

THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY of A PENNSYLVANIAN

By Samuel W. Pennypacker
*Pennsylvania's Most Zealous
 and Energetic Governor*



INTRODUCTION

THE autobiography of Governor Pennypacker was written in the last years of his life, during what that incessant worker called his summer vacations. In 1912 he became a member of the Pennsylvania Railroad Commission by appointment of Governor Tener and in 1915 chairman of the Pennsylvania Public Service Commission. He requested Governor Brumbaugh in 1915 not to reappoint him to the chairmanship of that body, but remained a member of it until his death on September 2, 1916.

Public duties and other activities and responsibilities necessarily confined the writing of the autobiography to brief periods in the summers of some four or five years. Later in the summer of 1915 his right arm was broken, and, while still carried in a sling, was again injured in a railroad train. He was never able to use the arm during the year of life that remained, but immediately after the injury, at the age of seventy-two years, with the courage and resolution which always characterized him, he set out to write with his left hand. The concluding sentence of his account in Chapter 13 of his visit to the battlefields of Fredericksburg and Chancellorsville was the last portion of the autobiography written with the right hand. The remainder of Chapter 13, the pages of comment and review in Chapter 14, the sketches of Walt Whitman and Elihu Root in Chapter 15 and the introductory paragraph of Chapter 16 were written with the left hand.

Governor Pennypacker never had opportunity to revise the manuscript. He had intended to add two chapters of a philosophical nature giving the outcome of his study, experience and reflection, one chapter about the law, the other on statecraft. His reading, as shown by the series of notebooks which he kept from 1863 to 1916, wide in variety and scope, embracing science, theology, poetry and American and European history, in sources often not accessible to historians, in the French, German, Dutch, Latin, Spanish, English and other languages; his familiarity with the origin and development, laws and customs of many peoples, combined with a rare power of analysis, mental integrity and directness of method, no doubt would have made the chapters contemplated rich in fundamental criticism and constructive suggestion. Bishop Darlington has portrayed him as an idealist and a radical. If in part and at times he was both, as the following pages show, he had also a firm faith in the wisdom of holding fast to that which is good. Increasing physical weakness and suffering prevented the writing of the two additional chapters which he had in contemplation.

When it became known to the public that Governor Pennypacker had left an autobiography a number of officials and prominent citizens of Pennsylvania, moved no doubt by their knowledge of the untoward fate that has overtaken so many similar life records in the hands of unhappy editors, united in signing the following letter:

To the family of the Hon. Samuel W. Pennypacker:

It is now a matter of public knowledge that the late Governor Pennypacker wrote, for publication, an Autobiography.

Of the existence of this work he had often spoken to his friends.

A fear exists, on the part of the latter, that a desire to avoid controversy, or the possible injury to some one's feelings may tempt his family to consider having the manuscript edited.

His friends and associates whose signatures are appended feel that they owe it to his family, to the institutions with which he was connected and to his memory to urge that this be not done.

Unaltered, unexpurgated and unedited, Governor Pennypacker's Autobiography constitutes an invaluable historical document, of increasing public interest, perhaps his greatest contribution to the history of the State. And it is in the name of the citizens of Pennsylvania, living and to come, that we urge his family to print his Autobiography exactly as it was written.

MARTIN G. BRUMBAUGH, Governor.
 THOMAS L. MONTGOMERY, State Librarian.
 AMUEL G. DIXON, Commissioner of Health.
 HAMPTON L. CARSON, Formerly Attorney General of Pennsylvania.

JOHN W. JORDAN, Librarian Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
 GREGORY B. KEEN, Curator Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

HENRY B. EDMUNDS, President of Board of Education.
 SIMON GRATZ, Vice President Board of Education.
 JOHN FREDERICK LEWIS, President Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts.

GEORGE WHARTON PIPEER, Former Professor of Law, University of Pennsylvania; Lyman Beecher Lecturer, Yale University; Trustee, University of Pennsylvania.
 HENRY SHIPPEN HUIDEKOPFER, Lieutenant Colonel United States Volunteers, Major General National Guard of Pennsylvania, Former Overseer of Harvard University.

C. STUART PATTERSON, President Western Savings Fund Society, Director Pennsylvania Railroad Company.
 CHAS. C. HARRISON, Former Provost of University of Pennsylvania.

FRANK P. PRICHARD, Chancellor of the Law Association.
 EDGAR F. SMITH, Provost of University of Pennsylvania.
 MORRIS JASTROW, JR., Librarian of the University of Pennsylvania.

EDWARD J. NOLAN, Recording Secretary and Librarian of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.
 MAYER BULBERGER, Formerly a Justice of the Court of Common Pleas No. 2 during the presidency of Governor Pennypacker is that tribunal and later President Judge of said Court.

J. C. ROSENGARTEN, Vice President Philobiblon Club.
 JOHN ASHURST, Secretary the Philobiblon Club, December 4, 1916.

Beyond the verification of certain dates, titles, names and occasionally a minor incident and the elimination of a few repetitions caused by the long interruptions to the writing, all of which would have been done by the author himself had not illness and death prevented, there has been no such editing of the autobiography as the signers of the letter perhaps feared might occur. No such editing was ever contemplated. Whatever or whoever may be maligned, the book goes forth "scot free." It will be seen that the criticism is essentially of policies and of principles and of conduct growing out of erroneous conceptions, that where it seems to be most personal the criticism is based upon something broader than personality and that the abundant praise has also an underlying foundation. At the close of his gubernatorial term, and not before, as an expression of his personal good will, Governor Pennypacker gave a dinner at the executive mansion to the newspaper correspondents at Harrisburg. The timing of the courtesies was a characteristic expression of his sense of propriety and of the absence of personal feeling in his previous conspicuous effort to bring the publication of newspapers into line under the law with all other commercial activities.

In his notable biography of Governor Pennypacker, printed in 1917, Hampton L. Carson, Esq., the historian of the United States Supreme Court, says of him that he was "a great and a good man." Mr. Carson's high standing at the bar and as a citizen, his lofty conception of public duty, his long acquaintance with the subject of his memoir, his intimate knowledge, acquired as Attorney General of Pennsylvania from 1903 to 1907, of Governor Pennypacker's motives, plans and acts give to the words quoted a weight which they could derive from no other living source.



THE PENNYPACKER COAT OF ARMS

ISAAC R. PENNYPACKER.



SAMUEL WHITAKER PENNYPACKER, GOVERNOR, JUDGE, CITIZEN

The EVENING LEDGER is indebted to the family of Governor Pennypacker for aid in the collection of photographs and other illustrations. The EVENING LEDGER also acknowledges courtesies in this connection extended by Newman F. McGill, of the State House Book Shop, the North American, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania and the Free Library of Philadelphia.

CHAPTER I

Ancestry

THE life of every man has a value as well as an interest for his fellows. No matter how humble may have been the career, if the events are truly told they are a source of helpfulness to the race.

The book of the old gossip, Peeps, has outlasted and been oftener reprinted than many another of more apparent importance.

Scientists search with the utmost care for the chips of stone which men long forgotten threw away as refuse, in order that their lost lives may be reconstructed.

My own life has been somewhat eventful, and, in a certain sense, representative. It presents many antitheses. It covers the period of the War of the Rebellion (I decline to use the euphuism of the Civil War, no such thing having been ever), the destruction of slavery, the centennial anniversaries, the publication of the Origin of Species, the introduction of electricity into the industries and the discovery of the North Pole. I have been brought into relations with the Presidents, from Lincoln to Roosevelt; with the Generals Grant, Sherman, Hancock, Sickles, Howard and Sheridan, and have corresponded with Darwin, Le Comte de Paris, DeHoop Scheffer, Bayard Taylor and Lloyd Milfin. I have made addresses at Stony Point and at Gettysburg. I have presided over the Law Academy, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, the University of Pennsylvania, a court, and the Commonwealth. I have walked one hundred and seventy-five miles on a stretch and have ridden down Pennsylvania avenue from the Capitol to the White House at the head of ten thousand men. I have carried on my back at one time twenty pounds of putty and at another a musket. I have made pills in Kensington, thrown a load of wood into a Chestnut street cellar, kept the books of an oil company, mowed weeds in a meadow, gathered a great library, written eighty books and pamphlets, tried men for murder and sent sixty-six criminals to be hanged. Therefore is this story begun.

It pleases the vanity of men who have won some of the success of life to believe that they have been the architects of their own fortunes and that the results are due to their individualities. The thought is pure error. Countless ages and almost infinite effort of unrecognized forces are required to make a man. His character and his physique he inherits; what he accomplishes depends upon the conditions that surround him more than upon the weight of his hand or the logic of his brain. I became Governor of Pennsylvania because one grandfather earned and gave to me the money with which to read law, and the other grandfather, in obedience to family traditions, took into his home and provided for a helpless child. The deeds of virtue, as well as the sins of the fathers, are visited upon the children even unto the third and fourth generations. Consequently, if we wish to understand a man and his work, it is necessary to know how he came about and what there is back of him.

