

Samuel Jay Buck, who has been termed "the grand old man of Iowa College," was for forty-two and one-third years connected with the institution as instructor and acting president, and the school in its present prosperous condition stands largely as a monument to his ability in and devotion to the profession which he chose as a life work. He came to Grinnell in early manhood and for forty-two years labored for the upbuilding of the school. Ex-President Eliot of Harvard said: "What is needed is continuous education which lasts all through life." It was this which Professor Buck strove to give to his pupils, believing with Kant that "The object of education is to train each individual to reach the highest perfection possible for him." He had acquired some previous experience as a teacher in Ohio and Illinois before coming to Iowa. He had gone to the former state in his early boyhood with his parents, who removed westward from Russia, Herkimer county, New York, where Professor Buck was born on the 4th of July, 1835. Upon a farm near the town of Mecca in Trumbull county, Ohio, his youthful days were passed and his experiences were those which usually fall to the lot of the farm lad. It is undoubtedly true that environment has not a little to do with the forming of character and Professor Buck spent his youth in Ohio where the forces of New England were arrayed against the incoming forces from the south over the questions of gambling, intemperance and the slave trade. The discussion of such themes could not have failed to leave an impress upon the mind and character of the boy who, moreover, spent five years as a student in Oberlin College, Ohio, the very center from which permeated a strong influence of personal liberty and public morality. He entered the preparatory department of the school in 1853 and on the completion of the college course was graduated in 1858 and at once turned his attention to the profession of teaching. At one time he was an instructor in an academy at Bazetta, Ohio, and at another time principal of the Union high school at West Liberty, Ohio.

Soon after his marriage in 1859 to Miss Jane Cory, a college classmate, Dr. Buck entered the theological school of Oberlin, from which he graduated in 1862 with the degree of Master of Arts. He then accepted the position of principal of Orwell Academy in Orwell, Ohio, and in 1863 was ordained to the ministry of the Congregational church. His time was afterward given to the dual profession of teaching and preaching, his pastoral work being done at Orwell and Mecca until 1864.



S. J. BUCK

In that year Iowa College at Grinnell sought the services of Dr. Buck, and he came to this city to take up his work in connection with the school that was struggling for existence. The greater part of its pupils who were able to carry a musket had gone to the front in defense of the Union cause and there were but ninety-two students enrolled in the catalog of 1863-4 under the charge of four teachers, one of whom was Professor Von Coelln, whose recommendation of Dr. Buck had led to his selection for the professorship at Grinnell. He reached Grinnell on the 5th of February, 1864, and at once took up his work as principal of the Iowa College Academy and second permanent instructor in Iowa College. He brought to his new duties zeal and enthusiasm as well as wide knowledge, and the school soon felt the stimulus of his interest and exertions. In 1869 the college trustees elected him professor of mathematics and physics, which position he filled until 1905, the title of the chair, however, being changed in 1893 to that of mathematics and astronomy. In the earlier years of his professorship here he preached at Chester, aiding in organizing the Congregational church there and supplying the pulpit until January, 1866, when he resigned to accept the position of county superintendent of schools. He was twice elected to that position and the public school system of this city benefited by the stimulus given to it by his efforts and ability.

In 1868 he was elected a member of the school board of the independent district of Grinnell and continued to serve upon it until 1880, being president of the board the last six years, declining to serve longer.

After three years in the county superintendency he resigned to accept again the pastorate of the church at Chester. For two years he engaged in preaching the gospel there and then resigned to supply the new church at Gilman, which he had aided in organizing and of which he remained pastor for seven years. For two years he supplied the pulpit of the Congregational church of Toledo, Iowa, and his labors in the ministry were not denied the full harvests nor the aftermath.

