

BAIRD, MILTON G

Milton G. BAIRD, a former member of the Jay county council and one of the best known and most substantial farmers and landowners of Knox township, now living practically retired at his pleasant home in that township, was born on the farm on which he is living and has lived there all his life. Mr. BAIRD was born on September 25, 1844, and is a son of Britton and Matilda (GALLAHER) BAIRD, both of whom spent their last days in this county. Britton BAIRD was born in the Catskill Country in New York state on March 19, 1811, a son of Joseph BAIRD, and was four years of age when his parents moved from New York to Ohio and settled in Warren County in the latter state. He was trained in his boyhood to the trades of blacksmith and cooper and remained in Ohio until 1838 when he became attracted to the new lands which then were being opened up over here in Indiana and came to this state on a prospecting tour. He located a desirable quarter section in Knox Township, this County, and then proceeded on to the land office at Ft. Wayne, where he made formal entry to the land, making his payment with 800 silver dollars which he had brought over with him in his saddle bags, the date of this entry having been August 20, 1838. The year prior to this date Mr. BAIRD had married in Ohio and he established his home on the pioneer farm he had taken in Knox Township, building there a log cabin and proceeding to clear the place. His wife, who was Jane GIBSON, died within a little more than a year after coming here and her babe died a few weeks later. These were the first to be buried in what came to be known as the Center Cemetery. Mr. BAIRD later returned to Ohio and there married Matilda GALLAHER, who came back with him to his forest home in this county, where in 1851 Mr. BAIRD erected the first brick house, built in Knox Township, burning on his place the bricks which entered into the construction of the house. It was not long after settling there until he had a blacksmith shop going on the place and he later erected a sawmill, the first in the community, and both shop and mill proved of great benefit to his pioneer neighbors. As his affairs prospered he added to his land holdings until he became the owner of 520 acres of land and was accounted one of the most substantial and influential members of the community. Britton BAIRD was an ardent abolitionist and was an active agent in the operations of the "underground railroad" that during the troublous days before the war aided in the flight of many a fugitive slave through this section of Indiana. He was one of the charter members of the Portland lodge of Freemasons and took an active part in the affairs of that lodge. He died at his home in Knox Township on February 12, 1879. Britton BAIRD was thrice married. By his union with Matilda

GALLAHER, mother of the subject of this sketch, he had three children, those besides Milton G. BAIRD being Sarah, who married Madison MOODY, of Delaware county, and Anna, who married Justus AUSTIN and died at the age of fifty-five years. The mother of these children died on March 12, 1864, and in the year following Mr. BAIRD married Mrs. Julia A. (BUNCH) TURNER, who was born in North Carolina, and who long survived him. To that union one child was born, a son, William H. BAIRD, who made his home in Nebraska many years ago, but who is now living at Mason City, Iowa, where he is the superintendent of an extensive beet sugar factory in which he is interested. He was one of the early promoters of the beet sugar industry in this country. Mrs. Julia A. BAIRD was but eight years of age when she came to Indiana with her parents and she grew to womanhood in Wayne and Randolph counties. At Winchester she married John TURNER, who died leaving her with six children, all of whom grew to maturity and were married with the exception of one, Ellen, who died from the effects of a burn, in her eleventh year. Another of the daughters, Mary Elizabeth, who grew to womanhood in the BAIRD home and had for some time been teaching school, married her stepbrother, Milton G. BAIRD, the subject of this sketch. It was on November 17, 1869, that Milton G. BAIRD married Mary Elizabeth TURNER, the ceremony being performed at their joint home, and they continued to make their home there. Mr. BAIRD had been a helpful factor in the development of the home place from the days of his boyhood and after his father's death he inherited 172 acres of the BAIRD estate, this including the original quarter section his father had entered from the Government. Since then he has done much in the way of further improvement on the place and has for years had one of the best farm plants in that section. Mr. BAIRD is a Republican, as was his father, and has ever taken an active and interested part in local civic affairs. In 1900 he was elected a member of the county council from his district and in other ways he has contributed to the public service. He is a Freemason, a member of the Masonic lodge at Redkey, and is a member of the Oak Grove Methodist Episcopal church. Mr. BAIRD's wife died on October 19, 1920. To Milton G. and Mary Elizabeth (TURNER) BAIRD were born two children, sons both, Charles H. and Walter E., the latter of whom died in the days of his young manhood. Charles H. BAIRD, who is now looking after the operation of the home farm, completed his schooling in the Indiana State Normal School and at DePauw University and was for five years engaged as a teacher in the schools of Knox township, this county. He has given his thoughtful attention to local civic affairs and for four years (1902-06) served as trustee of

Knox township. On January 1, 1900, Charles H. BAIRD was united in marriage to Lulu M. PARKHURST, of Bourbon, Ind. (Marshall Co.) who also had been a student at DePauw University, and to this union three children have been born, Mary and Helen (twins), born on June 25, 1901, and Dorothy, born on August 30, 1904, who on April 14, 1920, was united in marriage to Frederick BIMEL, of Portland.
SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls.1922, Vol. II, pp.267-268. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut