



*William B. Oglesby*

JOSEPH and MARY A. OGLESBY, the parents of Wm. B. Oglesby, were natives of Pennsylvania, of English and German extraction. William B. was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, on the 30th day of January, 1815, he being one of nine children,—six sons and three daughters. His grandfather and father were sickle-makers, which in those days were made by hand.

In the fall of 1818 the family emigrated to Wayne County, near Richmond, Indiana, where they remained two years, and then removed to Preble County, Ohio, where our subject enjoyed the advantages of a good, solid, log-house education, usual at that time in the backwoods of a new country, until he was thirteen years old. He had at that time arrived at an age when it became necessary to earn his own living, and thus lighten the expenses of a large family. His father procured a situation for him in a store with Captain Hiram Potter, at Jacksonburg. The subject of his leaving home at so early an age was discussed pro and con in the family. Various objections were made by William B. and other members of the family, but two days' plowing on a new piece of land among stumps and roots settled the question on the part of the young boy, who informed his father that he was ready to accept the situation, whereupon he was clothed in his best "homespun," and at once left his home, never to return except as a visitor, for a new field. His father's parting injunction to him was to do anything his employer might require of him that was not immoral. He served with Captain Potter as boy of all work acceptably for two years. From there he went to Middletown, and entered the store of Jonathan Martin as clerk, in the same room now occupied by himself and Geo. C. Barnitz as bankers. He continued there two or three years, until the death of Mr. Martin; afterwards the business was carried on by Tytus & Wrenn, with whom he remained, except for a few months, until they dissolved. Mr. F. J. Tytus continued the business in the same room, with whom young Oglesby remained as clerk about two years; he then became a partner with Mr. Tytus, and so continued until the summer of 1840, when they sold out. In the fall of 1840 he and his brother Jacob bought a stock of goods in Philadelphia, which, at Pittsburg, were shipped on the steamer Troy for Cincinnati; near Portsmouth, on the Ohio River, the steamer, with its goods and freight, was sunk, and no insurance. The goods were "fished out," opened and dried, reshipped to Cincinnati, thence to Dayton, and again opened. From Dayton they removed their goods to Sydney, Ohio, and after doing business about six months, sold out. From this place Mr. Oglesby went to Urbana, Ohio, and remained there two years. He then went to Philadelphia, and engaged as clerk in a wholesale dry-goods house for six months, at the expiration of which time he was married to Miss Rebecca S. Barnitz, of Hanover, Pennsylvania, the sister of his present partner. They had been well acquainted with each other for several



*Catharine Oglesby*

years, and were married in December, 1843. This union terminated on the 21st of January, 1850, by the death of his wife. By this marriage he had three children: Mary J., William B., and Charles B. William B. died in infancy, the others are living and both married.

In the spring of 1844 he entered into copartnership with his brother-in-law, Mr. Geo. C. Barnitz, in the dry goods business, with whom he has continued to do business ever since without interruption. A great portion of the time, from 1844 to 1855, the firm was engaged in buying produce, pork-packing, and various other branches of business. In 1855 he engaged in the manufacture of paper, at the mills now owned by Oglesby, Moore & Co., and which is still continued. Mr. Oglesby and Barnitz retired from the dry goods business about the year 1857, and subsequently engaged in the banking business, which they still continue. In the fall of 1854 Mr. Oglesby was married to Miss Catharine Gingrick, a native of Germany; by this last marriage he has four children: Edwin G., John H., Ida R., and Effie L., all of whom are living at home. The eldest daughter by the first marriage, Mary J., is married to Mr. Frank Foster, who is in charge of the paper house of Oglesby, Barnitz & Co., in the city of Chicago. This house was established previous to the "Great Chicago Fire," and was destroyed in that conflagration, but was re-established and doing business within five days thereafter. Charles, his eldest son, is married to Miss Alice Kate Dickey, of Dayton, Ohio, and is cashier of Oglesby & Barnitz's Bank, at Middletown. In addition to the foregoing business connections, Mr. Oglesby has an interest in the Harding Paper Company, whose mills, located at Excello, Butler County, and Franklin, Warren County, are among the most extensive and important in the United States. He also owns interests in the Tytus Paper Company, of Middletown. Mr. Oglesby has been for many years connected, in various branches of business, with numerous partners, and has at this time a considerable number, and ever since he entered the store of F. J. Tytus as clerk, up to this time, except about six years, he has been connected with him in business, and in all these years has never had any misunderstanding with him or any of his partners requiring legal adjustment, or a reference to friends for a settlement. During all these years, from 1829 to this date, with the exception of seven years, he has transacted business in the same room, slept under the same roof, and from the year 1844 has lived and kept house in the same dwelling now occupied by him.

In regard to his business qualifications, integrity, contributions to the various branches of business in which he has been engaged, donations to public and charitable objects, giving aid to the destitute, and of his daily intercourse with his fellow-men, the public and his various partners are left to pass judgment, as he refuses to permit the author of this sketch to publish anything on these subjects.