

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

George S. Briner, Blain, Perry County, Pa., son of **George** and **Magdalena (Seeger) Briner**, was born July 7, 1841, at Mt. Pleasant, Jackson Township, on the place where he now lives. His great-grandfather, a German by birth, settled in Pennsylvania before the Revolutionary war. He enlisted in the Continental army, and served under General Washington in the conflict that secured American independence; his name is written in the archives of his adopted country. He reared his young family in Berks county, Pa.; but his son, **Jacob Briner**, grandfather of **George S.**, left home at the age of eighteen, made his way westward to where the borough of Middletown is now, and there found employment with a farmer named **Young**. Here he remained for several years; then he returned to Berks county, married **Magdalena Hammer**, and, accompanied by his brother, **George**, came to Perry County, and settled in Shermans Valley, about two miles southwest of Loysville, where the brothers began farming. This took place in 1806 or 1807. Somewhat later, **George Briner** also returned to Berks County on a matrimonial errand, and taking to himself another daughter of the **Hammer** family, a sister of **Mrs. Jacob Briner**, brought her out to the settlement in Perry County, where the brothers continued farming together for about two years longer. Next, a third brother, **Peter Briner**, married a third **Miss Hammer**, a sister of the two earlier brides, and settled on the **Briner** homestead, near Loysville. **Peter Briner** was endowed with a variety of talents. He soon became widely known throughout Cumberland and the adjoining counties as a skillful veterinary surgeon. He also served for some years as constable, and was an acute and successful detective. He made persevering efforts for the capture of horse thieves, sometimes following them as far as Ohio, and seldom failing to apprehend them. He passed the remainder of his life on the farm near Loysville, and reared a family of six daughters and three sons. One son and one daughter were drowned in the Himes mill-dam, now Weaver's. **Jacob** and **George Briner** removed in March, 1809, to the homestead in Jackson Township. Here they bought from a man named **Hunter** a tract of 226 acres, improved their purchase, and became prosperous farmers. The children of **George Briner** were: **Jonas; John; Mary Ann; Julia; Andrew; Samuel; Solomon; Elizabeth (Mrs. George Kiner); Annie**, who became the second wife of **John Thumma**, and who still resides at Loysville; **Margaret; Leah (Mrs. Emanuel Freeman);** and **Rebecca (Mrs. Andrew S. Loy)**. **Annie** and **Leah** are the only survivors.

Jacob Briner had his agricultural interests in common with his brother, **George**, for twenty-two years. They at length separated, buying the old property near Loysville, on which they had formerly lived, and to, which **George Briner** now removed. He passed the rest of his life there, and bequeathed the farm to his sons, **John** and **Solomon**; after their death, it passed into the hands of **Solomon's** son, **Edward Briner**. **Jacob Briner** was a man of excellent character and of high reputation, besides being a good farmer and business man. His known integrity procured for him universal confidence. While still a young man, he became a member of the Lutheran Church at Loysville, and after becoming a resident of Jackson Township, connected himself with the congregation at Blain, and, with his wife, **Magdalena (Hammer) Briner**, continued a faithful participant in its work and its privileges. Their children are: **George; Catherine**, died unmarried, aged about seventy three; **Mary (Mrs. George Seeger)**, of Toboyne Township, near New Germantown, has children, **Jacob, Melinda, Magdalene, Catherine** and **George;**

Elizabeth (Mrs. Jesse Saylor), of Juniata County; **Susan (Mrs. J. P. Arnold)**, removed first to Shelby, O., resides now in Richland County, O., has children, **George, Mary, Ellen,** and **John; Jacob J.**, married **Amelia Ritzman**, of Juniata County, removed to Springfield, O., in 1865, has children, **Minerva**, who died and is buried at Blain, **another** that died aged two years, **Samuel Ritzman, George Milo, William, Ida,** and **Martha; Anna Magdalena (Mrs. Simon Kern)**, resided in Toboyne Township, had two children who died very young, and one now living, **Anna M. (Mrs. Elmer Willhide)**; and **William**, who died when about five years old. The mother, **Mrs. Magdalena (Hammer) Briner**, died aged about forty-one; her husband survived her until August, 1842.

