Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative Gear, John Henry Senator _____

Represented Des Moines County, Iowa

1. Birthday and place 7 April 1825 Athens, New York

2. Marriage (s) date place

Harriet S. Foote 1852

3. Significant events for example:

A. Business _____

B. Civic responsibilities _____

C. Profession Grocery, mercantile business

4. Church membership _____

5. Sessions served 14th, 15th, 16th General Assemblies 1872, 1874, 1876

6. Public Offices

A. Local _____

B. State Speaker of the House in 15th and 16th General Assemblies 1874, 1876; he was Governor of Iowa 1878-1881

C. National United States Senator, elected Jan 1894, re-elected in 1900 served from 1895 until his death

7. Death 14 Jul 1900 Washington, D.C.; buried Aspen Grove Cemetery, Burlington, Iowa

8. Children Mrs. Horace Rand; Mrs. J. H. Blythe; two children preceded him in death

9. Names of parents Reverend E. G. Gear

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

Gen. John Kerr

10. Education He was educated in common schools.

11. Degrees

12. Other applicable information Republican

He came to Burlington, Iowa in 1843 where he lived thereafter.
He started his mercantile business by engaging as a clerk with the firm of Bridgman and Brothers. He worked there for a year and then was employed by H. I. Coolbaugh for 5 years.
He then became a partner for Mr. Coolbaugh and Company and 5 years later he purchased the entire wholesale grocery.

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

Gear, John Henry

Sources Log For Legislation Entries

Applicability

Source	Non Applicable	Applicable	Information obtained
- Obituary - The Evening Gazette, Burlington Iowa Sat. July 14, 1900, p. 1, col. 1, 2, 3			
- bioguide.congress.gov (accessed 1/30/02) ✓			

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

SENATOR J. H. GEAR

Passed Away at the Portland Hotel in Washington at 4:28 A. M. To-day.

He Has Been in Good Health and Was Only Taken Ill at One-Thirty This Morning.

The Remains Will be Brought to Burlington For Burial Arriving Here Monday.

WASHINGTON, July 14.—United States Senator Gear, of Iowa, died at his apartments in the Portland at 4:28 this morning, of heart failure. He was in his usual health up to 1:30, when he was attacked. Doctors were immediately summoned, but could do nothing for him. While Senator Gear had been in ill health for years, death came entirely unexpected. He was in excellent spirits last night, made an engagement with some political friends for today, and retired about 11 o'clock in his usual good health. Shortly before 2 o'clock the Senator summoned his confidential secretary, Col. Root, and informed him that he was troubled with congestion of the chest. Simple remedies were applied by Mrs. Gear and Root, and seemed to relieve the Senator's suffering for a time. Shortly afterwards his condition became critical and the family physician was summoned. About 4 o'clock the Senator seemed easier, but within fifteen minutes he was dead. The remains of the Senator will be taken to Burlington on a special car tomorrow afternoon. President Pro Tem Frye and Speaker Henderson will both designate committees to attend the funeral. Secretary of Agriculture Wilson will accompany Mrs. Gear west. The Senator leaves, beside his widow, two daughters, Mrs. J. W. Blythe and Mrs. Horace Rand, both residing in Burlington. The funeral service will be held in Burlington some time on Wednesday.

Senator John Henry Gear is dead.

His grand and victorious life came to a sudden end at 4:30 o'clock this morning. In his rooms in The Portland at Washington, D. C., while surrounded by Mrs. Gear, Col R. Root, of Keokuk, Iowa, and a few Washington friends and physicians, the splendid career of the ex-governor of Iowa and the member of the United States senate from Iowa was brought to a sudden termination by the angel of death, before whom the great as well as the small, the famous as well as the unknown, the rich as well as the poor, must inevitably and finally bow.

In spite of the reports to the contrary, Senator Gear has been enjoying very good health during the last three months. His final illness seized him suddenly at 1:30 o'clock this morning while he was in his apartments, and three hours later he closed his eyes in their last sleep.

