

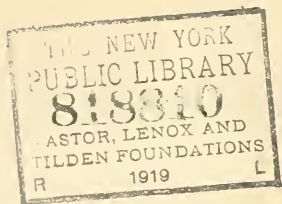
A Standard History
of
Kansas and Kansans

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ILLUSTRATED

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George W. Fail, grandfather of the clerk of the District Court at Columbus, was born in Lawrence County, Illinois, in 1816. He was reared in his native county and at Keokuk, Iowa, spent many years as a farmer in Davis County, Iowa, and shortly before his death removed to Schuyler County, Missouri, where he died in 1891. He was one of the early California gold seekers, having gone to the Pacific Coast in 1852. He spent seven years in the far West, and was rather more successful than the average seeker of fortune in that land. After returning from California he spent the rest of his active career as a farmer. In politics he was a whig and later a republican, and a member of the Christian Church. George W. Fail married Nancy Agnes Orr, who was born in Lawrence County, Illinois, in 1820, and died at Hamilton, Illinois, in 1856. Their children were: John, who died in childhood in Lawrence County, Illinois; Sarah, who died young; Phoebe, who died at the age of three years; William, who died at the age of two and a half years; Samuel W., referred to more at length in the succeeding paragraphs. George W. Fail married for his second wife Mary Woods, who was from Davis County, Iowa. She was the mother of one child, Nicholas, who was a car worker and died in Colorado in 1910.

Samuel W. Fail, father of Oliver W., was born at Keokuk, Iowa, June 1, 1844, and received his early education in the public schools of McLean County, Illinois, and Davis County, Iowa. His early life was spent on his father's farm, and he was only about eighteen years of age when he volunteered his services for the defense of the Union. He had a notable military record. He enlisted August 2, 1862, in Company B of the Thirty-sixth Iowa Infantry, and was in service until finally mustered out and given his honorable discharge on October 26, 1865, more than three years. He was present at the battle of Fort Pemberton, Mississippi, April 4, 1863, at Helena, Arkansas, July 4, 1863, at Little Rock, September 10, 1863; and early in the following spring took part in the noted expedition against Camden, Arkansas. He and his comrades left Little Rock March 23, 1864, and during their progress fought at Prairie D'Ane and at Camden on April 20, 1864, and at Marks Mills, on April 25, 1864. At Marks Mills the entire brigade was captured and made prisoners of war, being sent to Camp Ford in Tyler, Texas. Samuel W. Fail remained a prisoner of war from April 25, 1864, until he was exchanged on February 26, 1865.

Following this experience as a brave and faithful soldier of the Union he took up farming in Schuyler County, Missouri, where he lived until 1870. In that year he removed to Johnson County, Kansas, was a farmer in that locality until 1896, when he removed to Kansas City, Kansas, and from there in 1912 came to Columbus, where he has since been retired. For six years he was an officer in the State Prison at Lansing, but the rest of his active career since leaving the army was spent as a farmer. He owns a residence at 407 North Highland Avenue in East Pittsburg. Politically he is a republican, is a member of the Christian Church, is affiliated with Ben Hur Lodge, No. 322, Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, at Kansas City, Kansas, and was formerly a member of the Knights of Pythias and the Ancient Order of United Workmen. He has long taken an active part in the organizations of his old army comrades, and is a past commander of John A. Dix Post, No. 59, Grand Army of the Republic, at Columbus.

In 1866, in Schuyler County, Missouri, Samuel W. Fail married Miss Ann Briddle. By this marriage there were two children: Sarah, wife of S. N. Kinton, in the produce business at Amarette, Missouri; and George W., a farmer in Bates County, Missouri. In October, 1873, Samuel W. Fail was married in Jackson County, Missouri, to Luthira Bookout, a daughter of Wright and Sarah (Black) Bookout. She died in Kansas City, Kansas, in 1908. Her children were: Carrie A., wife of H. W. Levi, a car repairer at Kansas City, Kansas; A. H. Fail, a farmer near Pomona, Kansas; Cora P., wife of Marion Brooks, who is a car repairer at Kansas City, Kansas; O. W. Fail, who is the fourth in age among his mother's children; Edith, wife of Tony Brizendine, a clerk in the postoffice at Kansas City, Missouri; and L. A. Fail, a railroad conductor at Yuma, Arizona.

A prominent factor in O. W. Fail's successful career has been his womanly and cultured wife. In September, 1903, at Kansas City, Missouri, he married Miss Hannah Matella Smead. The only child of their union, Nina, died at the age of ten months. Mrs. Fail was born in St. Lawrence County, New York, in the same house which was the birthplace of both her father and grandfather. Her grandfather, Suel Smead, was born in St. Lawrence County, New York, and at his death, in 1882, lacked only sixteen days of being 100 years old. He was a farmer all his life. The father of Suel Smead was of Holland Dutch descent, and was a pioneer in St. Lawrence County, New York, having built there the old house in which members of the three following generations were born.

Benjamin F. Smead, father of Mrs. Fail, was born in St. Lawrence County, New York, in September, 1843, and died at Richmond, Ray County, Missouri, in February, 1901. He was reared and married in his native county, became a carpenter and builder, but after his removal to Northwestern Iowa in 1876 took up farming. In 1881 he removed to Montgomery County, Illinois, where he followed his trade, and he continued work as a carpenter and builder from the date of his removal to Ray County, Missouri, in 1884 until his death. During the Civil war he was employed in an arsenal of the Union Government. Politically he was a democrat, was a member of the Masonic order and belonged to the Methodist Episcopal Church. Benjamin F. Smead married Mary Melissa Abbott, who was born in Ogdensburg, New York, in 1849, and died in Adair County, Missouri, in 1888. She was reared in St. Lawrence County, New York. Mrs. Fail is the oldest of her parents' children. The next younger, Frances, married for her first husband Harry Thomas, who was a mason by trade, and for her second husband, A. H. Fail, a farmer near Pomona, Kansas, and a brother of Oliver W. Fail; Frederick, who is in the bakery and confectionery business at Klamath Falls, Oregon; Nina, who died at Lansing, Kansas, shortly after her marriage to Harry Taylor, who has been an officer in the State Penitentiary for many years and lives at Wichita; Albert, who is a soldier in the United States army; and four other children that died in infancy.

Mrs. Fail received her early education in the public schools of Richmond, Missouri, and finished her training in a boarding school at Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She takes an active part in the Christian Church, and also belongs to Columbus Chapter of the Eastern Star.