

Hoyt Sherman

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NOTABLE DEATHS.

JAMES BLAKELY WILLIAMS was born at Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, May 11, 1836; he died at Ft. Dodge, Iowa, August 25, 1903. He was the second son of Maj. William Williams, founder of Ft. Dodge, with whom he came to Muscatine, Iowa, in 1849. Maj. Samuel Woods, of the 6th U. S. Infantry, having been ordered to establish a military post on the Des Moines river near the mouth of the Lizard, urged Maj. Williams to accept the position of post trader, which he did, and marched with the troops across the State, reaching Ft. Dodge August 23, 1850. James, then a boy of twelve years, accompanied him and was his father's clerk and chief assistant for the next ten years in the work of post trader, pioneer Indian trader and merchant and town proprietor. He was always upon the best terms with the Indians and was especially intimate with Wah-kon-sa, a young chief after whom the township of Wakhonsa was named. The troops were removed to Ft. Ridgely, Minnesota, in 1853, and Maj. Williams and others purchased the buildings and the site on which they were located. In March, 1854, they platted the town of Ft. Dodge. Maj. Williams was the first postmaster. In 1855 the United States Land Office was located at Ft. Dodge and it immediately became the leading town of northwestern Iowa. A large part of the clerical work incident to the then rapid changes rested on the shoulders of this comparative boy. In August, 1862, he enlisted and served as sergeant in Company I, 32d Iowa Infantry Volunteers. Soon after reaching the field on account of his elegant penmanship and superior business qualifications he was detailed as clerk and spent the principal part of his army service as clerk at Division and Corps headquarters. On his return from the army he founded the abstract business in Webster county in which business he continued until the time of his death. He was a man of fine intellectual qualities, self-educated, as all the schooling he had was prior to his twelfth year. At the time of his death he was the oldest living settler of Webster county and one who had from the first been closely and intimately identified with Ft. Dodge through all phases of its growth. He has worthily filled a place in the history of his city, State and nation.

W. H. J.

MILO SMITH was born in Addison county, Vermont, January 25, 1819; he died in Clinton, Iowa, February 28, 1904. He was a son of a veteran of the war of 1812 and the grandson of a revolutionary soldier. In 1840 he came west to Chicago, and in 1848 was identified as engineer with the first railroad line built west of Chicago. In 1855, before a house was erected within the present city limits, he came to Clinton as chief engineer of the Chicago, Iowa & Nebraska railroad, now the Chicago & Northwestern. He helped to construct the first railway bridge across the Mississippi at that place, and until the war was engaged in railroad building and territorial development. In 1862 he organized the 26th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, and was commissioned Colonel of the regiment by Governor Kirkwood. He was twice severely wounded in battle. Since the war Col. Smith has resided in Clinton and has been active in various public enterprises. He was often urged to accept public office but preferred the life of a private citizen. For five years, however, he served as superintendent of the Soldiers' Home at Marshalltown.

MAJ. HOYT SHERMAN was born in Lancaster, Ohio, November 1, 1827; he died in Des Moines, Iowa, January 25, 1904. He was a member of a distinguished family; a brother of Senator John Sherman and of Gen. W. T. Sherman. He had been a resident of Des Moines for more than 55 years, having located here in 1848. For a short time he was a member of

the law firm of Casady & Tidrick; in 1849 he was elected clerk of the district court; he was appointed postmaster of Des Moines by Zachary Taylor, holding the position from 1849 to 1853; in 1854 he became a member of the banking firm of Hoyt Sherman & Co.; in 1858 he took an active part in organizing the Iowa State bank. When the war broke out he was commissioned by President Lincoln paymaster in the army with rank of Major. Maj. Sherman was an active member of various pioneer, social and charitable organizations. He contributed a sketch "Early banking in Iowa" to THE ANNALS, 3d ser. v. 5, pp. 1-13, and also a history of the "State Bank of Iowa" v. 5, pp. 93-116.

MARY M. MILLER was born in Clarion county, Pennsylvania, July 24, 1842; she died in Des Moines, March 28, 1904. In 1862 she came to Iowa and taught in the public schools of Eddyville and Ottumwa. In 1867 she was married to Lieut. Samuel Miller of the 4th Iowa Cavalry, who died in 1872. After her husband's death she taught for a time in the Des Moines schools. In 1888 Mrs. Miller was appointed State Librarian by Governor Larrabee, succeeding Mrs. S. B. Maxwell. Mrs. Miller had an experience in her office that was quite different from that of most librarians of years ago. This was the fact that Governor Boies, a democrat, allowed her to remain throughout his administration, though very strong pressure was brought to bear upon him to secure her removal, for purely political reasons. In 1896 she became Matron of the Business Women's Home in Des Moines; in 1898 she took the position of Matron in the Soldiers' Home at Marshalltown, where she remained until failing health obliged her to resign.

JACOB HUGH HARRISON was born in Carrollton, Ky., December 25, 1840; he died in Davenport, Iowa, January 1, 1904. For more than 35 years he had been a resident of Davenport and identified with the best interests of the town. For many years he was engaged in the drug business. He was appointed commissioner of pharmacy under Gov. Boies, and was at one time President of the Iowa Pharmaceutical Association. He was for a time president and for many years a member of the board of trustees of the old Davenport Library Association. He helped to organize the Davenport Crematory; was a trustee of the Davenport Academy of Sciences and an active member of the University Extension Society. He was interested in collecting historical documents relating to Iowa and became a warm friend of the Historical Department at Des Moines. He was instrumental in securing Gov. Lucas' commission as Captain in the regular army, issued in 1812, for this Department.

WARD LAMSON was born in Sterling, Mass., September 7, 1820; he died in Fairfield, Iowa, April 6, 1904. He was one of the earliest pioneers of the State, having arrived in Burlington, then the capital of Wisconsin Territory, December 6, 1837. He remained there until 1852, when he removed to Fairfield. As a business man he was active and thorough. In the early 50's he was engaged in the real estate business, and some of the methods he devised for keeping entries of land in his own office were adopted by the Land Department, in Washington, D. C., as superior to those in use. By nature he was a student, an independent and original thinker, and especially interested in scientific investigations. The honor of founding the Jefferson County Library Association in March, 1853, belongs to him; that institution has developed into the splendid Fairfield Free Public Library, in the building up of which Mr. Lamson was closely associated with the late Senator James F. Wilson.

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