

Biographical Annals of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania; Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens and of Many of The Early Settled Families. Illustrated. Chicago: The Genealogical Publishing Co., 1905.

John W. Wetzel, Esq. About the time Cumberland County was formed one **William Davidson** took out a warrant for 228 acres of land lying in Middleton Township, due north of Carlisle. In making his will he directed that the first one of his brothers or sisters, or brothers' or sisters' children, that came to America, should have one-half of this land.

Through this peculiar bequest **Samuel Davidson**, a nephew, came into possession of one-half of this tract of land, and he on Dec. 21, 1773, conveyed it to **George Wetzel**, "of Middleton Township, Blacksmith." The conveyance was dated in 1773, but it is probable that the purchaser was in that vicinity a year or two earlier, as he then already was "of Middleton Township." This is the first appearance of the **Wetzel** name on the records of Cumberland County. This tract of land lies in the vicinity of Wert's schoolhouse, North Middleton Township, and is now owned by J Wesley Hoye.

George Wetzel was a native of Germany and came to America from Rotterdam in the ship "Bennet Galley," landing at Philadelphia Aug. 13, 1750. He first settled somewhere in the eastern part of the Province, where he married and remained until the Indian troubles had subsided, when the opportunities for acquiring land and a home induced him to migrate to the Cumberland Valley. He lived upon this land the remainder of his lifetime, farming and blacksmithing. He was a quiet and reserved citizen and participated very little in public affairs. During the war of the Revolution he was commissioned an ensign in the 10th Regiment, Pennsylvania Militia, but from the data at hand it does not appear that he was in active service, although he may have been. He died in 1786, leaving to survive him his wife **Mary** and four sons, named respectively: **Jacob, George, John** and **Martin**.

Jacob Wetzel, the eldest, was born March 11, 1771, and had not yet reached his sixteenth year when his father died. He grew up on the farm, and along with farming learned blacksmithing, all his lifetime following these two occupations in the same locality in which his father purchased a home in 1773. He was a worthy and influential citizen and a member of the German Reformed Church of Carlisle from the time of its first organization. He served as one of its trustees for twelve years continuously and following his trusteeship was an elder up to the time of his death. For many years he was prominently identified with all its affairs, and its charter, dated Dec. 23, 1811, bears upon its face his name as one of its original incorporators. His brother **John** was also long a member of the same ancestry and the family, through all its different branches and generations, has uniformly adhered to this church. The **John Wetzel** here named was a private in the Carlisle Light Infantry, one of the companies which in 1814 marched from Carlisle to the Niagara frontier and there participated in the battle of Chippewa and other engagements. **Jacob Wetzel** married **Phoebe Moses**, a daughter of **Peter Moses**, of Tyrone Township, Perry County, Pa., and by her had the following children: **John, Joseph, Moses, Jacob, Phoebe, Susan, Mary** and **Eliza**, all of whom lived to maturity, married and settled down within a short distance of their birth place. As but few members of this large family sought homes elsewhere their descendants have become very numerous within the bounds of their native county. **Jacob Wetzel** died on Oct. 15, 1828; his wife died Oct. 14, 1825, and their remains were interred in the German Reformed graveyard on South Hanover Street, Carlisle, but when the growth of the town

made it necessary to remove that burying place they were transferred to the **Wetzel** family lot in the "Old Grave Yard" at Carlisle.

John Wetzel, the eldest child of **Jacob** and **Phoebe (Moses) Wetzel**, was born May 3, 1805. He grew to manhood in Middleton Township and became a farmer and incidentally also did blacksmithing. On March 9, 1826, he married **Catharine Wise**, Rev. John Ebaugh, pastor of the Reformed Church of Carlisle and vicinity, performing the ceremony. **Catharine Wise** was born Jan. 25, 1804, and was a daughter of **George Wise**, who was a son of **Jacob Wise**, and for a long time owned the property known upon the records as "Mansfield," lying on the south side of the Conedoguinet Creek at Wise's Bridge, in what is now North Middleton Township. **John** and **Catharine (Wise) Wetzel** had children as follows: **George, Jacob, Susan, Mary E., John, Catharine, Joseph, Phoebe, Moses, Henry** and **Eliza**. This generation also all grew to maturity and, with a single exception, remained in the county of their birth, and they and their descendants form a very respectable and influential element in the social and business activities of the section. **John Wetzel** died on May 26, 1842: his wife died Oct. 5, 1881, and both are buried at Carlisle Springs.

