

Standard Form For Members of the Legislature

Name of Representative \_\_\_\_\_ **Senator** Wright,

George Brown - Represented Van Buren County, Iowa

1. Birthday and place 24. Mar 1820 Bloomington, Indiana

2. Marriage (s) date place  
Annal Mary or  
Mary Hannah Dibble 19 Oct 1843

3. Significant events for example:

A. Business Admitted to the bar in 1840; about 1886 he retired from law practice and accepted the presidency of the Peck County Savings Bank until his death, president of the State Agricultural Society

B. Civic responsibilities American Legion

C. Profession Lawyer, judge; chief justice of Iowa

4. Church membership \_\_\_\_\_

5. Sessions served 2<sup>nd</sup> 3<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly 1848, 1850

6. Public Offices

A. Local Prosecuting Attorney of Van Buren County, Iowa 1847-1848; served on school Board

B. State Appointed Judge of the Court in June 1860 - Sept 1870; chief Justice of Iowa 1865-1869; Justice of the State Supreme Court 1854-1870

C. National United States Senator 1871-1877; President of the American Bar Association

7. Death 11 Jan 1896 Des Moines, Iowa; buried Woodland Cemetery, Des Moines, Iowa

8. Children Craig L.; Mary D. (Mrs. Frank H. Peavey); Lucia H. (Mrs. Edgar H. Stone); Cornell; George G.; Thomas Seaman (predeceased his father in death)

9. Names of parents John and Rachel (Seaman) Wright

10. Education Attended private schools

11. Degrees Graduate of Indiana University of Bloomington, Indiana in 1839 with high honors at age 19.

12. Other applicable information Whig, later Republican

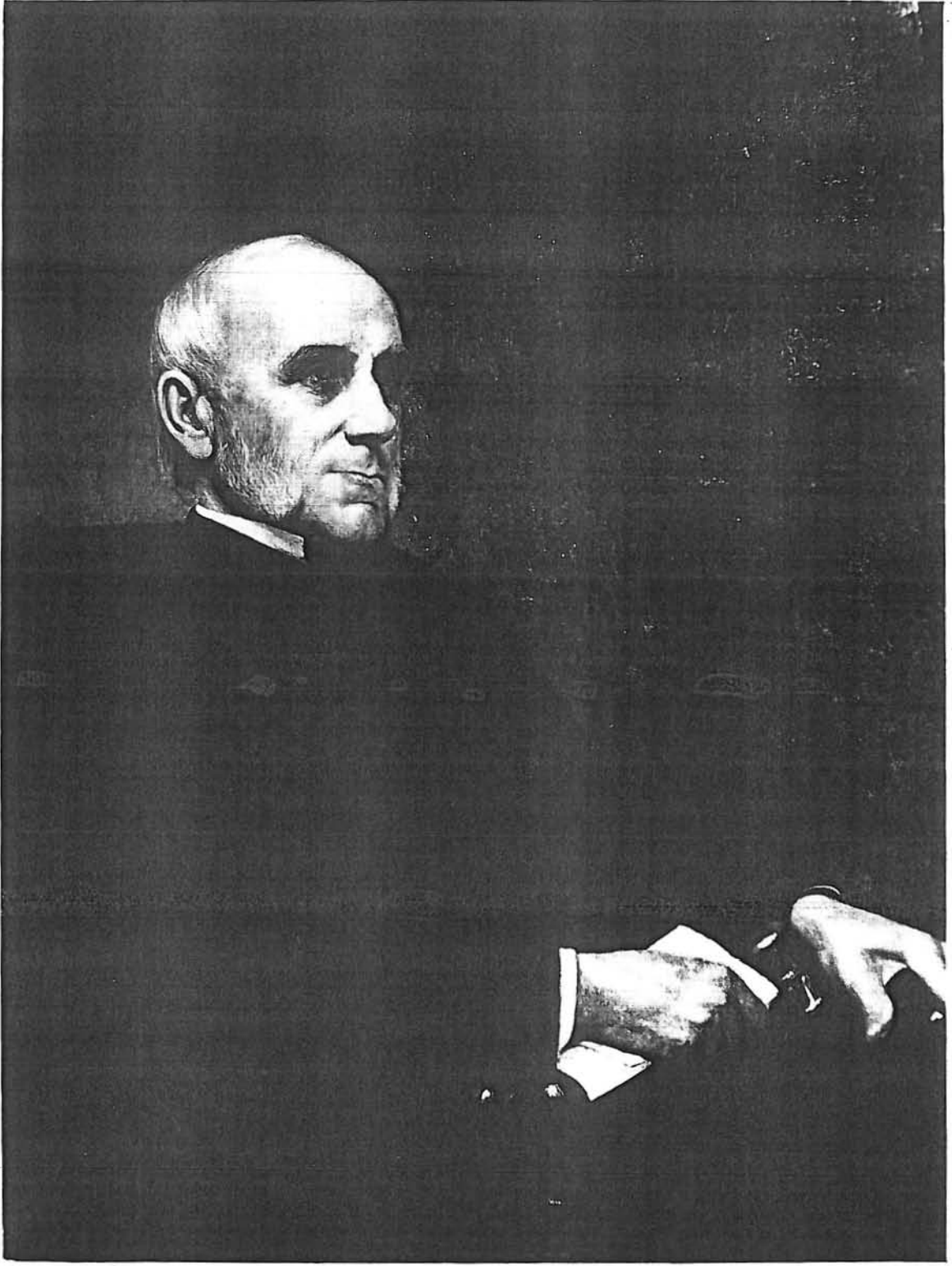
- He read law in the office of his brother Joseph G. Wright who was
- He moved to Keosauqua, Iowa, <sup>1846</sup> while still in his <sup>course of study</sup> minority where he  
practiced law and in surrounding counties until elected to the  
legislature and where he lived for 30 years.
- While he was a judge on the bench he lived in Des Moines Iowa
- He was a member of the law firm of Wright, Gatch and Wright
- He was a popular lecturer
- He served as president of the Iowa Agricultural Society 1860-1865
- He was one of the founders of the College of Law at the University  
of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa and was a professor in that law  
department 1865-1871
- He was President of the Board of Trustees of Simpson College at Ankeny, Iowa
- In 1879 he was elected a director of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific  
Railway.
- His wife, Mary, died in Sioux City, Iowa 22 June 1897

Sources Log For Legislation Entries

Applicability

Source	Non Applicable	Applicable	Information obtained
- Obituary	-	-	<u>The Keosauqua Republican</u> , Keosauqua, Iowa, Thurs. Jan. 23, 1896, p. 1, col. 6-7
-	-	-	bioguide.congress.gov (date accessed 1/30/02)
- Obituary	-	-	<u>The Waterloo Democrat</u> , Keosauqua, Iowa Thurs. Jan. 16, 1896, p. 2, col. 1
-	-	-	<u>The United States Biographical Dictionary</u> 1878, p.
-	-	-	<u>Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Public Men of Iowa</u> by Stokes 1916, p. 417-422
-	-	-	<u>Narrative History of the People of Iowa</u> Vol II, 1931, photo
-	-	-	<u>History of Iowa by Saxe</u> - Vol IV p. 296-297
-	-	-	<u>Burial in Woodlark Cemetery, Des Moines Iowa</u> 1998
-	-	-	findagrave.com (accessed 29 Sept 2009)
-	-	-	<u>Iowa Grave Records WPA - Polk County, Iowa</u>
-	-	-	judicial.state.ia.us (accessed 27 May 2007)
-	-	-	ancestry.com (accessed 29 Sept 2009)
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APRIL 17  
# 3209



WRIGHT, GEORGE G.

A Narrative History

The People of Iowa

with

SPECIAL TREATMENT OF THEIR CHIEF ENTERPRISES IN  
EDUCATION, RELIGION, VALOR, INDUSTRY,  
BUSINESS, ETC.

by

EDGAR RUBEY HARLAN, LL. B., A. M.

