

THE FARGO FORUM

Funeral Rites Friday For R. S. Lewis, Banker, Business, Political Leader

A Rose Croix funeral service for R. S. Lewis, long time Fargo resident, will be at 3 Friday in the Masonic Temple with Pelican Chapter of Rose Croix, one of Fargo's Scottish Rite bodies, in charge.

W. T. Stevenson will be in charge. The remains will be placed in the mausoleum of Riverside Cemetery. The body is at Ivers Funeral Home.

The family suggests that memorials be made payable to the Shrine Hospital for Crippled Children.

Mr. Lewis, one time lieutenant governor of North Dakota, died Wednesday morning in his home at 1102 3rd Ave. S. Had he lived until Aug. 15, he would have been 100 years old.

Robert S. Lewis came to Fargo, in what was then Dakota Territory, in 1882 when he was 26 and lived to become one of North Dakota's political and business leaders.

He was born Aug. 15, 1856, at Iuka, Miss., the son of Josiah and Mary Lewis. His father was of New England stock and his mother a native of Louisiana.

When he was 5 years old, Mr. Lewis came to Minnesota with his parents. His father engaged in farming in Wright County, Minnesota, and later was superintendent of schools in that county.

R. S. Lewis worked for a time in Minneapolis, then was offered a position with the Red River National Bank of Fargo.

Not long after becoming associated with the bank, Mr. Lewis interested his brother, J. H. Lewis, in joining him in acquiring the controlling interest, "R.S." becoming vice president.

In 1902 the Lewis brothers sold their interest in the bank to E. J. Weiser, F. A. Irish and Robert Jones, who later merged it with the First National bank.

It was in 1892 that Mr. Lewis became actively interested in farming, purchasing extensive acreage in the Buffalo, Cass and Minn. County, area. At one time he was farming more than 10,000 acres. About 1910, with land prices booming, Mr. Lewis liquidated his Buffalo and Hunter holdings and later purchased about 3,000 acres in the vicinity of Mapleton.

In 1900 he was elected to the state senate and served in the legislatures of 1901 and 1903. He was elected lieutenant governor in 1906, re-elected in 1908.

He was on the Fargo Board of Education six years, part of that time as president. He served several years as a member of the board of trustees of the North Dakota Agricultural College, and five years as a member of the state board of control which had charge of the state penal and charitable institutions.

Interested in the development of Fargo as a commercial and industrial city, Mr. Lewis took an active part in the organization of the city's commercial club — now the Chamber of Commerce — and served for several years as its president.

He was also a prime mover in the organization of the North Dakota State Fair in Fargo, served from its organization until a few years ago as a member of its board of directors.

During later years he served as a member of the city special assessment commission.

For years Mr. Lewis headed the Cass County Red Cross, and



R. S. LEWIS

was for more than 20 years chairman of the chapter, during which time it gained national recognition for its achievements.

Mr. Lewis was a 33rd degree honorary Mason, was a member of Shiloh Lodge No. 1 of Fargo, the Scottish Rite bodies and El Zagal Temple of the Shrine.

A member of the BPOE he served many years on the board of trustees of the Fargo Elks Lodge. He was a member of the AOUW and of the First Baptist church of Fargo.

In 1879 Mr. Lewis married Alice May Carpenter, a native of Minnesota. They had three children, Robert C. Lewis of Fargo who died May 25, 1946; Mrs. Olive M. Braisted, residing with her father the last several years, and Mrs. James Chesley Beale of Franklin, Va., who died in 1954. The first Mrs. Lewis died in January, 1920. Mr. Lewis' second wife, the former Nancy Beale of Virginia, died Jan. 25, 1948.

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