

BARNABAS BURNS.

Among the well known and highly respected citizens of Richland county who bore an important part in the development of the state was Barnabas Burns, of Mansfield. There are few men whose lives are crowned with the honor and respect which is universally accorded him, and through long connection with this portion of the state his has been an unblemished character. With him success in life was reached by his sterling qualities of mind and heart, true to every manly principle. He has never deviated from what his judgment indicated to be right and honorable between his fellow men and himself. He has never swerved from the path of duty, and along many substantial lines of progress he labored for the welfare of the people among whom he resided.

Barnabas Burns was born in Fayette county, Pennsylvania, June 29, 1817, the youngest child of Andrew and Sarah (Caldwell) Burns. The father was a native of Donegal, Ireland, and left that country in 1798, at the age of eighteen years. He came to America on account of political troubles of the period and here he married Sarah Caldwell, an orphan who had come with her uncle, Stephen Caldwell, from county Donegal at an early age, residing in Philadelphia until her marriage. The children of the family were Andrew, who became a prominent minister of the Christian church; Hugh, who was one of the early dry-goods merchants of Ashland county and was the first county auditor; and Barnabas.

When the last named was three years of age he was brought by his parents to Richland county, where his childhood and youth were spent upon a farm which has since become the hamlet known as Paradise Hill, near Olivesburg. His education was obtained in a rude log schoolhouse, such as was familiar to the pioneer, and in the academies of Ashland and Mansfield. After completing his academic course he engaged in teaching a number of terms of school, and in 1840 he was chosen for the position of deputy county clerk, in which capacity he served acceptably until 1846. While performing the duties of that position he employed his leisure hours in the study of law in the office of Bartley & Kirkwood. In 1846 he was elected to represent the counties of Richland and Crawford in the Ohio state senate. He had not yet attained his thirtieth year when he was elected to this office. He served for two terms and was a member of the following committees: On finance, privileges and elections and on benevolent institutions, of which last he was the chairman.

Mr. Burns married Miss Writh Gore, a native of Maryland, who

removed from that state to Mansfield in her nineteenth year. On her father's side she was descended from an old colonial family that for many generations had resided in Maryland. On her mother's side she was of Quaker ancestry, of Bucks county, Pennsylvania, the family dating in that locality from the settlement of William Penn. Mrs. Burns was devoted to her husband, home and family. She died in 1887, at the age of seventy years, and the description of the "good woman" in Proverbs would prove a very fitting epitaph for her monument.

Through a long period Barnabas Burns occupied a prominent position at the bar of Richland county. From 1850 until 1855 he was associated in the practice of law with his former preceptor, Hon. S. J. Kirkwood, who afterward removed to Iowa City, Iowa, and became prominent in that state as governor and United States senator, while later he was a member of President Garfield's cabinet. At the bar Mr. Burns won distinction by reason of his comprehensive knowledge of the law, his close application, the logic of his deductions and the correctness of his conclusions. His reputation as a lawyer was indeed enviable, for he ranked among the most prominent of the state and was an intimate friend of many distinguished members of the Ohio bar, including Durbin Ward and A. G. Thurman.

Few men have done more to promote the progress and improvement of Ohio along various lines than did Barnabas Burns. He was the first president of the Mansfield Savings Bank and aided in organizing the institution. He was also director for many years of the Richland Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and in the days of the volunteer fire department he was a member of the old Company No. 2. He was a trustee of the Orphans' Home at Xenia for a number of years, being first appointed to that position in 1869. He served as a member of the board of education and of the city council and took an active interest in both before they became political offices, doing everything in his power to advance the interests of the schools and of Mansfield along the lines of reform and progress. He was one of the founders of the Mansfield Lyceum and Library Association, became its first president and acted in that capacity for a number of terms. In 1873 he was chosen a member of the constitutional convention by both political parties, and was recognized as one of the most capable members of the organization, taking an active part in framing the organic law of the state. That instrument bears the impress of his individuality in many instances and indicates his loyalty to the welfare of its commonwealth. In 1876 he was appointed by Governor R. B. Hayes as one of the centennial commissioners

from Ohio at Philadelphia. The last office he held was that of inspector of the Northern Pacific Railroad.

In politics Mr. Burns was a war Democrat when the country was engaged in hostilities, but previous to that time had advocated the principles of Jefferson and after the war adhered to the old-school Democracy. When the question of slavery in the south and its extension into northern states became the paramount issue he was known as a stalwart advocate of the Union, delivered many addresses in its support, aided largely in raising recruits and was tendered the colonelcy of the Eighty-sixth Ohio Volunteer Infantry by Governor Tod in recognition of his services during the three-months campaign in 1862. He was then appointed for a three-years term, but could not serve on account of chronic bronchial trouble, from which he was for many years a sufferer. He was at the front, however, for about six months, being appointed judge advocate upon the important military trial which was held at Cumberland, Maryland. He had been a delegate to the Baltimore convention which nominated Stephen A. Douglas, and also went as a delegate to the convention which nominated Horatio Seymour for the presidency in 1868. Mr. Burns was often called upon to preside at public meetings and acted as president of the day at the dedication of the soldiers' monument, also made one of the addresses at the unveiling of the Washburn Fountain, July 4, 1881.

Mr. Burns had the following named children: Mary, now the wife of Dr. George Mitchell; John Caldwell, Jere Humphrey, Catherine and Barnabas Gore. At his death his children and five grandchildren were at his bedside. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal church from early manhood, long served as one of its trustees and was very active and influential in building the present edifice. Of the Odd Fellows society he was a very enthusiastic member, and in his life exemplified the beneficent spirit of the fraternity. He was the president of the Richland County Bible Society and indeed took a very deep interest in everything pertaining to progress and advancement along lines of public good.