*Curator of the  
Historical, Memorial, and Art Department of Iowa*

IOWA BIOGRAPHY

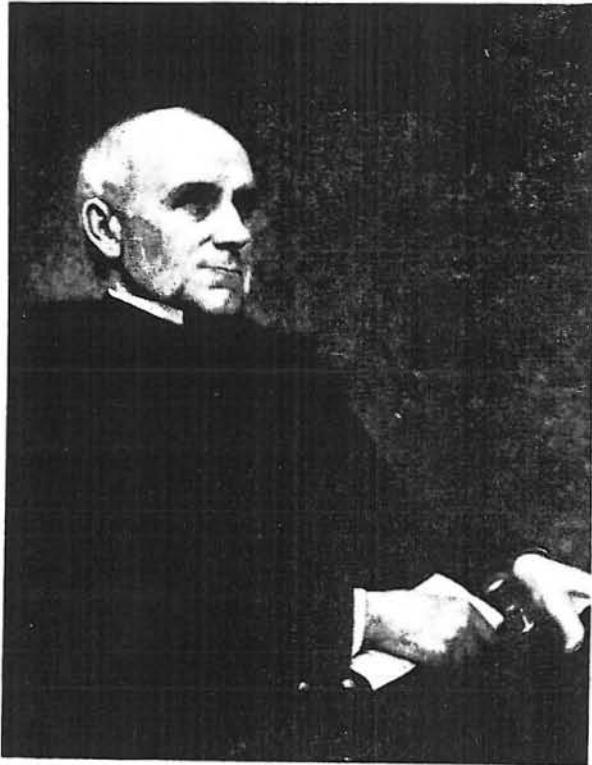
*Gratuitously Published*

*Selected and Prepared by Special Staff of Writers  
of The American Historical Society, Inc.*

Volume II

ILLUSTRATED

THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY, Inc.  
CHICAGO AND NEW YORK  
1931



GEORGE GROVER WRIGHT

Chief Justice of Iowa, 1855-1859; 1864-1865.  
Judge of the Supreme Court of Iowa, 1855-1865;  
United States Senator, 1871-1877.

From a portrait in oil by George H. Yewell, in the  
Historical, Memorial and Art Department of Iowa.

# DEATH OF JUDGE WRIGHT.

Iowa's Veteran Lawyer and Statesman  
Passes to the Hereafter.

[Iowa Capital.]

Although not unexpected, yet with unwelcome suddenness, came this morning the moment which was to witness the departure from earthly activities and scenes of George G. Wright, for two generations one of the leading men of Iowa. The Judge had been somewhat of an invalid for some time; yet, possessed as he was, of wonderfully great vitality, fatal results were repeatedly warded off. But, yesterday afternoon, January 10, 1896, a severe stroke prostrated him; yet he rallied, and seemed so much better that members of his family thought the danger had again passed: so much so that his son, George, feeling that his father was out of danger for the present, left at midnight for his own home. Later, however, the sufferer began to sink, and at the hour of 3:30 passed away.

This event takes from our community one whose continued presence we all could wish might have been prolonged for yet many years. Genial, kindly, extremely companionable, Judge Wright had come to be looked upon as almost everybody's friend. And widely will he be missed.

George Grover Wright was born at Bloomington, Ind., March 24, 1820. He was the son of John Wright and his wife Rachel (Seaman). The ancestral Wrights came originally from Wales to America; the Seamans from England. The

Charles Baldwin, who lives in Keosauqua.

The following is the tribute to Judge Wright by Hon. Josiah B. Grinnell, in his "Public Men of Forty Years":

"For a period of a generation in the circles of farmers, at the bar, at educational and political gatherings, he has found a welcome. For epigrammatic taste, exuberance of wit, strong Saxon, apt comparison, close logic, while devoid of limpid fluency, he is in just repute. Few have had like rare opportunities, as a pioneer counselor, a judge, a chief justice, wearing the unspotted ermine long years until called to the United States senate, to take rank with a deceased brother, statesman and diplomat, Joseph Wright. As senatorial candidate, he had but to intimate and troops of friends made his cause their care."

In addition to the foregoing full obituary from the Capital, the REPUBLICAN can add but little of this great and good man whom the people of Van Buren county knew so long and loved so well. This was his home. He loved to come back to Keosauqua and always spoke of it as the dearest spot to him on earth. At almost every visit he dwelt on the beauty of its location and the grandeur of the surrounding scenery—which he often expressed as the finest in the state. And the people of the county, as well as his old home town, he loved to meet every Old Settler's Day, and always came to this reunion until last year when he was too feeble to make the trip.

The funeral was held at his home in Des Moines, Tuesday, Jan. 13, Rev. Dr. Rowley of Danville, who was a resident of Keosauqua when Judge Wright first came here and who was an intimate friend, preaching

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In 1848, he had been elected a state senator, serving in that capacity four years, and being a member of the senate when the code of 1851 was enacted. In 1850 he was the whig candidate for congress in the first or southern district, but there were too many democrats in the district and they succeeded in electing Bernhart Henn. The last time a democrat was elected (in 1853), the whig members of the general assembly gave their votes to Hon. George G. Wright for the position.

Seventeen years afterward a republican candidate was elected, and he was chosen by the legislature to the senate as a successor to

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The funeral was held at his home in Des Moines, Tuesday, Jan. 13, Rev. Dr. Rowley of Danville, who was a resident of Keosauqua when Judge Wright lived here and who was an intimate friend, preaching the sermon. The world is better because Judge Wright lived in it.

### OBITUARIES.

Mary Jane Whitten was born in Lawrence county, Ohio, Jan. 19, 1829. Died Jan. 13, 1896, at her home in Douds Station, Iowa, aged 66 years, 11 months, 24 days. She came with her parents to Van Buren county, Iowa, in May 1840. She was married Jan. 2, 1847, to Hon. Eliab Doud, since which she has resided at this place on their home farm. She was the mother of eleven children: Mary A., Winfield S., Rebecca Fear (who died in infancy), Fletcher W., Harriet I., Eliab E., A. Lincoln, Candace R., Elizabeth O. (who died Dec. 31, 1895), Malissa M. and Walter D., leaving her husband and nine children to survive her, all of whom were present at the funeral except one son, Fletcher W. who resides in California. She also leaves four sisters and one brother who were present except two sisters who reside in California and Colorado. She became a member of the Baptist church before her marriage and was a constant member of that church until two years ago when she united with the M. E. church at Douds, Iowa. She always expected to die for the change from this life to the

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Seventeen years afterward a republican general assembly elected him to the senate as a successor to James B. Howell. He declined a re-election, the duties and labors being less congenial to him than the work of his profession.

During the time Judge Wright was on the bench he removed to Des Moines, which was his home

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for the last thirty years of his life. He was for a long time a partner in the law firm of Wright, Gatch & Wright. About a dozen years ago he retired from the practice, and accepted the presidency of the Polk County Savings bank, which he held until the end came.

Judge Wright found time, even under the pressure of exacting duties, to give attention to other matters of public concern. He always felt a warm interest in the State Agricultural Society, and was its president for several years. He was also in demand as a popular lecturer, never failing to interest and entertain his audiences.

He was married October 19, 1843, to Miss Hannah Dibble, a native of the state of New York, who, with five of their six children, survive him. They are, Craig L., of Sioux City; Mary D., wife of Frank H. Peavey, of Minneapolis, Minn.; Mrs. Lucia H., wife of Edgar H. Stone, of Sioux City; Carroll and George G., of this city.

Judge Wright's brother, mentioned above, was one of Indiana's great men. He was ten years his senior. He was governor of Indiana seven years, was senator for a short time, and was appointed by President Lincoln minister to Prussia, where he died in 1867. Another brother John R. represented the county of Van Buren in the general assembly in 1872 and 1873. He has also passed away. One sister survives, who lives in Indiana, and one Mrs. Charles Baldwin, who lives in Keosauqua.

The following is the tribute to Judge Wright by Hon. Josiah B.

Highest of all in Leavening Power.—Latest U. S. Gov't

# Royal Baking Powder

ABSOLUTELY PURE

better land. The funeral services were held at the church in Doubs and were conducted by her pastor Rev. B. F. Shane of Selma, Iowa. It was largely attended by sorrowing friends and sympathizing neighbors. Her remains were laid to rest in the Mount Moriah cemetery with those of her daughter and three grand children who so recently preceded her.

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Mrs. Martha Kuhn Fegtly was born in Lancaster Co. Penn., April 4th 1824 and died at the home of her daughter Mrs. Kate E. Tucker in Pasadena California, Jan. 6th. 1896. She, with her parents, moved to Wayne Co. Ohio, where at the age of 21 she was married to John W. Fegtly, at Wooster Ohio. They lived there until 1854 when they moved with their family, and settled on a farm near Utica, Van Buren Co., Iowa. Here in 1861 she was left a widow after having been the mother of nine children, three of whom died in infancy. At this early date she was left to struggle and support her family of six children during the hardships of war times. In 1872 she left the farm and moved with her family to Mt.

Eldon Ne

[This letter came in too]

Holidays though muddy brought several presents, and old Sanders of presents a candy for the little ice house just completed. R. I. & P. R. R. Co. use . . . Ross Hamm house near the wagon burned to the ground since. The house reach of the water had died in an area only a short time before was sounded . . . A man by name, took twenty morphine at Ottumwa ago, and is now sleeping from which none awake was quite well known in charge of several horse grounds last summer writer knew him and was sorry to hear of . . . S. Lucas recently Hudler building on street, where he will sell groceries . . . C. family, and his started visiting last evening. When oppos

Charles Baldwin, who lives in Keosauqua.

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"For a period of a generation in the circles of farmers, at the bar, at educational and political gatherings, he has found a welcome. For epigrammatic taste, exuberance of wit, strong Saxon, apt comparison, close logic, while devoid of limp fluency, he is in just repute. Few have had like rare opportunities, as a pioneer counselor, a judge, a chief justice, wearing the unspotted ermine long years until called to the United States senate, to take rank with a deceased brother, statesman and diplomat, Joseph Wright. As senatorial candidate, he had but to intimate and troops of friends made his cause their care."

In addition to the foregoing full obituary from the Capital, the REPUBLICAN can add but little of this great and good man whom the people of Van Buren county knew so long and loved so well. This was his home. He loved to come back to Keosauqua and always spoke of it as the dearest spot to him on earth. At almost every visit he dwelt on the beauty of its location and the grandeur of the surrounding scenery—which he often expressed as the finest in the state. And the people of the county, as well as his old home town, he loved to meet every Old Settler's Day, and always came to this reunion until last year when he was too feeble to make the trip.

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and support her family of six children during the hardships of war times. In 1873 she left the farm and moved with her family to Mt. Pleasant in order to better educate her children. Since 1880 she has made her home with her children. During the years she lived near Utica she was known by all her acquaintances to labor with unselfish zeal and devotion for the good of her children and all her friends. It is a pleasure to know that during the past ten years she has been privileged to visit many of the pleasant places throughout the land. In the fall of 1893 she visited the World's Fair, before leaving for the beautiful land of flowers in California, from where her spirit was taken to the more beautiful realm above to join the many kindred and friends who have gone before. She joined the M. E. church at an early age, and ever after lived the life of a devoted christian. Wherever she has lived she has always been surrounded by many friends as the large gathering at her funeral attests. Her remains were brought from Cal. to be laid beside her husband at Bentonsport, and arrived Monday Jan. 12, the funeral services being held at the M. E. church, where friends from far and near gathered to follow her to her last resting place. The funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Weese, pastor of the M. E. church, from the text "There remaineth therefore a rest, to the people of God," Hebrews 4-9, a short sermon full of appropriate comforting words to those who are left behind, sooner or later to join in the better land. Many friends, with one brother, two sisters, and the

sell groceries... family, and he started visiting him. When on grounds the kin the occupants thrown forward. Mrs. Finney were about the face. ens and Constal three prisoners day last week... to be seen here ter... G. M. My country, gave the school a reception one hundred of t they report a ple E. H. Finney, wi of the Muscatine now running the ... M. E. Mines a fraction less th the James Jordan ber land. He p tract... F. W. I lot of old soldiers together the ever when they called Crow and his est at their home. took their comr surprise, but the the visitors by s invited them to where an oyster ing. The writer happened to be c can say, and tr the evening of Ja of the most enjo ... Revival meet at both the Chris gational church recently closed a were a success, t eighty converts :

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OBITUARIES.

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thrown forward. Mrs. Finney were about the face. ens and Constal three prisoners day last week... to be seen here e ter.... G. M. My country, gave th school a reception one hundred of th they report a ple E. H. Finney, wl of the Muscatine now running the .... M. E. Minea a fraction less th the James Jordan ber land. He pa tract.... F. W. I lot of old soldier together the ever when they called Crow and his est at their home. took their comm surprise, but the the visitors by s invited them to where an oyster ing. The writer happened to be c can say, and tr the evening of Ja of the most enjo .... Revival meet at both the Chris gational church recently closed a were a success, t eighty converts a to the church. the Christian chu day were eleven. tional meetings last Monday nigh families, Jones

Biographical Directory  
of the  
United States Congress



1774 - Present

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## WRIGHT, George Grover, 1820-1896

**Senate Years of Service:** 1871-1877

**Party:** Republican

WRIGHT, George Grover, (brother of Joseph Albert Wright), a Senator from Iowa; born in Bloomington, Monroe County, Ind., March 24, 1820; attended private schools and graduated from Indiana University at Bloomington in 1839; studied law in Rockville, Ind.; was admitted to the bar in 1840 and commenced practice in Keosauqua, Iowa Territory; prosecuting attorney of Van Buren County, Iowa, 1847-1848; member, State senate 1849-1851; justice of the State supreme court 1854-1870; served as president of the Iowa Agricultural Society 1860-1865; moved to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1865; one of the founders of the College of Law, University of Iowa; professor in the law department of the State university 1865-1871; elected as a Republican to the United States Senate and served from March 4, 1871, to March 3, 1877; was not a candidate for reelection; chairman, Committee on the Judiciary (Forty-second Congress), Committee on Civil Service and Retrenchment (Forty-third Congress), Committee on Claims (Forty-fourth Congress); resumed the practice of his profession in Des Moines and also engaged in banking; president of the American Bar Association 1887-1888; died in Des Moines, Iowa, on January 11, 1896; interment in Woodland Cemetery.

### Bibliography

<http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=W000759> 1/30/02



### GEORGE G. WRIGHT

Served on the Iowa Supreme Court from January 11, 1855, to January 11, 1860; and again from June 26, 1860, when he was appointed to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Justice Lacon-D. Stockton, until he resigned September 1, 1870. He was Chief Justice for seven years.

Born at Bloomington, Indiana, in 1820. He was graduated from Indiana University in 1839, and located the next year at Keosauqua, Iowa. He was a member of the Second and Third General Assemblies. In 1870 he went to the United States Senate for one six-year term.

In collaboration with Justice C. C. Cole, he established at Des Moines the first law school west of the Mississippi river. This school later became the Law Department of the University of Iowa. Justice Wright was a lawyer, judge, legislator, teacher, and business man. For many years he was a director of the Rock Island Railroad. He was president of the State Agricultural Society, president of the Polk County Savings Bank, and an organizer of the Pioneer Lawmakers Association. His brother was a Governor of Indiana.

Justice Wright died in Des Moines in 1896.

# HISTORY OF IOWA

FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES  
TO THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

FOUR VOLUMES

BY BENJAMIN F. GUE

*Illustrated with Photographic Views of the Natural Scenery of  
the State, Public Buildings, Pioneer Life, Etc.*

WITH PORTRAITS AND BIOGRAPHIES OF NOTABLE MEN AND WOMEN OF IOWA

VOLUME IV  
IOWA BIOGRAPHY



SEAL OF THE STATE OF IOWA

THE CENTURY HISTORY COMPANY  
41 LAFAYETTE PLACE  
NEW YORK CITY

and was brevetted Brigadier-General. In 1865 he was again elected to the Legislature and chosen Speaker of the House. In 1866 he was elected Secretary of State and twice reelected, serving six years. In 1873 he was chosen secretary of the Board of Capitol Commissioners and assistant superintendent of the construction of the State House. He held these positions until the work was completed in 1884 when he was appointed custodian of the new edifice. He held this office until 1890 when he was placed in charge of the Capitol grounds. At the World's Columbian Exposition General Wright conducted a directory for furnishing information to visitors from Iowa. In 1895 he was appointed a member of the board of public works for the city of Des Moines which position he held at the time of his death. Iowa never had a more useful and conscientious public officer than General Ed. Wright. When his death occurred on the 5th of December, 1895, his body lay in state at the Capitol where thousands of citizens paid their respects to the man who served the State so well for nearly half a century.

