

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 historical publications are reproduced here with the actual spelling, punctuation, and grammar retained.

February 11, 2015

THIS WEEK:

Two Legislators Shared the Same First Name, Surname, and Middle Initial

BACKGROUND:

The 36th General Assembly convened January 11 and adjourned April 17, 1915, a 97-day session. There was a 158-member Legislature. There were 35 Republicans in the Senate and 75 in the House of Representatives. The Senate had 15



**Governor
George W. Clarke
1852 - 1936**

Democratic members and the House of Representatives had 32 Democratic members. There was one Independent member in the House of Representatives according to some legislative sources.

George Clarke was Governor during the 36th General Assembly, having been inaugurated at the age of 60 on January 16, 1913. The federal census of 1910 showed Iowa's population at 2,231,853.

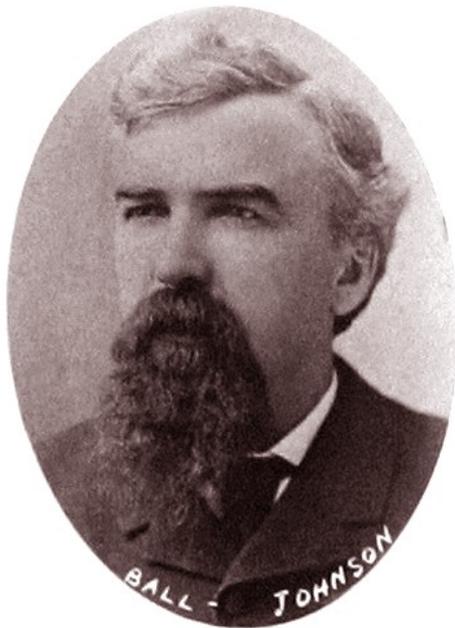
**Two Legislators Shared the Same First Name,
Surname, and Middle Initial**

There were two persons by the name of George W. Ball who served in the Iowa Legislature at different times from different districts and different parties.

The one member who is noted as an Independent in the House of Representatives Journal from the 36th General Assembly is George W. Ball, from House District 19, Jefferson County. There are other legislative sources that list G. W. Ball as a Democrat and still other sources that list him as a Republican. Legislative records indicate there was a George Ball who served in the 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 28th, 29th, 36th, 37th, and 38th General Assemblies. There was a Representative Ball and a Senator Ball.

From the Iowa Official Register

GEORGE W. BALL Born near Fairfield, Jefferson County, Iowa, June 7, 1847. He spent his youth on his father's farm in Jefferson County, attended common school, and Wesleyan University, Mt. Pleasant, graduating in 1867. He also graduated from the law department of the State University of Iowa in 1869. He



practiced law a short time in Des Moines and in Mt. Ayr, Iowa, and then in Chicago, but in November, 1874, he removed to Iowa City and formed a

partnership with Charles Baker, which continued until Mr. Baker's death in 1910. Then he formed a partnership with his son, George W. Ball, Jr. In 1885 he was elected



representative and served in the Twenty-first General Assembly. He was county attorney of Johnson County for four years, 1893 to 1896. In 1899 he was elected senator and served in the Twenty-eight and Twenty-ninth General Assemblies and was mayor of Iowa City from 1905 to 1909. He was vice president of the First National Bank of Iowa City. He was a member of the board of curators of the State Historical Society. He was prominent in the different branches of Masonry, and was grand master of the Grand Lodge of Iowa Two terms, 1895 and 1896. Source: *Annals of Iowa*.

From the *Iowa Official Register*

**State Representative
Democrat**

GEORGE W. BALL Born in Hancock County, Virginia (now West Virginia), March 6, 1848, and died at Fairfield, Iowa, March 14, 1920. He was descended from the family of Balls to which belonged Mary Ball, the mother of George Washington. He came with his parents to Jefferson County, Iowa, in 1854 where he attended the public schools and Fairfield University. He engaged in farming, banking and manufacturing, was a director in the Iowa State Savings Bank,

the Iowa Loan and Trust Company and the Fairfield Gasoline Engine Company, all of Fairfield. In 1887 he was elected representative and re-elected two years later. Again elected in 1914, he served as representative in the Twenty-second, Twenty-third and Thirty-sixth General Assemblies. In 1916 he was elected senator from the Jefferson - Van Buren district, and served in the Thirty-seventh and Thirty-eighth General Assemblies. He vigorously proposed repealing the law for extending and improving the capitol grounds. He was a prominent citizen and a useful legislator. Source: *Annals of Iowa*

NOTE: The House of Representatives Journal is the only source noting G. W. Ball as an Independent and only in the 36th General Assembly.

