

HISTORY

OF

Pittsburgh and Environs

BY

Special Contributors and Members of the Editorial Staff



v. 5

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ployees' Association, member of lodge, chapter and commandery of the Masonic order, and belongs to Syria Mosque, Ancient Arabic Order, Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. His religious membership is with the Fourth United Presbyterian Church.

Mr. Tate married, Oct. 6, 1915, Florence M. Conner, of Pittsburgh, Pa.

GEORGE MORRIS TREFFALL—From the age of seventeen Mr. Trefall has been connected with engineering and constructive operations, beginning with the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie railroad, and since 1902 as president of the McLaughlin Contracting Company of Pittsburgh, Pa. Several of those earlier years were spent in city and State employ in engineering capacity, and to the management of his own business he brought a wide experience. The headquarters of the company are in the Citizens' Bank building, but their operations are widely extended.

George M. Trefall is a son of Roger and Mary Ann Trefall, his father for many years a mine superintendent for the Cambria Iron and Steel Company, of Johnstown, Cambria county, Pa.

George Morris Trefall was born at Henrietta, Pa., April 3, 1865, and until seventeen years of age was a pupil in the public schools of his native town, and Martinsburgh Academy. In 1882 he entered the employ of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie railroad as a member of the engineering company, remaining with that company three years. He then became an employee of the city of Pittsburgh, continuing with the city engineering department until 1890, when he was appointed assistant city engineer of McKeesport, Pa. In 1895 he returned to Pittsburgh to become assistant road engineer to the county of Allegheny. Five years later he transferred from the county to the State highway engineering service, being appointed in 1900 assistant State highway engineer. Two years later, with Thomas McLaughlin, he organized the McLaughlin Contracting Company, of Pittsburgh, George M. Trefall, president; Thomas McLaughlin, treasurer; these officials still holding (Jan. 1, 1921). The business of the company is the building of railroads, highways and bridges. The company is well known in the business world, and as its executive head Mr. Trefall has displayed sound judgment and fine business quality in addition to his skill as an engineer. He is a member of lodge, chapter and commandery of the Masonic order, and is a noble of Syria Temple, Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine.

Mr. Trefall married, in December, 1898, Nancy S. Walker, of Elizabeth, Pa., and they are the parents of three children: Frederick Patterson, Virginia Aileen, and John W.

GEORGE K. BENNER—Beginning life with meagre educational equipment, but by nature endowed with the courage that overcomes all obstacles, George K. Benner, of the Benner Tool Company, of Swissvale, Pa., has placed himself by his own unaided efforts in a position of independence and successful achievement.

Mr. Benner is a son of Joel and Sarah Benner, farming people of Armstrong county, Pa., and his grand-

father was a soldier in the Mexican War, a member of an Ohio Volunteer Regiment.

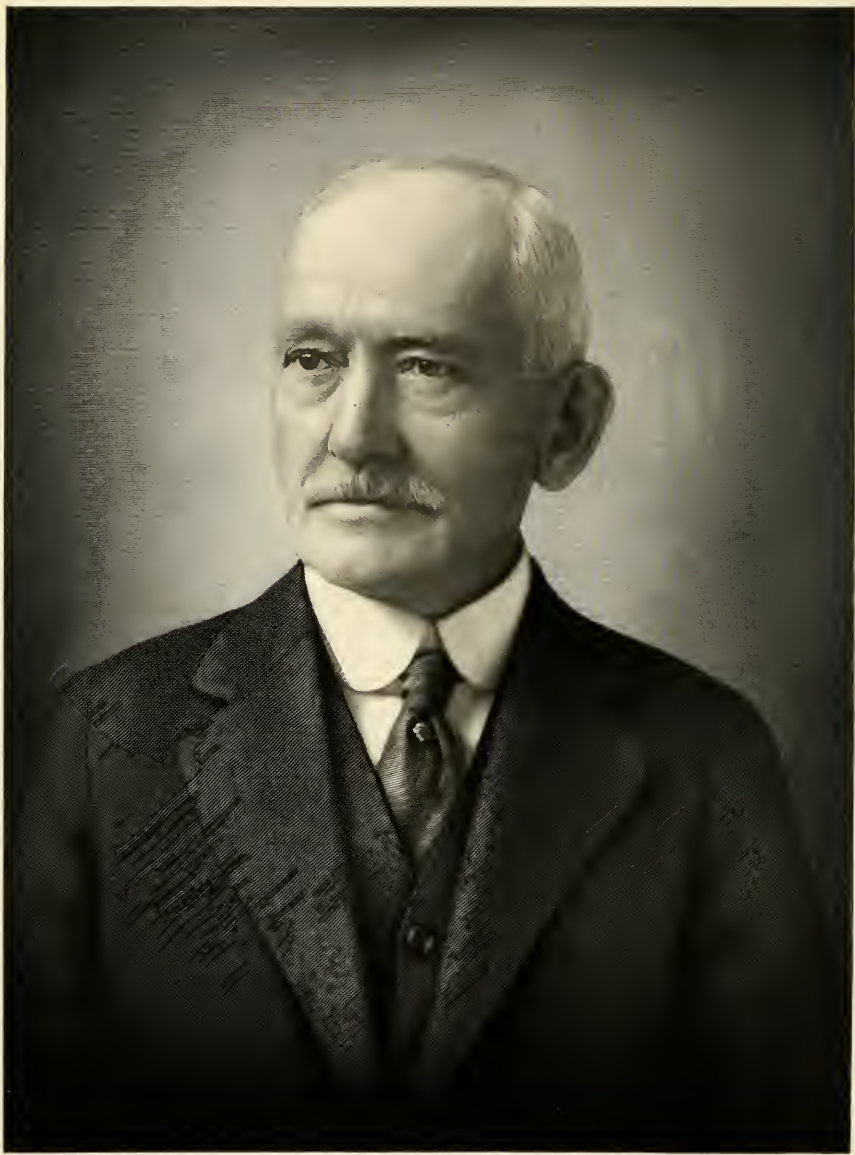
George K. Benner was born in the little town of Parkers Landing, Armstrong county, Pa., on Oct. 18, 1868. He attended the public schools of the neighborhood until eleven years of age, then, when only a child, entered the world of industry. He first worked for Thomas Whiteman & Company, then with the advantage of experience, at the age of eighteen years, accepted a position with the Oil Well Supply Company, of Pittsburgh. Here he rapidly rose to general superintendent, which office he filled for a period of twenty-four years. At the end of that time he resigned to go into business for himself. At this time Mr. Benner organized the Benner Tool Company, and began the manufacture of oil and gas well supplies. The company has been successful from the first, and is now a factor in this important branch of industry in Western Pennsylvania. Mr. Benner holds the presidency of the company, and is the moving spirit in its progress.

In other lines of interest Mr. Benner is also prominent. He is a member of the Masonic order, belonging to all bodies except the Consistory. He is also a member of the Pittsburgh Athletic Club. In civic affairs he is well known, being a member of the Pittsburgh Board of Trade, and also of the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce. His religious convictions place his membership with the First Baptist Church, of Pittsburgh.

In April, 1890, Mr. Benner married Ella Hobson, a second cousin of Richmond Pearson Hobson, the hero of the Spanish-American War.

JOHNSON C. SMITH—For many years a prominent merchant and man of affairs of McKeesport, the last years of Mr. Smith's long life were spent in Pittsburgh, where he acquired many interests and had many points of contact with the life of the city. He was one of the best known drug merchants of this district for four decades, and there was scarcely a progressive movement in his city with which he was not identified, either as a leader or supporter of the project. Mr. Smith was an able business man of broad executive talent, but his daily life had important interests beyond the world of trade, and his religious, philanthropic, and charitable activities were productive of widespread good. He was held in unwavering regard by his associates and friends for personal qualities of mind and heart that found their expression in quiet deeds of good will and brotherhood, and in his bearing of simple democracy.

Johnson C. Smith was a son of James and Margaret (Johnson) Smith, of one of Washington county's early families, the grandfather, Dennis Smith, a soldier of the Revolution, being one of the pioneer settlers. Johnson C. Smith, was born in Amwell township, Washington county, Pa., Oct. 27, 1844, and died in Pittsburgh, Aug. 20, 1919. Upon the completion of his education, in early young manhood, he entered the retail drug business in McKeesport, and for forty years continued in this field with steady prosperity. His establishment was known as the Hiawatha Drug Store, and under his wise management this became one of the most popular pharmacies of the city, noted for the careful,



Johnson C. Smith

courteous, capable attention its patrons received. He extended his interests into the broader lines of industry and public utilities, and became a potent factor in a number of leading enterprises. He was chairman of the executive committee of the McKeesport Tin Plate Company, second vice-president of the People's Bank of McKeesport, an organizer and president of the McKeesport Street Railway Company, and an officer and director of the McKeesport Gas Company. In practical affairs he was the spirit of forceful initiative, wise in counsel and decisive in action, and under his leadership movements of value and benefit to the community were consummated.

Mr. Smith made Pittsburgh his home in 1910, and brought his membership to the Third Presbyterian Church. He was active in denominational work, served on the board of the Presbyterian Hospital and the board of the Association for the Improvement of the Poor, both of Pittsburgh. His contributions to their work were of his means as well as of his time and service, and in this, as in all of his beneficent work, he sought the method by which the greatest good might be accomplished with the least public notice.

Mr. Smith married, Oct. 24, 1883, Jane Morrow Berry, daughter of James H. and Jane (Morrow) Berry (q. v.). Mrs. Smith is a member of the Board of the Association for the Improvement of the Poor, the Board of the Home for Aged Protestants, men and couples, of Wilkensburg, the board of directors of the East End Young Women's Christian Association, and the Twentieth Century Club. Their home was Mr. Smith's chief joy, and there he spent his happiest hours. Mrs. Smith, who was always his associate in good works, continues her interest in and support of the organizations whose work they had long furthered.

JAMES H. BERRY—Berry has long been a familiar name in McKeesport, where Daniel Berry was Burgess at an early day, and where his son, James H. Berry, was for twenty-five years a justice of the peace. Daniel Berry was a native of Maryland, a tailor in occupation, and settled in Mifflin township, Allegheny county, Pa., about 1812. He followed his trade there for a number of years, and in 1838 made his home in McKeesport, where his death occurred in 1854.

James H. Berry was born in Mifflin township, Allegheny county, Pa., son of Daniel and Ellen (McNee-land) Berry. He was there reared and educated, in young manhood learning his father's trade, which occupied him until he was thirty-five years of age. Entering the grocery business, he was thus engaged for a number of years, and in 1859 came to McKeesport, where he resided until his death. In 1883 he was elected to the office of justice of the peace, and for a quarter of a century he faithfully discharged the duties of this position. He was a Republican in political belief, and a member of the Presbyterian church. His life was not marked by stirring event, but in the able performance of his duty he passed his days and gained the regard of his fellows.

James H. Berry married Jane Morrow, daughter of Robert and Anna (Crawford) Morrow, of Robinson

township, Allegheny county, Pa. Children: Anna E., married E. F. Woods, and Jane M., married Johnson C. Smith (q. v.).

GLENDON ELDER CURRY, M. D.—Among the specialists in surgery in Western Pennsylvania, Dr. Curry holds a leading position as an authority on the eye. He is a son of Moses and Sarah (Nicholls) Curry, of McKeesport, Pa. His father was long a member of the firm of Curry & Shaw, a man of public influence, and for many years a member of the City Council of McKeesport.

Dr. Curry was born in McKeesport, Pa., June 28, 1869. Receiving his early education in the public schools of that city, he was graduated from the high school in the class of 1884. After finishing high school he studied chemistry under C. E. Manby, of McKeesport, and became assistant chemist for the National Tube Company. Later, he entered the University of Pennsylvania, from which he was graduated in the class of 1892, receiving from that institution his degree of Doctor of Medicine. He then became house surgeon of St. Joseph's Hospital, and later Blackley Hospital, of Philadelphia, thereafter filling the same position in the Wills Eye Hospital for a period of one year. In August, 1895, Dr. Curry came to Pittsburgh, where he established his office, and began the practice of Ophthalmology, in which field he has since attained wide recognition.

In institutional work and also in industrial surgery Dr. Curry takes a deep interest. He is surgeon at the Eye and Ear Hospital, of Pittsburgh, and also at the Pittsburgh Hospital for Children, and is consulting surgeon at the Western Pennsylvania Hospital. He is the eye surgeon for the National Tube Company, and for the West Virginia railroad. For many years he was eye surgeon for the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie railroad, also for the Riter & Conley Manufacturing Company, and many other industrial concerns.

Dr. Curry is a member of the American Medical Association, the American Academy of Ophthalmology, and a fellow of the American College of Surgery. He is a member of the Allegheny County Medical Society, of the Pittsburgh Academy of Medicine, and of the Pittsburgh Ophthalmology Society.

Fraternally, Dr. Curry holds the thirty-second degree in the Masonic order, and is a member of the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. He is a member of the Duquesne and University clubs.

In June, 1911, Dr. Curry married Ariana Riddle, daughter of George D. Riddle, for many years an attorney of Pittsburgh, and they have one son, Daniel Noble Curry.

ALFRED TOMKINS—Mr. Tomkins' entry into the manufacturing field was through an invention of his own, the Tomkins Improved Heating Furnace, and in the extensive building operations with which he has been connected he has employed another valuable machine of his invention, a hoisting machine for building materials. He is numbered among Pittsburgh's progressive and successful business men, and literally and