

Thomas Watts

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HON. HIRAM Y. SMITH died suddenly at his home in Des Moines, on the 4th of November. He was born in Piqua, Ohio, March 22, 1843, coming to Iowa in 1854. He graduated at the Albany, (N. Y.) Law School in 1866, and settled down in Des Moines to practice his profession. In 1875 he was elected District Attorney, which position he held four years. In 1881 he was elected to the State Senate from Polk County, serving with ability four years. In 1884 he was elected to Congress to fill a vacancy occasioned by the resignation of Hon. John A. Kasson. He was the founder and always the staunch friend of the city library of Des Moines. Mr. Smith had a large acquaintance in the State, and was highly esteemed as a useful and influential citizen.

THOMAS WATTS, who died at Deep Creek, in Clinton County, on the 3d of December, was one of the earliest settlers in that part of the State. He was born in Vermont in 1816, coming to Iowa in 1838. The Territory had been organized that year. Iowa consisted at that time of a vast region of wild prairie, interspersed with creeks, rivers and lakes, bordered by fringes of woods, and groves, which served as guides to hunters, trappers and emigrants traversing the great plains. Mr. Watts was charmed with the beauty and fertility of the new country, and took a claim in the Deep Creek Valley. Here he made a fine farm home upon which he spent fifty-six years of his life. It was to this home he took his bride fifty years ago. All of their children were born and reared to manhood and womanhood on the old homestead, where their father died at the age of 78. Mr. Watts held many township and county offices, and was an influential member of the Legislature of 1858.

WALDO M. POTTER, who died at Castleton, North Dakota, November 24, was for many years a prominent Iowa editor and politician. He was a native of New York, where he attained considerable prominence as an editor, and was active in the organization of the Republican party. He came west about the year 1873, and purchased an interest in *The Omaha Republican*, but did not remain there long. The next year he bought an interest in *The Davenport Gazette* and became its editor. In 1875 he moved to Clinton and purchased *The Herald*, which he conducted until 1881, when he removed to Fargo, in Dakota. Here he engaged largely in wheat raising, on a fine farm which he purchased in the Red River valley. But his old love for journalism never died out, and he again became associated with the press of North Dakota. Mr. Potter was a strong man intellectually, a vigorous writer, and one who wielded marked influence wherever he lived. He was appointed by President Harrison Register of the United States Land Office, at Fargo, which position he held four years.

CAPTAIN WILLIAM HILLHOUSE, who died at Burlington on the last day of the year, was one of the most notable of early Iowa settlers. We hope to be able to secure his portrait and an extended record of his pioneer achievements for a future number of THE ANNALS.

DAVID D. SKINNER, who died at San Jose, California, on the 6th of December, was one of the earliest pioneers in Iowa. He was born in Ohio, in 1823, and in 1834 came with his father's family to Iowa. They settled at Montrose, Lee County, soon after the Indian title was extinguished. Mr. Skinner lived in Iowa under four different governments: Michigan, Wisconsin and Iowa, Territorial, and the Iowa State government. With his brother, W. W. Skinner, he established a plow factory at Davenport in early days, and in 1855 they removed their establishment to Des Moines where for a quarter of a century it was successfully carried on. D. D. Skinner has been a member of the City Council of Des Moines, and was one of the founders of the Central Church of Christ. He was well known and highly esteemed by all of the old residents of the Capital City where he lived so long.

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