

NEELY, HENRY M

Henry M. NEELY, one of Richland township's well known and substantial farmers and landowners, proprietor of an admirable place on rural mail route No.1 out of Redkey, former township trustee and formerly and for years one of the best known oil men hereabout, has been a resident of Jay county for the past twenty years and has done well here. Mr. NEELY was born in Des Moines county, Iowa, May 2, 1857, and is a son of Jesse and Mary (SIGWORTH) NEELY, both of whom were born in the state of Pennsylvania. Jesse NEELY became attracted to the West in the days of his young manhood and was for some time during the '50s a resident of Iowa, but after a while returned to Pennsylvania and made his home in the district in which the first oil development was brought about in this country. He assisted in drilling the first productive oil well ever brought in this country and thereafter devoted himself to the development of the Pennsylvania oil fields and became a conspicuous figure in that development. He and his wife were the parents of nine children, five of whom are still living, those besides the subject of this sketch being Agnes, Hester, Rose and Lemon.

Henry M. NEELY was but a child when his parents returned to Pennsylvania from Iowa and he received his schooling in the schools of Clarion county, in the former state. When seventeen years of age he began working in the oil fields with his father and when nineteen he had an oil rig of his own and began his career as a driller. For fifteen years he was thus engaged, working in various fields as new developments opened up and in 1894 was made superintendent of the local branch of the plant of the Logansport Gas Company at Walton, Ind.[Cass Co] Two years later he was transferred to Kokomo [Howard Co.] and was for four years thereafter in charge of the gas plant there. He then was made superintendent of the gas field of the Ohio and Indiana Gas Company at Redkey and since then has been a resident of this county, his attention of recent years being given to farming and stock raising. It was in 1898, not long after coming to this county, that Mr. NEELY bought a tract of thirty-five acres in Richland township. A couple of years later he bought an "eighty" lying across the road from the former tract and on this latter piece erected a new house and an up-to-date set of farm buildings and has since made his home there. Since taking possession of this place Mr. NEELY has done much in the way of improvement and has a well improved farm and an excellent farm plant, the latter including two tractors, a heavy one for general purpose work and a lighter one for cultivating and light work about his farm. He has demonstrated to his own satisfaction that the tractor is a wonderful factor in promoting efficiency of farm labor and has done away with all his horses with the exception of one team of favorites. Mr. NEELY has for years given considerable attention to the raising of livestock and feeds out about 150 head of hogs a year and a car load of cattle. He has a milking machine to facilitate the dairying operations on the place. He has twenty-two head of Guernsey cattle. He has added to his land holding until now he is the owner of 275 acres in Jay county and 100 acres in the neighboring county of Randolph. He and his wife are members of the Methodist Episcopal church at Redkey and he is a member of

the board of trustees of the same. He is a Democrat and has served as trustee of Richland township. Mr. NEELY is a Scottish Rite (32d degree) Mason, affiliated with the blue lodge of the Free and Accepted Masons at Redkey and with the consistory of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite at Indianapolis, and is likewise a noble of the Ancient Arabic Order of Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, affiliated with the temple of that order at Indianapolis.

In 1878 Henry M. NEELY was united in marriage to Victoria LOGUE, who was born in Clarion county, Pennsylvania, daughter of John and Jane (BARR) LOGUE, and to that union six children have been born, Burdette, Lena, Lemon, Elmer, Jesse and Mary Jane, all of whom are living. Lena NEELY married Fred THOMAS, a farmer of Randolph county, and has two children, Harry and George. Lemon NEELY married May WALTERS and is farming in Richland township. Elmer NEELY, also engaged in farming in Richland township, married Ethel SAUNDERS and has one child, a daughter, Victoria. Jesse NEELY who married Sarepta BARLEY, is now engaged in the hardware and farm implement business at Redkey, doing business under the firm name of H. M. NEELY & Son. Mary Jane NEELY married Paul MAUZY and is living at Muncie, Ind.[Delaware Co.], where her husband is engaged as purchasing agent for the Hoosier Clutch Company.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.366-368. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.