

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

Maj. Peter Hiestand, superintendent of the Juniata Furnace and Foundry, East Newport, Perry County, Pa. In 1708, 3,600 Germans were transferred from their native land to Ireland, among whom were some who bore the family name and were ancestors of **Major Hiestand**. Some years later it is recorded that **Dennis Hiestand**, with his mother, aged eighty-five years, was evicted from the miserable hovel they occupied on an estate in that country. Some of these German emigrants on their arrival in Ireland, were settled upon improved land in the County of Limerick, near Arbela and Adair, and others settled in the town of Rothkeale, where their descendants still reside, and are known as German Palatines, preserving their German characteristics of industry, thrift and honest dealing. **Jacob** and **Johannes Hiestand** emigrated with their families from Germany to America in 1727, being accompanied by other emigrants, described as 46 Palatines with their families, constituting a company of 200 souls. They landed in Philadelphia from the ship "Friendship," October 16, 1727, and were among those emigrants who came to America on the invitation of William Penn; he had several times visited the part of Germany from which they came, and cordially invited them to find peaceful homes in the great Commonwealth he was founding in the wilderness of America. In this land of Penn, they found that freedom to live and labor and build up homes for themselves and their descendants which was denied them in the Fatherland. **Johannes Heistand**, from whom **Major Heistand** is descended, signed a declaration of citizenship, and settled upon a farm of 150 acres, situated in Manor Township, five miles west of Lancaster, on the south side of the Lancaster and Columbia turnpike. He made his will in 1781, and died in 1784. He had one son, **Henry**, and six daughters. **Henry Hiestand**, who it is supposed was born in Germany, succeeded to the farm, it having in fact been given up to him some time before his father's death. At the death of **Henry**, which occurred on the same farm, in 1805, there survived his widow, **Esther** (whose maiden name was **Reiper**), two sons, **John** and **Peter**, and two daughters, **Elizabeth** and **Barbara**. The elder son, **John**, married **Annie Hiester**, who survived him many years, dying in 1855, at the age of 93 years. They resided in Donegal Township, where **John Hiestand** died. Their children are: **Jacob**; **Andrew**; **Henry**, father of **Major Hiestand**; these three died in Donegal Township; **John**, who removed to Germantown, Montgomery County, O.; **Theo.**; **Joseph**, died young; and **Peter**, who died after reaching manhood.

Henry Hiestand, a wealthy and influential farmer, who was the third son of **John** and father of **Major Hiestand**, married **Margaret Cochran**, September 1, 1818, and died January 12, 1864, at the age of seventy-four years, eight months and five days. His wife died September 20, 1868, aged seventy-three years, three months and two days. Their children are: **Hon. John A.**, deceased, who will be further noticed below; **Samuel**; **Henry**; **Peter**; **Jacob**; **Abraham**; and **Elizabeth**, the youngest of the family, who died young. **Maj. Peter Hiestand** was born in East Donegal Township, Lancaster County, Pa., February 11, 1831. His education was received in the common schools of the vicinity, and he remained with his father on the farm until he was twenty-three years of age, when he determined to leave home and try his fortune in the great west. His first stopping place was Freeport, Ill., which he reached in the spring of 1854, and where he remained a short time; he then made a tour through the State of Iowa, but finally returned to Freeport, and was employed in a store until February, 1861. When the call was made

for volunteers to put down the Rebellion, he responded at once, received a captain's commission, and was made assistant quartermaster, soon after which he was ordered to Washington and assigned a place in the Army of the Potomac; he accompanied the army in the march through Maryland, participating in the battles of Antietam and South Mountain. His meritorious services and brave conduct were recognized, and he was rewarded in 1863 by a major's commission. After the second battle of Fredericksburg, the Ninth Army Corps, to which he belonged, was transferred to the west, and participated in the march through Kentucky, and afterwards aided in the siege of Vicksburg. Upon the capture of this stronghold, the corps returned to Kentucky and took part in the brilliant campaign of General Burnside's army through East Tennessee, culminating in the siege of Knoxville, after which it was transferred again to the Army of the Potomac, then on the heights back of Arlington, and participated in the battle of the Wilderness; moving thence to Petersburg, it remained in camp a short time. After the surrender of Lee, **Major Hiestand** was on duty in Washington, D. C. for a year, and then became a clerk of Colonel Pierce, who was commissioned to visit the important points which had been the seat of army operations, and settle up all business pertaining to the war. Under this commission, they visited in turn Vicksburg, Chicago, Montana, Ft. Snelling, where they remained one year, Little Rock, Ark., and Vicksburg, Miss., where Colonel Pierce resigned in 1868, and **Major Hiestand** returned to his home in Lancaster County, Pa. After a short stay with friends and relatives, he came to Newport, where for two years he was engaged in mining ore, after which he was appointed to his present position, that of superintendent of the Juniata Furnace and Foundry Company. **Major Hiestand** is a Republican, but refrains altogether from office-seeking, content with being a private worker and voter. He is recognized as a citizen of sterling character, and universally esteemed as a gentleman of worth and ability.

