

NOTABLE DEATHS.

ALVIN SAUNDERS was born at Flemingsburg, Kentucky, July 12, 1817; he died at Omaha, Nebraska, November 1, 1899. His family were originally from Virginia, but settled in Kentucky where they remained until 1829, when they removed to the vicinity of Springfield, Illinois. Alvin's father was a farmer, and the son enjoyed only the limited advantages of education at that day afforded by the common schools. In his case this amounted to but three months each winter. His father "gave him his time" at the age of nineteen years, when he struck out for himself. Coming to Mt. Pleasant, Henry county, in 1836, he became one of the pioneer settlers of that "Athens of Iowa." He engaged in merchandizing and banking with his brother, Presley Saunders. This firm was successful in business and enjoyed a high reputation in that part of the State. Three years after he settled in Mt. Pleasant he received a commission from President Van Buren as postmaster of that town, in which position he served seven years. In 1846 he became a member of the convention which framed the constitution under which Iowa was admitted to the Union. From that time he was one of the leading men of Iowa—one of its honored and best known citizens. In 1853 he was elected to the State Senate, and re-elected four years later, serving in the regular sessions of 1854, '56, '58, and '60, and in the extra sessions. While active and influential in all of the legislation of that period, he was especially so in securing the establishing of our first Insane Hospital at Mt. Pleasant. This project was fought with intense bitterness. The proposed asylum was alleged to be a needless affair, a job simply started for the benefit of a locality and largely out of proportion to the needs of the State for a century. But for the efforts of Alvin Saunders the project would have been delayed for years. The State Senate, especially in the sessions of 1858-60, contained an unusual number of able men, among whom Mr. Saunders was one of the foremost. He was appointed Governor of the Territory of Nebraska by President Lincoln in 1861, and reappointed in 1865. Upon the admission of Nebraska as a State he was chosen one of its first U. S. Senators, serving six years. Mr. Saunders was an able and successful business man, closely identified with the progress and development of Iowa while he resided within the State and equally so of the State of his adoption. He had amassed a handsome fortune which was swept away by the panic of 1873; but with characteristic foresight and energy he went to work again and not only paid off every dollar he owed, but acquired a sufficient competency to make his last years comfortable. An able, just and honest man, his life was full of usefulness and he rendered his country and the two states in which he resided valuable services which will long be remembered.

JOSIAH P. WALTON was born in New Ipswich, New Hampshire, February 26, 1826; he died at Muscatine, Iowa, November 24, 1899. He came to this State with his parents in 1838, their course of travel being by way of New York City, Philadelphia and Pittsburg. At this last place they took a steamboat for the voyage down the Ohio and up the Mississippi. That is how people came West in those days. The family settled at Geneva, a promising settlement three miles above the present city of Muscatine. That region was then a portion of Wisconsin Territory. A bill is said to have passed the Iowa territorial legislature making Geneva the county seat, but which was vetoed by Governor Lucas. Of this we find no official record. His father died four years later, when he and his widowed mother removed to Muscatine, their settlement in that city dating from 1842. Young Josiah ran the first vegetable and milk wagon in Muscatine. This led up to the Island Commission Business, the Royal Canning Factory and the

famous creameries of that county. After his dealings in milk and vegetables he became a carpenter and worked some years in building houses, wherever he could find a job. Some portion of this time he was only able to command \$13 per month, payable in goods at the stores. This was the only "currency" of that period, and fifteen hours constituted a days' work. Later on he engaged in moving buildings, both those built of wood and masonry. In 1857 he married Miss Mary Elizabeth Barrows of Clayville, New York. His ambition led him to the study of architecture and some of the finest buildings in Muscatine and the surrounding country are samples of his work. He also acted for many years as Meteorological Observer for the United States Weather Signal Service Bureau. This Weather Record involved the most careful observations for forty-seven years, the first twenty-one of which were made and recorded by Hon. T. S. Parvin. After Mr. Parvin's time this work was done by Mr. Walton. He was one of the founders of the Muscatine Academy of Sciences, of which he was at one time president, and one of its trustees from the beginning. He was a prominent member of the Episcopal church, having been confirmed by the late Bishop Henry W. Lee in 1854. During the last dozen years he has devoted much of his time to writing and printing the early history of that portion of Iowa, more especially, however, of Muscatine and the surrounding country. We have had no more enterprising and industrious gatherer of materials for the history of our State. The Historical Department has been indebted to Mr. Walton for many valuable pamphlets and leaflets, which fact we are glad to place on record. He was a man of great usefulness, with energy and public spirit seldom equalled. *The Saturday Mail*, of Muscatine, contained a beautiful tribute to the memory of this good and useful man, from the pen of his daughter, Mrs. Alice Walton Beatty.

JOHN S. WOOLSON was born in Erie county, New York, December 6, 1840; he died in Des Moines, Iowa, December 4, 1899. His parents resided in Erie county until 1856, when they removed to Iowa and settled in Mt. Pleasant, Henry county, where he grew up to manhood and began the study of the law. In March, 1862, he was appointed assistant-paymaster in the navy, and assigned to service on the sloop-of-war *Housatonic*. He was on board this ship at the time she was sunk by a torpedo near Charleston, South Carolina. The officers and crew took to the water and he was picked up with others, uninjured. He was present at the attack on Fort Sumter, and at both attacks on Fort Fisher. He was also on the James river at the capture of Richmond. He retired from the naval service in December, 1865. Returning, he completed his legal studies and was admitted to the bar in 1866. He was for several years the law partner of Judge W. I. Babb. In 1875 he was chosen to the State Senate to fill a vacancy, and re-elected in 1877 for the full term of four years. He proved himself an able and influential senator. He was secretary of the Mt. Pleasant school board several years, and in 1870 became chairman of the State Board of Commissioners of Insanity. Upon the death of James M. Love, U. S. Judge of the Southern district of Iowa, Mr. Woolson was appointed to the place. In this position he became one of the leading jurists of the Middle West, distinguished for his legal knowledge, his promptness in expediting the business of the court, and for the certainty with which the penalties of the federal laws were enforced upon incorrigible transgressors. He always dealt most leniently with youthful offenders, and with men who came before him charged with a first offense. In a case where the plea of guilty was entered, before proceeding to pronounce sentence, he made the most thorough investigation into the man's character and standing up to the time he went astray, anxious to give him the benefit of every mitigating circumstance. It was always a terrible strain upon him to pronounce a severe sentence, as he sometimes had to do, in the presence of a weeping

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