GEORGE F. WRIGHT was born in Warren, Vermont, December 5, 1833. He was reared on a farm, and when eighteen years of age attended West Randolph Academy. He came to Iowa in 1855, locating at Keosauqua where he began the study of law in the office of Judge George G. Wright, and was admitted to the bar in 1857. At the beginning of the Civil War he helped to raise a military company of which he was chosen first lieutenant. Later at the request of Governor Kirkwood Lieutenant Wright organized a company of State militia of which he was commissioned captain. In 1868 Mr. Wright removed to Council Bluffs where he became a law partner with Judge Caleb Baldwin; the firm ranked high and became attorneys for several railroads. In 1875 Mr. Wright was elected to the State Senate from the district consisting of the counties of Mills and Pottawattamie, serving in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth General Assemblies. In 1879 Mr. Wright was appointed by Judge Dillon United States Commissioner, and later held the same position under Judge Woolson for the Southern District of Iowa. In 1896 he was chosen vice-president for Iowa of the Trans-Mississippi Exposition at Omaha. Mr. Wright was one of the organizers of the company which built the bridge across the Missouri River between Council Bluffs and Omaha.

GEORGE G. WRIGHT was born in Bloomington, Indiana, March 24, 1820. He graduated at the State University and studied law with his older brother, Joseph A., who became a distinguished statesman. In 1840 George G. came to Iowa Territory, locating at Keosauqua where he began to practice his profession. In 1846 he was chosen Prosecuting Attorney and in 1848 was elected to the State Senate for a term of four years. He was nominated for Representative in Congress for the First District by the Whigs in 1850 but was defeated by a small majority. In 1855 he

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became Chief Justice of the Supreme Court and remained on the bench for fifteen years. In 1870 he was chosen United States Senator, serving six years. Mr. Wright removed to Des Moines in 1865 and was for many years president of the State Agricultural Society. In company with Judge Cole he established the Iowa Law School which after some years was removed to Iowa City and became the Law Department of the State University. Judge Wright continued to be one of the lecturers before the Law Department of the University as long as he lived. After retiring from law practice and public life, Judge Wright was for many years one of the directors of the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Company. He was one of the organizers and president of the Security Loan and Trust Company and of the Polk County Savings Bank. In 1892 he was elected president of the Pioneer Lawmakers' Association, a position he held at the time of his death, January 11, 1896. It was as a judge of the Supreme Court that he won enduring fame. His term of service embraced a period of important changes in fundamental judicial systems of the State and his opinions extend through thirty volumes of the State reports. Judge John F. Dillon, who was long associated with him on the bench wrote as follows of his ability and services:

"Of his learning as a lawyer and merits as a judge, no difference of opinion, so far as I know, ever existed among the bar and the people of Iowa. The verdict of the bar on this subject is that, take him all in all, he had no equal among the State's Chief Justices or Judges in her judicial history. Some may have had in special and exceptional lines superior gifts, or superior learning, but take him all in all he easily stands conspicuous and foremost. He was a living digest of the legislation and decisions of the State. He carried in his memory every important case that had ever been decided, and thus kept the lines of judicial decisions consistent. As a presiding officer he was without an equal. He had remarkable executive ability. He presided with dignity, maintained the utmost decorum in his court, and yet no member of the bar, I believe, ever felt that he was oppressive or that he in any way encroached upon their legitimate rights or privileges. He had almost in perfection what I may call the judicial temperament. He showed absolute impartiality, had great patience of research and above all a level headed judgment and strong, sure footed common sense.

Combining these merits and qualities with ample learning in his profession, it is no marvel that the bar of Iowa hold him and his memory in such deserved honor."

JOSEPH A. O. YEOMAN was born at Washington Court House, Ohio, in 1842. He received a good education and studied law. When the War of the Rebellion began he enlisted as a private in the First Ohio Cavalry. He was a most daring soldier and was soon promoted to the rank of captain. His war record was a brilliant one. He was a dashing officer, shrewd in plans and prompt in action; a typical cavalryman in a war where that branch of the service was a most important factor. He was selected to command a picked body of cavalry in the pursuit of the Con-

# Recollections and Sketches of Notable Lawyers and Public Men of Early Iowa

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Belonging to the First and Second  
Generations, with Anecdotes and  
Incidents Illustrative of the Times

*By*

EDWARD H. STILES

For many years a member of the Iowa Bar; member of its House of Representatives, 1863-1864; member of its Senate, 1865-1866; Reporter of its Supreme Court, 1867-1875; author of Complete Digest of its Decisions from the earliest Territorial period to the 56th Iowa Reports.

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"In old age alone we are masters of a treasure of which we cannot be deprived, the only treasure we can call our own. The pleasures of memory and the retrospect of the varied images which in an active life have floated before the mind, compensate, and more than compensate, for the alternate pleasures and cares of active life."—SIR ARCHIBALD ALLISON.

"Personal anecdotes, when characteristic, greatly enliven the pages of a biography."—SAMUEL SMILES.

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and did not return to Iowa till the first land sale in 1838. By this time I was satisfied to take my chances in Iowa for a home. I ordered a \$5,000 invoice of goods from New York City and they were lost in the Gulf in transit, but being well insured I was not the loser, the stock was duplicated and came forward and was considered the largest assortment brought to Iowa at that time. I presume I am the earliest pork packer and shipper in the State. I supplied the post at "Raccoon Forks" with commissaries and transferred them from St. Louis by steamboat in 1840. I built and run the first flat boat of pork on the Des Moines river. In all my flat boating I can remember of sinking but three laden with pork and grain and one of them was sunk twice, first at Bentonsport and next at Croton dam, but all was saved and proved satisfactory investments, notwithstanding the extra expense caused by shipwreck. The next decade brought the river improvement. It was a grand boom for the Valley for a short time; but the volume of water was found too great to warrant and justify the improvement. After a fair trial it proved to be behind the age and not suited to the wants of the Valley. As I had inaugurated navigation and "run" the first flat boat laden with pork, it was my province to re-open navigation in the spring of 1851. The Valley was suffering greatly, owing to the mill obstructions in the river, and the demand for navigation caused me to visit St. Louis and charter the steamer "Jenny Lind and barge," and load them with merchandise supplies for the Des Moines river. I gave timely notice to the mill owners to have their locks and gates in working order, but when we arrived at Farmington we found the locks and gates so dilapidated they would not open. Here the great question of legal right to open was sprung and I responded by commanding Captain Allen to pull out the gates and go ahead. My order was obeyed and success crowned our efforts. This timely movement proved a blessing to the entire Valley, as the navigation of the river from that time was never obstructed until the iron horse was made to supersede both river and slack-water navigation. In the language of Governor Grimes, this timely and modest movement in behalf of the public good he regarded as one of the great events the people of the Valley should ever be proud of. When the "Jennie Lind" reached Des Moines, from St. Louis, with a full cargo of supplies, it opened both the hearts and purses of the merchants of the city. A reception was tendered Captain Allen and myself for our successful voyage and all the hospitalities of the city bestowed. A company was soon formed, a boat purchased and put in the St. Louis trade.

As one of the commissioners of the Des Moines River Improvement Company, he saved to the State a vast acreage of land, and demonstrated that the whole scheme was futile and impracticable. He would have filled any office within the gift of the people with credit, and was several times solicited to become a candidate for Governor and Congressman, but steadily refused these proffers. He was born in South Coventry, Connecticut, in 1810, and died at Keosauqua, in 1901.

