

Commemorative Biographical Encyclopedia of the Juniata Valley, Comprising the Counties of Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, and Perry, Pennsylvania, J. M. Runk and Company, Publishers 1897

John Bair, ex-president of the People's Bank, now the First National Bank, Newport, Perry County, Pa., is a son of **John** and **Mary (Moore) Bair**, and was born in Buffalo Township, Perry County, November 14, 1821. **John Bair, Sr.**, was also a native of Buffalo Township. He was a prosperous farmer, and spent his entire life in his native township. The children of **John** and **Mary (Moore) Bair** are: **Susan**, wife of **Solomon Matter**, both deceased; **Jacob**, died in Buffalo Township; **John**; **Samuel**, died in Buffalo Township in 1896; **Jesse**, was killed in the battle of the Wilderness; **David**, died in Illinois; **Sarah**; **Mary**; **Jerry**; and **Isaac**; the last four all living. **Mrs. Bair** died, and **Mr. Bair** was again married, to **Mrs. Susan Higgins**, a widow; they had one son, **Horace**, who resides in Buffalo Township.

John Bair, Jr., received his education principally in the subscription schools of his neighborhood. His father was opposed to the free school system and after its adoption by the State, kept his children out of the school for two terms. As soon as **John** was old enough, and had sufficient strength, he was set to work on the farm, and as his father owned a large extent of timber land, there was always enough chopping and hauling to do in addition to the ordinary work. As the youth wished to learn a trade, his father consented to his leaving home for that purpose. At twenty years of age, accordingly, he went to Liverpool, Pa., and served an apprenticeship of two and a half years at plastering with **Joel Huggins**. His ambition soon led him to branch out into larger ventures. One of his first undertakings was the building of a hotel, on leased ground at Gertys Notch, in which he proposed to provide entertainments for the "Yankees," as all the raftsmen and lumbermen were then called. When the hotel was completed, he installed himself as landlord, and for eight years was a successful and popular tavern keeper. Some years after, he bought the lease of the ground on which the hotel stood. His next enterprise was farming, and in connection with his agricultural operations he became a buyer and seller of lumber; in these operations he was reasonably successful. He came to Newport in December, 1868, and here at once embarked in the lumber trade, continuing his operations with most satisfactory results until he disposed of his business. He has a farm of 140 acres in Buffalo Township, but gives it no further attention than to keep it rented to a good tenant. In 1883, **Mr. Bair's** financial soundness and ability were recognized by his election to the presidency of the People's Bank, which trust he administered to the utmost satisfaction of the directors, stockholders and patrons of the bank, until 1893, at which date the People's Bank was merged in the First National Bank of Newport. Since 1893 he has given up participation in active pursuits, and lives retired, in the quiet and comfortable enjoyment of the fruits of his labor in former years. **Mr. Bair** is a staunch Democrat, but he has never sought any political office and would never accept any public position.

On February 18, 1847, **John Bair** was married to **Miss Louisa A. Coam**, who was born in Lancaster County, Pa., October 23, 1826. Their children are: **Mary E. (Mrs. William H. Zeigler)**; and **Clara Louisa**, widow of **Isaac Barnes**, who resides in Harrisburg, Pa. **Mr. Bair's** religious opinions are Lutheran, and he maintains active fellowship with that church. The father of **Mrs. Bair** died in Lancaster County, Pa., and her mother subsequently married **Mr. Albright**.