

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

Charles L. Van Newkirk, Newport, Perry County, Pa., was born in Howe Township, Perry County, September 29, 1845. He is a son of **John C.** and **Charlotte (Beatty) Van Newkirk**. The family originated in Holland, and the prefix **Van** was formerly **Von**. **John C. Van Newkirk** was a native of Baltimore, Md., who came to Perry County, and settled in Howe Township before his marriage, occupied as a day laborer. He was twice married; his first wife died, leaving three daughters; he afterwards married **Charlotte Beatty**, and had children, as follows: **Charles L.**; **Mary (Mrs. Samuel Bosom)**, of Newport; **Wilhelmina**, married **James L. Gardner**, both deceased; and **Susan**, widow of **Oliver B. Smith**, resides at Harrisburg, Pa. The father of the family was killed in 1854, by the falling of a tree.

As **Charles L. Van Newkirk** was only about nine years of age at the time of his father's death, and his mother, by this disaster, was left with three young children, and without resources, to meet the trials of life, the boy was obliged to do without a school education; he was never at school more than six months in his life. He was bound out to a farmer, a German, who was of so harsh and cruel a temper that the child could not stay in his house; so for the following six or seven years, he paid his board by working for different farmers. He at first received two dollars a month; the very first earnings that he brought home consisted of two gold dollars and six bushels of buckwheat. The entire property of the little family was their small house and one acre of land, the whole estate of the deceased father. At the age of sixteen, **Charles Van Newkirk** enlisted in Company I, One Hundred and Thirty-third Pennsylvania Volunteers, Capt. A. B. Demaree, for the nine months' service. Being discharged at the expiration of that time, he came home, but reenlisted in the United States Signal Corps, and served until the close of the war; he was finally discharged in August, 1865. Of his three half-brothers, one was killed at Malvern Hill; the other two were both in the western army, both marched to the sea with Sherman, and both died later from the effects of wounds received in the service. Once more at home after four years of patriotic and gallant service, which had matured the boy into a man, **Mr. Van Newkirk**, for one year, worked in Newport at brick-making; he was then for three years employed on the railroad; then for two years at Marshal Furnace; finally, he returned to railroad work, and has been occupied in the same ever since. In 1877, he was made foreman of the floating gang; in 1881, he was promoted to foreman of sub-Division No. 12. During the years of his railroad service, his family has resided in Newport. He has built for them a pleasant residence at Newport, besides two other beautiful dwellings, both of which he has sold. In early life, he was under Democratic influence, but having formed his own judgment as to political questions, he adheres to the Republican Party. He served the borough three years as councilman. **Mr. Van Newkirk** is a member of the I. O. O. F., holding the rank of past grand in the subordinate lodge, and of past chief patriarch in the Encampment.

Charles L. Van Newkirk was married, February 1, 1866, to **Catherine Franklin**, of Newport. Their children are: **J. Frank**, telegraph operator at Davis, W. Va.; **Mary I. (Mrs. Charles Oren)**, of Newport; **Ralph G.**, a tanner, resides with his father; **Blanche M.**, at home; **John C.** at home; and **Victor Lee**.

Mr. Van Newkirk is a member of the Episcopal Church.