

Hendricks, James 1840 - 1914

HENDRICKS, KITTLESON, HUBBLE, ST JOHN

Posted By: Janice Sowers

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From the Scrapbook of Newspaper Articles by Mrs. Lillian Wheeler

JAMES HENDRICKS

(Nov. 9, 1914)

The passing of James Hendricks, whose death was briefly mentioned last week, removes from this community one of its foremost citizens, a man to whom Riceville and the country surrounding, are under a heavy debt of obligation.

No historical record of Riceville would be complete that did not include generous reference to the activities of Mr. Hendricks. For more than a half century he had lived here and for the greater portion of the time he was literally bone and sinew of the community. He was the backbone, the strong tower, the bulwark that never failed. His word was taken at its face value; his integrity was above question.

Mr. Hendricks was not without his faults and peculiarities, but these human frailties largely lose dimension when contrasted with those qualities of mind and heart which should and are the measure of the man. He was apparently blunt of speech and decision, but behind an exterior that sometimes seemed rough, there beat a heart as tender and as full of noble impulse as that of a woman. The efforts of honest, industrious young people to make progress in this world, moved him mightily. During the latter period of his life Mr. Hendricks was happily, in a position to be of financial help to those in need, and hundreds in this community will bear appreciative testimony of this fact. The young man, just getting a start in life to whom a few hundred dollars meant the means to take advantage of opportunity, and who could present evidences of thrift, industry and integrity, was never turned away disappointed. The matter of security did not appear to interest Mr. Hendricks in such cases. He was a keen student of human nature and a reader of motives, and the young man who could show a clean record and was worthy never appealed in vain. The young man's cause at once became the cause of Mr. Hendricks; he became personally interested; the success of the young people was a delight to him. So infallible was his judgment of character that of the hundreds of young men who have come to him with nothing to offer as security except their eyes and hands, and asked temporary aid, those who failed to meet their obligations so few as not to be worth mention.

But the characteristics of Mr. Hendricks which were the mightiest asset of this community in the earlier day, were his indomitable faith and his unflinching courage. He believed implicitly in the future of this part of Iowa at a time when genuine faith was not only necessary, but extremely scarce. He backed his belief and faith by courageous action.

Mr. Hendricks was a man of strong convictions and he did not hesitate to give utterance to his views. He was an extensive reader of things worth while and possessed an analytical mind which enabled him to form his own opinions and deduction. He was a life-long republican and for a

third of a century a political power in Howard and Mitchell counties. The men who shaped political affairs rarely failed to obtain his views before determining on party policies. His judgment in such matters was seldom at fault.

He was a big man with a generous heart and a pure purpose. His greatest monument is the record he leaves of helpfulness to hundreds who were in dire need of help and who could obtain it nowhere else.

James Hendricks was born in Bergen, Norway, June 22, 1840, and next June would have been 75 years old. His parents came to the United States in 1844 and settled in Yorkville Prairie, Wisconsin. Here Mr. Hendricks' father died, and some years later his mother was married to Jermund Kittleson. In 1854 the family moved to Iowa and were among the very earliest settlers on the Little

Turkey river near the present site of Cresco. The youth of young James was marked by unusual industry and thrift. His passion seemed to be to work and get ahead. Before he had reached the age of ten years the boy had become an experienced trapper and when not yet fifteen he had become owner of a team of oxen; a tremendous achievement in those early days, the proceeds from the sale of which greatly aided the family in purchasing a fine farm for a homestead. Feb. 14, 1864, Mr. Hendricks was married to Miss Rubie Hubbel and in the fall of that year moved to Riceville, having saved sufficient to enable him to buy a small farm east of town. Not long after this Mr. and Mrs. Hendricks obtained possession of a hotel in Riceville. They succeeded so well in the management of the property that within a few months other parties, coveting the business, offered Mr. Hendricks an attractive price, and he sold to them. However, the new landlord did not put the industry and executive ability into the business that had characterized the management of Mr. and Mrs. Hendricks and not long afterward they came to Mr. Hendricks with a proposition to sell back to him for a price very much less than they had paid him some months previously. Mr. Hendricks took the hotel, put it back on a profit-producing basis, and proceeded to invest heavily in land near Riceville. This policy was continued until within the last few years when he practically gave up his business activities, having acquired title to several thousand acres of land.

In 1903 Mr. Hendricks built a magnificent new residence, one of the most completely equipped in Howard county, a few rods west of the old home where he had lived for forty years and where the children had been born and reared to maturity. In 1906 he organized the First National Bank of Riceville, and erected a fine building for its use. This was a culmination of a long-cherished desire and the immediate and continued prosperity of the institution has been a source of delight and satisfaction to him. From a commercial point of view it was the apple of his eye.

During his entire life Mr. Hendricks had enjoyed a rare degree of health, due to abstemiousness and a constitution of iron passed on to him by ancestors inured to hardships and the rugged life of the mountains of Norway. During the last half dozen years, however, he suffered considerable discomfort as a result of stomach disorder, but not until the middle of August of last year, when he was stricken with partial paralysis, was he afflicted with serious physical ailment. Following the stroke Mr. Hendricks failed for a time, when seemed to rally, and for nearly a year held his own, although confined to his bed most of the time.

For years Mr. Hendricks and the entire family had looked forward with keenest anticipation to the Golden Wedding Anniversary, which would be celebrated appropriately Feb. 14 of the present year, but unfortunately Mr. Hendricks' illness rendered this impossible, and the occasion was observed in a simple way by the family, the more elaborate festivities being postponed until such time as the sick one should be sufficiently recovered to actively participate.

Two weeks ago were noted symptoms that caused apprehension; there were mental lapses that it was feared forecasted another stroke. Sunday evening Nov. 8, Mr. Hendricks went to sleep as usual, but it was the slumber from which there was to be no awakenig this side of the mysterious boundary of eternity. Monday evening at eight o'clock came peacefully the end.

The funeral services were held at the family residence Wednesday afternoon at 2:30, conducted by Rev. T. C. Hunt, formerly pastor of the Congregational church of Riceville, now of Chicago, assisted by Rev. C. W. Hempstead, the present pastor. Only a small portion of the great throng who would gladly have paid a final tribute of esteem, were able to find room in the house. The remarks of Rev. Hunt were appropriate and helpful, being in the nature of some thoughts on the life of the deceased rather than a sermon. The speaker declared that Mr. Hendricks was not a church man in the commonly accepted significance of that term. While not directly affiliated with any church orgization he was a God-fearing and God-loving man; a man of exemplary life and a most generous contributor to the church. Rev. Hunt said he had intimate conversations with Mr. Hendricks touching these matters and he understood fully the simple yet comprehensive belief of the deceased.

Interment was made in the family lot beside all that is mortal of the first-born son, James, whom he had loved so well and whose tragic death he had never ceased deeply to mourn. The deceased is survived by his wife, his son, B. N. Hendricks, his daughter, Mrs. E. R. St. John, two grandsons and three granddaughters to whom the sympathy of the community is extended in this hour of their great bereavement.

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Perhaps related to Rubie:

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Last Names	First	Dates	Sec	BLK/L ot	Mrkr	et
HUBBEL	S		04	xx/009	N	

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Surnames	Birth Date	Birth Place	Death Date	Mother's Maiden Name	Number	Box
Hendricks, Ruby Ann	02 Jan. 1846	New York	03 Feb. 1933	Hubble	D45-0021	D2698