

Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative Erastus B. - **Senator** Billal  
Represented Cedar and Jones Counties, Iowa

1. Birthday and place 16. Aug 1828 Connecticut

2. Marriage (s) date place  
Celia

3. Significant events for example:  
A. Business He practiced medicine in Durant, Iowa 47 years.

B. Civic responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_

C. Profession Physician

4. Church membership Episcopal

5. Sessions served 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> General Assemblies 1888, 1890

6. Public Offices  
A. Local Durant postmaster; Justice of the Peace

B. State \_\_\_\_\_

C. National \_\_\_\_\_

7. Death 15 Oct 1902 Durant, Iowa; Buried

8. Children Henry

9. Names of parents \_\_\_\_\_

10. Education \_\_\_\_\_

11. Degrees Graduate of Yale University 1847

12. Other applicable information Democrat

- He came to Durant, Iowa in 1855.
- He served the community faithfully until his death.



visiting her daughter. Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Snyder drove to Wood Sunday evening and took a train at that point for Merville.

Mr. J. M. Cousins came home yesterday evening from Oskaloosa and will return today to resume his duties in the campaign. He goes to Columbus, Ohio, the latter part of the week to make an address in connection with Senator J. B. Foraker, and will return to Cedar Rapids next Saturday night.

There is only one way to keep a party strong and that is to stand by the party. It is to clear down the line from the school district. Those who are in republican principles and in the party to maintain its power in the affairs of the country have no other duty than to vote for its candidates in the regular party conventions and caucuses.

Mr. and Mrs. E. H. Kohlhasse passed through Tipton Saturday enroute from St. Louis, Mo. to Mechanicsville, their home. Mr. Kohlhasse has been in the law office of K. J. Joka and engaged in the study of law, he having been admitted to the Missouri bar recently. He has been campaigning down there this year, acquiring a reputation as a powerful orator only second to Clark.

The Klein Clothing Co., successors to the Block, opened its doors last week and is now one of Tipton's permanent business institutions. H. Klein, proprietor, is an old and experienced man, having been engaged in the clothing line for many years at Washburn, Iowa. He comes here with the endorsement from his home as a business man of means and good standing. Since purchasing the Block he has added to it large quantities of new goods and now has on display a large and complete stock of all the latest in clothing and gents' furnishings.

The election of a democratic congressman this year would be nothing short of a national calamity. While it would be a party imperfect control of the government and it would be helpless to pass laws, the evil effects would be felt. It would be a disaster to the business world that the people

manufacturing plant is closing up a very busy season. The last run of brick is being made today, but the manufacture of tile will continue until cold weather forces the plant to shut down. There has been a heavy demand this season for tile due largely to the wet weather, and the plant is far behind on orders. Eleven men are now employed but fifteen have been employed most of the season. The new kiln is ready now but was not completed in time to be of much help during the rush.

#### Death of Dr. E. B. Bills.

Dr. E. B. Bills of Durant died very suddenly last Wednesday evening. He had long been a prominent and well known citizen of the county and his death was a shock to all. He came to Durant 47 years ago and during all those years he was an active and influential member of his home community. He represented this district in the Iowa senate one term. He was a graduate of the class of 1847 at Yale and was a broad minded man of large culture and great ability. The funeral services were held at his home Sunday last.

#### A Frightful Accident.

The little daughter of Lee Anderson was the victim of a frightful accident last Sunday morning, which resulted in the loss of her left eye and will leave her disfigured for life. The circumstances were about as follows: Elliott, the oldest boy, had loaded two shells with powder and finding no shot he placed the shells on a shelf and left the room in which a younger brother aged about eight years and two little girls were playing. They began to examine the gun and were looking through the barrels, etc. It appears that the boy slipped one of the shells into the gun and it was discharged in some manner while the girls' faces were near the muzzle. Both were severely burned about their faces by the powder, and the one receiving the serious injuries had her left eye blown out and the bridge of her nose shot off. The accident is a most deplorable one.

The Woman's Club of Tipton will give a unique, attractive, mirth-provoking, elaborate, unprecedented, up-to-date entertainment at the Armory Hall at some early date, for the benefit of the Public Library. Further notice

with the patients.  
Miss Eleanor Hecht spent Sunday at the hotel, Mrs. J. T. Moffit.

Mrs. J. E. Sansom spent Sunday at Mt. Vernon with her daughter attending college there.

J. H. Brownell, proprietor of Lowden Sash and Door Co. was here yesterday on business.

Mrs. E. K. Moreland and F. Bunker visited friends here the latter part of last week.

A. G. Davis came in here last Friday for a few days to visit his mother, Mrs. M. R. Davis.

Mrs. Johnson returned from Atalissa Saturday afternoon with Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Hill.

Jerome Hart spent Sunday at Tipton last week visiting with his son and other old soldiers.

Judge Treichler returned from Tipton yesterday where he will be holding court for two weeks.

John I. Blair of Des Moines was a guest over Sunday at the home of Mrs. Moffit, his former classmate.

T. M. McCoy of Vandalia, Illinois, who has been here for some time, left for his home Sunday.

Mrs. Will Werling and family returned this morning from their vacation where they have been for several weeks.

