

JOHN SCHWALM, a native of the old world's mightiest empire, who has carved out for himself a successful and honorable career in the new world's greatest republic by industry, energy and integrity, is recognized as one of the most substantial business men of Armstrong county. Prominently identified with the industrial life of Leechburg since the Centennial year of American Independence, Mr. Schwalm has become one of the main factors in the prosperity of that live borough. John Schwalm was born in Hesse-Cassel, Prussia, February 27, 1835, and is a son of John George and Catharine Elizabeth (Koehler) Schwalm. His father came, in 1852, to parks township, where he bought a small farm and has been engaged in its cultivation ever since.

John Schwalm received his education at Marburg, Hesse-Cassel, and was intended for the ministry by his parents. He came to America with his father in 1852, landing at New York, August 14<sup>th</sup>, and coming immediately as far westward as Leechburg. Having determined to win honorable standing and a respectable competency in the land of his adoption, he accepted the first honest employment which came to his hand and engaged as a laborer on the Allegheny Valley railroad. He next worked for his father a few years and in 1863 embarked in the mercantile business, which he followed with increasing success until 1871, when he formed a partnership with W. H. Carnahan, under the firm-name of Schwalm & Carnahan, and purchased what is known as Cochran's Mill, in Burrell township. They pursued the mercantile and milling business until the fall of 1876, when Mr. Schwalm came to Leechburg and purchased the Hill mill property and the homestead of David Leech, the founder of the town. He immediately erected a new mill on the site of the old one, in which he did a successful business until it was swept away by ice in 1881. In 1887 he erected his present large two-story mercantile establishment and somewhat later purchased and rebuilt the Ulam Hotel, now known as the Schwalm House. He has a one-half interest in the Elwood flouring-mill (old Leech mill), is part owned of three coal mines in Westmoreland county not far from Leechburg and owns three Armstrong county farms. In addition to his large mercantile, milling, hotel, coal and farming interests he has invested in various other business enterprises. In politics Mr. Schwalm is a democrat, and on account of his strength and great popularity in the county, he was nominated, in 1882, by his party for the assembly. Notwithstanding the county was republican by six hundred majority, and that that party made a strenuous effort to secure their usual vote, yet Mr. Schwalm lacked by sixteen votes of being elected. He is a member of Leechburg Lodge, No. 577, F. & A. Masons, Orient Chapter, No. 247, R.A.M., Leechburg Lodge, No. 437, I.O.O.F., and Burrell Grange.

In 1854 he married Sarah Smail, who was a daughter of Jacob Smail, an early settler of what is now Bethel township and died July 14, 1883. They were the parents of nine children: Catherine Elizabeth (Carson), Anna Mary (Taylor), John Jr., who read law with Atty.-Gen. Brewster; Matthew, Margaret, Matilda, Sarah Amanda, Ida Louisa, Charles Bismark and Edward Walter. On April 13, 1887, Mr. Schwalm united in marriage with Rebecca A Christy, who was a daughter of John Christy, of Manor township, and died January 14, 1890.

John Schwalm has been a member of the Presbyterian church for many years and is a genial, courteous and obliging gentleman. His life has been one of constant activity and continued success and his character is above the breath of suspicion. Honest, honorable, just and charitable he is deservedly popular. Mr. Schwalm's career has been fittingly described by one who is well able to speak from personal knowledge and who

says: "His property has all be accumulated by his own exertion and enterprise, and his quite phenomenal prosperity, extending and increasing through a period of more than forty years, marks him as a man of unusual ability, judgment and industry. He is in all respects worthy of the success he has achieved. He had done a great deal, directly and indirectly, to advance the interests of Leechburg. He is liberal and public-spirited, and always one of the foremost in any enterprise for the good of the community."