

26-Yr. Veteran Says City's Future Bright

# Mayor Emeritus Carlson 90 On Sunday

By ROSS L. WEEKS, JR.

One of Jamestown's grand old men of politics will celebrate his 90th birthday Sunday with an expression of confidence in the city's future—and a hope that a spirit of cooperation will prevail all along the line.

Mayor Emeritus Samuel A. Carlson, who first took office as mayor 50 years ago last January, and who bowed out of public life in 1952, becomes a nonagenarian still in good health although his eyesight is failing. His son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Wendell L. Carlson of Princeton, N.J., have arranged an open house for any and all of his many friends and associates Sunday from 3 to 5 P.M. at his home, 115 West Summit Avenue, Lakewood.

Mayor Emeritus Carlson served 26 years as mayor, earning him a distinction of being, according to a Buffalo newspaper editorial some time ago, "the most reelected mayor in America."

Mr. Carlson, who has been honored by citations in the Congressional Record, by leading historians, by leading national figures, including Sen. Paul H. Douglas of Illinois, and the late Supreme Court Justice Robert H. Jackson and by the late President Theodore Roosevelt, still retains the interest in city politics that brought him such distinction.

His greatest pride has come from his work in bringing to realization the Municipal Electric Light Plant, and Jamestown General Hospital, both of which were pioneer services offered by the city and copied later by other American communities.

Mr. Carlson believes, in retrospect, that these and other similar services "should be a matter of pride to the community."

And he also said he believes city government "should be based on progress of community, rather than narrow partisanship."



SAMUEL A. CARLSON

...colorful career recalled

"I look forward to that," he said. He called for a constant effort to make the city government a power in the community.

Mr. Carlson smilingly "declined to comment" on whether he will reach age 100.

Mr. Carlson was first elected a fourth ward councilman in 1893 and reelected in 1895 with the endorsement of Republican, Democratic and People's parties.

He ran for mayor in 1908 and won the election on a platform pledging expansion of the light plant, water plant, paving of streets, sewer construction and building a city hall and city hospital.

He served 11 two-year terms as mayor, and one four-year term. When he retired from the mayoralty in 1938, the City Council conferred on him the unique title "Mayor Emeritus." A photograph of Mr. Carlson, as well as other

mayors hangs in the Council Chambers in City Hall.

For ten years after that, he served on the Board of Public Utilities, until his residence in Lakewood ruled out membership on city bodies.

Mr. Carlson was born in Jamestown Oct. 4, 1868, son of John F. and Louise Carlson, who were emigrants from Sweden. After leaving high school, he engaged in a furniture manufacturing enterprise on lower Willard Street, and then acquired ownership of Vart Land Publishing Company, which produced a Swedish language weekly newspaper until Swedish immigration decreased.

Upon becoming mayor, Mr. Carlson initiated publication of city assessment rolls so taxpayers could be informed. He long advocated a city milk plant, something which never materialized, although a city referendum approved it, but the project was dropped because of lack of construction company bids.

Under his leadership, and with Ernest Cawcroft as city corporation counsel, the City Charter was completely revised and improved in 1923.

It was then, that the non-partisan system of election was introduced to the city.

In later years, Mr. Carlson has been one of the leading advocates of a City Manager form of government for Jamestown, to replace the present Mayor-Council system.

He was one of the leaders in forming the State Conference of Mayors, now a strong organization with many informational services available to city officials.

Mayor Emeritus Carlson was selected in 1933 as one of 17 members of a delegation to tour Germany and investigate municipal government in that country. On the tour he met Adolph Hitler and was able to inspect every facility of Nazi government, except concentration camps.