

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF A FEW OF THE

PROMINENT MEN AND PIONEERS OF JACKSON COUNTY.

GEORGE COLEMAN, CEDAR TOWNSHIP.

There are few sketches of the representative men of Jackson County that will be read with more interest and pleasure than that of George Coleman, or "Uncle George," as he is familiarly called. He may be justly termed a "self-made man," being a man who, by his own energy and determination, has arisen from a small beginning to a place of influence and honor, and who to-day commands the respect and admiration of his fellow-citizens.

He was born in Sussex County, England, on the 27th of November, 1815. He passed his childhood days in his native county, when, as his parents were not in affluent circumstances, his school advantages were necessarily somewhat limited, but this did not prevent him from acquiring a good, practical education, which, with his surroundings, has been of more value than any other.

When nineteen years of age, he came with his parents to America and settled in Upper Canada, where he remained three years. Here his father died, and as he disliked the climate and the government of Canada, the subject of this sketch determined to try his fortunes in the United States. He accordingly moved to Illinois, and settled about twelve miles south of Chicago, which he describes as being at that time a small village. After a residence of nineteen years in Illinois, he decided to come to Kansas, in order to obtain farms for his children. He came to Jackson, or as it was then called, Calhoun County, in July, 1855, and took up the claim which he now occupies. He then returned to Illinois and sent out his son, and in October, he moved with his family in wagons, arriving on the 20th day of October, 1856. Since that time, Mr. Coleman has remained in Kansas. He has been successful in the objects for which he came to this State. He has one of the best farms in Cedar Township, and has lived to see all his children very prosperously situated.

Politically, he has always affiliated with the Democratic party. Although never an office-seeker, his fellow-citizens have had such confidence in his ability and honesty that they have elevated him to various important positions, both township and county. He was one of the County Commissioners in the years 1860, 1873-74. He has been at various times, elected to the office of Treasurer of Cedar Township, and has long been Treasurer of his school district.

He was married in 1835 to Miss Elizabeth Voice, a native of Sussex County, England. This marriage has been blessed with seven children, five of whom are living.

As one of the earliest settlers, Mr. Coleman has taken a deep interest and pride in the growth and development of Jackson County. His public life has not been tarnished by one unworthy act, and his private character has been equally blameless.

He is a generous, kind-hearted man, and a good neighbor, and in his declining years, enjoys the love and confidence of all who know him.

J. W. WILLIAMS, DOUGLAS TOWNSHIP.

Among the prominent men of Jackson County, who have risen to places of influence and honor from the smallest beginnings, may be classed the gentleman whose name stands at the head of this article.

Mr. Williams is the oldest son of Richard Williams, who was a native of Virginia, but early moved to Ohio, becoming one of the pioneer settlers of that State. The subject of this sketch was born in Belmont County, Ohio, on the 7th of October, 1819, he is consequently at this time (1881), sixty-two years of age. When ten years of age, he moved with his parents to Morgan County, Ohio. His education was received in the common schools of Belmont and Morgan Counties, and one year attendance at Marietta College.

In 1856, he took a trip through the West, and on his return settled in Hocking County, Ohio, where he remained till 1858, when he came to Kansas, arriving on the site of his present home on the 7th of April. His object in coming to Kansas was to secure land for his children, and to make a home for himself in the Great West. Although he has met with some misfortunes, and endured many of the hardships incident to a new country, he has, in the main, been very successful. He was the first to settle on the open prairie in his neighborhood. He now possesses a fine farm, well improved and cultivated. Since coming to Kansas, his business has been farming, and his well-tilled fields are convincing proofs of his proficiency. We are happy to present to our readers a view of his residence and surroundings.

His political views have been in sympathy with the principles of the Republican party since 1856, previous to which time he acted with the Democratic party. Although in no respect a professional politician, his fellow-citizens recognizing his merit, have elevated him to various important positions. He was one of the Commissioners of Jackson County in the years 1861-62-63, and Trustee of Douglas Township in 1873-74. In the years 1864, 1875-76, he represented his county in the State Legislature. All of these offices he has filled with credit to himself and to his county.

In 1842, while in Morgan County, Ohio, he was married to Miss Elizabeth McKeever, by whom he has been the father of ten children, eight of whom are living.

A member of the Christian Church since eighteen years of age, he has led a consistent life, and is well known as an upright, honest man.

Mr. Williams is to be classed among Jackson County's pioneer settlers, and as such, he has watched the development of its resources with much interest. In public improvements, he is ever ready to lend a helping hand, and where donations are required for the furtherance of such improvements, he is never less generous than his neighbors. During his long residence in the county, he has shown himself worthy of the esteem and confidence reposed in him by his fellow-citizens.

PRESTON M. HUMPHREY, LARKIN.

Among the pioneer settlers of this section of Kansas, Mr. Preston M. Humphrey deserves special mention.

He was born in Trumbull County, Ohio, November 7, 1820. His father, Theron Humphrey, and his mother, whose maiden name was Harriet Miner, were both natives of the State of Connecticut, but early moved to Ohio. The subject of this sketch began life on a farm in his native county in Ohio, and here he passed his boyhood days. At the age of twenty, feeling that he should begin life on his own account,

he set out for the Far West. He passed the winter of 1840-41 working near St. Louis. In the spring of 1841, he went to Platte County, Mo., where he engaged in farming.

In 1846, during the Mexican war, he was in the employ of the Government. He drove a team to New Mexico, arriving at Santa Fe on the 18th of August, 1846. He remained at Santa Fe or in its immediate vicinity nearly a year, and then returned to Platte County, Mo.

In 1857, he took up the claim in Jackson County upon which he now resides. In 1858, he pre-empted a claim in Johnson County, Kan. In 1859, he moved upon the farm upon which he now resides. Mr. Humphrey's business has always been farming, and the fine improvements on his place are evidences of his industry.

On the 15th of June, 1865, he was united in marriage to Miss Diantha D. Hubbel, a native of Bradford County, Penn., and by this marriage he is the father of two children—Charles P., aged fourteen, and Hattie, aged twelve.

He was a staunch supporter of the principles of the old Whig party till its dissolution; since that time, he has been identified with the Democratic party. He held the office of Trustee of Kapioma Township, Atchison Co., one term.

Honest and upright in all his dealings with his fellow-men, he has won the highest regard of all with whom he has been associated.

SIMEON FEES, FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP.

Among the influential farmers of this prosperous township, Mr. Simeon Fees deserves special mention. He is a native of Henry County, Ind., and was born August 30, 1828. His father, John Fees, was born in Germany, but came to this country when only seven years of age, and his mother, whose maiden name was Annie Kesler, was born in North Carolina. The subject of this sketch remained in Indiana attending school, working on a farm and at the carpenter's trade, till nineteen years of age, when he went to Iowa, thence to Wisconsin, where he remained at Shullsburg, engaged as a carpenter, for four years. He then went to St. Paul and soon after to Wabasha, where he lived three years.

At this time Kansas was in the midst of her great struggle for freedom, and Mr. Fees determined to throw in his mite toward making her a free State. He arrived in Jackson County on the 24th day of December, 1857. In 1858, he went to Iowa, where he was married, on the 3d day of May, to Miss Fannie Alexander, with whom he immediately afterward returned to Kansas. During the early Anti-slavery struggles in this county, Mr. Fees was an active participant in many of the exciting scenes of which its history is largely made up. Although in early life he was allied to the Democratic party, the struggle which gave Kansas to freedom made him a strong Republican, of which party he is still a member.

In 1865, he became the owner of the farm he now occupies, and its fine improvements bear evidence of his untiring industry. During his life in Kansas, he has often been the victim of misfortune, but has borne all with fortitude and unswerving integrity. During the time of famine he refused aid from abroad, preferring to suffer many privations rather than be the recipient of public charity. As one of the early settlers of Jackson County, Mr. Fees has done his share toward elevating it from its former wild state to its present advanced condition. He is widely known, and respected by all with whom he has been associated.

CYRUS G. WAYNANT, FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP.

