

Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative Read, William C. Senator _____
Represented Lee County, Iowa

1. Birthday and place _____

2. Marriage (s) date place _____

3. Significant events for example:

A. Business _____

B. Civic responsibilities _____

C. Profession _____

4. Church membership _____

5. Sessions served 2nd General Assembly 1848

6. Public Offices

A. Local _____

B. State _____

C. National _____

7. Death Nov 1849, New Orleans, Louisiana

8. Children _____

9. Names of parents _____

Read, William C.

10. Education _____

11. Degrees _____

12. Other applicable information _____

- *He died in an explosion of the steamer "Louisiana" at
New Orleans, Louisiana*

Reed, William C.

Sources Log For Legislation Entries

Applicability

Source Non Applicable Applicable Information obtained

- Death notice - The Mercantile Express, Dubuque, Iowa
Dec. 12, 1849, p. 1, col. 4, 5

- Article - The Burlington Free-press, Burlington, Iowa
Thurs. Dec 6, 1849, p. 2, col. 4, 5, 6, 7

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The Late Terrible Disaster!

Full particulars of the Explosion of the Steamboat Louisiana.

Yesterday morning we gave all that could be gathered at the time, relative to the almost overwhelming catastrophe that has clothed our city in mourning, and made desolate the hearts of many of its citizens. But the sad records has largely increased, and in the mournful lists below, we present a full statement up to the present time. The lists of the missing is still very incomplete; no register has been found of the passengers of the ill-fated Louisiana, and until the river gives up its dead, the blank cannot be filled! The emigrants that thronged its deck have gone to that far off country from whence no traveller returns. The bright eye of woman lies dimmed beneath the weight of waters that press upon it; the strong man's agony has passed away in its embrace. Anxious days, months—months—will be spent by loved ones far away, and yet no words of joyous welcome can ever fall upon the dull, cold ear of death. Fathers will bend beneath the blow that is now flying, a swift-winged messenger of sorrow to the homes that can know the Lost no more; mothers' hearts will break for the idols there so long enthroned; brothers will bow in manly grief, and sisters pour out the gushing tenderness of their wealth of love, until the fading forms give sorrowful earnest of another victim.

Thirty-six hours since, a gay assemblage, clothed in bright hopes, gathered on board of the Louisiana. Where are they now? And on whom does the awful responsibility rest of sending into eternity so many souls?

We are told that the origin of the explosion is not known, and yet we know that the first engineer was on shore, with leave to join the boat at Lafayette; and that the second engineer must have been absent from his post, from the fact that the instant before the explosion he returned to the engine, found that there was some-

Mr Edgar, Mr Elliott, clerk in the office of Marsh & Raulett, J. W. King, of firm of E. J. Gay & Co, St Louis; Merritt Morris, clerk of Small & McGilson of Mr Bareille, the Sicillian Con Mr Stone, Dr. Bienville, John Dai Wm. Hopkins, St Louis; J. Leon Alton; J. Mumford, St Louis.

A number of amputations have taken place in the Charity Hospital, and the medical faculty have invariably used chloroform, with the greatest success. A amount of suffering, in this catastrophe alone, has been saved by this great discovery.

To-day the Mayor has called upon citizens to testify, by signs of mourning the irreparable loss sustained. We are assured that this mark of grief for the dead will be responded to. Already our heart feels the calamity, and sympathizes with the bereaved.

INCIDENTS.

The event of Thursday was the most disastrous of the kind that ever occurred in this city. The extent of the mortality will exceed our highest estimates. The facts discovered thus far, give credence to the gloomiest apprehensions of the number killed. More than sixty-four dead have already been recognized—more than forty were exposed in the Baronne street watch-house yesterday, and at least twenty were in the dead houses of the several hospitals. Several have died at private houses. Many others have no doubt floated down the stream, and will never be heard of again. Others have been crushed under the weight of the wreck, and their bodies will not rise for some time. Early yesterday we visited the scene of the disaster. A large crowd was assembled on the Levee. Not a vestige of the Louisiana was visible, but the Stormer and Bostona lay in the same position they occupied when the explosion occurred. There they were, the Storm a perfect wreck, riddled and crushed from the bow to the stern; the Bostona, a costly and beautiful boat, also, with her pilot ho-

absent from his post, from the fact that the instant before the explosion he returned to the engine, found that there was something wrong—cried out to the mate to run for his life, and saved his own by a rapid movement to the stern. Negligence the most culpable is too plainly seen. The boat was within a few minutes of its departure, when officers and crew should have been doubly vigilant; and yet how different from this are the facts shown.

The steamboat *Storm*, having just come in from Louisville, had her larboard exposed to the explosion and her upper works were made a complete wreck.

Death was hurled in the midst of her passengers, with the giant force of steam, and they fell amidst the crashing timber that overwhelmed them.

The *Bostona*, also lying alongside of the *Louisiana*, shared the fate of the *Storm*. Her decks were strewed with the dead and dying, and her cabin presented a dreadful scene.

The crowd of persons upon the levee, adding farewell to kindred and friends, also added their quota to the terrible work that in an instant summoned two hundred human beings to their last account.

A number of clerks of mercantile houses were on board of the boat receiving their bills of lading, and their names, as far as we could learn them, are in the list of the "missing"—a word that tells their fate at the present hour. News-boys eagerly pursuing their daily trade, became early victims to the dread destroyer, and their humble homes are in mourning as sincere as the residence of the more favored of fortune. Grief levels all distinctions—side by side we found yesterday the penniless and the millionaire, searching among the bleeding mass of disfigured corpses! Their tears mingled together—words of sympathy came from each.

We now proceed to give the sad details conveyed in the lists of the killed, wounded and missing.

Killed.—Mrs. Robert Moody, Major B. B. Edmondson, of Missouri, Dr. Thomas M. Williams, Peter Welsh, Simeon

wreck, riddled and crushed from the boilers to the stern; the *Bostona*, a costly and beautiful boat, also, with her pilot house knocked off, and her wheel house badly crushed. Amid the general wreck of the *Storm*, we were painfully impressed by the spectacle of a beautiful little girl of seven or eight years, who stood near a gentleman, apparently her father; sitting in the cabin of the *Storm*, with his head in his hands, seemingly in deep grief.

The expression of dependence, affection and grief of the little girl, with the sorrowing attitude of her father, surrounded as they were by so many signs of disaster and desolation, made a picture which we shall not soon forget. We have since learned that the gentleman was Mr Moody, clerk of the *Storm*, whose wife was killed. The little girl was his only child.

The wharf, the barrels and sacks lying on it, were still sprinkled with blood, and the debris of mutilated bodies. A number of persons were engaged in fishing up bodies. Six were taken up whilst we were on the levee. In all, eleven were taken out of the water yesterday.

Several news boys were killed. The destruction of life would have been much greater, had not the explosion passed over the great number of persons on the Levee near the boat. The fragments were hurled in every direction; a large piece of one of the boilers was thrown upon the Levee, and one, entire—a mass of iron, 15 feet long, and weighing thousands of pounds—was thrown 600 feet from the river, landing within three steps of the door of the "White Mansion Coffee House," at the corner of Canal street. This almost incredible exhibition of the power of steam can now be seen there. In its passage it struck against some bales of cotton, which lessened its force, or the huge mass would have penetrated the house. In its fall it killed two men, and a mule attached to a dray! another piece of the boiler struck a sign in Natchez street, and parts of the wreck were carried for squares from the scene of the disaster. Several inches of the unfortunate victims were found

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Killed.—Mrs. Robert Moody, Major B. B. Edmondson, of Missouri; Dr Thomas M. Williams, Peter Welsh, Simeon Wolffe, Capt. W. P. Brown, John Sullivan, Horace Goldstein, J. N. Craft, Dennis Abbott, John Handerhin, Richard Kelly, Alfred Watson, pilot of the Louisiana; Joseph Clusman, J. H. Meyers, Edward Hulbert, Levi Prescott, Capt. Renselar Becker, **Wm. C. Read, of Fulton, Mo.**; Robert Devlin, Andrew Bell, pilot of the Louisiana; John Hughes, Rowland Pell, Jas. Gilmore, mate of the Louisiana; Robert McMackin, 1st clerk of the Louisiana; Euan Knox, Louis, a cabin boy; James Martin, Dr. E. J. Marsh, James Atkinson, Richard Perry, Rich Caudon.

Died in Charity Hospital.—John Kelly, Wm. Riley, John Laws; a clerk of the Louisiana Bakery.