The news of Senator Gear's death was flashed over the telegraph wires to every state and city in the union at an early hour this morning. To all it brought painful surprise, but to none was the surprise greater than to the members of his family and to others who enjoyed an intimate acquaintance with him. This was true because his health lately was of the best and his relatives had no reason to expect anything but the best reports from him.

Several letters, either written or dictated by Senator Gear personally, were received by various Burlington people yesterday.

Communications received from him yesterday contained the information that Senator and Mrs. Gear intended to start for Burlington this (Saturday) Monday for the summer.

The news of Senator Gear's death was received with the greatest of surprise and regret when announced at an early hour this morning by the newspaper extras.

in the national senate, his name and history were known to every man, woman and child in Iowa.

The statements which have recently been made by some newspapers in different parts of the country to the effect that Senator Gear was ill are positively denied by those in a position to know the true state of his health, and they say that he was in the best of health during the last three months. A letter received but yesterday from Senator Gear stated that he and Mrs. Gear intended to start for Burlington this evening, and would arrive on Monday evening, to spend the summer here.

The members of the family here will, as far as is known at the present time, receive the remains and the bereaved wife at Burlington, and will leave the trip from Washington in the capable hands of Sergeant-at-Arms Ransdall.

The fact that The Gazette received telegrams from nearly twenty different daily newspapers in Iowa, asking the latest information had here in regard to Senator Gear's death, shows what an intense interest in the news is taken in all parts of Iowa.

BIOGRAPHY.

John Henry Gear was born in Ithica, New York, on the 7th day of April, 1825. His father was Reverend E. G. Gear, a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal church, and the deceased senator was the only son. In 1843 Mr. Gear came to Burlington, where he has resided ever since. Upon his arrival here he commenced his mercantile career by engaging as clerk with the firm of Bridgman & Brothers. After being with this concern for a little over [illegible] W. F. Coolbaugh (late president of the Union National bank of Chicago), who was even at that early date the leading merchant in the state. He was cautious, paid great attention to details, worked incessantly, paid his bills promptly and laid the foundation for the honorable nickname, "Old Business," by which he was always known. He did not show an aptitude then for political life, nor did he make any effort to enter it. He was a republican as soon as the new party was organized and uncompromising in his attitude on the questions raised during the civil war, but until 1863 he did not solicit the votes of the people, and then only to become the mayor of Burlington, a position which he filled with credit.

When his term expired he retired again to private life, from which he did not emerge until 1872, when party exigencies demanded his election to the legislature, and he was sent to the house. He displayed there the same love for close attention to business affairs that he had in his private life. He was cautious, slow to accept innovations until common sense was behind them, and eager to know how and why public money was expended. Men came to know that his advice was given only after long thought and that it was valuable.

In 1874 he was elected speaker of the house, and again in 1876 the same office was given him. His first term as speaker came at the end of the famous deadlock in the grange legislature of 1574. From the legislature he passed to the governor's chair, where he served four years and did much to strengthen the power of his party in the state. He was not given to making long enmities, and he had possessed the knack of conserving popular interests at the right time. Retiring from the governor's chair, he became a private citizen again until 1886, when he was elected to congress and re-elected in 1888, without opposition.

The landslide against the republican party in 1890 defeated him for re-election to congress, with four other congressmen of the state, but he served as assistant secretary of the treasury for some time. In 1892 his party again re-[illegible] assistant secretary of the treasury, 1894, he was elected to the United States senate as the junior senator from Iowa. He was conspicuous in

noted for their progressive ideas. Senator Gear, beginning with small capital, increased his field of operations until he was one of the best known merchants in the state.

Governor Shaw is out of town spe[illegible] ing a few weeks in Colorado with [illegible] family.

Secretary Dobson is at the lakes.

Treasurer Herriott leaves toni[illegible] leaving Auditor Merriam the o[illegible] member of the executive council [illegible] the city.

Speculation as to what Gover[illegible] Shaw will do in the appointment [illegible] successor is considerably up in the [illegible] It is a well known fact that the go[illegible] nor would like the place himself, [illegible] it is not thought for a moment tha[illegible] would resign the office of gover[illegible] with the understanding that Milli[illegible] would appoint him.

