

mon school, he was educated at Warsaw Academy, Warsaw, New York, in which institution he also taught several terms. He removed to Des Moines in 1882, as representative of the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Company of Milwaukee. He organized the Bankers' Accident Insurance Company which later was merged with a Chicago concern. In 1901 he organized the Great Western Insurance Company, became its president and continued in that position until his death. He aided in organizing the Morris Plan Bank in Des Moines, and the Reinsurance Company, and was a director in the Des Moines National Bank. His unusual constructive and executive business ability made him no more noted than did his activities in charities. He became interested in this soon after reaching Des Moines. He was one of the organizers of Associated Charities in Des Moines in 1891, was a member of its Board of Directors from then until his death, was a member of the Executive Committee nearly all the time, was a close adviser of every secretary of the association, was president in 1913, and in 1921 was made a life member and honorary president. He had made a thorough study of benevolences and of foundations and by will he bequeathed almost his entire private fortune to the establishment in Des Moines of the Hawley Welfare Foundation, a trust fund to be administered through a board of directors. He was president of the State Society, Sons of the American Revolution, in 1904-05, and was a vice president of the National Society for two years. He was a cultured man, and contributed to his culture by travel, having visited most portions of this country, besides Hawaii and Europe, which he visited both before the World War and since.

---

WALTER C. RAMSAY was born in Ford County, Illinois, August 15, 1878, and died in Des Moines, Iowa, February 9, 1928. Burial was at Belmond, Iowa. His parents were James Wilson and Mary Elizabeth (Henry) Ramsay. Walter received his education in the graded schools of Paxton, Illinois, and the High School of Owatonna, Minnesota. In 1894 the family removed to Garner, Iowa, and he followed school-teaching for a few years. In 1900 he and his twin brother, Wallace R., purchased the *Iowa Valley Press* at Belmond. Walter was actively in charge of the editing of the paper from that date until he became secretary of state, except for the eight years he was postmaster. In 1914 the Ramsay Brothers took over the *Belmond Herald*, the paper becoming the *Herald-Press*, which they continued to own and publish until July, 1927. In January, 1904, Walter became assistant clerk of the House of Representatives of the Thirtieth General Assembly and served during that session. Two years later he served in the same position in the Thirty-first General Assembly until in February, 1906, when he resigned to assume the duties of postmaster at Belmond, to which position he had just been appointed. He remained postmaster until February, 1914. In April, 1914, he was elected mayor of Belmond, serving

until March, 1918. He was chief clerk of the House of Representatives of the Thirty-sixth, Thirty-seventh, and Thirty-eighth general assemblies, 1915, 1917, and 1919. In the primary election of 1918 he was a candidate for the Republican nomination of secretary of state, and in a field of four candidates was second in the number of votes received, the nomination going to William S. Allen for the fourth time. Mr. Allen resigned the office in April, 1919, and Mr. Ramsay was appointed to the position by Governor Harding and assumed the duties July 1, of that year. He was elected in 1920, 1922, 1924, and 1926, thus serving as secretary of state for eight years, seven months and eight days, a longer time than any one else in the history of the state in an elective state executive office.

---

OLIVER COOMES was born in Licking County, Ohio, August 26, 1845, and died in an automobile accident near Storm Lake, Iowa, June 27, 1921. Burial was in the Wiota Cemetery, Wiota, Cass County, Iowa. His parents were Isaiah and Mary Coomes. The family removed to a farm in Jasper County, Iowa, in 1856. Oliver attended common school in winters, and in summers worked in a pottery plant his father conducted. The winter of 1865-66 he was a student in Iowa College, Grinnell. In 1870 he removed to Franklin Township, Cass County, and engaged in farming. About this time he began writing vivid stories of the West which he sold to eastern publishers, the *New York Weekly*, and the *Saturday Journal* of New York publishing many of them serially, while many were published in the form of the dime novel of that period. Among the best known were *Adrift on the Prairie*, *Dakota Dan*, *Death Notch*, *Hawkeye Harry*, *Ironside*, the *Kid Bandy Series*, *Little Texas*, *The Raven of the North*, *The Dumb Spy*, and *The Scout*. He became one of the best known and most popular writers in the country of that class of adventure stories. He acted as postmaster at Wiota for some months when the office was established. Besides being a member of the local school board, he was elected representative in 1877, and was re-elected in 1879, serving in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth general assemblies. In 1905 he removed to Atlantic where he resided until his death.

---

MARCELLUS LUTHER TEMPLE was born in Monongalia County, Virginia (afterward West Virginia), September 16, 1848, and died in Osceola, Iowa, February 28, 1928. Opportunities for securing an education in the locality of his youth were then meager. He attended subscription school amounting in all to 140 days, then entered West Virginia State University at Morgantown and was graduated with the degree of A. B. in 1873. The same year he removed to Osceola, Iowa. He read law a part of the time while taking his liberal arts course and was admitted to the bar at Osceola at the May term of the District Court in 1874. At first he had as partner R. B. Parott, but in 1875 he and John Chaney

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.