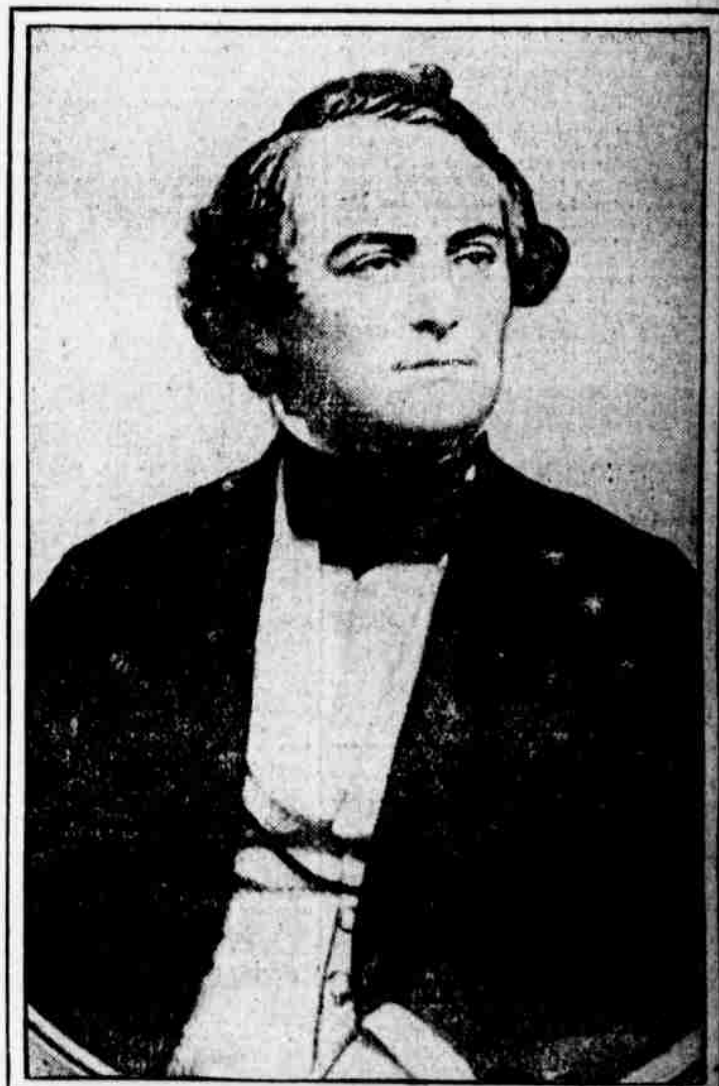
The people of Pennsylvania are more blended in race than those of any of the other American colonies. Biologists and breeders alike have learned the law of nature that the crossing of allied stocks leads to the increase of vital activities. To interbreed, or, as it is called, to keep a strain pure, is to prevent further development. Substantially all of my American ancestors were residents of Pennsylvania, save a few from New Jersey, and in almost all of my lines they came to the country among the earliest settlers. But among them were Dutch, English, Germans, Welsh, Swedes, Scotch-Irish and French Huguenots, though in the main my blood is English. The paternal line is Dutch, and the name, which originated somewhere in the neighborhood of Goreum, in Holland, is Pannebakker. It means a maker of tiles. The earliest trace of the family that I have found tells the tale of a man who was burned to death and a wife who was drowned for heresy at Utrecht in 1568. In those days they were more gentle with the women. The founder of the family in Pennsylvania, Hendrick Pannebecker, was born March 21, 1674. He was in Germantown in 1699, and from there moved out to Skippack in 1702, as the attorney for Matthias Van Beber for the sale of the lands of the latter in Beber's township. He later bought the township and became, as well as Van Beber and Lodowick Christian Spraggell, one of the three Dutch Patrons of Pennsylvania. He was a surveyor and laid out most of the early roads in upper Philadelphia, now Montgomery County. I have his bill to the Penns for surveying a number of their manors in 1733, with the order of Thomas Penn for its payment. He understood three languages—Dutch, German and English. He had a library of books. He owned seven thousand acres of land. He wrote a very pretty script, drew deeds and devised a seal much like that of Van Rensselaer in New York. There is a biography of him in print, and when it turns up at a book sale it brings \$25. His wife, Eva Umstat, came from the lower Rhine, and neither the marriage of his son, Jacob, who was a miller on the Skippack, nor that of his grandson, Matthias, who moved to the Pickering Creek, in Chester County, effected any race modifications. This Matthias, born in 1742, had rather a broad country life. He owned a mill, still standing, and four or five farms. He was a commissioner appointed by Act of Assembly to provide for the navigation of the River Schuylkill. He was a Bishop of the Mennonites, using the three languages of his grandfather and preaching with eloquence and strength. He sent several contributions of flour and money to the Philadelphia people when the yellow fever devastated the city in 1793, as will be seen in the report of the committee. It is told of him that people came to his funeral from five counties and that he had the largest funeral and the longest will up to that time known in the county. No better evidence could have been given of his consequence. His son, Matthias, my grandfather, born in 1787, spent his days on the Pickering, owning the same mill. He was portly, and it may be, a little pompous, but he had some reason for demanding in manner that those around him show respect. "Rich, respectable and numerous" was written of the family in his time. In 1826 and 1827 he was a member of Assembly. The organization which was effected to bring about the incorporation of the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad Company made him its president,

and he was one of the incorporators of that road. He represented Chester County in the Constitutional Convention of 1837, which prepared a Constitution for the State. When the Whig party held its county meetings at West Chester he presided. In his day the traces of the old Dutch life almost entirely disappeared. English alone was spoken in the household and his children knew no other tongue. The German books, which had lost their utility, were given to a servant. The old German family Bible was banished to the spring house, and there one of his boys cut from it all its pictures.

