

# Democratic Watchman

Bellefonte, Pa., January 10, 1919.

To Correspondents.—No communications published unless accompanied by the real name of the writer.

P. GRAY MEEK, Editor

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Paid strictly in advance - \$1.50  
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Paid after expiration of year - 2.00

## WORK OF THE ENGINEERS.

Major H. R. Cooper Writes Very Interestingly of Last Days of War and What the Engineers Found.

Back in October, while the war was still at its height and the American army was driving the Germans out of the Argonne sector, the "Watchman" published a letter written by Major H. R. Cooper to his father, H. S. Cooper. The fact that Major Cooper, or "Rex," as he is best known by his Bellefonte friends, spent many years of his life here would have, of itself, attracted attention to his letter, but in addition to that it was one of the newest epistles that came from the seat of war at that time. And this week the "Watchman" is privileged to publish another of the Major's letters written after the armistice was signed and we commend it to our readers as being unusually interesting. Major Cooper is with the 315th engineers and they evidently saw plenty of action and played their part well.

Stenay, France, Nov. 16, 1918.

Well, "le guerre finis," and I'm safe, sound and hearty as a dollar; a little thinner, that's all. Reckon I can give you some dope now, so here goes. Since we arrived in France we have been on the front for sixty-seven days fighting, gone over the top in three grand and four small attacks, have made some sixty odd raids and never failed to bring home the bacon. In fact in every attack the corps commanding officers had to halt us to allow the divisions on our right and left to catch up with us. Once we carried the whole corps along with us.

We received two grand citations for our work on the St. Mihiel front, and have already received three for our work on this front, and have been told that the best is yet to come. The end of the fight, i. e., 11 o'clock, 11th day, 11th month, found us in Stenay, having just driven the Hun out after a house-to-house, barricade-to-barricade drive of about eighteen hours continuous fighting. We crossed the Meuse at Sassey on the 10th on our last grand attack, and they accuse us of not quitting at eleven sharp. Our last killed were at three minutes of eleven. Our regiment has had one lieutenant, one non-com., and one private get the distinguished service cross; two officers, four non-coms and two whole companies cited—this all from the St. Mihiel scrap—so we are some "set up."

And as everyone except one officer and one non-com. was from my battalion, why I claim the best Bu. in the best regiment of engineers, in the best division, in the best army in the world, and the Bu. will lick anyone who says it isn't so. Two of our officers were the first to enter this town (Stenay), which they did from the west side while on a bridge reconnaissance some four days before we took the place. They got in without being fired upon, but machine gun bullets and one-pounders chased them out and followed them for a kilometer but "never touched 'em."

The last grave assault started November 1st. We have been on this front since October 17th. Since October 23rd my Bu. has moved, worked, eaten and slept under almost continuous shell-fire, from guns of all calibres up to the 12 inch, (this won't mean much to those who have not lived under it, but as a nerve-breaker it has everything in the world beaten), and this with no more shelter than shacks and pup-tents afforded. We moved so many times and worked so continuously that we never had a chance to "dig-in," so we dug shells all day and laid at night and wondered which one would get us. For seven days we woke up every morning to find that a shell or shell fragment had gotten some one or more of us men.

One night (October 30th) my Bu. was ordered to rebuild a bridge the Huns had blown out and also build a ford to be available in case they shot the bridge out again. As this work was to be within two hundred yards of the Hun lines, in a valley shaped like a horseshoe, the hills of which bristled with two hundred guns and God only knew how many machine guns and one-pounders, you can imagine it was some job. Then when the "H" hour came (6:30 a. m., Nov. 1st), we were to open, clear and keep clear two certain roads, follow the infantry and open a road through No-Man's land for the artillery. The Hun knew or felt that we were to attack. He knew this town (Bautheville) was the crossroads where our only road to him lay; that this bridge was our only artillery passage, so for about twenty hours he poured everything he had on, or rather at, the town, crossroads and bridge. We built the bridge—no lives lost; we built the ford—no lives lost, but had twenty-seven slightly wounded and twenty-six gassed, all cases that will be o. k. in two or three weeks.

Then came November 1st. I was so darned scared I took my motorcycle driver and we beat it up to the crossroads about fifteen minutes ahead of my first company. At twenty

minutes past the "H" hour along came C company with Capt. Hoffman at their head. They were in single file, rifles slung over their backs and their tools over their shoulders. Honest, I never was so proud of anything in my life as I was of that bunch. Shells were bursting around them and among them, so fast that it seemed as if they would be annihilated. Yet I never saw a single man falter or break the line. They had to step over dead and wounded men, dodge falling walls, and all of them knew they were moving right up into direct machine gun fire, and were going up to work in it all day and maybe all night; that it was work and be killed, yet they moved as steady as clockwork. B company (Capt. Timmons) followed then A company (Capt. Millender). A company stayed in the town and worked in the shell-fire all that day, then moved on ahead.

We moved the Hun so fast that at times our own engineers could hardly keep even a trail for artillery (light 75s) to follow, but three times machine gun fire checked us and each time my men got ahead of the infantry before they noticed the check and twice I found nothing but space between me and the Huns. We had to go ahead and reconnoitre the roads as the Huns were destroying and raining as they retreated, and we simply had to know how to get our bridging material to the Meuse. We finally reached the river, but were so far ahead of the rest of the corps they wouldn't let us cross, so for six days we lay under shell-fire and nearly killed ourselves trying to make a two-way road for guns weighing eighteen tons out of a bottomless mud trail. It kept us going day and night. Then on the 10th we got the order to cross and "sit 'em," and we again went at it. We put several foot bridges across and got onto a national highway. The Huns had utterly destroyed five bridges between Dun-sur-Meuse and Mousay, but in four and a half hours we had the infantry, artillery and ammunition trains over the river, into Mousay and after them. The Huns had machine guns by the hundreds on every hill, in every clump of woods, and Stenay was alive with them, but we went ahead, and at 9:45 on the morning of the 11th had cleared all but the northern edge of the city. Some prisoners we took, when they saw artillery in Mousay could scarcely believe their eyes, as they calculated that two days would be a minimum time for us to get artillery over their destructions. So you see the engineers "went some."

And let me tell you: Fighting courage is one thing, but the man who can't fight but has to take the hell and keep on working has more cold courage than any fighting man that ever lived. Our stretcher bearers all prefer work in the front line to work in the shell area, as they aver it is much safer and not so hard on their nerves.

We had the ceremony of the presentation of the distinguished service crosses to our men today, and it was fine. I'd give five years to have been one of them, but a poor, darned major of engineers has about as much chance for a D. S. C. as a snowball in hades.

Our divisions are now moving on to the Rhine, and through here are passing two divisions—from daylight until dark one solid stream of men, horses and horse-drawn vehicles, and auto-trucks—it seems as if they never will pass. Since the armistice we have been doing a lot of reconnaissance work, which is very interesting. We are finding "beaucoup" loot. The Hun may have been hard pressed for food on other fronts, but in this one town we have found about 20,000 loaves of Hun bread, 5,000 to 10,000 bushels of fine potatoes, hay, wheat and oats straw by the thousands of tons, and barrels of sauer-kraut, pickled onions, etc.; and in the fields, rutabagas, sugar beets, onions, celery, lettuce, carrots and other vegetables, and so far as our "roughins" are concerned we are living high. We have also found large stores of Hun war materials, 10,000 cans of solidified alcohol, thousands of tons of coal and other stuff.

I have seen many interesting and wonderful things. The Verdun battlefields, where every literal inch of the ground is part of a shell crater, all traces of trenches lost, Dead Man's hill, (Le Mort Hommes) where we worked for four days and every time a pick or shovel went into the earth it brought up men's bones or flesh; Hill 304 nearly as bad; Bethincourt Nealinourt, where not one stone remains on top of another to show that there had once been homes; Montfaucou, where the Crown Prince went to watch his troops take Verdun. He had a shelter with more than twenty feet of reinforced concrete and ten feet of earth on top of that. It was equipped with a wonderful periscope sort of thing through which, while seated in an easy chair, he could do all his watching. The last building in this town (Stenay) from which we drove the Hun was the chateau in which he lived for three years. The beasts had not injured it in any way and it is a beautiful place. It is now a brigade P. C.

Wish you could see the wonderful system of 60 c. m. railroads the Hun had built all through this country. Vantillois was the railroad for his broadgauge, and really Montigny was the big railroad for supplies, and everywhere he used the 60 c. m., or as we call it, the "Soixante." We use it now, and during our drive between the engineers of the division and the Twenty-third engineers (the narrow gauge railroad regiment—10,000 men) we had it working up almost to the battle front all the time. It brought up ammunition a distance of nearly sixty kilometres, although theo-

retically it is limited for such work to about ten miles, but "limits" didn't bother us at all.

