

James Perry Conner

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NOTABLE DEATHS

JAMES PERRY CONNER was born at Morristown (now Parker), Randolph County, Indiana, January 27, 1851, and died at Denison, Iowa, March 19, 1924. His parents were Dr. William L. and Maria A. (Stiffler) Conner. The father died in 1854, the mother remarried and the family moved to Spring Creek Township, Black Hawk County, Iowa, in 1856. James attended district school, Upper Iowa University, taught country school, and was graduated from the Law Department of the State University of Iowa in 1873. In November of that year he located at Denison and entered practice and in 1877 formed a partnership with Leslie M. Shaw, then but recently out of law school. In 1880 Mr. Conner was elected district attorney of the Thirteenth Judicial District, served four years, and was then elected circuit judge of the same district, and served until 1886 when the office of circuit judge was abolished. He was then elected district judge of the Sixteenth Judicial District and served from 1887 to 1890. He then resumed the practice of law, but when J. P. Dolliver resigned in September, 1900, as representative in Congress, in order to accept the appointment of United States senator, Mr. Conner was elected to Congress. This was the Fifty-sixth Congress. Re-elections followed and he served to and including the Sixtieth Congress, ending in 1909. On his first election to Congress he formed a law partnership with P. E. C. Lally, which continued until Mr. Lally's death in 1913. Later L. W. Powell became his partner. In his later life he with his son Raymond owned the *Denison Review*, and he contributed to its editorial columns. He was also interested in banking and other enterprises, was active in all local affairs, and was a devoted member of the Methodist Episcopal church. As lawyer, prosecutor, judge, congressman, churchman, and citizen he filled every position with credit.

CHARLES VAN GORDER was born in Delaware County, New York, January 23, 1837, and died at Audubon, Iowa, May 29, 1924. His parents, Simon and Jane (Fish) Van Gorder, removed with their family to Bradford County, Pennsylvania, in 1843. Charles had no opportunity to attend school until he was seventeen years old, but by application and reading he later became a well informed man. In 1857 he made an overland trip to Kansas, and settled in Bates County, Missouri, but in 1860 removed to Exira, Audubon County, Iowa. Here in 1861 he engaged in manufacturing brick. On August 22, 1862, he enlisted in Company B, Thirty-ninth Iowa Infantry, was promoted to first sergeant May 20, 1864, to first lieutenant August 7, 1864, was severely wounded at Allatoona, Georgia, October 5, 1864, was promoted to captain January 1, 1865, and was mustered out at Washington, D. C., on June 5, 1865. He returned to Exira and made at least two over-

land trips to Colorado by ox teams before the Union Pacific Railroad was built, hauling shelled corn, bacon, flour, etc. The farmers of Audubon County furnished him these provisions, and the oxen and the wagons, and waited for their pay until his return from the trips. He was elected treasurer of Audubon County in 1869 and was re-elected in 1871, serving four years, was in real estate business from 1874 to 1876, and in 1876 started a private bank at Exira known as the Audubon County Bank. Two years later when the county seat was removed to Audubon he transferred his banking business there, and in 1893 organized it as the First National Bank of Audubon, of which he was president for many years. He was very successful in business, was helpful to his community, took an interest in public matters and in every good movement, and was a real builder of society and of the state.

HERBERT B. RUGH was born in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, May 16, 1879, and died in an automobile accident near Hazel Green, Wisconsin, July 11, 1924. Burial was at Cedar Rapids. His parents were George Stopher and Rilla Watt Rugh. He was reared in Cedar Rapids and was graduated from Washington High School there. He later studied in the University of Chicago, and the Chicago Art Institute. He enlisted in the Spanish-American War on April 26, 1898, as a private in Company C, Forty-ninth Iowa Volunteer Infantry. He was in service in Cuba from December 21, 1898, to April 4, 1899, and was mustered out at Savannah, Georgia, May 13, 1899. He was engaged in business as an architect at Winnipeg, Canada, when the World War began and enlisted on December 4, 1914, in the Second Field Troop of Canadian Engineers; was commissioned second lieutenant January 18, 1915; was transferred to the Forty-fourth Battalion Canadian Infantry May 30, 1915; was in training at Camp Hughes, Canada, and later at Bramshott Camp, England; began service in France August 11, 1916, was promoted to captain May 15, 1917, and received his discharge June 10, 1919. He participated in operations on the Ypres Salient, in the Battle of the Somme, at Vimy Ridge, Lens, and many other places. His battalion was practically wiped out by German attacks, and he was the only one of its original complement of officers left when the armistice was signed. He received certificates signed by General Haig and by General Ashton and others thanking him for his bravery and his distinguished services. After the war he resumed his work as an architect, this time in Cedar Rapids, where he became quite successful.

GEORGE HOUTS RAGSDALE was born near Spencer, Fairfax County, Indiana, December 13, 1844, and died at the home of his daughter in Evanston, Illinois, March 13, 1924. Burial was in Des Moines, Iowa. When six years old he with his parents, Daniel and Elizabeth Lindsay Ragsdale, immigrated to Van Buren County, Iowa. When he was eleven years old his mother died and afterward for several years he worked

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