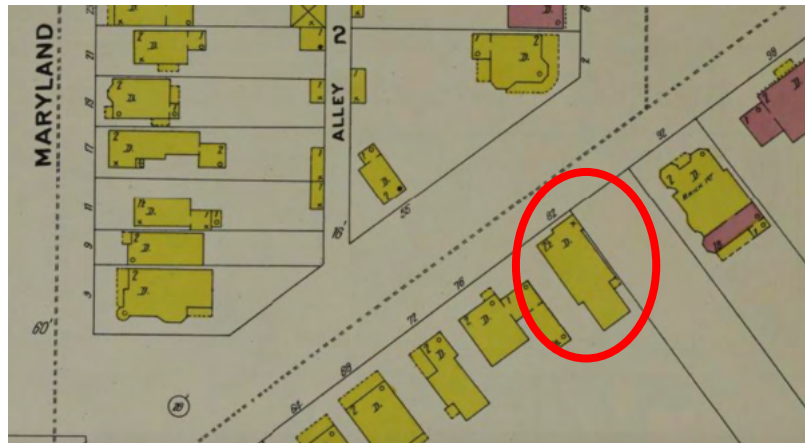


## 118 North Front Street Alexander Mitchell House

Deed records, city directories, and early Wheeling maps suggest that this house was built around 1884 for banker Alexander Mitchell. The property was purchased in early 1883 under the name of Delia Mitchell (1853-1929), Alexander Mitchell's wife., and Alex Mitchell in shown in the 1884 Wheeling City Directory as living at 80 North Front Street – the street number used at that time.



The first Sanborn Insurance Map that included this part of Wheeling Island – in 1902 - shows the house, mis-numbered as 82.



The next available Sanborn map, 1921, shows the house with the later (and current) street number, 118.



By the time of his death on July 15, 1921, Alexander and Delia and their children had moved to 427 Broadway. His death was announced with a banner headline on the front page of the *Wheeling Intelligencer*. His impressive obituary is attached.



In 1896, Louis Harttong purchased the property. The owner of Louis Harttong & Sons, Harttong (1844-1928) was the son of German immigrants and worked as a carpenter and contractor. According to his obituary, Harttong had directed the building of “many of the large and beautiful buildings of Wheeling... His last contracting job before retiring [in 1907] was the imposing structure of the St. John’s [Lutheran] church at Twenty-second and Chapline streets, of which he was a member.”

Harttong’s son, Louis C. Harttong (1869-1940), also lived in the home. Following the death of the younger Harttong, the property was left to his widow, Anna Harttong (1873-1963).

Anna Harttong sold the property six years later, in 1946, to Merle Edward Eckley and his wife Rita. Eckley was listed as a sign painter in the 1948 city directory. Other tenants are also shown as living in the home that year – entertainer George Jeffers and his wife Maxine, and millworker Joseph Sarko and his wife Doris.

From 1949 until 1997, Mildred K. Elder – later married to Ludwig Schmitt (1964-1995) – owned the property. Other extended family and tenants also lived there during Mildred’s ownership. For example, in 1953, residents included Mrs. Mildred K. Elder, office secretary, Westinghouse Electric Supply Company; William M. Elder, barber, Rex Barber Shop; Shirley Elder, clerk; and William Jones, timekeeper, and his wife Lila. Another example, from 1970, shows that residents at that time included Ludwig Schmitt, Lou Ann Beauty Shop, and his wife Mildred; Mrs. Nellie Martin, widow of Harold Martin, kitchen helper at the Scottish Rite; John W. Reilly III, US Navy, and his wife Judith; and Charles R. Vance, shipper for Louis Marx Company, and his wife Ethelyn.

Robert Barry Boyd purchased the property in late 1997 from the widowed Mildred Elder Schmitt. He sold it to Joshua and Sherie Braunlich in the spring of 2019.

Prepared by Jeanne Finstien, Friends of Wheeling  
January 2023



# ALEX. MITCHELL, FOREMOST BANKER, PASSES AWAY

### Distribute Tax Burden

No Great Increase Contemplated in the Corporation Taxes—Tax on Production Favored

By DAVID LAWRENCE  
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### JAPAN COMES IN, BUT WITH RESTRICTIONS

OBJECTS TO FAR EAST DISCUSSION

American Government Hopes to Make Program Acceptable to Japan

### TREASURER OF THE MUTUAL SAVINGS BANK DIES IN THE OHIO VALLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL SHORTLY AFTER MIDNIGHT AS THE RESULT OF ATTACK OF PLEURO-PNEUMONIA—LONG A LEADING FIGURE IN THE CITY'S BANKING ACTIVITIES.



