

HISTORY  
OF  
LEE COUNTY  
ILLINOIS

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By FRANK E. STEVENS

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ILLUSTRATED

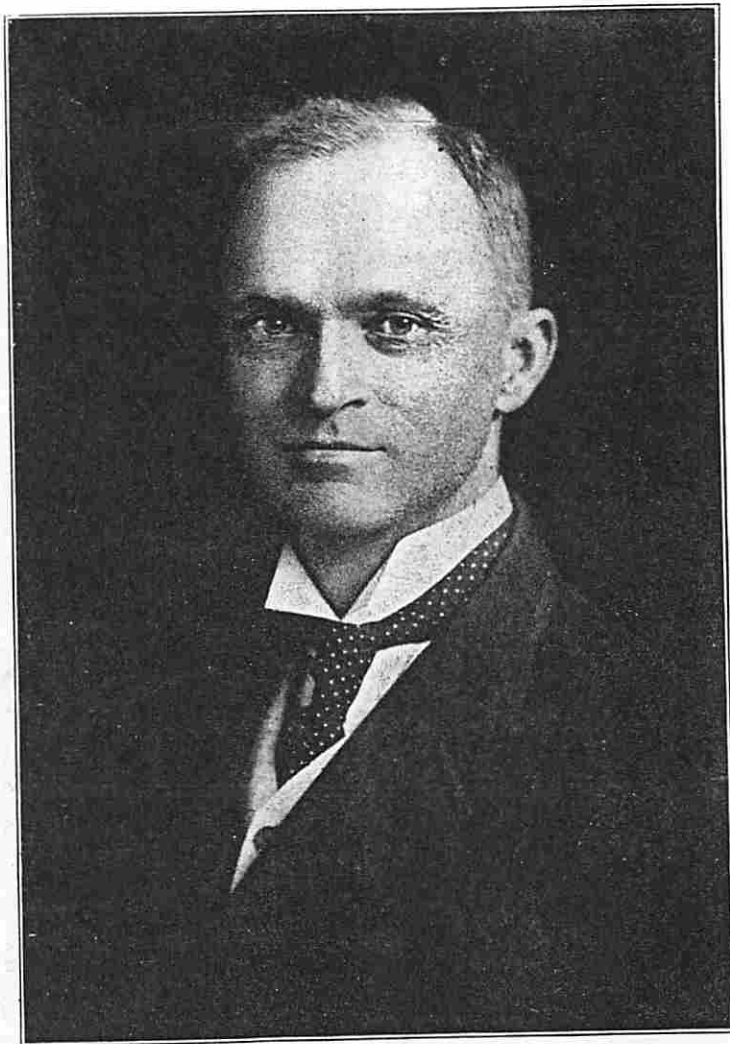
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VOLUME I

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1914

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY



FRANK E. STEVENS

ity. He was born in Bradford township, this county, November 11, 1872, and was reared at home, acquiring a public-school education. He has devoted his entire active life to farming, and his success in this field is the natural result of his ability and experience. When he was twenty-one he rented a farm in Bradford township and developed this property for fifteen years thereafter with constantly increasing success. At the end of that time he bought one hundred and sixty acres on section 35, Ashton township, and upon this property he has since resided. He has made excellent improvements upon it, providing the place with a modern house, a barn and other outbuildings. It now presents an attractive appearance and gives every evidence of the care and labor which the owner has bestowed upon it.

In 1894 Mr. Wagner was united in marriage to Miss Elizabeth C. Harek, a native of Bradford township, born September 11, 1871. She is a daughter of William and Catherine (Dill) Harek, natives of Germany. The parents came to America at an early date and located in Bradford township, where the mother died July 4, 1910. Her husband survives her and makes his home in Ashton. To their union were born four children: Elizabeth C., wife of the subject of this review; Anna, who married William Petre, of Ashton; Mary, the wife of John Nass, Jr., of Bradford township; and Fred. Mr. and Mrs. Wagner have become the parents of a son, Ervin W., born October 5, 1895. He is now attending a business college at Dixon, Illinois. The parents are members of the United Evangelical church, and Mr. Wagner gives his political allegiance to the republican party. For several years he has served as school director and is a progressive and public-spirited citizen, taking an active interest in community affairs. Ashton township numbers him among her most progressive and successful agriculturists, and he is widely and favorably known in this locality.

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#### FRANK EVERETT STEVENS.

Frank Everett Stevens, who has spent nearly his entire life in Dixon, was for a number of years actively engaged in the practice of law, and has gained success and recognition in journalistic circles as editor of the Weekly Citizen, which he established in 1910. His birth occurred in Dixon, Illinois, on the 5th of Janu-

ary, 1856, his parents being John and Marie Sophie (La Porte) Stevens. It was in 1846 that the father came from Huntingdon county, Pennsylvania, to Dixon, taking up his abode among the early residents of this place. He was an attorney by profession and served as county superintendent of schools during the years 1853 and 1854. At the time of the civil war he raised Company H of the Forty-sixth Illinois Volunteer Infantry, was made judge advocate of the army and also held the rank of major. On Sunday morning, April 6, 1862, he was killed at the battle of Shiloh.

Frank E. Stevens obtained his education in the high school of Dixon and after preparing for the practice of law was admitted to the bar in 1877. For a number of years he ably discharged the duties devolving upon him in the capacity of deputy circuit clerk. It was in 1910 that he became identified with journalistic interests as editor of the Weekly Citizen, which he has since published, and which enjoys an excellent subscription and advertising patronage, being an up-to-date news sheet in every respect. He is a member of the State and Chicago Historical Societies and also belongs to the Caxton Club of Chicago. In the community where his life has been spent he is well known as a representative, esteemed and influential citizen.

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#### U. GRANT DYSART.

U. Grant Dysart, a representative and successful agriculturist of Viola township, owns a well improved farm of one hundred and sixty acres on section 32 and is also filling the office of township supervisor at the present time. His birth occurred in Lee county, Illinois, on the 14th of September, 1865, his parents being Samuel and Jennie (Henderson) Dysart, both of whom are deceased and lie buried at Franklin Grove, Illinois. The father passed away on the 8th of April, 1911, and the mother August 8, 1909.

U. Grant Dysart acquired his education at Fulton, Whiteside county, Illinois, attending school until twenty-two years of age. Subsequently he took up his abode on the farm of one hundred and sixty acres on section 32, Viola township, which he has operated continuously and successfully since. He engages in mixed farming and keeps about twelve horses, twenty cattle and twenty-eight hogs. The residence and other buildings which adorn the prop-

each equipped with excellent buildings and provided with modern machinery. Mr. Miller raises stock on an extensive scale, dealing largely in cattle and horses. He has a comfortable residence in Paw Paw but gives his personal supervision to the conduct of his farm. He is a director and stockholder in the Compton National Bank and well known in financial circles as a man of ability and enterprise.

In Brooklyn township, on the 27th of September, 1891, Mr. Miller married Miss Nettie Miller, a daughter of S. B. and Sarah Miller, pioneers in Lee county. The father makes his home in Paw Paw, having survived his wife since 1885. Mr. and Mrs. Miller have become the parents of six children: Lelah and Samuel A., graduates of the Paw Paw high school; Lora, Grace and Hazel, also attending school; and Bina M., aged five.

Mr. Miller is a republican in his political beliefs and is now a member of the board of aldermen of Paw Paw. Through his energy and ability in promoting his personal interests he has contributed in substantial measure to the welfare and growth of the community which numbers him among its most respected and representative citizens.

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#### WILLIAM G. KRUG.

During the entire period of his active life William G. Krug has been associated with agricultural interests of Bradford, his native township, and he now owns an excellent farm of one hundred and sixty acres, a visible evidence of his industry and enterprise in the management of his affairs. He was born June 4, 1874, *and* and is a son of John and Catherine (Hilliard) Krug, natives of Germany, who came to America at an early date, settling in Lee county, Illinois. The father died here April 10, 1883, and is survived by his wife, who makes her home in Ashton. To their union were born four children: Mary, who married John J. Wagner; Catherine, the wife of W. A. Kersten; William G., of this review; and John M., of Ashton.

William G. Krug was reared at home and remained with his mother until he was twenty-one years of age. He then rented a farm and operated it for about two years, after which he purchased land on section 22, Bradford township. He owns one hundred and sixty acres and has improved this with substantial barns

and outbuildings and has brought the fields to a high state of cultivation.

In 1897, Mr. Krug was united in marriage to Miss Minnie Kersten, a native of Bradford township and a daughter of John and Christina Kersten, both of whom were born in Germany and both of whom died in Ashton township in 1912. Mr. and Mrs. Krug have four children, Roy J., Oliver J., Pearl C. and Alvin W. The parents are members of the Evangelical church and Mr. Krug is affiliated with the Modern Woodmen of America. He gives his political allegiance to the republican party and is now serving in a capable and efficient way as school director. As a citizen he is public-spirited and whatever tends to promote the best interests of the community receives his indorsement and hearty support.

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#### R. W. CHURCH.

In a history of the wide-awake, progressive business men of Dixon mention should be made of R. W. Church, now superintendent for the Borden Condensed Milk Company. He is thoroughly acquainted with every phase of the business under his control, seems to have every detail in mind and at the same time gives due prominence to the more important features of the business having to do with its substantial and growing success. Born in New York in 1869, his educational opportunities were only those accorded by the public schools. He has been connected with the milk business for the past twenty-four years, having been associated with the Borden Condensed Milk Company in New York, Wisconsin and in Illinois. Long experience has thoroughly acquainted him with every phase of the business, which he has carefully studied, and thus step by step he has worked his way upward, his efficiency and reliability being recognized by those under whom he has served. He came to Dixon July 13, 1911, to accept the superintendency of the Borden Condensed Milk Company at this place. The business was here established on the 1st of July, 1902, the company buying out the Anglo-Swiss Condensed Milk Company, which had been established July 8, 1889, although the buildings were started in 1887. The Borden Company purchased the plant and equipment of the old company and today the plant has a capacity of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds.



On the 25th of February, 1889, Mr. Vaughan was united in marriage to Miss Carrie Briggs, of Amboy, and they have become the parents of two children, Frank and Edith Caroline. Mr. Vaughan is a very prominent Mason, holding membership in the lodge and in the various branches of York Rite Masonry and also in the consistory and the shrine. He is likewise connected with the Benevolent Protective Order of Elks, the Knights of Pythias and the Modern Woodmen of America and holds membership in the Baptist church, which finds him loyal to its teachings and generous in its support. The social position of the family is one of prominence and they have an extensive circle of warm friends in Lee county.

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### JOHN KERSTEN.

Among the early pioneers of Lee county was John Kersten, a self-made man whose gratifying prosperity had its root in frugality, industry and determination. He was numbered among the early pioneers of his section of Illinois, arriving in 1857. His birth occurred in Germany, February 15, 1831, his parents being Mr. and Mrs. Hartman Kersten, the former born in the fatherland, September 30, 1801, and the latter in 1802.

