and the latter of Pittsfield. The family remained in Auburn until Edward L., was seventeen years old, during the most of which period, after he had reached a suitable age, he attended the common schools of that village, at the same time applying himself in his leisure hours to the acquirement of such education as was obtainable with his limited advantages.

During the last three years of his life in Auburn Mr. Stevenson was in the employ of Chauncey H. Coe, who then kept a hotel there and had charge of that division of the great stage route running from Buffalo to Albany. In the stage office the young man made himself thoroughly conversant with the details of that business; and so well did he please his employer that when Mr. Coe sold out his business in Auburn and came to Buffalo, he brought his assistant with him. Mr. Stevenson arrived in Buffalo on the 18th of October, 1823. His employer purchased the western division of the stage route from Sylvanus Marvin, a brother of the late Mrs. Judge Walden, and Mr. Stevenson was at once placed in the office. In 1825 Mr. Coe exchanged his stage business with his brother, Bela D. Coe, then of Canandaigua, who came to Buffalo and took charge of the stage line, still retaining Mr. Stevenson in the office.

The stage route from Buffalo to Albany constituted in those days an enterprise of very considerable magnitude. At one time four regular lines of coaches left Buffalo—the "Telegraph" line, which limited the number of its passengers to six and in seasons of good roads made the distance to Albany in forty-eight hours, charging fifteen dollars fare; the "Pilot" line, the "Diligence," and the regular mail and accommodation line. The three latter charged about ten dollars fare. Old residents tell many amusing and interesting experiences while bowling along in the old days of stage travel.

Immediately upon the arrival of Mr. Stevenson in Buffalo he entered upon the duties in the stage office, which was then located in the old Mansion House, but after about six months was removed to the building in which was located the old and long popular Eagle tavern, where it permanently remained. This division of the stage line was operated by Mr. Coe for a number of years, a large share of the management of which devolved upon Mr. Stevenson. It was finally sold to Benjamin Rathbun a short time previous to his disastrous bankruptcy, Mr. Stevenson's continued service being a stipulation in the bargain. Upon the occurrence of that memorable event, the assignees (Messrs. Lewis F. Allen, Joseph Clary, Millard Fillmore, and David E. Evans,) placed the stage business in the sole charge of Mr. Stevenson pending the settlement of the estate; and it is said that at the time they closed up the wrecked affairs of the famous speculator, the stage business was the only portion of his property that was found to be paying a profit.

Mr. Stevenson continued in the stage office until the spring of 1842, at which time the Buffalo & Attica Railroad was completed, forming the last link in the line from Buffalo to Albany and practically ending the stage business over that route forever. During the period since Mr. Stevenson's arrival in Buffalo and the date just mentioned, he made numerous investments in land, chiefly under the advice of his friend, the late Hon. Albert H. Tracy, and his employer, Mr. Coe. These real estate operations, being carefully and judiciously conducted, yielded handsome profits and laid the foundation of his present large fortune. He is one of the comparatively few men whose wisdom, prudence and foresight carried him safely through the panic of 1836 and other financial revulsions, in which such a large portion of the business men of the country were overwhelmed.

Mr. Stevenson was for nearly twenty-five years engaged with his brother, the late George Stevenson, in conducting a livery business in this city. At one period they kept in stable sixty horses and practically controlled that business in the community.

In 1837 Mr. Stevenson was elected Alderman of the Third ward of Buffalo, and was again elected to the same office in 1839; the duties of this office he discharging to the eminent satisfaction of his constituents and for the best good of the city. He is now a trustee of the Buffalo Savings Bank; a director in the Bank of Buffalo; was at one time a real estate commissioner of the Young Men's Association, in which he has always felt a warm interest, and a director of the Buffalo Insurance Company. He is an attendant at St. Paul's Church, of which he has been one of the vestrymen. In person Mr. Stevenson is naturally of a retiring disposition, never courting the notice of the public and devoting himself quietly to the management of his own affairs. For many years past he has devoted his attention almost entirely to the care of his large real estate interests, and now, having accumulated a competence and won the unqualified respect and friendship of all with whom
he has come in contact during his long life in Buffalo, he may look back upon a long career of honor and usefulness. It is his pride to say that he has transacted business within a circle of one hundred feet from his present office on Main street for a period of sixty years.

Mr. Stevenson was married in 1832 to Miss Amelia S. Geer, of Shelburne, Chittenden county, Vt. She was a daughter of William and Sally Geer, of that State. They have had two children—Edward Henry, born October 23, 1838, died May 5, 1840; and George F. Stevenson, born May 9, 1849, died May 23, 1878. The latter was one of the most promising and respected young men of Buffalo, and his loss was a terrible blow to his fond parents. This sketch may be appropriately closed with a brief extract from an obituary printed in the Buffalo Express at the time of his death:

"Outside the circle of family friends and acquaintances, few of our readers could realize what a world of sorrow is embodied in the formal, terse and customary announcement of the death of George F. Stevenson. That circle is an unusually large one, it is true, for the deceased was known personally to many of the young people of Buffalo, as his parents are among our oldest and most respected citizens; but few even of these can understand what a crushing weight of affliction is caused by his death. An only child of wealthy parents, amiable, intelligent, affectionate and irreplaceable in conduct, he seemed to be the darling of fortune, as he was the idol of his parents. From early childhood he was frail in form and of a delicate constitution, the source of such constant anxiety and nervous solicitude as can be appreciated only by fathers and mothers whose hopes of happiness have hung trembling upon the threatened life of a beloved child. He grew stronger as he grew towards manhood; but these encouraging indications were deceptive, as they usually are. All that could be done or thought of, by love unbounded and at expense without limitation, to remove the impending shadow, was done promptly and persistently in hope and fear, but, alas, without avail. Some months ago the weary young traveler was brought home—brought home to die, as he knew, and he waited for the inevitable event in hourly suffering, borne with a sweet patience and a rare courage that endeared him the more to the sorrowing surroundings. At last the fatal messenger came, and we can say nothing to mitigate the profound affliction of the bereaved parents. What consolation there may be in the sincere sympathy of friends they will be sure to find. We also hope there may be for them some comfort in the thought that his beautiful character will not soon be forgotten."

