

# The History of Knox County

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## THOMAS JEFFERSON HUBBELL.

Thomas Jefferson Hubbell is now practically living retired in Altona, although he is filling the office of justice of the peace, being one of the oldest in that position in Knox county, having first been elected in 1888. His long retention in this office is incontrovertible proof of the fairness and impartiality of his decisions and of his devotion to duty. He was born in Victoria township, this county, April 14, 1842, and is therefore numbered among the older of its native sons. His father, M. C. Hubbell, was born in Seneca county, New York, April 4, 1806, and reached a ripe old age, passing away December 28, 1884, his remains being interred at Victoria. His educational privileges in youth were quite limited for circumstances forced him to begin the battle of life early. Thus when a young lad he worked on a small farm belonging to his parents. He was only seven years of age when his father died in 1813, and at the age of ten years he accompanied his mother on her removal to Delaware county, Ohio, remaining at home with the family, consisting of two brothers and four sisters, in order to aid in the support of his mother. The burdens and responsibilities of life rested heavily on young shoulders and yet he bravely took up the duties that awaited him. After reaching manhood he married Philena Buck, who was born in October, 1808, in Christian county. She was but four years of age when during the progress of the war of 1812 she was taken to Ohio by her uncle, living with his family until her marriage. Her uncle continued a resident farmer of Ohio up to the time of his death. During the pioneer epoch in the history of Knox county Mr. and Mrs. M. C. Hubbell came to this state and the father secured land and devoted his attention to general agricultural pursuits. Following his demise in 1884 his widow ever remained true to his memory and passed away in Victoria, January 21, 1897. In the family were ten children of whom four are yet living: Phoebe Philena, now the wife of N. J. Johnson, of McCook, Nebraska; Joseph L., who is living retired in Nebraska; Ruth, the wife of David Swickard, a resident of Victoria; and Thomas J., of this review, who is the youngest living member of the family.

The boyhood days of Thomas J. Hubbell were spent upon the home farm and almost as soon as old enough to handle the plow, he began work in the fields, to which he devoted his time from early spring planting until crops were harvested in the late autumn. In the winter seasons he attended school until twenty years of age, when he put aside all personal considerations that he might offer his services to his country, then engaged in Civil war. He enlisted on the 11th of August, 1862, for three years as a member of Company K, Eighty-third Illinois Volunteer Infantry, under Captain George W. Reynolds, his regiment being assigned to duty with the Army of the Cumberland. He could not serve out the entire term of his enlistment because of disability and was discharged on the 11th of January, 1865, at Clarksville, Tennessee. When no longer able to remain at the front Mr. Hubbell returned to his home in Victoria township and made farming his life work, continuing actively in the labor of the fields until 1886, when he retired from

business life and removed to Altona, where he has since enjoyed a well earned and well merited rest. While upon the farm he carefully and systematically cultivated his fields and his well directed business interests and unfaltering diligence brought him the competence that now enables him to rest from further labor.

On the 16th of March, 1867, Mr. Hubbell was united in marriage to Miss Matilda Bell, who was born near Belleville, Canada, on the 17th of February, 1846, a daughter of Peter and Emeline (Yaeger) Bell and a granddaughter of Fred Bell, of Canada. Her father, Peter Bell, followed farming in the Dominion until about 1863, when he crossed the border into the United States and made his way to Knox county, settling in Victoria township where he followed that occupation until his death, which occurred in 1895. His wife, who was of German descent, still survives him and is now living with a daughter in Missouri at the advanced age of ninety-seven years. Unto Mr. and Mrs. Hubbell have been born the following children: George W., a resident farmer of Walnut Grove township, who married Mrs. Bell Lawrence, the widow of Thomas Lawrence; William H., of Campbell, Minnesota, who married Minnie Whitcomb and has two children, Ruth (and Fern?); and Charles A.

In his political views Mr. Hubbell has always been a republican, supporting the party which was the defense of the Union during the dark days of the Civil war, and has always been a member of reform and progress. He has made a most creditable record in office, having been elected justice of the peace in his township in 1888. He has since filled the position and is undoubtedly one of the oldest justices in years of continuous service in Knox county. He has made an excellent record in presiding over this court, his decisions being ever based upon the law and the equity of the case. He maintains pleasant relations with his old army comrades through his membership in the Grand Army post at Galesburg, and his religious belief is evidenced in his membership in the Methodist Episcopal church. His has been an active, useful and well spent life, devoted to duty and to the high principles in which he believes, and there is in his entire life history no esoteric chapter. (pages 542-546, submitted by Janine Crandell)