

HISTORY
OF THE
COUNTY OF WESTMORELAND,
PENNSYLVANIA,
WITH
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES
OF MANY OF ITS
PIONEERS AND PROMINENT MEN.

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THE MARKLE FAMILY.

The progenitor of the Markle family in Westmoreland County was John Chrisman Markle, who was born in Alsace, on the Rhine, in 1678. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, in 1685, he fled from Germany, passing down the Rhine, and settled in Amsterdam, Holland. Here he married Jemima Weurtz (or Weurtzen), a sister of the admiral of that name. In 1703 he came to America, and settled at Salem Springs, Berks Co., Pa., where he purchased fifteen hundred acres of land of the Penns. He was by trade a coach-maker, and he there established a wagon-shop, blacksmith-shop, and grist-mill.

His son Gaspard was born in Berks County in 1732, and married Elizabeth Grim, and in 1770 removed to Westmoreland County. Shortly afterwards his wife died, and he returned to Berks County, where he married Mary Roadarmel, whom he brought to his home in this county. His residence here was the post of refuge to which the settlers fled for succor and safety. He and Judge Jacob Painter entered large tracts of land that extended several miles up and down Sewickley Creek. Several of his sons served in the desultory wars growing out of the incursions of the Indians, one of whom, George, was especially distinguished at the defense of Wheeling. George, his nephew, was in the Revolution and at the battle of Brandywine, and his brother Jacob was in the naval service under Commodore Barney, and on board "Hyder Ally" at the capture of "Gen. Monk." His brother-in-law, Joseph Roadarmel, was at the battle of Long Island, in August, 1776, where he was wounded, captured, and taken prisoner on the British ship of war in New York harbor, on which he died of wounds received in battle. Another member of the Markle family, Abraham Markle, removed from Germany, and settled in Canada, and became a delegate in the Provincial Parliament. In the war of 1812 he came to the United States, and became colonel in the American army. The British government confiscated all his property in Canada, but the United States gave him four sections of land near Fort Harrison, in Indiana.

Gaspard Markle in 1772 erected a grist-mill on Sewickley, which traverses his ancient homestead. Here was made some of the *first flour manufactured west of the Allegheny Mountains*. It was transported in flat-boats by Jacob Yoder, a citizen of Reading, to New Orleans. So much consequence was attached to this feat that the citizens of Spencer County, Ky., where he afterwards lived and died, erected a monument to him to commemorate the fact. All the salt used was transported by the Markles (Gaspard's sons)

from Eastern cities on pack-horses, the intervening country being an almost unbroken forest and impassable with wagons. Of course taverns and habitations, if any, were few and far between, and the caravans of packers were compelled to carry with them from home the necessary provender for the whole journey. But often the weary packer was turned out to graze on the mountains, or in the rich valleys which diversified and divided them, while the rider himself reposed under the shadows of the overhanging forest. His son, Gen. Joseph Markle, was born Feb. 15, 1777, and was the most daring of all the packers over the mountains.

In 1799, Gen. Joseph Markle, then a young man twenty-two years old, made his first trip to New Orleans with a load of flour from his father's mill. He left Robbstown (West Newton) in March, and was six weeks on the voyage. The early traders and boatmen on the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers followed quick on the heels of the pioneers, and were a hardy and adventurous race. Before the introduction of steam-boats on the Western waters they were the common carriers of the Great West. Pittsburgh and Robbstown were their headquarters, and New Orleans the Ultima Thule of their voyages. It was a long and tedious journey, the difficulty of returning adding greatly to its perils and the time occupied. As far as communication with white inhabitants was concerned, the voyage might as well have been made on the wide ocean. The unwieldy and sluggish flat-boats crawled slowly along with the current until it entered the Mississippi, where, amidst its whirlpools and eddies and its rushing waters, the sturdy voyager strained every nerve to save it from wreck on snags and sawyers. At night they lashed their boats close under the shore, and again at early dawn set out for their voyage. The boatmen generally returned by what was called the "Wilderness route" by the way of Natchez, Nashville, Lexington, Chillicothe, etc. From the vicinity of Natchez to Nashville the route was by the Indian trail through the Chickasaw nation, a distance of about six hundred and fifty miles.

