

Jonathan E. Wells largely spent his boyhood days in Vermont where he continued to the age of eighteen years, and the public schools afforded him his educational privileges. He then determined to try his fortune in the new and growing west, of which he had heard such favorable reports, believing that he might have better business opportunities in that section of the country than he could secure in New England. He traveled westward by way of Dubuque and thence made the trip by driving across the country to Monona, Clayton county. In that vicinity he secured employment as a farm hand and while thus employed carefully saved his earnings until his industry and economy had brought him sufficient capital to enable him to purchase forty acres of land. This he tilled for a time but later disposed of the property and removed to Howard county, taking up his abode in Albion township. He then invested in a farm of eighty acres, to which he added from time to time until he had three hundred and twenty acres in all. Year by year he continued the work of cultivating and improving his farm land and annually gathered good crops as the result of the practical and progressive methods which he employed in carrying on the farm work. His place in its neat and thrifty appearance indicated his careful supervision and his intimate knowledge of modern farming methods. He continued to reside upon his farm until 1899, when he removed to Cresco and retired from active business life. He then enjoyed a well earned rest and the most envious could not grudge him his success, so honorably had it been won and so worthily used.

In 1862 Mr. Wells was united in marriage to Miss Mary Burgess, a native of Detroit, Michigan, and a daughter of Thomas and Elizabeth (Lincoln) Burgess. Her parents were both natives of England and in early life crossed the briny deep to the new world. They did not remain in the east but continued on their westward way to Detroit, Michigan, where the death of Mr. Burgess occurred some years later. His widow afterward came with her family to Iowa, settling at Cresco, where she continued to make her home until called to the home beyond. To Mr. and Mrs. Wells were born two children, Charles A. and William J.

Mr. Wells was a republican in his political faith and during the course of his active business life was called to serve in various public offices. At one time he was overseer of the county poor farm and continued in that position for seventeen years, making a most excellent record by the prompt and capable manner in which he discharged his duties. He was numbered among the pioneer settlers of Iowa and was familiar with the story of its growth and development from the earliest days. When he first came to the county Cresco had not yet been founded and the principal town was New Oregon, just north of the present county seat. Much of the land was still undeveloped and unimproved and the work of transforming this region into a rich agricultural district had only just begun. Mr. Wells bore his part in the task and for many years was prominently and successfully connected with the agricultural development of the county, winning a measure of success which was most gratifying and, moreover, was the merited reward of his labors. He passed away January 27, 1919, and his death was deeply regretted by a large circle of relatives and friends.

JOHN STEJSKAL.

John Stejskal, a progressive and energetic farmer living on section 22, Howard Center township, Howard county, was born in Bohemia, January 1, 1872, a son of James and Catherine (Bouska) Stejskal, both of whom remained in Bohemia, where the father passed away and where the mother is still living. The son was but a lad of thirteen years when he came to the United States. His father had previously died and the mother married again. The boy then determined to leave home and as his mother refused to give him money to make the trip, he wrote to an uncle in Howard county, Iowa, to send him money for his passage. The request was complied with and he was furnished the funds to pay his fare to Hamburg and a ticket from Hamburg to Cresco, Iowa. On reaching Hamburg with five dollars in cash he had to wait a couple of days for a ship and to meet his expenses