

**The
Criss
Family**

**Researched and Edited by
Nicholas R. Criss**

Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society

THE CRISS FAMILY

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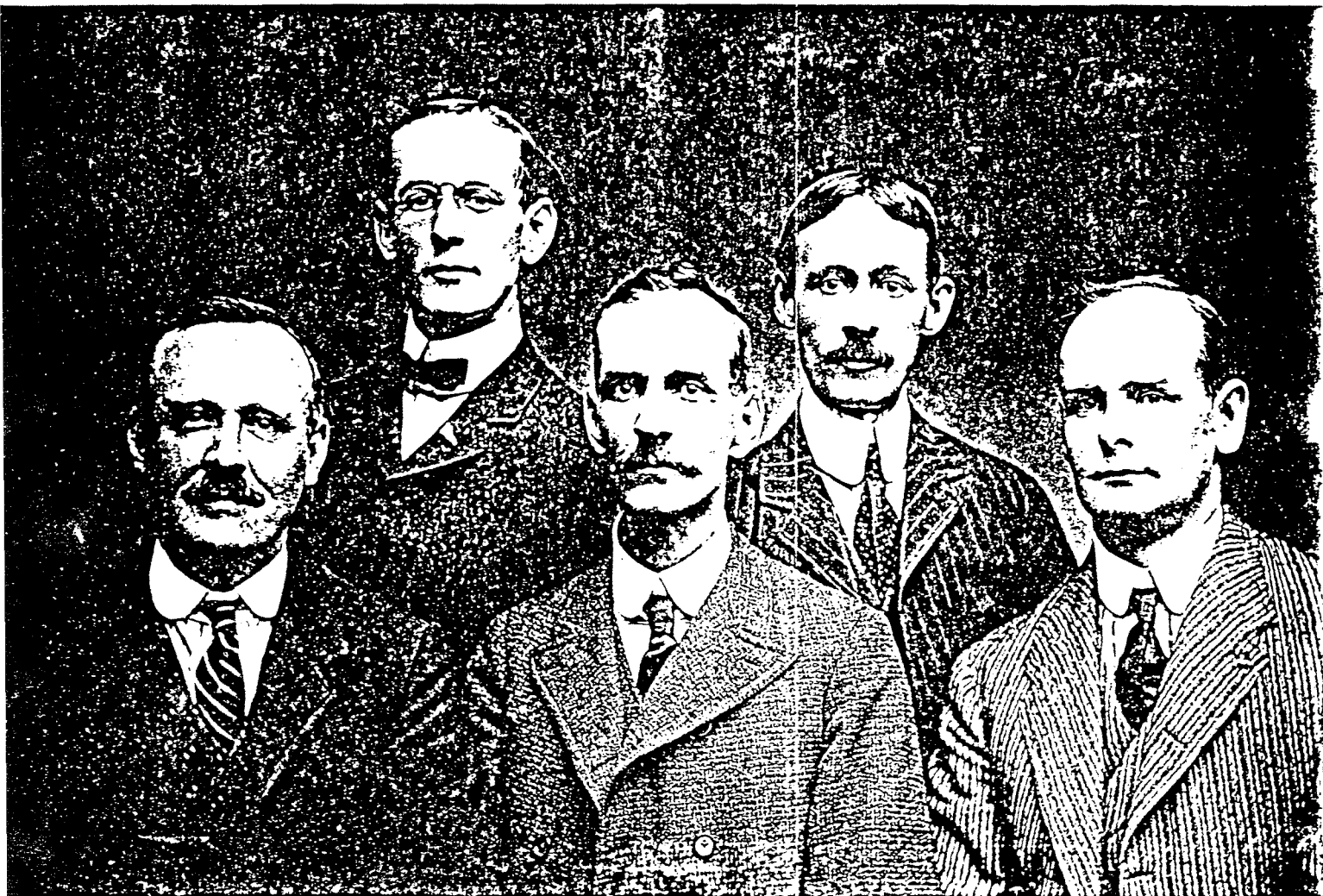
NICHOLAS R. CRISS

1873 - 1958



THE NATIONAL CYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN BIOGRAPHY

N. R. Crisso



The Criss Brothers

Left to Right

Elmer R.
1864-1942

Nicholas R.
1873-1958

Stewart W.
1861-1941

Charles L.
1866-1959

Robert W.
1870-1948

THE CRISS FAMILY

(Based on Records Compiled by N. R. Criss)

It has always been a matter of regret with me that those of my generation in the Criss family never received any, or certainly very little, first hand information from their fathers and mothers in relation to the earlier generations of their families. I knew that my own father Rittenhouse Criss was named for his mother who was Hannah Rittenhouse, but it took many long years and the accidental finding of an old letter, together with an accommodating letter from the postmaster at Belleville, Illinois, giving me the name of a member of the Rittenhouse family in that community, before I was able to trace her ancestry back to the Rittenhouse family which settled in Philadelphia in 1688.

As an attorney, early in my practice, I made abstracts of title to various coal lands in Washington County and learned how much valuable family history is to be found in land patents, deeds, wills, partition proceedings and other court proceedings involving the distribution of decedents' estates. As a hobby I have examined all such proceedings involving the earlier members of the Criss family and have compiled a considerable amount of data which would be useless in the hands of anyone else, and so I feel some responsibility in seeing to it that future generations may receive more of their family history from our generation than we received from our ancestors. My father died when I was nine years old, and with his death the chief source of information was gone.

JOHN CRIST

My great grandfather settled on Harmon's Creek, Washington County, Pennsylvania, about 1775. The present site of Hanlin Station on the P.C.C. & St. L. Ry. is almost at the geographical centre of his patent for 350 acres of land called "The Hermitage." This patent was granted by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to "John Crist" and is dated January 11, 1788. The original sheep skin patent is in possession of my brother Charles L. Criss. Where John conveyed portions of this land from time to time beginning in 1804 he was always designated as "John Crist" and his will written in 1821 is signed "John Crist." This didn't mean much, however, because he always signed by mark, as did most of those early settlers, and the person signing for him could use any spelling he pleased. The scrivener also was doubtless more or less illiterate and used his own system of phonetic spelling. This accounts for much variation in the spelling of proper names over the years.

In 1813 John conveyed a portion of his land to his son, Jacob, my grandfather. In the body of the deed, the names both appear as "Christ" while the signature is "Crist." About 1830 the date of John's death, the spelling "Criss" came into popular use and his sons executed various agreements in relation to their father's estate, all of which are signed "Criss." Thus, we have the evolution of the family name, "Christ," "Crist," and "Criss." All variations resulted from spelling the name the way it sounded to the person who happened to be writing it.

John Crist's wife was reputed to have been named Hawkins. Her first name was probably Ursula, but in deeds and other records her name appears as Ursilla, Ursley, Usley. She and John Crist both signed by mark. John Crist was evidently an old man when he died in 1830, and his wife had died about 10 years before.

His settlement was made under Virginia; and during the Revolution, when Virginia was in full control of this territory all settlers were required to take an oath of allegiance to Virginia. Then when the boundary dispute was settled they all became citizens of Pennsylvania and I have a record where John Crist and many of his neighbors appeared before a Justice of the Peace in Cross Creek and took an oath of allegiance to Pennsylvania.

As citizens of Pennsylvania, many were inducted into the Washington County militia about 1781. (Pennsylvania Archives 6th Series, Vol. 2, Page 152) Familiar names appearing on this roll are John Criss, Thomas Ward, John Stephenson, Adam Poe, Andrew Poe, and Boston Burget, who founded Burgettstown. Also Phillip Jackson who was captured by the Indians, and Robert Wallis (Wallace) whose wife and three children were taken prisoner by the Indians. The wife and her baby were killed, but their remains were not found until the next year.

John Crist left a will signed Crist, in which his "childring" are named as follows: Nicholas, John, George, Jacob, William, Henry and Sally.

William, after his father's death, acquired the home farm and built the house which later became the home of Charles Hanlin. He died in 1856. He had a wife Hannah and twelve children: Sarah (Perrine), George, father of Thompson and Tollar Criss, Rebecca, Isaac, Lewis, James, John, Reason, of Meiggs Co., Ohio, William also of Meiggs County, Hester (Gilmore) of Ohio, Rebecca (Dickey) of Ohio and Nancy (Tollan).

