

GEORGE H. CROSBY

3-27-1923
Came to Grinnell from Maine Fifty-five Years Ago With Wife and Child.

WAS MAN OF CHARACTER AND STRENGTH OF PURPOSE

Was Active in Early Days of Anti-Trust Warfare Fighting for Popular Rights.

The death of George H. Crosby removes from life a man who played a leading part in the active life of this city in the eighties, when Grinnell was the center of the stage in legal warfare between the independent "Grinnell Barbed Wire Company", and the great barbed wire trust working under the name of the Washburn & Moen Co. This fight was a momentous one in Grinnell's manufacturing history. The Grinnell company was backed up by the Farmers Protective Association. The purpose of the contention was to furnish the farmers the popular barbed wire fencing of those days at a less price.

Thro several years Mr. Crosby was a leader in the fight, but the local company was finally forced to wind up and close out its business.

In every thing that stands for integrity, honor, a broad humanity, and cultured intelligence, he was recognized as a leader. During all his years in Grinnell, he was of the type which gave Grinnell its Christian character, and in his death humanity and education lost a friend.

George Haliburton Crosby was born at East Hampden, Maine, May 10, 1841, at the old Samuel Nevers Crosby homestead and died at Long Beach, California, March 17, 1923, aged eighty-one years and ten months.

Mr. Crosby was of Scotch-English extraction, his ancestors emigrating to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1632. He was a grandson of an officer from the State of Maine in the Revolutionary War.

January first, 1863, Mr. Crosby was united in marriage to Annie M. Haines of Bangor, joining the families of two of the earliest Maine pioneers. Last New Years Day at Long Beach, Mr. and Mrs. Crosby commemorated the sixtieth anniversary of their marriage.

In 1868 Mr. and Mrs. Crosby and their young son, Howard P. Crosby, moved to Grinnell, Iowa. This city was their home for a full half century. Most of the time they lived on East street, at the location where the home of Dr. H. B. Brock now stands. The parents of both Mr. and Mrs. Crosby, Samuel N. Crosby and wife and Gideon Haines and wife and daughter, Lizzie, came to Grinnell shortly afterward, made their permanent home here and died here. A cousin of Mr. George Crosby, D. W. Bartlett, was also persuaded to come to Grinnell. His son, Dana W. Bartlett, was present at the funeral services held in Long Beach.

In 1877, after a course in the Iowa Law School (now Drake University) he was admitted to the Iowa bar. During that period he was engaged with Dr. Thomas Holyoke and Marshall Bliss in the milling business in Grinnell. The mill was located where the electric light plant now stands. In the years immediately preceding his admission to the bar, Mr. Crosby organized and became first secretary and manager of the Mill Owners Mutual Insurance Company of Des Moines, a pioneer in the mutual insurance field and one of the most useful and successful companies in Iowa business history.

At about the same period, Mr. Crosby was employed as secretary of the Farmers' Protective Association for the purpose of organizing an attack against the Washburn and Moen barbed wire combine operating under the Glidden patents. It was in this famous piece of early anti-trust litigation and while serving as attorney for the Farmers' Protective Association that Albert B. Cummins became known to every intelligent farmer in Iowa.

Following several years of overwork in these activities, Mr. Crosby sustained a physical breakdown which proved permanent and a shattering disappointment to the realization of his plans and ambitions in law and business. After partial recovery from this partial collapse Mr. Crosby was at different times engaged in modest ventures in Grinnell or Denver, but was never again physically able to renew any very active participation in business or professional life.

In 1869 Mr. Crosby united with the Congregational church of Grinnell and during his residence here was a loyal member and faithful in attendance upon church services. While in Denver he assisted in the organization of the South Broadway Presbyterian church, later serving as an elder for a number of years. He has also been an enthusiastic member of the Sons of the American Revolution in the communities where he has lived.

For the past two years Mr. Crosby's health has notably failed, although he continued to take an active and happy interest in affairs. His death came as the result of an attack of influenza with acute complications.

Mr. Crosby is survived by his wife, Mrs. Annie Haines Crosby, 2305 Fillmore St., Denver, by his two sons, Howard P. Crosby, of Denver, and Samuel H. Crosby of Grinnell and Port Arthur, Texas, and by seven grandchildren.