

Gilman Folsom

ISSN 0003-4827

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Recommended Citation

"Gilman Folsom." *The Annals of Iowa* 1872 (1872), 298-301.

Available at: <http://ir.uiowa.edu/annals-of-iowa/vol1872/iss4/10>

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west from Washington. This western boundary would very nearly correspond to the line between the present counties of Ringgold and Taylor, and its adoption would have deprived our state of all that fertile portion denominated the "Missouri Slope." In October, 1844, a constitutional convention had been held at Iowa City, and a constitution framed which embraced boundaries far more extensive than those of the present state, taking in much of the southern portion of the present state of Minnesota. The people of the territory disapproved of the reduction of these boundaries by Congress, and at the election held August 4, 1845, rejected the constitution—the vote being seven thousand two hundred and thirty-five for, and seven thousand six hundred and fifty-six against it. In 1846, Congress proposed the present boundary lines, and another constitutional convention convened at Iowa City, on the 4th of May of this year. A session of fifteen days resulted in the framing of the constitution, which was sanctioned by the people at an election held August 3, 1846—the popular vote this time being nine thousand four hundred and ninety-two for, and nine thousand and thirty-six against the constitution. This constitution was agreed to by Congress, and on the 28th of December of the same year, Iowa was admitted into the Union as a sovereign state.

GILMAN FOLSOM.

FROM the Iowa City *State Press* we copy the following sketch of the life of the late Gilman Folsom, who died at his residence, near Iowa City, July 15, 1872:—

"At three o'clock on last Monday occurred the death of one of the first of our pioneer settlers, and one who, in ability and acquirements, was foremost of our citizens,—Hon. Gilman Folsom. He was born at Dorchester, New

Hampshire, April 7, 1818, and at his death had reached the age of fifty-four years, three months, and eight days. In his early youth he gave such indications of precocious natural gifts that his education was carefully attended to, and he improved each advantage with an industry that encouraged every effort to give him the best culture possible. His course in the schools terminated at an age when the young men of to-day are mostly commencing their college courses, in the noted school founded at Norwich, Vermont, by Capt. Alden Partridge, former superintendent of West Point military academy. This school subsequently grew into Norwich University, and its founder, whose death occurred in 1854, laid the foundations of the noted military institutions of Virginia and Mississippi.

“Leaving his *Alma Mater*, Mr. Folsom prosecuted the study of law in the office of the Hon. Josiah Quincy, a noted jurist of New Hampshire, and at the age of twenty-three was admitted to the bar at Haverhill. At that time the west, though far less accessible than now, was the Mecca of every young man’s hope, and the new territory of Iowa was just beginning to draw from New England that immigration which gave to our early councils, to our bench, bar, and pulpit so many cultured men, to the subduing of our wild acres so many strong arms, and to the rude homes of that day so many noble women, that by their firesides laid the deep foundation of our state’s best good, in the characters of their children.

“To the west the young lawyer turned his face, and became a citizen of Iowa City early in 1841. Here he was soon selected as a man of mark and promise. Cheerfully sharing all the privations of the times with the rudest pioneer, his great acquirements and transcendent talent placed him foremost in a galaxy of able men, all of whom he survived. Of these, Judge James P. Carleton, the late Senator Grimes, and Judge Joseph Williams, members of his own profession, were in turn his colleagues and competitors, or

from the bench participated with him in the trial of most of the noted cases in our early history. They are all gone.

“Entering politics, Mr. Folsom, from the stump, and for some time by his pen, in the editorial columns of the old *Iowa Capitol Reporter*, fought an able battle against the Whig party of that day, and was for two successive terms made a member of the house of representatives from this county. In the councils of the young state his great abilities were brought to bear upon the creation of our early statutes, and the formation of our system of jurisprudence. The code of 1851, which as a system of laws was far in advance of that of many an older state, was the joint product of the labors of himself and James W. Grimes, and in our later codes many of the legal landmarks reared by their hands stand as fixed boundaries in the midst of change which surges in vain against them.

“On the election of Pierce, in 1852, Mr. Folsom was appointed receiver of the federal land office in this city, which place he held until the removal of the office. His colleague, as register, was the Hon. John Clark, whose death occurred last summer, and the two were, respectively, the successors of Hugh D. Downey and Easton Morris, who had held the land office under Fillmore, and who are both long since dead.

“This service terminated Mr. Folsom’s public career, and he devoted himself assiduously thenceforth to the large estate accumulated in the successful practice of his profession, and by the eligible investments which a man of such prudent foresight found on every hand in the early days. Throughout his professional career he had been peerless in its practice. As a writer, the state furnished no opponent bold enough to brave his pen. As a legislator, he rose to the full height of a statesman. In his later life, long after he had abandoned the active practice of law, and was beset by physical infirmities, he returned occasionally to the management of important cases, and at such times his efforts, before bench or jury, were characterized by a depth of le-

gal acumen and a wealth of classical illustration that recalled the vigor of his youth, and were worthy to rank beside the efforts of the greatest of American lawyers.

“Mr. Folsom was married in 1843, to Miss ^VArthur, who, with three sons and one daughter, survives him.

“To mourn the dead, there came to-day, others beside those whose consanguinity gave license to their tears, for he was a man of tender heart and free hand, and his charity was broad as his culture.

“So has slept from his activity a man great in genius and culture, adorned by mental gifts of peerless brilliancy, author of deeds all worthy of ability so exalted, and the places in public station and private life he was so qualified to fill, are vacant, and await the coming of occupants who can walk upon that higher plane, pressed by his feet as their native path.”

DAVENPORT.

THE ^V*Davenport Democrat*, some months ago, contained the following allusions to the rise and development of that city:—

“Three-and-thirty years ago, just a generation back, there were but few people on this handsome town site. Only a few months before Judge ^VCook had been ferried across the river by Indians, and Harvey ^VLeonard had not yet taken forcible possession of a cabin to shelter himself and family, after wheeling all his earthly possessions to its door on a borrowed wheelbarrow. Our hill-sides were beautifully graded slopes, noble trees dotted their surface, and the river's edge touched the bank without any intervening miasmatic marsh. A handsome place for a town was recognized.

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