

## David Bremner Henderson

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## NOTABLE DEATHS.

COLONEL HENDERSON.

An English poet has well said that "each man's born for the high business of the public good." While in a general sense the saying is strictly true, it is none the less true that some few men, "sun-crowned," are set apart for the responsibilities and the glory of leadership. Men turned instinctively to David Bremner Henderson, not simply for advice and counsel, but for actual leadership. We who knew him well could not think of him as bringing up the rear—in battle, in politics, or in statesmanship. Men everywhere recognize the man inspired to lead.

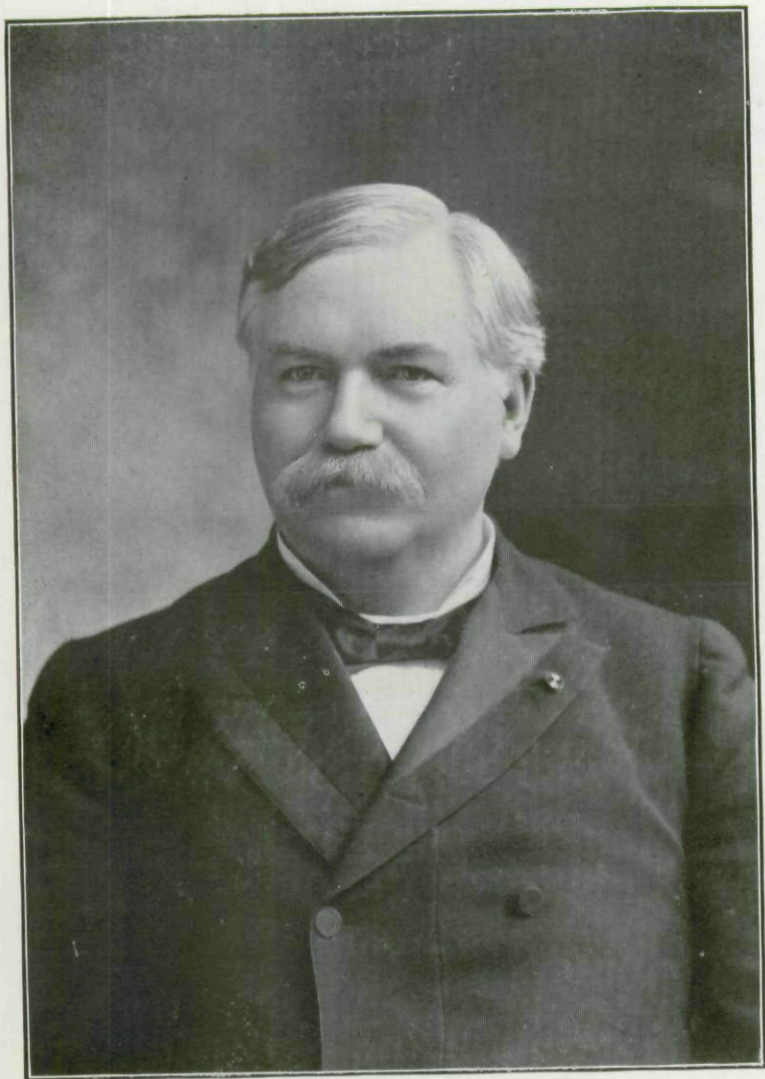
It was a long, hard climb from the poor farmer boy's first place in the studies and sports of a country school in Iowa in '47 to a standing among the foremost in Upper Iowa University in '61; later, to the first lieutenantcy of Company C, Twelfth Iowa Infantry; to the front rank at Donelson; to the front rank at Corinth—where he received the wound which made him a life-long martyr to duty; to a commissionership on the Board of Enrollment; to the colonelcy of the Forty-sixth Iowa Infantry; to leadership at the bar in Dubuque; to the Revenue Collectorship of his district; to a seat in Congress; to acknowledged leadership during twenty years of service in the House, and finally to the highest position which any man of foreign birth can attain in his adopted country—the Speakership of the House,—attaining that position by the unanimous votes of his political associates.

Hard and long as was the climb, this man of men made the ascent bravely, cheerfully—never a step of the way by intrigue or indirection, ever with full and generous acknowledgment of others' right of way.

Though his splendid military career nearly cost him his life and compelled him to pursue the rest of his way upward with halting and oftentimes painful step, he never lost his courage and heart of hope. After every new calamity this hero with a song in his heart and words of courage on his lips went bravely forward, splendidly exemplifying those inspired last words of Browning:

"One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
 Never doubted clouds would break,  
 Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
 Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
 Sleep to wake."

