

Bjornson, Icelandic Leader, Dies

Gunnar B. Bjornson, 85, patriarch of Minnesota's Icelandic population, died Sunday at his home, 2914 Dorman avenue.

Services will be Tuesday at 10 a.m. at Grace Lutheran church, Minneapolis, and at 3 p.m. at St. Paul's Icelandic Lutheran church, Minneota, Minn., with burial in St. Paul's cemetery there.

BORN in Iceland Aug. 17, 1872, Mr. Bjornson came to Minneota in 1876, where he tended the town herd, clerked in stores and worked as a carpenter.

When he was 22, he acquired a half interest in the Minneota Mascot, which had been founded four years earlier. He sold out in less than a year, but returned to journalism in 1900, becoming sole owner and publisher of the oft-quoted weekly newspaper. He sold the Mascot 44 years later.

Turning from the Populist party to the Republican in the late 1890s, Mr. Bjornson was appointed Minneota postmaster. He served as justice of the peace, a school district clerk and was for 24 years a school board member.

He served two terms as a state representative in 1913 and 1915.

IN 1925 he was appointed to the state tax commission, later serving as chairman of the state board of tax appeals from 1939 to 1955.

A life-long leader among Americans and Canadians of Icelandic descent, Mr. Bjornson was trustee and president of St. Paul's church and a frequent delegate to church conventions of Icelandic Lutheran synod.

He represented Minnesota in 1930 at the millennial anniversary of Iceland's parliament. He and his wife, the late Ingibjorg Augustine Hurdal Bjornson, visited Iceland again in 1940 as guests of the government.

Mr. Bjornson was a Royal Arch Mason a charter member of Equality lodge, Minneota, and a member of Damascus commandery of Knights Templar, St. Paul.

Survivors include four sons, Valdimar, state treasurer; Hjalmar, Minneapolis Tribune editorial columnist; Bjorn, Northern States Power Co. information manager, and Jon, Northwestern National bank advertising manager, all of Minneapolis; two daughters, Mrs. Arne (Helga) Brogger, Minneapolis, and Mrs. Carl (Stephanie) Denbow, Athens, Ohio, and 19 grandchildren.



GUNNAR B. BJORNSON