

MEEKER, FREDERICK EDWARD

Frederick Edward MEEKER, of Portland, one of the organizers and a member of the board of directors of the Home Finance Corporation of Indianapolis, formerly and for years connected with the affairs of the HAWKINS Mortgage Company of Portland and prior to that connection for some years engaged in the newspaper business at Portland, one of the best known young men in that city, was born in Portland and has been a resident of that city all his life. Mr. MEEKER was born on August 18, 1879, and is a son of Norton Augustus and Rachel Hannah (HAWKINS) MEEKER, the latter of whom was a daughter of Judge Nathan B. and Rebecca (SHANKS) HAWKINS, both members of pioneer families in this county and concerning whom further and fitting mention is made elsewhere in this work in a comprehensive review of the HAWKINS family in Jay county. Norton Augustus MEEKER, an honored veteran of the Civil war and formerly and for years one of the leading merchants of Portland, was a native of Ohio, born in Delaware county, that state, July 7, 1844, a son of Robert and Jane (McDONALD) MEEKER, and was living there when the Civil war broke out, he then being under seventeen years of age. In the next year, on August 8, 1862, he then being just past eighteen, he enlisted his services in behalf of the cause of the Union and went to the front as a member of Company A, 96th regiment, Ohio Volunteer Infantry, with which gallant command he served until honorably discharged on August 18, 1865, the war then being over. During the battle of Arkansas Post, September 11, 1862, he was severely wounded in the neck and in one arm and during his service was in several other hard fought engagements. Upon the completion of his military service Mr. MEEKER rejoined his parents, who meanwhile had moved to Jay county, locating in the immediate vicinity of Portland, where his father became engaged in farming and also for years operated the toll gate on East Main street. As a boy Mr. MEEKER had learned the rudiments of the drug business and after his marriage on October 4, 1866, at Portland, to Rachel Hannah HAWKINS returned to Ohio and opened a drug store at Spencerville [Allen Co.] in that state. A few years later he disposed of his interests there and returned to Portland, where for some time he was engaged as the local agent for the United States Express Company, but the urge to re-enter business on his own account proved stronger than his desire to continue connected with the corporation and he presently opened a drug store in Portland and was thus engaged in business in that city, first on North Meridian street and then on West Main street, the remainder of his life, his death occurring on May 24, 1890. His widow survived him for more than twenty-five years, her death occurring on April 17, 1918, she then being in her seventieth year. To Norton A. and Rachel H. (HAWKINS) MEEKER were born six children, those besides the subject of this sketch being Lenora J., wife of H. D. WALTZ, of Portland; Gertrude O., wife of Frank L. BRADEN, former proprietor and publisher of the Portland Commercial-Review and a former city clerk of Portland, now and for years past a resident of Indianapolis, head of the firm of F. L. BRADEN & Co., insurance adjusters; Caroline Adele, who died in 1894 at the age of twenty-two years; Charles M., who died in 1871 at the age of fourteen months, and Franklin Sheridan MEEKER, of Portland.

Reared at Portland, where he was born, Frederick E. MEEKER received his schooling in the schools of that city and when seventeen years of age became engaged as a clerk in the book and jewelry store of R. H. DENNEY at Portland. Three years later he became engaged in newspaper work at Portland in association with his brother-in-law, Frank L. BRADEN, and was thus engaged for about six years, at the end of which time he accepted employment as time keeper for the construction force of the Muncie & Portland Traction Company, engaged in building the traction line from Muncie to Portland, and upon the completion of that work was appointed ticket agent for the company in the Portland office. He continued thus engaged for about eighteen months, at the end of which time he took up a new line and was for nearly three years thereafter engaged in the publication of city and

