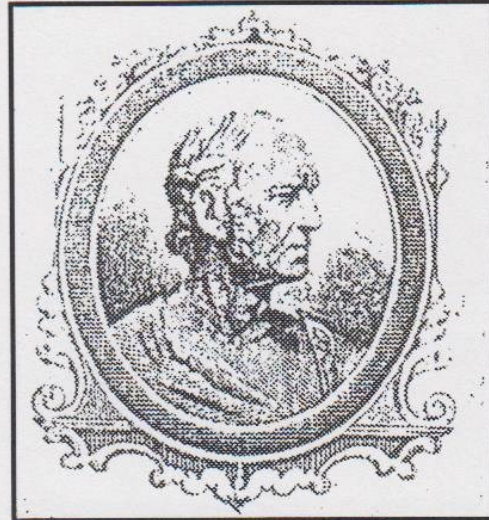


CANAWLERS AT REST

SOLOMON STURGES

b. April 21, 1796
d. October 14, 1864

By Carolyn Schmidt



SOLOMON STURGES
From the Marble Bust by Hiram Powers

Solomon Sturges was born in Fairfield, Connecticut on April 21, 1796, to Dimon and Sarah (Perry) Sturges. He was the eighth of their ten children, who were all born in Fairfield.

Mary (Polly) b. Mar. 4, 1780, d. age seven
 Esther b. Jan. 24, 1782, d. Sept. 28, 1829, Putnam, OH, unmarried
 Eben Perry, b. Aug. 12, 1784, D. Jan 1, 1862, Mansfield, OH
 Sarah b. Dec. 4, 1786, m. Ebenezer Buckingham Mar. 31. 1812, d.
 Apr 9, 1815, Putnam, OH
 Dimon b. Apr. 11, 1789, d. Nov. 4, 1808, swept from deck during
 storm and lost at sea
 Mary b. Nov. 23, 1791, m. Chester Welles, d. Sept. 27, 1858, Put-
 nam, OH
 Hezekiah b. Jan. 3, 1794, d. Jul. 29, 1878, Putnam, OH
 Solomon b. Apr. 21, 1796, m. Lucy Hale Aug. 14, 1823, Glastonbury,
 Conn., d. Oct. 14, 1864, Zanesville, OH
 Amelia b. Nov. 5, 1799, m. Austin A. Guthrie, D. Sept. 3, 1882, Put-
 nam, OH
 Edward b. Dec. 5, 1805, d. Sept. 16, 1878, Mansfield, OH

The ancestors of the Sturges family have lived in Fairfield, Connecticut, for five generations. In his memoir, Solomon Sturges describes them as "farmers of the sturdy New England type; upright, industrious, frugal, God-fearing and law-abiding." Unfortunately many of the family papers were destroyed in 1779 when Judge Sturges' home was burned by British troops.

Five Generations of Ancestors

I. John Sturges b. 1624 (probably England) bought land in Fairfield, Connecticut, in 1660 and was probably living there before then. He may have been one of the founders of Fairfield in 1639. In 1660 John purchased the home of Richard Fowles located on the northwest side of the road leading into Mill Plain in Fairfield. On May 14, 1669, he was made a freeman and was appointed selectman later than year. He married Deborah Barlow probably prior to 1650. They had at least seven

children. He died in 1700. In his will dated March 4, 1697/8 the following seven were mentioned: Jonathan, Joseph, John, Thomas, Deborah, Sarah, Abigail

II. Joseph Sturges was born about 1653 and married Sarah Judson, his first wife and mother of all his eleven children. Upon her death he married Mary Sherwood, widow of Thomas Morehouse. His children were: Christopher, Joseph, David, Jeremiah, Solomon, Sarah, Esther, Benjamin, Abigail, Jane and Deborah. Joseph died in 1728.

III. Solomon Sturges (the great-grandfather of our subject) was baptized on May 15, 1698, and probably born that year in Fairfield. He married Abigail Bradley (b. 1706) on March 8, 1724/5. They had four children Hezekiah, Joseph, Judson and Esther. Solomon was killed on July 7, 1779 when the British troops under General Tryon landed at Fairfield pillaging and burning the town.

