

GEORGE ROW, ex-editor of the *Indiana Register*, a prominent and one of the oldest justices of the peace in this county, and the senior member of the real-estate firm of Row & Books, was the well-known editor of the *Kingwood Chronicle*, which was one of the few Union papers of western Virginia in 1861. he was born near Adamsburg, in Westmoreland county, Pennsylvania, October 24, 1832, and is a son of Jonathan and Maria C. (Miniam) Row. {For ancestral history, see sketch of Jonathan Row.}"

George Row was reared in Westmoreland county, where he received his education in the common schools. He served a four years' apprenticeship to the tanning business, which he did not follow very long. In 1852 he removed to Indiana, where he assisted his father in the printing business for eight years. Upon solicitation of prominent parties in Virginia (now W. Va.), he and his brother, Amos Row, in February, 1861, went to the beautiful and pleasant town of Kingwood, the county seat of Preston county, Va. (now W. Va.), and stated the *Kingwood Chronicle*. They were ardent and radical Unionists, naturally encountered all the hostility of the Secession element of that section, and were repeatedly threatened with personal violence and the destruction of their press. In May, 1861, it was rumored that the press would be destroyed, and the Row brothers, with other prominent citizens, would be hanged. This elicited the following in the issue of the *Chronicle* for June 8<sup>th</sup>: "We have endeavored to pursue a fair and frank course throughout, both as publishers and as citizens, and, feeling thus, we have no fears for our persons or property through or by process of law; and as for mobs, we hate and espies them." The *Chronicle* was folio of seven columns to the page, and while ardently advocating the preservation of the Union and the suppression of the Great Rebellion, was not lacking in literary merit or deficient in county news. Copies of the paper, still preserved at Kingwood, bear evidence to the patriotism and editorial ability of its "Yankee" editors, as they were termed by the Secessionists. The governor of Virginia, in January, 1861, convened the Legislature of that State in extra session. *The Kingwood Chronicle*, soon thereafter, pointed out the fallacy of the non-coercive policy demanded by the Virginia legislature. Referring to the persistent efforts of leading secessionists to intimidate the Union settlement, on April 6<sup>th</sup> the *Chronicle* fearlessly condemned the fanaticism of secession as vitiating the moral sense of society in all classes; and further reviewing the violet measures threatened from Richmond, the *Chronicle* assumed that the people of West Virginia would not suffer themselves, by any means whatever, to be coerced out of the Union, or be compelled to fight the battles of those who were seeking to oppress her, without a struggle. Herein was foreshadowed the formation of a public sentiment which bore its legitimate fruits a little father on in time, in the division of the old State of Virginia. George Row again argued that in the Secession action of the State government was the hope of West Virginia; that western Virginia being the only loyal part of the State, upon her devolved all the responsibility of the government and the election of officers by the sovereign people in convention assembled, and supported his position by a lengthy and able argument. On June 29, 1861, George Row strictly advanced and advocated the importance of a division of the State. He said; "The question is an important one, and the dissimilarity of interest in the eastern and western sections demand for it very grave considerations."..."For a long while the basis of representation and the discrimination in the rates of taxation in favor of property in slaves which are in favor of east Virginia have been just causes of complaint on the part of the people of western Virginia. The east, having the power, lost no opportunity of securing her own aggrandizement by liberal appropriations, while the

interests of the west have suffered detriment from neglect.”...”The State debt has accumulated, and the legislature has attempted to force a new and weightier wrong upon us: we are ordered to aid with our lives and our fortunes to destroy the government of our fathers, by setting up treason and rebellion in our midst. Forbearance has ceased to be a virtue, and the people of the west, not willing to be made tools in this new infamy, are urging a division of the State.”

The editors of *The Kingwood Chronicle* actively bore their part, and by their independent course and decided utterance, exercised a wide and positive influence in keeping the western counties of western Virginia in the Union line, and establishing the new State of West Virginia. The perils of the times, the unsettled condition of business and threatened Confederate raids into Preston county were fatal to all newspaper enterprises there during the first two years of the late war, and in 1862 the Row Brothers were compelled to stop the publication of their paper for the want of pecuniary support. While at Kingwood, George Row was instrumental in securing for the Unionists of Preston county a large stock of arms and ammunition, which had been stored in the courthouse at Kingwood by order of Gov. Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, soon after the John Brown raid. George Row first suggested the seizure of these arms to the Union men of Kingwood, and not too soon; for, as was afterwards learned, a Confederate force had been sent on the preceding Friday from Phillippi, with wagons to carry away these military stores. Their instructions were to be at Kingwood on Sunday night, May 12, 1861. But heavy rains and storm impeded their progress, so that they did not arrive on time (intending, however, to fulfill their mission on the succeeding night), and thus failed to secure the much coveted and highly valuable prize. Upon learning of the facts, Gov. Letcher, as commander-in-chief of the Virginia military, issued an order for the arrest of George and Amos Row, and some half-dozen others who had participated in taking the arms: but the order was never executed.

In 1862 Mr. Row returned to Indiana, where he assumed charge of the *Register*, which had lost prestige and influence with the republicans on account of criticising some of the influential leaders of that party. He soon won the entire confidence and full support of the Indiana republicans, and successfully conducted the paper until 1870. Three years later he was elected justice of the peace, and has served as such ever since. In 1888 he formed a partnership with John W. Books in the real estate and collection business, under the firm-name of Row & Books. They occupy rooms in the Stadtmiller building, and buy, sell and lease real estate, besides giving prompt attention the collection of rents and accounts.

On April 20, 1865, George Row was united in marriage with Phebe E. Brooks, daughter of John J. Brooks, of New York, and sister to the distinguished and courteous Edward Brooks, A.M., author of Brooks' arithmetics, algebras, geometry and mental science. Mrs. Row passed away January 30, 1878, and left one child,-- Rose Miniam, who married F. J. Neeson, of Williamsport, Pa., and died December 20, 1889, leaving two children,--Phebe A. and Thomas F. Neeson

He is a republican, but is liberal in his political views. As an editor, he followed in the footsteps of his father, and was unswerving in his fealty to the principle and interests of the Republican party. As a magistrate, his efficiency has been endorsed by his successive re-elections, and as a business man, his success is attested by his large patronage.