

DISCLAIMER

This biography is a rough draft and a work-in-progress.
The research has not been completed, so there may be errors and omissions.

This document lacks 1950 census data.

Please return to Tuscania1918.org in the future to see if a revised and
finalized version is available.

Abbreviations:

b = born

d = died

F: = Find A Grave (www.findagrave.org)

NOK = next-of-kin

TUSCANIA

**Letton, Harry Pike (Sr.)
1886 NE – 1934 IL**



Harry Pike Letton – Find A Grave 88476862



Harry Pike Letton – “Nebraska State Journal” (Lincoln NE) 31 Mar 1934 p 14

From Find A Grave 88476862:

Harry P. Letton was born at Fairbury, Nebraska, May 28, 1886, the son of Charles B. Letton & Althea Hosmer (Pike) Letton.

Harry's father, Charles Blair Letton, was born at Edinburgh, Scotland, October 25, 1853. He was a former judge of the district court of Nebraska, and served as judge of the Nebraska Supreme Court, 1906-1924. He came to Nebraska with his parents and settled near Fairbury, in 1869.

Harry's mother, Althera Hosmer Pike Letton, was born at Carmel, Penobscot County, Maine, July 5, 1863, of New England ancestry. She served as state regent of the Daughters of the American Revolution, 1907-1908, and was national vice president of that organization in 1914.

Harry Pike Letton graduated from the Fairbury High School in 1904. He received his B.S. degree in civil engineering at the University of Nebraska in 1909. From 1910 to 1911 he was a student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology at Boston. He was elected to membership in Sigma Tau, honorary engineering fraternity, and to Kappa Sigma, and is now alumnus advisor to the Nebraska University chapter of this society.

He was sanitary engineer of the New Jersey State Board of Health, 1911-13; held this position in the United States Public Health Service, 1913-1919; was a member of the engineering firm, Grant, Fulton & Letton, at Lincoln, 1919-28. In 1928 he was employed with the firm Burns Potter & Company, dealing in stocks and bonds at Omaha and Lincoln. He is the author of several articles on sanitary engineering subjects, published in technical publications. He lived in Nebraska for 34 years.

On November 18, 1911, his marriage to Ethel M. Kirby was solemnized at Springfield, Illinois. Mrs. Letton was born at Liberty, Gage County, Nebraska, December 8, 1886. They had one son, Harry, born April 12, 1915.

Mr. Letton served as captain of the engineering corps with the American Expeditionary Forces during the First World War; he was one of the survivors of the German U-boat attack that sank the Troopship "Tuscania" on the evening of Feb. 5, 1918. During the war he was engaged in water supply activities from 1917 to 1919.

He was a member of the American Legion, serving as first commander of Lincoln Post Number 3. He was a member of the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce; Lincoln Executives Club; Hiram Club; and Lincoln Collectors Club. He was a member of Masonic Lodge Number 54, Scottish Rite bodies of Lincoln. His favorite sport was golf, and his hobby was philately.

HARRY P. LETTON DEAD IN CHICAGO

Lincoln Engineer Succumbs to Illness Early This Morning.

Harry P. Letton, 1910 E st., a consulting engineer, died at 12:52 a. m. Friday in St. Luke's hospital, Chicago, where he had gone twelve days ago to receive the care of a heart specialist connected with Northwestern university. An oxygen tent was employed in an attempt to save him.

Mr. Letton had performed civil engineering work for the Burlington and also was considered an expert on municipal water works. He had been ill several months.



H. P. Letton.

Born in Fairbury in 1886, the son of the late Charles Letton, who was a member of the state supreme court, Harry Letton was educated at Fairbury, the University of Nebraska and the Massachusetts institute of technology. He was sanitary engineer for the city of Providence, R. I., in 1911, was connected with the New Jersey state board of health until 1913 and then with the United States public health service until 1919, when he came to Lincoln and joined the firm of Grant, Fulton & Letton. For a number of years he was associated with Burns-Potter.

Aboard Torpedoed Ship.

As Captain Letton of the A. E. F., he was aboard the Tuscania, on his way to France, when the vessel was torpedoed near the coast of Ireland. A British trawler took him, and such of his comrades as were rescued, to Londonderry, and they spent some time being reoutfitted in England. This was in February, 1918, and Captain Letton was in France for the next fifteen months. He was a sanitary officer detailed on special duty. While stationed at Bordeaux a great deal of the time, he visited all American army camps, inspecting the drinking water. He joined the A. E. F. in Chicago with the rank of lieutenant, and trained at Fort Leavenworth for a time before going overseas. He became first commander of Lincoln post.

American Legion, and was active in legion matters for years.

Harry Letton was the first sanitary engineer for the state of Nebraska, having held that office in 1916 and 1917 under Governor Neville. He was affiliated with the American Society of Civil Engineers, Sigma Tau engineering fraternity and Kappa Sigma social fraternity at the University of Nebraska, where he was graduated in 1909.

