

Biographical and Portrait Encyclopedia of the Nineteenth Congressional District, Pennsylvania, Containing Biographical Sketches Of Prominent And Representative Citizens Of The District Together With An Introductory Historical Sketch Samuel T. Wiley, Esq.; Philadelphia: C. A. Ruoff Company, 1897.

**Rev. J. J. Kerr**, a respected and effective Lutheran minister of Newville, Cumberland County, was born in Siddonstown, York County, January 1, 1836, and is the son of **James** and **Elizabeth (Krall) Kerr**. He is of Scotch-Irish and German ancestry. The original American head of the family was **William Kerr**, who came from the North of Ireland about 1790 and settled in what is now Adams County, Pa. He was a weaver by trade, and his children were: **Thomas, William, James, Mary**, married to **George Burns; Elizabeth**, who married **James Bryne**.

**James**, the father of our subject, was born in Adams County in 1798. He became a resident of York County, early in life. He taught school a number of years. He belonged to the Covenanter Church. For a number of years he was an officer in the State militia. The mother of our subject was **Elizabeth**, daughter of **Henry** and **Martha (Shirich) Krall**. Mr. and Mrs. **Kerr** had twelve children: **Henry**, drowned in the Yuba River, California, at the age of 21, in the year A. D. 1850; **Barbara**, deceased; **Catharine**, wife of **James Hayward; John**, died in infancy; **J. J.**, our subject; **Thomas J.**, of Wellsville; **David P.**, of Erie; **James P.**, of Missouri; **Mary**, deceased; **George W.** and **Ezekiel C.**, in Missouri; and **Franklin P.**, died young. The father died at Siddonstown, February 9, 1874. The mother survived him three years dying in November, 1877.

Our subject's life was very similar to that of other boys brought up on farms, but he made the most of his opportunities and acquired a good common school education. At the age of 19 he began to teach in the public schools in the winters, and would go to summer school. After a few years thus spent, he entered Tuscarora Academy, under the efficient Professor J. H. Schmucker. Here he spent several years, fitting himself for the Junior class in college. After some years under private tutors, he entered the Theological Seminary at Gettysburg, Pa. Just about the time of the closing of the term, June, '63, the Confederates entered the State and their movements, as well as the movements of the Union Army indicated trouble for Gettysburg, and history tells what followed. He enlisted subsequently in the 162nd Regiment, Ohio Volunteers, and served to the end of the war, four brothers being in the Union Army at the same time. Before his time of service expired, he came to Rebersburg, Centre County, Pa., on furlough, met the Synod of Central Pennsylvania of the General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, underwent a rigid examination in Greek and Hebrew with all other required studies, and was licensed to preach the gospel. This was in the year 1865. He served the following churches: Millerstown Mission, Huntingdon, Pa.; Myersville, Frederick County, Md.; Duncannon, Pa.; Willmore, Pa. In 1881 he removed to Altoona, Pa., and spent between 8 and 10 years in Altoona where he organized three congregations and built two churches. He removed from Altoona to Brookville, Jefferson County, Pa., where he built a new church. And from Brookville he came to Newville, where he is serving St. Paul's Lutheran Church, the youngest but most thrifty church in the place.

He was married December 25, 1866, to **Miss Kate A.**, daughter of **J. J.** and **Catharine (Myers) Smith**, of near Newport, Perry County, Pa. To this union were born: **Minnie Armadale**, deceased; **Annie Laurie**, now married to **W. H. Slaughaupt**, and **Homer Trestler**, married and living in Buffalo, N. Y.