

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

**William H. Willis**, farmer, Duncannon, Perry County, Pa., was born July 23, 1847, on the farm on which he now resides in Penn Township. He is a son of **James D.** and **Mary (Hunter) Willis**. The **Willis** family was of English origin; the **Hunters** were Irish. Both families settled early in Perry County, and were among the most respected and substantial families of the county. The great-grandfather and father of **William H. Willis** were both born in Perry County and passed their entire lives within its bounds, devoting their attention to farming. They were interred in the Presbyterian cemetery at Juniata Bridge. **James D.** and **Mary (Hunter) Willis** had seven sons, of whom three now survive: **William H.**; **Toktuga H.**, of Miller Township, Perry County; and **Adolphus H.**, also a resident of Miller Township. Those deceased are: **Delavan F.**; **Alphousus A.**; **Winfield S.**; and **Samuel C.**

With the exception of two years spent in the service of the United States, during the war of the Rebellion, the entire life of **William H. Willis** has been passed in the county and township in which he was born, his employment at all times having been agriculture.

**Mr. Willis** was twice married. The first marriage was celebrated at Carlisle, where he was united to **Elizabeth Barrett**; they had two children: **Delia (Mrs. Peter Kirk)**, of Harrisburg, Pa.; and **Grant D.**, of Penn Township, Perry County. **Mrs. Elizabeth Willis** dying, **Mr. Willis** was married the second time in Philadelphia, December 13, 1882, to **Mary W.**, daughter of **William C.** and **Matilda Hench**. To this union there is one daughter, **Lillian Grace**, born January 19, 1884. Universally respected for his integrity, and enjoying the pleasures of rural life, there was in **Mr. Willis**, quality powerful enough to tear him from his neighbors and his peaceful employments, and to send him in the presence of the deadliest dangers. That quality was patriotism. On February 21, 1864, when he was a youth of less than seventeen years of age, **Mr. Willis** enlisted in Company C, Twenty-first Pennsylvania Cavalry, of which the gallant **William H. Boyd** was colonel. With this regiment young **Willis** served, with credit and distinction, for seventeen months, participating honorably in many battles, among which were such fields of death as Cold Harbor, Poplar Grove Church, the Explosion of the Mine in front of Petersburg, Boydton Plank Road, Stony Creek Station, the Bellefield raid. Hatcher's Run, Dinwiddle Court House, Amelia Springs, Flat Creek, and Appomattox. **Mr. Willis** was mustered out and honorably discharged, at Lynchburg, Va., July 18, 1865. **Mr. Willis** has been a school director for a period of eleven years. During all that time the duties of his important office have been ably and faithfully discharged. **Mr. Willis** is a staunch Republican. Like his ancestors, he is connected with the Presbyterian Church.

**William Hench**, the father of **Mrs. Willis**, was born September 8, 1823, in Milford, Perry County. He is a son of **George** and **Mary (Campbell) Hench**. His grandfather, **George Hench**, was a German, came to America before the Revolutionary war, and settled in what is now Perry County. He served as a fifer in the Continental army. He was a wagon-maker, at which business he worked after his return from the army. At the time of his death, he resided in Tuscarora Township, Perry County. One of his sons was **George Hench**, father of **William C. Hench**. Born in Juniata Township, Perry County, he passed his entire life within his native county. On

the maternal side the ancestry of **William C. Hench** was Scotch, the **Campbells** having been early settlers of Perry County. The parents of **Mr. William Hench** had eleven children, of whom but two now survive: **William**; and **Samuel**, of Pittsburg, Pa.

**William Hench** spent his early life in Greenwood Township, Perry County, acquiring his education, during the winter months, in subscription schools, supplemented by a course in the public schools of the township. After leaving school, he learned ship carpentry, which occupation he followed until 1861. In 1862, he began farming in Wheatfield Township, Perry County, and has followed the same vocation ever since. He is a staunch Republican.

**William C. Hench** was married, at Hollidaysburg, Pa., February 1, 1850, to **Matilda**, daughter of **Nathaniel** and **Mary (Sharer) Williams**, old and honored residents of Huntingdon County. They had four children, three of whom died in early life, the only survivor being **Mary**, the estimable consort of **William H. Willis**. Both **Mr.** and **Mrs. Hench** are members of the Presbyterian Church.

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