John Kersten acquired his education in schools of Germany and remained at home until twenty-five years of age, assisting his father, his thorough training giving him experience and knowledge which proved of marked value in later years.

On the 18th of June, 1856, Mr. Kersten was united in marriage to Miss Christine Hildebrandt, a native of Gelfershausen, Kreis-Rothenburg, Kerr-Hessen, Germany, and a daughter of John and Elizabeth (Speck) Hildebrandt, the former born in 1787 and the latter in 1799. The year following their marriage John Kersten and his young wife came to the new world, crossing the Atlantic in order to seek their fortune in America, having heard many favorable reports concerning the advantages and opportunities offered in this land. Mr. Kersten arrived in Lee county with but a dollar and a half in his pocket. Necessity made it imperative that he seek immediate employment. He was energetic and ambitious to earn a good living and by his frugality, unabating energy and economy he added to his savings year by year until he became the owner of a fine farm which he developed and improved. As the

years rolled by he won prosperity and at the time of his death was the owner of six hundred and forty acres of as valuable land as could be found in Lee county, and there is no richer elsewhere. His life is an example of what the sturdy German can accomplish when energy and resolute purpose point out the way. Moreover, he left to his family an inheritance which money cannot buy—that of an untarnished name.

Mr. and Mrs. Kersten became the parents of eleven children, ten of whom survive. Mr. Kersten passed away on the 10th of July, 1912, and just three months later, on the 10th of October, the death of Mrs. Kersten occurred, the county thereby losing two of its valued and worthy pioneer citizens.

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### CARL MARTIN EWALD.

No history of Lee county would be complete without extended mention of the Ewald family. Its members are known throughout this part of the state as progressive farmers and stock-raisers and each of the sons has displayed sterling characteristics of industry and determination in the conduct of his business affairs, thereby attaining success and winning a place among the self-made men of the county. Carl Martin Ewald was born in Germany, April 18, 1872, and is a son of Henry and Anna Martha Ewald, who in 1873 bade adieu to friends and native land and with their family sailed for the new world. Coming to Illinois, they established their home in Ogle county and in 1879 removed to Lee county. Carl M. Ewald continued with his parents until thirty-one years of age, at which time he was united in marriage to Miss Ida Wendt, who was born in Bradford township, September 27, 1883, and is a daughter of William and Amelia (Engal) Wendt, both of whom were natives of Germany but in early life came to the new world and were married in this country. They established their home in Lee county, where they lived for a long period. The father passed away in 1887, but the mother survives and is now a resident of Ashton. They had a family of seven children: Frank, who is a resident of Nebraska; Grace, the wife of Conrad Smith, of Ashton; Fred, living in Lee county; Emma, the wife of John Schaffer, of Cook county, Illinois; William, who makes his home in Rochelle, this state; Mrs. Ewald; and Matilda, who is the wife of William Rankie, of Ashton.



of milk daily. This is purchased from local farmers, three hundred dairymen delivering milk to the plant, while fifty-eight hundred cows are kept to supply the product. The company has ninety acres of ground and the three buildings are each three hundred and sixty-five by eighty feet and two stories in height. An electric plant furnishes power for the works and two hundred and twenty-five people are employed at the plant in the manufacture of condensed and evaporated milk. They also make a large amount of candy, mostly caramels, as a by-product. They make their own gas for mechanical manufacturing and the water is supplied from artesian wells upon the place. Everything is most sanitary and the plant and equipment are the largest in size in the world. It may well be understood therefore that the men at the head of the enterprise are most capable and energetic business men, thoroughly conversant with every phase of the work, and onerous are the duties and responsibilities that devolve upon Mr. Church as superintendent of the Dixon interests.

In 1893 Mr. Church was united in marriage to Miss Sue I. Lewis, a native of Dundee, Illinois, and they have become the parents of three children, Kenneth L., Donald and Harriet, all attending school. Mr. Church holds membership with the Masonic fraternity and he gives his political indorsement to the republican party, of which he has always been a staunch advocate. He is always ready to support any plan or project that is a matter of civic virtue or civic pride but he has never sought nor desired office, preferring to concentrate his energies upon his business affairs, and gradually he has advanced to a position of prominence, making a record which is most creditable. There is no phase of the business with which he is connected that is not familiar to him and his long experience has enabled him to speak with authority upon any matter relative to the production, care and use of milk. He is indeed alert, wide-awake and progressive and ranks with the foremost business men of Dixon.

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#### JOHN J. WAGNER.

John J. Wagner, a progressive farmer and stock-raiser and a native son of Bradford township, was born February 15, 1867. He remained at home until he was twenty-three years of age and then married, afterward engaging in farming upon rented land.

At the end of two years he purchased the property which he now owns. He has one hundred and sixty-eight acres on section 3, Bradford township, and he has improved this with substantial buildings and modern machinery, making the place productive and valuable to a high degree. He makes a specialty of raising and feeding stock and he has important interests of this character.

Mr. Wagner married Miss Mary Krug, a daughter of John Krug and a native of Bradford township. They have become the parents of a daughter, Alta L., who was born November 22, 1899, and who is now a student in the Ashton high school. Mr. Wagner is a republican in his political beliefs and has held various positions of public trust and responsibility, serving for two years as collector. He is now in the twelfth year of his able service as county supervisor and is at the present time chairman of the board. A resident of Bradford township during his entire life, he has become widely and favorably known here and his influence has been a tangible force for good in the community.

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#### MARK CLANCY KELLER.

Mark Clancy Keller, city attorney of Dixon since 1909 and recognized as one of the ablest members of the bar of Lee county, was born in May township, in February, 1873, and spent his boyhood and youth upon the home farm, his time being divided between the work of the fields, the duties of the schoolroom and the pleasures of the playground. Like many other young men, however, he did not care to follow agricultural pursuits as a life work and with a view to entering upon a professional career, continued his education in college. He was graduated with high honors from the Chicago Business College and afterward took up the profession of teaching, which he followed in the common schools and colleges of Lee and Bureau counties for six years. He had convinced himself within that period that he preferred the practice of law and in the fall of 1897 he began preparation for the bar, completing his studies in the Northern Illinois College of Law in 1900, at which time the LL. M. degree was conferred upon him. Immediately afterward he was admitted to the bar and has since practiced in Dixon with marked success. On the 20th of April, 1909, he was elected city attorney and has since most intelligently

also devoted ten years to railroad work in Iowa but during this time still continued his business in Amboy.

In 1879 Mr. Edwards was elected county treasurer but the board of supervisors questioned the sufficiency of his bond, although his bondsmen were several of the most wealthy farmers of Lee county. On referring the case to the states attorney he held that they could not accept a new bond after the 1st of December, and as they had assembled at the last moment no time was left to make a new bond and thus the office was lost. In 1882 Mr. Edwards was elected sheriff of Lee county and during the four years which he spent as the incumbent in that position he resided in Dixon. In the meantime his son conducted his livery business in Amboy until the expiration of the father's term of office. During the Civil war Mr. Edwards furnished the government with many horses. He was an extensive dealer in horses and in addition to that business he successfully carried on farming, owning over five hundred acres of good land. While carrying on his individual business affairs he likewise filled many offices, serving for an extended period as county supervisor, as collector of city taxes and for several terms as mayor of Amboy. In his political views he was an earnest republican and at all times was public-spirited and active in support of interests pertaining to the welfare and progress of town and county.

In 1853 Mr. Edwards was united in marriage to Miss Elizabeth Saul, a daughter of Thomas Saul of Forreston, Illinois, and they became the parents of eight children, of whom four died in childhood. Those surviving are: William J. and James A., the former engaged in the livery business and the latter in the ice business in Amboy; John H., who is a traveling salesman; and Isaac F., living in Dixon. Mr. Edwards' death caused deep regret to all who knew him, for he was one of the well known citizens of Lee county, held in high esteem by all.

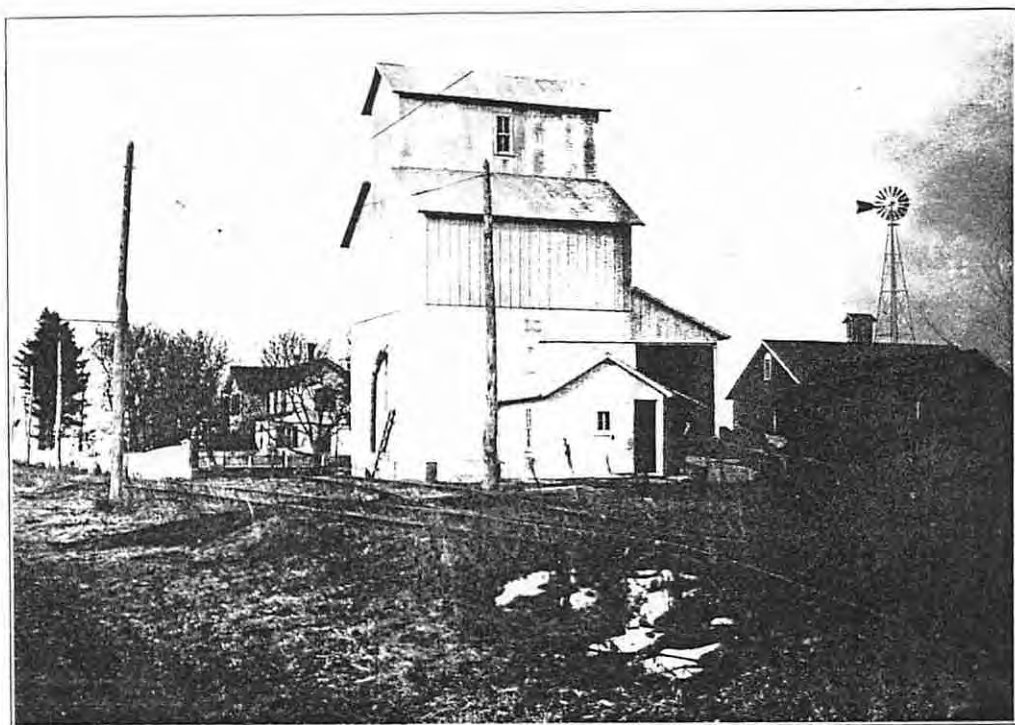
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#### HARTMAN M. KERSTEN.