Mr. Letton was the first commander of Lincoln post No. 3, American Legion. He also belonged to the chamber of commerce, Eastridge country club, Lincoln collectors club, Lancaster lodge No. 54, A. F. & A. M., the Scottish Rite, Kappa Sigma fraternity and several professional engineering organizations. Last year he was venerable master of Delta lodge of Perfection, Scottish Rite.

Surviving are his wife, Ethel; son, Harry P., jr., mother, Mrs. C. B. Letton, and brother, W. A. Letton of Denver. His family had been with him for several days.

The body will reach Lincoln Saturday morning and be taken to Roberts.

MANY FRIENDS PAY A TRIBUTE TO H. P. LETTON

**Rev. Paul Johnston Gives
Eulogy Assisted by Rev.
L. R. Smith.**

A large crowd gathered at Robert's mortuary Monday afternoon to pay tribute to the memory of Harry P. Letton, 1910 E, consulting engineer who died in Chicago Friday. Mr. Letton had gone there to be treated for a heart ailment.

Born at Fairbury, Neb., he was educated in the Fairbury schools, the state university and Massachusetts institute of technology. He served as an engineer in several states and was a sanitary engineer for the state of Nebraska some years ago.

Mr. Letton's fraternity, Kappa Sigma, attended in a body as did former fellow workers. Easter lilies, roses and palms were in abundance. The casket was draped with the flag. Scottish Rite quartet sang, "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere."

Rev. Paul C. Johnston was in charge, assisted by Rev. Leslie Smith. Rev. Mr. Johnston said in part:

'It has been well written that it is not the length of the span of earthly life which counts, but what is done with the years. As we face today the fact that our friend Harry Letton has gone on, we are deeply sad that he could not have had more than forty-eight years of life here. But we are likewise proud that he did so much with the years vouchsafed to him. Many persons live twice his span, and at the end can show no more than he did, of brilliant honor, simple affection, and adherence to the things that count the most.

Service to Country.

'Harry Letton was well born, and he carried his family name with full integrity. His services to his fellows and to his country were unrelenting. His technical

skills were most useful. A graduate of the University of Nebraska and of the Boston Institute of Technology, he employed his talent in civil projects and in the war time necessities of his government, and performed every task well. He possessed a kindly and positive philosophy of life, that influenced all he met, and that was best revealed in the response that always came from his nearest companions and his loved ones. He will be greatly missed by his fraternity, for which he was a wise and judicious counselor for many years; by the American Legion, to whose fortunes he was devoted; by his Masonic brethren, to whose order he gave much time; by the Lincoln chamber of commerce, of which he was a charter member; and by many other groups that enjoyed the impress of his life thru the years.

A Friend to All.

"The testimony of a close friend indicates what he meant to many. Harry Letton was a friend to all mankind. He was an optimist, a dreamer, a poet, a philosopher, a sweet, gracious and generous character. He was indulgent, patient, sympathetic, loyal, devoted and true to family, friends and country. His smiles, his happiness, his courage in adversity, his fundamental belief in the finer and nobler things of life—these attributes and qualities we shall always remember. He lived and died like a gentleman. He will live thru all eternity like a gentleman.

"We are still in the midst of the glow of the Eastertide and stirred by the strong affirmations of the Easter assurance. Who will deny that the God who creates such masterful abilities and enables a

man to live to such a level will continue him in the eternal service? We give our friend over into the care of the One who makes everything work together for good, sure of his immortality, and thankful that we have had the opportunity to know him and to love him."

Eulogy – “Nebraska State Journal” Tuesday 3 Apr 1934 p 12

LINCOLNITES ON TUSCANIA SAFE ASHORE

“BUNCRANA — Arrived well. Letton” is the text of a cablegram received by Judge C. B. Letton about 3 o'clock Saturday afternoon.

The news is from Judge and Mrs. Letton's son, Captain Harry P. Letton, who was on the Tuscania and who it was feared after the sinking of the transport, was among the missing.

Letton was well known as a university student several years ago where he was popularly called “Pike”.

The other Lincolnite aboard the Tuscania, was Edward Regnier. From Chicago, where he enlisted, it was reported he had been reported as a survivor.

“Lincoln (NE) Journal Star” Saturday 9 Feb 1918 p 1

Captain Harry Letton Writes of Boat Sinking

(From a Staff Correspondent.)

Lincoln, March 1.—(Special.)—Captain Harry Letton, who was on board the transport *Tuscania* when it was sunk by a German submarine, has sent his father, Judge C. B. Letton of the Nebraska supreme court, a letter written from the north coast of Ireland, the day after the sinking, in which he says, in part:

"Arriving here about midnight after an exsiting night. I won't be able to send any details, but just want you to know that I am perfectly well and safe.

"I had written you a long letter to be mailed, but lost it with all my equipment. Will write more later on, when I know more than now.

