

20TH CENTURY HISTORY

OF THE CITY OF

Washington and Washington County
Pennsylvania

AND

Representative Citizens

BY

JOSEPH F. McFARLAND

"HISTORY IS PHILOSOPHY TEACHING BY EXAMPLES"

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Alexander L. Hawkins was the fourth child born to his parents. He was surrounded in youth with the uplifting influences of a Christian home and was reared in a law-abiding community. After receiving a liberal education in the public schools, he prepared for college at George's Creek Academy and for some time subsequently was a student at Waynesburg College, interrupting his course in order to teach a few terms of schools. He was on the eve of resuming his collegiate studies when came the clarion call to arms, one to which every loyal fiber of his being responded. As soon as he could arrange his affairs, Alexander L. Hawkins enlisted for service in the Federal Army, becoming a member of Co. K, 15th Pa. Vol. Cav., on August 30, 1862. He was one of a company of farmer boys, many of them being acquaintances, all of sturdy strength, robust frames and clean and wholesome lives. The company was almost entirely a Greene County organization, and in the later victories won by the regiment, this aggregation bore no inconsiderable part. The first work of the regiment was the raid on Chambersburg and then came the battle of Antietam. On May 19, 1863, he was raised from the ranks to be corporal and subsequently filled the various grades of non-commissioned officers until October, 1864, when he was made lieutenant, and in the following spring he was given a commission as captain of a U. S. Col. troop. His superior officers recognized in him a commander and soldier of great ability. In the winter of 1862, he was made acting lieutenant when the regiment was lying in the barracks at Nashville. Later, at the battle of Nashville, when he was serving under Gen. Thomas, with the rank of captain, he did valiant service. For some months after

the actual termination of the war, he remained in the service as a member of the staff of Maj-Gen. Clinton B. Fisk, and was finally mustered out on January 21, 1866.

After his return from the army, Col. Hawkins entered into the drug business at Pittsburg and from the fall of 1866 continued there for two years, when he sold his store and moved on the homestead in East Bethlehem Township, Washington County, ere long becoming prominently identified with politics. He was a strong Republican and at different times served with great efficiency as chairman of the county Republican organization. In the fall of 1875 he was elected treasurer of Washington County, held other public offices and was Burgess of East Washington, when he entered the service of the government for the Spanish-American War.

It was during his term as treasurer of Washington County, that Col. Hawkins began his career with the 10th Pa. N. G., which, as an organization, has long stood very high in the regard of the citizens of the State. In 1872, Co. H, the local company of the 10th Regiment, was so demoralized that there had been a suggestion entertained to disorganize it. However, on the advice of Maj. Wilson, who had been the first captain of the company, Alexander L. Hawkins was chosen as commander, receiving his commission on January 1, 1877. Maj. Wilson had been right, Mr. Hawkins was just the man needed to bring about the former efficiency of Co. H, and both his and the company's usefulness were shown shortly afterward, when they took part in quelling the Pittsburg riot. On February 12, 1879, he was elected colonel of the regiment, succeeding Col. Black, of Greensburg, and was re-elected in 1884, 1888, and in 1894, and for a long time served as senior colonel, and with him at its head it was developed into one of the strongest military organizations in the State. It gained a name for itself both on account of its make-up and its devotion to its commander, and was affectionately called "Hawkins' Hay-Seed Regiment." During his twenty years' service as commander of the regiment, Col. Hawkins never missed an encampment nor was absent on any occasion when his regiment was represented. He commanded during three inauguration ceremonies at Washington, those making Garfield, Cleveland and Harrison, President of the United States. He enjoyed the most cordial relations with his fellow officers and was so beloved by his men that, as was the case with a favorite commander during the Civil War, the affectionate and familiar title of "Pap" was given him. He was a man of commanding presence and martial air and presented a fine appearance at all functions where the military was not only useful but ornamental. When President McKinley issued his call for volunteers for the Spanish-American War, Col. Hawkins was eager to go to the front with his regiment and that his was the

only one from the State that was selected to be taken to the Philippines, was considered a high mark of merit for it. While on his way to the Philippines he was elected to the State Senate, from the Washington and Beaver District, having no opposition and receiving a phenomenal vote. From the effects of the climate and his efforts in behalf of his regiment, Col. Hawkins was taken sick in the far-off islands and he was urged to return home, but no persuasion could induce him to leave his "boys" until he had brought them back to the homes he had taken them from, but he died before his noble mission was entirely accomplished, passing away on board the transport "Senator," on July 18, 1900.