Hartman M. Kersten is now living retired in Ashton, but for many years he was a most active, energetic business man, carrying on general farming and the raising of blooded stock. He is still the owner of a valuable farm property upon which is a large grain elevator. Lee county numbers him among her native sons,



MR. AND MRS. HARTMAN M. KERSTEN



ELEVATOR OF HARTMAN M. KERSTEN



his birth having occurred in Bradford township, January 13, 1860, his parents being John and Christine (Hildebrandt) Kersten, mention of whom is made elsewhere in this volume. The country schools afforded him his early educational privileges and he afterward spent two winter terms in Northwestern College at Naperville, Illinois, attending there in 1881 and 1882. He then returned home and assisted his father through two succeeding years. He afterward purchased seventy acres from his father-in-law, located on section 16, Bradford township, while his wife inherited eighty acres adjoining. Upon this tract, then comprising one hundred and fifty acres, he began farming and converted the land into an arable section, readily producing good crops as the result of his progressive methods of tilling the soil. He erected modern buildings and made a specialty of raising blooded stock, handling largely Galloway cattle. As prosperity crowned his labors he purchased more land from time to time, becoming the owner of the Gleim farm of one hundred and twenty acres in Bradford township and also another tract of one hundred and nine acres in the same township. He likewise has other land in Lee county situated near Dixon. He continued upon the home farm until December, 1903, when he sold his blooded stock and removed with his family to Ashton, where he now makes his home, living retired in the enjoyment of well earned rest. In 1913 he erected upon his farm in Bradford township a grain elevator, having a capacity of ten thousand bushels, and he also built a private siding from the Northern Illinois Electric Railroad to the elevator, thus securing excellent shipping facilities.

On the 15th of January, 1885, Hartman M. Kersten was married to Miss Mary Gross, a daughter of Reinhart and Martha (Reinhart) Gross, who were natives of Kerr-Hessen, Germany.

Unto Mr. and Mrs. Kersten were born three children. Arthur K., who owns and operates a farm in Ashton township, wedded Miss Minnie Henert and has one son, Clarence Hartman Kersten. Rosa C. is the wife of Edward M. Herwig, who owns and cultivates a tract of land in Bradford township. Alice E. Kersten is deceased.

Mr. Kersten is a member of the United Evangelical church and has taken an active and helpful part in the various lines of church work, serving for many years as Sunday-school superintendent. When a youth of thirteen he had been converted through the efforts and teaching of Christian Schuster and Joetchel. He is a progressive in politics and has been a delegate to republican



county conventions. He filled the office of road commissioner and for eleven years was school director. Mr. Kersten believes firmly in promoting the public-school interests and in giving to the youth of the land the best educational opportunities possible. He is one of the prominent and prosperous citizens of Lee county, and while promoting his individual success, has always found time to aid in the general development and the advancement of the public welfare.

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### WILLIAM C. HOLDREN.

William C. Holdren is the owner of a farm of eighty acres on section 10, Brooklyn township, near the city limits of Compton. He came to this county in 1851, brought by his parents, John and Phoebe (Derr) Holdren. He was then but a year old, his birth having occurred in Pennsylvania, June 15, 1850. The father had purchased the property upon which the family settled in 1848. Three years later he brought his family to the middle west, and they took up their abode upon the tract of government land which he had secured, and which was still in its wild condition, not a furrow having been turned or an improvement made. With characteristic energy he began its development and converted the place into rich fields. He was a very popular man, and one who left the impress of his individuality for good upon the community in which he lived. He was at the head of the Union League and was therefore in thorough sympathy with the Union cause and the administration at Washington. One of his brothers was an enlisted soldier in the Union army. John Holdren died in 1898, having for two years survived his wife, who passed away in 1896, their remains being interred in Malugin Grove cemetery.

William C. Holdren was the eldest in his father's family. He had comparatively limited opportunities of attending school, having to put aside his text-books at the age of fifteen years in order to assist his father in the further cultivation and development of the home place. He was thus employed until he attained his majority, after which he learned the carpenter's trade with his uncle, Mathias, with whom he worked until 1881. In that year he secured a position as fireman on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad and spent three years in that way. He next began building residences in this vicinity and erected many of the

P. W. Mason attended the public schools of Whiteside county until a youth of nineteen and subsequently assisted his father in the operation of the home farm until he entered the law office of P. M. James, an attorney of Amboy, with whom he studied for two years. On the expiration of that period he began practicing in the justice and county courts. Since 1888 he has maintained his offices in the First National Bank building at Amboy, enjoying a gratifying clientage as an attorney and also for eighteen years devoting considerable attention to auctioneering.

In Amboy, Illinois, on the 1st of January, 1888, Mr. Mason was united in marriage to Miss Martha McLaughlin, a daughter of George and Jane (Edwards) McLaughlin, of Mendota, Illinois. The mother is deceased and lies buried at Mendota, Illinois. Mr. and Mrs. Mason are the parents of three children, namely: Wayne G., who is employed as clerk in the general offices of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway; and Alta and Elva, twins, who are students of the Amboy high school. Mr. Mason gives his political allegiance to the democracy, while fraternally he is identified with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Rebekahs and the Star of Equity. He is most conscientious in the performance of his professional duties and in every relation of life is actuated by high and honorable principles. His genuine worth and his devotion to all that is right, just and elevating, make him a man whom to know is to respect and honor.

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#### EDWARD M. HERWIG.

Edward M. Herwig, a progressive and successful young farmer of Bradford township, manifesting unusual enterprise and ability in the conduct of his agricultural interests, was born in China township, this county, November 21, 1885. He is a son of William and Minnie (Burham) Herwig, the former a native of Germany and the latter of Lee county, Illinois. The father was brought to America when he was four years of age and has resided for many years in China township, where he still makes his home.

Edward M. Herwig was reared at home and remained with his parents until his marriage, which occurred when he was twenty-four years of age. For two years thereafter he rented land and at the end of that time he bought one hundred and seven acres

on sections 16 and 21, Bradford township. Upon this property he engages in general farming and stock-raising and he has extensive interests along both lines. He owns also a half interest in one hundred and sixty acres of land on section 21, Ashton township, and he is regarded as a progressive, enterprising and representative farmer.

Mr. Herwig married Miss Rosa Kersten, a native of Bradford township and a daughter of H. M. and Mary (Gross) Kersten, also natives of Lee county. They are now residents of Ashton. Mrs. Herwig is a graduate of high school and taught for three years previous to her marriage. She and her husband are members of the United Evangelical church and Mr. Herwig gives his political allegiance to the democratic party. He is an energetic and progressive business man and a native son of whom Lee county has every reason to be proud.

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#### ANTON ALBRECHT.

Anton Albrecht is a native of Bradford township, Lee county, born September 15, 1866, and a son of Burket and Martha (Kersten) Albrecht, natives of Germany, who in 1859 crossed the Atlantic to America and located in this county. Both are living and make their home in Ashton.

Anton Albrecht was reared under the parental roof and remained at home until he reached his majority. He received his education in the schools of the neighborhood and under the able guidance of his father soon became an efficient agriculturist. After leaving home he rented land for some years and then bought the farm upon which he now lives and which comprises one hundred and twenty acres, the property being located on section 29, Bradford township. He not only follows general farming but makes a specialty of raising and feeding cattle and hogs. He has made substantial improvements upon his property and his years of arduous labor have resulted in a gratifying financial success.

On December 31, 1890, Mr. Albrecht married Miss Katherine Heckmann, who was born in Germany, August 21, 1868, and is a daughter of Adam and Anna (Gonnermann) Heckmann, both natives of the fatherland. Mr. Heckmann died there, but the mother is living, still making her home in Germany. Mrs. Albrecht was one of five children born to her parents. She and her husband



born in Shelby county, Illinois, in 1860 and is a son of Laurent and Julia (Toullian) Gehant, of whom further mention is made elsewhere in this work.

Laurent E. Gehant came to Lee county with his parents when he was five years of age and acquired his education in the public schools. At the age of twenty he laid aside his books and after assisting his father with the work of the farm until he was twenty-two began his independent career, buying the property which he now owns. He has five hundred and fifteen acres of improved land on section 30, Viola township, and upon this has erected a comfortable residence and substantial outbuildings. Mixed farming engages his attention and his stock-raising interests are important, for he keeps on an average fifty head of cattle, forty hogs and twenty horses. His business interests are carefully and conservatively conducted and have brought him a gratifying measure of success.

In Ohio, in 1882, Mr. Gehant married Miss Mary Henry, a daughter of August and Mary (Venier) Henry, the former of whom has passed away and is buried in Ohio. Mr. and Mrs. Gehant have become the parents of eight children: Louis and George, farmers in Lee county; Mary, the wife of George Montavon, also engaged in farming in this county; Louise, at home; Frances, the wife of Lewis Choan, a farmer of Lee county; Albert, deceased; and Edna and Pauline, at home.

Mr. Gehant is a member of the Catholic church and is connected fraternally with the Catholic Order of Foresters. He is a democrat in his political beliefs and while not active as an office seeker takes a commendable interest in public affairs. He has proved capable and reliable in the conduct of his personal affairs, and his contributions to general agricultural development have been many and substantial.

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#### ARTHUR R. KERSTEN.

Since the beginning of his active career Arthur R. Kersten has given his attention to general farming and stock-raising in Lee county and he is now the owner of an excellent property of one hundred and two acres on section 34, Ashton township. He was born in Bradford township, this county, January 23, 1886, and is a son of H. M. and Mary (Gross) Kersten, both natives of Lee

county and now residents of Ashton. To their union were born three children: Arthur R., of this review; Rosa C., the wife of Edward M. Herwig, of Bradford township; and Alice E., deceased.

Arthur R. Kersten was reared upon his father's farm in Bradford township and there remained until he was twenty-one years of age. He afterward engaged in farming upon rented land for two years and then bought the farm which he now owns. This comprises one hundred and two acres lying on section 34, Ashton township, and is in excellent condition as a result of the care and labor which the owner has bestowed upon it. Mr. Kersten is a progressive and industrious farmer, and his thorough knowledge of the details of farm operation constitutes an important factor in his growing success.

Mr. Kersten married Miss Minnie D. Henert, who was born in this county December 7, 1885, a daughter of George and Katherine Henert, both of Germany. The father passed away in 1902 and is survived by his wife. Mr. and Mrs. Kersten have become the parents of a son, Clarence H., born November 25, 1907. The parents are members of the Evangelical church, and Mr. Kersten gives his political allegiance to the republican party. He is a member of Ashton Lodge, No. 977, I. O. O. F., of Ashton, and he and his wife belong to the Rebekahs, of which Mrs. Kersten is now matron. His entire life has been spent in Lee county, where he has become widely and favorably known.

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#### CHARLES EWALD.

A well known resident of Reynolds township is Charles Ewald, who, starting out in life on his own account upon a rented farm, is now the owner of a valuable property of three hundred and twenty acres, splendidly improved with good buildings and all the accessories and conveniences of the model farm of the twentieth century. He was born in Germany, February 5, 1865, and is a son of Henry and Anna Martha (Beck) Ewald, both of whom were natives of Germany. The father was born in Hesse-Cassel, August 5, 1837, and was a son of Martin and Christina (Bogel) Ewald. He was married in Germany in 1864 to Miss Martha Beck and in the year 1873 they crossed the Atlantic with their family, making their way to Ogle county, Illinois, where the father worked at the stonemason's trade, which he had learned and fol-

have seven children: Gertrude Anna, born February 13, 1892; Carrie K., January 4, 1894; Amanda M., September 4, 1896; Mary Alice, April 9, 1899; Clara K., January 26, 1902; George Anton, April 22, 1904; and Lucile D., April 6, 1909.

