

Iowa's Notable Dead . . .

THOMAS HENRY FOSTER, meat packing executive, died at Ottumwa, Iowa, November 14, 1951; born in Chicago, Illinois, January 31, 1875; son of Thomas Dove and Elizabeth Foster, the father having brought the Morrell packing company from England, first conducting it in Chicago, and in 1877 established the business at Ottumwa, which is now the headquarters for the nationwide operation; first work was at the packing house in 1887 as a hog driver, subsequent summers finding him in various departments of the plant until he had made the round of most of them, and in 1890, at the age of fifteen, and after only a year in high school, he began regular work in the smoked meat department, but after a year entered Parsons academy at Fairfield, graduating in 1893; then entered Parsons college and attended a year, and in the spring of 1894 began work in the John Morrell & Company office as bill clerk, and in 1896 became the bookkeeper; promoted in May, 1897, to manager of the Boston, Mass. plant, where he remained three years, and there married Mary Frances Bugler on July 25, 1898; moved to New York in 1899 and established a branch house there, but January of 1901 found him back in Ottumwa assisting in the establishment of the canning department; transferred in 1902 to the general office in charge of canned goods manufacturing, sales and advertising and continued in that capacity until 1906, when he became assistant to the superintendent of the plant; became manager of the meat packing plant at Sioux Falls, S.D., in 1909, after it had been leased by the Morrell company; returned to Ottumwa in 1912 to assist his father as assistant manager, and since remained in Ottumwa with the company as a top executive; because of ill health in the spring of 1914, Thomas Dove Foster relinquished active management and the business was reorganized in 1915 following his death, with John H. Morrell, president, and T. H. Foster as vice president and general manager; following the death in 1921 of Mr. Morrell, was elected president, a position held until retirement in 1944, becoming chairman of the board of directors, which he held at the time of his death; a leader in the meat packing industry, he also was president of the Yorkshire Creamery company, a member of the board of directors of John Morrell & Co., Ltd., Liverpool, England, and the trustee of the Morrell Refrigerator Car Company; served three terms as chairman of the board of the American

Meat Institute; a member of the Chicago Board of Trade for thirty years and also served upon the board of directors of the National Association of Manufacturers and the United States Chamber of Commerce, the C. B. & Q. Ry. and the Southern Railroad; a member of the Presbyterian church and Ottumwa's various clubs and civic organizations, and likewise those of other cities where the company operated plants; well-known in literary circles as a collector of rare books, manuscripts, bookplates and prints; collaborated with Malcolm G. Wyer in writing "Bookplates in Iowa" in 1914 and "A Letter From the Fire" in 1923; wrote in 1945 "A Little Journey to the Chateau of the Loire," and in 1946 wrote "Shakespeare—Man of Mystery"; owned an Uncle Tom's Cabin collection of nearly 300 volumes together with first editions printed in America, England, Germany and many other countries, also everything available upon the author, Harriet Beecher Stowe, and her writings, including scrapbooks of Stowiana clippings and autographed letters, gathered over eighteen years and containing 270 items; devoted a lifetime to collecting books; had one of the outstanding libraries of the middle west, containing rare editions, illuminated manuscripts, written laboriously by scribes before the invention of printing, outstanding examples of the binders' art as practiced by European and American craftsmen, and a marvelous collection of books about books; was the recipient of various honorary degrees conferred by Parsons college; survived by the widow, two daughters, Mrs. Harold E. Purdy of Kansas City and Mrs. F. E. McCarthy of Ottumwa, one son, Robert T. Foster, vice president of the company and manager of the Sioux Falls plant, eight grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

CHARLES PARSONS, minister and rehabilitation counselor, died at Des Moines, Iowa, January 7, 1952; born in a suburb of London, England, in 1870; came to the United States as a child and with his family settled at Harmon, Illinois; a graduate of Wheaton (Illinois) college, and Chicago Theological seminary; before entering the work of the Society for the Friendless, to which he devoted forty-one years of his life, he held Congregational church pastorates at Webster, South Dakota, Menville, Iowa, and Byron, Illinois; came to Des Moines, Iowa, in 1909, as superintendent of the Iowa Society for the Friendless, the year it became an agency of the local Welfare Bureau; first work in that capacity was done in the organization's national office at St. Joseph, Missouri, in the early 1900's; during which time he traveled widely in Missouri and Kansas; widely known throughout Iowa as a speaker on crime

