

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN EVANS, a well-known agriculturist of Brushvalley township, Indiana county, prominent also in other connections, was born there Nov. 9, 1861. A citizen whose activities have made him valuable to the community, he bears worthily a name which has long been synonymous with good citizenship in this section.

Mr. Evans is descended from one of the oldest pioneer families in Brushvallay. The Evanses are of Welsh extraction, the founder of the family in this country, Hugh Evans, having been a native of Cardiff, Wales, who crossed the Atlantic when a young man, working for his passage on the vessel. Among the passengers was a young English girl named Hannah Dill, with whom he fell in love, and they were married when they landed at Philadelphia. They came west to the Welsh settlement near Ebensburg, in Cambria county, Pa., where they remained for a short time, until they came to Indiana county, locating in Brushvalley township. They were among the first settlers there. Settling in the wilderness, Mr. Evans built his log cabin and set to work clearing up the land. He remained but a short time on his first farm, buying a 400-acre tract, all brush and timber, near the site of Mechanicsburg, upon which he settled down to farming. Much of this land is still in the family name. Here he built a dwelling house and barn, and also erected a saw and grist mill, the first of the kind in Brushcreek valley. The mill was of stone, and stood on Brush creek about three quarters of a mile below the present site of Mechanicsburg, and for many years was a prominent landmark. He also owned a distillery. He worked hard and faithfully, prospered in his own affairs, and did his full duty as a citizen, being one of the enterprising and progressive men of his day and generation. He was a strong abolitionist. He died on his farm in 1849, at the age of seventy years, and was buried in what is known as the Evans graveyard. He was a member of the Baptist Church, the first Baptist to settle in the township. His first wife died leaving children as follows: Ann, who married John Kelly and (second) James Stewart; John; Hugh, who died at Altoona; Mary, who married Henry grumbling; Elizabeth (Betsy), who first married Joseph McNutt; Evan, who lived in Brushvalley; William, who married Susan Wilkins; and James, who died in Center township. Mr. Evans married for his second wife Esther Cresswell, and she bore him three children: Ellen, Rebecca and Lucinda (who married Rev. A. B. Runyan, a well-known Baptist minister of Mechanicsburg).

John Evans, eldest son of Hugh Evans, was educated in Brushvalley township and there grew to manhood on the farm. Receiving 250 acres of land from his father, he settled down to farming and stock raising, made many improvements on his property and was an industrious and successful man throughout his long life. He was an honored resident of his locality, a member and deacon of the Baptist Church, and in politics a Whig and Republican in turn, and a strong admirer of the martyred President Lincoln. During the Civil war his sympathies were with the Union cause, and his two sons went out as Union soldiers. He died on his farm at the age of seventy years, seven months, and is buried in the family lot in the Evans cemetery. He married in Brushvalley township Elizabeth Sanderson, a native of Hagerstown, Md., daughter of Thomas Sanderson, who settled in that township. Mrs. Evans was also a member of the

Baptist Church. She was the mother of eight children: Benjamin, mentioned below; Emily, who married John Finley, and died in Blairsville; Lucinda, who married William Conrad, and is now a widow residing in East Wheatfield township; Susan, who married David Overdorff, both being deceased; Elizabeth, who married Thomas Gregory, and died in Franklin, Pa.; Rebecca, who married Finley Campbell, and died in Johnstown; John Sanderson, who now makes his home in Homer city; and Maria, who married John Bracken, and died in Indiana county, Pennsylvania.

Benjamin Evans, son of John, born Feb. 16, 1826, on the homestead farm in Brushvalley township, attended the local school. He took up farming as an occupation, following in his father's footsteps. Settling on the 100-acre tract of land now owned by his son Benjamin F. Evans, he improved the land, erected a dwelling house and barn, and added to the value of the property in many other ways. As he prospered he bought another place, of 126 acres, known as the Isaiah Bonner farm, which he gave later to his son John W. He spent his life in agricultural pursuits, carrying on stock raising as well as general farming, and died on his farm in April, 1895, at the age of sixty-nine years, three months. He was buried in the Evans cemetery near Mechanicsburg. Mr. Evans was one of those men of unassuming disposition but strong character whose lives, following what they deem only the simple paths of duty, have a lasting effect on the welfare of the community. He was intelligent and well read and took an interest in all things which tended to promote the general good. During the Civil war he fought for the Union cause as a member of the 6th Heavy Artillery. He served five years as school director of his township, and was an active church member, belonging to the M. E. Church, which he served as class leader and steward. In politics he was a republican. Mr. Evans married Margaret Finley, of Brushvalley township, daughter of David and Margaret (McCormack) Finley, and they had three children, namely: John W., now retired and living at Homer City, Pa.; Margaret J., who married Frank Stake, of Cherryhill township (both are deceased); and Benjamin F. The mother died in 1901 while living with her son Benjamin and is buried in the same cemetery as the father. She was a member of the M. E. Church.

Benjamin Franklin Evans obtained his education in the public schools of the home neighborhood. From early boyhood he worked on the farm with his parents, and continuing to make his home there, took charge of the homestead after his father's death and cared for his widowed mother. In time he bought other land in the township, and is now cultivating over two hundred acres, engaging in farming and stock raising on a large scale. He built his present home and rebuilt the barn which his father erected, and which was destroyed by fire. Mr. Evans is thoroughly enterprising, and under his well-directed labors his farm has become one of the best cultivated in his section of the county. He has shown his public spirit by his efficient work in the township offices to which he has been chosen by his fellow citizens. During his eleven years' service as member of the school board he has been president of that body for several years; he has been assessor for one term. Mr. Evans has been a staunch Republican and is an ardent supporter of Roosevelt and the principles he stands

for. In religion he is a member of the M. E. Church, of which he is a trustee. As the representative of a family whose members have always been regarded as estimable citizens he is living up to the obligations of an honored name, connected for several generations with the best element in the community.

On Oct. 18, 1883, Mr. Evans married Clara B. Hileman, who was born in Brushvalley township, daughter of George and Louisa Hileman. They have had a family of ten children: George S., a farmer of Brushvalley township, who married Mary Appleton; Charles, a railroad man, who resides at Mansfield, Ohio; Louisa, Bessie and Eleanor, at home; Marion, who died when sixteen years old; Elizabeth, at home; Dick; Ruth, and Boyd.