
We first meet the lad, Alfred Hunt, sitting on an up-turned keg in the Douglas Axe Manufacturing Company, (Douglas, Massachusetts) intently watching the brawny blacksmith as he hammered out an axe—one of man's most valuable tools in all history. We watch this lad develop into a lively, vigorous, young man of "medium height and sturdy frame, with curly brown hair, hazel eyes, and jaunty mustache," graduate from M.I.T. (class of 1876), take an active part in the Massachusetts militia, rise to the rank of Captain (Ninth Massachusetts Regiment), marry the lovely Maria T. McQuesten (1878), move to Pittsburgh three years later, where he spent the remainder of his life.

Young Alfred had descended from a long line of artisans, blacksmiths and mechanics. His grandfather, Oliver Hunt, in company with his brother Joseph, had erected a wooden shop in East Douglas (Mass.) back in 1795. From the outset they achieved success in making axes, farm implements, and in repairing tools. Oliver Hunt's fourth son, Leander (by his second wife) became the father of Alfred E. Hunt, "A Captain In Industry," and the subject of this brief biography.

Alfred's interest in tool making and metallurgy came not only from his father's side, but was likewise inherited from his maternal ancestors—the Hanchetts of Connecticut. His mother, Mary Hanchett Hunt, was a descendant of Ebenezer Hanchett, a pioneer iron manufacturer in Canaan, Connecticut. Mary Hanchett had not only grown up in an environment where the iron industry was a major topic of family discussion, but she also had attended Patapsco Institute, near Baltimore, where she majored in science, served as a student assistant in the science department, and was graduated with "Highest Honors," class of 1852. She and Leander Hunt were married October 27, 1852.

The first son born to this union, Alfred E. Hunt, reached school age about the time the Civil War broke out, and his recollections of the events of that terrible tragedy remained with him throughout his entire life. When the boy was twelve years old, the family moved to Hyde Park, a suburb of Boston. "With the Massachusetts Institute of Technology practically in his front yard," says the author, "and with his budding interest in chemistry and steel-making, it was almost a foregone conclusion that Alfred would study at Tech." At the age of seventeen
he enrolled there, (September 1872) electing Mining and Engineering as his favorite field of study. A close second, and an unrelated field of interest, was the course in military sciences—and before he graduated, Alfred had enlisted in the Ninth (Mass.) Regiment, and rose to the rank of Captain, a title which he bore with honor and dignity until his death.

Two years after his graduation, Alfred married Maria T. McQuesten of Nashua, New Hampshire. Three years later the young couple possessing "the pioneering instinct that was strong in their New England blood," decided to "strike out for a new career in the West"! (Thus Pittsburgh was described as recently as 1881.) Here he became Superintendent of the open hearth division of the famous Black Diamond Crucible Steel Works, and here, too, he met another brilliant young metallurgist, George Hubbard Clapp. The two formed an association that was to last a lifetime, and brought fame and fortune to both. Within a few years the two talented young men acquired the Pittsburgh Testing Laboratory, a recently organized company that had been formed for "The Testing of Materials and for Engineering Inspection." But it was in another field of metallurgical research that Hunt and Clapp were to make their greatest contributions to the industrial world: namely, the development of aluminum.

The dramatic story of the beginnings of the aluminum industry in America now follows. In the succeeding pages we find Alfred E. Hunt associating with such budding business and industrial geniuses as George Hubbard Clapp, Arthur Vining Davis, Charles M. Hall, and other men of vision who pioneered in giving the world one of the most valuable products in the history of science and technology—namely, aluminum. A company was organized known as the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, with Captain Hunt as President. Plans were made to step up the production of aluminum, and a program was outlined for putting on a sales campaign to acquaint not only the people of the United States with the many uses of this new product, but also the people of Europe were to hear about it.

