

Joseph Balk acquired his education in the public schools of his native country and at the age of seventeen crossed the Atlantic to America, locating first near St. Lucas, Iowa, on a farm. After one year and a half he returned to Germany and served one year in the regular army, after which he remained in his native country for two years, returning to America at the end of that time. He spent a short period in Buffalo, New York, and came from there to Winneshiek county, where he turned his attention to agricultural pursuits. In 1901 he purchased ninety acres of land in Fayette county, but after holding it for one year sold it and bought another farm of eighty acres. At the end of three years he returned to Winneshiek county and bought one hundred and twenty acres of land, continuing its development and improvement for eight years thereafter. When he sold that property he purchased one hundred and seventy acres on section 28, Washington township, and has since carefully carried on the work of its development, so that it now presents an attractive appearance. He is building a modern two-story residence upon the property and the barns and outbuildings are all in good repair, the owner constantly putting forth well directed efforts along lines of progress and improvement. He engages in general farming and stock-raising and in the community is recognized as a man of good business ability, whose judgment is sound and whose enterprise is unflinching.

Mr. Balk was married on the 2d of June, 1896, to Miss Marguerita Hengstl, and to their union have been born four children, Lizzie, John, Mary and Joseph. Mr. Balk is a member of the Catholic church and has always voted the democratic ticket, although he prefers to do his public service as a private citizen rather than as an office holder. He has been in America for twenty-six years—years of earnest and well directed work—and he deserves all the credit which is due a man who wins his success by honorable and persistent labor.

EVEN E. LOMEN.

Even E. Lomen is one of the active and progressive farmers and stock-raisers of Springfield township and is conducting his business interests on a fine property lying on section 3. The farm's neat and attractive appearance indicates his careful supervision and his practical methods and he is justly accounted one of the leading agriculturalists of his native county. He was born on the 6th of January, 1861, and is a son of Erick and Olena Lomen, of whom further mention is made elsewhere in this work in connection with the sketch of Henry Lomen.

Even E. Lomen was reared and educated upon his father's farm in Decorah township and attended district school, later becoming a student at the Brecken-ridge Institute. From his childhood he was familiar with the details of farm operation, having learned them by practical experience upon his father's property, and he remained at home until 1896, when he moved to one of his father's farms lying on section 3, Springfield township, upon which he now resides. The place had but slight improvements and he began further to develop and cultivate it, erecting fine barns and outbuildings and installing the necessary equipment. In addition to general farming he engages in stock-raising and is a shareholder in the Farmers Hog Company of Decorah.