

A poor boy with nothing but his own health, strength and unconquerable spirit, and a friendless exile from his native land, at the age of fourteen; a man of large means and a highly respected citizen in the country of his adoption at sixty; this is his record, and it is creditable to our land of great resources and abundant opportunities. But it is far more to his credit, because it has been his native ability, fidelity to duty and determined industry and frugality which have wrought such gratifying results. Others, many of them, have had similar or equal opportunities, but he has taken advantage of his and made the most of them. The people among whom he has lived, labored and succeeded so well recognize his merit and esteem him accordingly as one of their best citizens. He also owns two fine residences in Shelbina.

MORT. D. AYERS.

Orphaned in his infancy, when he was little more than one year old, by the untimely death of his father at the early age of forty-four, and being one of eight children left for the mother to rear and educate, Mort. D. Ayers, now one of the prosperous, progressive and enterprising farmers of Salt River township in this county, was forced to begin the battle of life for himself at an early age, and for years after beginning it found the struggle an arduous and trying one. But he had the make-up of a man of merit and determination, and never lost faith in himself or his ability to win out in the contest, whatever its difficulties.

Mr. Ayers was born at Bay City, Michigan, on May 30, 1867, and is a son of Wright and Clara (Wright) Ayers, natives of Massachusetts, where the father was born in 1824, and where they were married. They had eight children, only two of whom are now living, Mort. D. and his older sister, Mina, the wife of Mr. Middleton, of Allen, Michigan. The father was a carpenter and prospered at his trade, bidding fair to win a competence for himself and his family, when death ended his labors in 1868.

After his death, about one year, that is, in 1869, the mother brought her offspring to Missouri and located in Shelbina. Here the son obtained a limited common school education, and as soon as he completed it immediately engaged in farming and raising live stock on a farm of 120 acres of land three miles east of Shelbina. The career as a farmer which he thus began he has continued to the present time, and in his efforts for advancement has been successful, winning a comfortable estate through his persistent and judiciously applied industry and his frugality and good management. He is now one of the substantial and well-to-do farmers and stock men of his township, and is also regarded as one of its most progressive and enterprising citizens in respect to all matters of public improvement. For he has taken a warm and helpful interest in every worthy undertaking designed to advance the welfare of the locality of his home or promote the good of its people.

On July 24, 1887, Mr. Ayers was united in marriage with Miss Julia Nitsche, a daughter of Fred and Minnie (Miller) Nitsche, of Shelbina, where

Mrs. Ayers was born on May 5, 1866. Four children have been born to the union, three of whom are living: Clara Lillian, the wife of James T. Greening, of this county, and Lee Frederick and Alberta, who are living at home with their parents. As a member of the Masonic order and the Order of Odd Fellows the father has taken a deep interest in the fraternal life of his community and contributed to the expansion of its usefulness and the strengthening of its forces for good. He has sought nothing in the way of political preferment, but has, nevertheless, taken a very active interest in local public affairs with a view to securing the best results for the general meal of the township and county of his home. No duty of citizenship has been neglected by him, and all have been performed with zeal, fidelity and intelligence, and he is esteemed by his fellow men of the locality in accordance with his demonstrated worth and usefulness.

GEORGE A. WRIGHT.

This valued citizen and prosperous farmer and live stock man of Salt River township began life for himself with nothing and now has a comfortable competence, all of which he has acquired by his own thrift, persistent industry and excellent management. He knows what is required in the way of effort for advancement where the competition is so keen and the avenues of progress are becoming so crowded, when a man has nothing to depend on but his own unaided faculties, and he can therefore appreciate the endeavors of others situated as he was when he began the struggle.

Mr. Wright was born in Lewis county: Missouri, on July 28, 1865, where his parents had located two years before. His father, also named George, was born in Canada in 1825 and is still living at the grand old age of eighty-five years, with a considerable measure of his vigor still available. He is like some genial and fruitful year, passing to its close, doubtless, but with some of its warmth and beauty and usefulness still remaining. He came to the United States before the Civil war and took up his residence in Illinois, where he followed farming two or three years. In 1863 he moved across the Mississippi to Lewis county, Missouri, but four or five years later became a resident of Shelby county, and here he has ever since had his home. In 1899, after farming and raising live stock for a period of more than sixty-five years, he retired from active pursuits and moved to Shelbina, where he now resides.

He was united in marriage with Miss Nancy Hastings, of Ohio. They became the parents of twelve children, six of whom are living: Ella, the wife of J.W. Peters, of Shelbina; George A., the pleasing subject of this sketch; William, who is a resident of Paris, Missouri; Lillie, the wife of Roy Haskins, of Shelbina; Nettie, the wife of Louis Noble, also a resident of Paris, Missouri; and Ida, the wife of David Montgomery, of Shelbina. The mother of these children is still living. In politics the father is a Republican, and in religious affiliation a member of the Christian church.

George A. Wright obtained a limited education in the country schools of Shelby county, and after leaving school