From here on the biographical narrative moves rapidly. We follow Captain Hunt to London, where he engaged in the formation of a syndicate to manufacture aluminum in England, then back to Pittsburgh where he made plans for increasing the capital stock of the company to one million dollars, then another trip abroad in 1889 (this time accompanied by his wife Minnie and son Roy) attending meetings of
Engineering societies in London and Paris, and then extending his travels into Switzerland, Italy and Germany.

Back in Pittsburgh he busied himself with the many problems relating to the expansion of the aluminum business; the removal of the plant to New Kensington, Pennsylvania, and pushing a law suit against a rival company, the Cowles Electric Smelting and Aluminum Company, which was accused of using the Hall electrolytic process. In 1893 Captain Hunt at the Chicago World's Fair was presented a gold medal in recognition of a scholarly, technical paper, entitled "A Proposed Method of Testing Structural Steel," which he read before the members of the Engineering Congress at the Exposition; and he accepted a second award in behalf of his company in recognition of the special aluminum exhibits at the Fair. The years 1895-1896 marked an important milepost in the history of the Pittsburgh Reduction Company—the decision was reached to locate two plants at Niagara Falls and begin using electric power converted by the high water falls at that place. The spring and summer of 1897 found Captain Hunt, with his wife Maria (Minnie), son Roy, and his mother, making another trip abroad.

With the outbreak of the Spanish-American War Captain Hunt's Battery B was one of the earliest to volunteer, and the only Pittsburgh organization to see active service. Captain Hunt, himself, suffered severe attacks of chills and malaria while in the service. Following the close of hostilities he resumed his position with the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, and after making a personal inspection of the bauxite deposits in Arkansas, early in 1899, he returned to Pittsburgh, weakened from fatigue and the results of malarial fevers. He yielded to family persuasion, and started on a vacation trip to Atlantic City. While stopping for a few days at the Hotel Lafayette in Philadelphia, he underwent a minor operation from which he was unable to recover. He passed away April 26, 1899.

While this reviewer was delighted with this brief biography, he laid it down rather reluctantly, for he expected more. For surely Captain Hunt's many achievements deserve a more lengthy, more definitive biography. A pioneer in founding one of the industrial empires of the nation; a master metallurgist and business leader of his generation, a participant in the economic, civic and cultural life of America during the last half of the nineteenth century; a man of military achievement; active in patriotic societies, such as the Sons of the American Revolution; deeply religious; high ranking member in the Order of Masonry;
a pioneer in the movement to purify the rivers and streams of Western Pennsylvania; an organizer of the first smoke abatement movement in Pittsburgh—these and his many other achievements place Captain Hunt among that group of late Nineteenth century Americans who helped to lead this nation from a position of smug complacency into a world power. Others of lesser importance have lengthy biographies filling the book shelves of our homes and libraries. Such a biography of Captain Hunt should be there, too.

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Oliver La Farge has made a notable addition to the literature on the American Indian. His impressively bound and illustrated book covers the story of the Indian from the time the first white men landed until the present. In his Introduction and throughout the book he also discusses the early migrations of peoples from the Old World, and their cultural remains as found by the archeologist.

The book is at its best in the vivid discussion of the great events, major developments, and people of Indian history. The notable chiefs and heroes among the many Indian tribes are covered. La Farge dramatically recounts the wars among the tribes, their leagues, their fighting and alliances with the British, the French, the Spanish, and the American settlers.

Many insights into the customs, ways of life, religions, superstitions, culture and social organizations of the Indian are given. Among the major aspects of Indian life discussed are: the war activities, hunting, agriculture, clothing, arts, crafts, housing, the role of men and women, and many others. Descriptions are given for many tribes, from the Choctaws, Creeks, Chickasaws, Seminoles, and Natchez of the Southeast, and the Cherokees, Iroquois, Hurons and Eries of the Northeast to the tribes of the West: Pawnees, Osages, Kickapoos, Blackfeet, Navaho, Apaches, Pueblos, Sioux, Utes, Comanches, and the Haida, Kwakiutl, Nootka and others of the Northwest.