

GENEALOGICAL
AND
PERSONAL HISTORY
OF
BEAVER COUNTY
PENNSYLVANIA

UNDER THE EDITORIAL SUPERVISION OF

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(IV) John Reeves, third son and seventh child of Daniel and Margaret (Steen) Reeves, was born February 9, 1825, at Beaver Falls, Beaver county, Pennsylvania, the town at that time being known as Old Brighton. His parents' house was located between what was then the Newcastle road and Walnut street, about where Eighth street now meets the Pittsburgh & Lake Erie railroad right of way. Mr. Reeves deserves more than ordinary credit for the fine education he now possesses, as his opportunities for attending school in his early youth were very limited. He was but twelve years of age at the time of the death of his father, and for two months he had attended a private school in charge of the Quaker meeting, and under the direct supervision of a Mr. Consort. For a period of a few months he also attended a private school on what is now Patterson Heights. But his main and most beneficial instruction was obtained at the hands of his mother,

a very gifted and well-read woman, and this he has supplemented in the course of his long and active life by well chosen reading and study along lines which most appealed to him. From the time he was eleven years of age he was actively engaged in work of various kinds. At that time he worked during the farm seasons—spring, summer and fall—three years being spent on the farm of David Coup, 1836-38. During these years he slept in a loft, rose at daybreak each day, and was obliged to chop wood during each meal hour, so that he would lose no time. After leaving Mr. Coup he entered the employ of Robinson & Company, who had the paper mills, was a fireman for this concern, and in the discharge of his duties had to shovel one hundred bushels of coal into the furnaces daily, and clean all the grates. For this service he received eleven dollars per month and remained with them two years. His next position was in James Patterson's cotton factory, where he worked as a picker and had charge of the carding room at the time he left. There he received one dollar and fifty cents per week, and was obliged to board himself. However, he worked there until 1841, then obtained a position on the large keel boats which were used in shipping grain for the Patterson Flour Mills. During the winters of 1841-42 Mr. Reeves wheeled staves in Patterson's cooper shops, and he then learned the trade of coopering with James Alexander. In the summer of 1843 he worked on the government "snag boat" cleaning out the Beaver and Ohio rivers. Until 1846 he was engaged in boating operations in summer and in coopering in winter. By this time, having been frugal and economical, he had amassed a considerable capital, and proceeded to invest this in lots in New Brighton. He also built himself a shop there in which he could follow his trade, and made flour barrels until 1852. His boating operations also had not been neglected, and he was the owner of two boats. The railroad having just reached New Brighton, Mr. Reeves saw better possibilities in that direction, and accordingly sold his boats, and became one of the first conductors on the old Fort Wayne railroad, then running between Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Alliance, Ohio. He followed this occupation three years, and then became station agent at New Brighton. About 1857 he abandoned this occupation and associated himself with his brother, Henry T., in the mercantile business in New Brighton. They opened a general store in New Brighton, which they conducted very successfully until 1865, at which time they sold it, having in the meantime realized fifty thousand dollars. After selling this business Mr. Reeves removed to Beaver Falls. He and his brother then became the agents for the sale of the land where Beaver Falls is now located, which was then owned by the Economites. Their business was transacted under the firm name of H. T. & J. Reeves. They sold the entire city in lots, and in all paid over to the Economites two million dollars. In 1869 Mr. Reeves built the large brick house at No. 1207 Seventh avenue, which he still uses as a winter home, the front of the building being used for the business of the Bank of J. T. Reeves & Company, and he also has a fine summer home on Patterson Heights.

The Economites started the Economy Savings Institution in 1868, and Mr. Reeves was made cashier, a position he held until the bank liquidated in 1893 and paid off all its depositors. The firm of John T. Reeves & Company, Bankers, was established in 1893, the senior member being the son of Mr. Reeves, and is in a very flourishing condition at the present time. Mr. Reeves has been connected with a number of manufacturing enterprises in Beaver Falls, one of them being the manufacture of cutlery, in which he has taken a leading part. Mr. Reeves took matters in hand at a time when the employees of the company were striking and the company was losing money because of the numerous thefts of the employees. He brought four hundred Chinese under contract to Beaver Falls, and reduced the payroll from thirteen thousand to five thousand dollars per month, at the same time producing more goods. Because of the cheaper manner in which these goods were produced they forced several eastern companies out of business, and finally eastern capital made a suitable offer and bought out Mr. Reeves' company. During the Civil War Mr. Reeves enlisted under Captain George Barker to go to Antietam, and enlisted again for state service along the Baltimore & Ohio railroad. He is a devout church member, and has long been on the board of trustees in the Presbyterian church.