

WESLEY PONTIUS, one of the reliable and leading business men of Wayne township and his section of the county, was born in Huntingdon county, Pennsylvania, September 15, 1813, and is a son of Jacob and Elizabeth (Lias) Pontius. His paternal grandfather, John Pontius, was a native of Germany and settled for a time near Philadelphia. He afterwards removed to Huntingdon county, where he remained but a short time and then located permanently in Wayne township. Although reared a Lutheran, he became a Methodist, and in politics was successively a whig and republican. His family consisted of two sons and four daughters. One of these sons was Jacob Pontius (father), who was born near Philadelphia. He owned a farm of two hundred acres near Dayton, besides several other tracts of land in the county. He was a Methodist and a whig and voted his party ticket when he and one other man were the only whigs in their section of the county. He married Elizabeth Lias, whose father was a German, who removed from eastern Pennsylvania to Huntingdon county, where he followed farming until his death. Mr. and Mrs. Pontius reared a family of nine children.

Wealey Pontius was reared on a farm when the county was but barely past its pioneer days and when farming was accomplished only by the hardest of labor. He attended the schools of that day and worked on the farm until he was almost twenty-one years of age, when his father built a tannery and he learned the trade of tanner. At the death of his father he came into possession of a part of the farm, which he tilled until 1862, when he disposed of all of his land but fifty acres adjoining Dayton, which he still owns. In 1866 a stock company was formed at Dayton, which organized the "Dayton Soldiers' Orphan School," and he was one of the heaviest stockholders as well as president for seven years of the board of managers of the company. He also has considerable stock in the Dayton Agricultural association, of which he was manager for a number of years.

He married Jane Traves, daughter of Thomas Traves, of near Dayton. They had three children, of whom two are living: Mary A., who married Rev. J. B. Gray, of the Pittsburgh m. E. conference and has one child, Earle, who is a young man of bright promise; and Canaretia, wife of Charles H. Grey, a commercial traveler of Pittsburgh.

At the present time Mr. Pontius is not actively engaged in any particular line of business, but gives his time to the management of his farm, and in looking after his general business interests. He was a whig until that party went out of existence and remembers distinctly the political campaign of 1840, with its many exciting scenes in Armstrong county, where he voted for General William H. Harrison for President of the United States. He has always given his time to business and especially to educational and agricultural enterprises calculated to benefit Dayton borough and Wayne township. Wesley Pontius is a member of the Methodist Episcopal church of Dayton, of which he served as a trustee for many years.