

Buren R. Sherman

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

"Buren R. Sherman." *The Annals of Iowa* 6 (1905), 635-636.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.3112>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

NOTABLE DEATHS.

BUREN R. SHERMAN was born in the town of Phelps, Ontario county, New York, May 28, 1836; he died at Vinton, Iowa, November 11, 1904. His ancestry was English. He was educated at Elmira, New York. He came to Iowa with his parents in 1855, the family settling on a farm in Tama county. While yet on the farm he studied law and was admitted to the bar and entered upon the practice of his profession in Vinton. At the outbreak of the civil war he enlisted as a private in Company G, Thirteenth Iowa Infantry, under Col. M. M. Crocker. He was soon appointed Second Lieutenant in which capacity he took part in the battle of Shiloh, where he was so severely wounded as to compel his resignation some months afterward, though he was promoted to the Captaincy of his company while yet in the hospital. Returning to Iowa he was almost constantly in public life until the end of his second term as Governor of the State. He was for several years clerk of the district court of Benton county. After this service he was elected State Auditor, serving three terms—1875 to 1881. While yet in the office of State auditor he was elected to the governorship, in which he served two terms—1882 to 1886. The public life of Governor Sherman was an active one. He was a man of pronounced views upon the various questions in agitation during his career—one who had warm, devoted friends and bitter enemies. So far as the administration of his public duties was concerned his services were everywhere highly creditable, with but a single exception, in regard to which there were differences of opinion. This was his quarrel with State Auditor Brown. He called Brown to account for an alleged irregularity in reporting to the State Treasurer the insurance fees which he had collected in his department. Brown failed to satisfy the Governor, whereupon the latter suspended him from his office, which he ordered him to vacate. This action was disregarded by Brown, who locked himself in his private office. The Governor then called out the militia and ejected Auditor Brown from the office, which he declared vacant, and appointed Jonathan W. Cattell, a former State Senator, who had also served three terms as State Auditor, to the position of Auditor. While this state of things continued William Larrabee came into the office of Governor. He ordered Cattell to surrender the office of Auditor, restoring Brown to the place. Cattell obeyed the order, but protested against it. An investigation was instituted at once in the State Senate, a committee of which soon after reported unfavorably upon the course of Auditor Brown. At this juncture the latter demanded an investigation, whereupon articles of impeachment were preferred in the House, upon which he was tried before the Senate. Governor Larrabee appointed Hon. Charles Beardsley, of Des Moines county, State Auditor *pro tem*, pending the impeachment proceedings. Several of the ablest lawyers in the State appeared on each side and the case attracted wide and interested attention; but the impeachment failed, and upon the advice of the Attorney General, Governor Larrabee promptly reinstated Brown in the Auditorship. Later on Brown came to the legislature with a petition asking that the State reimburse him for the costs of the trial. This application was pressed at several sessions, and finally at that of 1896, a bill was passed allowing him \$4,000 for a complete settlement of the claim. And so the great case came to an end. Aside from this affair, the administration of Gov. Sherman passed off with great credit, and good will attended him in his retirement. At its close he returned to his old home in Vinton, though it was his custom to spend a portion of his time in Des Moines. His after life was a quiet one. He was one of the most prominent men in the State in Free Masonry, having attained its highest honors. He was always the truest and most

generous of friends wherever his friendship was bestowed. He was the first executive officer who signed an official paper relating to the founding of the Historical Department, though he was not the first to commend it to the fostering care of the legislature.

JOHN H. CHARLES was born in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, January 19, 1826; he died in Sioux City, Iowa, December 1, 1904. During his infancy his parents removed to Mifflin township, Ashland county, Ohio, where they settled on a farm and where he grew up to manhood. At the age of 15 he began to learn the trade of a carpenter, at which he worked during the next nine years. In 1850 he left his home to seek his fortune in California. The route to the far west in those days was via the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. Mr. Charles embarked on one of the river steamboats for St. Louis, where he stopped a few days before starting upon the long overland journey. The party which he joined outfitted at Independence, Missouri, where they procured twenty-one wagons and teams of four yokes of oxen to each wagon. Each wagon carried four men, their provisions and baggage. After some days together this cavalcade divided into several parties, each taking such route as pleased them best. This course was deemed prudent in order to be certain to find grass for the animals, and perhaps there were other reasons. After a stay of six months in California, where the young man by prospecting for gold and by hard labor accumulated \$1,000, he returned to the east. His next venture was the purchase of 100 cows for the California market. Two other men joined him with the same number of animals, and together they made the overland journey, living in a covered wagon. The cows cost \$17 and were sold at \$80 per head, netting the enterprising men handsomely. Mr. Charles gave some time to various business enterprises, but settled in Sioux City in December, 1856, where he remained to the end of his days. He was engaged in merchandizing and steamboating on the upper Missouri until the year 1900. While he became widely known from his large business interests, his claims to a permanent place in the annals of Sioux City and the State of Iowa rest upon his useful and patriotic labors in other directions. Every public interest of Sioux City found in Mr. Charles a most active and intelligent supporter. He was a pioneer in the founding and development of its Scientific Association, its growing public library and its various schools. But the crowning work of this grand old man was the organization of the movement to erect the famous monument, on a bluff overlooking the river and the city, to the memory of Sergeant Charles Floyd, of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who died there August 20, 1804. That he had the aid of many earnest and distinguished workers, is true, but without his energetic and patriotic efforts from the first step to the last, the monument would not have been built. He secured the aid of Congress, and of the State Legislature, as well as most important assistance in Sioux City. In the inception and development of the wide-spread interest in the Lewis and Clark Expedition the erection of that monument, and the discussions to which it gave rise, in the opinion of the writer, were no inconsiderable factor. And now that he has passed away in the fulness of years and usefulness, a tribute in enduring bronze to the man and his labors should be placed upon this imposing and beautiful monument. Said *The Sioux City Journal* of December 3, 1904: "The home life of John H. Charles has been extremely pleasant, and the Charles home has always been a hospitable one. Kind and gentle as a husband, loving and considerate as a father, true and constant as a friend, and patriotic and energetic as a citizen, John H. Charles was an exceptional man, admired and loved by all. He always loved Sioux City, and Sioux City always loved him."

HARVEY J. SKIFF was born in Allegany county, New York, in 1821; he

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.