

William O. Mitchell

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Davenport in a partnership with William O. Schmidt which continued until the latter's death in 1908, after which he practiced alone until about a year before his death when Edward O. Doerr became his partner. He became an alderman of the city the same year he began practicing law, 1889, and was elected mayor in 1893 when only twenty-six years old. He was three times re-elected, the terms then being but one year each. He was a member of the Board of Education from 1898 to 1901, and was corporation counsel of the city from 1913 to 1914. Besides these local activities he took part in larger political affairs. In 1893, the same year he was elected mayor, he was permanent chairman of the Democratic State Convention. In 1900 he was the Democratic candidate for Congress from the Second District, but was defeated by J. N. W. Rumble. In 1912 he was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention, and on February 10, 1914, was elected to Congress to fill the vacancy caused by the death of I. S. Pepper, and served from that date to March 3, 1915, having in 1914 declined to be a candidate for re-election. He was a man of strong convictions, fearless in speech and action. In 1896 he bolted the free silver wing of the Democratic party under the leadership of W. J. Bryan, but when his party dropped that issue he resumed his party allegiance. He was a brilliant and persuasive orator and a charming conversationalist. He was for many years a prominent member of the Davenport Turners and was honored with the presidency of the National Turners' Association.

WILLIAM O. MITCHELL was born in Van Buren County, Iowa, April 4, 1846, and died in New York City July 29, 1930, two days after he was struck by an automobile there. He enlisted in Company C, Thirtieth Iowa Infantry, August 9, 1862, when but sixteen years old, was promoted to sixth corporal January 22, 1864, taken prisoner near Atlanta, Georgia, July 22, 1864, exchanged, and mustered out at Davenport July 21, 1865. He was graduated in liberal arts from Cornell College, Mount Vernon, in 1871, was admitted to the bar in 1872 and began the practice of law at Corning. In 1891 he was elected representative from Adams County and was elected speaker of the House of that assembly, the Twenty-fourth, it being the only instance in the last two-thirds of a century, or since Civil War times, that a member was chosen speaker in his first term. He was re-elected two years later, and that session, the Twenty-fifth, was chairman of the Ways and Means Committee. In 1895 he was elected senator and served in the Twenty-sixth, Twenty-sixth Extra (Code revision session) and the Twenty-seventh general assemblies. In the Twenty-sixth he was a member of the Public Libraries Committee and introduced the measure which resulted in the Traveling Library. In 1903 he removed to Oklahoma City where he had land interests and engaged there in the practice of law, having as partner C. Porter Johnson in the firm of Mitchell & Johnson. For the last three years of his life he and his wife resided with a daughter in New York City.

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