

HON. JACOB HENRY CLAY SMITH, State Senator and attorney at law, residing in Bluffton, was born in Rock Creek Township, Wells County, Indiana, August 9, 1842. He was reared to the avocation of a farmer, remaining on the home farm until nineteen years of age, receiving his early education in the district schools. Before leaving home he taught one term of school, and in the spring of 1861 entered the Bluffton High School, which he attended for three years, and taught school during the winter months. In the spring of 1864 he engaged in the drug business with his brother, T. G. Smith, at Markle, Huntington County, Indiana. Retiring from the firm in the spring of 1865, he returned to Bluffton, where he engaged in the book and stationery business until 1868, when he engaged in the confectionery business at Bluffton. The following spring he added groceries to his confectionery business, which he followed until 1875. April 25, 1865, he was united in marriage at Bluffton to Miss Arlie L. Wisner, who was born, reared and educated at Bluffton, her parents, Thomas L. and Mary W. (Sharp) Wisner, being pioneers of Wells County. Mr. and Mrs. Smith have two children living—Willis S., who graduated from the Bluffton High School in the class of 1886, and is clerking in a drug store at Bluffton, and Merle W., aged three years. They also have an adopted son, a nephew, named Frank S. Smith, whom they have reared from infancy. He is at present attending the high school at Bluffton. Three children are deceased—Lutie T., who died in September, 1867, aged one year, and Jennie and Harry (twins), both dying in infancy. In 1872 Mr. Smith was elected justice of the peace of Harrison Township, and re-elected in 1876, holding that office continuously for eight years. In 1878 he was admitted to the bar at Bluffton, since which time he has been engaged in the practice of law, and has succeeded in building up a good practice. In politics he affiliates with the Democratic party. In 1886 he was elected State Senator to represent the district composed of Huntington and Wells counties for a term of four years. Both Mr. and Mrs. Smith are members of the First Baptist Church of Bluffton, of which Mr. Smith is also a deacon. Also a member of Bluffton Lodge, No. 1838, K. of H. Mr. Smith is a son of Thomas T. and Catherine (Geary) Smith, natives of Ohio, the father of Irish and Scotch ancestry, and the mother of German. They were the parents of eleven children, all of whom are yet living—one a resident of St. Louis, one living in California, three in Texas and the rest in Indiana. The parents came to Indiana in 1832, and settled at Fort Wayne, Allen County, removing to Wells County in 1836, when they located on Government land in Rock Creek Township. Here the father improved a farm on which he resided until 1864. He then sold his farm and purchased another in the vicinity of Bluffton, on which he and family resided ten years, and then moved into the city of Bluffton, where he died April 9, 1881, aged nearly eighty-one years. In politics he was formerly a Whig, but in later life affiliated with the Democratic party. He served as county commissioner, justice of the peace and township trustee several years. In his religious faith he was a Universalist. The mother of the subject of this sketch was born at Lancaster, Ohio, April 4, 1812, and died at Bluffton, Indiana, December 7, 1882, aged nearly seventy-one years. In early life she joined the Presbyterian church and remained a member of the same until her death.



Biographical and historical record of Adams and Wells counties, Indiana. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1887. pp. 878-881.