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THOMAS HARRIS.

Pop 722

Among the pioneer settlers of Poweshiek county none occupied a more prominent place in the estimation of the people than Thomas Harris, now deceased. A man of marked business ability and sterling personal worth he assisted materially in upbuilding the county and left the world better for his having lived in it.

He was born at Barnstable, Massachusetts, October 14, 1832. His father was Thomas Harris, a sea captain, and after the son reached manhood he followed sea life for several years. He yielded to the excitement aroused by the California gold discovery and visited the Pacific coast, going via Cape Horn. After spending two years in the gold fields he returned home and was married and in 1856 landed in Iowa City, Iowa, and for almost fifty years from that time was a citizen of this state. It is interesting to note that he came on foot to what was then known as Dresden, in Poweshiek county, and later bought one

hundred and sixty acres of land in Deep River township on which he established his home. He broke the prairie with the aid of an ox team and disposed of his produce in the early days at the nearest market point, which was Iowa City. He was a man of industrious habits and good judgment and he was soon acknowledged as a leader in the community, becoming one of its most prosperous members. In 1876, while still living on his farm, he and his brother Charles entered the grain and lumber business as T. Harris & Company, with which he was prominently identified during the remainder of his life, also being extensively interested in farms and ranches in various parts of the west. From 1881 he lived in Montezuma. He was president of the First National Bank of Montezuma and in all the relations of life discharged his responsibilities in a manner that indicated a constant desire to perform his duties in accordance with the principles of truth and justice.

On October 15, 1854, Mr. Harris was united in marriage at Hampden, Maine, to Miss Maria S. Mayo, and to this union three children were born: Samuel, who died in infancy; N. M., whose record appears elsewhere in this work; and Sarah E., who became the wife of John McDonald. The mother of these children having passed away March 2, 1867, Mr. Harris was again married November 5, 1868, to Miss Sarah Dodds, of Washington, Iowa. Six children were born of this union, all of whom are now living except Wilber, who died February 28, 1885.

Politically Mr. Harris was identified with the republican party and for many years was a prominent factor in its local councils. He served in various township offices and also for two terms as county supervisor. In 1902 he was elected as a member of the state legislature and soon acquired a high standing in that body as a man of ability and honor. In religious belief he affiliated with the Methodist church, of which he became a member in 1857. He served for many years as trustee of the church and was always a liberal contributor toward its support. He was a conscientious and consistent follower of the great Master.

After a lingering illness from cancer of the stomach Mr. Harris was called from earthly scenes October 5, 1904, having then arrived at the age of seventy-one years, eleven months and twenty-one days. He died as a Christian, with an undimmed faith in immortality, one of his last expressions being: "All is well and I am resigned to the will of my Father."

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HARRIS, THOMAS—Dealer in lumber and grain. Section 17, P. O. Montezuma. Owns a farm of 360 acres. Was born in Barnstable, Massachusetts, October 14, 1832. His father was the captain of a sailing ship, and when fifteen years of age he went with his father, and made two trips to Europe, and one to San Francisco. In the fall of 1849 he returned home and soon after removed to Hampden, Maine, and engaged in the general merchandise and manufacture of lumber, and in shipping. He was there married to Miss Maria Mayo, October 15, 1854. In 1856 he sold out and came to this county and located on section 21, Deep River township. His wife died, leaving one son and one daughter: Nathan M. and Sarah Lizzie. He took for his second wife Sarah Dodds, of Washington county, by whom

he had four children, two sons and two daughters: Thomas, Jr., Wilber, Minnie and Alma.