*George G. Wright and Joseph C. Knapp.*

I join these men because they were very near to each other and associated as law partners for many years. Judge Wright was one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of Iowa during most of the time I was its Reporter, and from this and other associations, I came to know him intimately. He died in 1896. For more than half a century his name had been a familiar one, intimately associated with the progress and current history of the State. The mature years of his long and busy life were devoted to its interests with a purpose as steadfast as it was heroic. He was not only one of the most widely known men of the commonwealth, but one of the most popular. He had been a favorite with the people throughout his entire

career. The causes for this general popularity lay in his intrinsic character and make-up. In appearance and bearing, he was very attractive. He walked with a limp owing to a defective limb, but notwithstanding, his figure was good, his face classical, his countenance always beaming with good will. He loved the pioneers, the old settlers, and they were always at ease with each other. He delighted in the narration of early events; his memory was extraordinary and he was able to recognize and never failed to greet any man with whom he had had the least acquaintance. This faculty greatly facilitated the renewal and continuance of his early acquaintances. He frequently delivered addresses to and about men of the early period, and especially those related to Van Buren County. As instances, he delivered one before the Library Association of Keosauqua in 1856, and another before the Pioneer Law Makers' Association of Van Buren County, in 1872, in the course of which he went into the minutest details respecting the early settlements and settlers in that county—giving the names of the different pioneers, the dates of their coming, just where they settled, their course of life, and in many cases the names and dates of birth of their children. These narrations, like all his others, were interspersed with incidents and anecdotes which were interesting to know. These qualities brought and kept him very close to men of the early time and their descendants. He was exceedingly affable and always approachable to the humblest citizen. He had reflected deeply and comprehensively on the affairs of the world and was an excellent judge of human nature. He was so full of pleasantry and good nature that I do not believe anyone ever engaged in a conversation of any length with him without being told some apropos anecdote or incident that would provoke a smile and give a pleasant impression. It will be readily appreciated that these combined qualities made him greatly beloved by the people, and they were always ready to rally to his support. There was no office within their gift that he could not have obtained for the asking. Indeed, he did receive at their hands the highest honors of the State. For fifteen years he was a Judge, and a portion of the time Chief Justice of its Supreme Court; then its United States Senator. In respect to the latter position, he had a most formidable rival in the person of William B. Allison, who for so many years subsequently represented Iowa in the United States Senate with a distinction which rivaled that of any of his compeers in that body. The only objection I had to Judge Wright was the character of his handwriting, which was the most difficult chirography that I have ever beheld. In digesting his opinions, while preparing my head notes, I had often great difficulty in ascertaining what he had written. These opinions, too, were written in his best and most legible style and were not quite so bad as some of his more hastily prepared productions. He sent me many years ago for my use in this work, quite a lot of hastily written memoranda, which after repeated efforts to decipher, I gave up as impossible.

As a summary of his personal traits: In public affairs he was extremely cautious. He was not a bold and aggressive leader of men. His popularity was whol-

ly due to other sources. His good humor and cheerfulness were perennial. His attractive person, his still more attractive, finely lineated face carried a ray of sunshine that enlivened all surroundings.

His manner was urbane and graceful, and "on his unembarrassed forehead, nature had written 'Gentleman.'" He was, in short, one of the most lovable of men; he drew everybody to him. As for myself, my affectionate veneration was such that I dedicated to him my "Digest of Supreme Court Decisions," published in the early seventies; and on the occasion of his death, made a plea for a statue to his memory in a communication addressed to and published in the Des Moines State Register of January 24, 1896.

As a Judge, he has had few equals and no superiors in the history of the Supreme Court of the State. His numerous decisions constitute one of the principal bases of its jurisprudence and will serve to perpetuate his judicial fame throughout all its future period. His associates on the bench were John F. Dillon, Ralph P. Lowe and Chester C. Cole, and it was this rare judicial array that principally contributed in giving to the Supreme Court of Iowa the distinction throughout the entire country of being one of the very strongest in the land. Among these it goes without saying, none was more conspicuous than Judge Wright. He possessed those four qualities which Socrates declares to be the requisites of a judge: To hear courteously, to answer wisely, to consider soberly, and to decide impartially. His published opinions are models of unaffected wisdom and force. With no attempt at learned display, they grasp with all the force of reason the naked points of controversy and trenchantly carry them to lucid conclusions.

Nothing that I can say of him as a judge would furnish as reliable an estimate as that contained in the following letter of that great lawyer and judge, John F. Dillon, to the Pioneer Law Makers' Association, read at its reunion of 1898:

I esteem it one of the felicities of my professional career that I was associated for six years with Judge Wright on the Supreme Court bench of the State of Iowa. It is scarcely necessary for me to express my opinion of his learning as a lawyer, and his merits as a judge. No difference of opinion on this subject, so far as I know, ever existed among the bar and the people of Iowa. The verdict of the bar on this subject is that, take him all in all, he had no equal among the state's chief justices or judges in her judicial history. Some of them may have had, in special and exceptional lines, superior gifts, or superior learning, but as I have just said, take him all in all, he easily stands conspicuous and foremost. To those who served on the bench with him, and to the bar who practiced during the period of his long connection with the court, the reasons for this are not difficult to find. I may refer to some of them briefly.

First among these reasons may be mentioned his zeal and conscientiousness in the performance of his official duties. As Chief Justice he was always present; and, having control of the deliberations of the Court, would never consent to adjourn any term until every case which had been argued or submitted was considered. The period of my association with him was when there was no rule requiring the records and arguments to be printed. They were mostly in writing. Judge Wright was a rapid and most excellent reader; and his invariable habit during our consultations, in all cases submitted, was, first, to take up the argument

of the appellant; read it; next the argument of the appellee; then any reply, referring to the record whenever necessary; then to insist on a full discussion and a vote. I believe I may safely affirm that no case was decided during these six years that I was on the bench without this "formula" having been complied with. No case was assigned, previous to full consideration among the judges, for examination and an opinion by a single judge. I verily believe that the admitted excellence of the judgments of the Supreme Court of Iowa during the period of Judge Wright's incumbency of the office of Chief Justice, is due to the course of procedure above mentioned.

Another characteristic of Judge Wright was his intimate knowledge and memory of the legislation and course of decisions in the State. He was a living digest of these decisions. He carried in his memory every important case that had ever been decided, and thus kept the lines of judicial decision consistent.

As a presiding officer he was without any equal. He had remarkable executive ability. He presided with dignity; maintained the utmost decorum in his court, and yet no member of the bar, I believe, ever felt that he was exacting, oppressive, or that he in any way encroached upon their legitimate rights and privileges. He had almost in perfection what I may call the "judicial temperament." He showed absolute impartiality, had great patience of research, and above all, a level-headed judgment, and strong, sure-footed common sense. Combining these merits and qualities with ample learning in his profession, it is no marvel that the bar of Iowa hold him and his memory in such deserved honor.

His miscellaneous reading had not been wide; his acquaintance with English or classic literature, slight. None of his compositions are adorned with decorative drapery. I do not think that in any of his writings can be found the employment of Latin or other foreign phrases, save in those terms and expressions which have been preserved in the law; but they are none the less forceful, and often traced in elevated lines.

His notions concerning the judicial office were of the highest order. Perfect independence of the judiciary was his ideal, and when a portion of the press joined in a denunciation of the judges, one of whom was Judge James G. Day, who united in the opinion of the Supreme Court, declaring what was known as the prohibition amendment to the Constitution void, it made him indignant, though he was not then on the bench. Stirred with this feeling, he wrote me the following letter, which clearly reveals his views on the subject:

Des Moines, May 2, 1883.

Dear Stiles: As you value the independence of the judiciary, the integrity of courts and the good name of the State, I hope you will stand as a wall of fire against this most iniquitous clamor that four judges should be outraged and disgraced because they had the "courage of their convictions." I do not care about the case, nor the decision, nor how it was decided, but I do care, when it is proposed to appeal from the Court to State Conventions and town meetings. I know your views must be in accord with mine on this subject, and I only write that it may be made the more certain that Wapello County be truly represented. I do not propose that Judge Day shall go down before this unjust whirlwind.

Your friend ever,

George G. Wright.

I feel privileged in saying that to this I made the following reply:

Ottumwa, May 3, 1883.

Dear Judge: Yours relating to Judge Day is received. I cordially endorse its sentiment. To allow the slaughter of Judge Day for performing a duty in accordance with his conscience as a judge and which to have shrunk from would have

been moral cowardice, will never do. In my judgment the clamor that certain newspapers have made against, and the opprobrium they have sought to throw upon the judiciary of our State, has done more to corrupt the political morals of our people than anything that has occurred in my time. I propose to stand by Judge Day, and I believe that is the general sentiment here.

