

Sumner B. Hewett

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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

was a most useful citizen, intelligent, public-spirited, exemplary in all the relations of life, charitable, just in his dealings, a man of mark in the communities where he resided, and one whose influence was ever on the side of education, temperance and good morals. The writer knew him for nearly fifty years as an abiding friend, concerning whom he is glad to place these words of appreciation on record. Mr. Hewett was the real founder of the city of Eagle Grove, where his name will long be held in grateful remembrance.

OBED CASWELL was born October 29, 1835, near Watkins, N. Y.; he died at Marshalltown, Iowa, July 7, 1906. While still a boy his parents removed to near Sandusky, Ohio. He was educated at Oberlin and Antioch Colleges. At the outbreak of the war he enlisted in an Ohio regiment with which he served three months. After his discharge he settled in Marshalltown, where he enlisted in Co. D, 5th Iowa Infantry, and was promoted to a second lieutenantcy. Before his discharge Lieut. Caswell became captain of the company. After the war he attended the law class of the State University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and the law school at Albany, N. Y., from the last of which he graduated and was admitted to the Supreme Court of the State of New York. In 1864 he entered into the practice of his profession with J. H. Bradley, who later became circuit judge. Mr. Caswell was afterward associated with J. F. Meeker in the practice of the law which he continued for several years. He went to California on account of his health in 1888. Upon his return he resumed his law practice which he continued until 1896. When the 17th Judicial District was taken from the 11th District, he was appointed by Gov. Drake to fill the vacancy. He was afterwards elected and re-elected for two full terms, and nominated for a third. He became one of the well known Iowa judges. The decision which he made in the case of the soldiers' preference law, which he held to be unconstitutional, as class legislation and against public policy, attracted state-wide attention. It was carried to the Supreme Court, where his decision was reversed.

GEORGE SCHRAMM was born in Plech, Germany, Feb. 12, 1816; he died in his summer cottage at Lake Okoboji, Iowa, July 26, 1906. In 1836 he came to America and settled in Ohio; in 1845 he removed to Farmington, Iowa, remaining there until 1867, when he located in Des Moines, which place had since been his home. "Father" Schramm was a member of the Polk County Octogenarian Society, and its president at the time of his death. He also held membership in the Tippecanoe Club, the Old Settlers' Association and the Pioneer Law Makers' Association. He was a member of the Senate in the 4th and 5th, and a member of the House in the 9th General Assemblies, from Van Buren county. While exceedingly quiet and unobtrusive, Mr. Schramm was much more than an average legislator. His services are recalled as those of a man who was always clear in his convictions, whose habit it was to be found on the right side of questions which challenged public attention. His record is one from which nothing need be expunged. Though living to an advanced age, he was blessed not only with health and strength, but with a most happy temperament, which always made him a pleasant man to meet. His smile of cordial greeting was never absent. There are always men in the ranks of a regiment in active service whom their associates will not forget to the last day of their lives. So it is in a legislative body. After forty years the majority of faces will fade from the brightest memory; but those who were associated with Mr. Schramm in those far-off days have ever borne him in kindly remembrance.

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