

who were likewise natives of the Empire state. The father was a farmer and nurseryman there for a number of years but at length his health failed and he left the east, taking up his abode in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, where he resided until 1887. In that year the family removed to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where the father passed away in 1890. The mother was called to her final rest in 1902.

William H. Burtis, who was three years of age when taken by his parents to Oshkosh, Wisconsin, there began his education and continued it until he had completed the high-school course in 1887. The following year he entered the University of Minnesota and was graduated from that institution as a member of the electrical engineering class of 1892. At that time he embarked in the electrical contracting business on his own account in Minneapolis, remaining there until 1896, when he removed to Waukon, Allamakee county, Iowa, and became associated with the Waukon Electric Light Company, assisting in the construction of its plant. In the fall of the same year, however, he came to Decorah, Iowa, and erected an electric light plant of which he became president and manager. In 1906 he was made president and manager of the newly organized Upper Iowa Power Company, which obtained water-power rights upon the upper Iowa river. This corporation also took over the business of the Waukon Electric Light Company, both plants being now the property of the Upper Iowa Power Company, and Mr. Burtis still remains its chief executive officer. After its organization the Upper Iowa Power Company built a concrete dam seven miles east of Decorah, which proved ineffectual and entailed a loss of about fifty thousand dollars that had to be met by the stockholders. They had employed what were believed to be competent hydraulic engineers to design and superintend the construction of the dam but, like many others within the last decade, found their judgment erroneous and were obliged to face the consequences. In 1908 they constructed a larger dam four miles further down the river and this has proved to be a great success. The Upper Iowa Power Company has a handsomely equipped office and also storeroom in the Citizens Bank building at Decorah. The company furnishes light for the towns of Decorah, Waukon, Postville, Cresco and Lansing. Mr. Burtis is also vice president and general manager of the Interstate Power Company, which owns and operates five light plants in South Dakota. In 1911 and 1912 the Interstate Power Company built another concrete and steel dam at the site of the wrecked dam, believed to be the first dam in the United States that has a steam thawing apparatus on the steel gates and is of the most modern construction throughout. Mr. Burtis is widely recognized as a man of excellent executive ability and keen discernment and his success in the conduct of power plants has proven the efficacy of his efforts.

On the 10th of May, 1898, Mr. Burtis was joined in wedlock to Miss Mary L. Stewart, of Fergus Falls, Minnesota, her parents being Scott and Emma (Wilcox) Stewart, the mother a native of New York, and the father of Indiana. The latter removed to Fergus Falls, Minnesota, in an early day and was there engaged in the merchandise business. His demise occurred at Fergus Falls, in 1899, but his widow is yet living and resides in Bemidji, Minnesota. Mr. and Mrs. Burtis have five children, as follows: Florence Elizabeth; Lucille Gertrude, Helen Emma, Barbara Stewart and Mary Alice. The family residence is an attractive home at No. 600 Jefferson street, which Mr. Burtis practically rebuilt. He is a republican in politics and fraternally is identified with the Knights of