



John McMahon Westcott
(May 2, 1834 – August 24, 1907)

[Newspapers.com](#): *Palladium-Item*, Richmond, Indiana, Sunday, August, 25, 1907, Page 1

J. M. WESTCOTT, AGED CITIZEN, IS DEAD; LONG SICK

Passed Away at 9:30 O'clock Saturday Night at His Home,

On East Main Street, Surrounded by Relatives.

WAS LONG IDENTIFIED WITH LOCAL BUSINESS.

**Formerly Was Head of the Hoosier Drill Company
and Owned the Westcott Hotel -- Funeral Not Arranged.**

While sitting in his chair Saturday night about 9:30 o'clock talking to his near relatives, John M. Westcott lapsed into unconsciousness, and a few seconds later the life of one of the most prominent businessmen of Richmond came to an end. Mr. Westcott appeared greatly improved over his condition of the past two weeks and ate a hearty supper. His death had been expected for some time but came as a surprise Saturday night. Near relatives were at his side when the end came. For the past

week, the mind of Mr. Westcott had been wandering and relatives realized that his world's battles were nearly ended. The relatives were all summoned to Richmond some time ago. Mr. Westcott's most recent illness covered a period of about eight weeks, although he has been ill on various occasions for the past two years. Bright's disease was responsible for his death. He was 73 years of age.

Biographical Sketch.

John M. Westcott long had the distinction of being Richmond's foremost manufacturer and his business sagacity was not alone applied to the management of factory interests. Of late, he had not taken an active interest in his business enterprises, but even in his enfeebled condition his relatives who now have charge of his concerns, often sought his advice on questions of moment. Mr. Westcott was best known in the business world by his connection with the Hoosier drill works, the Westcott carriage company, the Westcott Hotel and the Union Loan and Trust company.

Native of Indiana.

Mr. Westcott was a native of Indiana, having been born in Union county in 1834. His education was secured in the public schools of the county and was not extensive. His first business enterprise was as a dry goods merchant, and later in the grain and feed business. In 1862 he removed to Richmond where he continued as a grain merchant for ten years. At the end of that time he went to Milton, Ind., where he secured the controlling interest in the Hoosier drill works, then located at that place. The Hoosier plant remained at Milton but six years under Mr. Westcott's control and was then brought here. The company purchased property on North E street, between Thirteenth and Fourteenth, and the plant has been added to from time to time until it now occupies nearly two solid blocks.

Joins the Combine.

At the time of the formation of the American Seeding Machine combine the Hoosier became a part of it. James W. Carr, a son-in-law of Mr. Westcott, is now general manager of the American Seeding Machine company, and Fred Carr, husband of Mr. Westcott's grandchild, is general manager of the Hoosier Drill while Burton Westcott, a son, is treasurer of the Seeding machine combine.

The Westcott hotel, one of the finest hostleries in the state, was built largely by Mr. Westcott, he having

invested \$110,000 in the building alone. Mr. Westcott helped organize the Westcott Carriage company but had very little to do with its management. He was the owner of real estate both in this county and in Kansas and California. The Union Trust company, which makes nothing but large loans and finances big enterprises, was formed by Mr. Westcott and Omar Hollingsworth, his son-in-law. The Westcott square wherein is located Mr. Westcott's residence and those he built for his three sons-in-law, is the finest residence district in Richmond. For a long time the square was occupied by none but Mr. Westcott and his relatives, but of late others have come to own homes there.

Mr. Westcott was a member of the Methodist Episcopal church and of Whitewater lodge No. 41, I.O.O.F. The men in Mr. Westcott's employ always had the greatest respect for him as he was kindly in his treatment and made nearly all of his employees his personal friends. He always remembered them handsomely at Christmas time and other holidays. He helped maintain a fund for sick and injured employees.

In 1855 Mr. Westcott was married to Carrie Mitchell, of Warren county, Ohio. To them were born seven children, Alice C. Hollingsworth, Lucilla B. Carr, Jennie M. Wilke, Charles G. Westcott, Burton Westcott, Harry M. Westcott and Maude Evelyn DeWees. Mr. Westcott's second marriage was to Mrs. Grace C. Carter of Indianapolis, six years ago. There are no children as a result of this union. Funeral arrangements have not yet been made.

JOHN WESTCOTT, WEALTHY BUSINESS MAN, DIED SUDDENLY

Apparently on Road to Recovery After Long Illness When Stricken.

IMMENSELY WEALTHY

Left Fortune Estimated at \$2,000,000 in Various Kinds of Property.

UNION COUNTY NATIVE

Education Limited But Commercial Life of Vast Achievement.

Though apparently on the way toward recovery after a serious illness of eight weeks, John M. Westcott, pioneer businessman and capitalist of Richmond, died suddenly Saturday night. The end came about 9:30 o'clock, while Mr. Westcott was seated in a chair, where he had been conversing with members of the family. Mr. Westcott had been a sufferer from Bright's disease, and an affection of the lungs. Life had been sustained during several weeks of his illness by means of artificially administered oxygen. Mr. Westcott was 73 years of age. A wife, three sons and four daughter survive. ...

John M. Westcott was born in Union county, near Liberty In 1834. His parents were Henry and Sarah (Dyche) Westcott. Henry Westcott was of English descent and the mother of German extraction. John M. was one of four children, the other three being girls. Mr. Westcott's early education was not extensive. He attended the public schools near the scene of his nativity. His youthful experiences were such as were common to the early settlers of the community. He did much toward the material improvement of the country.

Mr. Westcott's first business experience was as a dry goods clerk. Later he opened a grain and feed store and prospered. He came to Richmond in 1862 and continued in the feed and grain business until 1872 when he became a stockholder in the Hoosier Drill works, then located at Milton. He then devoted his entire attention to the construction of agricultural machinery and progressed to a point where he was justified in moving the institution to Richmond, in 1878. For a long time, the Hoosier plant was the largest of its kind in America, and it was through it, principally, that Mr. Westcott acquired his stupendous wealth, which is estimated at close to \$2,000,000. He retired from the manufacturing business about eight years ago. Upon leaving the Hoosier, Mr. Westcott, in partnership with his son-in-law, Omar Hollingsworth, organized the Union Loan & Trust Company, with offices in the Westcott hotel. Mr. West-

cott was not identified in any way with the Hoosier after its amalgamation with the American Seeding Machine Company, the big trust, in which it is now one of the strongest factors, and which has extended the plant to a point where it will soon employ about 700 men instead of 300 as heretofore.

In 1883 Mr. Westcott purchased forty feet of ground on the south side of Main street and personally supervised the erection of the Westcott block, for a long time the principal business block in the city. In 1892 the Commercial Club of Richmond projected the Westcott hotel, in which he acquired a controlling interest. This he held to the time of his death.

In addition to his many valuable local holdings, Mr. Westcott owned valuable real estate in Dickinson county, Kansas. He had 5,000 acres devoted to a fine stock farm. Much of the land was under cultivation and yielded immense returns. Until a few years ago he operated a fine bred horse and Shetland pony farm, near Centerville.

In 1855 Mr. Westcott was united in marriage to Miss Carrie Mitchell, a native of Wayne county, Indiana. They were the parents of seven children: Lucilla B., wife of J. A. Carr; Alice C., wife of Omar Hollingsworth; Jennie M. Wilke, Charles G.; Burton, J., Harry M., and Maude Evelyn De Weese. In 1880 Mr. Westcott purchased an entire block, bounded by Main, South A, Fourteenth and Fifteenth streets, which has been laid out with walks and drives, and immediately improved the property. The second year he erected a large brick residence and since then four other residences have been added. Until recently these houses were occupied by members of the family.

Six years ago Mr. Westcott was united in marriage to Mrs. Grace Carter, of Indianapolis. Socially Mr. Westcott was connected to the White Water lodge of number 41 of I.O.O.F., of Richmond. Since 1849 he has been a member of the Methodist Episcopal church.

Susan E. King, Richmond, Postcard History Series
(Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2005), Page 25



WESTCOTT HOTEL. Located on the northeast corner of Tenth and Main Streets, the Westcott Hotel was intended to be the “premier hotel of Indiana” in its heyday. The grand opening was September 10, 1895, and all the biggest names in the city were guests that night. The Commercial Club spearheaded the drive to build it and owned it until 1899, when the club fell on hard times. J. M. Westcott, an early Richmond business leader and the man for whom the hotel was named, then assumed ownership.