Our subject (Solomon) later wrote in his memoirs:

"My father in my early days, often repeated the story of the dreadful day and more dreadful night that the enemy had possession of the town. My Great-grandfather Solomon Sturges was too old to fight in the ranks of our small army; but in concert with another man (both on horseback) endeavored to make himself useful by acting as a scout. Upon hearing the alarm gun he at once mounted his old bay mare and proceeded toward the beach where it was said the British were landing their troops from their ships of war....There was then, and I presume there is yet, an offset or turn in the road leading to the Sound, a few hundred yards south of the old Fairfield burying ground. My great-grandfather and his companion had made this turn and had advanced but two or three rods down the beach lane when they discovered through the fog the red coats of the British soldiers close upon them. They

wheeled their horses and as they did so were fired at by the front platoon on the column, and my great-grandfather received a musket ball in his back. He was able, however, to remain on his horse until he had passed the Court House, and his companion who being unhurt was enabled to ride ahead, saw him carefully get from his old mare on and over the fence and (being no doubt entirely unable to walk) creep upon his hands and knees to a bunch of elder bushes by the roadside. The precise spot was pointed out to me by my father, in my early life; it was between the jail (then upon the corner east of the big pond) and the academy. The old gentleman companion then rode rapidly to my grandfather's house and reported to the excited household these facts. While he was yet speaking the old bay mare came to the house. The saddle was almost covered with blood. The tale it is told, though mute, was expressive. All was confusion, and all were filled with alarm. Other places had been burnt and all knew too well what the fate of Fairfield was to be. My grandfather and several of his older sons had before this seized their guns and gone to the rendezvous of their company. Two carts were hastily loaded with the most valuable household goods and the women and youngest children being placed in the carts or walking by the side, the cavalcade moved off toward Greenfield Hill....The Hessians applied the torch to both of my grandfathers' houses [one being that of Judge Sturges previously mentioned]....The enemy, if I remember aright, held possession of the two but little over twenty-four hours. Our forces being rapidly increased by the coming in of the militia from the surrounding towns were busy popping away from behind stone fences, cedar bushes or anything that afforded concealment or protection. As soon as the enemy commenced a retreat toward their ships my grandfather and his sons were on hand to search for 'grandfather Solomon' as he was of course called by my father and his brothers. They knew where to look and found him in that thicket of elder bushes, dead, yes of course, with one bullet hole and six or seven severe bayonet stabs. He was without doubt found by those infernal Hessians, with life yet not quite extinct, and *finished* with the bayonet."

IV. Hezekiah Sturges was born in 1726 in Fairfield. On November 21, 1751 he married Abigail Dimon (b. Feb. 1, 1792/3, d. Nov. 21, 1803 on their 52 wedding anniversary). The Sturges and Dimon families were closely interrelated. Hezekiah's brother Joseph married Abigail's sister Sarah and Hezekiah's sister Esther married Abigail's brother William Dimon. Hezekiah and Abigail had nine children: Ebenezer, Dimon, Hezekiah, Solomon, Eunice, Edward, Samuel, Abigail, and Mary. Hezekiah died in Fairfield on April 27, 1792.

V. Dimon Sturges was born on October 29, 1754 in Fairfield and married Sarah Perry (b. Sept. 21, 1761, d. May 7, 1846). According to our subject's memoirs Dimon and Sarah had agreed to be married before the Revolutionary War broke out but postponed it until shortly before Fairfield was burned. Their ten children are previously listed. Dimon died on January 16, 1829 in Fairfield.

VI. Solomon Sturges (our subject) described his boy-

hood home as being almost square with an enormous chimney in its center. On the entire west side was a kitchen in which they both cooked on the 8-ft.-wide fireplace, baked in the oven at the north end, and dined. This is where he sat on a stool inside one of the fireplace jambs while listening to stories about the Revolutionary War as they drank cider that was kept in the cellar and told whale boats brought the Tories from Long Island.

Solomon's father raised sheep. His mother and sisters would always spin the wool or flax, which was broken and dressed during winter days by his father and brothers, when nothing more important needed to be done. It was common for three wheels to be whirring at once. From the woolen yarn they made a long piece of grey (black and white wool) coating that was fulled at Sherwood's Fulling Mill and used for the men and boys' winter clothing. From the flax they made a long piece of linen for shirts, tablecloths, and long checked aprons. His mother died some of the wool for carpeting and the linen for blue shirts. Any extra fabric was bartered or sold and the money used to pay taxes or purchase something they really needed.

When Solomon was two years old his eldest brother Eben Perry Sturges, age 14, left home to serve on a merchantman. By age sixteen Eben was first officer and by twenty-one was master and half owner of the "Madisonia," a large schooner equipped for transatlantic and South American commerce. When Solomon reached age 12 or 13 the family decided he should "learn the sea" with Eben. Solomon finished his district school education studying navigation and then he spent a year at an academy. At age 15 in October 1810 he met Eben in New York and they sailed to Georgetown, District of Columbia, to pick up a cargo for Lisbon. The waters of Chesapeake Bay were so rough and he suffered so much from seasickness that when they reached the mouth of the Potomac River and met Elisha Williams, a prosperous Georgetown merchant with whom Eben had business, Solomon accepted a position in Elisha's counting room until Eben could return from his trip across the Atlantic. He was employed there for two years and lived in the Williams' household.