### LAWRENCE E. SANDS, FORMERLY OF WHEELING, HEADS BANK CONSOLIDATION AT PITTSBURGH; LARGEST INSTITUTION IN THE SMOKY CITY

First National Bank Takes Over Peoples National Bank and Peoples Savings & Trust Company—(Combined Resources Will Be Sixty-five Millions)

### LOYD GEORGE AND DE VALERA COME TOGETHER

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS FOR IRISH PEACE

Significance Seen in the Summoning of Ulster Premier to Conference

Washington, July 16.—President Harding has made it clear to the financial leaders in congress that he wants a tax program added which will lift the burden from business initiative. He is not committed to a sales tax, but he inclines to believe that a tax on production is the correct one to impose. While the tax program is in embryonic condition, congressmen are practically agreed upon. For development, however, some agreement has been reached that with the report of the special panel, the government would be obliged to announce whether the proposal is to be made a part of the budget or to be introduced as a separate bill. It is believed that the government will make the tax program a subject for the next session.

**Don't Want to Increase Tax.**

It is believed that the country will be better served if the tax burden is placed on a group of business in America. It is believed that the government should not increase the tax burden on the business and industry of the country. The tax burden will be more evenly distributed by the use of a tax on production. The government should not increase the tax burden on the business and industry of the country.

Washington, July 14.—Japan is ready to enter the disarmament conference, but without assent to an unrestricted discussion of Far Eastern questions as a part of it.

The viewpoint of the American government is that a solution of the Far Eastern questions is a necessary adjunct to a treaty which will end the present armistice. The Japanese plan to remove the cause for heavy armaments and they refuse the armistice themselves.

American officials, however, are optimistic that a way will be found for a satisfactory conference of which Japan will be a party and for a program of armament reduction acceptable to all.

The Japanese reply to the preliminary question of whether she would require an invitation to such a conference came in the State Department today through the Japanese embassy at Tokio. Its text was not made public, but dispatches from the State Department indicate that it did not agree to a consideration of Pacific problems. Despite the fact, however, it became known that the attitude of the Japanese government was known to the government here.

**Appointments in Japan.**

Pittsburgh, Pa., July 14.—The announcement was made here today by Lawrence E. Sands, president of the First National Bank, and Robert Wardrop, president of the Peoples National Bank, and Alexander C. Robinson, president of the Peoples Savings and Trust company that details had been worked out for a combination of the three banks, which when consummated will give Pittsburgh a banking institution ranking in strength and size with the leading banks of this country.

According to the plan as proposed in a letter to the stockholders of the First National Bank and the Peoples Savings and Trust company, the latter owning the Peoples National Bank, the First National Bank will absorb the Peoples National Bank and the Peoples Savings and Trust Company. The combined assets of both institutions (under the name of First National Bank of Pittsburgh) in its present location at the corner of Fifth and Wood streets. The executive officers and clerical forces of both institutions will be retained.

A meeting of the stockholders of the First National Bank has been called for Tuesday, August 24, to vote on the question of increasing the capital of the bank from \$4,000,000 to \$6,000,000, or 50,000 additional shares. The present stockholders of the First National Bank have been asked by President Sands to contribute 25 per cent of their holdings, or 15,000 shares, at \$150 per share.

The plan is to have the First National bank purchase the Peoples National Bank for \$2,000,000, with the proceeds the Peoples Savings and Trust company to purchase the increased capital of the First National bank, or 15,000 shares, at \$25 per share, and the stockholders at \$150 per share. The stockholders of the Peoples National Bank will then have a capital of \$2,000,000 and the combined assets of \$6,000,000.

### SEVERAL DIE IN CLOUDBURST IN NEBRASKA

At least 25 persons reported to have perished in a heavy rain storm, thousands of acres of crops and stock have been lost, and scores of homes around Andrews, Neb., were destroyed and others have been damaged by the cloudburst which deluged the White River canyon country.

Crowford last night was frantically making attempts to prevent inundation of a portion of the city when a four-foot wall of water, which hit rushing down the White River canyon from the inundated district, arrived.

## TREASURER OF THE MUTUAL SAVINGS BANK DIES IN THE OHIO VALLEY GENERAL HOSPITAL, SHORTLY AFTER MIDNIGHT AS THE RESULT OF ATTACK OF PLEURO-PNEUMONIA—LONG A LEADING FIGURE IN THE CITY'S BANKING ACTIVITIES.

