

[Witter, John J.]

FORT PLAIN LOSES PROMINENT CITIZEN

John J. Witter, Former Postmaster, Has Long Been Ill
For Many Years He Was Principal of the Public Schools of That Village and
Also Took an Active Part in Politics—Served in Civil War Under Admiral Farragut
(Special to the Recorder.)

Fort Plain, Jan. 17.—John J. Witter, former postmaster and one of Fort Plain's most prominent citizens, died at 12:30 o'clock this morning at Hotel Grant, where he made his home. Mr. Witter, who was 74 years old, has long been ill of heart trouble and a complication of diseases.

Mr. Witter was born in Brooklyn, Conn., the only son of John and Mary A. Bradford Witter. His mother was a lineal descendant of Colonial Governor Bradford, of Massachusetts. After attending the public schools Mr. Witter fitted for college at the Munson academy. In 1859 he became principal of the public school at Putnam, Conn., but owing to ill health was obliged to resign. He then opened a select [private] school at the same place, which he closed and also abandoned the idea of a college course on account of entering the United States navy. He was attached to the U.S. steamer Fort Henry as an apothecary [pharmacist], when she was a part of the east gun squadron. Afterward he was transferred to the steamer Nyack as yeoman and served with Admiral Farragut. He was discharged from the navy in 1866 and then returned to his native home. Because of the condition of his health he later spent two years in the Adirondacks. He then accepted a situation as teacher at Clay, Onondaga county, and after one term there went to Starkville, Otsego county, where he taught three terms. In 1872 he became principal of the Fort Plain graded school. After twelve and a half years of service in this position he resigned to become traveling salesman for the Fort Plain Glove and Mitten Company, in which he was interested as a partner. After traveling for five years, at the earnest solicitation of the school board of Fort Plain, he again became principal of the public school where he remained for five years. An ardent Democrat, he was appointed postmaster of Fort Plain during President Cleveland's second term. Since then he has lived practically in retirement.

He was prominently identified with the Democratic party and was a member of the Knights of Pythias and the Grand Army of the Republic. Mr. Witter is survived by three nieces, Mrs. Herbert P. Williams of Brooklyn, and Mrs. J.G. Williams and Mrs. Irene Allen of Malden, Mass. The funeral will be held Friday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock at the Universalist church, the Rev. H. [Herbert] F. Moulton officiating. The local Knights of Pythias lodge will be in charge of the service and the Grand Army post will act as an escort to the Fort Plain cemetery, where the body will be interred.

Evening Recorder, Amsterdam NY, Wed. 17 Jan 1917

[Witter, John J.]

Leaves Thousand Dollars to Fort Plain Church

Fort Plain, Jan. 23.—By the will of the late John J. Witter, the local Universalist church receives the sum of \$1,000. By the terms of the will only the interest on this amount may be used for the support of the church. The principal is to stand as a start for an endowment fund of \$10,000. The balance of his estate is left to relatives. Mr. Witter was personally responsible for the big celebration of Memorial Day, as it has been observed here for the past several years. The arrangements for the parade and services were under his personal supervision and have always been most successful.

The Evening Recorder, Amsterdam NY, Tue. 23 Jan 1917

Transcribed on 7 Sep 2011 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY