

[This biography contains numerous errors, and one should exercise caution in extracting information. Research notes by Sherlene Bartholomew and Barry Wood discuss the biography]

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### **James F. LANKFORD**

JAMES F. LANKFORD.--Among the valued and highly esteemed residents of Harrison township there is no one better known in its history than the gentleman whose name appears at the head of this sketch. He has the distinction of being a veteran of the Civil war, and ex-sheriff of Clay county and an important factor in advancing the material interests of this part of the state, as a general merchant at Middlebury carrying on an extensive business. A native of this township, he was born July 8, 1845, a son of Harvey Lankford. On the paternal side he comes of sturdy Scotch ancestry, his great-grandfather having emigrated with his wife from Scotland to this country, settling in North Carolina, where Walker Lankford, the next in line of descent was born. Left an orphan at an early age, Walker Lankford was bound out to a wood worker, from whom he learned the trade of a carpenter and cabinet maker. In 1818, during the trouble with the Seminole Indians in Florida, he enlisted as a soldier, and served under that gallant hero,

General Andrew Jackson. While in the army he formed the acquaintance of a charming Southern girl, Folly Williams, the daughter of an Alabama planter and slave owner. This daughter, whom he subsequently married, inherited from her father eleven slaves. Mr. and Mrs. Walker Lankford afterwards removed to Kentucky, taking with them six of these slaves, having freed five of them. In 1832 they made another removal, coming to Clay county and locating in Harrison township, where the grandfather bought land lying about one mile west of the present site of Middlebury, and established the first distillery in this

part of the county. He improved a good homestead, and there resided until his death in 1848. His wife survived him a number of years. They had a large family of children, and their posterity is numerous.

Born and reared in Rockcastle county, Kentucky, Harvey Lankford was twenty-two years old when he came with the family to Harrison township. Familiar with agriculture from his boyhood, he soon purchased a tract of land not far from his father's homestead, and was there engaged in farming for a number of years. Turning his attention subsequently to mercantile pursuits, he was employed in the grocery business at Middlebury until the breaking out of the Civil war. He then enlisted in the Forty-third Indiana Volunteer Infantry, but in a short time was transferred to the Second Ohio Battery, sent South, and died while in service at St. Louis, Missouri, and was buried in the town-

ship cemetery in this city. His wife, whose maiden name was Delilah Coopri-der, was born in Harrison township, Clay county, a daughter of Jacob and Mary (White) Coopri-der, and granddaughter of Peter Coopri-der, of whom a more extended account may be found on another page of this volume in connection with the sketch of John Coopri-der. She survived him, and married for her second husband John Dalton, and lived to the venerable age of eighty-eight years. She reared by her

first marriage three children, James F. William; and Folly, who married Joseph Francis. By her marriage with Mr. Dalton she also had three children, Mahala. John and Nannie.

In 1861, although but sixteen years of age, James F. Lankford offered his services to his country, enlisting in Company G, Fifty-ninth Indiana Volunteer Infantry. Going to the front with his regiment, he participated in all of its marches, campaigns and battles, marching with Sherman to Atlanta and on to the sea, thence through the Carolinas and Virginia to Washington, where he took part in the Grand Review. Subsequently with his regiment he was honorably discharged from the service July 17. 1865, at Indianapolis. Returning home, Mr. Lankford learned the trades of a carpenter and wagon maker, the latter of which he followed successfully for more than a score of years, his only interruption being the two years, from 1880 until 1882, when he served as sheriff of Clay county. In 1889 Mr. Lankford opened a general store in Middlebury, and has since carried on a thriving business, his stock embracing a choice line of groceries and general merchandise.

Mr. Lankford married, December 19, 1872, Calista M. Ecret,, who was born in Bowling Green, Clay county, a daughter of Wesley and Rebecca Ecret, natives respectively of New Jersey and Indiana. Nine children have been born of the union of Mr. and Mrs. Lankford, namely: Pius, Flora, Elva, Letha, James B., Bertha, Otto, Frances and Harvey. Pius married Alma Baumgartner, and they have two children, Albert Leroy and Kedrick. Flora married first Carry Moody, by whom she had one child, Mary Moody, and married second William Bond, by whom she has two children, Willie and Helen. Elva, wife of Daniel K. Kittle, has one daughter, Glenna Alberta. Letha married John Everett, and has one son, Herman Wayne. Frances was drowned when in the thirteenth year of her age. Politically Mr. Lankford is a straightforward Republican, and was the second member of his party to be elected sheriff of Clay county. In the spring of 1881 he proposed to the county commissioners, Messrs. William Buckalew, Adam B. Moon and Archibald Love, that maple trees be set out around the court house in Brazil, that there might be a nice grove in the future. They discouraged the idea, but Lankford, in true Andrew Jackson style, said: "By the eternal I will be sheriff of Clay county two years, and I will see that these trees are taken care of and watered." So the grove was set out, and to-day, in 1909, there is a beautiful grove there. Religiously Mrs. Lankford is a faithful member of the United Brethren Church.