

JOHN R. BRYAN, former school teacher and business man of Indiana, Pa., and now living retired, was born Jan. 8, 1838, on the old family homestead in White township, near Indiana, Indiana Co., Pa., and is a son of John MacCartney and Mary Barr (Allison) Bryan.

Nathaniel Bryan, the great-grandfather of John R. Bryan, was born in Ireland, and was there married to a Scotchwoman. He was a farmer in his native country, and on coming to America with his wife and seven sons located at the present site of Cumberland, Md. His eldest son was finely educated, and was one of the early government surveyors, laying out the town of Cumberland, Md., and later going to Kentucky, where he was married. Two of the sons of the progenitor settled in Virginia, and from one of these, it is supposed, William Jennings Bryan is descended. Two other sons settled in New York State, one remained in Maryland, and the remaining son, the grandfather of John R. Bryan, came to Indiana county, Pa. Nathaniel Bryan fought as a soldier in the war for American independence.

Nathaniel Bryan (2), son of Nathaniel, and grandfather of John R. Bryan, was born in Ireland and was a lad when brought to the new world. He was reared to manhood in Cumberland, Md., and came to Indiana county, Pa., some time prior to his marriage, which occurred in Brushvalley township, to a Miss MacCartney. When he had reached advanced years he went to live at Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind., the home of his three sons and one daughter, and died at the home of his son Joseph, when he had reached the remarkable age of ninety-six years. His wife died in Indiana county, Pa. They were both members of the Church of the Covenant. Their children were: Samuel, a cabinetmaker by trade, when twenty-two years old accompanied a colony of Indiana county people to the woods at what is now Decatur, Ind., where he became a prominent man, serving as justice of the peace and as judge of the county court, holding the latter position at the time of his death (he left two daughters); Hannah, who married Robert Allison, settled on a farm in White township and died there at the age of eighty-two years; Mrs. Joseph McCartney died on a farm in Wheatfield township; John MacCartney is mentioned below; Charles, who as a youth learned the tanner's trade in Mahoning township, where he married a Miss Saddler, with his wife and two sons removed to Greensburg, where he superintended the construction of a railroad, and where his wife died. Mr. Bryan subsequently returning to Mahoning township to marry her sister, Martha (he died at Greensburg, Ind.); Joseph, who accompanied the colony to Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind., where he was engaged in the hardware business up to the time of his death, married a Miss McCartney, and had two sons and two daughters; Martha made her home with her brother Joseph, at Greensburg, Decatur Co., Ind., and died there, unmarried.

John MacCartney Bryan, son of Nathaniel (2), and father of John R. Bryan, was born June 10, 1808, on the old homestead in Wheatfield township. Though during his entire life he received but three months schooling, and in order to obtain that was obliged to walk five miles, no man in the county could keep a better set of books. After his marriage he settled at Strongstown, Indiana county, where he kept the old tavern for two years, and then purchase d138 acres of land

one mile north of Indiana from David Ralston, subsequently purchasing another property of the same size, located in the woods. He spent his entire life in the cultivation of these properties, and died April 10, 1860, in the faith of the Presbyterian Church, of which he was a trustee for many years, and to which his wife also belonged. He was a Whig in his political views. Mrs. Bryan, who died June 24, 1872, at the age of seventy-five years, was the mother of these children: Sarah Jane married Thomas Ebey, and died in Topeka, Kans, at the age of seventy years; Samuel, who married Rebecca A. Rowe, lived and died on the old homestead; Rebecca married Samuel Rowe, of Oskaloosa, Iowa, who was for thirty years in the fruit business there, and when Guthrie, Okla., was opened for settlement, went to that point and was there engaged in fruit raising, Mrs. Rowe still being a resident of Guthrie, although her husband is deceased; Allison died at the age of four years; John R. is mentioned below; Harrison, who married Maggie Wigans, lives on the old homestead; William B., a retired farmer of Indiana, Pa., married Deborah Berkepale, now deceased; James Mitchell died at the age of three years; Taylor W., who fought with the 55th Pennsylvania Volunteers during the Civil war, following that went to Sedalia, Mo., engaged in scene painting, married and died there.

John R. Bryan received his education in the old subscription schools of Indiana borough and spent his boyhood days on the home farm. He started out to make his won way in the world with little else than determination, energy and a good mind and steady habits, and at the age of eighteen years was teaching school at Taylorsville, following that during the winter months, while the summer season was spent in advancing his own education, in Dayton Academy and the seminary at Marion Center. At the latter place his sister, Mrs. Rowe, resided, her husband being postmaster and conducting a general store at that place. Mr. Bryan worked in his brother-in-law's store and carried mail, thus earning board and clothes, and at the age of twenty-three years endeavored to enlist in the 11th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry. On account of his small stature, however, he was advised by the recruiting officer to "go home and grow a bit." Returning to his duties as teacher, Mr. Bryan spent the recesses in drilling his pupils, and the patriotic fever finally became so strong that a company was formed, which was subsequently accepted and merged with Company I, 67th Regiment, Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, under Col. John F. Stanton, a full cousin of the family Secretary of War Stanton. They went to camp in Philadelphia, and after drilling there and at the navy yard in Annapolis, were sent to do guard duty on the railroad. Later they went to Annapolis and eventually to Harper's Ferry, to assist in preventing Jackson's crossing into Maryland. With the 2d Corps, the regiment served in the Shenandoah valley, but during the fall of 1863 was transferred to the 3d Division, 6th Army Corps, with which it was identified until the close of hostilities. Mr. Bryan was captured at Winchester, Va., and taken to Libby prison and thence to Belle Isle, when he was transferred to a parole camp at Annapolis. From that city he walked home to see his mother, and on rejoining his regiment was discharged at Washington and mustered out of the service at Harrisburg, on account of the close of the war.

Returning home, the young soldier was engaged in buying stock for one year, and on March 20, 1866, was married to Mary E. Dunn, of Penn Run, Pa., daughter of Cyrus and Sarah (Empfield) Dunn. Mr. Bryan then engaged in business as a huckster, but after four years entered the commission business, in which he continued twenty-nine years. For more than a decade he has lived retired in Indiana, where he is widely known and highly esteemed. Mr. Bryan is essentially a self-made man, having gained success in life through the medium of his own efforts. He has had an able assistant in his worthy wife, who has shared with him all the vicissitudes of a long and useful career. They are consistent members of the United Presbyterian Church, and in political matters Mr. Bryan is a staunch Republican, having served as overseer of the poor for twelve years and in various other offices. He is a remarkably well preserved man, and in spite of his seventy-five years reads the newspaper without the aid of glasses and has a very retentive memory.

Mr. and Mrs. Bryan have had three children: Minnie J., who married R. M. Smith, of Indiana; a child who died in infancy; and Wallace Steele. The latter was born in Indiana, Pa., April 5, 1867, and after attending the public schools of the borough and the Indiana State normal school entered Washington and Jefferson College, and subsequently took a course at Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, where he graduated. He at once engaged in practice at McKeesport, but at present is practicing in Ramey, Clearfield county, where he is also the proprietor of a drug store. Dr. Bryan married Clara Howell, and they have one daughter; Mary.