Dolliver was in the city today [illegible] refused to be quoted.

WEEKLY BANK STATEMENT

NEW YORK, July 14.—The we[illegible] bank statement shows a reserve [illegible] crease of $4,370,825; loans decre[illegible] $1,654,200; deposits increased $1,[illegible] 300. The banks now hold $19,960,12[illegible] excess of the legal requirements.

THE LATE JOHN HENRY GEAR.

MORE THAN HER SHA[illegible]

America Captured Most of Big Events in Paris Today.

World's Athletic Championship Co[illegible] Are Being Held in the French Capital Today.

PARIS, July 14.—In the first e[illegible] [illegible] 110 metres hurdle, Kramlein, of P[illegible] sylvania, won; McClain, of Michi[illegible]

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

land at Washington, D. C., while surrounded by Mrs. Gear, Col R. Root, of Keokuk, Iowa, and a few Washington friends and physicians, the splendid career of the ex-governor of Iowa and the member of the United States senate from Iowa was brought to a sudden termination by the angel of death, before whom the great as well as the small, the famous as well as the unknown, the rich as well as the poor, must inevitably and finally bow.

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Communications received from him yesterday contained the information that Senator and Mrs. Gear intended to start for Burlington this (Saturday) evening, and would arrive here on Monday for the summer.

The news of Senator Gear's death was received with the greatest of surprise and profoundest of regret by everybody in Burlington, his home city. So great was the interest manifested in the news that within a half hour after the reception of the first telegram it was known practically all over the city, telephones and messenger boys being brought into use to carry the announcement to various parts of the city.

Senator John H. Gear was an American, an Iowan, but, first of all, he was a Burlingtonian, and never did he lose his great love and interest in his home city. Burlington people not only honored and respected Senator Gear, but they were proud of him; proud of his citizenship, proud of his political power and proud of his character as a man. Citizens of all political parties unite today in grieving at his death, and all feel that it is a personal loss to the state, but particularly to the city of Burlington.

A private telegram received this morning from Washington, D. C., stated that Mrs. Gear was bearing up well under her sudden bereavement.

Another private telegram was received from Sergeant-at-Arms of the United States Senate Ransdall, saying that at the request of Mrs. Gear he would take charge of the funeral arrangements, and that he and Mrs. Gear would accompany the remains to Burlington, leaving Washington at 3:30 o'clock tomorrow afternoon. No further arrangements for the funeral have yet been made, but without doubt the funeral services will be public and will be attended by the most prominent men in all parts of this and surrounding states.

Because of Senator Gear's long political service in the state of Iowa and been made by some newspapers in different parts of the country to the effect that Senator Gear was ill are positively denied by those in a position to know the true state of his health, and they say that he was in the best of health during the last three months. A letter received but yesterday from Senator Gear stated that he and Mrs. Gear intended to start for Burlington this evening, and would arrive on Monday evening, to spend the summer here.

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Mr. Gear belonged to the generation of young men who abandoned farm life and small commercial pursuits in the early years of the Nineteenth century and came west to find room for their ambitions and energy in which to work.

He was 18 when he made his way to Burlington, taking all the chances of travel of that time and facing poverty for the reward which labor might bring in the years to come. He was a merchant in Burlington when Chicago was a struggling village, before the Union Pacific was constructed, when St. Louis was the commercial mart of the west, when the Missouri was to be the great navigable stream of the middle country, when there was not an operated railroad west of Ohio, not a mile of telegraph line, nor any means of transportation but steamboat, stages or one's own feet.

Burlington was a town of considerable importance at that time, having a wide trade and a class of merchants

THE LATE JOHN HENRY GEAR.

speaker came at the end of the famous deadlock in the grange legislature of 1874. From the legislature he passed to the governor's chair, where he served four years and did much to strengthen the power of his party in the state. He was not given to making long enmities, and he had possessed the knack of conserving popular interests at the right time. Retiring from the governor's chair, he became a private citizen again until 1886, when he was elected to congress and re-elected in 1888, without opposition.

