

EBERLY, WILLIAM L

William L. EBERLY, one of the oldest and best known men in Jay county, a veteran of the Civil war, formerly and for many years justice of the peace in Penn township, formerly deputy postmaster at Balbec, and a substantial landowner who died at his pleasant farm home just north of Balbec on rural mail route No. 2 out of Pennville on January 1, 1922, was a native of the old Keystone state, but had been a resident of Jay county since he was twenty years of age, a period of nearly seventy years. Mr. EBERLY was born in the city of Philadelphia on November 7, 1833, and was a son of Daniel and Susan Ann (BRUFF) EBERLY, earnest Quakers, whose last days were spent in this county. The EBERLY's are of Swiss descent and the family in America had its origin in six brothers of the name who came to America in Colonial days and joined the Quaker colony in the vicinity of Philadelphia, settling in Lancaster county. Later one of these brothers, Abraham EBERLY, grandfather of William L. EBERLY, moved to Cumberland county and located in the vicinity of Carlisle. He served as a soldier of the patriot army during the Revolutionary war and was at Valley Forge. His brothers also were soldiers of the Revolution. Daniel EBERLY, one of the sons of Abraham EBERLY, was born in Cumberland county, Pennsylvania, October 12, 1806, and was early trained as a tanner and currier of leather. He established a tannery and wholesale leather house in Philadelphia and remained there in business until 1854 when he became interested in land investments and became a half partner in a 1,100-acre land deal in the heart of the Quaker settlement in Penn township, this county, and moved out here with his family and established his home in that township, putting up a tannery and taking his place as one of the leaders of the community. He retained for himself 400 acres of the land in which he had invested and in addition to carrying on the work of his tannery developed there a farm, and on that farm spent the remainder of his life. His wife, who was born on the east shore of Maryland in 1809, died in 1880 and he survived until February 15, 1895, he then being in his eighty-ninth year. Daniel EBERLY and his wife were the parents of nine children, of whom but one is now living, Joseph EBERLY, formerly and for years postmaster at Balbec, the others (besides the subject of this memorial sketch) having been Daniel, Peter, Robert, Anna, Sarah, Joseph L. and Rachel, the latter of whom was for years a teacher in the schools of this county. As noted above. William L. EBERLY was twenty years of age when he came to Jay county with his parents in 1854. He had received good schooling in Philadelphia and had some experience in commercial activities as a clerk in one of the

leading stores in that city, afterward taking up chemistry with particular reference to the chemical reactions essential to the tanning of hides and had become under his father's instructions a practical tanner, so that when he came out here he was able to take an active part in the tanning business which his father developed here. When the Civil war broke out William L. EBERLY was commissioned a second lieutenant of the local company of Indiana Home Guards, his commission, signed by Governor Morton, having been dated November 5, 1861, and he served in that capacity until the company was disbanded, when he enlisted as a private in Company G of the 153d regiment, Indiana Volunteer Infantry, and went to the front, that command being a part of the Army of the Tennessee, with which he served until the close of the war and was mustered out at Louisville in the summer of 1865. Upon the completion of his military service Mr. EBERLY returned to Jay county and resumed his place in the community, looking after the tannery and also helping in the development of his father's farm, and after his marriage in the fall of 1869 established his home on the farm. In 1883 he became associated with his brother Joseph in the mercantile business at Balbec and continued thus engaged until his retirement from active business and his last days were spent at his home on his farm just north of Balbec, his death occurring there on New Year's Day, 1922. Mr. EBERLY was a Republican and for nearly thirty years served as justice of the peace in and for Penn township. For twenty years he served as deputy postmaster at Balbec, during the time his brother Joseph was postmaster. He was one of the promoters of Cartwright post of the Grand Army of the Republic at Pennville and was a past commander of that post. He also was a Freemason of many years standing and ever took a warm interest in lodge affairs. It was on October 29, 1869, that William L. EBERLY was united in marriage to Eliza GRIEST, who was born in York county, Pennsylvania, in 1840, a daughter of John and Hannah (EDMUNDSON) GRIEST, who were among the leaders in the Quaker settlement in Penn township and of whom further and fitting mention is made elsewhere in this work, and to this union were born four children, Emma, John, Minerva and Sarah, all of whom are living save the first named. Sarah EBERLY married John HURST and has three children, William, Edna and Helen HURST. Mrs. Eliza (GRIEST) EBERLY died in 1920.

SOURCE: Milton T. Jay, M.D., History of Jay County Indiana, Historical Publishing Co., Indpls. 1922, Vol. II, pp.297-298.
Transcribed by Eloine Chesnut.