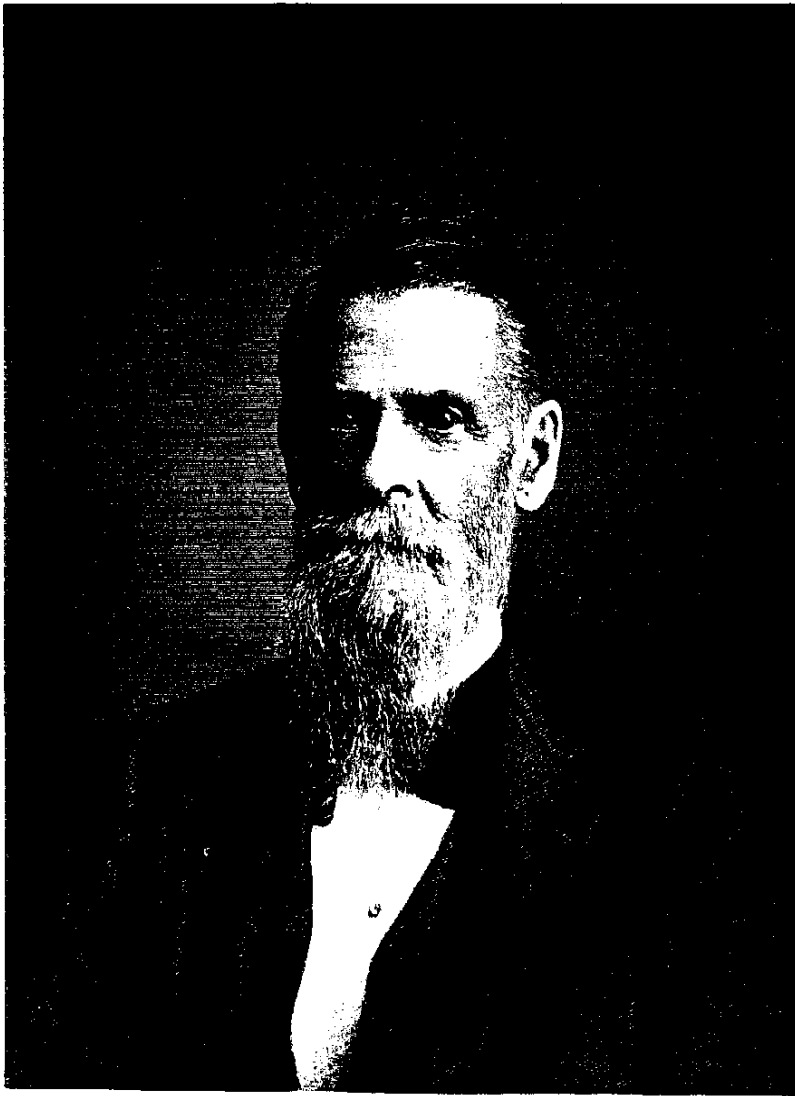


Although nearly a decade has elapsed since the demise of Erastus Snow his personality was too strongly impressed upon the community where he had resided for so many years for him to be readily forgotten. A man of rare ability and possessing a high sense of public duty he is remembered as an agriculturist, financier and legislator, but probably best as the citizen who was always willing to contribute both his time and money to forward any movement for the general good of the community. Of Puritan extraction, the early principles fostered in a New England home remained with him throughout life.

His birth occurred in Winchester, New Hampshire, on the 19th of September, 1810. He was reared in the paternal home to the age of twelve years, acquiring his education in the common schools of his native town. One evening after he had passed his thirteenth birthday he was reading the paper by the firelight when his eye was caught by an advertisement which read, "Wanted, a boy in a printing office. Apply here." Being an ambitious lad, he was most anxious to begin his business career and so applied to his father for permission to take the position.



*Erastus Snow.*

Ten minutes later Mr. Snow placed within his pocket a note for fifty dollars, bearing the signature of little Erastus, remarking as he did so that he would always have something coming to him. The mother, however, thought better of her son than that and replied, "That note will be paid." It was to this early confidence reposed in him by his mother that Erastus Snow attributed much of his success in after life. At times when everything looked hopeless and he was ready to give up or was sorely tempted to compromise with right he would remember his mother, and her belief in him gave him renewed courage and enabled him to conquer conditions rather than to permit them to conquer him.

