

Biographical Annals of Cumberland County Pennsylvania Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens and of many of the Early Settled Families. Illustrated Chicago: The Genealogical Publishing Company, 1903.

**Jacob Alter** came from France in the ship "Beulah," which arrived at Philadelphia in September, 1753. His father was Swiss and his mother was a native of France. He first settled in Lancaster County, Pa., and remained there about sixteen years. On Dec. 4, 1769, he sold his land in Lancaster County, and on Dec. 29, 1769, purchased land in West Pennsboro Township, Cumberland County. The ancestor on the maternal side, **Graeffe**, came from Switzerland about 1696 and purchased land near Germantown in 1704. In 1718 he removed to what is now Earl Township, Lancaster County, Pa., and took up 1500 acres of land. As indicated by the name, he was an earl and Earl Township was named for him. He died there in May, 1746, leaving six sons and three daughters. **Jacob Alter** married **Veronica**, daughter of the **Earl (Graeffe)**. He went to Washington County about 1808, and died there about 1812. He was a colonel in the Revolutionary war and served eighteen years in the State Legislature. His wife, **Veronica**, was a Mennonite. He had four sons and three daughters. **Susanna**, the youngest daughter, married **Gov. Joseph Ritner**. **Jacob Alter**, the second son, remained on the plantation in Cumberland County. He was born in 1773, and served twenty-two years in the State Legislature. He was of Quaker faith. He died in 1839, leaving six sons and three daughters: **Jacob, Benjamin, John, Simon, William, David, Susan** (married **Samuel McCormick**), **Eliza** (married **George Graham**), and **Mary** (married **Doctor Clugston**). **Jacob** was a Presbyterian minister; **David** was a physician, and **William** purchased the old home of his ancestry. For several years previous to his purchasing the home of his ancestors, **William Alter** was employed to superintend the canal works. He married **Sarah Stark**, a direct descendant of **Gen. John Stark**, of Revolutionary fame. He passed away highly respected as a citizen and esteemed by his friends and neighbors for his many good traits, Aug. 31, 1873, at the age of seventy one years. His wife, **Sarah (Stark) Alter**, died Oct. 21, 1901, aged eighty- nine years, eight months and nine days. **William Alter's** family consisted of six sons and three daughters: **Simon B., Mary, Jacob, Henry H., John, Columbus, Josephine, Sarah Elizabeth** and **W. S.** All of these children are dead excepting **Jacob** and **John**, of Kansas, and **Josephine** and **W. S. Alter**, of West Pennsboro.

**W. S. Alter**, the youngest of the above family, purchased the home of his ancestry and resides there. On Feb. 14, 1889, he married **Anna Minerva Bear**, daughter of **Francis** and **Catherine (Beidler) Bear**, of West Pennsboro, and has three daughters and one son: **Alice, Ruth, Sarah** and **W. Stark Alter**.

**Josephine Alter**, the only surviving daughter of **William** and **Sarah (Stark) Alter**, resides near the old homestead. She was a teacher in the public schools of Cumberland County for a number of years. After leaving her work here she entered Holyoke Female College and after leaving college she taught in Massachusetts and in Kansas.

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