

**William Z. Jenkins**, merchant, Pennville, and among the earliest settlers of Penn Township, was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in 1828, the eldest son of Henry Z. and Abigail G. (Bedford) Jenkins, who were also natives of Philadelphia. David Jenkins, the grandfather of our subject, was a native of Wales, coming to America with his brother at an early day. The mother of our subject was of English and Irish descent. Her father was a native of England. Henry Jenkins was reared in his native city, and followed the avocation of a carpenter. He was married in 1827 to Abigail G. Bedford, and to them were born a children, three still living. In 1830, they immigrated to Cincinnati, Ohio, crossing the mountains in away. On arriving at his destination, he posted notices for the odd Fellows in the locality to meet him, to which about seven responded and they established the first Lodge of that order west of the Allegheny Mountains. After living there a short time, the father removed with his family to Springborough, Ohio, where he followed his trade until 1836, when with his wife, five children and his mother, he came to Jay County, Indiana, making the journey 19, and settled in Penn Township, near the center of the present village of Camden, Mr. Jenkins assisting to build the first In that village. The now thriving little village was then a dense wilderness. Henry Jenkins brought with him to the County, a stock of general merchandise and opened the first store in the village of Camden, as was one of the pioneer merchants of the County. He followed this business three years, and during this time he erected a saw mill, which proved the disastrous enterprise. He then followed farming for a time, after which he lived in Portland, about three years. He then settled in Knox Township, where he followed farming until he removed to Camden in 1865, where he passed the remainder of his days. While living in Knox Township, he served as a magistrate for 16 years and for 17 years with postmaster at Camden. He was a member of the odd Fellows order until his death; in politics, he was in early life a Whig, but afterword, an ardent supporter of the Republican Party. Two of his sons, Thomas B and Barton were soldiers in the late war, the former serving three years in the 84<sup>th</sup> Indiana infantry at the latter a member of the 39<sup>th</sup> Indiana infantry, serving five years. Henry Jenkins, died December 9, 1882, aged 80 years and his wife died in March of the same year, aged 81 years. Both were active and consistent members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mrs. Henry Jenkins was formally a member of the Friends Society.

William Z. Jenkins, whose name has this sketch, was allowed of eight years when brought by his parents to Jay County here. He was reared, is she is being spent in assisting his father in the store, and in attending the early subscription schools, where he received a limited education. He remained with his parents until 20 years of age, after which he worked at the Carpenter Street for four years. He then purchased 40 acres of unimproved land in Knox Township, and engaged in farming. He was married

in July, 1850, to Miss Frances Jane Ransom, a daughter of James and Elizabeth (Anderson) Ransom, who came from Guernsey County, Ohio, to Blackford County, Indiana, among the first settlers.

Mrs. Jenkins, died July 17, 1853, leaving one child, Elizabeth, who became the wife of William Hyde. After the death of his wife, Mr. Jenkins sold his farm, and engaged as a dealer in stock, which proved profitable undertaking, and he soon was the owner of a quarter section of land. In November, 1853, he went to San Jose, California, where he followed farming for one year, after which he was engaged in mining for six months, when he met with a serious accident by the discharge of powdered while blasting, which deprived him of the cited both eyes, and for 18 years. He was without sight and trying to have his eyes restored, but without success. While in San Francisco, he was engaged in selling fruits and was said to be the only blind man there who was earning his own living. He then returned to Knox Township, Jay County, and after his return he went to the blind asylum in Indiana, where he learned rulemaking and will work, which he followed about five years, after which he sold books for a while. In 1867, he engaged in the mercantile business, which he has since followed with success. Mr. Jenkins was married a second time in June, 1874, to Miss Sarah Stults, a daughter of John and Susannah Stults, early settlers of Jay County, coming from Ohio in the spring of 1836. In politics, Mr. Jenkins affiliates with the Republican Party.

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**Contributed by Jim Cox**