"I want you to know that our men are fine. They lived up to all the traditions of the American army and not one showed the white feather.

"You may have details of the occurrence before this reaches you, but probably not.

"This is a beautiful country here and interesting, too. Under other circumstances I think I could really enjoy it. I will leave here today or tomorrow, probably, but don't know for where."

"Omaha (NE) Daily Bee" Saturday 2 Mar 1918 p 4

start

Hambell Heasty, long-time resident of Fairbury, and Harry P. Letton, who was reared in that city, will hold a reunion in Lincoln Thursday. The two men had an unusual experience during the World war. Mr. Heasty was sent overseas on the Tuscania in 1917 as a member of an engineering regiment, while Mr. Letton who ranked as captain was going to France to take charge of sanitation work. He was assigned. Neither know of the other's presence on the liner until after it had been torpedoed in the Irish sea by German submarines. Then the

fact was made known only thru a cable from Judge Letton, the captain's father, to his son. Heasty got off on one of the boats that a little later tipped its occupants into the sea, and he clung to a life raft until help came. When Captain Letton answered the summons he found all the boats gone, and with others waited in the full expectation that they would have to go down with it. A destroyer came in time, however, and picked off the survivors. A number lost their lives in the disaster.

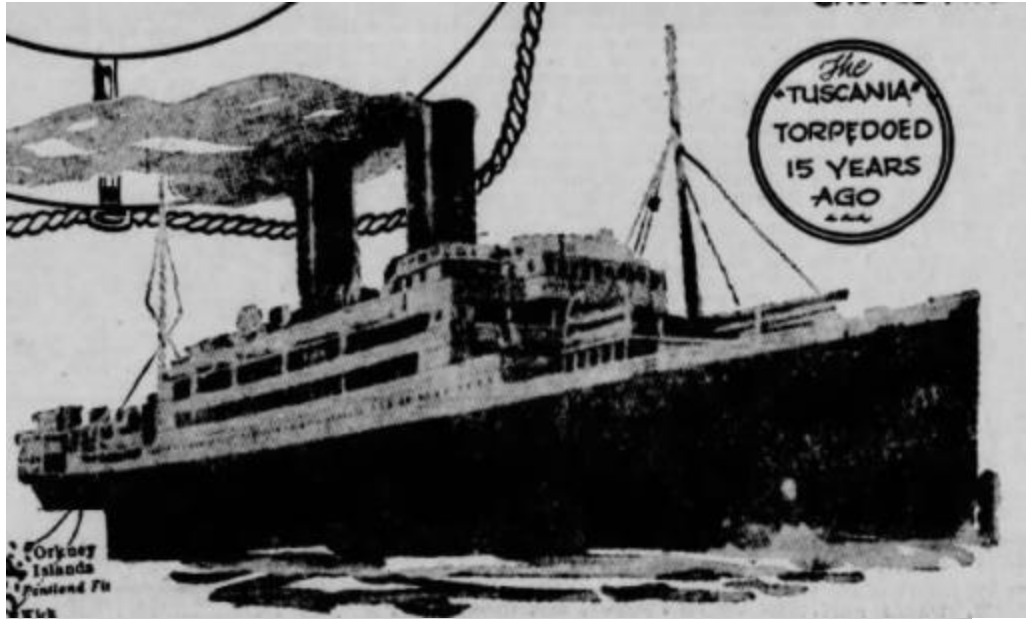
"Lincoln (NE) Journal Star" Wednesday 6 May 1931 p 6

*Lincoln Survivor Of "Tuscania" Disaster Recounts
Tale Of Troop Ship Sunk By German U-Boat*

Harry P. Letton
One of Survivors of
Torpedoed Transport,
Which Went Down
In North Atlantic
Fifteen Years
Ago.



HARRY P. LETTON





BY LULU MAE COE.

WHATEVER Harry P. Letton is doing this Sunday, he knows it isn't a repetition of fifteen years ago today.

Nor does he desire the same sort of day, even though February 5, 1918, and the weeks following have become a part of a more objective history.

For, fifteen years ago this very day, he was in the North Channel between Scotland and Ireland on the *Tuscania*, a troop ship which before night was to go beneath the waves, the ill-fated target of a German torpedo.

It was the first American troop transport Europe-bound to be sunk by a submarine. The *Tuscania* was carrying to France around 3,000 men, the majority of them Michigan and Wisconsin soldiers, and civilian workers and a group of officers, mainly casualties, who had been in training at Fort Leavenworth.

Captain Letton of the engineer reserve corps was one of the casualties, awaiting assignment when he reached France.

The *Tuscania* had left Halifax just thirteen days before its last adventure, one of a transport fleet of thirteen ships. Which may have a meaning for those believing in signs. In a diary which he continued anew after the first volume went down with the ship, Mr. Letton records that the trip had been uneventful across the winter seas.