Their eldest son, **George Briner**, was born November 18, 1807, on the **Briner** farm near Loysville, the homestead now in the possession of **Edward Briner**. He was educated in the schools maintained by the citizens of the township, in which instructions were given in German and English. He became a farmer of skill and experience, being accustomed to the care and management of the homestead from his early youth. At his father's death, he succeeded to the property in Jackson Township, where the family then resided. He was a man of intelligence, good moral character and sound judgment, which gave him an excellent standing in the community, and led to his being called upon for important services, both in the public offices of the township, and in business affairs, as in the settlement of estates, etc. He was a Democrat, and was warmly interested in political and general local concerns. **George Briner** was married September 2, 1820, to **Magdalena**, daughter of **John** and **Catherine (Koontz) Seeger**. Their children are: **Sarah A. (Mrs. Henry Miller)**, resided at Harrisburg and Middletown, where her husband died, after which **Mrs. Miller** became successively matron of the laundry department at the Harrisburg Asylum, matron of the Emaus Orphan School, of Middletown, and manager at the Morganza Reform School, near Pittsburg, and now resides on the homestead in Jackson Township; **Magdalena**, residing in Toboyne Township, widow of **Jacob Eby**, who died January 1, 1858, of typhoid fever, has one daughter, Mrs. **Charles N. McKeehan**, of New Bloomfield, Pa.; **Jacob**, married, a shoemaker, residing on the homestead, enlisted October 21, 1862, for the nine months' service, in the One Hundred and Seventy-seventh Pennsylvania Volunteers, Company F, Capt. Isaac S. Filbert, was discharged at Harrisburg, August 5, 1863, went to Ohio in October, 1864, where he was engaged in various occupations for four years, and returned home in 1868; **John H.** of Jackson Township, married **Diana E. Hollenbaugh**, of Shelby, O., has children, **William**, who died young, **Anna** and **Mary**, twins, and **Harry J.; George S.; Elizabeth C. (Mrs. Adam Foust)**, of Madison Township; **Hannah M. (Mrs. Andrew Brown)**, of Mifflin Township, Cumberland County, Pa., has three children, **Mary, George B.,** and **Sarah;** and **Daniel**, formerly of Shade Valley, Huntingdon County, since 1880, in insurance business at New Bloomfield, Pa., married **Elizabeth Parsons**, of Nossville, Pa., has three children, **John**, who died young, **Ira G.**, a student at Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, Pa., and **Dora**. The fourth member of this family, **John H. Briner**, who learned cabinet making at Landisburg, Pa., and worked as a journeyman at that trade for some years, enlisted, like his elder brother, **Jacob**, for nine months' service in the Union army; he was enrolled September 2, 1861, in Company F, Two Hundred and Eighth Pennsylvania Volunteers. He experienced some active and perilous service, taking part among other engagements in the battle of Fort Steadman, March 25, 1865, and in that of Petersburg, April 2, 1865. He was discharged in June of that year.

After receiving his education in the common schools, **George S. Briner**, at the age of eighteen, learned carpentry, serving an apprenticeship of two years, and afterwards performing journey work at Harrisburg and Washington, Pa., and at Shelby, O., one year in each place. He filled out the patriotic record of his family by enlisting at the same time with his brother, **John H. Briner** and in the same regiment and company, Company F, Two Hundred and Eighth Pennsylvania Volunteers. The regiment was attached to the First Brigade and Third Division of the Ninth Army Corps. **Mr. Briner** did faithful and courageous service from September 2, 1864, to June 2, 1865, when he was discharged at Harrisburg, Pa. He then went home to the labors of the farm and the gathering in of the harvest, and in the fall went to Huntingdon, Pa., and was employed at the business of his trade by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, from that time until 1866. After another summer of agricultural work, he engaged as a journeyman carpenter; in 1868, he began to erect the framework for the house in which he now resides, in Jackson Township, for which he prepared all the woodwork himself. In the fall of 1868, he built for **Samuel Endslow** the dwelling in which **William S. Endslow** now lives. **Mr. Briner** worked at carpentry with more or less regularity until 1869 at Lome, and went in that year to Shelby, O., where he was engaged in the same occupation until January 4, 1870. He then returned home, and became actively engaged in contracting and building. He built the hall at Blain; a house for **Solomon Bowers** in Jackson Township; a large barn for **Samuel A. Johnson**, and a number of other structures. On December 19, 1870, he fell from the roof of **Mr. Johnson's** barn, sustaining a compound fracture of the left leg, which disabled him for some time for the work of his trade. In February, 1874, he was appointed mercantile appraiser of Perry County; he also received the appointment of tax collector of Jackson Township. In 1875, he resumed work at his trade, and built a barn for his uncle, **George Seeger**, and a school house in Horse Valley. In 1875, he received the Democratic nomination for register, recorder and clerk of the Orphans' Court of Perry County, was elected, and served for three years. Being renominated in 1878, he was elected by a majority of 437, and again served for three years. In 1881, he became engaged in the insurance business at New Bloomfield, Pa., and in 1886, removed to Newport, where he continued in the same business, in partnership with his brother, **Daniel**. The firm was in successful operation until 1890, when **George S. Briner** sold his interest, and returned to the homestead, where he turned his attention to farming. He lived in one of his father's houses until 1894, when he removed to the one which is now the home of his family. His father died in 1893, and **Jacob** and succeeded **George S. Briner** to the homestead. **Mr. Briner's** activity in business, his progressive spirit, his good judgment and fair dealing have made him prosperous in his own business undertakings, and useful in the affairs of others and of the community. Like his father, he has been sought as trustee, guardian, and for other responsible positions. As already intimated, he is a Democrat. He is a member of Toboyne Lodge, No. 625, I. O. O. F., and of Sergt. John Jones Post, No. 448, G. A. R., at New Bloomfield.

George S. Briner was married, January 17, 1876, to **Susan B.**, daughter of **William** and **Rebecca (Balthaser) Moose**. Their children are: **Laura S.**, died aged four years, ten months and twenty-seven days; **Mary R.**; **Sarah E.**, died in infancy; **George M.**; **William Grier**; **Jacob Frank**; and **Charles S.** **Mr. Briner** and his wife are members of the Lutheran Church at Blain, of which **Mr. Briner** has been a trustee since 1890.