

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

Leonard K. Ulsh, farmer, Millerstown, Perry County, Pa., son of **Joseph** and **Susanna (Kline) Ulsh**, was born in Liverpool Township, Perry County, May 6, 1830. His grandfather, **Henry Ulsh**, came from Germany when a young man, and settled in Liverpool Township, the country at that time being in its primitive state and occupied by the forest, the Indians and the wild beasts; here he built his cabin and attacked these enemies in true pioneer style, cutting down the forests, driving away the Indians, and slaying the wild beasts. His son, **Joseph Ulsh**, was born in Liverpool Township, January 13, 1804. He was reared on the farm and educated in the common schools, and for two terms was engaged in teaching. At forty-five years of age, he met with business reverses and lost his property. In order to retrieve his fallen fortunes, he accompanied his sons to California in 1851, and having seen them settled in a promising mine, returned to his home, after one year's absence. The search for gold by his sons soon proving successful, they were able to send him money for the purchase of a farm, where he spent the remainder of his life, his death occurring January 8, 1888. He first married **Susanna Kline**, who died in 1838; his children by this marriage are: **Mary Ann**; **Reuben**, married **Margaret Miller**, and resides in California; **Leonard K.**; and **John W.**, married **Susan Rickabaugh**, deceased. **Mr. Ulsh** married secondly **Elizabeth Bow**; his third wife was **Elizabeth Pfoutz**; to neither of these marriages was there any issue.

Leonard K. Ulsh received some instruction in the common schools, but he and his brothers were frequently employed on the farm and in the saw-mill, and some of the time usually employed in attending school was occupied with work. He remained on the farm until February, 1851, when his father and his two brothers, **John W.** and **Reuben** went in search of gold to California. They sailed from New York on the United States mail steamship, Ohio, reached Aspinwall, and proceeded up the Jaguars River to Archipelago, where **Joseph Ulsh** was made captain of the mule train which transported the baggage of the 600 passengers to Panama, and made the trip mounted on the back of one of the mules. The boys were obliged to make the journey on foot, starting early in the morning, traveling hard all day, and reaching Panama in the evening, almost exhausted by the walk. They also met with startling adventures and narrow escapes on the way. At Havana, a town on the route, they were ordered to halt by the native soldiers, and, disregarding the ardor were fired upon, but happily escaped, no one being hit. At Panama they took the steamer "Isthmus of Panama" and reached San Francisco in forty-two days from the time they left New York. They proceeded thence by water to Stockton, and thence by teams to the Southern Mines; here fifteen of the party hired a team of four mules, with which they covered the distance of twenty-two miles to Daily's Halfway House, and from there proceeded on a two days' journey to Murphy's Camp, where they pitched their tents, and on the second day afterwards began digging for gold. They occupied their tents for a short time, but the father and sons built a log cabin, which was considered the most comfortable habitation at Murphy's Camp. **Joseph Ulsh** having returned home the next year, the sons remained and worked the mines for four years, meeting with enviable success, and sending home amounts sufficient to purchase two farms.

As a respite from their exhausting work in the mines, they frequently went out on hunting expeditions to a region nineteen miles distant from the camp, where deer abounded. On one of these expeditions, **Leonard K. Ulsh** and **Joe Sheffler**, of Louisville, Pa., met with a thrilling adventure. They had been a short time separated when **Mr. Ulsh** heard his comrade calling lustily for help, and hurrying to the spot with all possible haste, found him in a life and death struggle with a monster buck. He at once proceeded to render all the assistance in his power, but fearing to shoot lest he might hit **Joe** instead of the buck, he gave the animal several thrusts with his bowie knife with apparently no results save that of increasing its rage, and his friend's peril. At length, seeing no other way of rescuing his comrade and securing the game, he seized the buck by the horns, and in this way took the place of his comrade in the fierce struggle with the beast, which they finally despatched by cutting his throat. By this time darkness had overtaken them, and they could find their way back to camp only by firing a gun, and listening for a return shot from their companions in camp. Fortunately, the gun in reply was soon heard, and they got back with their fine trophy, in due time and in fine shape. **Mr. Ulsh** killed eight deer on this trip, but his brother, **J. W.**, came in ahead of him on the honor list, having nine to his credit.

On Friday, February 16, 1855, they took passage on the steamer "Golden Age" at San Francisco, and reached New York in twenty four days, the time across the isthmus being shortened by the completion of the railroad, from four weeks to four days, and they reached home March 28. **Mr. Ulsh** resumed farming on one of the places purchased with the money they had sent home from the mines; after marriage, he went to housekeeping on this place, where he also opened a store, and conducted it for six years.

Leonard K. Ulsh was married February 16, 1857, to **Caroline Rickabaugh**, of Juniata County, Pa. Their children are: **Emma C. (Mrs. W. W. Dimm)**, of Juniata County, Pa. **Willis W.**, married **Miss Cox**, and resides in Altoona, Pa.; **Joseph E.**, married **Maggie Cauffman**, and resides in Altoona, Pa.; **Levi R.**, married **Emma Zearny**, and resides in Greenwood Township; **Alberta**; **Harvey L.** and **Charles**; the last three at home. Their deceased children are: **Ida May**; **Minnie Alice**; and **Jay M.**; all died young. **Mr. Ulsh** is prominent in local politics, and is a Democrat. He has been president of the school board for fourteen or fifteen years. He is a member of the Lutheran Church.

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