Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative _____ Senator Bills, John Carver — Represented Scott County, Iowa

1. Birthday and place 7 Nov 1833 Perry, New York

2. Marriage (s) date place

3. Significant events for example:

   A. Business Admitted to the bar in Buffalo, New York

   B. Civic responsibilities

   C. Profession Attorney

4. Church membership

5. Sessions served 19th, 20th General Assemblies 1882, 1884

6. Public Offices

   A. Local Davenport board of education; Scott County attorney; mayor of Davenport 3 terms

   B. State

   C. National

7. Death 23 Aug 1897

8. Children No children

9. Names of parents Jonathan and Almira Billes

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

Bills, John Carver

10. Education Educated in the common schools; attended Perry Academy, Perry, New York

11. Degrees Attended Poughkeepsie, New York, Law school.

12. Other applicable information Republican, later Democrat

- After leaving the academy he began studying law in a law office in Warsaw, New York
- He came to Iowa, settling at Davenport in 1856.
- He soon formed a partnership with T.C. Campbell which dissolved in 1860. He then practiced alone until 1870 when he joined with Vernon Block which ended in Apr 1888. He soon joined with Carl F. Hass on 1 May 1888 until just before his death.

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

Bills, John

Sources Log For Legislation Entries

Applicability

Source	Non Applicable	Applicable	Information obtained
- Obituary - The Davenport Daily Republican, Davenport, Iowa, Tues. Aug. 24, 1897, p. 7, col. 1, 2, 3			
- Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Early Public Men of Iowa by Stiles 1916, p. 755			

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HAS GONE TO HIS REST.

Hon. John C. Bills Passed Away Yesterday Morning.

His Reputation Was State Wide--Was Thrice Mayor of Davenport and an Ex-State Senator--His Life's History.

Hon. John. C. Bills, the most prominent, beloved and respected attorney of the Scott county bar, died by his own hand at his home on upper Perry street shortly after 8 o'clock yesterday morning.

The announcement of his death was greeted with surprise throughout the city and threw a gloom over it which in many instances caused men to forget their labors in their expressions of dismay and feeling for the man and his tragic end.

Mr. Bills was one of the ablest and most prominent attorneys in the west and by his death one of the brightest lights of the Iowa bar goes out forever. He was respected by one and all and leaves a record for honor, straightforwardness and love for his fellow man which stands without a blemish.

It was not more than a month ago that Mr. Bills suffered a light attack of heat prostration while on his way home from his office. The day was one of the most torrid of the season and although the stroke was a comparatively mild one, his recovery was not as speedy as was hoped for and, in fact, he never fully rallied or regained his former strength.

His life had been one of business activity and when he realized that his return to his former health must necessitate a protracted season of quiet and rest it preyed upon his mind. Dr. Watzek, his attending physician, was much concerned regarding him and at length prevailed upon him to take a vacation at a Michigan summer resort. Being a great home man, however, and strictly adverse to all ostentation, he was not contented at the summer resort and returned in a few days to his home in this city. His condition had not improved during his absence and he left his home but a few times since his return a week ago. A feeling of deep melancholy had taken possession of him. His old friend and physician, Dr. W. W. Grant, who was in the city, called upon him and informed him that there was nothing wrong physically, but that his nerves required a rest. His time should be spent quietly at home for a few weeks. He should see his friends and enjoy their company. There was no reason why he should [illegible] for a time brightened up and seemed [illegible] ified to move a jury than he, his fearlessness and at the same time his knowledge of right and wrong in the law being of great assistance. His victories were many and his defeats few.

His record as a public man was one of honor. He never sought an office, preferring that the people seek him, which they did. For years he was a member of the board of education as well as county attorney. Three times he was elected mayor and from 1881 to 1885 he served as senator in the state legislature.

He was a staunch standby of republicanism from early manhood, but being opposed to the principles of prohibition, he withdrew from the party and in 1888 cast his first democratic vote, since which time he has upheld the principles of that party.

Besides his widow he is survived by one sister, Mrs. Mendal, of Allegan, Mich., a brother, Dr. Walter Bills, of the same place, and a brother, Harrison Bills, in Montana. The death of his elder brother, Rev. Jared M. Bills, of Rochester, N. Y., occurred some weeks ago. The funeral announcement will be made later.

