

Johnson Pierson

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NOTABLE DEATHS.

JOHNSON PIERSON, born in Ohio county, Virginia, June 24, 1814, died in St. Louis, Missouri, Aug. 18, 1906, was a pioneer settler in Iowa, having come to Flint Hills (now Burlington), Sept. 27, 1835. He brought a compass with him, and surveyed the lot on which David Rorer built the first brick house in the Territory. A graduate of McKendree College, Ill., he was professor of ancient languages in the Mt. Pleasant Collegiate Institute (1845-'8), now the Iowa Wesleyan University. In 1853-'5, he was editor of *The Burlington Hawk-Eye* and upheld the policy of the "Old Line Whigs." On one occasion William H. Seward called at his office, accompanied by James W. Grimes, and recommended to him more liberal views, which he did not embrace then, but did later. His health failing in newspaper work, he took a contract, upon the recommendation of A. C. Dodge, to divide sixteen townships in Fremont county into sections. Lyman Cook and John G. Foote went as bondsmen on the contract. During the work, at the request of a young lawyer at Sidney, James G. Day, afterwards a Judge of the Supreme Court, in the absence of other legal authorities, being a sworn officer of the Government, he acted as justice of the peace in a criminal suit in which Mr. Day was attorney. In his absence from Burlington, he employed George F. Magoun, afterwards President of Iowa College at Grinnell, as sub-editor. Mr. Pierson was the senior Iowa poet. He published "The Judiad" in 1840. At the festival of the Hawkeye Pioneer Association, June 2, 1858, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the opening of Iowa to settlement by the white people, after an eloquent address by Charles Mason, he delivered a poem of 280 lines, recounting the changes that a quarter of a century had brought, and looking into the future with prophetic vision.

"Thus we have marked this infant's birth,
A prattler round our federal hearth;
And soon we'll see this Child confest
The fairest one in all the west."

The poem describes the legal lights of those days:

"First, Rorer came, the lawyer pioneer,
In stature low, but at the bar a peer;
Close in pursuit came he they call "Old Grimes"
That man so well proportioned to the times,
Who rode by rapid marches to the throne,
And made ambition's airy realms his own.
Then Mason, Browning, Starr—"hale fellows all"—
And last, but not the least among them, Hall."

In the civil war he was appointed commissioner of the draft in the First Congressional District, and was subsequently employed in the postal service. He preserved his faculties to the last, with his love of literature, and the year before his death wrote "Reminiscences of Seventy Years Ago." His remains were interred in Aspen Grove Cemetery, Burlington.

W. S.

HARVEY NELSON BROCKWAY was born in Mottville, Mich., Dec. 26, 1836; he died at Garner, Iowa, June 7, 1906. He attended the common schools as boys in his walk of life are wont to do, but his real

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