

# Armstrong County

PENNSYLVANIA

HER PEOPLE, PAST AND PRESENT

EMBRACING

A HISTORY OF THE COUNTY

AND

A Genealogical and Biographical Record of Representative Families

IN TWO VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

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ISAAC REESE, the son of William and Elizabeth Reese, was born April 29, 1821, and emigrated to America in 1832 with his parents, who then had a family of seven children, all born in Llanelly, near Abergavenny, in southern Wales. All accompanied the parents to this country, where three children were born later. The father and grandfather of William Reese were born in Breconshire, Wales, and William Reese was born in Brecon in 1787. His cousin, Lewis Rees (the father of Dr. Abraham Rees, the encyclopaedist), was also born in Brecon, and both were descended from the clergyman of the Church of England who held the living of Penderyn, in Breconshire; both Lewis Rees and William Reese have the Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in their respective families.

A short sketch of the three types of workmen, from the old Welsh clergyman down to the present time, may not be amiss here. Lewis Rees preached the gospel seventy years, and died at the age of ninety years. He was the first pastor of the old Independent Chapel of Llanbryn-mair in 1739. Dr. Abraham Rees was his son; he died aged eighty-two years.

He was a Presbyterian minister, and preached in Old Jewry, London, for forty years. Previous to that he was mathematical tutor at Hoxton Academy, London, an appointment which he filled with great distinction for twenty-two years. For many years he was president of the Presbyterian Board in London. He was one of the chief directors of the City Road Orphan Working School, and an active member of most of the charitable institutions of the metropolis. He edited the Chambers' Cyclopaedia for ten years before his own, Rees' Cyclopaedia, and the profound learning and ability which the work displayed caused it to be translated into several continental languages, and procured him the honor of being elected a Fellow of the Royal Society. Many other foreign and scientific bodies also paid him the compliment of enrolling him among their members. He took the degree of doctor of divinity from Edinburgh University at the express desire of Dr. Robertson, the historian. He was one of the earliest members of the Linnaean Society and of the Society of New York. On May 3, 1820, he headed a deputation of eighty-nine dissenting ministers to present to King George IV an address on his accession to the throne. He was the only member who had also been present when a similar address was presented to the late King, in 1760. His portrait by Lonsdale hangs in the National Art Gallery of London, that by Opie in Dr. Williams' private library, founded by him in Redcross street, having been brought there only a few years ago from the British Museum. He was a great favorite of the Duke of Sussex, who associated his portrait with that of Dr. Parr in his principal library at Kensington Palace.

William Reese's cousin Sam, when he was only nineteen years old, tutored the sons of English noblemen in mathematics and natural philosophy. These men induced Sam and his brother John to move their academy from Wales to England.

William Reese was an iron worker, as was his father before him, the latter building the first iron mill on the borders of France and Germany and living there two years to manage it, returning to his native land (it is said of him) able to speak both French and German fluently. Isaac Reese retained to old age a few French phrases caught in his early childhood.

A record of upward of five hundred inventions, improvements and discoveries, listed in the Department of the Interior, Washing-

ton, D. C., testifies to the energy of the sons and grandsons of William Reese. The basic Bessemer open-hearth process of steel manufacturing that revolutionized steel making, the indestructible silica brick and furnace building that controlled the industry in the United States for many years, the present-day process known to the arts as the Universal Beam Mill, are the original products of the three sons of William Reese, Jacob, Isaac and Abram, respectively.

William Reese and his wife were plain, God-fearing people. They were uncompromising in their integrity. They organized Sabbath schools and prayer meetings in every community in which they lived if they found none there. They believed in the old proverb, "If there is an idle man there is another starving." They brought up their ten children to habits of industry and thrift. "The plain man serves the world by his action and as a wheel in the machine; the thinker serves it by his intellect, and as a light upon its path. The man of meditative soul, who raises and comforts and sustains his traveling companions, mortal and fugitive like himself, plays a nobler part still, for he unites the other two utilities. The artisan, the savant and the orator are all three God's workmen."

We have the three types in these generations of the old clergyman all born in Wales, all with nothing to boast of so far as this world's goods are concerned, but the nobility of labor. William Reese died Aug. 4, 1892, aged one hundred and four years. His wife died April 12, 1874, in the seventy-sixth year of her age.

Jacob Reese, the second son of William Reese, was a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science; a member of Franklin Institute, and of the Philadelphia Academy of Philadelphia; a thirty-second-degree Mason and a Master Mason for fifty-two years. He held the office of deacon in the Baptist Church for sixty-one years. He was married to Eliza Matthews of Pittsburgh. He died in 1907 in the eighty-second year of his age.

Abraham Reese, the third son of William Reese, was the mechanical genius of the family, making miniature models in brass and wood with his own hand of several of his inventions. Almost a hundred years after the death of Dr. Abraham Rees, the son of Abraham Reese and nephew of Isaac Reese, Dr. Stanley C. Reese, took similar honors to his grandfather's famous cousin. He is a doctor of philosophy of Princeton University, a charter member of the Astronomical and

Astro-Physical Society of America, and a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was elected a foreign member of the Royal Societies Club of St. James street, London, England. Abraham Reese was married to Mary Godwin. He died in the seventy-eighth year of his age. Cara (lately deceased), daughter of Abraham and sister of Dr. Stanley C. Reese, did work worthy of her ancestry. She took her degree from Bucknell University for her rescue work for children by the exposure of fire-traps in the public schools of Pittsburgh, Chicago, St. Louis and Washington, D. C., through her articles in a Boston magazine. High as her literary work stands, whether as lecturer, magazine writer or newspaper correspondent, overtopping everything else was her loyal, self-sacrificing devotion to her family, which will shine as a beacon light to the future generations of William Reese and his wife through every branch of that family.

Joseph Reese, the fourth son of William Reese, lost his life at the charge on Stone River during the Civil war.

Benjamin F. Reese, the youngest and only surviving son of William Reese, passed through four years of the Civil war. He has been identified with the brick and clay business for forty years. He married Dora Berkeley, of Bolivar, Pa., where they now reside.

All the daughters of the family, Rachel, Leah, Rebecca, Mary and Elizabeth, were leaders in church work in every community in which they lived.

The family name Rees was changed to Reese in Pittsburgh, Pa., on account of the confusion over the mail, there being another Rees family having a William among its members. Letters were frequently opened by mistake. Isaac Reese, the eldest son of William Reese, was the last of the family to take kindly to the "e." His naturalization papers were taken out Rees, and all the births and deaths in the family Bible record written in his own handwriting Rees up to the date of the birth of his son Benjamin, in 1862, when he adopted the "e" for the first time.

We quote from the "Centennial History of Allegheny County," 1888 (Snowden & Peterson, publishers):

"As a great center of industrial activity Pittsburgh, of course, contains many concerns that have developed into immense proportions within the last quarter of a century. An important branch of commercial activity, and one deserving of special mention in a review of leading business interests of Allegheny

county, is the manufacture of fire brick; and none of those great manufacturing and mercantile corporations which have, and are, contributing so materially to Pittsburgh's prosperity, deserves a more prominent place than that of the Phoenix Fire Brick Works, of Manorville, Armstrong county, Pa., owned and managed by Mr. Isaac Reese. By hard work, constant improvements and close personal attention this gentleman has succeeded in producing a brick which affords his numerous customers entire satisfaction. His Silica brick is now considered the best brick made in this or any other country, and is fast taking the place of all imported brick, it being preferred, even at a higher price per thousand, to that made in foreign countries. Mr. Reese's Silica works are located at Manorville, Armstrong county, and, his process being patented, he is, as a matter of course, the sole manufacturer of this brand. To give a description of the superiority of this brick over any other brand would occupy more space than can possibly be spared in a review of this kind; let one instance suffice. In one of our large manufacturing establishments over seven thousand tons of steel has been taken out of an open-hearth furnace without necessitating any repairs. Another advantage possessed by this brick will easily be seen. By using the old fire brick in the cap or arch of a glass furnace the slack or drippings would run into the glass, while caps made of Reese's Silica brick will make the output of the furnace perfectly clean. Starting in the fire brick business on a small scale, in 1863, Mr. Reese has since then been connected with a number of leading works, prominent among which are the Apollo Fire Brick Works and the Bolivar Union Fire Brick Works, Westmoreland county; the Woodland Fire Brick Works, Woodland, Clearfield county, and the Empire Fire Brick Works, Ellerslie, Allegheny county."

Mr. Reese on being asked one day whose arithmetic they used when he was a boy, answered with a merry twinkle in his eye, "Mother's Arithmetic—it's good enough for anybody; it carried me through eighty years' computations. Mother taught me to read, write, and cipher through the 'rule of three'!" The following biographical notes accompanied the article in the "Centennial History" before mentioned:

"Isaac Reese was born in South Wales in Great Britain in 1821. His parents emigrated with their children to this country in 1832. They first settled at Phoenixville, Chester

county, where Isaac attended school. From thence they removed in the following year to Huntingdon county, and again, in 1834, to Bellefonte, Center county. At the last place they resided for two years and then removed to Pittsburgh. Isaac was now old enough to go to a trade, and he served an apprenticeship to learn the business of 'hammer-man' in one of the iron mills at Pittsburgh. For over twenty years he followed his trade, more than half of which time he was employed in the extensive mills of John H. Shoenberger. He saw an opening to engage in fire brick making in 1863, and although not having much capital and but little knowledge of the process of manufacture, he entered into it with great energy and a determination to succeed. He possessed natural business qualifications, and a physique well able to sustain the wear and tear of his active business life. From boyhood he has been familiar with hard labor, and to-day the mental strain of business is commensurate with the physical taxation of his earlier years. He has been a very successful manufacturer, and produces the best silica brick made in the world to-day, while his fire brick is without a peer. He has thoroughly mastered the process, and although he has almost reached the allotted time to retire—"three score and ten"—is to-day one of our most energetic business men. He has served a term in Pittsburgh Councils, is a member of the Fourth (Chatham street) Baptist Church, and is a widely known and much respected citizen of our city. Mr. Reese everywhere is recognized to be a thoroughly enterprising and public-spirited citizen, whose successful efforts in mercantile life are in keeping with his cordial support to all measures best calculated to advance the permanent welfare and prosperity of Allegheny county."

Isaac Reese found "the guerdon in the strife." "Father never gets tired," said his son George once after a very strenuous day for both father and son. Isaac Reese gave the credit of his achievement late in life principally to his son George, but always said: "My three sons stood shoulder to shoulder with me or I could not have accomplished what I did." Mr. Reese was a builder. Every one of the works he ever owned was built up from almost decay, and flourishing little villages soon sprang up around them. He was the friend of the workmen. A newly engaged bookkeeper for the Manorville works asked one of the men who had been working for the firm a number of years how the firm treated the workmen. He answered, "Well,

every workman knows he can bring any grievance he may have to Mr. Reese or his sons and he will get justice." And "Justice is the highest emanation from the gospel."

During the panic of 1873 Mr. Reese lost every dollar he had in the world, but with the assistance of friends he once more got to his feet. He built a plant at Manorville, Armstrong county, and another later on at Cowanshannock in Valley township, in the same county, at the mouth of Cowanshannock creek. These mills were called the Phoenix Fire Brick Works, and Mr. Reese was sole owner. Later on in order to meet the great demand for his brick he built two mills at Powelton, Center Co., Pa., and the combined capacity of all was 50,000 brick daily.

Mr. Reese was the inventor of the first silica fire brick, for furnace linings, in the United States, his first experiment being made at his Apollo works, previous to the panic of 1873. The Phoenix Fire Brick Works, at Manorville, in Armstrong county, Pa., were started in 1880, for the manufacture of ordinary fire brick, but after Dec. 16, 1884, when Isaac Reese patented his "Reese" Silica Brick, they ran night and day to supply the demand which followed the demonstration of the efficiency of the new product. When improvements were made in the process of making high-grade steel there was a demand for a better fire brick than could be obtained in the United States, and from 1863 until 1884 the fire brick especially for open-hearth steel furnaces was brought from Europe at great expense. After experimenting for ten years on a quartz rock which he found in the Allegheny river, Mr. Reese perfected and patented a silica brick far superior to the European product, a fact so generally recognized that it replaced the latter entirely in the home market. Of uniform size and weight, practically free from expansion or contraction under varying temperatures, and giving the best satisfaction in the construction and use of glass, open-hearth steel, copper and other metallurgical furnaces, the Reese silica brick soon attained the popularity it deserved, and found a market in every manufacturing State and Territory of the Union, especially at the gold, silver and copper smelting works of Colorado. After fruitless attempts to induce the steel manufacturers to build a furnace of Reese silica brick, without giving a written guaranty of several thousand dollars to reimburse them in case of failure, Mr. Reese went to Dr. C. G. Hassey, who on hearing his claims for the brick said, "Build your furnace, Isaac Reese, you are my friend,

your word is my guaranty." This proved the open sesame to future success.

In 1902 Mr. Reese sold out to the brick trust, but retained stock in the same. There were thirty-four brick plants merged in the trust known as the Harbison & Walker Refractories Company, into which the Reese plants entered. The Reese plants were the only ones to preserve their individuality and to retain their own offices and the firm name of Isaac Reese & Sons Company.

Mr. Orr Buffington, Mr. Reese's friend and attorney, who had a thorough insight into the industry and the history of Mr. Reese's efforts to perfect and put this brick upon the market, writes of him: "Without capital other than that which one or two of his friends, recognizing his integrity and ability, supplied, Isaac Reese ventured to make and market a new and untried line of refractory brick for furnace linings. He came a stranger into Armstrong county for this purpose. To appreciate the gravity of the undertaking it must be realized that these bricks, designed for use in costly furnaces, with their more costly contents to be fluxed, must prove the most perfect success, otherwise the entire proposition became a total loss to the purchaser. The bricks were produced as designed, but the customers had to be convinced. This involved untold patience and persistency through a series of years, against the strong and bitter opposition of wealthy competitors. The excellence and uniform character of this product and his fair dealing overcame the obstacles in his path, and not many years before his death, his competitors were compelled to buy his interests at his own figure. The instances are few of record where at sixty years, when most workers are preparing to lay aside life's work and rest, a man, alone and apparently defeated in life's struggle, grapples a new and great problem and in spite of his years and adversity compels success to surrender.

"The writer knew Mr. Reese intimately during these nearly thirty years, and in all these years saw no change in the man himself: the same genial nature, the same patience, the same absence of personal pride, the same fairness in his methods of business, the same extreme care for his family, his friends and his church, bespoke his manliness and goodness of heart.

"When abundant results rewarded his work there was perhaps the usual elation always present in man, but it did not take the form of boastfulness, but rather only added to his pleasure in seeing those around whom his in-

terest centered enjoy the fruits of his victory. Many quiet unknown gifts to those who had aided him were bestowed. His was essentially an honest and trusting nature. Once his confidence was won it remained unshaken, and once lost could never be regained. His mind was wholly constructive—he was a builder; his work was a public service—he made the world better and his memory deserves perpetuation.”

Isaac Reese was a man of uncommon gifts. “Oh, for Isaac’s matchless memory,” said his brother Jacob the last evening they ever spent together on earth, when they discussed Biblical questions up to a late hour. He never troubled about the scientific philosophies of the day, but broke ground often for preacher and scholar by his original thinking. He was great in his humility! He looked upon the casting of his vote as a binding obligation he owed to his country. He was about the last man to enter the Harbison & Walker combine, saying, “If I were ten years younger I would not join. Trusts are going to ruin the country”—it was his protest against the selfish monopoly of the age. He worked for the universal good and not for his own selfish ends.

Isaac Reese died as he had lived, his faith in God and men being the deepest and most powerful element in his character. It was the leaven of his beautiful optimism which could raise every man, woman or child who came to him in the depths of despair to the sunlight of hope before they left his presence (“the inward shaping toward some unborn power”). He was called to the larger life which he was so well fitted to enter Jan. 1, 1908, but to his children and grandchildren “A light is passing from the earth!” He was a Baptist and a deacon in the church for many years, and a Mason, and beloved by everyone for his sunny nature—a man to whom an unkind thought even was foreign, and could not thrive there.

The achievements of any man cannot be properly gauged without insight into his environments as well as his ancestry. Isaac Reese married Elizabeth Bebb Jones in Pittsburgh, May 24, 1844. One day, when speaking of his business reverses to Mr. Thomas McConnell, Sr., of Kittanning, Mr. Reese said: “I can never see a storm threatening, it has to burst right over my head before it is known to me; and then when the darkness is so great I cannot see my hand before me, it is my wife who has always guided me

to the light. Her faith, courage and fine mind never fail her in the darkness.” Elizabeth Bebb Jones was born Feb. 21, 1824, in Llanbrynmair (St. Mary’s on the Hill), called from its Church of England dedicated to the Virgin. She was the daughter of Robert and Mary (Bebb) Jones, who emigrated from Llanbrynmair, in northern Wales, with their two children, Elizabeth and John, in 1841, the eldest two, Thomas and Mary, having come over the year previous with Dr. Chidlaw, a personal friend of this family. The Jones family settled at Brady’s Bend, Armstrong Co., Pennsylvania.

The Jones and Bebb families figure in the parish history of Llanbrynmair as far back as 1663 as vicars, church wardens and overseers, almost every consecutive year for two hundred years, and the tombstones in the churchyard and the garden burial plot of the Friends record some of their deaths as “Quakers.” Edward Bebb, Quaker, who died April 23, 1740, was the ancestor of Mary (Bebb) Jones and her brother Edward Bebb. Judge William Bebb, the fourteenth governor of Ohio, was the son of Edward and Margaret (Roberts) Bebb. Judge Bebb was born in America. He tutored the children of old General Harrison (“Tippecanoe” of the political phrase “Tippecanoe and Tyler, too”) in mathematics, Latin, French and German, living in the Harrison family one year. He then started an academy at South Bend, Ind., and through the influence of General Harrison, the leading families of Cincinnati sent their children to this institution. He then studied law, became judge and afterward governor of Ohio (in 1851) through the appointment of the president, and according to history was the first governor to take the stump against slavery. He was governor when the war with Mexico made his duties arduous and exacting, and when the feeling between the Whigs and the Tories ran high, filling the office with credit to himself and the government. He was the intimate friend of Thomas Corwin, and their two portraits in the Statehouse at Columbus, Ohio, are called the “David and Jonathan” of the Ohio bar. Later he held other offices under the United States government.

On the Jones side of the house the family is a branch of the ancient house of Esgair Evan, the root of the Jones clan in Llanbrynmair. The little house Robert Jones built and from which the family emigrated was called in its honor “Esgair Lafureyn.” His great-grandson, Reese O. Snowden, has

named his ranch at Lancaster, Cal., Esgair in its honor. Robert Jones built a break in the wall around "Esgair" to which one of the villagers pointed with pride over fifty years after he had emigrated, saying, "It will last as long as the Roman wall!" A farmer by inheritance, he had never learned the trade of the stonemason, and yet his work in masonry stands as a monument to future generations! He did his work well, and "earned a creature's praise." Carlyle had this man's type in view when he said, "In all true work, were it but hand labor, there is something of divineness." Robert Jones was also one of the pillars of the church, both in Wales and Armstrong county, from youth up to old age. He was a man of sterling principles and generous to a fault.

Josiah Jones (nom de plume Josiah Brynmair), the Welsh bard and religious writer of Gomer, Ohio, whose hymns are sung in Welsh churches, was the son of Robert Jones' uncle, Josiah Jones, of Llanbrynmair. At his funeral in Gomer, Ohio, almost seventy ministers and deacons, representatives of Congregational churches, were present. His father was a deacon for fifty years in the old Independent Chapel, Llanbrynmair, and a leader of its choir for sixty years at the time of his death.

Rev. John Roberts, who with his two sons held the pulpit of Llanbrynmair Independent Chapel for over sixty years, was a kinsman of Mrs. Reese as well as closely related by marriage ties. Edward Bebb, the brother of Mrs. Robert Jones, married the sister of John and George Roberts, and Richard, the youngest son of John and brother of Samuel, married Ann Jones, a cousin of Robert Jones.

Rev. George Roberts emigrated to Ebensburg, Pa. Besides his faithful discharge of clerical duties he did much to strengthen the feelings of good will and cooperation between England and the United States through his intimacy with Mr. Rush, the then United States ambassador to London.

David Francis, another cousin of Mrs. Reese, emigrated there with Rev. George Roberts, and engaged in farming.

Samuel Roberts was the most noted of these preachers. He was born March 6, 1800, in the old Chapel House of Llanbrynmair, as was also Dr. Abraham Rees (in 1743), the encyclopaedist, kinsman of Isaac Reese. A tablet above the pulpit commemorates the events. Samuel Roberts published a collection of two thousand hymns for Welsh Congregational churches. He labored unceasingly

through the press and the pulpit on behalf of every great reform—social, political and religious. At his funeral one of the most noted preachers of Wales said of him, "There was a time when all Wales turned to Llanbrynmair for political light as the world turns to the east every morning for the sun." He was preeminently a man of peace. He attended the great Peace Congress at Frankfort in 1850. In 1857, with his nephew, Judge Bebb, he started a Welsh colony in the mountains of Tennessee, but the Civil war put an end to the undertaking, as they were Northern sympathizers. Samuel Roberts, utterly bankrupt, then turned his face homeward, and on his arrival in Wales, a mass meeting was called in Liverpool, presided over by an English baronet, which took the form of a national testimonial. Resolutions were drawn up saying he was received back to Wales with the same welcome as a mother received her newborn babe, and presenting him a purse of £1,250 (as told in a letter from Samuel Roberts to Mrs. Reese on that occasion).

While Samuel Roberts wrote on national as well as religious subjects, his brother John confined himself to the religious, and history says no one had a stronger influence over Wales; and no Welshman ever went to his grave with more admirers than his brother John. Richard, the youngest of the three brothers, was a farmer, but preached much and was a regular contributor to monthly magazines. He was a general favorite in Wales. The father and his three sons went to their graves mourned by the whole Welsh nation, but their teachings live.—"The dead but sceptered sovereigns who still rule."

God had sifted three kingdoms

To find the wheat for this planting.

—LONGFELLOW.

'Tis said that a religious atmosphere surrounded the birthplace of St. Francis of Assisi long after it had become extinct in other places. The writer felt the same when, some few years ago they visited Llanbrynmair, and saw the people in small flocks plodding through a drizzling rain for miles over mountain and valley to the old Independent Chapel one Sabbath morning—some horseback, some in spring wagons, but many of them on foot. It was the only Protestant Church the writer ever saw where the people made the same effort to attend divine service as the Catholic makes to attend early Mass in midwinter,

over ice and snow, to "St. Mary's on the Hill," in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

'Twas not the grapes of Canaan did repay,  
But the high faith that failed not by the way.  
—LOWELL.

After Robert and Mary (Bebb) Jones had settled in Brady's Bend they ventured their all with their son Thomas in a blast furnace in Clarion county, Pa. The panic of 1849 swept everything away and left them strangers in a strange land in their old age. Mrs. Jones, to help eke out the living for the family, took in a few boarders, and one of these men related how every boarder was obliged either to go to church on the Sabbath or seek shelter elsewhere. It was the custom of Mr. and Mrs. Jones to close the house on that day, as everyone was expected to attend divine service. This man, almost a lifetime a trusted officer in a Congregational Church of Pittsburgh, said: "Mrs. Robert Jones gave me my first start in regular churchgoing." Grace before meals and daily family worship had left its impress on those young men, far away from their family influence. Rev. Samuel Roberts had called this woman in Wales "A mother in Israel." "How far that little candle throws his beams" here in Armstrong county! Mrs. Roberts Jones belonged to the hierarchy of elect souls whose invisible laws bend the universe toward righteousness.

Religion high, but with communicants few as the cedars on Lebanon.—GEORGE ELIOT.

"Truth stands fire and water" has been handed down by tradition from Mary Roberts, the grandmother of Mrs. Reese, through seven generations.

A strong persistent life  
Panting through generations as one breath.  
—GEORGE ELIOT.

