

JOHN STUDABAKER, of the Exchange Bank of Bluffton, and a prominent and one of the oldest citizens of Wells County, was born in Darke County, Ohio, August 15, 1807, a son of Abraham and Mary (Townsend) Studabaker. He received such education as could be obtained in the schools of his neighborhood in that early day, which were held in rude log cabins. When a young man he engaged as clerk in the dry goods store of Henry Arnold, of Greenville, Ohio. In 1838 he left Greenville for Wells County, Indiana, bringing with him a stock of goods consisting of articles that were needed by the settlers of that new country, and opened up a store in a log cabin north of the Public Square in Bluffton, many of his customers being Indians. His stock of goods was brought from Cincinnati, Ohio, by wagons, requiring some fifteen or twenty days to make the round trip, he would exchange his goods for all kinds of produce and then he would load his teams that he sent for goods and sell at Cincinnati. In 1844 the county began settling up pretty fast, and he built him a two-story frame building and enlarged his business. During this time he was agent for the American Fur Company, and bought all kinds of furs and had control of the counties of Adams, Jay, Wells and Blackford. Furs bringing cash and being rather plentiful he derived quite a trade. In 1852 he built a brick building on the same spot where he located his cabin, and in 1856 he closed out the dry goods business and commenced banking in connection with his produce business, under the name of Exchange Bank. In 1863 the same merged into the First National Bank, with John Studabaker as president, and in 1868 the First National was discontinued, when the subject of this sketch, together with his brother, Peter Studabaker, and his nephew, Hugh Dougherty, organized the Exchange Bank of John Studabaker & Co., which is still in operation and doing a successful and extensive business. Mr. Studabaker has always carried on the produce business and has built large elevators at Bluffton, Warren and Markle, Indiana, and at this time has associated with him James W. Sale, and his sons — David E. and John A.. Studabaker--under the name of Studabaker, Sale & Co. he owns a number of farms, also a large amount of town property, all of which he operates and manages himself. In 1851 he laid out an addition to the town of Bluffton, and in 1869 made a second addition, and has made quite an improvement to the city. He has always been in favor of public improvement. In 1850 Wells County was in the mud, and he, with others, originated and built the Bluffton and Fort Wayne plank road, which opened quite an outlet for the produce. In 1851 he was interested largely in the Fort Wayne & Southern Railroad, which was graded through Wells County, but failed for awhile on account of stringency for money. In 1869 it was revived, and it was by his energy that it was completed. He subscribes to all the gravel road petitions and favors all public improvements that will prove the most good to the people, and at all times will try to aid and assist those that are deserving, believing in industry and economy in all things. July 7, 1839, he was married to Rebecca Angel, daughter of David Angel, one of the leading citizens of Darke County, Ohio, and made his wedding tour on horseback from Greenville, Ohio, to Bluffton, Indiana. Of the ten children born to this union only four are now living. Four died in childhood. Mary Jane, his eldest daughter, was married to Dwight Klinck, in 1863, and from this union four children were born. In 1875, while crossing the Atlantic Ocean, Mr. Klinck was drowned when the steamship Schiller sank in the English Channel. In August, 1876, she was again married, to Jacob J. Todd, a prominent attorney of Bluffton, of which union two children have been born. Jeanette, his second daughter, was married to F. T. Waring, by whom two children were born, a son and a daughter. In 1874 Jeanette died, leaving these two children to the care

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of her younger sister, Martha, who, in 1875, was also married to F. T. Waring. His son David E. was married to Emma Holmes, and has a family of two children, and John A., his youngest son, was married to Edna Angel, of Dayton, Ohio, and has one child. In politics Mr. Studabaker started out a Whig, and remained so until the war of the Rebellion, when he took an active part in assisting to get volunteers and in filling up the quota of the county. He remained with the Republican party until 1876, when he joined the Greenback party, and was twice on the State ticket and was also a candidate for Congress, but in 1884 he severed his connection with the Greenback party and allied himself with the Prohibition party, and at this time is an active worker in it; being a strictly temperance advocate, he spends his time and means in forwarding the cause. In religion he belongs to the Methodist Episcopal church, which he joined in 1844, and has been a prominent member ever since, and has aided the church in many ways, donating the ground and subscribing largely to the commodious edifice of this church in Bluffton. In his younger days he was an active worker in the Sunday-schools. After spending the three score years and ten allotted to man he still works and carries on his business as actively as in his younger days. Treading on borrowed time he thinks it best not to be idle. As a business man Mr. Studabaker has been successful and has accumulated a handsome fortune, and by his aid and assistance many others have homes and enjoy the comforts of life. Both he and his wife having almost arrived at the time to celebrate their golden wedding, enjoy the respect of the community in which they have lived nearly a half century, seeing the county improve from the unbroken wilderness to one among the best improved counties of the State.

Biographical and historical record of Adams and Wells counties, Indiana. Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1887. p. 683-684.