

ENCYCLOPÆDIA  
OF  
CONTEMPORARY BIOGRAPHY,  
OF  
PENNSYLVANIA.

VOL. 1.

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ILLUSTRATED WITH PORTRAITS ON STEEL.

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NEW YORK.  
ATLANTIC PUBLISHING & ENGRAVING COMPANY.

1889.

Church, with which church Col. Snowden's family is connected at the present time. As an evidence of the profound and simple faith of the early settlers in Philadelphia, it may be instructive in this material age to state that bills of lading are in existence issued by this same old merchant, who in committing his vessels to the uncertain deep, formally "committed the lives of the seamen and the safety of the cargo to the protection of Divine Providence." Isaac Snowden, the eldest son of John, followed in his father's steps as a merchant, as did also his eldest son, Isaac, who had five sons, all educated at Princeton College, and, what is remarkable, all became Presbyterian ministers. Of these, the eldest, the Rev. Nathaniel Randolph Snowden, was born in Philadelphia in 1770, and was the first Presbyterian preacher in Harrisburgh, Pa. His eldest son, Dr. Isaac Wayne Snowden, the father of Col. Snowden, was born in Philadelphia in 1794. He studied medicine and entered the army as surgeon before he was twenty years of age, and served with Gen. Jackson in the Seminole War, and at New Orleans. He was severely wounded at Fort Scott. At the close of the war he resigned from the army and began the practice of his profession in the beautiful Cumberland Valley, near Carlisle. Here he married a daughter of Archibald Loudon, a prominent land owner residing in the eastern end of the county. From this union the subject of our sketch, Archibald Loudon Snowden, was born. When attending the academy at Newville, in his thirteenth year, his father died quite suddenly from disease contracted in his professional work. Learning that the estate was somewhat involved, the youthful student hastened home to ascertain the facts and concluded to economize by entering the Cumberland Valley Institute at Mechanicsburg. He resided with his mother, and either walked, or rode on horseback, to and from the school, several miles distant, each morning and evening. In his determination to obtain a good collegiate education he took charge of a district school, which he taught for several months, before he was sixteen years old. This was an early demonstration of the determination and spirit which have ever been his striking characteristics. Resigning his desk as teacher, he went the following year to Jefferson, now Washington and Jefferson College, in Western Pennsylvania. From the old college many distinguished men have graduated, among them James G. Blaine, the late Chief-Justice Mercur, Judge Sterrett, Gen. Beaver and many others. At college, Col. Snowden was distinguished as an accomplished writer, and the most eloquent speaker in the institution. He twice represented the class as Orator in the annual con-

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## A. LOUDON SNOWDEN.

COL. A. LOUDON SNOWDEN, ex-Chief Coiner of the United States Mint, ex-Postmaster of Philadelphia, and ex-Superintendent of the Mint, is a gentleman who, whilst possessing a National reputation, particularly on coinage and matters relating to monetary standards and finance, is pre-eminently a representative Philadelphian. The line of his ancestry goes back beyond the landing of William Penn, and his great ancestor, William Snowden, owned large bodies of land in Philadelphia as far back as 1669. John Snowden, the son of William, was born in Philadelphia in 1685. From his daughter the late Mayor Alexander Henry was descended. John Snowden was not only one of the most enterprising merchants in the infant city, but was also a leader in all benevolent and Christian work. He was one of the founders of the First Presbyterian Church, as was his grandson Isaac of the Second

test of the literary societies. Besides these accomplishments, he was, as a classmate recently said to the writer, "the jolliest boy in the college." On finishing his collegiate course he began the study of law, but shortly thereafter, at the request of his uncle, the late Hon. James Ross Snowden, then Director of the United States Mint, entered that institution in 1857, as Register. From that position he was, in 1866, promoted to the Chief Coinership, which he held with great advantage to the institution until 1877, when he was unexpectedly made Postmaster of the city by President Grant, but was returned to the Mint Service as Superintendent by the voluntary act of President Hayes in 1879, after having declined the appointment of Director of all the Mints, voluntarily tendered by the same President. On each occasion when his name was presented to the Senate, he was unanimously confirmed. His official connection with the National Mint extended over a period of more than twenty-eight years, when he voluntarily resigned the position he held, after the election of President Cleveland. This action he felt compelled to take, not only from a desire for personal independence, but as required by his sense of self-respect, as he had taken an active and conspicuous part in the canvass in behalf of the Republican party's candidate. In the Mint he obtained a National reputation and became an authority on all subjects relating to coins and coinage. His advancement in that service was uninfluenced by political considerations. As the best equipped man he was promoted from a subordinate position until, refusing the highest place in the service, he accepted the chief executive office in the old institution in which he had entered as a youth more than twenty-two years before. Recognizing the advantage of experience in our Civil Service, he made the rule absolute in his administration of the Mint, that all vacancies should be filled by experienced and capable subordinates. This rule was not only applied in the matter of minor positions, but was made to apply to all others where his own action was involved or his influence could reach. Under this admirable principle, on his recommendation, Col. Bostyshell was promoted from assistant to coiner, and on his retirement, his assistant, Mr. Stell, was advanced to his place. Mr. Charles E. Barber, the skillful and accomplished artist, was also promoted on the death of his father, from assistant to the chief engravership of the Mint, and the late William E. DuBois, assayer, was on his death, after years of valuable service, succeeded by his nephew, Mr. Eckfeldt, who had been his first assistant. Under Col. Snowden's management of the Mint no man was ever removed from

place for a political or partisan reason, but only for such cause as would have removed the same individual from any private establishment. As Chief Coiner, and, subsequently, as Superintendent, he devoted his energies and skill in procuring, devising and suggesting machinery and appliances for the rapid and artistic production of our coinage. To him is largely due the purchase from England and Austria of the "Hill Reducing Machine," for the rapid production of medal and coinage dies, now considered indispensable in that branch of the Mint work, and also the importation of the "Seiss Assorting Machine," which has rendered it an almost impossibility to issue a legal coin outside of the legal tolerance allowed by law—a very important matter in coinage. Not only the best appliances of other countries were imported for our service, but all our domestic machinery was improved and the whole mechanical appliances brought up to the highest point of efficiency, so that on his retirement he could say with truth, as he did in his letter of resignation to President Cleveland, "I leave the best equipped Mint in the world." During his connection with the Mint, as Register, Chief Coiner and Superintendent, there passed through his hands—was in his custody—or was operated upon during its conversion into coin under his supervision, \$1,713,495,946.75 in gold and silver and minor coins,—a sum so vast as to seem almost incredible, were not the figures taken from the books of the Mint. Upon this great mass of gold and silver, there was a legal allowance for wastage of \$1,330,284.58, and on which the actual wastage was but \$92,301.56, or \$1,237,983.02 less than the legal allowance for wastage. During his superintendency he expended in wages, for repairs to machinery, new machinery, in ordinary supplies, in building storage vaults, in renovating, ventilating, electric lighting and lighting, and other needed expenditures, \$3,151,796.47, and yet, in his final settlement made under a Democratic Administration, the accounts were so accurate as to leave but a difference of eighteen cents, and this in the late Superintendent's favor. His administration of the Philadelphia post office was also highly creditable. He entered the office very reluctantly, almost on the peremptory order of President Grant, but the citizens of Philadelphia, without distinction of party, soon appreciated the value of his services and freely acknowledged the advantages they derived from his admirable management of the office. Business methods were applied, old abuses corrected, unworthy employes dismissed, whilst the worthy were protected in their places and promoted when opportunity presented. Political conventions

were permitted to take care of themselves, whilst the Postmaster devoted his energies and the capabilities of his subordinates to the discharge of the duties assigned to each. The order which he issued on taking charge of the office, that "All employes who discharge their full duty will be retained, all others dismissed," was faithfully carried out to the end of his term, as was attested on his retirement from the office, when at a full meeting of the employes, it was formally declared that "Under Postmaster Snowden, no faithful subordinate had been discharged, but, on the contrary, where occasion presented, had been protected and promoted, whilst those who had been displaced were justly removed from the service." Thus spoke the men who knew him best and had no favors to ask. As Postmaster he met the full expectation of the public, and rendered as acceptable and intelligent a service as could have been rendered by any officer. This was the universal verdict of the entire city press on his retirement. As a citizen, Col. Snowden is bold and outspoken on all public questions; as a public officer, his first effort has always been to give to the people and Government the best service possible, and next, in so far as was proper, to promote, by a wise and conservative course, the unity and welfare of the party in whose principles he believes, and whose success he desires by all honorable means to promote. Being the son of a prominent Democrat—one who had served with Gen. Jackson, and who revered the memory of that remarkable man—the subject of our sketch very naturally inherited the political opinions of his father. In 1860 he, however, became alarmed at what he believed was the manifest determination of the National Democratic organization to force human slavery into the Territories, against the interest and will of the people, thereby endangering the permanency of the Union. Being convinced of this he separated himself from the party in which he had been reared, and has not acted with it since his last Democratic vote, cast in 1859. Col. Snowden's pre-eminent quality is clearness and quickness of intellect, with remarkable administrative ability. He grasps a proposition submitted to him as if by intuition, and his conclusions are promptly given. He is as ready of reply as he is quick of understanding. As a test of his executive ability his plan and management of the great parade on December 16, 1879, in honor of Gen. Grant, on his return from Europe, may be properly mentioned. The entire management of this stupendous popular demonstration was placed in his hands by the joint-committee of Councils of Philadelphia. When questioned on the day previous to the occasion by the

over-anxious Chairman of the Committee as to the possibility of moving in order so vast a mass, Col. Snowden promptly said, "All our plans are completed, our work done, except to participate in the demonstration, which, if the day be clear, will be the largest of its kind ever witnessed in this country. At the hour designated, to-morrow, on the turn of a minute, the column will move from Broad street and Germantown Junction, and never stop until its last division passes the Union League, in review before the hero of Appomattox." This statement was fully verified by the result, and for which he received the thanks of the city authorities. The splendid work Col. Snowden accomplished in this great popular demonstration to the first soldier and citizen of the Republic, very naturally directed the attention of the Constitutional Centennial Commission to him, as the one man who could create and organize, by his genius and popular qualities, the great civic and industrial processional display, which was to be the central feature of the celebration which took place in Philadelphia, on the 15th, 16th and 17th of September, 1887, in connection with the Centennial Celebration of the Constitution of the United States. The position of Chairman of the Committee and Marshal of the demonstration was tendered to him by the Commission in the following letter:

CONSTITUTIONAL CENTENNIAL COMMISSION, }  
 No. 907 WALNUT STREET, }  
 PHILADELPHIA, June 15, 1887. }

*Col. A. Loudon Snowden:*

DEAR SIR.—You are hereby duly appointed and commissioned to act as Chairman of the Committee in charge of the preparations for the Industrial and Civic Processional Display, to be held in Philadelphia on the 15th day of September next, as a part of the ceremonies commemorative of the framing and promulgation of the Constitution of the United States, and to act as Chief Marshal of the same.

You are also fully empowered to organize and appoint your own committee, to call to your aid all necessary assistants, to arrange all details and to prepare estimates of the probable expense, which are to be submitted to the Executive Committee of the Constitutional Commission for action.

Awaiting a favorable reply, we are, with sentiments of great respect,

Your obedient servants,

JOHN A. KASSON,  
*President Constitutional Centennial Committee.*

AMOS R. LITTLE,  
*Chairman Executive Committee.*

HAMPTON L. CARSON,  
*Secretary.*

To which Col. Snowden made the following reply:

HAVERFORD COLLEGE STATION, }  
 MONTGOMERY Co., PA., June 24, 1887. }

GENTLEMEN.—I have to acknowledge the receipt

of your polite favor of the 15th inst., requesting my acceptance of the "Chairmanship of the committee in charge of the preparation of the Industrial and Civic Processional Display, to be held in Philadelphia on the 15th day of September next, as part of the ceremonies commemorative of the framing and promulgation of the Constitution of the United States, and to act as Chief Marshal of the same."

Whilst I am duly sensible of the honor conferred in my designation to serve in this important position, I am also fully aware of the labor and time that must be bestowed and of the grave responsibility assumed in its acceptance.

I only accept as a public duty, and from a conviction that we may confidently rely upon the cordial and earnest support of our patriotic and public-spirited citizens, in the effort to properly commemorate the establishment of Constitutional Government on this Continent, which is esteemed by many thoughtful people not to be second in its beneficent results to the great Declaration itself.

I am, gentlemen, your obedient servant,  
A. LOUDON SNOWDEN.

To

HON. JOHN A. KASSON, *President Commission.*  
MR. AMOS R. LITTLE, *Chairman Executive Committee.*  
HAMPTON L. CARSON, Esq., *Secretary.*

That the confidence of the Commission and country was not misplaced was manifested on the 15th of September, when there was witnessed upon the great central street of Philadelphia the most marvelous, suggestive and instructive processional display that was ever witnessed in any city of the world. From the day he accepted the appointment until the demonstration took place, Col. Snowden gave to it his entire time and energies. He elevated the character of the demonstration by determining in its inception to make it a great object-lesson illustrating the progress made by our country in the arts of peace—embracing benevolence, education and all industrial pursuits within a hundred years of Constitutional Government. The thought that his genius impressed upon the display was manifest from the first division with its typical banner until the last marched past in the shadows of the evening. As a distinguished Senator from the West remarked, "I have watched the Processional Display from the beginning until its close, and confess that it is so far beyond my highest conception or expectation, that I am overwhelmed with its majesty, and can only thank God that I live in a country that can produce such a marvelous lesson of progress and industrial independence, and that possesses a citizen with genius to conceive its creation, and ability enough to present it to the public." Not only were the character and objects of the display worthy of our country, but its management was perfect. It took eight hours to pass a given point, and contained over forty thousand men, three thousand horses, one hundred and fifty-seven bands and over three hun-

