

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.

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of the Court of Appeals. In 1861 he was strongly urged to accept the Democratic nomination for Governor, but declined the honor. In 1868 he consented to stand as a candidate for the United States Senate, and was elected for six years from the 4th of March, 1869. His predecessor, Governor Whyte, had been appointed to fill the unexpired term of Reverdy Johnson, who had been sent by President Johnson as United States minister to England. The vote stood: Hamilton, 56 (exactly the number necessary for a choice); Swann, 46; and Merrick, 7. In the Senate Mr. Hamilton proved himself to be a fluent and forcible debater, and made a marked impression upon that body at a period when it was exceedingly difficult for a senator of his political persuasion to obtain even a respectful hearing. His term expired in 1875, in which year the Democratic convention met to nominate a candidate for Governor of Maryland. In an eloquent and forcible speech Hon. John Ritchie, of Frederick, presented the name of ex-Senator Hamilton, but Mr. Hamilton failed to receive the nomination, and Hon. John Lee Carroll was chosen by the convention and elected by the people. On the 7th of August, 1879, however, Mr. Hamilton was unanimously nominated by the Democratic State Convention to succeed Gov. Carroll, and in the following autumn was elected, his majority over his Republican opponent, James A. Gary, being 22,208. His inauguration was the occasion of an enthusiastic popular demonstration, and the ceremonies at the State-house were of an exceptionally interesting and impressive character. Governor Hamilton devotes much time and attention to the management of his farms, which are considered to be among the most intelligently and carefully tilled and among the most productive in Washington County. He has a handsome residence in Hagerstown, besides his country-seat about two miles distant, and alternates between these two points and Annapolis. He has six children,—four daughters and two sons,—the latter being Richard and William T. Hamilton, Jr. Governor Hamilton is a man of remarkable force of character, strict integrity, and a lofty appreciation of the duties incumbent upon a public official. As an executive, he has shown invariably an earnest disposition to prevent and reform abuses, and to reduce the burden of taxation to the lowest possible point. As a lawyer, he ranks among the foremost members of the bar of Western Maryland; and in all matters of business or of agriculture he is quoted by his neighbors and friends as an authority from which there should be no appeal.

William Price, one of the most distinguished lawyers that Maryland has produced, was a native of

Washington County, his father being an officer of the Revolution, and died Nov. 25, 1868. He was educated at Dickinson College, and studied law with Judge Cooper, of Carlisle, Upton Lawrence, of Hagerstown, Judge Nicholas Brice, of Baltimore, and John Thomson Mason, the elder. While a resident of Washington County he was elected a member of the State Senate by the electoral college about 1825. He was afterwards a candidate for Congress. He moved to Cumberland, Allegany Co., and after a few years removed to Baltimore. He was elected a member of the State Legislature from Baltimore in 1862, and was afterwards appointed United States District Attorney by President Lincoln, which office he held for one term. Mr. Price was one of the commissioners appointed by the Legislature to simplify the forms of pleading and practice in Maryland. He was a prominent member of his profession, by whom his social qualities and personal character were held in high regard. The courts of Baltimore, in which tributes of respect were paid to his memory, all adjourned to attend his funeral.

In the Superior Court George M. Gill announced the death of Mr. Price. He spoke of the deceased in becoming terms, and moved that the court adjourn in respect to his memory.

Hon. J. Thomson Mason rose to second the motion. He gave a sketch of the life of the deceased, and said his abilities as a lawyer were generally recognized, and his high personal character was as well known as his professional abilities.

In response to the remarks of the members of the bar Judge Dobbin said,—

“The whole bar of Maryland will unite with us in mournful regret at the death of our brother Price. Enjoying in his younger life a large practice in the western counties of the State, Mr. Price followed his cases to the Court of Appeals, where all remember how his majestic presence, his genial urbanity, and his rich colloquial gifts adorned the professional circle which assembled at Annapolis. Mr. Price possessed also an extensive and varied scholarship, which he so gracefully blended with the severer labors of his vocation that he was always an engaging and instructive orator. The liberal view which he took of the science to which he was devoted carried him ahead of most of his contemporaries in those simplifications of the law now so apparent upon our system of conveyancing and pleading; and he was the first, under legislative appointment, to get rid of many of the technical embarrassments of the older law. After his removal to Baltimore, and in the late trouble of the country, William Price became the law officer of the general government in this district; and while he faithfully discharged his duty to the public, he made what was often a painful exercise of office as little offensive as possible to those of his fellow-citizens who differed from him in opinion. He belonged to a generation of lawyers fast passing away, and when our younger professional brethren shall look back in the forensic annals of the State to find a type of the old Maryland

gentleman and lawyer, none will be more likely to furnish the example than the late Mr. Price.

"Out of respect for his memory, and in order that we may attend his remains to the grave, I shall now order the court to stand adjourned."

