

FLEMING, THOMAS H

Thomas H. FLEMING, mayor of the city of Portland and former sheriff of Jay county, for many years one of the best known residents of this county, is a native Hoosier and has made his home in this state all his life. Mr. FLEMING was born on a farm in the vicinity of Fort Wayne on May 5, 1857, and is a son of James W. and Nancy (SUNDERLAND) FLEMING, the latter of whom was born in Montgomery county, Ohio. James W. FLEMING was a Virginian, who became a resident of Montgomery county, Ohio, in the days of his young manhood and became a cooper by trade. In 1838, following his marriage in that county, he came over into Indiana and settled on a farm in Alien county, in the vicinity of Fort Wayne, where he established his home. His last days were spent in the city of Fort Wayne, to which place he moved upon his retirement from the farm. Of the children born to him and his wife, five sons grew to maturity, those besides the subject of this sketch having been William S. FLEMING, formerly and for years engaged in the mercantile business at Portland and former clerk of the courts of this county; Benjamin F. FLEMING, who went West and spent his last days at Helena, Mont.; Thornton J. FLEMING, formerly engaged in the mercantile business at Portland, and who later became a merchant at Fort Wayne, and James W. FLEMING. Reared on the home farm in the vicinity of Fort Wayne, Thomas H. FLEMING completed his schooling in the schools of that city, and in 1875, he then being eighteen years of age, came to Jay county and became engaged as a clerk in the store his brothers, William S. and Thornton J. FLEMING, had established at Bryant. He continued thus engaged for five years, at the end of which time he returned to the home farm in Alien county and was for about three years thereafter employed on his father's farm. He then became a fireman on the G. R. & I. railroad, making his home at Ft. Wayne, where he remained until 1891, when he returned to Portland. In 1912 Mr. FLEMING was appointed deputy to the sheriff of Jay county, and in 1916 was elected to the office of sheriff as the nominee of the Democratic party. In 1918 he was re-elected and thus served two terms, thus having been the first sheriff to serve in the new court house. Upon the expiration of his term of public office Mr. FLEMING announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination for mayor of Portland. In the subsequent primaries he received the nomination, and in the following city election, in November, 1921, was elected by a majority in excess of 600, which in view of the fact that the city of Portland normally is regarded as a Republican city, was regarded by his friends as a most fitting- and quite well deserved compliment. Mr. FLEMING was inaugurated mayor of the city of Portland on January 2, 1922, and is now serving in that important administrative office. On January 30, 1881, Thomas H. FLEMING was united in marriage to Mary E. OTTO, who was born in Ohio, and to this union have been born seven children, Nellie A., Beryl, Ollie B., Sadie I., Thomas C., Anna and James W., all of whom were graduated from the Portland high school and all of whom are living. Mayor FLEMING, as indicated above, is an ardent Democrat and has for years been looked upon as one of the leaders of that party in this section of the state. He and Mrs. FLEMING are members of the Congregationalist church and he has for some years been

serving as a member of the board of trustees of the church. He also is a member of the local Masonic lodge.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.152-153. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut