

Goodspeed's History of Southeast Missouri Biographies of Mississippi County, 1888

A B C D E F G H J K L M O P R S T V W Y



Joseph R. Shelley

Joseph R. Shelley, a farmer

and stock raiser of Shelley's Ridge, Mississippi Co., Mo., was born in Gibson County, Tenn., in 1837. His parents, Joseph and Susan (Graham) Shelley, were both natives of Middle Tennessee, born in 1801 and 1804 respectively. The settlement of the Graham family Tennessee dates back to the Revolutionary War, when the great-grandfather removed from New York to that State. Joseph Shelley's parents were from North Carolina. In early life Joseph was engaged in hat manufacturing, but afterward followed farming as a vocation. When of middle age he was a minister in the Baptist Church. In 1851 he removed with his family to Mississippi County, Mo., locating on Shelley's Ridge, where he remained one year, and started with his family to Texas, but upon reaching Alexander, on Red River, he was taken sick. Turning his course back to Mississippi County, he died before he reached home (in 1853). To him and wife were born twelve children, five of whom are living: Sarah, Ellen, Nancy, John, James and Ellen (named for her older sister who died before her). The mother died in 1878 in Arkansas, while living with her youngest daughter, Arbelle. Joseph R. remained at home, assisting on the farm, until he was twenty-eight years old. His mother went to Arkansas in 1860, and he served in the Confederate army about one year. In 1865 he removed to his present location, and in 1866 married Elizabeth Childers, who was born on September 1, 1846. She is a daughter of Jackson and Martha (Reesor) Childers, natives of Tennessee and Kentucky, respectively. When a young man, Mr. Childers went with his parents to Indiana, in which State he grew to manhood, removing from thence to Kentucky. He was married April 15, 1839, and remained in Kentucky about ten years. In 1854 he removed to Southeast Missouri, where he died on February 15, 1877. Mrs. Childers is still living. To them were born Elizabeth, George, Thomas (deceased), Frances (Mrs. Hass Moss), Wilson (deceased), Drucilla (deceased), Reedie (Mrs. Frank Childers) and Parnelia (deceased). Mr. and Mrs. Shelley have no children, but they are rearing three orphans, Eliza, Adar and Thomas, children of Thomas and Rebecca (Thurman) Childers, who died on November 3, 1883, and January 16, 1884, respectively. Mr. and Mrs. Shelley have been members of the Christian Church for fourteen years. He is a member of the I.O.O.F. and of the Agricultural Wheel.

William Sherman

William Sherman was born in

Jefferson County, Ky., on March 15, 1826, and is the only survivor of nine children born to the marriage of Charles R. Sherman and Julia A. Porter, both of whom were natives of Maryland. The grandfather, Charles Sherman, was a Methodist minister, and lived in Jefferson County, Ky., at the time of his death. Charles R. Sherman was a turnpike contractor in early life, and built several of the pikes leading out of the city of Louisville, in which city he was a resident for several years. In 1840 he, with his family, took the steamer "Georgia," and came up the river to Price's Landing. Arriving on February 20, 1840, he removed his family to Mathews' Prairie, where he located, having previously purchased 300 acres of unimproved land, upon which he had built a good two-story farm house, considered one of the best in this portion of Missouri at that day. He soon had the farm under cultivation. Although the prairie was the most thickly settled portion of this part of the State, the inhabitants were few. Mr. Sherman resided on his farm until his death in the fall of 1843. His widow died in 1866. Four of their children died in Louisville, and four in Mississippi County; one besides William lived to be married - Susan - who was married to Dr. Jesse S. Bledsoe. William was fourteen years of age when his parents removed to Mississippi County, previous to which he had lived in Louisville. After the death of his father, he remained on the farm with his mother until his marriage in 1851, with Sallie, daughter of James Smith, a pioneer of Mississippi County. Upon the death of his wife, in 1860, he removed back with his mother, and remained until her death. He and wife had four children, of whom but one is living: Henry E. Those deceased are Dr. James S., Julia and Susie. From February 1874 to 1877, he was a resident of Columbia, to which place he removed to educate his children. His two sons graduated at the State University there. Mr. Sherman has made farming and stock raising his life vocation, at which he has been very successful. He is now retired from business, and for several years has been a resident of Charleston. Since 1840 he has been a consistent member of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

