

Rev. Samuel A. Armstrong, a minister of the Christian Church, a veteran teacher in the schools of this county and a substantial farmer and landowner of Madison Township, proprietor of a well-kept farm on rural mail route No. 3 out of Ft. Recovery (Ohio), where he makes his home, a former township trustee and one of the best known citizens of that part of the county, is a "Buckeye" by birth, but has been a resident of Jay County since the days of his infancy.

Mr. Armstrong was born on a farm in Franklin County, Ohio, December 27, 1863, and is a son of Joshua and Emeline V. (Trish) Armstrong, the latter of who was born in that same county, a daughter of Adam and Elizabeth (Shaffer) Trish, the former of whom was born in Germany and the latter in France. Joshua Armstrong was born in Licking county, Ohio, November 4, 1835, a son of George and Alice (Vance) Armstrong, and was eighteen years of age when the family moved to Franklin County, where he married and engaged in farming, remaining there until the fall of 1865, when, in company with his elder and unmarried brothers, Samuel and Charles H. Armstrong, he came with his family to Jay County and established his home on a tract of 200 acres the brothers had bought in section 2 of Madison Township. The three brothers made an excellent piece of property out of that farm, and there Joshua Armstrong made his home until the end, his death occurring there on January 8, 1922, he then being in the eighty-seventh year of his age. To him and his wife were born five children, all of whom are living, the subject of this sketch having three sisters, Alice E., Mrs. Emma Whitacre and Mrs. Margaret Whitacre, and a brother, Charles Armstrong.

As will be noted by a comparison of above dates, Samuel A. Armstrong was under two years of age when his parents came to Jay County in the fall of 1865. He grew to manhood on the home farm in Madison Township, and his early schooling was received in the Lotz District School. He was an apt student and through the aid received in his studies at home early became qualified as a teacher, and when hardly more than a boy taught two terms of school in the district schools of his home township. He then for two years attended the Normal School at Portland, in further preparation for teaching service, and has ever since been engaged in teaching, a record of service covering nearly forty years, all but five years of this service having been rendered in the schools of his home township. In addition to his school duties Mr. Armstrong also early began to turn his attention to study for the gospel ministry, and in due time was ordained as a minister of the Christian Church. During the years 1894-96 he preached for the congregation of the West Walnut Street Christian Church at Portland, and at the same time carried on classes in the old Normal School in that city, teaching from three to six hours a day.

During the years 1897-98 Mr. Armstrong served as pastor of the Christian Church at Oxford, Ind., and at the termination of that service returned to his home in Madison Township and bought a tract of forty-six acres in that township, a part of the farm on which he is now living, and has since resided there, he and his family being very comfortably situated. Since taking possession of this place Mr. Armstrong has added to his holdings by the purchase of an adjoining tract of sixty-three acres and thus now has a fine farm of 109 acres, well improved and profitably cultivated.

In addition to his continuous service as a teacher in the schools of his home township Mr. Armstrong continues to maintain his ministerial service, and on call preaches in churches not too remote from his established home and also responds to calls for "supply" preaching in the churches of his faith hereabout. He also gives his thoughtful attention to local civic affairs, and during the years 1887-88 served as trustee of Madison Township. He is a member of the local camp of the Modern Woodmen at Salamoniam. On October 16, 1885, the Rev. Samuel A. Armstrong was united in marriage to Serena A. Woten, who was born in Madison Township, a member of one of the real pioneer families of that part of the county, and whose schooling was received at the Center School. Mrs. Armstrong's parents, the Rev. Benjamin and Mary A. (Peden) Woten, both were born in Madison Township, the Woten's and the Peden's having been among the earliest settlers of that part of Jay County.

The Rev. Benjamin Woten, formerly a well-known minister of the Christian (Disciples) Church and a substantial land owner of Madison Township, was born in that township

on December 1, 1836, and was a son of Hugh and Elizabeth (Goldsmith) Woten, who were married in that vicinity in December, 1835, this region then having been a part of the northern extension of Randolph County, for that was before Jay County had been set off as a separate civic entity. Hugh Woten had come to this region in October, 1833, with his parents and became the owner of a quarter section of land in section 27 of Madison Township.

In 1878 he was ordained a minister of the Christian Conference and was widely known as a "local" preacher among the churches of that communion hereabout. His son Benjamin, father of Mrs. Armstrong, also became widely known as a minister of the Christian Church, but his useful career was cut short by death in his forty-third year, August 12, 1879, and he was buried in the Salamonia Cemetery, and his widow was left with five children.

To the Rev. Samuel A. and Serena A. (Woten) Armstrong four children have been born, Elmyra M., Ruth Elva, Russel Irvin and Oliver W., the latter of whom died in infancy. Elmyra M. Armstrong married Harry C. Bickel, a farmer of Noble Township, and has one child, a daughter, Erma Marcile Bickel. Ruth Elva Armstrong married Alva C. Bibler, also a Noble Township farmer, and has two children, Edna M. and Carl Bibler. Russel Irvin Armstrong, a veteran of the World War, who is now giving his attention to the operation of his father's farm, entered the service of the National Army at Portland on April 26, 1918, and was sent to Camp Taylor. Three weeks later he was transferred to Washington Barracks and thence, after ten days, to Camp Merritt in preparation for overseas service. A week later he sailed with a detachment of the Engineers Corps and landed at Brest on June 28. A month later he was assigned to the 324th Heavy Field Artillery, and on September 26, 1918, arrived with that command on the battle front. After two months of strenuous service with that command he was transferred to the 32d Heavy Field Artillery, which had been heavily depleted in action, and he remained in action with that command until the armistice was signed on November 11. After the armistice he became a part of the Army of Occupation and was in Germany until orders came to return to the United States. He arrived on home shores in the last week in May, 1919, and from Camp Mills was sent to Camp Sherman, where he received his discharge on June 4, 1919, and straightway returned home.