

Robert S. Finkbine

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NOTABLE DEATHS.

— CONRAD YOUNGERMAN was born in Hesse-Cassel, Germany, December 15, 1833; he died in Des Moines, Iowa, September 10, 1901. The name of his family in the old country was spelled Jungermann, but changed in America to the present form to preserve the correct pronunciation. When his schooldays were over he was apprenticed to learn the trade of a stone-cutter, at which he served a term of years, becoming a practical and expert workman. He came to America in 1854, worked awhile in the vicinity of New York, and then went on to Illyria, Ohio, where he still followed his trade. On the 11th of September, 1856, he was married to Miss Minne Stark, who survives her husband. She was born in Mecklenburg, Germany, in 1835, and immigrated to this country with her parents. Immediately after their marriage the young couple came to Iowa and settled in Des Moines, where he established himself in business as a stone-cutter, taking his first building contracts in 1857. Four years later he began to manufacture brick, increasing his facilities until he was able to put upon the market from 2,000,000 to 6,000,000 per annum. Meantime his work as contractor and builder constantly increased. He erected scores if not hundreds of buildings, and among them some of the largest and most important structures in Des Moines. Like the dutiful and affectionate son he always was, he visited the fatherland in 1872 for the purpose of bringing back his aged mother, who had been left a widow in his boyhood, and who thenceforth lived with him to the end of her days. One remarkable fact in relation to Mr. Youngerman was this, that he never forgot a friend who had stood by him in his earlier years. When he came to Des Moines he soon met Gen. M. M. Crocker, then a young lawyer in the first years of his practice. They became well acquainted, and Crocker advised and befriended him at a time when he needed friends. This he never forgot, and he strove in many ways to keep green the memory of that ideal Iowa soldier. One of his largest and most durable structures in Des Moines (corner of Fifth and Locust streets) bears the name of "Crocker Building." It is seldom, indeed, that a man in the rush and worry of an active business life has thus paid tribute to the memory of a friend who had been dead nearly forty years. But it attests the abiding steadfastness of Mr. Youngerman's friendships. He was to the end of his days an important factor in the business interests and development of the capital city. "In all his business dealings with hundreds of tenants, business firms and individuals, he was known as a man whose word was as good as gold, as a man who would not misrepresent anything, a man who was never selfish and never unkind." "He started in an unknown land without a penny to his name, and by his own industry and thrift worked his way to the top." The Des Moines daily papers paid the highest tributes of respect to the memory of this exemplary man and useful citizen.

— ROBERT S. FINKBINE was born at Oxford, Ohio, July 9, 1828; he died at Des Moines, Iowa, July 8, 1901. He was married at Oxford, Ohio, in 1852, to Miss Rebecca Finch, who survives him. Mr. Finkbine came to Iowa in 1850 and settled in Iowa City, where he resided until 1880, when he removed to Des Moines. He had, however, been a member of the board of capitol commissioners from 1873. The appreciative tribute paid to Mr. Finkbine's memory upon the occasion of his funeral, by Hon. Peter A. Dey, of Iowa City, obviates the necessity of any extended notice in this place. Mr. Dey's remarks appear elsewhere in this number of *THE ANNALS*, and very clearly set forth the services of his deceased associate upon the capitol commission. In 1890 Mr. Finkbine was appointed a member of the board of public works by the mayor of Des Moines and served four years.

He was at an earlier period connected with the building of the blind asylum at Vinton, and with two or three of the university buildings at Iowa City. He was also occasionally employed in the erection of county buildings elsewhere in the State. The people of Johnson county sent him to the Iowa house of representatives, where he served two regular terms—1864 and 1866. As a law maker he was at once alert, courageous, clear-headed and honest. Always courteous, never posing, doing nothing for mere show or effect, few men have ever so thoroughly commanded the respect and confidence of their associates in legislation. It was greatly due to his experience and energetic, judicious action, that the commissioners were able in the next decade to secure the large appropriations necessary to carry forward the capitol to completion. No suspicion of seeking self-aggrandizement in legislation, or in awarding public contracts, ever attached to his reputation. As a man of affairs, possessing rare executive ability, and the most exact knowledge of every department of his profession as a builder, Mr. Finkbine proved himself equal to the great responsibilities which devolved upon him. His knowledge was both minute and extensive, and he was able to meet every exigency that arose in the construction of our beautiful capitol. No structure ever erected in the State has evoked to such an extent the spontaneous pride of our people. It is the proud boast of everybody that not a dollar was wasted or stolen during the construction of that great work.

CAPT. J. E. WILKINS was born near Canal Fulton, Wayne county, Ohio, April 5, 1830; he died at Carl Junction, Mo., June 9, 1901. He and his wife made the overland journey to California in 1853, where they remained three years, after which they returned to Geneseo, Ill. During the civil war Mr. Wilkins enlisted in the 112th Illinois Infantry, in which he served three years as a private soldier. He was captured at the battle of Riceville with a part of his regiment and sent to Libby prison. He was one of the famous party of ninety-seven who tunneled out of the prison and escaped, but before he reached the Union lines he was recaptured and sent to Macon, Ga. On the way thither he leaped from the train with other prisoners and again escaped. This time he was successful and reached the Union lines, but was so emaciated and broken in health that he was sent home on sick leave. After some months he returned and was promoted to a captaincy. He was one of the last Union soldiers mustered out of the service. He removed to Iowa in 1870, and settled first in Victor, a few years later coming to Des Moines which was afterwards his residence. He established "The Fair Store" on the east side of the river in company with C. B. Dockstader, another soldier of the civil war. The partnership lasted seventeen years, and at its expiration he established a department store on West Walnut street, which was mainly in charge of his sons. Capt. Wilkins had made investments in certain zinc deposits near Carl Junction, Mo., and was visiting that point when he met with an accident which caused his death. In coming from the train he fell or stumbled over some obstacle from which he received injuries that rendered him insensible and from which he died the second morning afterward. Capt. Wilkins was a man of wide acquaintance and highly esteemed by all who knew him. He was a member of Kinsman Post, G. A. R., of Des Moines, and also of the Iowa Commandery of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion. At the time of his death he was president of the Union of American War Prisoners. His sudden death was widely deplored. The public journals of Des Moines published elaborate notices of his life and patriotic services.

DR. A. C. ROBERTS was born in Queensberry township, Warren county, N. Y., January 15, 1830; he died at Ft. Madison, Iowa, July 27, 1901. As a boy he spent much of his youth in hard work on his father's farm, obtain-

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