

MRS. C. D. VAN VECHTEN (*nee* Ada Amanda Fitch) was born Feb. 2, 1841, in Van Buren county, Michigan, and was educated at Kalamazoo. She was married Aug. 8, 1891, and with her husband lived in Van Buren county until 1876 when they removed to Minneapolis. Mr. and Mrs. Van Vechten came to Cedar Rapids, Iowa, in 1877, and made that city their home until her death, which occurred early Sunday morning, Nov. 12, 1905. Her death was mourned by all in her home city. The municipal offices were closed during the hour of her funeral service, which was attended by the city officers in a body. Mrs. Van Vechten always took a deep interest in the club life of Cedar Rapids, and was ever an earnest worker in the Universalist church. In a large measure to her efforts was due the establishment of a free public library in Cedar Rapids. It was her quiet and effective work that carried the day at the election when the question was submitted to the electors. At the request of Mayor Lincoln, who was then at the head of the city government, Mrs. Van Vechten was given the privilege of naming the first board of trustees. That was ten years ago. She was chosen the first president of this board, and held the position continuously until her death. She was widely known throughout the State, especially by those interested in library and club work. The entire city of Cedar Rapids feels her loss deeply, the city council and several other organizations having put upon record expressions of their sense of loss. A memorial service was held for her Sunday morning, Nov. 19, at the Universalist church.

R.

JOHN N. IRWIN was born on Christmas Day, 1843, at Hamilton, Butler county, O.; he died at Hot Springs, Ark., Dec. 22, 1905. This death closed the career of one of the foremost business men and statesmen of south-eastern Iowa. He was for the most part educated in the public schools of Keokuk, and at Miami University. At the age of 17 he enlisted as a private in the 45th Iowa Infantry, where he served several months, when he was discharged on account of defective sight. He then entered Dartmouth College, from which he graduated in 1867. Engaging in the wholesale dry goods trade with his father and T. F. Phillips, the firm became prominent and highly successful and was well known throughout the middle west. He served in the Iowa house of representatives in the session of 1882, from which time forward he was one of the most widely known public men in Iowa. In 1883 President Arthur appointed him Governor of Idaho. In 1890 President Harrison appointed him to the governorship of Arizona. He was appointed U. S. Minister to Portugal in 1899 by President McKinley, from which position he resigned a year later. During the intervals in his public service he was the recipient of many lesser honors at home. His life was one of great activity and usefulness.

HARVEY SOUTHMIT BRUNSON was born at Euclid, Cuyahoga county, O., May 10, 1814; he died in Fayette, Iowa, Dec. 8, 1905. Mr. Brunson had but limited educational opportunities in his youth, but made up for his meager schooling by constant self-education and study. In 1840 he entered the ministry of the Methodist church. After 1875 he was principally interested in commercial and industrial enterprises. He was engaged in construction work on the Davenport and St. Paul Railroad, afterwards part of the Milwaukee system, in 1861, and for several years was a director in the company, serving also for some time as its assistant treasurer. In 1864 he removed to Fayette in order to provide for the education of his children in Upper Iowa University, with the founding of which he had no small part. In 1862 and '64 he served as a member of the Iowa senate. Among other public positions filled by him was that of mayor of Fayette and justice of the peace. He had also been one of the presiding elders of the Methodist church in northeastern Iowa.

Copyright of Annals of Iowa is the property of State of Iowa, by & through the State Historical Society of Iowa and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.