

HISTORY OF WESTERN MARYLAND.

BEING A HISTORY OF
FREDERICK, MONTGOMERY, CARROLL, WASHINGTON, ALLEGANY, AND GARRETT
COUNTIES

FROM THE EARLIEST PERIOD TO THE PRESENT DAY;

INCLUDING

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

OF THEIR

REPRESENTATIVE MEN.

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES, ILLUSTRATED.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:
LOUIS H. EVERTS.
1882.

able to attend the sessions of the court. He was a man of decided talents, and had a quick, sagacious, and penetrating mind.

Hon. Frederick J. Nelson, born in 1833, a distinguished member of the Frederick bar and a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1867, is a son of the late Judge Nelson.

William Schley, one of the shining lights of the Baltimore bar, was born in Frederick City, Oct. 31, 1799, and died March 20, 1872, in his seventy-third year. The Schleys were among the earliest settlers of Frederick, having arrived there in 1735. The builder of the first house in Frederick, John Thomas Schley, was the grandfather of William.

William Schley graduated at Princeton College in 1821, with first honors in every department of study. He was admitted to the bar in 1824, and practiced with success in Frederick till 1837, when he removed to Baltimore and rapidly rose to distinction. In 1824, Mr. Schley married a daughter of Gen. Samuel Ringgold, of "Fountain Rock" Manor, Washington County, and sister of Maj. Samuel Ringgold, who was killed in the Mexican war, at Palo Alto. This lady died in 1870.

In 1836, Mr. Schley was elected to the Senate of Maryland, and as chairman of the Committee on the Constitution took a leading part in the debates of the interesting reform agitation of that time, which involved him in a personal dispute with William Cost Johnson, to whom Mr. Schley sent a challenge. The parties met at Alexandria, Va., Feb. 13, 1837, and exchanged one shot, in which each was wounded. Mr. Schley was accompanied to the field by Daniel, of St. Thomas, Jenifer, of Maryland, and Governor Pickens, of South Carolina. Mr. Johnson's seconds were Governor Henry A. Wise, of Virginia, and Governor Campbell, of South Carolina. The parties were reconciled on the ground and remained firm friends ever after. The affair received the name at the time of the "Pattern Duel," from the extreme punctilio which was observed.

Mr. Schley was in politics a Whig. He was defeated by one vote in the caucus nomination for the United States Senate in 1838. He took an active part in the political campaign of 1850, when Mr. Fillmore was a candidate, and in 1864, when Gen. McClellan was a candidate. Mr. Schley was on terms of friendly and confidential intercourse with Clay, Webster, Crittenden, Gen. Scott, Chief Justice Taney, and many others of the more distinguished men of the last half-century. His life and energies were given with earnestness to the profession of the law, in which he continued actively engaged up to his

last sickness. His professional reputation, which was of the very highest character within his State, extended beyond those limits, and no man was more frequently consulted by clients from abroad or from other States. In personal or social intercourse he was distinguished by that peculiar courtesy and gracefulness of manner which is recognized by the appellation of "the old school."

Mr. Schley's death resulted from confluent small-pox, which he is supposed to have contracted while traveling to Baltimore in a railroad train. He had never been vaccinated, and when the nature of his disease was ascertained he was with his own acquiescence removed to the Marine Hospital, where he died. He was attended by Dr. E. Lloyd Howard, and by his affectionate and devoted daughter, Mrs. Wm. Woodville, who nursed him with assiduous tenderness and care throughout his illness. On the night of his death, when Dr. Howard, exhausted, lay down to rest in an adjoining room, Mrs. Woodville remained at his bedside, and was alone with him when he died. A meeting of the bar of Baltimore was held, at which resolutions in honor of Mr. Schley's memory were adopted, and addresses highly eulogistic of his character delivered. Personally, Mr. Schley was a generous, warm-hearted man, and his legal attainments and mental abilities were of the highest order. Unfortunately, in early life, from a mistaken sense of duty, he assumed the indebtedness of his father-in-law, Gen. Samuel Ringgold, and was forced to struggle through life beneath a crushing burden.

The peculiar qualities of Mr. Schley's character were accurately described in the remarks of Judge Giles at the meeting of the bar :

"Before taking a vote upon the resolutions submitted," said the judge, "I would express the deep sorrow I felt on learning this morning (March 20th) of Mr. Schley's death. Thirty-seven years since, at Annapolis, I made his acquaintance. He was then a senator of Maryland from the county of Frederick. During the winter of 1837 he resigned and moved to this city. During the many years since that time he has been in full practice as a leading member of our bar, and no more patient, hard-working, and willing member could be found in the profession. He was an accomplished scholar, an able advocate, and a learned jurist. In very long service on the bench in the District and Circuit Courts of the United States, he has tried very many causes before me, and I always felt I was a learner at his feet. He was courteous and kind to all, and I shall long miss him as a friend whom I shall see here no more. The last few years of his life has been of much sorrow. Death had broken up his family circle, and taken from him those who once adorned it, but he bore blow after blow with an uncomplaining spirit, and toiled on. His passage from the strife and active scenes of this life to the solitude and quiet of the grave has been under circumstances the most painful; but through the dark cloud there breaks a ray of glory from a daughter's love. But a few days since I stood with him at this bar to pay our last tribute to the

patriarch of our profession. Little did I dream that his name would be called from the master of death. But he has bowed to that decree, from which there is no appeal, and has gone on that journey from which there is no return."

William Cost Johnson. This famous lawyer and politician was born in Jefferson District, Frederick Co., in 1806. He received an academic education, studied law, and was admitted to practice in the United States Supreme Court in 1831. He was a member of Congress from 1833 to 1835, and again from 1837 to 1843. He also served in the State Legislature before entering and after leaving Congress, and was a member of the Maryland Constitutional Convention of 1851. He was elected president of the Young Men's Convention which met in Washington to nominate Henry Clay for President. Whilst in Congress he was chairman of the Committee on Public Lands, and was also a member of the Judiciary Committee. Mr. Johnson was an ardent Whig, and a political debater of uncommon ability. He was a man of great energy of character, and of indomitable will and courage. He fought several duels, among them one with William Schley, which has already been described. An anecdote is related of Mr. Johnson which serves to forcibly illustrate his firmness of character, while also throwing a strong light on the customs of his time. On one occasion the House of Representatives was sitting in committee of the whole. Hon. R. M. T. Hunter was Speaker, but the chair was temporarily occupied during his absence by Joseph L. Tillinghast, of Rhode Island.

"Tillinghast," we are told, "was a good sort of a fellow, but nowhere as a chairman. And in about half an hour the House, which had not much to do, and was bent upon 'larks,' got into such a state of uproar that poor Tillinghast, being at his wits' end, sent for the Speaker. When the Speaker came he was for a moment at loss what to do; but casting his eyes around the turbulent benches he observed a young member named Johnson, a Representative from Maryland, whose determination, tact, and knowledge of the forms of the House had been proven on several occasions. Johnson accepting the instructions, took the chair, rapping smartly with the gavel. . . . There was silence for a moment, the House being curious to see what the new-comer would do or say. What he said was, 'The House will please be in order.' An invitation which was received with a roar of laughter."

Among his other claims to distinction Mr. Johnson was well known as a quick, sharp hand with the pistol, and not unaccustomed to the duello. For a moment he stood glaring at the disorderly mob. Then he rapped loudly with the gavel, and, silence being temporarily restored, he spoke to the following effect:

"Gentlemen of the House of Representatives, in compliance with the request of your regular presiding officer, I have taken the chair to preside over your deliberations. It is my sworn

duty to preserve order with a view to the speedy dispatch of the business of the country. I devoutly trust you will appreciate the responsibility devolved upon me as well as yourselves, and that we shall proceed with decorum and regularity. You will find me neither tyrannical nor unreasonable, and if you respond to advances in a spirit of amity and conciliation, we shall get along pleasantly and to the benefit of our constituents. On the other hand, if you are inclined to insist in the course of unbridled license that has prevailed here for some time past, I give you fair intimation I will not endure it for one moment. When I call a member to order, he must take his seat quietly until the committee has formally determined upon the propriety of his conduct, and I will make it a personal thing with any member who is unruly or makes unseemly disturbance hereafter. I will show neither favor nor partiality, and if the dearest friend I have on this floor, be he Whig or anti-Whig, violates the rules of this House and refuses to respect the decision of the presiding officer, I will send him a hostile message the moment the committee arises."

This belligerent announcement is said to have had the desired effect, and the House came to order without more ado. Mr. Johnson was an earnest opponent of slavery, and made an eloquent speech in the House proposing its abolition by a system of graduations.

Milton George Urner. Early in the history of this country the Urner family emigrated to America from the canton of Uri, in Switzerland, and made a settlement in Chester County, Pa., where many of the name still reside. Samuel of that name, who was born in Chester County, Dec. 25, 1797, came to Frederick County when a lad, in company with his father, Jonas, who located upon a farm near Sam's Creek, then in Frederick but now in Carroll County. Jonas was, like his ancestors, a farmer, and died on the Sam's Creek farm. Of his ten children two are living,—Mrs. Hannah Cunningham, in Tiffin, Ohio, and Sarah Price, in Pennsylvania. His son Samuel, already spoken of, following in the footsteps of his forefathers, devoted himself to agricultural pursuits, and upon a farm in Liberty District, where he spent the greater portion of his life, died in August, 1872, in his seventy-fifth year. He was twice married,—first, to Elizabeth, daughter of Jacob Snader, of Frederick County, and, second, to Susannah, daughter of Amos Norris, likewise of Frederick County. By his first marriage he had two sons, both of whom are living, and by his second five children, of whom but two are living. His second wife, the mother of the subject of this sketch, died in March, 1853. Samuel Urner was a man of sound judgment and of more than ordinary intelligence and mental vigor. He lived a simple, unpretentious life, and enforced a wholesome parental discipline with religious care. Being a very industrious man himself, he enjoined habits of industry upon his children. Susannah Urner was a woman