

Grier Franklin GEMMILL, a former member of the board of county commissioners of Jay county, former vice president of the Bank of Pennville, an extensive landowner in Penn township and formerly and for years engaged in the mercantile and milling business at Pennville, who died at his home in that place in the spring of 1913, left a good memory at his passing and it is but fitting that in this formal history of the county in which nearly all his long life of usefulness was spent there should be set out some modest tribute to that memory. Mr. GEMMILL was born in York County, Pennsylvania, October 6, 1833, and was not yet ten years of age when his father became a resident of Jay County in the early spring of 1842, so that he grew up here and was a witness to and a participant in the development of this county from the days of the pioneers. He was a son of William and Frances (BLAINE) GEMMILL, the latter of who was born in 1807, a daughter of John BLAINE, who had come to this country from Ireland. William GEMMILL was born in York County, Pennsylvania, October 7, 1798, and was a son of William GEMMILL, who also was born in Pennsylvania, of Scottish descent. William GEMMILL and Frances BLAINE were married in the spring of 1823 and remained in Pennsylvania until 1835, when they came to Indiana with their family and located in Wayne county, where the wife and mother died in the fall of 1842, shortly after which time William GEMMILL bought a tract of land northwest of Pennville in Jay county and moved up here. He married Elizabeth PYLE, of Wayne County, and established his new home in this county, where he remained until 1863, when he returned to his old home in Pennsylvania and there spent the remainder of his life, his death occurring on September 13, 1867. He was a good manager and left a good piece of farm property at his death. He had eight children, seven of whom, five sons and two daughters, lived to maturity and as most of these married and had children of their own the GEMMILL connection hereabout in the present generation is a no inconsiderable one. Of these children, Grier Franklin GEMMILL was the fifth in order of birth. As noted above he was about ten years of age when he came up here with his father in 1842 and he grew to manhood here, early becoming a farmer on his own account, his first purchase of land being that of a tract of eighty acres of timber, which he cleared and proceeded to develop, later finding a ready purchaser for the same. After the death of his father he bought from the other heirs ninety-five acres of the home farm and after his marriage established his home there. To this tract he gradually added as his affairs prospered until he became the owner of more than 400 acres and was accounted one of the county's most substantial citizens. In 1876 Mr. GEMMILL, who was one of the leading Democrats of that part of the county, was elected to represent his district on the board of county commissioners and by successive re-elections occupied that position for eight years. For years also he was engaged in association with Samuel A. SHOAFF in the milling business at Pennville and in other ways took an active part in the general affairs of the community, one notable phase of these activities having been his long connection with the Bank of Pennville as vice president of that institution. He was a charter member of the Pennville lodge of the Knights of Pythias. His death occurred on April 27, 1913, he then being in his eightieth year. On September 14, 1876, G. Franklin GEMMILL was united in marriage to Amanda Jane SPAHR, who was born in this county, daughter of James M. and Elizabeth (SMITH) SPAHR pioneers of Jay county, who had come over here from Greene county, Ohio, and to this union were born four children, two of whom are still living, William R. and Elizabeth Leona. The mother of these children died on January 19, 1888. Further reference to the pioneer SPAHR family, of which she was a member, is made elsewhere in this work.

Source unknown