

CORWIN, CORNELIUS

CORNELIUS CORWIN, an honored veteran of the Civil war and the oldest living member of the bar of the Jay Circuit Court, now living retired at his pleasant home in North Meridian street, Portland, is a native son of Jay county, a member of one of the real pioneer families here, and has lived in this county all his life, a member of the bar for fifty years and active in practice until his recent retirement. Mr. CORWIN was born on a farm in Knox township, this county, October 3, 1843, and is a son of William and Mary (GRAY) HUDSON CORWIN, the latter of whom was the widow of Joshua HUDSON, one of the pioneers of Randolph county. William CORWIN was a pioneer Baptist elder, a member of the first Baptist Association organized in this part of Indiana. He was born in Washington county, Pennsylvania, and later became a resident of Ohio, where he was married and where he resided until 1838 when he left his home in Columbiana county, that state, and came to Indiana, locating at Deerfield, in Randolph County, whence he presently moved up into Jay county and settled in Knox township, where he spent the remainder of his days, his death occurring on September 17, 1847. In addition to his service as a missionary of the Baptist church William CORWIN was an expert blacksmith and thus was able to render double service in the pioneer community. He was twice married and by his first marriage was the father of four children. His first wife died at Deerfield, in Randolph county. By his union with Mrs. Mary (GRAY) HUDSON he was the father of two sons, Cornelius and Stephen CORWIN, the latter of whom died from the effects of a wound received in battle while serving as a soldier of the Union during the Civil war, a member of Company K, 16th regiment, Indiana Volunteer Infantry. He later was transferred to the 13th Indiana Cavalry, but was wounded while serving with the 16th Indiana. Two of Mr. CORWIN's half-brothers, Ben J. and Edwin HUDSON, also served as soldiers of the Union, the latter a member of Company F, 12th regiment, Indiana Volunteer Infantry, later Company F, 59th Indiana. Ben J. HUDSON, who was a member of Company E, 89th Indiana, died in Jefferson military hospital at Memphis, Tenn., August 3, 1863. Three of Mr. CORWIN's nephews also served as soldiers of the Union. Cornelius CORWIN was not four years of age when his father died. His mother survived until 1864. He was born in Knox township and his early schooling was received in the schools of New Mt. Pleasant, this being supplemented by a course in the old Liber College. On August 9, 1862, he then being eighteen years of age, Mr. CORWIN enlisted his services in behalf of the cause

of the Union and went to the front. He continued to serve as a soldier until mustered out three years later, the war then being over, and upon the completion of his military service returned home and resumed his place in civil life. In his youth he had learned the tanner's trade under the direction of his half-brother, William C. Hudson, but did not long follow that, the inclination toward a professional career having steadily developed during his period of service in the army. Not long after his return from the army Mr. CORWIN served for a year as deputy county treasurer and also was for a year or two engaged in teaching school in this county. He then went West with a view to locating in Iowa, but not finding things wholly to his liking out there presently returned and became engaged in the study of law under the preceptorship of James N. Templar at Portland. He was admitted to the bar in October, 1871, and then entered into a partnership with James B. JAQUA for the practice of his profession in Portland. This mutually agreeable association was maintained for fourteen years, at the end of which time Mr. CORWIN formed a partnership with John M. SMITH. This latter association continued for thirteen years and then Mr. CORWIN became engaged in practice in partnership with James J. MORAN and was so engaged for five years, or until his retirement from practice. Since his retirement Mr. CORWIN has continued to make his home in Portland, where he is very comfortably situated. He has ever taken an interested part in the general commercial development of the community and has been a real force in that behalf. He was one of the fourteen men who guaranteed the right-of-way for the Lake Erie railroad through Portland and has for years been a member of the board of directors of the Peoples Bank of Portland. He is a Republican and has in years past served in various public capacities, such as school trustee, county attorney and member of the town board. Mr. CORWIN is a York Rite Mason. He is a charter member of the local chapter, Royal Arch Masons, at Portland, of which he was the first captain of the host, and for six years served as high priest of the chapter. In 1876, some years after he became a resident of Portland, Cornelius CORWIN was united in marriage to Rachel E. WOOD, who was born in Miami county, Ohio, a daughter of Thomas G. WOOD, who later became a resident of Penn township, this county, and to that union was born one child, a son, William Thomas CORWIN, now living at Portland, who married Laura J. DESTTATE, who was born in the kingdom of Belgium, and has five children, Rachel, Mary C., Laura J., Cornelius and John. Mrs. Rachel E. CORWIN died on October 29, 1910. Cornelius CORWIN's military record during the time of his service in the Union army was so varied and interesting that a brief resume of

the same may be found to be of value here. As noted above, it was on August 9, 1862, that he enlisted his services with a company that was being organized in this county. This company went into camp at Wabash, Ind., on August 18 and presently was sent to Camp Burnside, Indianapolis, where it was mustered in as Company E of the 89th Indiana infantry regiment by Henry B. Carrington, brigadier general. A few days later the command was sent to Louisville, Ky., and was thus unlucky enough to be caught at the battle of Munfordville, September 14, 1862, and compelled to surrender to General Bragg, of the Confederate forces. Three days later, at Green river, they were paroled and sent into Buel's lines to Bowling Green, whence they presently were returned to Indiana and camped at Sugar Creek, where they received an order to report at Indianapolis, where they received a twenty-seven days furlough. On November 17th at Camp Morton they were exchanged and then were sent, via Centrailia and Cairo, to Memphis, Tenn., where and at Ft. Pickering they were kept on garrison and picket duty until December, 1863, when they were sent to Moscow, Tenn. At Lafayette Station they had a scrimmage with the enemy, going on to Coldwater, Miss., whence they returned via Moscow to Memphis, from which point in January they were sent to join General Sherman on the Meridian expedition. They later took part in the Red River expedition, participating in all the battles of that memorable campaign, including the battle of Pleasant Hill (La.), April 9, 1864, in which they held the field at a loss to the regiment of fifty-three men. The regiment then was assembled at Grandecore and went down the Alexandria. On this expedition the regiment lost sixteen more men. At Marksville they routed 10,000 Rebels and then went on to Yellow Bayou, where a battle ensued, May 18, 1864, in which the regiment lost fifty-four men, three of whom were Company E men. Thence by boat the command returned north to Vicksburg, Memphis, Grand Junction and Harrisville, at which latter place) on July 14, 1864, it took part in the engagement which resulted in the loss to the Rebels of 1,200 men. The command then was sent back to Memphis to help defend the town and thence to Jefferson Barracks, Mo., marching west of St. Louis and thence to Independence and Harrisonville, Mo., St. Charles and other points, starting on October 3 and returning to St. Louis on November 21, getting there a change of clothes for the first time in more than a -month. The command then went into camp at Nashville and was there to take part in the battle of Nashville, December 15-16, 1864, in which several Company E men were wounded. In January, 1865, this command took a turn down the Tennessee river to Eastport, Miss., presently going thence to New Orleans, where they were held three weeks, at the end

of which time they went by gulf boats to Mobile, Ala., and took part in the siege and capture of Ft. Blakeley, April 9, 1865. While between Greenville and Ft. Blakeley the command received word of Lee's surrender. The remainder of the regiment's service was rendered at Mobile, where it was kept on patrol duty until July 19, when it was mustered out and returned to Jeffersonville, Ind., thence to Indianapolis, where it received its final discharge on August 8, Mr. CORWIN being mustered out as a corporal. SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.96-99. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.