

HISTORY
OF
VENANGO COUNTY,
PENNSYLVANIA.

ITS PAST AND PRESENT,

INCLUDING

ITS ABORIGINAL HISTORY; THE FRENCH AND BRITISH OCCUPATION OF THE
COUNTRY; ITS EARLY SETTLEMENT AND SUBSEQUENT GROWTH; A
DESCRIPTION OF ITS HISTORIC AND INTERESTING LOCALITIES; ITS
RICH OIL DEPOSITS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT; SKETCHES OF
ITS CITIES, BOROUGHs, TOWNSHIPS, AND VILLAGES; NEIGH-
BORHOOD AND FAMILY HISTORY; PORTRAITS AND
BIOGRAPHIES OF PIONEERS AND REPRESENT-
ATIVE CITIZENS; STATISTICS, ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATED.

CHICAGO, ILL.:
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CHARLES MILLER, sixth son of Christian Miller, is of Huguenot ancestry, and was born in the little village of Oberhoffen, Canton de Bishweiler, Alsace, France, June 15, 1843. When he was eleven years old, the family came to this country and settled near the village of Boston, Erie county, New York, where the father purchased a farm. At the age of thirteen he engaged himself to a country merchant for a year for thirty-five dollars and board. When seventeen years old he secured a clerkship in a dry-goods store in Buffalo at one hundred and seventy-five dollars, board not included. The highest wages he received as long as he remained a clerk was eight dollars per week. He enlisted in the New York National Guard in 1861, and in 1863 was mustered into the United States service.

He was married in 1863 at Springville, New York, to Miss Ann Adelaide Sibley, eldest child of Doctor Joseph Crocker and Lucy Elvira (Babcock) Sibley. Their children are: Adelaide Sibley, Charles Joseph Sibley, Henry Sibley, LeRoy Sibley, Julius French, and Metta Evalina. These are all now living, except Henry Sibley, who died in infancy.

Mr. Miller commenced business for himself in 1864, in the same store in Boston, New York, in which he had first begun as clerk. His own capital was only two hundred dollars, but Doctor Sibley loaned him two thousand dollars, and also aided him by valuable suggestions. In 1866, Doctor Sibley having died, he sold out his store, the profits of the business being about one thousand dollars above living expenses. The same year he came to Franklin, formed a partnership with John Coon, of Buffalo, and for three years did a successful dry-goods business, but the fall in prices was then so great as to equal all the profits and nearly the whole amount originally invested.

In 1869 the partners purchased a works and a patent for Galena oil. R. L. Cochran was taken into partnership in the oil business. The dry-goods business continued depressed and the store was closed out at a loss of eleven thousand dollars. Mr. Miller himself auctioned off most of the goods. The following year the works burned down, and Miller and Coon found themselves liable for thirty-two thousand dollars with assets amounting to about six thousand dollars. In this misfortune several citizens together subscribed and presented one thousand dollars, which was gratefully accepted as a loan and subsequently repaid. Necessary funds for continuing the business were obtained by taking in a new partner, H. B. Plumer. Another works was purchased and refitted, and within thirty days after the fire, oil was being

shipped from the new manufactory. Since that time the business has been prosperous and continuously growing. In the fall of 1878 his partners disposed of their interests to the Standard Oil Company. Mr. Miller retained his interest, was made president, and given entire management of the business. To-day nearly three-fourths of the railway mileage of the United States lubricate their equipment with Galena oils. Mr. Miller deals directly with consumers. Since 1870 his business trips have averaged nearly five days of every week. Probably no other man has a wider acquaintance with railroad officials, and what is highly gratifying is that they are almost without exception his personal friends.

Mr. Miller is a director in many other enterprises, among which may be mentioned the Paige Car Wheel Company; the Middleton Spring Company; the Railway Speed Recorder Company; the Anglo-American Oxide Company, and the First National Bank of Franklin. He is also the senior partner and joint owner with his brother-in-law, J. C. Sibley, of the noted Prospect Hill Stock Farm.

