

A BRIEF HISTORY
OF
JOHN AND CHRISTIAN FRETZ
AND A COMPLETE
GENEALOGICAL FAMILY REGISTER

WITH

BIOGRAPHIES OF THEIR DESCENDANTS FROM
THE EARLIEST AVAILABLE RECORDS
TO THE PRESENT TIME.

WITH PORTRAITS AND OTHER ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY
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With an Introduction by J. FREEMAN HENDRICKS, A. M.

1890.

MENNONITE PUBLISHING CO.,
ELKHART, IND.

VI. Benjamin Franklin Fretz, born June 22, 1854. in DeKalb Co., Ind.. where he spent his childhood. The death of his father left him, then but little more than seven years of age, the oldest of a family of five children. It was in his early boyhood that he witnessed some of the privations and hardships incident to life among the heavy forests of Indiana. Frank with his widowed mother, assumed the task of caring for themselves and family, in all a group of five chil-

dren, ranging in age from eight years to five months. The mother bowed down with grief at the untimely loss of her husband and the weight of the great responsibility thus thrown upon her, was for a number of years almost an invalid. Through the direction of a kind Providence and an indomitable energy, born of that courage which comes only of an unflinching faith in God, she with the help of her older children, succeeded in stemming the tide of poverty and want which at times threatened her. It was during these trying ordeals that Frank received many of the lessons of life, usually learned by others at a more advanced age, and only learned by experience. These, together with the kind advice and maternal admonition of his mother, were the germs from which grew the future hopes and aspirations of the young man. He attended the Public School until the age of sixteen when he was obliged to quit. During the whole period of his school life much of his time was diverted to attend to the wants of the family. He entered a normal class in 1871 under the instruction of Prof. Wm. H. McIntosh, was licensed to teach the common branches, and taught in his county during the winter of 1871 and 72, dividing his meagre salary with his mother. He entered the Oberlin school of Telegraphy in the fall of 1873, taking a complete course in that art, and soon after secured a position in a Railway Telegraph Office at Kendallville, Ind. He returned to the profession of teaching in 1875, devoting his time alternately to his profession and various other pursuits. In the spring of 1878, he determined to visit the Great West. At Independence, Kans., he passed the summer on a farm, as a common laborer, and the following winter again entered the school room. In 1880 he began the study of law, under the tutorship of the Hon. Daniel Grass, of Independence, Kan., but a year later accepted the offer of Ben. S. Henderson Atty. at Law, to finish his law studies and prepare for a copartnership with him in the practice. Here his associations and relations were pleasant and profitable. He acquired a taste for his profession, but circumstances conspired to

change his course and he was induced to accept a position as teacher in the employ of the Department of the Interior, at Osage Agency, I. T., where he remained for nearly two years among the natives of the plains. Here in the summer of 1882 he was married to Miss Linna Crooks, of Waterloo, Ind., a former associate and fellow teacher. The marriage was consummated Aug. 20, 1882, and the two at once set out for the husband's field of labor among the red men of Indian Ter. Both engaged as teachers of the Indian children of that post. During the following winter Small-Pox scattered the inmates of the school and on the 26th day of Feb., 1883, the doors were closed and all employees sent to the states. Embarking again for Independence, Kan., he accepted the offer of the Clerk of the County, as deputy, and later that of Clerk of the Court. Here he remained a short time and then removed to Waterloo, Ind., and accepted a position with the L. S. & M. S. Ry. Co. In 1887 he removed to Rochester, Fulton Co., Ind., where he was at once admitted to the practice of law. Here he has formed the surroundings which will probably attach him permanently to the place and profession above named. He has frequently occupied positions of trust and honor in the society to which he belongs, and in the business of the county in which his interests are centered. In matters pertaining to religion he was always a doubter or skeptic; not careless, but incredulous. The virtues taught him by his mother were never forgotten, though often ignored. His researches led him to the philosophy of Spencer, Huxley, Tyndal, Hume, Voltaire, Payne and Ingersol, but each failing to satisfy the wants of man's spiritual nature, the beautiful philosophy of Jesus Christ has been adopted. In 1888 he renounced his allegiance to the Prince of Darkness and has since sought to lead the life of an exemplary christian. Husband and wife are members of the Christian Church, at Rochester, Ind., and were baptized Dec. 29, 1888.