Gaspard Markle had retired from business before 1799, when the management of the mills, farms, etc., all devolved upon Gen. Joseph Markle.

In 1806 he erected another grist-mill, and in 1811 formed a partnership with Simon Drum, of Greensburg, and during that year built a large paper-mill, the third establishment of the kind west of the Alleghenies. Mr. Drum, father of Adj.-Gen. Drum, of the United States army, residing at a distance, the entire superintendency was added to Gen. Markle's other duties. Gen. Markle was captain of a company of light dragoons (troop) in the war of 1812, and was in the battle with the Indians on the expedition against the Mississinewa towns on the Wabash River, in which Lieut. Waltz (from his vicinity) and sixteen others were killed. Four other members of the Markle family were in this troop, one of whom,

Jacob, was appointed to fill the vacant lieutenantcy occasioned by Waltz's death. Gen. Markle was under Gen. Harrison, and was at the siege of Fort Meigs, and the sorties which accompanied it. While away in the West fighting the British and Indians the dam of the paper-mill on the Sewickley was swept away by a flood, but it was immediately repaired by the supervision of his wife, and the manufacture of paper extensively carried on. His dealings with a single house in Pittsburgh in a few years then amounted to more than a hundred thousand dollars. He supplied a greater part of Western Pennsylvania with paper, and personally distributed large quantities in Ohio and Kentucky. His farm, too, in the meanwhile was cultivated with great industry and vigor. The flour-mill was kept constantly employed. He also kept a store, out of which the great number of hands employed by him were partly paid for their services. The profits of the whole were no doubt very great, but the freedom with which he lent his name to his friends ultimately swallowed them up and left him deeply involved. In 1829, in order to relieve himself from the vexation consequent to his embarrassments, he transferred to two of his sons, S. B. and Cyrus P., over three hundred acres of land, including the paper-mill, upon the condition of their paying his responsibilities. This condition was faithfully performed by the payment of every dollar for which he was morally or legally bound. He retained the ancient homestead of two hundred and twenty-five acres. It is one of those retired and fertile nooks into which our German population are so fond of retiring. Though selected by Gaspard Markle with far different views, it is just such a spot as the eye of the lover of nature would delight to survey. It is beautifully situated on the east bank of the Sewickley. The principal part of the farm, descending gently from the east, terminates with a more abrupt descent at the stream. On an elevated point between the creek and a small rivulet which traverses the farm stands the family mansion, now occupied by George Markle. It is a large stone building, erected about 1818, and of rather modern construction. The frame mansion built in 1817 is occupied by Gen. C. P. Markle. Immediately below the former is the mill built in 1806. From this point the stream, rushing and brawling among the rocks, pours along the base of a high and precipitous hill, crowned with oaks and fringed below with spruce and cedar. Hemmed in by the hill, it sweeps around a beautiful plateau of cultivated fields, and again approaches the mansion house. It has evidently at one time, after traversing a distance of a mile and a half, returned to within fifty paces of its present channel near the mill. Through the narrow isthmus thus formed Gen. Joseph Markle cut a tunnel, and through this and a canal cut along the deserted bed of the creek the water is now conveyed to the paper-mill. Here after having performed its office it is precipitated into its

parent stream, which rushing through a cleft in the rocks rolls down its water towards the Youghiogheny. All or most of these objects are directly under the eye of the mansion. The hill towering and stretching along it towards the setting sun, the creek at its base with its fringe of evergreen, the fields embossed in their midst and dotted over with the houses, paper-mill, the residences of the proprietors, and the neat white cottages of the hands, the clatter of the mill, and the ceaseless rush of the waters, all conspire to make this a spot where its owners may seek repose from the cares and vexations of life.

In the "Whiskey Insurrection" of 1794, Maj.-Gen. Daniel Morgan's wing of the Federal army encamped on Gaspard Markle's homestead, and the garlic still found in this region troubling the land-owners is attributable to its being introduced by that army. Gaspard Markle was opposed to the lawless opposition engendered against the excise laws and the officials sent here to enforce it, and saw with chagrin the defiers of law erect a liberty-pole on his lands, being unable in the excitement of the then maddened populace to prevent it. He died in 1819. Gen. Joseph Markle, his son, in 1837 purchased of his friend and old commander, Gen. Harrison, five hundred acres of land near Princeton, Ind., and eighty acres of another party near Vincennes same day. He died March 15, 1867, in his ninety-first year.

