

Harvey Nelson Brockway

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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

education was no doubt due to his habit of omnivorous reading and to his own untiring industry and perseverance. He was living in Webster City in 1857, remaining there and in that vicinity, studying law, in the meantime, with Granville Berkley, the pioneer lawyer of old Webster county, until 1862, when he enlisted in Co. B, 32d Iowa Infantry, of which he became orderly sergeant, and later captain. During the years he spent at Webster City the people of northwestern Iowa saw their hardest times. The panic of 1857 left business of all kinds at its lowest ebb. Little was raised on the farms in 1857, and 1858 was an unproductive, wet year. The three following seasons crops were better, but there were no markets, no prices for anything. Corn was burned for fuel, and more money came into the northwestern quarter of our State for mink skins than for all that grew from the soil. It was hard work for even such a self-reliant law student as Harvey Brockway to live. But he struggled on till he entered the military service. His first real battle was that of Pleasant Hill, La., April 9, 1864. The end of the fight found him with two painful wounds—the ranking officer of his company, his Captain having fallen and the two lieutenantcies vacant, either by death or resignation. He was promoted to the Captaincy of Co. B, in which rank he was mustered out at the end of his service. He came home, was happily married to Miss Sarah Mitchell, of Washington, Iowa, and settled in Hancock county. He engaged in buying and selling real estate, in which he accumulated a handsome fortune. The year of his marriage he was elected treasurer of his county, and re-elected at the end of his term. He was elected circuit judge in 1868, serving four years most creditably, declining a re-election. His remaining years were spent in private life, honored as a man who had “done the State some service.” He was a member of the Grand Army of the Republic, and of the Iowa Commandery of the Loyal Legion. He was beloved and honored in his own town and county, where his memory will long abide.

SUMNER B. HEWETT was born in Northbridge, Mass., June 22, 1833; he died at Los Angeles, Cal., June 12, 1906. He was educated at the High School in East Douglas. At the age of 17 he taught a common school, and a year or two later became a clerk in one of the large furniture establishments of the city of Boston. In October, 1854, he was married to Miss Abbie S. Parker, of Blue Hill, Maine, and soon thereafter migrated to Iowa, in company with his father and mother and settled upon a farm just west of the present city of Eagle Grove. His wife became the Eagle Grove postmistress as soon as they could get an office opened, and held the place until the city was established and incorporated. During all of the pioneer years, before the advent of the railroad, no home in northwestern Iowa was better known than that of the Hewetts. Generous hospitality awaited all who journeyed that way. Blizzards or high water often delayed those who came for their mails, but they always found “rest and shelter, food and fire,” in the great two-story log house which was long the most imposing edifice in Wright county. Mr. Hewett served as a member of the Iowa House of Representatives in 1872, and had served several years as a collector of internal revenue. He received this appointment from Abraham Lincoln, mainly through the influence of U. S. Senator James Harlan. His commission with the signature of the great martyr President now belongs to the State Historical Department. He was elected county judge some time later than 1860, but this was after the office was shorn of most of its powers and duties by the advent of the supervisor system. Mr. Hewett

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