We Americans are accustomed to the prejudice that we live under a two-party system. Yet, when normal political divergence is complicated, as too often it is, by an acute economic crisis, quite obviously we do not. Our current factions probably trace their origins to the years of the bitterest animosities in our history, those years euphemistically called the Era of Good Feeling. Out of them emerged, in 1824, not two but four candidates for the presidency, Crawford and Jackson on the "Democratic" side, J. Q. Adams and Clay on the "Republican." Again, in 1860, Breckenridge and Douglas represented "Democracy," Bell and Lincoln, "Republicanism." Finally, in 1912, Taft and Theodore Roosevelt appeared as Republicans, while only what has been called the treason of Bryan prevented the Democrats from putting both Champ Clark and Wilson before the electorate.

Some historians, throwing up their hands in despair at the task of of-

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1 Read at a meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania on January 30, 1934, and at a meeting of the Westmoreland-Fayette Branch of the society at Uniontown on March 22, 1934. Dr. Baldwin is the author of a number of books, including *The Organization of Medieval Christianity* (1929), and also of several magazine articles. For the last five years he has been resident, in a professional capacity, at Greensburg. Ed.
fering an adequate interpretation of these phenomena, fall back on the shibboleth of sectionalism. They ignore such transparent facts as, for example, that perhaps the best known of our political debates was carried on between Lincoln and Douglas, both Illinois men, that the West has lionized successively a "snob" of the New York aristocracy, Theodore Roosevelt, and a doctrinaire president of Princeton University, Woodrow Wilson, while an Iowa farm boy and California self-made man has been quite recently conceived as symbolizing the vested interests of the East. They also ignore the fact that there are few precincts in this whole broad land in which some votes, and often a substantial number, have not been cast for every Republican or Democratic candidate who asked the people's suffrage.

Not until historians are willing to give over some of their passion for university libraries and attempt to overcome their congenital disposition to treat mundane affairs as if they were transacted on Mars, will they acquire the sympathy necessary to an adequate interpretation of our political vicissitudes. Instead of studying American life in libraries, let them descend to the dusty and mutilated files of county newspapers, let them nose out the deep-rooted and well-hidden feuds that separate neighbors who live side by side in the county seats. Plato, to be sure, studied the "state" as the individual writ large, but Plato's state was no larger than an American township, and he may have been right in holding that any larger unit must blur the letters in which politics are to be read.

The merest tyro in the politics of the counties of western Pennsylvania knows that today both the major parties are divided into two quite clearly marked factions. The story of the normal majority party factions, "Standpatter" and "Bull Moose," is fairly well known. Clearly, one of these may be called, generally speaking, conservative, the other, progressive or radical. Far less clear is the historical background for the similar factionalism of the Pennsylvania Democracy. Why cannot the Democrats, who so rarely are successful at the polls anyway, stand together? Why do they fight more bitterly among themselves than with the Republicans? Why do they prefer to trade or deal with one or another Republican faction than to make peace within the party and present a united front to the enemy?
It is fair enough to answer all these questions from the direct, practical point of view by saying that the policy of any given politician is governed by self-interest. The factions exist, and, taking account of the inevitable, he does the best possible thing for himself and his friends. But the very inevitability of the factions is the chief problem. Why will not Democrat X, who has Democracy in common with Democrat Y, work in the same harness with him? Or if Democracy is too weak to serve as a harness, why do not Democrats X and Y go over to the corresponding Republican factions and permit the realignment of Pennsylvania politics on a straight conservative-radical basis? The purpose of the present paper is to offer tentative solutions to these problems, based upon soundings taken in the journalistic history of Westmoreland County.

The Pennsylvania Argus was a weekly paper published at Greensburg, the county seat, under the same name, for a period of about ninety years, and by members of the same Laird family for about half a century. During its long life it gained something more than a local reputation for its unwavering support of the Democratic party and for the pungent and caustic wit of its greatest editor, John M. Laird. The impression it has made upon the present leaders of opinion in Westmoreland is the deeper and more abiding because the Argus in its later years was fighting, so it seemed, an utterly lost cause in a county where the Democracy had long been a hopelessly minority party. The change in the political complexion of Westmoreland came when the Argus was in middle life, during the seventies and eighties of the last century, and was due to the transformation of the county from a grain-growing to a coal-mining region.