October 26, 1876, **Major Hiestand** was married at Lewistown, Pa., to **Miss Sarah M. Kerr**, born May 23, 1837, at Mifflin, Juniata County, Pa., and daughter of **Thomas** and **Elizabeth (Selheimer) Kerr**. At the age of eighteen years, she studied telegraphy at Lewistown, after which she was put in charge of the Pennsylvania Railroad office at Spruce Creek, where she served during the war, and was soon after transferred to the office at Newport, Pa., which she held until her marriage to **Major Hiestand** in 1876. While at Spruce Creek, **Mrs. Hiestand** was in an office near that of **Mr. Cullen**, the railroad supervisor, who at the beginning of the war was a staunch Democrat, and was regarded by the Republicans as a Southern sympathizer. On one occasion, while **Mr. Cullen** was absent, **Mrs. Hiestand** received tidings that a company of soldiers newly enlisted in the neighborhood were coming to raid the office, provided they found no American flag displayed on the building. The news filled her with great distress, as she knew that **Mr. Cullen** was, in fact, loyal to the national cause; she accordingly hastened to procure the needful material and make a flag, which she flung to the breeze from the building. When **Mr. Cullen** arrived, and was informed of the proceeding and the situation, he warmly commended the prudence and patriotism of **Mrs. Hiestand**. During the first year of their marriage, **Major** and **Mrs. Hiestand** remained in Lancaster, Pa., but early in 1878 they went to housekeeping at Newport, where they now have a beautiful and commodious residence. Both **Major** and **Mrs. Hiestand** are adherents and supporters of the Episcopal Church—the **Major** having been baptized in that communion and **Mrs. Hiestand** having been the first Episcopalian in Newport. She has always been actively engaged in church work, and in connection with **Mrs. Bechtel** collected enough money to build the church edifice at Newport.

The parents of **Mrs. Hiestand, Thomas** and **Elizabeth (Selheimer) Kerr**, were both born in Juniata County and there spent their early life. They were united in marriage at Mifflintown in December, 1822; some sixteen years later, or about 1838, they took up their residence in Lewistown, Mifflin County, Pa. Both died in this borough, **Mr. Kerr** in 1854 and **Mrs. Kerr** in 1873. They had eight children, one of whom, a **daughter**, died in childhood. Their first child was a son, who was named in baptism **George**. He was born September 26, 1823, and resided with his parents until he had attained the age of seventeen years, receiving the advantages of a moderate education in the best schools of that day. On the 4th day of July, 1840, he became an apprentice with **Henlock & Bratten**, printers, of Harrisburg, Pa. In 1843 he went to New Orleans, and was there engaged as a compositor on the *Bee* and *Courier*, and also on the *Delta* from its first issue in October, 1845, until the breaking out of the Mexican war. On the first requisition made upon the governor of Louisiana for troops by General Taylor, after the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, he enlisted and served three months on the Rio Grande as a private in the Andrew Jackson regiment. On August 7, 1847, he was elected first lieutenant of Company C, First Battalion, Louisiana Mounted Volunteers, and was subsequently chosen captain of this company. That he served with distinction may be inferred from the fact that he was mentioned in dispatches by General Scott. The regiment was disbanded July 17, 1848, and after a short visit to his family in Pennsylvania, he returned to New Orleans and embarked for California via Panama, in the steamer "Galveston," reaching San Francisco in the steamer "Panama. He shortly after proceeded to Stockton, and engaged in various pursuits in that place and vicinity until May, 1851, on which date he purchased the material of the Stockton *Times*, and commenced the publication of the San Joaquin *Republican*, which under his management became the leading Democratic newspaper of the San Joaquin valley. In February, 1853, he was elected State printer, and in June of the same year became associated in the publication of the *Placon Times and Transcript*, of San Francisco, of which paper he continued to be one of the proprietors up to the date of his death, which sad event occurred March 5, 1854.