Judge Wright was born in Bloomington, Indiana, 1820, and graduated from the University of that State in 1839. He studied law with his brother, Joseph A. Wright, who was at one time, Governor of Indiana, and afterwards United States Minister to Germany. He was admitted to the bar in 1840, and during that year came to and commenced the practice of his profession in Keosauqua. In 1844 he formed a partnership with J. C. Knapp, under the firm name of Wright & Knapp, which continued till his removal to Des Moines in 1865. In 1847 he became Prosecuting Attorney for Van Buren County; in 1848 he was elected to the State Senate and served in that capacity two terms; in the fall of 1850 he was nominated by the Whigs of that district for Congress, but it had a clear Democratic majority, and his opponent, Bernhart Henn, was elected. In 1853, when General George W. Jones was re-elected to the United States Senate, Wright was nominated by the Whig caucus and received the vote of the Whig members of the General Assembly. He was then but thirty-three years of age. In 1855 he was elected as one of the Judges of the Supreme Court of the State and served until 1859, but declined a re-nomination. In the following summer, 1860, however, he was appointed by Governor Kirkwood to fill the vacancy on that bench, occasioned by the death of Judge Stockton. At the end of that term, he was re-elected for a term of six years from the first of January, 1866. In January, 1870, he was elected to the United States Senate for a full term commencing March 4, 1871, in consequence of which he resigned his place on the bench. In the Senate he served on the important committees of judiciary, finance, claims, the revision of the laws and on Civil service and retrenchment. In the performance of these duties, he won a high position in that distinguished body, but at the end of the term, absolutely declined a re-election. He was elected in 1860 President of the State Agricultural Society and served five years in that capacity.

While in Keosauqua, Henry C. Caldwell was added to the firm of Knapp & Wright. While in Des Moines, at the close of his term in the Senate, the Judge became a member of the firm of Wright, Gatch & Wright, composed of himself, his son, Thomas S., and Colonel C. H. Gatch. In 1881 the firm was composed of Judge Wright, his sons, Thomas S. and Carroll Wright, and A. B. Cummins, afterward Governor and United States Senator. In the fall of 1865, after he had removed to Des Moines, he, with Judge C. C. Cole, established the first law school west of the Mississippi River. After the first year, Prof. W. G. Hammond, afterward Chancellor of the Law Department of the Washington University at St. Louis, accepted a position with them, giving his entire time to the school. In 1868 the law school was removed to Iowa City, and became the law department of the

State University, Judges Wright and Cole becoming law lecturers of the department. He took great interest in this work; his last lecture before the department was in June, 1896, and in it he referred with pathetic eloquence to his co-workers of the past, who had been his associates in laying the foundations of the State. In 1879 he was elected a director in the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad Company. The State is not only indebted to him for wise decisions moulding its jurisprudence, but for introducing into its early laws beneficent measures that have been enduring. He prepared and introduced both the bills which passed into laws, abolishing imprisonment for debt, and the creation of homestead exemption.

Among the sons of Judge Wright were three who became eminent lawyers. Thomas S. Wright was General Counsel for the C. R. I. & P. Railway Company. He died suddenly, while on a visit to New York some years ago. Craig L. Wright went from Des Moines to Sioux City and formed a partnership with William L. Joy. This firm continued to be one of the strongest legal firms in that part of the State for many years. This son died at Los Angeles in 1915. Carroll Wright, who died many years ago, was the General Attorney from Iowa of the C. R. I. & P. Railway Company.

*Joseph C. Knapp*, in appearance, temperament, bearing, disposition—in the tout ensemble of his characteristics, was in striking contrast to his long-time partner, Judge Wright. He was a man of moods, sometimes blunt, gruff, apparently unsociable, devoid of popular traits and cared nothing for public opinion. He was really a great man, and had his lot been cast in a large city, rather than a country town, he would have attained a national reputation. He needed the stimulus of great demands and the execution of great purposes. He did not have these, and lapsed into the inertia of his surroundings. He had a great contempt for little things, and I think became discontented with his environments. But it was too late in life to change, and he lingered and died in Keosauqua. He was leonine in appearance and character, but it took something more than the ordinary to arouse him. But when once aroused, he was a veritable Jupiter Tonans and made everything around him tremble. I heard him when thus waxed, make the closing argument in the slander case of Bizer vs. Warner, tried in our Court at Ottumwa fifty years ago, and it made my youthful blood tingle. He was a pretty regular attendant of our Court during the early part of my professional life. He subsequently became the Judge of our District Court and it was my fortune to try a good many cases before him. At that time he was somewhat advanced in years, and the lapse of time had considerably toned down his youthful fires. His reputation as a great lawyer overshadowed his reputation as a Judge, and was co-extensive with the State.

Anecdotes, when apt, sometimes serve to illustrate a man's traits. I have said that Judge Knapp was occasionally gruff. The following incident related to me by Judge Robert Sloan, who lived in the same town, and was for many years a dis-



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BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY

AND

PORTRAIT GALLERY

OF

EMINENT AND SELF-MADE MEN.

IOWA VOLUME.

CHICAGO AND NEW YORK:  
AMERICAN BIOGRAPHICAL PUBLISHING COMPANY.

1878.

practiced for a time at Iconium, Appanoose county, and in February, 1862, moved to Monroe county.

On the 22d of October, 1862, Dr. Lambert was commissioned assistant surgeon of the 6th Iowa Infantry; served in that position until November, 1864, when he was appointed surgeon of the same regiment, and thus remained until the war closed, being the last man of the regiment mustered out.

On leaving the service Dr. Lambert located at Lancaster, Missouri; remained there until October, 1867, when he returned to Albia, which has since been his home and the scene of his eminent success in business. He makes a specialty of surgery, profiting by his discipline in the army, and he has an extensive practice. He is surgeon for the Chicago,

Burlington and Quincy Railway Company, and is well known far up and down this road. He has the confidence of the people wherever known; is blessed with a vigorous mind and a disposition to feed it.

Dr. Lambert always votes the republican ticket, and is as active in politics as his extensive practice will permit him to be. He is a Royal Arch Mason.

In June, 1857, Miss Olive J. Bengel, of Bloomfield, Iowa, was joined in wedlock with Dr. Lambert, and the fruit of their union has been seven children, all living but two.

Dr. Lambert is a member of the Monroe County Medical Society, of the Des Moines Valley Medical Association, and of the State Medical Society, and has an excellent standing in the fraternity.

## HON. GEORGE G. WRIGHT,

DES MOINES.

GEORGE GROVER WRIGHT, late United States senator, was the son of John Wright, a mechanic, and Rachel Seaman, and was born in Bloomington, Indiana, on the 24th of March, 1820. The progenitor of the family in this country was a native of Wales, and among the early settlers in Pennsylvania. The Seamens were from England.

George G. was educated at the State University, located in his native town, graduating in 1839. He read law with an elder brother, the late Hon. Joseph A. Wright, once governor of Indiana, and subsequently minister to Berlin, where he died in 1867.

The subject of this sketch was admitted to the bar in 1840, and in November of the same year located at Keosauqua, Van Buren county, Iowa, where he commenced legal practice and continued it until his removal to Des Moines, on the 20th of October, 1865. While law has been the profession of Senator Wright, and while he is now of the firm of Wright, Gatch and Wright, he has had but little time for practice for the last twenty years or more, for he has been almost constantly in the service of the state in some capacity, in the legislature, on the bench or in the upper house of congress. In 1847 he was prosecuting attorney for Van Buren county; the next year he was elected to the state senate, and served two terms, becoming the leader of that body on the whig side. In 1853, when General George W. Jones was elected United States senator, the democrats of the state and the legislature being in

the majority, Mr. Wright received the vote of his party for that office. In the winter of 1854-5 he was elected chief-justice of Iowa. In 1859, when the supreme judges were elected under the new constitution, he refused to run for the office. In the summer of the next year, however, on the death of Judge Stockton, Governor Kirkwood appointed Judge Wright to fill the vacancy, and at the next general election the people sanctioned the governor's choice, Judge Wright filling out the unexpired term of Judge Stockton, which ended on the 31st of December, 1865. In the autumn previous the people had reelected Judge Wright for a term of six years ending on the 31st of December, 1871. He left the bench on the 1st of September, 1870, to occupy the office of United States senator, to which he was elected by the general assembly on the 18th of January, 1870. During the six years that he was in congress he was on the committees on finance, judiciary, claims, revision of the laws, and on civil service and retrenchment. Part of this time he was chairman of the committee on claims. While in the senate he was an indefatigable worker, looking at all times to the best interests of the state and of his country.

