

Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative Irish, John Powell Senator _____

Represented Johnson County, Iowa

1. Birthday and place 1 Jan 1843 Spaulding, Iowa, some sources say Rose Hill, Iowa

2. Marriage (s) date place
Anna Fletcher 3 Nov 1875

3. Significant events for example:

A. Business _____

B. Civic responsibilities _____

C. Profession Editor; Journalist

4. Church membership _____

5. Sessions served 12th, 13th, 14th General Assemblies 1868, 1870, 1872

6. Public Offices

A. Local _____

B. State Nominated by the Democratic State Convention for Governor in 1877, but was defeated

C. National _____

7. Death 6 Oct 1923 Berkeley, California

8. Children Frances (Mrs Francis Hus); John Peck

9. Names of parents Frederick M. and Elizabeth (Robinson) Irish

10. Education Educated in the schools of his native city

11. Degrees _____

12. Other applicable information Democrat

- He taught school starting at age 17
- He made great efforts to secure a better college of law at the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa, as well as to found the college of medicine
- He was a great orator.
- Apr 1864- he acquired The Iowa State Press, newspaper of Iowa City for 41 years.
- Helped create the Iowa Soldiers Orphan Home as a liquidator and served as one of the trustees.
- He left for California in 1882

COL. J. P. IRISH KILLED BY CAR IN CALIFORNIA

**Distinguished Son of Iowa—
Editor, Orator, Attorney,
Farmer and Official,
Meets Death in West**

Half-masted, the Stars and Stripes are fluttering sadly in the October breezes, over the city hall and the university of Iowa's Old Capitol.

The flag of his well-loved country tells of the tragic death of Hon. John P. Irish, news of whose fate reached Iowa City, through the Associated Press and dispatches to his niece, Miss Elizabeth Irish, head of Irish's Business college.

A wave of sorrow swept over the city, when these messages announced that Colonel Irish, one of the most prominent citizens of Oakland, Calif., had been run down by a streetcar, at an intersection, in the business heart of Berkeley, California.

The accident happened Saturday morning, and Mr. Irish breathed his last that evening, a victim of cerebral hemorrhage, presumably due to a skull fracture.

The funeral will be held Tuesday, Oct. 9th, says an Associated Press dispatch today.

One of Iowa's Greatest Sons.
Colonel John Powell Irish was one of Iowa's favorite and foremost sons. He was born and reared in Iowa City. His birthplace was at Rose Hill, the present home of his sister, Miss Libbie Irish. He was born on New Year's day 1843—almost 81 years ago.

Early in life he gave evidence of the devotion to letters and education that characterized his after days. When aged about 17, he was a teacher in the Third ward school, of which his brother, Prof. Thomas Irish was chief—being the first teacher in Iowa City, when this younger brother, John P., was teaching. Among Col-

publican state, when he lived in Iowa, but made splendid runs for congress and for the governor's seat on the democratic platforms, which he espoused sincerely, devotedly, and with unswerving loyalty. From that faith, he never really wavered, although he battled once against a tenet, whose democracy he denied—the Bryanitic "free silver" theory, against which he launched the thunders of his finest oratory. He was a powerful speaker for or against any thesis, which he defended, or attacked, respectively. Thus whether one agreed with his views or not, and, in such instances as equal suffrage which he opposed, he was not always on the so-called "popular side", he was always assured of an earnest hearing, and an intensely interested audience, as well as a great one.

Editor of Power

He was an editor of power, too. In 1864, he acquired the Iowa State Press, the prototype of the Press-Citizen, and from about Christmas time that year, until 1882, or 41 years ago last month—almost 18 years in toto he was its editor.

His law library was the largest and finest in Iowa at one time, and was even so much larger than the university's own law library, that law students made much use of his generously loaned volumes.

Iowa learned to know the potency of his pen—sometimes mordant; sometimes humor-tipped—always trenchant. Throughout the state he was loved by his fellow-democrats, and feared (though esteemed) by his republican "hostiles", when he belabored their principles and arguments, with his giant blows of logic, humor, and sarcasm.

As he provided strength for the university, by securing the "sinews of war", in the shape of funds, and fine men for the faculty; so he made strong and conquering his party in Iowa City and Johnson county, where democracy achieved remarkable triumphs during his days, when the Iowa City Press first became one of the foremost democratic papers in Iowa.

