

A History of the Juniata Valley and its People Under The Editorial Supervision of John W. Jordan, LL.D.; Librarian of Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; Illustrated; New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company; 1913; Volume II

## SEIBERT

The paternal ancestors of **Judge William N. Seibert**, president judge of the Forty-first Judicial District of Pennsylvania, came to this country from England, settling first in Virginia. Their coming antedated the revolutionary war, in which members of the family served on the colonial side. The family, originally from Württemberg, Germany, settled in England, from whence they came to America.

(I) **Jacob Seibert**, a soldier of the revolution, serving eight years, married **Jeretah White Lawrence**, of Scotch-Irish descent; children: **John**; **William**; **Lawrence W.** (of further mention); **Margaret** and **Sarah**.

(II) **Lawrence W.**, son of **Jacob Seibert**, was born near Strasburg, Virginia, April 15, 1797, died in the autumn of 1866. He studied law, but became a large owner of landed property; he never practiced his profession. His estate was at Woodstock, Virginia, where he lived the life of a wealthy Southern planter until the war came. He was a noted public speaker and was much in demand during political campaigns as a "stump" speaker.

He married (first) **Mary Ann Miller**, born in Virginia, March, 1801, died February, 1834. She was very young when married, her first child being born when she was but sixteen years of age; children: **Eli**, born 1817, died in Woburn, Illinois, in 1905; **Jacob A.**, born 1819, died in Muscatine, Iowa, in 1907; **Samuel W.** (of whom further); **James L. W.**, born 1826, died at Somerset, Pennsylvania; **Lorenzo M.**, born 1828, now living in Selma, Iowa; **Sarah Ann**, born 1830, died at Mount Jackson, Virginia; **John H.**, born 1832, served in the Seventeenth Regiment, Indiana Volunteer Infantry, during the war between the states and died in a soldiers' hospital in Marion, Indiana; **Mary Ann**, married **Thomas Skinner**, and died at Maplewood, Ohio, December 3, 1907. **Lawrence W. Seibert** married (second) **Amelia Marshall**; they had issue: Six children, the eldest of whom, **George**, was a soldier in the Confederate army at the time his half-brother, **John H.**, was serving in the Union army; was shot through the breast at the battle of Bull Run and died in the hospital.

(III) **Samuel W.**, third child of **Lawrence W. Seibert** and his first wife, **Mary Ann Miller**, was born at Woodstock, Virginia, April 1, 1824, and died at his residence in Newport, Perry County, Pennsylvania, on May 27, 1913, in his ninetieth year. He was educated in the subscription schools, Fairview Academy and Cambridge College, Indiana. He prepared for and became an ordained minister of the Evangelical Association, living a long life of Christian usefulness. He served many churches in different localities with great acceptability. He built over a score of churches, many parsonages, and received into communion of his church over two thousand new members. For sixteen years he was a presiding elder and was held in high esteem by church officials, the clergy and laity. For a year or two he managed the **Neilson** farm for his father-in-law, who was in poor health, then returned to the ministry, where he has always been a prominent figure. After the failure of his health he retired to a comfortable home in Newport, from which he superintended his farm of one hundred and ninety-six acres. He was a director of the First National Bank of Newport and its president for many years, and in politics a Democrat. He married, April 1, 1846, **Eleanor K. Neilson**, born in Perry County, Pennsylvania, December 26, 1826, died June 16, 1905. **Rev. Seibert** came to Perry County shortly after his entering the

ministry, there met and married **Miss Neilson**, **Rev. Emanuel Kohr** performing the ceremony; children: **Judge William N.** (of whom further); **Dr. James L.**, a practicing physician of Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, married **Eliza Bolig**, no issue; **Virginia**, died 1897, aged forty-two years; **Charles**, died 1875, aged nine years.

**Mrs. Eleanor K. (Neilson) Seibert** was a daughter of **William** (2) and **Rebecca Darlington (Bull) Neilson**, granddaughter of **John Neilson** and great-granddaughter of **William** (1) **Neilson**, who is first found in Chester County, Pennsylvania, from whence he came to Perry County, where he became the owner of a thousand-acre tract. There he built a log house, cleared a farm and in 1767 built the stone house that is yet used as a residence. After a life of prosperity and usefulness, he died, leaving a widow and two children: **John** (of whom further) and **Polly**, who married **William Power**—a runaway match he a saddler, engaging later and for many years in business at the Neilson homestead.

