

Nilsson, Loving, Gannon, Pitluck, Hodges.

In 1896 the Town Council appointed a committee to work with a committee selected by Swan Lake Township to look into the purchase of land for a cemetery. The land was purchased from the Allen Land Loan Co. It was 15 acres and was purchased for \$1,161.00. It is the cemetery east of Laurens and is known as the Laurens Cemetery.

In 1897 a hose company was founded for fire protection. Laurens has its own volunteer fire department. It is housed in a Fire Department that was built by the city after an intensive fund drive in 1978.

The Laurens people have apparently always had a yearning for literature because even before they had a permanent library they were able to find a way to have books brought in by a traveling library. Laurens got its first library in 1910 when after much work on the part of Mrs. R.N. McCombs and others, Laurens became the smallest town to have a Carnegie Library. The Library grew until in 1955 an addition was made. It continued to grow until in 1975 the citizens of Laurens joined in a city wide effort to build a new library. Thanks to the Blomgren family who gave a generous donation to start off the drive, the new library was completed in 1976. The Carnegie library was then leased to the Pocahontas County Historical Society to use as a County Museum.

Laurens has not been without its problems. In 1919, the first cyclone visited the Laurens area. The path covered three or four miles long and 100 to 1000 feet wide. Fortunately no one was killed.

In 1946 and 1947, six months apart, disastrous fires burned out the produce plant and main warehouse of M & JR Hakes. The company rebuilt and has continued to grow since.

Fires have been the cause of many businesses either staying or going. The most recent being in 1980 when a fire destroyed Joann's Fashions on the east side of Third Street. Joann Kleigel chose not to rebuild after the fire gutted her business.

The preceding history of Laurens is brief and not as complete as a historian would have written it. There have been many things happen in Laurens over the years. It is difficult to include everything and everyone who has contributed to its growth. One thing is clear, the citizens of Laurens do live in "The Businest Little Town in Iowa". *Submitted by: Evelyn and Michael Hakes with reference to: "Early History of Laurens" 1880 - 1921 by Mrs. John (Ida) King*

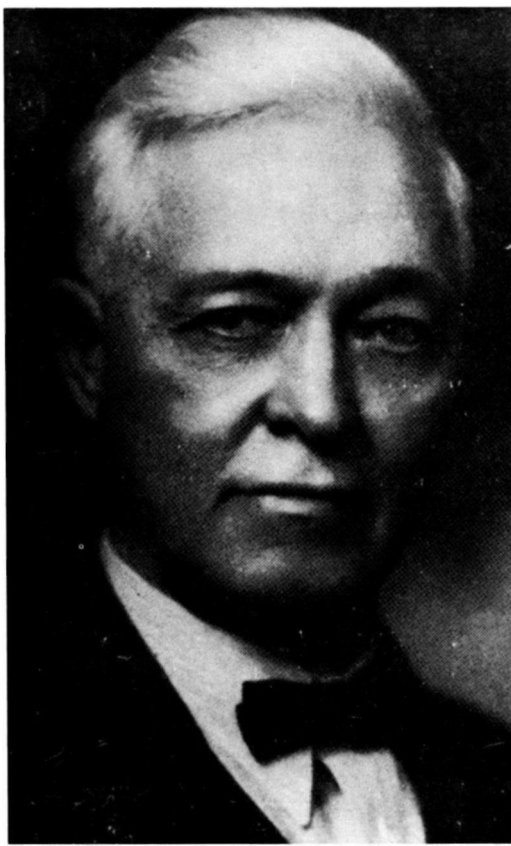
## DANIEL J. ALLEN FAMILY

Daniel J. Allen, wife and family with Quaker background in Ohio moved to Marshalltown, Iowa, and later to Laurens, Iowa in 1866. They carried on farming, dairy and cattle feeding operations on what is now the Packer farm, west of Marshalltown, Iowa.

On arrival in Laurens, Daniel J. Allen and sons established the D.J. Allen & Sons Bank (later State Bank of Laurens), the first and for many years the only banking institution in the community. They were involved in the business and political life of Laurens and Pocahontas County.

Charles A. Allen, the oldest son, acquired substantial farm land in northwest Iowa which he and his family continued to operate for 70 years.

