

INDIANA COUNTY

175th

Anniversary History

by

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VOLUME IV

Biographical Sketches of Noted
Citizens, Past and Present

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and Helen Julia (Dunlap) McWherter. She was a daughter of James & Nora Dunlap. Jesse I., son of Samuel H. & Anna Bell (Smith) McWherter, was a foreman for Pa. Dep't of Highways.

SUTTON, JOHN (5-20-1814/6-9-1877). First pres., Board of Trustees, INS, 1872-77. John Sutton Hall, IUP, named in his honor.

Mr. S. was prominent as a merchant and businessman. After his father's death in 1833 he helped his mother continue the store established by Thomas Sutton until in 1835 he and his brother, James M. Sutton, erected another store and took over the business. In 1842 James withdrew and Mr. S. took H. M. Moore as partner. On 5-8-1844 they hired A. W. Wilson as clerk, who afterward became a 1/4 partner in March 1847. When Mr. Moore d. (Sept. 1848) Wilson became a 1/2 partner. A new store 65 x 28, two-story, with a slate roof (said to be the first slate roof in Indiana) was erected 1858-59 at the corner of S. Phila. St. & Carpenter Alley and is still standing. The store did a large volume of business (Vol. I: 544). Mr. S. retired from the firm Sutton & Wilson in March 1872 and his son, John W. succeeded as junior partner.

Other business interests included being a director of the First National Bank from its organization in 1864 (I: 542) until 1875 when he succeeded to the presidency of the bank. He was one of a stock company which erected the Indiana Strawboard Mill in 1853 (I: 538) but later withdrew until in 1869 he was again involved (as McCartney & Sutton) in its operation. With A. W. Wilson & John Lichteberger, he invested money in a Tennessee cotton farm in 1865 but lost money on it. It was reported in 1865 he had an income of \$4960.

John Sutton was much interested in education; was a trustee and secretary of the Indiana Seminary 1858-59 (I: 477). He was also an Indiana Boro school director and participated in the construction of a new eight-room school in 1859 (III: 217). On 9-3-1870 he chaired a meeting to consider ways and means of establishing a normal school and was one of the largest subscribers to its stock, elected a trustee 5-7-1872 at a stockholder's meeting. By June 1872 the site selected for the school was on a 12-acre tract which he sold for \$7,000. In August 1872 a "Notice to Builders and Contractors" signed John Sutton, president, asked for bids on a 221-foot front, four-story building with three wings. A conflict, however, ensued with trustee Harry White who in July 1872 attempted to have the trustees reconsider the selection of the John Sutton site. The result was a 4-4 tie vote, broken by Mr. Sutton's vote as president not to reconsider. The Normal School opened in 1875 (III: 238). After his death alumni remembered his leading role (III: 250) and years later the structure was named "John Sutton Hall." The author in 1975 had a part in saving the building from destruction (III: 643-45).

Mr. S. was also active in the political, civic and religious life of Indiana. He served on Boro Council in 1836 and again (as a Democrat) in 1857 (I: 590). In 1855 he had been nominated on the "Fusion" ticket for Poor House Director, but the poor house was never built (I: 397). He was much interested in bringing a railroad to Indiana (I: 552, III: 245). During the Civil War in 1863 he was one of a committee instructed to work for passage of an Act authorizing payment of bounties to volunteers (I: 637). About the same time he was on the executive committee of a "Cemetery Meeting" which considered purchasing from him a tract for a cemetery at \$125 per acre. He was a member of the Presbyterian Church of Indiana, was chosen as Elder in 1851, and served over 25 years as Sunday School Superintendent. He was a director of the Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh. In 1871 he was treasurer of a local committee which collected funds for fire victims in Chicago, Detroit & Wisconsin. He was chairman of the 1870 efforts to secure gas lighting for Indiana (III: 245). Toward the end of his life he was named a v. pres. of the 1876 Centennial Celebration in Indiana (III: 256).

The home of Mr. S. was on the site where now stands the Indiana Theater Building. Here in April 1876 a new house was erected. In failing health, he went to Bedford Springs in August 1876 for a few weeks. The *Indiana Progress* hoped "he may return with restored health." It was not to be. His death in 1877 brought forth three columns of eulogy in the *Indiana Progress* (III: 245-49) lauding him as "the foremost citizen of Indiana." The *Progress* editor said, "The writer does not know that in his own private affairs he ever had a case in court." The Normal School trustees adopted resolutions stating, among other things, that "So long as the Indiana Normal School of Pennsylvania exists, John Sutton will be remembered as one of its founders--as one of its first and best friends."

Our subject m. Mary Agnes Walker 7-14-1847. She was a native of Canonsburg, PA b. 1-10-1826, who had come to teach in the Indiana Female Seminary in 1846 (I: 287). During the operation of the underground railroad she was said to have been a secret contributor of food and clothing (III: 115). During the Civil War she was secretary of a society of ladies organized to aid the sick and wounded soldiers (I: 641). In later years she was said to have been the first pres. of the W.C.T.U. She was one of the founders of the Ingleside Literary Club organized 11-14-1882. She d. 4-17-1898. Mr. & Mrs. S. had three children: Thomas and John W. Sutton are subjects of separate sketches. A daughter, Annie, d. in youth.

Thomas Sutton, father of our subject, is treated in another sketch, as also his ancestors.

KIER, JAMES (1799/9-23-1846) Sheriff of IC 1836-39. Subscriptions of stock for building a covered bridge over the Kiskiminetas