

Joseph William Blythe

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NOTABLE DEATHS.

JOSEPH WILLIAM BLYTHE was born at Cranberry, N. J., January 16, 1850; he died near Wapello, Louisa county, Iowa, while temporarily absent from his home at Burlington, March 6, 1909. He was the son of Joseph William and Ellen Henrietta (Green) Blythe. He was educated at Lawrenceville, N. J., High School and Princeton College, graduating with the degree of A. B. Subsequently he received the A. M. degree from his alma mater, that of LL. D. from Hanover (Ind.) College and Bethany (Kan.) College. He commenced the practice of the law in Burlington, Iowa, in 1874, and a year later the firm of Hedge & Blythe was organized, which was never formally dissolved. Mr. Blythe came to Iowa as assistant attorney for the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, under Judge David Rorer, and his service for that Company was his life's work. At the time of his death, he held the position of General Counsel, with headquarters at Chicago, but always retained his home and residence in Burlington. He was a great lawyer, not a case lawyer who knew the law because he found it in the books, but one who knew that the law was or should be founded in reason. He was well grounded in the general principles of the profession. His intelligent application of fundamental rules enabled him to form clear, logical and correct opinions upon complicated matters. He was not a politician from either inclination or choice; it was simply with him the logic of events. Representing great corporate interests at a time when the public mind was governed by prejudice rather than reason, it was inevitable that his duties should require him to take an interest in public affairs. With his fascinating personal qualities, with his great powers of discernment, and above all, with his commanding intelligence and ability, he could not escape leadership. Much of Mr. Blythe's activity in politics, especially in his later years, was for the single purpose of helping his friends. Asking no personal preferment, he was always ready to help others. After his graduation from Princeton, he was for some years an instructor in the Lawrenceville, N. J., preparatory school. He was well informed upon all subjects of modern progress, his reading and information not being confined to his special line of work. He was at all times a most delightful, interesting and instructive companion. He was a wonderful judge of human nature. He took a broad, liberal, statesmanlike and common-sense view of important public questions. With his friends and with his adversaries he was fair and open. He hated dissimulation and hypocrisy. He admired frankness and courage. He was once asked how he accounted for his multitude of loyal friends. His reply was characteristic. He said, "If I have such friends, it must be because of my brutal frankness"; and so it was. He fearlessly told the truth, and men loved and admired him for it. No greater tribute can be paid to this man's memory than to say that for more than twenty years he was the dominant factor in the public life and affairs of Iowa, and during all of that time no man ever questioned his high sense of personal honor and integrity. If, instead of giving his life to corporate employment, he had accepted public office, he would easily have taken front rank with those of Iowa's sons who have given our State a place in history. Joseph

William Blythe, the man, as he really was, highly educated, thoroughly refined, a great lawyer, a cultured scholar, was unknown to a majority of the people of Iowa. Especially to those living outside of the territory of southern Iowa, he was only known as an able corporation lawyer and a politician of commanding power and influence. But to those who enjoyed his personal friendship and confidence, the accomplishments of the lawyer and the politician were the least of his acquirements. But because of the interests he represented, he received cruel and undeserved criticism. In the face of this he was a philosopher, uttering no unkind words and making no complaint. He believed that time would secure him a proper measure of justice.

J. C. D.

THOMAS D. HEALY was born in Lansing, Iowa, May 25, 1865; he died at Fort Dodge, January 15, 1909. He was educated at Notre Dame University, Indiana, the Law Department of the State University of Iowa, and the University of Michigan. With his parents he removed in 1883 to Fort Dodge, Iowa, where he continued to reside until his death. Soon after his admission to the bar, Mr. Healy entered upon the practice of his profession at Fort Dodge and continued therein actively during the remainder of his life. He early developed a deep and intelligent interest in public affairs, where his superior ability backed by an ardent temperament and unswerving courage soon won for him a position of leadership. In 1895 he was elected to the State Senate, where he served with high honor during the Twenty-sixth, Twenty-seventh, Twenty-eighth and Twenty-ninth General Assemblies. In constructive, reformatory and progressive legislation he was a leader among leaders. He was largely influential, if not the decisive factor, in the establishment of a State Board of Control. In framing the Code of 1897 he took a conspicuous part. He had a quick intuitive perception of the moral tendency of public measures and was at all times and everywhere the uncompromising foe of political indirection and official graft. The history of Iowa records the name of no more influential legislator and none whose vote, voice and influence were more uniformly or efficiently exercised for the benefit of the people whom he served. Upon the retirement of Judge O. P. Shiras from the bench of the Federal Court for the Northern District of Iowa, he became a candidate for that position. He had, to a remarkable degree, the support of the bar and the people of the district, but the positive nature of his convictions and the uncompromisingly independent character of his course as a member of the Senate had excited the set hostility of powerful interests whose influence in certain official quarters was sufficient to prevent his success. Events have moved rapidly since then, and of the Iowa names passing into history connected with that episode, the inner story of which has yet to be written, none will be remembered with deeper or more abiding respect than that of the defeated candidate. At the close of his second senatorial term, Mr. Healy took position as the Iowa attorney for the Great Western Railway Company and later entered into like relations with the Illinois Central Railroad Company, continuing meanwhile a large and important general practice in connection with the firm of which he was a member. He became the victim of his own passion for work. Never a man of robust health, the burdens of rapidly expanding

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