Yet it is remarkable that this stalwart Democratic paper was brought into being 103 years ago not in order to do battle with "National Republicans," "Adams Men," "Anti-Masons," and "Whigs," but to make

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The most nearly complete files of the Argus at present extant are in the possession of Richard D. Laird, Esq., of Greensburg, the district attorney of Westmoreland. All citations in this paper are drawn from those files. A few volumes also exist in the vaults of the Tribune-Review Publishing Company at Greensburg. Since this paper was written, these files have been inventoried and put in order by two CWA workers under the direction of Dr. W. D. Overman. I wish to express my appreciation of the courtesy of Mr. Laird, in allowing me free access to his records.
war in the name of Democracy upon the established Democratic machine of the day. According to the county history:

*The Pennsylvania Argus* was established in 1831 by Jacob S. Steck and George Rippy. It was Democratic in politics, and represented as the disaffected of their day "the outs." These had thought that the *Westmoreland Republican* exhibited a disposition to domineer over the opinions, and to monopolize the patronage of the Democratic party, and thus the establishment of the *Argus* was regarded as a necessity.¹

It should, of course, be borne in mind that at least down to the close of the Mexican War, the party of Jackson called itself in Pennsylvania the Democratic-Republican party, and its members were called and called themselves indifferently Democrats or Republicans. This will serve to account for the name of the rival Democratic paper, the *Westmoreland Republican*.

The total Democratic vote of the county in the thirties and forties was between four and five thousand, with a majority over the opposition of about two thousand. How were five thousand voters to be expected to support two political journals with a subscription price of a dollar a year? The answer is that at least as far as the *Argus* was concerned, support was extremely precarious. At each session of court the editor was wont to insert a pathetic plea to the effect that many of his subscribers had never paid him a cent since the paper had started, that his necessities were great, and his credit all but exhausted. Payment in kind would be most gratefully accepted. The grandson of the *Argus'* most distinguished owner states that as a youth he was regularly supplied with clothing and other commodities in exchange for advertisements inserted in the family paper.

But some financial backing of a more substantial order there must have been, and we recall that it was in the Jackson administration that what Daniel Webster dismissed contemptuously as "the typographical crowd" first began to be recognized as a power in the country. The year of the foundation of the *Argus* corresponds too closely with that of the open breach of the Calhoun and Van Buren factions in the Jackson administration for the correspondence to be dismissed as coincidence. Jack-

son's quarrel with his vice president, Calhoun, is associated with the charming "Eaton Affair." John Eaton, the rough and ready secretary of war from Tennessee, Jackson's own state, had married the lively daughter of a Washington tavern keeper. Mrs. Calhoun and the wives of the cabinet members who sided with Calhoun snubbed Mrs. Eaton, and the wily secretary of state, Van Buren, persuaded Jackson to make an issue of "democracy" out of the snubbing, and, himself a widower, won his chief's favor by his chivalrous attention to the lady. The breach was further widened, of course, at the famous Jefferson Day dinner of April 15, 1830, when Jackson toasted: "Our Federal Union, it must be preserved," and Calhoun responded: "The Union, next to our liberty most dear. May we all remember that it can only be preserved by respecting the rights of the States."

The pages of the Argus bear testimony to the vast interest attaching to toasts in an earlier political day. Fourth of July celebrations were the chief occasions of their offering. About a dozen regular toasts were offered, the last one being, invariably, "The Ladies," and these were followed by as many as twenty or thirty "volunteer" toasts, in which the political sentiments expressed became more and more violent, fairly measuring, no doubt, the progressive imbibition of presumably untaxed spirits distilled by the indefatigable lawbreakers of Westmoreland's hills. The Argus, to fill space, was glad enough to print even the toasts at celebrations of the Whig-Federalist parties, and most of its July numbers were devoted to this material.

