



JOHNS DONALDSON, a dealer in agricultural implements and coal at Marengo, Iowa, and an extensive and well-known stockman of the county, is a Pennsylvanian by birth, having been born at Old Hickory, Washington County, February 19, 1830. He is a son of Henry W. and a grandson of John Donaldson, the former of whom was born in Washington County, Pa., and the latter in Ireland, of Scotch parents. John Donaldson came to America and took up his residence in Pennsylvania, where he cleared and improved a farm of three hundred and forty acres, but died at Freedom, Beaver County, Pa., a member of the Presbyterian Church. Henry W. Donaldson, like his father, became a tiller of the soil, and in 1830 removed with his family by wagon to Wayne County, Ohio, where he was engaged in farming and milling near Odel's Lake. Later he removed to near Youngstown, Ohio. He was a Democrat in politics and a member of the Christian Church. His wife was Jane Laird, who was born near Cork, Ireland, a daughter of James Laird, also a native of the Emerald Isle, who afterwards became a farmer in the State of Pennsylvania. Mr. and Mrs. Donaldson became the parents of three sons and six daughters, of whom John was the eldest and is now one of the seven surviving members. The two brothers, Samuel and Alexander, were Union soldiers during the war, the former serving throughout the struggle, and the latter three years.

John Donaldson resided on an Ohio farm from the time he was six months old until he reached the age of twelve years, and from that time until eighteen years old lived in Beaver County, Pa., during which time he obtained a common-school

education. At the age of eighteen years he returned to Wayne County, Ohio, but at that time was taken, with the "gold fever," joined a company and started on the overland journey with ox-teams to California. Mr. Donaldson stopped in Salt Lake City for ten days, then walked until he caught up with the wagon train. In crossing the plains they unfortunately lost four of their five yoke of oxen. They eventually reached Placerville, where they began prospecting, and later on a fork of the Yuba River. At the end of one year he returned to Ohio, via San Francisco and the Isthmus of Panama to New Orleans. During the year 1851 he farmed and was there married in 1852 to Miss Sarah Weiker, a native of Wayne County, and two years after his marriage, he came to Iowa by team and wagon, first residing on a farm ten miles west of Iowa City in Johnson County. After farming there until 1858, he located in Iowa Township, Iowa County, where he purchased two hundred and forty acres of land, which he at once began breaking, and erected thereon a good frame house. This land was very rich and fertile and his efforts in tilling the soil were richly rewarded. After a time he sold all but four hundred acres of his land and engaged extensively in buying and feeding stock, making a specialty of Shorthorn cattle, being one of the first to introduce that breed into the county. He paid the sum of \$1,160 for five of these animals and on numerous occasions has taken first premiums at the Iowa county fairs. He also raised Poland-China and Chester White hogs and a good grade of draft horses, and in fact, was a practical, successful and experienced stockman.

In February, 1865, while coming home from Johnson County with a load of wood and crossing the railroad track at Bush Run, he did not see the train coming on account of a high bank and brush at the cut, and when just on the track the locomotive of a heavily loaded freight train struck him, killing one of the horses, shattering his wagon and load to kindling wood and throwing him a distance of one hundred and eight feet to the right. He was picked up insensible, was taken to the residence of Emanuel Cook and a physician was sent for, who, upon examining his injuries and

finding that he had broken four ribs, his collar bone, cheek bone and shoulder blade, pronounced him fatally injured. Nevertheless, his time had not come and with good nursing he recovered. It was several days before he regained consciousness and fourteen days before he realized what had happened to him. However, his strong constitution triumphed. He resumed his occupation of stock-buying, in connection with which he continued farming until 1890, when he sold his farm and located in Marengo, in the fall of which year he began dealing in agricultural implements and coal, and this occupation he has found to be both profitable and agreeable. He also continues to carry on his stock business and is a very busy man. His place of business is located on Miller Street and the Chicago, Rock Island & Pacific Railroad, and he has a handsome residence on Water Street. He has a family of six children: Eliza J., Mrs. Newmire, of Sioux City; A. J., who is a farmer of Greenleaf, Kan.; Cordelia, Mrs. Fosnaugh, of Sioux City; James M., who is married, resides in Marengo, and is in business with his father; Emma V., who is in Sioux City; and Clifton, in Marengo.

Mr. Donaldson was Clerk of Iowa Township for fourteen years, was Trustee a number of years and also a School Director on various occasions. He donated the land for the school in his district, and in various other ways exerted himself for the good of his section. The first winter that he was in the State he went to look for some wild land, and getting lost on the way home, tramped all night and must have gone fully twenty-five miles without seeing a house. He helped to haul the first steam sawmill from Davenport to Ft. Dodge and did not see a house for a distance of forty miles; and, notwithstanding the fact that the snow was three feet deep and the weather very cold, he was compelled to sleep out of doors by his camp fire at night. He brought the first Massillon thresher ever brought to the county or State and it was used by our subject for thirteen years, being run by horse-power. He was also one of the first to buy a self-rake and a mowing-machine; in fact, he was decidedly progressive and up with the times in every respect, and wisely took advantage of every

method for saving labor and time. At the time of his arrival in the county Indians were still here and game was quite abundant. He spent considerable time during the winter months in hunting, and killed two deer. He has seen the wonderful development of the country and no man in the county has done more towards bringing the region to its present admirable state of cultivation than has Mr. Donaldson, for he never hesitated to set a good example to his fellows. He is one of the highly honored residents of the county, and is considered an especially successful and honorable man of business. Socially, he is a member of the Ancient Free & Accepted Masons, is a Democrat politically, is almost invariably a delegate to county conventions and was a member of the Democratic County Convention for years. His life has been one of usefulness and honor and of profit to himself and friends, as well as to the section in which he has so long made his home.