The note, which he had given his father, was to compensate the parent for the lad's time and services up to the time he had attained his majority, which at that period was deemed to be the right of every parent. At the expiration of three years it was cancelled, in confirmation of his mother's trust, although the lad had only received fifty dollars for his first year's service, which sum was doubled the second and tripled the third year. Before he had attained his majority he had lifted the mortgage from the old homestead, thus relieving from anxiety the latter days of his parents. Mr. Snow did not follow his trade for many years, simply using it as a stepping stone to something higher. Returning to his old home he worked in the bank for a while but believing that the west afforded better opportunities for men of limited means he removed to Iowa. Upon his arrival here he first located in Davenport, where he resided for two years, and then removed to Poweshiek county, buying some land east of Grinnell, in the cultivation of which he was engaged when elected president of the First National Bank, following which he came to town to live. He served most efficiently in various public capacities during the long period of his residence here, having been elected to both branches of the legislature as well as to the board of supervisors. The latter office he held at the time when the matter of railroad bonds was being so strongly agitated in the county, but probably his most notable service was in assisting the school district to cancel its early indebtedness. After leaving the First National Bank, of which he was the first president, he became connected with the Grinnell Savings Bank, subsequently assuming the management of the Granger store for a number of years, while he was also identified with the Farmers Mutual Insurance Company. During the latter years of his life he withdrew from all public activities and returned to his farm, where he resided until December, 1893, although he rented the land. He then removed to Grinnell, where he was living at the time of his demise on the 1st of March, 1902.

On the 17th of October, 1887, Mr. Snow was united in marriage in Boston, Massachusetts, to Mrs. Harriett E. (Haskell) Waterhouse, whose husband had been killed in the first battle of Bull Run. He was a member of Company C, First Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. Mr. and Mrs. Waterhouse were living in Minnesota when the war opened but after the death of her husband she returned to the east, settling in Boston. She was a daughter of Thomas and Hannah (Johnson) Haskell, natives of Maine, in which state the father, who was a strong abolitionist, engaged in agricultural pursuits until his demise in 1852. His wife survived until 1872. Three children were born unto Mr. Snow by a former marriage but the daughter passed away when she was twenty-four years of age, and the two sons are also deceased.

His political allegiance Mr. Snow ever accorded the men and measures of the republican party, believing its principles were best adapted to protect the interests of the general public, but he favored free silver. He early adopted for his motto the old adage "Be sure you are right then go ahead," which became the governing principle of his life.

SNOW, ERASTUS—The New West has hardly numbered those years which are required to bring to the front rank in society a model class of men peculiarly Western. A visitor from the Sunny South amidst the sterility and rocks of New Hampshire asked, "What do you raise up here?" to be answered, "We rear men, sir"; but they cannot all stay, and if Douglas thought Vermont a good State to emigrate from, so is New Hampshire, and conspicuous among those who may have had the same opinion, provided they came to Iowa, is Hon. Erastus Snow. He being quite unaware of this attempt at sketching, we are ignorant in regard to his personal history, birth-place or age, save that it was in the old Granite State life began, and the full black beard, only slightly silvered, indicates about that mature age on the shady side of fifty, a guess confirmed by the fact that he has a son for several years a practicing attorney in northern Iowa.

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Mr. Snow is an accountant, having served many years as a bank cashier in his native State, removing to Davenport a reputed money loaner, where loans were easier put out than taken in. Next removing to Grinnell, where just out of the corporation he has a farm, which, regarding location, trees, and tasteful house architecture, is the equal of any establishment in central Iowa. But fine stock and model grounds could not detain the owner on his fertile acres and he gravitated into public affairs, still retaining his home. As member of the county Board of Supervisors our finances were by him brought out of disorder and indebtedness, known and provided for. Once he was elected to the Lower House in the General Assembly and once State Senator holding a conspicuous place as a trusted financier on committees, without any attempt at oratory, rather being disposed to the "golden silence." Several years since, when the farmers made an alliance, under what was called the Order of Grangers, this gentleman was accorded that prominence which correctness and business habits ensure, and is now at the head of one of the largest mercantile houses, occupying one of the most spacious stores in this region, where order mirrors the man. The presidency of the Farmer's Mutual Insurance Company, which has proved such wise economy to the insured, was also accorded to him, an office which he now holds. On the organization of the First National Bank of Grinnell, ten years ago, Mr. Snow was elected president, and on the founding, the past year, of the Grinnell Savings Bank he was also made president. In brief, if said as a business maxim, "Caution is the parent of safety," that may have been the guide of one who has neither grasped to hold, nor been ambitious for position, beyond the measure which was honorable and a pleasure for friends to accord, each succeeding expression of confidence bringing evidence of those qualities which so modest a gentleman might regard as flattery by a further mention and analysis. Mr. Snow is a practical believer in the "dignity of labor," and in early life from necessity, and later from choice, has been diligent in business and faithful to the many trusts conferred upon him. He believes that what is worth doing at all is worth doing well, and his life's history clearly demonstrates that strict integrity, persevering industry, joined to economy and good habits, seconded by a determined will, are unailing passports to success.