Mr. Price once appeared as a writer of romance, and produced the novel entitled "Clem. Falconer, or the Memoirs of a Young Whig." It was not a success, and was his only attempt. He also at one time contemplated the publication of work on chancery practice, which no doubt would have met a different fate from the novel, for the inclination of Mr. Price was law, in which he was profoundly versed. He also frequently essayed politics, but without a success commensurate with his natural ability; and was also once connected with an edge-tool manufacturing company, which proved a failure. His sphere was emphatically the law, and nothing else appeared to suit him. He was an enthusiastic Union man at the commencement of the war, and while in the Legislature introduced the "Treason Bill," with which his name became familiarly associated, and which, owing to peculiar circumstances, subjected him to severe animadversion. Towards the conclusion of the struggle he became pre-eminently conservative, and before his death those estrangements which sprang from his zeal at a more early stage of the war, were entirely removed.

In a letter to the *Hagerstown Mail*, correcting certain misstatements, the late Judge Mason gives the following interesting reminiscences of Mr. Price:

"It would be unnecessary to refer to the prominent incidents in the life of Mr. Price, as the recollection of them is still fresh in the minds of most of your readers. His urbane manners, his commanding personal appearance, his fascinating powers of conversation, his earnest, distinguished, and apostolic style of public speaking are all well remembered by his former friends and neighbors. Of his father, who was no less remarkable in his way, little is now known. Col. Price lived and died on the banks of the Conococheague, and was distinguished no less for the vigor of his intellect and personal integrity than for his great eccentricities. His history and peculiarities, of which I heard so much when a child, have passed, amid the changes and vicissitudes of Washington County, almost entirely out of the memory of the people. In many respects he was a wise man. He showed this in the course he pursued towards his four sons. Having but a moderate estate, he summoned his sons before him, and after a thorough explanation of his purpose, their consequences, etc., to the effect that his means would not enable him to give to them all a complete and polished education and leave them property besides, he proposed to those of his sons who preferred that they should receive such an education, but at his death should get no part of his estate, while the others, who might be content with the common education which the neighborhood could furnish, should have his property. William and Benjamin selected the education, and the other two the property; but by a strange decree of Providence the two last referred to died while young, and their surviving brothers thereby succeeded to the property as well as to the education. In regard to this compact, Col. Price carried it out in perfect

good faith, for he spared no pains in affording his two sons, William and Benjamin, every advantage of education which his judgment could suggest and his means furnish, and they in turn no less appreciated these advantages, as was abundantly shown in the highly-cultivated state of their minds, evinced as well in legal attainments as in general literary tastes and acquirements. But they commenced life without a dollar.

"I have heard one anecdote of Col. Price, which is so well vouched for and so creditable to his good nature and neighborly feelings, if it even does not reflect much honor upon his loyalty (as now understood), that I think it worthy of public notice.

"During the famous 'Whisky Insurrection,' in Washington's administration, Col. Price held a military position under the government. The spirit of rebellion was not confined to Western Pennsylvania, but it extended to other parts of the country, and even in the secluded region where Col. Price lived it had taken strong hold. A public meeting of Republicans, as they were then called, which was composed of many of the most substantial and respectable of Col. Price's neighbors, had been held at Rockdale to express sympathy with the Pittsburgh insurgents. The movement had assumed such proportions that the government determined it should be thwarted. Accordingly a body of soldiers was ordered to report to Col. Price, with instructions that some fifteen or twenty, whose names were furnished, of those who had participated in the meeting should be arrested. The soldiers reached his house early in the afternoon and delivered their instructions. He received them with his usual hospitality, but instead of proceeding at once to the execution of the orders, he insisted they should remain with him till morning, when he would see that their mission was fulfilled. They accordingly did so, and early the next day, accompanied by a guide, they started on their assigned duty. Late in the evening they returned with but one prisoner, and that was Philip Kriegh, a man well known in his day for respectability, probity, and frankness, in all of which qualities he is well represented by his son William, still living in Washington County. Col. Price met him at the gate in the most cordial manner, and inquired 'where the rest of his neighbors were?' Mr. Kriegh seemed a little surprised at this question, and with more frankness than prudence presently responded, 'Didn't you send your son all through the neighborhood last night to tell us to run away, that the soldiers were after us?' And he then explained that the reason he did not run with the others was that, being sick, he had not been able to attend the Rockdale meeting. At first the colonel was a little confused and discomfited at this unexpected public disclosure of disloyalty, but he soon recovered his presence of mind, and turning to the commanding officer, said, 'What can my good, harmless neighbors do to injure this great government? Come in! come in! and let us drink the health of Gen. Washington.' Greatly given to conviviality, as well as hospitality, it may be well imagined that Col. Price and his friends had a merry night. It was sufficient at all events to forever obliterate from the mind of the government all memory and resentment for the Rockdale treason."