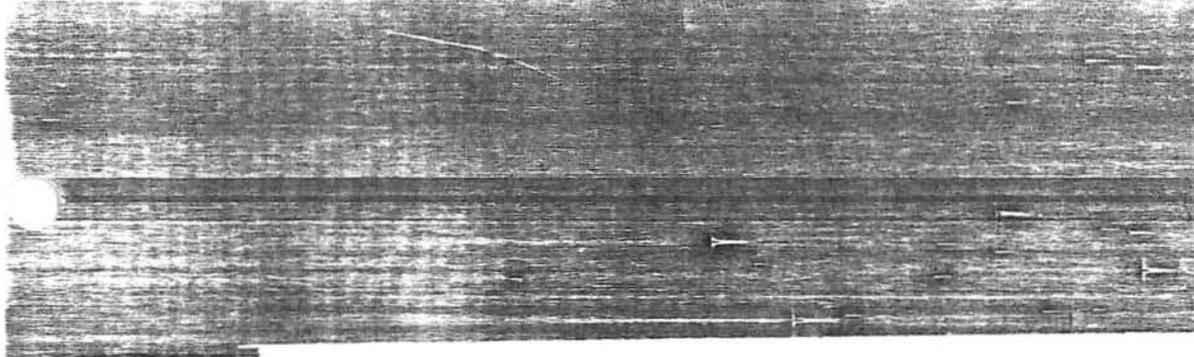
Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Mendenhall expected home today after a vacation where they have been for past three weeks.

Bob Keller and his family returned to Tipton this week where they have a contract for plastering the school house.

Misses Edna Lyle, Zella Stubblefield and Minnie returned home from Coe college a few days vacation.

Messrs Comstock, Deane and family are making preparations for a winter annual trip to the vicinity of Tipton in quest of feathered game.

W. A. Chrisman came in here last week for a short visit with his family. He is traveling with the England Mfg. Co. of Cl



He was paid the magnificent salary of Three Dollars per month. A schoolhouse was built in the spring of 1858 on a half block of land donated by Cook and Sargeant. The twenty-six by thirty foot building cost \$800.00 which had been previously donated by Mr. Durant, and was located on the present schoolhouse site. It served the community until 1869 when a new building was erected. A third building was constructed in 1904 and this building together with the gymnasium which was added in 1938 and the agriculture, shop and hot lunch annex which was added in 1951 still serve the youth of the community.

The first birth recorded in the town was that of the daughter born to Mr. and Mrs. Isaac N. Gilbert in December, 1857. She was named Mary Durant, and received, according to promise, from the founders of the town, a warranty deed to the lot north of the Turner Hall where the Herman Voss house is now located. The Gilbert family returned to New York State years ago.

The first physician of the community was Dr. Erastus B. Bills of Connecticut who came in 1855. He was a Yale graduate and served the community faithfully and well until his death in 1902. In addition to his duties as a doctor, he also served as postmaster for a period, was an active vestryman in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, was a Justice of the Peace and represented Cedar County in the State Legislature for a time. His office occupied the corner where the Trede Electric Company now stands and his residence was located on the corner now occupied by the Dr. J. E. Christiansen home. The fine old elm tree at the corner of the Henry Glaser residence was set out by Dr. Bills and still stands as a living memorial to him.

For the next ten years Durant continued to grow as glowing tales of the opportunities in Iowa were circulated. It has been said that Cedar County, formed late in 1836, was about thirty years in settling, yet by 1854, it is safe to say that very little virgin prairie land was left in the hands of the government. During the late fifties young German immigrants began to come to the community. Some had been exiled by the Schleswig-Holstein War, but all found the freedom and opportunity they sought and remained here. They were honest, industrious and thrifty, and made the most desirable type of citizens. Later they bought farms on borrowed capital from eastern bankers at the exorbitant rate of two and one-half to three per cent interest. Today the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of these sturdy immigrants carry on in the best tradition.

While Durant was recorded as a town in 1855, it was not incorporated until July 5, 1867. Mr. Allen Nesbitt was the first elected mayor and served until his untimely death in 1874. The story goes that one night the Orcutt and Loomis store was discovered on fire, and Mr. Nesbitt, who was head of the volunteer fire department, had just entered the burning building when a barrel of gun powder exploded causing injuries from which he died a few weeks later.

Thus did Durant begin. From the virgin Iowa prairies, a town began to grow. Men and women of the finest type came from the east and from lands

*Durant Centennial*  
1954



MRS. AND MRS. WM. GOETTSCH. MARRIED IN 1887



DR. BILLS  
(First Doctor in Durant)



ALLEN NESBITT, First Mayor

## Household Record

1880 United States Census

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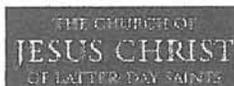
## Household:

Name	Relation	Marital Status	Gender	Race	Age	Birthplace	Occupation	Father's Birthplace	Mother's Birthplace
<u>Erastus B. BILLS</u>	Self	M	Male	W	49	CT	Physician	CT	CT
<u>Celila BILLS</u>	Wife	M	Female	W	49	NY	Keeps House	CT	CT
<u>Guy BILLS</u>	Son	S	Male	W	9	IA	Attending School	CT	NY
<u>Willis C. BILLS</u>	Nephew	S	Male	W	22	CT	Clerk In Store	CT	CT

## Source Information:

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