

McKINNEY, ANTHONY WAYNE

ANTHONY WAYNE McKINNEY, who died at his home in Dunkirk in the fall of 1918, was for many years one of the most potent factors in the development of the commercial interests of Jay county, particularly of the region surrounding the towns of Dunkirk and Redkey, and it is but fitting that in this formal history of the county in which he was born and in which his useful career had its fruition there should be carried some modest tribute to the good memory he left at his passing. His was a permanent and enduring work in this community and promises to be continued in successive generations, for the careful commercial plans he so wisely laid now are being carried out by his sons Jesse, Frank and Arthur in the operation of the McKINNEY department store at Dunkirk, which claims the title of "Indiana's greatest country store," an establishment containing upward of thirty departments and occupying 30,000 square feet of floor space.

Anthony Wayne McKINNEY was born on a pioneer farm in Richland township, this county. May 2, 1847, and was a son of Joseph J. and Elizabeth McKINNEY, who reared their family of ten children on that quarter section homestead farm, the grant of which was secured by Joseph J. McKINNEY during the Van Buren administration is still held in the family. The McKINNEY's of this line got their start in America in Colonial times. Joseph J. McKINNEY's father, Anthony Wayne McKINNEY, was a soldier of the War of 1812, and the latter's father, Joseph J. McKINNEY, was a soldier of the Revolution. The persistence of names and admirable family practice here is noted. Anthony Wayne McKINNEY, grandfather of the subject of this memorial sketch, was the founder of the family in Indiana. He served as a soldier during the War of 1812 and when settlements were beginning to be effected over in this part of Indiana he came here and set up a water power grist mill on the Mississinewa river in the Fairview neighborhood in Randolph county and thus became one of the most useful pioneers of this section, his mill attracting custom among the then widely separated settlers for miles hereabout. One of his sons, Joseph J. McKINNEY, named for his Revolutionary grandsire, became one of the first settlers in Richland township, Jay county. Of Joseph J. McKINNEY, the Richland township pioneer, it has been written that "he and his good wife Elizabeth were pioneers in the truest sense of the word, for it fell to their lot, together with other early settlers of their day, to help clear the forests and to lay out and help build the roads, and otherwise lay the foundations for our present civilization." Joseph J. McKINNEY was a useful and influential pioneer citizen, for years served his community as township trustee and also served .two terms as representative from this district in the Indiana General Assembly. He lived to be seventy seven years of age. As noted above, he and his wife had ten children, all of whom grew to maturity, those besides the subject of this memorial sketch having been Mrs. Sarah TAYLOR, George W. (a soldier of the Union during the Civil war), Mrs. Nancy GOE, Mrs. Adaline MAITLEN, Mrs. Mary NIBARGER, Mrs. Elizabeth HALL, Mrs. Susan KNAPP, Mrs. Ella BROWN and Jesse McKINNEY. As most of these reared families of their own the McKINNEY connection hereabout in the present generation is a no inconsiderable one.

Reared on the home farm in Richland township, Anthony W. McKINNEY completed his schooling at Liber College and when seventeen years of age began teaching school, continuing thus engaged during the winters for several years or until he went into business at Redkey as the proprietor of a sawmill, that having been in the days when "timber was king" hereabout. He married at the age of twenty-two and not long afterward added to his business enterprise a store at Dunkirk for the sale of hardware and agricultural implements, presently moving this stock to his home town of Redkey, where he established the first exclusive -hardware and implement store in the vicinity, and where for more than thirty years he continued successfully to serve his community as a distributor of household and farm commodities. He introduced and urged upon his farmer neighbors and friends

the installation of improved farm machinery and add and started the first reaper and the first self-binder in this section of the country, it having been written of him that "so eminently did he ply his trade in this particular line that Redkey became known far and near as a center of supply for all kinds of farming implements, supplies and repairs." With the development of the natural gas industry in this region Mr. McKINNEY took an active part in the promotion of the interests incident to that particular phase of industrial development and was one of the prime movers in the company which took charge of the work in Redkey, drilling wells and interesting outside capital in the utilization of the new fuel. During the later years of his life Mr. McKINNEY lived practically retired from mercantile activities and occupied himself with looking after his various property; interests, taking particular enjoyment and pride in the big department store which had been promoted by his sons at Dunkirk and which was the outgrowth of the business started by himself half a century before. He was a member of the board of directors of the Farmers State Bank of Redkey and was also a director of the City State Bank of Dunkirk. Though ever active in the general public affairs of his community Mr. McKINNEY was not an aspirant for political office and the only position of this sort he ever held was that of treasurer of the city of Redkey, in which capacity he served for a number of years. Mr. McKINNEY was a member of the Methodist Episcopal church at Dunkirk. His wife died in 1906 and his last years were spent at Dunkirk, where his sons had made their home, his death occurring there on September 5, 1918.

