

Armstrong County

PENNSYLVANIA

HER PEOPLE, PAST AND PRESENT

EMBRACING

A HISTORY OF THE COUNTY

AND

A Genealogical and Biographical Record of Representative Families

IN TWO VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

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GEN. SAMUEL McCARTNEY JACKSON, "Colonel" as the old members of the 11th Regiment loved to call him, was one of the sons of Armstrong county whose privilege it has been to achieve distinction in civil as well as military life. He was an active and successful business man of the county, located at Apollo, with whose interests he was closely identified for many years. He was a son of John and Elizabeth (McCartney) Jackson, and was born on the farm where his father settled, near Apollo, Armstrong county, Sept. 24, 1833.

The Jackson family is of Irish descent and has always been prominent in the southern part of the county from its earliest settlement. James Jackson, the General's grandfather, came from Ireland to Pennsylvania with his parents, who were at Hannastown (1782) when it was burned by the Indians, and finally settled in Kiskiminetas township. James Jackson died at eighty-four years of age, and his eldest son, John Jackson, born Oct. 12, 1797, died Jan. 8, 1853. John Jackson was the builder of his own fortune and became one of the wealthy, honorable and highly respected men of Armstrong county. On Oct. 5, 1826, he married Elizabeth McCartney, of Scotch lineage, who was born Oct. 10, 1805, and died Aug. 9, 1880. She was the mother of ten children, of whom the second son and fourth child was Samuel McCartney.

Samuel M. Jackson was reared on the farm, but he early craved something more than farm life seemed to offer, and at the age of sixteen he entered the Jacksonville Academy, in Indiana county, where he hoped to get that training which he considered the basis of a useful life. The unexpected death of his father, however, compelled him to leave school one year later and abandon his cher-

ished desire for a liberal academic education. However, he became well read in history and biography. At an early age he displayed an active interest in military affairs, and when only twelve years old he was enrolled as a drummer boy in the State militia, evincing in childhood those talents which were afterward of incalculable value to his country in the hour of her sore distress. For efficient service he was promoted, step by step, until he obtained a captain's commission, and when the dark clouds of rebellion broke Captain Jackson was one of the first to proffer his services in the great struggle to maintain one flag and a united country. He recruited Company "G" or the Apollo Independent Blues, of the 11th Pennsylvania Reserves, and was commissioned its captain when it was mustered into the service. His signal ability as a soldier could not long remain unnoticed. On July 2d, 1861, he was made major of his regiment. On Oct. 28th he was promoted to the office of Lieutenant-colonel, and on April 10, 1863, he received the sword and commission of a colonel. The talents of the man were so marked, his character and bearing so distinguished, that advancement in the service was as steady as the flow of the irresistible tide. At the head of a brave regiment he proved himself a gallant officer, and through the whole three years' service was a conspicuous figure in all the campaigns in which his regiment was summoned to duty. At the battles of Gaines' Mills, Second Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Wilderness, Spottsylvania Court House, and Bethesda Church, General Jackson and his regiment showed the fighting worth of Pennsylvania blood, rendering particularly distinguished service at South Mountain, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, and in the Wilderness. At Spottsylvania he commanded his brigade, and so well and ably did he bear himself in this battle that he was breveted a brigadier-general for gallant and meritorious conduct. It is a striking coincidence, and worthy of note, that this noble life went out on the anniversary of this sanguinary battle, which won for him his highest military rank. But it was at Gettysburg that General Jackson so eminently displayed his keenness of judgment and powers of command. On the second day's fight the 11th Reserves lay in the front on the slope of Little Round Top, overlooking the terrible valley of death from which the 3d Corps had been driven back. Supports sent to the relief of the 3d had been fearfully broken, and the enemy, flushed with success, was steadily

advancing with a terrible and resolute purpose to carry the hill. General Crawford's orders had been to remain in position and hold the hill at all hazards. This seemed impossible. Moments then were as vital as hours. There was no time to await orders from superiors. General Jackson, quick to see and realize the danger of delay, on his own responsibility ordered the regiment forward, and was at once followed by the commands in the rear. Down the slope they charged, and hurling themselves like thunderbolts on the columns of the confident and unsuspecting enemy they fought them foot by foot back across the valley of death, across Plum run and into the wheatfield, regaining the entire field so nearly and irretrievably lost. It was here that General Crawford rode up in rear of the regiment, and with much excitement complimented them in most extravagant terms, saying, "Colonel Jackson, you have saved the day; your regiment is worth its weight in gold sir."

At the battle of the Wilderness, General Jackson again displayed his signal ability to command, and his ready power to meet any emergency, however trying. While commanding his own and the 2d Regiment, he suddenly found himself cut off from his division by a strong force of the enemy. Thus isolated from the Union forces and surrounded by a confident foe, the situation presented but one of two alternatives—death or surrender. But General Jackson had never learned how to surrender. The chance of cutting his way through the enemy's lines, desperate though it was, was promptly accepted, and at the head of his brave troops, with an unequalled valor, broke through the Rebel forces, and by a circuitous route reached the Union front, where for several hours they had been given up as lost.

During three years of active, hard service, General Jackson won the confidence and respect of his superiors and the esteem and admiration of all within his command, and when mustered out he returned to his home and the quiet pursuits of a business life. While in the war he received two slight wounds. The appreciative regard of the officers and men of the 11th Regiment for their colonel was indicated by their presenting him a superb gold-encased and jeweled sword, together with sash and spurs, the presentation speech on behalf of the regiment being made by Captain Timblin. To keep warmer and more vivid the memories of his soldier life, its comradeships and past dangers, the General allied himself with Post No. 89, G. A. R., Encamp-

ment No. 1, U. V. L., and the Pennsylvania Commandery of the Loyal Legion.

For some time after the close of the war General Jackson was engaged in the oil business in Venango county, but in 1869 he returned to his native county of Armstrong and was in the same year elected to the State Legislature, and reelected the following year. In this position, as in all others he filled, both military and civil, he so won the confidence of those he served that four years later he was elected to represent the forty-first Senatorial district, composed of the counties of Armstrong and Butler, in the State Senate. At the close of his term of office he was again honored by the offer of a renomination, which he felt compelled to decline. In 1871 he was instrumental in organizing the Apollo Savings Bank, in which he filled the responsible position of cashier until 1882, in April of which year President Arthur appointed him collector of Internal Revenue for the twenty-third district, composed of the counties of Beaver, Allegheny (northern part), Butler, Armstrong, Indiana, Jefferson, Clearfield, Blair and Huntingdon. He assumed the duties of this office July 1, 1882, and served until July 1, 1885, when he was removed by President Cleveland, on account of his politics. In September of this year he was elected president of the Apollo Savings Bank, which later became the Apollo Trust Company, and he served in this position up to the time of his death. In 1893 he was elected State treasurer by a plurality of over 135,000. He was considered as a candidate for governor, and twice received the indorsement of his county for Congress.

Until the organization of the United States Steel Corporation General Jackson was largely interested in the sheet steel business in the Kiskiminetas valley. In 1886 he became interested in the benefits to be derived by his town and county from the erection of sheet iron mills at Apollo, and after he and others had agitated the subject the firm of P. H. Laufman & Co., Limited, was formed with a capital stock of \$150,000. They kept in constant operation three large mills. General Jackson became a stockholder in this company and was elected treasurer. Some time before his death P. H. Laufman & Co., Limited, and the Saltsburg Rolling Mill Company, in which he was interested, had been sold to the United States Steel Corporation. He was a lifelong member of the Presbyterian Church, and for many years an elder. He devoted much time to charity, and from the

