



D. G. Alter

David G. Alter, chief Burgess of Port Royal, Juniata County, Pa., was born September 10, 1841, at Alterton, Cumberland County, Pa. He is a son of **David** and **Sarah (Garman) Alter**. His grandfather, **Jacob Alter**, was born in Cumberland County, near Alterton, and was of Swiss descent. He was a farmer, miller, distiller, an extensive land owner, and the proprietor of a clover mill. His only **sister** was the wife of **Governor Ritner**, of Pennsylvania. He was married in Cumberland County to **Elizabeth Foutz**, and had eight children, all of whom are now deceased: **William; Benjamin; Simon; John; Jacob; David; Eliza; and Mary**. **Jacob Alter** represented Cumberland County in the legislature twenty-one consecutive terms, being elected on the Whig ticket. He was a man of great ability as an orator and debater, and his record as a member of the State legislature was a most honorable one, his vote and influence being in favor of just laws. He was a Whig: he was universally respected and esteemed for his integrity and good judgment. He was a consistent member of the Lutheran Church. Both he and his wife died in Cumberland County. **David Alter**, born in

Cumberland County, received a fair English education. He was a merchant during the greater part of his life in Cumberland and Dauphin Counties. For two years, he held from Governor **Joseph Ritner** the appointment of superintendent of the Pennsylvania canal. In 1848, he removed to Dauphin County, where he was in mercantile business until 1852. He then began to read medicine with **Dr. David Clugston**, of Perry County. Having completed his medical course, he practiced first in New Buffalo, Perry County, and subsequently in Port Royal, Juniata County, in which place he died in 1863. He was but a few years in practice, but was in every way successful. **Dr. Alter** was a Republican.

David Alter was married in Harrisburg, Pa., to **Sarah**, daughter of **John Garman**, a farmer of Dauphin County, where she was born, and of German descent. Their children were: **David G.**, chief Burgess of Port Royal, Juniata County; **James M.**, of Lewistown, Mifflin County; **John P.**, who died at the age of ten years; and one **child** that died in infancy. **Mrs. Sarah Alter** having died in Perry County, **Mr. Alter** married **Elizabeth Frank**, of New Buffalo, Perry County. They had two children: **Elizabeth C.**; and **Alice (Mrs. H. M. Engle)**, of Philadelphia. **Mrs. Elizabeth**

Alter died in Port Royal in 1875. **Dr. Alter** was a member of the Lutheran Church, Alterton, in Cumberland County, Pa., the name of which has since been changed to Kerrsville, was named in honor of **David Alter**, he having erected the first house. He began business there, and displayed such enterprise in its prosecution that he ran fifteen cars to Baltimore to carry grain, lumber and other products.

David G. Alter attended the public schools of Turbett Township, Juniata County, during the winter months. As a youth, he passed most of the time in the store of his uncle, **Noah Hertzler**, in Old Port Royal, in which town he spent the greater part of his life until 1870, when he removed to Port Royal. Here for twenty years he superintended the grain, lumber and coal business of the **Hertzler** firm. In 1890, he was appointed by President Harrison supervisor of the census enumeration for central Pennsylvania. The twelve counties in his district were Adams, Franklin, Fulton, Cumberland, Perry, Juniata, Mifflin, Snyder, Union, Bedford, Blair and Huntingdon. In 1890, he was appointed ganger in the Ninth Internal Revenue District of Pennsylvania, under **Sam. Matt. Fridy**, of Lancaster County; he held the position for six months, but then resigned it, not finding the duties congenial. In 1891, **Mr. Alter** engaged in the livery business, at the same time farming in Perry County. About this time, he purchased his fine residence in the town of Port Royal. On July 11, 1861, **Mr. Alter** enlisted in Philadelphia, in Capt. William Babe's Company K, of Col. John R. Haslett's One Hundred and Ninety-seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers. He was in the service one hundred and ten days, during the greater part of which time the regiment was employed in doing guard duty at Rock Island in the Mississippi River. He was mustered out with the regiment at the expiration of the term of service, March 7, 1865, he re-enlisted for one year, in the One Hundred and First Pennsylvania Volunteers. In this regiment he was appointed sergeant. The regiment was on duty at Roanoke Island, N. C, but at the end of six months was mustered out of service, in the same State, on account of the conclusion of hostilities, when **Mr. Alter** returned to Port Royal.

David G. Alter was married in Port Royal, April 10, 1868, to **Hannah Isabella Thompson**, born at McAlisterville, Juniata County, a daughter of **John** and **Hannah (Gilson) Thompson**, both of Scotch-Irish descent; **Mr. Thompson** was a coach-maker. They have six children: **Annie T.**, a very accomplished music teacher, who was instructed by a prominent Boston musician; **James T.**, assistant cashier of the Port Royal Bank; **David B.**, a student still attending school; **Rebecca**; **Hannah Isabella**; and **Ruth**. **Mr. Alter** was elected a member of the town council in 1872, and served in that capacity for twelve years, during which time he was twice president of the council and did much valuable work for the best interests of the borough. In 1882, he was elected chief burgess of the town, for a two years term. He was again elected in 1893, and has held the office ever since, discharging all the duties incumbent upon him in an able manner. He has also been a school director for four years. In 1894, he was elected a member of the board of health ; and in the same year, was appointed health officer. He has been a member of the I. O. O. F. **Mr. Alter** is a Republican. His family are consistent members of the Presbyterian Church.

The Family of Alter.

I. **Jacob Alter**, a native of Switzerland, a shoemaker by trade, came to America about the year 1765, locating in Lancaster County, Pa. During the Revolution he made shoes for the patriot

army; in 1790 removed from Lititz, Lancaster County, and settled at or near Alters Hill on the Conodoguinet Creek, where he died in 1806. He represented Cumberland County in the legislature six or seven terms. He married, about 1768, **Veronica Landis**, of Lancaster County. They had issue:

- i. **Veronica**, born October 9, 1769, married **Lawrence Lefevre**;
- ii. **John**, born September 13, 1771, married **Eleanor Sheetz**;
- iii. **Jacob**, born January 1, 1777, married **Elizabeth Foutz**;
- iv. **David**, born February 7, 1775, married **Hell**;
- v. **Esther**, born February 28, 1777, married **Michael Bear**;
- vi. **Samuel**, born March 17, 1779, d. s. p.;
- vii. **Susannah**, born October 30, 1780, married **Joseph Kitner**;
- viii. **Henry**, born October 25, 1781, married **Maria E. Rinehard**;
- ix. **Abraham**, born March 13, 1787, died unmarried;
- x. **Margaret**, born March 23, 1790, married **Mr. McCullough**, of Washington County, Pa., no children.

II. **Veronica Alter (Jacob)**, born October 9, 1769, married **Lawrence Lefevre**. They had issue (surname **Lefevre**):

- i. **Jacob**;
- ii. **John**;
- iii. **Isaac**;
- iv. **David**;
- v. **Joseph**;
- vi. **Elizabeth**;
- vii. **Fanny**, married **George Whitmyer**;
- viii. **Esther**, married **Rev. J. W. Hann**.

Mr. Lefevre married, secondly, **Sarah Line**; no issue.

III. **John Alter (Jacob)**, born September 13, 1771, married **Eleanor Sheetz**; they had issue:

- i. **Joseph**, born March 19, 1795, died August 17, 1816;
- ii. **Esther**, born July 14, 1798, died, 1880, married **Isaac Vanardsdale**, had nine children;
- iii. **John**, born July 1, 1801, married, first, **Charity Vanarsdale**, died 1835, second, **Lucinda J. Black**, died 1847, third, **Mary Ann Chamberlain**, had eighteen children, among them **Louis Simon Alter**, civil engineer of Remington, Ind.;
- iv. **Jacob**, born February 27, 1804, married **Prudence**, had fourteen children;
- v. **David**, born December 3, 1803, married, first, _____ **Rowley**, second **Amanda Rowley**, died 1880, had thirteen children;
- vi. **Simon**, born 1810, married **Mary Braddock**, died 1878, had seven children;
- vii. **Isaac**, born 1813, died May 12, 1827;
- viii. **Benjamin**, born 1816, died May, 1849, married **Anna Bell**, no children.

IV. **Jacob Alter (Jacob)**, born January 1, 1773, died June 29, 1839, in West Pennsboro

Township, Cumberland County, Pa., represented his county in the legislature twenty-one consecutive terms from the year 1814, married **Elizabeth Foutz**, born April 19, 1768, near Hagerstown, Md., died June 7, 1855, in Cumberland County, Pa.; they had issue:

- i. **Susan**, born December 19, 1797, died March 7, 1861, in Cumberland County, Pa., married **Samuel McCormick**, of Mifflin Township, Cumberland County, Pa.;
- ii. **Eliza**, born January 16, 1805, died in Cumberland County, Pa., married **George Graham**, of West Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County, their son, **John Graham**, represented his county in the 1885 legislature;
- iii. **Mary (Polly)**, born April 14, 1806, married December 3, 1844, **Dr. David Clugston**, of Perry County, Pa., both deceased;
- iv. **Jacob**, born August 16, 1799, died in West Virginia, married Eliza Tice, of Maryland;
- v. **Benjamin**, born December 25, 1800, died in Greencastle, Pa., married, first, **Nancy Lindsay**, second, **Catharine Walters**, and had eighteen children;
- vi. **William**, born March 7, 1802, died in West Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County, Pa., married **Sarah Stark**, his children owns the mill built by him on the Conodoguinet;
- vii. **John**, born July 3, 1803, resides in Harrisburg, Pa., married **Mrs. Sarah Hardy**, daughter of **Nicholas Brown**, of Newburyport, Mass.;
- viii. **Simon**, born February 19, 1808, resides in Eldorado County, Cal., married **Sarah Hardy**, of Newburyport, Mass.;
- ix. **David**, born February 7, 1810, died March 1, 1861, in Juniata County, Pa., married, first, **Eva Calvert**, second **Sarah Garman**, third, **Eliza Frank**.

V. **David Alter (Jacob)**, born February 7, 1775, married **Mell**. They had issue, among others:

- i. **David**, married **Margaret Ritner**, his cousin;
- ii. **Jacob**.

VI. **Esther Alter (Jacob)**, born February 28, 1777, married **Michael Bear**, died at Plainfield, Cumberland County, Pa., a Mennonite preacher. They had issue (surname **Bear**):

- i. **Benjamin**, married and removed to the west;
- ii. **Esther**, died at Mechanicsburg, Pa., married **Stevenson**.

VII. **Susannah Alter (Jacob)**, born October 30, 1780, died about 1840, at Mt. Rock, married in 1800, **Joseph Ritner**, born March 25, 1780, in Berks County, Pa., died October 16, 1869, near Mt. Rock, Cumberland County, Pa., son of **John Ritner**, who emigrated from Alsace, on the Rhine. He was brought up as a farmer with little advantages of education. About 1802 removed to Washington County, Pa., elected a member of the legislature, serving six years, and for two years was speaker of the House of Representatives. In 1835 was elected Governor of Pennsylvania as the Anti-Masonic candidate. Was a candidate for re-election in 1838, but defeated by **David R. Porter**. He was an earnest advocate of the common school system, and a decided opponent of human slavery. In 1848 was nominated by President Taylor director of the mint, Philadelphia, serving only a brief time. He then retired to his farm in Cumberland County, where he passed the remainder of his days. They had issue (surname **Ritner**):

- i. **Jacob**, married first, **Scott**, second, **Moore**;
- ii. **Henry**, married **Louissetta Alter**, daughter of **Henry Alter**;
- iii. **Michael**;
- iv. **Abraham**;
- v. **Peter**, resides on the old homestead at Mt. Rock, Cumberland County, Pa., married first, **Davison**, second, **Davison**, third **Mrs. McKeehan**;
- vi. **Emma**, died, unmarried;
- vii. **Susan**, married **George Kriechbaum**, of Chambersburg;
- viii. **Margaret**, married **David Alter**.

VIII. **Henry Alter (Jacob)**, born October 25, 1774, married **Maria E. Rinehard**. They had issue:

- i. **Louissetta**, resides at Danville, Ill., married **Henry Ritner**, had eleven children;
- ii. **Eliza**;
- iii. **David**, married and had five children;
- iv. **Margaret**;
- v. **Sarah**;
- vi. **Henry**, married and had eleven children;
- vii. **Jacob**, married and had ten children;
- viii. **Solomon**, married and had two children;
- ix. **Isaac**, married and had a son, **Isaac**;
- x. **Maria**, married and had seven children;
- xi. **Jeremiah**, married and had ten children.

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