THE BAR TAKES ACTION.

Regarding the Death of Hon. John C. Bills.

A large meeting of the Scott county bar was called to order in the court room at 2 o'clock yesterday afternoon by Chairman Geo. E. Hubbell. The meeting had been called to take action on the invitation of the Clinton bar to the attorneys of Scott county to be present at the dedication of the new court house in Clinton. It was understood, however, that the untimely death of Mr. Bills would call forth some action at this meeting.

Mr. Hubbell read his call for the meeting, suggesting that some action would be proper on the death of Mr. Bills. On the motion of Mr. Fisher the invitation from the Clinton bar was accepted with thanks, and it was resolved that the attorneys who wished to go should do so without special action on the part of the leal bar.

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The committee appointed by the chairman consisted of E. E. Cook, W. O. Schmidt, C. A. Ficke, E. M. Sharon and James Billinger.

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Geo. E. Green,
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John MacVica
J. A. Johnson,
A. W. Fly, Gal
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E. H. Dial, Me
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O. H. Phillips,
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John M. Harla
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for a few weeks. He should see his friends and enjoy their company. There was no reason why he should not recover. He took the advice and for a time brightened up and seemed to be on the road to recovery, but the change was only temporary and it was not long until the feeling of melancholy and general mental depression again settled upon him with renewed vigor. He said little to anyone and preferred to be alone. His nerves seemed to be completely unstrung.

Saturday he went to the office but spent only a few moments there. He conversed with Mr. Hass while there briefly on business topics. Mr. Hass noted his strange manner, but attributed it to his recent illness and was not alarmed. Sunday he spent quietly at home, retiring early. His sleep was restful during the earlier hours of the night, but toward morning he was restless and wakeful. Between 7 and 8 o'clock Mrs. Bills brought a light breakfast to him, which he ate in bed. Shortly after 8 o'clock she left him and went to the kitchen, where she poured a cup of coffee intended for him. She was not absent from her husband's room more than five minutes and when she entered found him dead with a bullet hole in his head just behind the right ear and the revolver still in his hand. It is supposed that during her absence he must have suffered an additional and sudden attack of his mental malady, arose from his bed, got the revolver and fired the shot. The report had not been heard by either Mrs. Bills or the domestic.

OBITUARY.

Jno. C. Bills was born in Perry, N. Y., Nov. 7, 1833, the son of Jonathan Bills and Almira Bills.

His general education, after the course of the common schools, was received at the academy in that town. After leaving it he took up the study of the law, and followed it in an office at Warsaw, N. Y., and later at Poughkeepsie, at the law school of which Hon. Jno. M. Rogers, afterwards of this city, was a professor, and his instructor. After this he was for a time at school at Buffalo. He was admitted to the bar in the latter city, and he came to Iowa and Davenport in 1856.

Soon after his arrival here Mr. Bills formed a partnership with T. C. Campbell, the firm being Campbell & Bills. The partnership was dissolved in 1860, or thereabouts, when Campbell went to New York. Mr. Bills continued in practice without a partner till June, 1870, when he formed a partnership with the late Herman Block, the firm being Bills & Block. This partnership was terminated in April, 1888, Mr. Block going to Europe then, and almost immediately therafter the firm of Bills & Hass, the partner being Carl [illegible] May 1, 1888. Since then Mr. Bills has [illegible] practice down to the [illegible]

[illegible] of the association of any action which might be taken.

The committee appointed by the chairman consisted of E. E. Cook, W. O. Schmidt, C. A. Ficke, E. M. Sharon and James Billinger.

E. M. Sharon moved that a committee also consisting of five be appointed to draw up resolutions and memorials to be presented the first day of next term of court. This report according to custom would be spread upon the minutes. This concluded the business of the convention.

The committee was appointed as follows:

E. M. Sharon.
W. H. Wilson.
W. M. Chamberlin.
L. M. Fisher.
Alfred Claussen.

OPINIONS OF MEMBERS.

