

JOHN W. McKEAN.

It was in the stern surroundings of a pioneer farm where one day's efforts meant the next day's bread and where earnestness, courage and grit were the only qualities that spelled and made for success that John W. McKean laid the foundations that support the life of retirement and ease that he enjoys today. Those who have not striven to claim a farm from a wilderness cannot have an adequate idea of what a struggle it is. So, perhaps, it is not easy to grasp the full significance of the antagonistic conditions against which many men of northeastern Indiana have labored. But success came to many, and among the number John McKean gained a generous measure. He was born in the village of Bethlehem, Stark county, Ohio, February 17, 1843. His father, Thomas J. McKean, was a practicing physician. His mother was Mary (Hendricks) McKean. His early life was spent in his native village and in Carroll county, where his parents lived. His father continued to live in Ohio until a short time before his death, in his eighty-eighth year, which occurred at the home of one of his sons in Michigan. His mother died in Carroll county, Ohio, in 1848.

John was the fourth of a family of six children and continued to live in Ohio until the beginning of the Civil war. At that time he enlisted, in May, 1864, in the One Hundred and Fifty-first Ohio Volunteer Infantry and served with this regiment until the term of his enlistment expired four months later. He then returned to Allen county, Ohio, from which county he had enlisted and resumed farming, which occupation had engaged him during the years previous to his war service. He operated his Ohio farm until the year 1872, when he removed to Adams county, Indiana. For the following three years he tilled a farm, which he rented, and then he purchased a farm of forty acres in Kirkland township. He remained in possession of this farm for two years and then sold it and purchased two farms comprising one hundred and sixty acres. All of this purchased land, with the exception of seven acres, was heavily timbered and the work of clearing and improving this tract was a serious undertaking. Persistence has ever been a prominent characteristic of Mr. McKean, and he kept at his arduous task of improving his farm until he had the greater portion of it under cultivation. As the years sped by he cleared more land and finally his farm became one of the most fertile and productive tracts in his section of the county. Modern buildings were added from time to time as necessity arose, and today this farm that was carved from among the trees of a primeval forest is one of the finest in Adams county. The entire credit for accomplishing all of this justly rests with Mr. McKean. He continued to operate his farm and to raise ample and profitable crops until 1900, when he retired from active work and took up his residence in Decatur.

Mr. McKean was married in Allen county, Ohio, January 14, 1864, to Miss Lydia Stalter, who was born in Allen county, November 19, 1842. She was a daughter of Christian and Catherine (Huddel) Stalter. Her father was a native of Pennsylvania and both her parents died in Allen county, where they are buried. Mrs. McKean was the fifth child of

a family of ten children. Mr. and Mrs. McKean also have been the parents of ten children. Of this number George E., John W., Charles, Thomas J., William F., James T. and Homer S. are living. Catherine A., who was the wife of Ephraim Bolinger, died in her twenty-second year; Emmy F., who was the wife of Joseph Russell, died in Washington township, aged twenty-three years, and Terisa, who died in infancy, were the remaining children.

Mr. McKean has lived a useful and complete life. He is a man who has taken an active and aggressive interest in all movements that were destined to better his fellows. His life has been characterized by a high order of public spiritedness and he has contributed generously to the development of his county in economic and social ways. He is a Democrat in politics and although history does not record that he aspired to public office, his voice has been heard in his past councils and his words have carried weight. He and his wife have taken an intelligent part in the activities of the religious side of life. Both have long been affiliated with the Brethren of Christ, and for fifteen or twenty years Mr. McKean preached the doctrines held by those of this faith. He has been heard in many churches throughout the state. Now, as the shadows of his exemplary life are lengthening he rests after labors well performed. He has the esteem of all who know him and his life might well serve as a model for the youth of the growing generation. The wife of Mr. McKean died in April of 1907.

Snow's History of Adams County, Indiana, John Fletcher Snow, B. F. Bowen, Indianapolis, IN, 1907, p. 323 (image 659)