

Clara Howell Pierce

WHITEWATER - Clara Howell Pierce, 98, formerly of Eagle, died Sunday, Jan. 12, 2003, at Fort Atkinson Memorial Health Services.



Clara May Howell was born Aug. 13, 1904, on the Howell family farm in the Bark River area of Ottawa Township, Waukesha County, to David and Olive (Lean) Howell. On March 4, 1931, she married Charles Chapin Pierce, and they lived on his family farm in the Melendy's Prairie area of Eagle Township. Mr. Pierce died Feb. 26, 1988.

She was a member of the Siloam United Methodist Church and its United Methodist Women's group, the Palmyra and Eagle historical societies and the Palmyra Senior Citizens.

Clara had an avid interest in local history and was honored with the Wisconsin State Historical Societies' Award of Merit in 1988 for her booklet "Historical Gleanings of Melendy's Prairie - 1836 to 1970." At the time of the presentation it was said that Clara was born near Dousman in 1904 and had a hard childhood, due to the early death of her mother, and barely attained an eighth-grade education. However, after her marriage to Charles C. Pierce in 1931, she became very interested in the history of the area in Eagle Township where he had grown up and where they now lived - known from the earliest days as Melendy's Prairie. She felt that time was slipping by and that it was very important for the benefit of future generations to try to preserve as much of the history of the early local settlers as possible. She could not interest anyone else in the project, so she set out to do it herself - although she had not had any training or experience in either historical research or writing and no typing skills. She really did not know how to start, nor did she get much encouragement from her family, but she persevered. When she had finished her booklet, "Historical Gleanings of Melendy's Prairie from 1836 to 1970," there was a good deal of interest in it, so she had a few copies printed and they were soon gone. The Palmyra His-

In 1999 she was honored as a Community Archivist by the Cornish Society of Greater Milwaukee and the Palmyra Historical Society.

She is survived by her daughter, Carol (Stewart) Calkins of Palmyra; three grandchildren, Nancy (Jon) Denzin of Whitewater, Gayle (Tim) Beck of Palmyra and Mary Beth (Mark) Schmidt of New Berlin; nine great-grandchildren, Erica, Kyle, Kevin, and Caleb Denzin, Rachel, Betsy and Tim Beck, and Tyler and Shawn Schmidt; and one brother, David (Jane) Howell, Jr. of North Fort Meyers, Fla. Clara was preceded in death by her husband, Charles; her son, Charles A. Pierce; her brother, Arthur Howell; and her stepbrother, George Howell.

Funeral services will be held at 2 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 16, at Mealy's Funeral Home, 320 W. Main St, Palmyra. Visitation will be from noon until time of services Thursday at the funeral home, with burial at Melendy's Prairie Cemetery in the town of Eagle.

If desired, memorials to Melendy's Prairie Cemetery of the Siloam United Methodist Church are appreciated.

Mealy's Funeral Home in Eagle, 495-2127, is serving the family.

(Freeman - Jan. 14, 2003)