

Biographical Annals of Cumberland County, Pennsylvania; Containing Biographical Sketches of Prominent and Representative Citizens and of Many of The Early Settled Families. Illustrated. Chicago: The Genealogical Publishing Co., 1905.



Capt. William E. Miller. One of the best known and most highly esteemed citizens of Carlisle is the practical, unassuming individual whose name introduces this biographical sketch. He is of German ancestry, both paternally and maternally.

Christian Miller, his paternal great-great-great-grandfather, with his wife, **Anna Margaret**, and children, **Andrew**, **Anlis** and **Anna Barbara**, came from Germany in 1730, landing at Philadelphia from the ship "Joyce" on the 30th of November of that year. **Christian Miller's** son **Andrew** became one of the pioneers of the part of Lancaster County that has since been erected into Lebanon, receiving a warrant for land within its bounds as early as 1743. He bore his full share of the hardships and dangers of his adopted land, and it is upon record that during the French and Indian wars he was a lieutenant in Capt. Matthew Dill's Company, of Col. Benjamin Chambers' Regiment. On

Nov. 5, 1738, he married **Margaret Funk**, who bore him the following children: **Abraham**, **Jacob**, **Andrew** and **Christina**. He died in 1754, and his widow afterward married **Christian Burkholder**. **Abraham Miller**, the eldest son of **Andrew** and **Margaret (Funk) Miller**, came into possession of the greater portion of his father's real estate and in 1762 laid out upon it the town now known as Annville, situated six miles west from the city of Lebanon. Formerly the place for many years was known by the name of Millerstown. **Abraham Miller** married **Rebecca**, daughter of **John Philip** and **Elizabeth Eprecht**, of Harrisburg, and about the year 1777 moved from Lancaster County to the banks of the Yellow Breeches, a short distance from Lisburn, in Cumberland County. He died in 1805, and his remains are interred upon the top of a high hill on the farm on which he lived. **Abraham** and **Rebecca (Eprecht) Miller** had the following children: **Joseph**, **Abraham**, **Isaac**, **Jacob**, **Andrew**, **John**, **Philip** and **Rebecca**.

Abraham Miller, the second son of **Abraham** and **Rebecca Miller**, married **Catharine**, a daughter of **Frederick Boyer**, a Revolutionary soldier, son of **Joseph** and **Mary Boyer** of York County. His first wife died without issue, and he afterward married **Elizabeth Boyer**, a sister of his first wife. This second **Abraham Miller** lived for most of his lifetime on the Yellow Breeches Creek near the place where his father settled in 1777. By occupation he was a fuller, and he operated a fulling-mill which **Abraham Miller**, his father, built in that vicinity and which is still (1904) in existence. Later in life he moved from the Yellow Breeches to Mechanicsburg, where he began merchandising, and from Mechanicsburg he removed to Abbottstown, Adams County, where he continued in the mercantile business until his death. **Abraham** and **Elizabeth (Boyer) Miller** had children as follows: **Joseph**, **Andrew G.**, **Martin**, **John**, **Eliza**, **Catharine** and **Daniel**.

Andrew G. Miller, the second son of **Abraham** and **Elizabeth (Boyer) Miller**, was born at the aforementioned fulling mill, in Allen (now Lower Allen) Township, on June 7, 1811. Like his father

and grandfather before him he became a fuller, starting to learn the trade with his partner, and completing it with his cousin, **Edward Miller**, who had a fulling-mill at Roseburg, near Ickesburg, Perry County. **Edward Miller** was a son of **John Miller**. He was married to **Polly Umberger**, a daughter of **David** and **Dorothy (Maish) Umberger**, who lived in York County, a short distance east of Lisburn. Through living in the family of his cousin **Edward**, **Andrew G. Miller** became acquainted with **Eleanor Umberger**, a sister of his cousin's wife, which acquaintance ripened into love, and they became man and wife. **The Umbergers** were also of German origin. **David Umberger**, the father of **Polly** and **Eleanor**, was a son of **Adam** and **Mary Gertrude (Vernon) Umberger**, and a grandson of **Michael** and **Anna Maria (Rambler) Umberger**, and **Michael Umberger** was a son of **Henry Umberger**, who was born in Germany in 1688, and landed at Philadelphia from the ship "Hope" on Aug. 28, 1733. An early Lancaster County church record contains the information that **Michael Umberger** was married to **Anna Maria Rambler**, of Tulpehocken, on Oct. 18, 1784, at the hands of the Rev. John Casper Stoever.

After his marriage **Andrew G. Miller** started in the fulling business on his own account, renting a fulling-mill which then stood on the banks of the Conedoguin Creek, near what is now known as Burgner's Mill, in West Pennsboro Township. He continued in the fulling business one year and then he and a man named **Jonathan Roberts** bought out a general store at West Hill, which they jointly conducted for two years. At the end of that time he sold his interest in this mercantile venture and bought a hotel and store at Centerville, Penn Township. Here he was in business until 1840, when he bought from **George Martin** the store property at the "Stone House," in Dickinson Township, where he conducted a flourishing mercantile business until the spring of 1848, when he again made a change. Returning to Centerville he there bought a property which included a farm, hotel, store and blacksmith shop, and there farmed, kept store and gave much attention to general business for about eight years. Along about 1850 he met with an affliction that cost him the loss of one of his limbs. When making fires he would break sticks for kindling across his knee and in doing this inflicted an injury which never healed, and finally amputation had to be resorted to in order to save his life. After a stay of about seven years in Centerville he sold out his interests there and bought a farm lying along the Yellow Breeches Creek in the same township. The loss of one of his limbs did not seriously impair **Andrew G. Miller's** business energy. As soon as he had recovered from the effects of the amputation he resumed his characteristic enterprise, and reaching out beyond the limits of his immediate neighborhood became one of the leading spirits in the organization of the Farmers & Mechanics Bank at Shippensburg. Becoming first cashier and afterward president of this institution, he removed to the town of Shippensburg, where he resided till his death. He was a potential factor in politics as well as in the business field, and in 1868 was elected State senator from the district then composed of Cumberland and York Counties. In religion he affiliated with the Presbyterian Church. He died Feb. 14, 1880. His wife died Feb. 2, 1896, at Carlisle, and their remains are buried in Spring Hill Cemetery, at Shippensburg.

Andrew G. and Eleanor (Umberger) Miller had children as follows: **William Edward**, **Mary Elizabeth**, **John Roberts**, **Sarah Eleanor**, **Henrietta M.** and **Andrew George**. **Mary Elizabeth** died Feb. 16, 1839, in infancy; **John R.** is an attorney-at-law and was formerly burgess of Carlisle; **Sarah Eleanor** married **Henry Lee Snyder**, of the U. S. Navy; **Henrietta M.** married **George Bridges**, and **Andrew George** is an attorney-at-law, and formerly was

District Attorney of Cumberland County (he married **Jennie Kennedy**, who a few years after their marriage died without issue).

William Edward Miller, the eldest child of **Andrew G.** and **Eleanor (Umberger) Miller**, and the special subject of this sketch, was born at West Hill, Cumberland County, Feb. 5, 1836. Until the breaking out of the Civil war he remained at home, receiving such education as the district schools then afforded and working upon the farm. Through the stress of circumstances it early fell to his lot to direct the farming operations for his father, which involved much hard work and careful, economical management, but gave him a discipline which he turned to good account in after life. At the beginning of the war he enlisted, becoming a private in Company H, 3d Pennsylvania Cavalry, and at the organization of the company was made its second lieutenant. His military career from start to finish was a hard and dangerous one. In the winter of 1861-62 his regiment was stationed at Camp Marcy, Va., where it underwent a rigid course of training conducted by Col. W. W. Averill, a graduate of West Point Military Academy. When the celebrated peninsular campaign began in the following spring it was sent to Yorktown, where it received its baptism of fire, and then was kept well in front as the army advanced. After the evacuation of the defenses at Yorktown it followed hard on the heels of the Confederates until they were driven behind Fort Magruder, at Williamsburg, and when driven from that position followed them in hot pursuit beyond the Chickahominy. During the period of preparation for the capture of Richmond **Lieut. Miller** was detailed to hunt out and make maps of the roads which led to the James River, and in this his duty at times led him as much as twenty miles into the enemy's country, which fact is a matter of record in "*Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*," Volume H, page 431. While on the peninsular campaign he met the Count de Paris and a friendship sprang up between the two which lasted until the death of that distinguished French soldier and author. At Antietam, on Sept. 16, 1862, **Lieut. Miller's** regiment led Gen. Hooker's advance across Antietam creek, and as a detail Company H, under his command, drew the first fire of the enemy in that famous and bloody battle. For this daring action he was afterward promoted to the captaincy of his company over all the first lieutenants in the regiment. His regiment was one of the most active in the Army of the Potomac, and in the campaigns of 1863 took conspicuous part in the battles of Brandy Station, Aldie, Middleburg, Upperville, Hay Market and Gettysburg. At Gettysburg **Capt. Miller** was in command of a squadron of four companies and won proud distinction by making a timely charge and breaking the flank of Wade Hampton and Fitzhugh Lee's commands, in their attempt to turn the extreme right of the Union Army. The charge was made in violation of orders, but the supreme importance of making it and the brilliancy of its execution were recognized by the government in awarding him a medal of honor. The Secretary of War, in forwarding this medal, wrote:

At Gettysburg, July 3, 1863, this officer, then Captain, 3d Pennsylvania Cavalry, and commanding a squadron of four troops of his regiment, seeing an opportunity to strike in flank an attacking column of the enemy's cavalry that was then being charged in front, exceeded his own instructions and without orders led a charge of his squadron upon the flank of the enemy, checked his attack and cut off and dispersed the rear of his' column.

