

HISTORY

—OF—

BUTLER COUNTY,

PENNSYLVANIA.

EMBRACING

ITS PHYSICAL FEATURES; ABORIGINES AND EXPLORERS; PUBLIC LANDS AND SURVEYS; PIONEERS; EARLY SETTLEMENT AND SUBSEQUENT GROWTH; ORGANIZATION AND CIVIL ADMINISTRATION; POLITICAL AFFAIRS; THE LEGAL AND MEDICAL PROFESSIONS; THE PRESS; SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL LAWS; INTERNAL IMPROVEMENTS; AGRICULTURE; THE TEMPERANCE CAUSE; MILITARY HISTORY; THE BUTLER OIL AND GAS FIELDS; SKETCHES OF BOROUGHs, TOWNSHIPS AND VILLAGES; RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL, SOCIAL AND MATERIAL PROGRESS; BIOGRAPHIES AND PORTRAITS OF PIONEERS AND REPRESENTATIVE CITIZENS, ETC., ETC.

ILLUSTRATED.

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Rev. Robert Smith, D. D., of Pequea, Pennsylvania, and he graduated at Dickinson College in 1788. He studied theology under the direction of Rev. John Clark, of Allegheny county, and was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Redstone, August 20, 1789. On September 22, 1790, he was ordained by the same Presbytery, and installed pastor of the congregations of Salem and Unity, in Westmoreland county, where he remained until 1803. In the meantime, however, he had visited this portion of the State on a missionary tour, coming here in the summer of 1799 and preaching to a congregation under the spreading branches of a large tree that stood near the site of Concord Presbyterian church, in what is now Concord township, Butler county. Several of his audience requested him to name the embryo church, which he did, calling it "Concord," the title it has borne to the present day.

In 1803 Mr. McPherrin returned to this county and accepted calls from Concord and Muddy Creek churches, both of which he took charge of the same year. In 1805 he became a member of the Presbytery of Erie, and continued to minister to the congregations mentioned until 1813, when he resigned the Muddy Creek charge, having been installed pastor of the Butler church April 7, 1813, in connection with the church of Concord. It is also said he was pastor of Harmony church for several years. He remained pastor of Butler and Concord churches until his death, which occurred at Butler, February 10, 1822. Before coming to Butler county, Mr. McPherrin was married to Mary Stevenson, a daughter of John Stevenson of Washington county. His children were as follows: Amelia, who married Walter Lowrie; William; Samuel; John; Clark; Mary, who married John Sullivan; Ebenezer; Josiah, and Anderson. The following tribute to his memory is from the pen of Hon. Walter Lowrie, his son-in-law:

Mr. McPherrin did not write his sermons. He used very brief but comprehensive notes, which he placed in a small pocket bible. It is no easy matter to draw a faithful likeness of Mr. McPherrin's character and appearance. He was tall in person, his hair, when I first saw him, quite gray, and his whole appearance the most venerable of any man I have ever seen. Decision and energy were the leading traits of his character. He knew not the fear of man, though sometimes his firmness degenerated into obstinacy. His natural temper was warm; hypocrisy formed no part of his character, and his heart was the seat of friendship and goodwill to man. He possessed a strong mind and strong natural abilities. At Dickinson College, under the celebrated Dr. Nesbit, he had received a thorough education, and by his studious habits his mind was in a constant state of improvement. As a minister of the gospel, his zeal in his Master's cause never flagged, and a sincere desire to do good was his ruling passion through life. His eloquence was classically chaste, yet strong and nervous. His hearers were, in general, rather awed than charmed, more instructed than delighted, yet often did the tears of his audience flow before they were themselves aware of it. All his sermons were, in the highest degree, evangelical. Christ Jesus and Him crucified, was the burden of his message; and yet in every discourse he urged in the strongest manner the necessity of good works and a holy and christian walk, not as a means or ground of acceptance with God, but as an evidence of being in the right way.

REV. LOYAL YOUNG, D. D., was pastor of the Presbyterian church of Butler for nearly thirty-five years, and his name is a familiar one in many of the homes in Butler county. He was a son of Robert and Lydia (Gould) Young, of Charle-mont, Franklin county, Massachusetts, where he was born July 1, 1806. When

Loyal was five years old his parents removed to French Creek, Harrison county, Virginia. He obtained a good English education in the schools of that locality, entered Jefferson College in 1826, and graduated from that institution in the autumn of 1828. After teaching a private family school in Virginia one year, he entered the Western Theological Seminary, at Allegheny City, Pennsylvania, and was licensed to preach the gospel, by the Presbytery of Ohio, June 21, 1832. On the 25th of October following, he was married to Margaret P. Johnston, a daughter of Rev. Robert Johnston, the first pastor of the Scrubgrass Presbyterian church, Venango county, to which union were born seven sons and one daughter. Four of their sons, Robert J., Watson J., Torrence F., and James W., were soldiers in the Union army.

Mr. Young came to Butler county soon after he was licensed to preach, his first sermon in Butler being delivered August 29, 1832. The following summer he preached as a candidate, and was ordained and installed as the third pastor of the Butler congregation, by the Presbytery of Allegheny, December 4, 1833. For nearly thirty-five years he labored faithfully and assiduously in building up the church. During his ministry here he baptised about 800 children and adults, united in marriage over 200 couples, and nearly 450 persons were brought into the Butler church. He delivered his farewell sermon May 10, 1868, and the same month took charge of French Creek and Buckhannon churches, in West Virginia. He remained at French Creek eight years, and was then installed as pastor of the First Presbyterian church of Parkersburg, in the same State, which position he filled five years. His next charge was the Winfield, Point Pleasant and Pleasant Flats churches of West Virginia, which he ministered to from 1880 to 1885. He then removed to Washington, Pennsylvania, and became a supply for a few years. Here his wife died December 29, 1887, and soon after he returned to Butler, where he continued to follow the ministry up to within a few weeks of his death, which occurred October 11, 1890.

While pastor of the Butler church, in 1858, the degree of D. D. was conferred upon him by Washington College. Dr. Young was twice moderator of the Synod of Pittsburg, once of the Erie Synod, and represented the Presbytery at the General Assembly several times. He was also the author of the following works: "Commentary on the Book of Ecclesiastes," "Hidden Treasure," "Interviews with Inspired Men," "Communion," and "From Dawn to Dusk." A few weeks before his death he completed a commentary on the Book of Proverbs, which has not yet been published. To Dr. Young more than to any other man was due the establishment of Witherspoon Institute at Butler. He was the guiding spirit in calling the convention which brought that school into existence, in preparing the charter, in raising money, and placing the Institute on a solid foundation. He was its principal for quite a long period, and his name is closely interwoven with its early growth and progress. In a sermon delivered July 2, 1876, Rev. C. H. McClellan paid Dr. Young the following tribute:

A man bold in the defence of truth, vigorous and active in frame, and indefatigable in promoting the interests of Christ's cause, his life and work in Butler will be remembered long after he himself shall have passed from earth. No better testimony to his ability as a preacher and pastor can be found than the well taught and strongly organ-

ized church he left in this place; no better proof of the reality of his piety and good works than the readiness with which all classes, young and old, rich and poor, Protestant or Catholic, speak his praise. He was an Israelite indeed in whom there was no guile.

REV. ISAIAH NIBLOCK, D. D., was one of the pioneer ministers of what is now known as the United Presbyterian church of Butler. He was a native of County Monaghan, Ireland, born in the year 1794, studied divinity under Rev. John Dick, D. D., professor of theology in the United Sessions church, Glasgow, Scotland, and was licensed to preach in 1817. The following year he immigrated to New York, and preached in Philadelphia in the autumn of 1818. Soon after he crossed the Allegheny mountains on horseback, arriving in Pittsburg, December 20, 1818, where he was appointed to supply vacancies for three months in this section of the State. He arrived at Butler three days later, and preached in the court house on the last Sunday of the year. He continued to preach as a supply until April 23, 1819, when he received a call from the congregations of Butler and White Oak Springs, which he accepted, and after filling his previous engagements, was ordained and installed as their pastor by the Monongahela Associate Reformed Presbytery, and preached his first sermon as pastor of the Butler church on the third Sunday in May, 1819. This pastorate continued in an unbroken chain for more than forty-five years, or until his death in Butler, June 29, 1864, although he was unable to preach for nearly five months preceding that event. When Mr. Niblock became pastor of the Butler church it consisted of but one elder and nine communicants. Under his ministry there were added to the Butler, White Oak Springs and Union congregations about 1,100 members. He baptised about 2,000 children and adults, and united in marriage more than 200 couples. Dr. Niblock was married after coming to Butler, to Rachel Alexander, of Pittsburg, which union was blessed by six children, viz: Mary J.; James; Alexander; John, a United Presbyterian minister; Hugh; Mrs. Maria Zimmerman, and Harriet. The following tribute to his worth and character, written by one who knew him well, will give the reader a good idea of this pioneer missionary:

Dr. Niblock was a minister of modest disposition and retiring habits, not much known to the world, but beloved by all his fellow ministers who knew him, and much esteemed among his pastoral charge. Of him it might be said: He was a good minister of Jesus Christ—an able and faithful expositor of the Word of God. Among the first of our ministers who settled northwest of the Allegheny river, he lived to see the church and the country grow numerous and prosperous around him, and as the fruit of his own labors many added to the church “of such as should be saved.” He loved the church of which he was minister, arduously and faithfully labored to maintain her principles and her purity, and the work of the Lord prospered in his hands. His life was one of self-denial, labor and usefulness, esteemed in the community and beloved in the church.

REV. WILLIAM WHITE, D. D., the honored and respected rector of St. Peter's Protestant Episcopal church of Butler for half a century, is one of the few living pioneer ministers of his church in Pennsylvania. He is a native of Stewartstown, County Tyrone, Ireland, born March 18, 1811, and is thus in the eighty-fifth year of his age. He grew to manhood in his native land, came to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, in 1832, and entered the Western University, graduating from that institution in 1834. In 1837 he graduated at the General Theologi-