At the declaration of war against England in 1812, Elisha Williams retired from business. He recommended that Solomon become a clerk in John Hersey's Georgetown grocery store. While working there Solomon learned that the "Madisonia" was captured by a British frigate on her return voyage from Pernambuco and that Eben was a prisoner in Spanish Town, Jamaica. While there Eben had an attack of yellow fever and suffered many hardships. He eventually was released, returned to the United States, regained his strength, and journeyed to his sister Sarah's home in Ohio.

On March 31, 1812, Solomon's sister Sarah had married Ebenezer Buckingham, who had been born in Fairfield County, CN, and then moved to Springfield (renamed Putnam, which later became a part of Zanesville), OH. Living near the head of navigation of the Muskingum River, Ebenezer had become a prosperous merchant in the interior of Ohio, most of which was a wilderness with a few log cabins making the beginning of a village. Upon arriving there Eben saw opportunity and chose to abandon life at sea for a new start in Ohio.

Eben returned to the east, formed a partnership with Buckingham Sherwood, purchased merchandise, transported it by wagon to Zanesville, OH, and were following a difficult route to General Harrison's frontier camp where they planned to sell it. They got as far as Mansfield, OH, when a few settlers convinced them to stay and open a store. The store prospered and after a few years Eben made his youngest brother Edward his partner. E. P. & E Sturges became one of the most highly respected mercantile houses in north central Ohio.

Solomon Sturges joined a volunteer artillery company to defend the cities of the District of Columbia when the British threatened to attack. He was stationed at Fort Washington on the Potomac River. Two of the better known privates serving with him were George Peabody, banker and philanthropist, and Francis Scott Key, author of "The Star Spangled Banner." When he returned to Georgetown he received an offer from his brother-in-law Ebenezer Buckingham to clerk in his store in Ohio and accepted it.

Solomon left Georgetown in May or June 1814 by stage traveling over an exceedingly rough road to Pittsburgh. The Ohio River was low and there was no boat on which to continue his journey. In a tavern he found two young men. One wanted to go to Louisville and the other to Cincinnati. They went together, purchased a skiff, fixed an awning over it for shelter, got some provisions and set out down the river at about 4 p.m. taking turns rowing. When they reached Wheeling drenched from rain the previous night and in pain from blisters on their hands, they learned a "barge" had just left for Cincinnati. They took up their oars and rowed as fast as they could until they overtook the barge, gained passage and tied their skiff behind it. After drying their clothing, they slept on the Captains buffalo robes, which were spread out for them. When the barge reached Marietta, Solomon gave his interest in the skiff and his unused provisions to the other men and went to the store owned by D. Woodbridge.

Eben had made arrangements with Mr. Woodbridge to help Solomon get a horse and saddlebags. Solomon's few belongings were taken from a small

trunk and placed in the saddlebags. He then was given directions to places where he could stop. After a lonely ride of about 80 miles he arrived at Zanesville and was ferried across the Muskingum River to Springfield (later Putnam).

Sarah and Ebenezer Buckingham welcomed Solomon, age 19, and working for his brother-in-law as a clerk he did very well being sent the very next winter to Philadelphia to purchase goods. That winter Sarah's sons John and Ebenezer died and on April 9, 1815, Sarah herself died.

In the spring of 1816 Ebenezer Buckingham, age 38, decided to make Solomon, almost 20, and his brother Alvah Buckingham, age 25, his partners in the firm of E. Buckingham, Jr., & Co. He gave each of them a quarter interest and shortly thereafter left them in charge while he went to Glastonbury, Connecticut. There he married Eunice Hale. They returned to Ohio accompanied by her younger sister Anna Hale, who in 1819 became the wife of Alvah Buckingham.

The profits of the new firm were large due to Putnam's being located on a navigable river between Pittsburgh and the south and west. Before long the firm was widely known and held in esteem.

Solomon went to New Orleans with four flat boats of produce in the spring of 1817. While there he saw the arrival of the "Washington," the first steamboat on the Ohio and Mississippi rivers. He returned over land taking over thirty days to make the journey with special difficulty on the crude trail between Lake Pontchartrain to the Tennessee River. That fall he went to Detroit to take funds to Governor Cass to pay off troops and saw the "Walk in the Water," the first steamboat to travel on the Great Lakes. These and many other visits to Atlantic seaboard cities to buy goods over the years enabled him to keep close contact with his eastern relatives and build up a large circle of friends there.

Lucy Hale [b. May 22, 1800, d. July 25, 1859], the youngest of the Hale sisters, decided to visit her two married sister in Putnam in 1821. Solomon became interested in her. Unfortunately he had business in New Orleans and then traveled by sea to Philadelphia. He became sick aboard the ship and after arriving spent several weeks recuperating. They were not formally engaged until after more than a year. He wrote in his memoirs,

"Lucy expected to return to her home in Connecticut in 1823, but before the time came I had made an agreement with her that my sister, who was visiting in Ohio should return [to Connecticut] with her, and she was to return to Ohio with me as my bride. This was

the most important bargain I ever made. We were married in August [August 14, 1823] of that year, at her father's home on the banks of the Connecticut, and during the thirty-six years we lived together it was almost always sunshine in our household. Her cheerful, happy temperament, and kind, sympathetic heart always made my home pleasant; the magnetic influence she always imparted to it, always drew me so strongly that when called away by business, my thoughts would flit back, 'like the needle to the pole.'"

A newspaper reported: "In August, 1823, Mr. Solomon Sturges was united in marriage to Miss Lucy Hale of Glastonbury, Conn., a lady eminently fitted by her happy temperament, her loving heart and her cheerful piety, to be his companion." They traveled by horseback over the mountains to Putnam, Ohio, to begin their married life. Her two married sisters awaited their coming and worked side by side with Lucy for many years.

Solomon and Lucy Sturges had ten children:
William - b. May 27, 1824, d. November 12, 1894
Sarah Potwin - b. September 23, 1826, d. July 9, 1889
Shelton - b. August 7, 1828, d. June 21, 1888
Lucy Buckingham - b. August 15, 1831, d. July 6, 1889
Buckingham - b. June 4, 1833, d. April 9, 1889
Albert - b. Nov. 5, 1835, d. March 17, 1900
George - b. May 13, 1838, d. August 12, 1890
Kate Benton - b. July 9, 1840, d.
Frank - b. Oct. 10, 1842, d.

When the family outgrew their home they moved into a new one that was admired by everyone. It had high large parlors with mirrors at each end making them seem even bigger. Lamps with prisms cast a fairy-like light in the rooms. The carpets were made of soft green velvet. Lace curtains were topped by gold cornices. It was like a palace on the prairie. In the big cellar Lucy hid fugitive slaves from Kentucky. The big "keeping room" table served as the schoolhouse where tutors and the village schoolmaster gave lessons to about a dozen children.

Business at the firm, E. Buckingham Jr. and Company, progressively increased for nine years following Solomon and Lucy's marriage. Then Ebenezer Buckingham lost his life in August, 1832, when he fell from one of the spans of the bridge over the Muskingum River that connected Putnam with Zanesville. He was overseeing the strengthening of the bridge after a great flood had weakened it. This was a great loss to Solomon and the community. Solomon wrote that he attributed much of his worldly success to Ebenezer's helping hand and influence on his mind and character. They worked together over eighteen years and made thousands of transactions.

The old firm was dissolved after Ebenezer's death. Alvah Buckingham and Solomon continued as "A Buckingham & Company." The next year Milton Buckingham, Alvah's brother from Carthage, OH, and Hezekiah Sturges, Solomon's brother, became partners in the firm and each of them received an equal share. In 1843 Milton retired and his place was taken by Alvah's son, Benjamin Hale Buckingham.

The firm had large investments in lands in Indiana and Illinois. Solomon also had land in Missouri and Wisconsin. With the increasing demands of the firm and the maturing of the senior partners' children, they decided to dissolve "A. Buckingham & Company" in 1845. Alvah's eldest son Benjamin and Solomon's eldest son William took over the mercantile business as "Buckingham & Sturges."

Wabash & Erie Canal

Solomon's health began to decline around age 50, but he continued to widen his horizons. He felt the lure of the Wabash & Erie Canal and relates this in his memoirs as follows:

"My brothers [Eben and Edward, at Mansfield, Ohio] and myself in the course of our operations had become considerable holders of the bonds of the State of Indiana, and about the years 1846-48 we had accepted terms of compromise offered by the State, and accepted new bonds and 3 per cent stock for one-half of the old principal, and the other half in the preferred stock of the Wabash and Erie Canal, which was to connect the city of Toledo, upon Lake Erie, with the city of Evansville on the Ohio river. In 1850 it became apparent that the Trustees who had the canal in charge would not be able to finish it to conform to the terms of the compromise, for want of funds. Under the circumstances, and fearing a large loss if the canal should not be finished in time, I entered into a contract with said Trustees associating Samuel Farrer and S. A. Hosmer with me in the enterprise), to finish the balance of the work on or before 21 Nov., 1853. This was for me a big job. It was expected to amount [in expenditures] to nearly \$700,000 and the total sum was finally near that amount. I was to furnish the funds, or procure them, Mr. Farrer was to act as Engineer, he having been at the head of the Canal Engineer Corps of Ohio for many years, and Mr. Hosmer was to be upon the line of the work, superintending and pressing it forward. We went along well enough while the money market was easy, but after spending all I could raise from my own resources, all I could borrow from my brothers, or other friends, I was often straightened to get funds for our heavy monthly payments, which had all to be made in cash, while by our contract with the Trustees we were to receive their bonds payable at various periods from 1854 to 1860. I have never found the

