

Martin Nelson Johnson

H. F. W.

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](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/publicdomain/1.0/).

Recommended Citation

W., H. F. "Martin Nelson Johnson." *The Annals of Iowa* 9 (1910), 395-396.

Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.3618>

Hosted by [Iowa Research Online](#)

entered the practice of the law. In 1858 he was nominated by the Democrats and elected the first county superintendent of schools. He served one term and declined renomination. He was appointed a trustee of the University of Iowa about this time and was one of the earliest and most effective advocates of co-education. In 1868 he was a delegate, and in 1884 a delegate and vice-president, of the Democratic National Convention. He was nominated by his party for Congress in the early seventies, and was barely defeated in his district which was strongly Republican. Upon the unanimous recommendation of the bar of Muscatine, in 1872, Governor Carpenter, a Republican, appointed Judge Brannan, a Democrat, to fill a vacancy on the district bench. At the end of his first term, on his refusal to become a partisan candidate, both parties placed his name on their tickets. He was elected, and the wholesome precedent of elevating the bench above partisanship has since been followed in the seventh judicial district. Judge Brannan resigned and re-entered the practice before the expiration of his term, continuing until 1886 when he was returned to the bench. He was nominated in 1869 and again in 1884 for supreme judge, but both times failed to overcome the great Republican majorities. On the district bench he continued to serve uninterruptedly without opposition until January 1, 1903. He then announced his unwillingness to serve longer because of failing health, whereupon the bar of his district, in a meeting at Davenport by resolution unanimously commended his career as having been at all times conscientious, painstaking, honest, fearless, broad-minded and impartial. Judge Brannan possessed an almost marvellous memory and the faculty of lucid expression of opinion. He never abandoned his interest in newspaper work, volunteered much editorial and news matter to the local press, and contributed a series of articles to Chicago papers upon his memory of events at Washington in the time of Andrew Jackson, of which as a lad, he was a witness.

MARTIN NELSON JOHNSON was born in Racine county, Wis., March 3, 1850; he died at Fargo, N. D., October 21, 1909. When yet in his infancy, he was taken by his father to the family's new home in Winneshiek county, Iowa. In due time young Johnson entered the State University, graduating in 1873. He was for a short time after his graduation instructor in the California Military Academy at Oakland. Returning to Iowa he was admitted to the bar in 1876. He had just been chosen a member of the House of Representatives from his home county. In that body he was made chairman of the committee on the state library. In 1877 he was elected a member of the state Senate, being in that body when the prohibitory amendment to the constitution was adopted for submission to the next General Assembly, and supported that measure. In 1880 he was chairman of the same committee in the Senate. While a senator he secured the adoption of statutory provision under which persons applying for opportunity to teach special subjects are allowed to take examination for such specialty without being required to take a general examination. In 1876 Mr. Johnson was an elector for president and vice-president, casting his vote for Hayes and Wheeler. In 1884 he removed to the territory of Dakota, and there entered the land which was his home to the last. He was

prosecuting attorney for a couple of years, and was president of the body that drafted the constitution for the State of North Dakota. In this convention he resolutely contended for a bicameral legislature, making a strong fight for a legislature with only one house, citing as precedent many other states and countries, including that of his ancestors, Norway. The convention, however, adopted the plan of a legislature with two bodies. When the first Legislature met Mr. Johnson was nominated by the Republican caucus for U. S. Senator, but a combination of disaffected Republicans with the majority party defeated him in the joint convention of the General Assembly. He was chairman of the first Republican convention of the State. In 1890 he was elected to Congress, representing the entire State. He was re-elected four times, serving as a member of the committee on ways and means, and as such participating in framing the tariff law of 1897. He voluntarily retired from Congress in 1889 to become a candidate for United States Senator. Defeated in his candidacy he returned to farming and grain dealing. In 1908 he was again a candidate for United States Senator, and in 1909 was elected by the Legislature a member of that body, taking his seat March 4, 1909.

W. H. F.

LEONARD WOODS PARISH was born in Springfield, Mass., July 4, 1850; he died March 21, 1910, at Marshalltown, from injuries received the same day in a railroad wreck near Green Mountain, Iowa. He was educated in the public schools of New Haven, Conn., and Springfield, Mass., and graduated from Yale in 1872. He began his career as a teacher in the high school of Bradford, Conn., going thence to Glastonbury Academy for two years. He removed to Rock Island, Ill., in 1877, and to Des Moines in 1879, where he served as superintendent of the West Des Moines schools for six years. He served as superintendent of schools at Independence, Iowa, until 1890, when he joined the faculty of the Iowa State Teachers College, then entitled the Iowa State Normal School, at Cedar Falls, Iowa. Here he resided for the rest of his life. He was for five years professor of psychology and didactics. In 1895 he was transferred to the department of political science, and recently was made the head of that department. Throughout his residence in Iowa he was a factor and leading member of the Iowa State Teachers' Association, serving as chairman of the executive committee a portion of the time. He was a curator of the Iowa State Historical Society. He was the author of "Institute Economics" and "Civil Government in Iowa," and a number of other important educational works. His son, Professor John Parish, is assistant editor of the Iowa Journal of History and Politics, and has recently been attached to the faculty of Beloit College.

P. GAD BRYAN was born of Irish parents near West Carlisle, Coshocton county, Ohio, December 11, 1825; he died at Des Moines, Iowa, March 22, 1910. He moved with his parents from Ohio to Georgetown, Illinois, in 1839, and there lived and worked upon a farm. In 1846 he began the study of medicine and graduated from Wabash Medical College in 1848. In the same year he began the

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.