The milestones in the career of David B. Henderson are these: Born in Old Deer, Aberdeenshire, Scotland, March 14, 1840, he came with his parents to Winnebago county, Illinois, in 1846 and, to his home on a farm in Fayette county, Iowa, in 1849. He sturdily worked on his father's farm in summer and studiously applied himself to his tasks in the district school in winter, meantime leading his fellows in their sports and the head and front of all social activities. The crucial year 1861 found him a student in Upper Iowa University. When the call came which meant sacrifice of cherished aims and possibly death in defense of the Union, it needed no prophet to tell how the sturdy young Scotch-American would meet it. He signed the first enlistment roll he saw, and inspired many another to sign it. Chosen first lieutenant of Company C, Twelfth Iowa Infantry, he eagerly went to the front and zealously fitted himself for leadership. Though wounded at Donelson, he was undaunted, and at Corinth he was wounded again, this time so seriously as to compel the amputation of a leg. Other amputations were long afterwards



*Sincerely yours  
D. Henderson*

DAVID BREMNER HENDERSON, 1840-1906.

Colonel 46th Iowa Infantry, Representative in Congress, 1882-1902, Speaker of the House, 56th and 57th Congresses.



made necessary, the last insidiously sapping the secret sources of his strength. Discharged February 16, 1863, he was soon after appointed commissioner of the Board of Enrollment of the Third District of Iowa. In June, 1864, he was made Colonel of the Forty-sixth Iowa Infantry and he served in that capacity until the close of the war. In 1865 he was admitted to the bar, and in that same year was appointed Collector of Internal Revenues for his district. In 1869 he became junior member of the famous Dubuque law firm of Shiras, Van Duzee & Henderson. In 1882 he was elected member of Congress and entered upon a career of statesmanship which continued for twenty years—a career so successful that near its close he was the unanimous choice of his associates for the speakership. His resignation was a genuine surprise and shock, for there was nothing in the situation in Iowa or in Washington to compel or even invite such a course. It was later thought by his friends that for several years before the final breakdown of his health he felt his strength slowly giving way under the tremendous pressure upon him officially and socially, and that he deemed it best to retire from public life in the strength of his mature manhood. Be that as it may, a brief career as a lawyer in New York City was soon followed by a glad return to his home and friends in Dubuque, and later by a residence in southern California, where his wife and daughter had hoped he might renew his former vigorous health. In this they were disappointed. He was brought home to die, and after months of slowly failing strength, on the 25th of February, 1906, the end came. On the first of March his funeral was held. It was a notable funeral—the most notable in the history of Iowa. It was attended by thousands of his fellow citizens, his soldier comrades from all parts of Iowa, high state officials, legislators and distinguished friends from other States. The eulogy pronounced by the Hon. George D. Perkins of Sioux City, an old-time friend and comrade, was a rare and beautiful tribute of friendship and esteem, voicing the emotions of thousands to whom the memory of the deceased is precious. The Thirty-first General Assembly of Iowa, and the Fifty-ninth Congress of the United States notably honored the memory of the great Iowan.

Colonel Henderson was a faithful friend of the Historical Department, promoting its interests whenever possible, and securing for the museum many valuable gifts from Washington, D. C. The bronzed plaster cast of him which stood in front of the Iowa building at St. Louis during the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, has recently been placed in the Historical building. (The original statue stands in Clermont, Iowa, the gift of ex-Gov. Larrabee). The sculptor, J. Massey Rhind, represents the subject in a characteristic pose—in the right hand his gavel, under the left arm his crutch. A fine oil portrait of Col. Henderson, by Freeman Thorp, hangs in the Art Gallery of the Historical building.

J. B.

LA VEGA G. KINNE was born near Syracuse, N. Y., November 5, 1846; he died in Des Moines, Iowa, March 16, 1906. He attended the common and high schools of Syracuse. He entered the University of Michigan and pursued studies in both the law and literary departments, graduating from the law department in 1868. In the same year he was admitted to the bar in Ottawa, Ill., and began to practice in Mendota, where he resided until September, 1869, when he removed to Toledo, Iowa. He soon formed a partnership with Mr. D. D. Appelgate, that continued, until 1876. Later a partnership was formed with Hon. G. R. Struble and Mr. H. J. Stiger, that continued until 1876, when Judge Kinne was elected to the District bench. Judge Kinne was a man of great industry,

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