

SYLVESTER C. WELCHONCE, who for thirty-five years has been the proprietor of a blacksmith shop at North Point, Indiana county, was born in Porter township, Jefferson Co., Pa., April 23, 1855, and is a son of Austin and Margaret (McHenry) Welchonce. Mathias Welchonce, his paternal grandfather, was a native of Germany.

Austin Welchonce, son of Mathias, and father of Sylvester Co. Welchonce, was born in Westmoreland county, PA., and when a lad of fifteen years moved to West Mahoning township, Indiana county, accompanying his father to the old Good mill, which they conducted for several years. Later they went to Porter township, Jefferson county, and secured a farm, and there they both passed away. Mathias Welchonce married Susan Ambrose, and they had six children: John, who is deceased; Alexander, of Clearfield county, PA.; Austin; Lavina, deceased; Martha, a resident of Illinois; and Claranna, living in Jefferson county. Austin Welchonce was engaged for some time in burning charcoal in Porter township, but later removed to the Stewardson furnace, near the mouth of Mahoning creek, in Armstrong county, working at the furnace. He returned to his farm some time later, and in 1862 came to West Mahoning township, purchasing the Crusman farm, on which he spent the rest of his life, and where his wife is still living at the age of eighty-two years. He was a Democrat in politics, and an active member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He and his wife were the parents of the following children: Sylvester C.; Alvy M., a blacksmith at Homer City, PA., who married Mamie Blose; Sarah, who married Scott Chambers, of Ambrose, Pa.; Elizabeth, who married Rev. C H. Frampton, of Oil City, Pa.; Frank, a farmer on the old home place, who married Lavina McHenry; and Ruth, who married Wallace McMiller, living at Ambrose.

Sylvester C. Welchonce, son of Austin Welchonce, received his education in the old Gamble school, in North Mahoning township, and at the age of sixteen years commenced to learn the trade of blacksmith in the shop of John C. Stear, at North Point. He continued in his employ for two years, and then went to Elk City, PA., for a short period, but returned to North Point, and in 1878 opened his present establishment, which he has continued to conduct to the present time.

Mr. Welchonce was married in 1880 in Jefferson county, Pa., to Joanna Lettie, of West Mahoning township, Indiana county, daughter of George and Hannah (Mottern) Lettie, of Northumberland county, Pa., pioneers of Jefferson county, who settled near Worthville. In 1860 they located at North Point, where Mr. Lettie conducted a gristmill for many years, but he is now retired and living quietly at Porter, Jefferson county. Mr. and Mrs. Welchonce have had one son, Harry Monroe. He was born at North Point, Pa., in 1884, was educated in the home schools, and at the age of sixteen years went to Hicksville, Ohio, to learn the trade of telegrapher. Finishing his course, he returned to his home and soon secured a position with the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, as operator at Indiana, going thence to Avonmore, Pa., where he spent one year, and then to Saltsburg, where he was stationed for three months. He was next connected with the B. R. & P. Railroad Company at Butler, Pa., for one year, went thence to North Point, and then became connected with the Bessemer & Lake Erie Railroad Company, at Greenville, where he was a dispatcher for two years. At

that time Mr. Welchonce began playing baseball as a professional, being one year as an outfielder in the Ohio and Pennsylvania League, from which he went to the Philadelphia Nationals. After one season he was sent to the Central League, where he played with Grand Rapids, but was traded by the latter team to South bend, Ind. He returned to the Philadelphia Nationals in 1910, but was sold to Nashville, in the Southern League, with which team he played for one season, and then went to the New York Americans and later was secured by draft by the Washington team of the American League, with which he played during the season of 1912, and of which he is still a member. He spends the winter months at home. He has demonstrated that he has inherited much of his father's mechanical skill, being able to perform almost any piece of difficult work in his father's shop. In 1904 he married Daisy Stone, of Greenville, mercer county, Pa., at which place he makes his winter home, being employed by the Bessemer Railroad Company during the winter months, as telegrapher in their main office.

Sylvester C. Welchonce is a valued member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles, with the members of which he has always been popular, and he has, indeed, with all who have met him. He is a Republican in politics, and has served as postmaster of North Point, and as a member of the school board, and he and Mrs. Welchonce are consistent members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He has always been an industrious and persistent worker, and the success which has attended his efforts is but the natural result of a long and useful life, filled with earnest endeavor and marked by the highest integrity. His skill as a horseshoer has brought him considerable renown, and though fifty-eight years old he was able recently to set sixty shoes in one day, keeping it up for several days at a time. He has horses coming to his shop from a radius of twenty-five miles, and is one of the leading horseshoers of Indiana and Jefferson counties, having been very successful in the shoeing of racehorses, and of all kinds of crippled and deformed feet.