Sarah, only daughter of John, married Samuel Wright and died in 1863. Johnathon Wright who lived and died near Eldersville was her son. She is buried in the Eldersville cemetery.

Jacob was my grandfather, and little is known about the others. Some of them drifted on West into Ohio where land was still available. There was an old Criss burial ground on the hillside just West of Hanlin Station where many of them are probably buried. There is probably no trace now of this burial place.

John Christ is probably buried in Bethel Cemetery. A large flat field stone stood near the grave of Jacob Criss, crudely carved J. C. It evidently fell down and was removed. His estate papers show as payment of "ten dollars in full for coffin for John Criss deed."

JACOB CRISS

Jacob Criss, as the following record shows, was born in 1778, married to Hannah Rittenhouse in 1799. (See history of the Rittenhouse family.) Their first child was born in 1800.

In 1813 John Crist conveyed to Jacob 120 acres of his tract called The Hermitage and this later became the farm of Rittenhouse Criss, my father. This is where he was born, lived, and died, and where I was born and spent the first twenty-five years of my life.

We have no information as to where Jacob Criss lived after his marriage until 1813 when he received the deed from his father. The probabilities are, however, that he lived on this land but did not get his deed until he had paid the six hundred dollars consideration. In my boyhood days there was some evidence of a building having been located near the western end of the ridge on our farm, and the old log house, evidently built by Jacob, stood near our home. The stone chimney had fallen and took with it a portion of the roof, part of the second floor, and some of the logs when I was a boy. It was evidently a good house for that day, and large, two stories high. The floor boards were almost tongue grooved. They were planed so that they overlapped. The doors were made of cherry wood, and the frames of the photographs of the old family register which each of my brothers and sisters had, were made from the wood of those doors. A fair sized house was needed, because Jacob Crist had thirteen children, eleven of whom grew up and married.

My brother, Charles, has the old family register evidently done with a pen by an itinerant artist. The name of Sarah Criss born in 1809 appears on this register, but nothing is known of her. Jacob Criss died in 1847 and in his will names eleven of his children, all except the first Jacob who died in infancy, and Sarah who evidently had died before that time. So the family register was made between 1809 and 1847, and is considerably more than 100 years old.

As indicating the crowded conditions under which such a large family lived in those days, Jacob Criss in his will bequeathed, "To my daughter-in-law, Mary Criss, my cupboard and the bed that stands in the kitchen." Mary Criss was my father's first wife.

The following is a copy of the text of the old Family Register without the decorative border, etc.

FAMILY REGISTER

Jacob Crifs born	May 15	1778.
Hahhan Rittenhouse born	Ap'l. 6	1781.
They above married	Nov'r. 25	1799.
Elijah Crifs born	Sept. 1	1800.
Mary Crifs born	March 24	1802.
William Crifs born	Feb'y. 24	1804.
John Crifs born	January 24	1806.
Jacob Crifs born	March 1	1808.
Jacob Crifs deceased	Sep't. 1	1808.
Sarah Crifs born	June first	1809.
Nicholas Crifs born	August 27	1811.
Hannah Crifs born	July 27	1813.
Henry Crifs born	Nov'r. 1	1815.
Rittenhouse Crifs born	Sep'r. 17	1817.
Jacob Crifs born	June 19	1819.
Ruth Crifs born	March 21	1821.
Ann Crifs born	March 4	1823.

RITTENHOUSE CRISS

My father was born September 17, 1817 and was past 55 years of age when I was born. He died December 4, 1882 when I was not quite ten years old. That was more than seventy years ago and my recollection of him is somewhat hazy. He was not a large man. His sons - all over six feet tall - took after their mother, but my sister Mary undoubtedly inherited her physical characteristics, and doubtless other characteristics from her father. If her good qualities were inherited from her father, then he must indeed have been a very good man. I think she was his favorite. He bought her an organ about the time I was born and I have very distinct recollections of her pure silk dress. Those things were luxuries in the days when farmers had very little money.

My father was not a slender man, but was solidly built for his height. His hair was thick and pure white, combed pompadour in front. He wore a full beard which, of course, was white like his hair and was trimmed round with his chin. I think he was a kindly man, at least I have no recollection of any outbursts of temper. It was a hard life on the farm in those days and everybody had to work hard. This was to be expected and was accepted without question.

