

Neal and Harrington Families

Goodspeed's History of Crawford County, Arkansas

Berkeley Neal, attorney at law of Fort Smith, was born in Crawford County, Ark., January 23, 1851, and is a son of William J. and Mouncy (Robinson) Neal. The father was born January 9, 1817, in Chatham County, N. C., and was a son of Younger and Susanna (Harrington) Neal, natives of the same county, born in 1778 and 1790, respectively. They moved to Hickman County, Tenn., in 1826, where he died in 1843 and she in 1867. Younger Neal served some time as sheriff of Chatham County. William J. was the third child, and when the Creek Indians came west in 1836 he was employed as cook for the officers, and went with them to Fort Gibson, Ind. T. After roughing it for some time he came to Van Buren, Ark., and in 1838 married Miss Mouncy Robinson, in Dickson County, Tenn., who was born in 1817. The following year he returned to Arkansas, and has since passed the remainder of his life in Crawford County. He has been a successful man, at one time owning a large tract of land, and still has in his possession 440 acres. He has seven children, all of whom are living and grown: Jonathan, probate and real estate agent; Francis M., justice of the peace; Elizabeth, Young, James, Berkeley and Willis H., attorney at law. Berkeley lived upon the farm until eighteen, and then clerked in a general store in Van Buren until 1872. He then began to study law under Benton J. Brown, and was admitted to the bar in 1873, subsequently practicing two years in partnership with his former preceptor. Mr. Neal soon became one of the leading members of the bar in the county, and about 1882 began to practice in the Federal court at Fort Smith, where he met with such success that January 2, 1888, he moved his office to Fort Smith, although he still retains an office in Van Buren, and spends two days a week in that place. In politics Mr. Neal is a Democrat, and although he has never sought office he was superintendent of the school board of Crawford County for two years. December 14, 1882, he married Miss Mary Edwards, daughter of Jesse Edwards, and a native of Crawford County. To Mr. and Mrs. Neal one child, Ollie May, has been born.

Lee Neal was born August 30, 1847, in Van Buren County, Ark., and is a son of Joseph and Rosana (Robinson) Neal. The father was born in Chatham County, N. C., spent his youth in Tennessee, was married in Crawford County, Ark., and shortly afterward removed to Van Buren County, Ark. In 1859 he went to Texas; in 1861 he joined the Eleventh Texas Volunteer Cavalry, and served until discharged. He then re-entered the Confederate service, remaining until the close of the war, and participating in thirty-six different engagements, among which were Poison Spring, Helena, Jenkins' Ferry and others. Since the war he has lived in Crawford County, and is now sixty years old, and engaged in farming. The mother is a native of Tennessee, is sixty-two years of age, and is the mother of the following children: Lee, Melinda (wife of W. S. Lester), Seldon R., Dillis Neal, America, Laurana (wife of Marcus Lamb), Sarah J. and William E.

The paternal grandfather of our subject spent his entire life in North Carolina. His parents were French, and left their native land on account of the religious intolerance there. Laurana (Arrington) Neal, subject's grandmother, was also born in North Carolina, and after her husband's death immigrated to Tennessee. She died in Crawford County, Ark. James R. Robinson, Lee's maternal grandfather, was born in Tennessee, when sixteen [p.1179] enlisted in the War of 1812, and about 1840 came to Arkansas. He died in Texas. His wife was born of German parentage, and was reared in Pennsylvania. Lee Neal accompanied his parents to Texas when ten years of age, received a good education there, and when seventeen served on post duty in the McGinnis regiment of Texas reserved corps. He afterward completed his education in Crawford County, Ark., and has since served the county six years as examiner of common free schools. For the past eight years he has been an ordained minister in the Methodist Protestant Church, and has charge of two churches. February 6, 1868, he married Serena T. Lester, daughter of William and Margaret Lester, and a native of this county. Her parents were both born in Hempstead County, Ky., and came to Arkansas in an early day. The father died here, but the mother is now a resident of California. Mr. and Mrs. Neal have three children: Edward J., born March 29, 1868; William A., born March 2, 1873, and Rosana Maud, born January 14, 1888. After his marriage Mr. Neal farmed and taught school until 1876, and has since that time been in the mercantile business in Cedarville, in connection with his farming. Mr. Neal is a public-spirited man, and has represented his county in the Lower House of the Legislature at Little Rock. He belongs to the Masonic fraternity and the Patrons of Husbandry. He is a large land owner in the township, and one of its best citizens. Mrs. Neal belongs to the Methodist Protestant Church.