

PROMINENT PITTSBURGHERS OF 1840-1850

CLARENCE EDWARD MACARTNEY

TACITUS was the historian of Rome's Great Fire, attributed by many Roman historians to the hand of Nero, who in turn, laid the blame on the Christians. The Great Plague of London in 1665, followed by the Great Fire in 1666, had for its historian, the gifted author of *Robinson Crusoe*, Daniel DeFoe. Chicago's Fire of October 8, 1871, has had its historians; and before this day is over, Pittsburgh's Great Fire of 1845, will have had its historians. But the story of the Fire does not fall within the range assigned to me for my address this afternoon. I am asked to say something to you about the interesting personalities in or about Pittsburgh during the decade, 1840 to 1850. If I omit some of your ancestors, you must not feel badly about it, for I have selected, out of the large number of the personalities of that decade, just a few who appeal to the historian.

It was an unusual thing that in the 1840's Pittsburgh had two representatives in the Cabinet of President Tyler: Walter Forward, Secretary of the Treasury, 1841-43, and William Wilkins, Secretary of War, 1844-45.

WALTER FORWARD

Walter Forward was born on January 24, 1876, at Old Granby, Connecticut, and came to Pittsburgh by way of Aurora, Ohio, when he was seventeen years of age. He studied in the office of Henry Baldwin, a well-known lawyer and editor of the *Tree of Liberty*, a democratic paper of wide influence. In 1822 he succeeded Henry Baldwin in Congress.

Henry Baldwin was Pittsburgh's first representative on the Supreme Court of the United States. He was born on January 14, 1780, in New Haven, Connecticut, and graduated from Yale College. He took up the practice of law in Pittsburgh and in Meadville, and soon rose to distinction in his profession. There is a tradition that he fought a duel with pistols and that his life was saved by a silver dollar. In 1828 Baldwin

was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Jackson. In his later years some regarded him as insane, and he was occasionally violent and ungovernable in his conduct on the Bench.

In 1828, Forward associated himself with the National Republicans and in 1834 played an important part in the formation of the Whig party. In 1840 President William Henry Harrison appointed him district attorney for the western district of Pennsylvania. This position he did not accept, but was appointed the first comptroller of the currency. President John Tyler made him his Secretary of the Treasury. When the Whigs returned to power in 1849, with the election of Zachary Taylor, Forward spent two years at Copenhagen as chargé d'affaires to Denmark. He was an active worker in the Methodist Church and in the temperance cause.

WILLIAM WILKINS

William Wilkins, like so many of the notable people of Pittsburgh, came to Pittsburgh from the Cumberland Valley, where he was born in Carlisle on December 20, 1779. His father had served as a captain in the Continental Army, and in 1783 he removed to Pittsburgh, where he held various city and county offices. Wilkins was a student for a time at Dickinson College, and was admitted to the Allegheny County Bar in 1801. He was one of the organizers of the Pittsburgh Manufacturing Company, which in 1814 was chartered as the Bank of Pittsburgh, of which he was the first president.

In 1828 he was elected as a Democrat to Congress, but resigned before qualifying. In 1831, he was elected to the United States Senate as a Democrat and anti-Mason. He served in the Senate till 1834, when he went to St. Petersburg as minister to Russia. President Tyler appointed him his Secretary of War in 1844. Thus, one after the other, Pittsburgh had two of its citizens in Tyler's Cabinet, Walter Forward, Secretary of the Treasury, and Wilkins, Secretary of War.

Wilkins achieved wealth through the increase in real estate values in the East End of Pittsburgh, and on an estate of 650 acres he built his mansion, "Homewood," which was the center of Pittsburgh society.

JAMES K. MOORHEAD

James K. Moorhead was born in Halifax, Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, on September 7, 1806. His father had been collector of inter-

nal revenue for the tenth district of Pennsylvania, and died when young Moorhead was only eleven years of age. At fourteen years of age Moorhead ran the family farm and conducted Moorhead's Ferry. He had learned something of building, and obtained the contract for the construction of the Susquehanna branch of the Pennsylvania Canal. He served also as superintendent of the Juniata Division. In 1839 he made a connection with the Monongahela Navigation Company in Pittsburgh, and in 1846 became president of the company. He was known as "Old Slackwater," because of the many slackwater dams which he built in Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Kentucky.

It was through Moorhead's efforts that the first telegraph lines were built between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. He was the president of the company known as the Atlantic & Ohio Telegraph Company. Other telegraph companies of which he was the president were afterwards consolidated with the Atlantic & Ohio Company and became in time the Western Union system.

Moorhead had been a Democrat, but in the pre-Civil War slavery discussions he took an active part in the formation of the Republican Party. He was elected to Congress in 1859 and served until 1869.

