

Nelle Lazure, One-Time Flood Hero, Is Dead

Nelle Lazure, well known Blair woman died at Memorial Community Hospital Monday. Although she had lived a quiet life during her declining years, she had at one time been very much in the news and brought honor to herself and to the company for which she worked.

Nelle Gertrude Lazure was born at Seymour, Iowa October 28, 1881 and was 86 years of age at the time of her death. She had come to Blair as a young woman and had been associated with friends and relatives here all of the time.

She was widowed when but a young woman and for a time she was employed as a clerk in Blair stores. Many years ago she became a telephone operator before the days of automatic dialing when operators were the "hub" of all telephone activity.

Mrs. Lazure won acclaim for herself in 1940 when she was working as a switchboard operator at Winnebago, Nebraska for the Northeastern Nebraska Telephone Company. It was in May of 1940 when heavy rains and finally a cloudburst sent the big Omaha creek on a rampage through the valley. The creek, which goes through the heart of Winnebago, suddenly swelled to the size of a raging river and the entire valley was flooded. Mrs. Lazure, sensing the danger which there was to residents in the farms up and down the valley, stuck to her post at the switchboard, methodically

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PRIZE

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 1968

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calling family after family through the night warning them to leave their homes and flee. She stayed at the switchboard while water ran in across the floor, then became ankle deep and finally knee deep. She stayed on until the water put the switchboard out of commission.

Later in the night, with all lights out in the village and water swirling across the lawns and streets, Mrs. Lazure was taken out of the telephone building by several of the younger Indians of the reservation who had come to rescue her.

It was realized, after the flood, that her warnings had saved several families whose homes had been washed away and she was acclaimed a hero of the catastrophe.

On June of 1941 in special ceremonies attended by state officials and many notables, Mrs. Lazure was given the coveted Vail gold medal and a check for \$1,000 for her bravery. The Telephone Company was given a plaque attesting the incident and the plaque is in the lobby of the Blair telephone company offices today.

Mrs. Lazure is survived only by her brother, John Strode, of Norfolk, Nebraska.

Services were held at St. Francis Borgia Catholic Church Wednesday morning, April 10th with burial in Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery in Blair under the direction of the Campbell Mortuary.

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Former Blair Man Dies In California

Mr. Bill D. Stewart died April 5th at the Veteran's Hospital in San Francisco, California.

He was born June 26, 1923 at Blair, to Mr. and Mrs. Theo. M. Stewart. On 1941 he graduated from Blair High School and later served in the Navy for 3 years during World War II.

He was married to Patricia Croup of Klamath, Falls, Oregon on August 7, 1945. They are the



MR. BILL D. STEWART

parents of two sons and a daughter.

For the past several years they resided in Santa Rosa, California where Bill was associated with an Insurance Company. He was a member of the Lion's Club, Volunteer Fire Department, Knox Presbyterian Church in Santa Rosa and the Hain-Flynn Post of the American Legion in Blair.

Survivors are his wife Patricia; sons, Terry Lee and Tod Allen and a daughter Tamara Lynn and a granddaughter Terri Renee, all of 1721 Mesa Way, Santa Rosa. Also his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ted Stewart of Blair.

Funeral services were at 11 A.M. April 8th at the Eggers Lance Mortuary at Santa Rosa.

TWO CHARGES

KIN OF ARLINGTON FOLKS DIED IN GRAND ISLAND

Mr. and Mrs. Leslie French received word of the death of Rex R. Gay at Grand Island Monday Morning. Mrs. Gay is remembered as the former Henrietta Drevsen of Kennard, with many relatives in the Arlington Community. There will be services for Rex R. Gay at the Kennard Cemetery at 2:30 Wednesday afternoon.

REX GAY BURIED IN KENNARD

Rex R. Gay of Grand Island died April 22nd at the age of 69 years.

He is survived by his wife, the former Henrietta Drevsen; a son Larry Gay of Hopewell, Virginia; a daughter, Mrs. James Madden of Freeport, Illinois and six grandchildren. Also two brothers Richard and Edward of Minnesota.

Graveside services were held at the Kennard Cemetery on April 24th.