

WABASH VALLEY

P R O F I L E S

A series of tributes to hometown heroes who have made a difference.

Alfred M. Ogle



Between 1909 and 1944, Alfred M. Ogle was ranked among Indiana's most astute coal products entrepreneurs.

The oldest son of Alfred M. and Laura (McKenzie) Ogle was born Sept. 28, 1882, in Stamford, Conn. When he was a child, his parents located in Indianapolis, where he attended Indianapolis (later Shortridge) High School, graduating in 1900. He then matriculated to Princeton University, earning a degree in civil engineering in 1904. Upon graduation, he accepted a position with a coal company in Linton before doing graduate work at Columbia University School of Mines.

Upon leaving college, Ogle became a mining engineer in Linton for his father, a principal of the Vandalia Coal Co., which operated mines in southwestern Indiana. In addition, he helped organize the Monon Coal Co. in 1909, serving as vice president and general manager and relocating his residence to Terre Haute. Ogle became president of Vandalia Coal Co. in 1911, taking it through a successful reorganization. He also founded Ogle Land Co. to reclaim 4,000 acres of overflow land in southern Indiana.

Ogle united with Terre Haute attorney Paul N. Bogart in 1915 to found Indiana Coke & Gas Co., securing adequate shareholders to build a one million dollar facility at the southeast corner of 13th and Hulman streets. On Sept. 25, 1916, the company began operations at its new plant with 30 13-ton ovens designed to convert Indiana Number Four Vein Coal into coke and other coal by-products: liquid fuel, tar, benzol solvent and ammonia. By 1920 the company added 30 more ovens and had more than doubled production. Ogle also served as president of Vigo Mining Co., which leased mines owned by Monon Coal Co. In 1929 he organized the Universal Gas Co., a subsidiary of Indiana Consumers Gas & By-Products Co., successor to the interests of Indiana Coke & Gas, which was sold to eastern interests in 1930.

In 1932 Ogle organized and was president of Indiana Western Inc., which built a Terre Haute plant. However, in September 1934, he was urged by a bondholders' protective committee to save Indiana Consumers Gas from bankruptcy. Ogle successfully reorganized the concern under the name Indiana Gas & Chemical Corp. and was named corporate president effective Sept. 13, 1935. In November 1940 Ogle also organized and was the first president of Terre Haute Gas Corp., a subsidiary of Indiana Gas & Chemical, which acquired the physical assets of the Terre Haute and Brazil divisions of Indiana Gas Utilities Co.

Throughout his business career, Ogle served on state and federal committees governing mine safety and employee benefits. From May 1922 through June 1923, he was president of the National Coal Association.

Alfred was married twice. In 1909 he wed Charlotte Bushnell Williams of San Diego. His second wife, the former Isabel Gates, died Nov. 17, 1926. Ogle died suddenly May 5, 1944, at age 61, while on a business trip to Washington, D.C. He was survived by daughter Carla of New York and four sons: Alfred III; Laird McKenzie of NBC Radio; James Alexander, a New York commercial photographer; and Paul Edward. At the time of their father's death, Alfred was serving with the British Army in Africa while Paul was with the U.S. Naval Air Corps.



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