

Hoyt Sterling was born on October 20 in 1851 in Conewango, Wisc., baptized William Nathaniel Hoyt Sterling, but called Uncle Hoyt by Grandpa Sterling and my aunt Eleanor. His older brother was my great grandfather, Fred Miller Sterling, who became an architect and builder in Sioux City.

Uncle Hoyt may have worked for F.M. Sterling on FM's many home design and building projects in earlier years, but was remembered by family members as an artist and photographer in Sioux City. He signed some drawings WNH Sterling and H Sterling.

See drawing link:

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fo/4jfa1jcaymftzcy5bx1od/h?rlkey=sih2gzp0p463aatthjfc97dy&dl=0>

Hoyt Sterling photo of Grandview Park, 1908  
Courtesy of Sioux City, A Pictorial History

By 1908 he was providing professional photography. He died in Sioux City in 1917.



Besides photography, Uncle Hoyt was very skilled at drawing landscapes and portraits. Mary Sterling Bakke had kept 16 of the drawings that must have been in his personal files at the time of his death in 1917 (see attached link).

Uncle Hoyt never married, so there were no direct descendants. I believe it is likely that there are other drawings and photos of his still in the possession of other Sterling relatives. Eleanor Sterling Robertson, Bompie's twin sister, for example, had given me two that she had of her own, attached here.



Unknown river

Some of Hoyt Sterling's drawings appear to be copies of images he may have seen in magazines or books. Making copies of master works was a common practice for training of artists (Don Quixote and Sancho).

Don Quixote and Sancho



This is likely how he developed his artistic skills. His mastery of light and shadow is excellent. In addition, his pictorial compositions are interesting and well balanced. Besides copying landscape scenes of the Danube and probably the one of St. Louis, Mo., there are other scenes that may well have been his own compositions. The two scenes of ferry crossings appear to be local events that are in our own family lore.

Ferry crossing  
unknown River



Gower's Ferry, Cedar River  
in Cedar Bluff, IA

by William  
A l a n  
Sterling,  
8.10.2023