

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

**Benjamin H. Ritter**, M. D., McCoysville, Juniata County, Pa., son of **Daniel** and **Elizabeth (Tressler) Ritter**, was born in Loysville, Perry County, December 13, 1858. His great-grandfather, **Valentine Ritter**, was born in Germany, came to America in a sailing vessel, while he was yet a young man, and settled in Berks County. **Mr. Ritter** was a soldier in the Revolutionary war, serving as a private under Washington. Removing to Perry County, he settled near Loysville with his family, and was engaged in farming during the rest of his life. He is buried at Loysville. **Mrs. Ritter** lived to be ninety-nine years old. Their children are: **Daniel; Jacob; John; George; Elizabeth; Mary; Rebecca**; and one whose name is **unknown**.

**Daniel Ritter**, grandfather of **Dr. B. H. Ritter**, was born in 1791. He was an extensive reader, equally at home with the German and the English languages. He was still young when his parents removed to Perry County, and there he grew to manhood. For a few years he farmed a tract of land that he owned near Ickesburg, Perry County, and then removed to Cumberland County, farming near Carlisle for several years. Later, he returned with his family to Perry County, and took up his residence on a large tract of land near Loysville, building a fine brick dwelling house, one of the first of its kind in Madison Township, the bricks for which were burnt on his farm. He also built a large barn and planted an orchard. Besides farming, he devoted considerable time to stock raising. **Mr. Ritter** was a Democrat, and strongly in favor of the public schools; in connection with the other township offices, he served as school director.

He married **Barbara Stover**, of the Cumberland Valley, and they had seven children: **Jacob**, was killed in Perry County by a horse; **George**, died in Perry County; **Lydia**, widow of **George Garber**, resides in Carlisle; **Catherine**, widow of **Jonathan Minnick**, resides at Loysville; **Jonathan**, died in Perry County; **Daniel**; and **John**, died in Perry County. **Mr. Ritter** died on the homestead near Loysville in 1871, his wife having died there twelve years before. Both were members of the German Reformed Church, **Mr. Ritter** being an elder, and one of the most liberal contributors.

**Daniel Ritter**, father of **Dr. Ritter**, was born near Carlisle, Cumberland County, in 1825. He attended both the German and the English schools, and at a very early age could read and converse very well in both languages. He was raised on a farm, and in 1871, after his father's death, he farmed the homestead for five years, during which time he made many improvements. Having sold out in 1876, he removed to Newville, Cumberland County, where he lived a retired life until 1892. In that year **Mrs. Ritter** died, and after her death, **Mr. Ritter** disposed of his home in Newville, and coming to McCoysville, spent the remainder of his days with his son. **Dr. Ritter**. In politics, **Mr. Ritter** was a Democrat, but was no office-seeker, consenting to serve as school director only through the interest that educational matters always held for him. He was married near Loysville to **Elizabeth**, daughter of **Joseph Tressler**, and niece of **John Tressler**, the founder of the Soldiers' Orphans' Home of Perry County. **The Tressler** family are of German descent, and were among the early settlers of Perry County. **Elizabeth (Mrs. Ritter)**, was born near Loysville, Perry County, December 8, 1826. The children of **Mr. and Mrs. Ritter** are: **Daniel**, a book-keeper in Chicago, was a soldier in the late war, having enlisted at the age of fifteen years; **Jacob**, a foreman for the Iron Bridge Company, of Chicago; **William**, a railroad engineer; **Ellen**, wife of **Calvin Rhodes**, a carpenter and contractor of Perry County; **Dr. Benjamin H.**; **Annie (Mrs. John Kunkle)**, of McCoysville; **Sarah C. (Mrs. Harry Stoops)**, of Chicago, Ill. **Mr. Ritter** died in 1893. He was a faithful member of the German Reformed Church, active and earnest in all lines of church work.

**Dr. Benjamin H. Ritter** in his boyhood days enjoyed no educational advantages except those afforded by the district schools. He attended school during the winter, the summer being taken with work on the farm. Filled with a desire for knowledge, he at length succeeded in saving the sum of fifty dollars, and with this money, every dollar of which meant hard work and close economy, he paid for one term at the Shippensburg State Normal School. After this he taught school for six months in Cumberland County. In 1878 he went to Aurora, Ill., where he became a fireman on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. Four years later he was promoted, becoming engineer on the same railroad, and held that position for five months.

While connected with this road he saved one thousand dollars. Having a desire for a professional life, he came to Newville, Cumberland County, and read medicine under Dr. W. G. Stewart. One year and a half later he entered the Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio, studying two years in the medical department, and graduating in 1886. He then came to McCoysville, Juniata County, succeeding Dr. Sahm of that place, and there during the past eleven years Dr. Ritter has been building up a very extensive practice. He compounds his own medicines, and practices in Lack, Tuscarora, Beale, and Spruce Hill Townships, Juniata County, and in Tell Township, Huntingdon County. He is one of the most skilled and efficient physicians in this part of the State. Dr. Ritter is a member of the Medical Society of Juniata County, and served as its first president; also a member of Union Lodge, No. 324, F. and A. M., Mifflintown. He is a Democrat. Since 1894, the Doctor and his family have occupied the very comfortable home that he built, costing nearly four thousand dollars.

Dr. Ritter was married at McCoysville, in 1887, to **Jennie**, daughter of **James Howell**, Academia. They have three children: **Daniel**; **James**; and **William**. **Dr. Ritter** is a member of the Lutheran Church. His family attends the United Presbyterian Church in McCoysville.