

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

Frederick F. Gothel, Perry County, Pa., was born November 10, 1827, in the Kingdom of Saxony, at a town near Leipsic. He is a son of **John David Gothel**. **John David Gothel** was born in 1765 or '66. When a young man, he learned the trade of blacksmith, but the labor being too severe for him, he gave it up for the business of weaving, which he carried on all his life. He served twelve years in the army, taking part in the wars with Napoleon. He was three times married; by his first wife he had one child, **Frederic Wilhelm**, who died in Saxony. There were no children of the second marriage; but his third wife, whose family name was **Stuckman**, was the mother of four children, of whom **Frederic F.** was one; another, **Augustine**, was accidentally killed at the age of twenty-eight. **John David Gothel** died in Saxony, aged ninety-two; his wife survived him, dying at the age of seventy-two. One of the great-great-grandfathers of **Mr. Gothel** came to America, and settled in Pennsylvania; He was a native of Hamburg. **Mr. Gothel** has met some of that ancestor's descendants in Franklin County, Pa.

Frederick F. Gothel attended school in his native place until he was about fourteen years old; he then learned spinning, weaving, and the other branches of the manufacture of woolen stuffs, serving a two years' apprenticeship. This vocation he followed in many parts of Europe. He was well accustomed to traveling through the country, having earned money when a child by going on foot through the rural districts, selling pins, thread, and other small necessities. As a young man, he worked not only in Bremen, Dresden, Berlin, and other places in Germany, but also in Poland, France and Italy. He traveled for eighteen successive months, being unable to find employment. He belonged to a trade guild, which paid his traveling expenses until he could find work. His father, at the age of eighty-eight, once walked with him a distance of twenty-four miles. In 1853, **Mr. Gothel** went to Bremen, and waited there three weeks for a ship on which to sail for America; he sailed at last, June 29, on the "Hindoo," and after a voyage of forty-three days, landed in Baltimore, August 12. He was provided with but little more money than sufficient to pay his passage. At Danville, Pa., he worked for a short time in the iron works, but could not perform the work, not being robust enough for that kind of employment. He was employed for some time at Northumberland, on the railroad; next in a stone quarry at Sunbury. When once more out of work, he went to Baltimore, making part of the journey on foot, and spent a few days with some fellow countrymen there. His next employment was at Williamsport, Pa., on a canal boat. He then found work at his own trade in Lykens Valley, and after that became a weaver in a woolen factory in Perry County, where he worked nine weeks for \$8.00. He was in bad health when he came to the county, and it was some time before he recovered. All the money he possessed, about \$120, had been used in paying doctor's bills, and he came to Perry County with only five cents in his pocket. His next employer was **Joseph Keifer**, for whom he worked for five years, after which he worked at his trade in Lykens Valley, first with **David C. Grosh**, and then with **Mr. Hennicke**; here he managed to save about \$300, but was attacked with brain trouble, the result of over-work and anxiety; he had worked day and night to lay up his little store of money, and now had to pass a year in the institution for the insane at Harrisburg. A strange coincidence is, that he had seen that building in a dream, during his passage across the Atlantic. After rest and medical skill had cured him, and he was discharged from the hospital, he went to work again with **Mr. Keifer** in Perry County; he was.

Somewhat later persuaded by **Mr. Grosh** to transfer his services to him; **Mr. Gothel** having become known as an expert hand, his work was in demand. In the course of eleven months, he had saved \$200, and had a good suit of clothes. He asked **Mr. Grosh** to allow him to peddle his goods; **Mr. Grosh** at first hesitated, fearing that **Mr. Gothel's** imperfect knowledge of the English language would prevent him from succeeding, but at last consented to allow him a trial. **Mr. Gothel** accordingly set out, provided with a horse and vehicle, and a full stock of goods; after spending a week on the road, he came home with all his stock disposed of. His employer was elated. **Mr. Gothel's** wages were \$1.00 per day, but by retailing many of the articles in the stock, he made \$18.00 that week. He then peddled with a pack upon his back, the goods being done up in a shawl. In this way he traveled through several counties. Later, he ceased to be employed by **Mr. Grosh**, but bought his goods to sell again, continuing this manner of doing business until the war broke out, when he could not obtain the goods. He had traveled for three months on foot, carrying his pack; had then bought a team, with one horse, but afterwards traveled for seven years with two horses. In 1862, **Mr. Gothel** bought the farm upon which he now resides, paying for it \$1,782. It was not in good order when he made the purchase, being without fences, and otherwise in disorder. He carefully improved it by erecting new buildings, fences and other necessary structures.

The farm contains over eighty acres, and is in good productive condition. **Mr. Gothel** has led a life of industry, patience and perseverance under great difficulties, the recollection of which must give him much satisfaction, as contrasted with his present condition of ease and comfort.

While traveling through the country, **Frederic F. Gothel** met the lady who afterwards became his wife, **Evelina Buchanan**; they were married October 4, 1864. Their children are: **John D.**, farmer, of Greenwood Township, born October 27, 1865; **Charles Henry**, deceased, born December 25, 1866; **Frederic F., Jr.**, deceased, born February 17, 1868; **Edward Wilson**, deceased, born June 15, 1869; **Walter H.**, born July 29, 1872; **Joseph**, born October 15, 1875; **George Calvin**, born July 2, 1878. **Mr. Gothel** was a member of the Lutheran Church in Germany. He is a firm believer in the Bible, much of which he has memorized.

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