

Biographical and Historical Record - Adams and Wells Co. Indiana Lewis Publishing Co. Chicago, IL, 1887

HON. DAVID STUDABAKER, president of the Adams County Bank, of Decatur, and a prominent and influential citizen of Adams County, was born at Fort Recovery, Ohio, the date of his birth being August 12, 1827. At the age of seven years he was taken by his parents to Adams County, Indiana, they settling in Wabash Township, where he was reared to the avocation of a farmer. His father died when he was but thirteen years of age, and being the eldest child, he aided in the maintenance of his mother and family. He received his primary education in the district schools, which he attended during the winter months, being a pupil in the first school taught in Wells County, Indiana. It was a subscription school taught by an Irishman, and held in a primitive log cabin, built with puncheon floor; a log cut out and the aperture covered with greased paper, served as a window, and the seats were made of logs. Mr. Studabaker attended the high school near Greenville, Ohio, one term, after which he attended the Jay County Seminary, at Portland, Indiana, one and a half years, and in the meantime taught in the district schools of Adams and Wells counties. He continued to teach school until the spring of 1851, when he began reading law in the office of Hon. Jacob M. Haynes at Portland, Indiana. In June, 1852, he was admitted to the bar at the same place, Hon. Jeremiah Smith presiding, and during the same month he settled in Decatur, where he began the practice of his chosen profession. He was married at Fort Wayne, Indiana, October 26, 1854, to Miss Harriet Evans, a daughter of Hon. John K. Evans. She was born at Shane's Crossing, Ohio, and in 1835 came with her parents to Adams County, Indiana, and received her education in the public schools of her neighborhood, and at the Methodist Female College at Fort Wayne. Mr. and Mrs. Studabaker have five children living - Mary J., wife of John Niblick, a merchant of Decatur; Lizzie F., wife of A. B. Morrison, a merchant and banker of Eckmansville, Ohio; Hattie, at home; Maggie, wife of William J. Vesey, an attorney of Fort Wayne, Indiana, and David, Jr., a student of the grammar school at Lima, Indiana. One son, John E., died at Decatur in May, 1869, aged eleven years. Mr. Studabaker practiced law at Decatur until 1883, a period of thirty-one years, and during this time was associated a number of years with James R. Bobo and John P. Quinn, both of whom were formerly students in his office. In connection with his law practice, he at an early day began dealing in real estate, which he has continued until quite recently. In 1852 he was elected prosecuting attorney for the district comprising Adams and Allen counties, serving as such two years, and in 1854 was elected a member of the State Legislature to represent Adams County in the lower house, and was re-elected in 1856. In 1858 he was elected State Senator by the district comprising Adams, Jay and Wells counties. In 1868 he was elected judge of the common pleas court for the district comprising Adams, Allen, Huntington and Wells counties. In 1869 he was identified with the building of the Richmond & Fort Wayne Railroad, and was elected one of its directors, which position he still holds. In 1871 he became a stockholder in the Adams County Bank, which was conducted as a private bank until 1874. It was then incorporated under the State law, and Mr. Studabaker was chosen one of its directors, and also vice-president, and in 1883 was appointed its president, which position he has since filled. Politically Mr. Studabaker affiliates with the Democratic party. He is numbered among the active and public-spirited citizens of Decatur, and is always interested in any enterprise calculated to be of benefit to his town or county.

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## **Standard History of Adams and Wells counties, Indiana: an ..., Volume 2 By John Wilson Tyndall, Orlo Ervin Lesh**

Hon. David Studabaker. No one would regard it as a disparagement or criticism of other men to say that Hon. David Studabaker was one of the greatest, most commanding figures in the life and affairs of Adams County whether as a lawyer, banker, or all around citizen. His is one of the names that recurs most frequently in the reminiscences of the older and later generations, and so far as possible the record of his life should be set forth without diminishment or abbreviation, even though a number of years have elapsed since he quit this mortal presence.

He was born at Fort Recovery, Ohio, August 12, 1827, and died at his home, in Decatur May 3, 1904, in his seventy-seventh year. The Studabakers are of Holland ancestry, originally lived in Pennsylvania, and the Studabakers of Adams County, of Wells County, and the famous manufacturing family of Studebakers of South Bend all trace their descent from a common ancestor several generations back.

The father of David Studabaker was Peter Studabaker, who had moved from his old home at Fort Recovery to Jay County, Indiana, and was the first settler at Portland in that county. In 1833 Peter Studabaker came to the Wabash, River in the southern part of Root Township, and was one of the first to take up land at Geneva. He was industriously engaged in the development of his farm on the Wabash, and while thus employed was stricken with typhoid fever and died in 1840. Peter Studabaker married Mary J. Simison, whose family also were prominent pioneers of Adams County.

David Studabaker was seven years of age when his parents removed to Adams County and he grew up in Wabash Township, trained to the duties and occupations of a farmer and as the oldest child though only thirteen years of age when his father died, he assumed many of the responsibilities and burdens of keeping the rest of the family together. He received an education in primary schools which he attended during the winter months, and was a pupil in the first school taught in Wells County. It was a subscription school, the teacher an Irishman, and was held in a primitive log cabin with a puncheon floor, the window being made by leaving out a log from the wall and the space covered over with greased paper. David Studabaker also attended a high school near Greenville, Ohio, one term, and the Jay County Seminary at Portland a year and a half. In the meantime he had qualified and had taught district schools in both Adams and Wells counties. Teaching was more or less a constant occupation with him until the spring of 1851, when he began the study of law in the office of Hon. Jacob M. Haines at Portland. In June, 1852, he was admitted to the bar at Portland, before Judge Jeremiah Smith. Later in the same month he located at Decatur and began the practice of his profession. It is said that while living with his mother in their home on the Wabash he was greatly encouraged in the pursuit of his law studies by P. N. Collins, an acquaintance and political leader, and by his lifelong friend and neighbor David McDonald, who subsequently became sheriff of Adams County and served in the State Legislature. Uncle David McDonald, as he was commonly called, was something of a hunter, and while he and young David were in the woods the older man would always insist that the younger make a speech, and thus he greatly encouraged and trained his budding forensic talents.

Mr. Studabaker practiced law at Decatur until 1883, a period of thirty-one years. During that time he was associated a number of years with James R. Bobo and John P. Quinn. Along with his law practice he began dealing in real estate at a very early time. He had an important public record, beginning in 1852 with his election as prosecuting attorney for the district of Allen and Adams counties. He filled that office two years and in 1854 was elected to represent Adams County in the lower house of the Legislature and was reelected in 1856. In 1858 the district of Adams, Jay and Wells counties sent him to the State Senate and in 1868 he was elected judge of the Common Pleas Court for the district of Adams, Allen, Huntington and Wells counties. He resigned this office before his term expired.

He proved himself an excellent judge, his knowledge of the law was profound, and his administering of the ends of justice was tempered with moderation and with consideration. The attorneys who practiced in his court found in him a man who was eminently fair and courteous and he filled the office to which he had been chosen with dignity and to his lasting credit.

For many years Judge Studabaker was chiefly a figure in the commercial life and the larger affairs of his section of Indiana. In 1869 he was one of the promoters of the Richmond & Fort Wayne Railroad, was elected one of its directors, and held that position for a long period of years, in fact until his death. In 1871 he became a stockholder in the Adams County Bank, and when it was incorporated in 1874 he was chosen a director and vice president and in 1883 elected president. He was also a director of the Bankers National Bank of Chicago, the First National Bank of Marion, Indiana, the Bank of Geneva and the Bank of Berne, and the First National of Fort Wayne and the Bank of Wren, Ohio. In politics he was an active democrat.

On October 26, 1854. David Studabaker married Miss Harriet Evans, whose father, John K. Evans, was a prominent figure in the state's history and had been shortly before the marriage of his daughter to David Studabaker associate judge of the District Court in which Adams County was located. Mrs. David Studabaker died June 7, 1891. In June, 1895, he married Mrs. Jennie Phelps, who survived him. The children of Judge Studabaker who reached maturity were: Mary, wife of John Niblick of Decatur; Mrs. Lizzie Morrison of Decatur; Hattie; Mrs. W. J. Vesey of Fort Wayne; and David E.

