



WILLIAM LLOYD HARDING

From an oil painting from life in 1928 by Allen A. Philbrick.

# ANNALS OF IOWA

---

## EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT

---

### NOTABLE DEATHS

---

WILLIAM LLOYD HARDING was born on a farm near Sibley, Osceola County, Iowa, October 3, 1877, and died in Des Moines December 17, 1934. The body was placed in the family vault of the Graceland Mausoleum, Sioux City. His parents were O. B. and Emalyn (Moyer) Harding. He received his early education in the public schools of his home locality, attended Morningside College, Sioux City, 1897-1901, and was graduated with the degree of LL. B. from the law college of South Dakota University, Vermillion, in 1905. The same year he began practice of law in Sioux City. At one time James W. Kindig, later a justice of the Supreme Court of Iowa, was his partner. He had a natural aptitude for politics and in 1906, only a year after commencing his law practice and when but twenty-nine years old, he was elected representative from Woodbury County, was re-elected in 1908, and also in 1910, serving in the Thirty-second, Thirty-third and Thirty-fourth general assemblies. He naturally grew with experience, had second place on the Judiciary Committee, and was chairman of the Committee on Municipal Corporations. He also greatly enlarged his acquaintance and friendships and in 1912 won the nomination for lieutenant governor, ran on the ticket headed by George W. Clarke for governor, and was elected. He was re-elected in 1914, again running on the ticket with Governor Clarke. In 1916 in a strong field of four candidates he won the Republican nomination for governor, and in the memorable campaign that fall he was elected governor over the Democratic nominee, Edwin T. Meredith. In 1918 he was renominated for governor and was re-elected, winning over Claude R. Porter, the Democratic candidate. When first elected he was but little over thirty-nine years old, the youngest governor-elect of Iowa since William M. Stone in 1863. A few weeks after the beginning of his first term as governor the United States entered the World War and Iowa did its full share in furnishing soldiers, provisions, and materials, buying liberty bonds and co-operating with the national government, and in it all was the patriotic leadership of Governor Harding. It was during his administration and by his helpfulness that the State Board of Conservation and the state park system were established, also that the present highway system was put on its present organization. In that period, too, prison contract labor was abolished, and the state ratified the amendments to the federal Constitution for prohibition and for woman suffrage. After leaving the governor's chair Mr. Harding returned to the practice of law, becoming a

member of the firm of Harding, Ruffcorn & Jones, Des Moines. He also engaged in lecturing, and in the promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence waterway project. He was in great demand as a political speaker, and took part in all recent state and national campaigns, speaking in many states under the direction of the Republican National Committee. His final illness began while he was making campaign speeches in Indiana. His readiness and felicity of expression, his abounding humor and his engaging personality were qualities that greatly contributed to his success as an orator.

---

GEORGE WATSON FRENCH was born in Davenport, Iowa, October 26, 1858, and died in that city November 27, 1934. Burial was in Oakdale Cemetery, Davenport. His parents were George Henry and Frances Wood (Morton) French. He received his education in public schools in Davenport and in Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. At the age of nineteen he became an apprentice in his father's factory, the Eagle Manufacturing Company in Davenport, makers of farm machinery, succeeding to the presidency of the company in 1886. He joined with the Bettendorfs in the Bettendorf Metal Wheel Company in 1888 and became president. The French & Hecht Company developed from this with Mr. French as president. In 1896 he and his brother, Nathaniel French, formed the Sylvan Steel Company with the former as president. He was connected with several other corporations. Besides being an outstanding figure in that industrial center, he had many other activities. In 1878 he joined the Iowa National Guard and rose through different ranks until in 1882 he was commissioned lieutenant colonel and assistant adjutant general of the First Brigade, but resigned in 1897. He gained political prominence and was a delegate to the Republican National Conventions of 1896, 1900, 1904, 1912, 1916, and 1928. He had a great interest in farming and developed a model farm just east of Bettendorf, purchasing it in about 1910 and centering his attention on Holstein cows. In 1914 Governor Clarke appointed him a member of the Permanent Iowa Commission to the Panama-Pacific Exposition. He did his part in civic development, was for a time president of the Davenport Chamber of Commerce, and was a liberal contributor to charitable movements. He and Mrs. French gave to St. Luke's Hospital, French Hall, a nurse's home. He took a great interest in Friendly House of Davenport, aiding in its establishment and maintenance. He was a brother of Alice French (Octave Thanet), noted author, and of Judge Nathaniel French.

---

EDWIN S. ORMSBY was born at Summerfield, Monroe County, Michigan, April 17, 1842, and died in Long Beach, California, October 24, 1934. Interment was at Long Beach. His parents were Lysander and Olive C. Ormsby. He was a member of the Eighth Michigan Infantry during the Civil War and became a lieutenant. He practiced law a brief time in Michigan, but removed to Emmetsburg, Iowa, in 1872,

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.