My father was evidently a pious man. He was a trustee of the Eldersville Methodist Protestant Church, and had family worship morning and night in our home. Small as I was I can picture him holding the bible in one hand and a homemade tallow candle in the other to give him light for reading. Kerosene lamps came later. I have, and prize very highly, an old pewter candle-stick which he used and the candle moulds which made the candles.

As further evidence of religious training, Sunday was observed as a day of quiet and rest. I was not allowed to whistle on Sunday and this presented a serious problem to one of my tender years whose chief accomplishment was whistling. I solved the problem simply by whistling more on Saturday. As I look back now this was not a very logical solution but it was the best solution I could think of at the time.

In the olden days when money was scarce there was no such thing as an allowance for spending money. Each child had to devise his own method of earning money to replenish his private exchequer. I recall pulling the wool off a dead sheep, and selling it at Cooper's store for 30 cents per pound. In the winter however my brother Bob and I had a better racket, catching rabbits in snare traps and shipping them to Pittsburgh to the store where our mother shipped her butter and eggs.

On December 4, 1882 I got up long before daylight in order to make the round of our traps before breakfast. The catch was pretty good - five or six rabbits and a "possum." Possums were hard to catch with a snare trap because they have a small head and a thick neck. On my return I threw the game on the coal house roof where it would be safe from cats, then noticed sister Mary sitting on the back porch with her apron thrown over her head rocking back and forth crying. I soon found the cause. When they went to call my father for breakfast they found him dead in bed, lying as if asleep, not the least indication that he ever awoke from his sleep. If he had to go, that was certainly a fine way to go.

ELIZA JANE CRISS

My mother was born August 10, 1835 and died December 25, 1916. She was a direct descendant of George Stewart who in 1734 had surveyed to him a tract of 330 acres of land on Pequea creek in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, for which he later received a patent, and a descendant of his son Col. George Stewart who served in the Revolutionary War.

Her mother died in 1855 and as the oldest of eight children, seven of whom were girls, she was forced to assume great responsibilities at an early age. On February 23, 1859 at the age of 24 years she married my father Rittenhouse Criss, a widower with one daughter Hannah, then 15 years old, whose deceased mother Mary Fink was my mother's full cousin.

My mother was a tall woman of stern appearance, but underneath she was anything but stern. She was quite sentimental but labored hard to conceal the fact. In my boyhood days, while generally rugged and healthy, she was subject to heart attacks which were frightening to all of us. These attacks resulted from functional disturbances and there seemed to be no organic trouble. She lived to be eighty-one.

She was religious and was raised as a Baptist, but after her marriage joined the Methodist Protestant Church at Eldersville. Here her reserve was again apparent. She could apparently never adjust herself to the emotional outbursts of the Methodists of that day. The shouting and crying and the emotional excitement generated by a shouting exhorter preaching hell fire, was not her sort of religion. This was apparent although she never said a word. A common expression of hers which I recall was like this, "If the Lord's willing," or "If we're spared" we'll do so and so next week. When sitting down in her customary long dress, she reminded you instantly of the famous picture of Whistler's Mother.

After my father died she continued to conduct family worship, although it must have been a chore, because she instinctively shrank from any open demonstration of her inward feelings.

Children of Rittenhouse and Eliza Jane Criss and their descendants.

Mary Margaret (1860-1947)

Never married but devoted her life to the other members of the family, and to the time of her death maintained a home where all could come and find a welcome. She was indeed "cumbered with much serving" and was loved by all.

Stewart Wilson (1861-1941)

He was of full age when his father died and taught school for some years, then took over a general store at Dinamore station. Later he joined his brother Elmer in a general store business at Collier, West Virginia, and from there went to Steubenville, Ohio, where he purchased and operated the leading grocery store on Market Street. Served one term as Director of Service in Steubenville and at one time was urged to become a candidate for Mayor, but refused.

Married Mary Doolan (1862-1905) of Steubenville in 1887. Their children:

John Elmer (1888-) married Hazel Young (1896-) in 1919, and had one son John E. Jr. (1926-). John Sr. engaged in the grocery business and later operated the Imperial hotel in Steubenville. John E., Jr., is a graduate of Ohio State University and currently conducts his own real estate business in Steubenville, Ohio. He married Zanovia Griskevich (1931-) on April 12, 1956. They have two children, Jeffrey Steven (1958-) and John Stewart (1959-).