For two successive terms, 1885 and 1886, Mr. Miller was elected mayor of Franklin on the Republican ticket. His vote and influence are now cast for the Prohibition party. He is now serving his fourth continuous term as president of the Northwestern Association of Pennsylvania of the Grand Army of the Republic. He was ordnance officer of the Second brigade of Pennsylvania under General James A. Beaver, and when General John A. Wiley succeeded to the command, Major Miller was appointed assistant adjutant general, which position he still holds.

He united with the Baptist church in Boston, New York, in 1865. At Franklin he assisted in the organization of the First Baptist church, of which he was, at the age of twenty-four, made deacon. The First Baptist Sunday school, of which he has been for seventeen years the superintendent, numbers nearly six hundred members. He is also superintendent of the Third Ward mission school. In each school he teaches a Bible class. The one in the First Baptist school comprises over one hundred and seventy-five men. He has been for several years past conductor of the French Creek Sunday School Association. He is at present president of the Young Men's Christian Association of Franklin and is now serving his fourth successive term as president of the Pennsylvania Baptist Association.

Mr. Miller's gifts to worthy objects have kept pace with his increasing wealth, and many churches, schools, and benevolent institutions, as well as deserving individuals, have been substantially helped by him. In October, 1889, he opened a free night school for his employes and the young men who attend either of the two Sunday schools of which he is superintendent. Four teachers are employed, and some ninety pupils enrolled.—*E. H. S.*

VENANGO COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA

HER PIONEERS AND PEOPLE

Embracing a General History of the County

PREPARED BY

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and

*A Genealogical and Biographical Record of
Representative Families*

TWO VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

CHICAGO
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GEN. CHARLES MILLER during his fifty years' residence in Franklin has probably left a deeper impression of his personality and initiative upon the city than has any other resident. Born in Alsace, France, he came to America when a child and spent his boyhood near Boston, N. Y., and when a young man moved to Franklin, Pennsylvania, where he engaged in the dry goods business. He was one of the first to realize the possibilities of the oil industry, and purchasing a refinery entered into a partnership to manufacture railway lubricating oils by a secret process. The little company met with heart-breaking reverses, their plant was destroyed by fire, and

the business seemed on the brink of dissolution. With the indomitable spirit that has characterized all his actions, General Miller rebuilt the plant and personally took charge of the marketing and all the affairs of the company. So aggressive was he that the business grew rapidly, and in a short time Galena oils and service were known and recognized as the standard for lubrication on every railroad in the United States and Canada. So confident was he of the quality of Galena materials that he evolved and put into practice the idea of guaranteeing the net cost of lubrication, which has saved the railroads millions of dollars. Not satisfied with having practically all the steam and electric railroads of the country under contract, he looked to an extension of the business in foreign fields. Undismayed by the fact that he was confronted by well-established, strong competitors, he proceeded with his exploitation, and to-day has a large and growing business in South America and European countries—in fact, it was Galena oils that furnished the lubrication to the French railroads for twenty-two years and during the great war.

From his home in Miller Park, which spot he transformed from a rough hillside pasture into one of the show places of Franklin, he can look across the city and see the smoke from half a dozen thriving industries that owe their existence to his initiative and foresight and that have been the principal factors in the development of Franklin. At the top of the hill back of his home is his farm, situated on a rolling plateau overlooking the city and affording a view for miles up the French Creek valley. His farm is his hobby, but not a plaything. It represents a material investment and is making material returns. It is a mecca for sightseers and farmers, who come to see the blooded cattle and hogs and the hundreds of fowls, in the most modern quarters, cared for according to the most advanced methods and practices, and to study the application of scientific farming to what was but a few years ago a waste of barren pastures. Besides its personal gratification to its owner, the farm is an educational institution to the farmers of the surrounding country and has contributed much to an improvement of the farming methods and production of the county.

