

GENEALOGICAL AND  
PERSONAL HISTORY

OF THE

ALLEGHENY VALLEY

PENNSYLVANIA

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UNDER THE EDITORIAL SUPERVISION OF

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ILLUSTRATED

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WEISER      In the beginning of the eighteenth century constant wars had reduced the people of southern Germany to a great condition of misery. Under the favor of Anne, the benevolent Queen of England, there was in consequence a large migration to America. At her expense four thousand Germans were transported across the sea. Five Mohawk Indian chiefs had promised them lands. June 13, 1710, a fleet of ten vessels landed at New York, having brought these four thousand settlers, and in the fall they took up their residence in villages along the Hudson. There they were oppressed by a commercial corporation; they were compelled to practical servitude and were not transported to the lands which the Indians had offered. Many of them removed to the westward, seeking these lands, and settled among the Indians, who happily received them kindly, in the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys, about forty miles west of Albany, New York. But trouble still pursued these wretched wanderers in their new home. Their lands were claimed by others. It was a long time, in which they suffered greatly, before the English authorities became clearly cognizant of the

miseries of these people and the wrongs which had been practiced on them. Justice was then attempted, but before the final relief of their condition a second migration had occurred from the Schoharie settlement into Pennsylvania.

Most of the Palatines, as these immigrants were called, were of the poor and doubtless they were ignorant and rude. For a long time there was a decided social distinction drawn between them and the Dutch, where these peoples lived together, to the detriment of the Palatines. But a few families among them rose conspicuous even in the earliest days, and the Weiser family was the most notable, forceful and capable of them all. It was of higher rank in the old country, though reduced by misfortune at this time. For three generations in succession the office of chief magistrate or chief burgess of Gross Aspach, county of Backnang, Wurtemberg, Germany, had been held in the family. The second of these officials, and the first of the line whose name is known, was Jacob Weiser, born about 1590; his son was also named Jacob, and was born about 1625. With his son, our more detailed family history is begun. The family arms are thus described: Per fesse, gules and argent, in chief, a swan of the second, in base three roses of the first, stalked and leaved vert.

John Conrad, son of Jacob Weiser, the American founder of this family, was born in 1660, died in 1746. He was the recognized leader of the Palatine immigrants who came to New York in 1710. Three years later he was the leader in the removal to the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys, and in their new settlement they called one of their villages Weisersdorf. When three delegates journeyed to London to plead on behalf of the settlers against the claimants to their new plantations, he was the chief of these. He married (first) Anna Magdalena Uebele, born in 1666, died May 1, 1709; (second) in 1711, ———, who died in 1781. Children, all by first marriage, sixteen, seven of whom died before their mother. The others were: Catharine, married Conrad Boss; Margaret; Magdalena; Sabina; Conrad, of whom further; George Frederick; Christopher Frederick; Barbara; John Frederick. All these, except the oldest daughter, came to America.

Conrad, son of John Conrad and Anna Magdalena (Uebele) Weiser, was born at Aftstaedt, county of Herrenberg, Duchy of Wur-

temberg, November 2, 1696. His name was really John Conrad, the same as his father's, but he was so generally called Conrad only, that the fact of his having another Christian name is almost forgotten. He was about fourteen at the time of the immigration. Three years later he lived for about eight months among the Indians, and it was largely due to this that he became proficient in their tongue. In the spring of 1723 about sixty families removed from the Schoharie settlement to Pennsylvania and formed the first white settlement in that colony north of the South Mountain Ridge. A second migration succeeded this after six years, and among the members of this second body were Conrad Weiser and his family. In Pennsylvania he became a man of prime importance. A capable and honest Indian interpreter was a valuable man. For more than twenty years he was almost constantly employed by the civil authorities in connection with Indian affairs. The colonial records, not only of Pennsylvania, but also of New York, Ohio and Virginia, are full of reports concerning his difficult, lonely, and hazardous journeys in the performance of these services. He was intimate with colonial governors; with Benjamin Franklin and with other notable men. The interests of his own community were not neglected; he was the chief agitator in the movement which finally resulted in the formation of Berks county, and was first judge of its courts, which office he held until his death. For a while he lived at Reading and kept a store. He served in the French and Indian war. Conrad Weiser was an active promoter of religion and education. While he was himself a Lutheran, he greatly assisted in the missionary efforts of the Moravians and of other religious bodies. He was a Christian citizen, of a type which may, as in his case, receive honor and gratitude, but whose deserts still surpass the honors received. He married, in 1720, Anna Eve ———. Children, fifteen, of whom eight died young. The survivors, named in his will, were: 1. Philip, born September 7, 1722, died May 27, 1761; married, in 1748, Sophia ———. 2. Frederick, born about 1724, died about 1790; married Amelia ———. 3. Peter. 4. Samuel. 5. Benjamin. 6. Anna Maria, born June 24, 1727, died August 23, 1802; married, April 22, 1745, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg. From them have sprung a remarkable number of eminent men among whom were Major General John Peter

Gabriel Muhlenberg (their son); Rev. Frederick Augustus Conrad Muhlenberg, who was the first speaker of the United States house of representatives; Rev. William Augustus Muhlenberg, D. D., eminent among the Episcopalians as others of the family among the Lutherans; and Rev. Henry Augustus Philip Muhlenberg, who was eminent in public life, beside being a minister. 7. Margaret, married (first) ——— Heintzelman, (second) ——— Finker.