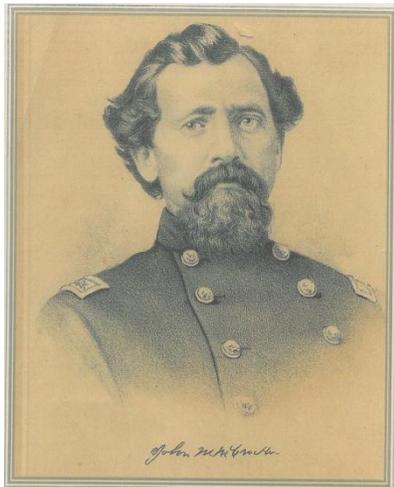


Portrait and Biographical Album of Stephenson County, Illinois, Chicago, Chapman Brothers, 1888



Maj. John M. McCracken, deceased, formerly one of the most prominent citizens of Ridott Township, and a portrait of whom is presented on the opposite page, was a native of Pennsylvania, born June 3, 1831, and departed this life Aug. 28, 1879, from the effects of wounds received in the army. He had been a great sufferer, and it became necessary to remove him to a private hospital at Elgin, where his death took place.

The father of our subject, **William McCracken**, a native of Pennsylvania, followed farming a part of his life, and was also employed in the woolen-mills of Tyrone, Pa., where he spent his last years. In early manhood he had married **Miss Mary M. Milliken**, who survived him and died in Atchison, Kan., March 27, 1884, at the home of her son **Samuel**.

John M., our subject, was the third child and second son of his parents, whose household included five children. He was reared in Juniata and Huntingdon Counties, received a common-school education and was bred to farming pursuits, while he also employed part of his time in the mills with his father. He remained in his native State until about twenty-five years of age, and came to Illinois in about 1856, being joined later by his mother and the remaining children, after the death of the father.

Our subject was variously employed until the breaking out of the late war, and at the second call for troops enlisted in Co. K, 46th Ill. Vol. Inf., in which he was soon tendered a Captain's commission. He had been active in recruiting this company, and soon afterward led them to the scene of action at Ft. Donelson, where they arrived just in time to participate in that memorable engagement. The young Captain came from this unharmed, and afterward met the rebels at Shiloh and Pittsburg Landing, where he received the high approval of his superior officers for his meritorious conduct, and which was rewarded by his promotion, Oct. 11, 1862, to the rank of Major. He veteranized in 1864, when he was made a Lieutenant Colonel, receiving his papers in May, 1866, commission to date from the 13th March, 1865. He had been severely wounded at Pittsburg Landing, but did not desert his post until compelled, and remained with his regiment until his honorable discharge.

Maj. McCracken, after his retirement from the army, located in Bloomington, Ill., and in company with **William H. Wentz** engaged in the sale of agricultural implements for about three years and then removed to Freeport, where for a time he carried on a similar business alone. The precarious state of his health, however, obliged him to abandon the responsibilities and cares of a business life, and on the 28th of August 1879, he closed his eyes forever upon the scenes of earth.

During the progress of the war and while home on a furlough, **Maj. McCracken** was united in marriage, at the home of the bride's parents in Ridott Township, March 2, 1864, to **Miss Clara**

C. daughter of **H. P. Waters**, of whom a sketch is given on another page in this work. **Mrs. McC.** was born on her father's homestead in Ridott Township, Dec. 29, 1844, and remained with her parents until her marriage. She received a good education in the common schools, and early in life exhibited the intelligence and force of character which have since distinguished her and secured for her the admiration and respect of a large circle of friends and acquaintances. Of her marriage with our subject there were born four children, one of whom, **William H.**, died when four months old. Those surviving are **Mollie A.**, **John W.**, and **Carrie F.**, who all remain at home with their mother. **Mrs. McC.** occupies a pleasant home in Ridott Village. She received from the Government the back pension due her husband, amounting to \$6,140, and also receives \$20 per month and the younger children \$2 each, making a total of \$24.

Maj. McCracken, as a man and citizen, was held in the highest respect for his fine personal traits, and as a husband and father was mourned by his family, who sympathized most deeply with his affliction and did all in their power to smooth his pathway to the grave. During the years of his usefulness and activity, he interested himself in the affairs of the country and used his influence as far as he could to bring about those measures which would be for the best good of the people. He was a Methodist in religion, and politically a staunch supporter of the Democratic Party. At the time of his enlistment in the army, the Major was the main support of his mother and sister, and continued so to be until his last sickness.

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