News that Colonel Alexander Mitchell, for many years a foremost figure in banking circles of the city, passed away this morning at the Ohio Valley General hospital, shortly after midnight, will be received with profound sorrow throughout the community. No man was more greatly admired and respected for many fine qualities of mind and heart. Integrity was synonymous with his name. His life work, the guidance of the Mutual Savings bank, which he organized in 1887, has been a business achievement to which any man could point with pride. Kindly and unassuming, he counted friends and admirers by the thousands. The grief which the members of an afflicted family are called upon to bear is shared by all others in only a slightly lesser degree.

For some time Mr. Mitchell had not been enjoying the best of health, but only since Friday of last week had he been taken seriously ill. He was taken to the hospital suffering from an attack of pleuro-pneumonia. All that the most competent physicians could do failed to successfully combat the dread disease, and early Thursday night it was reported from the hospital that his condition was not good. When the end came soon after midnight, he was surrounded by the sorrowing members of the family, including his devoted wife.

Mr. Mitchell continued his business activities almost to the day of his death, having been at his desk in the Mutual Saving bank until the latter part of last week.

### **Sketch of Career**

Alexander Mitchell first saw the light of day March 13, 1847, his birthplace the Hugh Mitchell farm on the Bethany pike, east of the city, now known as the Kelly farm. His parents were Zachariah and Ann Baird Mitchell, the latter a daughter of George Baird, of Washington, Pa. and a sister of the late Dr. George Baird, of Wheeling. Upon the death of his mother in 1852, the father moved to the west, and young Alexander Mitchell became a member of the family of his grandfather in Washington. Here he was reared, receiving the loving care of three aunts, one of whom, Miss Ellen E. Baird, is living and resides at Washington in the old Baird homestead.

Attending the common schools at Washington, young Mitchell next entered Jefferson College, at Canonsburg, before that institution was amalgamated with Washington College – thus becoming the Washington and Jefferson College of the present time. The union of the two schools was accomplished before his graduation in the class of 1867, at the age of twenty.

Coming to Wheeling in 1867, he studied medicine with his uncle, Dr. George Baird, and later was employed in the pharmacy of McLain Bros., at the corner of Twelfth and Market streets. Abandoning plans to enter the medical profession, young Mitchell took a clerical position with the Baltimore & Ohio railroad under the late Captain R.T. Devries, at that time general agent of the railroad. In 1872 he became connected with the National Bank of West Virginia, under Cashier John Wagner, in 1879, with George W. Eckhart he became identified with the People's Bank, of which Mr. Eckhart was made cashier, and Mr. Mitchell his assistant.

### **Organizes Mutual Savings Bank**

In 1887, assisted by Dr. George Baird, Howard Hazlett and others, he organized the Mutual Savings Bank, the institution of which he was destined to be the guiding factor during the remainder of his life.

This was the first savings bank in the state of West Virginia, and its promoters found it necessary to secure the passage of a state law permitting the organization of such financial institutions. About a month before the Mutual opened its doors for business, the Dollar Bank was organized, so that these two share the honor of being first in the field of financial endeavor, that has grown since then to enormous proportions.

At the start, the Mutual was conducted as a side issue. Mr. Mitchell continuing with the People's Bank, while at the same time operating the new savings institution, whose banking hours were confined to the evenings. At that time the new bank held forth on Twelfth street, in a room where the Perry stationary store now stands, By 1889, however, the Mutual had taken such strides of advancement that it was found necessary to find larger quarters at 1521 Market street, in the Huseman building. Mr. Mitchell left the employ of the People's Bank at this time and devoted his entire energies to the conduct of the Mutual Savings Bank. Then, as until the time of his death, he was its treasurer, the principal executive officer, the presidency being largely honorary and inactive. Later, his son, Baird Mitchell, became his assistant, continuing in that capacity until 1908, when he organized the brokerage and banking firm of Mitchell & Stevenson, Inc. Following the son's retirement from the Mutual, a daughter, Miss Katherine Mitchell, became secretary of the institution, a position that she has filled with ability to the present time.

### **A Remarkable Career**

The career of the Mutual Savings Bank, under the guidance of Alexander Mitchell, has been remarkable in a city that is noted for its growing and highly substantial banking enterprises. Starting with the comparatively small number of depositors, it has steadily increased its clientele

and the amount of its deposits until at the present time it boasts of a total of nearly two and one-half million dollars in resources, and nearly as much in savings deposits. Long known as the bank without stockholders – the bank owned by its depositors – the Mutual has always had the unlimited confidence of its patrons. Hundreds if not thousands of homes in the Wheeling district have been built through funds accumulated in this institution.

Alexander Mitchell typified Honesty, Ability and Honor in business, and his personality more than any other factor counted in the bank's wonderful progress.