Gen. C. P. Markle has some one thousand acres of rich lands on the Sewickley, all underlaid with the finest Youghiogheny coal. His splendid stock and dairy farm consists of three hundred acres, from which the annual sales of Jersey cattle exceed ten thousand dollars. His cattle and herds are among the best in the State. He and his sons have also a large butchering establishment in West Newton, where are daily slaughtered animals from their farm to feed the people of that manufacturing town.

The first paper-mill was erected in 1811, by Gen. Joseph Markle, in connection with Simon Drum, who only continued in the business a few years. It was a frame structure, located half a mile below the mansion, and was torn down in 1826. Gen. Markle built the steam paper-mill in 1827 by the narrows. It was constructed of stone and wood, and was over one hundred feet long. The stone end is still standing, and is used for a warehouse. In 1829 he turned the mill over to his sons, S. B. and Cyrus P., who in 1846 built the frame paper-mill in South Huntingdon township. It was operated both by steam and water-power. It was burned in 1862. In 1859 they erected the brick steam paper-mill in West Newton, to which in 1864 they made extensive frame additions. It was burned in 1876, and rebuilt in 1878.

It was again burned in 1878 and rebuilt the same year. In 1879 it was again burned and rebuilt the same year. In 1881 Cyrus P. Markle & Sons, who for several years have been the active partners of their father, the general, purchased some five thou-

sand acres of land on the Castleman River, in Somerset County, where they invested over two hundred thousand dollars, and erected very extensive "pulp-works," in which the live trees of the forest are manufactured in two days into pulp, as elsewhere in this book minutely described. The principal paper manufactured by them is the glazed hardware paper, a particular fabric of extreme niceness and rarity, of which they are the *only* manufacturers in America of this special kind. Part of it is shipped to Pittsburgh and the balance to New York, where much of it goes to foreign shores, and a large amount to China.

The Markle paper-mills have been operated by three generations. Formerly they made all kinds of writing and bank-note papers, manilla wrappers, etc., but now their chief fabrics manufactured are the glazed hardwares, of a great variety of shades and textures. When Gen. Joseph Markle established the factory in 1811, and for a long time afterwards, the paper was all made by hand shaking, but now the latest inventions of skilled machinery are employed in all departments of its manufacture. The glazed hardwares are used by hardware manufacturers and dealers in the packing of all kinds of steels, cutlery, etc. The business of their paper-mill this year will reach a million dollars, and gives employment to several hundreds of hands of both sexes and all ages. The firm has also very extensive coke-ovens,—the "Bessemer" and "Rising Sun,"—located near Mount Pleasant, which are among the largest and best in the State.

The pulp-factories of C. P. Markle & Sons at Markleton, in Somerset County, are said to be the largest in the world in their capacity for the production of wood pulp. The following sketch of these great works was written by one of a party of recent visitors, and published in the newspapers :

"Markleton is a station created out of nothing by Mr. Markle. He has already built ten dwelling-houses, and is building five more; has erected a church, a store, and an elegant little railroad station, besides his factories. The town lies in a little basin, surrounded by great hills densely wooded, and the Castleman River winds along beside it. On the opposite side of the river is one of the timber tracts belonging to C. P. Markle & Sons. They have over 8000 acres in Somerset and Westmoreland Counties. From Markleton a tram road extends back into the forest for eight miles. The road is carefully built, and T rails of excellent quality are used on it. The scenery along the road is highly picturesque, and its beauty was heightened by about a quarter of an inch of snow which lay upon the ground under the evergreen trees, although there was no snow in the open spots where the sun's rays could strike it. A large gang of men were at work about two miles from the station, getting wood ready for the mill.

