

## PHILETUS FALES



Philetus Fales was one of the earliest teachers and administrators of Ottawa University, a Franklin County superintendent of schools, and a leader in early Kansas education associations. He was born in Rockland, Maine, on May 7, 1825, and died on March 30, 1907, at his daughter's home in Winsted, Connecticut. His parents were Waterman Fales and Sybil (Robbins) Fales.

Fales grew up on a farm but was determined to get a college education. He graduated from Dartmouth College in 1849. He taught one year in Connecticut and then traveled abroad in 1850-1851 with most of his time spent in Paris. (Rauner Special Collections Library at Dartmouth has his travel journal in their collection.) He taught several years in Washington University, St. Louis.

When the Civil War broke out Fales volunteered and served in Company B, Second Iowa regiment. Later he became superintendent of the Missouri Institution for the Education of the Blind at St. Louis. It was from this institution that Isaac Kalloch lured him to Ottawa, Kansas, to lead Ottawa University in its opening years. Fales and Kalloch had grown up in the same small town in Maine. In 1866 Professor Fales was made superintendent of the Indian department which met in a building at Hickory and Second streets. By that fall he was also the head of the faculty of the entire school. In 1912 his widow Abbie Fales wrote a letter describing the early days of Ottawa University. In 1869 he was succeeded by Rev. Robert Atkinson.

In March 1869 Professor Fales along with John H. Kitts purchased the Home Journal newspaper. They changed the name to the Republic. He edited the paper until the fall of 1869. He was also an original stockholder in the First National Bank.

Professor Fales taught in the city schools of Ottawa for awhile and was the county superintendent of Franklin County schools on two different occasions. The first was from 1867-1875 and again from 1879-1881. Fales was the secretary for the Association of County and City Superintendents when they were drafting a new constitution in June 1869. He was elected president of the Kansas State Teacher's Association in 1870.

Philetus Fales married Abbie S. Lewis on November 20, 1861. Mr. and Mrs. Fales lived in Ottawa, Kansas, from 1868 until 1902 when they went Maine due to failing health. The home they built at 434 S. Walnut is now part of the Heritage Homes of Franklin County. Fales and his wife, Abbie, are buried at Highland Cemetery, Ottawa, Kansas. They had three children. A son, Dr. Harry P. Fales, who graduated from the Bellevue Hospital Medical College in New York in 1888, is also buried in Highland Cemetery . Another child was buried in St. Louis. A surviving daughter, Maude (Fales) Strong lived in Winsted, Connecticut.

Professor Fales was a man of many talents. He taught the classics at university, and worked as an engineer to help lay out the Northern Missouri railroad. He was a member of an early surveying team on Pike's Peak. He and a younger brother took an ox team to travel the Rocky Mountains. He was an elder in the local Presbyterian church and a trustee of the Emporia Presbyterian College.

#### **Sources of information:**

Archives & Special Collections, Ehrman Medical Library, NYU Medical Center  
([http://archives.med.nyu.edu/resources/peopledb/details.php?kid=a\\_falesh01](http://archives.med.nyu.edu/resources/peopledb/details.php?kid=a_falesh01))

Chapman's alumni sketches (Dartmouth) -  
[www.dartmouth.edu/~library/rauner/chapman/chapman\\_page\\_378.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/rauner/chapman/chapman_page_378.html)

Columbian history of education in Kansas: An account of the public-school ...  
[http://books.google.com/books?id=iHfAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA31&lpg=PA31&dq="philetus+fales"&source=bl&ots=h\\_1d1AoLal&sig=QZ8atVmeOPyaczO6WTquF-7Pfog&hl=en&sa=X](http://books.google.com/books?id=iHfAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA31&lpg=PA31&dq=)

Dartmouth College Necrology, Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth.

FindAGrave.com ,( <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gsr&GSfn=&GSmn=&GSln=fales&GSbyrel=all&GSby=&GSdyrel=all&GSdy=&GSctry=4&GSst=18&GScty=913&GSgrid=&df=all&GSob=n>) Highland Cemetery, Ottawa, Kansas

Obituary, Philetus Fales, *Ottawa Daily Republican*, 1 April, 1907

Obituary, Philetus Fales, newspaper clipping (probably from *Winsted Citizen*, Winsted, Connecticut).  
(Courtesy of Rauner Special Collections Library, Dartmouth)