Henry E. Sherman

Henry E. Sherman was born in

Mississippi County, Mo., on June 1, 1853. He graduated from the State University at Columbia in 1877, after which he was engaged in farming on his father's farm, about one mile north of Charleston, for two or three years. On June 12, 1877, he was united in marriage with Lillie V. Runyan, a native of Columbia, Mo. They had one child: William O. (deceased). His wife died in September, 1880. After the death of his wife he was not engaged in any business for about one year, and in 1881 he resumed farming, which he has very successfully continued. He owns 580 acres of good land, and has a nice residence in the city of Charleston, which was erected in 1876. On December 20, 1881, he was united in marriage with Mary F. Ward, a native of Mississippi County, by whom he has three children: Henry E., Jr., Virginia E. and Susie. Mr. and Mrs. Sherman are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. In politics he is a Democrat.

A.E. Simpson

Dr. A.E. Simpson, the oldest practitioner in Mississippi County, was born at Berry's Lick, Butler Co., Ky., on April 27, 1829. His grandfather, Hugh Simpson, was born near Fairfax Court House, Va., in 1760, and was of Scotch descent, his parents having come to America from Scotland. He was with Gen. Francis Marion in the Revolutionary War, at the close of which he was in South Carolina, and was married there to Mary Long. After his marriage he removed to Tennessee, locating near Nashville, where he remained a few years and immigrated to Warren County, Ky., where he died in 1832. He was a prominent man in his time, and was a Whig politically. Isaac Simpson, the father of the subject of this sketch, was a farmer, which occupation he followed during his life. He was born in Kentucky, and was married there to Rachel B. Tygart, also a native of Kentucky. The husband died at his home in that State in 1846, and his widow remained there until 1860, when she removed to Plattsburg, Mo., where she died in 1875. Isaac Simpson was elected a delegate to the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which met at Lebanon, Iowa, in 1845. They were the parents of nine children, viz: Julia A. (deceased), Rilda J. (deceased), Dr. Absalom E., John J., Albert W. (killed at the battle of Pea Ridge), Angeline E. (deceased), Emma H. (deceased), Isaac Monroe and Hettie F. (deceased). Dr. A.E. Simpson remained on the farm until he was twenty years of age, attending the country schools of the neighborhood during the fall and winter. Following this, he spent two years at high school under the teaching of one John C. Duke, in Warren County, Ky., and then engaged in teaching school, which occupation he followed a few years, reading medicine in the meantime. In 1853 he entered the office of Dr. J.R. Curd, of Russellville, Ky., and the next year entered the medical department of the University of Louisville, graduating in 1856. He immediately after began practicing his profession at Hartford, Ky., and remained there until the spring of 1858, when he came to Charleston, and continued the practice of medicine. In 1863 he was elected county judge, and served until he was elected to the Legislature the next year. In politics he is a Democrat (was originally a Whig), and at the time of his service in the Legislature there were but thirteen Democratic representatives. He has served as city councilman, and was a school director for sixteen years, and was elected to the position of public administrator of Mississippi County four terms, holding the office sixteen years. In 1869, on account of failing health, he engaged in the mercantile business, which he continued till 1877, when he resumed the practice of his profession. In 1859 he wedded Arabella Lee, who died in 1860, leaving one child: William L. He was married again in 1861, choosing for his second wife Mrs. Rebecca J. (Swank) McFarland, by whom he has six children, viz: John L., Effie M., Henry L., Anna L., Cora B. and Bertie D. The Doctor is a Mason, and a member of the American Medical Association, also of the Southeast Missouri Medical Association, of which he has served as president.