At the same time Dr Buck was continuing his work in the college and the beneficial results of his labors were so far and so strongly felt that in 1870, when the trustees, feeling the need of more funds, began to look about for some one to act as a representative of the college in the solicitation of gifts for the memorial fund, so-called because that year was the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, they very naturally chose Dr. Buck. The same zeal and enthusiasm which characterized him in the performance of every duty were manifest in this connection and within a few months he had succeeded in securing between twenty-five and thirty thousand dollars for endowment and an additional sum of three thousand dollars for the equipment of the physics department. At the following commencement the trustees in recognition of his successful efforts, unsolicited, gave his chair the title of "the memorial professorship." This name was retained until 1891 when Alonzo Steele, of Grinnell, pledged twenty thousand dollars for the endowment of the chair and at his request the title was changed to "the Myra Steele professorship of mathematics and physics" in honor of a deceased daughter, which name is still retained except that the word astronomy has been substituted for physics.

In the same year in which Iowa College chose him as professor of mathematics and astronomy to solicit funds, the State Teachers Association elected him to its

presidency and he occupied the chair at the meeting of the State Teachers Association held in Council Bluffs the following year. Later he was again chosen as the chief executive of the association but declined the honors. It has been characteristic of the life of Dr. Buck that duty has ever been with him the first consideration. He has refused honors and emoluments to remain with Grinnell College. He was offered the presidency of Talladega College, in Alabama, by the American Missionary Association in 1880 and although this would have meant advancement in honors and salary, he declined in order to remain with Grinnell College, where his interests had so long centered. In 1884, when George F.

Magoun, the first president of the college, resigned, Professor Buck was chosen acting president and the work went forward without interruption, gaining in quality and quantity so that at the close of this triennium the attendance had increased over forty-three per cent and more money was raised for Grinnell College than during any similar period in its history of nearly six decades. There is perhaps no department of the college that has not been benefited materially and largely by the efforts of Dr. Buck, while in various directions his labors have been of inestimable value. In 1888 the Clark Equatorial telescope was given to the college and Professor Buck, who had been teaching astronomy without interruption since 1869, determined to obtain other equipment for the department. The usual success attended him in this undertaking and soon the astronomical department was supplied with a modern equipment for advanced instruction in the science of astronomy. In 1903 the degree of D. D. was bestowed upon Professor Buck by Tabor College, Iowa. After forty-two years' connection with the school Dr. Buck tendered his resignation, announcing his determination to retire from the active work of teaching, an announcement that was received with deep regret on the part of all who had been connected with the school. He had endeared himself not only to his associate professors and teachers but also to the students of the college. In his work as a teacher he had always regarded the personal equation and studied the individual needs of the pupil and had adapted his instruction thereto. Moreover, his pupils recognized his strong sympathy and his abiding spirit of helpfulness and therefore his work was an inspiration that prompted them to do their best.

In addition to his regular college work Dr. Buck had made regular weather reports from 1888 as a volunteer observer. He has also filled the office of county surveyor for twenty-one years, in which connection he was never loath to give his students an opportunity to aid him and thus supplement their college instruction not only by practical experience but also by the attainment of funds of which many of them stood in need. An alumnus of Grinnell College, writing the biography of Dr. Buck, has said: "As one recalls the story of his life and thinks of the part which he has played in the building up, not only of the college and the town of Grinnell, but of the state as well, it is little wonder that he hesitates to point a moral or adorn the tale with words which cannot be more eloquent or forceful than a statement of the simple facts. Moreover eulogy seems inappropriate here from the fact that Dr. Buck has never been one to court public notice or to desire public praise. But for the alumni of Iowa College who have learned to know this man and, knowing, to love him, the news of his resignation will involuntarily call up certain thoughts and lessons which associate themselves nat-

urally with the story of his life and which it seems well to mention briefly at this time. If there is any one thing more than another which Dr. Buck's life and efforts illustrate it is perhaps the great amount of work which a man can accomplish simply by living his life conscientiously from day to day and by working patiently, tirelessly, calmly—without unseemly haste or worry. That Dr. Buck's days have been filled with hard, serious toil, none who have known of the various interests of his life will deny. One of his own household recalls many a day in earlier years when, wearied by the trials of a week's hard work, he would shut himself up alone on Saturday in order not to be disturbed while preparing a discourse for his Chester or Gilman or Toledo congregation the following day. On Sunday morning he would be up and off early for the long drive to his pulpit where he would conduct one, two and often three services and then drive home and cheerfully begin the week's round over again early Monday morning. Yet his life has been characterized by tranquillity and patient reserve—a mark of culture which the much-boasted strenuousness of our present working-day world cares little for and which shames the hasty ways of little men.