The October elections of 1862 in many sections had gone against the Republican Party, and the smoke of the political battle had hardly cleared away before both the vanquished and the victorious appeared at the White House, demanding the head of General McClellan, and blaming the Republican losses upon his being retained in command of the Army of the Potomac. Among those who appeared at a White House conference was J. K. Moorhead of Pittsburgh. Lincoln extended his hand to Moorhead and said: "And what word, do you bring Moorhead? You, at any rate, were not defeated." "No," answered Moorhead, in a voice trembling with emotion, "no, Mr. President, but I am sorry to say it was not your fault that we were not all beaten. And, Mr. President, I came as far as Harrisburg yesterday and passed the evening with a number of the best and most influential men of our state, including some of those who have been your most earnest supporters, and they charged me to tell you that when one of them said, 'he would be glad to hear some morning that you had been found hanging from the post of a lamp at the door of the White House,' others approved the expression." At this Lincoln, looking haggard and sad, said, with dignity:

"You need not be surprised to find that that suggestion has been executed any morning. The violent preliminaries to such an event would not surprise me."

ALEXANDER HAYS

Pittsburgh's most distinguished soldier, although not of the highest rank, was Alexander Hays. Hays was one class behind Grant at West Point and they were close friends until Hays fell in the Battle of the Wilderness. He served with Grant in the Mexican War, and while on furlough during that war, was married in 1846 to Annie McFadden, daughter of John B. McFadden, Pittsburgh jeweler, whose home was at 58 Penn Street, just opposite the Block House. After the war Hays returned to Pittsburgh and engaged in engineering and bridge building. In the Civil War he served under McClellan, and his home at Sewickley, "Fair Oaks," was named after that battle of the Peninsula. He commanded a division of the Second Corps at the Battle of Gettysburg, and the final charge of Pickett's troops was broken on the front of Hays' division.

After Gettysburg Hays sought in vain for the promotion which he richly deserved; but in spite of the petition of the officers of his division, and of influential Pittsburghers, and the friendship of Stanton, the Secretary of War, with his wife's family, the promotion was never granted, and he crossed the Rapidan with Grant's army in the spring of 1864, still in command of a brigade. After he fell in the wilderness, his body was brought to Pittsburgh, and amid honors from the whole city, his funeral was held in the First Presbyterian Church.

Hays was a great favorite of General Grant. When General Horace Porter brought Grant word of Hays' death, Grant was in his favorite position during the anxious hours of the Battle of the Wilderness, sitting with his back against a tree, engaged in his favorite occupation, thoughtfully whittling pine sticks. When Porter told him of the death of Hays, Grant sat for a time in silence, and then speaking slowly, and pausing before each sentence, said: "Hays and I were cadets together for three years. We served for a time in the same regiment in the Mexican War. He was a noble man and a gallant officer. I am not surprised that he met his death at the head of his troops. It was just like him. He was a man who would never follow, but would always lead in battle."

When Grant was a candidate for the Presidency in 1868, he visited Pittsburgh. The then mayor of the city, Jared M. Brush, was driving him back from a German picnic when they neared the Allegheny Cemetery. Grant said to Brush: "Can you tell me where General Alexander Hays' grave is?" Brush answered that it was just at hand. "Drive me to it then," said Grant. When they reached the grave, Grant got out of the carriage and read the inscription on the monument. Then he sat down by himself on one of the cannon by the side of the monument, as if in a reverie. When the mayor looked again Grant was in tears. Years afterwards, when, with the cancer gripping his throat, he was writing his celebrated *Memoirs*, Grant came to the story of the Battle of the Wilderness, this is his comment on his old friend: "One of Birney's most gallant brigade commanders, Alexander Hays was killed. He was a most gallant officer, ready to lead his command wherever ordered. With him it was 'Come, boys,' not, 'Go'."

JAMES SCOTT NEGLEY

Negley was born in East Liberty, and on his father's side was the descendant of Swiss-German ancestors. He studied at the Western University of Pennsylvania, now the University of Pittsburgh, and as a member of the Duquesne Grays served in the Mexican War with the First Pennsylvania Regiment. He was honorably discharged in 1848 with the rank of sergeant. At the beginning of the Civil War he raised troops in Pittsburgh and served, first under General Robert Patterson in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, and then under General Don Carlos Buell in central Tennessee and Alabama. He commanded the Union center in the battle of Stone River, December 31, 1862, and January 1, 1863. After Stone River he was promoted to the rank of major general and commanded a division on the right wing of Rosecrans' army at the Battle of Chickamauga, and together with McCook, Sheridan, and others, shared in the disaster which befell the right wing of the Union Army in that battle.

After the war Negley served four terms in Congress, where he took great interest in inland waterway improvements. He introduced a bill in Congress to construct a water highway from tidewater on the James

River to the Ohio River at the mouth of the Kanawha. He was vice president of the Pittsburgh-New Castle and Lake Erie Railway and of the New York and Chicago Railway, now the Pennsylvania. Defeated for the Republican nomination to Congress in 1886, he removed to New York, where he organized the Railroad Supply Company. After leaving Pittsburgh he made his home at Plainfield, New Jersey, where he died in 1901. .

BENJAMIN F. JONES

In 1845 Benjamin F. Jones was appointed the manager of the Mechanics' Line, a transportation company operating between Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, and New York by way of the Pennsylvania Canal. This was his introduction to large affairs in the business world.

