



HISTORY

OF

Pittsburgh and Environs

BY

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merly of Brownstown, Pa., now of New Brighton; Henry, who married Mary Hager, and died in Pittsburgh, in 1882; Mary, wife of Charles Kohlmeier, of Mount Washington, Pittsburgh; and Sophia, who died in Pittsburgh, the wife of William Kramer. The mother of these children died in Pittsburgh in 1877, aged seventy-four, and the father also passed away in this city at the advanced age of eighty-eight.

Ernest Rohrkaste, son of Frederick and Eleanora (Wiggravier) Rohrkaste, was born March 23, 1823, in Prussia, and received a common school education. At the age of fourteen he left school and thereafter was variously employed until 1846, when he emigrated to the United States. He sailed from Bremen for New York on a sailing vessel, which took ten weeks to make the voyage. Having friends in Fort Wayne, Ind., he went thither, but after one year, came to Pittsburgh, where for four years he worked in a foundry. In 1850 he was employed in the Bennette Soda Works in Brownstown, but later moved to Fourteenth street, where he engaged in the grocery business. In 1859 he built a dwelling and store on Thirteenth street, where he conducted business until 1869, when he removed to the corner of Twenty-third and Carson streets. In addition to his grocery business, he was for a time interested in the Empire Laundry, now conducted by his son, Frederick G. Rohrkaste. In 1891 Mr. Rohrkaste retired from active business life, being succeeded in trade by his sons. About the time of his retirement, he removed to the residence now occupied by his widow, on Boggs avenue, Mount Washington, where he passed the rest of his days. He possessed a marked degree of business ability and was a man of strict integrity. Politically, he was a life-long Republican. He was a member of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church on Eighteenth street.

Mr. Rohrkaste married, July 27, 1850, Sophia Stolte, to whom he had been betrothed before leaving Germany and for whom he sent to join him in his new home. Mrs. Rohrkaste was a daughter of Frederick Stolte, who was born Jan. n, 1801, in Germany, and was by trade a shoemaker. He married Dorothea Wolfe, born July 25, 1801. Mr. Stolte died in 1843, in Germany, and his widow came to the United States with five children, two having preceded her. Her death occurred in 1886. Mr. and Mrs. Rohrkaste were the parents of the following children: 1. Ernest Frederick, born in June, 1851, died in infancy. 2. Louisa Sophia, born Sept. 19, 1852, died in 1877, one year after her marriage to Christian Hitzemann, of Fort Wayne, Ind. 3. William Frederick, born Nov. 8, 1854, educated in German and at the public schools, took the store conducted by his brother when the latter moved to Carson street. He died March 20, 1906, leaving a widow, Annie (Kohlmeier) Rohrkaste. 4. Edward August, born May 26, 1857, died July 1, 1896. He was educated in both German and English, and for many years was engaged in the insurance business in Pittsburgh. 5. Herman A., born May n, 1860, died Jan. 21, 1905. He was educated in both German and English, and succeeded his father in connection with his brother, subsequently retiring from mercantile business. 6. Louis Herman, born Nov. 5, 1862, was also educated in both German and English. For a time he was engaged in insurance business, but later was clerk in the Keystone Brewing

FREDERICK G. ROHRKASTE—The Rohrkaste family, which has been for three generations resident in Pittsburgh, Pa., and which numbers among its present representatives Frederick G. Rohrkaste, was founded in this country by Frederick Rohrkaste, a native of Prussia and a farmer. He served in the German army, and in 1860 came with his wife and one son to the United States, settling in Pittsburgh, whither his other children preceded him. He and his wife were members of St. Paul's German Evangelical Lutheran Church. Frederick Rohrkaste married Eleanora Wiggravier, and their children were: Ernest, of whom further; Frederick, for-

Company's office, and afterward held an official position in the Pittsburgh Brewery. He died in June, 1903, leaving a widow, Agnes (Boyle) Rohrkaste. 7. John F., born May 29, 1866, died March 22, 1904, leaving a widow, Clara A. (Runk) Rohrkaste. 8. Frederick G., of whom further. Ernest Rohrkaste, the father of these children, died May 3, 1904.

Frederick G. Rohrkaste, son of Ernest and Sophia (Stolte) Rohrkaste, was born in the Twenty-eighth Ward of Pittsburgh, March 5, 1868. He received his education in the public schools, and as a boy, entered the grocery business as a clerk, remaining about six years. In 1889 the South Side Laundry was established, and Frederick G. became one of the company, which continued business at Twentieth and Carson streets until 1892, when it was moved to the present location, No. 2229 Carson street, and the name changed to the Empire Laundry. In 1904 Mr. Rohrkaste purchased the interests of the Rohrkaste heirs, which constituted the company, and has constantly increased the business, until to-day it is one of the flourishing industries of the South Side, employing on an average of 100 people. Mr. Rohrkaste is a hustling business man, wide awake to the demands of a constantly growing patronage.

