

BOOK OF BIOGRAPHIES

THIS VOLUME CONTAINS

Biographical Sketches

—OF—

LEADING CITIZENS

—OF—

BEAVER COUNTY,

PENNSYLVANIA.

“Biography is the only true history.”—Emerson.

Gilbert L. Stewart,

BIOGRAPHICAL PUBLISHING COMPANY,
GEORGE RICHMOND, Pres.; S. HARMER NEFF, Sec'y.; C. R. ARNOLD, Treas.
BUFFALO, N. Y., CHICAGO, ILL.

1899.

GENERAL J. S. LITTELL, ex-sheriff of Beaver county, now a representative farmer of Big Beaver township, Beaver county, Pa., is a descendant of 'Squire William Littell, an old Revolutionary hero, and one of the early settlers of Beaver county. 'Squire William Littell was born in Belfast, Ireland, in 1740. He attended the public schools of Belfast and came to America while still a young man. He wedded Elizabeth Walker, who was also a native of Ireland. They reared nine children, namely: Elizabeth (Reed); Jane, now deceased; Mary (Todd); Alice (Sharp); Agnes; James; William, father of the subject hereof; David; and Thomas.

At the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, General Littell's grandfather held a clerkship in the army (being private secretary to Gen-

eral George Washington), and served in that capacity throughout the war. His brother, James, was a soldier, and served under the illustrious Washington until the war was ended. A letter written in Fort McIntosh in 1779, by James to William, is still in the possession of the subject hereof, and is in a good state of preservation. It proves James to have been a good scholar. After the war, William went to Beaver county, Pa., where he took up a large tract of land in Hanover township. This tract was all wild land. Settlers were few, and wild game was abundant. William Littell made a clearing and built a large hewed-log cabin upon it,—also building a barn. He was appointed "Squire" by the governor of the state,—a position which he filled until the time of his death, in 1819. He died aged seventy-nine years.

William Littell, Jr., father of General Littell, was born upon the old homestead in Hanover township, in 1794. He attended the district schools, after which he taught for several years. He was joined in marriage with Cynthia Smith, a daughter of John and Nancy (McClure) Smith. Mrs. Littell was born in Adams county. Twelve children were the result of this happy union. Their names are: J. S., the subject of this sketch; Eliza (Robertson); Rebecca (Calhoun); Maria (Ewing); Nancy (Ewing); Cynthia, wife of J. McHenry; William M., who died in infancy; a second William M.; David; Washington; James M.; and Henry. The wife of William Little, Jr., died in 1853. Our subject's father was a farmer by occupation, and lived many

years on the old homestead farm. He sold this, however, and bought 155 acres near Beaver. His farm products were disposed of in Beaver and vicinity. He served in the War of 1812, and was ordered to duty on Lake Erie. While crossing the Ohio Swamps, he contracted the measles which nearly proved fatal. In politics, he was first a Whig and later a Republican, but had no aspirations to office. He belonged to the Seceders' church.

General Littell was the recipient of a good scholastic training, which he obtained by attending district school. He subsequently learned surveying, although he never followed that profession. He taught school for three terms in Beaver county. In 1845, his marriage with Mary Calhoon was solemnized. Mary was born in Raccoon township in 1821, and was a daughter of Richard and Sarah (Moffet) Calhoon. She was called away from her earthly home, August 1, 1897. Seven children were born of this union, viz.: Richard W.; William P.; Robert C.; Isidore S. (White); Harriet (Rhodes); Joseph; and Isabell. Richard W. served three and one-half years in the 76th Reg., Pa. Vol. Inf., as drummer boy (this being his father's regiment). William enlisted in the 6th Reg., Ohio Cavalry, and had some narrow escapes. On one occasion he was sent to the hospital. Joseph, the youngest son, resides on the farm with his father.

After his marriage, General Littell engaged in blacksmithing for ten years. He then bought the first portable saw mill ever used in Beaver county, which he operated for one

year. In 1853, he joined a militia company, of which he was elected captain. He was afterward appointed brigade inspector of the 19th division. In the fall of 1861, he recruited a company for the 76th Reg., Pa. Vol. Inf., and was chosen captain, and was ordered to the South. From a volume entitled "Martial Deeds of Pennsylvania," the following extract is taken: "Brig. Gen'l. J. S. Littell fought with his company of the 76th Pa. Vol. Inf., at James Island, and a few days later at Morris Island. He also took part in the first and second assaults on Fort Wagner, where he led his company with great bravery." On Morris Island, General Littell had charge of the entire regiment for thirty days. On the first of July, 1862, he was severely wounded, but continued to fight and would not give up, although suffering great pain. The next morning, he received a serious wound in the right arm and side.

The attack on Fort Wagner was very disastrous, as it resulted in the loss of almost one-half of the regiment. On May 31, the subject of our sketch was promoted to be lieutenant colonel. The very next day he was again wounded, a ball passing through both thighs. After remaining in the hospital for some time, he was removed to his own home. His recovery was slow. On August 17, he was promoted to a colonelcy, and, the following January, sailed with the expeditions under Generals Butler and Weitzel, and later served under General Terry in the attacks on Fort Fisher, which commanded the approach to Wilmington. In the midst of an engage-

ment, while gallantly leading the assault, General Littell was again wounded by a ball. This ball struck him in the left thigh, passed through a pocket-book, and lodged in his body. While a disastrous day for him, it was a glorious one for the Union Army. Although suffering severely, General Littell was able to exult in the splendid victory. He was removed to Fortress Monroe, the ball having been extracted while on the field. Later, he was sent to his home. Upon the recommendation of General Terry, as a merited recognition of his distinguished valor, he was created a brevet-brigadier general. While recovering from the wounds received at Cold Harbor, a party of inferior officers tried to secure the General's discharge from the army. This was done to better their own chance of promotion. Rumors of the situation reached the General before their plans had finally matured, however, and, with his wound still running, he returned to his command. It is a fact worthy of note that of all the commissioned officers who went out with the regiment, the subject of our sketch and one other alone returned.

After such a notable war record, General Littell was urged to be a candidate for sheriff, and was elected by a large majority, in 1866. Immediately after the expiration of his first term, he settled upon the farm where he still lives. This farm contains 233 acres of fine, improved land and was purchased from Harrison Power. The General erected another house and built better barns, and his farm is conceded to be one of the best in his section. For many years he operated a dairy. He was

one of the organizers of the creamery in Darlington, of which he is still a stockholder. He was president of the same until he declined to serve longer, but is still retained on the board of directors. He now makes a specialty of raising early lambs for the market. He is a Republican, and has served as school director and as supervisor. He is also an elder of the United Presbyterian church.