Wounded.—Harrison Rea, both legs broken, Mr Rea, Mr Horrell, severely injured; Mr Isaac Hart, very seriously hurt, S. Davis, Capt. Hopkins, of the steamer Storm; Capt. Dustin, badly wounded; R. Price, John Mason, slightly wounded the barber of the Storm, mutilated by the taking off of one of his hands at the wrist; Henry Bingham and his wife, of Helena, Ark., seriously wounded, but out of danger; Henry Livingston, slightly injured; Edward McCarty, leg amputated; Simeon Davis, seriously injured; Mr Wolf, slightly injured; Nosh J. Ellis, a compositor in T. Rea's Rotary Press Office; Elijah Cannon, brother of Captain Cannon, of the Louisiana, severely injured; Capt. Cannon, of the Louisiana, slightly injured; Mr Tyler, bar-keeper of the Louisiana, dangerously wounded.

Wounded and admitted in Charity Hospital.—Henry W. Bermegan, Daniel Eckerle, Henry Livingston, Isaac Garrison, Hugh McRee, Henry, a slave; Samuel

have penetrated the house. In its fall it killed two men, and a mule attached to a dray! another piece of the boiler struck a sign in Natchez street, and parts of the wreck were carried for squares from the scene of the disaster. Several limbs of the unfortunate victims were found nearly opposite to Gravier street.

This terrible calamity has clothed our city in mourning, and to-day, when the sad truth that many of those now only reported as missing are numbered with the dead is made known, it will shade still deeper the gloom. Last night hundreds were seeking friends and relatives amidst the wounded and dying, and the wild grief of those who found the objects of their search stretched upon the ground, robbed, in the twinkling of an eye, of life, made the scene most heart-rending.

A number of our city officers were early on the spot, and, with the Mayor at their head, offered every assistance in their power. We found them, too, at the Hospital, and other places where their services were needed.

In the coat of one of the persons lost was found letters to the principal officers in California, from Gen. Dodge of Iowa, and endorsed "Per Wm C. Read," indicating that this was the name of the passenger. He was from Fulton, Mo. [Formerly of Keokuk, and a member of our Legislature.]

The child of Mr. Moody, clerk of the Storm, reported as lost, was found this morning, safe and sound. Mr. Moody escaped by a miracle. He was at his desk, writing, within twenty feet of the boilers of the Louisiana, when they exploded, riddling the entire larboard side of the Storm as if with grape shot and tearing down the planks all around him, yet he remained uninjured. His lady at the other end of the boat, was killed at the same moment, instantaneously. We learned that several other ladies on the Storm were slightly injured.

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CAUSE OF THE EXPLOSION.—Much difference of opinion prevails as to the cause of the explosion. The majority of people, however, believe that the explosion occurred from the wilful neglect of the engineer, in keeping up the fires without a sufficiency of water in the boilers, thereby causing the formation of inflammable gas. That there was water in the boilers, seems to be established by the concurrent testimony of many persons, as to the ejection of a large volume of water, which fell for some distance around. Mr White, agent of the boat is certain as to this fact, so is Captain Cannon, both of whom were standing within a few feet of the gangway, when the explosion occurred.

Captain Cannon says that the fires were low, and there was but little steam in the boilers, so that he had just ordered the engineer to fire up in order to proceed down to the shipping in the Third Municipality to take emigrants. About fifteen minutes before the explosion Capt. C. had directed the engineer to keep the wheels in motion to prevent the boat from dragging, as the water where she lay was not deep.

On the other hand it is said that the boilers of the Louisiana were very old—that they were the same that had been used in the old Dallas, some years ago.— We do not vouch for the correctness of this statement, but we learn from an undoubted source, that they were the boilers of the Gov. Jones, which was broken up a year ago, when they were transferred to the Louisiana, a new boat. If it should turn out that the boilers were unfit, we trust that the owners and all concerned will be held to a rigid accountability for such diabolical recklessness. And as to the engineer, should the general opinion prove correct that it was by his neglect the

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NOBLE ACT.—Just as the Louisiana was sinking, a poor negro woman was seen hanging by her dress to some of the wreck, and uttering the most piteous cries for help. She held in her arms a young child, which with great strength she made out to throw into the arms of a man in the boat, who immediately went off with the child. The boat had sunk to the waters' edge, and the poor negress was struggling in the water, when a gentleman on board of the Bostona, whose name we regret we could not learn, threw off his coat and hat and leaped into the water, and swam towards her. The poor woman, mad with fright, seized the gentleman around the neck, and thus prevented him from using his arms—they sunk together. Some one cried out, they are both gone. But presently they came up, and the gentleman, holding the negress in his left arm, swam ashore. The poor woman fainted from exhaustion and fright. When she came to, she began to cry for her child, and ran about like one possessed.