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

LAND SIGHTED.

TUESDAY afternoon, February 5, about 3 o'clock, land was sighted, and Mr. Letton had remained on deck, trying to determine the exact location of the transport. He decided it was off Islay, the southernmost island of the Inner Hebrides in Argyllshire, Scotland, and later events proved the truth of his belief, and after a time portions of the Irish coast came into view, with the flashes of the light houses cutting the skies.

As Mr. Letton recalls it, the Tuscania's position in the convoy at that time was the worst possible for a submarine attack. The destroyers and the cruiser were leading together, with three other vessels. The Tuscania was behind the Baltic, which was in the first row, a quarter of a mile ahead. On either side, at a distance of several hundred yards, he wrote, were the other vessels and beyond them, the destroyers. A tanker brought up the rear.

Thinking back over it in days since, Mr. Letton feels that the submarine, the U-77, had seen the ships coming for many miles, silhouetted by a sinking sun. Slipping past the destroyer convoy, the U-boat prepared for attack. That it was not a mistake nor an unpremeditated attack was proved later, when a Tuscania survivor in Milwaukee secured the log of Capt. Wilhelm Meyer, commander of the German submarine, and this quotation from the log appeared in the Milwaukee Journal:

"5:50 p. m. Convoy in sight proceeding in. Well ahead there is a large steamer with two funnels painted white. Ahead of her again is a smaller steamer presumably acting as a 'bar-rage breaker;' astern of her a four-funneled cruiser, resembling the Drake class; then six to eight medium sized steamers in line ahead. The whole convoy is strongly guarded by destroyers."

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

SUB COMMANDER ERRED.

POSSIBLY the captain's periscope peerings led him astray, for the steamer with the two white funnels was the Tuscania. The boat he described as smaller was the Baltic, a larger vessel, which undoubtedly would have been attacked in place of the Tuscania, had he visioned correctly.

Continuing ten or fifteen minute notations of his preparation to attack, the captain tells of the continued preparations; the bitter result:

"I then fired Nos. 1 and 11 tubes. No. 1 is aimed for just abaft the second funnel. No. 11 is fired immediately afterward. G-7 torpedoes....

"One minute and 10 seconds later a very violent explosion is felt. . . .

"Judging by the force of the explosion, I consider that both torpedoes must have detonated," he explains.

Knowing nothing of the watching eyes, not cognizant that two hundred men would never see France, nor home again, not realizing that death was being prepared to slash through the waters of the channel, the spirits of the men on the ship had lightened. They had been in the submarine zone for three or four days, always prepared for the torpedo of destruction, and it hadn't come. Darkness was coming, and darkness was security, no more fear of the enemy patrolled seas.

Mr. Letton turned from the rail and his watching the shore beacons to go below to prepare for dinner. He removed his overcoat, and sat for a moment on his bunk.

▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

BOAT SHIVERS UNDER SHOCK.

THE boat shivered under a dull thud. Above its heavy thunder, breaking glass tinkled. The lights went out.

Just an hour from safety, he thought, and the torpedo had struck.

For he knew the story of the shuddering ship.

Waiting only to snatch a flash light, his coat, and a life belt, he started for his life boat station, putting on his coat and belt after his arrival there. There was confusion, men running about and yelling, startled as much by the black ship as by the impact, but with it all, there was fair discipline, and no panic. Mr. Letton thinks there is no truth in the weird tales that followed some time after the *Tuscania's* sinking.

His orders had been to go with the first boat load of men. Standing there on the slowly listing ship, drifting slightly ahead into the unseeing night, no one knowing but that another torpedo would come — darkness and the sound of destroyers prevented this, it was learned—Mr. Letton says he knew no fear. It seemed so inevitable. There was no place to go but the ship. Nothing to do but wait. A very clear acceptance of facts seemed the only thought at the moment. The next night, when he was safe on land and the undersea craft could have no terrors, he became afraid, he says.

The first lifeboat came down at an angle impossible for loading at the deck. Mr. Letton and his men were waiting. The boat was manned by young soldiers, able to handle a plow or drive a motor bus, but unknowing in the way of bringing down a life saving boat, in spite of many drills. When the boat slipped down to the level of the water,

the men began to slide down the ropes thrown over the side toward it, thinking only of safety, not recognizing that greater safety, could they but know it, lay on the foundering transport.

FAILS GET IN BOAT.

ALL of Mr. Letton's men could not get on his boat, because men came from the deck above and from another boat station, later found to have been damaged by the sub. In addition to the numbers scrambling for the boats, the *Tuscania* was slowly moving forward, which caused the small boats to drop back, and this added to the confusion. Since he failed to find a place in the boat allotted him, Mr. Letton decided to wait a bit to see if a destroyer would not return for the marooned men.