*“Lobby”
Hotel Westcott,
Richmond,
Indiana.*

Pub. for W. H. Ross.

WESTCOTT HOTEL LOBBY. The interior of the hotel boasted some of the finest features available at the time, including a marble staircase, electric elevator, and sunlit lobby, seen here. By the 1970s, the hotel was no longer a premier lodging, and with the interstate highway system, tourists were no longer driving on U.S. Route 40 through town. The Westcott closed in 1976 and was razed in 1977. (Courtesy of Gary Batchelor.)

WESCOTT HOTEL

RICHMOND, IND.



The Indiana Album: Joan Hostetter Collection

125 Rooms; 60 with Bath—Hot and Cold Running Water
Telephone in Each Room—Single and Ensuite

EUROPEAN PLAN

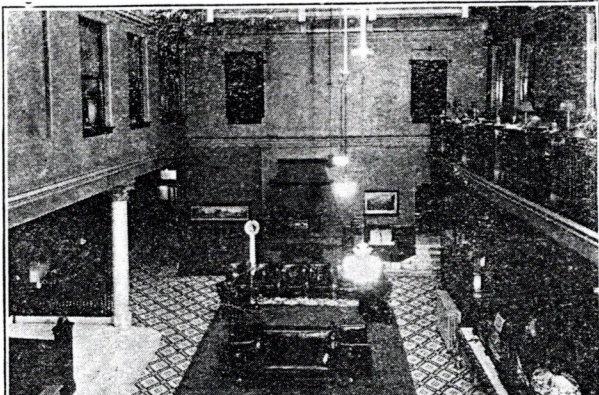
Rates Without Bath \$1.50 and up
Rates With Bath \$2.50 and up

EXCELLENT CAFE AND COFFEE SHOP

In Center of Shopping District
On U. S. No. 40—See America First
Special Rates to Tourists

A. C. DISHER, Mgr.

OFFICIAL AAA HOTEL



WESTCOTT HOTEL, RICHMOND, IND.

93574



Apothecary on the ground floor of the hotel.

Letter written on hotel stationery on July 14, 1923 with cover.
 The hotel has 150 rooms, 60 with baths, and, of course, "Soft Water."
 Back-of-the-envelope P.S. gives pre-Tripadvisor guest review.

POPULAR PRICES EUROPEAN PLAN



The Westcott Hotel

A.C. DISHER
MANAGER

100 ROOMS SOFT WATER 60 WITH BATH

Richmond, Ind.

