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PAST AND PRESENT

OF

PIKE COUNTY, ILLINOIS

BY

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CAPT. M. D. MASSIE,

TOGETHER WITH

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF MANY OF ITS PROMINENT AND LEADING CITIZENS AND ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD

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being the ninth in order of birth. Three of the number are now living, the sixth being William, who resides in Marion county, Kansas, while Henry is living in Highland county, Ohio.

J. T. Kibler was reared in the Buckeye state and supplemented his early education by study in the South Salem Academy. Subsequently he became a teacher of Highland county, where he followed his profession for several years. On the 21st of February, 1851, he was married to Miss Sarah A. Ruble, of the same county, and daughter of John Ruble, one of the first settlers of that locality, to which place he removed from Tennessee.

Not long after his marriage Mr. Kibler came to Pike county, Illinois, arriving here on the 18th of March, 1851. He located on a farm in Newburg township, where he rented land and carried on general agricultural pursuits for a year. He also taught school during the winter months for twelve or fifteen years, being one of the pioneer educators of this locality, his labors contributing in substantial measure to the intellectual development of this part of the state. He also bought a farm near the village of Time. This was an improved place, which he further cultivated, and in 1869 he bought his present property, comprising one hundred and sixty acres on section 11, Martinsburg township. There was an old log cabin upon the place, in which he lived for two years, when he built a more modern and commodious residence. He has continued the work of improvement and cultivation until the farm bears little resemblance to the place which came into his possession more than a third of a century ago. In fact, it is a splendidly improved property and in the year 1905 he gathered therefrom four thousand bushels of corn, together with other grain. He keeps a high grade of stock, including cattle, horses and swine, and is one of the enterprising and energetic agriculturists of his community.

Unto Mr. and Mrs. Kibler have been born seven children: William W., who is a druggist in Visalia, California; Albert M., who is living in Montgomery county, Missouri; Ben F., a civil engineer and rancher, also of Visalia; W. A., who resides in old Mexico, where he is a railroad-

bridge contractor; Joseph B., who is farming with his father; Kathie B., the wife of N. E. Unsell, of Pike county, Missouri; and Rebecca V., the wife of George Peters, who is deputy postmaster at Pittsfield.

Politically Mr. Kibler has long been a republican. He was reared in the faith of the whig party and cast his first presidential ballot for Henry Clay. He supported Fremont in 1856 and has voted for each presidential nominee to the present time. He served as township clerk for several years and was also school treasurer for eight or nine years. He has been connected with the Farmers' Mutual Insurance Company since its organization, has been a director for a long period and during the last four years has been its president. He and his wife are members of the Christian church, with which they have been identified from youth to the present time, and now he is serving as an elder in the Martinsburg church. This worthy couple have long traveled life's journey together, celebrating their golden wedding in 1901, and they are esteemed as most worthy and respected people, whose lives of uprightness and honor well entitle them to the confidence and esteem of all who know them.

ISAAC BARTON.

There is perhaps no resident of Pike county more deserving of mention among its representatives and respected citizens than Isaac Barton, a retired farmer now living in Pittsfield. He was born in Kentucky, June 7, 1825, a son of William and Mary (Brewer) Barton, the former of English descent. The family, however, was founded in America at an early day, the paternal grandfather having been a native of Virginia, where he followed the occupation of farming. At the time of the outbreak of hostilities between the colonies and the mother country, he espoused the cause of liberty and laid down his life on its altar in the battle of Bunker Hill. His wife lived to the advanced age of eighty years and reared their family of five children, filling the place of both father and mother after the death of her

husband. During the greater part of her life she was a devoted member of the Baptist church.

William Barton, father of our subject, was born in the Old Dominion and in early manhood went to Tennessee, where he was married to Miss Mary Brewer, a native of that state and a woman of high Christian character, belonging to the Baptist church. They afterward removed to Knox county, Kentucky, settling on the Cumberland river, and were among the early residents of that locality. Mr. Barton acquired a large tract of land and met success in his business affairs. For many years he was a deacon in the Baptist church and took an active and helpful part in its work. His political allegiance was given to the whig party. He was killed in a runaway accident when about sixty years of age and his wife died when more than fifty years of age. In their family were thirteen children, eight sons and five daughters, of whom three are now living. Those deceased are: Susan; Henry; James; John; Solomon; William; Lewis; Elizabeth; Sarah; and Nancy. Those who still survive are: Isaac; Mary Jane Barton, living in Kentucky; and Daniel, also of that state.

Isaac Barton was only eleven years of age at the time of his father's death and he afterward provided for his education by working for his board and the privilege of attending school. He remaining in his native state until twelve years of age, pursuing his studies in one of the old-time log schoolhouses, with its open fireplace, slab writing desk beneath the window and other primitive furnishings. He then accompanied his brother to Parke county, Indiana, which was a pioneer district with few evidences or promises of rapid development, and there he secured employment as a farm hand, his wage being seven dollars per month for the first years. He continued in similar service for eight years and then learned the carpenter's trade, which he followed for four or five years, after which he operated a carding machine for two years and also spent some time in sawmills. He was likewise employed as a clerk in a store before leaving Indiana, but thinking to find still better business opportunities in Illinois, he came to Pike county in December, 1847, making the journey on horseback, at which

time his possessions consisted of his horse, saddle and about fifteen dollars in money. For two years he was employed in sawmills at Rockport, Pike county, after which he invested his savings in eighty acres of land on section 8, Martinsburg township, of which only ten acres had been cleared. A log house had also been built into which he moved but after making some improvements on that property he sold the place and bought seventy-nine acres in Pleasant Hill township, the purchase price being six hundred dollars. A year later he sold out for twelve hundred dollars, thus realizing a good profit on his investment. He next became owner of one hundred and sixty acres farther north, but soon disposed of this at an advance of three hundred dollars and invested in one hundred and sixty acres of timber land north of Rockport, where he took up his abode and there operated a sawmill for ten years. As his financial resources increased he added to his landed holding from time to time until he owned three hundred and sixty acres. He carried on farming on an extensive scale and also raised stock, while to his farm he added excellent modern equipments and accessories. He carried on his farm work in a most systematic and approved manner and the place showed his careful supervision in its attractive appearance. He was careful in expenditures but always in touch with the spirit of progress in farm work and so directed his labors that success resulted. He still owns forty acres of valuable farming land together with one of the finest homes in Pittsfield, standing in the midst of seven acres of ground. The dwelling, a beautiful brick residence, sets well back from the street and the lawn is adorned with fine evergreen trees, shrubs and flowering plants.

On the 15th of February, 1848, Mr. Barton was married to Miss Rachel M. Owsley, who was born in eastern Tennessee, December 27, 1825, a daughter of Thomas and Charity (Butcher) Owsley. The father was a most far-sighted business man. He followed farming and he was the first in the country to deal in ready-made clothes. He came to Pike county in 1847 and was the owner of eleven hundred acres of bottom land all in one body and a large farm on the upland. He had three children but Mrs. Barton is

only one living. She is an intelligent lady and earnest Christian woman who has indeed been a faithful companion and helpmate to her husband. They became the parents of eight children: Mary, the wife of Richard Wells and a resident of Arkansas; William Thomas, deceased; John A., who married Allie Hayes and lives in Missouri; Frank, who married Elizabeth Wells and resides in Arkansas; Della R., at home; Fred, who married Annie Huffman and is located in Missouri; Anna, deceased; and Clyde E., a graduate of Hahnemann Medical College of Philadelphia, and now practicing his profession in Germantown.

Politically Mr. Barton is a stalwart democrat and has been called to various offices by his fellow townsmen who recognize his trustworthiness and ability. He was justice of the peace, constable, assessor and collector while living in Atlas township. He belongs to the Masonic lodge of Hartford and both he and his wife have been members of the Methodist church since 1855, taking an active and helpful part in its work. Mr. Barton has served as steward, class leader, trustee and superintendent of the Sunday-school and his labors have been most beneficial. He has always kept well informed on topics of general interest and has lived an upright life, crowned with successful accomplishment and the respect and honor of his fellowmen throughout the county in which he has now lived for almost six decades, witnessing almost its entire growth and development.

GILES H. PENSTONE.

Among the residents of Pittsfield formerly identified with agricultural interests but now living retired, is numbered Giles H. Penstone, who took up his abode in this city in November, 1900. He was born in London, England, February 22, 1838, and is a son of Giles and Sarah (Stratton) Penstone, both of whom were natives of Berkshire, England. The father was engaged in the dry-goods business in that country, having been apprenticed to the trade when fifteen years of age. In 1849 he came with his family to America,

settling first in Newburg township, Pike county. He there purchased eighty acres of land and for about eighteen years carried on the work of the farm, developing his place into a well improved property. He then retired from active farm life and removed to Griggsville, where he and his wife spent their remaining days. In the meantime he added to his original possessions and in connection with his sons had become the owner of seven hundred and sixty-five acres of land in Newburg township. In their family were six children, four sons and two daughters, and with the exception of one son all are yet living, namely: Giles H.; Edward, a resident of Pittsfield; Stratton, who is living in Newburg; Sarah, the wife of David Dolbow; and Ellen R., the wife of Will Kneeland of Griggsville.

Giles H. Penstone began his education in the schools of England and continued his studies after coming to America with his parents. He was reared to farm life, early becoming familiar with the duties and labors of the fields as he assisted his father in the operation of the home farm. He did not leave home on attaining his majority, but, like the other brothers, continued their business associations with their father and invested in land until, as before stated, they became the owners of valuable property. Throughout his entire business career Mr. Penstone of this review carried on general agricultural pursuits and lived upon the homestead in Newburg township until his retirement from business life. In all that he did he was methodical and systematic, and his labors resulted in the acquirement of a handsome competence so that he is now enjoying the fruits of his former toil in a well earned rest.

At the time of the Civil war, responding to his country's call for aid, he enlisted in 1862, as a member of Company H, Seventy-third Regiment of Illinois Volunteers under Captain James R. Davidson, a Methodist Episcopal minister of Griggsville, and at the close of his services he was under command of Captain Joseph L. Morgan, of Quincy, Illinois. The regiment was attached to the Army of the Cumberland and he was engaged in the battles of Perryville and Stone River in 1862 and afterward in the engagements at Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge,