

son, is married and lives in Tilsonburg, and the other two, George and Edwin, are young and reside at home.

For years Mr. Tillson has been one of Tilsonburg's most prominent and substantial citizens; has always advanced measures favorable to the public interest; is a man of the highest moral character; by earnest industry has accumulated considerable property, and is well worthy the esteem in which he is held by the citizens of Oxford County.

JOSEPH VAN NORMAN,

TILSONBURG.

JOSEPH VAN NORMAN is a native of New Jersey, a son of John and Sarah (De Pue) Van Norman, and was born May 12, 1796. His mother was of Huguenot descent, her ancestors escaping from France at the time of the persecution of the Protestants. When he was a small boy the family emigrated to Canandaigua, in Western New York, where he received a moderate education, picked up some knowledge of the iron manufacturing business, and having a talent, as well as a natural taste, for mechanics, he built a small furnace, and operated it for two or three years; then went to Manchester, now Shortsville, in the same State, and worked as foreman in a foundry.

In 1821 Mr Van Norman came to Norfolk County, then a part of the London District, and made preparations for the erection of a blast furnace at Normandale, in the Township of Charlotteville. The next spring he was joined by Hiram Capron and George Tillson; the enterprise was completed, and proved a success. In a few years Mr. Van Norman bought out his partners, and subsequently, at different times, had for partners, his brother, Benjamin Van Norman, and his eldest son, Romaine. He gave employment to a great many men, and did much towards settling the country.

In 1847 our subject went to Marmora, bought out the iron manufactory of Hon. Peter McGill founded the Marmora Iron Works Company, and on account of the difficulty of making shipments, the company found the enterprise a losing concern, and abandoned it, Mr. Van Norman returning to Norfolk County, and building a blast furnace in the Township of Houghton. About that time occurred the great financial crash of 1857, and this undertaking also proved a failure.

Since 1863 Mr. Van Norman has resided at Tilsonburg, County of Oxford, and has been at times engaged in the manufacture of brick, lime and shingles. For the last few years he has assumed light responsibilities only, though still quite active and smart for a man who is older than this century. His memory is a thesaurus of old annals.