

Commemorative Biographical Encyclopedia of the Juniata Valley, Comprising the Counties of Huntingdon, Mifflin, Juniata, and Perry, Pennsylvania, Volume 1, J. M. Runk and Company, Publishers 1897

**Rev. Joseph K. Knisely**, now of Flemington, Clinton County, Pa., was born on a farm near Port Royal, Juniata County, Pa., February 8, 1853. He is the son of **Abraham** and **Catharine (Kieffer) Knisely**. His grandfather, **Samuel Knisely**, was born in Lancaster County, 1791, removed to Juniata County, and married **Catharine Patterson**, born in 1793. They resided in Juniata County, until their death; that of his wife occurring in 1849, and his in 1864. His children were: **John**, a carpenter, who died at Lewistown, Pa., 1893; **Samuel**, died in 1871, near Mexico, Juniata County, Pa.; **Elizabeth (Mrs. Kauffman)**, of Cedar Rapids, Iowa; **Abraham**, father of **Rev. Mr. Knisely**; **Mrs. Mary Kauffman**, who died in 1862; **Kate (Mrs. Ferner)**, died in 1858; **George**, of Millerstown, Perry County, Pa.; **Jacob**, who went to California in 1848, and is now a well-to-do farmer near Quincy, Cal.; **Joseph**, a barge builder, of Allegheny City, Pa.; **Barbara (Mrs. Holman)**, of Mifflintown, Pa.; **William**, of Mexico, Pa. Two of these were in the war of the Rebellion, **George**, who served eleven months in Company B, Two Hundred and Second Pennsylvania Volunteers, and **William**, of the Forty-ninth Pennsylvania Volunteers.

**Abraham**, the father of **Rev. Joseph Knisely**, was born in Juniata County in 1818, and grew up there, receiving such education as the common schools afforded. His principal business was butchering. He was twice married; first to **Elizabeth Wetzler**. Of this marriage there were two sons: **Jacob** and **Henry**, both of whom served in the army of the Union, one three years and the other till the close of the war. They both enlisted July 25, 1861. **Jacob** was mustered out in September, 1861. **Henry** re-enlisted, December 31, 1863, and was mustered out August 15, 1865. There was also a daughter, **Mary Musser**. His second marriage was to **Catharine Keiffer**, a native of Lykens valley, Dauphin County, Pa., August 12, 1846. **Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Knisely** took up their residence in Walker Township, Juniata County, where he died after a short illness, December 11, 1854, and is buried in Lost Creek Valley. Their children are: **Sarah E.**, born September 30, 1849, resides at Newport, Perry County, Pa.; **Annie**, born January 8, 1851, died October 4, 1853; **Joseph K.**; and **Susan**, born October 7, 1854, who also resides at Newport. About thirteen years after **Mr. Knisely's** death, **Mrs. Knisely** married **Abraham Book**, who died in 1886, leaving her a widow again. She died at Newport, Perry County, October 21, 1895. They had no children. **Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Knisely** having resided for a time near Port Royal, where their son, **Joseph K.**, was born, returned to Walker Township when he was about one year old. In that part of the country his boyhood was passed, but not without sad changes. When **Joseph** was less than two years old, his father died. His mother, unable to maintain herself, and her three surviving children, entrusted the boy to the care of **Jonathan Kauffman**, with whom he lived until he was sixteen years of age. His occupations during this time, like those of most country boys, were in winter to attend school during the short terms allowed to most rural schools and in summer to assist in the work of **Mr. Kauffman's** farm. A severe cold, contracted at the age of sixteen, changed the whole course of the boy's life. It settled upon his lungs, and rendered him unable for hard work. For two years from this time, he lived at Mount Pleasant, Juniata County, with an aunt of his father's; during his stay there, he devoted much of his time to reading and study. Then, at the age of eighteen, he went to work in a woolen-mill near Middletown, Pa., and learned spinning. In seven months he returned to Juniata

County, and was employed at the Oakland woolen-mills, where he worked for seventeen months. During his scanty hours of leisure, **Mr. Knisely** prepared himself for teaching, and at the age of twenty, engaged in that profession.

His first school, of which he took charge in the fall of 1872, was in Decatur Township, Mifflin County, Pa. For ten years he continued teaching; he taught one term in Snyder County, Pa., and one in Juniata County; the rest of his teaching was done in Mifflin County. Teaching is a noble and useful profession; but **Mr. Knisely** had still higher ambitions. He had been preparing himself for the ministry by private study, his delicate health preventing him from going to college. In 1876, he was licensed to preach, but it was not until 1881 that he was placed in charge of a congregation; it was the one at Decatur, now Wagner, in Decatur Township, Mifflin County, Pa. In 1883, **Rev. Mr. Knisely** was admitted to the Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at Chambersburg, Pa. His charges since that time have been as follows: 1882 to 1884, Burnt Cabins, Fulton County, Pa.; 1885-86, Saxton, Bedford County, Pa.; 1887-89, inclusive, Schellsburg, Bedford County; 1890-93, Ennisville, Huntingdon County; 1893-94, Bloomfield, Perry County; and from April, 1895, to the present time, Orbisonia.

**Rev. Joseph K. Knisely** was married, February 27, 1873, at Lillyville, Mifflin County, to **Sophie B.**, daughter of **John D.** and **Sybella (Goodwin) Lotz**. **Miss Lotz** was born in Clearfield County, near the town of Clearfield, but was brought up in Decatur Township, Mifflin County. Her mother is deceased. **Mr. John Lotz** is a miller, but at present resides in Harrisburg, Pa., where he keeps a grocery store. The children of this marriage are: **John Blanchard**, born March 6, 1874, died November 29, 1879; **Florence Sybella**, born March 27, 1876, is a student at Dickinson Seminary, Williamsport, Pa.; **Joseph Leroy**, born May 20, 1879, is a school teacher; **Olive Bertha**, born April 26, 1883, died November 12, 1885; and **Hubert Dean**, born June 2, 1887, at home. **Rev. Mr. Knisely** is in sympathy with the Prohibition Party, but generally votes for the best man. He is a gentleman whose consistent life, kindly disposition and affable manners attract to him the respect and kindly regards of all who come within the circle of his acquaintance.

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