Shortly after that, he went down to a lower deck and aided some of the men in lowering the three life rafts. Mr. Letton might have gone on one of these, but as he says, they were large enough, but made of planks and held up by cylinders, they weren't particularly inviting. The night seemed too dark and the water too wet to set sail in one. While lowering a life boat, one capsized, and some of the men succeeded in getting on the rafts, which loaded them even more.

Climbing up toward the boat deck, he heard some deep thuds, as intense as a cannon. His first reaction was that the U-77 was attacking again, and he made haste upward, only to find rockets of distress being fired. It was months before this sudden apprehension at intensely loud noises left him. Returning in a freighter, the officers had quarters in the hold of the ship, which carried no cargo. The free whirling of the propellers shook the ship and he would awaken in the night, with the half-formed thought the vessel had been torpedoed. But that was later; the night of the sub's attempt and success, fear played no part in his role.

THREE HOURS ON SINKING SHIP.

UP ON the deck, he found another captain launching the boats from his station, with all but one gone. The life boats had suffered from delay, caused by the falls tangling when being twisted to take another boat off or

by broken ropes, in one case twenty men being upset in the water in this fashion. While on this deck, Mr. Letton saw the vessel was settling very slowly, with a slight list to starboard and stern. However, the flare of the rockets asking for aid, the working wireless, and the repaired lighting system, damaged by the explosion, all combined to give him a more comfortable feeling.

However, the nearly three hours he spent on the sinking transport aren't three hours he would care to repeat. It was about 6 o'clock when the torpedos struck—it was about 9 o'clock when the transport captain told him a destroyer was alongside, and to go on board. Ropes from the destroyer—it was the Mosquito, a British destroyer, as were all the others—and the dangling boat ropes were used to hold the two together. After helping a number of men over, Mr. Letton slid down the rope onto the Mosquito, unharmed physically. When it pulled away, it had on board 286 men and eighteen officers, but left hundreds behind, necessitated by an accident to the hull in pulling up to the Tuscania. About two hours later, the destroyer Pigeon took off about 700 men and officers.

The Mosquito took its survivors to Bunrana on the north coast of Ireland. Others were taken to Larene, near Belfast on the east coast.

WENT TO CAMP LUDDAN.

IN HIS diary, Mr. Letton records that the survivors bound for Bunrana were met by a military guide and marched about a mile to Camp Luddan, where a battalion of the Royal Fusileers was stationed. There hot stew and bread met them and blankets for all. Later, they entrained for Dublin and from there started across the Irish sea to Holyhead, a nervous lot of men, he writes, for every one claimed a life belt the moment he was on board. From there they went to Winchester.

As soon as Mr. Letton reached Bunrana, he cabled his parents of his safety. However, that was not received until February 9. The cable office sent the wire to London, where it was censored, with great care evidently, as it consists of but two words, and then sent it on. Although he had

left Halifax in January, it was not until the last of March that Mr. Letton reached France, owing to his round-about tour.

His two cabin mates, Capt. Le-Brun and Capt. Sherman, both perished in the disaster. They took off in the life boats, which accounted for the greatest loss of life.

Those who took off in these boats and the rafts kept about 300 yards from the ship, to prevent being caught in the tow when the *Tuscania* went down. British trawlers and destroyers were standing by, but, so it is said, took off the men on the *Tuscania*, rather than picking up those floating about in the vicinity. However, later the rescue ships began to pick up those on the water, but a strong wind which sprang up suddenly, sent many of the little boats toward the steep, smooth, high, and rocky coast of Islay.

THROWN ON ROCKS.

The boats which had drifted close to the shore found it necessary to prepare for their own rescue. The sky was obscured by clouds, the wind increased and turned colder, and a light rain fell on the desolation. The rafts and lifeboats were thrown against the rocky face of Islay, throwing the men into the water to drown. Some fought their way into a little cove, where they could cling to bits of projecting rock, with the breakers hurling their cold lace about them. The stouter ones went back to help the weaker, if they had not succumbed. Small caves afforded slight protection from the icy wind, men lying there without hats or coats, the most exposed to the elements being covered with life preservers for warmth. Other boats were swept into the rocks, shattered, the *Tuscania* survivors dashed back into the chill waters to perish or to maintain a precarious hold on life in the overfilled caves or on the nearly beachless shore. It was in this manner that Mr. Letton's two companions lost their lives.

By some heroic effort, some of the men had climbed the cliffs in the night and had found the home of a Scotch farmer, who just as the dawn was breaking came to build an enormous fire for the soaked survivors. There were eighty-six enlisted men, two captains, two first lieutenants, and a second lieutenant, also four members of the civilian ship crew. But two hundred had perished before reaching shore or at the foot of the rocks. Others were picked up by British trawlers and destroyers.

Those who had survived the night at Islay were cared for in the island homes.

WOMEN SEWED DEATH FLAGS.