Sunday night Richmond Ind 7/14

Dear Mamma,

I forgot to tell you when in Richmond to stop at the Westcott Hotel

this afternoon

OK,
above
yesterday
1981

The Westcott Hotel

RICHMOND, IND.
JUL 15
11-PM
1923



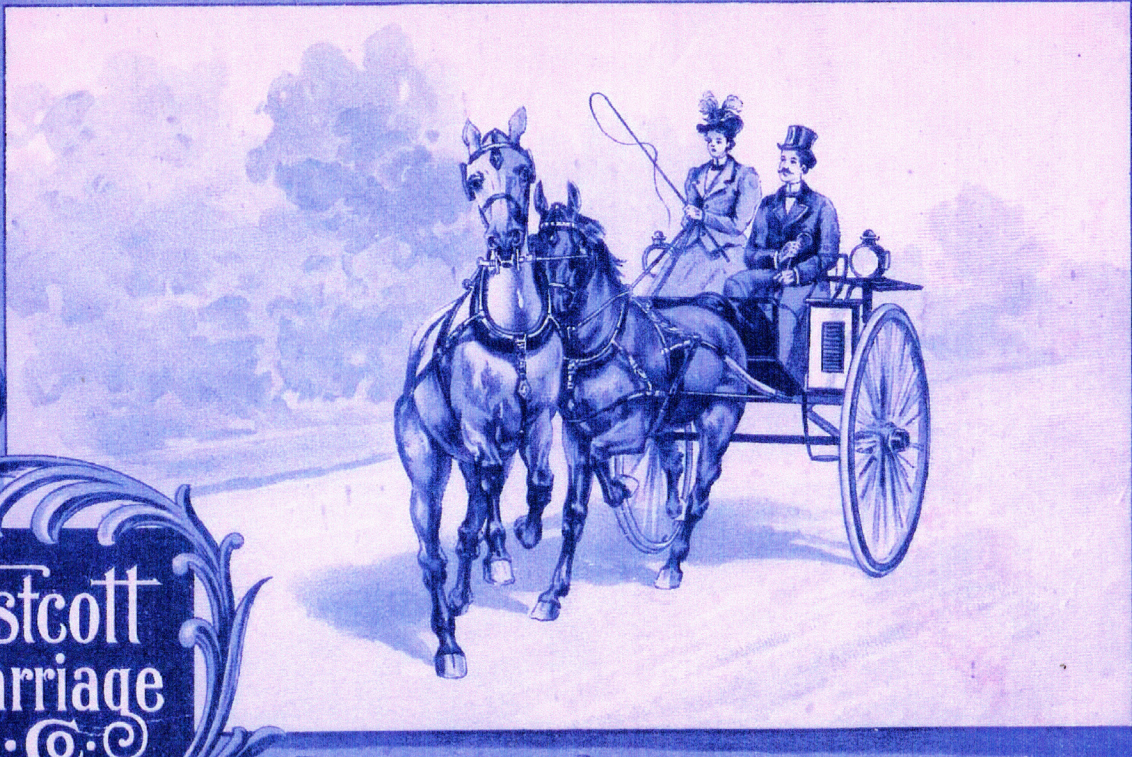
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Sunday



Richmond, Ind.

Mrs Comfort Monroe
Evansville
1237 East 20th St., Ind

school
Rake's Church there. Do not
find that they have anything
on Olivet-in fact their



Westcott
Carriage
Co.

RICHMOND, IND.



GOLF STANHOPE.

Westcott Carriage Company,
RICHMOND, INDIANA.

Designers and Builders of

FINE VEHICLES

Exclusive designs make our work most desirable to that class of people who admire and use attractive NOVELTIES and Pleasure Vehicles.

**Styles and Workmanship Unexcelled.
PRICES WITHIN REACH OF ALL.**

Ask your dealer, or write direct for catalogue.

THE WESTCOTT CARRIAGE COMPANY

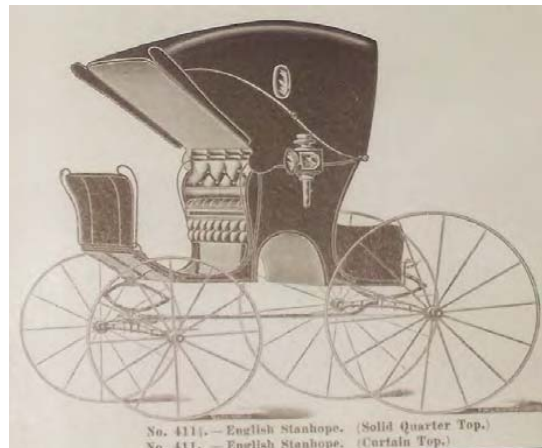
Our historian, Betty Acker was able to locate a privately owned manual for the Westcott Carriage Company and was able to photograph several of the pages. This company was started in 1896 in Richmond, Indiana by John McMahon Westcott with his two sons Burton and Harry.

The elder Westcott had a disdain for motorized carriages and did not want the carriage company to have to compete with them in the same company. Burton had moved to Springfield, Ohio as Treasurer of the American Seeding Machine Company in 1903. In the spring of 1916, Burton moved the car company to Springfield, Ohio.

Guarantee: Our vehicles are guaranteed to the purchaser for fair and reasonable use during the season ending October 1, 1900. Any breakage occurring within that time, by reason of defective material or faulty workmanship will be replaced free of charge when such part is returned to us for our inspection, charges prepaid. This guarantee does not apply to paint, trimmings or varnish resulting from the action of ammonia, moths or extraordinary exposure to the elements, nor shall the seller be required to re-set or renew the tires worn out within the period above named.



No. 111.—Princess Surrey.



No. 411.—English Stanhope. (Solid Quarter Top.)
No. 411.—English Stanhope. (Curtain Top.)