

BENJAMIN MARTIN McAFOOS, in his lifetime a well-known business man and farmer of Grant township, Indiana county, was born Feb. 25, 1847, near Kittanning, in Armstrong county, Pa., son of George Frederick McAfoos.

George Frederick McAfoos was born in August, 1816, and died Dec. 4, 1894. He followed farming near Kittanning, and came thence in 1859 to Indiana county, locating in what is now Grant township, where he owned land and followed farming and stock raising. His property was situated in what later became known as the McAfoos district, and he made many improvements on the place, where he spent the remainder of his life, his death occurring there. His wife, Margaret (Schreckengost), born Feb. 28, 1817, died Dec. 3, 1890, and they are buried in Oakland cemetery in Grant township. Mr. McAfoos was a member of the Lutheran Church. Children as follows were born to Mr. and Mrs. McAfoos: Isaac Schreckengost, born Jan. 6, 1839, died Sept. 30, 1854; James John, born Jan. 30, 1841, now a resident of Grant township, was a soldier in the Civil war; Herman Bertram, born Feb. 10, 1843, was a soldier in the Civil war and died while in the service, May 6, 1865; Susanna Urish, born Feb. 3, 1845, died Jan. 26, 1851; Benjamin Martin is mentioned below; Peter Wilyard, born May 23, 1849, died Jan. 26, 1851; Joseph William, born Sept. 16, 1851, died May 29, 1852; Daniel Lewis, born March 30, 1853, died young; Samuel G., born March 18, 1856, resides at Decker's Point, in Grant township; Sylvester L., born May 10, 1860, died young.

Benjamin Martin McAfoos attended public school near his early home in Armstrong county and later in Grant township, Indiana county. He was twelve years old when the family settled in what is now Grant township, where he grew to manhood on the farm, and when he started out for himself he purchased the Ruffner farm, a tract of ninety-two acres upon which he made many improvements, building a fine frame dwelling-house, and a substantial barn. Besides general farming he engaged in raising cattle and sheep, and also dealt largely in both, and he was selling agent for buggies and pianos in Grant township and other sections of Indiana county. His great energy, enterprise and business tact, combined with thrift and hard work, made him successful in his business undertakings, and he had many admirable personal traits which made him liked as well as respected. He was a lover of horses and cattle and took excellent care of his stock. In 1905 he sold the farm above mentioned and bought the Sylvis place at Decker's Point, remodeling the house, building a fine barn and converting the place into a most attractive home, one of the most desirable in that section. He did not live long to enjoy it, however, dying Nov. 4, 1907, and was buried in the Decker's Point cemetery. Mr. McAfoos was a member of the Christian Church and particularly active in the work of the Sunday School, acting as teacher and superintendent. He was very fond of music and was a very fine singer. Politically a Democrat, he took an interest in the success of the party, and served as assessor and tax collector.

On July 25, 1872, at the home of the bride's parents, Mr. McAfoos was married in Grant township to Mary E. Simpson, who was born there, daughter of Isaac and Sarah Jane (Smitten) Simpson. Four children were born to this marriage: (1) Harry Simpson, born May 1, 1873, received his early education in

the public schools of Grant township, and attended the Indiana State normal school and college. After teaching school four terms he engaged in farming and lumbering, having a fine farm near Gastown, Armstrong county, where his widow and children now reside. He had acquired extensive interests as a lumber manufacturer in North Carolina, and while locating there for the second time contracted fever. He started for home, but became so ill that he lived only four days, dying at Raleigh hospital, July 1, 1910. He was brought home and buried in the cemetery at Decker's Point, Indiana county, and a beautiful monument, erected by his wife, marks his resting place. Mr. McAfoos was a Republican in politics. His ambition was great, and his aspirations were high and noble. He married Lola White Graffuss, and they had two children, Annie Mary, born Aug. 13, 1905, and Helen Mabelle, born May 14, 1905. (2) Lola Eva died in childhood. (3) Anna Belle attended public school and summer normal, taught public school four years in Grant township, in the same district where her mother had taught, and is now the wife of Harry Reithmiller, a merchant of Grant township. (4) Nobel Cleone, who was educated in the public schools and summer normal, taught school four years in Grant township in the same district where her mother had taught. She now resides at home, and is a prominent member of the Christian Church.

