

HISTORY  
OF  
TRUMBULL AND MAHONING  
COUNTIES,  
WITH  
ILLUSTRATIONS AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

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#### JUDGE FRANCIS G. SERVIS.

A man of noble and genial nature, charitable, and friendly toward all who needed friendship and sympathy; never failing to extend a helping hand to those in distress; full of enthusiasm himself, he gave, both by example and precept, aid and encouragement to the struggling and aspiring; endowed with an honorable ambition, laboring manfully and unceasingly to make his influence widespread and useful, he was snatched away just as he had reached the goal of his hopes.

Judge Servis was born in Hunterdon county, New Jersey, August 1, 1826, and died in Canfield, Ohio, March 6, 1877. His father, Abram P. Servis, was born in Amwell township, Hunterdon county, New Jersey; he died in Berlin township, Mahoning county, Ohio, February 28, 1858, at the age of seventy-four. He married Sarah Pegg, a native of the same county and State as himself. They came to Palmyra township, Portage county, arriving May 29, 1827. Mrs. Servis died the following August. She was the mother of two children, Mary A. and Francis G. The former survives in Deerfield, Portage county.

Francis G. Servis was married September 11, 1853, to Martha E. Patton, youngest of three daughters of John and Mary (Taylor) Patton. John Patton was born in Ohio April 3, 1806;

married in 1828, and died May 8, 1880. His wife, a native of Beaver county, Pennsylvania, was born in 1810, married in 1828, and died in October, 1832, aged twenty-two years. Martha E. Patton was born in Beaver county, Pennsylvania, December 15, 1831, and by the death of her mother was left an orphan at the age of ten months. Mr. and Mrs. F. G. Servis, having no children of their own, adopted two daughters, Florence Geer and Minnie V. Piert, the former at the age of five years and the latter at the age of three. Florence is now the wife of Frank W. Freer, Ashland, Ohio. Minnie is single and resides at home with Mrs. Servis.

Judge Servis's father was a man in humble circumstances, who, after coming to Ohio, settled on a small farm, and divided his time between labor upon his farm and law practice in the lower courts. He had few early opportunities, but made the most of the facilities afforded him, and, having a natural aptitude for legal pursuits, he was skillful in the management of his cases. He is said to have been quite successful, and this no doubt, led his son to adopt the same profession. The young man, however, was obliged to depend entirely upon himself for means to acquire an education. He passed his boyhood laboring at various occupations, gaining what knowledge he could from the limited advantages afforded by the district schools and studying with zeal in his spare time.

In 1850 Judge Servis came to Mahoning county and entered the probate office of William Hartzell, then probate judge, as his deputy. While performing the duties of this position he pursued his legal studies under the instruction of John H. Lewis, Esq., at that time a leading lawyer of Mahoning county bar. In 1853 Mr. Servis was admitted to the bar upon the certificate of Wilson & Church, in whose office he had completed his studies. Soon after he opened an office, and ere long enjoyed a good practice. The acquaintance formed with citizens of all parts of the county during the years of his clerkship was of great service to him; the young man had many friends, and rose in his profession with almost marvelous rapidity. By diligence in his business, by faithfulness in promptly and punctually discharging every duty entrusted to him, he gained the confidence and respect of all his clients. When embarked on

the full tide of a prosperous practice, neither greed for gain nor any other unworthy ambition ever entered his heart. On the contrary, he rendered valuable assistance to many just entering upon the difficult task of building up a law practice, who, like himself, were obliged to begin at the foot of the ladder. A distinguished member of the Mahoning bar, after the death of Judge Servis, spoke of his friend and brother in the profession as follows: "I came to Canfield compelled to rely for a livelihood on my own exertions, and I should have found this a hard matter to accomplish had it not been for the helping hand extended to me of Judge Servis. I had no clients, but he had many. He worked from dawn of day till late at night, and many and many a time has he come to me and told me where I could make a cent, a dime, or a dollar. I can never forget the kindness done me in those days by this noble-hearted man. Illustrating his kindness, let me speak of what I myself know. A few years ago, while he was in Montana, the banking firm of which he was a member made an assignment, and by the stress of circumstances he individually was compelled to do the same. I was his assignee, and when I came to look up his assets, I found that there were hundreds, nay, thousands of dollars loaned out to needy widows or unfortunate men, from which not a dollar could ever be realized. He loaned knowing that he would never get a dollar back; he gave out of his warm sympathy never expecting a return save that which came from the affectionate regard of those whom he helped."

Concerning his abilities as a lawyer, a prominent member of the bar said:

He was strong as a statutory lawyer, and in this respect had not an equal in the State of Ohio. He had the statutes at his fingers' ends and at his tongue's end, and could turn to any one he wanted without a moment's delay or hesitation. When you add to this his strong common sense, he was an antagonist in a law suit to be dreaded and an attorney to be desired and sought after.

Judge Servis exerted a great, and at times a controlling influence in the politics of the county for nearly a quarter of a century. Up to the time the war broke out he was a Democrat, but when Sumter was fired upon he espoused the Union cause with fervent patriotism, and faltered not in this course until he laid down his life. Considering his activity in politics he rarely held office. Indeed, he seemed more desirous of

helping his friends than of advancing his own interests. He was twice elected prosecuting attorney of Mahoning county, and discharged the duties of that office with great credit to himself and advantage to the public.

During the war he was draft commissioner for Mahoning county, and in the discharge of the responsible duties of this trying position he displayed energy, courage, and ability that commanded universal admiration.

In 1872 he was appointed associate justice of the supreme court of Montana, and entered upon his duties in the fall of that year. In the summer of 1875 he resigned this position, returned to Canfield, and resumed his practice. In Montana he was held in high esteem by men of all parties. The press and bar of that Territory, with absolute unanimity, paid the highest tributes to his memory as to his ability, integrity, and judicial character generally.

In 1876 Judge Servis was elected circuit judge of his district. Concerning this period of his career the Youngstown Register says:

There is no doubt that he has cherished for many years an honorable ambition to hold the office to which he has just been elected, and upon the performance of whose duties he has not been permitted to enter. Since his election last October he has without any doubt overworked himself that he might reflect honor upon the great public dignity to which the people had called him. Of the judicial reputation and honorable fame he justly anticipated winning from a service upon the bench, among those with whom he had maintained life-long friendship and associations, cruel Death has robbed him.

Both in public and in private life Judge Servis was ever the same—a genial, generous, whole-souled man; and at his death the entire community mourned the loss of a valued and trusted friend.

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