

James Birney Harsh

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CLIFFORD THORNE was born at Brooklyn, Iowa, January 20, 1878, and died at a hospital in London, England, November 13, 1923. Burial was at Washington, Iowa. His parents were Rev. and Mrs. W. G. Thorne, Mr. Thorne being a Methodist minister who occupied pastorates in southeastern Iowa. Much of Clifford's youth was spent in Washington, Iowa. He attended public school, Iowa Wesleyan College at Mount Pleasant, and Iowa State University. He enlisted in Company D, Fiftieth Iowa Infantry, in which he served during the Spanish-American War. He was graduated from the Law Department of Iowa State University in 1899, and obtained the degree of Ph. D. from Yale University in 1901. He began the practice of law at Washington in 1901 and specialized in the law relating to railway rates, becoming attorney for the Corn Belt Meat Producers Association, the American National Livestock Association, and the Co-operative Grain Dealers Association, conducting cases before the Iowa State Railroad Commission and the Interstate Commerce Commission. In 1910 he was elected a member of the Iowa Railroad Commission, and was re-elected in 1914. In 1915 while a member of the Iowa Railroad Commission he appeared before the Interstate Commerce Commission at Chicago in a noted hearing in which he represented the Iowa Railroad Commission and the shipping interests of Iowa, resisting advances in rates asked by the railroads, and the advances were generally denied. He also appeared for the state in other important rate cases. In 1916 he was a candidate for the Republican nomination for congressman from the First District, lacking 380 votes of winning it. He resigned from the commission in 1917 and entered the practice of law in Chicago, giving special attention to railway rate cases. Besides the associations mentioned above he also became attorney for the American Farm Bureau Federation, the Farmers National Grain Dealers, the Western Petroleum Refiners Association, the National Wholesale Grocers Association, and many other associations and firms that were contending for the adjustment of freight rates, and became recognized as perhaps the best posted man in the United States on railway rate and kindred questions. In 1922 he was a candidate for the Republican nomination for United States senator, and at the primary ran second in a field of six. In 1923 he was an expert witness in the tax cases brought by certain Iowa railways against the state in assessments made by the Executive Council. In September, 1923, he and his wife started on a tour of the world and while at London he was stricken with pneumonia, which soon terminated fatally.

JAMES BIRNEY HARSH was born in Clinton County, Ohio, September 8, 1845, and died at Creston, Iowa, June 19, 1923. His parents were Daniel and Nancy (McKay) Harsh. His father died in 1849 and his mother with her family removed to Bureau County, Illinois. He attended common school and at sixteen years of age began teaching in winters, working at farm labor in summers. He enlisted in Company

K, One Hundred and Forty-ninth Illinois Infantry, and became a sergeant. Returning from the war he taught school, attended Lombard College, Galesburg, for a time, and in 1867 established Western Business College at Galesburg and conducted it two years. He removed to Creston, Iowa, in 1870, and engaged in real estate and brokerage business. He also practiced law, being a member of the firm of Harsh & Stafford, and later of Harsh & Higbee. In 1872 he established the *Creston Gazette* and was in active control several years. From the brokerage business he drifted into banking, being in turn president of J. B. Harsh & Co., Bankers, the Creston National Bank, the Creston Loan & Trust Co., and the Land Credit Bank which he established in 1905. For a time he was also proprietor of a general store, and of a hardware store, and managed several farm properties. He gave his time and energy freely to public enterprises, such as president of the Creston District Fair, the Blue Grass League of Southwestern Iowa, the Blue Grass Palace, etc. He served at one time as justice of the peace, was mayor of Creston at two different times, and in 1887 was elected senator and was re-elected in 1891, serving with distinction in the Twenty-second, Twenty-third, Twenty-fourth, and Twenty-fifth general assemblies. In 1894 he was permanent chairman of the Republican State Convention. He was at different times prominently spoken of for the Republican nomination for Congress from his district, and also for governor of the state. He served as department commander, Department of Iowa, Grand Army of the Republic, for the year 1921-1922. During the World War he wrote and published in the local papers a series of articles on "Will We Win the War?" which were followed later by another series on "Gains by the War." He also wrote for the local papers many character sketches of old residents of his town and county, which constituted a unique and valuable contribution to local history. In 1921 he issued for a year *Harsh's Monthly*, a paper of much interest and value in which he discussed current financial questions, and included reminiscences of local history. He was a man of great versatility, activity, and usefulness to his town, county, and state.

WILLIAM HENRY FLEMING was born in New York City, April 14, 1833, and died in Des Moines, Iowa, October 14, 1923. His parents were William and Margaret (Chambers) Fleming, both born in Ireland. He obtained his primary education under the then new public school system. Leaving school when about fifteen years old he worked a few weeks in a hat store, and then was for one year in the law office of General Frederick E. Mather on Wall Street. In September, 1847, he began as an apprentice in the printing trade with John A. Gray, publisher of the *Christian Intelligencer*. In 1850 he entered the employ of John Trow, a book and job printer. In November, 1854, he removed to Davenport, Iowa, where he worked in various printing offices. Early in 1857 he started the *Le Claire Express*. Returning to Davenport the fall of 1860 he worked as a compositor on the *Gazette* and soon became its

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