

HISTORY  
OF  
VENANGO COUNTY,  
PENNSYLVANIA.

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ITS PAST AND PRESENT,

INCLUDING

ITS ABORIGINAL HISTORY; THE FRENCH AND BRITISH OCCUPATION OF THE  
COUNTRY; ITS EARLY SETTLEMENT AND SUBSEQUENT GROWTH; A  
DESCRIPTION OF ITS HISTORIC AND INTERESTING LOCALITIES; ITS  
RICH OIL DEPOSITS AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT; SKETCHES OF  
ITS CITIES, BOROUGHs, TOWNSHIPS, AND VILLAGES; NEIGH-  
BORHOOD AND FAMILY HISTORY; PORTRAITS AND  
BIOGRAPHIES OF PIONEERS AND REPRESENT-  
ATIVE CITIZENS; STATISTICS, ETC., ETC.

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ILLUSTRATED.

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CHARLES MILLER, sixth son of Christian Miller, is of Huguenot ancestry, and was born in the little village of Oberhoffen, Canton de Bishweiler, Alsace, France, June 15, 1843. When he was eleven years old, the family came to this country and settled near the village of Boston, Erie county, New York, where the father purchased a farm. At the age of thirteen he engaged himself to a country merchant for a year for thirty-five dollars and board. When seventeen years old he secured a clerkship in a dry-goods store in Buffalo at one hundred and seventy-five dollars, board not included. The highest wages he received as long as he remained a clerk was eight dollars per week. He enlisted in the New York National Guard in 1861, and in 1863 was mustered into the United States service.

He was married in 1863 at Springville, New York, to Miss Ann Adelaide Sibley, eldest child of Doctor Joseph Crocker and Lucy Elvira (Babcock) Sibley. Their children are: Adelaide Sibley, Charles Joseph Sibley, Henry Sibley, LeRoy Sibley, Julius French, and Metta Evalina. These are all now living, except Henry Sibley, who died in infancy.

Mr. Miller commenced business for himself in 1864, in the same store in Boston, New York, in which he had first begun as clerk. His own capital was only two hundred dollars, but Doctor Sibley loaned him two thousand dollars, and also aided him by valuable suggestions. In 1866, Doctor Sibley having died, he sold out his store, the profits of the business being about one thousand dollars above living expenses. The same year he came to Franklin, formed a partnership with John Coon, of Buffalo, and for three years did a successful dry-goods business, but the fall in prices was then so great as to equal all the profits and nearly the whole amount originally invested.

In 1869 the partners purchased a works and a patent for Galena oil. R. L. Cochran was taken into partnership in the oil business. The dry-goods business continued depressed and the store was closed out at a loss of eleven thousand dollars. Mr. Miller himself auctioned off most of the goods. The following year the works burned down, and Miller and Coon found themselves liable for thirty-two thousand dollars with assets amounting to about six thousand dollars. In this misfortune several citizens together subscribed and presented one thousand dollars, which was gratefully accepted as a loan and subsequently repaid. Necessary funds for continuing the business were obtained by taking in a new partner, H. B. Plumer. Another works was purchased and refitted, and within thirty days after the fire, oil was being

shipped from the new manufactory. Since that time the business has been prosperous and continuously growing. In the fall of 1878 his partners disposed of their interests to the Standard Oil Company. Mr. Miller retained his interest, was made president, and given entire management of the business. To-day nearly three-fourths of the railway mileage of the United States lubricate their equipment with Galena oils. Mr. Miller deals directly with consumers. Since 1870 his business trips have averaged nearly five days of every week. Probably no other man has a wider acquaintance with railroad officials, and what is highly gratifying is that they are almost without exception his personal friends.

Mr. Miller is a director in many other enterprises, among which may be mentioned the Paige Car Wheel Company; the Middleton Spring Company; the Railway Speed Recorder Company; the Anglo-American Oxide Company, and the First National Bank of Franklin. He is also the senior partner and joint owner with his brother-in-law, J. C. Sibley, of the noted Prospect Hill Stock Farm.

For two successive terms, 1885 and 1886, Mr. Miller was elected mayor of Franklin on the Republican ticket. His vote and influence are now cast for the Prohibition party. He is now serving his fourth continuous term as president of the Northwestern Association of Pennsylvania of the Grand Army of the Republic. He was ordnance officer of the Second brigade of Pennsylvania under General James A. Beaver, and when General John A. Wiley succeeded to the command, Major Miller was appointed assistant adjutant general, which position he still holds.

He united with the Baptist church in Boston, New York, in 1865. At Franklin he assisted in the organization of the First Baptist church, of which he was, at the age of twenty-four, made deacon. The First Baptist Sunday school, of which he has been for seventeen years the superintendent, numbers nearly six hundred members. He is also superintendent of the Third Ward mission school. In each school he teaches a Bible class. The one in the First Baptist school comprises over one hundred and seventy-five men. He has been for several years past conductor of the French Creek Sunday School Association. He is at present president of the Young Men's Christian Association of Franklin and is now serving his fourth successive term as president of the Pennsylvania Baptist Association.

Mr. Miller's gifts to worthy objects have kept pace with his increasing wealth, and many churches, schools, and benevolent institutions, as well as deserving individuals, have been substantially helped by him. In October, 1889, he opened a free night school for his employes and the young men who attend either of the two Sunday schools of which he is superintendent. Four teachers are employed, and some ninety pupils enrolled.—*E. H. S.*