

POLK COUNTY, IOW

CONTAINING

Full Page Portraits and Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens of the County,

TOGETHER WITH

PORTRAITS AND BIOGRAPHIES OF ALL THE PRESIDENTS OF THE UNITED STATES AND GOVERNORS OF THE STATE.

CHICAGO:

LAKE CITY PUBLISHING CO. 1890.

PREFACE.

HE greatest of English historians, Macaulay, and one of the most brilliant writers of the present century, has said: "The history of a country is best told in a record of the lives of its people." In conformity with this idea the Portrait and Biographical Album of this county has been prepared. Instead of going to musty records, and taking therefrom dry statistical matter that can be appreciated by but few, our corps of writers have gone to the people, the men and women who have, by their enterprise and industry, brought the county to a rank second to none among those rising this great and noble State, and from their lips have the story of their life.

comprising this great and noble State, and from their lips have the story of their life struggles. No more interesting or instructive matter could be presented to an intelligent public. In this volume will be found a record of many whose lives are worthy the imitation of coming generations. It tells how some, commencing life in poverty, by industry and economy have accumulated wealth. It tells how others, with limited advantages for securing an education, have become learned men and women, with an influence extending throughout the length and breadth of the land. It tells of men who have risen from the lower walks of life to eminence as statesmen, and whose names have become famous. It tells of those in every walk in life who have striven to succeed, and records how that success has usually crowned their efforts. It tells also of many, very

many, who, not seeking the applause of the world, have pursued "the even tenor of their way," content to have it said of them as Christ said of the woman performing a deed of mercy—"they have done what they could." It tells how that many in the pride and strength of young manhood left the plow and the anvil, the lawyer's office and the counting-room, left every trade and profession, and at their country's call went forth valiantly "to do or die," and how through their efforts the Union was restored and peace once more reigned in the land. In the life of every man and of every woman is a lesson that should not be lost upon those who follow after.

Coming generations will appreciate this volume and preserve it as a sacred treasure, from the fact that it contains so much that would never find its way into public records, and which would otherwise be inaccessible. Great care has been taken in the compilation of the work and every opportunity possible given to those represented to insure correctness in what has been written, and the publishers flatter themselves that they give to their readers a work with few errors of consequence. In addition to the biographical sketches, portraits of a number of representative citizens are given.

The faces of some, and biographical sketches of many, will be missed in this volume. For this the publishers are not to blame. Not having a proper conception of the work, some refused to give the information necessary to compile a sketch, while others were indifferent. Occasionally some member of the family would oppose the enterprise, and on account of such opposition the support of the interested one would be withheld. In a few instances men could never be found, though repeated calls were made at their residence or place of business.

CHICAGO, June, 1890

LAKE CITY PUBLISHING CO.





POLK COUNTY.

IOWA.





HE time has arrived when it becomes the duty of the people of this county to perpetuate the names of their pioneers, to furnish a record of their early settlement, and relate the story of their

progress. The civilization of our day, the enlightenment of the age and the duty that men of the present time owe to their ancestors, to themselves and to their posterity, demand that a record of their lives and deeds should be made. In biographical history is found a power to instruct man by precedent, to enliven the mental faculties, and to waft down the river of time a

safe vessel in which the names and actions of the people who contributed to raise this country from its primitive state may be preserved. Surely and rapidly the great and aged men, who in their prime entered the wilderness and claimed the virgin soil as their heritage, are passing to their graves. The number remaining who can relate the incidents of the first days of settlement is becoming small indeed, so that an actual necessity exists for the collection and preservation of events without delay, before all the early settlers are cut down by the scythe of Time.

