

BIOGRAPHICAL ANNALS

OF

FRANKLIN COUNTY

PENNSYLVANIA

CONTAINING

GENEALOGICAL RECORDS OF REPRESENTATIVE FAMILIES, INCLUDING MANY OF  
THE EARLY SETTLERS, AND BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES  
OF PROMINENT CITIZENS

ILLUSTRATED

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(V) SAMUEL F. GREENAWALT (born Dec. 6, 1829—died Nov. 27, 1877), youngest son of Godfrey and Anna Mary (Rothbaust) Greenawalt, was educated in the public schools of Chambersburg, and engaged in active business while still a young man. Of indomitable will and iron nerve, he

early developed those traits of character that he maintained throughout an active business and political career of forty years. He took an active part in everything that tended to promote the best interests of the borough and our public schools, and was a leader in every undertaking. A member of the Friendship Fire Company, he was foremost at a fire or in the settlement of a tilt between rival companies. As a member of the town council and chief burgess he took an active part in the grading and improvement of our thoroughfares, and in the election which resulted in the erection of our system of water works. His livery and sales stables previous to the Civil war, and until the burning of Chambersburg, located in the rear of the "Mansion House"—at present known as the White block—were noted for their superior equipment, and the notable horses they contained. For his personal and family use he had choice strains, and as a dealer enjoyed the confidence of the best local and city purchasers. From 1867 to 1869 he was engaged in the stove and tinware business with the late E. G. Etter. He also had farming and other interests to which he gave attention. It was about this time that he became chief leader in the councils of the Republican party. Although active at every election he had never until now aspired for place. It was in 1867, after a most vigorous preliminary contest, that he received the nomination for Treasurer in the Republican County Convention, but with the greater part of the ticket he was defeated at the election. The chief cause for his defeat was the apathy of voters, and indifference to his election of unsuccessful competitors in the convention. Defeated, he did not sulk, but gallantly and loyally accepted the leadership of the party as its county chairman in the campaign of 1868, and won a sweeping victory for the Republican ticket, thus redeeming the county. This

was at the October election, under the old constitution, and the Presidential election was to follow in November. He therefore issued a ringing appeal "To the Voters of Franklin County," congratulating them upon the result of the late election and upon restoring the party "to its proper position." To arouse Republican enthusiasm for the important contest in November he continued: "The loyal people, who have repeatedly spoken with emphasis against the common foe at the ballot box, now feel like ending the matter, and winning a lasting peace by the final overthrow of the disturbers of national tranquility. We exhort you to do your part in the good work. Fall in and move forward! Do not pause to divide the spoils or wrangle over past indifferences, but push on solidly until the work is done. Let every voter be at the polls. Swell the majority to its fullest reach." Meanwhile he was borne down with the business misfortune of one who was near to him, with the result that he himself was well nigh driven to the wall financially. Nothing daunted he set to work to retrieve his fortunes with that vigor and pluck which were ever his characteristics. In 1871 he became the Republican candidate for Sheriff, and was elected by a rousing vote, considering the closeness of the county at that period, his majority in Chambersburg alone being 577, never until that time approached. During the Civil war he gave his aid and support to every effort made for the cause of the Union. Fearless and courageous during the trying times visited upon us during the civil strife, his shrewdness and diplomacy got him out of many difficult situations, the most notable being his capitulation to the Confederates on the night Stuart's cavalry held the town. He had just returned from Marion with members of the Chambersburg band, and was given safe escort to headquarters with his fine team.

Upon reaching the Diamond the names of the party were taken, and they were paroled to appear at Gen. Stuart's headquarters at 6 o'clock in the morning. Mr. Greenawalt was about to drive his team into the alley leading to his livery, when an officer ordered him to drive over to the old depot where Stuart was at the time. Arriving there, the Rebels were about to appropriate his horses, but Mr. Greenawalt pleaded to be permitted to take them to his stables and give them one more "good, last supper." He was allowed to do so. No sooner, however, had he driven under his carriage shed than the harness was stripped off and the animals were taken up what is now known as Central alley as far as German street, and then, turning east, he went out what was called "Long Lane." Fortunately, there were no pickets to intercept him in that lane, and he succeeded in saving his valuable horses. Mr. Greenawalt was a splendid horseman, and no culprit for whom he started ever escaped when once he got upon his trail. So speedily did he take after Johnston, the confederate of Rolland, on the night of the attempted bank robbery in March, 1875, that he surprised and captured the would-be robbers on the South Penn train coming toward Chambersburg, as it was taking its departure from that place. When he landed his prisoners here the plucky ex-sheriff was the hero of the hour. He was quick to decide in business or private undertakings. When Chambersburg, after its destruction in 1864, was without a hotel, he converted a South Main street property which had escaped the flames—now in the ownership of Mr. H. S. Gilbert—into a hotel, and for a year or more did an extensive business. In his death the town and county lost one of the most public-spirited citizens.