

HERMAN ZILSS. A resident of Fayette County for more than thirty years, Mr. Zilss has been a citizen of the Village of Winchester, active and influential in both business and civic affairs and through his well ordered efforts has achieved large and worthy success. He has been concerned with mercantile enterprise, and has large farming interests and business connections at the present time, his success having been the direct result of his own ability and earnest endeavors. Prior to establishing his residence in Fayette County Mr. Zilss had passed a year in the City of Galveston, where, through his service as a laborer and in the driving of a street car, he was enabled to save about \$250. With this money and a certain surplus which he had brought with him from his native land, he established himself in the general merchandise business at Winchester. Fair and honorable dealings and effective service to patrons conduced to the development of a large and prosperous business, and after a successful career of fifteen years as a merchant at Winchester he sold his stock and business to his younger brother, Emil, since which time he has given his attention principally to the supervision and management of his extensive landed estate and other capitalistic interests. He has done successful work in the buying and selling of real estate, principally farm property, and also controls a prosperous enterprise in the extending of loans upon approved real-estate securities.

Hermann Zilss was born in the Town of Buetow, in the Prussian Province of Pommern, or Pomerania, Germany, on the 8th of September, 1847, and his early educational advantages were of excellent order, as he completed a thorough course in the gymnasium, which is similar to the high school of the United States. He became an expert bookkeeper and accountant and his final service in this connection was given in the City of Berlin.

From the City of Hamburg Mr. Zilss sailed for Baltimore, Maryland, in 1881, on the steamship Braunschweig, and after his arrival on American soil he forthwith made his way to Giddings, Texas. Soon afterward he went to Smithville, where one of his first experiences in connection with his spirited welcome to his adopted country was that of being a member of a little party of men who were surrounded by robbers, were held up at the point of pistols and compelled to deliver their valuables, Mr. Zilss's pockets having been made to disgorge an appreciable amount of cash. Soon after this unseemly adventure he went to Galveston, where he began work as a common laborer, this being the only honest employment then offered. It was a proud moment in his career when he discovered at the end of a year that through such honorable toil and endeavor he had saved \$250. He has had many "ups and downs" during the long intervening years but has persevered, has shown indomitable spirit in the surmounting of obstacles, has met emergencies and adversities with courage and has reached a certain amount of independence and prosperity, the while he has so ordered his course as to gain and retain the confidence and good will of those with whom he has come in contact in the various relations of an earnest and useful life. He has shown marked consideration for those who have been less fortunate than he in connection with business affairs. While he lends money to those who borrow for various purposes, there has been naught of the grasping, Shylock attitude on his part, and he has never charged more than 6 per cent interest on his financial favors to others, though there have been occasions when he could readily have exacted a much higher rate. In politics Mr. Zilss has been a supporter of the cause of the democratic party and thus has been in accord with the general sentiment of his friends and

neighbors, the while he has given earnest and loyal support to measures and enterprises that have conserved civic and material progress and prosperity in his home community.

Christian Zilss, father of him whose name initiates this article, was a man of substantial means in Buctow, Pomerania, in which locality he owned and operated an excellent farm, his means and paternal fidelity being such that he gave to each of his children excellent educational advantages. He wedded Henrietta Grubert, and both continued their residence in Buctow until the close of their lives. Of their children Hermann, of this review, is the eldest; Julius is the executive head of a surveying bureau in the City of Berlin, Germany; Willhelm holds a similar administrative position with an important railroad bureau in the Fatherland; Emil, who came to the United States in 1884, is one of the leading merchants and representative citizens of Winchester, Texas, where he succeeded his brother Hermann in the mercantile trade; and Miss Emma still remains at the old home in Buctow.

In the period of his residence in Texas it has been the privilege and pleasure of Hermann Zilss to visit his old home in Germany on six different occasions.—pp 1395-1396.

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