

DAVID T. NIEL, ex-county commissioner of Indiana county, Pa., and superintendent of the county poor farm, was born on a farm in Banks township, Indiana county, July 22, 1853, son of David and Susannah (Keel) Niel.

John Niel, his grandfather, is supposed to have been born where he was reared, in West Mahoning township, Indiana county. He was a farmer and miller. Before his death he moved over the line into Jefferson county, and passed away there. He married Deborah pierce, who also died in Jefferson county. They were excellent people, and held to the Baptist father. They had the following children: Samuel, deceased, who married Ellen Lindsey; David, mentioned below; Thomas, deceased, who served in the Civil war as a private in a Pennsylvania regiment and several times was severely wounded (he married Mary Grauffis); George, who died in Banks township, in 1911 (married Susanna Adamson); Margaret, of Banks township, who married Samuel Adamson (deceased) and (second) J. H. Rager; Mary, Mrs. Drummond, who died in Banks township; James, a soldier in the Civil war, who married Sarah Spencer, and they died in Banks township; and Benjamin, who served over three years in the Civil war and was killed at the battle of Fair Oaks (he married Jane Findley, while on a furlough, and met death after returning to his regiment).

David Niel, son of John Niel, was born in West Mahoning township, where he spent his early life, in boyhood attending a subscription school held in one of the old log structures made use of at that day for school purposes. After marriage he located on a farm of 100 acres, situated in Banks township, and afterward bought his father-in-law's farm of 150 acres, later adding eighty acres adjoining and thus becoming one of the substantial farmers of his section. In 1864, he enlisted in Company B, 206th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, and served until the war closed, after which he resumed farming, subsequently selling his three tracts of land and buying a small tract adjoining, upon which he spent the rest of his life, his death occurring June 18, 1905. His first marriage was to Susannah keel, daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth Keel, who came to America from Germany; he was a Baptist minister. Mrs. Niel died in 1856, the mother of four children: John K., a resident of Reynolds, Jefferson Co., Pa., who married Elizabeth Pierce; Jacob, who died young; James Henry, who is deceased; and David T. the second marriage of David Niel was to Mrs. Elizabeth Bowers, who survives, and the following children were born to them: Della, who married George Long and (second) North Bratton, and they live in Banks township; Geneworth, who died young; Rhoda Belle, who died in childhood; and Jennie, who is the wife of John Fuller and lives in Polk county, Oregon. The father of the above children was a member of the Baptist Church. In political association he was a Republican.

David T. Niel grew to manhood on the home farm in Banks township and after leaving school, when about fourteen years of age, went to work at tasks requiring a man's strength and judgment. He ploughed his father's fields, helped harvest the crops, and in the winter time worked in the woods and hauled logs. Until he was nineteen years of age he continued to labor for his father, about this time deciding to establish a home of his own. He married Feb. 14, 1872, Sarah Catharine Sheesley, of Jefferson county, a daughter of Henry and Sarah

(Williamson) Sheesley, and after marriage located on a farm which he rented in Banks township. Later he bought fifty-six acres in the same township and he received a gift of fifty acres from his father. Mr. Niel remained on this farm for several years and then purchased 103 acres in the same township, which was formerly his grandfather Keel's old homestead. To this he added two tracts, one of thirteen acres and another of twenty-five acres, and all this land he put under a high state of cultivation, carrying on extensive farming operations and raising stock, in addition to which he was interested in a lumber business. Mr. Niel's business activities also led him into mercantile lines and he conducted a general store on his farm, and during this time was postmaster at Flora. As a successful business man and as a representative and reliable citizen Mr. Niel became known all over the county, serving his township as constable, supervisor, tax collector and justice of the peace. In 1908 he was elected a county commissioner and served out his full term of three years, at the end of which he was appointed superintendent of the county poor farm. He still retains his property in Banks township

To Mr. and Mrs. Niel twelve children have been born, the family record being as follows: Ora Etta is Mrs. A. C. Smyers, of Dubois; Miles Lester, who resides in the state of Oregon, married Rose Hanna; David Henry, who lives at Big Run, Jefferson county, married Edith Mogel; Anna B. is the wife of Calvin Pierce, of Jefferson county; Charles E., who lives in Banks township, married Jennie Filler; Lewis, who is a farmer in Banks township, married Dolly Henry; Blanche is the wife of Carl Smith, of Canoe township; Carrie Elizabeth is the wife of Luther Gaston, of Canoe township; Dora May is Mrs. H. B. Bowers, of banks township; Bertha Jane is the wife of Calvin Spencer, who resides on Mr. Niel's farm; Lott R. lives at Glen Campbell; Flora D. lives at home. Mr. and Mrs. Niel have twenty grandchildren.

Mr. and Mrs. Niel are members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in which he has been a class leader. For twenty-three years, he has been a member of Mahoning Lodge, No. 927, Odd Fellows, and belongs also to Big Run Lodge, no. 47, Knights of Pythias.