

John Gray Thornell

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dist Episcopal church in 1876, 1888, 1896, 1904, and 1908. He was president of the State Teachers' Association of Iowa in 1885; was made a member of the National Council of Education in 1886; a member of the Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal church in 1895; was a National Commissioner of the World's Columbian Commission in 1890; was a delegate to the Congress of Higher Education, Paris Exposition, in 1900; and was a delegate to the Ecumenical Conference, London, in 1901. His work as an educator took him into all parts of the United States, and to parts of Europe, while his leisure in later life permitted him to become an extensive traveler, a trip around the world being one of his privileges. He had broad education, culture, kindness, genuine Christian character, and rare judgment and administrative ability. As an example of his business judgment he made real estate investments on his own account and accumulated more than a competence, and then gave it practically all to the college, as he endowed a professorship in memory of his daughter and others in memory of his wife, and left money to the college by will, so that all his bequests to the college amounted to some \$200,000.

MAJOR JOHN GRAY THORNELL was born at Sidney, Iowa, May 5, 1886, and died in an aerial accident at Hampton, Virginia, February 21, 1922. Interment was at Sidney. He was a son of former Judge Andrew B. Thornell. He attended public school at Sidney, entered West Point Military Academy in June, 1906, and was graduated therefrom in June, 1910, with the rank of second lieutenant. For a time he was mostly in the Quartermaster's Department, being stationed at various points in the United States. In 1914 he went to Vera Cruz as commissary for General Funston. On July 1, 1916, he was promoted to first lieutenant. He was appointed an instructor of artillery at Fort Snelling and was promoted to captain in May, 1917. In December, 1917, he was transferred to the Third Motor Mechanics' Regiment, stationed at Fort Crook, Omaha. The regiment was soon sent to France and he was transferred to the air service, with the rank of major, with headquarters at Tours. Later he was sent to the front in charge of a balloon section and on Armistice morning was acting as a signal officer in a balloon over the American lines. After November 11 he was sent to aerial schools in England, France, and Italy, then returned to this country in July, 1919, and was placed in command of the flying forces at San Antonio. February 1, 1921, he was sent to Italy where he took a trial trip in the dirigible airship Roma, took it apart and shipped it to Langley Field, Virginia, reassembled it and made another trial flight in it. Its formal delivery was made to the government in December, 1921, and Major Thornell was relieved of its command that he might instruct in the officers' school at Langley Field. However, he was ordered back to take charge in a test flight after new and stronger motors had been installed, when the catastrophe of February 21 occurred, the greatest in the aerial history of the country, in which he and thirty-three others lost their lives.

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