

HISTORY  
OF THE  
COUNTIES  
OF  
McKEAN, ELK AND FOREST,  
PENNSYLVANIA,

WITH  
BIOGRAPHICAL SELECTIONS,

INCLUDING  
THEIR EARLY SETTLEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT; A DESCRIPTION OF THE HISTORIC AND  
INTERESTING LOCALITIES; SKETCHES OF THEIR CITIES, TOWNS AND VILLAGES;  
PORTRAITS OF PROMINENT MEN; BIOGRAPHIES OF REPRESENTATIVE  
CITIZENS; OUTLINE HISTORY OF PENNSYLVANIA; STATISTICS, ETC.

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ILLUSTRATED.

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RUFUS BARRETT STONE, counselor at law, Bradford, was born in the town of Groton, Mass., November 24, 1847. He is the son of Warren Fay and Mary (Williams) Stone, the former of English and the latter of Welsh descent. His maternal great-grandfather, Jacob Williams, was a Revolutionary soldier, and his first American ancestor, Thomas Williams, was one of the original proprietors of the town of Groton, which was settled in 1655, and a reputed relative of Roger Williams, founder of the Rhode Island colony. Mr. Stone's paternal ancestry was intermarried with the families of Warren, Prescott and Green, of heroic Revolutionary fame, and is traced directly to Simon Stone, who came to this country in the ship "Increase," in 1635, and settled at Watertown, Mass. His early descendants were engaged in the Indian wars, a garrison having been established at the house of Deacon John Stone, in Groton, in the year 1691, known in the early records as "Stone's Garrison." Just a hundred years later, and yet as early as 1790, a school kept at his house took the name of a lineal descendant, Jonas Stone. Of the same lineage was Rev. Thomas T. Stone, the oldest living Unitarian minister, the friend of Emerson and Alcott, and a contributor to the *Dial*. Mr. Stone's father followed the trade of a carpenter. He was an anti-slavery Republican, and at the presidential election of 1856 was chosen to the lower house of the Massachusetts legislature. He had three children now living: Charles Warren Stone, of Warren, ex-lieutenant-governor of Pennsylvania, and at present secretary of the commonwealth; George Fisher Stone, late city superintendent of public instruction of Bradford, now engaged in the practice of law at Southport, N. C., and Rufus Barrett Stone, the subject of this sketch, of intermediate age. The latter, who was but ten years old at his father's death, was reared on his grandfather's farm, which the three sons cultivated during their minority. At the outbreak of the Civil war the lad applied for the position of powder-boy on a man-of-war, but was rejected. He has had the honor since the war to become a member of the famous Massachusetts Sixth Regiment. He attended the district school, high school and Lawrence Academy, where he graduated in the classical department. Subsequently he took a special course at Williams College in the junior year of the class of 1869, from which he was recalled by domestic bereavement. In the latter year he entered the United States Internal Revenue service as chief clerk of the assessor of the third district of Mississippi; and later as assistant assessor and deputy collector, he passed through the experiences incident to the performance of such official duties, including the capture of illicit border distilleries

during the days of Southern reconstruction. While so engaged he took up the study of law, and was admitted to practice in 1872 at Hernando, De Soto Co., Miss., before the courts of that district, and later in the supreme court of the State. Having resigned from the revenue service he entered upon the practice of law at Okolona, Miss., in copartnership with F. S. Pate, Esq., a native of the State and formerly district attorney for the county. In the ensuing year Mr. Stone held the appointment of United States commissioner for the northern district of Mississippi. In 1873 he was appointed chancellor of the seventeenth chancery district, composed of the counties of Scott, Simpson, Smith and Covington, and six months later was unanimously confirmed by the senate, including Democratic senators representing the district. Of his decisions only one was reversed, although several were mooted in the newspapers and published at length, especially one relating to Confederate money as a contract consideration, and another relating to the statute of limitations as affected by the Civil war. In 1876 he resigned and removed to Bradford, Penn. During his residence in Mississippi Mr. Stone was deeply interested in the progress of reconstruction, and his active espousal of the policy of the Republican party rendered him obnoxious to the lawless element of the opposition. He was repeatedly assaulted, shot at, hung in effigy and made the recipient of death notices. He went to the State while it was a department of the fourth military district, and accepted an appointment under Gen. Ames as one of the registrars of the ensuing election in Chickasaw county. He was subsequently made chairman of the Republican county committee, and repeatedly sent as a delegate to political conventions. He not only took part in public speaking during several campaigns, and often before riotous assemblies with one hand resting upon his revolver, but also contributed editorial articles to the *Mississippi Pilot*, the State Republican organ published at the capital, and temporarily edited the *Prairie News*, published at Okolona. The constitutionality of a State revenue act, separating the offices of sheriff and tax collector, having been denied in a legal opinion published editorially by ex-Representative Watson, of the Confederate congress, and accepted with much demonstration by the Democratic press of the State, Mr. Stone controverted the position in a series of articles which, published over an initial signature, were commonly attributed to ex-Attorney Gen. Morris.

