

James S. Clarkson

ISSN 0003-4827



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Recommended Citation

"James S. Clarkson." *The Annals of Iowa* 13 (1922), 392-392.

Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17077/0003-4827.4395>

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NOTABLE DEATHS

JAMES S. CLARKSON was born at Brookville, Indiana, May 17, 1842, and died at the home of his son at Newark, New Jersey, May 31, 1918. Burial was in Woodland Cemetery, Des Moines, Iowa. When a mere boy he commenced to learn the printing trade in the office of his father, who was a newspaper man in Indiana. In 1855 he came with his parents to Grundy County, Iowa, where his father had bought a tract of prairie land. He remained with his parents on this pioneer farm for eleven years. He enlisted twice in the Union Army but was both times rejected for physical reasons. In 1866 he came to Des Moines and took a "case" as a compositor in the *Register* office. Several months after that he became city editor under Frank W. Palmer, who was then the editor. In 1869 Mr. Palmer resigned to run for Congress and Clarkson was made editor. Soon thereafter the *Register* was purchased by the Clarkson Company composed of Coker F. Clarkson and his two sons, Richard and James S. The latter became the editor. He was by nature a newspaper editor, being master of a vigorous style. He at once gained great prominence and influence. He became active in business and led in the movements that brought the Burlington, the Wabash and other railway lines into Des Moines. He was an aggressive Republican and an active politician. In 1868, while he was still city editor, he had become chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, which position he held several years. In 1867 he was offered the mission to Switzerland by President Grant, but declined. In 1871 he was appointed postmaster at Des Moines and served six years and resigned because he disagreed with President Hays on his southern policy. In 1881 President Garfield offered him a foreign mission, but he declined it. In 1889 he was appointed by President Harrison first assistant postmaster-general and served one year, and was offered the mission to China, or to Russia, but declined. He was a delegate to the Republican national conventions of 1876, 1880, 1884, 1888, 1892, and 1896. He was a member of the Republican National Committee from 1880 to 1896 and was chairman of the committee from 1890 to 1892, and was president of the Republican League of the United States from 1891 to 1893. In 1891 he sold his interest in the *Register* and removed to New York City and organized the New York and New Jersey Bridge Company and was made president of it. In 1902 President Roosevelt appointed him surveyor of customs for the port of New York. His career as editor and as political manager was most distinguished. He was a real national leader and was associated with the leading statesmen and political leaders of the country. During the last several years of his life his home was at Sleepy Hollow Farm, Tarrytown, New York.

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