

# Old and New Westmoreland

Genealogical and Personal History under Editorial Supervision of

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No citizen was ever more respected in Greensburg than General Coulter and no citizen ever more fully enjoyed the confidence of the people, a confidence justified and well placed. His death, which was a decided loss to his family and community, occurred October 14, 1908. The following extract from the address made at his funeral services is a tribute to General Coulter by a man who both knew him well and also spoke for the community:

For nearly twenty years I have known General Coulter; and in all that time he has been my friend in so close and tender a sense that he belonged to my heart. And this is true of many, of most of you who are here to-day. It is true of the community. For four-score years he has lived his life here, except those war-tossed years when he offered that life on a score of battlefields for his country. In a peculiar sense he was Greensburg's man. He belonged to it and stood for it and loved it and was loved by it in a way that is true of no other man and no other place I have ever known. No human measurements can gauge the importance of his personality on this community. Its life and the lives of all of us who knew him have something unspeakably precious added to them because of what he was and what he did.

And I would like to speak of his conspicuous service as a soldier, for as long as history of the Civil War shall be written, his name and his deeds will be kept in memory. All over the land to-day eyes that were once used to scenes of battle will grow moist when they note that he is gone. Memories of what he was to them at Bull Run, at Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville, at Antietam and Gettysburg, in the Wilderness and at Appomattox, will bring a sadness and a loneliness which only a veteran can understand; for it will mean to them not only the loss of their old commander who never failed them in danger, but the loss of a friend who never failed to help them in the years of peace that followed. There was no better friend to the old soldier than General Coulter.

There was never anything secretive or mysterious about General Coulter. The man himself was as open and well known as his deeds. His marvelous strength of will, his emphatic decisions, his unyielding determinations, his scorn of sham, his blunt contempt of littleness, his rugged honesty, his loyalty to his friends, and with all his free-handed, tender hearted generosity and his sincere Christian convictions; they are as well known to the community, aye and better known than his heroism in battle and his service as a man of affairs.

What are the forces that entered into the making of this man who filled so large a place among us? We will not understand General Coulter, much less be helped by the lesson of his life unless we think of this: He was blessed with a home of Godly influence both in his early and later years. These factors, his early family and his manhood family life, shot their roots deep into his nature and contributed wonderfully to his making. He was also his own director and maker. So far as his accountability was concerned he recognized himself as the arbiter of his life. He was as courageous morally as he was physically.

A tribute which rings true to the very core is contained in an extract taken from a eulogistic address before the Bar Association and which is given herewith:

General Richard Coulter, lawyer, soldier, fellow-citizen, true man, has left us, but the impress of his life on this community shall endure beyond the stables monument

which can be erected by the hand of affection. In his young manhood he was trained for the practice of our profession and for a few years displayed in it those strong, intellectual powers which always marked him as a leader and which would have given him high eminence at the bar as on the bench. The quality of his mind enabled him to sieze with rapidity and certainty upon the vital point in any contest, and thus with youthful ardor and impetuosity, yet with the discretion usually belonging to maturer years, to press advantage to success.

If the current of his life had flowed on undisturbed the limit of his achievements as a lawyer would have had him set duty by his wishes *vs.* his ambition. But nature had moulded him for deeds of daring and of courage and had inspired him with a love of country which made his commands a duty to be willingly performed. At the age of eighteen he followed the flag which waved in an unbroken succession of victories from Vera Cruz to the Halls of the Montezumas, perhaps the youngest soldier in the army, whose conquests, when we consider the size of the invading army and the difficulties encountered is without a parallel in history. A few years later the real crisis in this Nation's life found him again ready for a soldier's work. Vain would be the attempt to embody here his illustrious career during that tempestuous and war-tossed period. A captain, a major-general, these mark for him the beginning and the end, but the middle time for all was filled in with defeats and victories for the Union army with appalling loss of life and treasure, with numerous wounds, one almost mortal for our hero.

Through it all this undaunted soldier moved the incarnation of courage, the very joy of the strife carrying him where the most enemies could be found. Doubtless he did not consider war a pastime or an argument, but he did not fail to fill in the stress of battle that high and lofty incentive which prefers death to disgrace. The undying affection of every soldier in his service manifested this and for more than forty years later by the returning brave is conclusive evidence of his courage. They knew that their hardships and their dangers were his; and many since have known that the tongue which rebuked a coward could speak in the gentlest sympathy and that the hand which wielded a sword could minister relief and help.

Since Appomattox his life was peaceful and prosperous to the end and in all these years he has dwelt in the town of his birth and among the people which he loved. He had a strong intellect but a generous heart; he abhorred every form of dishonesty, insincerity or pretense and sought not, indeed would not have, the companionship of any man whom he thought possessed them; but he gladly aided his fellows with more than advice and the hand of charity was wide open to every cause and to every person in distress. Nature had richly endowed Richard Coulter and he knew it. This made him masterful, self-reliant and confident, but it made him at the same time as it should make every man of like gifts, sympathetic, generous and kind.

He was a man take him for all in all  
We shall not look upon his like again.

JAS. S. MOORHEAD,  
JOHN LOTTA,  
PAUL H. GATHIER.