

Portrait and Biographical Album of Washington, Clay and Riley Counties, Kansas, Containing Full Page Portraits and Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens of the Counties, Together with Portraits and Biographies of all the Governors of the State, and of the Presidents of the United States. Chicago: Chapman Bros. 1890.

Nathan Woodbury, Esq., a lawyer of ability, serving as Justice of the Peace in Washington, is one of its most thoroughly respected citizens. He is part owner of the Eureka Mills, in this city, and has from that source a comfortable income, aside from his professional earnings. He is a representative of the noble veterans, survivors of the Civil War, who have since done so much toward upbuilding the Great West. **Mr. Woodbury** was born in Ames Township, Athens Co., Ohio, July 14, 1833, coming of an honorable New England ancestry, one of whose descendants was an early pioneer of Ohio. **Nathan P. Woodbury**, the father of our subject, was born in the same place as himself, while his father, also named **Nathan**, was born in the town of Beverly, Essex Co., Mass., where his father, **Robert Woodbury**, is supposed to have spent his entire life. The grandfather of our subject left his New England home when a young man and went to Pennsylvania, where he married, and in 1797 he started for the Northwestern Territory with his family and settled in that part of it now included in the State of Ohio. He had previously bought twelve shares, calling for one hundred acres of land, each in the Yankee Purchase, and located in Ames Township. He thus became one of the early settlers of Ohio before its admission into the Union as a State. His son **William** was the first white child born in Athens County, and his mother gave birth to him while she was en route from her home to their nearest neighbor, eight miles distant.

After he had his family comfortably settled in their new quarters, the grandfather of our subject went back to Pennsylvania, leaving his wife and child in charge of her uncle. One Sunday during the absence of the head of the house they thought they would go to "preaching" eight miles away through the wilderness, and they made their way thither on foot. On their return they lost their way, and wandering around bewildered, the mother and child became separated from the man-of-all work who had accompanied them, and were obliged to stay in the dense, awesome, primeval forests all night, disturbed by prowling beasts and the fear of Indians. The man found his way home, and the watch dog taking his back track hunted the lost ones up and remained with them during the night. The family suffered the privations and hardships of life in a pioneer country, and by hard work succeeded in eliminating a good farm from the wilderness. In those early days there were no markets and the pioneers were home-livers, that is they had to content themselves to maintain life with the produce they could raise, and to dispense with all luxuries, and the wives, mothers, and daughters of the settlers, spun, wove and made all the clothing used. The grandparents of our subject died on the old homestead. The grandsire was a hero of the Revolution, and our subject has some of the Continental money with which he was paid for his services as a soldier. He died in 1838.

The father of our subject was one of six children, three sons and three daughters, and he was reared in his native county under the influence of its pioneer life. He was married in Perry County to **Miss Susanna Jennings**, a native of Pennsylvania. Her father, **James Jennings**, also a native of the Keystone State, was a pioneer of Perry County. In 1839, imbued with the fearless, enterprising, hardy pioneer spirit of his father, **Mr. Woodbury** moved to the wilds of Indiana, and became a pioneer of Randolph County. He bought 800 acres of timbered land in the

primeval forests of Wayne Township, and building a log house in the wilderness, commenced the hard task of clearing his land and preparing it for cultivation. He and his wife were far from the centers of civilization, there being no railways in that part of the country, and the nearest market was many miles distant, in Pickaway, Ohio. The family had to live in the most primitive way, depending upon what they could raise and the game killed by father and sons for the food they ate, which was cooked over a fire in a rude open fireplace, and mother and daughters used to weave the cloth used in the family. **Mr. Woodbury**, by many years of downright hard toil, improved a large tract of land, planted orchards, and at the time of his death had one of the finest farms in Randolph County. He died on his homestead in 1878, and his wife followed him in 1884, her death also occurring there. They were substantial, whole hearted people, of genuine worth and were held in high respect by all in the community where so many years of their lives were spent. They were the parents of nine children, whom they trained to be useful and honorable members of society.

He of whom we write was six years old when the family' removed to Indiana, where he attended school in a rude log house, the seats for the scholars being made by splitting saplings, hewing one side smooth, and inserting pins for legs. Early in life our subject learned the trade of a plasterer, and followed it until he entered the army. The pioneer spirit of his sire and grandsire, and of more remote ancestors seemed to have descended to him, for in 1857 he, too, ventured forth from his comfortable home to try life on the frontier, coming all the way from Indiana to Kansas with a team. He had a wide experience of life on the border in the four years that he remained here, in those trying times when the anti-slavery and pro-slavery men were disputing every inch of ground in the fierce struggle that arose when the question was pending as to whether Kansas should be admitted as a free State or as a slave State. In the meantime settlers were pouring in, and our subject found plenty of employment at his trade, which he followed in Doniphan, Atchison, Brown, Leavenworth, Jefferson and Douglas Counties, thus having a fine opportunity to traverse a vast extent of country in this great State, and of witnessing the early stages of its growth towards civilization from a wild, sparsely-settled region. He returned to Indiana in 1861, and in August, 1862, cast his lot with the brave defenders of the Stars and Stripes, enlisting in Company H, 84th Indiana Infantry, and serving with faithfulness and ability until after the terrible war was over. He was in the battle of Chickamauga, was with Sherman in his famous march to Atlanta, fighting with characteristic valor in the engagement at Jonesboro, and in all the battles of the campaign. He was disabled in the engagement mentioned, and was not fit for duty after that, and was honorably discharged in May, 1865. In those trying years of hardship, privation and misery he sacrificed his health while fighting for his country, and has not been able to do any manual labor since. After his discharge, **Mr. Woodbury** returned to his old home in Indiana, and under the watchful care of his parents and friends slowly recuperated sufficiently so take up the duties of life once more. He was soon honored by his fellow citizens by an election to the office of Justice of the Peace of Wayne Township. About that time he commenced the study of law, and was admitted to the bar in Randolph County. He served as Justice of the Peace eight years, and in 1878, coming to Kansas, bought the Eureka Mills, which he managed with financial success four years, and then sold a half interest in it to another. Soon after locating here he was elected Justice of the Peace, and has since served continuously, evincing in the discharge of the duties of his office, a thorough knowledge of the law as applicable to the cases under his jurisdiction, and in his decisions, which are conceded to be

wise, just and impartial, giving general satisfaction. He is a sound Republican in politics. In his intercourse with others he is frank and sincere in his manner, and always courteous and kind.

Mr. Woodbury was married in 1876 to **Miss Susan A. Bolen**, a native of Xenia, Greene Co., Ohio, and to her good management and tact he is greatly indebted for the comforts of his cozy home. Two children, **Oma** and **Lettie**, complete their happy household circle.

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