

M. R. JOHNSTON, ONE OF MOST PROMINENT MEN IN STATE DIES SATURDAY

Remains are Interred in the Local Cemetery

Tuesday

11-11-1934

M. R. Johnston, pioneer Wyoming citizen, and one of the best known men in this section in the early days, passed away at his home in the south part of Wheatland Saturday morning at about 7 o'clock. Mr. Johnston has been in poor health for some time but was able to be out and around to visit with his friends and in the care of his business matter. Friday evening he was in the State court attending to some business and apparently seemed in good health and high spirits. That night he complained of not feeling well and in the morning he awakened and passed away shortly after.

Funeral services were held Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock from the Masonic Temple. Pall bearers were C. Havens, Reuben Good, Tom Johnston, L. B. Adams, and George McMan. Honorary pall bearers were E. Banks, W. H. Loomis, D. W. Brice, George Richardson, Col Morrison and L. Ayers. Interment was made in Wheatland cemetery with the Cop Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

The following obituary was read by O. O. Natwick, deputy attorney general and past grand master of the Wyoming Masonic Lodge:

Brother M. R. Johnston was born on December 17th, 1858 in Green County, 10 miles east of Dayton, Ohio. He was educated in the local schools near

Dayton and spent his early boyhood on his father's farm. At the age of 19 he went to Denver, Colo., and secured employment in the Sheriff's office and was appointed deputy sheriff. Later he was employed with a government surveying party in the Rocky Mountain states. Brother Johnston arrived in Cheyenne February 28th, 1888. He secured a farm of about 260 acres near Wheatland, and was not only one of the first to farm on the Wheatland Flats, but was most successful in his farming.

On November 1st, 1888 he accepted the office of Superintendent of the Wyoming Development Company and for about a quarter of a century was associated with Honorable Joseph M. Carey in settling up and improving this project. In 1913 he resigned, to become manager of the Swan Land and Cattle Company, which position he held for three years. He was the first Mayor of Wheatland and later served another term as mayor.

He was appointed a member of the State Highway Commission by Governor Kendrick and was appointed for a second term by Governor Carey and for many years served as chairman of that body. He was a member of the State Board of Selective Service during the World War.

Brother Johnston leaves surviving him to mourn his passing, his widow Eppa Johnston, a son Frank M. Johnston, two daughters, Sarah Johnston and Virginia Johnston, and three grandchildren, as well as four brothers, Dr. George P. Johnston of Cheyenne, Wyo., J. A. Johnston of Los Angeles, and Frank Johnston and Chas. Johnston of Ohio.

Brother Johnston was made a Master Mason in Cheyenne Lodge No. 1. Later he was admitted to the Chapter and Commandery at Cheyenne, and was a member of the second Consistory class held there. Demitting from Cheyenne Lodge No. 1, he became a charter member of Wheatland Lodge No. 16, A. F. & A. M. in 1897. He was the first Junior Warden of Wheatland Lodge No. 16 and was its Master in 1900 and 1901. Brother Johnston was elected Grand Master of Masons in Wyoming in September, 1905. On October 17th, 1911, he received the 33rd degree at Washington, D. C.

In the passing of Brother Johnston, "M. R." as he was known and called by nearly everyone, the Wheatland Colony has lost a most ardent booster. Until the last day of his life he took a keen interest in the development and up-building of the Wheatland country.

He had many friends throughout the state of Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain west. He was a man of exceptionally strong determination and was loyal to his friends at all times. He was possessed of the fighting spirit of the pioneer and will long be remembered as the outstanding pioneer of the Wheatland colony. Many men of varying ages and walks of life will miss his friendly counsel, but even more will he be missed in the lodge of which he was a charter member and in which he labored so long and faithfully.

In regard to his connection with the Wheatland he loved and served, it may truly be said of our Brother, he was "the strong oak."