

one year after his admission to the bar in October, 1893. At the end of his service as a clerk of probate he began practicing his profession at Kirskville, where he remained until July, 1897. He then moved to Shelbina and formed a partnership with R. A. Cleek, with whom he continued to practice until 1902, the firm being Cleek & Williams. The partnership was dissolved in the year last mentioned and Mr. Williams practiced alone and edited the Shelbina Torchlight, which he and Mr. Cleek bought in 1900.

In 1904 Mr. Williams was elected prosecuting attorney of Shelby county, and at the end of his first term was re-elected for another. This ended on January 1, 1909. At the time of his first election he sold his interest in the newspaper and devoted himself wholly to his official duties until they were ended. He then bought the Shelbina Torchlight and has since been its sole owner and publisher. He is also a stockholder in the Shelbina National Bank and connected with other enterprises of moment and value to the community, in which he has always felt the deepest interest, and to which he has rendered effective and valued service in helping to promote every undertaking for its advancement which he has deemed of worth.

On August 29, 1895, Mr. Williams was united in marriage with Miss Rosa N. Deaton, a daughter of M. G. Deaton, of Kirskville. They have one child, their son Meredith, who is living at home with his parents. The father's political allegiance is given warmly and consistently to the Democratic party, and he has always been very active and effective in its service, his work in its behalf being

based on broad intelligence, good judgment and devoted loyalty to its principles. His fraternal relations are with the Masonic order, the Order of the Eastern Star, the Court of Honor and the Modern Woodmen of America, and his religious connection is with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. He has been very successful and is one of the leading and most influential citizens of the county, universally esteemed for his elevated manhood and his worth and usefulness as a force for good in the community of his home.

JOSEPH R. RIDGE.

For fifty-seven years this now venerable citizen of Shelbina has been a resident of Missouri and during all but two of them has dwelt in Shelby county. For more than half a century he was actively engaged in farming and raising live stock, first on the farm of his father as a boy and later on one of his own as a man. During his long activity in cultivating the soil he contributed extensively and notably to the development and improvement of the county and the aggregate of its wealth and influence. For he has always shown estimable public spirit and enterprise and given breadth of view and vitalizing force to worthy projects for the welfare of the section and the advantage of its people.

Mr. Ridge was born on January 31, 1838, in Hickman county, Kentucky, the state of which his parents were natives and in which his ancestors lived for at least two generations before him, his paternal grandfather, Isaac Ridge, having been born and passed his life in that

state. He is a son of William and Anna (Robey) Ridge, both products of the blue grass soil, on which the father's life began on July 7, 1814. They were reared on farms and never sought any other occupation in life but that to which they were accustomed from childhood. In 1852 they adventured into the wilderness beyond the Mississippi from their home, planting their hearthstone on the frontier and giving their children the benefit of its sturdy and invigorating lessons in endurance and self reliance. The first two years of their residence in this state were passed on a farm in Monroe county. The family then moved into Shelby county and this has ever since been its home.

The marriage of the parents occurred in Kentucky. They became the progenitors of six children, of whom three are living—Joseph R., the subject of this review; Martha E., the wife of Lewis Hale, of Shelbina; and William M., one of the prominent and influential citizens of this county. The father retired from the activities of life in 1875 and moved to Shelbina, where he died in 1877. He adhered to the Democratic party in all political affairs, and was to the end of his life vigorous and resourceful in the service of his party, although he never sought or accepted a public office. In religion he was a devout and consistent Catholic.

Joseph R. Ridge grew to manhood on his father's farm and was well schooled in farm work by energetic participation in it from his boyhood. He obtained his education in the district schools near his home, which were fair samples for their day and location of the many temples of

Cadmus that stud the surface of our democratic empire, where liberty receives her purest worship, and where, though in humble and lowly guise, she secretly breathes her strength into the heart and sinews of the nation. When he left school he turned his attention to what was then the leading pursuit of the county, agriculture, and from that time until 1903 he gave his whole energy and time to farming and raising live stock. He was a good manager and an excellent farmer, and his farming operations brought him large returns for the period, so that when he retired he was in the enjoyment of a competence which he had gained by his own industry, frugality and skill. In the year last named he sold his farm and took up his residence in Shelbina, of which he is now one of the most substantial and respected citizens.

He has ever shown a good citizen's interest in the public affairs of the country and general welfare of the community of his home. Believing firmly in a government by the people, he was a staunch and zealous Democrat until the formation of the Populist party, and since then he has been devoted to its principles and effective in supporting them and its candidates. On November 22, 1858, he was married to Miss Nancy Ann Hale, a native of Tennessee, and, like himself, an adventurer into the wilderness of this state, as it was when they came into it. Of their eight children five are living—William L., of Shelbyville; Minnie, the wife of John Boettcher, of this county; Annie, the wife of Hugh Sparks, of Shelbina; Joseph E., who lives in Illinois; and Allie, the wife of Theodore Bethards, of Shelbina.

Having reached the age of three score and ten, Mr. Ridge might look upon himself as an old man and consider that his day is past. But his health, energy and clearness of faculty all forbid this view to all who know him and share the benefits of his wisdom, feel the force of his influence or yield to the stimulus of his worthy example. They know that the fire within him is not spent and the fruitfulness of his exemplary life is not over. And the esteem which all who know him bestow upon him as his due and the just tribute to his merit, shows that his years have been well passed in usefulness and the results of his labors are highly appreciated.

SHELBY NATIONAL BANK.

With a capital stock of \$30,000 and a wise and farseeing directorate and official staff, the Shelby National Bank well sustains itself as one of the soundest, safest and best managed financial institutions in this portion of the state. It was founded in 1905 as the Farmers & Merchants Bank and became a national bank in 1908. The founders of the Farmers & Merchants Bank were: President, John Munch; vice-president, W. L. Shouse; cashier, E. J. King; directors, John Munch, George W. O'Bryan, James F. Allgaier, Thomas J. Rice, N. E. Williams, George Roff, W. S. Fox, H. M. Pollard and Weldon Cotton. George W. O'Bryan followed Mr. Munch as president, and T. A. Bailey succeeded E. J. King as cashier.

In January, 1907, J. H. Wood and W. H. Jones purchased an interest in the bank and the next year it was reorgan-

ized under its present name and with the following officers: President, J. H. Wood; vice-president, J. E. Ragsdale; cashier, W. H. Jones; directors, the above named officers and George W. O'Bryan, George Roff, E. W. Worland, O. F. Howell, G. G. Sanders and T. F. Bates. In March, 1910, Mr. W. H. Jones resigned as cashier and Oliver J. Lloyd was chosen to succeed him.

HIRAM COLLINS.

This veritable "Patriarch in Israel" among the people of Shelby county is not only one of the oldest and most esteemed citizens of this part of the state, but has been one of the most sturdy and industrious and one of those most truly representative of the founders and builders of the commonwealth, who laid the foundations of its greatness and planted in its soil the early seeds of civilization, which they and their successors have cultivated and developed into the magnitude, wealth and influence of the present day, when Missouri is an empire fragrant and fruitful in all the products of twentieth century life.

Mr. Collins was born in Monroe county, Missouri, on January 31, 1828, and is a son of James and Sarah (Oglesby) Collins, the father a Kentuckian by birth and rearing, and the mother a native of Illinois. They became residents of Missouri in 1836, making their home in Monroe county, where they engaged profitably in farming and raising live stock until the death of the father in 1853. He was always a Democrat in politics, a zealous promoter of the welfare of his community, an exemplar of sterling and pro-