The second child born to the parents of **Mrs. Hiestand** was **Elizabeth H.**, who married **Joseph Mount**; they were both mutes, and died, leaving one child, a daughter named **Elizabeth**, a bright and intellectual young lady. Their third child, **James D. Kerr**, served in the late Rebellion as a corporal in Company D, One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Pennsylvania Volunteers, and died from the effects of exposure during his service in the army, January 19, 1865. The remainder of this family are: **Miss Jean A.**, a teacher in the public schools of Lewistown, Mifflin County; **Nancy**, deceased; **Sarah M. (Mrs. Peter Hiestand)**; **Mary C. (Mrs. T. L. Johnson)**; and **Martha E.**, wife of **Rev. T. W. Martin**, at present residing on Long Island.

Miss Jean A. Kerr, teacher of the grammar school of Lewistown, Pa., was born at Lewistown, Mifflin County, Pa., and received her education in the borough schools and at the Lewistown Academy. At the age of seventeen, she was appointed a teacher in the borough schools, and has served in that capacity uninterruptedly since that time. **Miss Kerr** was one of the first teachers qualified by the first school superintendent of Mifflin County, in 1850, Superintendent Ross. She has held certificates under each succeeding county superintendent, up to the reception of her professional and final certificate, from the State and county superintendents jointly. **Miss Kerr** is not only acknowledged as an able teacher, but is personally esteemed by the many who have the privilege of acquaintance with her.

Hon. John A. Hiestand, son of **Henry Hiestand**, was born in East Donegal Township, Lancaster County, October 2, 1824. He first attended the public schools in the neighborhood of his home, and subsequently entered Pennsylvania College, Gettysburg, from which he was graduated. After studying law with the late Judge Champneys, he was admitted to the bar in 1849. In early life he took an active interest in politics, associating himself with the Whig Party, by whom he was chosen as representative of the Lancaster district in the House of Representatives in 1852, 1853 and 1856.

October 20, 1838, in company with **John F. Huber** and **Francis Heckert**, **Mr. Hiestand** purchased from **Edward C. Darlington**, the *Lancaster Examiner and Herald*. The paper was published under the firm name of **Hiestand, Huber & Heckert** until 1862, when on the death of **Mr. Huber**, an interest was purchased in the firm by **Edmund M. Kline**.

Other changes in the firm occurred until in 1874, when **Mr. Kline** withdrew and **Mr. Hiestand** became sole proprietor. In the Hartranft campaign of 1872, the *Daily Examiner* first made its appearance. This paper **Mr. Hiestand** continued to publish until 1888, when he sold it to its present proprietors. When he made his appearance in the newspaper field, **Mr. Hiestand** relinquished the practice of the law and devoted his entire time to his newspaper. He was conspicuous in politics, and in 1860 was sent to the State Senate, remaining there for a term of three years. In 1864 he was a district Lincoln and Johnson elector, and was appointed by the electoral college to carry the vote of the State to Washington. In 1869 he was the Cameron candidate before the Republican State convention for the nomination of Auditor General, but was defeated by Gen. John F. Hartranft. In 1871 he was appointed by President Grant, upon the solicitation of **Senator Simon Cameron**, a warm personal and political friend, naval officer at the port of Philadelphia, a position which he held for two terms of four years each.

In 1884 he entered the field for the Republican nomination for Congress against **Hon. A. Herr Smith**, who had served several terms in the National House of Representatives, but **Mr. Hiestand** defeated him easily. Two years later he was given his second term without opposition. In 1888 he was a candidate for a third term, but was defeated by **Hon. Marriott Brosius**.

For many years he made his home at the Cooper House, and after the death of **Gen. James L. Reynolds**, he purchased the old mansion, No. 126 North Prince Street, where he lived until March, 1890. Here about his board were frequently gathered men of the most prominent positions in the State and nation.

Statesmen, authors, lawyers and actors often assembled in his bachelor home and enjoyed his generous hospitality. He died December 14, 1890. **Mr. Hiestand** was kind and generous to a fault. His purse was always opened to the poor, needy and distressed, and to do a mean act would have been in direct opposition to his nature. He died as he lived—calm and at peace with the world. His death was deeply regretted and closed the career of one of nature's noblemen.