To be forgotten has been the great dread of mankind from remotest ages. All will be forgotten soon enough, in spite of their best works and the most earnest efforts of their friends to perserve the memory of their lives. The means employed to prevent oblivion and to perpetuate their memory has been in proportion to the amount of intelligence they possessed. The pyramids of Egypt were built to perpetuate the names and deeds of their great rulers. The exhumations made by the archeologists of Egypt from buried Memphis indicate a desire of those people

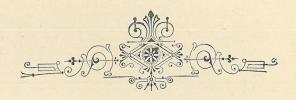
to perpetuate the memory of their achievements. The erection of the great obelisks were for the same purpose. Coming down to a later period, we find the Greeks and Romans erecting mausoleums and monuments, and carving out statues to chronicle their great achievements and carry them down the ages. It is also evident that the Mound-builders, in piling up their great mounds of earth, had but this ideato leave something to show that they had lived. All these works, though many of them costly in the extreme, give but a faint idea of the lives and characters of those whose memory they were intended to perpetuate, and scarcely anything of the masses of the people that then lived. The great pyramids and some of the obelisks remain objects only of curiosity; the mausoleums, monuments and statues are crumbling into dust.

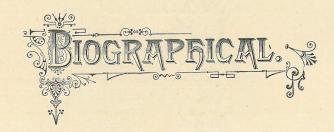
It was left to modern ages to establish an intelligent, undecaying, immutable method of perpetuating a full history—immutable in that it is almost unlimited in extent and perpetual in its action; and this is through the art of printing.

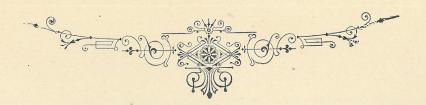
To the present generation, however, we are indebted for the introduction of the admirable system of local biography. By this system every man, though he has not achieved what the world calls greatness, has the means to perpetuate his life, his history, through the coming ages.

The scythe of Time cuts down all; nothing of the physical man is left. The monument which his children or friends may erect to his memory in the cemetery will crumble into dust and pass away; but his life, his achievements, the work he has accomplished, which otherwise would be forgotten, is perpetuated by a record of this kind.

To preserve the lineaments of our companions we engrave their portraits, for the same reason we collect the attainable facts of their history. Nor do we think it necessary, as we speak only truth of them, to wait until they are dead, or until those who know them are gone: to do this we are ashamed only to publish to the world the history of those whose lives are unworthy of public record.







* *,

of age when his parents emigrated to Iowa, locating in this city. He was educated in the public schools, a graduate of Des Moines High School, and when old enough to to be of service was employed about his father's brick-yards, afterward becoming foreman. He learned the mason's trade and worked at that business two years, after which, in in 1872, he became connected with the banking interests of this city as collection clerk for the Citizens National Bank, which position he retained until he was promoted to personal book-keeper. He afterward became general book-keeper and served in that capacity until January, 1883, when he resigned to accept the cashiership of the Union Savings Bank, which was afterward merged into the Des Moines Savings Bank. He acceptably filled that position until the 1st of March, 1887, when he resigned to become Cashier of the State Savings Bank. That position was tendered him and accepted on the organization of the bank and he has held it continuously since. The bank was started in modest quarters on Fifth Street and for the first eleven months, Mr. Geneser did all the work, laboring from early in the morning until late at night over his books. As the business in. creased it was moved to its present commodious quarters in the Good Block, in 1888, and the result shows an increased business to a very flattering extent. On the 1st of March, 1890, the books showed a line of deposits to the amount of \$340,-000. The Cashier has been its chief executive officer from the beginning and to his superior financial ability and faithful and arduous service its success is largely attributed.

Mr. Geneser was married in Des Moines, on the 11th of September, 1884, the lady of his choice being Miss Mary J. Jennings, daughter of Patrick and Mary (O'Neil) Jennings, and a native of the Empire State, born near Troy. They have two children, daughters, Cora E. and Frances. The parents are members of St. Ambrose Catholic Church and in politics, Mr. Geneser is a Democrat. Socially, he is a member of the order of Catholic Knights of America, and is the Treasurer of the Des Moines branch of that fraternity. He is also Treasurer of the Capital City Oat Meal Company, and is a large stockholder and Director in the State

Savings Bank. A wide awake and energetic young business man, he occupies a prominent place in business circles and has done much to place the bank on the firm financial footing where it stands to-day.