prevention, the rehabilitation of the criminal and the need for counsel and assistance for prisoners and their dependents; traveled to schools and churches to explain the problems of crime and criminals, and to prisons and state penitentiaries to deal with the problems, and had approximately 250 parolees under his charge annually; campaigned vigorously for custodial farms for housing and employing prisoners in county jails, and repeatedly attacked the jail practices of keeping prisoners idle; active in numerous national and state organizations during his lifetime; a charter member of both the National Social Workers association and the National Prisoners Aid association, president of the National Prisoners Aid group in 1922, and secretary-treasurer for 17 years, a member of the standing committee on jails of the American Prison association for eight years, and a member of the board of directors for 10 years; director and president of the former Congregational hospital in Des Moines from 1918 to 1925 and a charter member of the Des Moines Health Center, where he was director seven years; surviving are two daughters, Mrs. Tolbert Moore of Des Moines and Mrs. Willis King of Burns, Wyo.; a son, C. W. Parsons of Baton Rouge, La.; 11 grandchildren; one great-grandchild; and three brothers, John of Rinard, Wilton of Moline, Ill., and Alfred of Davenport.

BEN R. VARDAMAN, author, lecturer, editor and teacher, died December 15, 1951, at Des Moines, Iowa; born August 29, 1876, at Clarinda, Iowa; in family records a cousin of Gov. James K. Vardaman of Mississippi; attended Drake university and was a graduate of the Chicago (Ill.) Fine Arts school; came to Des Moines over forty years ago and was one of the editors of the *Merchants Trade Journal*; acquired the *Iowa Clothier*, a local organ of the State Clothiers association and developed it into a nation-wide and influential publication as the *National Clothier*; established the *National Community Magazine*, and devoted a number of years to aggressive community building programs in countless cities and towns of the country, being a platform leader of note and a speaker of force and power; wrote many books on salesmanship and store management, the most widely known being "Master Salesmanship," which unfortunately was not copyrighted and with his "Salesmanship Correspondence School Course" was appropriated almost in entirety by another man in that field who sold his publication widely and is said to have reaped a fortune from it; was in demand as a lecturer and delivered more than 8,000 addresses covering all parts of the country, his creative spirit, great mind, strong character and ability as an orator continued his prominence for years; as a teacher of constructive

business methods, organization and salesmanship, he had no peer, his works being used as college textbooks upon those subjects; later engaged in lyceum and chautauqua work, traveling far in filling engagements, his appearances obtaining large audiences to which he imparted enlightenment and inspiration; a member of the Methodist Episcopal church at Clarinda, the Nordway Masonic lodge there, the Scottish Rite Temple and the Shrine in Des Moines; of recent years since retirement resided a portion of the time with his sons, L. H. of Wapello, and H. F. of Evanston, Illinois, who survive him, with two brothers, A. F. of Braddyville, and Emmett of Shambaugh, and two sisters, Mrs. Anna Pritchard of Shambaugh and Mrs. Glen Fuller of Merced, California.

CLEVELAND KING CHASE, professor of Latin, Hamilton college, died at his home in Clinton, New York, November 27, 1951; born November 30, 1871, in Lyons, Iowa; received his A.B. and master's degree at Oberlin and studied at the University of Chicago, Göttingen university and the American School of Classical Studies in Rome; awarded an honorary degree in 1919 by Colgate university; beginning his teaching career as an instructor at Oberlin, was assistant professor at the State University of Iowa, and professor at Earlham college, Ind., before going to Hamilton college in 1911, teaching there thirty years, and retired in 1941, among his former students being Senator Irving Ives and Ambassador Philip Jessup; a member of the Fort Schuyler and Sadaquade Clubs of Utica; a Presbyterian, and a member of the American Legion, Archaeological Institute of America, American Philological Association, Classical Association of Middle West and South, Classical Association of Atlantic States, Societa Magna Grecia, Phi Beta Kappa; on June 23, 1902, married Helen Younger of Santa Cruz, Calif., who survives with three sons, Cleveland Bruce of Nyack, John Waddell of New London, Conn., and Frederick Peter Spence Chase of Washington.

