

Ezra Fahrney may truly be termed a pioneer of Deep River township and Poweshiek county, and he is still residing on the land which he entered from the government—the only man in the township who can lay claim to that distinction. His farm today, however, bears little resemblance to the tract on which he located fifty-eight years ago, for at that time the land was still in its wild state and few settlers had ventured into this district to take up their abode. Now this region is thickly settled, while in its midst towns and villages have sprung up and the entire countryside gives evidence of the thrift and industry of the people.

Mr. Fahrney was born in Washington county, Maryland, April 24, 1831, and in the paternal line comes of German ancestry. His grandfather, Dr. Peter Fahrney, was a native of Germany, whence he emigrated with two brothers to the United States, the brothers locating in Pennsylvania, while he settled in Washington county, Maryland. He was a tanner by trade and conducted a tannery on his farm, but later practiced medicine for many years. A grandson, who bears his name, is practicing medicine in Chicago. In his family were four sons and six daughters and it was his son Samuel who became the father of our subject. Samuel Fahrney was born in Washington county, Maryland, and was reared on his father's farm in that state. After reaching mature years he wedded Miss Barbara Gantz, who was likewise a native of Washington county, their entire lives being spent on a farm there. They had a family numbering fourteen children, eleven sons and three daughters, all of whom lived to be more than twenty-one years of age.

Ezra Fahrney, the tenth in order of birth, was reared on the home farm to the age of nineteen years, at which time he made his way to the north, locating in Ogle county, Illinois, where he worked on a farm for three years, while for a similar period he worked in a machine shop. In the fall of 1853 he came to Poweshiek county and entered one hundred and sixty acres of land on section 14, Deep River township, where he still resides. He then returned

to Illinois and in the spring of 1856 came to Iowa once more, bringing with him his family. The following winter was one of hardships and privation. During the first summer in Iowa he worked at the carpenter's trade and also succeeded in getting twenty acres of his land broken and his first crop planted. The crop, however, was destroyed by the heavy rains, which left him with little or no money. The nearest trading point at that time was Montezuma and many other inconveniences had to be borne in establishing his home on the frontier. Mr. Fahrney was a hard worker, however, and in course of time broke all his land and eventually raised good crops. He also made all the improvements on his farm, for to some extent he understood the carpenter's trade, and he is a natural mechanic, inheriting this tendency from his father, who possessed considerable mechanical genius and secured a number of patents on his inventions. Mr. Fahrney has also made several inventions and has secured five patents, one of his inventions being the reel on a reaper, which was later patented by McCormick. His genius in this direction proved of value to him in his early life when making improvements on his farm and also in building machinery with which to prosecute his labors. As time passed and he prospered in his work, Mr. Fahrney added to his land holdings from time to time until his possessions now embrace two hundred and ninety-one acres on section 15, Deep River township. He has two complete sets of buildings and everything about the place is kept in excellent condition. He is still actively engaged in work about the farm, having always enjoyed the best of health, and having never required the services of a physician but twice in his life.

Mr. Fahrney has been married twice. In Ogle county, Illinois, in 1855, he wedded Miss Catharine Hopwood, who was born in Washington county, Maryland. She died in 1873 at the early age of thirty-five years, leaving eight children: Ella, now the widow of George Fisher and a resident of Idaho; Emma, the wife of Montaville Cook, residing in Kansas; Eva, the wife of Noah Myerly, living near Burr Oak, Kansas; Theodore, a resident of Deep River township; California, who is an attorney of Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Ada, the wife of Salem Icenbice; and Almetta and Julia, who died in infancy. In 1875 Mr. Fahrney was again married, his second union being with Elizabeth Decker, who was born in Hancock county, Ohio, January 30, 1855, and came to Poweshiek county in the fall of that year, with her parents, Elisha and Mary Decker. By the second union there are nine children: May, the wife of Archie Inman, a resident of Missouri; Ed, who makes his home in Deep River township; Ida, the wife of Charles Middlekauff, of Iowa county, Iowa; William, a resident of Deep River township; Bessie, the wife of Harry Armstrong, of Deep River township; Clinton, at home; Earl, also of Deep River township; and Bernice and Cloyd, still under the parental roof.

The Fahrneys have always been whigs and republicans and Mr. Fahrney of this review has followed in the political footsteps of his forefathers. He has never been active, however, in political affairs, for his time has always been fully occupied with his private business affairs. He is a member of the German Baptist Brethren church. He is today a well informed man but is practically self-educated, for he never attended school but four months in his youth, and the knowledge that he has acquired has been through private study and

reading. It was a long strenuous task which presented itself to the pioneers of those earliest times but they met it with a steady, unwavering resolution. They did not see in advance the full dimensions and importance of the work there were accomplishing. From a wilderness traversed by only the deeply beaten path of the savage they converted these broad plains into gardens. They adorned them not only with the beauty of waving fields of grain but with commodious and pleasant homes, surrounded with many evidences of taste and refinement, with schoolhouses where their children were trained and taught for future honor and usefulness, with churches where they might be trained in the higher, holier ways of living. By their patience and energy, by their wise foresight, they organized and built up a community here which in its general prosperity, in its orderly society, in the pleasantness of its homes, in the intelligence and moral tone of its people, in all that goes to make up a desirable civilization is nowhere excelled. In all this work Mr. Fahrney has taken an active and helpful part and no more desirable place for a quiet home can be found than here in this community which he helped to establish. He has now passed the eightieth milestone on the journey of life and on the 24th of April, 1911, celebrated that anniversary of his birth by inviting fifty of his friends to dinner. He is still hale and hearty and his friends wish for him many more years of usefulness and activity among them.