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CHARLES W. DAHLINGER—A MEMORIAL¹

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LAWYER, banker, historian, and author—Charles William Dahlinger attained a high reputation for his accomplishments in all these rôles. He was born in the former city of Allegheny, now a part of Pittsburgh, on February 15, 1857, the only son of Charles and Margaret (Strauch) Dahlinger. His father was a hard-working, thrifty carpenter, and the son, as a lad, worked with his father and early acquired habits of industry. His education was obtained in the Fifth Ward public school of Allegheny, the Newell Institute, and the Ayers Latin School, well-known institutions of that day. At the age of fourteen he left school and obtained a position as messenger in what is now the Workingman's Savings Bank and Trust Company, North Side, Pittsburgh, and by devotion to his duties he soon commanded the confidence of his superiors. As a result he became cashier of the Workingman's Bank at the age of twenty-one and earned the distinction of being the youngest bank cashier in the city. It seems logical to assume that, having gained prominence in banking circles thus early in life, he would have made banking his life work, but his ambition was to be a lawyer.

¹ Presented by Major Ewing at a meeting of the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania on February 25, 1936, on behalf of a committee consisting of Major Ewing and the Honorable Ambrose B. Reid. *Ed.*

In his early years Mr. Dahlinger is said to have read widely and thus supplemented the knowledge he had acquired in school. He identified himself actively with a literary society known as the Allegheny Lyceum, which had among its members many prominent men of his day, and he contributed timely articles to a newspaper. All these activities developed in him a fine literary taste, which is evident in the distinguished work of his pen produced in his later years. He was admitted to the Allegheny County Bar in 1887 and opened his own law office in the city of Pittsburgh. He continued in the general practice of his profession until the time of his death, a period of almost fifty years. As a young lawyer he gave much of his time to civic affairs and served as a member of the common council of Allegheny for three terms, at the expiration of which he voluntarily relinquished active participation in politics that he might more fully devote his time and abilities to his profession and to his literary and historical activities. He always kept in touch with public affairs, however, and in 1904 was a Republican presidential elector. In 1890, as one of the prime movers in the effort to secure a public library for Allegheny, he was named chairman of a committee to investigate and make recommendations for a library.

For many years Mr. Dahlinger was closely connected with the Allegheny Trust Company: he was an active participant and the legal adviser in the organization of the company, served as its attorney and vice president, and during the last ten years of his life discharged the duties of president and chairman of the board of directors. Thus he rounded a career as a banker that had had its inception when, as a boy in his teens, he had run errands for the Workingman's Savings Bank. As a lawyer he did not enter the forensic field, but he was distinguished as a conscientious and wise counselor. He seems to have specialized in organizing companies and business enterprises of different kinds. He organized and had large interests in the Youngstown Park and Falls Railway Company in Youngstown, Ohio; the Oakdale and McDonald Street Railway Company in Allegheny County; the Columbia Plate Glass Company in Pittsburgh; the Leetsdale Ice Company; and the German Beneficial Union of Pittsburgh.

With all these activities demanding his time and attention, Mr. Dahlinger still found time to pursue his literary inclinations, and he acquired distinction as a writer on historical subjects. Among his books were *Where the Red Volleys Poured*, a story of the Civil War, published in 1907; *The New Agrarianism*, a survey of the prevalent spirit of social unrest and a consideration of the consequent campaign for the adjustment of agriculture with industry and commerce, published in 1913; *Pittsburgh; a Sketch of Its Early Social Life*, published in 1916; and *The Marquis Duquesne*, a comprehensive study of the life of the governor-general of New France from 1752 to 1755, published in 1932. In 1915, after the publication of *The New Agrarianism*, Washington and Jefferson College awarded him, in recognition of his work, an honorary degree of Master of Arts. Other books, among them *Rev. John Taylor, the First Rector of Trinity Episcopal Church of Pittsburgh, and His Commonplace Book* (1918) and *Fort Pitt* (1922), were privately printed. These works, as well as *The Marquis Duquesne*, appeared in article form in the WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE before publication in book form. In addition, he wrote numerous other articles; many of them, such as "Abraham Lincoln in Pittsburgh and the Birth of the Republican Party" (*ante*, 3: 145-177) and "The Pittsburgh Sanitary Fair" (*ante*, 12: 97-101), were published in the same magazine.

Mr. Dahlinger was actively identified with the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania for some fifteen years and contributed much time and effort in the furtherance of its affairs. From 1918 to 1922, inclusive, he was the efficient editor of the WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL MAGAZINE, established in 1918; to him is justly attributed much of its success during those years, and it was with deep regret that the society, at his urgent request, released him from that labor of love. As a member of the board of editors he continued to give advice and counsel until his death. In addition, he served as one of the directors of the society from 1930 to 1932 and thereafter as a member of the board of trustees.

On the afternoon of December 12 Mr. Dahlinger attended a committee meeting in the historical society rooms and participated in a discus-

sion of plans for the society's future, little realizing that a few hours later he was to suffer the injury from which his death resulted on December 19, 1935. He was an honest, upright, Christian gentleman in the truest sense of the word. He was ever mindful of his obligations to the church of his choice and regularly attended the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Ascension, Pittsburgh, where he was a vestryman at the time of his death. Mr. Dahlinger was married on June 17, 1911, to Miss Bessie Nox McCain of Kittanning, daughter of a prominent attorney of Armstrong County. By his untimely death his family, the community, the Bar of Allegheny County, and the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania have sustained a great loss. His quiet, unassuming manner, coupled with his accomplishments in several fields of activity, impressed all those who knew him.