After the regular bar meeting the attorneys did not disperse quickly as they usually do, but lingered in the room and talked quietly of the great loss which had befallen the Scott county bar. Here are a few of the utterances of the older members of the bar:

JUDGE WATERMAN.

I think he was one of the leading lawyers of the state, and I might even say of the country. He occupied a position such as no man I now recall occupied, and there is no attorney who can fill his place. He was equally good before a court and before a jury. He was one of the most forcible speakers I ever listened to, and it was a treat to hear him make either a legal argument or one to the jury. He was what is not often found now in the profession—purely a lawyer. He had no inclination to combine any other business with his profession.

E. M. SHARON.

He was one of the most thorough and successful lawyers at the bar. He had indomitable energy and perseverance, studied his cases thoroughly and generally won them. He was plain, outspoken and even gruff sometimes, but when away from business cares was the most social man I ever knew.

L. M. FISHER.

Mr. Bills was certainly one of the foremost lawyers in the state. As a lawyer before a jury he had no equal at this bar, and I think had few in the bars of any other places. He studied his cases hard and conscientiously and in this lay much of his success.

GEO. E. HUBBELL.

Mr. Hubbell, the oldest practitioner of the Scott county bar, has probably been associated with Mr. Bills and fought against him in as many cases as any other lawyer. This is what Mr. Hubbell says:

Mr. Bills' success as a lawyer depended on the intensity of his mental application to the cause of his client. When he accepted a retainer he at once threw into the cause personal feeling and great study of every issue

John Jerommen, [illegible]
Geo. L. Burton, N[illegible]
D. J. Courtney, Je[illegible]
P. F. Daly, New B[illegible]
E. M. Conroy, Ogd[illegible]
W. W. Bingham, [illegible]
J. D. Reed, Ports[illegible]
R. H. Ryder, Fayt[illegible]
A. H. Dewey, Ro[illegible]
A. Albright, St. P[illegible]
Chas. Nagle, St. L[illegible]
F. A. Walker, Tay[illegible]
G. A. Sauer, Utica
Jesse K. Bayliss, [illegible]
A. M. Powell, Wor[illegible]

Certainly you do[illegible] with dyspepsia, sic[illegible] skin and loss of [illegible] never tried DeW[illegible] Risers for these [illegible] would have been cu[illegible] pills but great regu[illegible] coll. H. A. Emies.

Clean, old paper [illegible] office—10c per 100.

Educate Your Bow[illegible] Candy Cathartic, cu[illegible] 10c. If C. C. C. fail, dr[illegible]

Candidate

Mr. F. H. Krack[illegible] himself in another [illegible] date for sheriff of [illegible] ject to the decisio[illegible] convention, which [illegible] of September, is [illegible] republicans that h[illegible] the party during t[illegible] been in the deci[illegible] served the party a[illegible] city council from [illegible] ing the years '85 a[illegible] has been for the p[illegible] eling salesman for [illegible] ery company. Mr. [illegible] while he is going [illegible] effort to secure th[illegible] should be beaten i[illegible] Mr. McArthur, he [illegible] hard for Mr. McArt[illegible] would for his own [illegible] succeed in securing [illegible]

TryGrain—O!

Ask your grocer [illegible] a package of Grai[illegible] drink that takes [illegible] The children may [illegible] jury as well as the [illegible] it, like it. Grain-O [illegible] brown of Mocha o[illegible] made from pure g[illegible] delicate stomach [illegible] distress. One-four[illegible] coffee. 15c and 25[illegible] Sold by all grocers[illegible]

Hennepin canal [illegible] bushel, Front an[illegible] McCaffery. Teleph[illegible]

[illegible] Tuesday and W[illegible] ladies day at the M[illegible]

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AS A LAWYER.

By the death of John C. Bills the Scott county bar loses its brightest light and the bar of Iowa one of its most attractive figures. The tragic affair which closed his career would never have occurred had it not been for the attack of mental derangement which took possession of him. His character was of the highest order and his honesty of purpose was beyond reproach. Those who saw him in the courtroom engaged in a cross examination or arguing a cause in his severe and uncompromising manner only beheld one side of his character. The other was exactly the reverse, his home life and among his friends being that of a man without cares and happy in the extreme.