Jones was born in Claysville, Washington County, Pennsylvania. For a time his family lived in New Brighton, where he was a student in the New Brighton Academy. In 1847 he was made a partner with Samuel M. Kier, in the Mechanics' Line, and also the Independent Line, which operated until the building of the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1854. In 1846 Jones and Kier bought an iron furnace and forge near Armagh, Pennsylvania. In 1854, when James Laughlin entered the firm, it became known as Jones & Laughlin, the forerunner of the present large corporation.

Jones was a strong protectionist and took great interest in politics. He was a close friend of James G. Blaine, and as chairman of the National Republican Committee managed Blaine's campaign in 1884. In this campaign Blaine lost New York by 1,049 votes, and thereby the Presidency. His defeat, probably incorrectly, was attributed to the famous alliteration of the Presbyterian minister, Dr. S. T. Burchard, who, when speaking at a reception given Blaine by Protestant clergymen at the Fifth Avenue Hotel in New York, said that in fighting the Democratic Party Blaine was "fighting the Party of Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion."

So far as New York was concerned, the real cause for Blaine's defeat was the aloofness of the great Republican leader, Roscoe Conkling, who had never forgotten Blaine's slur of two decades before, when he

spoke of his "overwhelming grandiloquent turkey gobbler strut." In the country at large, Blaine was hurt by the Mugwump defection and the resurrection of the "Mulligan Letters" scandal.

FRANCIS HERRON

"There are but two things in Pittsburgh, Doctor Herron and the devil; and Doctor Herron seems to be getting the advantage." Thus, in the first half of the last century, one spoke of Francis Herron, the pastor for almost fifty years of the First Presbyterian Church. Among those who built Pittsburgh, none takes a higher rank than Doctor Herron.

A great epoch opened in the history of the First Church in 1811, when Francis Herron came from the ancient church of Rocky Springs, near Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, to become the third pastor of the church. His first trip to Pittsburgh was in 1799, when he preached at the First Church. He told how his preaching disturbed the swallows which, in the language of the 84th Psalm, had made there "an house for themselves."

Dr. Herron found the church laden with debt and low in spiritual life; but the debt was soon cleared by the sale of a lot on Wood Street to the Bank of Pittsburgh for \$3,000, and the church building was enlarged. The pews sold for \$7,000. General O'Hara presented to the church his famous chandelier, as a token, he said, "of a glowing desire to promote the luster of this enlightened society." The chandelier was fitted with 100 sperm candles, and all the boys of the town were wont to assemble at early candle lighting to see Archie, the sexton, light the chandelier.

Dr. Herron had a number of famous praying elders who prayed with him till there was "a sound of a going in the tops of the mulberry trees" and a great revival broke out in 1827. Among these elders were John M. Snowden, Harmar Denny, Francis Bailey, and Robert Beer.

Pittsburgh was a rude community when Dr. Herron came into it, and great wickedness and licentiousness prevailed. He was strong in his testimony against drinking, and up to 1860 the communicants of the

First Church were required to take a pledge to abstain from the opera, the theater, the circus, and card playing.

Dr. Herron was a man of commanding presence, powerful frame, and great stature. His home was near the tavern and stable yards where the drivers of the Conestoga wagons congregated. There were frequent uproars and brawls among these waggoners, and on one occasion, disturbed in his study by the fighting and brawlings, Dr. Herron rushed into the stable yard, knocked down several of the ringleaders with his fist and quelled the battle.

Dr. Herron's power lay in his Christian character, his sincerity, and his prayerfulness, for, according to all accounts, he was a dull preacher. His public prayers were always the same. Late comers arriving during the prayer would say to those standing about the door: "Has he got to the dry bones yet?" The "yes" or the "no" let them know how long they had to stand, for everyone knew at what part of the prayer he mentioned the "dry bones" of Ezekiel's vision.

The majesty of Dr. Herron's personal presence is reflected in the engraving by Sartain. In 1827 he was made the moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. In 1850, weighed down with years and labors, Dr. Herron resigned. After his resignation the congregation frequently saw him sitting in a chair under the pulpit, a noble, benign figure. He died in 1851, and awaits the morning of the Resurrection in the Allegheny Cemetery. On the memorial tablet in the vestibule of the First Church is this inscription:

IN MEMORIAM
FRANCIS HERRON, D.D.

Born June 28, 1774—Died December 6, 1851
A dignified, decided, able, courageous and courteous man
An ardent Christian, faithful pastor, impressive preacher
and an honored Presbyterian, revered by the Church he
served and the city he adorned.

GEORGE RAPP

Some two hundred communistic societies were founded in the United

States, such as the Celestial City in Sullivan County, Pennsylvania, Robert Owens' New Lanark in Indiana, and Thomas Hughes' settlement in the mountains of eastern Tennessee. Hughes was the author of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. But of all these communistic societies, that known as the Harmony Society, and afterwards the Économite Society, was the most successful. George Rapp, one of the German mystics and millenarians, came to Butler County with three shiploads of his followers in 1804 and built the town of Harmony. They organized themselves as the Harmony Society, which was a communistic theocracy, with Rapp as the dictator.

