

A History of the Juniata Valley and its People under the Editorial Supervision of John W. Jordan, L.L.D. Librarian of Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa., Volume III, Illustrated, New York, Lewis Historical- Publishing Company, 1913

The Wertz Family

J. Price Wertz, a prominent business man of Lewistown, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, is descended from a family which came to this country from Germany, in the early part of the eighteenth century, the members of which have borne their share bravely and nobly in working for the welfare of the country of their adoption.

(I) **Daniel Wertz**, a native of Germany, who had resided in England for a time, emigrated to America and settled near Landisburg, Perry County, Pennsylvania. He was a farmer by occupation, and became a man of influence in the community in which he resided.

(II) **James**, son of **Daniel Wertz**, settled with his parents at Landisburg. He was a carpenter by trade, and died at the age of eighty-six years; his wife died a few years later.

(III) **Peter**, son of **James Wertz**, was born in Adams County, Pennsylvania. He settled in Spring Township, where he had purchased a farm which he cultivated until his death. He also followed the occupations of a carpenter and a butcher. He married **Mary Foose** and had children: **Peter, Margaret, Elizabeth, Catherine, Pollie, David, Henry, Mollie; John**, see forward; **Daniel, Sarah, Annie, Abraham** and **Isabel**. He and his wife were members of the Lutheran Church.

(IV) **John**, son of **Peter** and **Mary (Mollie) (Foose) Wertz**, was born at Newport, Perry County, Pennsylvania, April 24, 1819. His opportunities for securing a good education were limited. When he was twenty years of age he attended a subscription school at Little Germany, paying for this tuition himself. He was but a very young lad when he drove a cart in the ore banks of his father, and at the age of sixteen years he was apprenticed to learn the trade of shoemaking. This class of work was never to his liking, and at the age of nineteen years he ran away from home, his entire capital consisting of nineteen cents. Going to Mount Arabella Furnace, he found employment there, being engaged in chopping wood for a period of six months. One season was spent as the driver of a team on the canal, after which he went to Newport and made an arrangement with a **Mr. Foster** to learn carpentry, his wages to be six dollars per month. His next engagement was with a **Mr. Beatty**, from whom he received thirteen dollars per month, working as a carpenter on the canal, and in 1838, having heard that **John Musser**, of Lewistown, was in need of carpenters, he engaged to work one week on trial for that gentleman. So satisfactory was his work that he was at once engaged at a salary of twenty dollars per month, and remained with him for nine months. For some years he was then employed in the boat yard at Lewistown for various people, and, in 1850, he assisted in constructing the bridge across the Juniata River. In the same year he went to Illinois, and for almost half a year was at work on the Burlington & Peoria railroad. He then returned to Newport, where he worked at house carpentry during the summer and on the canal in the winter. Farming then engaged his attention for a time, and he became the owner of a farm which he subsequently sold. He built the home, which he later occupied with his family, in 1884, and in

1885 opened the store which he conducted for a number of years. He was a strong supporter of the Democratic Party, and an advocate of free silver. He was a member of the Lutheran Church, of which he was a regular attendant.

Mr. Wertz married (first) December 22, 1842, **Mary**, born in Perry County, Pennsylvania, 1824, died in 1886, daughter of **Abraham Frye**, of Tyrone, Blair County, Pennsylvania. He married (second) **Mrs. Catherine Zimmerman**, a widow. Children, all by the first marriage: 1. **William**, see forward. 2. **Mary Jane**, born March 31, 1845; married **Perry Rider**, and resides in Newport, Pennsylvania. 3. **Catherine**, born December 11, 1846; married **John Barrick**, of Newport, Pennsylvania. 4. **Mary Ellen**, born September 29, 1847, died young. 5. **Emma Rebecca**, born September 9, 1849; married **Joseph Murphy**, of Miller Township, Perry County, Pennsylvania. 6. **Martha Eve**, born June 15, 1853, died at the age of twenty years. 7. **John**, born June 17, 1856, resides in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. 8. **Margaret**, twin of **John**: married **John Haines**, of Altoona, Pennsylvania. 9. **Peter**, born November 13, 1858, resides at Newport, Pennsylvania. 10. **Charles**, born June 4, 1860, is a farmer in Iowa. 11. **James**, born December 26, 1863, is a farmer in Dakota.