Charles M. Slack

Charles M. Slack, dealer in furniture, Charleston, was born in Mason County Va., October 9, 1836. He is a son of Cornelius and Mary (McQuire) Slack, both natives of Virginia, the former of German, and the latter of Irish descent. The Slacks were an old Virginian family. Cornelius was a mechanic by trade, which he followed all his life in connection with farming. In 1838 he, with his family, immigrated to Cape Girardeau County, Mo., coming down the Ohio River on a flat-boat. He died in 1867, and his widow in 1879. They were the parents of eight children, viz: Susan (deceased), Mary, Charles M., Leander, Jeremiah, Franklin and John. The eldest child died in infancy. Charles M. being but two years of age when his parents emigrated from his native State was reared in Cape Girardeau County. At the age of eighteen years he began learning the carpenter's and cabinet-maker's trades, which he mastered under the instructions of his father. He was engaged in contracting and building at Cape Girardeau until about 1873, when he engaged in the furniture business, which he continued there until 1882, when he removed to Charleston, and engaged in his present business, at which he has been very successful. In 1860 he was united in marriage with Fidelia Lee, a native of Cape Girardeau. Three children have blessed their union: Everett L., Lillie H. and Arthur. In politics Mr. Slack is a Democrat, to which party his father also belongs. He is a member of the A.O.U.W., and he and wife are members of the Baptist Church.

William R. Slack

William R. Slack was born in

Hardin County, Ky., June 15, 1853, and is a son of Silas and Victoria (Cole) Slack, both of whom were natives of Hardin County, Ky. The two grandfathers, Randy Slack and William Cole, were Virginians, who settled in Kentucky at an early day, and resided there until their deaths. Silas Slack was reared in his native State. In 1857 he loaded his family and all his effects on a flat-boat, and came down the Ohio River to Missouri, landing at Wolf Island Township, Mississippi County, where he resided until February 1863, when the overflow of the Mississippi destroyed his property and he removed to the farm upon which William R. now lives. A few years later he purchased the farm, and resided there until his death on February 27, 1877. His wife died on February 15, 1880. They were the parents of seven children, three of whom are living: Cora (Mrs. John Hobbs, of Kentucky), William R. and Loyd F. The ones deceased are Silas, John, Emma and Melissa. William R. was but three years of age when his parents removed to Missouri. He has been engaged in farming all his life, and remained with his parents until their deaths. He now owns 352 acres of land, all of which is under cultivation. On March 17, 1885, he was united in marriage with Hannah, a daughter of Lowry and Mary A. (Stout) Hay. Mr. and Mrs. Slack have two children: Amy and Arthur, the later of whom is deceased. Mr. Slack is an enterprising and intelligent young man, and so far has been very successful in business.

Loyd F. Slack

Loyd F. Slack, a prosperous young farmer of Mississippi County, Mo., was born in that county on January 20, 1862. He is a son of Silas and Victoria (Cole) Slack [see William R. Slack's sketch].

Loyd F. was reared on his father's farm, and has always followed farming as a vocation. In 1881 he purchased the farm upon which he now resides, consisting of 120 acres of good land. He located on the farm the next year after his purchase. In 1885 he was united in marriage with Mollie Hendricks, a native of Kentucky. Two children have blessed their union: George O. and Willie. Mrs. Slack is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

James Smith

James Smith, one of the pioneers and prominent citizens of Mississippi County, was born on April 2, 1808, in Hardin County, Ky., and is a son of Washington and Hannah (McWilliams) Smith, both natives of Virginia. The Smith family came from England, and made a settlement in Virginia. The grandfather, James Smith, was a farmer and immigrated to Kentucky. He died in Hardin County, that State. The maternal grandparents came from Scotland, and also settled in Virginia. Washington Smith and his wife both died in Hardin County. They had five children, three of whom are living: James, David and George. Two daughters are deceased. James was reared on the farm in Kentucky, remaining with his parents until 1836, when he immigrated to Mississippi County, coming down the Ohio River in a flat-boat, on which he brought his stock, wagons, etc. Landing at Norfolk, December 28, 1836, he went to Mathews' Prairie, where he entered 240 acres of land, upon which he erected a hewed log cabin with a wood and mud chimney, and a clapboard roof. In which he lived for several years, until he could make better improvements. He has been a resident of this section of fifty-one years, and has witnessed it's development from a wild wilderness to its present wealthy state. He has been a resident of Charleston since 1883. Farming has been his life vocation, and he now owns 540 acres of land, but he has been retired, since moving to Charleston. Although in his eightieth year, he is bright and active, and possesses a wonderful memory. In 1832 he married Elizabeth Swank, a native of Kentucky, by whom he had six children, three living: Silas S., James W. and Elizabeth A. (Mrs. Dr. Bridwell). His wife died in 1845, and he was united in marriage in 1849 with Elizabeth A. Moore, a native of Scott County. Mr. Smith has been a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church South since 1833.

Isaac N. Smith

Isaac N. Smith was born on

May 21, 1837, in Meade County, Ky., and is a son of John and Jane (Peak) Smith, both of whom were natives of Kentucky, and were of English and Irish descent, respectively. The paternal grandfather, Robert Smith, was a Virginian by birth, but immigrated to Kentucky at an early day, and from thence to Spencer County, Ind. Where he resided until his death about 1840. John Smith was born in 1806, and was about eighteen years of age when his parents removed to Spencer County, Ind. He remained with his parents until his marriage, when he removed to Meade County, Ky. Remaining there until 1855, he immigrated to Missouri, and in 1858 located in Mississippi County, where he had previously purchased a farm. He remained there until death in February 1866. His wife died 1879. They reared two children, Isaac N. and Lydia (Mrs. N.M. Griggs). Isaac N., being eighteen years of age when his parents removed to Missouri, was reared in his native county, and received a good common education. He remained with his parents until the Civil War broke out and troops were called, when he enlisted in Company E., Sixth Missouri Cavalry, Confederate State army, with which he participated, in all the campaigns west of the Mississippi River. He was wounded at Jackson's Run during Price's last raid, receiving four pistol shots, which took effect in the right leg, breaking the bone. He was left at Fredericktown, at the residence of Alex. Nifong, and there fell into the enemy's hands, but he was so badly wounded and bleeding, that they left him for dead in November, 1864. He was afterward paroled, and returned home and resumed farming. In 1875 he removed to Cairo and engaged in the grain and commission business, and continued under the firm name of Cunningham & Smith, until 1881, when he engaged in railroad contracting. He finished a \$10,000 contract on the St. Louis & Cairo Narrow Gauge Road, and a large contract on the Kansas City, Springfield & Memphis Railroad, the first under the firm name of I.N. Smith & Co., the last of Bethune & Smith. In 1883 he resumed the grain business, in which he is still engaged, having removed to Charleston, Mo., in 1887. He also deals extensively in fine stock, and manages his farming interest. He owns about 1,500 acres of land in Mississippi County, In April 1865 he was united in marriage with Louisa E. Rush, a native of Mississippi County. Seven children have been born to their marriage, viz: John A. (deceased), Emma B., Edmund K., Effie W., Isaac N., Jr., Claude M. and Mary A. Mr. and Mrs. Smith, are members of the Baptist Church. He is a member of the K. of H., and in politics is a Democrat.

John W. Smith

John W. Smith, a merchant at

Bird's Point, was born in Paducah, Ky., on May 23, 1848, and is a son of William A. and Mary R. (Smith) Smith, the former a native of Lincoln County, Tenn., and the latter of Prince William County, Va. William A. Smith removed to McCracken County, Ky., in 1831, and remained a few years, until November, 1853, when he removed to Massac County, Ill., and located on a farm, after which he engaged in farming and timber contracting. The subject of this sketch remained on the farm with his parents until he was twenty-seven years of age, when he married, and was engaged in farming in Massac County, Ill., until 1879. He then removed to Kentucky, and remained until 1881. He removed to East Prairie, Mo., and remained there till 1883, then, moved to Bird's Point, where he engaged in the saloon business until February 1888. He was employed on the Texas, Arkansas & St. Louis Railroad for some time, but is now engaged in the mercantile business, carrying a large stock of groceries and drugs. On October 11, 1876, he married Mary J. Stratton, who died on September 17, 1878, leaving one child, William F. He married again in 1885 choosing for his wife Martha N. Strader, by whom he has two children: Mary E. (deceased) and Jennie C. Mr. Smith is a member of the I.O.O.F.

James B. Smith

James B. Smith, a member of the firm of Smith & Beckwith, general merchants at Bird's Point, Mississippi Co., Mo., was born in Massa County, Ill., March 4, 1857. He is a son of William A. and Mary R. (Smith) Smith, the former of whom was a native of Tennessee, and the latter of Virginia. They immigrated to Illinois about November, 1853, and made a settlement in Massac County. Mr. Smith purchased a farm near Pellonia, upon which he resided until his death. His wife died in 1879. To them were born five children, three of whom are living: John W., Miranda C. (Mrs. W.G. Swinney) and James B. The last named remained with his parents until he was twenty-one years of age, assisting them on the farm. He then worked for himself as a farm laborer for a couple of years. In 1879 he went to East Prairie, Mo., and worked as a farm hand a part of two years, with John A. Miller, and then entered a store as clerk at Bird's Point. In December, 1883, he engaged in the mercantile business at Bird's Point, with Underwood Beckwith, with whom he has since continued in business. They were in the grocery business until February 1888, when they sold their stock, and now carry a general line of dry-goods, boots and shoes and general notions. On December 31, 1882, he was united in marriage with Laura Wyndland, by whom he has one child deceased, and one living. In the fall of 1883 Mr. Smith was commissioned, postmaster at Bird's Point, which position he still holds.

Hartwell Stratton

Dr. Hartwell Stratton, justice of the peace, Charleston, Mo., was born in Cumberland County, Va., February 16, 1825. His parents, Robert and Mary (Adams) Stratton, were natives of Virginia. Robert Stratton's parents removed from England to Virginia in early life, and remained there until their deaths. Robert was a farmer and planter by vocation, and lived and died in Cumberland County, Va. He served as an officer in the War of 1812. His death occurred in 1859. His wife died in 1828, having borne him three children, one of whom, Hartwell, is living. Those deceased are William (a member of the firm of Stratton & Bird, wholesale grocers of Cairo, Ill.) and Pamela M. Jackson, the mother of the Messrs. Jackson Bros., commission merchants, Cairo, Ill.). Mrs. Jackson died in 1876. William died in January 1888. The subject of this sketch was reared on a farm and remained with his father until he was twenty-one years of age, spending most of his time in school. He attended the Richmond college, also Emory and Henry college. In 1847 he went to Middle Tennessee and engaged in the mercantile business, which he continued for several years, when he began reading medicine, attending two courses of lectures at the Nashville University. In 1860 he entered the Missouri Medical College at St. Louis, graduating in the spring of 1861. Soon after he removed to Norfolk, Mississippi Co., Mo., and remained a short time practicing his profession after which he removed to Charleston, and engaged in the mercantile business, in partnership with J.H. Bethune and William F. Rodney, of Cape Girardeau. They remained in business several years, when Dr. Stratton sold his interest, and engaged in the drug business in Charleston, in partnership with Dr. T.L. Petrie, and subsequently, with Thomas Byrd of Charleston. After remaining in the drug business a few years, Dr. Stratton sold out, purchased a farm near Charleston, and engaged in agricultural pursuits, which he continued until a few months ago (1887) when he sold his farm and is now practically retired from business. He was elected to his present office in 1886. He was first married in 1849 to M.A. Kinby, of Tennessee, by whom he had six children, two of whom, only, are living: Mary (Mrs. E.W. Thompson) and William T.G., both of Mississippi County. She died in 1859. He was married again in 1865 to Eliza M. Randal, a native of Cape Girardeau County, by whom he had three children, two of whom, Aura L. and Lindsay M., are living and the other, Frank M. died at the age of eighteen years; their mother died in 1876. Dr. Stratton is a prominent citizen of Charleston and is a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church South.

