

# **A History of Preston County, West Virginia**

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people. Mrs. Ressegger graduated from the Terra Alta High School when sixteen years of age, and would have graduated from her Alma Mater in June, 1912, had she continued her studies there three months longer. Mr. Ressegger is at this time building a residence on his farm near Frenchton.

Mrs. Ressegger's mother, Mrs. Robinson, married the second time. Her husband is William Henry Ringer, a well-to-do farmer near Terra Alta. He is the son of John Ringer, a veteran soldier of the late Civil War and a farmer near Lenox. Mr. W. H. Ringer was born in 1847. He was formerly a devout member of the Lutheran Church, but now worships with his family with the Methodist people.

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#### CHARLES W. BEERBOWER.

The history of the Beerbower family in America dates to the year 1752, so far as we have been able to trace the lineage.

September 26, 1752, a ship, "William and Mary," set sail from Rotterdam, Holland; master, John Moore.

It was one of a fleet conveying German and Dutch Hollanders to the then new world, America.

On ship were two brothers Casper and Philip Bierbauer, with a younger sister, who died on the voyage and was buried at sea.

Casper Bierbauer settled in York county, Pa., where he took out naturalization papers in 1777.

Among his descendants are some very notable characters. Possibly the best known was the late Vincent Beerbower, member of the State Legislature of Nebraska, and later Lieutenant Governor of Idaho.

The late Austin Bierbower, LL. D., lawyer, author and philosopher, whose name you will find in "Who's Who in America," was also a descendant of this brother.

Philip, Sr., settled on the Conewago Creek, York county, Pa., and was the father of seven children: Philip, Jr., Peter, Frederick, John, Jacob, Susan and Sarah. Of these only Philip, Jr., remained in Virginia, the others emigrating to Ohio, Indiana and other western states.

Philip, Jr., is the ancestor of all the families bearing the name Beerbower in West Virginia and western Pennsylvania. He was born in 1799 and died April 18, 1872.

The Beerbower homestead at Glade Farms, West Virginia, was near the site of old Fort Morris.

The subject of this sketch, Charles W. Beerbower, was born June 29, 1872. His father, George Stough, the oldest of the family of Philip, Jr., born November 22, 1820, died July 19, 1879, leaving a widow and five children: Martha, Mary, Charles W., Emma and Lloyd George.

It was largely due to the good management of the mother, and the oldest sister, Martha, and some help from the late Rev. W. D. Beerbower, then a student at Roanoke College, Salem, Virginia, that the family were kept together and that true home spirit was developed that ever afterwards was a characteristic of the children, and especially of the subject of this sketch.

Charles W. left home at the age of nine years, and from that time on was carving his own way in the world, spending his boyhood days on Muddy Creek and then at Glade Farms until he was nineteen years old,—working on farms, and attending the public schools in the winter time.

At the age of nineteen he left the familiar scenes of his boyhood days, and the recollections of the stories told him of old Fort Morris and the settlement of his great-grandfather, and took up the life of a colporteur and lecturer on "Pilgrim's Progress."

After spending one summer with the Bunyan's Pilgrim Band in the famous Shenandoah Valley, Virginia, he returned to Preston and took a term in the Terra Alta Summer Normal and secured a teacher's certificate, teaching his first term at the Falkenstine School, Grant district.

Following lecturing and colporteur work in the summer months and teaching in the winter season gave him a varied experience.

In 1893 he was one of a party of four who were sent to the Columbian Exposition, Chicago, Ill., by John C. Winston Co. of Philadelphia. After teaching a term in the public school at Bruceton, West Virginia, he again joined the Pilgrim Band in Washington, D. C., and traveled with Prof. McGrew until he organized "The Pilgrim Travelers" at Boonesboro, Md., August 27, 1895. He was lecturer, Prof. Martell Morrison, vocalist, and W. H. Thornton, manager. In this capacity he traveled all over southern Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia, giving in all over 300 lectures. Attending the seminary at Buckhannon, W. Va., in the spring term, 1899, and teaching a term at Masontown, W. Va., he abandoned the lecture work and entered the role of clerk in the mercantile firm of Lakin & Offut, Rowlesburg, W. Va.

September 19, 1900, he married Della S. Thomas, daughter of William and Martha Thomas of Elliottsville, Pa., whose ancestors go back to the Brandenburgs of Germany.

Locating at Terra Alta and teaching one term in the public schools of Kingwood, he then accepted a position with the Union Supply Co. as clerk, but was soon promoted to manager, and which position he now holds at Monarch store, one of the best of the chain of 63 stores of the Steel Corporation.

He is a member of the Leisuring Presbyterian church and of Gen. Worth Lodge, I. O. O. F., Connellsville, Pa.

His family consists of his wife, Della, and two daughters, Evangeline Lucile and Eleanor Beatrice.

He is interested in all matters pertaining to the betterment of the laboring classes and is a firm believer in the abolition of the liquor traffic as the greatest benefit that we can bestow upon the American people to help them to a better plane of living.

He is now engaged with James Bierbower of Lampasas, Texas, in compiling a book entitled "The House of Bierbower," being a history of all the different families bearing the name.

He conceived the idea of the Bierbower reunions, of which the first was held at Glade Farms, August 24, 1912, and at which over 500 people were present.

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#### LLOYD GEORGE BEERBOWER.

In the northeast angle of Preston is a smooth expanse of farm land. The landscape is attractive and interesting. Here was the site of old Fort Morris, and here linger memories of the early days of settlement as well as of the palmy era of the once famous National Road. To this inviting neighborhood there came in the opening years of the last century, Philip Beerbower, a farmer of York county, Pennsylvania. He was a son of Philip Bierbauer, who, with a brother Casper, came from Germany in 1752. Philip, Jr., spent the remaining years of his life in his Preston home and is buried at Glade Farms. But all his children save one listened to the "call of the West" and removed to the still more inviting soil of Ohio. A third Philip, after the death of his parent, reconsidered his determination to join his brothers beyond the great stream which the French explorers so aptly termed the "Beautiful

River." He lived and died on a farm which is only a half-hour's walk from the early home. From his thirteen sons and daughters are derived the Beerbower connection of this county.

George S., the oldest of the children of the third Philip, had for his first wife Catharine DeBerry, and for his second, Saloma Laub. He was born November 22, 1820, and died July 19, 1879. Catharine DeBerry was born April 8, 1818, and died March 18, 1857. His children were the following: (1) William D. Beerbower, born November 9, 1852, died July 7, 1884 (a Lutheran minister); (2) Silas, dead; (3) Allen Beerbower, born April 3, 1853, married Rachel Chopson; (4) Lydia Beerbower, born August 28, 1856, married Milton Robinson. George Beerbower married Saloma Laub, who was born March 24, 1840, died January 19, 1896—children: (1) Ida Bell, born June 3, 1862, died February, 1872; (2) Martha J., born April 2, 1864, married J. Allen Reckard; (3) Jonathan Camden, born July 4, 1865, died August 7, 1877; (4) Mary, born May 27, 1871, died December 6, 1887, buried near Brad-dock, Pa., Grave 12, Range 1, Division 1; (5) Charles W., born June 29, 1872, married Della Thomas; (6) Emma Alice, born March 3, 1874, married T. L. Gribble; (7) Lloyd George, born June 2, 1877, married Elizabeth Stafford.

The somewhat early death of the father left the household, and particularly its younger members, in circumstances far from easy. The remarriage of the widow proved most sadly unfortunate. It is due fundamentally to the care and training of a Christian mother that the subject of our sketch has achieved his success in life. Much also is due to an older sister, Mrs. Martha Reckard. She was untiring in her efforts to help her mother and the younger children. Yet with no home peculiarly their own, with no moneyed inheritance to look forward to, with but meager school training in the early years of youth, but with the commendable determination to "make good," the boys, Charles W. and Lloyd G., proceeded to carve out a career for themselves. We mention the two brothers in the same connection, since they are not far apart in age and were associated a long while in common activities. What is still more to the point, each has achieved a very gratifying degree of success.

As we have just observed, the brothers did not appear in the world with a spoon in the mouth that was either silver or gold. Yet they were endowed with health and strength, with the willingness to work, and with that power of steady application which is a characteristic of the German strain. Their progress was sure, even if it did not come

with that speed which oftentimes is so detrimental to personal character.

Lloyd George Beerbower was born June 2, 1877, at which time his parents were living in the adjoining county of Fayette, in Pennsylvania. Two years later they returned to Glade Farms, and their son has ever since acknowledged Preston as his home. As soon as the boy attained a size and strength that made him efficient on the farm, his time was thus employed until he had reached the age of seventeen. During this period of his life his educational advantages were simply those of the average farm boy of the period.

A somewhat unique career now presented itself. The youth was fortunate in coming under the notice of Professor N. N. McGrew of Philadelphia, an experienced seller of books. His kindly and practical interest was very helpful and important, and he readily prevailed upon his new friend to join his "Pilgrim Band," composed of a few young men. As colporteurs, and as sellers of that immortal allegory, the "Pilgrim's Progress," the band traversed a considerable territory, covering counties in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, as well as West Virginia. From the ever-shifting base of operations, the members of the troupe would take diverging paths in order to make a house-to-house canvass of the surrounding neighborhood.

After being thus employed for some time, the young man became associated with Charles W., his older brother. They now prosecuted the same work as principals and not as employees. They traveled mainly in a wagon specially arranged for their purpose. They gave evening lectures on "Pilgrim's Progress," these lectures being illustrated by a stereopticon. During the hours of daylight the neighborhood was as before canvassed for sales of the book in a binding offered at a very reasonable price.