value of a good credit so important to me as during the progress of that work. Indeed, at one time, when our payments were about \$30,000 per month, I was on the point of going to England to raise money, had letters of introduction from friends in New York to their correspondents in London all prepared, when unexpectedly my friend Caleb O Halsted [president of New York's Manhattan Company] procured me from his friend, Mr. Kennedy, a retired merchant, a loan of \$50,000 with assurance of other sums if they should be wanted, and this, with other sums from other quarters, carried our canal contract safely through, with a fair amount of profit and considerable credit. The net profit of the operation after every expense, interest, etc., was paid, was nearly \$80,000. This was equally shared by the three partners."

The Evansville Journal omitted Solomon in its of Sept. 26, 1850 article:

Wabash and Erie Canal

We learn from good authority, that a contract for all the unlet portion of the Canal has been entered into with Messrs. Forrer & Hosmer, by the Trustees, and that active operations will be shortly commenced on the line South of Petersburg.

It is understood that this contract embraces All the unlet sections of the Canal, and that now every foot of the work is under contract along the entire line. This intelligence, we feel assured will be gratifying to the people South of White river, and gives an earnest that the long looked for period is near at hand, when the water of the Lake will mingle with the "Father of Waters."

This contract, as we learn covers a large expenditure of money, and may be put down in round numbers at \$530,000. This sum, it is gratifying to know, will be readily commanded by the contractors, who are gentlemen of ample means and of undoubted credit and responsibility., The expenditure of so much money in our immediate vicinity, is of itself, a matter of great importance, but its influence will be much enhanced when it is remembered that it is auxiliary to the completion of a work in which the State itself and the Southern portion of it particularly, feels so deep an interest. On every account this movement of the Trustees cannot fail to have a great and favorable influence on the progress of South Western Indiana.

Though the prospective means of the Trust are ample, it cannot be disguised that a failure to realize them, promptly, would delay the work unfavorable, and that the time necessarily lost by the floods of 1848 and 1849, and the calamitous visitation of cholera along the line in 1850, would warrant the Trustees in looking to the extension of time provided in the Legislative enactment. By the late arrangements, this will be obviated, and the work will be completed within a year of the earliest time fixed upon by the act providing for the Funded Debt of the State leaving out of view entirely the eighteen months lost by the casualties and epidemic referred to. This is a great point gained, for time, in this case, in money with interest compounded.

We learn that the contract provides, as follows:

1. The entire line is taken at the Engineer's estimates, with five per cent added to meet contingencies;
2. The work is to be constructed in the most durable and substantial manner, under the immediate supervision of the engineers employed by the Trustees.
3. The whole line is to be completed by the 1st of November, 1852; and
4. The twenty miles next to Evansville is to be let on the first of October next, and completed, without any delay.
 - a. These are all the material points of the contract, with reference to the mode of construction and time of completion. It would be impracticable, we think, to complete the work as soon under any other system, or by any other mode of proceeding.
 1. The Trustees make payment to Messrs. Forrer & Hosmer stated periods, looking to the certainty of the means then at their disposal and by anticipating the ample resources of the Trust Funds. The contractors will use cash means alone, and payments to laborers will be made as heretofore, at sixty day periods. This will be a valuable feature growing out of the arrangement, and ensures to the workmen all the facilities enjoyed heretofore in the construction of the Wa-

bash and Erie Canal.

The following notice was placed in the Evansville Journal on Oct. 30, 1850, by Saml. Forrer, Solomon Sturges, and S. R. Hosmer:

NOTICE TO CANAL CONTRACTORS.

WABASH & ERIE CANAL, INDIANA.

SEALED Proposals will be received at Princeton, Ind., until the 20th day of October next for the construction of thirty-five miles of the above named Canal. The work consists of sixty sections, embracing much variety of excavation, including considerable rock, a number of deep cuts and heavy embankments, one aqueduct, eight locks, and many culverts. All the mechanical structures to be timber, and will afford much work for carpenters.

There will be no stone masonry of any description. Of the excavation and embankment there is much more heavy work than is common on an equal length of line. Bidders from Ohio will find it most convenient to reach this work by way of the Ohio river and Evansville as the south end of the work is only 18 miles north of Evansville—From the middle and north part of Indiana, it will be most convenient to reach the north end of the work at Petersburg, in Pike county. Bidders who are not known to the undersigned will be expected to furnish proper testimonials of character.

Payments in money will be made at periods of about sixty days.

Plans and specification of the work will be exhibited at Princeton, by the Engineer in charge, 10 days before the letting. The line will be in readiness for inspection by the first of October. For further information, persons wishing to examine the work can address W. J. Ball, Res't. Engineer, Terre Haute.

The Evansville Journal of Oct. 31, 1850, said:

Canal Lettings.

Our town has been quite lively with strangers—competitors for contracts on the Wabash and Erie Canal, at the Lettings during the past week, of all the unlet portions of said Canal.

Below will be found the number of the section with the name of the successful bidder, as awarded on the 23d, by Messrs. Forrer, Sturges & Hosmer

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 197, 11, 36 and Reservoir, | 26, McGuire & Farrell |
| Steward & Rockafellow | 27,50, Samuel Parker |
| 198, John Mechan | 28,29, Kinney & Murray |
| 199,1, Robert Garrett | 30, Aydelett & Parker |
| 200, 156, Hefferman & Mechan | 31,32, Stewart & Walters |
| 201, James Ferriter | 33, 34, 35, Edward Jordan |
| 202, Kinney & Steward | 38, Edward Barrett |
| 2, 7, Jacob Haug | 39, Faulkner & Syers |
| 3, 37, 44, Sharon & Meldrum | 40, Thos. Harris & Co. |
| 4, James Garrett | 41, Jas. Adams & Co. |
| 5, Adam Fritz | 42, Ralph Wilson |
| 6,8,20, David L. Bell & Co. | 43, Thos. Kinney |
| 9,10, John Tarvin | 45, Carty & Pandrigan |
| 12,17,34, Crimmins, Clune & Co. | 46, Patrick Sweeney |
| 13, Kinney & Manning | 47, 48, 49, E. M. & J. M. Patterson |
| 14, 16, Eber Jones | 51, George Hartley |
| 18, 19, Thomas Potter | 52, John McCracken |
| 21,22, M. C. Regan | 53, Hiran Green |
| 23, Griffin & Swaggart | 54, David W. Beeson |
| 35, Clark & Stewart | |

On Nov. 20, 1852 the Evansville Journal announced the completion of the canal saying:

S. R. Hosmer, Esq., of Zanesville, Ohio, one of the Trustees of the Wabash and Erie Canal, arrived at the Pavilion yesterday morning, and left on the half-past eight train of cars for Princeton. Messrs. Forrer, Sturges and Hosmer are now about closing their very extensive contract on the Canal, which finished this magnificent work from the Ohio river to Lake Erie—an enterprise which we hope will prove as profitable to these gentlemen, as to the rich valley through which it passes.

Grain Enterprise

In 1854 Solomon and his brothers Eben and Edward decided to begin a large farm on three sections of land they owned that was located near Gilman, IL, where the Chicago branch of the Illinois Central Railroad had just reached. The railroad ran through a region that was sparsely populated and "in the timber" with deer, wolves and lots of rattlesnakes. At the time the city of Kankakee was seen from the railcar's windows as a few unpainted pine structures. Solomon envisioned an area cleared for grain production and pouring its grain into Chicago for world distribution.

In June of 1855 Solomon purchased a third interest in Buckingham and Burlingame, which was a business partnership between Alvah Buckingham and Rufus Putnam Burlingame that was formed in 1846. Alvah furnished the capital and sent Rufus to Chicago to open a lumber yard. They soon entered the business of forwarding and had a grain and produce commission. They built the first grain elevator known as the Fulton Elevator in Chicago, which held 75,000 bushels. Solomon was to furnish capital for an even larger enterprise.

Solomon proposed to the Illinois Central Railroad that it should build and operate an elevator at Chicago for grain handling. His cousin, Jonathan Sturges of New York, was importantly connected with the financial management and policies of the railroad, which probably helped Solomon in getting a 10-year contract to do all the grain warehousing for the railroad in Chicago. The firm of Sturges, Buckingham & Co. erected Central Elevators "A," finished in the autumn of 1855, and "B," completed two years later, upon the railroad docks at its terminus near the mouth of the Chicago River. These were 120-foot elevators. They received grain from all the roads into Chicago until 1860. With a capacity of 700,000 bushels each, they were Chicago's leading grain warehousing firm during the Civil War.

At the expiration of the lease in 1865, the Illinois Central bought the property. Almost immediately the new firm J. and E. Buckingham was formed by Ebenezer and his brother John. They leased the same property, which subsequently became known as the Central elevators, for another ten years. The Great Chicago Fire burned elevator "A" but spared elevator "B," the only surviving elevator in the burned district. The firm reconstructed "A" in 1873 to the size of 100 x 200 feet on the ground. It had a capacity of one million bushels and added appliances for rapid grain handling. Elevator "B" had been enlarged in 1869 to hold one million five hundred thousand bushels and an additional three hundred and fifty thousand bushels could be stored after cribs were added in 1873 with the size being 100 x 300 feet on the ground. This made their capacity at almost 2.9

million bushels of grain. Using the modern equipment they loaded sixty-five thousand bushels of wheat in one hour twenty minutes onto a vessel. When John died in 1881 the partnership ended.

The profitable warehouses required Solomon to be in Chicago almost constantly. He planned to move his family there from Putnam where they had resided for thirty-three happy years. His wife, Lucy, was deeply attached to her home, relatives and friends and agreed to move only if her home be as large and comfortable as hers at Putnam. Solomon purchased the south half block bounded by Pine, Huron, St. Clair and Superior streets from Walter L. Newberry and built what was considered the finest dwelling in the city on the northeast corner of Pine and Huron streets. It was two semi-detached houses with the other being intended for one of his sons.

While the home was being prepared to receive Lucy Hale Sturges, she became ill and died in Granville, OH, on July 25, 1859, at the residence of Dr. W. W. Bancroft. Solomon, who was in New York at the time, was notified of her illness by telegraph, and hurried to her, but he was too late. His health was not good and while mourning for her it steadily failed.

Banking

Solomon's means were rapidly increasing following the Panic of 1857 and just prior to the Civil War. His grain enterprise had grown. He now owned a fleet of tugboats in the Chicago harbor and a number of grain-carrying ships on the Great Lakes. While living in Putnam, he had become a stockholder in Zanesville's banks and there conducted a private bank. These banks' assets were mainly southern paper or "stumptail" currency. With the approaching war and the uncertain value of this paper, Solomon thought it prudent to establish a conservative bank of high credit and reputation in Chicago. The firm Solomon Sturges & Sons was formed in 1860 and included he, his sons, Buckingham and Albert, as partners, and William as the manager. This bank was located half a block from the Chicago Board of Trade at 15 and 17 Wells Street and had previously been occupied by George Smith's bank. As with his other business, the bank was an immediate success and in no time at all it was the largest bank in the Chicago.

The bank's name was changed to Solomon Sturges' Sons when Solomon left after about two years. With the National Bank Act and the establishment of many banks in Chicago, the firm's business declined. In 1866 the partners closed the bank and retired.

Although Solomon had always been a Whig, the

slavery issue was of utmost importance to him. He became a Republican and strong advocate of Lincoln for President of the United States. The outbreak of the Civil War put additional strain on Solomon's health.

Civil War — Sturges Rifles

Solomon subscribed heavily in Government loans to aid his country. With his own funds he raised a company of volunteers, "The Sturges Rifles", in April 1861 after the attack on Ft. Sumter. The men armed with Sharpe's rifles and equipment were mustered into service on May 6, 1861, but were not attached to any regiment. He supported them for two months on his own.



The above picture and following caption appeared under "Civil War" Harper's Weekly on October 5, 1861.

GENERAL McCLELLAN'S BODY GUARD

We illustrate herewith the corps known as the Sturges Rifles, Captain Barker, who are serving as General McClellan's body-guard. They were recruited at Chicago, and took their name from the great grain merchant, Solomon Sturges, to whose liberality they were indebted for equipments. Before the outbreak of the war General McClellan had been connected with them as militia officer. When the war broke out they followed him into Western Virginia, and since then to Washington. They are a gallant body of picked men, all athletic, trained to endure fatigue, and all good shots. Their uniform is easy and comfortable, and is generally worn by General McClellan himself. Hitherto they have numbered one hundred and thirty-five men; they are now to be raised to one hundred and fifty-eight.

In June 1861 "The Sturges Rifles" were ordered to serve as General George B. McClellan's bodyguard in Parkersburg, West Virginia. They were with him and participated in the battle of Rich Mountain. They marched with him when he went to Washington to assume the command of the armies. Reaching Washington on July 26, 1861, they were on guard duty until March 10, 1862, and then accompanied McClellan on the march to Yorktown. After the siege there, they went into the Chickahominy seven-day battle. From there

many of the volunteers were sent out as foragers, scouts, and a few were in the battle of Antietam. At Falmouth, the company left the army. It was mustered out of service at Washington on November 25, 1862. James Steel served as its captain; Nathaniel E. Sheldon was the first lieutenant; and Marcus P. Foster was the second lieutenant. Ninety-nine men served under them of which two were musicians. The number of men in the company increased over time.

Solomon took a deep interest in the war. He went down the Mississippi to Island Number Ten to visit the troop encampments along the way in the winter of 1861-62. His son Shelton was attached to the Army of the Tennessee. While visiting him, Solomon witnessed the battle of Fort Donnelson.

Shortly after returning to Chicago from the front, Solomon's health compelled him to retire from business. He went to New England for a few months. and toured the White Mountains. The next year he moved back to Putnam and resided with his daughter. Cared for by her, Solomon spent the final days of his life in companionship with his brother Hezekiah, his sister Amelia, and his old friends. He died on October 14, 1864, in his daughter's home.

The Zanesville Courier of October 21, 1864, carried the following description of Solomon Sturges:

"Mr. Sturges was a man of great simplicity and transparency, yet a decidedly positive character. He put on no airs and with him there was no disguise; what he thought he uttered, what he felt he manifested unequivocally and strongly, yet never with the intention of wounding another's feelings. If with his nervous temperament and quick excitability he sometimes appeared harsh and overbearing, it was only because he wished to be frank and decided. He was a kind and generous neighbor, an upright and worthy citizen, honest and honorable in all his transactions with men. Close and sharp at a bargain, yet when 'swearing to his own hurt, he changed not,' but fulfilled the letter and spirit of his contracts. Those who had befriended him were never forgotten, but were remembered with the liveliest gratitude, and those who shared his confidence ever found in him a firm, steadfast and reliable friend. He could appreciate a noble character, and such had a warm place in his heart. He was a keen observer of men and things, read character with wonderful facility and though sometimes mistaken, often at a glance, judged men with surprising accuracy.

"To the institutions of religion, he gave a liberal support, and was a punctual attendant at the house of God on the Sabbath. He was likewise an attentive and apprecia-

tive hearer of the word, though as preached, it might not carry conviction to his own mind. He contributed cheerfully to the various objects of Christian benevolence, and to the colonization society particularly, in whose mission at one time he had great confidence, he gave largely. The Ladies' Seminary in Putnam, of which he was one of the three original founders, and for many years a trustee, attests the interest he felt in female education, and the desire he had that the daughters of the land might be thoroughly furnished for their appropriate and responsible duties.

"Mr. Sturges was a true, ardent and self-sacrificing patriot. He loved the country for which his ancestors fought and bled, and hastened to its rescue when imperiled. He hated corruption and improvidence anywhere, especially in the public servants. Always preferring right above any mere party ties, he was ready to pursue the course, which, to him, seemed best adapted to secure the highest welfare of the nation. For demagogues and political tricksters, who seek to fatten upon the public treasury, without rendering an equivalent service, he had a supreme contempt. When the present rebellion broke out he entered, with more than his wonted energy and activity, into the work of its overthrow and the destruction of its life and power. He organized a company of 'Rifles' bearing his own name, involving a personal expenditure of \$20,000, besides other expenditures exceeding, perhaps, those of any other individual in the country.

"When the Government in the first of that dark and gloomy period, appealed to its citizens for pecuniary aid and it required great fortitude to invest to any great extent in its securities, and when several of the loyal States proposed to indorse for the Government, to the extent of their receipts from the sales of public land, Mr. Sturges promptly subscribed for \$100,000 of the first loan offered to the public. This liberal subscription was heralded over the country as evincing his faith in the Government and had a marked effect in inducing early and rapid subscription to this patriotic loan. He also gave orders that the receipts from his grain warehouses, then yielding a large revenue, should also be appropriated in like manner. It was one of the

strong desires of his heart that he might live to witness the downfall of the rebellion and the complete triumph of the Government, and its free institutions enjoyed by all the inhabitants of the land.

"The country has had few men of greater financial ability than Mr. Sturges. Eminently was he the architect of his own fortune. His unwonted success was not the result of some rash speculation by which wealth is sometimes acquired and lost in a day. It was the legitimate fruit of fine business talents, patient and laborious toil, singular and accurate forethought and consummate skill in the management of his extensive and multiform affairs. His mind worked with wonderful rapidity not only, but had unflinching tenacity and untiring energy to the goal of his ambition—almost in any case there was a spice of romance in his plans, the instances were few, considering his quick and excitable temperament, and may be pardoned for the lofty ideal which floated in his imagination.

"Mr. Sturges was no common man. His was no negative character, taking its elements and shape from surrounding influences. He was one of nature's noblemen, born to rule, to give form and direction, and furnish thought and stimulus to other minds, and help society to move. He possessed a tall and commanding form, a well developed head, 'bright, keen and detective' eyes, a countenance, at times serene and thoughtful, and again glowing under the workings of his quick and genial spirit, as full of life and buoyancy, and as fond of humor and pleasant repartee as the most youthful and lively around him. Yet in these seasons of relaxation and social enjoyment, his large experience and deep reflection prompted the most sage and worthy counsels.

"It was a great comfort to Mr. Sturges, in his last sickness, that he could be in the bosom of his family, and as a child, be nursed by the tender assiduities of his daughters. And it was a noble sight to see him borne to his burial by his manly sons, and to those who have known and respected him so long, it is a source of deep regret that we shall 'see his face no more.'"

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