

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

A. Stewart Okeson, Academia, Juniata County, Pa., was born in Beale Township, Juniata County, Pa. He is a son of **Samuel** and **Margaret A. (McKennen) Okeson**. His paternal grandparents were **Nicholas Albertson** and **Susan (Silverthorn) Okeson**, two of whose children were: **Samuel**; and **William**, father of **Mr. W. B. Okeson**, of Chicago, Ill. **Samuel Okeson** was born at the old **Okeson** homestead in Beale Township, November 15, 1805. He attended the common schools, which afforded him a limited education; but for this deficiency in early opportunities he compensated to a great extent by reading, of which he was very fond.

After leaving school he worked for his father on the farm. At his father's death, the homestead being bequeathed to him, **Mr. Okeson** made many improvements upon it, chief among which was the erection of a stone house and frame barn, among the first of the kind in the valley. Besides farming, he dealt very successfully in live stock. He visited the State of Illinois, and there bought a large tract of land at \$1.25 per acre, which he afterwards gave to his sons. Although not an office seeker, **Mr. Okeson** always took an active part in politics, first as a Whig, and afterwards as a Republican. He was a trustee of the Young Ladies' Seminary of Tuscarora, which was originally held in a stone building, erected in 1848; for its accommodation, **Mr. Okeson** built a large and convenient frame house. He was active and influential in the erection of a house of Township for the Lower Tuscarora Presbyterian Church, at Academia, of which he was a member, and a trustee. The brick used in the building was made on his farm. **Mr. Okeson** was also teacher and superintendent of the Sunday-school of that congregation. **Samuel Okeson** was twice married; his first wife was **Jane Black**, of Perry County, their children being as follows: **George B.**, farmer, of Brown County, Kan.; **Nicholas A.**, deceased, was a soldier in the Union army in the kite war; and **Samuel B.**, who also served during the war, in the First Pennsylvania Cavalry, and died in 1871. **Mrs. Jane (Black) Okeson** died in 1843. **Mr. Okeson** afterwards married **Margaret A.**, daughter of **Patrick McKennen**, a farmer and a justice of the peace of the Tuscarora Valley; she is of Scotch-Irish descent. The children of this union are: **Mary J.**, married to **Dr. J. M. Bregee**, both deceased; **Elizabeth C.**; and **A. Stewart**. **Samuel Okeson** died on the homestead, September 29, 1865; **Mrs. Okeson**, his widow, a venerable lady, resides at Academia.

A. Stewart Okeson, also born on the home farm, received his education in the public schools of the valley, and at the Tuscarora Academy, where he studied for several years, and was prepared for college by the late Dr. J. H. Shumaker. In 1870 he turned his attention to mercantile business. At the end of three years he sold out his interest, and became a fire and life insurance agent, in which occupation he has passed more than sixteen years. The companies which he represents are the Palatine (Fire), of Manchester, England; Citizen (Fire), of New York; the Allemania (Fire), of Pittsburg, Pa.; the Teutonia (Fire), of Allegheny, Pa.; the Lebanon (Fire), of Jonestown, Pa.; the German (Fire), of Pittsburg; and the Penn Mutual Life, of Philadelphia, Pa. In the prosecution of this business **Mr. Okeson** travels over several counties, meeting with much success. As a real estate broker he has visited the west, where he owns five hundred acres of land; he has traveled through Kansas, Illinois and Iowa. It was owing to the efforts of **Mr. Okeson** that a post office was established at **Okeson**, Pa. He is a member and the secretary of

the board of trustees of the Tuscarora Academy. He is a supporter of Republican principles, but does not seek office. **Mr. Okeson** is a member of Victoria Lodge, No. 911, I. O. O. F., of Patterson, Pa.

On February 1, 1876, **A. Stewart Okeson** was married at Harrisburg, Pa., by the Rev. William A. West, to **Linda**, daughter of **James F.** and **Catherine (Weaver) McNeal**, a native of New Bloomfield, Perry County, Pa. **Mr. McNeal** was a tanner; he and his wife are both deceased. The children of this union are: **Ella M.**, died February 9, 1891; **Alma V.**; **Blanche L.**; **Margaret A.**; all the daughters are students at the Tuscarora Academy; and **Fred M.** **Mr. Okeson** is a member of the Presbyterian Church at Academia, Pa.

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