He was one of the legislative creators of the Iowa Soldiers' Orphans' home at Davenport, and served as one of its trustees up to the time of its burning at the Gal-

land. I see Germans, Bohemians, French, and other nationalities represented in the throng whose faces are illumined by your flashing lights—but I can bid goodbye to you, one and all, in a language that is common to the whole world—the language of the heart."

And the thunder of their answering voices rings in the ears of the writer to this hour.

Students Remember Him Also
The students of the graduating class of 1892 also presented to Mr. Irish a farewell gift—another gold watch and chain, as a token of their affection. In turn the recipient had silver medals, appropriately engraved, struck off, and presented one of these to each of the graduates.

Gift Giving in Far West

The giving of rich gifts to the Iowa star was not ended, when Mr. Irish went to the Golden Gate. Many years have flown since that night and Colonel Irish has lived since 1882 another span of 41 years—near the sun-kissed Pacific, and there, too, people, even the people of an alien race, have been glad to tender to him handsome offerings.

As official guests of the Japanese nation, for example, Colonel and Mrs. Irish visited Japan, last year, and were accorded much attention from the intelligentsia, in recognition of the services Mr. Irish rendered their countrymen, when the big-hearted Iowan defended them against what he considered unfair attacks of the radical anti-Japanese element in California. More than 200,000 people joined him, when a vote was taken upon the measures directed against the Japanese.

At that time, the Japanese government expressed its appreciation by sending to Mr. Irish a very large silver jarikisha, inlaid with gold, to be used as a decorative centerpiece. It is not only an extremely valuable gift, with its many pounds of precious metals, but is also an example of the highest quality of Japanese silversmithing.

Other Honors in California

In California, Colonel Irish won the title that is here attached to his honored name. He became a member of the governors' club in that state, and hence acquired his

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Iowa City, Iowa

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Early in life he gave evidence of the devotion to letters and education that characterized his after days. When aged about 17, he was a teacher in the Third ward school, of which his brother, Prof. Thomas Irish was chief—being the first city superintendent in Iowa City, when this younger brother, John P., was teaching. Among Colonel Irish's pupils then were Former Alderman Ira Tulloss and Mr. W. E. C. Foster, still Iowa Citizens.

Love of Education

That he never lost his love for education was proved when, in the years that brought him honors and fame, he labored to achieve the up-building of Iowa university. For its interests, he always stood foursquare, and as firm as the Rock of Gibraltar. He gave of his best, in brain and endeavor, when he served Iowa as a member of the board of regents, the precursor of the state board of education, and in the Iowa legislature, where he served two terms, in the early '70's as state representative.

He spared no effort to secure a better college of law, and to found the college of medicine, and develop both of them. He labored for bigger appropriations than the earlier law-making shortsighted. Than this grand old man of Iowa were always ready to award to the infant institution. In his love of law he became an attorney himself although he did not practice that profession until he went to California. It was he who laid the foundation for a bigger and better college of law when he secured Chancellor Hammond as its chief.

The city, itself, he served as president of the board of education. Political Leader—Silver-Tongued Orator

He was a leader in the local political world, where he first gained his reputation as a silver-tongued orator, a reputation which followed him to California, and has become nationally acknowledged. He was, of course, powerless to conquer the countless thousands of adverse republican votes in a rock-ribbed re-

own of war", in the shape of funds, and fine men for the faculty: to be made, strong and conquering his party in Iowa City and Johnson county, where democracy achieved remarkable triumphs during his days, when the Iowa City Press first became one of the foremost democratic papers in Iowa.

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Community Uniformly Regrets Departure

When Colonel Irish decided to remove to California, the entire community, regardless of party affiliations voiced its regret that the city and county were to lose so valuable a citizen.

The night of his farewell, in 1882, the citizens of the community united in a monster parade, a torch-light procession that rivaled those great demonstrations that marked presidential campaigns in the days that are no more. A public reception was held at the old St. James hotel, on the site of what became the Iowa Union, later fire-swept, and is now occupied by the Dey block.)

There he was the recipient of a superb gold watch and chain, while his wife was recognized, also, by way of a fine clock, as slight testimonials of the esteem in which they were held here, in the city which had been their home for four decades.

A memory of the long gone days comes back to the writer at this moment—as the mind's eye visions the spectacle of hundreds of torch-bearing marchers massed about the St. James corner, while a man of great stature, fine physique, massive brow, and flowing locks which he tossed like the mane of an African lion, took his stand upon the hostelry's balcony, and countless voices were raised in acclaim.