"They do not use axes or cross-cut saws up there in cutting down trees. Such tools are too slow in performing the required work. They simply blow a tree up with dynamite. A specimen of this sort of thing was witnessed by the visitors. A few large spruce were selected as the victims, and the 'feller' who fells began to quickly bore a hole in the base of the tree with an inch auger. The hole was driven in about ten inches, the chips were removed, and a dynamite cartridge was inserted in the hole. The dynamite used comes in sticks like a candle, and resembles moist brown sugar. A fuse was attached to the charge, and after it was lighted the men sought a place of safety and waited. In a few seconds there was a mighty roar, and the great tree was lifted up

into the air about ten feet, then with a swoop and crash it came to the earth, splintered half way up the trunk.

"Dynamite is not cheap, but it may truthfully be said that a little of it goes a great way.

"The trees are cut up into four-foot lengths and split up into pieces like cord-wood. Then they are hauled over to the storage-yards beside the factories. Almost any kind of timber could be used for making pulp, but the fibre of spruce and hemlock is so straight and soft that it can be worked more speedily and economically than any other available wood. The machinery in Markle's mill is strong enough to make pulp out of *lignum vitæ*, but it would not pay.

"About a hundred feet above the railroad is the mill proper. It is a superb building, one hundred and sixty-two by eighty-six feet, built in the most substantial manner and fitted out with the finest class of machinery. It is here the process of manufacture is carried on. The process is briefly this: The sticks of wood are brought into the mill and thrown into a large funnel which feeds a clipping-machine. This machine consists of a large wheel furnished with five knife-blades, and the blades chip the wood off just as the knives of a fodder-machine cut straw. The chips are conveyed by an elevator to the second story of the mill and are dumped into 'digesters.' There are eight digesters in this mill. They resemble vertical boilers. The chips are fed into the digesters from openings in the top, and then a preparation of soda ash and lime is poured upon them, and they are boiled. The pressure of the chips as they spread apart and the fibres separate is immense, and the digesters have to be made to resist a pressure of one hundred and fifty pounds to the inch. In a short time the chips become a stringy pulp, and the liquid is run off by a pump and conveyed to the evaporator, of which we will speak later. The pulp next goes through a wet machine, where it is strained and cooled. It then passes between rollers, and is made into sheets like pasteboard. Indeed, to the uninitiated, the sheets seem to be pasteboard of a fine and strong quality, and of a pure white color. The most striking feature about the mill is its water supply. Four six-inch pipes are supplied with water from a strong mountain stream a hundred feet above the mill. The water is carried to the mill through thirteen hundred feet of huge pipe, with a fall of one hundred and sixty feet. A more magnificent supply of water could not be desired, and it is so remarkably soft it does not require any artificial softening.

"The evaporator which has been alluded to is a great building, one hundred and forty-eight feet long and thirty-eight feet wide. It is supplied with a long battery of small furnaces, above which are the retorts into which the alkali is pumped from the mill. It is then evaporated until soda ash is the result, and this ash is again used in preparing pulp. There is but a trifle loss in evaporation, and the same alkali is used again and again. This evaporator is the most perfect building of its kind in existence, and yet it is not large enough to do all the work required, and the foundations of another one have already been laid.

"On the mountain side, a couple of hundred yards above the evaporator, is a six-foot vein of coal, which is opened, and which is to be connected with the works by a tramway.

"The capacity of the mill is sixty thousand pounds of pulp daily. A cord of wood will make twelve hundred pounds of pulp. This pulp is worth one hundred and forty dollars a ton. About five tons of the pulp will make three tons of paper, we believe, although we base this on a guess. The pulp is transported to the Markle paper-mills at West Newton, and there it speedily becomes paper. The firm has invested over a quarter of a million of dollars in its works at Markleton, but they will be amply repaid for their outlay. The mills will be in operation in two weeks, and will give employment to nearly two hundred men. A new paper-mill has been built at West Newton by the firm, and in a day or two it will begin work. The store of the firm is managed by Mr. John A. Miller, a very clever young gentleman, and the post-office—called Fibre—is in charge of Mr. John Cannon.

"This mere outline of this great enterprise gives but a poor idea of its merits, but it shows how, as Capt. Markle remarked, 'a tree that waved its branches in the forest wind at noon on Monday may be sold on Tuesday morning by the newsboys of Pittsburgh, who shout, Here's your morning paper! All about the great pulp-works at Markleton!'"