

Blue Earth County
Enterprise

Friday, November 5, 1915

HONOR COL. PRATT

Masonic Brethren Observe 88th Anniversary of Their Brother

Last Friday was the 88th anniversary of Col. M. M. Pratt, and his brethren of the local Masonic lodge deemed it right and proper that they should join with the old veteran soldier comrades in observing the event. Accordingly a patriotic program was arranged at the Masonic hall which was quite largely attended, the old soldiers and ladies of the Womens Relief Corps being guests of honor.

The hall was decorated with stars and stripes and a number of patriotic songs were rendered with G. G. Fetterman as leader, the exercises being opened with "Tenting on the Old Camp Ground" and closing with "America." An interesting feature of the occasion was a series of views from the battlefield of Gettysburg where Comrade Pratt saw service as a member of Co. B, 15th New York infantry, and was an eye witness of that historical charge of the First Minnesota in which every officer was killed or wounded. Of the 262 men who made the charge, 215 were stricken with rebel bullets, the 47 remaining still standing with their faces to the foe. It was a charge never before equalled in battle and General Hancock who ordered the men into that vortex of hell said that he did so to save five minutes of time and that he was glad to find such a gallant body of men at hand willing to make the terrible sacrifice which the occasion demanded.

Following this part of the program another patriotic song was rendered and a few remarks were made by Mr. Frank Simon. Next followed a few local views which were prepared especially for the occasion depicting the early life of Col. Pratt. The first was a series of four views showing his boyhood days and his attempt to become a great musician under difficulties, another view, "Off to the War" gave the parting with his sweetheart and two others, an ammunition wagon driven through the timber of the southland. Then there were portraits of Mr. Pratt himself and also of his G. A. R. comrades in the "Thin Line of Blue," and his brethren of the Masonic lodge. Light refreshments were served by the committee and all departed feeling happier that they had contributed something to the pleasure of one who has grown old in the harness but who through the long years of his life helped others to make the world brighter.

Following the close of the Civil War Comrade Pratt came to Minnesota and located in the town of Sterling where he was held in high regard as a man and citizen. With the coming on of old age Mr. Pratt moved to Mapleton where he has resided for a number of years honored and respected by all. He is not only a Mason of long standing but a past commander of the Grand Army post. That he may remain with us to enjoy many more anniversaries is the sincere wish of his brethren of the square and compass.

On this occasion one of the greatest pleasures to the guest of honor was the opportunity to meet again several of his old comrades, notably Casper Schimmels who too is traveling on toward the century mark, having reached the age of 86 years.