

For some time he also held the position of school commissioner. His wife was a native of Ohio and in that state their marriage took place. She died on May 4, 1854, on the farm which was located east of Waukon, Iowa.

John N. Topliff, Sr., enjoyed but meager educational advantages, attending school in Ohio until eleven years of age and working upon his father's farm after coming to Winneshiek county for two or three years. He improved his school advantages by attending the log schoolhouse erected on his father's farm near Postville, making use of the primitive opportunities thus offered. The father subsequently left the farm and our subject, when yet quite young, operated the place for five years. In 1865 John N. Topliff, Sr., bought out his mother's share in the farm and made his home thereon until 1891, when he retired. Employing progressive and scientific methods, he brought his land to a high state of cultivation, placing suitable improvements thereon and installing such equipment as would increase the productivity of the soil and facilitate the labor. The years have brought him prosperity and in 1891 he was enabled to retire, selling his property and now residing in Decorah in the enjoyment of a comfortable competence. While living in the country Mr. Topliff served for some time as local school director, and while his father was living was also employed for two years in the treasurer's office.

In 1860 Mr. Topliff was married to Miss Rachel Elizabeth Reed, a daughter of David and Mary (Allen) Reed, the father a native of Ross county, Ohio, where he was born on June 27, 1799. He was of Irish and Scotch descent and his occupation was that of a farmer. In 1848 he came to Winneshiek county, being one of the early pioneers of this part of the state, and located on land situated near the place upon which Elias Topliff had settled. He came to Decorah in 1852 and there died in March, 1880. He was closely identified with the public life of his locality and for eight years served with fairness and impartiality as county judge. His wife was born in Pennsylvania on May 9, 1814, and reared in Ohio, as was her husband, where they were married. She was of Yankee and Dutch extraction and passed away on February 4, 1866. Mr. and Mrs. John N. Topliff, Sr., became the parents of the following children: Charles L., born December 28, 1862, a well-known dentist of Decorah, who married Ida Tillottson of that city, by whom he has three children—Myrtle, Alta Grace and Lyle Ray; John N., Jr., born November 11, 1864, a farmer of Bruce, Wisconsin, who married Josie Kittenger, of Castalia, Iowa, by whom he has one son, Roily, a graduate of Highland Park College, now engaged in automobile manufacture in Des Moines; Ann Grace, born July 3, 1868, who died November 25, 1877; Frank Roily, born February 6, 1875, who died October 25, 1877; and Frank Ray, born May 19, 1884, a dentist at Postville, who married Miss May Joe Lennon of Decorah.

Mr. Topliff is a staunch republican, giving his support to the measures and candidates of that party. Both he and his wife are members of the Unitarian church, in which they take an active and helpful interest. Fraternally he is a member of the blue lodge of Masons at Decorah and both he and his wife belong to the Order of the Eastern Star. Mrs. Topliff was one of the first ladies to be initiated into this lodge in this part of the country, her initiation taking place at Postville. This lodge was instituted by Robert Morris, who at that time had just returned from the Holy Land and, giving a lecture thereon, organized