time of its organization was president of the board of trustees of the State Institution for Feeble Minded, at Polk, Pa. He always devoted his time, money and energy to industries and promotions beneficial to his native town of Apollo and the Kiskiminetas valley, and was active in local affairs, securing the passage of the act authorizing the building of a free bridge at Apollo and taking an interest in every important measure for the public improvement. While the weight of years was beginning to burden him he never faltered, but was active almost to the very end. It was indeed, as if he had been taken while yet in the harness, for though practically retired at the time of his death he was president of the Apollo Trust Company and was assisting in the reorganization of the Pittsburgh & Allegheny Traction Company. His interest in his friends, his faithfulness to every trust, doubtless prompted him to tarry unduly long at the altar of responsibilities. On March 7, 1906, his family noticed and remarked upon, the condition of his health. He insisted that it was but a passing ailment, but to his loved ones the absence of that brilliant luster of his kindly eyes, that joy of his usual disposition, seemed to portend a more serious result. For two weeks his condition varied with some indication of slight improvement, at which time he was markedly affected by his insidious ailment, and he was compelled to remain abed, from which he never arose. But throughout his entire sickness of nine weeks, while unable to talk, his spirit never waned, and his sincere interest in his friends and loved ones continued up to the very last. On the evening of Wednesday, May 8, 1906, just as the sun was sinking into the golden western sky, and the peaceful twilight was marking the close of a beautiful summer day, as if wearied by the weight of years, and responding to the beckonings of nature, like a tired child he sank to rest, and beloved by his friends, honored and respected by all, the enemy of none, his noble spirit took its flight from an honorable, busy and useful life into the realms of a cherished memory, a worthy example and a glorious eternity. The Master called and he was ready.

It is given to but few men in life's struggle to attain and occupy the place held by General Jackson. He was a gentleman of the old school, and his dignified appearance was supported by dignity of action and manner. While he occupied a prominent place in life he was always generous and considerate of the most lowly, and the needy found in him

a ready sympathizer. His platform in life, in business, in politics, was fair play to everybody, and win or lose he always stood upon it. Those who knew him best, his friends and neighbors, who were the constant observers of the varying changes in his busy life, all testify to the high esteem in which he was held. He was loved and honored by all, and without exception he always proved worthy of the confidence so often placed in him by his fellow men. His prominence in the affairs of the State is already history, and in every capacity in which he was called to serve he exemplified the highest type of American citizenship. It is, however, as a soldier that he endeared himself to the members of the old 11th Reserves. It was during those terrible days of civil strife that the character of the man showed forth in its true light. It was during those awful three years, as commander of a brave and faithful regiment, that he encouraged confidences which became the basis of a friendship lasting with increasing fervor until death, and an example which will continue while memory runs. It is well known what constant care and consideration he exercised for the comfort and safety of the regiment, and by his quiet manner and his inherent sympathy he so endeared himself to the "boys" that they would gladly follow wherever he led, even to the "jaws of death." His was surely the fullness of an ideal life. As a soldier he was obedient and brave; as an officer, gallant and fearless, as a statesman, conscientious and wise.

General Jackson was twice married. His first wife was Martha J. Byerly, of Westmoreland county, whom he married in 1860 and who died in 1864, leaving two children: Mary Gertrude (Mrs. Townsend) and Lizzie Virginia (Mrs. Hammitt). On Dec. 29, 1869, General Jackson was united in marriage with Mary E. Wilson, daughter of Col. John M. Wilson, of Clarion county. By his second marriage he had five children: Frank Wilson, John Howard, Bessie, Mamie (deceased) and Emily Louise. The mother of this family still lives in Apollo.

During his busy life General Jackson witnessed the little river village of his boyhood, whose industries and interests were those of a center of a moderately prosperous agricultural district, grow to a town of over two thousand people, the home of varied industries, the most important of which he was largely instrumental in establishing, and he was incessantly persevering in developing them to a highly prosperous condition.—Much of the

material from which this article was compiled was taken from the biography contained in the memorial resolutions adopted at a meeting of his old regiment, the 11th Pennsylvania Reserves.—Ed.