I remember once in my childhood spending a Christmas at the house. Memories of the Peltz Nicol still lingered and I hung my stocking beside the stone fireplace, at the end of which stood a long wood box, but what was put into it were ginger cakes and store candy. There was a large kitchen garden, in which were grown currants, gooseberries, black currants, asparagus, beets, corn, onions, lettuce and even strawberries in beds interspersed with brightly-colored flowers. Two large box bushes grew in the front yard. In the back yard was a burning-bush and a fringe tree. There was a meadow in front of the house stretching to the Pickering, and the outlook was to the Valley Hills. There was a parlor, a spare room with high-post bedstead, stately and chill. Water was brought in pipes to the house from a distant spring and ran out of the nozzle of a pump into a trough continuously, which was a great wonder to me, who had seen nothing like it anywhere else; but the water had to be carried up a long flight of stone steps into the kitchen. The only indication of art in the house were profiles cut at Peale's Museum, and, in fact, the desire to have the features of the face preserved was regarded as a vanity to be condemned. There was no music; cards were an iniquity, and there were no devices for other games. The mental attitude was stiff and cheerless, but rugged and sincere. To be honest and to tell the truth were the virtues inculcated. The letters written were in the main didactic and religious, and they tell much about going to meeting and hearing sermons. The welfare of the soul was a continual subject of contemplation. There was no liquor of any kind used during the lives of my great grandfather, grandfather and father, save that the housewife would have a cut-glass bottle filled with lavender brandy put away on the upper shelf of the closet in the spare room, to be ready in cases of emergency.

The Pennypacker Fighting Stock

My grandfather, like his father, was a member of the Mennonite Meeting at Phoenixville, and he paid the expense of having the Dordrecht Confession of Faith of 1632, reprinted at West Chester. My grandmother was fond of reading Pollock's Course of Time. My grandfather in his marriage, doubtless without intending any such result, brought about a great change in the race. He courted Sarah Andegson, born February 10, 1784, whose parents lived upon the opposite side of the Pickering Creek. He gave to her as "a token of my esteem" a little porcelain box with a mirror on the under side of the lid, which box I still preserve. Her father, Isaac Anderson, hunted with the Indians, was a justice of the peace, a member of Assembly, a Presidential Elector and a member of Congress from 1803 to 1807. His name heads the list of those in Congress who voted for the Louisiana Purchase. He served three terms in the Revolutionary Army before he was eighteen years of age, and became an ensign and lieutenant of militia, taking part in the fight at the Warren Tavern. His portrait is extant; I have it; and he wrote a local history. He was six feet four inches in height, and his firmness of will was such as to give him the reputation of being arbitrary.



ISAAC ANDERSON PENNYPACKER
 Father of Governor Pennypacker.

Her grandfather, Patrick Anderson, commanded a company in the French and Indian War and for a time the Pennsylvania Musketry Battalion in the War of the Revolution, participating in the battles of Long Island, Brandywine and Germantown. He was major of Anthony Wayne's Regiment of Chester County Minute Men in 1775. He was also for four years a member of the Assembly. He has an importance in Masonic history, having been master of Lodge No. 8 as early as 1760, and is claimed by Mr. Sachs to have organized the first lodge in the Continental Army. It is said that his teeth were double all around, something often said of the aged, but rejected by dentists. He married three times, and, being an Episcopalian, once in Christ Church in Philadelphia. His great-grandfather, James Anderson, came from the Isle of Skye, in Scotland. I have reason to believe he could not write his name. His services were sold for a fixed term from the ship to Thomas Jerman, a noted Quaker preacher, in the Chester Valley, to pay for his passage, and he showed a certain canniness by running away with and marrying one of Jerman's daughters. He was the first settler along the Pickering, where he built a log hut beside a spring. When Patrick was born, and the mother occasionally trudged across the Valley Hill, five miles; to visit her relatives, an Indian squaw suckled and took care of the baby. In this instance, as in many others, the Revolutionary War brought to the front a family of native stock which had been theretofore obscure. The blood which came from the alliances of the Andersons was that of the families of the (Welsh), Morris (Welsh) and Bartholomew (Bastholm, Huguenot).

(CONTINUED IN MORNING'S EDITION)