

JOHN W. ACOAM

Lawrence county was not lacking in loyalty during the dark days of the Rebellion, when the ship of state was almost stranded on the rocks of disunion, but contributed her full quota of brave and valiant men to assist in preserving the integrity of the government, prominent among whom was the well known gentleman and enterprising citizen whose name appears at the head of this review. Loyal to his country in its hour of peril and extremity, as was demonstrated on many bloody battle fields, he has ever been its staunch supporter in times of peace, and today there are few ex-soldiers of the county as widely and favorably known and none that can boast of a more honorable record. The ranks of the noble organization to which he belonged in the days of his youth are fast being decimated by the one invincible foe, and it is fitting that in every publication of the nature of this volume special tribute be paid to those who served during the greatest civil war known to history.

John W. Acoam was born on May 15, 1841, in Bedford, Indiana, and is a son of Joseph and Catherine (Wilder) Acoam, the father a native of Virginia and the mother of Kentucky. They came to Lawrence county, Indiana, about 1832, and settled at Bedford, where the father followed his trade, that of harness and saddle making. He was an industrious and honest man, and during his residence here he gained a high standing in the esteem of his fellow citizens. His death occurred at Bedford in 1849, at the early age of thirty-six years, and he was survived over half a century by his widow, who died in 1902 at the advanced age of eighty-five years. She was an earnest and consistent member of the Methodist Episcopal church and was a woman of high personal character. To Joseph and Catherine Acoam were born six children, namely: Hardin P., who is now deceased, was a plasterer in Bedford; Laura, who remained unmarried, is living in Bedford; Nancy, who lives in Indianapolis, is the widow of George Carroll; Mary E., widow of William Butler, late of Bedford; Henry, deceased, who was a veteran of the Civil war, afterwards lived in Bedford; John W., the immediate subject of this sketch, who was the third child in order of birth.

John W. Acoam had but little opportunities for securing an education, the same being limited to a few years in the public schools. At the early age of fifteen years he started to learn the harness and saddle-making trade in the shop of Leach & Davis at Bedford, and was thus employed when the Civil war broke out and Mr. Acoam gave practical evidence of his loyalty and patriotism by enlisting on August 12, 1862, in Company G, Fourth Indiana Cavalry. The command was sent first to Evansville, where they drew supplies, and then went to Henderson and Wadsworth, Kentucky, and on to Hopkinsville, Kentucky, and Clarksville, Tennessee, where they remained about ten days, being engaged mainly in skirmish duty. From there they were sent on to Nashville and Murfreesboro, where they joined the army under General Rosecrans, with whom they went south to Marietta, Georgia. They took part in all the campaigns and other arduous campaign duties of that year until they reached Huntsville, Alabama, where the subject was captured and the following nineteen months were spent by him amid the terrible experiences of the Southern prison pens. He was confined first for eight months at Danville and the last eleven months of his incarceration was in notorious Andersonville prison, where, under the inhuman administration of Major Wirtz, he endured all the horrors for which that famous prison pen was noted. During a large part of the time

which he was confined there Mr. Acoam was sick and contracted rheumatism and scurvy, from which he suffered a great deal. He was released from the Andersonville prison on August 18, 1864, and soon afterwards at Jacksonville, Florida, he was discharged from the service and given transportation home. For many years after his return home he felt the ill effects of the terrible experiences through which he had passed while in the Southland. After his return home he followed harness making at Bedford, being located on Sixteenth street until he retired from active business and his son is now following the same occupation at the old stand. In the past seventeen years Mr. Acoam has lived at No. 1727 O street and is now enjoying that rest which his years of honest effort have so richly earned for him. Mr. Acoam has been twice married, first in 1865 to Clara Malott, a native of Lawrence county, Indiana, and after her death be married, on August 25, 1895, Catherine Leach, of Bedford, the daughter of John and Frances (Phipps) Heron, of Martin county, Indiana, where the father was a successful farmer. Both are now deceased. They were the parents of. six children, namely: Daniel, who died while in the army; Alexander, who was killed in a railroad accident in St. Louis; Lewis, deceased; John, deceased; Nancy, the wife of John Stout, of Elnora, Indiana, and Catherine, Mrs. Acoam. To the subject's first union was born a son, Harry M., who is a harness maker in Bedford and who married Iola Hoopengartner. To the subject's present union has been born a daughter, Ora, who is the wife of John L. Miller, of Bedford, and they have three children. Catherine, Ora and Mabel.

Fraternally, Mr. Acoam has been for over a half century a member of Lodge No. 177, Independent Order of Odd Fellows, at Bedford, and has taken an appreciative interest in the workings of this order. He is also a member of P. C. Newland Post No. 247, Grand Army of the Republic, at Bedford. Religiously, he and his wife are members of the Christian church at Bedford, to which they give a generous support. Mr. Acoam is very widely known throughout Lawrence county and has a large circle of warm and loyal friends who esteem him not only for his record as a defender of his country in the hour of her need, but also for his splendid record as a business man and private citizen.

(History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties Indiana , 1914 B. F. Bowen & Co. Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana pgs 635-637)