

to New York City as the vessel encountered heavy storms in which it lost its mainmast. The ship's stores gave out and our subject and other passengers suffered from hunger before landing.

Mr. Stensel was born in Slazean, Prussia, May 12, 1823. He came of sterling German ancestry and his father, Gabriel Stensel, was also a native of Prussia, where he spent his entire life, carrying on the trade of a brickmason during his active years. At the time of his death he was three-score and ten years of age. In early manhood he married a Prussian lady, her death occurring a year after that of her husband and at about the same age. They were sincere Christian people and members of the Catholic Church.

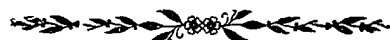
Our subject is the youngest but one of the family, and so far as he knows is the only one now living. His younger brother, Gabriel, and himself are the only ones that ever came to America, and of his brother, our subject knows nothing but supposes that he is dead. After he attained the age of fourteen years Mr. Stensel was sent to learn the trade of a cabinet-maker, and served an apprenticeship of four years. He subsequently worked at his calling in the larger German cities for some five years as a journeyman. When he was twenty-three years of age, shrewdly thinking that the United States of America possessed more advantages for making a competence than his native land, he embarked for these shores as before stated.

While a resident of Louisville, Ky., our subject had the good fortune to secure a capable and helpful wife and in the person of Miss Margaret Chickie. Mrs. Stensel was born in Wysenburg, Germany, near the French border in 1833, and was one year old when her parents migrated to this country in 1834, and settled at Louisville, Ky., which was then a small village. There her father and mother died when old people, both past eighty years of age. They were known as old settlers of Louisville, Ky. and were greatly respected. They were members of high standing of the German Catholic Church. Mrs. Stensel lived with her parents till her marriage and in the meantime received an excellent training that made her a good housewife.

Mr. and Mrs. Stensel are the parents of eight children, as follows: Lizzie, wife of William E.

Raymond, of Danville, Ill.; Kate, wife of Fred Beckel, of Farmer City; John, who operates a billiard room at Virden; George who assists his father in his business; Joseph; Rossa, wife of Frank Larison of this place; Anna and Laura; four of these are at home with their parents. The children have been well trained and educated and some of them have fine musical talents, especially Laura, the youngest.

Mr. and Mrs. Stensel are kind, hospitable, generous people, and are well liked by the entire community. Mr. Stensel is a man of excellent business capacity, is prompt and square in his dealings, and has a good name in financial circles. He is a member of Blue Lodge, No. 110, A. F. & A. M. at Farmer City. Politically he affiliates with the Republicans.



**P**HILIP WEEDMAN. The name of Weedman is one well known and highly honored throughout De Witt County and indeed beyond its bounds, as members of the family have been closely identified with the development of this section of Illinois for more than half a century. It is confidently expected that all who bear the name will prove worthy of it and continue the work so well begun by those of preceding generations. That this is the case in the life of Philip Weedman it needs but a mention of his name to his acquaintances to prove. He is numbered among the successful general farmers and stockmen of Santa Anna Township, and has a high reputation as a man of thoroughly upright character, stanch and true.

"Fair Prairie Stock Farm," whereon Mr. Weedman is prosecuting his business enterprises, consists of one hundred and eighty-five acres on sections 29 and 30, and is considered one of the best tracts of land in the township. Every acre has been improved and cultivated, a fine set of farm buildings has been erected, and the estate presents an attractive appearance indicative of prosperity and true home comfort. It is conveniently located, being but one mile from Farmer City, thus affording its occupants an opportunity to mingle in the social

life of the town whenever they feel disposed. For twelve years past Mr. Weedman has been breeding Short-horn cattle and some fine animals may be seen on his land. At the head of the herd is "Grover Cleveland," a bull whose proportions are beautiful in the eyes of stockmen, indicating as they do rare good qualities. Some fine Shropshire sheep are shown visitors to "Fair Prairie," and they also learn that the proprietor deals largely in domestic animals which he buys and feeds.

The birth of Mr. Weedman occurred February 17, 1844, on the farm which he now owns. His father, Asa Weedman, was born in Ohio in the early part of the century and had not yet entered his teens when he came to this State with his parents. The grandfather of our subject, John Weedman, of whom mention is made in the biographies of Thomas S. and George Weedman, found elsewhere in this volume, located in McLean County, but a few years later came to De Witt County. Here Asa Weedman became of age and began his life as a farmer and stock-dealer. He met with some reverses, but being plucky and industrious, overcame them and acquired a good estate while still a comparatively young man. He was considered one of the best business men in this section and enjoyed an enviable reputation as a man of firm principles and strict morality. He died at the early age of forty-six years, breathing his last in May, 1871.

The mother of our subject bore the maiden name of Delia Hand, and became the wife of Asa Weedman in McLean County. She was born in the southern part of the State and was rapidly advancing toward womanhood when her parents removed to McLean County. She is the mother of quite a large family, seven of whom are living, our subject being the fourth of the number. Some time after the death of Mr. Weedman the widow married Edward Adams, a farmer living in Miami County, Kan.

The gentleman of whom we write acquired a fundamental education in the schools of the county and then pursued a higher course of study in the Wesleyan College at Bloomington. He has always made his home on the farm which came into his personal possession in 1883, and since he grew to

manhood has devoted himself to tilling the soil, and its sister occupation, stock-raising. He was married in Piatt County to Anna D. Gillespie, whose parents, Harmon K. and Nancy Gillespie, have been occupying a farm in Piatt County for some years. They are natives of the Keystone State, whence they came to Illinois soon after their marriage, first establishing a home in McLean County, where their daughter Anna was born June 25, 1851. She, however, grew to maturity in Piatt County, receiving her education there and the home training which fitted her for a position at the head of a household. She is a bright, energetic woman, devoted to her husband and family, but by no means neglectful of the duties she owes to her neighbors and society at large. The happy union of our subject and his wife has been blest to them by the birth of two children: Frank L. and Louola.

Mr. Weedman is a stockholder and Director in the John Weedman National Bank, of Farmer City and has been since the organization of that financial institution. He has held the township offices, and, like his father before him, is an earnest worker in the ranks of the Republican party. He and his wife hold membership in the Methodist Church, where, as among the people in general, they are regarded with respect.

*Entered  
Gov. Land  
in Piatt  
Co. at  
Harris  
Station.  
Built one  
of best places  
in  
county.  
Still oc-  
cupied by  
son Carl O.  
Gillespie.*

GILBERT C. KELLY. Perhaps no man of his years in De Witt County has made a better record and gained a more prominent station in the minds of the people than Gilbert C. Kelly. He is now engaged in general farming, occupying a farm on section 34, Texas Township, but for some years he was engaged in the profession of teaching. Upon him various positions of public responsibility have been imposed, and whatever duties have devolved upon him have been undertaken with the determination to be faithful to the trust and watchful over the interests of his constituents.

Before entering upon the life history of our subject a few words regarding his parents and other members of the family will not be amiss. His