Mr. and Mrs. Albrecht are members of the German Lutheran church, the services of which they regularly attend and in which organization they take a deep and resultant interest. In his political affiliations Mr. Albrecht is a democrat and, being interested in the cause of education, serves at the present time as one of the school directors of his township. A man of progressive ideas, he has contributed in no small way to the general advancement and prosperity and is highly esteemed for what he has accomplished and those qualities that have made possible his success.

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#### JUSTUS H. HENERT.

A farm of two hundred and forty acres situated on section 16, Reynolds township, pays tribute to the care and labor bestowed upon it by Justus H. Henert, who has there lived since his marriage. He has a wide acquaintance in this county, for he is one of its native sons as well as one of its progressive young farmers. His birth occurred July 2, 1883, in the township in which he still makes his home, his father being George Henert, of whom mention is made on another page of this work. His boyhood days were passed in the usual manner of farm lads, his time being divided between the duties of the schoolroom, the pleasures of the playground and the work of the fields. He continued to assist in the cultivation of the old home place until he reached the age of twenty-three years, when he was married and started out in life on his own account. It was in 1907 that he wedded Miss Emma Kersten, who was born in Ashton township, this county, January 27, 1887, and is a daughter of Hartman F. and Sophia (Newman) Kersten, who were also natives of Lee county and representatives of old pioneer families here. The father is now living in Ashton, but the mother passed away in 1899. They had a family of four children, all of whom survive.

Following his marriage Justus H. Henert began farming on the place where he now lives, having two hundred and forty acres, which is pleasantly and conveniently situated not far from Rochelle and Ashton. The land is arable, and the productiveness



of the soil makes good return for the care and labor which he bestows upon it. In connection with the raising of crops he owns and operates a threshing machine, a corn sheller and a wood saw. His farm is splendidly equipped with all modern farm implements and machinery as well as with good buildings. He makes a specialty of raising and feeding stock and his annual sales of cattle and hogs bring him a gratifying return. Today he has one of the best improved farms in his township, lacking in none of the accessories and conveniences of a model property of the twentieth century. It forms one of the attractive features of the landscape, and it indicates in its well kept appearance the care and attention of a progressive owner.

Unto Mr. and Mrs. Henert have been born two children: Roland H., born January 30, 1909; and Luella C., born December 5, 1912. The parents are well known and have a large circle of warm friends in Reynolds and adjoining townships. Mr. Henert votes with the republican party, but the honors and emoluments of office have had no attraction for him. Fraternally he is connected with the Modern Woodmen of America at Ashton. All of his other interests, however, are made subservient to those of his home and his farm. He gives close application to his business, and his energy, intelligently directed, has brought to him gratifying success.

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#### NATHAN BURHENN.

Prominent among the energetic, successful and progressive farmers of Bradford township is numbered Nathan Burhenn, who, during his entire active life has been engaged in farming here and now owns a valuable property of one hundred and sixty acres on section 2. He was born in this township September 30, 1871, and is a son of Philip and Christine (Achenbremer) Burhenn, natives of Germany. In 1865 the parents crossed the Atlantic to America and made their home in Lee county, Illinois. They now make their home in Franklin Grove, this county. They became the parents of ten children, all of whom survive.

Nathan Burhenn grew up on his father's farm and aided in its operation from an early age. He remained at home until his marriage and then bought a farm on section 21, Bradford township. At the end of seven years he sold this property and pur-

Mr. and Mrs. Reitz attend the Evangelical church and along political lines the former is a republican. Mr. Reitz is a modern representative of agricultural interests in Lee county and is to be numbered among the successful men along that line of occupation.

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### GEORGE HENERT.

In George Henert were exhibited the sterling traits of perseverance, adaptability and enterprise which are characteristic of the German race and after coming to the new world, in which he started out empty-handed, he steadily advanced in a business way until he was the owner of a valuable farm of four hundred acres. His parents were Justus and Anna Henert, also natives of Germany. On coming to the United States they made their way into the interior of the country, settling in Lee county, Illinois, where they lived until called to their final rest. In their family were ten children, five of whom survive.

George Henert spent the days of his boyhood and youth under the parental roof with the usual experiences of the lad who is reared upon a farm, his education being acquired in the public schools, while under his father's direction he was trained in all the work that is a factor in the development and cultivation of the fields. In 1879 he was united in marriage to Miss Anna K. Griese, who was born in Germany, December 17, 1858, and is a daughter of John and Dora E. (Kleinschmidt) Griese, who were likewise natives of the fatherland. The year 1862 witnessed their arrival in Lee county, at which time they established their home in Reynolds township, where they resided until called to their final rest. Unto them were born ten children, of whom four are yet living.

Mr. and Mrs. Henert began their domestic life in Reynolds township, establishing their home upon a farm, and as the years passed by our subject proved himself a capable and progressive agriculturist, developing his fields according to modern methods. He kept adding to his land from time to time as his financial resources increased until he was the owner of four hundred acres. He improved the place with splendid buildings, barns and sheds, furnishing ample shelter for grain and stock, while the latest improved farm machinery facilitated the work of the fields. When a task was to be accomplished he did



GEORGE HENERT AND FAMILY

not falter. The work nearest his hand was that which was first done and thus he won success.

Unto Mr. and Mrs. Henert were born six children. Anna E., who was born August 24, 1880, died on the 7th of March, 1885. Justus H., born July 2, 1883, is a farmer of this county. Minnie D. is the wife of Arthur Kersten. The fourth child died in infancy. Rose E. became the wife of Harvey Heibenthal; and William G., born March 12, 1894, completes the family. The husband and father died in 1901 and was laid to rest in Reynolds cemetery, leaving a widow and four children to mourn his loss. Mrs. Henert still owns and manages the farm of four hundred acres, which is situated on sections 21, 22, 15 and 16, Reynolds township. She makes a specialty of raising and feeding hogs and derives a substantial income from the business. She possesses sound judgment as well as energy and determination and her German thrift has enabled her to take up the work laid down by her husband and carry it forward to successful completion. She deserves much credit for what she is accomplishing and she is highly esteemed in Reynolds township and throughout the county wherever she is known.

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#### WILLIAM C. THOMPSON.

William C. Thompson, occupying the position of county clerk since 1902, is accounted one of the most trustworthy and capable public officials, which statement finds verification in the fact that he has been again and again elected to the position. Lee county numbers him among her native sons, his birth having here occurred on the 28th of June, 1868, his parents being James H. and Catherine J. Thompson. They were early settlers of the county, the father coming from Pennsylvania to Illinois in 1852. The paternal grandfather died when James H. Thompson was but nine years of age and his mother afterward became the wife of John Colville, who settled in Lee county about 1833. He was one of the earliest settlers, the work of improvement and development being scarcely begun when he took up his abode in this part of the state. He bore an active and helpful part in advancing the interests of civilization and was accounted one of the valued citizens of his community. For forty years he served as postmaster of Paw Paw. James H. Thompson was reared upon

for the uplift and betterment of humanity along moral, intellectual and material lines. He is one of the most highly respected citizens of Paw Paw and the esteem and regard which he so freely enjoys are readily given in response to his professional attainments, his disinterested public spirit and those qualities of his character which have made possible his success.

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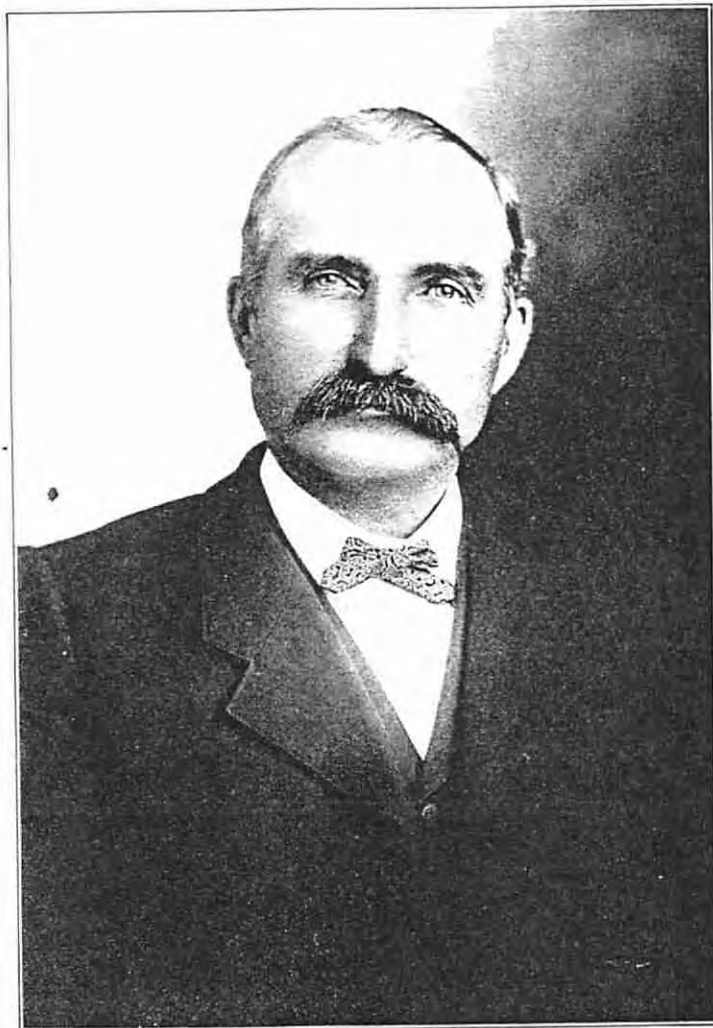
### WALLACE C. YENERICH.

Wallace C. Yenerich holds a position of distinctive precedence in financial circles of Lee county as president of the Farmers State Bank of Ashton, an institution which he aided in organizing and which his executive power and ability as a financier has placed among the leading banks in this part of the state. He was born in Buffalo, New York, February 14, 1855, his parents being George H. and Elizabeth Yenerich, natives of Germany.

Wallace C. Yenerich acquired his education in the public schools of Wyoming township, this county, and at Northwestern College at Naperville, Illinois. After completing his studies he turned his attention to farming in Wyoming township and later moved to Ashton township, where he followed agricultural pursuits until the fall of 1905. At that time, in partnership with his eldest son, E. J. Yenerich, he opened a bank at Whitten, Iowa, and he has since been president of this institution. In April, 1907, with others Mr. Yenerich organized the Farmers State Bank of Ashton, Illinois, and was elected president, an office which he has held continuously since that time. In a responsible and difficult position he has proved capable, farsighted and reliable, promoting the interests of the bank in a progressive and practical manner and winning recognition for himself as a successful financier. He controls valuable property interests, owning nearly one thousand acres of land, most of which lies in Lee county. He has stock in several banks in Minnesota and was at one time the owner of the majority of the stock in the Farmers State Bank of Ashton. He now holds a majority of the stock in the Whitten Bank at Whitten, Iowa.

In Reynolds township, this county, on the 4th of December, 1879, Mr. Yenerich was united in marriage to Miss Catherina Kersten, a daughter of John and Christina Kersten, the former a large land holder in that locality. Mr. and Mrs. Yenerich have become





WALLACE C. YENERICH



the parents of the following children: Erven John; Benjamin G., who married Elma Johnson; Ellen Lizzie, the wife of C. F. Heibenthal; Charles Otis; Maybelle; and Wesley H.

Mr. Yenerich is a member of the United Evangelical church at Ashton and is active in religious circles, holding the office of Sunday-school superintendent for many years and being now a teacher of the adult Bible class. He has lived in Lee county since his childhood and his long residence here has made him widely and favorably known. In his early life he was one of the most successful farmers in this part of the state and held the world's record for husking corn and putting it into the crib in the shortest possible time. Mr. Yenerich accomplished this feat on the 24th of November, 1879, husking and putting away one hundred and forty-eight and one-quarter bushels at eighty pounds to the bushel between sunrise and sunset. Mr. Yenerich is a progressive republican in his political beliefs and interested in public affairs, although not active as an office seeker. His name stands as a synonym for integrity and honor in business circles of Ashton and is held in high esteem and respect wherever it is known.

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#### J. A. ROPER.

Among the more recently established business enterprises of importance in Dixon is the manufacturing plant of the Roper Furniture Company, which was opened in 1910. It is today one of the leading productive industries of the city, contributing in large measure to the material growth and substantial development of Dixon. At its head is J. A. Roper and associated with him are two of his sons. The Roper family has long been established in the middle west. The parents of J. A. Roper removed from New York to Michigan in the early '40s. The father was a molder by trade and was a fellow workman on the molding floor with the late James Oliver of South Bend, the multi-millionaire plow manufacturer. J. A. Roper was born in Michigan in 1846 and the same year the family removed from that state to Indiana. His youthful days were devoted to the acquirement of a public school education before the war which was supplemented by a course of study in Asbury University after the war. He was but a lad of fourteen years when he joined the army, enlisting the fall of 1861 as a member of Company F, Forty-eighth

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GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

is identified with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Knights of Pythias and the Modern Woodmen of America. He has a wide circle of acquaintances in the community where his entire life has been spent and is best liked where he is best known—a fact indicative of qualities of character that are commendable, ever commanding respect and regard.

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### ERVEN JOHN YENERICH.

Erven John Yenerich, well known in financial circles of Lee county as cashier of the Farmers State Bank of Ashton and active also in the public life of the community, was born in Reynolds township, this county, March 26, 1881, a son of Wallace C. and Catherina (Kersten) Yenerich. He acquired his preliminary education in the Ashton public schools and later entered Dixon College, from which he was graduated June 24, 1901. His entire active life has been devoted to the banking business. In 1905 he entered the Whitten Bank at Whitten, Iowa, as cashier, serving in that capacity until April 11, 1907. In that year the Farmers State Bank of Ashton was organized and Mr. Yenerich was appointed cashier, a responsible position which he has since creditably and ably filled. He owns a great deal of valuable property, including tracts of land in Lyman county, South Dakota, city property in Somonauk, Illinois, and valuable holdings in Ashton. In addition to his position of cashier he also holds stock in the Farmers State Bank.

Although Mr. Yenerich is a resourceful, farsighted and careful financier, understanding banking in principle and detail, his interests have not by any means been confined to his business, but have extended to many other fields, notably that of public service. A republican in his political beliefs, he has been very active in the work of his party and has held various positions of trust and responsibility. From 1905 until 1907 he was mayor of Whitten, Iowa, his administration being constructive, progressive and businesslike and he is at present a member of the board of aldermen of Ashton, Illinois, an office to which he was elected in the spring of 1913. He is a member of the United Evangelical church, of Ashton, serving as assistant Sunday school superintendent since 1910 and he has extensive and important fraternal affiliations, being a member of Ashton Lodge, No. 531, A. F. & A. M.; Nathan



ERVEN J. YENERICH

Whitney Chapter, No. 129, R. A. M.; Dixon Commandery, K. T.; and Tebala Temple, A. A. O. N. M. S., Rockford, Illinois. He is affiliated also with Ashton Lodge, No. 977, I. O. O. F., and has been its secretary since its organization January 21, 1910.

In all relations of life in which he has been found, Mr. Yenerich has proven capable and progressive and although he is still a young man, is numbered among the substantial and representative citizens of his community.

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### W. E. TREIN.

The true measure of success is determined by what one has accomplished and judged by this standard W. E. Trein is a successful man, for he started out in life without any special advantages and is today the leading jeweler of Dixon. His success from the beginning of his connection with his present business has been uniform and rapid and yet an analysis of his life work shows that he has utilized only such qualities as others may cultivate—determination, energy and perseverance. He was born in Dixon in 1873 and is a son of Jacob and Mary Trein, who came to this city and cast in their lot with its early residents. The father, who was a blacksmith by trade, had one of the early shops of the town and was later with the Van & Means carriage shop as foreman for a long period. He was thus a well known representative of industrial life in the community and his efforts gave an impetus to business activity. He has now passed away but his widow still survives and yet makes her home in Dixon.

When W. E. Trein started out on his own account he had received such education as the public schools of the city afforded. He felt it incumbent upon him, however, to earn his own living and he sought and obtained employment in the jewelry store of Dodge & Kling. Later he entered the employ of G. O. Windell and while thus connected gained a comprehensive knowledge of the business in principle and detail. The careful husbanding of his resources brought him at length sufficient capital to enable him to carry on the business alone and in 1901 he opened a jewelry store in Ashton, Illinois, which he conducted for five years, selling out there in 1906. He then returned to Dixon and purchased a half interest in the store of his former employer, G. O. Windell. Subsequently he bought out E. L. Kling and is today proprietor of

home with his mother in Marion township, where he has carried on general agricultural pursuits continuously and successfully since. He is engaged in mixed farming and the raising of horses, cattle and hogs. The residence and some other buildings which stand on the property were erected by his grandfather, an early pioneer, who settled on this farm in 1850, and became an early agriculturist and esteemed citizen of the community.

In politics Mr. McCarty is a staunch republican, and for two years he ably discharged the duties devolving upon him in the capacity of clerk of Marion township. Fraternally he is identified with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Modern Woodmen of America and the Royal Neighbors. A man of genuine personal worth and high standards of integrity, he commands the sincere regard and esteem of all who come in contact with him and in the course of his lifelong residence in Lee county has proved his loyalty in citizenship, his reliability in business and his fidelity to all the ties and obligations of life.

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#### HENRY KERSTEN.

Henry Kersten is one of the self-made men of Lee county. He had no special assistance when he started out in life on his own account, but in the course of years, through his well directed efforts and careful management, he has become the owner of four hundred acres of valuable land in Reynolds township. It was in this township that he was born, March 1, 1864, his parents being George and Christina Kersten, both of whom were natives of Germany. They came to America in the '50s and journeyed across the country until they reached Lee county, Illinois, where the father still makes his home, residing now in Ashton. The mother passed away in the late '70s, after which George Kersten married a second and third time, his third union being with Mrs. Emma Brundenburg. By his first marriage there were eleven children and by the second marriage there were three children, of whom two yet survive.

Henry Kersten spent the days of his boyhood and youth under the parental roof and after attaining his majority started out in the world on his own account. He then rented land for four years, after which he purchased the farm upon which he now resides, comprising one hundred and sixty acres on section 16,



Reynolds township. From the beginning his success has continued, owing to the fact that he has never been afraid of hard work. He has labored diligently and persistently and has added to his holdings from time to time. He purchased eighty acres on section 8 and afterward invested in one hundred and sixty acres on section 17, Reynolds township. He has now altogether four hundred acres of rich and valuable land worth at least two hundred dollars per acre. He displays excellent management in the use of the fields, producing therefrom the best possible crops owing to his progressive methods of farming. He rotates his crops, keeps his soil in good condition and the harvests which he annually garners bring to him a good financial return.

On the 22d of March, 1888, Mr. Kersten was united in marriage to Miss Catherine Newman, who was born in Lee county, Illinois, and is a daughter of John and Martha (Wagner) Newman, both of whom were natives of Germany and came to the United States at an early date. They settled in Lee county, Illinois, and here continued to make their home until they were called from this life. Mr. and Mrs. Kersten became the parents of five children: Pearl Caroline, Harry J., Elmer H., Ervin H. and Rosa M. The parents hold membership in the Evangelical church, and Mr. Kersten is actively interested in its work. He is now serving as one of the church trustees and is treasurer of the Sunday school. He votes with the republican party and has filled the office of pathmaster. He has also been school director and is interested in everything that pertains to the general welfare along the lines of material, intellectual and moral progress.

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### JOHN P. DEVINE.

The bar of Lee county finds a worthy representative in John P. Devine, who has practiced continuously in Dixon since 1905. He came to the starting point of his career well equipped with certain qualities indispensable to the successful lawyer—a well trained mind, the habit of careful analysis and logical reasoning and a recognition of the fact that devotion to a client's interests is one of the elements of enduring success. Lee county numbers him among her native sons, his birth having occurred within her borders on the 22d of January, 1878. His father, James Devine, was born in Ireland and on coming to Illinois settled in Whiteside county





HENRY KERSTEN AND FAMILY

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In 1887 Mr. Ventler was united in marriage to Miss Martha Albrecht, a native of Bradford township, this county, and they became the parents of seven children: Clara K., who was born December 16, 1887, and is the wife of Harry Schafer; Edward A., born January 9, 1890; Mollie K., born May 28, 1892; Oliver A., born August 22, 1895; George, who was born November 28, 1897, and who died in December of the same year; Amanda, born July 16, 1901; and Florence K., born June 13, 1906.

Mr. and Mrs. Ventler are members of the Lutheran church. They are well known in the community where they reside and have an extensive circle of warm friends. In his political views Mr. Ventler is a republican and is now serving as township assessor and has been school director. He is interested in everything that pertains to the advancement and improvement of his section of the state and especially in progress along agricultural lines. He is a self-made man, deserving much credit for what he has accomplished, for since attaining his majority he has made substantial progress and is one of the leading farmers of his district.

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#### HARVEY W. HEIBENTHAL.

Harvey W. Heibenthal, engaged in general farming and stock-raising upon two hundred and forty acres of land on section 23, Bradford township, was born upon this property March 2, 1886. He is a son of William and Christina (Kersten) Heibenthal, natives of Lee county and residents of Ashton. In their family were seven children, of whom five are still living, as follows: Harvey W., of this review; Della, the wife of Fred Tadd; and Alta, Ada and Clarence, at home. Mr. and Mrs. Heibenthal lost two daughters, Hattie and Clara.

Harvey W. Heibenthal grew up on his father's farm in Bradford township and was reared to farm life, becoming early familiar with the best and most practical agricultural methods. He married in 1911 and afterward rented the homestead, whereon he has since resided. This comprises two hundred and forty acres of excellent land on section 23, Bradford township, and Mr. Heibenthal has carried forward the work of its development and improvement along progressive and modern lines, making it increase in value and productiveness year by year. He makes a

specialty of raising and feeding cattle and has extensive interests along this line.