Senator Wright declined to be a candidate for reelection to the United States senate, much to the regret of many thousand personal friends.

As may be inferred from what we have already written, Senator Wright was originally a whig.

Against his protest his party ran him for the lower house of congress in 1850, in a strong democratic district, where the best he could do, and what he did do, was to reduce the usual majority. He aided in forming the republican party in Iowa, and it is to his influence and that of a few other candid, conscientious and eloquent speakers, that the party owes, in a great measure, its strength in the state.

But while Senator Wright has been largely identified with the politics of Iowa for the last thirty years, he has done much good service to the state in other respects. From 1860 to 1865 he was president of the State Agricultural Society, and worked zealously for the widening and strengthening of its influence. His annual addresses delivered during those years showed that he had given no inconsiderable attention to other subjects besides law and politics.

In the autumn of 1865 he and Judge C. C. Cole organized, at Des Moines, the Iowa Law School, which, three years later, was removed to Iowa City and made a branch of the State University. In educational matters generally he has taken a lively interest; has done valuable work at sundry times on the local school board, and is president of the board of trustees of Simpson Centenary College, a Methodist institution located at Indianola, Warren county.

He has long been connected with the Methodist Episcopal church, and is one of its leading laymen in Iowa. No man in the state, of any denomina-

tion, has a higher moral and religious standing. He is a christian statesman of the noblest type.

Superior natural abilities, extensive legal learning and a broad and liberal culture, combined with rare practical sagacity, have concurred to make him prominent among the foremost lawyers and jurists of the country. A ready and comprehensive grasp of cases, with the quick discrimination and rapid analysis with which he at once separates and seizes upon the vital and material points, enable him as a lawyer almost intuitively to comprehend the merits and demerits of every cause or question presented to him. As a judge, with unswerving integrity and unyielding firmness, he invariably cut his way to what seemed the very right of a case, regardless alike of specious technicalities on the one hand and false sentimentalism on the other, detecting at a glance all chicanery and artifice, and quietly brushing away all sophistries and fallacious reasonings.

The wife of Senator Wright he found in Iowa: Miss Mary H. Dibble, of Van Buren county, daughter of Judge Thomas Dibble, formerly of New York. They were married on the 19th of October, 1843, and have had seven children, six of them yet living. Thomas is married, and is one of his father's law partners; Craig also has a wife, and is an attorney in Sioux City, Iowa; Mary is the wife of Frank H. Peavy, of Sioux City; the other three, Carroll, Lucia H. and George G., are single.

## HON. JAMES H. ROTHROCK,

TIPTON.

JAMES HARVEY ROTHROCK, now on the supreme bench of Iowa, is a native of Millroy, Pennsylvania, and was born on the 1st of June, 1829. He is a son of Joseph Rothrock, a tanner and farmer, and Sarah McKinney. The Rothrocks were Huguenots, driven to Holland and came thence to the United States in the early part of the colonial period. The maternal great-grandfather of James H. was a captain during the revolutionary war. Joseph Rothrock moved to Adams county, Ohio, when his son was about nine years old, and there the latter was reared on a farm and in a tan-yard. He fitted for college at Felicity, Ohio; entered Franklin College, New Athens, and left at the commencement of the junior year; read law with E. P. Evans, of West Union, Ohio, and was admitted to the bar at Colum-

bus in February, 1853. He practiced six years in Greenfield, Highland county, and one year at Hillsboro, in the same county, and in July, 1860, settled in Tipton, Iowa. Here, after two years' practice, he enlisted in his country's service, going into the army in August, 1862, as lieutenant-colonel of the 35th Iowa Infantry. At the end of one year, owing to disability, he was obliged to resign. Returning to Tipton, he resumed practice and continued it until January, 1867, when he went on the bench in the eighth judicial district. He was reelected twice, and during his third term, in February, 1876, he was appointed to the supreme bench in pursuance of an act of the legislature increasing the number of judges of the supreme court. He was elected by the people in the autumn of the same year. As a jurist he is re-

markable for ideas. Proc between ri years as his school for while a dis and a cool

While a rock was e county, an the lower t the regular same year, Although was nomin nomination stumped th ers had bi their first cient legis The fat

JOHN circui born in W of Decem His pater born in Ir early age whence hi In 1838 his paren York, to l which cit; commenc of age, u M. D., the attended Keokuk of twenty of his pre months, t commenc as a physi attorney commenc

# BURIED IN WOODLAND

Woodland-St. Ambrose-Emanuel-Odd Fellows Cemetery  
M.L. KING PARKWAY & WOODLAND AVENUE  
Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa

established 1848

compiled by  
Kaye Sanchez

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## HONORABLE GEORGE GROVER WRIGHT

George was born March 24, 1820 at Bloomington, Indiana, son of John and Rachel (Seeman) Wright. His father was of Welsh ancestry and native of Pennsylvania, came from Wales in 1720, dying in Indiana when George was just five years old. His mother brought the family to Iowa, during territorial days. She died at Keosauqua in 1850. Because of health reasons, George was unable to participate in any sports and he found companions in books, learning from them. He was awarded a free scholarship from the University of Indiana, graduating in 1839, with high honors at the age of nineteen.

He studied law in Rockville, Indiana with his brother Joseph, who was Governor of Indiana and was admitted to the Bar in 1840. Determined to try his fortunes in Iowa, he went down the Wabash and Ohio Rivers and up the Mississippi to Burlington, traveled by stage to Keosauqua, settling there and began to practice law.

Senator Wright was married on October 19, 1843 to Mary Hannah (listed as Hannah Mary in another source) Dibble of Van Buren County, daughter of Judge Thomas Dibble, and Ruth (Gates) formerly of Saratoga, New York. Mary came to Van Buren County, Iowa in 1839. She descended from one of the old colonial families of New England, who moved from Connecticut to New York early in the eighteenth century. They had six children, Thomas S.; Craig L.; Mary D.; Carroll; Lucia H.; and George G.

In 1846, George was appointed by the court to the office of prosecuting attorney Van Buren County. That same year he was nominated the Whig delegate to the territorial council, his opponent being his father-in-law, Thomas Dibble, who defeated him. They moved to Keosauqua, Iowa. In 1848, he was elected to the State Senate and served for two years. In 1853, he received the Whig vote, but lost. Senator Wright was elected Chief Justice of Iowa in 1854-5, and in 1860 Governor Kirkwood appointed him to the bench of the Supreme Court. "The most important work of the third session was the compilation of the first code putting into statutory form the unwritten law on a multitude of subjects and the reconstruction of the entire judiciary system. The bulk of the work of codifying fell upon Senator Wright, who worked day and night to complete the task. "His service on the bench changed the whole entire judiciary system of the state." "The opinions of Judge Wright running through the first thirty volumes of *Iowa Reports*, are notable models of perspicuity, clearness, and soundness." In 1850, Judge Wright was nominated for representative to congress, but he was defeated. He received the Whig vote, but lost in 1853. Senator Wright was elected Chief Justice of Iowa in 1854, serving for fifteen years. In 1860, Governor Kirkwood appointed him to the bench of the Supreme court.

In 1865, George moved to Des Moines, becoming associated with Chester C. Cole. In 1870, he was elected to the Senate for a full term, but resigned in September 1, 1870 to take the Bench. For five years Judge Wright held the office of the President of the State Agricultural Society and organized the Law School at Des Moines, giving lectures. "In recognition of his patriotic service, the Military Order of the American Legion of Honor made him a member in the third degree, he being only one of three Iowa civilians thus honored."



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## WRIGHT, George Grover

**Born:** 3-24-1820  
**Died:** 1-11-1896  
**Cemetery:** WOODLAND  
**Location:**  
**County:** POLK CO. - IOWA  
**Record Notes:** 75Y

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## IOWA JUDICIAL BRANCH

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### **George C. Wright (1855 - 1860)**

Served on the Iowa Supreme Court from January 11, 1855, to January 11, 1860; and again from June 26, 1860, when he was appointed to fill the vacancy occasioned the death of Justice Lacon D. Stockton, until he resigned September 1, 1870. He was Chief Justice for seven years.