JOHN P. MINCHEN, civic leader and Carroll banker, died at Des Moines November 18, 1951; born at Lyons, Iowa, December 10, 1870; came to Carroll, Iowa, when two years old with his parents, William T. and Marilla Bean Minchen, the father conducting the first bank there, now the site of the Carroll County State bank; was graduated from Carroll high school in 1888, and first college work taken at the State University of Iowa and Iowa State college, and in 1950 attended the 55th reunion of his class in the latter institution at Ames; from 1893 to 1895 inclusive pre-empted Iowa's last homestead, located north of Manning, and the following four years was cashier of the State bank at Scranton, Iowa; returned to Car-

roll in 1899, living there continuously ever since; engaged in various local civic activities; one of the organizers of the Carroll Trust & Savings bank which he served as vice-president from 1909 to 1920; served as member of the Carroll city council eighteen years, the city park board, and upon the board of trustees of the city library; among the civic projects to which he devoted considerable time was the west city park bearing his name, having presented the city with the real estate comprising the site; married Daisy Sallinger at Carroll July 19, 1900, and they observed their fiftieth wedding anniversary in July, 1950; only the widow survived him, as their only child, John Paul, died in infancy; prominent in Masonic activities and a member of the building committees of both the Masonic temples, one being destroyed by fire; a member of all the Masonic organizations at Carroll, the Chamber of Commerce, the Wild Life Conservation association, and the Carroll country club, being a member of the board of directors of the latter.

LEE W. ELWOOD, lawyer and legislator, died at Cresco, Iowa, December 28, 1951; born on a farm near Elma, Iowa, December 27, 1888; son of Frank D. and Katherine Harris Elwood; was graduated from the Elma public school in 1906, the University of Iowa law school in 1909, and opened a law office in his home town when twenty years of age; engaged in the real estate business in connection with the practice of law; elected to the Iowa house of representatives in November, 1912, reaching his twenty-fourth birthday less than two months thereafter, and no record has been shown that a younger man ever held a chair in the Iowa legislature; served three sessions and was elected speaker pro tem of the house in the Thirty-sixth General Assembly; married to Alice C. Church in Elma, June 27, 1917, and in April, 1926, moved to Cresco, where he formed a law partnership with his brother, Dale Elwood, and in 1933 Gerald E. Lyons became a member of the firm, which since has been Elwood, Lyons and Elwood; served as attorney for the appeal board during World War II, and was a member of the board of governors of the Iowa State Bar association at the time of his death; has long been an exponent of good roads for Iowa, and as a member of the legislature, aggressively supported the legislation from which the state's primary road system resulted; took an active part in civic and fraternal affairs in the community; a member of the Congregational church, the Masonic bodies, the Woodmen and Elks, and a leading Republican in his county and the Thirteenth Judicial district; survived by his widow, a son, Fred of Cresco,

and two daughters, Mrs. William Landholt, Elma, and Mrs. William Jaeger, St. Paul, Minn.

WILLIAM E. DENNISTON, lumberman, died at Newton, Iowa, November 7, 1951; born near Reasnor, south of Newton, on a Jasper county farm, in 1868, son of early-day Jasper county settlers; came to Newton sixty-one years ago when employed by a building contractor; two years later started bookkeeping at a lumber yard owned by the late Fred L. Maytag, owner of the Parsons Bandcutter Co., and later founded the Maytag Company; after twelve years purchased the lumber yard, which he has since operated; formed a partnership fifty-seven years ago with T. M. Partridge of Minneapolis, Minn., and together they gradually acquired lumber yards in neighboring towns, initiating an ownership by the Denniston family and Partridge interests that now numbers some forty lumber yards scattered throughout central Iowa, his two sons, Roy W. and Homer W. being active in the business; one of the founders and a former president of the Newton Home Savings and Loan association, with which he had been connected for thirty-eight years; a director of the Jasper County Savings bank since 1925; helped organize the Newton Commercial club, now the Newton Chamber of Commerce; identified with the United Presbyterian church, where he became ill before his death; a staunch supporter of every civic project that furthered the growth and progress of Newton; surviving besides his two sons are five grandchildren, three great-grandchildren and a sister, Mrs. Lulu Emery of Newton.

JOHN W. RATH, meat packing executive and institutional executive, died at Waterloo, Iowa, December 22, 1951; born February 26, 1872, at Ackley, Iowa, son of John and Elizabeth Mosier Rath; received his education in the public schools and business college; removed to Waterloo in 1891 and with his cousin, E. F. Rath of Dubuque, that year founded the Rath Packing Company, and served as its president from 1898 to 1943, then becoming chairman of the board of directors until 1950, and was chairman of the finance committee until his death: married Maude Harbin August 21, 1895; served as president and director of the National bank of Waterloo, a director of the Illinois Central railroad company, director and member of the executive committee of the American Meat Packers, chairman 1931-34, vice-president of the National Live-stock and Meat Board since 1935, trustee of the Waterloo waterworks from 1912 to 1931 and its chairman thirteen years, one of the organizers, a president and director of the Waterloo Rotary club, member of the Union League club of Chicago and numerous Waterloo civic clubs and fraternal orders,

a Presbyterian and a Republican; survived by his widow and two children, Mrs. A. D. Donnell, whose husband is executive vice-president of the packing company, and Howard H. Rath, present president, three brothers, three sisters, six grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren.