Stewart Vincent (1895-1935) married Pearl Loyer in 1917. Their children - Mary Catherine (1917-) married Joseph O. Brooks in 1939. Their children - Joseph Criss (1940-), and Patricia Ann (1943-), Naomi Virginia (1922-) and Mary Naomi (1896-1916) died unmarried.

Elmer Robinson (1864-1942)

Married Nettie Halstead (1868-1941) in 1890. First lived at Collier, West Virginia, probably now a part of Weirton, where he conducted a general store, later in association with his brother Stewart. Then moved to New Kensington, Pennsylvania, where he engaged in the grocery business. Served one term as Postmaster of New Kensington, and later entered the real estate and insurance business.

Children - Mila Montez (1891-). Educated in Mary Baldwin Seminary Staunton, Virginia. In 1922 married Lawson G. Bash. After their marriage they went to India where Mr. Bash, who had been with the Aluminum Company of America at New Kensington, assumed charge of the company's affairs in India and Burma. After a long residence in India they now live in New York. Mr. Bash is now associated with Aluminum Limited of Canada. No children.

Elmer Richard (1903-). Educated at Wittenberg College and Harvard Law School. Admitted to the bar of his home county, Westmoreland, then engaged in the practice of law in Harlingen, Texas. Now in the legal department of the Superior Oil Company at Houston, Texas. Married Dorothy Rose in 1930. Their children - Elmer Richard, Jr., born in 1931, after graduation from Southern Methodist University he enlisted in the United States Marines. Unmarried. Suzanne, born 1935. Married Ronald F. Holsinger. One child, Victoria Carol Holstead, born 1940.

Charles Louis (1866-1959)

Took a business course in Curry Business College, Pittsburgh, and entered the employ of the Union Storage Company as a stenographer. He advanced to become Secretary and Active Manager of the company, the largest company engaged in cold storage and general storage between Philadelphia and Chicago. Served some years as Secretary of the National Warehousemen's Association, and finally retired on account of health.

In 1892 married Eva Gillespie who died in 1903 leaving one child Helen (1893-1918) who married George Phillips in 1916 and died in 1918 childless. In 1908 married Lucy V. Criss (1870-) daughter of Jacob Criss of Lawrence County, Pennsylvania. Their children - Jean Stewart born 1910. Married Edward Stern who supervises blood banks for the Red Cross, covering the states of Vermont and New Hampshire. They reside in Burlington, Vermont. Both are graduates of the University of Pittsburgh. No children. Charles Rittenhouse born 1911. A graduate of the Colorado School of Mines after service in the Army in World War II joined the Sohio Oil Co. and now has charge of estimating and recording the company's oil reserves in this country and Canada. In _____ married Florence Large. They reside in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. They have one child, Winifred, born March 3, 1942.

Anna Ruth (1868-1899)

Taught school for several years then entered the Presbyterian Hospital which occupied an old dwelling house facing the park in Allegheny, for an operation which was not regarded as particularly serious. The superintendent of the hospital was an elderly lady who seemed to devote most of her time to entertaining visitors, and the surgeon, as it developed, would probably rank low even for that day. In any case the operation was followed by infection and blood poisoning. After a long siege the patient was discharged from the hospital a physical wreck, unable to eat solid food, due to the wrecking of her nervous system. She gradually declined and fell a victim to tuberculosis. This is in sharp contrast to the Presbyterian Hospital of today.

Robert Weldin (1870-1948)

Taught school a few years then opened a meat shop in Collier, West Virginia, where his brothers Stewart and Elmer were located. Later was employed by the Cudahy Packing Company at Beaver Falls, then went with the Merris Beef Company of which he later became Vice President, to manage their house at Ridgeway, Pennsylvania. Merris handled Armour products, selling to the retail trade, and maintained houses in DuBois, Ridgeway and Punxsutawney. He later assumed management of the Punxsutawney house which had a very lucrative business, but, with the depression of the late twenties and the early thirties and the closing of coal mines which created the market for meat, the Merris Beef Co. discontinued operations. He then joined the Punxsutawney Beef and Provision Co. Long a resident of Punxsutawney he was one of its best known and most popular citizens.

In 1896 married Emma Brooks (1878-1953).

Their children - Mary Margaret (1899-1953) who was a graduate nurse and at the time of her death was a supervisor of nurses to Iola Hospital, Rochester, New York. Her associates immediately set about to install a memorial in the hospital or nurses' home as a tribute to her memory. Never married. Verna Mae (1901-) A graduate of Drexel Institute of Philadelphia in Household Economics. Taught several years in public and private schools, then joined Pennsylvania State College, now Pennsylvania State University, to do extension work among the farmers and country people of certain sections of the state. In addition to these personal contacts she has a regular radio broadcast and has entered the television field. Resides at Shillington, Pennsylvania, adjoining Reading and is unmarried. Edna Louise (1908-).

NICHOLAS RITTENHOUSE - As Groucho Marx always says on his television show, "Oh, that's me!" I hesitate to make this a history of my own life, but since this whole volume is designed primarily for the benefit of my children and their descendants, I think it would be manifestly unfair to them if I should omit a rather complete discussion of their ancestor's life. My life as a boy on the farm is discussed in another chapter. I shall begin this in the summer of 1891 when I was eighteen years old.

I had attended the Eldersville ungraded school up to this time, a one-room school from forty or fifty pupils ranging in age from six to twenty. The county superintendent of schools was holding an examination for teachers certificates at Eldersville, and without any preparation whatever I suddenly decided to take it, passed, and received my first teacher's provisional certificate. Later I secured a professional certificate, and finally a permanent certificate which may be found among my papers. I applied for a school in Jefferson township and was elected to teach the school at Hanlin Station.

In all I taught school for nine terms, working on the farm during the summers. The schools included Hanlin, the Pike school in Robinson township, Paris, the upper grade, Miller's Tenan's and Eldersville. Prior to 1900, R. P. Stevenson who conducted a summer school for teachers, and those preparing for the teachers' examination, was a candidate for county superintendent. Most of his summer was taken up with campaigning, and I taught the school for him. Another summer when the class was exceptionally large I assisted him.

My salary as a public school teacher during these nine years was from \$30.00 to \$40.00 per month. Except for one term, I boarded at home and traveled by horseback through the deep winter mud to - for illustration - Paris, which must have been a good five miles from home. The school term in those days was six or seven months closing about March 1 or April 1.

I found that Grove City College admitted students to the spring term, and offered a summer term, all of which was attractive to teachers. I applied for admission to the Spring term, probably about 1897 and was admitted. When I arrived I was met at the train by the president of the college, Dr. Isaac Ketler, who sought me out and turned me over to someone who was to take me to my rooming house. We boarded in clubs and paid a woman to do our cooking. The cost ran about \$2.00 per week, and the room perhaps \$1.00 each for two.

I was in Grove City several spring and summer terms and always roomed at John Hanna's. He was the town barber and Mrs. Hanna was one of those women you can never forget. He took me into the choir of the Presbyterian Church, which was under the direction of Sherman Black who owned the drug store where we got ice cream sodas for a nickle. One of my professors was Dr. Dodds, father of Dr. Harold Dodds, now president of Princeton University.

Recently I had occasion to drive through Grove City and found the streets lined with automobiles, no place to park or stop to look around. In trying to locate the Hanna home I ran into one-way streets and "no left turn" signs. Nothing was familiar and it took me quite a while even to get out of town headed for Route 8 and Cambridge Springs, my destination. Oh, well, there are bound to be some changes in fifty-five years.

By this time I had decided to study law, and at the rate I was going it would take a long time to complete a college course. A college degree was not then required for entering upon the study of law, but the applicant had to pass a preliminary examination given by a committee of the bar. I registered as a student in the office of Boyd Crumvine in Washington, Pennsylvania, passed preliminary examination and entered the Pittsburgh Law School in the fall of 1900. It was the custom of the law school to appoint the student making the best grades on the final examinations as a teacher of text book courses, at a salary which of course was small but which looked mighty attractive to me, and I had some hopes of winning that appointment. However, an average of 94% in 17 subjects was not good enough. "Dick" Hawkins, son of Judge Hawkins of the Orphan's Court and a graduate of Yale, stood first. I am not sure of second place. It lay between "Dave" Reed, Princeton 1900, son of Judge Reed, founder of our largest law firm - Reed, Smith, Shaw and McClay - and myself. Three of my other classmates became and are now leading members of that firm. "Dave" Reed served some time in the U. S. Senate and passed on some years ago.

