

## **BIMEL, CARL**

CARL BIMEL, president of the BIMEL Spoke and Auto Wheel Company, of Portland, successor to the old manufacturing firm of L. BIMEL & Son, and long regarded as one of the most active and progressive factors in the commercial and industrial life of this section of Indiana, was born at Portland and has lived there practically all his life, from the days of his boyhood interested in the extensive manufacturing plant of which he now is the head. Mr. BIMEL was born on March, 13, 1889, and is a son of Fred and Margaret G. (KELSEY) BIMEL, both of whom were born at St. Mary's, Ohio, and the latter of whom is still living at Portland, where she has a very pleasant home on West Arch street. The late Fred BIMEL, who was for years one of the leading factors in the industrial development of Portland, was born on January 8, 1859, and was a son of Lawrence and Elizabeth BIMEL, the former of whom was a pioneer manufacturer of wagons and buggies at St. Mary's, Ohio. Lawrence BIMEL was born in Germany in 1827 and was three years of age when he came to this country with his parents, the family coming on West and locating at Wapakoneta, Ohio, where the Birnel home was established. Reared at Wapakoneta, Lawrence BIMEL early learned the trade of carriage maker and in time became a manufacturer at St. Mary's, where he established his home and built up an extensive plant, the wagons and carriages turned out in this plant having been widely distributed thereabout. In 1879 he established a branch plant at Portland for the manufacture of spokes, hubs, felloe strips and similar accessories of the carriage manufacturing line and his son Fred, just about then coming into his majority, was placed in charge of the same, the plant being conducted under the firm name of L. BIMEL & Son, the predecessor of the present extensive plant of the BIMEL Company, which is operated under the general management of Carl BIMEL, the third in direct line in the gradual development of this business. The plant which the late Fred BIMEL started in Portland more than forty years ago, taking then advantage of the wealth of timber which still was accessible hereabout, gradually developed the industry until it became one of the most important industrial enterprises in the county. In 1910 he enlarged and modernized the plant and added to his output the manufacture of automobile wheels. This latter phase of the business was rapidly developed and soon came to be the chief object of the factory and has so continued, the BIMEL wheels having gained a wide and justly deserved reputation in the automobile industry throughout the country. Fred BIMEL continued active in the operation of this plant until his death and was in other ways active in the development of the general business interests of the city of his

adoption the handsome BIMEL block, erected in 1896-98, at the corner of Main and Meridian streets being, in addition to the wheel works, one of the standing local monuments to his public spirit. He established the first waterworks plant and the first electric light plant at Portland and was one of the chief promoters of the C. B. & C. railroad which reached Portland about twenty years ago. Fred BIMEL died on October 2, 1912, and at his passing left a good memory. As noted above, his widow survives and is still making her home at Portland, where she is very comfortably situated. It was on September 14, 1880, not long after taking up his residence in Portland, that Fred BIMEL was united in marriage to Margaret G. KELSEY, who also was born at St. Mary's, Ohio, and to that union were born seven children, five of whom are still living, the subject of this sketch having three sisters, Lelia, Hazel and Bernice, and a brother Frederick BIMEL. Reared at Portland, Carl BIMEL was graduated from the high school in that city and then took a course in mechanical engineering at Purdue University, following this by a business course in the university at Valparaiso, Ind. From the days of his youth he had been interested in the operation of his father's industrial plant at Portland and after leaving college and in order further to familiarize himself with the technical details of factory operation spent a year in a large spoke factory in the South. He then returned home and in 1910 became actively engaged with his father in the operation of the BIMEL wheel works at Portland. When his father died in 1912 Mr. BIMEL took over the general management of the plant and upon the reorganization of the operating company was elected president of the company and has since served in that executive capacity, during this time doing much to extend the operations of the plant until now the BIMEL products are regarded as standards in their line. Mr. BIMEL is a Scottish Rite Mason and is a member of the local lodge of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks, of which latter organization his father also was a member. On June 4, 1913, Carl BIMEL was united in marriage to Louine MILLER and to this union one child has been born, a son, Carl, Jr. SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.54-55. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.