We are now (until moved again) quartered in a very pleasant house, formerly used by a Hun regimental commanding officer, and yesterday the lady who owns it came back and brought her two daughters, aged 15 and 19. They all three were ravished three years ago and were forced to live and work for the officers all the time they were here. Fifteen days before the Huns moved out all the inhabitants were forced into the cellars and kept there for four days. When they came out they were herded together and headed for Belgium. The houses during the four days the officers were forced to stay in the cellar were completely ransacked and everything in them literally torn to pieces and destroyed. The refugees are beginning to pour back now.

Eighteen hundred Russians came in here yesterday, about fifty British and a lot of French and Italians, former prisoners. The Huns are simply turning them loose and telling them to "beat it." I noticed that they all seemed well fed. I think the Hun is lying about the starvation business. He may be short in fats, he is short on brass and copper, but he's not starved by one "hell-uv-a-side." His new cartridges are iron, electro-plated with copper. Lots of his big gun shells are all iron. He used high-tension electricity everywhere and for everything. His high-tension lines radiate over the entire country. He had transformer houses—very neat ones—in every village, town and camp, electric lights and motor-driven machinery everywhere. He utilized all the water-power he could find to generate electricity. He had saw-mills wherever there was timber and cut every available stick of hard wood throughout the entire country. We have many thousands of feet of every size lumber and timbers. He had baths, hot and cold showers, and de-lousing stations everywhere. We have repaired and are using now in our division alone some twenty of these plants.

In a word, the Hun carried on the war in every phase with perfect Teutonic thoroughness and let slip absolutely not one single opportunity to use everything he captured to the end of assisting him in carrying on the war; in fact his watchword was the elimination of waste and the utilization of everything he found at hand. Just below this town is a rendering plant capable of an output of 10,000 gallons a day. Evidence shows that every dead horse went there. His hide was salted down and everything in him used, including his hoofs and tail. We captured over 5,000 horse hides, nicely sorted, salted and packed ready for shipment.

I really believe that the Hun could get behind the Rhine and give us hell right now, but I don't believe he will. One is simply forced to admire his wonderful organizing and utilize powers. I don't believe anyone who hasn't seen behind the lines—away behind—can ever appreciate it, or realize just how sure of, and close to, winning the war he was. The regiment is changing a lot. So many of our officers have returned to the States for promotion, some transferred to other regiments, another regimental commanding officer, Lieut. Col. Knapp goes—his health broke down—(am hoping for silver leaves myself but as yet have seen no signs) and while not a man of us would trade for any other regiment in the world, we all wish for our "Old Man," Col. Boggs, and the rest of the crowd. I reckon it is the same with other outfits, but we had such a plumb nice, congenial bunch it seems very hard to see it gradually scattering to the "four winds."

As to our future, God only knows. Reports say: We will be, we won't be; we are, we "ain't" part of the army of occupation. Or, we stay here, we don't; we move, we don't; we go front, we go rear, until we don't much give a d—n about it, either one way or the other.

REX.

In a letter to his aunts, the Misses Bener, of this place, under date of November 26th, Major Cooper says: "At the present time we are a part of the army of occupation which is marching into Germany, and at this writing we are close to the Luxembourg border. I have been some forty or fifty miles further on and have had some very interesting trips and reconnoissances, having visited many towns in Belgium, Luxembourg and Alsace. We have no idea how long they will keep us over here, or how long we will be a part of the army of occupation. In fact we know nothing at all about our future movements. Being a part of the army of occupation is a great honor which has been conferred upon this division, so they tell us, on account of the very good fighting that we did on the two fronts we occupied. We are all very thankful that the war ended before we had to spend the winter in the trenches. It was beginning to get very uncomfortable, to say the least, and knowledge of the fact that this winter will be spent in fairly comfortable billets or camps, instead of in the trenches, will do a lot to reconcile us to not getting home quite so soon."

"I have never had a chance to see Bertha Laurie, as I found out where she was when it was too late. I am sorry, too, because I was down near Lusille a great many times, and had I known she was there could have made it a point to see her. Haven't seen any other Bellefonte people lately, either."

REX.

Two dozen or more Bellefonte men and their wives enjoyed a turkey dinner at the Nittany Country club last evening.

## IS FRANK CRISSMAN DEAD?

Father Received Official Notice to That Effect on Tuesday.

The following brief notice was received from the War Department on Tuesday by W. Homer Crissman:

Regret to inform you that bugler Frank H. Crissman, of the military police, died on October 3rd of wounds received in action.

According to information that is considered very reliable bugler Crissman was wounded on October 2nd, and letters received from other Bellefonte boys during November stated that he was getting along fine. His father, however, has not received any word from him since letters written in September and, although after hearing of his being wounded he made every effort to find out through the War Department his condition he could get no further information than the very unsatisfactory statement that he had been severely wounded in action on October 2nd. And now, after more than three months of uncertainty, along comes the message announcing his death from wounds. But to the time that other Bellefonte boys reported seeing him alive, so that the question of his death is very uncertain.

Bugler Crissman, who was twenty-six years old on the 5th of last June, went to Camp Hancock on September 11th, 1917, with Troop L. He trained there and when the First Pennsylvania cavalry was broken up he was assigned to the military police. He went across with the Twenty-eighth division in May and as is generally known the Pennsylvanians were thrown into action at Chateau Thierry in July, and later transferred to the Argonne sector. They were in most of the hard fighting preceding the signing of the armistice and their casualty lists were unusually heavy.

Mourning the uncertainty of the young man's fate are his father, two sisters and a brother, namely: Mrs. A. B. Cromer, of Erie; Mrs. Maurice Broderick, at home, and Luther, a member of the supply company of the 109th field artillery in service in France.

## DAVID LAUCK KILLED IN ACTION.

On Sunday the sad message was received in Snow Shoe announcing the fact that David H. Lauck had been killed in action in France on November first. Private Lauck was a son of William and Lillian Lauck and was twenty-six years old. The family moved to Snow Shoe about seven years ago and prior to going into the service young Lauck was a trombone player in the Moore band. He was inducted into the national army by the local board and sent to Camp Meade on May 28th. After five weeks' training he was sent across to France. Over there he was assigned to Company H, 314th infantry, one of the units that suffered heavy losses during the big drive in the Argonne sector. While the announcement of his death was naturally a great shock to his parents their grief is somewhat assuaged by the fact that he died such a glorious death.

Prior to his being called for service he was employed as a brakeman on the Bellefonte and Snow Shoe railroad and was a most faithful and efficient employee. He had many friends in Snow Shoe and surrounding community who deeply regret his death and will long cherish his memory as one of the brave boys who gave his life in regaining the debt the United States owed to France.

Surviving him are his parents and the following brothers and sisters: Newton Lauck, of Runville; Mrs. Thomas Stark, Mrs. Clark Huey, Mrs. Howard Woleslagle, all of Snow Shoe; Anna, Mabel and Mary, at home.

## DIED OF WOUNDS.

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Elton Kuhn, of State College, last week received a notice from the War Department that their son, Charles E. Kuhn, had died on October 6th of wounds received in action on October 2nd. Private Kuhn was one of the original Troop L boys and in France served in the 109th field artillery. The young soldier was twenty years and six months old.

## A Brief Letter from LeRoy Gates.

LeRoy Gates, a former Ferguson township boy who went overseas as a member of the 301st company, under date of December 9th, wrote his mother, Mrs. John Quinn, of Pennsylvania Furnace, as follows:

Just a few lines tonight, as everything is practically the same. I had a bad cold when I wrote last week but I soon lost it. I think I have become acclimated now to all the different changes of weather in France. I am afraid we will all get sick at first when we arrive in the States, but I am willing to be sick a little while. I think we will be back some time in the spring, but the exact date is very indefinite.

It is reported over here that some of the people back home are reporting that all the enlisted men are in the service for four years, which shows how much they know about it. All men who enlisted in the regular army are good for four years, but we fellows who enlisted in the national army are for the duration of the war. Of course, we are all regular army now, but our enlistment period has never been changed.

I sent you a chevron several months ago and in five weeks now I will get my second one. I am enclosing a souvenir coin—five centimes, equal to our cent.

LEROY.

Whatever you do don't miss the great photoplay, "Eye for Eye," at the Scenic theatre next Monday, January 13th, matinee and night.