“But the characteristic which we think most prominently associates itself with Dr. Buck in the minds of those who have been his students is his unfailing kindness and gentleness. He has always tried to be just and while holding up high ideals to others he has never been one to demand of others what he did not require of himself. Like Chaucer's good priest, ‘Christ's lore and His apostles twelve he taught, but first he followed it himself.’ Another conspicuous fea-

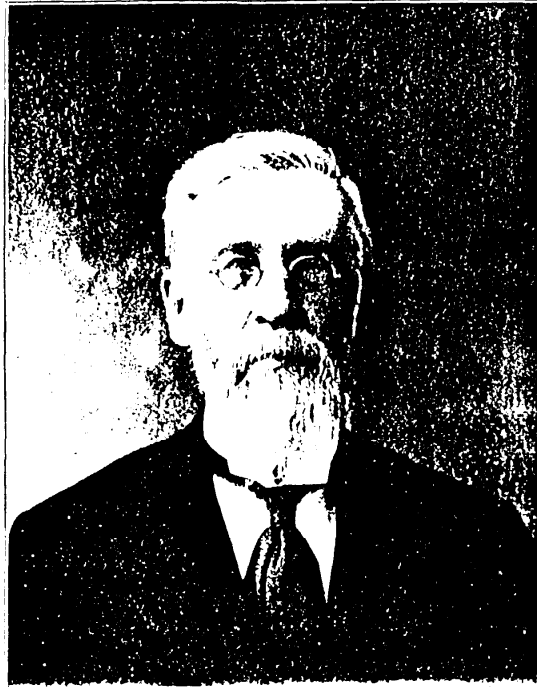
ture in the life of this man has been the respect and high regard which he has always maintained for his calling. Whether preaching or teaching he has felt that he was doing God's good work and he has done it with a befitting dignity. Yet this dignity and self-respect could never be mistaken for bigotry or intolerance towards the views or acts of others. Being by nature conservative, he has held conservative views and was never accused of unorthodoxy, but he has been broad-minded enough to have respect for the opinions of others. In fact one may say he has been as a rule very reserved in expressing his own views except when he thought the time imperatively demanded it. On one such occasion at least he took a firm and decided stand when others questioned and hesitated, only to see his position justified by time. He possesses a real and keen sense of humor which has always found ready expression and this humor has been as unfailing as his kindness and his bright, cheerful manner has been a tonic and a lesson for those who have come in contact with him. Generosity has ever been another of his traits—a generosity which has led him to give to college, church, town and public interests far in excess of his means or his share, particularly in the early days of town and college. In regard to him a prominent graduate of the college expresses the common sentiment when he writes, ‘He is one of the Pioneers of the college, a true friend to all students, and a kind Providence has found him so useful in the institution that two score years of labor have been measured out to him. It is a rare record; one vouchsafed to but few persons. He ought to be proud of it and every son and daughter of Grinnell College is proud of Dr. Buck.’ He has been in a very true sense a connecting link between the old and the new in our college life, for he has shared the privileges and helped bear the burdens of both. Young in spirit and in faith, he is old in service and rich in experience.