George Wetzel, the first child of **John** and **Catharine (Wise) Wetzel**, was born Dec. 25, 1826, in North Middleton Township, on the farm long owned by the late **Capt. George Braught**. His parents lived on several different properties in that vicinity until in the spring of 1832, when they moved to the **George Wise** farm, and there engaged at farming for a period of eleven years. The father dying when the boy **George** was only a little over fifteen years of age, and there being ten other children still younger, it became necessary that they be early taught to be self-supporting. Accordingly **George** was apprenticed to the wagon making trade in Carlisle with **Charles Pfleager**, who by marriage was a cousin of the boy's father. He entered upon his apprenticeship early in the month of March, 1845. Three weeks afterward the Carlisle courthouse and town hall were burned, and the young man, witnessing their destruction, was so worked up by the excitement of the occasion that he soon thereafter joined the Union Fire Company, and has been a faithful and enthusiastic fireman through all his long lifetime. There was much doing at wagon making in those days, and upon completing his trade he built himself a shop and began business on his own account. Being a good mechanic he commanded a patronage which afforded steady employment both for himself and for a force of journeymen and apprentices. In 1866 he quit wagon making to engage in the hotel business. He kept the well-known "Pennsylvania House" for two years and afterward the "Franklin House" for six years. Being an ardent Democrat and an influential party worker he in 1861 was elected to the borough council and in 1869 was elected county treasurer, which was then a two-year office. Afterward, when Carlisle was passing through a reign of terror from firebugs and other lawless characters, he served a term as town constable, and the courage and fidelity with which he performed the trying duties of that position were highly commended. In 1846 he joined the Washington Artillery, one of Carlisle's famous military companies, of which he was a member for seven years. In September, 1862, when the Confederates crossed the Potomac and threatened to advance still farther northward, he enlisted in the State militia under Capt. Ephraim Cornman, Col. Henry McCormick, and during the emergency did military service on the borders of Maryland. In religion, he followed the example of his ancestry and early united with the Reformed Church of Carlisle, sang in its choir, served as deacon and trustee and was otherwise prominent in promoting its interests. Since he has retired from the active duties of life he lives in the pleasant home of his daughter, **Mrs. H. G. Rinehart**, on North Bedford Street, Carlisle, where, with faculties unimpaired, he continues to take a lively interest in the affairs of the day and composedly awaits the future.

On June 28, 1849, **George Wetzel** was married to **Sarah Ellen Shade**, Rev. A. H. Kremer, pastor of the Reformed Church of Carlisle, performing the ceremony. **Sarah Ellen Shade** was a daughter of **John** and **Susan Shade**. **John Shade**, her father, was a carpenter and builder, long of Carlisle, but formerly of Perry County and a descendant of a Revolutionary ancestor. **George** and **Sarah Ellen (Shade) Wetzel** had the following children: **John W.**, **Charles Henry**, **Catharine**, **Sarah Adelia**, **Rebecca Florence**, **Mary Elizabeth**, **George B. McClellan**, **Annie Matilda**, **Ida May** and **Frank William Dale**.

John Wise Wetzel, the eldest of these ten children, and the especial subject of this sketch, was born in Carlisle April 20, 1850. In his boyhood he attended the public schools of Carlisle, and then, after preparing under Prof. David Sterrett, entered Dickinson College, from which institution he graduated in 1874. While in college he read law with C. E. Maglaughlin, Esq., and was admitted to the Bar of Cumberland County in April, 1874, two months before his graduation. He then entered upon the practice of his profession in the town of Carlisle and has steadily and assiduously pursued it ever since. He has made good progress and ranks high as a lawyer and counselor, both in the courts of his own and those of adjoining counties. He is extensively employed by leading corporations, being attorney for the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad Company, the Crescent Pipe Line, the Lindner Shoe Company, the Carlisle Carpet Mills, the Letort Carpet Company, the Letort Axle Works, the Carlisle Chain Works, and others that might be mentioned. He is a member of the Cumberland County Bar Association, also of the Pennsylvania State Bar Association, and for many years has been secretary of the committee on Admissions to the State Bar Association. He is one of the incorporators of the Dickinson School of Law at Carlisle, and since 1884 has been a trustee of Franklin and Marshall College, at Lancaster City. He works hard, gives prompt attention to business, is liberal and progressive in all things, and an influential factor in the social and material development of his town and county. He is one of the incorporators of the Merchants National Bank of Carlisle, and since 1893 president of its board of directors. He gives studious and careful attention to the finances of his section of the country and is a member of the Pennsylvania State Bankers' Association. He aids in establishing and promoting business enterprises, and was for a number of years a director of the Carlisle Gas & Water Company, is now a member of the Beetem Lumber & Manufacturing Company, and president of the Big Spring Turnpike Company. Like nearly all of his large family **Mr. Wetzel**, in politics, is a Democrat, and before his law business absorbed so much of his time and attention was very active and prominent in party management. In 1876 he was a delegate to the Democratic State Convention and again in 1890. In 1880 he was elected District Attorney of Cumberland County by an unusually large majority, and in 1882, in an exciting and memorable campaign, was chairman of the Democratic executive committee. Fraternally, he is a member of the order of Knights of Pythias, also of the Cumberland Star Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, in which he is a past master.

On Sept. 3, 1872, **John W. Wetzel** was married to **Miss Lizzie Wolf**, youngest daughter of **John** and **Elizabeth Wolf**, of Carlisle. Both are members of the Reformed Church of Carlisle, in which **Mr. Wetzel** has been a deacon and is now an elder. To **John W.** and **Lizzie (Wolf) Wetzel** one child has been born, a son named **George Frank Wetzel**, who is a graduate of Franklin and Marshall College. He is also a member of the Cumberland County Bar and is practicing his profession at Carlisle.