

HISTORY  
OF THE  
COUNTIES  
OF  
McKEAN, ELK AND FOREST,  
PENNSYLVANIA,

WITH  
BIOGRAPHICAL SELECTIONS,

INCLUDING  
THEIR EARLY SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT; A DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC AND  
INTERESTING LOCALITIES; SKETCHES OF THEIR CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES;  
PORTRAITS OF PROMINENT MEN; BIOGRAPHIES OF REPRESENTATIVE  
CITIZENS; OUTLINE HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA; STATISTICS, ETC.

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ILLUSTRATED.

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WILLIAM WALLACE BROWN was born at Summer Hill, Cayuga Co., N. Y., April 22, 1836. He is the son of Russelas W. and Mary (Brownell)

Brown, natives of New York, of Scotch and English blood, and, in religion, of the Baptist faith. They emigrated to Pennsylvania in the year 1838, and soon established their home in the then unbroken wilderness of that part of Elk county formerly belonging to McKean, and where is now located Rasselas. The land upon which they settled was covered with an immense growth of pine and hemlock. It was remote from a mill, and as the trees could not be manufactured into lumber, they had to be burned to ashes. To this huge task the father and sons addressed themselves with hard and constant labor. A large share of the settlers who undertook a like task in that neighborhood gave up in despair. The Browns came to stay and to conquer, and in a large sense they were successful. The farm was cleared, the children, six in number, three boys and three girls, were comfortably fed and clothed, their education made sure and their moral and religious culture in no wise neglected.

William Wallace, named in honor of his Scotch ancestors, was the second son. In such a home, and inured to hardships of such a frontier life, he grew to robust and hardy manhood. The opportunities for a common-school education were few and precarious. His first recollection of going to school was in the winter time, on horse-back, accompanied by his mother and elder brother, the three perched upon a single horse. The first mile of the journey was up a steep hill, through the woods and over a rough road covered with ice and snow. The old mare was "smooth shod," and it was quite as difficult for her to cling to the road as for the three to cling to her back. Wallace being in front, it became his duty to grip to the horse's mane, and as the hill grew steeper and the road more slippery, his youthful imagination brought him to the easy conclusion that his little arms alone kept the four from going to the bottom of the hill in a heap together! Thereafter, no matter how much his brother was inclined to go to school on horse-back, Wallace insisted that he would rather "climb the hill of science" upon his legs than "pull through" by his arms! By the time young Brown had reached his sixteenth birthday, he had not received more than that number of months of school training. At this time, it was determined that he should go to the Smethport Academy. Arrangements had been made for a home in the family of Solomon Sartwell, where he was to work mornings and evenings for his board and washing, and to remain two winters "if he suited." It must be assumed that he suited, for he remained the two winters. During a portion of the time he was in attendance at this academy it became somewhat difficult to get tuition money. This little hinderance was overcome by his ringing the academy bell and building the fires, which being passed to his credit squared the tuition account.

Returning in the spring, he took to the plow with a zest that plainly told that, under the tuition of Prof. Fordyce A. Allen, his mind had been filled with an enthusiasm that would be satisfied with nothing short of a college diploma. By teaching school in the winter, and at the same time pursuing his studies, he succeeded by the autumn of 1857 in preparing himself to enter college. While attending a teachers' institute at that time, he listened to a lecture by the president of Alfred College, Prof. W. C. Kenyon, in which many times he repeated the injunction: "Young man, do your best." So much pleased was he with the lecture of the pushing and sanguine professor, that he at once determined upon Alfred as the place, and that very fall as the time to enter college. If he could obtain the money to pay his board and tuition for the first term, he would take chances for the future. Knowing as he did that, though he would not ask of his father in vain, the amount could not well be spared by him, he at once called upon Col. A. I. Wilcox; \$32 was the sum required. Of course, he secured it; Col. Wilcox was never known to refuse

such an appeal. With this sum added to his meager savings, just about enough to pay railroad fare both ways, with grip in hand he undertook, on foot, the journey of fifty-one miles to Olean, then the nearest railroad station. There was a good deal of struggle in his heart when, reaching the top of the hill, he turned to wave good-bye to the dear ones "still standing at the gate," for it was then that a whole chorus of voices persuasive seemed to say: "Fling to the winds thy ambition; there is no rest or peace whither thou goest; return to contentment and home." This was no time to parley. A moment, and hesitation had fled, the command, "Young man, do your best," had come clear and unmistakable; he had waved his adieu, and was trudging on with firm, determined step, out into the conflict where men contend and faint and struggle and conquer.

By practicing the most rigid economy, working during vacation, at any labor offered, and teaching and clerking for a year, and sometimes borrowing money of his elder brother, he succeeded in reaching his place in the class of sixty-one. Two months more would bring him to his graduation day. It was then that the thunder of guns in Charleston's harbor disturbed the dreams of many a college student. None responded sooner or more freely than the class of sixty-one, of Alfred University. On the day the *Tribune* brought full details of the surrender of Sumter, twelve students, mostly of his class, gathered in the room of "Brown and Dexter," and there, before separation, pledged each the other, to go and be a soldier for the Union. They started next day for Elmira, and at once enlisted to fill the ranks of the Southern Tier Rifles, a well-drilled and fully officered militia company, which, in due time, was incorporated in the Twenty-third New York Regiment. In this regiment, as private in Company K, he served until December, when he was transferred to the famous Pennsylvania Bucktails, serving the balance of his term of enlistment as a member of Company C. He participated in several hard-fought battles, among them being South Mountain, Antietam, the second battle of Bull Run, Shantilla and Fredericksburg. After his return from the war, he came to Smethport, Penn., and studied law under the instruction of the Hon. B. D. Hamlin, and while pursuing his legal studies served as register and recorder of McKean county and at the same time as deputy prothonotary. He was admitted to the bar at Smethport in 1866, and the same fall was elected district attorney. He also filled the office of county superintendent of common schools of McKean county by appointment of Gov. Geary. In 1869 he moved to Erie county, Penn., and for nine years was a resident of Corry. While there he served three years as city attorney, and two years in the city councils. From 1872 to 1876 Mr. Brown was a member of the legislature, serving on the judiciary committee two sessions. He introduced the first bill to establish fish culture west of the Allegheny Mountains, which became a law. He was appointed aid-de-camp to Gov. Hartranft in 1876, and has been connected with the National Guards of Pennsylvania ever since, serving upon the staff of the major-general. Coming to Bradford in 1878, he has since lived in that city, and has been an active worker in the ranks of the Republican party. He was elected to the United States House of Representatives in 1882, and served in the XLVIII and XLIX Congresses. He took an active part in opposition to the Morrison horizontal tariff bill, and was the first member from Pennsylvania to oppose the bill for the stoppage of the coinage of silver. When President Cleveland's message was read to Congress, urging the measure, most of the Pennsylvania members were in favor of the bill, but before it came to a vote, over one-half agreed with Mr. Brown, and voted in opposition to the demonetiza-

tion scheme. During his terms in Congress, Mr. Brown procured appropriations for the United States court-house and post-office now being constructed in the city of Williamsport, and, besides establishing a very large number of post-offices and mail routes in his district, secured free delivery of mails for Bradford, that being the youngest city ever securing free delivery of mails in the State of Pennsylvania. At the expiration of his Congressional term, Mr. Brown resumed his law practice and soon became a member of the firm of Stone, Brown & Sturgeon. He has always been active in the promotion of public enterprises; he procured the charter for the city of Bradford, organized and obtained the charter for the Bradford, Bordell & Kinzua Railroad and its branches, and has served as a director of the road since its completion. For several years he has been a member of the Board of Trade, and is now its president. Since 1879 he has been interested in the production of oil, owning considerable oil lands in McKean county. He is a member of the Grand Army of the Republic; has served several times as post commander, and has been junior vice-commander of the department of Pennsylvania.

March 16, 1862, while at home from the army on recruiting service, Mr. Brown married Miss Ellen Crandall, of Independence, N. Y., daughter of Nelson Crandall, and they have one daughter, Jessie Lincoln. Mr. and Mrs. Brown are members of the Baptist Church, and have always been active in church and Sunday-school work, he having been superintendent most of the time for twenty-five years in Smethport, Corry and Bradford. He was graduated at Alfred in 1861, after he had entered the army (receiving, with others of his class, a furlough to return for that purpose) and from the same institution, the degree of LL. D., was conferred in 1886.