In 1807, under the urge of a religious revival, Father Rapp and his followers abjured marriage and adopted celibacy as the rule of their community. Father Rapp defended celibacy by a strange interpretation of Genesis 1:27: "Male and female created He them." He held that in the beginning man was dual in his nature, but when Adam desired to follow the practice of the animals, then unholy passion arose, and this was the fall of man. Christ, he held, was the second Adam, and hence the regenerate life here and hereafter must be celibate. The fame of this celibate community traveled far, for we find a comment on it in Byron's *Don Juan*:

When Rapp the Harmonist embargoed marriage
In his harmonious settlement (which flourishes
Strangely enough as yet without miscarriage,
Because it breeds no more mouths than it nourishes,
Without those sad expenses which disparage
What nature naturally most encourages)
Why called he Harmony a state sans wedlock?
Now here I've got the preacher at a deadlock.

In 1814 Rapp, because of the rigors of the winter at Harmony, moved his settlement to New Lanark on the banks of the Wabash in Indiana. But in 1825, plagued with malaria, they sold out to Robert Dale Owen for \$150,000 and made a new settlement on the Ohio River at Economy. This settlement covered much of the area which is now the town of Ambridge. The Society prospered greatly and from the Great House George Rapp ruled with benevolence and thrift and piety his ideal commonwealth. The Economites were leaders in the in-

dustrial development of the Ohio Valley. They were the builders of the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie Railroad and established a cutlery at Beaver Falls, which they operated with 500 Chinese coolies. Rapp died August 7, 1847.

Wandering through the ancient village of Harmony, one pauses before the massive doors of the substantial houses the Harmonites built, and reading the quaint legends carved in the stones, one thinks of the hearts that must have been broken within these walls when husband and wife, in the strange infatuation of religious musing, separated the one from the other and forever sealed the fountain of the heart.

On a hill hard by the Conoquenessing Creek, and not far from where the Perry Highway crosses that meandering stream, one can see under a few lonesome pines the gray walls of a rural cemetery. He who is interested not only in the loud today, but also in the silent past, and in the mysterious tomorrow, will find it worth his while to ascend the hill and visit that quiet acre of the dead. Entrance is had to the cemetery by a massive monolith gate under a graceful stone arch, but so delicately poised in the center that the slightest touch of one's hand will cause it to swing open. In the cemetery one is surprised to find no tombstones or markers of any kind. The explanation is that this was the burial ground of the Harmonites. The rules of the Society forbade the marking of the graves of the dead. That is why one looks in vain for "storied urn, or animated bust," and for "their name, their years, spelt by the" unlettered Muse."

In death, as in life, they had all things in common. There within those gray walls, and with the pine trees for sentinels, sleep the original Harmonites, unmarked and undistinguished in the pale communism and vast democracy of the dead.

THE BRIDGE BUILDER OF SAXONBURG

Many of the noble rivers of America—the Hudson, the Niagara, the Allegheny, the St. Lawrence, the Mississippi, and the Ohio—are spanned by beautiful and graceful suspension bridges. The prince of American bridge builders was John Augustus Roebling, and the town where he first manufactured the wire cable for his bridges was Saxonburg in Butler County, about twenty-five miles from Pittsburgh. Roebling was born

at Mülhausen, Germany, on June 12, 1806. He came of good family and had the advantage of a superior education, having studied at the Royal Polytechnic Institute in Berlin, where he was granted the degree of civil engineer. For a number of years he was employed by the Prussian government building roads in Westphalia. His first view of a suspension bridge was one over the river Regnitz in Bamberg. This bridge was held in suspension by chains, for the wire cables had not yet been invented. The young engineer was greatly impressed with this miracle bridge, and made a careful study of it, which he presented as a thesis for his degree at the Royal Polytechnic Institute.

Roebing became convinced that Germany did not offer him the opportunity for achievement which he desired, and planned to migrate to America. In the spring of 1831, Roebing, with his brother Karl and a colonizing party of three hundred, set sail from Bremen, in two vessels, the "Henry Barclay," and a smaller ship, a bark of 230 tons, the "August Eduard." The larger company on the "Henry Barclay," made up of religious communists, fell into a dispute and divided into two sections, half of them going to New Harmony in Indiana, where Father Rapp had settled after leaving Harmony in Butler County. The other half of the colonists settled in different places. With his company on the "August Eduard" Roebing and his brother reach Philadelphia on August 6. He was much impressed with what he found in Philadelphia. "Every American," he wrote, "even when he is poor and must serve others, feels his innate rights as a man. What a contrast to the oppressed German population." Of the language he said, contrasting it with England: "One hears the nasal sound more here." He was struck with the fact that "the removal of the hat and frequent greetings, which are so burdensome in Germany, do not exist here."

