

**J. T. MERRYMAN, FIRST MAYOR OF DECATUR, DEAD**

**Prominent Decatur Man, Former Judge, Dies This Morning**

Judge James T. Merryman, 89, first mayor of Decatur and judge of the Adams circuit court from 1908-14, beloved and widely known jurist of this city, died in peaceful slumber at his home, 407 N. Second street, at about 10 o'clock this morning.

Confined to his home for several months, the aged jurist was rational almost up to the last minute. Yesterday the family noticed that he was growing weaker and kept vigil during the night. The morning, just a few minutes before he was carried away in the sleep of death, he talked with members of his family. His grandson, Dr. James M. Burk, was called and as he held his grandfather's hand, the last breath of life flickered from his body.

On the threshold of 90, the long life of Judge Merryman is closely associated with the founding of Decatur and its early development.

When Decatur was incorporated as a city in 1882, the community turned to him and elected him mayor. It was during his administration that the first ordinance was passed prohibiting the construction of frame or wooden buildings on Second street, legislation which was badly needed following the destruction of the Second street business section by the disastrous fire in 1882.

Born in Washington township, Oct. 1, 1854, a son of Charles Wesley and Mary Archbold-Merryman, Judge Merryman was reared and spent his entire life in this county. He was born in a log cabin and the ownership of the farm continued in the hands of the Merryman children.

Completing his common school education, Judge Merryman attended two years' preparatory school under Professor Wright, who was a graduate of Yale university.

Gifted with fine talent and mind, he began to teach school at the age of 16, remaining in that profession until he was 21.

He moved to Decatur and in 1876 began his public career, which led to his election as judge of the circuit court and became one of the most widely known attorneys in northern Indiana. He was appointed deputy county clerk by Byron H. Dent and three years later was named deputy sheriff under the late Henry Krick.

As a young man he was employed as a bookkeeper in the Old Adams county band and started the study of law. In 1881 he was admitted to the Adams county bar and for more than 30 years was president of that association. When he retired from active practice several years ago and turned in his resignation as president, he was honored at a dinner by members of the bar.

When Decatur celebrated its Centennial in 1936, Judge Merryman was made an honorary president of the local association and was honored frequently during that week when the community paid respect to him as a pioneer and leading citizen.

His first partnership as an attorney was formed with Edgar W. Wicks, which continued until 1883, when he became associated with John T. France, a leading attorney of this city. Also he was a partner of the late Judge W. J. Vesey of Fort Wayne. Judge Jesse C. Sutton and prior to his retirement

conducted his own law office and later was associated with French Quinn. He was admitted before both the state bar association and the supreme court.

For more than a half century he was a local representative of Dun and Bradstreet, financial agency.

Judge Merryman was married to Miss Louisa P. Albers of this city on August 29, 1878. They were the parents of five children, two of whom are deceased.

Judge Merryman was a member of the First Methodist church of this city. Fraternally he was a member of Decatur lodge No. 571 Ancient Free and Accepted Masons, the Fort Wayne Scottish Rite, the B. P. O. Elks and the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

Surviving besides the widow, are three children, Mrs. Avon Burk of this city; Mrs. Don L. Burk of Oak Park, Ill., Charles A. Merryman, Collinston, LA. Six grandchildren and six great grandchildren survive.

Funeral arrangements will not be made until definite word of the arrival of the son, who is in Tampa, Fla., is received. The body was removed to the Zwick funeral home.