For those who had not, caskets were prepared, when the dead had been removed from the rocks. The little village could not supply enough, and trees were felled to make sufficient numbers for the others. Nor did it yield an American flag, so the women of the village, following the description of the men, sat in the little Scotch sitting rooms and made the stars and stripes, that the boys far from home might sleep beneath it.

Mr. Letton was one of four Nebraska men on the Tuscania at the time it was sunk, but as far as he knows he is the only one in Lincoln. A reunion of the survivors is being held in Chicago, beginning yesterday and continuing through Monday, although Mr. Letton does not plan to attend. So far are feelings changed in the last fifteen years that Capt. Wilhelm Meyer of the U-77 was invited to attend.

"Lincoln (NE) Star" Sunday 5 Feb 1933 p 25

Wife:

LETTON — Ethel Kirby (widow of Harry), 88, 225 No. 56th, died Friday. Born Liberty. Member Southview Christian Church, American Legion Auxiliary, Gold 15-year club, former Axis club. Survivors: son, Harry P. Jr., San Marino, Calif.; three granddaughters, Mrs. Arch (Challis) Thiessen, Los Alamos, N.M., Mrs James (Susan) Upchurch, San Diego, Calif., Mrs. Robert (Lorelie) Bryan, Los Angeles, Calif.

Obituary of wife Ethel Kirby Letton — "Lincoln (NE) Journal Star" Sunday 2 Mar 1975 p 40

Son:

MARRIAGE LICENSES.		
Ivan F. Baker, Lincoln...	.....	27
Ariene J. Stastney, Lincoln.....	.....	21
Wesley M. Abbott, Palmyra.....	.....	25
Maxine Bogenreif, Elmwood.....	.....	17
Harry P. Letton, jr, Lincoln.....	.....	23
Carolyn Lehnhoff, Lincoln.....	.....	23

Marriage of son Harry Pike Letton Jr. to Carolyn E. Lehnhoff – “Lincoln (NE) Journal Star” Friday 26 Aug 1938 p 15

HARRY PIKE LETTON
Lincoln
 LAW
 Kappa Sigma; Pi Mu Epsilon;
 Phi Beta Kappa.



Harry Pike Letton Jr., University of Nebraska 1935 yearbook -
https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1265/images/40146_b086485-00087?usePUB=true&usePUBJs=true&pld=469660310

LETTON -**Harry P. Letton**, died Oct. 29, 2002 of cardiac arrest at age 87. He was president and chief executive of Southern California Gas Co. from 1972 until retirement in 1980. President of Los Angeles Town Hall; chairman of Independent Colleges of Southern California; and vice president of Greater Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce; as well as chairman of American Gas Assn., and Pacific Coast Gas Assn. Graduate of University of Nebraska, and its law school, as well as from Harvard Law School, where he earned a masters of law degree in 1938. Served in U.S. Navy during WW II as communications officer. He is survived by his wife, Anne Letton whom he married in 1992 following the death of his first wife, the former Carolyn Lehnhoff in 1991. He is also survived by

three daughters, Challis Thiessen (husband Archer) of Santa Fe, NM, Susan Upchurch of San Diego, and Lolli Bryan of Clarkdale, AZ. Also a grandson, Paul Thiessen of Baltimore, MD; and three stepdaughters, Jane Stockwell (husband Michael), Catherine Giovanisci (Stephen) and Jacqueline Beland (Stephen), all of Southern Calif. The family asks that those wishing to do so, may make a memorial contribution in Mr. Letton's name to either Villa Esperanza in Pasadena or the St. Edmund's Episcopal Church in San Marino.

FOREST LAWN MORTUARY.

Published by Pasadena Star-News on Nov. 6, 2002.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/pasadenastarnews/name/harry-letton-obituary?pid=579673>

Father:

Charles Blair Letton

Light of the Nebraska Bar

Nebraska lost a good citizen, an upright judge, and a lovable man when Charles Blair Letton passed.

Modest almost to self-effacement, Judge Letton's long service as an associate justice of the Nebraska supreme court was a record of unremitting service to the people. He was thoroughly grounded in the law, but he had qualifications more eminently fitting him for the responsibilities of his high place.

His mind was clear and his thought luminous, not befogged by the legalistic myths that so often obscure the vision even of the wisest of jurists. He possessed a faculty for keen reasoning and a human sympathy that gave to his judgments a quality that stamped them with the stamp of authority. His independence of thought was evinced by his numerous dissents, perhaps the most notable being that in the language law case. His line of reasoning in this case was adopted by the supreme court of the United States.

Unfortunately for Nebraska, Judge Letton was victim of the provision that requires the justices of the supreme court to be elected from districts, while the chief justice is elected by the state at large.

It fell out that Judge Letton and Judge Rose had to come before the electors of the First district at the same time. Either deserved to be re-elected; the defeat of either meant a distinct loss to the bench. Judge Rose was chosen by the people, and his distinguished colleague had to retire from a service he so long adorned.

