

O'BRIEN, THOMAS

Thomas O'BRIEN, one of Pike township's best known farmers and the proprietor of an excellent farm on the line between Jay and Randolph counties, the same being situated on rural mail route No. 4 out of Ridgeville, was born in that township, on the place on which he is now living, and has resided there all his life. Mr. O'BRIEN was born on September 9, 1873, and is a son of Michael and Anna (SINNETT) O'BRIEN, who were substantial farming people of that community.

Michael O'BRIEN was a native of Ireland, born in County Wexford, and was reared there. As a young man he came to America and for some time thereafter was engaged in railroad work in New York. He then made his way South and was engaged in flour milling at Chattanooga, Tenn., when the Civil war broke out. His lack of sympathy with the Southern cause prompted him to dispose of his interests in Tennessee and to come North. He located at Hamilton, [Butler Co.] Ohio, and there became again engaged in railroad work, making his home there until 1867, when he came up into Indiana and bought a tract of sixty acres of land in Pike township, this county, and here established his home. His affairs prospered and he gradually increased his holdings until he became the owner of a good farm of 180 acres, and on that place he spent the remainder of his life, his death occurring on June 8, 1902. His widow survived until December 7, 1919. Michael O'BRIEN and his wife were the parents of four children, two of whom are still living, the subject of this sketch having a brother, Owen O'BRIEN.

Reared on the home farm in Pike township, Thomas O'BRIEN received his schooling in the neighborhood schools and from the days of his boyhood has been devoted to the affairs of the farm, 140 acres of which he now owns and on which he and his family are quite comfortably situated. Mr. O'BRIEN has a well-equipped farm plant and is carrying on his operations in up-to-date fashion. On January 2, 1915, Thomas O'BRIEN was united in marriage to Cora WHITENACK, who was born in Randolph county, Indiana, a daughter of David and Martha (WARE) WHITENACK, and to this union three children have been born, William, Walter and Arthur. Mr. and Mrs. O'BRIEN are members of the Catholic church at Portland and are Democrats. He is a member of the local council of the Knights of Columbus at Union City. Mrs. O'BRIEN's father, David WHITENACK, died on December 8, 1894, and his widow is still living. She was born in County Kilkenny, Ireland, and was there married, when eighteen years of age, to Patrick CUMMINS, with whom she straightway afterward came to the United States. Patrick CUMMINS died here, leaving three children, William, James and Richard, and his widow married David WHITENACK. To this latter union eight children were born, Mrs. O'BRIEN having six sisters, Stella, Dorothy, Delia, Ada, Hazel and Loretta, and a brother, Walter WHITENACK.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.397-398. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.