We may guess that some of the excellent product of Jackson's own hilly Tennessee graced the Jefferson Day banquet of 1830 and agreed as ill with the swampy humor of South Carolina's Calhoun as did Mrs. Eaton's easy-going ways with that of his frosty wife. But the division of Democratic-Republicans into Calhoun and Van Buren wings naturally went deeper than Tennessee whiskey or Tennessee wives: the fate of the United States Bank and of all that its existence implied politically, socially, and economically, was really at issue. Jackson reformed his cabinet and broke with Duff Green, whose United States Telegraph favored Calhoun. Francis P. Blair came from Kentucky and, in December, 1830, founded the Washington Globe, which thundered forth Jackson-Van Buren policies, giving the cue to the Democratic press the country
over. There can be little doubt that what the *Globe* was to Washington, the *Argus*, founded in 1831, was to Westmoreland County: the organ of the Van Buren wing of the Democracy.

Under the first régimes, those of Steck, Burrill, Cort, and Johnson successively, nothing could be more inept than to designate the *Argus* as a newspaper. It was, of course, a four-page folio, with a page somewhat larger than that of a modern daily and tending to increase in size. The first, second, and fourth pages were occupied by reprints of current literary compositions, fictional and otherwise, and by a heterogeneous mass of clippings, mostly political, from exchanges. But the congressmen and senators made it a point to transmit periodically their own remarks in Congress as well as presidential messages, while the legislators at Harrisburg provided a fairly voluminous stream of state papers from that capital. Whenever such documents were available they crowded out everything else and exceptionally long ones were continued in the subsequent issue.

The advertisements occupied about half the third and fourth pages. They furnish a fairly rich vein of social if not of economic history, but the greater part of them reflect conditions common to the whole country rather than peculiar to Westmoreland. Indeed, then, as now, a fair amount of the advertising in local papers was syndicated, and it is just possible that the distribution of this syndicated advertising may have been one of the channels by which local papers were subsidized. Since much of this publicity was of obviously fraudulent medicines, it may have paid their distributors to keep on the right side of government.

The Democratic-Republican factionalism that had disturbed Washington since 1830 came into the open in Pennsylvania for the first and last time in 1834. Governors then held office for three years and were eligible for reëlection.

George Wolf, Democrat, had been elected Governor in 1829 by a very large majority over Joseph Ritner, the Whig and anti-Masonic candidate. In 1832, on an increased vote, the same candidates running, Wolf was elected it is true, but by a very small majority. The friends of Wolf determined to prove that he was still popular as ever, and that he could be, as Simon Snyder had been, elected a third time. But the friends of other candidates protesting they were afraid to take so many chances against Wolf as the nominee of their party, and being in reality opposed to his candidacy, when
the nominating convention was held the friends of one of them, Henry A. Muhlenberg, appeared in such numbers and took such a determined stand that a bitter quarrel ensued, the Democracy divided, and both Muhlenberg and Wolf were nominated, one by each wing of the party.¹

The preliminary barrage laid down by the *Argus* in this intra-party quarrel was extremely cautious. On November 28, 1834, the editor writes:

Our democratic friends in the east are already choosing delegates to attend the Democratic convention... At all these meetings... resolutions have been adopted recommending the renomination of George Wolf. Our friends here may consider these meetings somewhat premature—yet we trust the “Star in the West” will not be the last to move.²

On January 2, 1835, it is observed that some eastern counties were sending instructed delegates for Wolf, others for Muhlenberg, “and others again are to support ‘honest’ George Kremer.” The following week appears the statement that if the convention’s “choice be the present incumbent or the Hon. H. A. Muhlenberg... our feeble energies shall certainly be exerted in favor of his election. Yet we are free to confess that we should like to see a Governor confined to two terms or six years. We give this... without... the slightest hostility to Gen. Wolf.”

On February 20:

Four “good men and true” were elected delegates to the Harrisburg Convention without being instructed to support any particular man... They are all, so far as we know, personally, in favor of George Wolf, but there can be no doubt, after an interchange of opinion... they will be disposed to do what, in their opinion, the interest of the great Democratic party requires to be done.

