

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

John W. Parsons, carpenter, Duncannon, Perry County, Pa., was born in Watts Township, Perry County, August 6, 1838, son of **James S.** and **Eliza (Morrison) Parsons**, both now deceased. His grandfather, **James L. Parsons**, was born in Somersetshire, England, and emigrated to this country in early life. He settled in Perry County, where he passed the remainder of his days. **Mr. Parsons'** maternal ancestry was German; his grandfather, **Mr. Morrison**, was born in Germany, and his grandmother in Lebanon County, Pa.

James S. Parsons was born in Watts Township, on the romantic banks of the beautiful Juniata River, about five miles above Duncannon. His entire life was spent in his native county. He was a weaver, but passed the greater portion of his life in fishing and boating on the Juniata. His death occurred at the age of seventy-seven years, eleven months, and fourteen days. After a useful and well-spent life, he passed away with the profound respect of all with whom he had been associated. **James S. Parsons** was the father of twelve children: **James F.**, deceased, of Penbrook, Dauphin County, Pa.; **Margaret (Mrs. James Wood)**, of Harrisburg, Pa.; **John W.**; **Annie V. (Mrs. John Whitmery)**, of Ohio; **William A.**, of Duncannon; **Leonard W.**, of Alabama; **five** that died in infancy; and **George B.**, who fell while fighting in the defense of his country in the war of the Rebellion.

John W. Parsons was educated in the public schools of Watts Township, after which he learned carpentry. He early displayed sterling qualities, integrity, good judgment, and ability in various directions; this excellent endowment secured for him success, and general respect. When the tocsin of war sounded, **Mr. Parsons** was of an age to be influenced by the great tide of patriotic ardor then sweeping over the land. His bleeding country did not appeal to him in vain; early in 1861, **Mr. Parsons** responded, by enlisting in the historic regiment, the Forty-second of the Pennsylvania line, whose fame under the name of "Bucktails," has become world-wide. As a member of Company B, of this regiment, he went honorably through the campaigns and marches of the Army of the Potomac, until he received a desperate wound on the bloody field of Chancellorsville. Upon becoming convalescent, he was placed in charge of the hospital in Harrisburg. In this city he was mustered out, in 1863, after two years of service. After the war, **Mr. Parsons** remained for some time in Duncannon, working at his trade. In 1866, he removed to Nebraska, where he remained one year. After staying two years longer in other portions of the west, he again came to Duncannon, where he ever after resided; he was for more than twenty years a trusted and faithful employee of the Duncannon Iron Company.

Mr. Parsons was married, by the **Rev. Mr. Zeigler**, at Duncan's Island, March 4, 1863, to **Leah**, daughter of **Lawrence** and **Annie Gross**, of Penn Township. They had six children: **Annie V. (Mrs. Otho Bowers)**, of Harrisburg, Pa.; **Julia E. (Mrs. Elmer Foster)**; **George L.**, of Altoona; **W. E.**, who died when three years old; **Charles C.**, who lost his life by an accident, at twenty years of age; and **Harry E.**, still at home. **Mr. Parsons** was a member of Lodge No. 57, Senior O. U. A. M.; of Lodge No. 27, of the Knights of the Mystic Chain, at Altoona, Pa.; and of the Duncannon Iron Company Burial Association. He was killed December 18, 1896, while coming home from his work.

The citizens of Duncannon, recognizing the ability and worth of **Mr. Parsons**, called upon him repeatedly to fill the various offices within their gift. He was chief burgess of the borough, member of council, and judge of elections. He was a Republican. In the church with which he was connected, he served in almost every office connected with the congregation. He and his family were connected with the church of the United Brethren in Christ. **Mr. Parsons** lived and died in the faith, honoring it by his regular and exemplary conduct.

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