

A
BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY

OF
LANCASTER COUNTY:

BEING A HISTORY OF
EARLY SETTLERS AND EMINENT MEN
OF THE COUNTY;

AS ALSO MUCH OTHER
UNPUBLISHED HISTORICAL INFORMATION, CHIEFLY
OF A LOCAL CHARACTER.

BY
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ELLMAKER, AMOS, son of Nathaniel Ellmaker, was born February 2nd, 1787, in New Holland, Lancaster county, Pa. Giving early indications of marked ability, his father determined upon giving him a first-class education, and for this purpose sent him to Yale College, where he finished his collegiate career; afterwards he completed his law studies at the celebrated law school, under Judge Reeves, at Litchfield, Connecticut.

He began the practice of his profession at Harrisburg, and was not long in establishing himself in his profession. In 1816 he married Mary R., daughter of Thomas Elder, esq., of that place. He was an officer in the army that marched from Pennsylvania to the defence of Baltimore, in the war of 1812. He was appointed Prosecuting Attorney for Dauphin county, and was elected three times from the same county a member of the House of Representatives. In 1814 he was elected a member of Congress, but declined to take his seat, having been appointed President Judge of the district composed of the counties of Dauphin, Lebanon and Schuylkill. He resigned his judgeship and was appointed Attorney-General of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, which position he also resigned, and afterwards, in 1821, removed to Lancaster, where he began the practice of his profession. Here, as a lawyer, he met with extraordinary

success, and retired from his labors in independence. He was the candidate of the Anti-Masonic party for Vice President of the United States, in 1832. In 1834 he received the next highest vote to James Buchanan for United States Senator, when the latter was elected. He died November 28th, 1851.

Amos Ellmaker possessed, in a considerable degree, the particular characteristics of his father. He was no courter of popular favor, but on many occasions, when proffered, he refused to accept distinguished stations. Upon the accession of James Monroe to the Presidency, Mr. Ellmaker was tendered the appointment of Secretary of War, a post for which he was admirably qualified, but which he promptly declined, notwithstanding the urgent solicitations of his friends to accept the same. He preferred the quiet enjoyments of private life to all the pomp and consequence of official position.

Mr. Ellmaker possessed, in an eminent degree, those characteristics that go to make up the soul of a great man. In addition to a vast fund of information on all subjects, he possessed a lively, social disposition, that made his presence pleasing to all; and no one had more of that elevation of mind and generosity of soul which distinguish men of rare endowments, than he.

In all the relations and positions of life, he was a model worthy of imitation. He was distinguished for great courtesy to the younger members of the profession, and was ready at all times to take by the hand young men struggling to rise by their own industry and merits. As a lawyer, he always advised the settlement of differences by amicable adjustment, without resort to legal means; and many there are who, having taken his advice, escaped the costs and harassing attendance upon courts from protracted and ruinous law-suits. As counsel, his effort always was to have the parties to settle their differences among themselves, although such advice was against his interest as an attorney. But he took it to be his duty to guard the interests of his client, and not look upon him as a bird caught in a snare to be plucked.

He entertained the highest regard for strict integrity, and no one devoid of this trait of character could secure his confidence or friendship. His associates must be free even from the suspicion of a lack of principle. He regarded honesty as the foundation of human excellence, but with those lacking this ingredient of character, he chose to have little intercourse, as they were unable to command his esteem.

He took a lively interest in all the political movements of the day; and although not conspicuous as a politician, yet his views and opinions had great weight in controlling the course of public affairs. Indeed, his sentiments in all the movements of the Anti-Masonic and Whig parties were anxiously sought for and highly respected. His judgment was rarely at fault, and his inflexible honesty and steadiness of purpose caused his counsels always to be regarded as wisdom. He continued to enjoy the esteem and high consideration of his numerous friends unimpaired until his death. Nathaniel Ellmaker, esq., son of Amos Ellmaker, has for many years been one of the leading lawyers of Lancaster. His Orphans' Court business is, perhaps, the largest of any lawyer at the Lancaster bar.