The committee that nominated the delegates was composed of the following: John Y. Barclay, John Stouffer, Major Samuel Bowly, George T. Crawford, Captain James Clarke, John McWherter, Christopher M. Walthour, John Kistler, and James Duncan. The delegates named were: John Y. Barclay, Dr. Lebbeus L. Bigelow, General Robert T. Stewart (who was elected a vice president of the convention), and Major John Hitchman. Dr. Bigelow, of Adamsburg, a strong free-thinker and a source of scandal to the more pious folk of the time

² The star, not the cock nor the jackass, has been the symbol of the Democratic-Republican ticket from the beginning of the party. Westmoreland’s consistent Democratic majorities earned it this sobriquet. In later years, the expression altered to “Star of the West.”
because of his irreverent views on Luther and Wesley, did not serve as a delegate, and his place was taken by John Hill.

The fourth of March convention of 1835 broke up in a bitter quarrel; the Muhlenberg supporters withdrew, but a rump remained and duly nominated George Wolf. The Westmoreland delegation remained with the rump so that the hopes of the Argus were disappointed. The schism now drifted down to the county. On March 27 the committee of correspondence issued its call for a meeting to approve or disapprove the proceedings of the Harrisburg convention. In the next two numbers of the Argus, April 3 and 10, the official notice is followed by another describing the meeting as having for its object “to take into consideration the propriety of choosing delegates to represent this county in a democratic convention to be held at Lewistown on the 6th of May next.” This convention was notoriously designed to place Muhlenberg in nomination. The notice carries some sixty-five names described by the editor as those of “undisputed members of the democratic party.”

In the April 3 number the editor comes out squarely on the insurgent Lewistown-Muhlenberg side. A plea for rotation in office appears, and a list of the papers in Pennsylvania that had declared themselves in favor of the Lewistown nominee. One of these was the newly established Democratic State Journal of Harrisburg, of which there is a special notice. Of the fifty-one listed, ten are German-language papers. There are the Republicans of Lebanon, Carlisle, and Codorus, as well as the Republican Farmer; the Democrats of Susquehanna, Clearfield, Chester, and Venango. Most important, however, is a declaration of war on


7 Among them are the following: Daniel Kort, Christopher M. Walthour, Andrew Highbarger, John Sloan, George Kettering, Peter Baughman, Reuben Cort, Dewalt Wentling, David Marchand, Jr., J. G. Busyaeger, Joseph Kort, Sr., Daniel Kistler, Andrew Eiseman, Henry Keck, John Kistler, Michael Baughman, Jacob Baughman, Andrew Sarver, Jacob Isaman, Samuel Keck.

8 Pittsburgher Beobachter, Freiheits Freund, Lebanoner Morgenstern, Allgemeine Staats Zeitung, Centre County Beobachter, Reading Adler, Harrisburg Morgenroethe, Pennsylvania Beobachter, Unabhengige Republican, Bauern Freund, Stimme des Volks.
the Argus' Democratic contemporary, the Westmoreland Republican. The editor of the latter, Joseph Russel, had written that opposition to Wolf had arisen in Philadelphia and that it was not unreasonable to suppose that the "Bank crowd were the instigators of the present disturbances." The Argus quotes Russel's charge in full and replies as follows:

The above paragraph appeared in the Westmoreland Republican of last week, under the editorial head. The insinuations contained in it are so totally at variance with the facts that we are not a little surprised that our neighbor, who we are aware is well acquainted with the true state of things in Philadelphia should publish a paragraph conveying an impression entirely erroneous. It is a matter of History that the only two newspapers in the city of Philadelphia, the Pennsylvanian and the Philadelphia Times who were consistent, uniform, and uncompromising in their hostility to the United States Bank, and who during the whole continuance of the Bank pressure and panic remained the firm and undeviating supporters of President Jackson and his measures are now the only two papers in the same city who are in favor of the truly democratic principles of "rotation in office," who are opposed to the Harrisburg minority caucus of the 7th of March, and in favor of the Lewis-town convention and H. A. Muhlenberg for Governor. On the contrary, the American Sentinel, the organ of the office holders and Wolf party in Philadelphia during the late panic eulogised the Bank, published the proceedings of the Bank meetings, and on several occasions, spoke of the measures of President Jackson as "oppressive" and "tyrannical." The "supposition" therefore that the Bank men of Philadelphia are the supporters of Gov. Wolf and "the instigators of the present disturbances" caused by the caucus is certainly the most reasonable.

The Republican, as might be expected, returned to the charge; for in the April 17 number of the Argus we read:

The Republican has become [sic] and all at once too both poetical and figurative. We have been "everything by turns and nothing long"—We have a "cloak of disguise"—and have "little consistency." Will the veritable gentleman have the goodness to point to these inconsistencies? ... Will he give them "a local habitation and a name"? The Democrats of Westmoreland will require more than mere "abuse" to satisfy them on these points. Was it on the Bank question we have been inconsistent? ... Was it on the question of the Reform of our state constitution, or is it not the "head and front of our offending" that we have dared to publish a newspaper without the permission of the editor of the Republican first had and obtained; and at the present moment have had the temerity to sustain in our feeble manner the cause of the Democratic party against dictation and corruption?
We should ill deserve the confidence of our friends... if the ill natured remarks of a malicious and vindictive man would be capable of disturbing the equanimity of our temper or of deterring us from exposing the conduct of those who "basely" attempt to deceive and mislead the public mind by insinuation and falsehood. We were not aware before that the Editor of the "Republican" constituted the "Democratic party in Westmoreland." It is highly proper that the matter should be generally known, that the people may regulate their conduct accordingly, and as in duty bound, bear true allegiance to King Joseph the First! under the penalty of his high displeasure, and of being politically disfranchised, through the columns of the "Republican," as those old genuine Democrats have been, who have dared to think for themselves at the present crisis.

The same number, however, carries the information that the Democratic meeting was won by the orthodox Wolf men, though a minority report was submitted and supported by H. D. Foster, Plumer, and Farrell. The majority report was supported by Barclay and Marchand and carried by almost two to one. The insurgents then met again on April 27 at the house of John Kuhns, innkeeper, and the meeting was reported in the Argus for May 1. General James Murry was called to the chair, William Beck and Daniel Kort were named vice presidents, Samuel B. Bushfield and Joseph Gross, secretaries. The resolutions reported and adopted condemned the Harrisburg convention, "considered the nomination of Geo. Wolf a mere nullity," urged rotation in office, declared that "the patronage of the Governor of Pennsylvania under the present constitution is entirely too extensive," and protested "interference on the part of our fellow citizens of the Borough of Greensburgh in the appointment or election of officers out of their own district." J. Kuhns, James Long, Daniel Kistler, and Samuel Welty were named, without instructions, delegates to the Lewistown convention, and an insurgent committee of correspondence was erected.

The same number contains an ironical bit of Shakespearean verse that throws a good deal of light on the inwardness of the struggle:

9 The resolutions committee consisted of: John C. Plumer, George Farrell, Daniel Kistler, John Kuhns, Henry Miller, Andrew Highbarger, Samuel Welty, Henry Keck, and Christopher Cribbs.

The Nomination! aye—what think you of it?
Was't fairly made, or merely a sly trick
To keep the loaves and fishes 'mong the gentry
And learn the Dutch to obey McKean and Burden?
Will the people bow to their high mandate
And humble ratify what has been done
By Jimmy Thompson, Sutherland and Co.—
And save all farther trouble 'bout the matter?
"Why sure 'twas regular," say the men in power.
"'Tis done and must be right—if any dare
'T' oppose these ancient usages of ours,
We'll straight proscribe the wretch and cut him off
From ev'ry hope of office.
He'll never get a cent by loan or contract.
We'll call him anti-mason, federalist,
And many other vile and ugly names
Too bad almost to mention.—But no matter:
The end you know will sanctify the means,
If we can only keep the people under,
All may yet do well—WE ARE DEMOCRATS!
We'll stick to that; for should they once suspect
The truth and what we are, our fate is sealed;
And we must bid farewell, and that forever,
To what we love, fat noble offices."