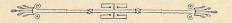
RNEST B. GASTON, who resides at University Place, Polk County, is proprietor and editor of the Suburban Advocate, a seven column quarto, published in the interest of the north and west suburbs of Des Moines. The Advocate was first established in May, 1887, by J. D. Bottenfield, who sold out to Charles McCanon in October, 1887. He continued the publication of the paper until August 20, 1889, when Mr. Gaston became its editor and proprietor. The paper is independent in politics, is rapidly increasing in influence and circulation.

Ernest B. Gaston is a native of Illinois, having been born in Knox County, November 21, 1861. His parents, James E. and Catherine E. (Estep) Gaston, were both natives of Pennsylvania, whence they emigrated to Illinois, where they made their home until their removal to Des Moines in 1865. The death of the father occurred at his home in this city, June 1, 1888, but the mother still survives and makes her home in Des Moines.

Our subject began his school life in the capital city and completed his education in the Drake University, graduating from the commercial department in 1887, with the honors of his class. On leaving school he entered upon his business career as a real-estate dealer in University Place, where he built a number of houses.

On the 24th of November, 1887, Mr. Gaston led to the marriage altar Miss Clara Mershon, a native of Jones County, Iowa, and a daughter of C. H. Mershon, of Des Moines. Their union was celebrated in Des Moines, and has been blessed with one child, a daughter, Frances L. The parents are both members of the Christian Church and take an active part in forwarding its interests. In politics Mr. Gaston is a Republican, having supported that party since attaining his majority. He has been honored with a number of local offices, served two terms as

Justice of the Peace, one as Town Recorder, was a member of the City Council of University Place for two years, which office he held when University Place was annexed to Des Moines. Socially, he is a member of the Legion of Honor. His public and private life are alike above reproach and he deserves no little credit for the part which he has taken in the advancement and upbuilding of University Place.



OHN TAYLOR, a retired citizen of Grant Park, was born in Tallington, England, on the 15th of July, 1826, and is the son of John and Elizabeth Ann (Booth) Taylor. The father was a shepherd and engaged in that business throughout his entire life, having charge of great herds of sheep in Lincolnshire. He was an upright and honorable man and was a faithful member of the Methodist Church. His death occurred in his native county at the age of sixty-five years and his mother, a member of the Episcopal Church, passed away at the age of eighty years. She was born, reared, married and died beneath the same roof, where for many years had lived her father, who was an industrious and energetic citizen and in that home reared a family of fourteen children. His death occurred in his ninety-ninth year. To John and Elizabeth Taylor were born seven children, five sons and two daughters: William, who died in England; James, who came to this country in 1847, and thence removed to Canada, where he spent his remaining days; Charles died in England after ten weeks of intense suffering, the result of a fall; George died in infancy; Catherine. now Mrs. Sears, resides near London; and Sarah is married and makes her home in that city.

Although our subject is now numbered among the well-to-do citizens of Polk County, his life has not been an easy one. When only nine years of age he was thrown upon his own resources and forced to perform any labor that presented itself. He at first only received eight cents per day for his services. Struggling against poverty and its disadvantages, he worked on, scorning no labor

whereby he might earn an honest dollar. At length his wages being increased, he felt justified in marrying and on the 16th of May, 1853, wedded Miss Eliza Butler, who was born in Spaulding, Lincolnshire, England, June 23, 1830, and is a daughter of Matthew Butler, who for seven years served as captain on an English man-of-war. An excellent position was then offered him by the government and he started on his return and last voyage. A storm coming up he received injuries while caring for the ship which terminated his life a few days afterwards. Mrs. Taylor's parents had eleven children, namely: Jane, John, Harriet, Eliza, Mary A. (1); Mary A. (2); Maria, Sarah, Lucy Ann. Two died in infancy. Previous to Mrs. Taylor's marriage she was engaged in nursing seven years. Since 1869, she has devoted much of her time to nursing, eighteen years of which has been in Des Moines. Her father served seven years on one of Her Majesty's vessels, at the close of which time he was given command of a vessel which he commanded till his death, which occurred at Boston, England. He was married to Sarah Gadsby, who died in Boston, where she is buried. He died December 2, 1849, aged forty-five years. His wife died in 1863, aged fifty-four years.