ROBERT G. STEWART.—Near the close of the eighteenth century Thomas Stewart and Jeanette Duff—having been joined in the bonds of matrimony at their native place, Edinburg, Scotland—came to this country and settled in the town of Fenner, Madison county, N. Y. Mr. Stewart had been brought up a farmer, and he followed this vocation after coming to America. He was among the pioneers or early settlers of Madison county, and in the observance of the prudent and industrious habits for which the Scotch people are noted, he became one of the well-to-do farmers of Central New York. He was an influential man in the community where he lived.

Six sons and two daughters were born to Mr. Stewart, all of whom grew to man or womanhood except one daughter that died in infancy. The fourth son was christened Robert G. Stewart, and is the subject of this sketch. He was born on Christmas Day in 1808, at the farm homestead in the town of Fenner. His early years were spent in the manner of country boys of those days, attending school in the winter months, and when old enough doing farm work in the summer. When a boy, Mr. Stewart displayed the wonderful energy, industry and push which characterized his career in after life. It is said of him that he was never idle. He was ever seeking employment and utilizing his time to some good purpose.

Mr. Stewart had no educational advantages other than those afforded by the common district schools. But in these he acquired a thorough knowledge of the rudiments of a good English education. He purchased a farm in his native town upon attaining his majority and was prosperous and successful in its management.

On the 16th of October, 1836, when nearly twenty-eight years of age, Mr. Stewart was married to Lydia Coman, daughter of a farmer of Monroeville, in the county of Madison. The young couple settled upon the farm and soon were surrounded with all the comforts that pertain to a prosperous and thriving country home-life. Mr. Stewart's uprightness of character and business reputation soon gained for him a leading position in the community where he had been reared. He was active in politics, and deeply interested in the management of public affairs. When quite young he was elected Supervisor of the town, and was continued in the office for eight consecutive terms. He was also chosen a member of the Assembly for one session by the old Whig party, to which organization he belonged. Like many young men of forty years ago, Mr. Stewart was a great admirer of
Henry Clay, and the defeat of the great Kentuckian for the Presidency in 1844, was a personal sorrow to him.

In 1855, at the age of forty-seven, Mr. Stewart was induced to venture in business pursuits other than farming, and he joined some of his friends and relatives in the establishment of a manufacturing enterprise in this city. The business was that of an extensive distillery, located at Black Rock, which was carried on under the firm name of Shoemaker, Stewart & Co. The firm was composed of John Shoemaker, Robert G. Stewart and his brother, Alexander, his cousins Daniel and Robert Stewart, and G. N. Sherwood.

At the time of entering this concern Mr. Stewart was possessed of only about $10,000, and the firm, although embracing several names, was not particularly a strong one financially. But it had plenty of the real Scotch grit, and therefore success was assured. Yet it was several years before the company advanced to that period where they felt absolutely certain of it. After four or five years one or two changes occurred in the firm, one of which was the retirement of Mr. Sherwood, whose interest was purchased by Mr. Thomas Graves, a banker of Auburn, who added more capital to the concern. Soon after this change the war came on and the internal revenue tax upon highwines was a boon for the Black Rock distillers, as it was to other holders of this commodity. A tax of two dollars per gallon was equivalent to an addition of that amount to their stock on hand, which fortunately was very large at that time, and they reaped the benefits.

Mr. Stewart retired from the distilling business after about ten years, and in connection with his brother, Alexander, purchased a half interest in the Exchange Elevator. He also became interested in the commission and forwarding business with the firm of Stewart, Graves & Co.; Mr. Graves, of Auburn, being a partner in this house as he was in the distillery. The concern did a successful business for several years.

In 1873, upon the formation of the Bank of Commerce, Mr. Stewart was chosen President, and continued to fill the responsible position up to the time of his death. He and his brother subscribed for one-fifth of the capital stock of the bank. Mr. Stewart was also a Director in the Merchants’ Bank that was started just prior to his death. He was an active member of the Board of Trade, and in all business relations and industrial pursuits he occupies a place in the front rank. His failing health for the last ten years, however, prevented his active participation in business affairs so much as he desired to.

Mr. Stewart never occupied any official station after taking up his residence in Buffalo. Business engrossed his attention, and suited his taste much better. He did not fail, however, to manifest his interest in public affairs. Few men were more concerned in the politics of the country than Robert G. Stewart. It may be said of him that he was an active politician in the best sense of that term. He sought to promote the success of his party for the good of the country and not to advance his personal interests. He sought no office, nor would he accept any. He was a radical Republican from the time the party was organized, and was an earnest, enthusiastic and liberal supporter of the Government in its efforts to put down the great Rebellion of 1861.

Mr. Stewart was very liberal in his religious sentiments. He was reared in the old Scotch Presbyterian faith, and continued through life to manifest his adherence to that doctrine, as much as to any religious belief, but he never became a member of any Christian church. He believed in doing good as well as professing it, and in acting right as well as in assuming to do so.

Mr. Stewart’s business connection with his unmarried brother, Alexander, was somewhat unusual. From boyhood they had all their affairs in common, each laboring and planning for the promotion and advancement of their united interest. They had as it were, but one purse. No jealousies or disputes ever disturbed the harmony of this relation.

An agreement was made, however, between the brothers that each should execute a will making the survivor, residuary legatee of the one who should die first, and these instruments were made and executed, Alexander, the bachelor, dying first. The subject of this sketch then changed his will, devising the joint estate to his widow, with the exception of certain specific bequests to personal friends and for other purposes. Both of them died in the same year.

Mr. Stewart died on the 28th of October, 1884, at the age of nearly seventy-three years. Four years before his death he had a paralytic stroke, from which he never fully recovered, and which greatly enfeebled him. He bore the infirmity uncomplainingly and continued to give his attention to business more than his crippled condition would seem to justify. He had no children.
JAMES TILLINGHAST.—The Tillinghast family in America originated with the Rev. and Elder Pardon Tillinghast, who was born at Seven Cliffs, in Sussex, near Beachy Head, on the south coast of England, in 1622. He served in Cromwell's army and came from England to Providence, R. I., as one of the Roger Williams Baptist colony, on the 19th of November, 1645, at the age of twenty-three. As appears by "Book No. 1," of the town records of Providence, R. I., he was received as a quarter-sharesman, or land-owner, and was "of the particular Baptist order and remarkable for his plainness and piety, and was set as a Baptist minister." (See Benedict's History.) He at first preached in a grove on his lot of ground at the north end of the town, the wagon road being at the front and the river at the back; a few years later he built a small building to use in bad weather; and, according to the records of the First Baptist Church of Providence, at his own expense and upon his own ground, built the first meeting-house which, in 1700, he gave, with the lot on which it stood, to the first Baptist society organized in America; which is now (1884) the First Baptist Church property of Providence, R. I. The meeting-house was removed and a larger one erected in its stead in 1718. Elder Pardon Tillinghast continued to preach in it until about the time of his death, which occurred April 27, 1719, at the age of ninety-seven. His shield, brought from England, bore the motto, "Be just and fear not," and which, as a good Christian, he endeavored to live up to.

The family and his descendants continued to live in Rhode Island for many years, and in 1820, Gideon Tillinghast, father of James Tillinghast, having served an apprenticeship as a mechanic at Walpole, Mass., where he helped to build the first power looms for weaving cotton and woolen fabrics, was employed by Levi Bebee, of Cooperstown, N. Y., to come there and superintend the construction of a cotton factory called the Hope Mills, near that village, in which were built and started the first power weaving looms used in the State of New York for making cotton cloth. In the year 1824 he removed to Whitesboro, near Utica, N. Y., to take charge of the starting of cotton mills at that place. In 1827 he removed to Brownville, Jefferson county, N. Y., where in company with Averill & Smith and others, of Cooperstown, N. Y., started a foundry and machine shop and erected cotton mills, and operated them for a number of years. He afterwards went to Little Falls to superintend the construction and operation of cotton mills at that place. He died there on the 13th of October, 1860, at the age of sixty-five years, leaving three children—James, Francis D., and Annie Tillinghast.

James Tillinghast, the subject of this sketch, was born at Cooperstown, Otsego county, N. Y., May 8th, 1822. His father having charge of cotton factories and machine shops connected with them, James spent most of his time when not at school and while yet a boy, in and about the shops, acquiring thus a fancy for and considerable practical knowledge as a mechanic, without the usual process of apprenticeship. In 1837, at the age of fifteen, he was employed as a clerk in a country store at Brownville. In the fall of 1838 he entered the employ of Bell & Kirby (James A. Bell and Major Edmund Kirby), who opened a country store at Dexter, Jefferson county, N. Y., on the dock located just above the mouth of Black river, on Lake Ontario. For this firm Mr. Tillinghast acted as both clerk and bookkeeper. Captain Bradley afterwards became a member of the firm, and having charge of the land department of the parties projecting the extension of the then small village of Dexter, the keeping of the land company’s books was added to the young clerk’s duties of making fires, sweeping the store, waiting upon customers in the sale of groceries, drugs, hardware and dry goods, and keeping four sets of books. For this comprehensive work he was paid eight dollars a month, four of which he gave for his board and washing. Mr. Bell was the only member of the firm who assisted in attending to the detail business of the firm.

At that time Messrs. Massey & Co., owned and managed a transportation line of steamboats and other vessels running between Dexter and Oswego. This line was purchased in the winter of 1839 by Mr. Tillinghast’s employers, and the charge of its business added to his duties. This was his first experience in the transportation business.* Mr. Tillinghast continued with this firm in the

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* There were no railroads at that time to the northern part of the State, and the freight, lumber and passengers from Jefferson county went by boat from Dexter and Sackett’s Harbor to Oswego, from Oswego to Albany and New York by canals. Between Dexter, Sackett’s Harbor and interior places in Jefferson county, goods and passengers were casted by teams. Fine lumber for eastern markets was then largely produced in the Black River district and sent by team to Dexter, where it was shipped on boats, sail-rigged, to Oswego; there the sails were taken down and the boats towed through the canals to Albany, when the sails were again rigged and the boats sailed to New York. One of these boats was named the “Jim Wood.”
lake transportation business until the winter of 1840, when he went to Brownville and took charge of the Brownville Cotton Manufacturing Company's store and office affairs. In the fall of 1841 he joined Alexander Brown in the firm of Brown & Tillinghast, as merchants in the country store at Brownville; buying out the firm of C. K. Loomis & Co. In the fall of 1843 he sold his interest in this business to again engage in the lake trade. In the winter of 1843 a sail vessel was built at Pillar Point, opposite Sackett's Harbor, which was named after H. H. Sizer, of Buffalo. She was completed in the following spring and Captain Jack Wilson appointed her master, with Mr. Tillinghast as super-cargo. They sailed from Sackett's Harbor at the opening of navigation in 1844 for Chicago, having on board some 134 passengers and their effects, household goods, farming utensils, etc. The passengers carried their own provisions and slept in the hold of the vessel. Arriving at Oswego and finding it necessary to have more load on the vessel to insure safety, Mr. Tillinghast bought of Richmond & Co., 200 barrels of salt and stored it in the hold of the vessel for ballast. A few more passengers were taken on at Oswego and other points, and after encountering a severe gale on Lake Huron, which carried away the sails and mainmast and nearly wrecked the vessel, they made Chicago in safety, landing the passengers on the only dock in the place—known as the Newberry & Dole dock, on the north side of the river. The disabled vessel had to be taken across the lake to Grand River, where Grand Haven now is, to get pine trees for masts, which were put in and new sails made at Chicago.

Not being able to get eastward freight at Chicago to load his vessel, Mr. Tillinghast received instructions from Buffalo about the first of June to purchase, as fast as possible, wheat enough to load the vessel, requiring about 3,500 bushels. He accordingly began buying wheat at Chicago, Racine and Michigan City, and after long delay was able to secure 1,551 bushels at Chicago, less than 400 at Racine, and about 900 at Michigan City. With these three lots, which were all that could be bought in those places, he sailed for Buffalo, arriving during the famous September gale of 1844, where the wheat was sold so as to net about forty-eight cents per bushel for freight.

All grain at western points was then handled in bags, there being no elevators or grain warehouses, and one of the greatest difficulties in handling it was to keep the sailors from stealing empty bags to make their clothes; the bags were, therefore, counted in and out, and the vessel required to pay for what were missing. Since then all this is changed, and millions of bushels are now handled in place of the hundreds of those days, for which elevators and steam power have taken the place of hand labor and bags. These improvements were a necessity; for, while a vessel of 3,500 bushels capacity could be loaded in a reasonable time by the old method, the great 60,000 bushel cargoes of the present time could not be successfully handled in that way.

Mr. Tillinghast continued in the lake trade until 1846, when, in company with his father, he removed to Little Falls, N. Y., where they started a machine shop and foundry. He continued there until the winter of 1850, when he gave up his interest in the business to his father, to try his hand at railroading. In the spring of 1851 he was employed on the Utica & Schenectady road as extra fireman of engine No. 10, hauling a gravel train. About this time his old friends in Jefferson county had begun building the Rome & Watertown Railroad, with Robert B. Doxtater as president. At the suggestion of William Lord, of Brownville, and Norris M. Woodruff, of Watertown, Mr. Doxtater sent for Mr. Tillinghast to meet him at Rome, which he did in July, 1851. Mr. Doxtater asked him to come to Rome and work for the new road, which then had about twelve miles of track finished and one engine. Mr. Tillinghast accepted the offer and began serving as extra fireman, brakeman, conductor, mechanic or agent, doing whatever service was most needed at the time, and finally, as the best man available, drifted into the position of acting Mechanic and Assistant Superintendent, Mr. J. L. Grant being the General Superintendent. He continued with that road until April, 1856. Mr. Grant had in the meantime accepted the position of General Manager of the Northern Railway of Canada, from Toronto to Collingwood; he requested Mr. Tillinghast to go with him as Superintendent of Motive Power and Assistant General Superintendent, and he consented, removing to Toronto for that purpose. That line running in connection with steamboat lines between Collingwood and Chicago, and Toronto and Oswego, brought him again in connection with the lake traffic, and he became interested in steam propellers. Retiring from the Collingwood Railroad December 31, 1862, he joined with Captain R. Montgomery, of Buffalo, and Mr. E. B. Ward, of Detroit, in forming a line of propellers to run between Goderich, Port Huron and Chicago in connection with the Grand Trunk Railway and the Buffalo & Lake Huron road, removing to Buffalo.
April 1st, 1863. Here he concluded, after looking about considerably, to make his future home, which he has done, although at times his business has required him to have his office headquarters at other places.

Mr. Tillinghast continued in the lake trade until April, 1864, when, at the request of M. L. Sykes, President, and H. H. Porter, general manager of the Michigan Southern Railroad, he consented to act temporarily as Superintendent of Motive Power until another person might be found for the position. His headquarters were established at Elkhart, Ind. He sold out his steamboat interest and remained at Elkhart until July, 1864, when his old friend, J. Lewis Grant, who had been appointed General Superintendent of the Buffalo & Erie Railroad, requested him as an old and tried friend to come and act as Assistant General Superintendent, with charge of the mechanical and machinery departments. This position he accepted, partly because it would bring him back to Buffalo, occupying it until February 8, 1865, when Dean Richmond, then President of the Buffalo & Erie and New York Central road, requested him to come into the service of the latter as Superintendent of the Western Division, in place of Mr. Harlow Chittenden, who was changed to the place of General Superintendent at Albany, vice Chauncey Vibbard, who retired from the service. Mr. Tillinghast accepted the appointment, and has ever since been in the New York Central Railroad interest and service.

In 1867 Commodore Vanderbilt obtained a large interest in the New York Central road, and on his first trip of inspection over the road, met Mr. J. Tillinghast. From that date and that meeting the Commodore became and continued his true, firm friend; and after the many changes that resulted in Commodore Vanderbilt’s acquisition and control of the property, he made Mr. Tillinghast its General Superintendent, with headquarters at Albany. During the Commodore’s administration “until his death, which occurred on the 4th of January, 1877,” Mr. Tillinghast enjoyed his full confidence and was entrusted with many confidential duties. It was while he was with the Commodore, on various trips of observation over the property, and upon examination as to the growth of traffic and the prospects of future increased tonnage, that the plan of four tracks was arranged and carried out; the result being that the road in 1881, carried ten times the tonnage it did in 1865—the year the first through freight lines were established—and at an average rate of seventeeths of a cent per mile, instead of three and thirty-one-hundredths cents in 1865.

Mr. Tillinghast continued as General Superintendent of the New York Central until 1881. In addition to his duties in that office, in 1877 and 1878, he was President and Acting-Manager of the Canada Southern railroad and succeeded in getting passed through the Dominion Parliament at Ottawa, laws for the re-organization of the bonds and obligations of that road. By this means and with the important aid of William H. Vanderbilt, the Canada Southern was made a valuable and successful property and its stockholders saved from loss.

In 1881 Mr. Tillinghast retired from the position of General Superintendent and was appointed by William H. Vanderbilt assistant to the President of the New York Central & Hudson River railroad, relieving him from the arduous work connected with the details of operating the road, and was assigned special duties by the President; among them being the re-organization of the Pittsburg, McKeesport & Youghiogheny railroad, for the purpose of securing its construction from Pittsburgh to the Connelsville coal and coke district, in the interest of the roads that are largely controlled by Mr. Vanderbilt. In this work Mr. Tillinghast was successful, the road now being in operation and extensions of it to Harrisburg, Pa., being in process of construction in the same interests; that will connect with the Philadelphia & Reading system of roads at Harrisburg, Pa., and when completed will unite the interests of the New York Central, the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern and the Reading system of roads, both via the Pine Creek route to the New York Central, and via Pittsburgh and Ashtabula, to the Lake Shore & Michigan Southern.

In addition to his duties as assistant to the President, Mr. Tillinghast has, since the sad accident causing the death of his friend, the Hon. Webster Wagner, of the Wagner Sleeping Car Company, on January 13, 1882, acted as Vice-President and General Manager of that Company. Besides those duties, he has during the last year, as Vice-President of the Niagara River Bridge Co., had charge of and looked after the building of the new cantilever bridge, which was completed and opened for traffic December 20, 1883.

Mr. Tillinghast was married October 22, 1843, to Mary Williams, at Limerick, Jefferson county, N. Y., who died at Atlantic Beach, near Portland, Me., August 20, 1859, leaving three children—James W. Tillinghast, now manager for the Western Union Telegraph Co., at Buffalo, in which
service he has been since he left school; the other two children are daughters, the eldest, Kate, being married to Mr. P. P. Burtis, of the Howard Iron Works, Buffalo; and the other, Annie, being the wife of Mr. F. D. Stow, General Agent for the Merchants' Dispatch Transportation Co.

Mr. Tillinghast was married to his second wife, Mrs. Susan Williams, widow of his first wife's brother, on July 25, 1882. He is still in good health and active duty, and will be sixty-two years of age on the 8th of May, 1884. All the offices and positions of trust that he has held, have been tendered to him without solicitation of any kind; the chief rule of his life has been, to try and do his whole duty to whatever interests were placed in his charge, and he has never yet asked that his compensation be made any particular sum; invariably leaving that to the person tendering him a position. He has been a householder and resident of Buffalo for twenty-one years, though his duties keep him in New York a large share of the time. Still, as he decided when looking for a place to call home in 1862, he hopes when the time comes to retire from active railroad duty, to dwell in Buffalo continuously. His present residence is No. 138 Swan street, in the house he bought in 1874, from his old and tried friend, George B. Gates, who at that time had built a new home on Delaware avenue.

We will close this sketch of one of the most prominent railroad men in America, with a brief extract from the Utica Observer, of December 8 and 15, 1883, in the publication of the "Recollections of Hon. William W. Wright," who was formerly a Jefferson county man. In referring to the Northern New Yorkers now scattered over the country, he says:

"There was another Brownville boy who has for a number of years filled a large place in railroad circles. This is James Tillinghast, of the Central and other Vanderbilt roads; commencing as a fireman and engineer on a locomotive, he has occupied in succession all the intermediate places between the humble position in which he served on the Watertown road, and that of assistant to the President of the immense establishment with which he is connected. Dean Richmond was, perhaps, the first to discover his merit as a railroad operator and manager, and after that remarkable man had passed away, he came under the notice of the elder Vanderbilt who, like Richmond, promptly recognized his ability and fidelity as a railroad man and gave him his full confidence; he not only appreciated his ability and trustworthiness in the management of an enterprise in which he had acquired such a vast interest, but he treated him as a personal and trusted friend down to the period of his death. Tillinghast is a quiet, shrewd and thoughtful man, and remarkably plain and un-demonstrative in his manners. He is both wise and fortunate in his investments, and may safely he set down as among the wealthiest, as well as ablest, of the long list of Jefferson county people who have made their mark in the world."

SHELDON THOMPSON was born at Derby, Connecticut, on the 2d of July, 1735. His grandfather, Jabez Thompson, was a man of prominence in Derby. He was an officer in the French war of 1755 to 1763; and was one of the Selectmen of Derby from 1761 to 1764, and again in 1774 and 1775. At a town meeting held at Derby, November, 29, 1774, after the "Boston Tea Party," to consider the proceedings of the Continental Congress, held at Philadelphia, September 5, 1774, the plan of the association recommended by that Congress, was approved, and a committee of fourteen appointed, to see the same carried into execution. On this list the name of "Major Jabez Thompson," stands third. He was in command of the first troops sent from Derby immediately after the fighting at Lexington; and this company was probably in the battle of Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775.* His commission, dated May 1, 1775, "in the 15th year of the Reign of his Majesty, King George the Third," from Jonathan Trumbull, Captain-General, etc., appointed him "First Major of the First Regiment of the Inhabitants enlisted and assembled for the special Defense and Safety of his Majesty's said Colony." On the "Committee of Inspection" of Derby, appointed December 11, 1775, again his name appears third, preceded by the same two as before, but this time with the rank of "Colonel." Tradition recites that he was killed while in command of his troops on Long Island, on the retreat of the Revolutionary army, and that his body was buried with honor by the English officers who had been his companions in arms in the French war.

His father, also named Jabez Thompson, was born January 7, 1759, and was a sailor from his youth. He was lost at sea with his eldest son, in 1794, while in command of a West India trading vessel, owned by himself, and which was never heard from after leaving port. He was a man of most estimable character, as is attested by an oration on his life and services, delivered before King Hiram Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons, at Derby, December 23, 1794.

* Orcutt and Beardsley's History of the Old Town of Derby, pp. 169, 173, etc.
The mother of Sheldon Thompson was thus left a widow with a large family of children. The greater part of the property was lost with the father by the sinking of the ship, and a small farm only was left. The eldest surviving son, William, was a sailor, and it became necessary that the boys should care for themselves, leaving the farm for the mother and daughters. Hence, Sheldon Thompson, at the age of ten years went to sea as a cabin boy under the charge of his elder brother, William, then a master. In 1798, during our difficulties with France, he was in the West Indies, where he was taken prisoner, conveyed to Guadaloupe, and there confined for several months. He followed the sea until he became master of the ship *Keishah*, owned by Gillett & Townsend, of New Haven, having risen rapidly from a sailor before the mast to the command of a fine ship in the West India trade, at the age of twenty-four years.

In 1810, he abandoned the ocean, and came to Lewiston, N. Y. This year was the turning point of his career, and the first step of his prominence, as connected with the beginnings and early growth of the commerce and navigation of the great lakes. One of his partners, the late Hon. Alvin Bronson, of Oswego, has left a vivid sketch of the formation of their firm, from which the principal facts may be condensed.*

In 1810, Jacob Townsend, Alvin Bronson and Sheldon Thompson left the seaboard for the lakes, impelled by the British orders in Council, and Bonaparte's Berlin and Milan Decrees. The war, originating in the French revolution, had pervaded all Europe, and well-nigh involved the United States. The leading belligerents had ceased to respect neutral rights. Great Britain, when her military marine was exhausted by blockades, supplemented it by what were called "paper blockades," declaring, by an order in Council, the ports of France, her colonies and allies, in a state of blockade, without any naval investiture. France, in retaliation, by Bonaparte's Berlin and Milan Decrees, forbade all intercourse with Great Britain, her colonies and allies.

During the year 1809, Jacob Townsend, then of the firm of Gillett & Townsend, West India traders, of New Haven, visited the lake region, taking in his route, Salina, Oswego, Niagara, Erie and Pittsburgh, and returned to New Haven about the time that Bronson arrived from a voyage to the West Indies, and proposed to the latter to abandon the West India trade, and join him in his projected Lake enterprise.

This proposition found Bronson ready for almost any change. He had brought the first news to the underwriters and to his associate owners, of the capture of their schooner, the *Philaender*, by the French. She was condemned and sold at Guadaloupe, under the Berlin and Milan Decrees, for having been bound to an English port. She was bought in by the master, for whom it might concern, again fitted out and again captured. She was carried to Antigua, tried by a court of Admiralty, and condemned for having been bound to a French port.

Bronson said that if Sheldon Thompson would join them he would go. He felt that they were taking leave of civilization for the wilderness and wanted company in a project deemed wild by most Eastern men. Thompson promptly agreed to join the enterprise and proceed to Lake Erie to cut a frame for a coasting vessel before the sap ran. Articles of co-partnership were accordingly drawn up. These provided that the name of the firm should be Townsend, Bronson & Co., and that it should continue for four years; that each should contribute all his capital and his whole time and that the purpose of the co-partnership should be transacting business in the State of New York and elsewhere, of a mercantile nature, in the various branches of vending goods, ship-building and coasting on Lakes Ontario and Erie, and any other business in which the parties collectively might judge best to engage.

In March, 1810, Bronson proceeded to Oswego Falls, where he cut a frame for a schooner of one hundred tons, on the land now occupied by the village of Fulton. He then visited Oswego for the first time, and arranged for her construction in the same ship-yard where Eckford built the United States armed brig *Ohio* the year before. The same builder became famous soon after, by constructing the formidable navy of Lake Ontario, with unparalleled dispatch.

This schooner was called the *Charles & Ann*, measured about one hundred tons, and in the fall of 1810, was running under the command of John Hull. At the completion of this first vessel,

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* Hon. Alvin Bronson, died at Oswego, April 2, 1885, aged almost ninety-eight years. He communicated the facts herein set forth a few years before his death.

† Jacob Townsend was born in Stratford, Connecticut, in 1759. He married for his first wife, Betsey Clark, daughter of Sheldon Clark, of Durham, Connecticut, a descendant of Sheldon Thompson; and, for his second wife, Eunice, daughter of Riald Atwater, a descendant of David Atwater, an early settler of New Haven. He died in Buffalo, in 1839.
Biographical.

Sheldon Thompson took the carpenters, and proceeding to the Niagara river, above the Falls, built the schooner *Catharine* (named after his future wife), at Cayuga Creek, near the spot where LaSalle had built the *Griffin*, the first vessel navigating Lake Erie, one hundred and thirty-two years before. The *Catharine* was completed and in commission early in June, 1811, commanded by Seth Tucker, so that, in little more than one year, the two younger partners had completed two vessels; which, when the circumstances they had to encounter are considered, is evidence of that energy by which they were distinguished in after life. Both vessels figured as United States gunboats during the War of 1812.

The combined capital of the firm amounted to $14,000, of which Townsend furnished $7,000, Bronson $4,000, and Thompson $3,000. This was hardly adequate to the business in which they were embarked, but was supplemented by fair credit of their own; by the high credit of Isaac and Kneeland Townsend, of New Haven; and by liberal loans made by Isaac Bronson from his Bridgeport bank.

In addition to the coasting trade of the lakes, the firm established two stores, one at Lewiston, conducted by Townsend & Thompson, and one at Oswego, conducted by Bronson. Their principal trade during the two years preceding the war was the transportation of Onondaga salt for the lakes and the Pittsburgh market, before the Kanawha springs were worked. In addition to this they transported the stores for the military posts, the Indian annuities, the American Fur Company’s goods and peltries, and provisions for the frontier settlements. The route taken was by sloops up the Hudson to Albany, thence by Portage to Schenectady, then shipped on the Mohawk River boats, called “Durham” boats, to Rome, thence by canal into Wood Creek, through Oneida lake, and down Oswego River to the Oswego Falls, where there was a portage of one mile, and finally taking a smaller class of boats to Oswego. Here goods destined to the upper country took schooners to Lewiston, were transported by teams to Schlosser, where they again took “Durham” boats to Black Rock, and there took vessel and were aided by what Thompson denominated “horn-breeze,” (a team of several yoke of oxen), to ascend the rapids to Lake Erie.† The salt from Salina took the same course, landing for the Pittsburgh market at Erie, with a portage of sixteen miles to Waterford, down the French Creek and Allegany River to Pittsburgh. The Lake Ontario business consisted of goods and salt to the lake ports, flour, pork, beef, potash, etc., from the New York interior lake region and Genesee, with staves from the south shore of Lake Ontario, chiefly for the Montreal Market.

Sheldon Thompson married Catharine Barton, at Lewiston, April 6, 1811. She was born August 31, 1793, and was the daughter of Benjamin Barton, of Lewiston. He was born in Sussex county, New Jersey, in 1775, went to Geneva, New York, in 1788, was married at Canandaigua in 1792, and removed to Lewiston in 1807. He was a surveyor by profession, and surveyed much of the frontier. In 1805, he attended the sale of the “Mile Strip,” on the Niagara River, at the Surveyor General’s office in Albany. Here he met Judge and General Porter on the same business, and combined with them. They purchased several farm lots, including the property around the Falls, and bid off at public auction the landing places at Lewiston and Schlosser, for which they received a lease for twelve or thirteen years. In 1806, under the firm name of “Porter, Barton & Co.”, they commenced the carrying trade around the Niagara Falls, and formed the first regular line of forwarders that ever did business from tide-water to Lake Erie. Benjamin Barton died at Lewiston in 1842, aged seventy-two years.‡

The two firms being thus connected by marriage, formed a more or less intimate connection in business. They co-operated in their undertakings, harmonized in the main, and conducted almost the entire commerce of the lakes, which has since swollen to such gigantic proportions. Townsend, Bronson & Co. did the carrying trade to Lewiston; Porter, Barton & Co. received the profits for the portage from Lewiston to Schlosser; and both firms were interested in the development of the business beyond the latter point.

The new firm of Townsend, Bronson & Co., was scarcely well established in business, and the junior partner hardly settled in matrimony, when the frontier was disturbed by rumors of war.

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* The “Durham” boats were decked over, fore and aft, with running boards on each side, to which were attached cleats to secure good footing. A considerable opening was left in the center. They were propelled against adverse winds and currents by poles, and had a crew of five or six men.
† The very valuable assistance of Sheldon C. Townsend, Esq., of Lockport, son of Jacob Townsend, now in his eighty-fourth year, is gratefully acknowledged.
These were speedily confirmed, and the war of 1812 followed. On the frontier it was vindictive and devastating to the utmost. At this day we can scarcely realize what our forefathers suffered; but the letters of Sheldon Thompson to his partners give a graphic picture of the anxieties and perplexities of the times. It was necessary again and again to move and remove their goods to places of safety; sickness was prevalent, and deaths were frequent; in addition to fighting the enemy, disturbances arose among our own troops, and nobody felt safe. The trouble increased until, in December, 1813, the enemy advanced on Fort Niagara, destroyed Lewiston, and devastated the border as far as Buffalo. The two letters that announce this event are as follows:

"LEWISTON, December 17, 1813.

"Mr. Townsend—Dear Sir—I have but one moment to inform you that Fort George is evacuated and Newark burned. We have but about three hundred troops on this frontier. We momentarily expect an attack, but where, we cannot say; but it is generally believed on Fort Niagara. I am now moving out our goods eight or ten miles. Harry has gone West. I am very anxious for you to return.

Yours in haste,

S. THOMPSON."

"Mr. Townsend—Dear Sir—I am happy to have it in my power to inform you that our lives are all spared. They have burnt everything belonging to us except about one-third of our dry goods. I hope you will make all possible speed to get to me at this place, as I am about beat out. Our goods are scattered from this to John Jones. I am getting them on this far as fast as possible. I got nothing of any amount from my house; had I been ten minutes later I should have fallen into the hands of the Indians, together with my family. You will have the goodness to inform my friends that we are all well.

"Yours in haste,

S. THOMPSON."

"N. B.—Our buildings on the farm were all burnt."

This last letter was posted at Geneva, January 6.

On the approach of the enemy to Lewiston, Thompson, after looking after the goods as far as practicable, drove his sleigh to his house; hurriedly put in it a mattress and a big iron kettle; turned into it part of a barrel of crackers, and part of a barrel of pork, put in his family and started for Geneva. Had he been a few minutes later they would all have been killed. A short time after this, February 20, 1814, at Pittsford, another daughter was born to him.

After the close of the war the settlers returned to their former homes, and began to build anew their shattered fortunes. About this time, in 1816 or 1817, the two firms formed a branch firm at Black Rock—Porter, Barton & Co., furnishing Nathaniel Sill, and Townsend, Bronson & Co., Sheldon Thompson, as managers, under the firm name of "Sill, Thompson & Co." This caused Sheldon Thompson to change his residence from Lewiston to Black Rock. The firm of Sill, Thompson & Co., built the Michigan, a schooner of about one hundred and twenty tons, and a smaller vessel called the Red Jacket. The Michigan was too large for the trade, and was finally sent over the falls in 1829. It is said the old Seneca chief was present at the launch of the Red Jacket and reminded the vessel that she bore a great name, charging her not to disgrace it.

The up-freights continued of the same general character as before the war. The down-freights, from the upper Lakes, consisted of furs, potatoes, pork, beef, feathers and grindstones, but as yet the grain trade was unknown. The Michigan was the largest merchant vessel on any of the Lakes; the Charles and Ann of Lake Ontario, being but a little over one hundred tons, while the larger portion of the vessels did not exceed fifty tons. The transportation business was attended with great labor, the boats on the rivers being propelled, in large part, by poles and oars, against currents and rapids, while the Lake harbors were unimproved and without light-houses.

The early rival routes for transportation to the Lake region, appear to have been by the way of the St. Lawrence, and the Hudson, Mohawk, and Oswego rivers; and, at a later period, by wagons, from Albany to Buffalo. There were remaining, as late as 1816, timbers and abatements of the inclined plane by which the French goods ascended the "Mountain," near Lewiston; the power used is said to have been a capstan.

The firm of Townsend, Bronson & Co., continued in business until 1821, and Sill, Thompson & Co., until 1823 or 1824. Mr. S. C. Townsend writes of the former firm:

"Having had access to the correspondence of the partners of the firm of Townsend, Bronson & Co., during the eleven years of its existence, and having been four years in their employ, it is a source of pride and pleasure to be able to say I have never found a word savoring of a desire, by fraud or trickery, to obtain an advantage of any party."

During the time of the building of the Erie Canal, it was a mooted question, whether the terminus should be at Black Rock or Buffalo. Sheldon Thompson, as a leading man of the former place, was active in his efforts to have the canal stop at Black Rock. He was in charge of the con-
struction of the harbor and pier built at Black Rock, in the hope that the work would decide the question. It is said that he would spend the days in directing this work, a greater part of the time up to his waist in water; and the evenings in discussions of the question with General Porter. Sheldon Thompson, with his commercial sagacity, saw that which ever place obtained the victory, must inevitably win the business supremacy. It was finally decided at a meeting of the Canal Commissioners at the Eagle tavern in Buffalo, in the summer of 1822, that the canal should be continued to Buffalo. The decision became known, and that same night Sheldon Thompson sent his younger brother, Harry, on horseback to Batavia. There, early the next morning, as soon as the office of the Holland Land Company opened, Harry purchased and entered for his brother, the land where the Reed Elevator now stands. Captain Thompson foresaw that he would need a new base of operations, and took prompt steps to obtain it.

About this time, in 1823 or 1824, the firm of Sheldon Thompson & Co., was formed, having its principal offices in Buffalo. It continued the same general forwarding business of its predecessors. Sheldon Thompson was a devoted friend of the canal, and went down on the first boat to assist in the mingling of the waters of Lake Erie with the waters of the Atlantic.

His firm owned a small line of canal boats in 1825, being one of the first organized lines on the canal. The line was called at first, the “Troy and Black Rock Line,” having its terminus at Black Rock. In 1826 the terminus was changed to Buffalo, and the name altered to the “Troy and Erie Line.” This line subsequently grew to large proportions. The boats were built with large cabins, carried from one hundred to one hundred and fifty passengers, mostly Western bound emigrants, and about two hundred and fifty barrels of flour; and constituted regular lines of passenger packets and of freight boats.

The firm was also largely instrumental in the early development of steam-navigation on the Lakes. Although the first two steamboats, Walk-in-the-Water, and the Superior were built by Albany parties, S. Thompson & Co., were not far behind. The Pioneer, the third steamboat on the Lakes, was built by S. Thompson & Co., in 1823, and was a great success. The Sheldon Thompson was built at Huron, Ohio, by the same firm about 1828, and was one of the prominent boats on the Lakes. Her first commander was Captain Augustus Walker, and he with the young clerks of the house, carried out quite a celebration on her first entrance into Buffalo, a small cannon on the dock saluting the vessel, as she sailed up the creek, and the salute being replied to from the deck of the boat.

The completion of the Canal having given Buffalo the lead, Sheldon Thompson moved there in 1830. His firm of S. Thompson & Co., and the firm of Townsend & Coit, were, for some years, the principal forwarders. In 1836, the two were consolidated, under the name of “Coit, Kimberly & Co.”; the two senior partners, Thompson and Judge Townsend, rather retiring into the background.

During the years of his business life in Buffalo, Sheldon Thompson was prominent in most of the enterprises that occupied the attention of its business men. He was one of a co-partnership that bought, laid out and developed Ohio City, now a portion of Cleveland. He was one of another co-partnership that did the same with Manhattan, on the Maumee river, an early rival of Toledo. He was one of a large land company that entered immense quantities of land all through the State of Wisconsin, embracing Milwaukee, Green Bay, Sheboygan, the mining regions in Iron county, and other portions of the State. He was one of seven prominent men in Buffalo who bought out the assets of the branch United States Bank; one of the largest individual investments of the time, but which did not result very successfully. He finally retired from active business about 1845, and occupied himself with the management of his estates, which had assumed goodly proportions, as the result of long years of industry and care.

While Sheldon Thompson was at all times an active citizen, public-spirited and patriotic, he was never a politician. He held public office but once in his life. Buffalo was incorporated as a city in 1832, and for eight years the Mayor was elected by the Common Council. In 1840 a law was passed by which Mayors of cities were made elective by the people. In the spring of that year the first election for Mayor of the city of Buffalo was accordingly held. The Whigs nominated Sheldon Thompson, and the Democrats George P. Barker, one of the most popular and brilliant men who ever graced the city. The biographer of Mr. Barker, in speaking of the difficulties of his canvass, says:—
"Added to this, the opposition put in nomination their strongest man; one whose residence was coeval with the first settlement of the country—whose acquaintances and connections were extensive and whose wealth and weight of character added great strength."

He further says of the contest:—

"It was, without doubt, the most severe one ever known at our charter elections. The friends of each candidate exerted themselves to the utmost. Few general elections have ever been so warmly contested. The eyes of the city, and indeed of Western New York, were centered upon the issue."

The result was: Sheldon Thompson, 1,135; George P. Barker, 1,125. Sheldon Thompson was accordingly the first Mayor of Buffalo elected by the people.* He filled the position with credit, and never again was a candidate for office.

Sheldon Thompson was brought up an Episcopalian, in the sturdy faith of the Connecticut churchmen, and never wavered from his allegiance. About the time he removed to Black Rock, the first movement was made at Buffalo for the formation of a parish, and he fully co-operated therein, there not being enough Episcopalians in the two places to support two churches. In February 1817, a meeting was held at the house of Elias Ransom, northwest corner of Main and Huron streets, in Buffalo, at which St. Paul's Parish was organized. Sheldon Thompson was one of those most interested, and was a member of the first vestry. He continued in the position for many years, until he voluntarily retired to make way for younger men. His bust, in marble, on the walls of the present beautiful edifice of St. Paul's Church, commemorates the fact that he was one of the founders of the parish and a member of the first vestry.

His wife died at Buffalo May 5, 1832. She bore him ten children, of whom four lived to maturity. Sally Ann married Henry K. Smith, one of the most prominent lawyers of Western New York, and died at Buffalo April 15, 1839; Agnes Latta married Edward S. Warren, and Lasiter Porter married Henry K. Viele. Both gentlemen were lawyers, and both are now deceased. Augustus Porter Thompson married Matilda Cass Jones, of Detroit; has always been identified with the development of the various manufacturing interests of Buffalo, and is now the president of the Cornell Lead Company.

Sheldon Thompson died at Buffalo, Thursday, March 13, 1851, at half-past two o'clock in the afternoon. His decease was followed by many warm expressions of regret and admiration. The Common Council, the vestry of St. Paul's and many other bodies passed appropriate resolutions. All emphasized especially his sturdy honesty and uprightness. The most widely copied and approved eulogy on his character closed with these words:—

"He possessed many noble traits of character which will be long treasured up in the memory of those who knew him. His intercourse with the younger portion of the community was of the kindest and most agreeable character, and by them he was looked up to with affectionate regard. He was quick to discern merit and prompt to extend to it a generous aid. We give expression to a fact known to so many of our readers when we say that he aided in the establishing of more young men in business in Buffalo than any other individual in the city. During the brief illness that preceded his death, he exhibited the same equanimity and cheerfulness of temper that were prominent traits in his character. He retained perfect consciousness to the last, and, surrounded by his children and relatives, died without a struggle."

He was industrious, temperate and cheerful, capable of great endurance and quick of resource. While not witty, he was full of humor, and ready and apt in reply. He bore reverses with equanimity and carried himself with steady courage, loyalty and honesty. From the humblest beginnings he achieved for himself a career of usefulness and prominence: through a long and eventful life he bore his name without a stain; he did his duty to himself, his family, and the community; and he died loved and mourned.

**SOLOMON STURGES GUTHRIE.—Stephen Guthrie, who was grandfather of the subject of this notice, was born in Washington, Litchfield county, Conn., on the 10th of January, 1768. His father's name was Joseph, son of John Guthrie, who emigrated from Scotland and settled in the vicinity of Litchfield early in the eighteenth century. Stephen Guthrie married Sally Chappell, who was born at Sharon, Litchfield county, Conn., August 11, 1770, and they, in company with Truman, Stephen Guthrie's brother, left Connecticut in the summer of 1790, for what was then the Northwest Territory, where after much hardship by land and water, they landed at Marietta, where the first settlement in that section was made. They remained there about a year and then removed to a place on the banks of the Ohio river, called Belpre, opposite the mouth of the Little Kanawha.**

*His partner, Alvin Bronson, was the first Mayor of Oswego.*