We need not follow further, in detail, the battle that ensued on a
state-wide front. The Lewistown convention, of course, nominated
Muhlenberg, and the undivided efforts of the Argus were engaged on
his side against Wolf, to the complete neglect of Joseph Ritner, the
Whig candidate. An editorial, however, of June 19, redolent of person-
alities, deserves quotation in part:
The Editor of this paper went last week to Armstrong county for the pur-
pose of paying a last visit to Daniel Torney, his friend and brother-in-law,
who is since dead. It may be that while in Kittanning, the editor expressed his
opinion upon such political topics as were introduced by the acquaintances
whom he accidentally met. The circumstance of his visit on this occasion pro-
duced a malignant attack, in the Armstrong Democrat, upon us, and called
forth sneer and remark upon our venerable father, long since dead, and also
upon our brother, the Rev. M. J. Steck. An humble individual, like ourself,
may therefore, be cautious hereafter how he visits or speaks in Kittanning. We
totally disregard the vulgar epithets with which the gentleman honors us, and
the imputation of being a mush head is only ludicrous, when coming from a
notorious block head. . . . We would not have thought proper to waste so
many words upon the Kittanning office holder, who is only laboring for his
bread, were it not that he seems to have some fellow laborer here. We don't think worth while to be more particular now, but when they attempt to put the "flea" in our ear, for travelling where our business and duty calls us, perhaps we may put a "ring" in their nose.

Rival Fourth of July celebrations were held that year. The toasts are reported in the July 10 number of the Argus. Daniel Kistler was host to the Muhlenberg forces. Christian Isaman, a soldier of the Revolution, presided. The regular toast to the governor was omitted, but the "People" were toasted as "too honest and too enlightened to submit to caucus dictation." Volunteer toasts were offered for "rotation in office"; to the Westmoreland delegation to the Harrisburg convention who "took an unfair and dishonest advantage of the people"; and to "Democratic Republicans, may they be sound to the core, not led by Burden, Sutherland, Lewis and McKean, the leaders of the Harrisburg caucus."11

The Wolf regulars met at the Westmoreland Hotel and called John Klingensmith to the chair. Christian Landis toasted "the Reverend Parson Muhlenberg, who will not have time to look behind in the October race."12 In a number of townships the factions joined for the celebration of the holiday, with violently conflicting volunteer toasts as a result.

The outcome, was, of course, that Joseph Ritner the Whig carried the state. But he did not carry Westmoreland. Wolf got 2,653 votes, Ritner 2,192, and Muhlenberg only 757 in that county. For the Assembly, however, the insurgent Democrats, Steck, the editor, and Farrell, did better than the state ticket, receiving respectively 2,706 and 2,444 votes. The regular Democrats were elected (John Hill with 2,916 votes and Stouffer with 2,837). The Whigs, Samuel Hill and Graham, got 2,588 and 2,782 votes respectively.

Thus were defined about a century ago what might be called the right and left wings of Democracy in the "Star in the West." Much of the opposition to Wolf was undoubtedly on the part of the Germans and especially the Lutherans, who disliked the recently established tax-supported public schools. Socially and economically, the industrial class, especially the iron interest, sided with Muhlenberg, while the agricultural

11 Jacob Steelsmith, Samuel Allshouse, Matthew Jack, Steck the editor, John Kistler, Simon Cort, John Sloan, and Henry Keck are among those who offered volunteer toasts.
12 Other volunteer toasts were offered by Daniel Kilgore, Daniel Long, James Ewing, J. Y. Barclay, and A. G. Marchand.
interest supported Wolf. That Muhlenberg was a Van Buren man is shown by his appointment as first United States minister to Austria in 1837. Politically, the radical Muhlenberg wing aimed at such constitutional reform as would diminish the governor's control of local offices, an aim achieved to all intents and purposes by the convention of 1837.

Thus the factions seem to arrange themselves, in general, along racial, social, and economic lines. The left, or Argus, wing, represents an alliance of German blood and mechanical skill against the right wing, whose organ, "King" Joseph Russel's Westmoreland Republican, seems to have retained the allegiance of the "gentry," the famous Scottish and Irish blood, and the agricultural interest. The pitiful showing of Muhlenberg reminds us that Westmoreland was still primarily a county of farmers.

