

HISTORY OF
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

IN TWO VOLUMES

Including a Genealogical and Biographical Record
of Many Families and Persons in the County

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Knights of Annunciation, and he is also a member of the Phoenix fire company. He is a member of the fraternal Order of Eagles and the Foresters. In 1900 Mr. Keogh was united in marriage to Miss Bridget, daughter of Patrick and Julia Dolphin, both natives of Ireland, though Mrs. Keogh was born in Shenandoah.

Kessler, John M., one of the oldest residents of Hegins township, was born in that township, Nov. 13, 1822. His grandfather, Michael Kessler, was a native of Berks county, but came to Schuylkill county in the year 1800. Here he bought a tract of wild land, cleared a farm and built a mill. He gave the site for the first school house and church in the township. He married Polly Grim and they both died on the farm he thus established. His son Michael, the father of John M., came with him to this county, and married a Miss Arnold, by whom he had eight children, viz.: Abraham, Michael, John M., Christiana, Philip, Catherine, Harriet and Magdalena. Abraham was a farmer. He married Kate Riekel and moved to Lykens Valley. They had one son, Reuben, who became a distiller. Michael died, unmarried, at the age of seventy-five years. He was a miller at Hegins. Christiana is the widow of John Lucas and lives in Barry township. Philip, now dead, was a farmer and mason. Catherine died, single, at the age of sixty-five years. Harriet is the widow of Joseph Staub and lives at Lancaster. Magdalena is the widow of Gabriel Barth and lives in Hubly township. The mother of these children died and Michael Kessler married Catherine Boyer, who had been twice married before, and had two sons: Franklin Haupt, now of Mount Carmel, and Charles Overfield, deceased. To this second marriage of Mr. Kessler's father were born five children: William B., a farmer of Hegins township; Caroline, widow of Daniel Diebert; Levi, who married Rebecca Hoch and is now dead; Joel, who married Sarah Hoch and is now a farmer in Hegins township; and Elias, who married Elizabeth Stutzman and lived on the old homestead until his death, in 1887. John M. Kessler received a limited education and learned the trade of miller, which he followed until 1851, when he gave it up on account of his health and bought from William Hoch seventy-nine acres of land, upon which he began farming. He still lives on the farm, the house in which he resides having been built by him in 1861. He is a member of the Church of God and is a Republican in politics, but has never aspired to office. In 1845 he married Miss Elizabeth, daughter of Michael and Elizabeth (Snyder) Wolfgang, of Schuylkill county, and to this marriage were born eight children. Cornelius was a carpenter, married Luzanna Geist and died at Mount Carmel at the age of fifty-seven years. Joseph is a contractor and builder at Shamokin, and is also treasurer of the Shamokin Lumber and Manufacturing Company. He married Polly Engle. Sarah married E. E. Greider, of Lancaster. John W. married Amelia Kimmel, and was a farmer and proprietor of the Marion hotel at Shamokin at the time of his death, in 1894. Michael W., the fifth child, is mentioned more fully below. Lydia is the wife of John Gahnes,

of Eldred township. Elizabeth is Mrs. James M. Boyer, of Ashland. William died at the age of six years. Michael W. Kessler was born on April 22, 1858. He grew to manhood on the farm and was educated in the local schools. He married Mary, daughter of George and Harriet (Klinger) Kimmel, of Barry township, and they have two daughters, Alverda E. and Jennie B., both at home with their parents. Alverda attended the Freeburg musical college, and Jennie attended the state normal school at Millersville; she has taught for six years in the Schuylkill county schools. Mr. Kessler has a well improved farm and a fine orchard of over 400 trees of all varieties, as well as a fine assortment of small fruits, his products finding a ready market at Minersville and other adjacent towns. He is a Republican and was for twenty-two years a school director. He belongs to Camp No. 85, Patriotic Order of the Sons of America, at Weishample, and to the Church of God, at the same place. He was for eight years superintendent of the Sunday school and takes a lively interest in church work.

Ketner, George W., of Orwigsburg, a farmer and a manufacturer of paper boxes, was born in Schuylkill county, March 25, 1857, a son of Samuel and Catherine (Maurer) Ketner. The father was a stationary engineer and had the unique distinction of being the first man to hoist coal from the mines of Schuylkill county. A physical deformity prevented his participation in the Civil war, but he was an ardent upholder of the Union cause and was strong in his denunciation of slavery and rebellion. He was exceedingly well read and a man of fine intellect. His death, in 1869, resulted from injuries received while blasting rock, the concussion causing a pile of lumber to fall on him. He married Mrs. Catherine (Maurer) Hartline, the widow of John Hartline, and by her first marriage she had three sons and a daughter. The subject of this sketch was the only child of her second union. Her death occurred in 1905, at the age of ninety years. George W. Ketner received his education in the common schools of Berks county and in Northumberland, upon the completion of which he found employment in the shops of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad at Reading. Then for a time he was a brakeman and subsequently became a locomotive engineer. He left railroad life to operate a stationary engine in a rope factory and from that business got into the paper-box industry. He continued in this line with the Webekind Paper Box Company until 1891, when, upon the death of Mr. Augustus Webekind (his father-in-law), he disposed of his interest in the firm and removed to Orwigsburg and embarked in the business in his own name. He employs some eighteen helpers, and the average daily output is 10,000 boxes—an amount which required 100 hands to turn out daily before the invention of modern machinery. His trade territory is not very extensive, only the immediate neighborhood being supplied, but his patronage is exclusive and unchanging. In politics he is an ardent Republican and before his removal from Reading he was chairman