The first thought of Roebing had been to settle in the South, perhaps Florida. But the institution of slavery made him look elsewhere. Reports of murderous attacks by the Indians caused him to abandon plans for the Far West. After a few weeks in Philadelphia, Roebing and his brother departed for Pittsburgh, traveling by way of the Pennsylvania Canal. At the Alleghenies they crossed the mountains over the portage railroad and inclined planes. In Pittsburgh they happened to hear of a Mrs. Collins who wanted to sell a large tract of land in Butler

County which she had purchased from the estate of Robert Morris, the financier of the Revolution. Roebling purchased this tract of seven thousand acres at an average rate of \$1.37 per acre. It was high land, fifteen feet above the sea, but wholly undeveloped and the soil inferior. In a short time Roebling and his thrifty followers made the wilderness blossom, and the town of Saxonburg, at first called Germania, was laid out. The water from the roof of the house built by the two brothers ran in two directions, on one side toward Buffalo Creek and the Allegheny, on the north side toward the Conoquenessing, the Beaver, and the Ohio. Living was hard, but cheap. A side of beef sold for four cents a pound; coffee five cents; fruit was soon produced by the orchard they had planted, and salt came from Tarentum. In 1836 Roebling married Johanna, the oldest daughter of Ernst Herting, one of the colonists who came from Mülhausen.

In 1837, Roebling, tiring of the farmers' life, was employed by the state of Pennsylvania as an engineer. His chief activities were in building dams and locks for the canal on the Beaver River. When making surveys over the mountains, Roebling became familiar with the workings of the portage railways, such as operated between Hollidaysburg, on the east side of the Alleghenies, and Johnstown on the west. These mountains rise to a height of 2,300 feet, and to lift the canal boats over them, however possible from an engineering standpoint, would have been a financial disaster. Instead of that, the canal companies pulled railroad cars up and down the mountain slopes. The hawsers used were nine inches in circumference, sometimes over a mile in length, and very costly. Up to 1840 the cost of the ropes used on the inclined planes from Hollidaysburg to Johnstown was \$12,000. The hawsers soon became worn and frayed and had to be replaced at great expense by new ones.

Roebling conceived the idea of replacing these hempen cables with wire ropes. He had heard of a German wire worker who had conceived the idea of twisting a number of wires together into one strand and thus producing a wire rope of great strength and flexibility. At Saxonburg Roebling manufactured the first wire rope made in America. It was soon adopted by the canal companies where they had portage over the mountains, and at once proved successful.

In the winter of 1844-45, Roebling carried out his first experiment

with a wire cable for a suspension aqueduct. The aqueduct was built over the Allegheny River to carry the canal boats of the Pennsylvania Canal across the river. In spite of the scepticism of the engineers of the day and their derision of his plan, the suspension aqueduct was a success and carried the canal boats over the river until 1861, when the canal was abandoned. The length of the aqueduct was 1,140 feet, the diameter of the cables 7 inches, and the total weight of water in the aqueduct, 2,100 tons.

The suspension aqueduct having proved a success, Roebling now applied his principles to bridge building. The wooden bridge over the Monongahela at Smithfield Street had been destroyed by the great fire of 1845. On the piers of this old bridge, Roebling constructed his suspension bridge. It consisted of eight spans, 188 feet each, supported by two $4\frac{1}{2}$ inch cables, which were manufactured on the bank of the river, and afterwards hoisted into place from flatboats. This bridge stood until 1882, when the present bridge was built. The total cost of the bridge was \$55,000, and it was completed in eight months.

Roebling had the vision of the future and advocated the building of what he called the great Central Railroad from Philadelphia to St. Louis, holding the view that Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Pennsylvania would suffer commercially and financially unless such a railroad was built to compete with the railroads then being constructed from New York and Baltimore. His idea bears fruit today in the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Saxonburg was found to be too remote and inaccessible for the transportation of Roebling's wire cables to the different parts of the country where they were being used, and in 1848 Roebling purchased twenty-five acres bordering the Camden and Amboy Railroad and the Delaware and Raritan Canal at Trenton, New Jersey. There he established his new factory, the manager of which, and one who did much to establish the success of the Roebling works, was Charles Swan, a young German from Breslau, who had come as a boy to Pittsburgh and was employed by Roebling when he was building the aqueduct over the Allegheny.

Roebling was a man of extraordinary energy, activity, and versatility. Always some new idea was stirring in his mind. He explored all fields

from bridge building to geology, music, politics and philosophy. In the early days of the Civil War, General Fremont once sent for him, but kept him waiting for some time in the anteroom. Roebling after a while sent a card in to General Fremont with these words on it: "Sir, you are keeping me waiting. John Roebling has not the leisure to wait on any man."

Writing in the *Journal of Congress* for April, 1850, four years before Cyrus W. Field became interested in the project, and eight years before the first cable was laid, Roebling advocated a trans-Atlantic cable and set forth his conviction that it was a feasible project. He estimated that the cost need not exceed \$1,300,000.00, and that on such an investment large dividends might be expected.

In 1857 Roebling commenced the construction of a suspension bridge over the Allegheny River, replacing the wooden bridge built in 1818. The total length of the bridge was 1,030 feet, divided into two spans of 344 feet each. The floor had a width of 40 feet, including the two side-walks of 10 feet each. This bridge was finished in 1860. His son Washington, who was in charge of the construction of the Allegheny River bridge, writes of the opposition of the citizens of Allegheny, who threatened to build a free bridge right alongside of the suspension toll bridge and circulated a petition for a charter. The people of Allegheny had been accustomed to pay by the year and strongly objected to the trip tolls. Washington Roebling tells of the celebration in Pittsburgh on the one hundredth anniversary of the capture of Fort Duquesne, November 25, 1758. Edward Everett, America's great orator, delivered a speech on Washington in the freight depot of the Pennsylvania Railroad, on the site of the fort. Judge Wilkins presided at the ceremonies and salvos of artillery were fired all day long from the Point.

In 1846 a contract was let to Charles Ellet, another great American bridge builder, for the building of a suspension bridge over the Niagara gorge. This bridge was commenced but never finished. Mr. Ellet, who had a controversy with the bridge authorities, withdrew, and the company selected Roebling as its engineer to finish the bridge. This bridge was the first railway suspension bridge in the world. Roebling was convinced by the success of his Monongahela River suspension bridge, which carried the traffic of six-horse coal wagons across it, that a suspension

railroad bridge was altogether possible. The Niagara bridge was commenced in September, 1852, and completed in November, 1854, at a cost of \$400,000.00. Roebling gave it as his opinion that a heavy train running at a speed of twenty miles an hour does less injury to bridge structure than that caused by twenty heavy cattle under a full trot!

In 1846 Roebling drew the plans for the great suspension bridge over the Ohio river between Cincinnati and Covington, Kentucky. The building of the bridge was interrupted by the Civil War, but the structure was completed in 1867.

The great bridge with which the name of Roebling will ever be associated is the Brooklyn Bridge. This project had been discussed for many years. Prime, the New York historian, wrote in the early forties that the erection of such a bridge had become a topic of general conversation; but in view of the good ferry service he thought that such a bridge would not be used by those who wanted to cross the river. "Who," he said, "would think of crossing on a bridge if one stood in his way?" In 1857 Roebling wrote to Abraham S. Hewitt of the feasibility of a bridge over the East River uniting Brooklyn with New York. The agitation for such a bridge became very strong in the winter of 1866-67, when the river was so choked with ice that it took passengers from Brooklyn to New York longer to reach their destination than it did passengers by rail from Albany to New York.

In May, 1867, Roebling was appointed chief engineer for the bridge. His original estimate of the cost was \$7,000,000.00. The final cost was \$9,000,000.00. Roebling's association with this his greatest enterprise came to a tragic conclusion in the summer of 1869. On June 28 of that year, when he was making observations at a point on the Brooklyn side, standing on some piles on the river front, a ferry boat entered the slip and pushed one of the piles against Roebling's foot. The foot was badly crushed and several of the toes cut off. He was taken to the home of his son Washington in Brooklyn. His injuries, although not painful, were not at first considered alarming; but fatal tetanus set in, and he died on July 22. His inventive genius declared itself to the very end, for the day before his death he made a drawing for an apparatus for lifting himself in his bed. A monument has been erected to Roebling in Trenton

where the great Roebling works are located. At the time of his death Roebling had accumulated a large fortune, \$1,200,000.00.

Roebling's faithful wife, Johanna Herting, died at Trenton in 1864 when Roebling was engaged in the construction of the Cincinnati-Covington bridge. In the family Bible, Roebling wrote the following beautiful tribute to his wife:

"Of those angels in human form who are blessing this earth by their unselfish love and devotion, this dear departed wife was one. She never thought of herself, she only thought of others. No trace of ill will toward any person ever entered her unselfish bosom. And O! what a treasure of love she was toward her own children! No faults were ever discovered, she only knew forbearance, patience and kindness. My only regret is that such pure unselfishness was not sufficiently appreciated by myself. In a higher sphere of life I hope to meet you again, my dear Johanna. And I also hope that my own love and devotion will then be more deserving of yours."

Roebling died just when the mighty bridge was about to rise out of the plans which he had conceived. He was succeeded as chief engineer by his son, Washington. The foundations for the towers were built by the caisson method. One day in the spring of 1872, Washington Roebling was taken almost unconscious out of the damp high pressure of the caisson chambers. He was able to return for a short time to the site of construction, but by the end of 1875 his health had been so impaired that he never visited the bridge site again until the bridge was finished, directing the work, until the structure was completed in 1883, from his sick chamber in his Brooklyn home.

Greater bridges by far than the Brooklyn Bridge have been built since that bridge was completed in 1883. Notable among these are the Philadelphia-Camden Bridge, the George Washington Bridge over the Hudson, the Oakland Bridge between Oakland and San Francisco, and the Golden Gate Bridge; but none of these bridges evoked the thrill which the building of the Brooklyn Bridge stirred in men's souls. Then it was not only the greatest thing of its kind in the world, but it seemed hardly conceivable that a greater could ever be built. When the bridge was finished a writer in *Harper's Weekly* for May 27, 1883, borrowing his

metaphor from Macauley and his famous traveler from New Zealand, who in the midst of a vast solitude, taking his stand upon a broken arch of the London bridge, sketched the ruins of St. Paul's, predicted that the towers of the Brooklyn Bridge would outlast every structure upon which they looked down: "It is not unimaginable that our future archaeologists, looking from one of these towers upon the solitude of a mastless river and a dispeopled land, may have no other means of reconstructing our civilization than that which is furnished by the tower on which he stands."