The respect and esteem of his fellow attorneys and friends was always his. Although known to few, he was of a most charitable disposition and gave with a liberal hand preferring, however, that his good deeds in this direction be kept from the eyes of the world. There were none better qualers I ever listened to, and it was a treat to hear him make either a legal argument or one to the jury. He was what is not often found now in the profession purely a lawyer. He had no inclination to combine any other business with his profession.

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MAJOR BEARDSLEY.

I have known Mr. Bills for many years. He was a man of wonderful ability as a jurist and was an authority upon all legal matters. There is not another lawyer in the tri-cities or in this part of the country who can take his place.

W. T. DITTOE.

In the death of John C. Bills Scott county loses one of the hardest workers who has ever addressed a court in this part of the country, and one of the best informed lawyers. He was

republicans that has the party during the been in the decided served the party as city council from the ing the years '5 and has been for the past eling salesman for the ery company. Mr. while he is going to effort to secure the should be beaten in Mr. McArthur, he hard for Mr. McArth would for his own succeed in securing

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Expert

Dr. ConNaughton f popular at the Black day afternoon, whe upon to bring to lif Evay, who had been with heart failure. rigid for almost tw ConNaughton has t young husband, whe farm living near storing his wife to co

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The fac-simile signature of Chas. H. H

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The committee appointed by the

absolutely faithful to his clients and whoever imposed a trust in John C. Bills could know with certainty that it would never be betrayed.

CONFERENCE OF MAYORS.

Mayor Smith to Attend the National Meeting at Columbus, O.

The Hon. S. F. Smith and Mayor T. J. Medill of Rock Island have been appointed members of the general committee for the National Conference of Mayors and Councilmen, to be held at Columbus, O., September 28 to October 1. This conference takes in the Whole United States. The general committee is made up as follows:

MAYORS.

Joseph Quincy, Boston, Mass.
Robt. E. McKisson, Cleveland, O.
H. P. Ford, Pittsburg, Pa.
Geo. D. Tadd, Louisville, Ky.
Mm. C. Maybury, Detroit, Mich.
Thos. Taggart, Indianapolis, Ind.
Wm. M. McCarthy, Nashville, Tenn.
Robt. Pratt, Minneapolis, Minn.
Wm. M. Jones, Kansas City, Mo.
T. S. McMurray, Denver, Colo.
James Phelan, San Francisco, Cal.
Geo. E. Green, Binghamton, N. Y.
James Allen Rice, Canton, O.
J. Adger Smyth, Charleston, S. C.
Geo. W. Ochs, Chattanooga, Tenn.
John MacVicar, Des Moines, Ia.
J. A. Johnson, Fargo, N. D.
A. W. Fly, Galveston, Tex.
Edw. Hoos, Jersey City, N. J.
A. J. Wakefield, Jacksonville, Fla.
E. H. Dial, Meridian, Miss.
A. C. Hastings, Niagara Falls, N. Y.
Warren Penwell, Pana, Ill.
L. A. Yories, St. Joseph, Mo.
A. B. Calvert, Spartansburg, S. C.
S. M. Jones, Toledo, O.
F. W. Vandusen, Norwalk, O.
Geo. F. Heath, Monroe, Mich.
T. J. Medill, Rock Island, Ill.
E. K. Tarbell, Winona, Minn.
O. H. Phillips, Larimore, N. D.
W. F. Hite, Huntington, W. Va.
S F. Smith, Davenport, Ia.
Chas. H. Fellows, Topeka, Ks.
M. H. Levagood, Elyria, O.

COUNCILMEN.

Geo. P. Howard, Atlanta, Ga.
Adam H. Leich, Brooklyn, N. Y
John L. Stone, Baltimore, Md.
John M. Harlan, Chicago, Ill.
Jesse C. Bond, Camden, N. J.
A. J. Watson, Elmira, N. Y.
W. H. Tigar, Ft. Wayne, Ind.
H. B. Russell, Hartford, Ct.
Jos. M. Kennedy, Montgomery, Ala.
[illegible]
Geo. L. Burton, New Haven, Ct.
D. J. Courtney, Jr., Nashua, N. H.

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