

HISTORY OF ARMSTRONG COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

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worked in a mercantile business at Spring Church, this county, and conducted a general store there for many years. Politically he was a Republican. During his useful life, which was terminated by death in 1880, in his fifty-first year, he was noted for his strict probity, and became well and favorably known in his community. Both he and his wife were Presbyterians. The latter was also born in Armstrong county, and her ancestors were of German origin. Mr. and Mrs. Cochran were the parents of ten children, six of whom still survive. The mother survived until 1907.

Erwin E. Cochran attended school until his seventeenth year. Upon the death of his father he remained at home to look after his mother and her affairs. Meantime he taught school four terms, and then disposing of the mercantile business owned by his father, moved the family to Apollo. There he engaged in the business of handling boots and shoes, which he continued to carry on for nine years, and subsequently he embarked in the real estate trade, building and selling town lots and other properties. In the fall of 1903, he was elected sheriff of Armstrong county, and served from 1904 to 1907. Mr. Cochran owned a fine farm in the county, but disposed of it recently, and in the spring of 1911 bought the beautiful residence at Apollo which is now the family home. He is well known all over the county and a man of recognized merit, both as a conscientious and able official and public-spirited citizen. Politically he is a Republican, and he has always rendered his party efficient service. On Nov. 20, 1900, Mr. Cochran was united in marriage with Matilda C. Alcorn. Four children have been born of this union, three of whom are now living: Margaret and John G., twins, born Sept. 22, 1902; and James F., born Feb. 27, 1905.

COL. WILLIAM SIRWELL was born at the Allegheny arsenal, in Pennsylvania, Aug. 30, 1820, his father, Richard Sirwell, a native of England, being in the United States Army. He had been principal musician, and at that time was armorer at the arsenal. He married Elizabeth Graham, also a native of England.

Of a military turn of mind, William Sirwell entered the militia service in 1839, and commanded in succession the City Blues, of Pittsburgh, and the Washington Blues, Brady Alpines and Kittanning Yaegers, of Kittanning, to which place he removed in 1846. He

was also for ten years brigade inspector of Armstrong county. In person he was six feet in height, broad shouldered, and robust. He married Nov. 6, 1840, Elizabeth McCandless, of Butler county, Pa., and eight children were born to them: Luenda Ann, Alexander Nelson, Sarah C., Mary H., William Mitchell, Samuel, Elizabeth M. and Emma J., only three of whom are living, Luenda A.; Mrs. Sarah C. McCoy (living in Buffalo, N. Y.); and William M., of Kittanning.

In 1854, being in Iowa, the colonel raised at Davenport the first military company in the State, and in 1855, while on his way home, he organized in Pittsburgh the first military company of colored men known to have been formed in the United States. They were called the Hannibal Guards.

On the breaking out of the Civil war Colonel Sirwell and his company, the Brady Alpines above mentioned, the first company in western Pennsylvania to offer their services to the United States government, were at once accepted, and served through the three months' campaign in the 9th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, under General Patterson, in Virginia. Upon the expiration of their term of service and return home, Captain Sirwell at once proceeded to organize the 78th Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry, was commissioned colonel of the same, and with his brigade, under the command of Gen. James S. Negley, ordered to the army then stationed in Kentucky. In the affair of Lavergne, one of the actions for the defense of Nashville, the regiment particularly distinguished itself, and its commander was complimented by General Negley and by Andrew Johnson, then military governor of Tennessee. At Stone River the regiment captured the White Horse Artillery, of New Orleans, consisting of four twelve-pounder brass Napoleon guns, the regimental colors of the 26th Confederate Tennessee, and the guidon of the 4th Florida. As a reward of his service here, Colonel Sirwell was made provost marshal of Murfreesboro, and was afterward placed in command of the 3d Brigade, 2d Division, of the 14th Corps, Department of the Cumberland. In the terrible conflicts of Chickamauga and Missionary Ridge, and in the subsequent campaign of Atlanta, he rendered valuable services. At New Hope Church so marked was his gallantry that he was commended by General Thomas. When Atlanta finally was taken after a campaign of a hundred days in which the smoke of battle scarcely cleared away, it became difficult to keep open the base

of supplies, stretching away to Chattanooga. Colonel Sirwell was assigned to this duty and ~~performed~~ ^{performed} ~~with~~ ^{with} the line of transportation, supplies being rapidly brought up. After his term of service expired, at the solicitation of the commander of the department, Colonel Sirwell remained in the field, his regiment as mounted infantry being employed in attacking and pursuing Forrest's cavalry through middle and southern Tennessee.

Colonel Sirwell was a gallant but prudent officer. He was much admired by his brother officers and the men of his command. He was made the recipient of two swords, both handsome and valuable ones, but prized by him more dearly for their associations than aught else.

At one time Colonel Sirwell saw fit to resign his command (which, however, he almost immediately resumed), and the officers of the 78th Regiment at that time, Nov. 20, 1863, presented him the following resolutions:

Whereas, Col. William Sirwell has felt it his duty to resign his commission as colonel of this regiment, we the commissioned officers, do resolve,

1. That we sustain Col. Sirwell in the cause that induced him to take this step which sunders the reciprocal ties which for over two years have held him and his military family together. Declining health induced by hard service in the field entitled "the old soldier" to an honorable retirement.

2. That the history of this regiment from its organization to this time, its superior discipline, its undaunted courage on the field of battle, and its complete appointment in every department are the handiwork of Col. Sirwell, and stamp him as a military commander of the first order.

3. That the name and services of Col. Sirwell will ever be associated in our minds with recollections of Lamb's Ferry, White Creek, Neely's Bend, Goodlettsville, Lavergne, Brentwood and Stone River, Dug Gap, Chickamauga.

4. That the kindness of disposition and the frankness of Col. Sirwell have endeared him to both officers and men, and in parting with him they feel that they are losing a father who watched over them with fond care.

5. That we each and all resolve here tonight in taking the parting hand of Col. Sirwell that we will do our utmost to bring this regiment home to him with its colors flying and its bright escutcheon untarnished.

6. To William Sirwell, late colonel of this regiment, the strict disciplinarian, the accomplished soldier, the high-toned gentleman, the kind and genial companion—you have toiled with us, you have endured all the sufferings and enjoyed many of the glories of the soldier's life—to you we say farewell, and God bless you.

7. Resolved, That copies of these resolutions be forwarded to Col. Sirwell and to the papers in Kittanning (except the *Mentor*), Indiana, Clarion, Butler, Lawrence and Pittsburgh.

(Signed by the commissioned officers of the 78th Regiment.)

Having performed his duties faithfully to the government during the time of the war, Colonel Sirwell afterward resided in Kittanning, and held the offices of postmaster and justice of the peace. He spent much time in collecting curiosities and relics, especially those which pertain to Armstrong county, and had perhaps the most valuable private cabinet in western Pennsylvania. He had moved to Kittanning from Pittsburgh, when his eldest child was three years old, and maintained his residence there to the end of his days, dying Sept. 9, 1885. A watchmaker and jeweler by trade, he always kept a shop in the borough, but had another man in charge, his military interests calling him away so frequently. He used to go to various places in this section to drill soldiers, being considered by many the best drillmaster in the State. Besides holding offices in the borough he was well known as one of the first Odd Fellows in Kittanning, and also belonged to other societies, and he raised the first lodge of Red Men in the town. Though he did not leave a large estate, Colonel Sirwell handled considerable money in the course of his life, but he believed in enjoying his means and especially in aiding others, no one in want ever asking him for help in vain, and he was always foremost in giving help to the needy. His wife, who survived until 1887, was like him, very kind and charitable, deeply religious, and beloved by all who knew her. The eldest of their children, Miss Luenda A. Sirwell, now over seventy years old, lives with her brother William in Kittanning.

HARVEY N. SNYDER, one of the leading attorneys of Kittanning, one whose connection with matters of jurisprudence in Armstrong county has been long and honorable, was born Sept. 29, 1846, in Brady township, Butler Co., Pa. He is a son of Zephaniah and Rachel (Kennedy) Snyder, grandson of Conrad Snyder, and great-grandson of Conrad Snyder, Sr., the founder of this Snyder family in Pennsylvania.

Conrad Snyder, Sr., was born in Switzerland in 1735, and lived there until after his marriage. He fled with his wife to the Netherlands to escape conscription for service in the French army. Deciding to come to America, he bargained for transportation for himself and wife by selling their time, a common custom in Colonial days, and it is believed served seven years in one of the eastern counties of Pennsylvania to pay for their passage here. Moving from Philadelphia to Bedford county,