General Miller has been commander of Mays Post, G. A. R., Franklin, Pa., for twenty-five years. Had business not claimed him, he would probably have been a soldier. Military affairs always possessed for him a fascination, and his talent for organization and

command secure for him the admiration and obedience of men. For many years he was connected with the National Guard of Pennsylvania, rising from one grade to another until he secured the rank of major-general, which position he held for six consecutive years, under two different governors. Then his pressing private affairs necessitated his resignation.

When head of the National Guard of Pennsylvania, while studying a military map, his attention was attracted to the possibility of a short line railroad connecting the northwestern part of the State with the large cities of the southwest, and that would afford a shorter route between New York and Philadelphia and Chicago than any of the established lines. He immediately engaged engineers to make the necessary surveys, which he finally turned over to the New York Central Railroad Company, who built the Jamestown, Franklin & Clearfield railroad.

In securing the rights of way for the railroad, General Miller saw the possibility of large coal development in the territory traversed and purchased and leased coal rights and organized the Pennsy Coal Company, which under his management has grown into a very profitable concern with great future possibilities. He also purchased the Lake Erie, Franklin & Clarion railroad and made it the best equipped road in western Pennsylvania, and increased its earnings over five hundred per cent.

In addition to being president of the Galena-Signal Oil Company, General Miller is president of the Colburn Machine Tool Company, president of the General Manifold & Printing Company, president of the Evening News Printing Company, chairman and acting president of the Franklin Manufacturing Company, president of the First National Bank of Franklin, chairman of the board of the American Steel Foundries Company, and president of the Lake Erie, Franklin & Clarion Railroad Company.

General Miller received only a common school education, but all his life has been a student, and his retentive memory has enabled him to accumulate a fund of knowledge on all subjects that is surpassed by few college men. He holds the degree of A. M. from Bucknell University, and has also been decorated by the French government as Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in recognition of his eminent services to industry and commerce.

General Miller is strongly attached to the city of Franklin, to which he has contributed

so liberally of his time and means, and is prouder of what he has done toward the civic and social betterment of the city than of his contribution to its material advancement. He built at his own expense a Sunday school room for the Baptist Church and contributed liberally to the rebuilding of the church itself, of which he has been one of the largest supporters. For forty-five years he has been superintendent of the Sunday school and president of the Miller Bible Class, with a membership of over one thousand. For nearly thirty years he has maintained at his own expense a night school, which has helped hundreds of young men and women to fit themselves for business life. For many years he was president of the Young Men's Christian Association, and assisted it liberally by his time and means. Under his leadership the present Y. M. C. A. building, costing over fifty thousand dollars, was built by public subscription. Although the city of Franklin abounds in many memorials to his generosity, enterprise and public spirit during more than fifty years of residence there, his greatest monument is the respect and affection in which he is held by his fellow citizens.

GENEALOGICAL AND
PERSONAL HISTORY

OF THE

ALLEGHENY VALLEY

PENNSYLVANIA

UNDER THE EDITORIAL SUPERVISION OF

JOHN W. JORDAN, LL. D.

Librarian of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia

VOLUME I

ILLUSTRATED

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MILLER Major-General Charles Miller will always live in the history of the city of Franklin for his numerous and important contributions to its welfare and prosperity. He is a man remark-

able for strength of body and useful activity of mind. It is a genuine pleasure for him to foster industry and enterprise.

To the particular business with which he is most closely identified, that of the Galena-Signal Oil Company, he has devoted his best efforts since 1869. This company not only supplies at the present time nearly all the steam roads of the United States with lubricating oils, but it counts also the greater part of the electric roads of the country among its customers; nor are its sales and services confined to railroads in North America. There is not a great division of the earth where they have not been used and appreciated. General Miller, knowing by long continued experiments the merits that were in the oils and that they could give superior service at a low cost, originated the idea of guaranteeing net results. The corporation, which General Miller has in all these years so firmly established, has a praiseworthy record for its dealings with its employees. They are paid the best of wages and salaries, they have been kindly looked after during sickness and misfortune, and they are pensioned on arriving at the age of sixty or sixty-five after twenty years of satisfactory service. They do not contribute in any way to the pension fund. It is almost needless to add that there has never been a strike or disagreement in regard to wages, hours of labor or any other feature connected with their employment.