Though by no means the last by whom the new has been tried he has never been the first to throw the old aside. Thus he has been a constant reminder of old ideals at the same time that he has been a conservative adopter of new ideas. If, as President Eliot has said, 'It is the greatest of human rewards to be enfolded as years advance in an atmosphere of honor, gratitude and love.' Dr. Buck has come as near realizing this supreme happiness as perhaps any one could. He has been blessed for over half a century with a wife in sympathy with all his aspirations, who 'wears the pure flower of a blameless life' and who has borne her full share of her husband's burdens as she has been joint participant in his joys. He has seen the college, whose success has been his ambition and care, grow from a weakling to its present state and has been allotted a prominent part in bringing about this development. He has won the respect and affection of all those who have had the interests of the college in their hearts and he has been in the truest sense 'the student's friend.'"

On November 17, 1909, the golden wedding of Dr. Buck and his wife was celebrated. At this time all their children now living were present. Edith C. Buck, professor in the Iowa Teachers College at Cedar Falls; Dr. Samuel C. Buck, a physician of Grinnell, and family; and Irving J. Buck, a business man of St. Louis, Missouri, and family. Many friends called during the afternoon and evening to offer their congratulations. During the evening two songs written especially for the occasion were sung, one being composed by a college classmate, the other by two former pupils. Letters to the number of one hundred and fifty were received from acquaintances of note, from college classmates, from teachers in other institutions, from former pupils and from relatives, extending hearty congratulations and paying high tribute to the work accomplished in the world by Dr. Buck and his wife, and to their noble and useful lives. On this occasion, the house was filled with flowers, the gifts of friends and neighbors.

When names were selected for the Phi Beta Kappa chapter of Oberlin College, members of classes of years ago were chosen by vote of the surviving classmates and Dr. Buck was one of four of his class of 1858 to receive this mark of high attainment.

Long Life of Service To Grinnell Is Ended



PROFESSOR SAMUEL JAY BUCK, D.D.

One of the men who have helped to make Grinnell city and Grinnell College passed peacefully away at 1:10 o'clock this morning at his home on Broad street, where he has lived quietly and serenely while the snows of honored old age crept upon him. Samuel J. Buck, faithful servant of Grinnell, devoted teacher, loyal friend, is dead, and all Grinnell is mourning the passing of another of its grand old men.

The funeral will be held from the residence, 1202 Broad street, Sunday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Interment will be in Hazelwood cemetery.

Professor Buck came to Grinnell as principal of Grinnell Academy in 1861. Since then he has lived and worked in Grinnell. His life has been intimately connected with Grinnell College. As professor of mathematics he saw many generations of students come and go and to each he gave richly of his talents and his interest. Once his student one was always his student, and he retained in every one an affection-

ate interest which followed them through life.

Professor Buck would have been 83 years old, July 4 next. It was fitting that his birthday should come on the day of the nation's birth, for he was a sincere and patriotic American with a deep interest in his country's success and its welfare.

For six months Professor Buck has been failing in health. Before unfailing in his attendance at church and at college gatherings, he was unable to go about as he had done. For several days he had lain unconscious at his home, while all that loving hands could do was done for him. The end has come. Grinnell says farewell with a regret, with respect, with sincere affection, to a man who has given his life to unostentatious, sincere and effective service of this community.

Professor Buck is survived by his wife, his loved companion of over fifty years, by two sons, Dr. S. C. Buck, of Grinnell, and I. J. Buck, of St. Louis, and by one daughter, Edith C. Buck, of Grinnell.

Mr. Vittum spoke of a quotation of Emerson's which he once suggested to a group of students as a motto: "Not he is great who can alter matter, but he who can alter my state of mind." The old educators of long ago understood the needs of the students of their day as well as the educators of the present understand the needs of their students. Professor Buck was one of the old educators who saw the importance of working on the state of mind of his students.

He was an administrator. During the three years of his acting presidency the college was considerably enriched by money and the enrollment increased 16 per cent.

He was a man of resources. He saw things. Mr. Vittum referred to the time of the meeting of the National Council of Congregational Churches in Grinnell, when the pipes that heated the church were torn up and Professor Buck made the suggestion which resulted in heating the church by the engine of a threshing machine.

