Parsons, Fay C.]

Fay C. Parsons, 74, Editor of Democrat, Passes Away

Fay C. Parsons, 74, following a distinguished 47 year as editor and publisher of the Cortland Democrat, died Sunday night, August 4 at his home.

The publisher was widely known thruout the state and his death terminated a career in newspaper work which was marked by a courageous enthusiasm for all things which had a deep and lasting meaning for Cortland and its people.

Mr. Parsons was born September 22, 1871, in Cortland, and he was the son of Noah and Laura A. Parsons. He attended Cortland State Normal School until June, 1888.

His long career in newspaper work really began on September 2, 1888, when he learned the printers trade in the Cortland Standard office under the late Hon. William H. Clark and Harlan G. Joy, foreman. He was an all around printer but specialized in press work.

In 1891 Mr. Parsons was employed by Benton B. Jones, publisher of the Cortland Democrat. Mr. Jones died December 20, 1896, and following the publisher's death Mr. Parsons purchased the newspaper and the printing plant from the Jones estate. He took over on March 1, 1899.

On June 24, 1896 he married Miss Pauline Jones, daughter of the publisher and her death occurred November 25, 1931. The publisher married a second time and was wed to Mrs. Alma H. Potter on December 8, 1933 and his wife survives him with a brother, Paul P. Parsons of Cortland.

Mr. Parsons was a member of the Universalist Church of Cortland and a trustee of that church since October 16, 1916. He served as moderator of the church board since January 1917.

On October 5, 1932 he was elected a trustee of the New York State Convention of Universalists, and has since served as trustee, heading the board as president in 1930 and 1931. He was elected treasurer of the state convention April 5, 1932, and had served in that office until illness forced his retirement.

The late publisher was a member and director for years of the state automobile association and served as treasurer of the association from 1912 to 1925. He was also a member and rarely missed a meeting of the American Automobile Association.

He was one of seven organizers of the New York State Automobile Alliance of American Motorists Insurance Co., and was a member of the advisory board at the time of his death.

In 1906 Mr. Parsons joined the New York State Press Association, and he became active when the association reorganized in 1922-23. He served as a

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director; as president in 1929-30; as treasurer for seven years 1931-39. He was also a member of the National Editorial Association since 1910.

Altho his father was a staunch Republican the late publisher was a member of the Democrat party. Early in his career he served as treasurer of the Cortland County Democratic Committee; later he served as chairman; and he was also a member of the Democratic State Committee from which he retired in 1928. He attended every Democratic state convention between 1898 and 1926.

Mr. Parsons from boyhood retained a deep and abiding faith in Cortland and its people and even at the cost of his own interests in business was always ready to respond when a call for civic service came.

He was a member of the Cortland Chamber of Commerce since 1906 and its president in 1919. He was a charter member and for years active in Cortland Lodge, 748, BPOE. At the time of his death he was an honorary member of the lodge.

[He was] A charter member and stockholder in the Cortland Country Club organized in 1914. He was a charter member of the Cortland Rotary Club in 1919; a director of the club in 1922; treasurer in 1923; president in 1925; and served 16 years as secretary of the club. He had a perfect attendance record for 18 years.

On December 2, 1915 he became a member of Orris Hose Co., of the Cortland fire department and served actively with the company until 1939. He served as a trustee of the old Franklin Hatch Library. In 1941, he was vice-president of the library board and was a member of the board at the time of his death.

Mr. Parsons was a charter member of the Cortland County Historical Society. He was a 33d degree Mason and a member of K. T. and Masonic Veterans of Central new York; served as grand marshall of the Masonic Grand Lodge of New York State 1934-36 and was a Shriner. He was an honorary member of Syracuse Lodge 501, F. & A.M.; a member of Cortland Commandery, 50 Knights Templar; a member of the Odd Fellows; a member of the Cortland County Sportsmen's Association; and a member of United Commercial Travelers.

Final rites for the publisher were held at 2:30 p.m. Wednesday from the First Universalist church and [were] largely attended.

The regular service was in charge of Rev. Roy J. Hatt, pastor, and he was assisted by Dr. Fred C. Leining of Syracuse, District Superintendent of the Universalist Church.

Chester D. Crowell of Syracuse had charge of the 33d Degree Masonic service.

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Honorary bearers were Dr. Lloyd Ingalls, L. W. Billings, A. J. Buck, Porter Bennett and M. A. Case of Cortland; George Hancock of Syracuse, John Sheerar of Cincinnatus, Bristow Adams of Ithaca, and Hart Seeley of Owego.

Active bearers were W. Wells Harrington, William J. Dwyer, Robert E. Hamill, Robert C. Hollister, John W. Morgan and Alonzo McAleer.

Fred Ashworth, past master of Cortlandville Lodge 470, F. and A.M., conducted the Masonic Committal service at Cortland Rural cemetery.

Twelve members of the 33d Degree Masons attended in a body and there were delegations representing Rotary and Cortlandville Lodge as well as an escort from Cortland Commandery Knights Templar No. 50.

*Cortland Democrat*, Cortland NY, Fri. 9 Aug 1946

Transcribed on 15 Oct 2013 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY