

March 23, 2022

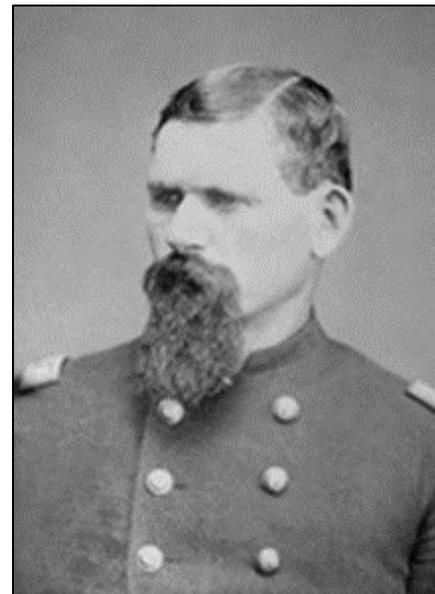
Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the Legislative Session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All italicized text/block quotes in this document are taken directly from historical publications with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

County Named for Senate President

Hamilton County is the only county named for an Iowa Senate President.

William W. Hamilton served in the Fifth and Sixth General Assemblies. Under Iowa's 1846 Constitution, the presiding officer of the Senate was chosen from the members. From 1846 until 1857, Iowa had a President of the Senate.

In 1857, the state adopted a new constitution that established the office of the Lieutenant Governor. The constitutional duties of the Lieutenant Governor included presiding over the Senate. The Lieutenant Governor was elected separately from the Governor and sometimes was a member of a different political party.



William W. Hamilton

However, Iowa voted to amend the Constitution in 1986 to, among other things, elect the Governor and Lieutenant Governor together starting with the general election of 1990. As a result, the two would be of the same political party. The constitutional amendment also gave the Governor the authority to assign the duties of the Lieutenant Governor and removed the Lieutenant Governor's duty of presiding over the Senate.

Since 1991, the 50 members of the state Senate have chosen the President of the Senate.

Because of the 1857 Constitution, however, Hamilton not only lost his position as President of the Senate but also his seat in the Senate because of changes to the Senate districts.

[Iowa Official Register](#)

ORIGIN AND NAMING OF IOWA COUNTIES

County	Date of Est.	Date of Org.	Named in Honor
Franklin	1851.....	1855	Benjamin Franklin, American statesman and philosopher.
Fremont	1847.....	1850	John Charles Fremont, lieutenant colonel in the Mexican War.
Greene	1851.....	1854	Nathanial Greene, general in the Revolutionary War.
Grundy.....	1851.....	1856	Felix Grundy, Chief Justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court and U.S. Representative and Senator from Tennessee.
Guthrie.....	1851.....	1851	Edwin Guthrie, captain in the Iowa Volunteers during the Mexican War.
Hamilton.....	1847.....	1857	William W. Hamilton, President of the Iowa Senate (1856 – 1857).
Hancock.....	1851.....	1858	John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress.
Hardin.....	1851.....	1853	John J. Hardin, Illinois colonel killed in the Mexican War.
Harrison.....	1851.....	1853	William Henry Harrison, 9th President of the U.S.

**LEGISLATIVE OFFICIALS AND DATES OF SESSIONS;
PRESIDENTS OF THE SENATE***

Number	Convened	Adjourned	Name	Home County
1st	Nov. 30, 1846	Feb. 25, 1847	Thomas N. Baker	Polk
1st Ex.	Jan. 3, 1848	Jan. 25, 1848	Thomas Hughes	Johnson
2nd	Dec. 4, 1848	Jan. 15, 1849	John J. Selman	Davis
3rd	Dec. 2, 1850	Feb. 5, 1851	Enos Lowe	Des Moines
4th	Dec. 6, 1852	Jan. 24, 1853	W. E. Leffingwell	Clinton
5th	Dec. 4, 1854	Jan. 26, 1855	Maturin L. Fisher	Clayton
5th Ex.	July 2, 1856	July 16, 1856	Maturin L. Fisher	Clayton
6th	Dec. 1, 1856	Jan. 29, 1857	William W. Hamilton	Dubuque

*The Office of Lieutenant Governor was not created until Sept 3, 1857, with the adoption of the present Constitution.

[Biography on the legislative website](#)

William W. Hamilton

Dubuque County

A native of England and located at Dubuque, upon his arrival in America, in 1845. He was a good lawyer and took a deep interest in all public affairs, including education and politics...He was a popular and able presiding officer and when the General Assembly was organizing many new counties and deciding upon their names, the rare compliment was extended to the presiding officer, of giving his name to the new county taken from the old county of Webster.