

Michael F. Healy

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NOTABLE DEATHS

MICHAEL F. HEALY was born in Lansing, Iowa, April 1, 1863, and died in Fort Dodge June 23, 1929. His parents were Michael and Catharine (Murphy) Healy. He attended public school in Lansing, Notre Dame University, Harvard University, and the Law Department of the University of Michigan. Being graduated from the latter in 1885 he at once began the practice of law at Fort Dodge. At this time he formed a friendship with John F. Duncombe, which influenced him professionally as well as politically. He soon attained a large practice and achieved a high standing in his profession. He gave much time to politics, but held no public offices, preferring only to aid his friends and to advocate those principles in which he believed. In 1888 when twenty-five years old he was temporary chairman of the Democratic State Convention in Des Moines. Since then he has been a favorite at the conventions of his party in Iowa as well as on the stump. He served his party as Tenth District member of the State Committee in 1896 and 1897, being chairman of the Executive Committee during 1897. He frequently attended Democratic national conventions and especially in 1924 won a notable ovation when he seconded the nomination of Alfred Smith. In the 1928 convention he was also accorded an ovation. Some twelve years before his death he became totally blind. This did not prevent him from continuing his law practice, nor from delivering public addresses. On the platform he had a fine presence, dignity, strength, courtesy, refinement, and a voice rich and beautiful. He had elegant diction, a marvelous memory, an acquaintance with the classics and a readiness in quotation, a keen sense of humor, an appreciation of the beautiful, and a good philosophy. These were some of the qualities that made him rank with the few real orators his state has produced.

JAMES WHITCOMB ELLIS was born near Danville, Hendricks County, Indiana, November 25, 1848, and died in Maquoketa, Iowa, April 9, 1929. His parents were Jesse and Ailsea (Jeffers) Ellis who settled near Maquoketa in 1852. James W. was reared on his father's farm, and attended public school until fourteen years old. He made several attempts to enlist in the Union Army during the Civil War, but was rejected because of his youth. However, in June, 1864, when less than sixteen years old, he got to the front long enough to witness the intensively fought campaigns at Culpepper and Petersburg, but was returned home. In May, 1866, he enlisted in Company H, Fifth United States Infantry, in which he served three years on the southwestern frontier. He then returned home and devoted himself to farming until 1889 when he began writing fire insurance. In 1907 he removed to Maquoketa, continuing his insurance, to which he added some real estate business.

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