

McHENRY OWEN

This biographical sketch has to do with a character of unusual force and eminence, for McHenry Owen has for a number of years been recognized as one of the able and successful lawyers and prominent citizens of southern Indiana. As a citizen he is public-spirited and enterprising; as a friend and neighbor, he combines the qualities of head and heart that have won confidence and commanded respect; as an attorney, who has a comprehensive grasp upon the philosophy of jurisprudence, he is easily the peer of his professional brethren at the Lawrence county bar, and as a servant of the people in places of responsibility he served in a manner that won for him the commendation of his superiors. Yet his entire accomplishment but represents the result of the fit utilization of the innate talent which is his and the directing of his effort along those lines where mature judgment and rare discrimination have led the way.

McHenry Owen was born near Clear Spring, Owen township, Jackson county, Indiana, on the 1st day of July, 1851 and is the son of James W. and Martha A. (Wells) Owen, both of whom were natives also of Owen township, Jackson county. James W. Owen, who was a farmer by vocation, was a prominent citizen of his county and acceptably filled the office of county commissioner for two terms, and also rendered appreciated service as justice of the peace. His death occurred on March 25, 1887, on his old homestead, and he was survived a number of years by his widow, who died on May 10, 1913, at Brownstown, Jackson county, at the age of over eighty-eight. years. The father was an active member of the Masonic order, being a past master. of Clear Spring Lodge. Politically, he was a lifelong Democrat He was a faithful and courageous defender of the flag, having served in the Mexican war as a member of Company F, Second Regiment Indiana Infantry, and in the Civil war he was first lieutenant of Company F, Sixty-seventh Regiment Indiana Volunteer Infantry. To him and his wife were born five children, all of whom are living, namely: McHenry, the immediate subject of this sketch; Cass, who lives at Ridelin, South Dakota; Sarah, the wife of Marion Johnson, of Clermont, Marion county, Indiana; Mettie, the widow of James M. Henderson, of Brownstown, Indiana; Laura, the wife of William McKay Milligan, of Fayetteville, Arkansas.

McHenry Owen attended the district and high schools at Clear Spring, and then became a student in the State University, where he was graduated on June 12, 1877, having specialized in law. On August 21, of the same year, he located at Brownstown, where he formed a professional partnership with Judge Ralph Applewhite and was successfully engaged in the practice until October 21, 1881, when he removed to Leesville, Lawrence county, Indiana, where he remained until September 11, 1889. His life at Leesville was an active one, for, besides practicing law, he farmed, acted as editor of the *Leesville Graphic* and served as deputy postmaster. In October, 1886, Mr. Owen entered the service of the government as special examiner in the pension department, his work being mostly at Dayton, Toledo and other Ohio points. He served efficiently in that capacity until June 30, 1889, and on the 11th of the following September he came to Bedford and resumed the practice of law. On November 1st, of that year, he formed a partnership with Judge Newton Crook, which association was terminated in October, 1893, when Mr. Owen again entered the service of the government in the same capacity as formerly, being located at Dayton, Ohio, until April 30, 1897, at which time he again

returned to Bedford and has been continuously engaged in the practice of his profession here since. He gives his attention to the general practice, though specializing somewhat in commercial law and acting as the local representative for a number of the leading commercial agencies. For a while he was associated with John R. East, of Bloomington, but is now alone in the practice. He is a busy man, for besides his professional duties, which are manifold, he is the owner of considerable valuable farm land in Lawrence county, which demands a share of his attention, while he has been for a number of years a member of the board of directors of the Bedford National Bank. Mr. Owen has achieved an enviable reputation in the field of effort to which he has devoted his energies, for from the beginning he was intensely methodical and unswervingly persistent in search of the true light and of the essentials of the legal foundations, and in sources of legal conception and thought, holding devoutly to the highly embellished record of equity, the invariable theorems of law, the sure, certain, invincible methods of practice; therefore success could not help crowning his efforts and attracting to him public recognition and appreciation. Personally, he is a man of genial and kindly impulses and has won a host of warm and loyal friends in the community which has been honored by his citizenship.

Politically, Mr. Owen has positive convictions and has been an active and influential supporter of the Democratic party. Fraternally, Mr. Owen is a Mason of high degree, being secretary of the blue lodge, secretary of the chapter of Royal Arch Masons, secretary of the council of Royal and Select Masters, and recorder of the commandery of Knights Templar, while he is a thirty-second-degree member of the Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite, Valley of Indianapolis, and of Murat Temple, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine, at Indianapolis. In the Knights of Pythias he also takes a live interest, being a member of the degree team of the Bedford lodge.

McHenry Owen was married, on October 8, 1879, to Ada E. Smith, the daughter of Dr. William H. and Sally (Holland) Smith, of Leesville, where her father was for many years widely known as a successful physician and public-spirited citizen. He was born in Salem, Washington county, Indiana, on September 5, 1830 and his death occurred at Bedford on October 30, 1911, to which city he had removed in 1893. He was educated in medicine at the Louisville Medical College and the Bellevue Hospital Medical College, New York city, after which he was continuously engaged in the practice of his profession at Leesville from 1853 until his removal to Bedford, where he also practiced for some years. He was successful in material affairs, owning considerable real estate and a store. He was numbered among the pioneer doctors of Lawrence county and was one of the organizers of the Lawrence County Medical Society. He was also vice-president of the Bedford National Bank. To Mr. and Mrs. Owen were born two children, namely: Anna May, born on November 21, 1880, is the wife of Prof. Everett E. King, who is professor of railway engineering at Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa; Frank Smith Owen, born March 29, 1883, is a successful civil engineer at Bedford.

Mr. Owen has always stood ready to identify himself with his fellow citizens in any good work and extend a co-operative hand to advance any measure that is calculated to advance the welfare of the community in any way. His integrity and fidelity have been manifested in every relation of life and he is eminently deserving of the marked popularity which he enjoys.

(History of Lawrence and Monroe Counties Indiana, 1914 B. F. Bowen & Co. Inc. Indianapolis, Indiana pgs 539-541)