Mrs. Reese, speaking of her religious ancestry to her children before her death, said: "This is your greatest inheritance. Don't forget your great-grandmother Roberts. 'Truth stands fire and water,' you pass it on." "Keep your promise," Mrs. Reese taught, "if it means loss, the burnt offering is still costly." She was another witness to the "Truth" and left to her children and grandchildren the imperishable legacy.

The thing of an eternal yesterday,  
Whatever was, and evermore returns,  
Sterling to-morrow, for to-day 'twas sterling!  
—S. T. COLERIDGE.

Mrs. Reese was of a deeply religious nature. She watched for the providence of God in every event. She was greatest in her moral qualities—a true descendant of her Puritan ancestry. Her certitudes of faith were solid rock for her. Circumstances had no effect on her, as her husband testified after fifty-four years of marriage. She was a benefactor to everyone in need with whom she came in contact, both in a material and spiritual way, and her death amid transcendent visions was a fitting end to the life whose footsteps through the world were so beautiful.

The high soul burns on to light (our) feet!

In Llanbryn-mair her people were staunch supporters of disestablishment. The house is still standing there where during the religious persecutions of the seventeenth century her people kept the Covenant for sixty-four years before they dared build the Old Independent Chapel in 1739. "If heredity is the sum of past environments, both spiritual and material" (Burbank), the rugged character of these God-fearing people within the mountain fastnesses of Wales may have had no small part in developing the simple grandeur of these lives—these people who have played no inconsiderable part in the history of this county.

Shall the trick of nostrils and of lips  
Descend through generations and the soul  
That moves within our frames like God in worlds—  
Convulsing, urging, melting, withering—  
Imprint no record, leave no documents  
Of her great history? Shall men bequeath  
The fancies of their palate to their sons,  
And shall the shudder of restraining awe,  
The slow-swept tears of contrite memory,  
Faith's prayerful labor and the food divine  
Of fasts ecstatic—shall these pass away  
Like wind upon the waters, tracklessly?  
—GEORGE ELIOT.

Mrs. Robert Jones died in Brady's Bend, Pa., in 1856, in the sixty-seventh year of her age. Robert Jones' surviving years were spent in Pittsburgh with his daughters. He died Feb. 10, 1865, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

Thomas Jones, the eldest son of Robert and Mary (Bebb) Jones, was born in Llanbryn-mair, Nov. 27, 1813, and was educated at Newtown Academy. He died in Pittsburgh, April 21, 1855. His life in America was spent at Brady's Bend. It was a saintly life, of great usefulness in the home with his aged parents, in the neighborhood and the church. He never married. Samuel



Roberts, on receiving the letter in Wales from the family telling of his death, was so overcome with grief he was unable to preach the following Sunday, and in his return letter said: "Thomas was a grandson and a son worthy of Mary Roberts and her daughter. His work was perfect when the Master called and he went in at the Gate loaded down with full sheaves."

Humphrey died, aged eight years, and is buried in Llanbrynmair Churchyard.

Mary Jones, daughter of Robert and Mary Jones, was born Aug. 30, 1818. She was a devoted wife and mother, and a faithful and respected member of the First Congregational Church of Pittsburgh for sixty years, at the time of her death. She was married to William Hopkins, of Pittsburgh, whose grandfather was a cousin of Stephen Hopkins, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.

John Jones was born May 9, 1832. He fought through four years of the Civil war. He learned the art of photography as known in those days (daguerreotypy) from his brother, Thomas, who had learned it in London. He was a born horticulturist, doing his best work in his sister's garden at Manorville, Armstrong county, which a visiting Pittsburgher called "Allah's Garden of Roses," so beautiful and luxuriant were they under his care and labor. He was married to Mary Scarm, of Brady's Bend, and died in Pittsburgh, Dec. 22, 1891.

Mrs. Reese had been a faithful and respected member of the First Congregational Church of Pittsburgh for fifty-four years at the time of her death, June 2, 1898.

Eleven children were born to Mr. and Mrs. Isaac Reese, six of whom died in childhood and early youth. Four survive at the present time, Elvira, Emma, George W. and Walter Lawrence. The three sons assisted their father in business, and George W. Reese is mentioned elsewhere in this work; he is a resident of Kittanning, Pennsylvania.

BENJAMIN F. REESE, the second son of Isaac and Elizabeth Reese, was born Feb. 16, 1862. He attended the public schools of Pittsburgh until he was fifteen years of age, when his father's business failure impressed him with the necessity of doing something toward the family's support. He was born with an abiding sense of duty. Accordingly, without saying a word to anyone, he started out in search of work and found it in the steel works of Miller, Barr & Parkins. (It is a significant fact that his great-grandfather, left an orphan

at ten years of age, and the eldest of several brothers and sisters, had started out on a similar quest in order to help support the family, and found work in a *blast furnace* at Brecon. He was such a practical theorist that it is said of him he could "square the circle" with molten metal—tossing up seven or nine balls where others could only toss four or five. This is the first known instance of a member of the Rees family engaging as an iron worker.) Benjamin F. Reese remained with the firm of Miller, Barr & Parkins until his father had the works started at Manorville, when he became foreman at the age of nineteen. When the Cowanshannoc works were bought he was made foreman there and cleared the works in the first six months of the entire debt. But the bent of his mind lay in gas and oil fields and had he lived to these days of vast exploiting in those fields, the germ would doubtless have fructified and borne large fruit. He was a subtle theorist, and a metaphysician of high type. He valued his word above his bond. "Your Benjamin's word stands the same as his bond in Butler county," said an oil man to Mr. Reese one day in Butler. "It stands the same in Allegheny county and Armstrong county, wherever he is known," said the pleased father.

The flower must drink the nature of the soil  
Before it can put forth its blossoming.—KEATS.

Benjamin F. Reese was of a retiring nature, but always manly and noble-minded, even when a boy, and he was great in his generosity. He married Eleanor Mathias, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Mathias, of Chicago, Ill. He died without issue, Oct. 4, 1904. Of him Orr Buffington, who has known the family so well, said:

"The early and untimely death of Benjamin F. Reese was a severe shock to his many friends who had been endeared to him by his lovable disposition and many acts of kindness. His business career, though brief, was highly successful, and gave promise of great results. His clear perception, his quick mental grasp of a business proposition and his broad-mindedness and daring bore early fruit and his generous and manly treatment of his business associates gained their confidence and esteem. There was nothing small or narrow in him and his mind was of a constructive character. He was one of the founders and heavy stockholders in the Kittanning Plate Glass Company, and in many ways promoted the progress of the county of his adoption. In his dealings with his partners and associates

he was the soul of liberality and fairness, and those who were so fortunate as to be associated with him learned to trust him and love him as a brother."

"Elvira appears to have inherited in a marked degree the intellectual and religious endowments of both branches of the family. This she has cultivated and developed by wide, discriminating and critical reading of literature in all its branches—philosophy, theology, poetry, fiction, etc. One of the results of her extensive reading is the publication of a literary calendar, entitled 'Showers of Blessing.' The book contains selections for every day in the year, culled from the writings of all nations and all ages. 'Showers of Blessing' was published by the Pilgrim Press of Boston, Mass., whose chief reader pronounced it the finest book of its kind on the market. Its conception and execution reveal most comprehensive intellectual grasp coupled with a masterly genius for details. It contains four hundred pages. The book is one of the most beautiful demonstrations of the doubleness of the great problem of existence—the spiritual and material, the Divine and Human, the Finite and Infinite. 'Everything that is is double.' Five hundred copies were donated to the women of the First Congregational Church of Pittsburgh (of which Miss Reese is a faithful and loyal member), to be sold for the benefit of that organization."—G. S. RICHARDS, Pastor First Congregational Church, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

Emma, the second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Reese, married F. L. Snowden, of Allegheny City, Pa. They have two sons: Reese Olver Snowden, now a resident of Lancaster, Cal., and F. Laird Snowden, of the Somerville Iron & Bronze Foundry Company, of Pittsburgh, Pa. Reese O. Snowden married Minerva Burke, of Pittsburgh; Laird Snowden married Cora Thomas, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Thomas, of Greensburg, Pennsylvania.

Walter Lawrence Reese married Tirzah, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Thomas, of Greensburg, Pa. They reside in Pittsburgh.

The family history of the Reese Jones sketch was contributed by Elvira Reese—some of the material taken from translations of Welsh letters, some from traditions, and much from a copy of a history given to her mother many years ago when in Wales by her cousin, the author of it, Richard Williams, a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society.

