

History of York County Pennsylvania - Volume II

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E. D. BENTZEL, one of the lights in the legal profession in York county, comes of sturdy German ancestry.

In 1745 there emigrated from Germany two brothers by the name of Bentzel—Philip and Baltzer—who landed at Baltimore, Md. Of these Baltzer, who was a shoemaker by trade, came to York county, and settled near the town of York. He served his adopted country in her War for Independence, attaining the rank of captain. He married and became the father of six children: Henry, David, Catharine Ellman, Anna Maria, Lizzie, and Barbara Kump.

David Bentzel, son of Baltzer, was born in August, 1777, and he became a successful farmer and distiller. In 1811 he erected a large distillery, and manufactured a high grade of whiskey which he transported by team to the market in Baltimore. The farm on which he located at the time of his marriage was on the Little Conewago Creek, near what is now known as Weigelstown. At the age of twenty-four years he married Miss Elizabeth Meisenhelter, and they became the parents of [] children: Henry, Felix (who died young), David, Samuel, Daniel M., Barbara, Mary, Elizabeth, Nancy, and Sarah (who died young). All the children who reached mature years married.

David Bentzel (2), son of David, was born May 3, 1815. In his youth, at his father's mill, he learned the trade of milling under his uncle, George Meisenhelter, and at his father's death he bought this same mill on the Little Conewago, and there continued to make his home as long as he lived. He married Sarah Eisenhart, daughter of John Eisenhart, a carpenter and cabinet maker; she died Dec 23, 1880, the mother of six children, as follows: Henry M., born in 1844, located in California and there died in 1877, leaving one son, Frederick; Edward D.; David E., born in 1857; Nancy married Henry W. Jacobs; Kate [] married Peter Binder; and Leah died in infancy.

Edward D. Bentzel was born Feb. 22, 1846, and his boyhood and youth were passed at the old homestead on the banks of the Little Conewago. He learned the milling trade of his father, but owing to a severe illness, which so crippled him in his lower limbs as to necessitate the use of crutches, he was forced to abandon it. His educational opportunities had been excellent, he having had the advantage of courses in both the York County Normal and the Academy. For some six terms he was successfully engaged in teaching at York borough and the County. Always interested in public affairs, he naturally turned to politics, and as a good staunch Democrat [][][] became the leader in his chosen party. In 1872 he was elected clerk of the courts, a position which he ably filled for three years. While in that office he was inspired with ambition to enter the legal profession, and became a student in the office of James B. Ziegler, and in 1878 he was admitted to the Bar, continuing to the present time in the calling. A man of broad and progressive ideas he is a natural leader, and his worth as a citizen has been demonstrated in every relation of life.

On Feb. 24, 1881, Mr. Bentzel was united in marriage to Miss Ida Kate Wehrly, daughter of George Wehrly, of the "Pennsylvania [][][]ua House," York. Three children have blessed this union namely: Edith May, Ernest, and Edward Wehrly.

JACOB N. BENTZEL, one of the highly respected citizens of Dover, York county, and an honored survivor of the Civil war, was born in 1844 on Col. John Hoff's farm, in York county, on the Susquehanna river, a son of Daniel H. Bentzel, and a grandson of Henry Bentzel. Henry Bentzel, the great-grandfather, was born in York county, near the Bull road, where his father had located with his brother David. Henry Bentzel settled in Dover township, where he was a farmer and distiller, and also engaged in teaming to Baltimore. He was owner of the farm on Bull road, and died at an advanced age. He was interred in Dover township. His wife was born at sea, of German parents. The children of Henry were: David, Samuel, Phelix, Henry and Barbara.

Henry Bentzel (2), the grandfather, owned and conducted an excellent farm in Dover township, where he put up all the substantial buildings. Like his father he did a great deal of teaming to Baltimore, the railroads not having yet established their lines through this section. He married Catherine Naylor, who was born in Lancaster county. Both the grandparents of Jacob N. Bentzel died in old age and were buried at Weigelstown, Dover township. They had children as follows: John died in West Manchester and is buried at Weigelstown; Elizabeth died in Cumberland county and was buried there; David die from an accident, being burned to death while burning bush near the homestead; Daniel H. was the father of Jacob N.; Henry died in Dover township, and was buried at Neiman's Church; Rachel died in Dover township; Elias died in West Manchester township, and is buried at Neiman's Church, Dover township.

Daniel H. Bentzel, the father of Jacob N., was born in Dover township, and assisted on the family farm until he learned the carpenter's trade and cabinetmaking, with John Frantz, in Manchester township. After mastering these vocations he went to Strinestown, where he followed them for about twenty years, removing then to the farm on which Jacob N. was born. This he operated for about ten years, and then returned to Dover township; went next to Manchester, and later again located in Dover township; subsequently took possession of John Thomas's farm, in Manchester township, and then operated Bentzel's Mill. Finally he settled in Dover borough, where he built a comfortable home and followed his trade as long as he was in active life. After the death of his wife, about twenty-two years prior to his own decease, he lived with Jacob N. Bentzel. His death took place in 1897, at the age of eighty-eight years and three months, and his burial was in the churchyard of the Reformed Church, of which he was a worthy member. In politics he was a Democrat.

Daniel H. Bentzel married Anna Mary Neff, daughter of Henry Neff, of York, York county. She died aged sixty-six years, and is buried at Strayers' Church. They had children as follows besides Jacob N.: Catherine, who was the wife of Rufus Rhoades, was killed by a stroke of lightning at the age of twenty-two years, and is buried in Manchester township; Anna Mary died young; Henry married (first) Rebecca Bremer and (second) Mary Sweitzer, the latter of whom lived in Baltimore, where he died aged sixty-two years; Daniel is a farmer in Dover township and married Barbara Miller; Peter married Mary Richardson, of Indiana, and lives on the Pacific coast, an official on a vessel; Susan married Jacob Meisenhelder, and lives in York.

Jacob N. Bentzel was educated in the pay schools of Manchester township and Weigelstown, Dover township, attending until he was fourteen years of age, and then assisted his father on the farm for two and one-half years. In 1862, although only seventeen years old, he enlisted for service in the Civil war, entering Company G, 166th P. V. I., under Capt. D. L. Spangler, was mustered in at York, and was sent first with the command to Washington. Thence the regiment was ordered to Newport News, Whitehouse and Yorktown, returning to Washington and Harrisburg, where our subject was mustered out in July, 1863. In October,

1863, he re-enlisted, in the Carlisle garrison, and was appointed a sergeant of cavalry under Capt. Myers. Sergeant Bentzel was a very young officer, too young to undergo the hardships which came his way, and from which he suffers more or less to the present time. He participated in all the engagements of his regiment, and is one of the few men who can tell the true story of "Sheridan's Ride," for he was one of that dashing troop himself. Of all that gallant body of brave men few indeed are left. In telling of the way in which he was wounded so seriously he says it happened [sic] while he was delivering a dispatch from the gallant Gen. Kilpatrick. Although he had his horse shot from under him he delivered the message; when he returned he asked permission to take off his shirt, and the wound in his back was found to be bleeding profusely. Mr. Bentzel has a record of surviving seven horses which were shot beneath him, and he is confident of killing three of the enemy, on all these occasions being in such close quarters that he could do nothing else. He was finally mustered out of the service, Aug. 16, 1865, at Nashville, Tenn. The graphic story of the war told by Mr. Bentzel is very interesting, and only limited space prevents insertion of many facts never before published. It is a matter of regret that this brave soldier has been so crippled from the effects of his army service that for the past fifteen years he has been confined to a chair. A copy of the following order was presented to him, but as it came to Washington after Lee's surrender, he never received his commission:

May 22, 1865.

To all whom it may concern I this day of May 22, have promoted J. N. Bentzel as first lieutenant on my staff for bravery all through my campaign.

Yours,

W. T. SHERMAN

Major General Commanding.

After his army service was completed Mr. Bentzel returned for a time to his home in Dover township, and then traveled all over the West, working at his trade, but later settled in Dover.

On Aug. 27, 1871, Mr. Bentzel was united in marriage with Sarah A. Lenhart, daughter of John and Margaret (Emig) Lenhart, who were early settlers in this portion of York county. After marriage Mr. and Mrs. Bentzel lived for one year in Dover, and then moved to Mr. Lenhart's farm, which he operated for thirteen years, then buying a home at Dover, where he was a carpenter and carriagemaker until he was obliged to retire from active work. He has a pleasant home and many friends. Among his treasures which he kindly displays to visitors is a sword which was brought to America by his great-grandfather.

Mr. and Mrs. Bentzel have had these children: A child born in December, 1875, died the same month; Anna Jane, born Jan. 14, 1877, married Harry Strickler, of York, and is the mother of two children, Morris (aged three years) and Margaret; Charles L., born July 22, 1878, married Annie Hobough, and is living at York, York county, and has one child, Marion H., aged two years; Harry L., born Oct. 29, 1880, who lives at Green Ridge, married Florence Bear, and they are the parents of two children, Evelyn and Hazel. Mr. Bentzel takes great comfort in his little grandchildren. In politics he is a Democrat. Mrs. Bentzel is a member of the Reformed Church.