## CHARLES McCOY NOT DEAD.

Report that He Was Killed in Action Proves Incorrect.

When private Charles McCoy Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles McCoy, of Bellefonte, reaches home, as he is likely to do soon, he will be able to read a notice of how he was killed in action in France as published in the Bellefonte papers and also see his picture in the same papers. Private McCoy went from a national army training cantonment to France in August, and according to reports was slightly wounded and gassed on September 7th.

On November 20th his parents received the customary official notice from the War Department that their son had been killed in action in the Argonne sector on October 3rd. From other sources information was gleaned which was considered correct that private McCoy had been discharged from the hospital and rejoined his company on October 1st and was killed in action on the 3rd. His name also appeared in the regular list of killed in action given out by the War Department.

Naturally there was nothing else for the family to do but accept the facts as correct and mourn their boy as being one of those who gave his life in the great cause. But during the past two weeks persistent rumors have been in circulation that private McCoy was not dead. Like all rumors it was impossible to chase them down to a solid foundation. But all doubt as to McCoy's being killed in action was dissipated on Friday when Mrs. McCoy received a letter from her son, who is now in this country and expects to get his discharge soon and return home. The letter is as follows:

Camp Stuart, Newport News, Va.  
January 1, 1918.

Dear Mother:— Well, mother, I am back in the good old U. S. once more and I hope that I will never leave it again. We sailed from Bordeaux, France, on December 18th and landed in port here on the 30th, so you see that was making good time. I am in the best of health and feeling fine. I had a small wound on my right side which has been healed up for about two months.

We will leave here in a day or two, and I found out that I am to be sent to Pittsburgh, and I guess I will get my discharge there. I have not received a letter from home since August, and I sure would like to know how my dear son Donny is, and tell him that his papa will be home soon; and I would like to know how all of the family are getting along. I will close for this time but will write soon again. Your loving son,

CHARLES McCOY.

## The "Watchman" Has Located the Lost Boys.

Some weeks ago the "Watchman" volunteered to ascertain the location of any boys who are in the service, who have not been heard from for such a length of time as to give concern to their relatives.

We received a number of requests for information and immediately wired them to our correspondents, the Home Paper Service of America, with the result that we are able to give this information concerning their whereabouts.

## CHARLES R. HEVERLY

Charles R. Heverly, of Howard, Pa., has not been on the casualty list. The address given by his relatives is inadequate to locate him for it indicates him to be in a replacement detachment. Mail should reach him through that address, however. But the Department in Washington has no way of locating where he might have been assigned, if he has been moved out of the replacement detachment at all.

## PATRICK QUIRK

Patrick Quirk, of Snow Shoe, has no casualty report. His unit, Co. A, 28th infantry is part of the army of occupation, located on the Rhine river near Boppard, Germany.

## LINZY ROSS

Linzy Ross, of Port Matilda, has no casualty report. His unit, Co. L, 145th infantry, according to latest reports, was located at Hondschoote, France. It is on the priority or preference schedule and is apt to start for home at any time, as shipping conditions permit.

## ROBERT H. COLE

Robert H. Cole, of Port Matilda, has no casualty report. His unit, Battery F, 314th field artillery, is located at Dun-sur-Meuse, France, and is not on the priority list.

## DORS A. PETERS

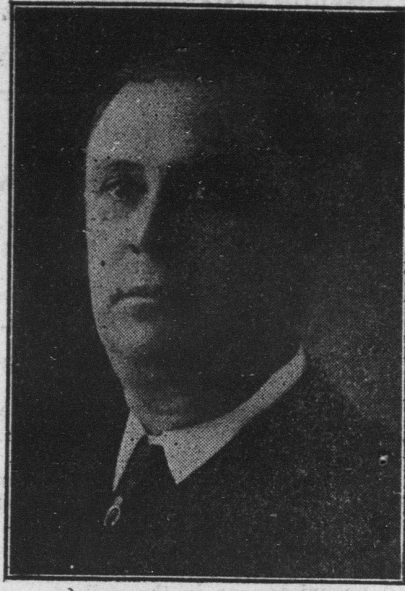
Dors A. Peters, of Mill Hall, left hospital after suffering slight wound and returned to duty on October 12th, 1918. His unit, headquarters company 77th field artillery, is part of the army of occupation and latest reports had it located near the city of Kirchberg, in Germany.