After entering law school I took the preliminary examination in Allegheny County and registered as a student in the office of Crumvine and Patterson (John P.) in Pittsburgh. A diploma from law school, at that time, did not entitle one to admission to the bar.

The Allegheny County Bar conducted a very rigid examination for admission, although the Supreme Court had set up an examining board to conduct examinations for admission to the bar of that court, which it was expected would be adopted by the various counties. Allegheny County Bar refused to admit on certificate of the state board, and as a result we were compelled to take both examinations. Both were severe and many dropped by the wayside.

I was admitted to the bar in 1903 and secured desk room in the office of Crumvine and Patterson at 432 Diamond Street. I lived with my brother Charles in Sheraden at this time, and opened a night office there.

About the first case I ever had in court was an action brought on behalf of my brother Charles as Burgess of Sheraden, against the First National Bank of Sheraden which had been elected Borough Treasurer by the Borough Council. The purpose was to oust the bank from the office of Treasurer on the theory that a corporation could not hold such an office. This was a Quo Warranto proceeding, quite unusual, but I finally succeeded after much work and worry.

For the first and only time in my life I became involved in politics in Sheraden. Many people were convinced that municipal affairs were not honestly handled and a strong independent party had been formed, which had succeeded in electing my brother Charles to the office of Burgess, but the opposition retained control of Council.

Next thing was a movement to have the Borough annexed to the City of Pittsburgh. To me fell the job of handling the complex legal work incident to a special election - all for free of course. Lawyers of experience and ability were watching every move in the hope of catching me up somewhere, but the election carried by a good majority and decree of annexation was entered by the court. Then came a appeal to the Superior Court, which acted as a supersedeas. Every attempt was made to show that the whole proceeding, including the election, was illegal, but the Superior Court said there was no fault to be found with the procedure, and the decree was affirmed.

This was my first case in an appellate court, and did I sweat? One of our vigorous opponents and a leader of the opposition told me years later what he knew all the time. They had gathered up a number of bums and floaters in the Point district and voted them at the various polling places.

After this election, the independents obtained a majority in Council and I was elected Borough Solicitor. It was well known that borough finances were in terrible shape - paving and sewer liens and taxes uncollected etc., and William B. Rogers, City Solicitor, insisted that the retiring Borough Council designate me to wind up the Borough's affairs under the direction of the City Solicitor's office. This was done and the annexation became effective in 1907. I think in September.

Under the City Solicitor's office we had an audit made of the accounts of three tax collectors and the Borough Treasurer. The tax collectors were each short about \$5000 which their respective sureties paid, and the Borough Treasurer had overdrawn borough accounts in the First National Bank of Sheraden about \$13,000. He left for the northwest, and the question was whether the Bank or the Borough would stand this loss. This involved a court battle in which the lower court held that the Borough should take the loss, but the Supreme Court reversed and put the loss on the bank. I fought the bank on every move, but in 1913 I was invited to purchase some stock and become a director, which I did. I am still a director, and have completed about ten years as president of the institution. During these ten years the bank's assets have grown from about \$350,000.00 to \$700,000.00.

After annexation the Sheradan people set about to secure a new high school. In 1911 the new school code was passed which abolished about sixty old ward boards and set up a new board of fifteen members to be appointed by the judges of the Common Pleas Court, and to have charge of

all public schools in the City. A petition signed by residents of Sheraden asking for my appointment as a board member, was brought to me with a request that I have it presented to the court. I was not sure that this was a good procedure, and discussed the matter with Mr. Rodgers, the City Solicitor. He advised against presenting the position, and said he would speak to some of the judges himself.

Mr. Rodgers was a man of great influence in those days, and was very close to the judges. He was personal attorney for David B. Oliver, co-author of the School Code who was the logical man to head the new board.

