

Frances Catherine, who married Fred C. Reum, of that city; and John F. B., who died on April 15, 1912, at the age of twenty-six years, being at the time assistant cashier of the Citizens Savings Bank of Decorah. Both Mr. and Mrs. Portman are devout members of the Episcopal church of Decorah, in the work of which they take a deep interest. Professionally he is a member of the Winneshiek County Bar Association. He has for thirty years served as a director of the Citizens Savings Bank and has done efficient work in that connection, holding from 1884 to 1904 the office of vice president. Among official honors which he has held is that of United States commissioner, in which office he served for several years; referee of bankruptcy; and justice of the peace, in which capacity he distributed justice fairly and impartially for two terms. For fourteen years he served as member of the Decorah school board, giving evidence of his interest in the cause of education. His active interest in the community is evident from the fact that he served as the first foreman of the Decorah hook and ladder company and as chief of the fire department from 1879 until 1882. His fraternal connections extend to the Masons, in which order he is a member of the blue lodge, chapter and commandery of Decorah and the Mystic Shrine of Cedar Rapids. He is past grand treasurer of the grand commandery of Iowa and also past grand treasurer of the grand chapter of this state, being widely and prominently known on account of these high positions.

Decorah has greatly profited by the activities of Mr. Portman, who is one of its most honored citizens, his life work having not only resulted in his own success, important as it is, but has been a serviceable factor in the growth and development of his community and Winneshiek county along moral, intellectual and material lines.

#### BENJAMIN JOHNSON GRONAAS.

The career of Benjamin Johnson Gronaas, who came to the United States and Winneshiek county about 1886, again establishes the fact that this county offers unlimited opportunities to the man who sets out with a will and determination to grasp them. Mr. Gronaas now owns a valuable farm of eighty acres on section 25, Decorah township, Winneshiek county, where he successfully engages in agricultural pursuits. With the exception of two years which he spent in the west, he has been a resident of this section since his arrival in America, and has become favorably and widely known in that length of time, being not only an interested witness of the changes that have occurred here but a valuable factor in promoting growth and progress, especially along agricultural lines. Born in Norway on September 16, 1856, he is a son of John and Elizabeth (Bertelsen) Gronaas, natives of the Norseland. The father was a deep-sea pilot by occupation and so engaged from the age of twenty-five to that of seventy. He passed away in his native country in 1905 at the advanced age of ninety years, his wife preceding him in 1903.

Benjamin Johnson Gronaas was reared under the parental roof and educated in the schools of his native land, laying aside his text-books in order to embark upon a career as a sailor. He entered upon this career when but fifteen years