How much the career of Judge Studabaker meant to the people of Adams County was well expressed in the words of an editorial in the Decatur Democrat, quoted herewith: "In the death of Judge David Studabaker a worthy and honored citizen has lived his allotted time and passed to the Great Beyond. During his long life, covering a period of three score years and ten, we look back upon a busy, active and useful career, in which he rose from a self educated boy to a school teacher, then a law student, lawyer, judge, banker and in later years has been as busy and as energetic in the control and management of his many and varied personal interests. All of these he managed and directed to the last days of his last illness, and he died honored and respected to the highest degree. Such a life is worthy of the ambition that is rife in the mad rush of progress, and its emulation should be a high ideal among the youth who are striving to win laurels in the days and years to come. Judge Studabaker's public and private life is an open book, and upon its pages are written many good deeds of charity and encouragement. Public spirited, kind and observant, his counsel and advice will

be severely missed but thanks to the seed that has been sown Judge Studabaker will live for many and many years to come."

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Snow's History of Adams County, Indiana, John Fletcher Snow, B. F. Bowen, Indianapolis, IN, 1907, p. 214 (image 447)

HON. DAVID STUDABAKER.

When the Hon. David Studabaker died it seemed that the death angel had entered every home in Adams county and an entire community mourned and was plunged in gloom. The prominent and obscure; the rich and poor; the intimate friend and the casual acquaintance, felt that something had gone from their lives that might never be replaced. The business world of northeastern Indiana suffered an irreparable loss and the bar an accomplished advocate and a fearless and just judge.

Judge Studabaker was born at Fort Recovery, Ohio, August 12, 1827. At eight years of age he was taken by his parents to Adams county and his father died when he was but thirteen. He was the eldest of his father's family and attended the first school taught in Wells county. This was a subscription school taught by an Irish schoolmaster. The building was rough with a puncheon floor. The windows were mere cut-outs, covered with greased paper, and the benches were hewed from logs and without backs. He studied in this rude school for some time and then spent one term in a high school near Greenville, Ohio. He also attended the Jay County Seminar, near Portland. He also taught in the schools of Wells and Adams counties and became an ardent scholar and a persistent one. About this time he decided to take up the study of law and to make the law his life profession. To this end he entered the office of Judge Jerc Haines and soon mastered the technicalities of the study. He applied for admission to the Adams county courts and passed a creditable examination. He was admitted to practice and at once began the work that made him famous and one of the most accomplished men in the profession in the state. Judge Studabaker was admitted to practice in June, 1852, and for more than thirty years he was a leader of his profession. In the course of his practice he was associated with James R. Bobo and John P. Quinn, both of whom studied in his office, and both of whom are dead. In the same year in which he began practicing' Judge Studabaker was elected prosecuting attorney of the district composed of Adams and Allen counties. He served in this capacity for two years and was then chosen a representative to the state legislature from the former county. He served in the session of 1854 and was re-elected for the session of 1856. His political service was admirable and entirely to the satisfaction of his constituents. In 1858 they again called upon Judge Studabaker to represent their interests in the state's lawmaking body and returned him to Indianapolis as the senator for the joint counties of Adams, Jay and Wells. He served in the upper house with distinction, and after the close of the session returned to Decatur and resumed the practice of his profession. He was elected judge of the common pleas court for the circuit composed of Adams, Allen, Huntington and Wells Counties. Throughout his tenure of office as judge of this district he added much to his prestige as a member of his profession. He proved himself a most excellent judge. His knowledge of the law was profound, and his administering of the ends of justice was tempered with moderation and with consideration. The attorneys who practiced in his court

found in him a man who was eminently fair and courteous and he filled the office to which he had been chosen with dignity and to his lasting credit. During his incumbency many important cases came before him for adjudication and in each case he displayed a wide range of learning and a keen desire to decide the issue with regard to the facts presented without prejudice.

In addition to his arduous duties as judge and as a practicing attorney the busy brain of Judge Studabaker was concerned with many other tilings. He was engaged in many lines of business and was a prominent figure in ail movements that were destined to promote the commercial interests of Decatur and Adams county. He dealt extensively in real estate and owned much of it in various sections of the country-. He became the wealthiest citizen of his community and owned at his death large interests in producing oil property and bank stock. In 1869 he was one of the promoters of the Fort Wayne & Richmond Railway that later became the Grand Rapids & Indiana Railway and finally passed into the control of the Pennsylvania Railroad. He was a member of the first board of directors of this road and retained this position until his death. He was a director in a number of banks - the Old Adams County Bank, of which he was a stockholder and one of its founders, serving as vice president and later president when the bank became incorporated at a state bank; the Bankers' National Bank, of Chicago ; the First National Bank, of Marion, Indiana: the Bank of Geneva and the Bank of Berne, and the First National Bank of Fort Wayne, and the Bank of Wren, Ohio.

Judge Studabaker was twice married. His first marriage occurred October 26, 1854, when he was united to Miss Harriet Evans, a daughter of the Hon. John K. Evans, a prominent figure in the state's history. Mrs. Studabaker died June 7, 1891. One son of this marriage, John E. Studabaker, died May 2, 1S69. The surviving children are: Mary, wife of John Niblick, of Decatur; Airs. Lizzie Morrison, of Decatur; Miss Hattie Studabaker, of Decatur; Mrs. W. J. Yesey, of Fort Wayne, and David E. Studabaker, of Decatur. Judge Studabaker was married for the second time in June, 1895, to Mrs. Jennie Phelps, who survives him.

After a busy, useful and distinguished life, extending over the allotted span, Judge Studabaker died on the evening of May 3, 1904. His death followed an illness of but two weeks' duration and was due to a complication of causes. He contracted a cold while visiting a farm he owned and he was stricken as the result. He was kept alive through the use of stimulants for several days and retained his consciousness until within a few hours of his death. With his passing Decatur and the entire northeastern section of the state suffered a distinct loss. His loss was voiced feelingly in a comment appearing in the Decatur Democrat. It follows:

"In the death of judge David Studabaker a worthy and honored citizen has lived his allotted time and passed to the great beyond. During his long life, covering a period of three score years and ten, we look back upon a busy, useful and active career, in which he rose from a self-educated boy to a school teacher, then a law student, lawyer, judge, banker, and in later years has been as busy and as energetic in the control and management of his many and varied personal interests. All of these he managed and directed to the last days of his last illness, and he died honored and respected to the highest degree. Such a life is worthy of the ambition that is rife in the mad rush of progress, and its simulation should be a high ideal among the youth who are striving to win laurels in the days and

years to come. Judge Studabaker's public and private life is an open book, and upon its pages are written many good deeds of charity and encouragement. Public-spirited, kind and observant, his counsel and advice will be severely missed, but, thanks to the seed that has been sown, Judge Studabaker will live for many and many years to come."

The funeral of Judge Studabaker was a most impressive function. It was participated in by the entire city of Decatur. During the hours when the cortege wound its way through the city streets and services were held at the church, the home and the grave, all business in Decatur was suspended. Representatives of the banks of Fort Wayne, Chicago, Bluffton, Huntington, Geneva, Berne and other places in which Judge Studabaker had interests, were present and many other interests paid last and touching tributes. For two days the body of the aged jurist laid in state at his home surrounded by many beautiful emblems and crowds viewed it. Intimate friends and strangers, rich and poor, gazed on the features of a dead friend and sympathetic counselor. The services were conducted by the Rev. W. H. Daniel, assisted by the Rev. W. E. McCarty. A choir of twenty voices rendered favorite hymns of Judge Studabaker and the services were concluded by the solemn rites of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. The funeral procession was over a mile in length and was headed by the Odd Fellows and the members of the Adams County Bar Association. The pall-bearers were: Judge James T. Merryman, T. H. Ernst, J. H. Stone, A. Van Camp, Henry Hite, M. F. Rice, John S. Falk and R. D. Patterson. The honorary pall-bearers were: George Pixley and B. W. Pixley, of Fort Wayne; Dr. Reasoner, president of the First National Bank of Marion, Indiana; Judge Dailey, of Bluffton; Judge O'Rourke, of Fort Wayne; R. B. Allison, of Decatur, and Judge D. D. Heller and Judge R. K. Erwin, of Decatur. Resolutions of regret and sympathy were passed by the Decatur Commercial Club and by the Fort Wayne Trust Company at a meeting of the board of directors of these institutions.