

A. J. BICKEL, one of the representative citizens of Wayne Township, is the oldest person living at the present time who was born in Jay County, the date of his birth being November 8, 1833. His father, George BICKEL, was born in Centre County, Pennsylvania, and subsequently removed to Preble County, Ohio, where he was married to Miss Nancy GLASSFORD. To them were born ten children, nine daughters and one son -- Christina, Elizabeth, Andrew J., Maria, Catherine, Jane, Henrietta, Rachel, Nancy A. and Matilda. A few years after his marriage the father with his family, then consisting of his wife and two daughters, came to Jay County, making the journey by team. They first located in the woods of Pike Township when but six or eight families were living in the township. The father cleared and improved his land in Pike Township, where he made a good home for his family, living there until his death, which occurred in April, 1877. Mrs. BICKEL had died many years before, her death occurring in August 1859. Andrew Jackson BICKEL, the subject of this sketch, was reared on the old homestead where he was born, his youth being spent in assisting his father clear and improve their farm and in attending the subscription schools of that early day, where he received but a limited education. He was married in November, 1857, to Miss Elizabeth THARP, a native of Perry County, Ohio, a daughter of Asa and Margaret (IMEL) THARP. Her father died in Perry County, Ohio, and in 1855 her mother came with her children to Indiana and made her home in Pike County [sic]. Seven children have been born to Mr. and Mrs. BICKEL -- George, William, Sarah M., Rebecca Ann, Simeon, Christina and Adella Alice. Mr. BICKEL continued to live on his father's homestead for a time after his marriage, and then bought land adjoining, where he resided until 1881. In that year he removed to the farm on section 25, Wayne Township, where he still resides. His farm contains eighty acres of valuable land, which he has improved in a good manner. He has about sixty acres cleared and divided into different fields for stock-raising, to which he devotes some attention. He has a comfortable residence, pleasantly situated, and good farm buildings, and his land is under laid with tile drainage, the entire farm showing the thrift and care of its owner. In politics he is a strong adherent to the principles of the Democratic Party. Mr. BICKEL has witnessed the many wonderful changes that have taken place in the county, seeing it transform from a wilderness into its present prosperous condition. The population of Jay County at the time of his birth was about fifty person [p 623] and now the inhabitants are 20,000. Mr. BICKEL has always manifested a deep interest in the welfare of his township or county, and in every movement calculated to aid in building up the place has his encouragement and assistance."