Saxonburg today is a pleasant village, swept by the clear winds that roam in that high country. At the head of the main street is a high towered Lutheran Church. Tradition tells that when the Roeblings lived in Saxonburg a regularly ordained preacher was not available and they selected a gifted layman to take his place. He was a man of amazing eloquence, to such a degree that it was said that even those on their death beds looked forward with pleasant anticipation to the funeral oration which he would deliver over their bodies! And what higher tribute could be paid to man's eloquence than that?

One of the cottages where the Roeblings lived, not far from their ropewalk where the first wire was made, still remains. On a house on the corner of the main street a bronze tablet relates the fact that John A. Roebling, designer of the Brooklyn Bridge and his son, Washington Roebling, builder of the bridge, once resided in Saxonburg. Near the house I met a lad of about seventeen, just out of high school, and I asked him if that was the house where Roebling had lived. He looked at me somewhat vacantly and said: "Roebling? Who is he?" Then I stepped into the post office and asked the damsel at the window about Roebling and his house. She gaped at me as if I had asked for some prehistoric monster.

Truly, a bridge builder is not without honor save in his own town!

EDWIN M. STANTON

Edwin M. Stanton, Lincoln's great Secretary of War, was a native of Steubenville, and practiced law first at Cadiz, and then at Steubenville. But in 1847 he opened a law office in Pittsburgh, although maintaining his home in Steubenville. During his practice in Pittsburgh, one

of his most famous cases was the Wheeling Bridge case. In 1847 the Wheeling & Belmont Bridge Company built a bridge over the Ohio at Wheeling. Rivermen and steamboat men got out an injunction against the company on the ground that the bridge would interfere with navigation on the Ohio and make Wheeling the head of Ohio river traffic. Stanton was retained as their counsel. He made a careful study of river navigation, floods, high water and low water, and arrived at the conclusion that the bridge in order not to obstruct navigation, must clear the river by eighty feet. The counsel for the defense showed that forty-seven feet was a sufficient clearance, and that in times of exceptionally high water the smoke stacks of the steamers could be lowered with hinges.

In order to demonstrate the bridge's menace to navigation, Stanton got aboard a steamboat and had the captain drive the boat under a full head of steam between the piers of the bridge. The stacks and part of the upper works of the steamboat were carried away. With this visible evidence the Supreme Court decided in favor of those who had brought suit against the bridge company. But in 1852 Congress declared the bridge a post road, and it stood as it had been completed and a standard for river bridges in the future.

Stanton's first wife was Mary A. Lamson of Cadiz, Ohio, for whom he had a deep and abiding affection. Twelve years after the death of his first wife Stanton married Ellen M. Hutchison, daughter of a Pittsburgh business man. His law office, where he was in partnership with Charles Shaler, was on Fourth Avenue, near Wood Street. Stanton's most celebrated criminal law case, perhaps, was his defense of Daniel Sickles, afterwards famous as a corps commander at Gettysburg, who shot and killed Philip Barton Key, son of the author of the "Star Spangled Banner," whom he charged with intimacy with his wife. In this case Stanton was one of the first to invoke what we now hear so much of as the "unwritten law."

When General Cass resigned as Secretary of State, Buchanan appointed in his place Jeremiah S. Black of Pennsylvania, then Attorney General, and appointed Stanton to take Black's place as Attorney General. Although he was born in Steubenville and practiced law there, politically, Stanton was regarded as a Pennsylvanian. It was partly on this

ground, also, that Lincoln put Stanton in his Cabinet as Secretary of War to succeed Simon Cameron.

On December 27, 1860, there was great excitement in Pittsburgh and a public meeting was held in and around the courthouse to protest against the transfer of heavy guns from the arsenal to forts on the Gulf of Mexico. This was a few days after South Carolina had seceded and the citizens of Pittsburgh were sure that if these guns were shipped south, as the then Secretary of War, Floyd, had directed, they would be used against northern troops. Stanton's former law partner, Judge Charles Shaler, was one of the speakers at the meeting, and afterwards telegraphed Stanton who had just been sworn in as Attorney General. Stanton at once took the matter up with the President who seems to have been ignorant of Floyd's order, with the result that on January 1, 1861, Stanton telegraphed George Wilson, the mayor of Pittsburgh, that the order for the shipment of the guns had been officially rescinded by the new Secretary of War, Joseph Holt.

In December, 1862, Lincoln appointed Stanton Secretary of War to succeed Simon Cameron. The first time Stanton saw Lincoln was at Cincinnati in 1854, when Lincoln, Stanton, George Harding, and P. H. Watson were associated as counsel in the suit of the McCormick Reaper Company against the John N. Manny Company of Rockford, Illinois, for infringement of patent rights. When he saw Lincoln, Stanton exclaimed: "I will not associate with such a d—— gawky long armed ape as that! If I can't have a man who is a gentleman in appearance associated with me in the case, I will abandon it." But Stanton's last verdict was different. At twenty minutes after seven on April 14, 1865, he turned from the bed on which Lincoln lay in the house on Tenth Street, to the window, and pulling down the blind, exclaimed: "Now he belongs to the ages!"