Mr. Rohrkaste is a staunch Republican in politics, but outside of supporting his choice of candidates, has never taken a part in the political game. He is a member of Pittsburgh Lodge, No. 1196, Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks; the new South Hills Country Club, and the Americus Republican Club.

Mr. Rohrkaste married, Jan. 31, 1900, A. Ethel Pfeil, and they are the parents of two children: Henrietta M. and Hunter R. Mr. Rohrkaste's family are members of the Lutheran church.

WILLIAM N. BAKER, for a number of years past, has been a prominent figure in all public affairs in the borough of Wilkinsburg, Pa. He has been active in political matters, in all municipal works, and in the various civic affairs in which the town has been engaged.

By birth William N. Baker is an Englishman, the son of John and Pamela Baker, both of English birth. He was born in England, Nov. 12, 1865, but came to the United States when he was a very small boy and has resided here ever since. He was educated in the public schools of the borough of West Liberty, Pa., remaining at school until he reached the age of sixteen years, then, entering the employ of the Union Switch and Signal Company, Mr. Baker was engaged in work there for twelve years following.

In 1893 Mr. Baker accepted a position with the Carnegie Steel Mills at Braddock, Pa., and for four years remained with them, leaving their plant to return to the Union Switch and Signal Company to fill a much better position than his former one in the same concern. For seventeen years Mr. Baker continued in this employment, then, having been elected by the Town Council of Wilkinsburg to the office of borough clerk there, he resigned his position with the Union Switch and Signal Company to enter upon his new duties in 1914.

At the same time Mr. Baker was appointed to the secretaryship of the Board of Health of Wilkinsburg, acting in both capacities, and in 1916 received from the State Board of Health the commission of registrar of

vital statistics. At the present time, 1920, Mr. Baker is filling all three positions in a very acceptable manner.

During the period of the World War, 1917-18, Mr. Baker was chosen secretary of the Committee of Public Safety in Wilkinsburg, and when grade crossings were abolished in the borough, he was asked to take the office of secretary at the grade crossing elimination celebration which marked this event in the history of the town.

In addition to all this public work, Mr. Baker is active in much of the fraternal work going on about him. He is a member of the local lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, also of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and of the Knights of Malta. He is affiliated with the Wilmas Club of Wilkinsburg, and is a trustee of the First Union Brothers Church of Wilkinsburg.

On Oct. 29, 1899, at Five Points, Mercer county, Pa., William N. Baker was united in marriage with Elizabeth Gilson, a resident of that village. They have five children: Raymond Earl, Harry Milton, Lenella, Gertrude, and Clara. Three members of this family were actively engaged in the service of their country during the World War, 1917-18, the eldest son, Raymond Earl, going to France with the 28th Division, United States army, and Harry Milton, being a sergeant in the 13th United States Infantry. Lenella served as clerk in the War Department at Washington, D. C. The family residence is at No. 1102 South avenue, Wilkinsburg.

WILLIAM L. CALLAHAN—Holding a position of trust in one of the large fraternal and benevolent societies of this country, the Order of Maccabees, William L. Callahan has been brought into considerable prominence in the busy, progressive borough of Braddock.

Born in the city of Chicago, 111, May 28, 1875, William L. Callahan is the son of William and Elizabeth Callahan. His father for a number of years was engaged in the transfer business in Chicago and up to the year 1882 carried on the largest line of work in that city.

The education of William L. Callahan was acquired in the early years of his life in St. John's College in Chicago, and later at St. Benedict's College in Atchison, Kan., continuing at his studies until he reached the age of eighteen years.

Obtaining employment with the Joilet & Chicago Stone Company, Mr. Callahan remained with them for one year, giving it up to take a railroading position. Having become a very active member of the Order of Maccabees, Mr. Callahan was appointed, in 1900, to the position of supervising deputy, a position he now holds (1921). He has also been one of the state trustees of the order and the representative to the Supreme Lodge for the past ten years.

William L. Callahan has always been prominent in the public life of Braddock, having served in many ways in civic work as well as municipal matters. He was appointed by the courts of Allegheny county, Pa., to the office of Burgess of the borough of Braddock, and also was appointed, in 1902, by the governor of Pennsylvania to the position of notary public. In 1918, during the many "drives" held by the municipal authorities and by the various fraternal orders and societies in the interests of war work during the World War, Mr. Callahan was chosen chairman of all the work for the entire Braddock