

BIOGRAPHICAL ANNALS
OF
LANCASTER COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

CONTAINING

BIOGRAPHICAL AND GENEALOGICAL SKETCHES OF PROMINENT
AND REPRESENTATIVE CITIZENS AND MANY
OF THE EARLY SETTLERS

ILLUSTRATED

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Mr. Brosius's early school days were passed in Octoraro and Chestnut Hill Academies, under the tutorage of the veteran teacher, Thomas Baker, who early predicted him a glorious future. His summers were passed in manual farm labor, and under his father's direction superintending the hands employed. With a dictionary in his pocket and some favorite classical author in his hand, his time for rest was spent in study. The study of political economy had a decided fascination for him, and he was authority on all national issues. When the war of the Rebellion was inaugurated then our young student farmer became restless. A conflict raged within his bosom, between his duty to his invalid parents and his duty to his country. The supremacy was won by his unqualified patriotism, and he obtained his parents' permission to enlist at a heart-breaking cost. He was enrolled in Co. K, 97th Regiment Pa. Vols., recruited by Capt. Wayne, grandson of "Mad Anthony" Wayne, the celebrated major general in the Revolutionary army. He was of Irish-Quaker ancestry. Mr. Brosius's history in

the service is summed up by his colonel, Henry R. Guss, afterward Gen. Guss, who says: "Mr. Brosius's record is linked and written with the 97th Regt., in whose rolls his name was inscribed in 1861. Its history is his history and its fame is his fame and its glorious deeds are the sum of the faithful brave deeds of the men who with him went forth at the call of this country to do battle for the preservation of the life of the nation. Among the most earnest yet quiet and unobtrusive in all his actions was Marriott Brosius. From the day of his enlistment in the service until stricken down by the bullet of the enemy he was ever at his post of duty, active and vigilant as a sentinel, brave and courageous in line of battle. He was regarded as a model soldier as well from the force of culture that indicated the perfect gentleman as from the exact fulfillment of duty that indicated the trained veteran soldier." In the above few lines his war record is summed up. Aside from special acts it is complete. During the terrible charge on May 20, 1864, at Bermuda Hundred, which rivaled Pickett's charge at Gettysburg, the 97th Regiment, 300 strong, charged across the wheat-fields upon 2,000 Confederates, Pickett's Division, protected by rifle pits. Mr. Brosius was struck in the breast by a rifle ball which imbedded itself in his diary. After charging up to within twenty-five yards of the rifle pits and losing 237 men, killed, wounded and missing, the recall was sounded. In the retreat Mr. Brosius stooped to assist a fallen comrade from the field, when a minie ball entered near the spine, and, passing between the ribs and shoulder blade, crashed through the right shoulder joint. Sergt. Brosius was confined to the hospital for eight months, three months of which time he could not be moved in bed. After the removal of the shoulder joint and a portion of the arm bone the wound healed but his arm ever after was comparatively useless. During all these months he bore his sufferings with Christian fortitude—no murmuring, no repining, he was ever cheerful and resigned. In February, 1865, Sergt. Brosius was promoted to a lieutenancy, although he had been mustered out of service for disability the previous December.

After his return to civil life Lieut. Brosius entered Millersville State Normal School, where he remained two sessions. After teaching a short time in Chester county, he entered the office of the late Hon. Thomas E. Franklin to study law. He also matriculated in the Law Department of Ann Arbor, and graduated therefrom in April, 1868, and was immediately admitted to the Lancaster County Bar. For two years he was State lecturer for the I. O. G. T., after which term he devoted his time exclusively to the practice of law. When attending the Millersville Normal School he became acquainted with Miss Elizabeth Jackson Coates, a daughter of Simmons Coates, of West Grove, Chester county. Mr. Coates was of the distinguished Coates family of Chester county; he was a man of high standing in his community, educated and cultivated and prominent in

the Society of Friends. The acquaintance of Mr. Brosius and Miss Coates soon ripened into the strongest mutual attachment, with the usual result, and shortly after he was admitted to the Lancaster Bar she became his wife, and no more congenial union was ever formed. Four daughters blessed their union, two of whom are living: Gertrude, wife of Herbert B. Coho, of New York (they have two children, Gertrude and Helen Elisabeth); and Grace, who married Clement Biddle, Jr., of the Carnegie Iron Works, Pittsburg, Pa. Loretta R. died aged six years, and Florence died aged nineteen months. Mrs. Brosius contributed largely to her husband's successful career. His modest, retiring, unassuming nature required some one to lean upon in his many trials and tribulations, and at these times she cheered and comforted him and he learned to rely upon her wise counsel. She never doubted her husband's ability to distinguish himself. She knew his capabilities better than anyone else, and had fondly hoped for the realization of her waking dreams. The home life of the Brosius family at No. 419 West Orange street, Lancaster, was happiness personified, each member of the household contributing to the happiness of the others; gentleness and love permeated the entire atmosphere. The love for the good and beautiful was promoted by the esthetic surroundings. Mr. Brosius once said to a friend of his youth that the highest encomium ever paid to him was by his daughter, who said, "Papa, we never saw you angry."

Mr. Brosius's career at the Bar, and the high esteem in which he was held by his associates, has been so beautifully portrayed in authoritative classic language that we introduce in this place the address of W. F. Beyer, Esq., at a meeting of the Lancaster Bar to adopt memorial resolutions regarding the death of Mr. Brosius, which occurred on the 17th of March, 1901. Mr. Beyer in part said:

Mr. Chairman: In common with other of his associates, I desire to add the testimony of my appreciation of the life and manly qualities of our late associate, the Hon. Marriott Brosius.

We were born on adjoining farms that our respective fathers owned, in Colerain township, and, although he was a dozen years my senior, I knew him and his family from earliest childhood. When I came to Lancaster, leaving the Law School, he took me into his office for the few weeks preceding my examination and admission to the Bar, and afterward aided me in my early practice. For twenty years our homes have been on the same side of the same square in this city, where our families have met and grown up together. Never once during these more than forty years has a single unpleasant incident strained the chain of early friendship, but its links have rather grown brighter with the constant social intercourse of recurring years.

I will not rehearse the story of his army life, which has frequently been printed, and is a matter of history. Let us pass to his career at this Bar, where his industry and ability, the thoroughness with which he prepared his cases, his uniform courtesy and fairness, will long be remembered. He loved public questions, but he was not a politician in the modern sense. Those of us who were with him in his first campaign for Congress at the primary election in 1888 know that he had no combination back of him, as we now understand the word, but that he went

before the people, and the people of this great county chose him gladly, and they have chosen him ever since. There have been many vile stories of our local politics, some true and some false, in the past thirteen years, but none of them in the remotest degree has ever been associated with his good name. The bitterness of defeat often moves the tongue to slander, but in this case no sound has been heard.

As a member of Congress, he rapidly rose to prominence, and it may truly be said that this county never had a more industrious, careful and conscientious representative. For some years he has held the chairmanship of the Committee on Banking and Currency, one of the most important committees in the House, and there, as at home, he has proven himself a thoroughly honest man. It fell to his lot to shape the legislation affecting the money of a nation of 70,000,000 people, under which a large portion of the Government bonds were refunded at a lower rate and the National banking system practically reorganized, the whole involving hundreds of millions, yet not a dishonest dollar stuck to his fingers. And now the end has come in the midst of his usefulness. He was one of the people, and the whole people mourn him, while we, his intimate associates, will cherish his memory as that of the noblest type of man.