The Galena-Signal Oil Company is only one of perhaps threescore enterprises which General Miller's forcefulness and powers of initiative have called into existence or have materially aided. To name all of them would require too much space, but a few of them, especially those located in the city of Franklin, deserve to be at least briefly mentioned. Noteworthy among these is the Park Hotel, a commodious impressive looking structure, embodying many of the latest improved architectural ideas. Few if any other cities of the population of Franklin have a hotel building to be compared with it in size, convenience or beauty. In fact there are many cities much larger that have nothing its equal.

General Miller built at his own expense a Sunday school room for the Baptist church, that cost him approximately \$40,000. The Odd Fellows Temple, which he financed and which is now completed cost over \$70,000. For many years General Miller has been president of the Young Men's Christian Association

of this city and has assisted it liberally by his means. Between two and three years ago, under his leadership, over \$50,000 was raised by a general subscription for a building fitted to the needs of the work. This building, which is a model of its kind, is at this writing (November 27, 1911) almost ready for occupancy.

When General Miller made up his mind to have a residence park on a hillside lying to the west of what was then the city of Franklin, he purchased an old pasture lot and woodland that was at that time most unpromising in its appearance. If General Miller wants to do anything, he wants to do it in the best manner possible. He, therefore, in connection with this plat of ground, engaged one of the ablest landscape architects of the country, Mr. Charles N. Lowrie, who is now president of the Association of Landscape Architects of America. Cities in the oil regions have not in times past possessed residence sections that would be commended by those who have seen the residence sections adjacent to the big cities of the east. Since Miller Park (the name given this residence plat) was laid out and transformed in accordance with the plans submitted, visitors, no matter where they come from, speak of it in terms of highest praise.

General Miller was instrumental in bringing to Franklin, or took an active part in encouraging to locate here, the following plants: The Venango Manufacturing Company, the Colburn Machine Tool Company, the American Steel Foundries Company, the Chicago Pneumatic Tool Company, the Franklin Manufacturing Company and the General Manifold & Printing Company. These companies give employment to hundreds of people and pay out hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in wages and salaries.

For many years General Miller was connected with the National Guard of Pennsylvania, rising from one grade to another until he attained the honor of being Major-General. This position he held for six consecutive years under two different governors. He then resigned on account of numerous pressing private duties. While at the head of the militia of the state he brought the organization up to a very high standard of efficiency.

During one of the great coal strikes he had the proud distinction of repressing lawlessness and at the same time of dealing very humanely with the strikers, whom he recognized as having real and serious grievances. Through his

knowledge of the situation, his influence and tactfulness he was able to take steps tending to bring about a better understanding between employers and employed. General Miller was in 1900 elected department commander for the state of Pennsylvania of the Grand Army of the Republic. He has been commander of Mays Post, of Franklin, Pennsylvania, for nearly eighteen years. The "boys in blue" rightly entertain for him a most affectionate regard.

It was while he was at the head of the National Guard of Pennsylvania that General Miller saw the necessity for a short line railroad connecting the northwestern part of the state with the large cities in the southeast. He studied the map and was so convinced of the feasibility of the plan that he engaged a corps of engineers to make the requisite surveys and procured nearly all the necessary rights of way. Recognizing from the outset that the road would be more serviceable to the general public and more easily financed if it were handled by one of the existing lines, he offered the surveys to two or three leading railway corporations. The company, however, which finally built the Franklin & Clearfield Railway, which is the portion of the road that is of most commercial importance to Franklin, was the New York Central. The number of miles at present constructed is sixty-five, and it was built at an average cost of \$100,000 a mile. Everything in connection with the roadbed is of the best quality. Already for two years or more it has been operated as a freight road and it is expected that passenger service will be inaugurated in the near future. When arrangements are all completed it will make practically a new trunk line between Chicago and New York, and it will cut off approximately seventy miles between Franklin and Philadelphia over any existing route, thus proving a great convenience to all the residents of this section of the country. As it passes through a region rich in coal deposits it will insure cheap fuel for Franklin and vicinity for many generations to come. The consolidated Jamestown, Franklin & Clearfield Railway, of which General Miller is president, has a total trackage of one hundred and sixty-five miles.

For two terms General Miller was mayor of Franklin; for six years he was a member of the State Board of Charities. He has served for many years as a trustee of several universities. General Miller is uncompromisingly op-

posed to the liquor traffic. For several years, as long as he believed there was any chance of making headway against the foe through the Prohibition party, he gave it the benefit of his support and influence. He was at one time chosen to be its nominee for governor of Pennsylvania. A combination of circumstances, however, made it necessary for him to decline to be the candidate at the polls.

General Miller's honors are not confined to this country. His services to commerce and industry were recognized by the French government which conferred upon him the highly prized distinction of chevalier of the Legion of Honor.

For twenty years or more General Miller and his partner, Hon. Joseph C. Sibley, conducted a stock farm near Franklin, which was regarded as one of the foremost of its kind in the world. Jersey cattle were bred or owned that broke all previous records for yield of milk and butter. The firm once refused \$15,000 for one bull. Their herd won two hundred and twenty-four first prizes and sweepstakes at twenty-two state fairs or greater exhibitions. Their trotting horses were of the best and most popular strains and certain ones had as much speed as had been developed up to that period. Fifty thousand dollars was once offered and refused for their noted horse St. Bel.

General Miller has generously helped numerous struggling churches, but as was fitting has given most liberally to the Baptist church, of which he is a member and deacon. His Sunday school, now numbering one thousand nine hundred and ninety-two members, is his special pride. He has been its superintendent since 1874. This bare statement without comment is an eloquent eulogy of his efficiency. His bible class, consisting of over seven hundred men and two hundred and fifty ladies, is believed to be larger than any other of the kind in the world. If it is anywhere surpassed in numbers, it is in some city of several times the population of Franklin. To the Franklin hospital, to the public library, and to many other organizations working for social betterment, General Miller has proved himself a most able and generous friend.

One of the deeds of General Miller that the people of Franklin will always recall with special gratitude is the Miller Night School, which he has maintained at his own expense since 1890. It has helped hundreds of young men

and women to earn a livelihood and to become valuable members of the community in which they reside. Two hundred scholars attend the night school annually.

This sketch, though necessarily brief and inadequate, is nevertheless sufficient to show that General Miller has reared in Franklin many memorials to his genius, enterprise and public spirit.

General Miller married (first) Anne Adelaide Sibley. Their children were: Adelaide, married Samuel Addison Megeath, president of the Galena-Signal Oil Company; Charles Joseph Sibley, president of the Franklin Manufacturing Company, married Mary Prentice; LeRoy G. Miller, general manager of the street railway department, Galena-Signal Oil Company, married Patty Plumer; Julius French, president of the Keystone Carbon Paper Manufacturing Company, and secretary of the Galena-Signal Oil Company; Metta Sibley, married John C. Rochester, president of the Topia Mining Company; and Clarence A.

General Miller married (second) Emma Bullen. There were no children.

(Ancestral Narrative).

General Charles Miller was born in Alsace, France, in 1843, coming from an ancient Huguenot family seated in that debatable region which, after being one of the earliest provinces organized into the Frankish empire under Clovis, after the decline of the Roman empire, and subsequently until the 11th century under Charlemagne, was recognized as French territory about 1681, and taken by the Germans at the close of the Franco-Prussian war in 1871.

