

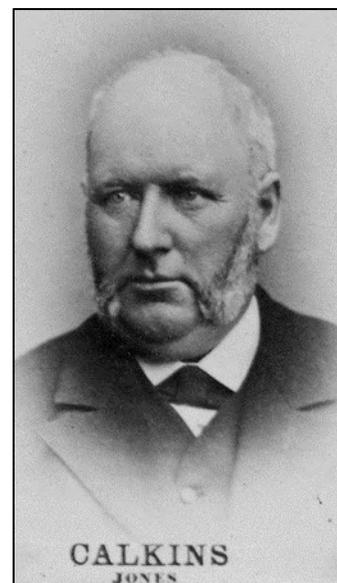
Pieces of Iowa's Past, published by the Iowa State Capitol Tour Guides weekly during the Legislative Session, features historical facts about Iowa, the Capitol, and the early workings of state government. All italicized text/block quotes in this document are taken directly from historical publications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

Martin H. Calkins

Personal and professional life

The Iowa Legislative website reads: "Hon. M. H. Calkins was born near the town of Mexico, Oswego County, N. Y., Sept. 25, 1828, and died in Wyoming, Jones County, Iowa, Sept. 28, 1909. He was of Puritan descent and the second son of John and Caroline (Habert) Calkins. He was a lineal descendant of Thomas Cushman, who preached the first sermon ever printed in America.

"He received an education in the rural schools of New York, and at the age of seventeen, he taught in the rural schools of Oswego County, and afterwards in the city of Oswego. He held the sixth teacher's state certificate issued in the state of New York. He afterward read medicine in a local doctor's office and then took a course in the College of Medicine in Geneva, N. Y., and later finished his course in the Medical University of New York City.



[Martin H. Calkins](#)

"He was married Nov. 5th, 1855, to Miss Lucinda Lowden of North Bay, Oneida County, N. Y. Hearing of the golden opportunities of the Mississippi valley, he started westward, arriving at Maquoketa, Iowa, where he stayed a few weeks and then moved to Wyoming, Jones County, Iowa, where he resided and practiced medicine until the infirmities of old age came upon him, and he then rested from his labors."

Political life



Mineral map of Iowa shows the areas where coal was located and mined; [Coal Mining in Iowa](#)

According to the Iowa legislative website, "When Wyoming was incorporated, Dr. Calkins was unanimously elected its first mayor. He was sent south during the Civil War to take the vote of the soldiers and did many patriotic acts to prosecute the Civil War. In 1881 he was elected to the office of state representative of Jones County, without opposition and served in the Nineteenth and Twentieth General Assemblies with honor to himself and to his constituency. He served as chairman on Public Health and was the author of a bill requiring a rigid inspection of illuminating oils used in mines, and regulating the sale thereof."

Miner's light, while necessary for the miner's work, brought a risk of explosion. Petroleum mixed with coal or kerosene would emit a combustible vapor at a low temperature, compromising the miner's safety. Illuminating petroleum needed to test to a specific "flash-point" to be safely used in the mine.

However, Standard Oil, which had one of the most active and unscrupulous lobbies, provided a strong fight against the legislation. They went so far as to steal and hide the legislation. But Calkins called a stop during the last

hours of session and had the bill searched for until found and later passed on April 2, 1884, much to the surprise of the lobby who thought they had resolved the matter for that session.

The law, which created the position of state oil inspector, brought in a net revenue of \$10,000 to \$12,000 a year, to say nothing of the safety to people using illuminating oils.

1884.]

JOURNAL OF THE HOUSE.

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Mr. Calkins moved to take up Senate File No. 305, a bill for an act to provide for the inspection and to regulate the sale of petroleum and its products, and to repeal chapter 172 of the acts of the Seventeenth General Assembly, and section 3901 of the Code.

Mr. Lyons moved the previous question, which was seconded and the main question ordered.

On the motion to take up the bill the yeas and nays were demanded, and the roll was called, resulting as follows:

The yeas were:

Messrs. Aaker, Babb, Baldwin, Banta, Boggs, Brown of Butler, Brown of Marshall, Butler, Calkins, Campbell, Canfield, Carpenter, Clayton, Cloud, Coie, Converse, Doerr, Fillmore, Fordyce, Gilliland, Green, Hall, Hardy, Haviland, Head, Henderson, Hersey, Hogeland, Holbrook, Johnson, Jones, Jordan, Kennedy, Kerr, Killen, Kuhn, Linehan, Livingston, Lynch, Lyons, McCall, McCarty, McCulloch, McDaid, Manderscheid, Mentzel, Merreil, Millen, Mowry, Nachtwey, Overholtzer, Pattee, Picken, Ranck, Russell, Schee, Upton, Vanderpoel, Ward, Watrous, Wattson, Weaver, Widner, Wilbur, Wright, Wyland, and Mr. Speaker—67.

The nays were:

Messrs. Benson, Bolter, Bullock, Chamberlin, Culbertson, Grant, Harrison, Hayzlett, Miller of Carroll, Rice, and Schmidt—11.