Mr. Mitchell was the father of the Wheeling Clearing House Association. This institution, organized in 1900, was brought about largely through his efforts among the many bankers of the city. The need of a clearing house had long been realized, but somehow the bankers could not be gotten together. With patience and diplomacy, Mr. Mitchell continued his efforts in the face of many discouragements, and finally was successful. Within a year or two, every commercial and savings bank in Wheeling had become a member of the clearing house association. Its benefits are many, and in time of financial stress of incalculable value – as evidences during the so-called panic of 1907, when every Wheeling bank weathered the storm without a struggle, largely through the spirit of co-operation and harmony among the banks, by their association in the clearing house.

### **Stalwart Republican**

Mr. Mitchell had always been a stalwart Republican, though most of his family connection are as staunch in their Democracy. His father was a soldier in the Confederate army, but the grandfather, George Baird, of Washington, from whom young Mitchell received his youthful training, was an Abolitionist and Unionist of pronounced spirit and opinion. Mr. Mitchell believed that the Republican party's policy of protection to home industries was essential to the country's well being. Although an admirer of President Roosevelt, he could not follow that brilliant leader in the defection of 1912 and cast his vote for the re-election of President Taft.

He was always interested in the welfare of his home town, and served twice in the city council, first being elected to the second branch of council from the Seventh ward in 1887, while in 1907 he was chosen from the same ward as one of its two representatives in the first branch. He never sought political preferment, however, though the esteem in which he has always been held by the people of this city would have made him the strongest of possible candidates. Several times he has been honored by selection as West Virginia's vice president of the American Banker's Association.

In 1880, Mr. Mitchell married Miss Delia G. Harbour, daughter of Joseph C. Harbour of this city, who was the senior member of the furniture firms of Harbour & Mendel and Harbour & Dittmann. The union was blessed with two sons and two daughters, all of whom survive, s follows. Baird Mitchell, head of the banking and brokerage firm of Mitchell & Stevenson, Inc.; Harbour Mitchell, vice president of the American Foundry & Construction Company, of Pittsburgh; Katherine Mitchell, secretary of the Mutual Savings Bank, and Alexandria Mitchell, now Mrs. Harry Eckhart, of Fort Worth, Texas. There is one grandchild, Katharine, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Baird Mitchell. One brother, James K. Mitchell, of Washington, Pa, also survives, while among the family connection in Wheeling cousins include General Alfred Caldwell, George Baird, Dr. R. M. Baird, Miss Jennie Wilson, Miss Agnes Wilson and Miss Anne Wilson. Mrs. Mitchell, the wife, survives.

Mr. Mitchell was one of the members of the first chapter of the Phi Kappa Psi college fraternity, formed at Jefferson College, Canonsburg, while he was a student there in the 'sixties.

He was not an organization man, not being a member of any other society than the college fraternity mentioned.

### **A Ball Player**

In his young manhood, Alex Mitchell was an enthusiastic baseball player, a member of the famous Standard team, which enjoyed fame before the formation of the first professional organization, the National League, in 1876. One of his fellow players was Attorney Frank P. McNell, while Jack Glasscock, noted later as the greatest shortstop the national game has even produced, was one of his proteges. His interest in baseball was continued later in life, and he was part owner and one of the managers of the Wheeling team in the old TriState League in the 'eighties. During the last thirty years, when Wheeling was frequently on the map of professional baseball, first in the Tri-State League and later on in the Inter-State, Ohio State and Central leagues, Mr. Mitchell was a frequent, if not steady, attendant at the games here. He was a hard loser – took to heart every defeat the Stogie team suffered.

His interest in all outdoor sports was pronounced, while he was always a devotee of the game of checkers. In the early 'nineties, he and John H. Winder, then foreman of the Composting room of the *Intelligencer*, were almost every-day battlers at checkers, and it was generally nip and tuck between them. Very few other local players were as proficient.

### **Had Friendship of Thousands**

Without ostentation of any sort, Mr. Mitchell enjoyed the friendship of thousands in every walk of life, and the death of few other men will strike as near to so many.

He was a great statistician and had the faculty of making figures talk. He enjoyed nothing more than collecting statistics that showed the preeminent position of Wheeling in the domain of business and finance. He often pointed out that no other city in the United States of Wheeling's population had as large financial and industrial resources. He believed in Wheeling and lived his life in Wheeling – very seldom did he make other than very short business trips to other cities. Local history always interested him.

He was a staunch Presbyterian. In the Jefferson College class with which he graduated in 1867, all but three of the members became ministers of the Presbyterian church. One of his fellow classmen was Judge John A. Campbell, of New Cumberland, W. Va.

*Wheeling Intelligencer*, Friday, July 15, 1921