

William Esbeck, 101

ELK HORN — William (Willie) Esbeck, 101 of Elk Horn, died at the Salem Lutheran Nursing Home, July 17, 1987 at age 101 years. He had been a resident there since Dec. of 1984.

He was born May 10, 1886 to Lars N. Esbeck and Christina Sorensen on the Esbeck homestead near Elk Horn. He attended a rural school in Oakfield Twp., Audubon County and the College of Elk Horn. On June 14, 1910, he married, Sena Hansen. They were both members of the Elk Horn Lutheran church and had been confirmed in the same class. They moved immediately onto the Esbeck homestead which they farmed until 1948 when they moved to Elk Horn.

He was a leader in Conservation of farmland, and was one of the original Commissioners of the Audubon County Soil Conservation Service, and has continued this interest as an assistant commissioner. He was awarded the Omaha World Herald Soil Conservation Award in 1949. His farm won the Iowa Sweepstakes award in 1955, Register and Tribune Soil Conservation Achievement awards program. This award was shared with his son, Howard, who was then managing the farm operation. He received the Good American Award for his contribution to 4-H presented by Ted Malone, ABC radio commentator, in 1949. He also was given an Emerald Award by the State 4-H office for his years of 4-H leadership.

In 1955, he was named an honorary member of the Iowa State College Block and Bridle club for his contribution to Iowa Agriculture in the livestock field. He was a breeder of Hereford cattle. At the 1984 State Fair the Esbeck farm was recognized as a century farm. His son, Gordon, is the present owner. He was one of the first members of the Audubon County Farm Bureau and has been a member for over 70 years. He has served as Audubon County Farm Bureau President and a leader in many of the Farm Bureau and Extension programs. He helped plan the AAA program of the early 30's in Audubon County.

The Lutheran church has played an important part in his life. He has been an active member of the Elk Horn church serving as president of the church council.

He was preceded in death by his parents; his wife; one daughter, Marjorie; and one son, Leland; one brother, Andrew and five sisters, Anna Johnson, Mary Johnson, Sena Mardesen, Emma Petersen and Clara Marquesen. Surviving are three sons, Howard of Moline, IL; Donald of Elk Horn and Gordon of Tipton and two daughters, Ramona of Ames; and Thelma Wehde of Normal, IL; 11 grandchildren and 18 great-grandchildren and one sister, Violet Petersen of Orlando, FL.

Funeral services were held July 20, 1987 at Elk Horn Lutheran church with Rev. Soland, officiating. Burial was in the Elk Horn cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made to the Elk Horn Lutheran church or the Danish Immigrant Museum both of Elk Horn.