The gentleman whose biography is herewith presented was born near Waynesboro, Franklin Co., Penn., October 17, 1829. He is the third son of Jacob E. and Margaret Waynant, both natives of Pennsylvania. His mother's maiden name was Margaret Besore. He remained in his native State till 1852, when he removed to Schuyler Co., Ill., where he engaged in farming till 1856. On the 16th of December of that year he arrived in Jefferson County, Kan. He soon after located

a claim in Jackson (or what was then Calloun) County, and moved upon it April 7, 1857, and on this place he has since resided.

Mr. Waynant's business has always been farming, and his fine farm two and one-half miles east of Holton, bears evidence of his energy and skill in his chosen vocation.

In political views he has ever been a strong Democrat. In 1838-69 he was one of the County Commissioners of Jackson County, and in 1870 he was a candidate for State Senator, but was defeated by a small majority.

He was married in 1850 to Miss Catharine Little.

Mr. Waynant, as one of the earliest settlers of the county, has been prominently associated with its interests from its very organization, and he is one who has never failed to "put his shoulder to the wheel" for the furtherance of public improvement. His biography is of importance as showing what may be accomplished by energy and industry.

JAMES M. ARTMAN, LARKIN.

The gentleman whose name stands at the head of this sketch is a fair representative of that class known as "self-made men," and to this class of men we ought to accord more praise than to any other. He was born in Boone County, Mo., September 2, 1831, but when four years of age he moved with his parents to Platte County, Mo. At the early age of twelve, he was left an orphan by the death of his father. He remained in Platte County till 1858, when he came to Jackson County, Kan. He shortly after returned to Missouri and then moved to Johnson County, Kan. After one year's residence in this county, he returned to Jackson and settled four miles southeast of Holton. In 1867, he moved to his present home near the line between Jackson and Atchison Counties.

Mr. Artman came to Kansas with very little property except his energy and ambition. He now owns a splendid improved farm of 140 acres in Atchison County and ninety-six acres of fine land in Jackson County.

When twenty-four years of age, he was married to Miss Lucinda Jane Hubbard, by whom he has had ten children, nine of whom are living.

Mr. Artman's political views have ever been in accord with the principles of the Democratic party, but he is more inclined to liberal than radical. He is a consistent member of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Mr. Artman is widely known and respected for his manly, sterling qualities.

WILLIAM K. LUTZ, FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP.

Mr. Lutz is to be classed among the early settlers of Jackson County, who have been associated with its interests from its organization up to the present time. His father, John Lutz, was a native of Pennsylvania, and his mother, Margaret Lutz, was a native of Delaware. He was born in Philadelphia on the 10th of April, 1827. After remaining in his native city till nearly twenty-five years of age, and having learned the trade of a machinist, he moved to Wisconsin and settled in Grant County, where he became a miner. After two years of residence in this place, disliking the severity of the weather, he decided to move to Kansas. He arrived in Jackson, or what was then Calloun County, on the 4th of October, 1856. This was during the border troubles, and Mr. Lutz thus became a witness to some of the very exciting scenes in early Kansas history.

He was one of those employed to survey the town site of Holton. He first settled about half a mile from Holton, but afterward moved to Johnson County. He soon returned and settled on the place he still occupies in Section 20, Town 7 south, Range 15 east.

In political affiliations, Mr. Lutz has always been a Democrat, and has always supported the ticket.

He was married, when twenty-four years of age, to Miss Ellen C. Conde, of Philadelphia. This marriage has been blessed with eight children, all of whom are living.

He is one of those who entered this county at a time when but little effort had been made to disturb the original possessors of the soil—the savage and the wild beast—and he has done his share toward its advancement. He is a man of a retiring disposition, modest and unassuming. He is highly esteemed by his fellow-citizens.

WALTER PARMENTER, FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP.

Mr. Walter Parmenter, the subject of this sketch, was born in Rutland County, Vt., on the 29th day of March, 1833. His father, Walter Parmenter, and his mother, whose maiden name was Polly Daly, were both natives of the State of Vermont. His boyhood was passed on his father's farm, on which he labored hard, as was the custom of the youth of the country. His educational advantages were not extensive, but he made the most of his opportunities, and succeeded in acquiring a good common-school education.