In his 78th year, mellowed and genial, Judge Letton died, respected by the people, loved by his close friends, a man whose work was well done.

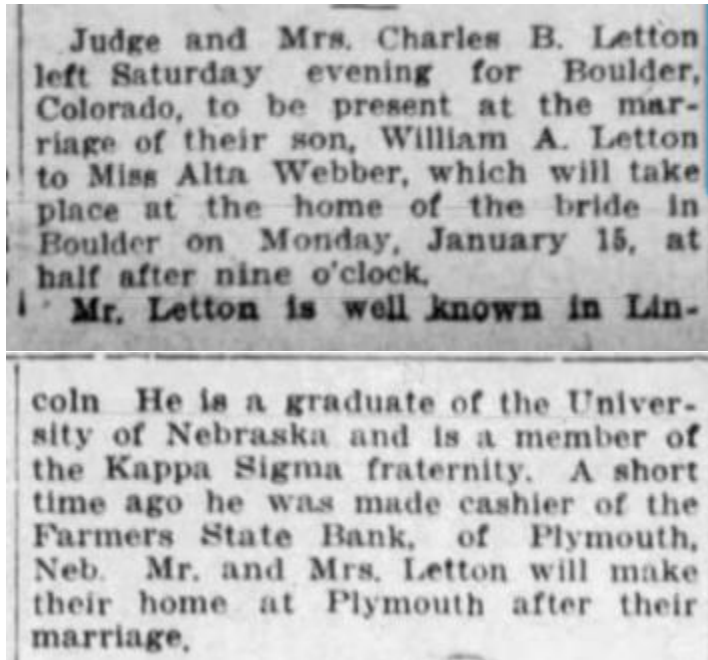
Testimonial to his father, Charles Blair Letton, "Omaha (NE) Evening Bee-News" Wednesday 4 May 1932 p 20

Mother:

LETTON—Oct. 26, 1945—Althera H., formerly of Lincoln, Neb.; wife of the late Charles B. Letton; mother of William A. and the late Harry P. Letton. Private services at chapel of the William R. Hamilton Co., Cass Ave., cor. Alexandrine, Monday morning. Please omit flowers. Interment later. Fairbury, Neb.

Obituary of mother Althera Hosmer Pike Letton - "Detroit (MI) Free Press" Sunday 28 Oct 1945 p 18

Brother:



Marriage of brother William A. Letton to Alta Webber on 15 Jan 1917 in Boulder CO – “Lincoln (NE) Star” Sunday 14 Jan 1917 p 15

Name: Harry Letton Pike (Sr.)

Name variations: middle name spelled Pipe on Tuscania passenger list – university nickname: “Pike”

Military:

On Tuscania: Officer Reserve Corps, Casuals - captain

Serial number: Army officers in WWI were not assigned serial numbers

Entered service from: Springfield, Sangamon IL

Sailed on “Tuscania” as: Harry PIPE Letton

Next-of-kin on “Tuscania”: wife Mrs. H.P. Letton, 431 S. 7th St., Springfield IL

Returned from war on: "Walter A. Luckenbach" Mar 1919

Sailed on return ship as: Harry P. Letton

Next-of-kin on return ship & rank: wife Mrs. Ethel K. Letton, 1732 Ryons St., Lincoln NE (captain, Reg. HQ, 26th Engrs)

World War I draft registration (1917):

Veterans Administration Military Index: cannot locate

Enlisted

Discharged

Address:

Rank/unit:

Birth & death:

Born: 28 Feb 1886 Fairbury, Jefferson NE

Died: 30 Mar 1934 Chicago, Cook IL (St. Luke's Hospital, where he had gone 12 days earlier for treatment of a heart condition)

Find A Grave record: 88476862 – photo – presence on Tuscania noted in text & flower

Burial location: Omaha, Douglas NE

Cemetery: Forest Lawn Memorial Park

Tombstone:

Father: Charles Blair Letton, 25 Oct 1853 Edinburgh, Scotland – 1 May 1932 Lincoln, Lancaster NE.

Son of William Henry Letton & Agnes Michie. The family emigrated to the US in 1869, settling near Bower in Jefferson Co. NE They then moved to Beatrice NE & in 1873 to Fairbury, Jefferson NE.

Served as judge on the NE Supreme Court. Buried in Fairbury Cemetery, Fairbury, Jefferson NE.

Find A Grave: 110993110

Mother: Althera Hosmer Pike Letton, 5 Jul 1863 Carmel, Penobscot ME – 26 Oct 1945 Highland Park, Wayne MI. Daughter of Silas Symonds Pike & Olive Ranger Green. Active in the Daughters of the American Revolution. Buried in Fairbury Cemetery, Fairbury, Jefferson NE. F: 110993182

Find A Grave:

Parents' marriage: 2 Sep 1885 Fairbury, Jefferson NE

Spouse: Ethel Kirby Letton, 8 Dec 1886 Liberty, Gage NE – Feb 1975 Lancaster Co. NE. SSN 508-10-6613. Daughter of Robert H. Kirby (1858-1935) & Ida Emma Cunningham (1861-1952). Buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Omaha, Douglas NE.