It was in 1869 that Anthony W. McKINNEY was united in marriage to Martha Jane GOE, who was born in Greene county, Ohio, a member of one of the real pioneer families of that county, a county from which so many of the pioneers of Jay county came and to this union five sons were born, one of whom died in infancy; Harry, who died at the age of twenty-three years, and Jesse, Frank and Arthur, proprietors of the McKINNEY department store at Dunkirk, who are doing business under the firm name of the McKINNEY Brothers Company. Jesse McKINNEY, the eldest of these brothers, was born at Redkey on August 16, 1875. He completed his schooling by attendance at the Indiana State Normal School at Terre Haute and a term at Oberlin College and then entered the Byron W. King School of Oratory, from which latter institution he was graduated, entertaining at that time views concerning the possibilities of a public life. Mr. McKINNEY is a Democrat and has always taken an interested part in public affairs. He served for two years as town clerk at Redkey and in 1906 was elected to represent this county in the lower House of the Indiana General Assembly, serving in the regular session of 1907 and in the special session afterwards called by Governor Hanley for the consideration of the county local option bill. But the call of business always has been stronger than the lure of politics and from the days of his boyhood Mr. McKINNEY has been in business, he and his brothers having been valuable assistants to their father in the operation of the store at Redkey, which was continued until the time of the elder McKINNEY's retirement, after which the younger men started out "on the road," each with a distinctive line, and for two or three years were busy gaining some most valuable experience as traveling commercial salesmen. They then were ready for the enterprise which they had in mind and began "cashing in on a dream," as a nationally circulated house organ of a well-known office-supply concern some time ago, in a most informative write-up of that enterprise in connection with a story of general office efficiency, referred to the McKINNEY brothers' enterprise. The brothers Jesse and Frank and Arthur pooled their interests and took over the old established business of their father, organizing at Dunkirk the Hardware Supply Company, with an initial capital of \$15,000. As the little story of commercial enterprise here referred to says: For six years the new firm prospered, but in those six years the three brothers had experienced visions of a larger store, a store that would not confine itself to a limited line.. Dreaming of it, talking it over and figuring the possibilities of branching out only served to crystallize the idea in their minds. The day dawned when dreams came true and the Hardware Supply Company blossomed out as

McKINNEY's Department Store. The old building (formerly used as a hotel) had been remedied and repainted, display windows added, elevators installed, intercommunicating telephones put in and each of the thirty departments carefully stocked. To much more along this line is added, The business grew with each succeeding day. It was in 1915 that the department store had its beginning when the brothers bought the old Boston dry goods stock at Dunkirk and added dry goods to their stock in trade. Presently they added a furniture department, and then men's furnishings and women's ready-to-wear goods and millinery and finally a line of shoes, all these lines with their various auxiliaries making a very complete department store, occupying a building 60 by 130 feet, three stories in height.

In February, 1910, Jesse McKINNEY was united in marriage to Mary H. GILPIN, who was born in Portland, a daughter of Levi L. and Nancy (HAWKINS) GILPIN, of whom further mention is made elsewhere in this work, and to this union one child has been born, a daughter, Martha J., born on March 9, 1912. Mr. and Mrs. McKINNEY are members of the Methodist Episcopal church at Dunkirk and Mr. McKINNEY is president of the board of trustees of the same, a member of the board for some years. He also for the past four years has been superintendent of the Sunday school. Frank McKINNEY, the second of the McKINNEY brothers, was born at Redkey on August 22, 1877, and the lines of his business life have run pretty closely parallel to those of his brother, above outlined. Upon leaving the high school at Redkey he entered his father's store and remained there until the establishment was moved to Dunkirk in 1909, since which time he has been a resident of the latter city, giving his attention to the affairs of the McKINNEY department store.

On January 9, 1909, Frank McKINNEY was united in marriage to Charm WEAVER, who was born in Dunkirk on June 12, 1885, and whose schooling was completed at Glendale College, Cincinnati. Mrs. McKINNEY is a daughter of John and Jennie (MAITLEN) WEAVER, both members of old families in this community, and the former of whom formerly was proprietor of one of the oldest complete general stores in Dunkirk, later taken over by the Dunkirk Mercantile Company. Mr. and Mrs. Frank McKINNEY also are members of the Methodist church, and he is a member of the board of trustees of the church.

Arthur L. McKINNEY, the youngest of the three brothers and who in addition to his mercantile interests has been for years interested in musical expression, the author of several songs of wide recognition, was born at Redkey on November 3, 1885. He completed his schooling under a special tutor and then took up in such leisure as he could command from the duties of the store the study of music, making a specialty of piano and slide trombone, taking an active part in both band and orchestral work. His study of musical composition has given him a facility in musical expression which has found its outlet in the writing of a number of pieces which have been well received in musical circles, particularly his "When the Wheat to Gold" and "I Told Her So Long Years Ago." On February 16, 1910, Arthur L. McKINNEY was united in marriage to Lena M. PETERSON, who was born in the neighboring county of Delaware, daughter of Newton and Luella (McDANIELS) PETERSON, and to this union one child has been born, a son, Duane P., born on April 4, 1914. Mrs. McKINNEY's schooling was completed at the university at Valparaiso, Ind., and prior to her marriage she had taught school at Albany, Ind. Mr. McKINNEY is a member of the United Commercial Travelers of America. He and his wife are members of the Methodist church at Dunkirk and he is one of the church stewards.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.40-44. Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.