

Alvin Saunders

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NOTABLE DEATHS.

ALVIN SAUNDERS was born at Flemingsburg, Kentucky, July 12, 1817; he died at Omaha, Nebraska, November 1, 1899. His family were originally from Virginia, but settled in Kentucky where they remained until 1829, when they removed to the vicinity of Springfield, Illinois. Alvin's father was a farmer, and the son enjoyed only the limited advantages of education at that day afforded by the common schools. In his case this amounted to but three months each winter. His father "gave him his time" at the age of nineteen years, when he struck out for himself. Coming to Mt. Pleasant, Henry county, in 1836, he became one of the pioneer settlers of that "Athens of Iowa." He engaged in merchandizing and banking with his brother, Presley Saunders. This firm was successful in business and enjoyed a high reputation in that part of the State. Three years after he settled in Mt. Pleasant he received a commission from President Van Buren as postmaster of that town, in which position he served seven years. In 1846 he became a member of the convention which framed the constitution under which Iowa was admitted to the Union. From that time he was one of the leading men of Iowa—one of its honored and best known citizens. In 1853 he was elected to the State Senate, and re-elected four years later, serving in the regular sessions of 1854, '56, '58, and '60, and in the extra sessions. While active and influential in all of the legislation of that period, he was especially so in securing the establishing of our first Insane Hospital at Mt. Pleasant. This project was fought with intense bitterness. The proposed asylum was alleged to be a needless affair, a job simply started for the benefit of a locality and largely out of proportion to the needs of the State for a century. But for the efforts of Alvin Saunders the project would have been delayed for years. The State Senate, especially in the sessions of 1858-60, contained an unusual number of able men, among whom Mr. Saunders was one of the foremost. He was appointed Governor of the Territory of Nebraska by President Lincoln in 1861, and reappointed in 1865. Upon the admission of Nebraska as a State he was chosen one of its first U. S. Senators, serving six years. Mr. Saunders was an able and successful business man, closely identified with the progress and development of Iowa while he resided within the State and equally so of the State of his adoption. He had amassed a handsome fortune which was swept away by the panic of 1873; but with characteristic foresight and energy he went to work again and not only paid off every dollar he owed, but acquired a sufficient competency to make his last years comfortable. An able, just and honest man, his life was full of usefulness and he rendered his country and the two states in which he resided valuable services which will long be remembered.

JOSIAH P. WALTON was born in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, February 26, 1826; he died at Muscatine, Iowa, November 24, 1899. He came to this State with his parents in 1838, their course of travel being by way of New York City, Philadelphia and Pittsburg. At this last place they took a steamboat for the voyage down the Ohio and up the Mississippi. That is how people came West in those days. The family settled at Geneva, a promising settlement three miles above the present city of Muscatine. That region was then a portion of Wisconsin Territory. A bill is said to have passed the Iowa territorial legislature making Geneva the county seat, but which was vetoed by Governor Lucas. Of this we find no official record. His father died four years later, when he and his widowed mother removed to Muscatine, their settlement in that city dating from 1842. Young Josiah ran the first vegetable and milk wagon in Muscatine. This led up to the Island Commission Business, the Royal Canning Factory and the

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