

O'Donnell, and his grandfather, Richard O'Donnell, were also natives of the Emerald Isle, and there their forefathers lived many generations. The father came to the United States in 1845 and located in New York City, but three years later returned to Ireland, and there passed the balance of his life. He was a stone mason by occupation and did well at his trade. He was married in 1832 to Miss Mary Shea, also of Ireland, and they had six children.

Richard O'Donnell obtained his education in Ireland and passed the years of his early manhood in Australia, where he was engaged in building bridges and saw mills. It was natural that he should seek better opportunities away from his native heath than the political and social conditions in his own country afforded, and as Australia was a new and progressive land, with seeming abundance of opportunity for a poor but ambitious young man, he went there. And the qualities of head and hand and heart which he possessed, which would have won him success almost anywhere, were serviceable to him there. But still he hankered for America, and in 1877 he came to this country and found a home in Chicago, where he worked six months. He then moved to Shelby county and located on the farm in Salt River township on which he now lives, and on which he was actively and profitably engaged in farming and raising live stock until his retirement from active work in 1904.

Mr. O'Donnell's farm comprises eighty acres of good land and is well improved. He applied to its cultivation while he was in charge of it the intelligence he had gained in his extensive and

varied experience, and also what he had gained in study and from observation and reflection, and he brought it to a high state of fertility and productiveness. It is now farmed by tenants, but Mr. O'Donnell still supervises the farming, and the same care and systematic work that he performed is the rule governing all its operations, and the standard of excellence in farming set up by him still prevails in every feature of what is done on the place.

Mr. O'Donnell was married in 1870 to Miss Jane Cross, also a native of Ireland. They have had eight children, six of whom are living, and all residents of Shelby county. They are: John, also a prosperous farmer; Thomas, who resides in Shelbina; Richard, Jr.; Mary, the widow of Eugene Bailey; Eugene, who is a farmer of this county; and Evelyn, who is at home with her parents. The father is a pronounced Democrat in his political faith and allegiance, and his religious connection is with the Catholic church, of which he is a devout and faithful member.

JOHN F. SPARKS.

Born of one of the sturdy strains of Virginia yeomanry on his father's side of the house, his paternal grandfather, Robert Sparks, having been a product of old families in the Old Dominion, and of Kentucky parentage on both sides, John F. Sparks, of Salt River township, in this county, has reproduced in his own career on the soil of Missouri the best historical and traditional life features of his ancestry in the two older states of the South, and shown that whatever the

condition or surroundings of the sterling American citizen, be is sure to exemplify the commendable traits of character and manhood that have given that citizenship its high rank in the judicious estimate of the world.

Mr. Sparks himself is a native of Henry county, Kentucky, where he was born on January 4, 1835. His father, James P. Sparks, was born in Kentucky on January 4, 1801, and was reared and educated in his native state. There, also, he began the career as a farmer and live stock man which lasted to the end of his life. He came to Missouri and located his family on the boundary line between Monroe and Shelby counties in 1839, the dwelling of the family being in Monroe and part of the farm on which it was located in Shelby county. Here he renewed his activity as a farmer and stock man and continued it to his untimely death in 1846, at the age of forty-five years. He was very enterprising and energetic and success followed all his efforts. And from the indications presented he was destined to become a man of considerable wealth and influence if death had not cut short his usefulness when he was at the height of his powers.

In 1822 he was united in marriage with Miss Sarah Elizabeth Threlkeld, and by this union he became the father of fourteen children, five of whom are living: Martha Margaret, the wife of Judge N. Adams, of Shelbina; John F., who is the interesting theme of this writing; Sarah Elizabeth, the wife of Henry Sparks; Nancy Helen, the wife of Henry Smith, of Monroe county; and S. A. Sparks, an esteemed citizen of Blackwell, Oklahoma. The father was a loyal and

zealous member of the Democratic party from the dawn of his manhood, and his services to his party were always pronounced and appreciated by the leaders and the rank and file of the organization.

John F. Sparks was reared on the parental farm and educated at the district schools of Monroe county. After leaving school life on the farm seemed tame and insipid to him, and accordingly, in 1853, he gratified the love of adventure he had inherited from his forefathers by going to California, which had not long before thrilled the world with the inspiring strains of its golden music. He remained on the Pacific coast fourteen years, then returned to his Missouri home, locating in Shelby county in 1867. In the meantime he had mined and done teaming in the neighborhood of Sacramento, and had experienced all the adventure and exciting incidents in life that he had previously longed for.

After his return to this state he was continuously and profitably engaged in farming and raising live stock until 1904. In that year he retired from active pursuits in consequence of a serious injury he received, and since then he has lived quietly in the enjoyment of the competency his industry and frugality had brought him. He was married in 1870 to Mrs. Mary E. (List) Sparks, the widow of his deceased brother. They had three children, two of whom are living: Gerard, of Moberly, and Ada B., the wife of Y. E. Sullivan, of this county. The father is a Democrat in politics, a Presbyterian in church connection and has been a Freemason in fraternal life. He is one of the most esteemed citizens of his township.