

COMMEMORATIVE
BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD
— OF —
CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA,

INCLUDING THE COUNTIES OF

Centre, Clearfield, Jefferson and Clarion,

CONTAINING

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF PROMINENT AND REPRESENTATIVE
CITIZENS, AND OF MANY OF THE EARLY SETTLED FAMILIES.

~ ILLUSTRATED ~

CHICAGO:
J. H. BEERS & CO.
1898.

JACKSON LEVI SPANGLER, of Bellefonte, Centre county. Achievements more than words, things done rather than things said, have constituted the contribution of the German element of our population to the great political and industrial fabric which has been reared upon the foundations laid by William Penn for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania more than two hundred years ago.

Johannes Spangler, who came to the port of Philadelphia August 17, 1731, from the Palatinate, in the ship "Samuel," Hugh Piercy master, was no exception to the rule. He and his descendants have had their full share of the solid, every-day work in making the Commonwealth what it is.

Col. Jackson Levi Spangler, the sixth generation from Johannes, the elder, is the eldest son of John Spangler and Annie Berger, and was born in Adamsburg, Snyder Co., Penn., September 27, 1849. His early life was without special incident. He attended the common schools of Snyder county until 1860, when his father removed to Centre county, and has resided at Centre Hall, in one of the most beautiful valleys of Pennsylvania, from that time until this, except during his official term as sheriff of Centre county, to which office he was elected in the year 1877. Col. Spangler attended the common schools in Centre county, and was there fitted for Dickinson Seminary at Williamsport, from which institution he graduated with honors in June, 1871. His relations with the seminary have been very cordial ever since. He delights in attending its commencements, and at the last commencement was the alumni orator, and entertained a large audience by his graphic and vivid description of the development of this portion of Pennsylvania. He entered the office of Orvis & Alexander in the latter part of 1871, pursued the study of the law diligently and with success, and was admitted to the Bar of Centre County in January, 1874. He at once took his rank in the legal profession, and his abilities were so quickly recog-

nized that in the summer of the same year he was nominated for the office of District Attorney of Centre county, and was elected by a large majority in the fall of the year. He filled the office ably and acceptably to the people for the full term of three years, and would have undoubtedly been renominated and re-elected in 1877 but for the fact that he declined a renomination, apparently for the reason that his father was a candidate for sheriff in that year. Col. Spangler continued the practice of his profession, after his official term ceased, for a number of years alone, and, subsequently, as the senior member of the firm of Spangler & Hewes. He had high standing at the Bar, and was an especially persuasive advocate, his genial disposition and temper making him an especial favorite with the jury. During his professional life he was also interested in local politics, in reference to which he was always an influential adviser in his party. He was the chairman of the Democratic County Committee during the celebrated campaign of 1880, when Gen. Hancock received a majority of 996—an unusual one in Centre county, and larger than that of any other Presidential nominee since. In 1890 he was the cordial choice of his county for the nomination of Congress in the Twenty-eighth District, and would have undoubtedly been nominated at the conference of the representatives of the several counties, but the fact that his nice sense of honor forbade his making an arrangement which he thought was not in accordance with an implied promise he had made. His mental equipment and education would have fitted him admirably as a successful candidate of his party, and, if nominated, he would undoubtedly have been elected, and those who knew him best are satisfied that the district would have been worthily represented, in case of his election.

Col. Spangler's services in the National Guard of Pennsylvania have been valuable and almost unique. In 1877, at the time of the great railroad riots which convulsed the country, he accompanied Gen. Beaver, then commanding the 5th Division of the National Guard, as a volunteer aide, when the Division was called into action. The headquarters were established at Altoona, where there was great unrest and much dissatisfaction on the part of the employees of the Pennsylvania railroad. A careful investigation of the situation revealed the fact that the ferment was largely maintained by the demagogical appeals of a man who had lately come into the community, and was little known, but who had exerted a great influence by his street-corner addresses to the crowds which assembled to hear him. The civil powers seemed to be paralyzed, and

neither mayor nor sheriff would undertake to arrest the disturber of the peace. At the request of Gen. Beaver, Col. Spangler (then without military rank) and Major M'Farlane were sworn in by the mayor as deputy policemen. The second day after their arrival at Altoona, they located this man in a saloon, had a carriage driven to the door, arrested him, hurried him to the carriage and drove to Hollidaysburg, the county seat of Blair county, before the fact of his arrest became known. From that day the spirit of unrest at Altoona decreased, and it was not long before complete order was restored. In recognition of his services, Gen. Beaver recommended him for aide upon his staff, with the rank of major, which was promptly confirmed by Gen. Hartranft, then Governor of the Commonwealth.

Immediately after the unprecedented disaster caused by the flood at Johnstown in the latter part of May, 1889, Col. Spangler, who was in that part of Cambria county, hurriedly repaired to Johnstown in company with Gen. Hastings, and was so overwhelmed with the necessity for prompt action on the part of all who could render service to the afflicted people there, that he remained upon the ground and volunteered to render such service as he might, in the distribution of provisions to those who were in need. He organized the Commissary Department, and was so efficient in the discharge of his duties connected therewith that, in recognition of his services, he was appointed by Gen. Beaver, then Governor of the State, assistant commissary-general, with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Most men discharge their duties in National Guard service because of rank previously bestowed; in Col. Spangler's case, however, the services were rendered, and the rank followed in recognition of them. So much impressed were the officers and men who were on duty in connection with the Commissary Department at Johnstown, that at the conclusion of their term of service they presented Col. Spangler with a handsome sword as a recognition of their appreciation of the ability with which he had met all the requirements of the position.

In the fall of 1887, Col. Spangler became acquainted (through several gentlemen who had the control of a number of options upon coal lands in the northwestern corner of Cambria county) with the marvelous mineral wealth of this region. He visited this locality, and was impressed with its extent and value. As a result of it, he enlisted the interests of others in such a way as to induce an effort to secure control of a large body of coal in this neighborhood. As a result, the Blubaker Coal Co. was formed, of which he may

be said to be the original founder. Others united with him, and the business was followed so intelligently and persistently that the company became the owner of some 12,000 acres of the best coal land in this region. Col. Spangler has continued as a director of the Blubaker Coal Co. since its organization, and is one of the prominent stockholders. As a result of this business connection, he became interested in the Sterling Coal Co., and, when the business interests of the latter company increased in the region to such an extent as to demand active and energetic supervision, Col. Spangler was appointed general manager, and has resided in Hastings, acting in that capacity for several years. He had considerable experience at Bellefonte in the development of real estate, and became interested in this region in the Hastings Improvement Co., and was one of the original and energetic movers in the development of the Spangler Improvement Co. In recognition of the services rendered by him as treasurer and trustee of the latter company, the village on the West branch of the Susquehanna, which is destined to be the center of a larger number of coal operations than any locality outside of Houtzdale basin, was named "Spangler."

On March 24, 1890, Col. Spangler was married to Mrs. Eliza Wagner Holliday, and enjoys the domestic comfort to which he is entitled in his elegant and hospitable home at Bellefonte. Although so largely interested in this locality, and spending most of his time either at Hastings or Spangler, he maintains his residence in Bellefonte. We are persuaded that to no one man does northern Cambria county owe more of its recent development than to the subject of this sketch.