In 1911 Mr. Heibenthal married Miss Rose E. Henert, a daughter of George and Anna K. (Griese) Henert, natives of Germany. The parents came to America at an early date and lived for many years in Lee county, where the father passed away in 1901. Mr. Heibenthal is a republican in his political beliefs and is connected fraternally with Lodge No. 977, I. O. O. F., and the Rebekahs. His wife is also a member of the latter organization. Both are well known in Bradford township, and they have an extensive circle of friends within the borders of Lee county.

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### WILLIAM SANDROCK.

William Sandrock is numbered among the citizens of Lee county who owe their success entirely to their perseverance, determination and industry. He started out in life empty-handed, but he recognized the fact that success is due to the close application and diligence of the individual and in employing these qualities he has worked his way steadily upward. He now owns a fine farm on section 29, Reynolds township, and it was upon this farm that he was born February 8, 1871. He is a son of George and Martha E. (Thiele) Sandrock, both of whom were natives of Germany. They came to America in 1848 and cast in their lot with the early settlers of Lee county, contributing to the development and progress of their locality as the years passed on. They had a family of five children and with the exception of Charles, all are yet living.

The boyhood of William Sandrock was spent upon the farm which is now his home and which is endeared to him through the associations of youth and of manhood. At the usual age he entered the public schools and mastered the branches of learning therein taught. He was twenty-two years of age when, in 1893, he was united in marriage to Miss Anna C. Kersten, who was born in Ashton township, Lee county, and is a daughter of Hartman and Anna E. Kersten, both of whom were natives of Germany, whence they came to America in early life. They too made Lee county their destination and the father continued his residence here until his demise. He is survived by his wife, who is living in Ashton.

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WILLIAM SANDROCK



Following his marriage William Sandrock rented the old homestead for two years, during which period he carefully saved his earnings and was thus enabled to purchase the old home property comprising two hundred and forty acres of rich and productive land on section 29, Reynolds township. His labors have since wrought many changes in the appearance of the place. He has erected a fine and commodious residence, has built barns and sheds for the shelter of grain and stock and has added all the modern equipments and improved machinery which so greatly facilitate farm work. The actual work of the fields has been given over to a tenant and Mr. Sandrock lives practically retired. He also owns six hundred and forty acres of land in Canada, and the success which has crowned his efforts is the merited reward of his perseverance of purpose and his unfaltering labor.

Unto Mr. and Mrs. Sandrock have been born three children: Lydia M., who was born October 6, 1895; Joy William, born January 13, 1906; and Ray William, born August 30, 1908. The parents are members of the Evangelical Association, and Mr. Sandrock is president of the board of trustees and superintendent of the Sunday school. His political allegiance is given to the republican party, but he has never sought nor held political office. He served, however, for four terms as school director, and he believes in giving to children the opportunity for acquiring a good education which will serve as a preparation for life's practical and responsible duties. A lifelong resident of this county, residing always on the farm which is yet his home, he is well known in this section of the state and that his life has been a commendable one is indicated by the warm regard in which he is uniformly held.

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#### JOHN P. FASSIG.

The success which came to John P. Fassig in former years now enables him to live retired. He took up his abode in West Brooklyn in the spring of 1913, at which time he erected his present pleasant and commodious residence and the barns and sheds upon his place. Prior to that time he had carried on general agricultural pursuits. A native of Lee county, he was born on section 17, Brooklyn township, March 23, 1860, his parents being Phillip and Charlotte (Erbes) Fassig, the former being born June 1, 1822, and the latter August 24, 1825. The father came to





REYNOLDS EVANGELICAL CHURCH, NEAR ASHTON



MAIN STREET, WEST, ASHTON

## CHAPTER XIX

### ASHTON TOWNSHIP

And here is another resource of old Inlet! Until 1861 it was included in Bradford township. In 1861, it was set off by itself. It contains but one-half a government township.

Ashton was not settled early for the reason that, knowing the land was exceedingly rich and fertile, speculators later bought up nearly the whole township. Not a single settler is known to have settled here in the thirties and even not until the late forties when in 1848, Erastus Anderson settled here. A few weeks later his brother Timothy followed. In December their father followed.

In 1849 a man named Hubbard settled in the western part of the township, and in 1852 Daniel Suter located in the town and so did H. Sanders.

Another reason for the absence of settlers was the lack of timber. Old settlers demanded fuel. They feared the prairies over which the winds whistled. Then too, there was no great road or trail through that section and naturally settlers would not seek the country so long as claims nearer the trail were to be had.

The entrance of the Galena and Chicago Union railroad in 1854, gave this region its first impetus.

The first church erected in Ashton was the Methodist, in 1863. It was a temporary building to hold down the donation of a lot until a better could be built. The second church was a Free Methodist Church built in 1864 and it is claimed for itself to be the first of that denomination to be built in the state. Among the first members were Jonathan Dake, Sidney and Melville Beach, Sylvester Forbes, Charles Butolpk, Isaac Martin, Samuel Walker, James Reed, William Martin; Rev. J. G. Terrol was the first pastor.

The third church was built in 1866 by the Catholic people with a membership of fifty. The Christian Church was built in 1868.

Among its first members were F. Nettleton, J. P. Taylor and Peter Plantz. At first the meetings were held in a schoolhouse.

The German Baptist church was built just outside of the village to the south in 1866.

In 1877 the Presbyterians erected their church. Their first minister was Rev. S. Vale. Among the earliest members were Samuel F. Mills, Nathan A. Petrie and Messrs. Pollock, Griffith, Huston and Brewer.

Ashton is a wonderful little city. Beginning with 1863 it has been visited several times with very destructive fires. The grain elevator, loss \$2,000 and the flouring mills, loss \$60,000, were burned. In 1871, the railroad property, which consisted of two tanks, the depot and a coal house with 1,200 tons of coal were consumed. A lumberyard and four dwelling houses went too. The coal house was the origin. Loss \$75,000. In 1874 the hay press and an elevator were burned; loss \$30,000.

Several tragedies have been enacted in Ashton, of the most atrocious character. A preacher named Samuel P. McGhee, a married man, in 1877 became infatuated with another woman. By the use of strychnine, administered in small quantities he put his wife out of the way. When first taken ill, the doctor was called. He attended her constantly, but the trouble was not discovered until later. The last dose was administered by the husband just before he left for church to preach and hold his usual Sunday services. He was arrested at once and placed in jail. At first he tried to fasten the blame on his fourteen-year-old daughter, and he succeeded in having her sign an acknowledgment to that effect. But the jury did not believe him. He was seen to throw the package containing the last dose on an awning. It was recovered and used in evidence.

In this trial which lasted about a week before Judge Heaton and a jury, Judge John V. Eustace defended the prisoner. As already stated it was one of the noted trials in the state, and Judge Eustace presented a masterful defence. If he had not, the verdict of guilty and fourteen years, would have been for life or hanging.

McGhee was a sleek fellow; his long silky beard almost black, was regarded with the same affection that the peacock has for his brilliant tail. During all the long trial, he stroked it continually. The other tragedy was enacted but recently Aug. 18, 1912. It was a frightful one.

Warren Sanders had married Westanna Griffith, a young girl, almost young enough to be classed a child. She was handsome.

In time a child was born, little Naomi. Later the couple parted. Sanders lacked the knack of getting along in the world. At first the father-in-law permitted him to occupy the old home farm.

He did not succeed there and experimented with other pursuits in town. At last Mrs. Sanders, left him and with the child, went to live with her parents. Reconcilements were effected, but for no lasting time. About a year before the tragedy occurred, Mrs. Sanders went to Chicago to seek employment. Sanders followed and for a short while they lived together. Another separation followed. Mrs. Sanders procured a divorce. Later the decree was reopened and there the matter stood, when learning from the daughter at Ashton, that his wife was to return to Ashton that night for a visit, Sanders waited till the train arrived that night, about 1 o'clock, and when his wife alighted, he deliberately shot her two times and she dropped dead on the station platform. Then turning to his mother-in-law, Mrs. Melva Griffith, who had brought the little daughter, Naomi, down to the train, he shot the mother-in-law twice, and then surrendered himself. He pleaded guilty to the indictment for murder and Judge Farrand sentenced him to life imprisonment. Mr. Harry Edwards made a remarkably able prosecution, and Mr. John E. Erwin made a brilliant defense. Ashton is one of the richest communities in this part of the state. Way back in the sixties, Mills & Petrie sold \$109,000 worth of general merchandise in one year in Ashton and today in the little village the Ashton bank presents a statement of three-quarters of a million dollars, almost. Two of the very oldest, almost the very first business men of Ashton live there today. They are Samuel F. Mills and Nathan A. Petrie.

In 1854 Mr. Mills came here and engaged in the grain and lumber trade. In 1858 Mr. Petrie, his cousin, joined him and ever since the lives of those two gentlemen have been wrapped up as one. For years it was their custom to dress alike; to wear moustaches alike. They were married on the same evening, and for most of their married lives, they lived together. Now Mr. Mills is eighty-three years old and the devotion of Mr. Petrie, twelve years his junior, is even more beautiful than Jonathan's devotion to David.

About two years ago Mrs. Mills died. Mr. Mills and she had returned to the old family home in Parrish, New York, where, retired, the comforts of the old home and the glamour of childhood scenes might be enjoyed. On the death of Mrs. Mills, the husband



returned to Ashton, where, though somewhat infirm, he enjoys the atmosphere of his early successes.

In 1861, these gentlemen gave up the grain business for general merchandizing. In this they made fortunes. In 1867 they entered the banking business. A few years ago they incorporated as The Ashton Bank.

Sidney Beach came out to Ogle county in 1838, later he moved across the line to Ashton; James King came to Bradford in 1854, later he moved into Ashton; Peter Plantz moved from Ogle county into Ashton in 1856; Melville Beach, 1852; Riley Paddock settled in Ogle county in 1837, later he moved to Ashton; Erastus Anderson settled in Ogle county in 1846; in 1848 he moved to Ashton township; Henry Saunders, Jr., came here from Ogle county. Thus it will be seen that most of the first settlers moved from Ogle county, immediately north, and Bradford, immediately south.

What Kalamazoo is to the celery market, Ashton promises to be to the asparagus market.

About twelve years ago, Mr. Benton Drummond planted seven acres to asparagus. The next year he planted five acres, making a total of twelve acres.

In three years time after planting, the grass began to yield a crop for market. By careful tillage and very heavy enrichments each year, the field now yields annually three thousand cases of choice grass. During the season Mr. Drummond hires seven people to cut and pack this grass. At first he shipped to Chicago, but the quality of his product spread so rapidly that very soon he was deluged with offers in other places, and latterly, all of his shipments have been made to Milwaukee.

Mr. Drummond's grass is labeled "The Drummond Grass," and is known and prized in every asparagus market.

In every crate there are twenty-four boxes. Every afternoon the grass is shipped on the four o'clock east bound train and arrives that evening in Milwaukee.

Since Mr. Drummond's success has become so pronounced, eight others have planted fields, so that now, Ashton furnishes about nine-tenths of the asparagus which goes into the Chicago market.

