

Josiah D. McVay

ISSN 0003-4827

Material in the public domain. No restrictions on use.



This work has been identified with a [Creative Commons Public Domain Mark 1.0](#).

Recommended Citation

"Josiah D. McVay." *The Annals of Iowa* 6 (1904), 477-477.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.3070>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

questions. Mr. Gue's pioneer work includes an active part in the founding of the Pioneer Law-Makers Association of Iowa, among the members of which no one was held in higher esteem. In religion he was a Unitarian, at a time when to be a Unitarian was to be almost alone in Iowa. He was one of the founders of the First Unitarian Church of Des Moines and of the Iowa Unitarian Association. The crowning work of Mr. Gue's life is the four-volume History of Iowa on which he labored, at first intermittently and afterward daily, for more than seventeen years. The gathering and preparing of the material for this history was a work calling for rare patience, industry and good judgment and a personal knowledge of the subject such as few have. It is not too much to say, borrowing the thought from Virgil, that he himself was part of the history of Iowa and had himself witnessed nearly all the public events which make up that history. Mr. Gue was very close to Governor Kirkwood during the War period and the John Brown epoch immediately preceding, and his personal participation in the history of the war and the many incidents and events leading to the war, constitute of themselves a most valuable contribution to Iowa history. His story of the part which he and his brother, David J. Gue, took in warning the Secretary of War of the John Brown raid on Harpers' ferry, forms a most interesting chapter in the history of that episode and a remarkable indication of the trend of his Quaker education. As Charles Aldrich well said, in the *Register and Leader* on the morning following the death of his friend: "Governor Gue stood for what he thought was right. This characteristic, this principle is the thing that distinguished him above all things. His influence was always on the side of right, in politics, in business, in morals, in society." On the 12th of November, 1855, Benjamin F. Gue was united in marriage with Elizabeth Parker, and on the 3rd of July, 1888, occurred the death of Mrs. Gue, leaving four children all of whom survive, namely: Horace G., Alice, Gurney C., and Katherine, the last named is the wife of Dr. A. G. Leonard, State Geologist of North Dakota. The death of Benjamin F. Gue occurred on Wednesday, June 1, 1904. Death came to him without premonition. The funeral took place at his residence, 1522 West Ninth street, on Saturday, the 4th inst. Funeral services were conducted by his pastor, Rev. Mary A. Safford and his friend Judge Gifford S. Robinson.

J. B.

JOSIAH D. McVAY was born in Fulton county, Ill., February 3, 1844; he died at Lake City, Iowa, April 10, 1904. He came with his father's family to Keokuk county in his boyhood. In August, 1862, he enlisted in Co. B, 36th Iowa Infantry, of which Gov. Francis M. Drake was the Lieutenant Colonel. The most active campaigning of this command was in the southwest. Drake's Brigade was surrounded by Gen. Fagin's army at Mark's Mills, Ark., and compelled to surrender. The prisoners were taken to Tyler, Texas, where they remained in prison for the next ten months. McVay when exchanged returned to his command at Little Rock, where he was furloughed home, but later returned to his regiment, with which he was mustered out at Davenport. He was yet but twenty-one years of age, and at once set about attending school, afterwards studying medicine. He settled in Lake City, Calhoun county, in May, 1872, where he rapidly rose in his profession, becoming surgeon of the C. & N. W. R. R., which position he held for several years. He was elected to represent Calhoun and Pocahontas counties in the Iowa House of Representatives, in 1883. In 1887 he was elected State Senator from Webster and Calhoun counties. During his service in the legislature he was recognized from the start as one of its leaders, becoming widely and favorably known throughout the State.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.