Joseph S. Wheat was born on March 30, 1803. Little is known about his past other than his education was that of a Civil Engineer. He was married twice first to one of the daughters of Peter and Matilda Dyche. They had five children: Elmira, Armenia, Sarah S., Eliza, and Joseph. He married again to Elinor Newbraugh Grove, daughter of John Grove, a Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. From this marriage he had another six children: Harriet, Henry, Mary, James, John, and Alfred. He was too old for military service at the time of the Civil War but he was a strong Union supporter. In February of 1863, was captured at a lodge of the Union League in Bath and was sent to Libby Prison in Richmond, Virginia. He was held until June, 1864. After the war, he began the life of a public official. He served in the 1st, 2nd, 5th, and 8th West Virginia State Legislatures and later served as a Justice of the Peace in Morgan County. He owned a tannery with his brother in St. Johns Run. In the 1870 Federal Census report, he changed his profession from a farmer to a surveyor.

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