

SUTTON, JAMES M.

James M. SUTTON, one of the best known and most: substantial farmers and landowners of Jay county, proprietor of an excellent farm in Penn township and former member of the advisory board of that township, has been a resident of this county since he was ten years of age. Mr. SUTTON was born on a farm in the neighboring county of Delaware on December 6, 1855, and is a son of John and Mary (HELM) SUTTON, both members of pioneer families in this section of Indiana. John SUTTON also was born in Delaware county, his parents having been among the early settlers of that county. He grew up on a farm and for some years as a young man varied his farming activities by teaching school during the winters. He was married in Delaware county and some years later (in the latter '50s) bought a farm up in Wells county and moved to this latter county, where he remained until 1866, when he disposed of his interests there and moved down into Jay county and bought a tract of ninety acres in Penn township, where he established his home. He later increased this holding to 140 acres and there spent the remainder of his life. He and his wife were the parents of nine children, of whom six are still living, the subject of this sketch having five sisters, Sarah, Harriet, Minnie, Matilda and Ida.

As noted above, James M. SUTTON was about ten years of age when he came with his parents to Jay county. He completed his schooling in Penn township and from the days of his boyhood was a helpful factor in the labors of developing and improving the home farm, remaining with his father until his marriage at the age of twenty-seven, when he established his home on a tract of forty acres which he had bought in that same neighborhood. Not long afterward he sold this tract and bought a farm of ninety-five acres in the same township, where he lived for three years, at the end of which time he disposed of it and bought a quarter of a section lying at the edge of the town site of Balbec, and there he lived until his removal to his present place of residence in 1916, where he has a very pleasant home and is quite comfortably situated) his farm being improved in up-to-date fashion. Mr. SUTTON is the owner of 600 acres, all in Penn township, and has five producing oil wells on his land. In addition to his general farming he has long given considerable attention to the raising of high grade livestock and has done well. Mr. SUTTON is a Republican and for twelve years served on the advisory board of his home township. He is a Freemason and a member of the United Brethren church and formerly was a member of the board of directors of the church.

It was on November 11, 1881, that James M. SUTTON was united in marriage to Caroline Virginia BIRDSALL, a member of one of the pioneer families of this county, and to this union were born four children, namely: Chester, who married Tiny DEWEESE; Louis, who married Burdell STARBUCK; John, who married Nettie REED, and Anna, who married Morton MYERS and has two children, Sutton and Maryanna MYERS.

Mrs. Caroline Virginia SUTTON died on May 11, 1905. She was born in Penn township and was a daughter of Joel and Jane C. (BROWN) BIRDSALL, the latter of whom was born in Logan county, Ohio, daughter of Zachariah and Hannah (MOORMAN) BROWN, the former of whom was a cousin of Edwin M. STANTON, secretary of state during the Civil war.

The late Joel BIRDSALL, who for years served as a minister in the Society of Friends here and also was for years justice of the peace in Penn township, came to Jay county from Ohio in 1854 and purchased a tract of eighty acres in Penn township. In the following spring he returned to Ohio and was there married, after which he established his home in this county and here spent the remainder of his life, one of the best known and most influential men in the upper part of the county. He was a Virginian by birth, born in Loudoun county, a son of John and Mary (BROWN) BIRDSALL, the latter of whom was a daughter of John and Ann (HURST) BROWN, also a Virginian. John BIRDSALL was a son of Whitsom and Rachel (BRADFIELD) BIRDSALL, both of whom were born in Pennsylvania of Quaker parentage. He died in Loudoun county, Virginia, in 1830, leaving his widow and eight children. Joel BIRDSALL one of these children, remained with his mother until he had attained his majority, and was engaged in teaching school for some time before coming to Jay county in 1854. He and his wife had three children, Mrs. SUTTON having had a brother, Alvin J. BIRDSALL, who died in childhood, and a sister, Anna A. BIRDSALL, who died at the age of nineteen years. Joel BIRDSALL and his wife began housekeeping in a log cabin upon coming to Jay county, but this soon gave way to a more substantial home when local conditions of living became somewhat easier.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.293-294. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.