



Biography of James Chapman DeKalb Co., IN b.1827

Of those who have seen the wonderful development of northeastern Indiana from the swamps and primeval forests and who have played well their parts in the great undertaking, none deserve special mention in a historical work better than James Chapman, whose conversation is at once instructive and interesting as he recalls the pioneer days, the times when there were only log school houses, with puncheon floors and greased paper for window panes, the long miles of endless woods, large numbers of deer and other wild animals which haunted the forests at that remote period, and of the days when civilization first attempted to reclaim these lands, turning them into fine farms. Where plenty and happiness now abound.

Mr. Chapman was born on March 23, 1827, in Stark County, Ohio, and is a son of John and Eunice (Boyle) Chapman. John Chapman was born probably near Beaver Falls, Pennsylvania, and Eunice Boyle, who also was a native of the Keystone state, was of Irish parentage. She and John Chapman were married in their native state and subsequently moved to Stark County, Ohio, locating near Massillon. When James Chapman was about seven years old they moved to that part of Richland County, which afterwards became Ashland County, Ohio, where the parents lived for many years and reared their family. In October, 1852, they moved to Allen County, Indiana, locating three miles southeast of Hometown, where the parents spent the rest of their lives, and where John Chapman successfully followed farming pursuits. James Chapman lived on the home farm until eighteen years of age and then gave his attention to carpenter work in which he became an expert and in which he was successful. His father not only conducted the home farm but gave considerable attention to veterinary work and was very successful in the treatment of dumb animals, especially horses. In addition to carpenter work James Chapman engaged in the buying and selling of all kinds of live stock and also handled grain, wool and other commodities in large amounts. An idea of the extent of his operations may be gained from the statement that in one year he bought and sold over one hundred and twenty thousand pounds of wool, and in one year sheared twenty-five hundred sheep which he bought, shipping the wool to New York and Philadelphia. In 1884 Mr. Chapman came to Waterloo and bought a farm in the northeast quarter of the southeastern section of Smithfield township, and here he carried on farming and made his home for about twenty years, at the same time dealing in livestock. About 1903 Mr. Chapman moved into the town of Waterloo, where he has since resided, and about 1909, at the age of eighty-two years, he retired from active business and has since been living quietly in his beautiful and attractive home here. Politically Mr. Chapman was in early life a Democrat, but after the organization of the Republican party, or rather the first Lincoln campaign, he has been allied with the latter party and has been ardent in its support. His life has been a busy one and he has been closely identified in many ways with important business interest, having carried on many and diverse lines of business at the same time. He was an honest and energetic man and at all times commanded the respect of all with whom he had dealings. His last active work was to superintend the erection of the very pleasant and modern house in which he now resides, the place being provided with all up-to-date conveniences, and being a pleasant and comfortable home. Mr. Chapman is now the oldest man living in Waterloo and until he suffered from an attack of la grippe three years ago, he was remarkably active for his age, and even now at the age of eighty-six years his eyesight and hearing are only slightly impaired and his memory very good.

On October 28, 1852, Mr. Chapman married Nancy Johnson, whose father, Robert Johnson, came from county Cork, Ireland, being of Scotch-Irish descent. Nancy Johnson was born and reared in Richland, afterward Ashland County, Ohio, where she lived until her married and for a short time afterward. To Mr. and Mrs. Chapman were born five children: Eunice Josephine, the wife of Robert Underwood, a veteran of the Civil war, and she now lives at Denver, Colorado; she has a daughter, Mrs. W.J. Railey, of Denver, who has one son, Robert Martin Railey; Laura, who remains unmarried, lives with her father in Waterloo and has charge of the home and assist her father in the management of his affairs; Emma Elizabeth is

the wife of Marshall Lewis and lives in Franklin township, five miles from Waterloo; she is the mother of two children, Fred and Iva, the latter being the wife of Milton Wiler and the mother of three children, Esther, Alfred and Bert Lewis; George Wilbur died at the age of nineteen years and Robert died in infancy. Mrs. Chapman died in October, 1904, just twenty-four days prior to the fifty-second anniversary of their marriage. She was a woman of many gracious qualities of head and heart and was beloved by the entire community in which she had spent so many active and happy years. Mr. Chapman is widely known for his kindly qualities and hospitality, no worthy person ever having left his door unfed and his high standing among the people of this locality show how well his life has been spent, for he is appreciated for his fine personal qualities and for the active part he has taken in the upbuilding and development of the various communities in which he has lived.

Source: History of DeKalb County, Indiana