The landslide against the republican party in 1890 defeated him for re-election to congress, with four other congressmen of the state, but he served as assistant secretary of the treasury for some time. In 1892 his party again returned him to congress, and in January, 1894, he was elected to the United States senate as the junior senator from Iowa. He was conspicuous in congress for his work on the committee on ways and means, where he had charge of the sugar schedule. At the time of his death he was chairman of the senate committee on Pacific railways, and it was through his efforts that the government was successful in realizing $117,000,000 from them instead of the $20,000,000 offered.

He was always doing something and getting something for Iowa. His energy, skill and persistence have often accomplished things at Washington that other men failed to bring about. He bore the reputation at the capital of securing more for his people than any other senator now in office.

In 1852 Senator Gear was married to Harriet S. Foote, formerly of Middlebury, Vt., and by whom he had four children, two of whom survive him, Mrs. Horace Rand and Mrs. J. W. Blythe.

PROFOUND SURPRISE AND REGRET

The Manner in Which the News Was Received in Des Moines.

(Special to The Gazette.)

DES MOINES, July 14.—The death of Senator Gear caused profound

MORE THAN HER SHA

America Captured Most of Big Events in Paris Today.

World's Athletic Championship Co Are Being Held in the French Capital Today.

PARIS, July 14.—In the first e for the world's athletic championsl 110 metres hurdle, Kramlein, of P sylvania, won; McClain, of Michi was second; Moloney, of Chicago, third. Time, 15 2-5 seconds.

Sheldon, of the New York Ath club; McCracken, of Pennsylva and Garrett, of Princeton, qualifie finals in the shot-putting contest

In the final heat, 100 meters, Ja of Princeton, won; Tewksberr Pennsylvania, was second; Rowley champion of New South Wales, third. Time, 11 seconds.

In the 400 metres, flat long, of the New York Athletic club, first; Moloney, of Chicago, Hol second; Georgetown Schulz, third.

A. Dane qualified for the final

In the 400 metres hurdle, Tewk ry and Orton, of Pennsylvania wo

This leaves Tauzin, the French to qualify for the final.

In the 800 metres hurdle, flat, of Brown University; English and liams of the Americans; Crega Princeton; De Logue, Frenchman Speide, Hungarian, are qualified fo final.

In the long jump trials, Prins of Syracuse, was first; Krane second; Delanney, third; Remin Pennsylvania, fourth; Leahy, En and Irish champion, fifth.

This concluded the day's events

FIRST CENSUS REPORT.

WASHINGTON, July 14.—The sus office issued the first bulleti day, giving the population of the trict of Columbia as 278,718. Th an increase since the last censu 48,226.

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

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress

1774 - Present

- Biography
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- Bibliography
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GEAR, John Henry, 1825-1900

Senate Years of Service: 1895-1900
Party: Republican

GEAR, John Henry, a Representative and a Senator from Iowa; born in Ithaca, Tompkins County, N.Y., April 7, 1825; attended the common schools; moved to Galena, Ill., in 1836, to Fort Snelling, Iowa, in 1838, and to Burlington in 1843, where he engaged in mercantile pursuits; mayor of Burlington 1863; member, State house of representatives 1871-1873, serving as speaker two terms; Governor of Iowa 1878-1881; elected as a Republican to the Fiftieth and Fifty-first Congresses (March 4, 1887-March 3, 1891); unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1890; appointed by President Benjamin Harrison as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury 1892-1893; elected to the Fifty-third Congress (March 4, 1893-March 3, 1895); elected as a Republican to the United States Senate in 1894; reelected in 1900 and served from March 4, 1895, until his death on July 14, 1900, before the start of his second term; chairman, Committee on Pacific Railroads (Fifty-fourth through Fifty-Sixth Congresses); died in Washington, D.C.; interment in Aspen Grove Cemetery, Burlington, Iowa.

Bibliography

American National Biography; *Dictionary of*

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

American Biography; U.S. Congress. *Memorial Addresses for John Henry Gear*. 56th Cong., 2nd sess., 1900-1901. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901.

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