That same memory brings back the typical Irishesque oratorical outburst:

"My friends—I see before me a small army of men and women, whose native homes, in many instances, are in lands across the seas; I cannot address all of you in the language of your Father-

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He first purchased an interest in the Oakland Times, and two years later, bought out his partner. When he sold the Times, it was to take

over San Francisco's oldest paper, the Alta Californian, the change being made because San Franciscans recognized his worth and power as an editorial writer and a force in the community, and urged him to cross the bay.

During Grover Cleveland's second administration, he was named naval officer at the port of San Francisco, which office he ably filled, regardless of political changes, through subsequent administrations, serving nearly 20 years. He was also national commissioner of the Yosemite Valley; and was a founder and president, and member of the board of managers of the Home for the Blind, at Oakland.

After he retired, he devoted his energies to editorial writing—for almost every paper of prominence in California—and to farming.

He acquired 1,000 cultivated acres in the Sacramento Valley, and, as the waters seeped up through the decayed flags that formed the "ground" for his farm which he christened the Casa Rio, he raised marvelous types of asparagus, potatoes, beans, and other products, beyond betterment.

This ranch he has owned and cultivated about 20 years.

Up to the day of his tragic fate, it has been his pride and pleasure to devote his personal energies to its operation, although he had a Japanese manager in charge of it in later times.

Recovers Health Recently

During the last year, Colonel Irish's health was gravely imperiled, but he conquered in a great battle, and seemed to be himself again, writing and speaking with his pristine power during the last few weeks.

Then came the terrible tragedy, and now a distinguished and beloved son of Iowa lies lifeless, while an old home city and state, and his adopted city and state mourn inexpressibly.

His Bereaved Family

Colonel Irish's bereaved family includes his venerable wife, formerly Miss Anna Fletcher (a sister of a pioneer sheriff of Johnson county, Gil. Fletcher) whom Mr. Irish wed on November 3, 1875; a daughter, Frances, Mrs. Francis Hus, of Lake Merritt, near Berkeley, whom he was visiting, it is presumed, when he was stricken down fatally; and a son, Attorney John Peck Irish, a namesake of the late Dr. Peck, of Davenport, a father of the university of Iowa college

of medicine. Also grieving are a grandson and a granddaughter; a brother, Prof. Thomas Irish, a pioneer educator of Dubuque, Iowa; and a sister, Miss Libbie Irish, of Iowa City; and three nieces and two nephews—Miss Elizabeth Irish, Iowa City; and Prof. Fred T. Irish, of Tempe, Ari., two other educators; and Miss Jane Irish, Iowa City; John T. Irish, of Oregon, Ill., and Mrs. Ruth Irish Preston, of Davenport; and two great nieces and one great nephew.

To these well-known kinsmen and kinswomen, who have lost a beloved husband, father, brother, and uncle, Iowa City and Johnson county, where the name of John P. Irish is enshrined in thousands of hearts, will tender unbounded and unending sympathy.

Their loss, today, is that of two states, and of the nation, itself.

**J. L. WILKINSON
LAID TO REST
IN ST. JOSEPH'S**

Mr. J. L. Wilkinson, one of Iowa City's worthy residents, was laid to rest this morning, in St. Joseph's cemetery, following services at 9 o'clock, at St. Patrick's church.

Many friends are mourning this excellent citizen, who, for 15 years, was engaged in the retail grocery business, in the building now occupied by Frank Wicks' store. During the last few years, he has conducted a similar business at 519 South Dodge.

Mr. Wilkinson passed away, as briefly recorded herein, Saturday, at his home at 620 South Dodge street, Friday afternoon, at 3. He had been ill 18 months, being a victim of rheumatism, with complications.

Mr. Wilkinson was born in Iowa City, July 19, 1869, and was thus 54 years, two months, and 16 days of age, when the end came. He passed the greater part of his life here, and received his education in the public schools and the old Iowa City academy.

A host of friends will tender sympathy to the grief-stricken widow and eight children—Thomas, connected with the Johnson County Savings bank; Mary, a junior in the college of liberal arts, Iowa university; Ann, a graduate nurse, at Davenport; Edward, a liberal arts sophomore; and Paul, at St. Patrick's school. There are also four brothers

Source: Iowa Territorial and State Legislators Collection compiled by volunteers and staff at the State Historical Society of Iowa Library, Des Moines, Iowa.