

SMITH NEAL, one of the largest landholders of eastern Armstrong county, and a prominent and influential member of the United Presbyterian church in Cowanshannock township, was born in Butler county, Pa., January 25, 1822, and is a son of Robert and Sarah (Love) Neal. The Neal family is of German descent, and one of its members, Henry Neal (great-grandfather), was a farmer in the Cumberland Valley, who had three brothers who served in the colonial army in the Revolution, and were all killed in the battle of Brandywine. He married a Miss Smith, by whom he had three sons: William, who settled in Armstrong county; John, who became a farmer in Butler county, and Smith Neal (grandfather), who was born March 5, 1764, in the Cumberland Valley, from whence he removed to Butler county. He enlisted in the Colonial army during the Revolution and served one day. He was also a soldier during the war of 1812, and the gun that he carried has been preserved in the family, and is now in the possession of his grandson and namesake, the subject of this sketch. In 1833, Smith Neal removed to Armstrong county, where he purchased a farm, which he cultivated until his death, August 5, 1863, when he was in the one hundredth year of his age. He was a millwright by trade, a whig in politics, and a member of the Seceder church. He married Sarah Cochran, and they had one son, Robert Neal (father), who was born July 5, 1795. Robert Neal was a farmer of Butler county until 1834, when he bought a farm in Armstrong county. He was a member of the Seceder church until his death, December 24, 1863. He was a whig and afterwards a republican; was the first inspector of elections in his township. He married Sarah Love, by whom he had five children, three sons and two daughters: William H., married Eliza Stuchel, and resides near Marion; Rosetta P., wife of Thomas H. Marshall, a merchant and farmer of Dayton; Alexander, who went to California; Neal, and Mary J. (deceased), who married James Hanagan, and after his death married James Temple, of Iowa.

Smith Neal was reared on his father's farm, attended the subscription schools of his neighborhood, and has been engaged in farming ever since leaving school. Besides his Cowanshannock township farm of two hundred acres, he also owns the home farm of five hundred acres.

On May 25, 1847, he married Margaret Sloan, a daughter of Samuel and Nancy Sloan, old settlers of Plum Creek township. To Mr. and Mrs. Neal have been born five children, one son and four daughters: Nancy J., now living in Philadelphia; Amanda, wife of Johnson Irwin, a carpenter of Denver, Colorado; and Sarah, wife of Samuel Burns, a farmer of Cowanshannock township; Margaret and Alexander, who are both dead. Mrs. Neal passed away March 17, 1861, at thirty-nine years of age. On April 10, 1862, Mr. Neal married as his second wife, Caroline Jewert, a daughter of Alexander and Jane (Kickenlooper) Jewert, of Plum Creek township. To this second union were born six children, two sons and four daughters: Loella R., married J. P. Beyer, and after his death became the wife of A. M. Hines, a resident of Harrisburg, and a conductor on the main line of the Pennsylvania railroad; L. Adda, wife of John Downey, of New Brighton, who is the inventor of the "Keystone Driller" and a steam-pump; Aldon, married Maggie J. Rankin, and has one child; Smith, Robert E., Mattie V. and Alice L.

In politics, Smith Neal is a republican, and has held various township offices. He and his whole family are members of the United Presbyterian church, of which he has been an elder for at least fifteen years. He represented the Brookville Presbytery in the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian church, held in Philadelphia in 1887.