

SAMUEL L. RUGG was an early settler of Adams County. He was born in Oneida County, New York, August 28, 1805, where he passed his early life. He prepared himself for college at Waterville, in his native county, but his father dying about this time he was obliged to modify his plans. It became necessary for him to make his own living, and, being a natural mechanic, he obtained employment in a blacksmith shop, in his native village. Here he worked and studied, and developed into a man of rare business capacity, which was recognized by his employers. In 1825 the Erie Canal was opened, and there was an immense immigration westward. During this year he went to Cincinnati, where he was employed in a large cotton-thread factory. He was a thorough machinist, a good salesman and a skillful accountant. In 1832 he left the factory and came to Indiana, where he entered a tract of land in Allen County, near the old fort, and commenced at once to improve his land. In 1836 he petitioned to the General Assembly for a new county. Adams County was then set off and organized, Decatur being chosen as the county seat. He was elected the first county clerk and recorder, and held the office eighteen years. The office of recorder was soon after separated from that of county clerk. Mr. Rugg was popular in the county, being known as a man of honesty, generosity and public spirit. In 1854 he was nominated by the Democratic party for State Senator, and was elected. He filled the position with great satisfaction to his constituents. In 1858 he was nominated for the office of superintendent of public instruction, and was elected by a large majority. He entered upon the duties of his office in February, 1859, on the retirement of Dr. Larrabee. Mr. Rugg was the third superintendent of the State. At this time the school monies were distributed among the different counties, and the officers had made proper returns to the State. Every county had been provided for but his own. Mr. Rugg recovered for the use of the public schools \$750,000, which placed them on a good footing. In 1860 he was defeated by Mr. Miles Fletcher, who died before the expiration of his term of office. Another election was ordered, and Mr. Rugg was elected, serving until 1864. He died at Nashville March 28, 1871, and his remains were brought back to his old home at Decatur for interment. As a public man Mr. Rugg was the promoter of the Fort Wayne & Richmond Railroad, and the organizer of the Fort Wayne & Decatur Plankroad Company. He exhausted all of his own resources in the construction of the two roads, and he was left in very poor circumstances. He was a kind husband and father, a devoted friend, and left behind him a large circle of friends to mourn his loss. The first land he entered in Indiana was one-half mile north of Decatur, now known as the Tonallie farm. Mr. Rugg lived on this farm when Adams County was set off from Allen County. He was first married in Cincinnati, living with his wife only a few years, when she died, leaving a young child that soon followed its mother. It was after this that Mr. Rugg resolved to come to the wilds of Indiana. He went to Piqua, Ohio, by canal, and bought an ox team, loading his effects on a stone-boat made of planks. It was very muddy and the boat would slide over the mud; in this way he came to the farm. He was again married to Miss Susan Ball, who died leaving four children - J. Kirkland, Dewitt Clinton, Julius and Cornelia. All are living. His third wife, whom he married June 8, 1847, was Catherine Biggs, who was born in Pennsylvania January 22, 1822, and died August 7, 1853, leaving three children - Jay; Jessie born April 3, 1851, and died October 12, 1853, and Indiana, who was born August 1853, and died in eleven days. The father was formerly a Methodist, but in later life was a Presbyterian. The mother was also a Methodist. Mr. Rugg owned and platted Decatur, then afterward sold the north part to Mr. Reynolds. He donated a lot to the Methodist, Presbyterian, Catholic, Baptist and German Reformed churches, and also donated the public square on which the courthouse was built. He set apart five acres for a park, and gave the fair grounds. At one time he engaged in the agricultural implement business, but it failed. He was more successful in cotton growing.