

## George Kirts

In the history of the agricultural development of Franklin county, mention should be made of George Kirts who, at an early period in the development of Ohio, came to this state. He was born in Hancock, Maryland, June 30, 1821, a son of Michael and Elizabeth (Simpson) Kirts, the former a native of Germany and the latter a native of Maryland. In his boyhood days George Kirts, Sr., was brought by his parents to the new world, the family home being established in Maryland, where he was reared and married. His son and namesake was but four years of age when he left Maryland and with his family removed to Marion county, Ohio, in 1825. At the age of sixteen years George Kirts, of this review, went to Franklin County, Ohio, with his uncle, Henry Kirts, and there resided up to the time of his marriage, which was celebrated November 2, 1842, when he was twenty-one years of age. Not long afterward he removed to Jersey, Licking County, Ohio, where he lived until March, 1850, when he went to California, leaving his wife and four children at the old home. He was a poor man but hoped that in that land of golden promise he might rapidly acquire a substantial competence. He made the overland journey across the long stretches of hot sand and through the mountain *passes*, but returned by way of the Isthmus route, reaching home on the 1st of July, 1852. He was successful in the far west and brought home a fair amount of money, after which he purchased a farm of one hundred and eighty acres near Jersey in Licking county. This he cultivated for a few years, but desirous of having more land he sold that farm and in April, 1855, bought two hundred and twelve acres part way between Johnstown and New Albany on the Johnstown and Columbus road. He afterward became owner of an additional tract of one hundred and sixty acres, so that his total holdings embraced three hundred and seventy-two acres. Thus as the years passed he prospered and became the owner of valuable property.

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## Prospect Township

"**WILLIAM KIRTS**, farmer, was born in Prospect Township, March 5, 1827; his parents' names were Michael and Elizabeth (Simpson) Kirts, natives of Pennsylvania, near the Maryland State line. They were of Scotch and German parentage; and both now deceased and buried in the Otterbein graveyard in Prospect Township. They came to Marion County in 1826, locating near Prospect Village. and subsequently bought the farm now owned and occupied by William B. Thomas and cleared it up. The buildings on this farm were erected by them. They had ten <sup>(eleven)</sup> children- Mary Ann; George; Henry, deceased; Julia Ann, deceased; William; Daniel, deceased; David and Jane (twins), Matilda and Isaac. Himself and wife are members of the United Brethren Church and were much respected.

William Kirts, the subject of this sketch, lived with his father until twenty-one years of age, when went to Upper Sandusky and worked at making rails and gathering cranberries for two years. During that time he made 28,000 rails and helped to clear 100 acres of land. He then came home and farmed his father's place for three or four years, when he bought 106 acres of land, at \$6 an acre, where he now resides. The land was then covered by a dense forest. He immediately made a clearing and erected a log cabin; the same year (1853) he was married to Ruth Ann Williams, a daughter of John Williams, one of the early settlers of the county. They moved into the log cabin February 27, 1854. He has since added to the home farm, so that it now consists of 230 acres, of which 190 acres are cleared. He has 110 acres in Union County, fifty of which are cleared. The old log cabin has been superseded by a fine frame residence, surrounded by convenient barns and out-buildings, with a fine well of water. This lust was very expensive to obtain, as Mr. Kirts dug seventeen different wells before securing a good one; and, as he says, among all of his improved Meats it has cost as much as any one of them. He has assisted in rolling logs at thirty-one places in one spring.

Mr. Kirts is one of the self-made men of the county; he acquired all his home farm by hard work and industry, though afterward he received a legacy of \$2,500 and forty acres of land from his father's estate. Mr. and Mrs. Kirts have the following children: Mary Ellen, Albin D., Elizabeth Sivonia, John Michael, Silas Spencer, Eva, Ada Thalia, Thomas Edwin. Mary Ellen, who married Frank Butts, lives with her husband on her father's farm in Union County. Elizabeth married Samuel Johnson, and lives on the home farm; Eva Florence married Fuller Johnson; the rest of the children are living with their parents."