While a resident of Mississippi Mr. Stone became acquainted with Margaret Sarah Baldwin, a native of Ashfield, Mass., but then a resident of Montrose, Susquehanna Co., Penn., to whom he was married at the home of her uncle, P. H. Porter, in Newark, N. J., April 18, 1872, her father, Rev. Burr Baldwin, officiating, assisted by Rev. Jonathan Stearns, D. D., a brother-in-law of Sargent S. Prentiss, of Mississippi, the favorite orator and famous Southern statesman.

Life in the South, with its vigils and dangers, had not been without attraction hitherto. But a bullet-hole over the mantel, a shattered shutter, the head-gear of a Ku-Klux, and an array of deadly weapons, were rather grim relics to constitute the bric-a-brac of a honeymoon. Right bravely the gentle wife bore the sight of an armed mob, the occasional news of neighborhood assassination, the duty of midnight entertainment to a vigilance committee. And Mr. Stone, with the quiet sympathy of the best people of the community, still sought among his neighbors to revive the broken confidence of the people in our national form of government, to encourage faith in its administration, and to commend the Republican policy as a just basis of mutual trust between the races. But public opinion seemed rigid, the future of the South locked up in sullen hatred, and the time far off when it could become a congenial and in-

spiring home for people of Northern birth. Upon his removal to Bradford Mr. Stone lost no degree of interest in the cause of his political party. Upon the organization of a Republican club he became its president, and was twice re-elected. In 1878 he was made chairman of the county committee, and subsequently a member of the State committee. In 1882 he received a unanimous Republican nomination for mayor of Bradford, and was barely defeated by the intervention of an independent candidate. He has taken part in every campaign, speaking in his own county and occasionally in other neighboring counties. The *Evening Star*, a daily Republican newspaper published at Bradford, was founded with his aid in 1879, and soon after he became its sole proprietor and publisher. Having conducted it at an average loss for several years, he at length disposed of it. The paper passed through subsequent stages of ownership until finally it reached the Star Publishing Company, its present corporate proprietor, of which Mr. Stone is a director. While engaged in its publication he conducted its editorial department, and in periods of especial public interest wrote its leading articles. Thus, during the controversy between Conkling and Garfield, he sustained the position of the New York senators throughout, as in accord with the ideas of Franklin and Madison, and justified by custom and by the clearest views of public policy. Certain of these articles, having fallen under the eye of Mr. Conkling, received his graceful acknowledgment. In the New York campaign which followed the senatorial election the *Star* took earnest ground against the re-election of State Senator Sessions from the counties of Chautauqua and Cattaraugus, and its editorials were reprinted and posted on the dead walls and fences throughout the district. Sessions was defeated. The *Star* resisted the Independent movement in Pennsylvania under Wolfe and Stewart, against strong local influence and loss of patronage. It made successful opposition to the adherents of the Greenback theory when, under the remarkable leadership of David Kirk, they sought for him a seat in congress. Notwithstanding a threatened suit for libel in a season of great excitement among oil producers, it opposed the right of "mystery" owners to play with the fortunes of small producers by the publication or tacit sanction of false reports. In respect to municipal affairs, its criticism of the administration of Treasurer Critchlow for disbursing indiscriminately from distinct funds resulted in his defeat as a candidate for re-election. Its influence was exerted against the adoption of the Holly system of water-works, and in favor of the present gravity system, which it supported with diagrams and engineers' reports prepared under its direction. In 1879 Mr. Stone made an elaborate but ineffectual argument before the common council in favor of the seating of F. S. Johnson, a contestant, and in 1885 successfully conducted an investigation and trial before the same body, which resulted in unseating one of its members. Soon after his arrival in Bradford Mr. Stone became interested in the petroleum business, and served for a number of years as chairman of a limited co-partnership, which operated successfully as a pioneer company of Knapp's creek. He has since been continuously engaged in oil operations, with varying success, and his interests have extended to the counties of Washington and Allegheny, in Pennsylvania, and into the fields of Ohio, West Virginia and New York. In 1879, at a mass meeting of oil producers held at Bradford, he was chosen as a member of a committee to oppose the taxation of oil before a legislative revenue commission, and at the request of the committee prepared an argument which was submitted to the commission and supplied to members of the legislature. The measure was not afterward pressed. He subsequently drafted a bill, which in modified form became a law, requiring abandoned oil wells to be plugged. Mr. Stone is a corporator