### ERASTUS SNOW.

We gather to-day in this house of mourning to pay our last tribute of respect to another of our pioneers.

He was born September 19, 1819, upon a farm about six miles from Winchester, N. H., and died early in the morning of March 2, 1902, at his home in Grinnell, Iowa, aged 82 years, 5 months and 13 days. He was the eighth of eleven children. His parents were hard working people and Erastus early learned that his must work for a living.

His early education was in a rural school where he attended about 8 weeks each year. When about twelve years of age his parents decided to apprentice him to a cabinet maker to learn the trade. He had an education from his reading, his study of men and affairs of business and contact with the world that made him intelligent, sensible and very practical. He did not take readily to the plan of being a mechanic. When about fourteen years of age he saw an advertisement that said a boy was wanted and he concluded to be that boy himself. Having found a job his first consideration was to get his father to fix a price for which he would relinquish his claim to his wages until he was twenty-one years of age. His father in his characteristic and joking way said he thought it would be worth \$50. The bargain was promptly closed at that figure and Erastus gave his note for \$50 to his father who when taking it said he did not think it would be paid. His mother expressed her confidence in the young debtor and he justified her faith by bringing it in little by little until the large bill was paid. His first year's wages \$50 and board was the beginning of his capital and business career.

He sought employment in a store in Lowell after in Winchester where he worked for several years eventually to become a partner until finally he was called to become the cashier of a bank in Winchester by the director of the bank. He was selected without seeking the place and entered upon the service with only a fortnight in which to learn the system of double entry book keeping and all the intricacies of the situation. He was too in delicate health and had often thought of coming west to find a better climate. He took charge of a bank with \$100,000 capital and had the entire labor to perform in the care of it, without an assistant. He was also treasurer and secretary of a savings bank, town treasurer, insurance agent and agent for sale of exchange. He grew into the care and management of this large amount of business by proper

training and systematizing his work. His whole mind was given up to it. It was important that nothing be forgotten. If a note was about to fall due it must be protested if not promptly paid so as to hold the endorser or else he himself would become liable for its loss. His bond of \$20,000 (official) was signed by his friends and not by a trust company. He must and did keep them from loss. He began with a modest salary of \$500 per year and staid with the Winchester bank 8 years until his salary and commissions for all his work amounted to \$1,500 per year. His yearly income was \$2,000. But the severe and exhausting labors had so undermined his health and strength that he determined to come west and undertake the independent and quiet life of a farmer. His board of directors pleaded with him to remain and managed to keep him a

short time longer. He had been so successful in managing the affairs of the bank and keeping it from doing what most banks then did viz. suspending payment in the troublous times from 1851 to 1859.

He had saved it when a run had been planned by driving all night nearly and bringing from miles away \$5,000 in coin and getting from another source \$5,000 more in gold and silver to show to those who came to claim the coin and break the bank. When they presented their bills to be cashed he called their attention to the fact that only a few of them were upon the bank of Winchester but he assured them that coin was so abundant that they could have all they wanted of it. So they went away leaving the bank doing its usual business in its customary way and they never came again.

His clever detection and arrest of a forger who had managed to get over \$1,000 from the bank before he began to be the cashier, his getting authority from the postmaster general to travel upon the mail cars in any direction, enter post offices and examine letters and even open same that came from the culprit was a very clever piece of work. In company with and aided by Holbrook, author of "Ten Years Among the Mail Bags," he at last found his man at the very house he lived in. He was six months in the pursuit and the bank spent \$1,000 in the chase and capture. The forger was convicted and paid the penalty of his crimes. So competent and useful had he become that the officers of the bank strongly desired to retain him.

He was married Sept. 14, 1848 to Lydia Maria Weedon, a school teacher whom he met at Lowell. Of this union four children were born: Eugene Erastus, July 2, 1849; Florence M., Aug. 10, 1851, at Winchester; Sumner Sherman at Davenport, Iowa, Oct. 24, 1860 and Her-  
man Henry at Grinnell Jan. 4, 1864, who died in October of the same year.

In 1859 the family consisting of the parents, one son and a daughter came to Davenport, Iowa, visiting and remaining there for two years within which time the second son was born, and attracted by the character of the people Mr. Snow came to Grinnell and purchased 80 acres of land one-half mile east of town coming here to live in 1861. His purpose was to become a farmer and live the quiet and independent life realized in that way. He built a good brick house the first of its kind hereabouts. Trees were set out for an orchard. Both attempts were regarded as doubtful experiments, yet the results seemed to be satisfactory. It really seems as if his endeavor to settle down in the quiet life of a farmer was about the most unsuccessful attempt of his long and busy life. It was not long before his neighbors found out his capacity to do business and since then he has had little leisure for the quiet pursuit of the real farmer. It has been my privilege to know him since 1864. Since then he has had much to do in a public way. As a member of the Board of Supervisors and chairman of it when it consisted of 15 or 16 persons (Sheridan then not organized) one for each township in the County. He showed the same ability in managing affairs which characterized his life in New England. He has been trusted by the people and put in charge of most important matters. In affairs of the school district of Grinnell in the large business of the county, where the attempt was made to collect from the peo-

ple of the county \$100,000 for bonds given to the Railroad Company, even though the Company had failed to fulfill its part of the contract and had disposed of the bonds to so called innocent parties so that the courts held that the County was liable, Mr. Snow decided not to levy the tax and was for a time committed to jail for contempt of court with his fellow supervisors until a compromise was made, saving the county many thousands of dollars. He was elected a representative in the legislature of the 13th General Assembly and served with efficiency and credit, though not given to over much talking. He was chosen state senator from this district by appointment of the governor. He was prominent in the cooperative movement called the Grange.

He was prominent in starting the First National Bank here and he was the first president of it. The Savings Bank also selected him to be their president. Twice he was chosen to settle with the county treasurer and went through the whole business as an expert accountant for the four years of his incumbency, spending thirty days each time. He was deputized to hold court in the settlement of an estate, a most intricate and difficult undertaking.

In the originating and conducting the co-operative Grange Store he showed the same mental alertness and consummate ability which had characterized his previous career and he made a pronounced success of what it was prophesied would prove a disastrous failure, as nine out of ten of such enterprises had been. His fellow grangers reaped abundant advantages in the purchase of good goods at reasonable prices. This care he finally concluded. At the age of 65 he could no longer endure the responsibility. It did not long survive his surrender of it. There is also an insurance company with which he had much to do in the same helpful way. With this he has longer been connected. Considering all his public service and achievements, we must conclude that although he modestly disclaimed any difference from the common lot, yet it seems to me we are considering the life and character of a man quite different from the ordinary individual.

He had his faults and none were more ready than he to acknowledge them, but I am not here to judge him or advertise them. De Mortuis nihil nisi bonum shall be our motto for this one half hour I could wish that his life had been characterized in these later years by his impulses and conclusions reached when most profoundly impressed with the transcendent importance of spiritual things at which time he confessed himself fully convinced of the great reality of the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

He had read much of skeptical writings and it was not easy for him to reach the conclusion to which he came of the divine reality of religion. My recollection is very distinct in regard to the occasion when he was so wrought upon. Permitted as I have been to have access to his own statements as to the operation of his mind in that crisis of his life history I am glad that he has left the record that he has. He has experienced many vicissitudes and trials in his eventful life. With an apparently frail outfit of bodily strength he yet has survived labors which now seem almost super-human and lived more than the four score years. With mental faculties alert and not seriously impaired he is taken suddenly from life here. He has

frequently been called to attend the funeral services of his own household. Of his children—three sons and one daughter—only one survives. Florence died in '76, Sumner in '92. So far from his New England home and the graves of his kindred yet in this fair land his choice for a home where he has spent so much of his active life, here he is to be buried. Of his father's family of 11 children only his youngest brother survives. Of his own, this surviving companion, Eugene, his first born, and two grand daughters alone are left.

We are here to pay our last tribute of respect to this husband, father, friend and citizen and to convey his body to the place appointed for all the living. To day three open graves remind us of our mortality.