(V) **William**, son of **John** and **Mary (Frye) Wertz**, was born at Lewistown, Mifflin County, Pennsylvania, October 31, 1843. When he was four years of age his parents removed to Ickesburg, Pennsylvania, and he has a faint recollection of the flood of 1847; later the family moved to Newport. The common schools of Newport furnished his education until the age of nine years, when he commenced the serious business of life as a driver of mules on the tow path. So small was he at this time that he was obliged to take the mules to a fence in order to mount them. He was thus employed until he was old enough to take charge of a boat. He enlisted for a period of nine months, at Newport, Pennsylvania, August 9, 1862, becoming a private in Company I, 133d Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, and was sent to the front with his regiment and participated in the battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Antietam. He was honorably discharged at the expiration of his term of service, May 28, 1863, and returned to his home. In September, 1863, he purchased an interest in the boat "Abraham Collins," of which, with its team of five mules, he had sole charge, day and night, until early in 1865. In the summer of 1864 he also had charge of another boat, the "Lizzie Dugan," for A. Collins, of Falmouth. He became the sole proprietor and manager, in 1865, of the boat "Parish No. 35." He added to his fleet of boats by purchase, from time to time, until it numbered nine. They plied between Nanticoke, Baltimore, New York and Philadelphia. Two trips were made to Lake Champlain and Fort Henry, which consumed one month and five days, and netted the (at that time) large sum of three hundred dollars. **Mr. Wertz** was actively engaged in the boating business until 1892, when his other business interests consuming the greater part of his time, he sold all his boats with the exception of five. He became a stockholder in the People's Bank of Newport, upon the organization of that institution, and filled the office of director for a period of seventeen years. When the bank was reorganized, becoming the National Bank, he was also a stockholder and director, an office he is still holding. He resided in Oliver Township until his removal, in 1884, to Newport, where he had purchased a residence which he has occupied since that time. He has filled several township offices as a representative of the Democratic Party, and was a supporter of the free silver movement. He served several terms as a deacon of the Zion Lutheran Church, and has been a member of its Sabbath school throughout his life. He is a member and past commander of Lieutenant Arnold Lobaugh Post, No. 297, Grand Army of the Republic.

Mr. Wertz married, August 12, 1863, **Catherine**, daughter of the **Rev. Samuel Glaze**, who was killed on the railroad crossing at Newport, Pennsylvania. Children: 1. **Margaret W.**, married **Silas J. Clark**, of Newport, Pennsylvania. 2. **William Henry**, a coal operator at Houtzdale, Pennsylvania; married **Cora Noll**, of Newport, Pennsylvania. 3. **Carrie Letitia**, married **Harry B. Miller**, and removed to Pendleton, Oregon in 1895. 4. **Laura Myrtle**, married **Herman E. Snyder**, of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. 5. An **infant**, deceased. 6. **J. Price**, see forward. 7. **Victor Haldeman**. 8. **Fannie Eleanor**.

(VI) **J. Price**, son of **William and Catherine (Glaze) Wertz**, was born in Perry County, Pennsylvania, November 2, 1875. He was educated in the public schools of his district, where he proved himself an apt and studious pupil. At a suitable age he engaged in business, and after a variety of experiences established himself in the laundry business in 1902, on South Main Street, where the old brewery was formerly located. In 1906 he removed to No. 127 South Main Street, where his business is conducted at the present time; he has since bought the entire property. In 1909 he commenced the manufacture of shirts, in which line of industry he has achieved an undeniable success. He has seventy-five people in his employ, and everything is done which can tend toward the comfort of his employees or facilitate the work. Like his ancestors in this country, **Mr. Wertz** is a staunch supporter of Democratic principles, and he is a member of the following organizations, all of Lewistown: Independent Order of Odd Fellows; Patriotic Order Sons of America, and Knights of Pythias.

Mr. Wertz married, at Donnally Mills, in 1893, **Ada**, daughter of **Isaac Barratt**, a farmer of Donnally Mills, Pennsylvania. They have had children: An **infant**, deceased; **Esther Hazel**, **William Barratt**, **Amanda Ethel**. **John Paul**, **Robert Barnett**, **Jacob Edward**.

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