Such a career is of priceless worth to an ambitious young man. In selling books, a vocation which the late Dwight L. Moody said would prove the mettle of any person, the brothers achieved marked success. Their work was an education at once practical and liberal. It lifted them above the narrow sympathies of a home neighborhood and made them acquainted with numerous towns, villages and school neighborhoods, and with the denizens of the same. It turned the quondam plowboys into polished gentlemen. It opened an avenue by means of which they found themselves. In short, it gave them an adaptability and efficiency which could not have been secured had they remained all this while close to the home of their childhood. Nor were the advantages all on one side. By scattering literature of an unexceptionable sort, and

by furnishing public entertainments of an uplifting character, the brothers rendered a service to the communities they visited.

At length they put an end to this migratory life. It is to their credit that they determined to do so. As a very serviceable training, their work had fulfilled its purpose. To have pursued it indefinitely would not alone have perpetuated an unsettled career: it would insensibly have drawn the young men into a rut and lured them into performing their duties in a mechanical way.

Like his brother Charles, the junior partner now turned his attention to school work, teaching three successful winter terms in the rural schools of Preston. While thus engaged he was a prominent and useful member of the county institutes. To fit himself the better for this new career, he availed himself of private instruction from that unusual and gifted character, the late Samuel T. Wiley. That teacher-historian was a firm friend to the two brothers, and to him they feel deeply indebted for his sage advice as well as his helpful tuition.

For two years more young Beerbower resumed traveling work, but in a broader and more advantageous field. In the service of a Pennsylvania company, whose line was the selling of views, he traveled not only in the states with which he was already familiar, but also in Ohio, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia. As a consequence, his knowledge of places and of people was much further extended, and he was enabled to prepare for the permanent calling which he had by this time chosen.

He took up his studies in Cincinnati, graduating in June, 1905, with the degree of Doctor of Dental Surgery. His travels in the South had developed a purpose to locate at Galveston, Texas, for the active pursuit of his profession. But the more tonic air of the Preston hills, and, above all, the loyalty of the many friends who dwell among them, caused this design to be reconsidered. During his summer vacations they had put his dental services into request. So on the completion of his course of study he at once located in Terra Alta, the energetic and wide-awake metropolis of the county.

With regard to his practice alone, the success of Dr. Beerbower was immediate, and it has been continuous. In connection with Frank Zeller, he completed in 1910 the Beerbower-Zeller Building, on Washington Street. On the second floor is his suite of dental apartments. These rooms are as well equipped as the up-to-date dental offices found in the cities. Dr. Beerbower is a charter member of the West Virginia

Dental Society, and since the organization of the same in 1906 he has never missed any of its meetings. He has served on its most important committees, and as its president in 1913. He is also secretary-treasurer of the Board of Dental Examiners for West Virginia, having been appointed in July, 1911, by Governor Glasscock.

The older Beerbowers were Lutherans, but since locating in Terra Alta, the doctor has transferred his allegiance to the Methodist Episcopal Church. He has long been active in church work and is regular in his attendance upon devotional as well as business meetings. For several years he was superintendent of the Methodist Sunday school at Terra Alta, and he continues to teach a class.

With respect to fraternal organizations, Dr. Beerbower is a member of the Masonic order, and of the Knights of Pythias, the Woodmen of the World, and the Modern Woodmen of America. Of the first-named society he is a Past Master, and he holds the Royal Arch degree.

In matters of political opinion, the doctor's people have in the main adhered to the Democratic creed. But he himself early gave his adhesion to the Republican party, although he has never hesitated to support the candidate of another ticket whenever he has deemed the interests of true citizenship to require such action. Twice has Dr. Beerbower been called upon by his townsmen to serve as mayor of Terra Alta, and he has served four years on the Board of Education for Portland district.

June 28, 1906, Lloyd George Beerbower was married to Miss Mary Elizabeth Stafford, who had been educated at the Preparatory School at Keyser, and who, like himself, had taught in the public schools. Mrs. Beerbower is the youngest of the six children of William E. and Mary (Shahan) Stafford. Both the Staffords and the Shahans come of old Monongalia and Preston families. The father-in-law was a Federal soldier and a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Doctor and Mrs. Beerbower have been blessed with two children: Albert Stafford, born April 9, 1909, and Fred Vance, born July 30, 1912.

In personal contact, Dr. Beerbower is courteous, genial and approachable. These engaging qualities are linked with those of sincerity, integrity and straightforwardness. It is a sterling character as well as patient effort that has brought him the commendation and the patronage of the people with whom he has cast his lot. The writer of this sketch knew him quite intimately during a period of ten years, and therefore speaks from personal observation.