Spouse Find A Grave: 88476926

Marriage: 18 Nov 1911 Springfield IL

Children:

- Harry Pike Letton Jr., 12 Apr 1915 Chicago, Cook IL – 29 Oct 2002 San Marino, Los Angeles CA. SSN 050-18-9502. Married on 31 Aug 1938 in Lancaster Co. NE to Carolyn E. Lehnhoff, daughter of Henry J. Lehnhoff & Rae Challis. She died in 1991; he remarried in 1992, to Anne. Graduate of the U of NE, of the U of NE Law School & of Harvard University Law School. Served in the US Navy in WWII.

Sibling:

- William Adam Letton, 27 Dec 1889 Fairbury, Jefferson NE – 11 Nov 1993 CO. Attorney. Married in Boulder CO on 15 Jan 1917 to Alta Webber (1892-1990, F: 139496137). Buried in Fairmount Cemetery, Denver, Denver CO. F: 139496113

Notes:

Descended on his mother's side from Revolutionary War soldiers Silas Symonds (1758-1840) & Captain William Symonds, of Vermont.

Pre-war:

Graduate of Fairbury (NE) High School 1904.

Graduate of the University of Nebraska 1909 with a B.S. in civil engineering.

Wartime:

"Lincoln (NE) Journal Star" 9 Feb 1918 p 1- telegram received by Judge C.B. Letton 9 Feb read "Buncrana - Arrived well. Letton." A University of NE student, known as Pike.

"Chicago (IL) Tribune" Sunday 10 Feb 1918 p 2 – 12 more men reported safe, among them Captain Harry Letton of the Engineers' Reserve Corps. His wife is living at the home of her sister, Mrs. Frank L. Britton [sic/Brittin, i.e. Edna Kirby Brittin, Ethel Kirby Letton's twin sister], 4722 Sheridan Rd.

Post-war:

Obituary:

Numerous articles nationwide that he is critically ill & then dies.

"Nebraska State Journal" 31 Mar 1934 p 14 - photo – resident of 1919 "E" St., Lincoln NE. Consulting engineer, d. 30 Mar 1934 at St. Luke's Hospital, Chicago, where he went 12 days earlier to receive treatment from a heart specialist from Northwestern University. Had been ill several months. Son of late Charles B. Letton, former NE Supreme Court judge. A civil engineer considered an expert on municipal waterworks. Graduate U of NE 1909, also studied at MIT.

Sanitary engineer for the city of Providence RI in 1911. With NJ State Board of Health until 1913, then with US Public Health Service until 1919. Enlisted in Chicago as a lieutenant, trained at Ft. Leavenworth. Was on the Tuscania; taken by trawler to Londonderry, Ireland. Was in France the next 15 months as a sanitary officer, inspected drinking water. Was the 1st commander of the Lincoln NE American Legion. Was the 1st sanitary engineer for the state of NE (1916-17). Member of many clubs & associations. Survived by wife Ethel, son Harry P. Jr, mother Mrs. C.B. Letton & brother. The body is being returned to Lincoln NE on 1 Apr 1934. Harry returned to Lincoln NE in 1919 & was Grant, Fulton & Letton. Also for a number of years worked with Burns-Potter.

Social Security number:

Censuses:

1900 Fairbury, Jefferson NE - 10th St.

Charles B. Letton [misindexed as LETTON and LITTON], 46 Scotland, Oct 1853, father b. England, mother b. Scotland, emigrated 1869, naturalized, married 15 years, district court judge Althera, 37 ME, Jul 1863, father b. NH, mother b. VT, gave birth to 3 children, 2 are living Henry P., 14 NE, Feb 1886, school William A., 9 NE, Dec 1889, school & servant Anna Hartman, 30 Germany, Dec 1869

1910 Lincoln, Lancaster NE

Charles B. LETTEN, 56 Scotland, parents b. England, emigrated 1869, naturalized, married 24 years, lawyer, judge Supreme Court

Althera, 48 ME, parents b. VT, gave birth to 2 children, 2 are living
Harry P., 23 NE, civil engineer
William A., 20 NE

1920 Lincoln, Lancaster NE – 1921 S. 16th St. – conducted 6 Jan 1920
Harry P. Letton, 34 NE, father b. Scotland, mother b. ME, engineer, consulting
Ethel, 33 NE, parents b. IL
Harry P., 4 years 8 months IL

1930 Lincoln, Lancaster NE – 2845 Maure (spelling?) Ave.
Harry P. Letton, 43 NE, father b. Scotland, mother b. ME, age 25 at 1st marriage, salesman,
securities
Ethel K., 43 NE, parents b. IL
Harry P., 14 IL