Honors were not lacking in his career. He was president of the State Teachers' Association. He received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity from a neighboring college. He was chosen a Phi Beta Kappa by one college. He was elected president of another college; a position which he had to not to accept. For twelve years he was a member of the school board of Grinnell and for six years its president and up to the time of his death he was president of the Poweshiek chapter of Sons of the American Revolution.

A man of constructive ideas and not prone to criticize others, he suffered keenly when others criticised his own
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Samuel Buck

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work, but the fact that he suffered in silence proved him not a little man, but a great one. He could stand alone, but at a great cost to himself, for he was a man of peace and a man of love.

He was also a man of home. He and his wife graduated from college together and practically ever since that time they have lived their lives together. They brought the love and the spirit of their college to Grinnell with them. Many remember the Oberlin group, Col. and Mrs. Cooper, Dr. and Mrs. Cavanaugh, Professor and Mrs. Parker and Professor and Mrs. Buck and the annual reunions which they enjoyed for so many years. There was a home of perfect love. For years Mrs. Buck's health had been frail. The simple life which they led on that account drew them nearer and nearer together. It was a beautiful union of two beautiful souls. They were one in the best sense of the word.

"I have never known," said Mr. Vittum in conclusion, "an occasion when the words spoken 2,000 years ago were more applicable: 'They were lovely and pleasant in their lives and in their death they were not divided.'"

The quartet closed the services by singing "Asleep in Jesus."

The pallbearers for Professor Buck were Dr. Gombert, D.D. of Des Moines, Professor W. J. Rusk, Professor G. P. Wychoff, Professor H. W. Norris, H. W. Somers and G. H. Hamlin. The members of the family carried the casket of Mrs. Buck at her request. Interment was in the Belwood cemetery.

One of the incidents of Professor Buck's later life which he took great pleasure in was his trip to Panama, on which he and his son, Dr. S. C. Rusk, were passengers on the first official boat to pass through the Panama canal on October 7, 1914, as the guests of General GaitHER.

The first thing one thought of in connection with Professor Buck was Professor Macy, was that he was a thoroughly good man; a man who was reliable; who always did what he thought right; who attended strictly to his duty. Both Professor Buck and Parker, especially as they were of the Oberlin spirit, had an unlimited capacity for personal interest in and friendship with their students. This confidence and personal interest in the students led Professor Buck to make a valuable collection of documents bearing on the early history of the institution, but documents can never fully replace his accurate personal recollection of those who years ago were actively connected with the college. Professor Macy brought an affectionate tribute to the memory of the friends who were gone.

Rev. E. M. Vittum spoke for the church and the community of which Professor and Mrs. Buck for so many years were active and honored members. Professor Buck, he said, was a real pioneer; one of those who made the West worth winning; who came when men of thought and of ethics were needed after the first rough days

of settlement. When Professor Buck came to Grinnell it was only ten years old and when the college was at a fairly goodly size with an enrollment of less than ten. Many students were in the Union army, and the majority who were enrolled were in the preparatory department. The question of co-education was still undetermined. For forty-two years he was active in the college, teaching conscientiously except during one year when he was employed in raising funds. For twenty-five of those years he was senior professor in point of length of service. In one particular especially his service cannot be readily matched by any other college in the country. During these forty-two years he was for three years pastor at Chester; for seven years at Gilman, and for two years at Toledo. For three years he was county superintendent of public instruction; for twenty-one years he was county surveyor. For three years at one time and a part of a year at another he was acting president of the college. For many years he was city engineer. Thus it will be seen that for practically all of these forty-two years he was doing double duty. Never fretful, never boasting, but always busy, he accomplished his work because of his patience, persistence and lack of friction. He was really efficient.

"As if in Their Lifetime They Were Not Divided"

Services May 12, 1918

Their souls united passed at the
International church on Sunday afternoon.
Professor and Mrs. S. E. Buck, so closely united in life, were
not separated in death. Almost to-
gether they entered the land of the
Hereafter. For days Mrs. Buck had
been lingering on the verge of death
and on Saturday night the doctor held
was snapped and she crossed to the
other shore.

