

BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY
OF *Rybski*
Tippecanoe, White, Jasper, Newton,
Benton, Warren and Pulaski
Counties, Indiana.

ILLUSTRATED.

VOLUME I.



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occupation to which he was reared he has made his life work, always devoting his energies to farming, stock raising and dealing in stock. His capable management, his systematic methods and his energy have brought to him a well deserved success. After the death of his parents Mr. Stidham and his two sisters resided upon the farm together until 1894, when the elder sister died. Since that time the remaining sister and brother have lived together, and through their combined efforts the old homestead ranks among the best homes in this part of Indiana. As the years have passed Mr. Stidham has made judicious investments in land, has extended the boundaries of the home farm, and now has a valuable property of over one thousand acres, much of which is under cultivation of a high order and yields to the owner a golden tribute in return for the care and labor he bestows upon it. The farm is splendidly drained, with about twenty-five miles of tiling.

Mr. Stidham shows a number of traces of his Swedish ancestry, having the thoroughness, reliability and perseverance so characteristic of the race. He is a man of kindly and genial disposition, of generous impulses, and broad-minded, and no citizen of the community stands higher in the public regard. In politics he has always been a Democrat and keeps well informed on the issues of the day, but has always refused office. He is a friend of public improvement and a strong advocate of good roads, good schools and all measures tending to the general advancement and progress. He and his sister are worthy representatives of one of the old and honored families of the county, and well deserve mention in this volume.

HON. DUNCAN McARTHUR WILLIAMS.

So closely allied with the interests of Benton county is the history of Duncan McArthur Williams that a work of this character would be incomplete without a record of his career. His name is one prominently connected with the business enterprises of the county, with its pioneer development, with its political record and with its material and educational advancement; and he ranks to-day among the distinguished citizens of northern Indiana,—a man who stands high in the regard of his fellow men and commands the respect of all by his sterling rectitude of character.

Mr. Williams is a native of the Buckeye state, born in Woodstock, Champaign county, January 16, 1832, a son of Samuel and Margarette (Lansdale) Williams. His father was born January 10, 1807, in Prince George county, Maryland, and his mother in Washington, D. C., September 22, 1805, and they were married September 30, 1828, at his mother's birthplace, and immediately thereafter located in Woodstock, Ohio. About three years later Mr. Williams bought a farm of three hundred acres near

Mechanicsburg, purchasing the same of Duncan McArthur, a family friend for whom our subject was named and who presented him in later years with one hundred acres of land. Mr. Williams' mother accompanied her parents to Mechanicsburg when she was a child of ten years; but on the death of her parents a few years later she returned to Washington and remained there until after her marriage.

The paternal grandfather of our subject, John Williams, was also a native of Prince George county, Maryland. His parents were among the earliest settlers of that state and the family was a prominent one in the early history of Maryland. John Williams was a ship carpenter by occupation, and was a captain in the war of 1812, stationed at Annapolis. After the war he located on a farm overlooking the Potomac, but his death occurred at Mechanicsburg, Ohio, in 1838, when he had attained the age of fifty-four years. He married Miss Nellie Duval, a lady of French extraction, who was born and reared in the vicinity of Baltimore, and who died in Prince George county.

The maternal grandfather of our subject was Thomas Lansdale, who married Miss Jemima Hyatt; they were both of Welsh ancestry and natives of Maryland, owned the property upon which is located the town of Hyattsville, rendered somewhat noted in recent years as being the camping ground of Coxe's "commonweal army" on its tramp to Washington. Mr. Lansdale, the grandfather of our subject, was a miller by occupation, and was the original proprietor of Mechanicsburg, Ohio, where he erected a flouring mill, which he owned and operated until his death. These ancestors both died young.

Mr. Williams, whose name heads these paragraphs, was denied the advantages of a classical education, though he has supplemented his youthful training by a life-time of careful reading and systematic study: his literary pursuits in later years have been largely conducive to this end. He attended the common schools in Mechanicsburg and for a brief time the London Academy. On leaving this institution he received a certificate of qualification to teach reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar and natural philosophy. This honorable introduction to the world was prefaced by the statement over the signature of his professor, "He has and will sustain himself in his studies." This expression of implied confidence in his ability and determination to win has been a life incentive to him, and to this is largely due his persistent effort at self-culture.