A newspaper of Poweshiek county in commenting upon the life and character of Mr. Harris said: "Were we called upon to pronounce a eulogy upon the life and character of Thomas Harris we would say that he was a man of such push, perseverance, and indomitable will, as to overcome obstacles and to remove obstructions to progress. He was a man who had the courage to sail round Cape Horn nearly one-half a century before the Oregon made her famous trip. He had the courage to dare the wilds of the frontier in '56, and build for himself a home on the outposts of civilization. He conquered the prairie sod and laid down the native timber from which the joists and other dimension stuff of the old portion of our courthouse was constructed. His thrift and industry was seen in everything he touched. In his maturer years, having conquered want and won competency, he became interested in various industries. He was a man of quick perception and clear discernment and his interests broadened until he was

doing a large and diversified volume of business. His elevators in Iowa and Nebraska were busy. His stock ranches in Nebraska, Kansas and Texas were carefully managed and yielded him rich returns. His lumber business in Montezuma and elsewhere was safely handled, while his large banking interests were well looked after. With all these cares, he was ever a willing and attentive listener when the most humble of his friends had anything to say. He was an ardent Methodist, a trustee for years, a liberal giver, but never a complainer. His daily walk and conversation stamped him as a man. At the time of his death he was a member of the thirtieth general assembly and always represented the better element in society. He was a standing exponent of reform. Well has he done his life work, and well for us if we follow his example. Space forbids us to say more and we could not have said less, concerning this public man 'who lived above the fog in public duty and in private thinking.' "

## The Grinnell Herald

W. G. RAY

G. W. COWDEN

RAY & COWDEN, Editors & Prop's  
OFFICIAL PAPER

Grinnell, Iowa, Friday, Oct. 7, 1904.

### THOMAS HARRIS.

Thomas Harris was born October 14th, 1832, at Barnstable, Mass., and died at Montezuma, Iowa, October 5th, 1904.

In 1850 he went to California by way of Cape Horn and remained there about two years. He returned to his home via Panama where he contracted Panama fever and for some time his life was despaired of. He came to Deep River Township in 1856 walking from Iowa City. He started a saw mill soon after his arrival in this county. He broke out his farm with the aid of oxen. He continued to reside on the farm in Deep River Township until 1882 when he removed to Montezuma, Iowa, where he has since resided.

At the time of the construction of the Grinnell and Montezuma Railroad, he engaged in the grain and lumber business in Montezuma in partnership with his brother, C. A. C. Harris. The business that was then started has been continued until the present time. The firm for many years past has been entitled T. Harris & Co. Mr. Harris was twice married. His first marriage occurred in 1854. His first wife died in 1866. There were three children born to this union, two of whom, Mrs. John McDonald of Montezuma and N. Mayo Harris of Grinnell, are living. Mr. Harris re-married in 1868. To this union were born six children of whom, Thomas Harris, Jr., Miss Minnie Harris, George Wilson, of Cedar Falls, Ernest J. Lewis, are living. These children and the widow survive him.

Mr. Harris engaged in various enterprises and has for a number of years been interested in cattle, grazing in Nebraska and Montana and also in several grain elevators in Iowa, beside numerous other interests. He held stock in several banks and for many years was an officer of the First National Bank of Montezuma.

Mr. Harris always took a keen interest in public matters but until the past year held only one office. He was for two terms a member of the Board of Supervisors of Poweshiek County. He was a member of the 30th General Assembly where he was chairman of the Committee on Suppression of Intemperance and was a member of several other important committees.

Mr. Harris was a man of strong character, and convictions. He was active and prominent in business, social and religious circles. He was a member of the Methodist church of Montezuma and for years had been a member of the Official Board of that church.

About four months ago Mr. Harris began to feel that his health was being undermined, but he kept up his active work until the past few weeks when the disease began to assert itself more forcibly. He was confined to his bed about three weeks during which time he suffered greatly.

His friends and neighbors all feel a keen personal loss. The public funeral services will be held this afternoon at 2:30 at the home after which there will be a private service and private burial. The Mayor has issued a proclamation requesting all business places to be closed during the services and the county offices will be closed at the same time. *Thomas Harris*

1st wife  
Minnie  
died 1867  
2nd wife  
Sarah Dadds