SAMUEL MORGAN SHORTRIDGE, attorney, editor and U.S. senator, born at Mount Pleasant, Henry county, Iowa, August 3, 1861; died at his home at Atherton, California, January 15, 1952; son of the Rev. Elias W. and Tabitha Shortridge, who moved to Oregon in 1874 and a year later to San Jose, California; attended public schools and the Hastings college of law at San Francisco; admitted to the bar in 1884 and commenced the practice of law at San Francisco; married Laura Gashweiler of San Francisco, August 3, 1899; presidential elector from his state on the Republican tickets in 1888, 1900 and 1908; elected as a Republican to the United States senate in 1920 and served by re-election until 1933; for twenty-five years was co-owner of the San Jose *Mercury-Herald*; widely known as an able orator on political and patriotic occasions; a member of the Pacific-Union, Commonwealth, Union League and Press clubs and the Masonic bodies.

LOY L. LADD, lawyer and jurist, died at Des Moines, Iowa, November 7, 1951; born at Sheldon, Iowa, May 26, 1884; son of the late Supreme Court Justice Scott M. Ladd, who died in 1931; came to Des Moines in 1903; was graduated from Drake University law college and admitted to the state bar in 1909, immediately took up the practice of law in Des Moines, and continued a resident of the city until his death; served as assistant county attorney of Polk county from 1923 to 1926, and then resumed the practice of law with his father, who had retired from the supreme bench; appointed as district judge in the Polk county courts to succeed Judge Herman F. Zeuch, deceased, and was successively re-elected, serving twenty-two years; a member of the Congregational church, the Elks and the Masons, and survived by his wife, Ada E. Ladd, a brother, Mason Ladd of Iowa City, and three sisters, Mrs. John Valerious and Mrs. Bert Mills of Des Moines and Helen Ladd of New York.

RALPH B. HARRIS, economist and educator, died at Washington, D.C., November 7, 1951; born at Cedar Falls, Iowa in 1890, where he received his education; entered the educational field and taught for many years before joining the U.S. government in 1935, his last college post being with the University of Richmond, Virginia, where he taught as an economist and organized an evening session business school; served

with the Social Security Board at Washington, the War Production Board and the Veterans Administration; retired from the V.A. four years ago and resided in Miami, Florida, until his return to Washington last spring; survivors include his widow, Mrs. L. Margaret Harris, 505 18th street N.W., Washington, D.C., a daughter, Mrs. Geanette W. Holmes, of Waterloo, Iowa, and a son, Ralph B. Harris, Jr., of Washington.

GEORGE H. ROBB, legislator and public official, died at Des Moines, October 27, 1951; born in Grundy county, Illinois, February 15, 1881; came to Emmet county, Iowa, in 1892; received his education in the Estherville, Iowa, public schools and the Kankakee, Illinois, Commercial college; married Nellie M. Crim of Estherville in 1902; resided upon an Emmet county farm twenty-five years and engaged in livestock buying at Estherville for a similar period; served twelve years on the Estherville board of education, two years upon the city council and later as mayor; a director of the county fair board and a charter member of the farm bureau; a member of the Iowa House of Representatives from 1943 to 1950, four sessions; a member of the Iowa tax commission since July 1950, and its chairman in that year; a Methodist, a Rotarion and a Republican; survived by his widow, a daughter, Mrs. Evan Higgins, a son, J. M. Robb, both of Estherville; two brothers, Emmett Robb of Berkeley, Cal., and Walter Robb of Billings, Mont.; and two sisters, Mrs. Olive Rughtiv, Oakland, Cal., and Mrs. Hi Kendall of Lincoln, Neb.

E. A. FARNSWORTH, public official, died at Centerville, Iowa, December 16, 1951; born at Evanston, Illinois, December 30, 1877, and came to Oskaloosa, Iowa, when a young man; has spent a great portion of his life in the coal mining industry; served for sixteen years as state mine inspector for the first Iowa district, his last four-year term expiring June 30, 1951; married Carrie Davis of Oskaloosa Nov. 26, 1904, and to this union was born one son, Dr. Samuel Farnsworth of LaPorte, Indiana, who survive, with two grandchildren, David Arlington and Jerry Eugene; a member of the Masonic order and the Shrine, and assistant publicity editor of the Mine Inspectors Institute of America.

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