At the beginning of life's struggles, independently of parental authority and aid, Mr. Williams was imbued with the idea that the stock business was prolific of flattering results. Coming to Indiana in 1852, he followed farming and stock-raising for some years in Parish Grove township, Benton county,

where he once owned seventeen hundred acres of land. He drove one hundred and twelve head of cattle, unassisted except the first day, from his farm to market in Chicago. After the civil war he thought that the south presented a profitable field for investment of northern capital and industry, and accordingly he purchased a plantation near Jackson, Mississippi, whither he moved; and while a resident there he was a member of the constitutional convention under reconstruction measures in 1867. The year following he was a delegate from Mississippi to the national Republican convention at Chicago and assisted in the nomination of Grant and Colfax.

But his investment in southern property did not prove satisfactory, and in 1869 he returned to Indiana and entered journalism. But it was in 1873 that he purchased the *Central Clarion*, the first newspaper published in Fowler. In 1876 he disposed of the *Clarion*, but repurchased it in 1878, changing the name to *Fowler Era*, and continued to be its editor and proprietor until 1880, when he finally retired from journalism. Until 1873 the family home was on the farm in Parish Grove, but since that date in Fowler.

In 1876 Mr. Williams was commissioned postmaster and served about four years. He then went on the road as a general agent for a school-supply house, serving in that capacity for six or eight years. Next he engaged in the real-estate and loan business in Fowler. In recognition of his special fitness for the position, he was made chairman of the Republican county central committee in 1888 and was continued in that position until 1898, retiring when he was commissioned postmaster of Fowler, on the 1st of February, 1898. During his administration as leader of the Republican party in Benton county he prosecuted an aggressive policy, redounding to its success and increasing its majority threefold.

Mr. Williams was one of the prime movers in the county-seat contest, which resulted in transferring the seat of government of Benton county from Oxford to Fowler; and to accomplish this end he and his friends resorted to much strategy known only to the successful politician. One means employed was the purchase of a complete newspaper outfit at Chicago and the establishment of a fearless organ favorable to the transfer; and through its columns able articles were published which brought together the previously disintegrated fragments of the party favorable to the new movement. About this time the Patrons of Husbandry became a strong factor in politics, their policy being to defeat the dominant party, whatever its name.

In 1896 Mr. Williams was chosen a presidential elector from his congressional district and performed valiant services for the success of the McKinley ticket. No man in Benton county has performed greater service to the Republican party than D. McA. Williams. Not only this, but he has also watched the growth and prosperity of Benton county from its infancy to

the present day, and has always encouraged and fostered everything of public interest and value. He is public-spirited and enterprising, and liberal to a fault. For two years he held the office of county assessor, receiving his appointment in 1891. In the pioneer days of 1858 he held the office of justice of the peace, in Parish Grove township.

He owns some land in Kansas and a comfortable home in Fowler. He is devotedly attached to his family, and enjoys the comforts and seclusion of his happy home; has been an industrious worker all his life, and whatever he has done he has done "with all his might." Though well along toward the traditional "three-score and ten years" in life's journey, he is still active and energetic and in the enjoyment of good health. No man in Benton county is more worthy of representation in this work than Mr. Williams; in fact his life history is so closely interwoven with the public affairs of Benton county that a work of this character would not fill its mission to posterity were he not given the prominence his worth demands.

Mr. Williams was married in Parish Grove, March 22, 1853, to Miss Elizabeth B. Boswell, a daughter of Parnham and Adah (Chenoweth) Boswell. Her father was born in Prince William county, Virginia, September 30, 1798, and was one of the prosperous farmers and pioneers of Benton county. The town of Boswell, in this county, is named in his honor. His death occurred at that place in April, 1882, when he had reached the advanced age of eighty-six years. His wife, who was born near Piketon, Pike county, Ohio, died in Parish Grove, June 8, 1878, and both are buried at Oxford, where their remains are no more disturbed by the awful lightning flash of the midnight storm than by the calm rays of the next noon-day's sun.

Mr. and Mrs. Williams have had three children, one of whom is deceased. The eldest of these, Edward P., was born at Waco, Texas, August 7, 1858, and is now his father's efficient deputy in the post-office. Adah M. was born at North Hickory Grove, Benton county, Indiana, October 13, 1860, and died in Fowler, August 29, 1889; and Lizzie L., a beautiful and accomplished young lady still at her parental home, was born at Parish Grove, May 10, 1870, and has been for a number of years the official stenographer for the thirtieth judicial circuit of Indiana.

SAMUEL C. HANSON.

Samuel C. Hanson, city superintendent of the public schools of Williamsport, Warren county, Indiana, and the author of a series of popular school music books, was born at Pana, Illinois, January 12, 1850. His parents were John and Alcinda (Cox) Hanson. In 1857 the family removed to