

led west, the journey across the Mississippi being made in wagons. He settled in Polk county, on the land now known as the poor farm. In 1855 he removed to Des Moines, occupying various positions of trust in those early days. He served as bailiff in the County Court for twelve years, in the United States Court for twenty-one years, and was for a long time bailiff of the State Supreme Court. He was also, at one time, elected Justice of the Peace. He was engaged for the greater part of his life in farming and was recognized as an authority on matters pertaining to agriculture. He was a man of simple habits and unostentatious life, but possessed of the most sterling qualities of character as accorded with his Scotch ancestry, while his kindly nature and genial disposition won the affection of all who knew him. Mr. Norris was possessed of an unusual memory, retentive and accurate, extending back for over eighty years; and having witnessed the drama of our early history for so long a period one found in him a storehouse of most valuable information. It was a delight to him to talk of early days and to narrate anecdotes and incidents relating to the general history of our country, and particularly of pioneer and territorial days in Iowa. He served as teamster in the war of 1812; saw President Madison fleeing from Washington when that city was in flames, and formed part of his escort in that trying time. He was present when the people of Fredericktown received Gen. Lafayette in 1826 and also saw Gen. Jackson on numerous occasions. When he came to Iowa troops were stationed at the fort near the intersection of the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers, to prevent trouble with the Indians. He was well acquainted with the old Indian chiefs Keokuk and Johnny Green. Mr. Norris' daughter was the first white woman married in Polk county. At the time of his death the living representatives of his family numbered five generations.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL and BREVET MAJOR-GENERAL A. J. SMITH died at St. Louis on January 30, 1897. He was born in Buck's county, Pennsylvania, April 21, 1815. Both his grandfather and father were distinguished soldiers, the first in the Revolutionary war under General Washington, and the latter in the war of 1812. A. J. Smith graduated at West Point in 1838, and his record fills nearly two pages of Gen. Cullum's "Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy." He fought in the Mexican and Indian wars and had made a very excellent record at the outbreak of the Rebellion. On the Red river expedition—having risen to the command of a Division—there were three Iowa regiments in his command, viz: the 14th, 27th and 32nd Infantry. He took a prominent part in the expedition, but was in no sense responsible for the disastrous results which attended it. General Banks, in fact, gave him credit for saving his army at the terrible battle of Pleasant Hill, of which Mr. A. J. Barkley has written so entertainingly in this number of THE ANNALS. He was idolized by his soldiers, who had the fullest confidence in him. He instilled so much of his dare-devil spirit into his men—and possibly was not too particular about certain little peccadillos in camp life—that they came to be characterized as "Smith's guerrillas." This designation seemed rather to flatter the old man's vanity. Some of our Iowa regiments were in his command at the battle of Nashville and were posted upon the inside of a breastwork or fortification, when General Thomas rode along. He inquired, "General Smith, will your men stand behind that work?" "Can't tell you anything about it!" But by Blank they'll stand if you put 'em outside of it!" General Thomas was entirely satisfied with "Smith's guerrillas," and rode on. General Smith continued in the service, participating in many battles, until the close of the war, and was afterwards appointed postmaster of St. Louis by General Grant, holding the office several years. This necessitated his resignation, but at the expiration of his civil service Congress placed him upon the retired list of the regular army with the

rank of Colonel. His last years had been very quiet, and he was well-nigh forgotten at the time of his death, save by the soldiers whom he had led in so many battles and hard marches. His surviving men have none but proud and kind recollections of "Old A. J."

JUDGE SAMUEL MURDOCK was born near Pittsburg, Pa., March 13, 1817, and died at his residence in Elkader, Iowa, January 26, 1897. He came to Garnavillo, Clayton county, Iowa, and bought a farm in the year 1843. He remained there until 1876, when he removed to Elkader, which was his home until the day of his death. He was well known as one of the early legislators and jurists of Iowa. He was elected to the last territorial legislature in 1845, and to the State legislature in 1869. In the spring of 1855 he was elected judge of the Tenth Judicial District, which included ten counties in northeastern Iowa. Aside from his professional culture Judge Murdock possessed a wide knowledge of agriculture, horticulture, geology and natural history. Clayton and Allamakee counties had been the home of the mound-builders and no man in our State has ever made more thorough investigations in that direction. His interesting collection of pre-historic stone implements was purchased by the State and is now in the Historical Department. He also owned a large-geological collection which had been made by himself. He was a ready writer and very familiar with the early pioneers, not only of his own county but of the State at large. No man in Iowa has written finer or more truly appreciative biographical sketches of pioneers whom he knew than Judge Murdock. Really these sketches possessed so much merit, that they ought to be gathered into some permanent form of publication. They would make a valuable book. He was a genial, abiding, true friend, surpassed by very few as a conversationalist, and always a pleasant man to meet. No one could pass an hour in his company without being benefited by his large stores of information. This is but the briefest statement of his many excellent qualities. We trust that some friend more thoroughly informed than the writer, will yet prepare a biographical sketch for THE ANNALS, which shall do justice to the memory of that grand old man.

COL. ISAAC W. GRIFFITH was born in Trumbull county, Ohio, April 2, 1820, and died in Des Moines, January 6, 1897. For nearly forty years he was one of the most familiar figures in the capital city. He had enjoyed the acquaintance of most of the distinguished lawyers, legislators, jurists, soldiers and pioneers of early Iowa. In 1846 he volunteered under the first call for troops for the Mexican war, and was made a sergeant in the 15th U. S. Infantry. He participated in many battles and skirmishes, and at Churubusco lost his right arm at the shoulder. Disabled for most of the active vocations of life, Col. Griffith, as was eminently just and proper, was almost constantly in public employment. He served in the Legislature of 1849, as a member from Lee county, and deserves the distinguished credit of having introduced and secured the passage of the Iowa Homestead law. He first came to Des Moines with the appointment of Register of the U. S. Land Office in 1858, in which position he served with entire satisfaction to all with whom he had business relations. Despising no useful employment, when his term expired, he became the toll-gate keeper on the old wooden bridge which crossed the river at Walnut street. He was at times bailiff in the State and United States Courts. From his kindly nature, strict honesty, no less than from the serious character of his disability, he always possessed the sympathy of his wide circle of acquaintances. When Judge Mason's portrait was placed in the Supreme Court rooms, May 22, 1895, the compliment of unveiling it was accorded to Col. Griffith, who had long served as bailiff in his courts. From this brief statement it will be seen

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