The reverse side of the medal bears the following inscription:

The Congress to Captain W. E. Miller. Company H, 3d Pennsylvania Cavalry, for Gallantry at Gettysburg, July 3d, 1863.

This extraordinary action attracted the attention of military authorities of this and other countries, and Arthur L. Wagner, U. S. A., in his work on "*Organization and Tactics*," pages 187 and 222, refers to it as follows: "At Balaklava a heavy force of Russian Cavalry advancing to attack the British Heavy Brigade, deliberately slackened its pace before contact and received a counter charge at a halt. In this action the flank of the Russian Cavalry was exposed to the Light Brigade, whose commander, Lord Cardigan, failed to avail himself of the opportunity thus presented because his orders did not contemplate such action; but he afterwards engaged in a heroic but senseless charge on the Russian batteries, which furnished a theme for poets but not a model for a cavalry general. In the great cavalry battle at Gettysburg, **Captain Miller**, of the 3d Pennsylvania Cavalry, seeing an opportunity to strike Wade Hampton's column in flank as it was charged in front by Custer, turned to his lieutenant with the remark: "*I have been ordered to hold this position, but, if you will back me in case I am court-martialed for disobedience, I will order a charge.*" The charge was opportune and effective and no mention of a court martial was ever made. **Miller's** conduct on this occasion is in striking contrast with that of Cardigan at Balaklava."

After the war closed **Capt. Miller** engaged in the hardware business in Carlisle and continued at that until 1898, in which year he was elected to the Pennsylvania State Senate from the district composed of Cumberland and Adams Counties. He is of a retiring disposition, but firm in his convictions and purposes. Some estimate of the man can be found in the remarks made by his old commander, Gen. D. McM. Gregg, at the dedication of the cavalry shaft at Gettysburg, on Oct. 15, 1884: "*Of course everybody expects to hear from **Capt. Miller**, whose name is so inseparably and honorably connected with our shaft. Possibly, having built so well on the very ground on which he fought so well, he will try to escape talking, which he can do well also. How pointedly he can write you can all attest.*"

Capt. Miller has long been conspicuous in his native county as a Democrat and a party worker. He served twice as chairman of the Democratic County Committee, once in 1877, when the Democratic State ticket was given over one thousand majority, and again in 1888, when Cleveland was given a majority of 696 over Harrison. In 1878 he was a member of the Democratic State Central Committee. In municipal affairs he has always borne a conspicuous part. He was twice elected chief burgess of Carlisle, first in 1882 and again in 1883, and was a member of the Carlisle board of health for about twelve years, and president of that body for four years. In 1898, after much importuning from members of both political parties, he consented to stand as a candidate for the State Senate and was easily nominated and also easily elected. As a legislator he was assiduous and attentive to the interests of his constituents, and discharged the entire roll of his duties with conscientious fidelity. His term included the famous session that was dead-locked upon the election of United States senator, and he was present and voted upon all the ballots that were held. He also had the honor of being his party's nominee for president pro tem of the Senate. In Grand Army circles he has always been active and prominent and was the first Commander of Capt. Colwell Post, No. 201. He is a member of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the United States, and while he has filled various positions of honor and responsibility he has never aspired to any of the places which he has filled. He is secretary of the

Carlisle Board of Trade and gives much of his time and labor to the promotion of the industrial welfare of the town. Since relinquishing the hardware business he has turned his attention to writing fire insurance, in which he highly succeeded in building up a very satisfactory line.

Capt. William E. Miller has been twice married. His first wife was **Elizabeth Ann Hocker**, daughter of **John** and **Elizabeth (Henry) Hocker**, of Hockersville, Penn Township. **Mrs. Miller** died Sept. 8, 1859, at the age of twenty-three years, leaving two daughters, named respectively **Carrie Olivia Rankin** and **Elizabeth**. **Elizabeth** died in April, 1862. **Carrie** grew to womanhood and married **George K. McCormick**. By whom she has three children, **William**, **Anna** and **George K.** **Mr. McCormick** is a civil engineer and at present is located at Knoxville, Tennessee.

On June 25, 1868, **Capt. Miller** married for his second wife **Anna DePui Bush**, daughter of **J. S. Bush**, of Tioga, Tioga Co., Pa., who died Aug. 4, 1894, leaving no issue. Both wives were intelligent, cultured, amiable ladies and the loss of each was a sore bereavement. **Mrs. Anna DePui (Bush) Miller** was a writer of acknowledged ability, a contributor to literary periodicals and author of a book entitled "*Who and What*." Such is the record of **Capt. William E. Miller**, a worthy citizen and a gallant soldier.

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