To investigate in detail the corresponding factions among Federalists, Whigs, and Anti-Masons (the forbears of modern Republicanism) would transcend the province of the present paper. Yet it is worth while observing that during the "Hard Cider and Log Cabin" campaign of 1840, when the opposition succeeded in electing "Tippecanoe" Harrison and "Tyler too," Westmoreland's three thousand Whigs had to divide their allegiance between two journals: the Intelligencer and the Sentinel. For a brief period, also, one Joseph Miller conducted a German-language Whig paper under the name of Der Westliche Democrat, in close alliance with Ramsay of the Intelligencer, from which it would appear that the Intelligencer represented among the Whigs what the Argus represented among the Democrats. But the political loyalty of the Argus so far transcended its social and economic loyalties, it was so much more Democratic than it was "Left," that its animosities were particularly directed against the Intelligencer.

So strong was the political loyalty of the Argus to Democratic principles that, after the Wolf-Muhlenberg schism, few traces can be found in its pages of the social and economic divergence that separated it from the Republican. When, in 1849, the paper passed into the hands of John M. Laird, its particular connection with the German element in the Democracy disappears, as, indeed, grounds for racial and linguistic differences were disappearing in the actual life of the county with the influx of the new immigrants who came to build the railroad. But the
Argus' advocacy of the industrial-mechanical economic group did not disappear; and, as Westmoreland became more and more an industrial rather than an agricultural county, the Argus, under the Lairds, conducted a long and brilliant but ultimately unsuccessful campaign to align the workers with the Democratic party. The agricultural element remained, and, to some extent, still remains loyal to the Westmoreland Republican, which, now called the Westmoreland Democrat, enjoys a small circulation as a weekly summary of local news among the county farmers.

The fundamental political principle uniting Democrats of whatever social or economic faction against the opposition was, of course, the sovereignty of the majority. The stalwart and dangerous opposition of John M. Laird to "Mr. Lincoln's war," which at times forced him to edit the Argus with a revolver on his desk, depended ultimately upon what has often been overlooked—that Lincoln was a minority president. But Westmoreland's political loyalties, as we may believe the loyalties of most of the counties of the United States, depend less perhaps upon an intellectual appreciation of principle than they do upon an instinctive emotional traditionalism that tends, generation after generation, to adhere to the things that our fathers and grandfathers have loved.

In turning the pages of the Argus through the years, we are repeatedly struck by the recurrence of names still known, in Westmoreland and in Pennsylvania, as Democratic. We should be more grateful to the successive editors of the paper if they had not always taken for granted that the persons to whom they refer were well known to everyone. We seek generally in vain for any descriptive touches that might bring these figures long since dead a little nearer to us who know them only by their descendants. One such description, of the great uncle of a present leader of the Pennsylvania Democracy, I have had the good fortune to stumble upon. Other more patient researchers in these fruitful pages will no doubt discover more.

A few months before John M. Laird took over the Argus in 1849, the Westmoreland County convention nominated for the Assembly, along with Harrison P. Laird, General Joseph Guffey, who, in due course, was elected and who served till 1852. In the Argus for Feb-
February 27, 1852, its editor reprints from the Butler Democratic Herald the following charming picture of Westmoreland’s distinguished Democratic assemblyman:

We admire the man on whom nature, in her moments of profuse bounty has bestowed a considerable quantity of flesh, for she has never failed, in such a case, to bestow an equal amount of good nature. Within such an earthly tenement, such a tabernacle of clay, there is always to be found a soul bearing the impress of a true lineal descent, in a direct line, from old father Adam, who, we all know, was as innocent as a lamb until he was brought under the influence of woman's frailty. Now Adam was a fool to General Guffey, both in respect to the influence of woman as well as physical corporeity, and if we all had descended from him as our earthly father, we should have been “some pumpkins.” We should have stood about seven feet in stocking soles, and made in proportion.

General Guffey is a member of the Legislature from Westmoreland County, and he is a fair sample of the honest and industrious yeomanry of that truly Democratic county. He possesses influence in the House and when desirous to have a bill passed, his appeal is irresistible—no member daring to vote against him. He is a man what is a man, and reflects as much credit on the “Star of the West” as any member which she has had for years. The very sight of General Guffey puts a person in good humor—his form—noble bearing and exceeding rotundity—his face bearing a habitual smile—his loud ringing hearty laugh—all taken together, will drive away the “blues” from any man living. Long may the general live, say we, and long may he be the representative from Old Westmoreland.