In 1980 the Charles Allen family moved to California due to ill health of his wife, Martha. The family included three daughters, Elizabeth, Lucille, and Eleanor; and three sons, Burritt, Fred and William J. Burritt and family and Fred Allen moved to California. William J. Allen remained in Laurens managing the affairs of the family and practicing law prior to his retirement in 1951. William J. Allen and his wife, Sally, were active in civic organizations, city council, and school board affairs in Laurens.



J.H. Allen



Daniel J. Allen  
About year 1895

William J. Allen and wife had three children, John, Mary and Fred, who graduated from Laurens High School. John Allen moved to Tennessee and worked with the Tennessee Valley Authority until his retirement. Mary Allen, married William Harshbarger, lives in California. Fred Allen has resided in California and Washington.

Benjamin Allen (son of D.J. Allen) carried on major land and cattle feeding operations near Laurens. For ten years he operated a large squab ranch for eastern restaurant markets as delicacies. The ranch operations were conducted on the east side of Laurens and included more than 20,000 pigeons. Benjamin Allen had two sons, Wilmot and Harold,

and three daughters. The oldest daughter, Lenore, married Merton Straight of Adel, Iowa; Doris, who married Fred Keplar of Florida; Wilmot engaged in farm management, and Harold a lawyer in Iowa and California.

Thurma Allen married Rudolph M. "Spike" Evans after World War I; they lived in Australia. Later, they returned to Laurens. In the middle thirties, "Spike" Evans joined the United States Department of Agriculture, serving successively as a member of the County, State and National committees administering the farm programs under President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Henry A. Wallace, Secretary of Agriculture. During World War II "Spike" was appointed a member of the United States Federal Reserve Board. In the early 1950's, the Evans family moved to Arnolds Park. Mr. Evans was nominated on the democratic ticket for United States Senator but was defeated in 1954. The Evans family consists of two daughters, Lenore Dorsey in Colorado and Nancy Miller in Des Moines, Iowa.

Joseph Holmes Allen, son of Daniel J. Allen, served in the Spanish American War. Returning to Iowa he completed work at the University of Iowa and practiced law at Pocahontas where he was the principal officer and stockholder in banks there and at Ware, Iowa. He served for 14 years in the Iowa senate. Joseph Allen and family moved to Des Moines where he was actively involved as the head of the First Mortgage Corporation; and in the practice of law. In 1918, he was an unsuccessful candidate for the republican nomination for Governor of Iowa. He served as mayor of Des Moines in 1936-1938. In 1939 Joseph Allen and family moved to Detroit Lakes, Minnesota where he continued in the management of business interests there until his death in 1948. Joseph Allen married Grace Gilchrist, sister of Fred C. Gilchrist, attorney in Laurens (and later member of the United States Congress).

A son, Byron G. "Barney" Allen, graduate of Pocahontas High School 1919 and Iowa State University 1924 served in the Legislature in 1926-32 and held other public offices to 1939. He married a Laurens teacher, Elsa Erickson, in 1926. They had three children Virginia, Joseph, and Eric. From 1929 until 1933 "Barney" published the Pocahontas Democrat. His family moved to Detroit Lakes, Minnesota in 1940 to enter into business with his father. In Minnesota he continued in politics; in 1944 was the Democratic Farmer Labor party's first candidate for Governor, was State Commissioner of Agriculture and from 1961 to 1969 was liaison officer with state governments for the U.S.D.A. In 1946 Josephine Allen, a daughter of Joseph Allen, joined the Allen families in Detroit Lakes, Minnesota after a career as commercial artist in Des Moines, Chicago and New York.

Mary Allen, oldest daughter of Daniel J. Allen, married Byron Whealen. The Whealen family lived at Galva and Storm Lake, and was involved in farm management and banking affairs. Their daughters: Edna moved to Canada; Bessie, married Milton Crowley; Grace married Harry Covey of Rembrandt; and son Ralph was active in insurance in Storm Lake.

Sarah Allen, youngest daughter of Daniel J. Allen, came to Laurens with her parents and was cashier and bookkeeper in the State Bank of Laurens. In 1895 Sarah Allen married the Reverend George F. Whitfield who served as Methodist minister of Laurens in 1893-5. Reverend Whitfield was minister in Marathon, Burt, Belmond, Forest City, Ruthven, Le Mars, Estherville in the northwest Iowa conference of the Methodist Church and was District Superintendent of the Algona District of the Methodist Northwest Iowa Conference. In 1916 Reverend Whitfield became ill and moved to Laurens. George Whitfield died at Lincoln, Nebraska in 1921. The Whitfield family included a daughter,