#### ASHTON OF TODAY

Sitting snugly in the midst of land, a piece of which sold recently for \$300 per acre, Ashton should not be blamed if she were



vain. But she's not. A more hospitable people cannot be found in the county than in Ashton.

The people are a church going, industrious and well to do people. There are no saloons here and there have been none for a long time. There are about one thousand people here at present I am told. Ashton is the home of several fraternal orders. Ashton Lodge, 977, I. O. O. F., is a very prosperous body. Frank Hart is noble grand; Arthur Dugdale is vice grand; E. J. Yenerick is secretary and Faust Boyd is treasurer. Rebekah Lodge, 497, has a large membership. Its officers are as follows: Mrs. Lura Dugdale, noble grand; Mrs. Mary Gilbert, vice grand; Mrs. Myrtle Zeller, past grand; Mrs. Ida Bassler, secretary; Mrs. Olga Howey, treasurer; Miss Clara Bode, warden; Miss Lena Bode, conductor; Mrs. Alice Hamm, chaplain; Mrs. Dora Putman, R. S. N. G.; Miss Hattie Brown, L. S. N. G.; Mrs. Ora Beach, R. S. V. G.; Miss Gertrude Fell, L. S. V. G.; Miss Lucy Hart, inside guard; Mr. John Vaupel, outside guard.

Following is the roster of the officers of the R. N. A., Myrtle Dade Camp 6061: Mrs. Earl Howey, oracle; Mrs. George Van Ness, vice oracle; Mrs. George Putman, past oracle; Mrs. Adam Eisenberg, chancellor; Miss Minnie Aschenbrenner, recorder; Miss Ida Eisenberg, receiver; George Putman, manager; Mrs. Roland Eisenberg, marshall; Mrs. John Weishaar, inside sentinel; Mrs. Conrad Smith, outside sentinel.

The Masonic body is very strong. Following are the officers of Ashton Lodge, 531, A. F. & A. M.: John Drummond, worshipful master; Carl Schade, senior warden; Ralph S. Charters, junior warden; George R. Charters, treasurer; Roy W. Jeter, secretary; Charles Hunter, senior deacon; Jacob B. Farver, junior deacon; Fred C. Mall, senior steward; Paul W. Charters, junior steward; Laban T. Moore, marshall; Fred A. Richardson, chaplain; John D. Charters, organist; Charles Tuck, tyler.

O. E. S.: Mrs. Lewis Sindlinger, W. M.; M. N. Glenn, W. P.; Mrs. Ed Chadwick, Associate M.; Mrs. Doll Orner, secretary; Mrs. Joseph Wetzel, treasurer.

M. W. A., Camp No. 48: George Putman is V. C.; R. J. Dean, clerk; Jo Mall, banker.

Mystic Workers: W. F. Klingebiel, prefect; Miss Lena M. Howard, secretary; John Oesterheld, banker.

The Ashton churches are all handsome structures. Of the Methodist Episcopal church, Rev. A. E. Ullrich is pastor. The Sunday school of this church is a marvel. Ralph J. Dean is the

very able superintendent. The Men's class of Mr. A. W. Rosecrans has a membership of 85 men and the average attendance is 50. In the school there are 201 members.

Of the Presbyterian church, Rev. McWherter is the pastor. He presides over the Franklin Grove church, too, I understand. Rev. Mack is the pastor of the Lutheran church. All of these buildings are frame. The United Evangelical, German, is a brick structure and Rev. George Walter is the pastor. Of the Catholic church, the pastor at Rochelle ministers to its members. Thus it will be seen why Ashton enjoys so much comfort and why so many good things abound there. The schools too are of the highest order.

The new school building which cost \$35,000 is the best equipped school building in the county by all odds. It is positively fire proof. It was occupied Dec. 8, last. The present enrollment is 185. There are eight grades and a four-year high school course. Diplomas from this school are recognized by the colleges and universities which of itself speaks volumes for the high character of the Ashton schools. There are three teachers in the high school courses, Prof. J. Nofsinger, superintendent; Miss Eva Nelch, principal and Miss Alice Eddy, assistant principal. In the four lower rooms where eight grades are taught, the teachers are John Absher, Miss Minnie Schade, Mrs. Pearl Billmire and Miss Lena Bode.

The members of the school board are S. T. Zeller, president; Dr. H. A. Bremmer, clerk, and E. C. Shippee.

While dwelling on the schools I may as well give the following historical sketch written in 1909:

"More than a half a century has passed since the educational interests of the village of Ashton began. The early inhabitants of the village were largely of Irish descent. To the north it was entirely American while to the south there were some English people and a small settlement of French. The thrifty German population is of more recent years. No very learned or cultured classes seem to have gilded the fair name of Ashton in an early day. Most emphatically the people of today are descendants of the common people, the tillers of the soil, of which we have no regrets to express.

"As early as 1859 a school election was held in the village of Ogle and elected James Brecumer, Daniel Suter and George Glenn as directors. The records have it that the first school in the place where Ashton now stands was taught by J. A. Andrus who acted

in this capacity for several terms. The first assistant was David A. Glenn. Among the early assistants were Maria Bradstreet, Miss Kate Buck, who taught for the stated sum of \$10 per month, and Miss Margaret Cartwright who was engaged for \$12.50 per month and furnish her own board. Miles Tennyck and George Brewer were also among the early teachers of the school. The above teachers taught in an old stone schoolhouse with a frame wing located on the south side of the present school lot.

"In 1860 the board of trustees were C. J. Wilson, J. B. Williams and D. G. Shottenkirk.

"The first school treasurer was Aaron Weeks.

"Owing to the needs and increasing demand for better school advantages there was considerable discussion as to the possibility of a new school building. The agitation grew and found hearty cooperation among the more progressive people of the village. These affairs took definite shape when an election was held which resulted in the decision for a new building. There was considerable contention over a location for the new building. Two sites were under consideration by the people. One side favored the site where the present school building is and the other the more elevated location where the Catholic church now stands. After a considerable excitement over the contending locations the old one was chosen and was made larger by the district purchasing the lot to the north which made the present school grounds. The trustees at the time of the new building were Henry Glenn, Henry Bly and Aaron Weeks. W. H. Emerson was clerk when the school site was chosen.

"The material for the building was obtained in the quarry on the north edge of the village. James Quick superintended the work and a Chicago architect designed the style of the building. Among those that worked upon the building were Isaac Earl, Wilburn Earl, and J. S. Thompson; the latter making the pattern work for the stone. There is no accurate record as to the actual cost of the building, but upon inquiry we find that a bond of \$19,000 was given by the district and other additional expenses brought the cost up to \$23,000. The building was completed in the fall of 1869 and school was begun in the new building the first Monday after New Years, 1870, with H. M. Halleck as principal.

"No town in this part of the state could boast of better school advantages at this time than Ashton. The building was a monument to the district and was considered superior to any in this section of the country. Foreign scholars from a radius of many



miles were enrolled as members of the Ashton High School, there being so many that it was necessary to utilize a portion of the upper hall for a part of the scholars. During the history of the school which covers a period of forty years there have been seventeen principals. The first high school assistant was Miss Olive Rogers. Among the most successful of the early principals were M. E. Phillips, A. W. Rosecrans and H. V. Baldwin. There are other good teachers that preceded and followed these and did their share towards raising the school to a higher standard, but there can be no valid objection in giving these men the honor of such successful effort.

"Many able scholars and professional men have had their preparatory work in this school. The first class that graduated from the school was under M. E. Phillips in 1874. The class consisted of Lyman Booth, Mrs. Westana Glenn Rosecrans and Mrs. Maggie Brown Byers. Since that time many good classes have been graduated from the school whose members are proud that the Ashton High School is their alma mater. The Ashton High School Alumni Association is a flourishing organization and its influence will be a force for good for the school.

"The influence of the former students and the general interest of the patrons of the school and the people of the village is the best evidence of the spirit and success of the school.

"Perhaps some of the older inhabitants of the village, as well as the younger generation, will be interested in the above sketch. To the critical reader some errors may be detected in data and names, but often school records are poorly kept and errors in dates are very frequent and sometimes annoyingly so, and for this reason much of the information has been obtained from inquiry. Mere facts have only been stated and some one after me has the field for embellishment."

Possibly another reason why Ashton enjoys so much praise as not only a live village but one so mighty clean, is because its municipal affairs are conserved so creditably by its officers: J. B. Farver, president; Ralph J. Dean, clerk; Harry Pierce, E. J. Yenerick, Clifford Knapp, Charles Tuck, Adam Strabe and J. W. Griesse, trustees. Ashton township and its surrounding territory are regarded as a German community very largely and that of itself assures Ashton of wealth and sturdiness of character.

Charles Heibenthal is supervisor; Fred Beach is collector; S. T. Zeller, Sr., is assessor and the highway commissioners are C.

W. Bowers, Henry Reitz and Earl Howey. George Stephan is town clerk.

Naturally in listing the business houses of a place, the banks come into view first. The Ashton Bank is a very prosperous concern. Its history has been noticed already. Its published report Jan. 20th, last, shows loans, \$420,000; bonds, \$62,000; cash means, \$79,000. Its capital stock is \$50,000 and its surplus is \$25,000. Its deposits are \$482,253.10.

The Farmers Bank was organized April 10, 1905. Its president is W. C. Yenerick; vice president, Lewis Sindlinger; cashier, E. J. Yenerick and the directors are W. C. Yenerick, Lewis Sindlinger, John M. Killmer, William Krug and Will Sandrock. The beautiful new building for this bank will be ready for occupancy in a very short while. Thus equipped the Ashton banks will have the finest homes to be found in any small town in the state. By statement dated January 19th, this bank is shown to have a capital stock of \$25,000 and undivided profits of \$3,234.42. Its deposits are \$104,414.21. Its cash means are approximately \$20,000.

At the present time, Ashton markets 450,000 bushels of grain every year. Before the elevators were built down at Middlebury on the electric road which runs from Lee Center, Ashton shipped 650,000 bushels, and inasmuch as the Middlebury houses are run by Ashton people, it might be classed as Ashton grain to this very day.

The two grain elevators of Ashton are run by O. C. Baker and R. W. Jeter.

A little further up the track, Nathan Sanders has his sheep yards. Annually, Mr. Sanders feeds thousands of sheep which are taken off here in transit and he feeds them until they are fully rested from their usually long journey from the West. Sometimes he buys and feeds his own sheep; but he prefers feeding for others. This business amounts to a large profit annually.

The physicians are Drs. William Petersmyer, C. M. Cheadle, H. A. Bremmer, E. M. Sheldon and James Brown. Dr. S. C. Gould is a D. D. S., and so is C. R. Root. H. L. Winder is the veterinarian.

There are no lawyers in Ashton; just why is inexplicable because in the probate court at least, there is a vast amount of legal business for this community to be transacted.

The business houses of the Ashton of today are: A. W. Rosecrans, general store; C. W. Jonker, jeweler; Harry Pierce, barber; G. R. Charters & Son, drugs; Randle & Lake, shoes; M. N.