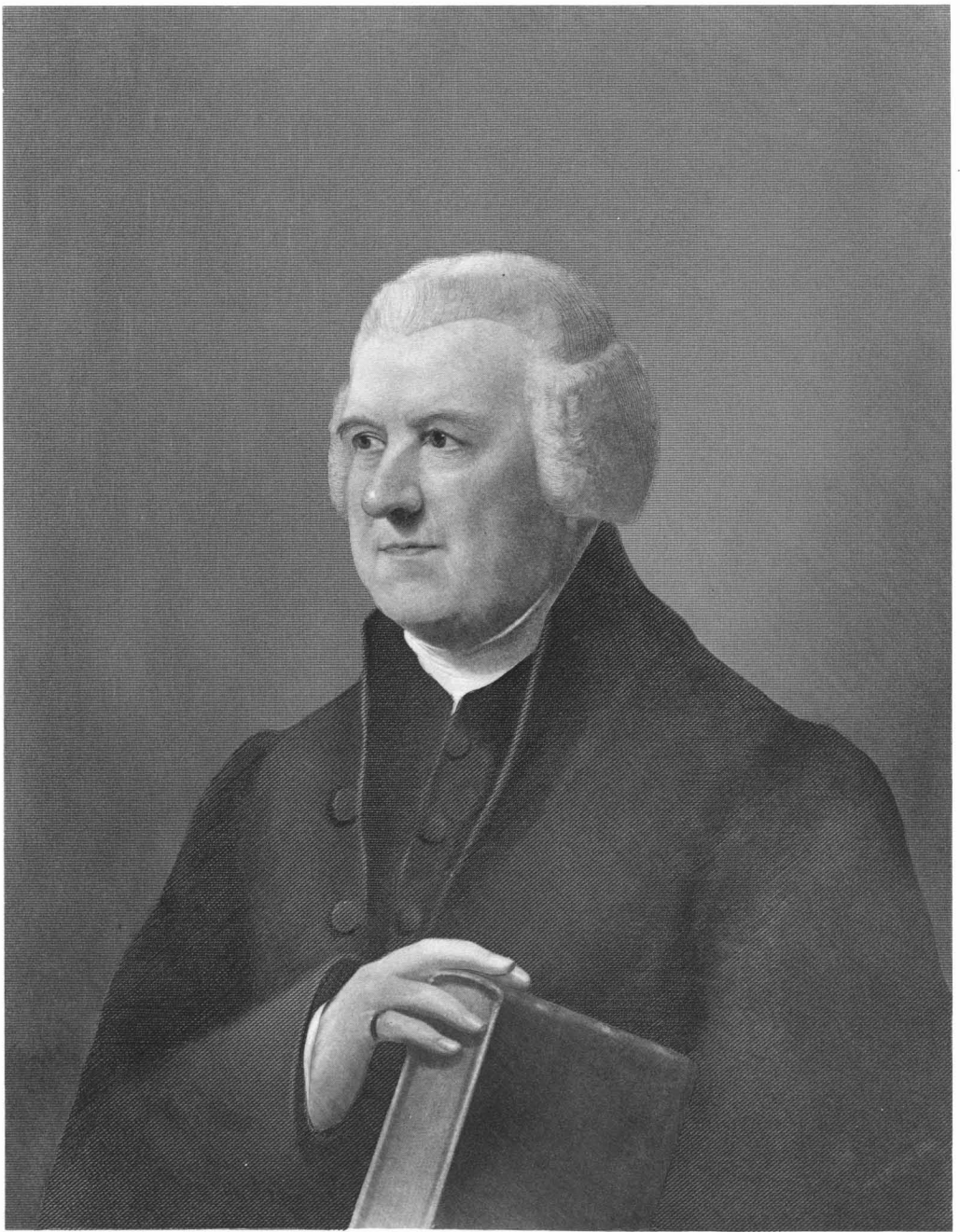
GEORGE W. REESE, one of the capitalists of Kittanning, was born at Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1858, son of Isaac and Elizabeth (Jones) Reese.

Both Isaac Reese and his wife were born in Wales, and were brought to the United States. Isaac Reese was brought to Pittsburgh, Pa., when ten years old, and grew to manhood in that city. He and his wife had eleven children, five reaching maturity: Elvira, Emma, George W., Benjamin F. and Walter L. The father died in 1908, the mother passing away in 1898.

George W. Reese was educated in the public schools of Pittsburgh, and in the Iron City business college, graduating from the latter in 1877. In 1879 he came to Armstrong county, and embarked in the fire brick business at Manorville. In 1882 he went to Europe, and engaged to work in fire brick plants at London, and Abermant, near Swansea, South Wales. The proprietors were manufacturing a high grade of Silica fire brick, superior to any produced in the United States, and Mr. Reese engaged with this company in the hope of discovering the process. At first he worked as a laborer, then was put in the brickyards, and within six months mastered the details, so that he became an expert in the manufacture of this special kind of brick. Having gained his end, he returned to the United States, and began producing what is known as the Silica brick. This was the beginning of what subsequently developed into a large industry. This grade of brick is used specially for furnace work, and there is a large demand for it in every State in the Union. The business was conducted under the firm name of Isaac Reese & Sons until in 1902 Mr. Reese sold to the Harbison-Walker Refractories Company of Pittsburgh, although he retains stock in the concern, and is on the board of directors. For several years Mr. Reese was president and manager of the Kittanning Plate Glass Company, of Kittanning, and still is a stockholder and director in same. In February, 1911, he organized the Fort Pitt Powder Company, which is incorporated with a capital stock of \$200,000, with himself as president. This company also deals in other high explosives. In addition to his other interests, Mr. Reese is a director in the Armstrong County Trust Company. Fraternally, he belongs to the order of Elks.

In 1877 Mr. Reese was married to Mary M. Donnelly, daughter of Daniel Donnelly of Pittsburgh, and one child, Margaret, was born of this union. Mrs. Reese died in 1885. In 1894 Mr. Reese was married (second) to Juanita Truby, daughter of Simon Truby, of Kittanning. The one child born of this marriage, George, is deceased. Mrs. Reese is

descended from Col. Christopher Truby, a distinguished pioneer and patriot, who served as colonel in the Revolution.



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*Abraham Rees D.D.*

*D. R. S. F. L. S. &c. &c.*



ENGRAVED BY HENRY TAYLOR, JR., CHICAGO.

*Samuel Robert* M.A.  
S.R.