Other inquiries which the "Watchman" has received since the above were made have been sent in and will be reported on immediately they are received.

The information given above is absolutely correct and is all that can be procured on this side of the Atlantic. It seems to us, however, that it is highly reassuring to anxious relatives and should set their minds at rest against the time when they should surely hear from their loved ones personally.

If the "Watchman" can be of any further service in any of these cases or others command it.

—Mrs. David R. Foreman has purchased from Enoch Hastings the old Hastings home on Spring street now occupied by Lewis Daggett and family. Mr. and Mrs. Foreman will occupy their new home on April first.



WILLIAM A. LYON

LYON.—Notwithstanding the fact that he had been a sufferer for three years or more with diabetes, and his condition of late had been such that it was evident that his end was near, yet it was with extreme regret that the people of Bellefonte heard of the passing away at eleven o'clock last Friday morning of William A. Lyon, at his home on east High street. During the most of his long illness he kept about by the sheer force of his unusual will power and looked after the details of his business, but much of the time last summer he spent at home. During the month of August he was down at his place of business several times but in September he grew worse and was compelled to take his bed. From that time on he suffered considerable distress and misery and the fact that his passing away was calm and peaceful came like a blessing.

He was a son of Moyer and Hannah Lyon and was born in Danville on March 6th, 1849, hence had reached the age of 69 years, 9 months and 28 days. He first came to Bellefonte in 1872 and spent a short time here, but in 1876 came here again and engaged in the butchering business, making it his life's work. He exercised remarkable judgment in buying stock for his block with the result that he acquired a reputation at home and abroad for his choice output. He was shrewd and honest in all his dealings, with a decision of character that is possessed by few men.

His perception of human nature was unusually acute and his rare judgment was frequently consulted by men in various walks of life. He was jovial by nature and disposition and had cultivated the art of witticism and story telling to a remarkable degree. In fact his reputation along this line was more than state-wide, and in the days when the late Governor Curtin was a prominent figure in official life at Washington Mr. Lyon accompanied him on several occasions to the national capitol and pitted wits against some of the best raconteurs of Washington, and always to his credit.

He always took an active interest in the affairs of the town and county, but never sought any special preference for himself. He served one term as a councilman from the North ward, having been elected in 1913 for four years.

Prior to coming to Bellefonte, or on January 15th, 1875, he was united in marriage to Miss Catherine Green-slade, of Bristol, England, whose acquaintance he formed while she was visiting friends in America. She survives with five children, namely: Robert V., of Buffalo, N. Y.; Mrs. C. B. Williams, of Bayonne, N. J.; Mrs. J. E. Maginnes, of Atlanta, Ga.; Lieut. Edward and Jack B. Lyon, both in service in France. He was one of a family of five boys and five girls, and a peculiar incident of the family is that the birth of each boy was followed by the birth of a girl. Of the family of ten children six survive, as follows: Henry, of Norfolk, Va.; Charles, of Danville; Jacob, of Bellefonte; Mrs. James Scarlett, Mrs. Howard Shultz and Miss Caroline Lyon, all of Danville.

Funeral services were held at his late residence on east High street on Sunday afternoon and the remains were taken on the early train Monday morning to Danville for burial.

RUNKLE.—Maurice Runkle died at his home at State College on Friday of last week after a brief illness with pneumonia, the result of an attack of the flu. He was a son of Mr. and Mrs. John L. Runkle, and was born at Tusseyville on January 8th, 1879, hence was within a few days of being forty years old. He was united in marriage to Miss Mamie Kline who survives with no children. He leaves, however, two brothers, Lawrence, of Centre Hall, and Wilbur, of Tusseyville. Burial was made at Boalsburg on Monday afternoon.

DUNKLEBARGER.—Grace Helen Dunklebarger, daughter of Alfred and Hannah Gettig Dunklebarger, died at the home of her parents at Pleasant Gap on Tuesday of cerebro spinal meningitis, following a siege of whooping cough. She was born on February 17th, 1916, hence was 2 years, 10 months and 20 days old. Owing to the nature of the disease burial was made at Pleasant Gap on Wednesday.

SAGER.—Russell W., the infant son of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Sager, died on Wednesday of last week following a brief illness with influenza, aged 4 months and .27 days. Burial was made in the Union cemetery last Friday.

—Subscribe for the "Watchman."