

James Blakely Williams

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NOTABLE DEATHS.

JAMES BLAKELY WILLIAMS was born at Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania, May 11, 1836; he died at Ft. Dodge, Iowa, August 25, 1903. He was the second son of Maj. William Williams, founder of Ft. Dodge, with whom he came to Muscatine, Iowa, in 1849. Maj. Samuel Woods, of the 6th U. S. Infantry, having been ordered to establish a military post on the Des Moines river near the mouth of the Lizard, urged Maj. Williams to accept the position of post trader, which he did, and marched with the troops across the State, reaching Ft. Dodge August 23, 1850. James, then a boy of twelve years, accompanied him and was his father's clerk and chief assistant for the next ten years in the work of post trader, pioneer Indian trader and merchant and town proprietor. He was always upon the best terms with the Indians and was especially intimate with Wah-kon-sa, a young chief after whom the township of Wahkonsa was named. The troops were removed to Ft. Ridgley, Minnesota, in 1853, and Maj. Williams and others purchased the buildings and the site on which they were located. In March, 1854, they platted the town of Ft. Dodge. Maj. Williams was the first postmaster. In 1855 the United States Land Office was located at Ft. Dodge and it immediately became the leading town of northwestern Iowa. A large part of the clerical work incident to the then rapid changes rested on the shoulders of this comparative boy. In August, 1862, he enlisted and served as sergeant in Company I, 32d Iowa Infantry Volunteers. Soon after reaching the field on account of his elegant penmanship and superior business qualifications he was detailed as clerk and spent the principal part of his army service as clerk at Division and Corps headquarters. On his return from the army he founded the abstract business in Webster county in which business he continued until the time of his death. He was a man of fine intellectual qualities, self-educated, as all the schooling he had was prior to his twelfth year. At the time of his death he was the oldest living settler of Webster county and one who had from the first been closely and intimately identified with Ft. Dodge through all phases of its growth. He has worthily filled a place in the history of his city, State and nation.

W. H. J.

MILO SMITH was born in Addison county, Vermont, January 25, 1819; he died in Clinton, Iowa, February 28, 1904. He was a son of a veteran of the war of 1812 and the grandson of a revolutionary soldier. In 1840 he came west to Chicago, and in 1848 was identified as engineer with the first railroad line built west of Chicago. In 1855, before a house was erected within the present city limits, he came to Clinton as chief engineer of the Chicago, Iowa & Nebraska railroad, now the Chicago & Northwestern. He helped to construct the first railway bridge across the Mississippi at that place, and until the war was engaged in railroad building and territorial development. In 1862 he organized the 26th Iowa Volunteer Infantry, and was commissioned Colonel of the regiment by Governor Kirkwood. He was twice severely wounded in battle. Since the war Col. Smith has resided in Clinton and has been active in various public enterprises. He was often urged to accept public office but preferred the life of a private citizen. For five years, however, he served as superintendent of the Soldiers' Home at Marshalltown.

MAJ. HOYT SHERMAN was born in Lancaster, Ohio, November 1, 1827; he died in Des Moines, Iowa, January 25, 1904. He was a member of a distinguished family; a brother of Senator John Sherman and of Gen. W. T. Sherman. He had been a resident of Des Moines for more than 55 years, having located here in 1848. For a short time he was a member of

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