In August, 1840, Mr. Price fought a duel with the Hon. Francis Thomas, which caused no little excitement throughout the State. The *Baltimore Sun* in its issue of Aug. 6, 1840, said,—

"Our city was thrown into considerable excitement yesterday by a painful report, said to be brought by passengers in the railroad cars, that a hostile meeting had taken place somewhere on the Virginia shore of the Potomac between the Hon. Francis Thomas, member of Congress from this State, and president of

the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, and William Price, Esq., an eminent member of the Hagerstown Bar."

On the following day the same paper added,—

"In a part of our edition yesterday morning we added a post-script containing authentic intelligence of the result of a duel between Mr. Thomas and Mr. Price, and we must now repeat it for the benefit of those who did not see it. The parties met on Wednesday morning in Morgan County, Va., between Bath and Hancock, Md.; one shot was exchanged without effect, and the difficulty was then compromised on the interference of friends. We rejoice exceedingly at the result. Mr. Thomas is a gentleman well known in this State, and as a politician throughout the country, and few men have had greater share of the confidence of their immediate constituents than he. He now, besides his place in Congress, holds a responsible situation in the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal Company, that of president. From this his position in society may be inferred. In Congress he was looked upon by his party as a man of more than ordinary discrimination and talent, having been placed at the head of the Judiciary Committee, one of the most important committees in the House. The distance at which the gentlemen fought was twelve paces."

The particulars of the affair, as given in the Hagerstown *Mail*, were these:

"The difficulty originated in a speech delivered by Mr. Price at Cumberland some time since. There are various rumors afloat about the rise, progress, and settlement of the affair, but we have not been able to obtain a statement that could be relied upon, because, as we understand, it was agreed among the friends of the parties that no publication should be made except the following:

"A CARD.—Understanding that the public are aware that a misunderstanding between William Price, Esq., of Washington County, and Francis Thomas, Esq., of Frederick County, in this State, has resulted in a hostile meeting, the undersigned, who acted as the respective friends of the parties upon the ground, take pleasure in stating, with a view to correct all error upon the subject, that after an exchange of shots, at our instance the difficulty was adjusted to the entire honor of both gentlemen.

"Wm. H. NORRIS,

"JOHN McPHERSON,

"J. HOLLINGSWORTH.

"HANCOCK, Aug. 5, 1840."

Robert J. Brent, one of Maryland's most gifted lawyers, was born in Louisiana, and died in Baltimore City in February, 1872. Mr. Brent married a daughter of Upton Lawrence, of Hagerstown, and was otherwise identified with the people of Washington County. His grandfather, Mr. Fenwick, was for many years a member of the Maryland State Senate from Charles County, and his father practiced law in Louisiana and in Washington, D. C. Robert J. Brent studied law in the office of his father, and in that of Gen. Walter Jones, of Washington, and was admitted to the bar in 1834. After practicing a short time in the courts of Washington he removed to Frederick City, and thence to Hagerstown, where he married. A few years later he removed to Baltimore, where he soon acquired a large practice. He

also frequently appeared before the Court of Appeals, and in the courts at Washington. His associate and intimate friend was the Hon. Henry May.

Mr. Brent was originally of the old Whig school of politics, but becoming dissatisfied with the party during the administration of Gen. Harrison, allied himself with the Democrats, and afterwards remained an active and influential member of that party. Although he was never a seeker for office, he was on several occasions chosen delegate to the Presidential Nominating Conventions, served several terms in the State Legislature, and was a member of the Constitutional Convention in 1850 and 1851. While in the latter body he was appointed State's attorney for Baltimore City, on the death of George R. Richardson, by Governor Lowe. Mr. Brent was engaged in a number of the most important cases, not only in Baltimore, but in the various counties in the State, in the Court of Appeals and in the Superior Court. As an advocate he was fearless and faithful, so devoted to the interests of his client that he sometimes failed to see the imperfections of the cause in which he was engaged. To his associates he was always polite and courteous, and to the younger members of the profession he was kind and considerate. In social life he was genial and entertaining, never, however, carrying any pleasure or sport to excess. During his leisure hours in summer he indulged his love of aquatic sports, and his yacht "Minnie" was well known in the Patapsco. The last time Mr. Brent appeared as counsel was for the defendant in a civil suit in the Superior Court, and during the trial complained of a pain in the heel, which finally became so acute as to cause him to retire to his home. The disease was finally pronounced acute rheumatism, which, extending to vital parts, terminated his life. Mr. Brent left a widow, several daughters, and one son, who was associated with his father in the practice of law.

Hon. Richard H. Alvey, chief judge of the Fourth Judicial Circuit, and judge of the Court of Appeals, was the eldest child of George and Harriet (*née* Wicklin) Alvey, and born on the 6th of March, 1826, in St. Mary's County, Md. Both of his parents were of English descent, and belonged to families which were among the oldest and most distinguished in Southern Maryland. Straited family circumstances, however, did not permit them to give their eldest son a liberal education, and his early intellectual training was confined within the unpretentious limits offered by the curriculum of a county school taught by his father. In 1844, when only eighteen years of age, he entered the clerk's office of Charles County, where he held the position of deputy clerk for several