Absent or not voting:

Messrs. Ballingall, Brothers, Curtis, Dabney, Davis, Densmore, Derr, Hamblin, Humphrey, Huskins, Linn, Lucas, McVay, Miller of Lee, Nugent, Scrimgeour, Sherman, Smyth, Stewart, Storey, Tuttle, and Wherry—22.

So the motion prevailed, and the bill was taken up.

Mr. Calkins moved to suspend the rules and read the bill a third time now.

Mr. Schee moved the previous question, which was seconded, and the main question ordered.

On the suspension of the rules the yeas and nays were demanded, and the roll was called, resulting as follows:

The yeas were:

Messrs. Aaker, Baldwin, Banta, Boggs, Brothers, Brown of Butler, Brown of Marshall, Butler, Calkins, Campbell, Canfield, Carpenter, Clayton, Cloud, Coie, Converse, Curtis, Dabney, Derr, Fillmore, Fordyce, Gilliland, Green, Hall, Hamblin, Hardy, Haviland, Head, Henderson, Hersey, Hogeland, Holbrook, Humphrey, Huskins, Johnson, Jordan, Kennedy, Kerr, Killen, Kuhn, Linehan, Linn, Livingston, Lynch, Lyons, McCall, McCarty, McCulloch, McDaid, Manderscheid, Mentzel, Merrell, Millen, Mowry, Nachtwey, Nugent, Overholtzer, Pattee, Picken, Ranck, Russell, Schee, Sherman, Smyth, Stewart, Storey, Tuttle, Upton, Vanderpoel, Ward, Watrous, Wattson, Weaver, Wherry, Widner, Wilbur, Wright, and Mr. Speaker—78.

The nays were:

Messrs. Chamberlin, Culbertson, Grant, Miller of Carroll, Miller of Lee, Rice, and Schmidt—7.

Absent or not voting:

Messrs. Babb, Ballingall, Benson, Bolter, Bullock, Davis, Densmore,

Doerr, Harrison, Hayzlett, Jones, Lucas, McVay, Scrimgeour, and Wyland—15.

So the rules were suspended, and the bill was read a third time.

The question being shall the bill pass?

The yeas were:

Messrs. Aaker, Babb, Baldwin, Benson, Boggs, Brothers, Brown of Butler, Brown of Marshall, Bullock, Butler, Calkins, Campbell, Canfield, Carpenter, Clayton, Cloud, Coie, Converse, Culbertson, Curtis, Dabney, Davis, Densmore, Doerr, Fillmore, Fordyce, Gilliland, Grant, Green, Hall, Hamblin, Hardy, Harrison, Haviland, Hayzlett, Head, Henderson, Hersey, Hogeland, Holbrook, Humphrey, Huskins, Johnson, Jones, Jordan, Kennedy, Kerr, Killen, Kuhn, Linehan, Livingston, Lynch, Lyons, McCall, McCarty, McCulloch, Manderscheid, Mentzel, Merrell, Millen, Miller of Lee, Mowry, Nachtwey, Nugent, Overholtzer, Pattee, Picken, Ranck, Rice, Russell, Schee, Schmidt, Sherman, Smyth, Stewart, Storey, Tuttle, Upton, Vanderpoel, Ward, Watrous, Wattson, Weaver, Widner, Wilbur, Wright, Wyland, and Mr. Speaker—88.

The nays were none.

Absent or not voting:

Messrs. Ballingall, Banta, Bolter, Chamberlin, Derr, Linn, Lucas, McDaid, McVay, Miller of Carroll, Scrimgeour, and Wherry—12.

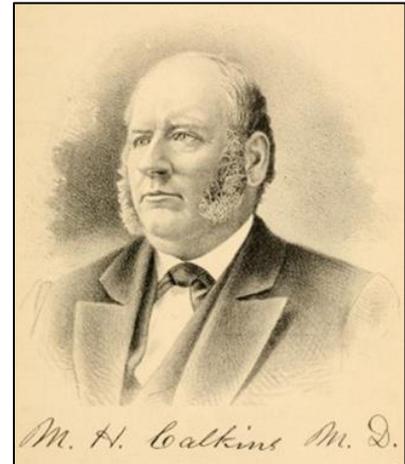
The title was approved.

Mr. Kerr moved to reconsider the vote by which the bill was passed, and to lay the motion to reconsider on the table.

So the motion prevailed.

*B. W. BLANCHARD, State Inspector of Oils, Dubuque Co.
(Post-Office, Dubuque, Iowa.)
C. J. BLANCHARD, Dubuque,
R. MORRELL, Dubuque,
J. K. MASON, Keokuk,
F. R. LAIRD, Des Moines,
JOHN BEHRENS, Davenport, } Dep. Oil Inspectors.

1885 oil inspectors



M.H. Calkins, M.D.

[1855-1905 Souvenir Book for Wyoming Iowa](#)



THE CALKINS HOUSE, built in 1860 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places, has been donated to the city of Wyoming for use as a museum. The house was the home of Dr. Martin H Calkins, first doctor in the Wyoming area. His office is the oldest original doctors office west of the Mississippi.