

## The Walker's and Wilson's of Shanksville

Both the Wilson's and the Walker's were prominent citizens of the Shanksville, Pennsylvania area for generations.

Abraham Wilson (1828-1911) was a decorated veteran of the Civil War. He served as a Sergeant in Company B of the 54th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry Regiment, and for a time was a Prisoner of War held in Libby Prison in Richmond. In Shanksville he operated a grist mill. The photos below show the town of Shanksville in about 1900 and Abraham Wilson in 1875.



The photos below show Abraham's son Newton B. Wilson and his wife Ella Brant (from another pioneer Shanksville family) in 1920, at left their three oldest children -- Abe, Kate, and George -- in 1895, and at right Abraham R. Wilson in 1910.



Jakob Andreas Wacker was born in 1749 in Württemberg, Germany and came to America shortly thereafter with his parents who settled in Frederick County, Maryland. Jakob became a naturalized citizen of Maryland in 1765, sold the family farm in 1773 on his father's death, and relocated to Bedford County, Pennsylvania. There he served as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the First Pennsylvania Battalion during the American Revolution. The family name was anglicized to Walker in the early 1800s when public schooling was first available in Pennsylvania.



His great-grandson, Josiah J. Walker (1831-1904) inherited the 1500 acre family farm in Stoney Creek Township outside Shanksville. During the Civil War, he was drafted in 1864 but paid \$1500 to secure a substitute. In 1870 he formed a partnership with Charles Shank in the lumber business, owning two sawmills and a planing mill. He was also known as the “sugar king” of Somerset County, having produced 20,000 pounds of maple sugar from a grove of 4000 trees in 1899. Above is a photo of Josiah and his second wife Sarah Larman (1847-1900) taken shortly before her death. The drawing below pictures the Walker farm about 1890.



Apparently the Walker family was quite talented musically. The history of Stoney Creek Township notes that around the turn-of-the-century, the *Walker Family Band* provided entertainment throughout Somerset County. The band, composed almost entirely of Walker brothers; included J.J.'s sons Fran (b1862), Joe (b1868), Lew (b1881), Ed (b1858), George (b1873), Charlie (b1875), Bruce (b1879), Will (b1870) and brother-in-law Ed Lowery.