

J. J. Stewart, attorney and one of the leading citizens of Dunkirk, was born in Fayette County, Ohio, December 14, 1832, a son of James and Sophia (Chew) Stewart, both natives of Berkeley County, West Virginia, the father born near Martinsburg, of Irish parentage, and the mother born near Girardstown. They were married in their native county and in 1814 went to Fayette County, Ohio. They made their home in Fayette County until the fall of 1856, coming thence to Delaware County, the father in 1874 in his eighty-sixth year, and the mother in 1886, in her eighty-eighth year.

J. J. Stewart, the subject of this sketch, was reared to manhood in Fayette County, and in his youth received but limited educational advantages, never attending school more than six weeks in a year, but by reading and private study he acquired by his own efforts a fair education. In 1852, he came on a visit to friends in Jay County, and while here made arrangements to teach school in Richland Township, when he returned to Ohio, and after settling up his affairs, he again came to Indiana on horseback for Portland, arriving at his destination late in the evening; was examined by Judge Haynes the following day, and after receiving his certificate he returned to Richland Township, where he taught his first school in a rude log cabin with greased paper windows. Eight of the boy who attended his school that winter have since engaged in teaching school, and one of them is now principal of the schools in a leading Kansas town.

Mr. Stewart was married May 26, 1854 to Miss Rachel A. Wilson, a native of Richland Township, Jay County, and a daughter of Joel and Sarah (Bromagen) Wilson. Her parents came from Greene County, Ohio, to Indiana, about 1829 and her father built the second log cabin in Richland Township. Although game of all kinds was in abundance, Mr. Wilson was no hunter, but was a hard worker, and from the wilderness he made a good home for his family. He died April 1, 1873, but the mother of Mrs. Stewart still survives, living at Dunkirk at the age of eighty-two years. Of the five children born to Mr. and Mrs. Stewart only three are living – Alonzo C., marshal of Dunkirk; Minerva J. and Sadie S. Sadie has been engaged in teaching for the last five years. Oliver P. and Early Earle are deceased.

At the age of twenty-three years, Mr. Stewart was elected justice of the peace, serving as such one term, and during this time he decided to study the legal profession, and for some time he followed farming and school teaching, beside attending to his official duties as justice and studying law.

He followed the teacher's profession until 1876, since which time he has devoted his attention to the practice of law. In the fall of 1876, he located at Dunkirk, where he has since had a law office and has built up a good practice. He was admitted to the Bar of Jay County before Judge Bobo in 1878 and is now a member of the Jay County Bar Association. Mr. Stewart became a member of the Odd Fellows Order of Fairview, Indiana, at the age of twenty-one and was a charter member of Dunkirk Lodge, No. 306, in which he has passed all the chairs, and is also a member of the Encampment at Dunkirk. He has twice been a representative to the Grand Lodge of the State.

He is a member of the Methodist Protestant Church, in which he is a local preacher, and is at present steward of the class of Dunkirk Congregation.