Born at Bloomington, Indiana, in 1820. He was graduated from Indiana University in 1839, and located the next year at Keosauqua, Iowa. He was a member of the Second and Third General Assemblies. In 1870 he went to the United States Senate for one six-year term.

In collaboration with Justice C. C. Cole, he established at Des Moines the first law school west of the Mississippi river. This school later became the Law Department of the University of Iowa. Justice Wright was a lawyer, judge, legislator, teacher, and business man. For many years he was a director of the Rock Island Railroad. He was president of the State Agricultural Society, president of the Polk County Savings Bank, and an organizer of the Pioneer Lawmakers Association. His brother was a Governor of Indiana.

Justice Wright died in Des Moines in 1896.

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## George G. Wright

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Edit

**Birth:** Mar. 24, 1820  
 Bloomington  
 Monroe County  
 Indiana, USA  
**Death:** Jan. 11, 1896  
 Des Moines  
 Polk County  
 Iowa, USA



Added by: John "J-Cat" Griffith

US Senator. From 1847 to 1848, he was the prosecuting attorney of Van Buren County, Iowa, and served in the State Senate, 1849 to 1851. He served on the State Supreme Court, 1854 to 1870 and as president of the Iowa Agricultural Society, 1860 to 1865. In 1871, he was elected as a Republican Senator from Iowa to the United States Senate, serving until 1877. He also served as chairman for the Committee on the Judiciary Forty-second Congress, Committee on Civil Service and Retrenchment Forty-third Congress and Committee on Claims Forty-fourth Congress. Not a candidate for reelection, he resumed law practice and was president of the American Bar Association, 1887 to 1888. (bio by: [John "J-Cat" Griffith](#))

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[Woodland Cemetery](#)  
 Des Moines  
 Polk County  
 Iowa, USA

Maintained by: Find A Grave  
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Blk 14; in same lot: Willie Wright, Hannah M. Wright, George G. Wright, Mary E. Wright, Thomas S. Wright, Helen Mary Wright, Nellie E. Wright, Carroll Wright  
 - [Katie Lou](#)

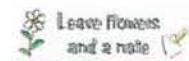
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Senator from Iowa, 1871-1877.

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### George G WRIGHT

Birth 1820 in Bloomington, Monroe, Indiana, USA  
Death

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#### Media Gallery

No photos, stories, audio or video have been added yet.

#### Timeline (View details)

1820 Birth  
Bloomington, Monroe, Indiana, USA

1843 Marriage to Hannah Mary DIBBLE  
Keosauqua, Van Buren, Iowa, USA  
Age: 23

#### Comments

No comments have been added yet.

Add a comment

#### Family Members

##### Parents

John WRIGHT  
1776 - 1825

Rachel SEAMANS  
1784 - 1851

Show siblings

##### Spouse & Children

Hannah Mary DIBBLE  
1820 - 1897

Craig WRIGHT

Mary Dibble WRIGHT  
1850 - 1902

Family group sheet

#### Historical Records

No historical records have been attached to this person.

#### Web Links

There are no weblinks available for this person.

Search the web for George G WRIGHT



You searched for **George G. Wright** in **Iowa**

### Iowa State Census Collection, 1836-1925

Name:	<b>George G Wright</b>	
Birth Year:	<b>abt 1821</b>	
Birth Place:	<b>Indiana</b>	
Gender:	<b>Male</b>	
Marital Status:	<b>Married</b>	
Census Date:	<b>1885</b>	
Residence State:	<b>Iowa</b>	
Residence County:	<b>Polk</b>	
Locality:	<b>Des Moines</b>	
Roll:	<b>IA1885_249</b>	
Line:	<b>13</b>	
Family Number:	<b>795</b>	
Neighbors:	<a href="#">View others on page</a>	
Household Members:	Name	Age
	George G Wright	64
	Hannah M Wright	64
	George G Wright Junior	23
	Levinia Windbar	23
	Louise Morrogh	36

**Source Information:**  
Ancestry.com. *Iowa State Census Collection, 1836-1925* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2007. Original data: Microfilm of Iowa State Censuses, 1856, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, 1925 as well various special censuses from 1836-1897 obtained from the State Historical Society of Iowa via Heritage Quest.

**Description:**  
This database contains Iowa state censuses for the following years: 1856, 1885, 1895, 1905, 1915, and 1925. It also includes some head of household censuses and other special censuses from 1836-1897. Information available for an individual will vary according to the census year and the information requested on the census form. Some of the information contained in this database though includes: name, age, gender, race, birthplace, marital status, and place of enumeration. [Learn more...](#)



You searched for **George Grover Wright** in Iowa

Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-2005

**Name:** George Grover Wright

**Date of Birth:** 24 Mar 1820

**Date of Death:** 11 Jan 1896

**Elected Office(s):** Senator, President

**Elected Date(s):** 4 Mar 1871

**State:** Iowa, Indiana

**Country:** USA

**Relationship:** Brother of Joseph Albert Wright

**Biography:** (brother of Joseph Albert Wright), a Senator from Iowa; born in Bloomington, Monroe County, Ind., March 24, 1820; attended private schools and graduated from Indiana University at Bloomington in 1839; studied law in Rockville, Ind.; admitted to the bar in 1840 and commenced practice in Keosauqua, Iowa Territory; prosecuting attorney of Van Buren County, Iowa, 1847-1848; member, State senate 1849-1851; justice of the State supreme court 1854-1870; served as president of the Iowa Agricultural Society 1860-1865; moved to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1865; one of the founders of the College of Law, University of Iowa; professor in the law department of the State university 1865-1871; elected as a Republican to the United States Senate and served from March 4, 1871, to March 3, 1877; was not a candidate for reelection; chairman, Committee on the Judiciary (Forty-second Congress), Committee on Civil Service and Retrenchment (Forty-third Congress), Committee on Claims (Forty-fourth Congress); resumed the practice of his profession in Des Moines and also engaged in banking; president of the American Bar Association 1887-1888; died in Des Moines, Iowa, on January 11, 1896; interment in Woodland Cemetery. |Bibliography: Dictionary of American Biography; "Judge George C. Wright." *Annals of Iowa* 13 (July 1922): 383-87; Wright, George C. "The Writings of Judge George C. Wright." *Annals of Iowa* 11 (April 1914): 352-57; (July 1914): 431-36; (October 1914): 481-88; (January 1915): 594-99; 12 (July 1915): 117-21; (October 1915): 194-99; 14 (April 1924): 281-86; 15 (October 1925): 139-45.

**Source Information:**

Ancestry.com. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-2005* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 2006. Original data: United States Congress. *Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-2005*. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 2005.

**Description:**

This database contains the *Biographical Directory of the U.S. Congress*. It is comprised of brief biographical descriptions of every person that has ever served as a member of Congress since its inception in 1774 up through 2005. This is approximately 12,000 people.

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- ID: I0884 [View Post-em](#)
- Name: George Grover WRIGHT <sup>1</sup>
- Sex: M
- Birth: 24 MAR 1820 in Bloomington, Monroe Co., IN <sup>1</sup>
- Death: 11 JAN 1896 in Des Moines, IA <sup>1</sup>

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Father: [John WRIGHT](#) b: 23 MAR 1776 in Pennsylvania  
 Mother: [Rachel SEAMAN](#) b: 1 JUL 1784 in New Jersey  
 Marriage 1 [Hanna Mary DIBBLE](#) b: 15 AUG 1820 in Saratoga Co., NY  
 • Married: 19 OCT 1843 in Van Buren County, Iowa <sup>2</sup>

**Children**

1. [Thomas Seaman WRIGHT](#) b: 29 SEP 1844 in Keosauqua, Van Buren County, Iowa

**Sources:**

1. Title: Belding.Davidson.FTW  
Repository:  
Media: Other  
Text: Date of Import: Jan 9, 1999
2. Title: Belding.Davidson.FTW  
Repository:  
Media: Other  
Text: Date of Import: Oct 24, 1998

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