Justice J. Hay Brown, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, said:

The virtues of our dead friend and brother have been justly extolled by those who have spoken and it is not needful that I should longer dwell upon them. But if I do not speak of them it is not because any other man's appreciation of them was higher. In every relation of life he was exemplary and from the beginning to the end he was pure and his hands were clean. His good qualities ought to be remembered here and recalled from time to time in order that they may be emulated. As a citizen, soldier, lawyer, statesman, husband and father he was pure, brave, successful, able, affectionate and God fearing. More than this cannot be said of mortal being, and though he fell at his work when the rays of the day's sun were still shining upon him and before the shades of eventide had gathered about him, his life was not lived in vain.

In 1882 Mr. Brosius, a delegate in the Republican State Convention, in the midst of a factional contest, made a speech in favor of harmony in which he said: "I love my party better than any wing or faction of it and only less than my country," which so carried the convention that he was by acclaim nominated for a Congressman at large, but was defeated, although he ran seventy-six hundred ahead of the others on the Republican ticket. In 1888, after an exciting contest, he was elected as the Republican candidate to represent the Tenth District in Congress: almost without opposition he was nominated and elected in 1890, 1892, 1894, 1896, 1898, 1900. His death left a vacancy in the LVIIth Congress, where he had only entered upon his term a few days previously.

It was no easy task to follow Stevens and Smith as the representatives of Lancaster county in the National Congress—the grandest district in our nation, and whose representatives had always taken a leading part in shaping National legislation, yet Mr. Brosius soon secured respectful consideration from that body and was frequently selected by his party members to lead the discussion in the House of Representatives in consequence of his clear conception, persuasive rhetoric and faultless diction in

presenting the subject under consideration. His fame as an orator was not confined to Congressional halls, it was only bounded by our National confines, and he was eagerly sought for to deliver memorial addresses in our National cemeteries and other places. In 1876 he delivered the Centennial address in Lancaster. On Sept. 18, 1888, he delivered the oration at the unveiling of the monument on the Antietam battlefield. He also delivered the oration on the dedication of the Ross monument, in Lancaster City; the address on the occasion of the dedication of the monument in memory of the Revolutionary patriots who lie buried at Donegal, Pa.; on the battlefield of Gettysburg, 1896; and many others, but space will not permit the enumeration. On two occasions he delivered the memorial addresses at Arlington—a compliment never as yet paid to any other orator. As a political speaker, Mr. Brosius was sent by the National Republican committee, at solicitation of candidates in closely contested districts—the inspiration of his presence, his fluent, convincing reasoning, winning many to his party standard. But his great ability to sway people consisted not alone in his eloquence. His sterling integrity, unimpeachable honesty and unqualified veracity were important factors in directing the general consensus of public opinion. In consequence of Mr. Brosius's diversified learning Ursinus College conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws.

During his Congressional career Mr. Brosius served on a number of important House committees, including Agriculture, Civil Service (of which he was chairman), Pension Bureau and Banking and Currency (of which he was chief). He was an acknowledged authority on National financial legislation. At the last meeting of the committee on Banking and Currency resolutions strongly commending Mr. Brosius's impartial and courteous rulings were adopted, and the members of the committee, regardless of party affiliations, paid him high compliments for efficiency, little thinking they should never on earth meet him again.

Mr. Brosius was a member of the Society of Friends, of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, of the Grand Army of the Republic, trustee of Lancaster General Hospital, member of Lancaster County Historical Society, of the Young Men's Christian Association, and of other organizations.

Mr. Brosius died on the morning of the 17th of March, 1901. The arrangements for the interment were made by Col. E. F. Pierce, Sergeant at Arms of the House of Representatives, and Mr. Fishback, Mr. Brosius's private secretary, the time appointed being 2 P. M., March 20. Mr. Brosius's body lay in state at his home on the above date, and for hours a constant procession passed the casket, all anxious, through their tear-dimmed eyes, to have a last fond look on their beloved friend. The Congressional committee, composed of senators and members of the House of Representatives, arrived in Lancaster the morning of the funeral to take part in the funeral

obsequies. Rev. Dr. Alleman delivered an eloquent sermon, after which the body was borne to Greenwood cemetery, where the interment took place, in the midst of a large concourse of friends.