

HUNTON, THOMAS
October 2, 1853-March 2, 1916

The Wheatland World, March 10, 1916

JUDGE THOMAS HUNTON IS DEAD

Passes Away at the Wheatland Hospital on Thursday—Old Time Resident and Prominent Citizen Is Generally Mourned—Business Houses Closed

Judge Thomas Hunton, a resident of this territory since 1873, and one of the most widely known citizens of the section died at the Wheatland hospital yesterday morning, age 66 years. Although he has been failing for two years, Judge Hunton's condition had been alarming only the past two weeks. Hardening of the arteries, arresting the circulation was the immediate cause of death.

The funeral occurred from the Episcopal church at 4:00 o'clock Thursday afternoon and interment was made in the Wheatland cemetery. All the business houses of the city closed for the hour between four and five o'clock, as a mark of the deep grief felt for the departure of this distinguished citizen.

The funeral was largely attended. Old friends of the deceased, who have been watching his condition for the past several days with increasing alarm and sorrow, turned out to pay their last respects, crowding the church and following the remains to the grave.

In early young manhood Judge Hunton was afflicted with heart trouble, but his free life on the plains during the early days apparently made him a sound man, and for years, or up to the beginning of his decline, he was in the best of health. At that time, however, the heart action became bad, and he was started on the down grade. Every effort made to check his failing health proved fruitless.

Ten days ago a gangrenous affectation appeared in one of his legs, and his suffering became intense. He was taken to the Wheatland hospital, where, after other methods failed to afford relief, the leg was amputated. Local anesthetic was used for the operation, the nerve blocking method being resorted to on account of the condition of the patient's heart.

While the operation quieted the pain and relieved the sufferings of Judge Hunton, the succession of the malady could not be checked, although every thing known to science was done to relieve his condition. The hardening of the arteries continued until the circulation became affected in all parts of the body and death resulted.

Judge Hunton was born in Madison, Va. on October 2, 1853 and received his education in the schools of that state. In April, 1873, he arrived at Bordeaux, a boy less than twenty years of age. At that time John Hunton, a brother, was located at Bordeaux, then a station on the old freight road to the Black Hills. He was one of the very earliest business men of Wyoming. Thomas Hunton was taken in and assisted his brother John for a number of years, or until 1882, when he revisited his old home in Virginia, renewed his acquaintance with Miss Mora Evans, a childhood companion, and wedded her.

The call of the new west was strong in Thomas Hunton's blood, and bringing his bride, he returned to this section. Soon after this John Hunton who had been a very large factor in the development of the territory, and who had widened his interests greatly, turned over the business at Bordeaux to Thomas Hunton, who conducted it for a number of years or until Wheatland gave promise of being an important point, when he removed here, opening the livery and stock business which he retained to the time of his death.

Judge Hunton was a man of great native ability and was highly regarded by his fellows. He was prominent in all counsels, and has been a real factor in the development of this section of the state of Wyoming. He was a man of action, fearless, broad minded, outspoken in his beliefs and forceful in his expressions. While at Bordeaux he was postmaster and here he was Justice of the Peace for many years, a position which brought out his fair-play characteristics prominently. The past two years he has held the position of court commissioner. He has been prominent in politics and was one whose counsel was sought widely in the democratic party.

During his first years with his brother John at Bordeaux, Thomas, together with his brother, was

in a number of brushes with the Indians, and while watching some stock over on the Chug, another brother, Jim, was killed and the stock in his charge run off. A little later the Indians made another raid on stock on the Chug and ran away with a considerable bunch.

A number of citizens, among whom was Judge Hunton, reinforced by several soldiers, pursued the redskins over into the Reshaw hills and there came upon them just at night. A fight resulted, in which one soldier was killed. Owing to the fact that night was near, the Indians succeeded in getting away, taking the stock with them.

Judge Hunton leaves besides his wife, six children. They are, John at Laramie; Dean, attending Harvard University; Thomas, Wheatland; Jas, Wheatland, and Miss Mora and Master Don at home. He is also survived by his brother, John Hunton, with whom he was closely associated during his early residence here.

GATHERED TO LAND OF HIS FATHERS

The angel of Death mercifully came to the relief of Thomas Hunton on Thursday morning, March 9, and another name is stricken from the ever lessening roster of our western pioneers. Funeral services were held from the Episcopal church, conducted by Rev. B.A. Turner, and the body was laid away for its last long sleep in the Wheatland cemetery. All business houses were closed during the funeral as a tribute of respect to our departed fellow citizen.

Mr. Hunton was a native of Madison, Va., having been ushered into the sunshine of the southland on Oct. 2, 1853, hence was 62 years and 5 months old at the time of his death. In 1873, he came to Bordeaux, which was then a freight station on the Cheyenne-Black Hills road, and went into business with his elder brother, John Hunton, who had previously located there. In 1882 he returned to Virginia and took as his bride Miss Mora Evans, who returned with him to his western home, and who, with her children, live to revere the memory of a faithful husband and a kind and indulgent father. The children are John Hunton of Laramie; Dean Hunton at the Harvard University; Thomas R., James, Mora and Don, who are all in Wheatland. His brother, John, also survives him and is one of the prominent ranchmen of the Fort Laramie country.

During the early pioneer days there was considerable trouble caused by Indians driving off the livestock of settlers. Mr. Hunton took an active part in numerous skirmishes with the redskins and bore his full share of all the hardships and privations incident to the early days, and prospered as the country developed.

When the Wheatland colony was established Mr. Hunton moved with his family to this place and engaged in the livery and livestock business which he continuously conducted to the end of his days. He was always active in public life, having been postmaster, justice of the peace, district court commissioner, and held other positions of influence, always performing his full duty as a citizen. For many years he had been familiarly known as Judge Hunton.

Since young manhood he had been afflicted with a weak heart and during the past years had suffered many threatening attacks of heart failure. The final illness which resulted in his death, and which caused him intense suffering, has been told in detail in the past two issues of this paper. Several times during those trying days Mr. Hunton expressed the wish that death might come to his relief. Everything known to medical science was done to alleviate his suffering and prolong his days, but it was all of to avail. He passed into the realms of the unknown with a smile and in the firm trust that all is well.

Judge Hunton was a man of generous impulses and never forgot the hospitable ways of the pioneer. He bore adversity bravely and enjoyed prosperity quietly. He filled the various relations of life as son, husband, father, brother, friend, and filled them well. Who can do more?