dred floats, each one bearing its precious burden indicative of the progress of a century. The Indian exhibit, which contrasted the savage warrior mounted, with all his war-trappings, with the students from the Carlisle School and Lincoln Institution, was a sight never to be forgotten. The Pennsylvania Railroad exhibit, which illustrated transportation from the old pack-horse, through the Conestoga wagon, mail coach, canal boat, packet, up to its highest development,—the fast freight car and Pullman palace car with engine attached—was perfect. The naval exhibit in naval architecture and the Baldwin and Eckley B. Coxe's exhibit were remarkable; but why particularize when all were so illustrative and perfect in design and execution. At the close of his labors the Commission wrote the following flattering letter, which expresses the universal opinion as to the value of his services:

CONSTITUTIONAL CENTENNIAL COMMISSION }  
CELEBRATION, SEPTEMBER 15, 16 AND 17, 1887. }

JOHN A. KASSON, *Chairman.*  
AMOS R. LITTLE, *Chairman Ex. Com.*  
HAMPTON L. CARSON, *Secretary.*

907 WALNUT ST., PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 21, 1887.

DEAR SIR.—In transmitting to you a copy of the Resolutions of thanks adopted by the Constitutional Centennial Commission at their final meeting, permit us to express our high appreciation of the fidelity, energy, intelligence and ability which marked your management of the Industrial and Civic Department of the Celebration, to which is due the brilliant success of the greatest trades' display ever witnessed in America, and to add our personal congratulations to the many which you have received.

Permit us, also, to express our gratification that we were brought by the work of the Commission into such close and agreeable relations.

Believe us to be, with sentiments of profound respect,  
Your sincere and obliged friends,  
JOHN A. KASSON, *Pres. Const. Cent'l Com'n.*  
AMOS R. LITTLE, *Chairman Ex. Com.*  
HAMPTON L. CARSON, *Secretary.*

To

COL. A. LOUDON SNOWDEN.

As a man Col. Snowden has ever been loyal, patriotic and public-spirited. On the outbreak of the Rebellion he organized, partly clothed and fed for weeks a regiment, and was commissioned its Lieutenant-Colonel. The quota of troops from Pennsylvania being full, the regiment was divided, six companies going with their officers into the Sickles Brigade from New York, and the other four companies were incorporated in the Second Regiment of Pennsylvania Reserves. Col. Snowden returned to his place in the Mint Service, but subsequently participated in the preliminary skirmishes of the battle of Gettysburgh, but was driven back with his command, the old First Troop, by Gen. Gordon's Georgia Brigade. Col. Snowden was connected for

over fifteen years with the First City Troop of Philadelphia, which was Washington's body-guard during a period of the Revolution. He passed through all the subordinate grades and was commissioned as its commanding officer in 1877. As an effective and eloquent public speaker he has but few equals, and is always welcomed with enthusiastic manifestation whenever he rises to respond to a sentiment or to discuss a question at issue before the people. The best tribute that can be bestowed upon him as a man, is that those who admire and esteem him most may be found in every walk of life, from the most honored and exalted to the humblest who can always turn to him as a helper and friend. As a companion he is possessed of a cheerful, buoyant spirit, and is a welcome guest at every gathering or festive board. In the business affairs of the city he has taken an active and conspicuous part. During a portion of the period he was Postmaster and Superintendent of the Mint, he was Vice-President and President of the Fire Association, and for two years President of the "United Fire Underwriters" of America, (a National organization, embracing nearly all the Insurance Companies doing business in the United States,) and is now a director of the Equitable Life Assurance Society of New York. He has also taken much and intelligent interest in railroad matters, and has for years presided most acceptably to all the stockholders over the annual meetings of the Pennsylvania Railroad. As a writer he has prepared many interesting and valuable papers on important public questions and matters of general interest. He is a member of the Grand Lodge of Masons, also of the American Philosophical Society, St. Andrews, the Union League and many other literary and social institutions. The space allotted to biographical sketches in this volume is so contracted that only a brief outline can be presented. But in this instance we think enough has been said to justify the conclusion that the subject of our sketch, considered as a public officer, a gifted orator, an enterprising and public-spirited citizen, a liberal-minded and warm-hearted man, with an ancestry extending back over two hundred years in the history of the Quaker City, may very properly be considered as a thoroughly representative Philadelphian.

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