

Standard History of Adams and Wells Counties, Indiana, Vol. II, John W. Tyndall & Orlo Ervin Lesh; Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co, 1918, p. 788-790.

E. Burt Lenhart, a lawyer of high standing at Decatur, and secretary of the Decatur Abstract & Loan Company, represents a family that has had a part in the making and development of Adams County from the very beginning of settlement here, a period of over eighty years.

His grandfather and some of his earlier ancestors spelled the name Linhard. Mr. Lenhart's great-grandfather, John Linhard, came from Pennsylvania to Adams County about the time the county was organized in 1836. He located on wild and unbroken land in Root Township, not far from the present city of Decatur and took a full share of the responsibilities and hardships that went with pioneering. He accumulated several hundred acres of land, and this property once in his ownership is now worth many thousands of dollars. He lived a long and useful life and died in the early '70s when a very old man. His wife also lived to a good old age.

In their large family one of the children was Lawson, grandfather of E. Burt Lenhart. Three of Lawson's brothers and sisters are still living: Joseph, Mrs. Catherine Chronister of Bobo, and Mrs. Anna Shackley of Decatur, all of them past eighty years of age.

Lawson Lenhart was quite young when he came to Adams County and he married here Miss Lois Brown of another pioneer family. After their marriage they located on a farm of ninety-four acres, improved it from a wild condition, and were prosperous and successful farmers. Lawson Lenhart died at the age of seventy-five and his widow survived him several years and died about the same age. In politics the older members of the family were all followers of the fortunes of the whig party and later became republicans. Lawson Lenhart and wife had the following children: John Henry; Samantha, Mrs. William H. Brown living in Southern Indiana; Sanford B., who is an operator in the oil fields about Robinson, Illinois, married and has a family; Ellen, who died after her marriage to Greenbury Baxter and left three children; Lawson C.; Marcus M., and Artie E., wife of William L. Bremer.

The late John Henry Lenhart, father of E. Burt Lenhart, was in his time one of Adams County's most conspicuous citizens. He was born March 8, 1847, and died June 6, 1903. He gave many years of his life to educational work, teaching in Root, Union and Kirkland townships. For a long period he was member of the firm Steele & Lenhart, lumber manufacturers and dealers at Peterson in Adams County. One of the specialties they manufactured was Texas stirrups, and they also conducted a planing mill. John Henry Lenhart served as justice of the peace

of Kirkland Township for some years and for eight years was county clerk of Adams County, from 1891 to November, 1899. His funeral at Decatur was one of the largest attended in Adams County. For two hours all the business houses and the county officers were closed in his honor, and the funeral was attended by the Adams County Bar Association, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, the Masons and the Daughters of Rebekah in a body. The funeral service was held at the Methodist Episcopal Church by Rev. John C. White, the pastor.

It is appropriate to quote some of the words found in the local paper at the time of his death: "Impressive and solemn were the sad rites and the great crowd in attendance but dimly portrays the high esteem in which Mr. Lenhart was held by the citizens of Decatur and Adams County. Many people were present from Berne, Geneva, Peterson, Bobo and other towns, while the country districts were also well represented. The beautiful casket was nearly buried in floral wreaths and emblems, the gifts of lodges, friends and relatives. The cortege was the largest seen here for many years. Interment was made at the Maplewood cemetery where the lodges performed the last offices in honor of their deceased brother. He is dead, but the good he has done will live for many years and his clean record, pure heart and upright principles should be a lesson for all. He lived a noble life."

At the same time the Adams County Bar Association passed resolutions, containing the following sentences: "Whereas it has pleased the Supreme Judge of the Universe to remove from our midst our brother, companion and fellow citizen, John H. Lenhart. it is resolved that in his death we have sustained a loss which we deeply deplore. As an officer of this court for eight years he was honest, upright and had ever in his mind the duties and responsibilities of his trust. As an attorney of this bar since the 7th day of October, 1898. he was ever faithful and true to his clientage, discharging the duties of his calling to the best of his knowledge and ability. As a citizen he was ever kind and courteous, leading a pure and open life, always ready to lend a helping hand to the needy and poor.

"Resolved, that out of respect for our deceased brother, the Adams County Circuit Court this day adjourn, and that the members of this bar attend his funeral in a body and that a copy of these resolutions be ordered spread of record on the order book of the Adams Circuit Court and that a memorial page be dedicated and set apart to his memory."

John Henry Lenhart married Tillie Stevens. She was born in Union Township, Adams County, in 1851, and was educated in the local schools. Her death occurred in June, 1907, at the age of fifty-six. She and her husband were both very active in the Methodist Episcopal Church and he served as superintendent

of the Sunday school for many years. Their children were: E. Burt; Millie I., wife of David N. Rice, living in Kansas; Norman G., who is a graduate of Taylor University of Upland, Indiana, now lives near Graylin, Colorado, unmarried, and is a prominent Mason, being affiliated with both the York and Scottish Rites, attaining the thirty-second degree in the latter branch; James Lawson, who died July 2, 1899, when about seventeen years of age after having completed the first year in high school and after having exhibited much musical talent; and Nettie, who died at about four years of age, and two sons who died in infancy.

E. Burt Lenhart was born at Peterson in Adams County October 1, 1871, and grew up and received his early education at his native town. He also attended the Decatur High School and the Tri-State Normal at Angola. For several years he worked as head sawyer in the Steele & Lenhart Mills at Peterson. His home has been at Decatur since the fall of 1893, and for six years he was deputy county clerk to his father. Then for a few years he was in the real estate business and in 1903 became one of the organizers of the Decatur Abstract & Loan Company and has since been a director and secretary.

In 1896 Mr. Lenhart was admitted to the bar and has since been in active practice, being a member of the firm Hooper & Lenhart. He is active in Masonry, the Knights of Pythias and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. He is past chancellor, district deputy and past representative to the Grand Lodge of the Knights of Pythias, is past noble grand of the Odd Fellows, is a charter member and was first counsel of the local camp of the Modern Woodmen of America and with his wife is a member of the Pythian Sisters. They are active Methodists and at present writing Mr. Lenhart is serving as superintendent of the Sunday school, a post which his father held before him for a number of years.

Mr. Lenhart married at Decatur Miss Martha Ellen Johnson. She was born in Adams County in 1873. They are the parents of three children, Velma O., Orval M., aged twenty, and Alice May, who is a student in high school. Velma O. was well educated in the local high school and Valparaiso University and for several years a teacher before she married Charles Bowman. They are now living on a farm in Adams County near Bobo and have one child, Kenneth E.