

FREDERICK WILLIAM MORRISON.

Although thirty-five years have passed since Frederick William Morrison was called to his final rest, he is still remembered by many of Grinnell's older residents as one of the most prominent and respected early settlers of the town. As the founder of what is now the Morrison & Ricker Manufacturing Company, one of the principal industrial enterprises of Iowa, the record of his life well merits a place in a volume of this character.

His birth occurred in Bath, New Hampshire, on the 29th of July, 1813, and he was a gentleman of Scotch-Irish lineage. He obtained a good education in the common schools and after putting aside his text-books learned the tanner's trade, working by the side of Mr. Parker, the father of Ira Parker, who later developed the Saranac glove industry in Littleton, New Hampshire, using practically the same process in tanning leather that Mr. Morrison introduced in Iowa. On the 4th of October, 1843, he was united in marriage to Miss Ann Sutherland, a daughter of the Rev. David Sutherland, who was for many years father and so called priest of the Congregational community of Bath, New Hampshire. The wife brought to her new duties all the refinement of a Chris-

tian home and the knowledge gained by varied experience. She had attended Mount Holyoke Seminary as a member of the first class, under Mary Lyon, subsequently followed the profession of teaching in Littleton, New Hampshire, and later went to Plymouth, that state, where she learned to make gloves. Mr. and Mrs. Morrison began their domestic life in Bath, where five children were born unto them—three sons and two daughters. Two of the number reached mature age, Mary and David.

With the call from J. B. Grinnell for the building of a model colony in Iowa was an advertisement for a tanner, to which Mr. Morrison responded, bringing his family west in the fall of 1853. After reaching the terminus of the railroad at Rock Island, Illinois, he made his way down the Mississippi river by boat to Muscatine, where he procured a private hack in which to make the journey of one hundred and twenty miles to his new home. A number of the residents of his native town had preceded him and here he found friends and kindred, spending the winter in the home of David Sutherland, a brother of Mrs. Morrison. In the spring of 1856 Mr. Morrison erected a small house at the corner of Sixth avenue and State street, which corner is marked by tall cottonwood trees on the college campus, the house having been moved to make room for the circular drive on the south. Not having capital sufficient to build a tannery, Mr. Morrison began tanning in the open and put in vats north of the mill pond, the mill being located on the corner of Fifth avenue and State street. Here was begun the work which led to the development of the Grinnell glove industry. Like all tanners of his day, Mr. Morrison was both a tanner and currier and undertook to tan and finish anything from glove leather to sole leather. His first desire was to establish a horse collar shop and considerable

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work was done in this line. Gradually, however, he turned his attention toward glove-making. Deer were still numerous in Iowa and Grinnell soon became a market for them. The tanning process was a sore trial in the early days, as the oak bark was found unsuitable and shumac and smartweed proved to be of little value. Finally a small shipment of gambier, an imported article, was received and Mr. Morrison developed a combination process which is still used in the tannery. No salesmen were employed for a number of years but the stage drivers made a good substitute as they learned the value of the Grinnell gloves. Orders began to come in from adjoining towns and annually increased in number. In 1859 a tannery was erected west of Grinnell and prior to the completion of the railroad in 1863 large shipments were sent to Newton, Des Moines and points farther west. Mr. Morrison lived to see but the beginning of the industry, though at the time of his demise it had outgrown the kitchen and the home and occupied half of the Deacon Whitcom harness shop on Fourth avenue. The glove sales of 1876 amounted to nine thousand dollars. Though he passed away when the enterprise was practically still in its infancy, he established a reputation for integrity in all his dealings with his fellowmen that is more to be desired than great riches.

Mr. Morrison was a modest, retiring gentleman, faithful in attendance at church services but not an active participant. He was an interesting conversationalist and his friends found him a congenial companion whose never-failing supply of stories showed a rare appreciation of the best kind of humor. He was

not strong physically but no man in the community was more faithful or persistent in his attention to all the requirements of his business. His word was as good as his bond and his demise, which occurred on the 16th of August, 1876, was the occasion of deep and widespread regret, for his life had been at all times unselfish, upright and honorable.