The wedding tour of Mr. and Mrs. Taylor consisted of a trip to America. Bidding good-by to home and friends they sailed for Quebec and located near Milton, Canada, where the husband found employment in the harvest fields at \$15 per month. When the harvest was gathered they removed to Stratford, Canada, and for a time he worked upon the Buffalo and Erie Railroad. While there residing two of their seven children were born unto them: Elizabeth R., who was born April 28, 1854, became the wife of John Crady of Ft. Dodge, Iowa, by whom she has four daughters: Emma, Rose, Carrie and Anna. Charles Butler, who was born in Stratford, May 26, 1856, is a large ranchman residing in Clark and Lewis County, Mont. Seven miles of fence are required to enclose his land and he is the owner of three hundred head of horses. Miss Ada White became his wife. Prior to the birth of the next child, Mr. Taylor removed to North Evans, N. Y., where on the 15th of June, 1859. was born a daughter, Carrie Elizabeth, who is now

and supplemented his early knowledge by a course in Franklin College. He learned the trade of carpentry in his native town, and in 1855 emigrated to Iowa. He spent the summer in Davenport and the following winter in Moline, Ill., but returned to Davenport in the spring of 1856. The month of October the same year witnessed his arrival in Des Moines, whither he had come to work on the first capitol building erected in this city. He followed his trade until the spring of 1860, when attracted by the discovery of gold at Pike's Peak, he joined an expedition bound for that promising Eldorado. Crossing the plains he spent one summer in the gold region but failed to find the anticipated fortune.

In the fall, Mr. Lowry returned to Des Moines and on the 22nd of November, was joined in wedlock with Miss Mary E. Turney, a native of Petersburg, Md., and a daughter of Daniel and Ellen Turney. They have five children living and have lost one. William R., the eldest, wedded Miss Mary O'Conner, and is a resident of Des Moines; Daniel Francis resides in the State of Washington; John D., single, is engaged with his father in the grocery business at No. 1304 East Ninth Street, Capital Park; Mary E., resides at home; Mark died at the age of seven years; and Alice T. is the youngest.

Mr. Lowry continued to work at his trade until 1861, when he engaged as clerk in the store of J. M. Moody, with whom he continued until elected to the office of City Treasurer in 1871. He was twice re-elected and served three terms. He was also the people's choice for County Treasurer in 1873, and served three terms in that office. While holding the latter position he was required to make good a loss of \$7,000 county funds which he had on deposit with F. R. West & Son, bankers, at the time of their failure. This was an unjust and severe hardship to Mr. Lowry, but by a vote of the people of the county he was subsequently re-imbursed. He was an efficient and faithful officer and his great popularity is shown by the fact that, while he was known to be an earnest Democrat, he was three times elected to the responsible office of County Treasurer in the face of from thirteen hundred to sixteen hundred Republican majority. Mr. Lowry was reared under the auspices of the Presbyterian Church, but after his marriage united with the Roman Catholic Church, of which his wife has been a consistent member since her girlhood. He is a member of the Ancient Order of United Workmen and for a quarter of a century has been identified with the Masonic order.



EN. JAMES BAIRD WEAVER, late member of Congress from the sixth district of Iowa, and a prominent lawyer and politician of the State, was born in Dayton, Ohio, on the 12th of June, 1833. His parents, Abram and Susan (Imley) Weaver, were also natives of the Buckeye State and became pioneers of Davis County, Iowa. The family is of English origin and was established in America in Colonial days by emigrants from England who settled in New York. Members of the family served in the War for Independence and others became men of note in the various communities where they resided. William Weaver, grandfather of our subject, removed from New York to Ohio in the days of its early settlement and served as a Judge in one of the courts in that State. During the Indian Wars, he was in command of a fort that stood at a point, now the foot of Main Street, Cincinnati. He also participated in the War of 1812.

Abram Weaver, father of Gen. Weaver, was born and reared in Ohio, and in 1835 removed with his family to Cass County, Mich., where he followed farming until 1842, when he emigrated Westward. On the 1st of May, 1843, (the first day on which the whites were allowed to enter upon the reservation which had been purchased of the Sac and Fox Indians) he settled in Davis County, Iowa. He took an active part in public affairs and for ten years held the office of clerk of the court of that county. Subsequently he removed to Atchison County, Kan., where he served as clerk of the court for fourteen years. His death occurred in the city of Atchison in the spring of 1889, at the age of eighty-three years.

His wife, the mother of Gen. Weaver, was born in Ohio, and was descended from an old and prominent New Jersey family. She died prior to her husband, in the spring of 1888.

The subject of this sketch spent his boyhood days upon his father's farm, and when fifteen years of age went to Bloomfield, where he availed himself of such educational advantages as the pioneer schools afforded. During this period he was employed a part of the time in carrying the mails on horseback between Bloomfield and Fairfield, his father having the contract on that route. In 1850, young Weaver decided to adopt the legal profession as a business and entered upon the study of law in the office of Hon. Samuel G. McAchran of Bloomfield, but soon afterwards, he entered the store of C. W. Phelps as salesman and pursued his readings in such leisure times as he found available. In 1853, he drove an ox-team across the plains to California for a relative and returned by way of the Panama route and New York in the fall of the same year. The following year he clerked for Edward Manning, a merchant of Bonaparte, Iowa. His employer urged him to remain under the promise of increased salary and an ultimate partnership in the business, but this he declined and again turned to his favorite project, that of becoming a lawyer. In the autumn of 1854, he entered the Cincinnati Law School and was graduated in the class of 1855, with the degree of L. L. B. In May of the same year he opened a law office in Bloomfield, where he has pursued the practice of his profession except when in the service or employed in official or political work.

On the breaking out of the late war, Mr. Weaver was one of the first to respond to President Lincoln's call for troops, and in April, 1861, enlisted as a private of Company G, Second Iowa Infantry, intending to enter the First Regiment, but missed it on account of his company not filling soon enough. He was elected First Lieutenant of the company, which position he held until October, 1862. Having participated in the battles of Donelson, Shiloh and the seige of Corinth, he was commissioned Major on the eve of the battle of Corinth, an honor unsolicited by him.

During the sanguinary battle of the following day Col. James Baker was mortally wounded, and the succeeding day Lieut. Col. N. H. Mills fell a victim to the enemy's bullets. Thus the command of the regiment devolved upon Maj. Weaver until the end of the engagement. Seven days later he was unanimously chosen Colonel and was duly commissioned by Gov. Kirkwood. Within one week he had risen from lieutenant to colonel and continued to lead the gallant Second Iowa Regiment until the expiration of the term of service on the 27th of May, 1864, when he was mustered out. During his war experience he never missed a march, a skirmish or a battle in which his command took part. At the capture of Fort Donelson a ball perforated his hat and cut a furrow through his hair, which is the nearest he came to being hit. He led the brigade which crossed the Oostenaula, during the battle of Resaca, Ga., discovered the enemy's position, laid the pontoon bridges under fire, and after crossing, the brigade drove the enemy from the rifle pits before him. He bore the reputation of never shrinking from the most perilous position, while the magnetism of his presence inspired his subordinate officers and men with confidence and hope. He was brevetted Brigadier General on the 22nd of May, 1866, to date from the 13th of March, 1864, "for gallant and meritorious services," the United States Senate confirming the well deserved honor.

