

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 Co., 1905.

Daniel Drawbaugh, Inventor. About the year 1802, one **William Drawbaugh** settled in the vicinity of Eberly's Mills, in Allen, now Lower Allen Township. Little is known concerning his previous history except that he came from York County. He continued to reside in that locality for seven or eight years, and then moved to the vicinity of Bloserville, Frankford Township, where in 1811, he was assessed with both real and personal property. He was a blacksmith, but also engaged to some extent at farming. He died in September, 1817, and his remains are said to be buried in the graveyard of the brick church in Upper Frankford.

This **William Drawbaugh** and **Catherine**, his wife, had, among other children, a son **John**, who in the matter of a vocation followed in the footsteps of his father, and became a blacksmith. When his father, because of the feebleness of age, laid his hammer upon the anvil he took it up and continued the business. Along with ordinary blacksmithing he made edged tools, gun barrels and other special articles that were much called for at that day. He had a brother named **George** who was a wagonmaker and the two carried on their respective trades near each other, first in Frankford Township and afterward at Eberly's Mills. When the **Drawbaughs** moved to Frankford Township, there lived in that part of the county a man named **Peter Bloser**, a carpenter, who bore the reputation of being a very thorough and skillful craftsman. He had a large family and among his children there was a daughter named **Leah**. **John Drawbaugh**, the young blacksmith, married **Leah Bloser**, and by her had the following children; **John B.**, **Elizabeth**, **Rebecca**, **Daniel**, **Henry** and **Catherine**.

Daniel Drawbaugh, the fourth child of **John** and **Leah (Bloser) Drawbaugh**, was born July 14, 1827, in Allen, now Lower Allen Township. The place of his birth is the hamlet known as Eberly's Mills, which formerly was called Milltown, and occasionally is still referred to by that name. **Daniel's** ancestors, both on the paternal and maternal sides, having been skilled mechanics for generations before him, he inherited a strong inventive genius that has served the world, and won him great distinction. Like other boys of his neighborhood, as soon as old enough he was sent to the country district school, where he was an average boy in the matter of deportment, and made fair progress in his studies, but displayed no special eagerness for book learning. He was more ambitious to be the owner of a good jackknife, than to stand at the head of his class, and consequently his training for life led by way of the workshop, rather than through the schools. He never had any educational advantages beyond that afforded by the country school of his vicinity. His father's smith shop had more of interest to him than the schoolroom, and being naturally inclined he was early given the opportunity to blow and strike, and in various other ways lend a helping hand. He was short of stature, and to level up with the handle of the bellows and the top of the anvil his father placed a box for the boy to stand on. This box did duty for years, it being cut down from underneath and lowered as the boy increased in height. From early boyhood he felt an uncontrollable desire to make things: to construct devices by which the forces of nature could be harnessed for man's use and enjoyment. The running stream, the currents of the air, heat and cold and other conditions of the atmosphere, afforded him opportunities for experiment, and experiment he did, in season and out of season. This ruling passion sometimes got him into trouble. Upon one occasion, while sitting in the old

schoolhouse at Cedar Grove, he discovered a current of cold air coming through a small hole in the wall. Instantly an idea flashed across his mind. Putting his inventive wits to work he built a miniature windmill, and placing it in the way of the current when school was not in session, in presence of some of his associates, it worked like a charm. It was torture to him to keep his little mill idle while that current of air was going to waste. It might as well be doing something, he thought, so while the rest of the school were absorbed in their books, he unnoticed by the teacher, rigged his little invention up against the wall, and, swinging it to the way of the current, it set up a shrieking noise that startled the whole school. "What's that?" the teacher asked, and the pupils in the secret looked at **Daniel Drawbaugh**. Their looks betrayed him and on being called up he confessed. The teacher feigned a friendly interest, had him show the machine and explain its principles, and then gave him a flogging.

He early began to turn his inventive and manufacturing talent to practical account. While yet a mere boy he earned considerable spending money by making boot trees and other articles of actual use, and in his seventeenth year made himself a rifle, lock, stock and barrel. The gun was not only of fine appearance but possessed excellent shooting qualities, and he sold it for eighteen dollars, which at that day was considered a fancy price. While yet a boy he made a clock and a steam engine, both of which he preserved for many years. An intelligent farmer in his neighborhood needed a mowing machine, he made the facts known to young **Drawbaugh**, and in due time the machine was constructed, answering the purpose until an accident demolished it. Upon one occasion a man sent him word that he wanted an attachment to his drill to sow plaster, and in a little while the young inventor had perfected a device that did the work with entire satisfaction. At seventeen he learned coachmaking with his brother, **J. B. Drawbaugh**, and while thus engaged he greatly improved the machinery used in coachmaking. The inventive faculty was so strong in **Daniel Drawbaugh** that it did not permit him to continue long at coachmaking. It was an impulse that governed his actions, as no matter to what he applied his hand his mind would revert to invention as surely as the needle does to the pole. Invention was so natural and easy to him that he underrated the value of many of his appliances, and did not have them patented. Others he did not have patented because of lack of means to pay the expense thereof, and through the misfortune of being poor he failed to reap the full reward of the crowning triumph of his genius. In the year 1867 he invented an instrument to convey human speech by means of the electric current. It was the first and original invention of the telephone, as was conclusively proven in the courts. He experimented and improved upon it for several years, intending to apply for a patent as soon as he was financially able. He did not become able in time, and in 1876 Prof. Bell was granted a patent for identically the same invention. When public attention was attracted to the invention, capitalists realized how valuable it was. A company was formed which employed some of the best legal ability in the country and carried the matter into the courts. Over twelve hundred printed pages of testimony were taken, and it was shown that **Daniel Drawbaugh** had invented and exhibited to more than one hundred and fifty people of intelligence and good judgment the speaking telephone, long before Alexander Graham Bell had discovered the idea. But all of this testimony was of no avail, Prof. Bell was the first to file his application, and without contest had been awarded a patent, and the United States Supreme Court, by a vote of five to four decided that his patent could not be revoked. Although not successful in securing a patent for same, **Daniel Drawbaugh** is none the less the original inventor of the telephone. That has been established beyond dispute. He has also invented more than one hundred other useful appliances and instruments, for which he has

secured patents, and earned and holds high rank in the inventive fraternity of the country. In his earlier years he did drawing from nature and has preserved many fine specimens of his art and skill. He also did wood engraving and photographing, but only engaged in these lines in an experimental way.

On Jan. 1, 1854, **Mr. Drawbaugh** was married to **Elsetta J.**, daughter of **John** and **Mary (Thompson) Thompson**, whose father for several terms was a member of the Pennsylvania Legislature from York County, and during the famous political episode known as the Buckshot War, was in command of a company of State militia. **Daniel Drawbaugh** began his married life at Eberly's Mills, in the same house in which he was born. Here, with the exception of a few years, he has always lived, steadily labored at his inventions and won all of his fame. Here were born to him the following children: **Lola O.**, **Bella B.**, **Maud C.**, and **Charles H.**, who are living; and **Emma C.**, **Laura V.**, **Dovan T.**, **Naomi E.**, **Emma C. (2).**, **Ida M.**, and **Harry W. S.**, who are dead. **Emma C.** was married to **William Sheely** and left surviving her one son, **Roy Sheely**, who has his home with his grandparents.

Charles H. is married and has one child, **Carson**. Within the last year **Daniel Drawbaugh** has removed his family to a new home in Camp Hill, which is a model of domestic comfort and ease, but he still retains his workshop at Eberly's Mills, in which he has spent so many hours at inventions, and in which, even in his declining years, he loves to linger.

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