

John F. Boepple

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in which rank he was honorably discharged April 11, 1864, because of disabilities, as the result of wounds received in the battle of Black River.

JONAS SEELY KNAPP was born at Elmira, New York, September 6, 1821; he died at Los Angeles, California, February 5, 1912, while on a visit there. He was the second son of General John H. and Harriet Seely Knapp. He went with the family to Blossburg, Pa., for a short time and then to visit his sister at Penn Yan, New York, as there were better schools there. He came west with the family, arriving at Ft. Madison, Iowa, October 9, 1835, and always after lived there. For many years he has been acknowledged as the oldest resident of Ft. Madison. He retained the farm his father entered, one-third of which he inherited, and the other two-thirds he bought from his mother and brother John. October 31, 1844, he was united in marriage to Mary Stewart of Ft. Dodge, and five children were the issue, all of whom are living, though only one in Ft. Madison. Mrs. Knapp died July 23, 1906. Jonas S. Knapp had a remarkable memory, especially for faces and names, and was intimately acquainted with and could call by name almost every man, woman and child who now lives in Fort Madison or ever had lived there for any length of time.

H. E. K.

WILLIAM GIDEON CROW was born in Tennessee, July 2, 1837; he died at Eldon, Iowa, January 22, 1912. He removed to Appanoose county, Iowa in 1856, and then to Eldon, Iowa, in 1872. At the age of twenty-six he enlisted in Company D, Sixth Iowa Infantry, was wounded at the battle of Kenesaw Mountain, June 27, 1864, was promoted to seventh Corporal May 1, 1865, and mustered out at Louisville, Kentucky, on July 21st, of the same year. From 1872 to 1882 he was a locomotive engineer on the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific Railway, and in the latter year engaged in the mercantile business at Eldon continuing until 1890. In 1891 he was elected to the General Assembly as a member of the House of Representatives and was reelected in 1893. He was one of the organizers of the Eldon District Fair and served the community in many ways as a promoter of patriotic and moral movements.

JOHN F. BOEPPLE was born in Germany, July 23, 1854; he died at Muscatine, Iowa, January 30, 1912. He was a native of Ottensea, near Hamburg, and there learned the trade of a horn turner. He removed to America in 1887, locating at Columbus Junction. While engaged as a farm laborer he collected some fresh-water clam shells and after extemporizing a foot lathe on the principle of those he had operated as an apprentice in Germany, he cut the first

blanks and made the first buttons from the fresh-water clam, in the Mississippi valley. He engaged the attention of William Molis, of Muscatine, to his work and disclosed the possibilities of the industry which appealed to Mr. Molis sufficiently to cause an arrangement of co-partnership between the two gentlemen on January 26, 1891. Out of this arrangement grew one of the greatest industries whose beginning has been in Iowa. Mr. Boepple, like pioneers of many other industries, did not fully reap the benefits of his invention, and the purely commercial manufacture, with its competition against the sea shell product and of local factory against local factory, soon caused his retirement and his employment as a shell expert in the government biological station at Fairport, Iowa, where his service continued until his death. He brought about the practical displacement of the sea shell by the fresh-water shell, and caused the employment of more persons in his industry and allied callings than are employed in all other combined industries in the city of Muscatine. He was an expert in his line, an assistant to Hon. Nelson Dingley in the framing of the Dingley tariff bill, and formed the acquaintance of President McKinley in the discharge of his duties as a government employe.

BENJAMIN BILLINGS RICHARDS was born at Milton, Saratoga county, New York, August 30, 1823; he died at Dubuque, Iowa, March 16, 1912. He was educated at Bennington and at the age of fifteen became a teacher in the district schools of New York. He became the first principal of the Caryville Seminary and professor of mathematics at the age of eighteen. At Caryville he prepared to enter the junior year at Yale but was diverted to Milwaukee, where he began the study of law in 1848 and two years later was admitted to the bar. In 1854 Mr. Richards removed to Dubuque and engaged in the real estate business, associated with others for a part of the time. He was nominated for Congress in opposition to Senator Allison in 1862 and the two conducted their campaign through the joint debate system. Mr. Richards was elected to the General Assembly in 1863, as a member of the House of Representatives, and in 1865 as a member of the Senate. He was again an unsuccessful candidate for Congress, this time against Col. David B. Henderson. He withdrew from the Democratic party in 1896 and was not thereafter a public factor in party sense. Mr. Richards was the first president of the Dubuque National Bank and founded other banks in northern Iowa. He served in other capacities of a public nature including that of a member of the Board of Education of Dubuque. He was a member of St. John's Episcopal Church and was a delegate to the convention which elected Bishop Lee the first bishop in Iowa. He was a broad, deep, strong, eloquent, useful man.

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