Five members were to be appointed for two years, five for four years and five for six years. I was appointed for the six-year term. My associates in that group were David B. Oliver, president of Oliver Iron and Steel Co., Marcus Aaron, president of Homer Laughlin China Co., then the largest in the world, Taylor Allderdice, soon to become president of the National Tube Co., and William McConway, head of the McConway-Torley Co., pretty fast company for me, an unknown, but I must say I have never known a finer group of men. I was taken into their confidence and treated with the utmost consideration.

Unknown as I was, I was appointed Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Administration, of which James I. Buchanan, president of the Pittsburgh Trust Co. was a member. I guess the big fellows just didn't want to be bothered with the details. I held this chairmanship for the twenty-two years I remained on the Board and also held the office of Vice President during the last ten years of my service on the Board.

The Board had invested temporarily about \$2,000,000.00 of surplus funds in Government bonds which were registered, and when they were sold and had to be assigned, Mr. Aaron, then President, was out of the City, and the Union Trust Co. contacted me, at home and in bed with the flu. It was arranged that they would send the bonds out for my signature.

In due time a Brink's armoured truck pulled up in front of the house, and guards in uniform with guns hanging all over them got out. One stayed with the truck, another stayed at the front door, and a third came upstairs with the messenger who had the bonds. I guess the neighbors thought the house was being "pulled."

In 1933 there was a vacancy in the Office of Solicitor for the School District of Pittsburgh, and it was suggested that I was the logical one for this position, and since the salary was \$7,500.00, I was willing; but - the School Code provided that a board member could not be elected to a position under the Board, during the term for which he was appointed or elected. My term had two years yet to run.

When I called this to President Aaron's attention, he said, "Well, we'll have the law changed." We had a conference with the Attorney General, who was very cautious because he was a Philadelphian, and the Philadelphia School District was governed by the same School Code provisions as Pittsburgh.

An amendment was worked out to fit the exact situation in Pittsburgh providing that where one had served a certain number of years as a board member, he might resign and be elected School Solicitor by the unanimous vote of all the other members of the Board.

That meant that the other fourteen members would have to be present at a meeting, but Mr. Oliver was in his nineties, and there was practically never a full turnout. The meeting was held, and at the last minute I was thrilled when Mr. Oliver came in with a firm step and as erect as a man of forty. I was elected Solicitor by the unanimous vote of all the other members of the Board, and resigned as a member.

My election as Solicitor was in 1933 and I served in that capacity until my retirement in 1948. This was not regarded as a full-time job, and so was not under the Retirement System. I handled the school work, and private practice from my downtown office until about 1937 but by this time the school work had become so heavy that I dropped private practice and moved into the School Administration building in Oakland.

After a long struggle the Langly High School was built in Sheraden. With the Athletic Field it represents an Investment of almost \$2,000,000.00.

BILL FOR MEDICAL SERVICES FILED IN THE
 ESTATE OF JACOB CRISS BY DR. H. R. McCLELLAND
 OF ELDERSVILLE, PA. IN 1847.

1844		
July 20	To medicine for son Jacob	\$.25
1845		
May 19	To visit for self at medicine	.62 1/2
May 20	To visit for self	.50
July 13	To visit for self	.50
July 27	To bleeding et advice for self	.31 1/2
July 28	To emetic for self	.10
Aug. 14	To digitalis got by Reatinghouse	.12 1/2
Sep. 29	To tincture Digitalis	.20
1846		
Mar. 2	To bleeding and emetic for self	.65
May 20	To bleeding self	.37 1/2
July 21	To one visit for self	.80
Sep. 7	To bleeding self	.25
Dec. 20	To bleeding, visit, et medicine for self	.87 1/2
1847		
Jan. 21	To one emetic for self	.15
Jan. 24	To one visit for self	.56
Feb. 5	To one visit et medicine for self	.75
Feb. 7	To one visit for self	.68
Feb. 12	To one visit et medicine for self	.70
	Total	\$8.40 1/2

Jacob Criss was born in 1778, married Hanna Rittenhouse in 1799, had thirteen children, and died in 1847.

Boyd Crumrine in his history of Washington County says that Dr. McClelland "Succeeded in amassing considerable wealth. His qualifications were of the highest order."