

BICKEL, WILLIAM J

William J. BICKEL, one of the well-known and substantial farmers and landowners of Pike township, proprietor of an excellent farm on rural mail route No. 4 out of Portland, where he makes his home, is a native son of Jay county, a member of one of the real pioneer families here, and has been a resident of this county all his life. Mr. BICKEL was born on a farm in Madison township on August 19, 1860, and is a son of Andrew J. and Elizabeth (THARP) BICKEL, the latter of whom was born in Perry county, Ohio, a daughter of Asa and Margaret (IMEL) THARP, and who had come to Jay county with her widowed mother in 1855) the family settling in Pike township. Andrew J. BICKEL was born in Pike township, this county, November 8, 1833, that having been before the time of the formal organization of Jay county, and was a son of George and Nancy (GLASSFORD) BICKEL, who had come over here from Preble county, Ohio, and were among the earliest of the settlers in that part of the county which presently came to be organized as Pike township. George BICKEL was born in Centre county, Pennsylvania, a son of Thomas BICKEL, who later moved with his family to Ohio and became one of the pioneers of Preble county, from which county he moved over into Indiana and entered a tract of land in what afterward came to be Pike township. Jay county, but which at that time was comprised within the borders of Randolph county, the BICKEL's thus having become numbered among the real pioneers of Jay county, where the family has ever since been honorably and prominently represented. George BICKEL was married in Preble county and some years later came with his wife and the two daughters that then had been born to them and settled in this county, and in Pike township he and his wife spent the remainder of their lives. She died in August, 1859, and he survived until in April, 1877. They were the parents of ten children, nine daughters and the one son, Andrew J., the latter of whom was the first of the family born in Indiana. Andrew J. BICKEL grew up on the homestead farm in Pike township and from the days of his youth was a helpful factor in the labors of clearing and developing the same. In November, 1857, when twenty-four years of age, he married Elizabeth THARP, who had come over here from Ohio two years prior to that time, and after his marriage established his home on a "forty" of the old home place, presently increasing this holding to an "eighty," where he lived until 1881, when he bought a tract of about sixty acres in section 25 of Wayne township and moved to the same. There he spent the remainder of his life, his death occurring on January 19, 1909. His wife died in November of that same year. They were the parents of seven

children, all of whom are still living, the subject of this sketch having four sisters, Sarah, Rebecca, Christina and Alice, and two brothers, George and Simeon BICKEL. Reared on the old home farm in Pike township, William J. BICKEL received his schooling in the neighborhood schools and was about twenty-one years of age when his father moved to the farm in Wayne township. He later took up farming on his own account on a "forty" which he had bought in Pike township and after his marriage established his home there and has continued to reside on that place, where he and his family are very comfortably situated. Meanwhile Mr. BICKEL has increased his acreage until he now is the owner of a fine farm of 177 acres and has one of the best improved farm plants in that neighborhood. Mr. BICKEL is a Democrat and has ever given a good citizen's attention to local civic affairs. It was on January 14, 1888, that William J. BICKEL was united in marriage to Eunice Marcella WHIPPLE, also a member of one of the old families in Jay county, and to this union ten children have been born, all of whom are living save four, Ruth, Ora, Lola and an unnamed infant, the former of whom married Dewey SMITH and died leaving one child, a daughter, Leotta. The other children of this family are Eugene, Virgil, Russell, Raymond, Chela P. and Paul, the two latter of whom are still at home. Eugene BICKEL married Edith BERGER and has two children, Marvin and Darwin. Virgil BICKEL married Lulu McCOY and has one child, a son, Lendon. Mrs. BICKEL was born in Pike township, in the neighborhood in which she is now living, October 5, 1868, and is a daughter of David O. and Elizabeth (HILTON) WHIPPLE, natives of Rhode Island, who had settled in Jay county some years prior to that date and had become substantial residents of Pike township. The BICKEL's have a pleasant home and their "latch string is always out." SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.373-374. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.