AFFECTING INCIDENT.—A little girl, the daughter of one of the steerage passengers, was taken from the wreck, and being placed on the Levee, began to cry for her mother. Being shown some of the dead bodies, she recognized that of her mother from the ring on her finger, and threw herself, in deep grief, on the mutilated remains. This little girl is at the house of a gentleman in this city. A generous rivalry was enacted among our citizens, to extend to her all the best that could be

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GOOD AND BAD DEEDS.—Occurrences like this never fail to develop the higher as well as the lower qualities of humanity. During the confusion of the scene, following the explosion, many of our citizens threw themselves, with characteristic generosity, and promptitude, and energy into the crowd of the dead, and the dying and the wounded.

The Mayor, A. D. Crossman, ably seconded by Captains Youens and Forno, of the First and Second Municipality Police, were on the ground, rendering every assistance that the circumstances permitted, in rescuing persons from the wreck, and carrying off the dead and wounded. John M. Celif, Colonel McAlpin, Wilhelmus Bogert, Henry Bier, and several other

In reference to the mass of iron at the corner of Canal and Levee streets, which is an entire half of one of the Louisiana's boilers, the flue is crushed or rolled together like sheet lead. One end of this huge fragment is smeared with blood, mixed with hair. The effects of the explosion on the ceiling of the Boston's fore cabin are awful to behold. The whole surface is stained of a claret-color, occasioned by the scattering of the blood of the victims.

GREAT PRESENCE OF MIND.—Capt. Mason, pilot of the Storm, was in the pilot-house on the upper deck when the explosion occurred. Those who have seen the Storm, perfectly riddled as she is, from fore to aft, can alone form an opinion of the narrow escape he made. A negro at the wheel, working under the direction of Capt. Mason, and standing three feet from him, was killed immediately. His body fell over the tiller of the rope—Capt. Mason himself was stunned and slightly wounded. Perceiving the Storm was moving out, her ropes, which had made her fast, having been cut, Capt. Mason, with admirable presence of mind, rung his bell for the engineer to set the engines to work, and prevent the boat from getting out into the current. The engineer promptly responded, and the boat was thus kept up.—Capt. M. then perceiving that the explosion proceeded from the Louisiana, lying alongside, and not the Storm, and that the Louisiana was rapidly sinking, halloed out to some persons he saw in the after cabin of the Louisiana, to take care of themselves, as the boat was sinking.—Capt. M. says the bodies of persons fell from the air into the river like hail.—Wherever a body fell the water bubbled up and blood was visible for some minutes after. A number of persons rushed aboard of the Louisiana to rescue the wounded, who were crushed under the wreck. About twenty were saved, and many others were picked up by the fruit boats.

citizens whose names we could not learn, were also active and ardent in deeds of philanthropy. In the meantime the baser order of humanity, lost to all sensibility and shame, embraced the occasion as a fit one for successful thieving and pocket picking. A great deal of money was thrown about the Levee, and was eagerly grabbed by the loafers who were assembled. One man was seen going off with a large roll of bank notes. Many others were seen picking up watches and other valuables, and others, still more depraved, employed themselves in pulling rings and other jewels from the dead and wounded. An honest laborer, having rescued a watch from one of the rogues, gave it to the Mayor for safe keeping. It did not remain however, long in his Honor's pocket, considering scoundrel having extracted it whilst the Mayor was absorbed in his duties.

The Crescent City says:

Numerous incidents of an extraordinary and affecting nature are attached to this dreadful event. The melancholy history connected with the death of Dr. E. J. Marsh, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, calls forth our warmest sympathy. From an oranda taken from his person, we found that he had been toiling for some time in the mines of California, and with the product of his labor, after undergoing innumerable hardships, he was hastening to return to his family in the Far West. He arrived in this city a few days since in Alabama, and a large amount of gold was found upon him. Alas for human hope! With joyful anticipations of the meeting in store, with warm feelings throbbing around his heart, and glad thoughts of the happy future, he was swept away from earth, and his distant home made dark and desolate!

The body of William C. Read was recognized yesterday morning at the Barron street watch house, by two of his friends, and removed for the purpose of being sent back to his late residence, Fulton.

