

## Samuel Merrill, Orlando C. Howe, J. D. Wells

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## NOTABLE DEATHS.

SAMUEL MERRILL, 7th Governor of the State of Iowa, was born at Turner, Maine, Aug. 7, 1822; he died at Los Angeles, Cal., Aug. 31, 1899. He grew up on his father's farm, receiving only such education as the country schools afforded in those days. As soon as he was qualified he also became a country school teacher. Later on, like many other young men of northern birth and education, of whom William H. Seward was the most conspicuous example, he went south for the purpose of engaging in teaching. Like Seward, however, he soon became convinced that this was no desirable field of effort, for a man of his views regarding slavery. He returned home and engaged in farming. But on reaching the age of twenty-five he abandoned this calling for that of merchandizing with his brother, Mr. J. H. Merrill, now of Des Moines, Iowa. In the years 1854 and '55 he had the honor of representing his town in the legislature of his state. He supported John P. Hale, the illustrious free-soiler, for the United States senate. During the following year the Merrill brothers emigrated to Iowa, settling in McGregor, where they commenced business as merchants and bankers. Their efforts in these lines proved highly successful. In the fall of 1859 Mr. Samuel Merrill was elected to the Iowa House of Representatives, serving in the regular and special sessions (1860-61) of that body. While he was for the most part a quiet and undemonstrative member, those who made his acquaintance understood that no man in the house kept a closer watch of its proceedings or was more fully informed concerning what was accomplished. Few members were better remembered by their associates. He took an active part in the extra session of 1861, when the first preparations were made for the long civil war. The Merrill brothers advanced the funds necessary to clothe the First, Second and Third regiments of Iowa volunteer infantry. Early in 1862 he was chosen colonel of our Twenty-first infantry, which saw its first service in Missouri. He commanded a brigade in the battle of Hartsville, Mo., in a manner to win distinguished credit for skill and bravery. Proceeding on to Vicksburg, Col. Merrill's regiment bore a prominent part in the battles of Port Gibson and Black River Bridge. At Port Gibson his horse was shot down under him and Gen. Carr highly complimented him in his report. He said, "The Twenty-first Iowa, Col. Samuel Merrill, first in battle and one of the last to leave the field." The next battle in which he led his regiment was that of Black River Bridge, where he received a wound which finally necessitated his leaving the service. Returning to McGregor he was elected president of the First National bank of that city. He was nominated as the Republican candidate for Governor of Iowa in the summer of 1867, and his brilliant record made his election a matter of course. Upon attaining the governorship it is truth to say that he gave the State one of the best business administrations it has ever had. He was the first Governor who came to the capital to reside. He said the final word in favor of impartial suffrage, and the General Assembly ratified the famous amendment, striking out the word "white." He also started the movement which resulted in better insurance laws. He frequently visited the public institutions and thoroughly watched over their interests. During his second term, which began in 1870, many important questions were before the legislature, all of which had been considered in his biennial message. Among these may be named, the codification of the laws, the erection of the new capitol, the establishing of a second penitentiary, the protection of the school lands, and the development of the Soldier's Orphans Home. He took an active part in the famous reunion of Iowa soldiers, at Des Moines, Aug. 31, 1870. His administration was filled with good and useful works. One other thing should not be forgotten. Up to the time of his administration the State Library was

a dust-heap of ill-assorted law books and "pub. docs." under very haphazard care. Governor Merrill appointed Mr. John C. Merrill (not a relative, however), State Librarian, and then began the work of improvement which has never since ceased. Librarian Merrill died not long after his appointment and Governor Merrill filled the place with Mrs. Ada North, who won distinguished credit for the admirable manner in which she discharged her duties for ten years, as well as for her later work of nine years as librarian of the State University. Intelligent library work was begun in the Merrill administration to which the credit of its inception is due. Governor Merrill remained in Des Moines at the head of important business interests until 1886, when he removed to California, where with several other gentlemen he made large purchases of real estate. This venture was not a very fortunate one and the Governor's investments are understood to have undergone a large shrinkage. About a year ago he met with a serious accident while riding on a trolley car, from which time his health failed until he died. Civic and military honors were paid to him at his funeral in Los Angeles, and his remains were brought back to his old home in Des Moines for interment in the family vault. The body lay in state for some hours in the capitol and was then taken to the Plymouth Congregational church of which the deceased had long been a member. Eloquent funeral addresses were made by Rev. Dr. A. L. Frisbie, Rev. Dr. George A. Gates, president of Iowa College, and Governor Leslie M. Shaw. The lying in state in the capitol was directed by Mr. W. H. Fleming, who was the private secretary of Governor Merrill, as well as of several of his successors. The remains were escorted to Greenwood cemetery by cavalry Troop A, Iowa National Guard, and many carriages filled with distinguished citizens. After the closing funeral exercises, three volleys were fired over the grave, "lights out" sounded by the bugler, and the dust of the illustrious statesman and soldier was left to its last sleep.

ORLANDO C. HOWE was born at Williamstown, Vermont, December 19, 1824; he died at Topeka, Kansas, August 31, 1899. We have few facts relating to the early life of Capt. Howe, though he was quite well known in northwestern Iowa forty years ago. Educated at Aurora (N. Y.) Academy, he studied law in Buffalo. He came west and settled at Newton, Iowa, in 1855. In the fall of 1856, in company with B. F. Parmenter and R. U. Wheelock, he visited Spirit Lake where these men each made a land claim with the intention of returning and making improvements the following year. They returned early in March, 1857, when they discovered that the entire settlement had been massacred by the Inkpadutah band of Sioux Indians. They immediately went back to Fort Dodge, and upon their report the famous Spirit Lake Expedition was organized. In this Expedition Mr. Howe was a private. His name appears in the roster of Co. B on the monument at Okobojo. He subsequently removed to Spirit Lake where he resided several years. In 1858 he was elected district-attorney of the Fourth Judicial District, serving four years. He afterwards returned to Newton and in 1863 entered the Union army as captain of Co. L, Ninth Iowa Cavalry, which served on the northwestern frontier. He practiced law some years in Newton after the war, and from 1875 to 1880 was Professor in the Law Department of the State University. Soon after this last date he removed to Medicine Lodge, Kansas, which was thenceforth his residence. After suffering many years from impaired health he became violently insane during the month of August last and was sent to the State Asylum at Topeka, where he died as above stated. He was a man of much ability, a pioneer who became deservedly prominent in northwestern Iowa, and socially an excellent Christian gentleman. His name is one that will always be connected with the early history of northwestern Iowa and of our great University.

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