county directories, after which he became engaged in the real estate business at Portland in association with C. W. McLAUGHLIN, and was thus engaged for about three years, at the end of which time he entered the office of N. B. HAWKINS and Company and was with that: concern when it became reorganized as The HAWKINS Mortgage Company. In this latter connection Mr. MEEKER's attention particularly was directed to the Welfare Loan Societies department of this company's extensive operations and he organized the second such society of the present long series of Welfare Loan Societies now operating under the direction of The HAWKINS Mortgage Company. Mr. MEEKER continued his connection with this company until in January, 1921. when he and T. J. TAYLOR, of Portland directed their energies toward the organization of the Home Finance Corporation of Indianapolis and in May following secured a charter for that concern, which is incorporated in accordance with the laws of the state of Indiana and under the supervision of the Indiana state securities commission. The Home Finance Corporation of Indianapolis, incorporated with a capital of \$1,000,000, quickly established itself on a firm financial basis and is now recognized as one of the most promising concerns of this character in Indiana. The local branch office of the Home Finance Corporation is in the Sibery block in Portland, which was bought for that purpose. The greater part of the stock in this concern is held by substantial business men and farmers of Jay county and is officered as follows: President, O. E. PIERCE, of Portland; vice-president, Charles S. WATSON, of Indianapolis; secretary-treasurer, Frank L. BRADEN, of Indianapolis, who with E. Bert THURMAN, of Indianapolis, T. J. TAYLOR, of Portland, David ABRAMSON, of Portland, and Frederick E. MEEKER, of Portland, constitute the board of directors. Mr. MEEKER also is a member of the board of directors of the Portland Chamber of Commerce and has long- been recognized as one of the real "live wires" in the business life of that city. He is a Republican and has ever given his earnest attention to local civic affairs. Fraternaly, he is affiliated with the local lodge of the Benevolent Order of Elks and with the local aerie of the Fraternal Order of Eagles at Portland, and he and his wife are members of the Presbyterian church and of the Country Club.

On May 8, 1908, Frederick E. MEEKER was united in marriage to Grace E. WARE, who at that time had been for five years a member of the teaching staff of the schools of Jay county, and to this union one child has been born, a son, J. Gordon MEEKER, born on September 25, 1910. Mr. and Mrs. MEEKER have a very pleasant home on East High street, Portland, and have ever taken an interested and helpful part in the general social activities of the city. Mrs. MEEKER also is a member of one of the pioneer families of Jay county, the WARE's having been represented here since the days when what is now Jay county was a part of Randolph county. She was born in Pike township and is a daughter of Enoch F. and Rebecca Jane (LYONS) Ware, the latter of whom was born in that same township, daughter of Elijah and Mary (BAILEY) LYONS, the latter of whom was born in Fulton county, Pennsylvania, a daughter of Peter and Margaret (CLINE) BAILEY. Elijah LYONS was born in Columbiana county, Ohio, September 24, 1824, a son of Thomas and Eve (APPLE) LYONS, who in 1837 moved to Perry county in that same state. In this latter county Elijah LYONS grew to manhood and in 1846 married Mary BAILEY. Four years later, in September, 1850, he came over into Indiana and settled on an un-cleared farm in section 26 of Pike township, this county, where he and his wife reared their family and spent the remainder of their lives, useful and influential members of that community. Enoch F. WARE also was born in Pike township, May 31, 1848, a son of John E. and Susan (FREEZLE) WARE, the latter of whom was born in Washington county, Tennessee) but was reared in Wayne county, Indiana, where her parents, Martin and Mary FREEZLE, had settled when she was a child. John E. WARE was born in Amherst county, Virginia, April 4, 1816, a son of Andrew and Cynthia Ann WARE, who in 1834 moved with their family to Clark county, Ohio, and in the following year (1835) moved over into Indiana and settled on a quarter section of timber land in the Bluff Point neighborhood in what later came to be organized as Pike township, this county. John E.

WARE was nineteen years of age when he came to this county with his parents and he at once "buckled down" to the task of clearing and developing the home place. In 1842 he married Susan FREEZLE and established his home on that place, coming later to be the owner of 380 acres of land, and there his last days were spent, his death occurring in the spring of 1868. His widow long survived him. They were the parents of nine children, of whom William WARE, the first born, died in the service of his country while serving as a soldier of the Union during the Civil war. The late Enoch F. WARE, the fourth in order of birth of these children, grew up on that homestead farm and on November 28, 1879, married Rebecca Jane LYONS. He established his home there and spent the rest of his life on that place, one of the leading men of the community and for two terms trustee of Pike township. He and his wife were the parents of seven children, six of whom are still living, Mrs. MEEKER having four sisters, Mrs. Everett BISHOP, of Seattle, Wash.; Mrs. Clarence HUTCHENS, of Portland; Lucile and Lena, who are unmarried and living on the old home place, and one brother. Lee WARE, who is farming the home place in Pike township. Mrs. MEEKER's schooling was completed at the Indiana State Normal School at Terre Haute. At the age of seventeen she became qualified as a teacher and for five years prior to her marriage was engaged as a teacher in the schools of this county. She has long taken an interested part in local cultural activities, one of the leaders in woman's club work at Portland, and is the district chairman of the Eighth district department of the Indiana state federation of clubs. She organized the first Parent-Teacher Association in Portland and is the present president of the local association.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.328-331. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.