The service on Sunday afternoon
was marked by dignity and simplicity.
Tributes consisting in their sincerity
were brought by those best fitted to
convey them. Professor H. W. Mat-
lack at the organ played softly as the
caskets were brought down the
aisle after a brief service at the home.
Professor Charles Noble read from the
Scripture and offered a prayer so ten-
der and so eloquent in its thanks for
the two good lives so peacefully ended
that it brought comfort and peace to
the many who listened.

A quartet, fittingly composed of in-
structors of the Grinnell School of
Music, Misses Jean Currie and Mary
Coleman, Elias Blum and Aron Dor-
sey Cain, sang very sweetly the old
hymn, "My Days Are Gliding Swiftly
By."

Professor Jesse Macy, who, as the
only man associated with Professor
Buck during his whole connection with
the college fittingly represented that
institution, was the first speaker.
When he returned to the college in
1861, Professor Buck was already in-
stalled as president of the academy
and Professor Macy, who was then not
quite ready to enter the freshman
class, was enrolled under him for a
time. Later, according to the Oberlin
idea of student instructors, he taught
in the academy, and the connection
thus begun remained unbroken until
Professor Buck's resignation from active
teaching in 1905.

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BUCK, PROF. S. J.—Prof. S. J. Buck, of Iowa College is one of the best known, if not the very best known, of any educational man in the county, having been connected with the institution almost all the time since the location of the college in this county and having served the county in the capacity of County Superintendent and labored in many difficult capacities among the people of this county and adjoining counties. He was born in Herkimer county, New York, on the 4th of July, 1835, but while he was very young his parents removed to Ohio and settled in Trumbull county where young Buck was brought up and received a common school education in the schools of the county and then entered an academy and received an academic education. In the year 1854 he entered Oberlin College and took the regular course and graduated in the year 1858. In the year 1862 he graduated from the theological course in the same school. Between the two courses at the college he was engaged in teaching. He was principal of an academy in Buzetta, Trumbull county. Also principal of a high school at West Liberty in Logan county. After his graduation in 1862 he was principal of an academy at Orwell in Ashtabula county one year and in 1863 was ordained a minister of the gospel in the Congre-

gational Church. He continued to teach and had charge of a church for the remaining part of the year and then resigned his duties as a teacher and took charge of another church and devoted his entire time to the ministry while he remained in that country. In 1864 he was invited to this place to take charge of the preparatory department of Iowa College, which invitation he accepted. He at once took a prominent position not only as a teacher but as a citizen. He was at once elected captain of a company of home guards and did valuable service in suppressing the "Sugar Creek Rebellion." He was elected County Superintendent in 1866, and re-elected in 1868, and did much for the public schools of this county. He resigned his office as County Superintendent, however, at the end of the third year to take charge of the Congregational Church in Chester township which he served for two years. He served the Congregational Church at Gilman seven years and the Congregational Church at Toledo, in Tama county, two years. He was elected professor of mathematics in Iowa College in 1869 which position he has ever since filled with ability. In 1871 he was elected President of the Iowa State Teachers' Association and presided over that body at its session in Council Bluffs. He has been employed in the normal institutes of this and other counties in this State either as instructor or as lecturer every year since the Institute was a part of our school system. He was married, in 1859, to Miss Jane Cary, a lady class-mate and a graduate from Oberlin of the class of 1858. She is a lady of refinement and taste and devotes herself to the care of her house and her family. By this union they have three children: Miss Edith C. (a young lady of fine mind and ability, now, 1880, a member of the junior class in Iowa College), Samuel C. (a bright lad of fourteen years is now a member of the excellent high school of which Mr. A. Z. Fru is superintendent and Miss Southard is the principal), Irving J. (now eleven and a member of the graded school). Professor Buck is a man of superior ability in his profession and it is only his love for the Institute which he has been so long connected with that keeps him here; having been invited three different times since he has been here to other positions some of which are more lucrative than the one occupied here.