Glenn, hardware; The Passtime theater, picture show, by Philip Ereich; Conrad Kliebe, butcher; The H. D. Mosher candy store; Mrs. William Fee, gift shop; Jordan & Paddock, blacksmith shop; Carl Wedler, jeweler; J. B. Farver, blacksmith; Philip Ereich, pool room; William Meister, livery; F. H. Boyd, garage; W. J. Sams, blacksmith; J. C. Griffith, lumber and coal; McCade & Weishaar, implements; Charles Bode, harness and shoemaking; Oscar Schade, pool room; Louis Sindlinger, tinner; F. P. Eisenberg, 10 cent novelty store; George Stephan, furniture and undertaking; F. I. Smith, drugs; Adam Faber, lunch room and cigars; E. S. Rosecrans, clothing; W. B. McCrea, grocer; postoffice, Harlow E. Chadwick, postmaster; Clifford Knapp, plumber and auto dealer; Joseph A. Roesler, grocer; William Leslie, implements and coal; Griffith & Moore, automobiles; L. T. Moore, harness and buggies; Ventler and Klingebiel, implements and automobiles; C. S. Kron, hotel and restaurant; G. A. Hamel, general merchandise; George Van Ness, barber; George Geyer, harness; Henry Nelson; William Schade, cigars, paints and oils and C. W. Jonker, jeweler, a very strong array of very strong business men. The Illinois Northern Utilities Company supplies Ashton with electricity and power. Ashton has the only municipal gas plant in the county. The streets are well lighted with 300-candle power electric lights, one on each corner. Cement walks have been laid before every building in Ashton and every vacant lot as well.

In Ashton township there are five quarries from which the very best of sandstone is taken. Once these quarries did a thriving business, but cement now forms so strong a competitor that but little is quarried.

Ashton township and village lead all other communities, except Dixon, and perhaps, Lee Center, with macadam roads. This town has spent large sums of money for roads. Only a short while ago \$20,000 was expended in making hard roads. Every main road in the township has been macadamized. Ashton is blessed with one of the best local newspapers in the State of Illinois. Mr. Ralph J. Dean, the proprietor, makes every train; he is constantly on the alert for locals with the result that every week he gives his readers about eight columns of locals besides a front page full of good matter pertaining to his locality. In connection with his print shop which turns out the very best of job work, Mr. Dean owns the only book store of Ashton. He is a very active wire, a money maker and saver and I put him down as the most comfortable newspaper man in the county.

## CHAPTER XX

### BRADFORD TOWNSHIP

Bradford! Another subdivision of Inlet! In Bradford the best and sturdiest of Lee county's population was started—the Norwegians, now so populous and prosperous; the Germans too started in Bradford.

John Hotzell came here about 1842, and he and Ommen Hillison kept bachelors' hall (separately) a long while before marrying. Christian Reinhart's daughter, Catherine, married Ommen Hillison and later John Aschenbrenner. The mother of Henry W. Hillison and Reinhart Aschenbrenner and Andrew Aschenbrenner came in 1845. Reinhart Gross came in 1847.

The history of the Germans is identical with that of the Norwegians. Friends back home desiring to come to America, came directly to the home of their old friend Hotzell. The latter was hospitable and he cared for them all as one by one and more came over. A day or two was all that was needed; then they sought work and later lands, always under the guidance of Neighbor Hotzell whose counsel was always good. Thus early, Bradford took on its reputation for solidity which ever since has characterized the place. When one speaks of Bradford, he is known to indicate the township where lands always are rising in value until perhaps Bradford is the highest priced land in the county.

At the last session of the board of supervisors, Bradford was honored in the selection of one of its strongest citizens, John J. Wagner, for the office of chairman.

Bradford was settled very early and Inlet was the point from which the settlers scattered into what now is Bradford.

For a long time Bradford contained its present six-mile square area and the present township of Ashton as well, and so it remained until 1861, when Ashton was set off as a township by itself. Brad-

ford obtained its name from Bradford, Pennsylvania, whence many of its population came.

In 1850 the town was organized at the home of Ralph B. Evitts. At the town meeting Elisha Pratt was made chairman, Thomas S. Hulbert, secretary and Charles Starks, moderator; George E. Haskell, justice of the peace, swore them in.

At this meeting Charles Starks was elected supervisor; Ira Brewer, town clerk; E. W. Starks, assessor; Samuel S. Starks, collector; Ralph B. Evitts, overseer of the poor; Sherman Shaw, Stephen Clink and George Yale, highway commissioners; Samuel S. Starks and Daniel Barber, constables; Elisha Pratt and Lafayette Yale, justices; Jesse Woodruff was put in charge of the town's litigation.

Meetings were held in private houses till 1856, when the school-house in Ogle Station, now Ashton, was used.

As in Inlet, Sherman Shaw was of the very first to build in Bradford, and Mr. Whitman in 1838. In 1840 Mr. Shaw built a frame house on the northeast 31. Egbert Shaw has the distinction of being the first white child born in Bradford. Ommen Hillison built a house about 1840. In 1838 Charles Starks came to Inlet and in 1839 laid his claim on east  $\frac{1}{2}$  northwest 32 and the west  $\frac{1}{2}$  northeast 32. The Whipple brothers came in about the same time. Starks began work immediately on his claim and in 1842 moved on it.

George and Milo Yale claimed the northwest 6. In 1842 their father, N. C. Yale, settled on section 1; Jesse Woodruff settled on 32; R. B. Evitts on 29 and C. Bowen settled on 29. Stephen Clink built a stone house.

In 1842 Elias Hulbert claimed south  $\frac{1}{2}$  southeast 19, and very soon thereafter moved upon it. John Owen moved in at about this time.

At the very earliest period Lewis Clapp of Lee Center, firm in his regard for Bradford, took an interest in pushing the welfare of settlers and he furnished money for fully two-thirds of the early settlers to enter their land from the Government. Others moved in rapidly; William Ross, Reinhart Gross, Conrad Reinhart (already named), Conrad Hotzell.

Ira Brewer reached Lee Center township in June, 1843. That same year he bought west  $\frac{1}{2}$  northwest 32 and east  $\frac{1}{2}$  northeast 31, Bradford. In 1845 he built a house, 19x24. He became a very large land owner in this and Lee Center townships. He was one of the fiercest enemies of the banditti which infested Inlet and



his son, George W., owns the very compact which was signed by the regulators of those days.

Among the old settlers not already named were: William S. Frost, 1838; Lorin T. Wellman, 1848; David Wellman, 1853; Harlow A. Williamson, 1850; Philip Runyan, 1850; Peter Eisenberg, 1852; Luther Baldwin, 1852; Edwin Pomeroy, 1844; Frank and Nelson DeWolf, 1837; Berghardt Albrecht, 1855; Edward W. Pomeroy, 1845; C. Bowen, L. Shumway, Samuel Cobel, William, Warren and Stephen Clink, 1841 to 1843; Ralph B. Evitts, 1842; Sherman Shaw, 1839; Elias Hulbert and Ebenezer Whipple, 1842.

The Germans which have predominated in this township ever since they began settling here, predominate today, and the descendants of those pioneers are today rich, almost to the last man. It may be said of them too, that the fortunes of the first settlers have been preserved down to the third and fourth generation.

The homes of Bradford are down-to-date, steam-heated, electric lighted, and automobiles may be found in nearly every family in Bradford. The people are enterprising to an unusual degree and in no greater manner can this enterprise have been exhibited than by the exertions of Reinhart and Andrew Aschenbrenner, sons of Catherine Aschenbrenner who have put over forty thousand dollars into the construction of the Northern Illinois Electric railroad. Only the other day when it went into the hands of a receiver, Andrew Aschenbrenner was made that receiver by the court. This road taps a fertile country and it is the only road in the world which affords the farmer along its line the opportunity to load grain and stock at his door.

Bradford was a pioneer in the formation of a mutual insurance company for members of a particular community and this company, "The Farmers' Mutual Fire Insurance Company," always has been a model. The incorporators were Ira Brewer, Ralph B. Evitts, Thomas S. Hulbert, Charles D. Hart, Valentine Hicks, C. F. Starks and George Hulbert. It was incorporated March 30, 1869. At its first meeting of directors, held in November, 1869, fifty-four applications were received and fifty-one were approved and signed.

For many years Ira Brewer was president of this company, Samuel Dysart, secretary; C. D. Hart, treasurer; William V. Jones, general agent. A million and a quarter dollars of risks have been written, and the losses have been remarkably few.

In the southeastern part of the township the land is low; it was the edge of Inlet swamp. But it has been drained perfectly,

so that it now is valued as high as any other lands in the township.

The people of Bradford always have been of a religious turn, especially the Germans.

As early as 1850, meetings of the Evangelical church of Bradford were held at the house of John Hotzell, who built just over the line in China township. Hotzell fitted up a room for the purpose and very soon a successful Sunday school was started. These were the first German meetings of Lee county. The preachers came from Perkins Grove in Bureau county. A man named McLean was the first; William Kolp was the next. Among the original members of the congregation were: Reinhart Gross, John Aschenbrenner, John Hotzell, the Conrad Reinhart family and the Conrad Hotzell family.

In 1859 a church was built on section 17 at a cost of \$1,300. In 1874 an addition was made and a steeple erected at an additional cost of \$2,700, making a total of \$4,000. The membership today is very strong in both church and Sunday school. Until recently the services were held in the German language.

It may be interesting to know that Edwin Pomeroy introduced the reaper into this community and when he used it in the wheat fields, farmers from far and near came to see it operate.

In writing a history of things and conditions around Inlet, one cannot get away from the good works of Ira Brewer and good old Uncle (George) Russel Linn. There never was a crisis these sturdy pioneers feared to meet. Lighter affairs were managed with the same determination to succeed.

Mr. Brewer understood music. Singing schools were the common source of entertainment in every locality. One day Doctor Welch handed to Mr. Brewer a subscription paper with the request that the latter head it and then circulate it. Mr. Brewer did and very presently Mr. Brewer found himself teaching in six school-houses. The tuning fork used, he fashioned on the anvil of a blacksmith shop.

In 1843, when \$40 had been raised by Daniel Frost and Russel Linn, with which to hire a teacher, it was tendered to Mr. Brewer for a winter's work and he accepted it. He also taught night school.

On one occasion when members of the "Grove Association," had been called together to settle a claim jumping case, Mr. Brewer responded. The case was over on Temperance hill, where a man deliberately jumped a settler's homestead and when the association decided he must leave "at once," he refused.



Uncle Russel Linn rose and said, "Gentlemen, we have come here to make homes for ourselves and our families. The Government has held out inducements for us to come, and we have made our homes, and we intend to defend them if we die on the defence. Then, we hope we have boys that will arise and avenge our death."

The claim jumper saw Uncle Russel and his seven boys and he declared that if he had to kill Uncle Russel and his seven boys before he could obtain possession of the land he would give it up and he did.

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

ORANGE COUNTY CALIFORNIA  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

