

STEPHENSON, THOMAS C.

THOMAS C. STEPHENSON, a substantial landowner of Wayne township and formerly and for years a progressive farmer of that township, now living retired at Portland, where he and his family are very pleasantly situated, is a native of Ohio but has been a resident of Jay county since he was ten years of age. Mr. STEPHENSON was born in Jackson county, Ohio, December 22, 1852, and is a son of Richard M. and Anna (DEMPSEY) STEPHENSON, who came to Jay county in 1862 and here spent the remainder of their lives. Richard M. STEPHENSON was a Virginian, born in Cabell county, that state, in 1812, and was but a lad when his parents, James I. and Margaret V. (McCOLLISTER) STEPHENSON, moved from Virginia to Ohio and settled in Jackson county in the latter State. James I. STEPHENSON was a son of a substantial landowner of Virginia, living in that section of the Old Dominion now comprised within the borders of West Virginia, who had early shown his aversion to the institution of human slavery by freeing his slaves and providing for their support on land which he gave them. His hatred for slavery caused him to leave Virginia and move into Ohio, where he established himself in a substantial manner. His son, James I. STEPHENSON became one of the prominent citizens of Jackson community and for some time served as an associate judge of the court there. Richard M. STEPHENSON, son of Judge STEPHENSON and father of Thomas C. STEPHENSON, received his schooling in Jackson county, Ohio, and upon reaching manhood's estate was started going by his father, who gave him an eighty acre farm, on which he established his home after his marriage and where he resided until 1862, when he disposed of his interests in Ohio and came over into Indiana, buying a tract of 320 acres of land in Wayne township, this county, where he and his wife spent their last days. They were the parents of eight children, of whom but three survive, the subject of this sketch having a brother, John STEPHENSON, of Wayne township, and a sister, Mrs. Hulda SNYDER, widow of Perry SNYDER, of this county. The deceased members of this family were James, William J., Ira, Douglas and Jeremiah.

As noted above, Thomas C. STEPHENSON was but ten years of age when he came to Jay comity with his parents in 1862 and he grew to manhood on the home farm in Wayne township. He completed his schooling in Ridgeville College and for about eight years thereafter taught school in this county, farming during the summers. His father gave him a tract of eighty acres in the Westchester neighborhood and he began his farming operations there in 1876. Two years later he disposed of that place and bought a tract of 200 acres in Wayne township on which he established his home after his marriage in 1881 and there he continued to make his home until 1912 when he retired from the active operation of the farm and moved to Portland, where he has since resided. In addition to his general farming operations Mr. STEPHENSON was for years quite extensively engaged in raising livestock arid did well in his operations, increasing his land holdings until he was the owner of 400 acres. Since his retirement from the farm he has rented his land. Mr. STEPHENSON is a Republican and he and his wife are members of the Presbyterian church.

As above noted, it was in 1881 that Thomas C. STEPHENSON was united in marriage to Amanda C. GIFFE, who was born this county, daughter of William and Deborah GIFFE, members of pioneer families here, and to this union have been born three children, Chester E., Giffe and Anna May. Dr. Chester E. STEPHENSON, now a resident of Indianapolis, married Blanche MILLER, of Adams County, this state, and has one child, a daughter, Helen. Giffe STEPHENSON married Nellie WEIST, who also was born in this county, a daughter of Noah WEIST, and is now living in Wayne township. Anna May STEPHENSON married Carl B. ANDERSON.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.91-92. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.