

SAMUEL BRAY

The record of the gentleman whose name introduces this article contains no exciting chapter of tragic events, but is replete with well defined purposes which, carried to successful issue, have won for him an influential place in business circles and high personal standing among his fellow citizens. His life work has been one of unceasing industry and perseverance and the systematic and honorable methods which he has ever followed have resulted not only in gaining the confidence of those with whom he has had dealings, but also in the building up of a large and profitable business.

Samuel Bray was born about six miles west of Bloomington, Monroe county, Indiana, on November 26, 1854, and is the son of Nathan and Nancy (Cannon) Bray. His father was a native of North Carolina, who, in 1812, moved to the state of Kentucky, locating near Somerset. In 1833 he loaded his household effects in wagons and came to Monroe county, Indiana, locating on a farm, to the improvement and cultivation of which he devoted his attention and in the operation of which he remained actively engaged up to the time of his death. A quiet and unassuming man, he never aspired to public office or distinction, but was numbered among the sturdy, reliable citizens, of his locality. His wife, who was a native of South Carolina, came to Lawrence county, Indiana, in 1825, and she also is deceased. Nathan Bray was twice married, having by his first marriage six children, namely: Michager, Littleberry, William, Elizabeth, Iradell and Catherine. The only survivor of these children. William, who is now eighty-eight years old, was until within the past few years pastor of the Christian church at Burnside, Illinois, being now retired from active work. By his union with Nancy Cannon, Nathan Bray became the father of eight children, namely: Thomas Nesbit, Martha Ellen, David B., Mary Esther (deceased). John W., Salena, Samuel and Ira.

Samuel Bray is indebted to the common schools of Monroe county for his educational training, but by much reading and close observation of men and events he has become a well informed man. He has for a number of years been following the business of contracting, specializing in stone and brick work, though he takes general contracts. Many of the largest, most substantial and costliest buildings in this part of the state have been erected by him and the quality of his work has always received the commendation of the parties interested. Among the public buildings constructed by Mr. Bray may be mentioned the First Baptist church, the Christian church, both in Bloomington, and many fine residences both in city and country. He superintended the construction of several of the State University buildings, and he is at present building the Colored Baptist church in Bloomington. For about twenty years before entering upon his present line of work, Mr. Bray engaged in agricultural work and there imbibed those habits of industry and perseverance which have characterized his labors during the subsequent years. A competent workman himself, he has always insisted on the highest quality of work on the part of his employees and he absolutely will not permit inferior work to enter into the buildings constructed by him. This fact is well known and is one of the elements which has contributed so largely to his success.

On April 17, 1884, Samuel Bray was married to Laura Pauley, the daughter of James B. and Mary (Wooley) Pauley. Her father, who is native of Monroe county, was for many years a successful farmer here and served one term as county commissioner, Mrs. Bray's mother was born near Cincinnati, Ohio. To Mr. and Mrs. Bray have been born three children, namely: Alma Pearl, deceased; Francis and Grace..

Politically, Mr. Bray was formerly a Republican, but is now aligned with the Progressive party. Religiously, he is a member of the Christian church. A business man in the full sense of the term and making all other considerations subordinate to the successful prosecution of his chosen vocation, Mr. Bray is also public spirited and fully in touch with means and measures for the advancement of his city and for the welfare of the people. He is mindful of the duties he owes to the community, discharges the same as becomes a man of character and influence and as a citizen is fully abreast of the times, having decided opinions and the courage of his convictions on all the leading questions of the day.