After the close of the war, Gen. Weaver resumed the practice of law in Bloomfield, and in 1866 was elected District Attorney of the second judicial district of Iowa, and the following year was appointed Assessor of Internal Revenue for the first district of the State, which position he held six years, or until the office was abolished by law. In 1874, Gen. Weaver came within one vote of being the Republican nominee for Congress from his district and in 1875, against his wishes was a prominent candidate for Governor. He was one of the organizers of the Republican party in Iowa in 1856, and affiliated with that party until 1877, since which time he has been prominently identified with the National Greenback Labor party and its most conpicuous leader in the West. In the fall of 1878, he was nominated by that party for Congress, in-

dorsed by the Democrats, and was elected by a vote of 16,366 against 14,308 cast for E. S. Sampson, the Republican nominee. On the 18th of March, 1879, he took his seat as a member of the Forty-sixth Congress. In June, 1880, he was nominated for the presidency by the National Greenback Labor party and in the November election received 307,740 votes for that office. In 1884 he was returned to Congress by the combined vote of his and the Democratic party and took his seat in the Forty-ninth Congress on the 7th of December, 1885. Having twice held the office the people knew of his worth and ability and again sent him as their representative to the legislative halls of the Nation. The broad and liberal views of public policy advocated by Gen. Weaver is shown in the spirit of his letter of acceptance when nominated for the presidency, from which we make the following extract:

"One of the grand missions of our party is to banish forever from American politics that deplorable spirit of sectional hatred which for base purposes has been fostered by the leaders of the old parties. This has greatly deceived and embittered the public mind both North and South. Our civilization demands a new party dedicated to the pursuits of peace and which will not allow the war issues ever to be re-opoened, and will render the military strictly subordinate to the civil power. The war is over, and the sweet voice of Peace, long neglected, calls us to worship at her altars; let us crowd her temples with willing votaries. Let us have a free ballot, a fair count and equal rights for all classes; for the laboring men in Northern factories, mines and workshops, and for the struggling poor, both white and black, in the cotton fields of the South."

On the 12th of July, 1858, Gen. Weaver was married in Keosauqua, Iowa, to Miss Clara Vinson, a native of St. Mary's, Ohio. She is a woman of superior talent and culture, and is one of the leaders of the State in the Woman's Foreign Missionary work. Gen. and Mrs. Weaver have seven children living, two sons and five daughters and lost one son in infancy. Maud, the eldest of the family became the wife of Rev. E. A. Robinson, of Cincinnati, Iowa; James B. married Miss Fay

Atkins, and is a member of the law firm of Gatch, Connor & Weaver of Des Moines; Susie is still at home; Abram C. is engaged in farming near Bloomfield, Davis County, Iowa; Laura, Ruth and Esther complete the family.

Gen. Weaver is a Knight Templar Mason and also a member of the Odd Fellows society. In the temperance cause he is an earnest worker and is an official member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He was a lay delegate to the general conference which met in Baltimore in 1876, and has been prominently identified with that church for many years. Since 1883, he has been one of the editors and proprietors of the Iowa Tribune of Des Moines, which paper is the recognized organ of the National Labor party in the West and a powerful champion of the rights of the people in opposition to all monopolies. Gen. Weaver is a clear and forcible writer, a talented and able lawyer, and one of the most eloquent and popular public speakers in the United States. His course as a lawyer, soldier and statesman has won for him a foremost place among the distinguished men of the nation.



AMES C. SAVERY, the pioneer hotel man of Des Moines, came here in 1853 and opened a hotel in a log house which was situated at the southeast corner of Walnut and West Third Streets, and which was known as The Marvin. He also dealt in real estate and took an active interest in the improvement and development of the city. In 1856, when the capital was located in Des Moines, a joint stock company was formed for the purpose of building a first-class hotel building. Mr. Savery was the leading spirit in the enterprise and the result was the Savery Hotel, now known as the Kirkwood, of which he became the owner and which was conducted by his brother until 1878. Financial troubles having overtaken him, he in connection with Mr. Allen, a banker in Des Moines, went to Montana, where he engaged in mining and other enterprises. Having in a few years recuperated his financial condition he returned home and became largely interested in real estate in Iowa in