Newton T. Strickland

Newton T. Strickland, an enterprising farmer of Mississippi County was born in Benton County, Tenn., in 1852, and is a son of Noah and Jane (Cowell) Strickland, both of whom were born and reared in Tennessee. Noah Strickland was born in 1816, and was a farmer, owning 500 acres of land. He was a highly respected citizen, and a member of the A.F. & A.M. His wife was born in 1819, and died in 1860. They had twelve children, of whom Joseph E., Charles H. and Susan G. (Mrs. John Allen) are deceased. Those living are Sarah (Mrs. W.C. Jernigan, of Carroll County, Tenn.), Nancy J. (Mrs. Ashley Bivens, of Benton County, Tenn.), William (of Wilson County, Tenn.), John C. (of Bertrand, Mo.), Cora G. (Mrs. Jacob Sullivan, of Williston, Tenn.), Thomas, Martha A., Louisa M. (widow of Richard Thompson) and Newton T. After the death of our subject's mother, Mr. Strickland married Elizabeth Davidson, who now lives in Long Prairie Township, with two of her daughters, her husband having died in 1879. Newton T. remained at his father's until he was twenty-five years of age. In November 1877, he was united in marriage with Sophronia I. Thompson, a native of Benton County, Tenn., born on August 17, 1855. She is a daughter of Albert and Amanda (Jarrell) Thompson, natives of Tennessee and North Carolina, respectively, who were married on August 17, 1854. The former was a son of William and Peninah (Holland) Thompson, natives of North Carolina, who early immigrated to Tennessee. They had twelve children, five of whom are living: Willis, David, Mary Ann, Rhoda (Beasley) and Jerry. Those dead are Benjamin, Lemuel, William, Charles, Albert, Dollie (Higden) and Eliza (Gossett). The father of these children died in 1848, and his widow was married to John Horn, a Baptist minister, who died about eleven months after his marriage. Mrs. Horn is now living in Benton County, Tenn., and is ninety years of age. She enjoys good health, except that she is now almost blind. She had been very active and energetic, and has ever been a good, kind mother, and a devoted Christian, beloved by all who knew her. She is a member of the Primitive Baptist Church. Amanda Jarrell was the daughter of Richard and Elizabeth (Stires) Jarrell, also natives of North Carolina, who came to Tennessee at an early day. Richard was a highly respected man, and an accomplished school-teacher. He died about 1843, and his widow followed about 1861. They had eleven children, of whom nine are deceased: Lucinda, Missouri, Calvin, Franklin, Amanda, Nancy Ann, Queene, Thomas and Susan. Those living are Daniel and Lafayette, both of whom live in Texas. Mr. and Mrs. Strickland came to Southeast Missouri in January, 1881, and located on their present farm. They are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church South. He is a member of the A.F. & A.M. and of the A.O.U.W. To them three children have been born as follows: Albert N., November 13, 1878; Emma E., April 12, 1881; and Eulah G., August 9, 1884.

William B. Swank

William B. Swank, a prosperous farmer of Mississippi County, was born on the farm upon which he now resides, February 18, 1853, and is a son of Silas and Frances (Thompson) Swank, the former a native of Hardin County, Ky., and the latter of Cape Girardeau County, Mo. The paternal great-grandparents came to America from Germany. Jacob Swank, the grandfather, served in the War of 1812. In 1835 he immigrated to Mississippi County, and made a settlement on Mathews' Prairie, where he remained until his death. Silas Swank was but fifteen years of age when he came with his parents to Mississippi County. In 1843 he removed to the farm upon which William B. now resides, and was making his second crop, when the overflow of 1844 swept everything away. He resided on that farm until his death in August 1886. His wife died in 1857. They had four children: James S., Mary, William B. and Elizabeth. William B. has spent his life on his present farm, which consists of 320 acres of well improved land, which is mostly under cultivation. In 1879 he was united in marriage with Frances Remmek, a native of Alexander County, Ill. Three children have blessed their union: Willie M., Silas, and Mary (deceased). Mr. and Mrs. Swank are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

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