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Joel T. Griffen

L. G. Egbert

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JOEL T. GRIFFEN.

The following biography was prepared by his daughter, Mrs. L. G. Egbert:

JOEL T. GRIFFEN was born in Otsego county, New York, May 22d, 1817. His parents (Rachel Willson and Stephen Griffen) were of the Society of Friends, or Quakers, American born, his father being of Welsh descent. He carried on a small farm, beside running a grist mill, at which on mill days all the farmers congregated for a friendly chat and to procure their monthly flour and meal. It was proverbial of him that he was never heard to utter an oath or laugh out loud. Joel was the third son in his father's family, having two brothers and two sisters older, and a brother and sister younger. He was educated in the common or district schools of these times. He with his elder brother, Stephen, learned the trade of millwright, and spent several summers in building mills in the western part of New York and Northern Ohio. In 1835 his father removed with his family to Washtenau county, Michigan, which was then considered the far West. There he performed great labors in felling the immense forest which encumbered this portion of the state. And here in this malarial district was sown the seed of the fatal disease which attacked him in his later years. Returning to New York he married Miss Juliette Cobb Griffin, June 11th, 1840, and for a year or two owned and run a boat on the Erie canal. Yielding at length to the entreaties of his mother, he returned to Michigan and engaged in farming. After the death of his mother, in 1852, he removed to Oakland county, where he turned his attention to fruit raising and nursery gardening, also farming in a small way. He resided here until 1856. In May of that year he came to Nebraska, and located on the highest hill in the county, about three miles from the city of Omaha, then a very insignificant village. He returned to his home in Michigan for his family, consisting of three sons and two daughters. On his way to his new home he made (in St. Louis) the purchase of a stock of provisions and a house already framed and ready to put up, so that when he arrived in Omaha with his family July 20, 1856, he also brought his house and provisions to stock it. This house built of pine was known the country round as the pine house. At that time

the country was overrun with claim hunters, and as the inhabitants were few and far between night often overtook them, and any one who has traveled a prairie country after dark knows that with the most experienced it is an easy matter to lose the trail, and by his direction a whole candle was placed in a safe position in a western window before the family retired, and often the belated traveler has found shelter, guided by the light from the pine house. In fact, often after the beds were taxed to their full capacity he would jocosely remark that they were welcome to the widest board in the floor, and the floor would oftentimes be well occupied. In the prime and vigor of life, confident of his success and of the future of Nebraska, he gave his best energies to opening a farm, which was soon second to none in the country. He began immediately to plant trees, and urged others to do so, recognizing the fact that what Nebraska most needed was wood. His example was of great value to those around him, especially in this tree planting, which was attended with many drawbacks and much labor, and about the success of which everybody seemed in doubt. Now a grand tall forest covers sixty acres which in 1856 was bare prairie, innocent of tree or shrub. He was a staunch republican, and held a prominent place in the politics of his state. He was elected several times to the territorial legislature. He was elected to represent Douglas county in the first state legislature in 1867 and again in 1869. Omaha owes him a debt of gratitude for his efforts to secure the donation of Capitol Square for school purposes. He was postmaster of Omaha during 1870 and 1871. He resigned this office and engaged for some years previous to his death in the stock business, in which he had great success. He was a man of great executive ability and indomitable will, and once started in an enterprise would never give up until his end was accomplished. He was generous to a fault. I do not think any one ever turned away empty handed who applied to him for aid. He was fond of his home and children, and though not demonstrative, was a man of deep feelings, and his domestic afflictions had a marked effect on him. The loss of a son seven years of age, in 1856, and his daughter Ettie (a very bright and promising girl of eighteen), in 1875, each in turn bowed him down with a burden of grief and years. His health failed entirely in the summer of 1883, and he was persuaded to spend the winter in Southern California. Accompanied by his daughter Mary, he reached Los Angeles

November 1st; on November 30th he received the sad news of the death of his son Jay, who was killed on the Utah Northern R. R. This was the crowning sorrow of his life, and he never rallied from the shock. Weak as he was, he came immediately home, and slowly failed until, on March 10th, 1884, after much suffering, he passed away from this life to the life beyond. He is survived by only two members of his father's family, his younger brother and sister, who are at this time residents of Nebraska. He was buried under the auspices of the Masonic order, of which he was an honored member.

BISHOP CLARKSON.

The Rt. Rev. Robert H. Clarkson, Episcopal Bishop of Nebraska, died at his home on St. Mary's Avenue, Omaha, Monday, March 10, 1884.

The following biography of Bishop Clarkson was an editorial in the Omaha *Herald*, written by Dr. Geo. L. Miller, editor.

"This morning's sun looks down upon a stricken city, and its grief brings a whole state to the ground in woe.

"At the hour of twelve-thirty of the clock yesterday morning, Bishop Clarkson breathed his last breath of mortal life. In the midst of this great calamity, could we be left to our own hearts we would sit with our personal grief in silence. But a few words must be written for the public record.

"ROBERT HARPER CLARKSON, was born at Gettysburg, in Pennsylvania, on the 19th of November, 1826. He was of an old and honored family. His grandfather, the Rev. Joseph Clarkson, D.D., was the first clergyman ordained by Bishop White. He was rector of St. James' church, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, until he reached a great age, and he now lies in the church yard there. The Bishop's father was, during his son's boyhood, a man of extensive business and of great public esteem. Afterwards he lived in retirement. Many people in Omaha remember him, a genial, hearty, good old man. He died here several years ago.

"The Bishop's academic education was received at Pennsylvania College in the town of his birth, where he was graduated B.A. in