(I) The christian name of General Miller's great-great-grandfather Miller is not preserved, but it is known that he was a native of Markirch, Upper Alsace. His children were: Nicklose, born 1776; Martin; Michel, born 1780; Christian, of whom further; Elizabeth Ann. Of these Nicklose, Martin and Michel served in Napoleon's army.

(II) Christian, son of ——— Miller, born 1782, married Elizabeth Schuster. Children: Christian (2), of whom further; Nicklose, married Marie Bender; Michel, married Magdalena Heimlich; Elizabeth, married George Schuster; Magdalena, married George Burgraph; Margaret, married Jacob Ketterer; Salomae, married Philip Kline.

(III) Christian (2), son of Christian (1)

and Elizabeth (Schuster) Miller, was the immigrant ancestor of the American family here considered. He landed in America on June 12, 1854. He married Magdalena Voeltzel. Children: 1. Christian, married Salomae Frantz. Children: William, married Carrie Knapp; George Christian, married Nellie Allen; Michel, married Julie Buffum; Louis, married Anna Roth; Fred, married Agnes Riddell; Louisa, married H. K. Kobler. 2. Martin, married Magdalena Kummer. Children: Magdalena, died aged twenty-one years; Christian, married Barbe Smith; William, married Louise Wohlhuther. 3. Frederick, married Magdalena Heinrich. Children: Albert F., married Louise Drake; Magdalena, married Henri Barth; Emma, married M. Kirk. 4. Louis, married Catherine Eggle. Children: Catherine Myers; Elizabeth Trank; John; Frederick, married; a Henrich; Amelia, married William Schoeder; Edward. 5. Michel, married Elizabeth Miller. Children: Emma, married Edward Osburn; Adelia, married Louis Rosenkranze; Lillian, married Bert Barlow. 6. General Charles Miller, who is the subject of the principal preceding narrative. 7. William, married Katherine Shelgele. Children: Carrie M., married August Young; Charles A., married Anita Crandall. 8. George, died on ocean, April 16, 1854, aged six years. 9. Magdalena, married Edward Walasch. Children: Edward and Clara.

LeRoy George Miller, son of
MILLER General Charles and Anne Adelaide (Sibley) Miller, was born in Franklin, Pennsylvania, September 22, 1880. He was educated in the public schools and high school of Franklin, Pennsylvania, graduating from the latter in 1889. He then entered the Law Department of Yale University, but did not complete the course. Returning to Franklin he entered the employ of the General Manifold Company, made rapid advancement, and was soon promoted to the position of traveling salesman. This position he did not long hold, as he was offered one more advantageous in his father's company, the Galena-Signal Oil Company. After filling various positions in that company and making good in all, he was made manager of the new Electric Railway Department, which he organized. In this department he has shown great ability, as evinced by the fact that it now lubricates seventy per cent. of the total electric mileage of the United

States. Mr. Miller is active in local Republican politics. He has served as councilman of the city of Franklin, and in 1910 ran for the nomination of mayor, and was only defeated by the small majority of one hundred and nineteen. He is an active member of the Baptist church, having held the office of church clerk for two years, and is second assistant superintendent of the Sunday school. He is lieutenant-colonel on General A. R. Stocker's staff, General Stocker being the commander-in-chief of the Patriarchs Militant, a branch of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. Mr. Miller also held this commission on General M. A. Raney's staff, who was the preceding commander of this organization. Mr. Miller is a member of the Elks, the Royal Arcanum, the Nursery Club of Franklin, and the Venango Club of Oil City, Pennsylvania.

He married, September 24, 1902, Patty, daughter of Ralph Clapp and Margaret (Dieringer) Plumer. Ralph Clapp Plumer, son of Samuel F. and Sarah (Power) Plumer, was born in Franklin, February 7, 1849. He married, September 3, 1876, Margaret Dieringer, daughter of Joseph and Margaret Dieringer (see Plumer VII).