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The body of **William C. Read** was recognized yesterday morning at the Barrow street watch house, by two of his friends, and removed for the purpose of taking it back to his late residence, Fulton, Mo.— Mr Read was one of a party of six that left that place with the design of proceeding to California. On their arrival here, not being able to procure tickets for the whole route by the way of the Isthmus, five concluded to return and await until next December. Of the five Read is killed, and Thomas and Crockett Harrison badly scalded. Upon the person of **Mr Read** was a money belt of red webbing, bound with leather, containing \$700 in gold, which cannot be found. One of his friends, who was miraculously preserved, although standing at the time of the explosion upon the boiler deck of the Louisiana, saw a man on the levee take away the belt from the body, but he was himself so bewildered by the dreadful shock received, that he offered no impediment. The individual told him that he would be responsible for the money, and that his name was Smith.

[This money did fall into honest hands. It was taken by Mr John Smith, No. 24 Poydras street, who has given notice in the Picayune, that it will be delivered to the legal claimant.]

Mr Frederick A. Wood, now lying in a very precarious state at Dr Stone's hospital, was walking on the street, two squares from the place of the disaster, when he heard the explosion; thinking it very close he hurried instantly from the danger, but a semicircular bar of iron fell suddenly upon him, breaking both arms. He has already had one of them amputated, and now his life hangs upon a thread.

RESPECT FOR THE DEAD.—We are happy to see that the message of the Mayor, advising that proper tokens of respect should be exhibited for those who were suddenly swept from time to eternity by the disaster of Thursday evening, has been promptly responded to by our citizens and the shipmasters in port. The flags from the different public buildings, and nearly all the ships and steamboats in port

immediate in- assured, fello is given with —if you feel the ballot you though frang inconvenienc preserve on the free fair charge of the sale of this v happiness of tion.—N. C

A GAME who were at Bonapart, Grocery the waxed warm a poker, in and run the windpipe. and it is thou aggressor w his trial at the Court in Va

Washington ticed some from the Ch country, bel Missouri, ry of State. the Secretary with them 6 feet long, 4 inches thick, in that gra gratitude to [Keokuk, R

FIGS.—O Packing est- tory of Mer & Co., con- portion of t About a the barrels of 1 Port were sacks of salt ble portion e tional of the Land

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On the other hand it is said that the boilers of the Louisiana were very old—that they were the same that had been used in the old Dallas, some years ago.—

We do not vouch for the correctness of this statement, but we learn from an undoubted source, that they were the boilers of the Gov. Jones, which was broken up a year ago, when they were transferred to the Louisiana, a new boat. If it should turn out that the boilers were unfit, we trust that the owners and all concerned will be held to a rigid accountability for such diabolical recklessness. And as to the engineer, should the general opinion prove correct that it was by his neglect the accident occurred, there is no punishment too severe for him. We trust our police

back to his late residence, Fulton, Mo.— Mr Read was one of a party of six that left that place with the design of proceeding to California. On their arrival here, not being able to procure tickets for the whole route by the way of the Isthmus, five concluded to return and await until next December. Of the five Read is killed, and Thomas and Crocket Harrison badly scalded. Upon the person of Mr Read was a money belt of red webbing, bound with leather, containing \$700 in gold, which cannot be found. One of his friends, who was miraculously preserved, although standing at the time of the explosion upon the boiler deck of the Louisiana, saw a man on the levee take away the belt from the body, but he was himself so bewildered by the dreadful shock received, that he offered no impediment. The individual told him that he would be responsible for the money, and that his name was Smith.

[This money did fall into honest hands. It was taken by Mr John Smith, No. 24 Poydras street, who has given notice in the Picayune, that it will be delivered to the legal claimant.]

Mr Frederick A. Wood, now lying in a very precarious state at Dr Stone's Hospital, was walking on the street, two squares from the place of the disaster, when he heard the explosion; thinking it very close he hurried instantly from the danger, but a semicircular bar of iron fell suddenly upon him, breaking both arms. He has already had one of them amputated, and now his life hangs upon a thread.

RESPECT FOR THE DEAD.—We are happy to see that the message of the Mayor, advising that proper tokens of respect should be exhibited for those who were suddenly swept from time to eternity by the disaster of Thursday evening, has been promptly responded to by our citizens and the shipmasters in port. The flags from the different public buildings, and nearly all the ships and steamboats in port are displayed at half mast, and a deep gloom pervades throughout the city.