

MERRILL, Gideon W., native of Plainfield, N. H., was b. 1847, son of Philo G. C. and Sophia W. (Woodward) Merrill, both of Vermont. Came west in 1853. In 1897 m. Mrs. Mary E. Dickerson, daughter of George and Nancy Jackson, who came to Iowa and settled in Iowa City in 1853. Mr. Merrill d. in Grinnell where he had lived all his life, Feb. 3, 1915. His father built the old homestead on West street. G. W. Merrill endowed the Merrill Prize for Political Debate for college students, which will remain as a monument to him during the coming years. Was survived by his wife and aged mother, 92 years old, and brother, Dr. B. J. Merrill of Stillwater, Minn.

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GIDEON W. MERRILL.

Gideon W. Merrill, who has reached the sixty-fourth mile-stone in life's journey, is one of the best known residents of Grinnell. He is a native of Plainfield, New Hampshire, born April 18, 1847, a son of Philo G. C. and Sophia W. (Woodward) Merrill, both of whom were born in Vermont. The father was reared as a farmer and in 1851 took up his residence at Wilton, New York, where he remained for a year and a half, coming west to Warren county, Iowa, in 1853. He conducted a store and gristmill at his new home in this state and had attained a goodly measure of prosperity at the outbreak of the Civil war. To him belongs the honor of being the first man from Warren county to enlist in the Union army. His name was enrolled as first lieutenant of Company G,

Third Iowa Regiment. At the battle of Shiloh he was wounded and captured and was confined for six months in a Confederate prison at Savannah, Georgia, and later at Tuskegee and Mobile, Alabama. He was finally exchanged and returned to his company, with which he served until 1863, when, on account of ill health occasioned by the hardships through which he had passed, he was discharged from the army and returned home. The estimation in which he was held by the people of Warren county is indicated by the fact that he was elected to the state senate from that county and served in 1863-4. In the spring of 1864 he removed to Poweshiek county and engaged with marked success in farming. He died in 1896 but his wife is still living upon the old homestead.

Gideon W. Merrill arrived in Iowa with his parents at the age of six years and has ever since that time been a resident of this state. He attended the common schools in Warren county and later was a student at Iowa College. After leaving college he devoted his attention to agriculture and stock-raising upon the home place, where he is now living retired. The original farm upon which his father located is within the city limits of Grinnell and its value has increased many fold so that Mr. Merrill enjoys a good income.

In 1897 he was united in marriage to Mrs. Mary E. Dickerson, of Grinnell, a daughter of George and Nancy Jackson, the former of whom was born in New York and the latter in Indiana. They came to Iowa and settled in Iowa City in 1853. Mr. Jackson was by trade a carpenter and assisted in building the first capitol of the state of Iowa.

Mr. Merrill has been a resident of Iowa since 1853—a period of fifty-eight years—and for forty-seven years he has made his home at Grinnell. He has seen the country town grow to a thriving modern city and has been one of the factors by which this great transformation was wrought. As the son of a noble defender of the republic, he was early taught the duties of citizenship, and he has ever attempted to discharge his responsibilities fairly and with justice to all concerned. He has never been a politician in the sense of office seeking, as his interests have been concentrated on his business. Fraternally he is a valued member of the Masonic lodge at Grinnell.