

MATTHIAS KIRSCH.

Among the leading financiers of Adams county and the men who are contributing to the sustained commercial growth and development of this section of northeastern Indiana properly may be numbered Matthias Kirsch, the vice president of the Old Adams County Bank. He was born in the university town of Heidelberg, on the banks of the German Rhine. August 17, 1856. He is a son of Christopher and Catherine (Stern) Kirsch. His parents grew to maturity and were married in the quaint German college town and Christopher Kirsch was a merchant there for a number of years. After a few years of successful business in Heidelberg he decided to migrate to America and seek his fortune in the United States. Accordingly he sold his business interests in Germany and embarked with his family for New York. The journey across the Atlantic was made in safety and without incident and the family reached Indiana in 1867. Christopher Kirsch purchased a tract of new land in Preble township, Adams county, and settled on it. It was unimproved, but after a few years of industry and frugality he found himself in possession of a good farm, well cleared and improved and affording a comfortable income. He continued to live on his farm until a few years before his death, which occurred about the year 1899. His wife survived him several years and died in 1902. Both he and his wife were members of the German Reformed church and he was a successful farmer and accumulated considerable property. He was eminently respected and enjoyed the esteem and confidence of all who knew him and were associated with him in a business and social way.

Of a family of eight children born to this estimable couple and consisting of Barbara, Matthias, Peter (deceased), Peter (living), Catherine (deceased), Catherine (living), John (deceased) and John (living), it will be seen that Matthias was the second in point of birth. He was eleven years of age when his parents decided to forsake their home along the Rhine and migrate to the United States. His youth was, accordingly, spent in the fatherland and he was educated in the parochial schools of his neighborhood. After coming to Adams county he attended the common schools of his district and secured as good an English education as the circumstances and his environment warranted. In addition to his studies he assisted in the work of clearing and cultivating his father's farm and in time became a skilled agriculturist. He continued to live on the home estate and to assist in its cultivation and management until 1875, when he removed to Belmont, Illinois, and engaged in the mercantile business in that city. He spent the following twelve years in Illinois and in 1887 he returned to Indiana and settled in Decatur. He engaged in the lumber business after returning to Adams county, the firm name being Fritzingler & Kirsch. This partnership arrangement continued for the next two years, when Mr. Fritzingler sold his interest to A. H. Sellemeyer and the firm then became known under the name of Kirsch & Sellemeyer. This business is continued today. In addition to his lumber business Mr. Kirsch is interested in other commercial enterprises of Adams county. He is a stockholder in the Old Adams County Bank and in 1906 was elected vice president of this strong financial institution. He takes more than a passive interest in the affairs of the bank and is active to an extent in its management.

The marriage of Mr. Kirsch and Miss Amanda Langenbacher occurred in 1878. Mrs. Kirsch is a native of Preble township, Adams county, and is a daughter of Matthias and Harriet Langenbacher, who were early settlers of Adams county. Three children have been born to Mr. and Mrs. Kirsch: Delia, the wife of Frederick Reppert, one of the best known auctioneers of Adams county, and Otto L. and Harold, both at home with their parents.

Mr. Kirsch is one of the most highly esteemed men of his city and community a man whose advice is often sought on matters of importance. He is a shrewd and successful business man and one who takes an active part in furthering the interests of Decatur and Adams county. He is a director in the following companies: The Cement Roof and Block Company, Furnace Company, the Packing Company and the Automobile Works. In politics he is a Democrat and consistently votes the ticket of this party and works for its success. With his wife and the members of his family, he is a member of the German Reformed church and accords this denomination his hearty and generous support.

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**Standard History of Adams and Wells Counties, Indiana, Vol. II, John W. Tyndall & Orlo Ervin Lesh; Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co, 1918, p. 688-690.**

Mathias Kirsch, who has been actively identified with the business and civic life of Decatur for the past thirty years, is cashier and one of the organizers of the People's Loan and Trust Company of Decatur.

This is one of the nourishing financial institutions of Adams County. It was organized and began business on January 2, 1915. The first officers were James Rupel of Bryant, Indiana, president (now deceased) ; John LaPollette of Portland, Indiana, vice president; Mathias Kirsch, cashier; and W. A. Lower, secretary. Mr. Kirsch was elected to the office of president to succeed Mr. Rupel and the vice president now is H. M. Gillig. The bank still retains its original capital stock of \$50,000, and though in existence less than three years its prosperity^and growth have been nothing less than remarkable. At the beginning of its second year its resources had climbed to over a hundred eighty-two thousand dollars, at the beginning of the third year to approximately two hundred seventy-eight thousand dollars, while in June, 1917, the reported resources were almost three hundred thirty thousand dollars. The bank pays four per cent interest on time deposits and the growth and prosperity of the institution are proof of the wisdom of its founders. The management throughout has conducted the business with special emphasis upon safety and service, and while it has all the facilities for the service of a general banking institution, it also provides safety by insuring all the money deposited in its keeping.

Mr. Kirsch is a banker and business man of wide experience. For eight years before entering the People's Loan and Trust Company he was vice president of the Old Adams County Bank. He has been in the lumber business at Decatur for thirty years, and is still carrying on a big business in that line, with extensive retail yards handling building materials and supplies, builders hardware, lumber, etc. He engaged in the lumber business at Decatur in 1887. Prior to entering the lumber business in Decatur he was in the mercantile business in Bellmont, Wabash County, Illinois, for about eleven years.

Mr. Kirsch was born in the beautiful old City of Heidelberg, Germany, August 17, 1856. He comes of an old family of Baden people. His grandfather, Adam Kirsch, was born in 1805. Two sons of Adam, Christoph and Carl, came to America about 1848. They crossed the ocean in sailing vessels, being several weeks en route, and first landed at New York City. Carl was a teacher by profession and first located at Pittsburgh, but later came to Indiana and was a successful educator for fifty years. He died a number of years ago, leaving a family of children. Christoph Kirsch separated from his brother and went to the mining districts of Lake Superior. He was there four years, and then planned to go out to California and become a gold miner. In the meantime he went back to New York, and

while there decided to return to the old country for a visit. A good many years passed before he saw America again. In Baden he fell in love with a young woman of that country, Katharina Stern, a native of Baden and of old German stock. They married and for several years continued to live in Germany. The children born to them were Barbara, Mathias, Peter and Catherina. In 1868 the entire family, together with Christoph's father, Adam, came to America. They embarked on the boat Saxonia, a combined sailing and steamship, and after a voyage of fourteen days landed in New York City. From there they came west to Fort Wayne and soon afterwards settled in Preble Township of Adams County. Here Christoph Kirsch bought a partly improved farm. On that old homestead the grandfather, Adam Kirsch, passed away in 1880. His wife had died in Germany in 1859 in middle age. In the old country the family were Evangelical Protestants, but after coming to Indiana became affiliated with the German Reformed Church. As American citizens all the male members of the family became democrats. Grandfather Adam Kirsch had three other sons who also came to America, Valentine, Peter and Adam, Jr. Adam is still living. Valentine served as a soldier in the American Civil war, going through as a private, and died at the age of eighty-three years in Illinois. His brother, Peter, is also deceased, having married and leaving a family. Adam is a farmer in the state of Minnesota and has a family.

Christoph Kirsch and wife in their latter years lived retired at Decatur, where he died at the age of seventy-one and she at the age of seventy. Christof was born in 1828 and his wife in 1833. Their two daughters are both now deceased, but were married and left families. The sons, Peter, John and Mathias are all living and all married and have children. Peter is a resident of Decatur, while John has his home in Fort Wayne.

Mr. Mathias Kirsch married at Fort Wayne an Adams County girl, Amanda Langenbacher. She was born in Adams County June 20, 1857, and was reared and educated here in the public schools. Her father, Mathias Langenbacher, was a native of Baden, Germany, and in the old country learned the trade of clock maker. He followed that trade to some extent in Indiana, but after his marriage engaged in farming in Preble Township, and he died at the age of seventy-eight, in Decatur. His wife's maiden name was Harriet Spangler. She was a native of Ohio, and died also in Decatur, at the age of seventy-four. The Langenbachers were active members of the Reformed Church. Mrs. Kirsch had one sister, Sarah, wife of A. H. Sellemeyer of Decatur. They have two children, Jesse and Esther. Esther is now in China as a missionary. Mr. and Mrs. Kirsch have three children: Delia was born at Bellmont, Illinois, was educated in Decatur and is the wife of Fred Reppert. They have two children, Helen O. and Rollin M. Otto L., the older son of Mr. Kirsch is manager of his father's lumber business, lie married Miss E. Selig of Fort Wayne. The youngest child, Harold E., has completed his education and is assisting his brother in the lumber business. The family are all members of the Reformed Church, in which Mr. Kirsch has served as an elder for thirty years. He is a democrat in politics.