and officer in several natural gas companies, and in like manner engaged in certain railroad enterprises. In 1884 he went to Leadville, Colo., as the president of the Muncie Mining Company, and the year previous visited the Pacific coast. At home Mr. Stone has exhibited marked interest in the growth and prosperity of Bradford. He drafted the charter and by-laws of the board of trade, aided conspicuously in its organization, and, as its vice-president and member of the board of directors, helped to shape its policy of encouragement to manufacturers, and conducted the negotiations which resulted in the location and erection at Bradford of the repair shops of the Rochester & Pittsburgh Railroad Company. He was a member and afterward treasurer of the Bradford Hotel Company, limited, which erected the St. James Hotel; a corporator and afterward president of the Bradford Manufacturing Company, which erected the furniture factory now occupied by B. F. Hazelton, and a corporator and treasurer of the Bradford Glass Works, which erected the works now conducted by the Bradford Glass Company, limited. He was a corporator and director of the Bradford, Smethport & DeGolier Railroad Company, which was merged in the Bradford, Bordell & Kinzua Railroad Company, under an agreement that the line should be extended to Smethport; and a corporator and trustee of the Bradford Hospital, whose charter and by-laws he prepared. At the organization, in 1880, of the State Hospital for the Insane for the northwestern district, comprising the counties of Cameron, Clarion, Crawford, Elk, Erie, Forest, McKean, Mercer, Venango and Warren, he was appointed a member of the board of trustees, and in 1888 he was elected president of the board. Upon various public occasions he has not infrequently been called upon to preside or to respond. He has made reported remarks at a celebration of the Irish Land League; at the dedication of the Bradford City Hospital; at a stated meeting of the Temperance Rescue Corps; at the dedication of the McKean county court-house, on the event of the death of Garfield, and upon numerous other occasions, but these are sufficient to show the breadth of his sympathies and public spirit. His published addresses include one delivered at the dedication of Armory Hall; a speech under the title "The Republican Idea," delivered at Rixford, in 1884; Memorial Day addresses delivered at Eldred, at Olean, N. Y., and at Bradford; an address of welcome to the survivors of the "Bucktail Regiment," and a lecture on political economy before the Bradford Business College. Comprehending the future growth of Bradford, and regarding it as his permanent home, he purchased at an early date desirable sites for his dwelling and office. The former is an attractive cottage in the foot-hills, and the latter a brick building of pleasing architectural design, which he christened "Pompelon Hall," adopting the name of a noted Spanish city because it was borne by the tract or warrant, as originally granted, on which the city of Bradford is situated. A society known as the Pompelon Club, comprising a membership of about 200, meets in this building weekly, and has attained celebrity in this section for its discussions of important public topics. Upon his arrival in Bradford Mr. Stone at once resumed the practice of his profession, and at length formed a partnership with A. Leo Weil, Esq., with whom he subsequently opened a branch office in Pittsburgh, when that city had become an oil metropolis, attracting their clientage, and there Mr. Weil is now separately engaged in practice. Mr. Stone discovering that his professional business at Bradford demanded more exclusive attention than he could give to it without hazarding other business, which he had undertaken, the partnership with Mr. Weil was succeeded by the association of Hon. Wallace W. Brown (lately representing the district in congress) and George A. Sturgeon, Esq. (since elected district attorney for the county), under the firm

name of Stone, Brown & Sturgeon. Mr. Brown having temporarily retired from practice in 1889, the association with Mr. Sturgeon still continues. Mr. Stone is admitted to practice in the district and supreme courts of the State, the circuit and district and supreme courts of the United States, and his practice has extended to each of these courts.