

# The Grinnell Herald

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## DR. S. A. CRAVATH.

When Dr. Cravath passed away Tuesday morning, March 20, there passed a man who for thirty years and over of his life was active and influential in promoting every good cause in which Grinnell has been interested. Few men have had higher standards of Christian living than he, and none have exemplified more fully those high ideals.

Born in Conneaut, O., on Sept. 27, 1836, Dr. Cravath lived his boyhood days mostly in western New York. Early in life he was bereft of his parents and he was compelled to work his way through Oberlin college. In those days the college session was held during the summer months in order to give the students an opportunity to teach during the winter and Dr. Cravath took advantage of this opportunity, earning his way through college principally through this means.

He graduated from Oberlin in 1858 in the same class with the woman who was afterwards his wife, and Professor Buck, retired, of Grinnell college. After leaving college his first call was to Madison seminary, of Madison, O. On July 1, 1860, he was married to Miss Mary Raley, a former classmate and a teacher in Madison seminary, in the study of Rev. Dr. Albert Barnes, the famous Philadelphia divine.

Later he went to Marion, O., where he was superintendent of schools for two years.

At this time strife had arisen between the north and the south, so Mr. Cravath took up the study of medicine both at Columbus and Cincinnati, O., with a view of entering the army service as a surgeon. About the time he graduated the war was closed and he entered into the practice of medicine at Springfield, O.

During the pioneer days of 1865 Dr. Cravath came to Iowa, settling in Mitchell county, on the northern boundary of the state. He went through all of the hardships of a physician of the pioneer days, many times fording bridgeless rivers in order to give succor to the sick and injured.

While engaged in the practice of medicine there, Dr. Cravath became financially interested in the Mitchell County News and, on account of his health and his liking for journalism, decided to give up the medical profession and go into newspaper work.

Learning through Professor Buck of an opening on the Grinnell Herald, Dr. Cravath came to this city in 1872, riding across country from Mitchell county on an old sorrel horse, and purchased a half interest in that publication, remaining either as part or sole owner of that paper until 1894.

The best years of his life were given over to the upbuilding of the Grinnell Herald.

For a while Dr. Cravath was president of the Grinnell Savings bank and

was a director in the First National bank in the days of its prosperity. Later he became president of the Merchants National bank. Up to his last illness he was vice president of the latter banking institution.

In May of last year Dr. Cravath went to Chicago for an operation, and his advanced age was unable to wholly withstand the severe shock of the operation.

The body was brought to Grinnell yesterday, accompanied by his son J. R. Cravath of Chicago and Miss Ella Cravath of this city, and was immediately taken to the family residence, 118 East street, from which place the funeral took place at 2:30 o'clock in the afternoon, Professor Noble of Grinnell College officiating.

In honor of the dead banker, all Grinnell banks closed their doors at 2:15 o'clock, that officers and employes of those institutions might attend the funeral. The floral offerings were both numerous and beautiful.

The pallbearers were W. C. Staat, Scott MacEachron, B. J. Carney, J. H. Horn, Clinton Tooley, and H. J. Farwell, all of the Merchants National Bank.

Interment was in Hazelwood cemetery.

The foregoing is but a brief notice of the active life of a man who filled a high and warm place in this community since Jan. 11, 1872. Born on a farm he was early inured to the hardships of life and made his way almost unaided through Oberlin. As a teacher he proved a success as he did in everything he undertook. Always somewhat frail in health he maintained his vigor and lived to a good old age chiefly through careful habits of living. On account of some physical defect he was rejected for enlistment as a soldier in the Civil war and possibly this fact changed his life work, as he took up the study of medicine for the purpose of using the knowledge as an army surgeon.

After locating at Mitchell he found country riding was too severe for one whose health was none too good, and having had a taste of country journalism, he was glad of the opportunity to give his whole time to it in Grinnell. He was associated first in publishing The Herald with Rev. J. M. Chamberlain, a man of keen and judicial vision. Afterwards Col. Cooper, a man of rare talents, bought out Mr. Chamberlain's interest. In 1874 Dr. Cravath purchased of Col. Cooper and conducted it alone until he took Dr. Albert Shaw as a partner in 1879, which partnership continued until 1883. The business of The Herald plant grew until in 1890 it seemed impossible for one man to care for it all, so in 1890 he associated with him W. G. Ray, then superintendent of the Grinnell schools, which partnership continued until 1894 when reverently Dr. Cravath sold his interest to R. MacDonald.

The writer was associated with Dr. Cravath four years in The Herald and we know when we say that no truer man ever lived. Conservative to a degree, he loved The Herald and its printing plant, and every effort was

made to give both the paper and the finished work a character possessed elsewhere only in the large cities. He accomplished this, too, having as a helper and right hand man one of the best job printers Iowa ever had, W. H. Day.

In 1878 he changed The Herald to a semi-weekly, probably the first semi-weekly in Iowa.

Honesty was his end, not only in his daily life, but in every piece of work that left the plant. He was active, thoughtful and trusty. He possessed a keen sense of humor, and as an editorial writer was able to use it on an opponent with telling effect. His editorial writings were safe, but accurate, positive and earnest. He had the warm friendship of his party leaders and always was consulted in matters pertaining to the good of the town.

He and Mrs. Cravath were two of a group of eight Oberlin people who came early to the town and who gave the best of their lives to Grinnell—Professor and Mrs. Buck, Professor and Mrs. Parker, and Col. and Mrs. Cooper.

In the passing of Dr. Cravath Grinnell loses a true citizen, journalism a strong writer, humanity a kind and its most devoted and earnest followers.

The tribute given at the funeral by Professor Noble was an honest sketch