**John**, only son of **William Neilson**, was born at the Perry County homestead. He lived there all his life, owning the home farm, also lands in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania. He was killed by a runaway team while yet in his prime. He married and left five children: **William** (of further mention); **Mary (Polly)**, married **Judge Samuel Black**, lived and died in Perry County; **Sarah**, died unmarried, in extreme old age; **John**, died in infancy; **John** (2) lived and died in Perry County; **Robert**, lived and died in Perry County. At his death, **John Neilson** divided his landed estate among his three sons, providing for his daughters otherwise. It was the wish of the daughters, **Polly** and **Sarah**, to have lands instead of cash, but law and custom awarded that part of the estate in equal parts to the three sons, priority of choice being in accordance with seniority.

**William** (2) **Neilson** retained the old homestead, to which he brought his bride, and there lived a quiet, contented, prosperous life. He was of quiet, retiring nature, but nevertheless firm and decided in his likes, dislikes, beliefs and opinions. It is related of him that he was the first in his community to attempt to abolish rum from the harvest field. This he accomplished in the sensible manner of adding to the wages of his men the cost of the liquor that would have been consumed during the harvest. In this quiet, forceful way he exerted a strong influence for good, preaching by deeds, rather than by words. His wife, **Rebecca D. Bull**, was the descendant of the early **Bull** family, who in the persons of **John**, **Richard** and **William Bull** came to Pennsylvania in the days of William Penn and located in Chester County, founding a prominent, influential family. The only child of **William** (2) **Neilson**, **Eleanor K.**, married **Rev. Samuel W. Seibert**.



(IV) **Judge William N.**, eldest son of **Rev. Samuel W.** and **Eleanor K. (Neilson) Seibert**, was born in Center Township, Perry County, Pennsylvania, May 28, 1848. He was educated in the private schools, academies and under private tutors, and during his early years lived at the farm with his grandfather. He first intended to become a printer, but after two years at that trade abandoned it and began the study of law under the preceptorship of the late **William A. Sponsler**. Completing his studies and passing the required examination, he was admitted to the Perry County Bar in August, 1869. He at once began the practice of law in New Bloomfield, and continued in honor and success until January 1, 1912, when he took his seat upon the bench as president judge of the Forty-first Judicial District of

Pennsylvania, comprised of the counties of Juniata and Perry. **Judge Seibert** practiced alone until the admission to the bar of his son, **William S. Seibert**, then admitted him to a partnership, which continued until the father was elevated to the bench. **Judge Seibert** is eminently qualified to fill the high judicial position to which he has been chosen. He has devoted his entire mature life—forty-two years—to the practice of law: is learned in all its phases; has a fair, impartial, steadfast mind that will not be swerved from an upright, honorable course, and, above all, has lived a life of such integrity and uprightness that he commands the unbounded respect of every member of the bar. His learning, wisdom and fairness bespeak for him a career of great usefulness and honor as a jurist, rivaling that of the lawyer. **Judge Seibert** is a member of the Presbyterian Church and since August 5, 1883, has served as elder of the New Bloomfield Church. He belongs to the Masonic craft, being affiliated with Blue Lodge, Chapter, Council and Commandery of Knights Templar. For thirty-two years, by right of official position, he has represented his lodge in the annual meetings of the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, holding, with four others, supervision of Grand Lodge correspondence. He is highly esteemed in the craft and has been one of those eminent Masons who have made the Pennsylvania Grand Lodge one of the leading Grand Lodges of the United States.

**Judge Seibert** married, June, 1870, **Elizabeth A. Heiges**, born in York County, Pennsylvania, daughter of **Jacob** and **Elizabeth (Mumper) Heiges**; children: 1. **William S.**, born December 21, 1872, educated in New Bloomfield Academy; read law under the direction of his honored father; was admitted to the Perry County Bar in 1894, then was admitted to a partnership that continued until **Judge Seibert** was raised to a president judgeship, now practicing alone. He married **Allie E. Fastnacht**; children: **William Warren** and **Helen Elizabeth**, the latter dying in infancy. 2. **John H.**, born October 2, 1875, now proprietor of a livery stable in New Bloomfield; unmarried.

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