STEPHEN COLLINS FOSTER

Stephen Collins Foster was born on the Fourth of July, 1826, in the Foster cottage on Bullitt's Hill, in the section of Pittsburgh now known as Lawrenceville. His father named it Lawrenceville after Captain James Lawrence, whose last words, as commander of the American ship "Chesapeake," defeated in battle by the British frigate "Shannon," have

become one of the most familiar and stirring sayings of American history—"Don't give up the ship!" Foster was probably named for Stephen Collins, the twelve-year-old deceased son of Mrs. Thomas Collins, wife of a Pittsburgh lawyer, and a close friend of Mrs. Foster. It was this Mrs. Collins who had presented Mrs. Foster with a bound girl, Olivia Pise, a mulatto, the daughter of a West Indies Frenchman who taught dancing to Pittsburgh society. This mulatto girl often took Stephen with her to the colored church and there, no doubt, some of the negro hymns and melodies began to impress the mind and spirit of the boy.

His Scotch-Irish ancestors had settled in Lancaster County early in the eighteenth century. His grandfather, James Foster, had been a soldier under Washington, and after the war settled near Canonsburg, Washington County. He was one of the original trustees of John McMillan's Academy, established in 1791. This was the famous Log College which afterwards became Jefferson College. Foster's father, William Barclay Foster, settled in Pittsburgh and was for a time a partner of Major Ebenezer Denny, Pittsburgh's first mayor, in the shipping business. In the War of 1812 he was a quartermaster in the United States Army. When an urgent call came for supplies and munitions for Andrew Jackson's army at New Orleans, and there was no money with which to purchase them, Foster himself purchased the munitions, loaded them on the steamboat "Enterprise," the fourth steamboat in order of time on the western rivers, and sent the boat down the river under the command of the famous riverman, Captain Henry M. Shreve, after whom Shreveport, Louisiana, was named. The boat reached New Orleans on January 5, 1815, and Captain Shreve was able to run by the British batteries at Fort Philip and deliver the much needed munitions to Jackson's army before the battle on January 8.

Stephen's mother was a Miss Eliza Tomlinson of Wilmington, Delaware, whom his father met at the home of her uncle, Oliver Evans in Philadelphia, America's first steam engine builder. She was a woman of noble character and deep piety. Ofttimes, with her children gathered about her, she would address them on the meaning of life and the goodness of God, and at the end of her discourse would say to her children:

"And now my children, kneel down here around me and let us pray to our Heavenly Father."

In 1836 the Foster family moved to Allegheny, the father having been appointed the first collector for the recently completed Pennsylvania Canal. Three years later Stephen went to Athens, Pennsylvania, where his brother William was employed. There for a brief time he was a student in the Athens Academy. His first musical composition, "Tioga Waltz," written for flutes, was played at the commencement exercises of that institution.

In July, 1841, Foster entered Jefferson College, of which his grandfather had been one of the founders. His college career, however, lasted for just a few days. In a letter to his brother William, Stephen said he had come to college at the wrong time, in the middle of a term, and that he had gotten little attention from his instructors. He had become more and more disgusted with the place, and complained, too, of spells of dizziness and bleeding from the nose. But back of all this it is plain that he was suffering from a case of old-fashioned homesickness.

In 1842 the Fosters were living in a two-family house on Allegheny Commons. The other half of the house was occupied by the family of a retired army officer, Captain Pentland. Stephen's first published song, *Open Thy Lattice, Love*, composed when he was sixteen and published two years later, was dedicated to Susan E. Pentland, and some think there was a youthful romance between these two children.

Stephen was at home at the time of the Big Fire of April 10, 1845, and he and his brother Morrison, presumably as members of one of the Allegheny volunteer fire companies, helped to fight the flames.

With the broad outlines, at least, of Foster's later career, you are doubtless familiar, for the story has been told many times and in many ways, notably in his brother Morrison's *Biography, Songs and Musical Compositions of Stephen C. Foster* (Pittsburgh, 1896); John Tasker Howard's *Stephen Foster, America's Troubadour* (New York, 1934); and his niece Evelyn Foster Morneweck's two-volume *Chronicles of Stephen Foster's Family* (Pittsburgh, 1944).

Suffice it to say now, eighty-one years after his untimely death on January 13, 1864, that Foster's melodies still echo around the world,

and that among the many monuments or memorials erected in his honor is one in Kentucky; another in Georgia, where the Suwanee River takes its rise; still others in North Carolina, Ohio, and Indiana; the beautiful Foster Memorial building erected at the side of the University of Pittsburgh's towering Cathedral of Learning; and the Foster bust in the Hall of Fame at New York University:

As long as the heart has passions, as long as life has woes, as long as man yearns after a happiness which eludes him in this life, Foster's *Old Black Joe*, *My Old Kentucky Home*, and *Old Folks at Home*, or "Way down upon the Swanee Ribber," will echo around the world with the pathos of human sorrow and human hope.

¹ Based in the main upon excerpts from a more extended account of "Pittsburgh's Minstrel" written by Dr. Macartney and published in *First Church Life*, organ of the First Presbyterian Church of Pittsburgh.—Ed.