Mrs. McAfoos received her education in the public schools and in summer normal at Marion Center, this county, under Professors Wolf and Covode, studied under Professor Brown, and at the Blairsville high school. For four years she taught in Grant township, and for one term was so engaged at Punxsutawney. She is an earnest member of the Christian Church, and has taught in the Sunday school. The Simpson family, of which she is a descendant, was represented among the early pioneer settlers of the county. James Simpson, the first of the family in Pennsylvania, born about 1750, was of Scottish extraction, but came to this country from the North of Ireland, in 1775. He first located in the Path valley, in Huntingdon county, Pa., later moving to Westmoreland county, where he continued to reside until 1785-86. Then he crossed the Conemaugh river, locating in what is now Cherryhill township, Indiana county, in which section he was among the first settlers. He was married to Polly Pollock, and they became the parents of the following children: Charity, who married Thomas Craven; Robert, who married Mary Shearer; Margaret, who married Moses Gamble; Nathaniel, who married Catherine Leasure; James, who married Jane Shearer; John, who married Sarah Kirkpatrick; David, who married Nancy Coulter; Isaac, who married Mary Lewis; and Samuel, who married Phebe Lewis. (Another account gives his children as James, Charles, Sarah, John, George, David, Nathaniel, Isaac and Samuel).

David Simpson, son of James and Polly (Pollock) Simpson, was an early settler of East Mahoning township, one of the first at what is now Richmond or Rochester Mills. He put up the first building at Richmond for a dwelling house, and the next was a saw and grist mill. The place was known as Simpson's Mill until 1862, when it was changed to Richmond. Mr. Simpson was a large land owner, most of his property lying in Canoe township. The first lot he sold for

building purposes was bought by Isaac Bee, the second by Daniel Bee. Besides engaging extensively in lumber manufacturing he carried on farming and stock raising. He was a pioneer in canoe township. He died in 1870, at the ripe age of eighty-six years, and is buried in Gilgal cemetery. Mr. Simpson was a member of the Presbyterian Church, and in politics originally a Whig, later a Republican. His wife, Nancy (Coulter), died in 1858, and was buried in Gilgal cemetery. She belonged to the same church as her husband. Their children were: Nathaniel, who died in the West; David, who died in the West; Isaac; and Elizabeth, who married Jacob Wilhelm and lived in West Mahoning township.

Isaac Simpson, son of David, received his education in the subscription schools in the home neighborhood. Like his father he followed lumbering and farming and was a successful lumber manufacturer, operating his father's sawmills and the gristmill, and engaging in general agricultural pursuits and stock raising and dealing. He spent his life in Grant township, and was considered one of the most progressive citizens of his day. In politics he was a democrat, in religious connection a member of the Presbyterian Church, to which his wife also belonged. He married Sarah Jane Smitten, daughter of Archibald Smitten, and her death occurred on the farm in 1899, when she was seventy-five years old. They are buried in the Richmond cemetery. Nine daughters were born to their marriage: Nancy taught school before her married to W. H. Work; both are now deceased, and they are buried in Indiana cemetery. H. J., also a teacher, married J. M. Stuchel, a fine carpenter, and (second) T. H. Kerr, a veteran of the Civil war, who resided at Vandergrift, and was employed in the steel mill; she is now a widow residing at Richmond. L. Eva was also a school teacher; she is now the widow of William Widdowson and resides at Richmond. Elizabeth, a teacher, married A. P. Copp, of Maine, and died there. Mary E., is now the widow of Benjamin Martin McAfoos and resides at Decker's Point. Margaret died when sixteen months old. Sarah Candace married J. M. Gamble, of Indiana, Pa., and is deceased; she possessed the traditional powers of the "seventh daughter," having more than ordinary skill in the care of the sick, and her charity and kindness were unending. Anna Belle was graduated from the Normal University at Ada, Ohio, and served as principal of schools at Houtzdale, Philipsburg and Summerville, Pa.; while engaged as an instructor in Kezar Falls, Maine, she became acquainted with Prof. Aristes Kennerson, whom she married in 1880, and died April 17, 1883 (he was buried in Richmond cemetery); later she became the wife of Prof. H. F. Guthrie, a merchant of Summerville, Jefferson Co., PA., where she now resides. Keturah married Josiah Widdowson, a merchant, of Nashville, PA., and both are now deceased; by this union there was one son, Clyde, who now resides in Indiana, Pennsylvania.