In 1856, he determined to avail himself of the superior advantages offered to young men in the Far West. He went first to Iowa where he remained in Lewis, Cass County, five months. At this time, Kansas was in the midst of her troubles, and Mr. Parmenter decided to give his aid to the Free-State men in their struggle for freedom in the new Territory. He came to Kansas with his friend, Mr. Blossom, also a native of Vermont, and together they took up the claims upon which they have since resided. We are happy to present to our readers a fine view of Mr. Parmenter's residence and surroundings. All the improvements are the work of his own hands, and give evidence of his industry. As one of the earliest settlers of the county, he was compelled to endure many hardships, of the severity of which those who come to Kansas to-day can have no just appreciation, yet he manfully withstood them all and has been in the main successful.

In the hour of the nation's peril, he enlisted in Company B, Eleventh Kansas in which he served three years. He participated in the battles of Fort Wayne (Ark.), Prairie Grove, Cane Hill, Lexington, and all the other battles in which his company was engaged. He was mustered out of service at Fort Leavenworth in 1865.

In political views, he has always been a quiet supporter of the principles of the Republican party. In religious views, he is a consistent member of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

He was married February 9, 1860, to Miss Sarah E. Jones, of Ohio, by whom he is the father of four children—Hattie, Mary E., Ruth E. and Walter.

Mr. Parmenter is a public spirited, enterprising citizen, always awake to the interests of his township and county, and is an ornament to the community in which he lives. He has the highest respect of his fellow-citizens.

WILLIAM FLESHER, DOUGLAS TOWNSHIP.

William Flesher was born in Fayette County, Ohio, on the 19th day of July, 1828, he is consequently fifty-three years of age. His father, William Flesher, and his mother, whose maiden name was Mary Gumm, were natives of Virginia. He lived in Ohio till nine years of age, assisting his father in farm labor, and attending school.

After leaving Ohio, he went with his parents to Dade County, Mo. When twenty-three years of age, he moved to Andrew County, Mo., where he remained till he came to Kansas in February, 1860, settling in this county, where he has since resided.

Mr. Flesher's business has always been "following the plow," at which he has met with much success. His farm, situated in Section 6, Town 9, Range 16, is in a fine state of cultivation. Mr. Flesher has always been an adherent to the principles of the Democratic party.

In April, 1849, he was married to Miss Sarah A. Smith, by whom he had four children. Being called upon to mourn the death of his first wife, he again married. His second wife, by a strange coincidence, bore the same maiden name as his first wife, although not related. By his second marriage, he has been the father of nine children, seven of whom are living. He is an honest and industrious farmer, and his long residence in the county has secured him many friends.

A. A. POWERS, DOUGLAS TOWNSHIP.

Mr. A. A. Powers, the present Trustee of this township was born near Hackettstown, Warren Co., N. J., May 5, 1842. His father and mother were both natives of New Jersey. When three years of age, he was left an orphan by the death of his father; he received a common-school education in his native county. In 1856, he went to Indiana and engaged in farming for two years. In 1861, he enlisted in the Eighth New Jersey. He was in the Army of the Potomac from its organization till the battle of Petersburg; engaged in twenty-eight of the most important battles of the war. Returning to New Jersey, he found employment on the Morris & Essex Railroad, and was afterward agent for a wholesale house. In 1872, he came to Kansas, settling first in Reno County; after four years in Reno County, he moved to Jackson County, where he has since resided. In political views, he is a Republican. Has twice been elected Trustee of Douglas Township. He is a man who is highly respected by his fellow-citizens.

MICHAEL BAKER, FRANKLIN TOWNSHIP.

Michael Baker is the fourth son of Michael and Hepsyba Baker, both natives of Virginia. He was born in Greenbrier County, Va., on the 15th of November, 1813. When twenty-two years of age, he went to Missouri, where he remained till 1856; he settled first in Saline County and afterward in Platte County, Mo. While in Missouri he was engaged in farming and selling goods. In 1856, he came to Kansas with a stock of goods and started a store at the mouth of Bill's Creek. In the spring of 1858, he went to Pike's Peak, engaged in mining two years, and then returned to Jackson County, where he has since resided.

In 1840, he was married to Miss Julia Ann Mayo; she died in 1842, leaving one son. In 1862, he was again married to Sarah Isaacs.

He has always been an out-and-out Democrat. As a farmer, he has been moderately prosperous.