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# M'KINLEY

## His Rise From Schoolteacher to President.

## Sketch of the Career of the Third Chief Executive of the United States to Fall Victim to the Assassin's Bullet.

Long and honorable was the public career of William McKinley. It extended from the time when, as a mere stripling, he held sway in a log cabin country school to the tragic moment when, as chief executive of the nation, he was felled by the assassin's bullet. During all that time his record suffered neither blot nor blemish. He was tested as a soldier, as a lawyer, as a politician, as a statesman, as the head of the nation. In each case he stood the test.

In private life he began by being a manly boy, a dutiful and obedient son. He continued as a faithful and loving husband, one whose example has had its good effect on the national character. His life was typically American, the life of an American of the best type. And through it all he was a patriot. Above personal ambition were ever in his mind his country and his country's good.

**McKinley as a Boy.**

William McKinley came from that dominant race that has furnished this nation with some of its greatest soldiers and statesmen. He was Scotch-Irish by descent, and his ancestors immigrated to this country early enough to have sons who took a patriotic part in the war of the Revolution.

The family removed from Pennsylvania to Ohio in 1814, and from that day has been identified with that state not in a great public way, but simply as faithful and devoted citizens, not striving for particular eminence, but notable for sturdiness of character and integrity.

It was among such people and of them that William McKinley was born at Niles, in Trumbull county, O., Feb. 26, 1844.

A younger son, he was destined by his father, after whom he was named, for the bar. He was educated at the public schools, and later entered Allegheny college at Meadville, Pa., teaching school to pay his tuition fees. Scarcely was he matriculated when the civil war came on. He was but a stripling of nineteen when he entered as a private.

M'KINLEY AS A BREVET MAJOR.

McKinley, as those who remember him as a boy in Poland, O., declare, was a real boy, full of fun, loving athletic sports, fond of horses and hunting and fishing and all outdoor exercise, and yet at 16 we find him taking upon himself a serious view of life. The church records show that in 1858, when he was hardly 16, he united with the Methodist Episcopal church of Poland.

McKinley's father was an iron manufacturer and a pioneer in that business. William was his third son, the eldest being David, the second James and the youngest Abner.

McKinley's mother was alert and vigorous, mentally and physically, up to the time of her death, which occurred when she was nearly ninety years of age.

**As a Husband.**

Major McKinley's home life was very happy despite the fact that his wife was an invalid. Mrs. McKinley was Miss Ida Saxton, daughter of James and Mary Saxton of Canton, O. She received an excellent education when a girl, spent some time abroad and became her father's assistant in his bank, where it was said that her fair face attracted bouquets and bank notes to the window. "She must be trained," said her father, "to buy her own bread if necessary, and not to sell herself to matrimony."

She had many suitors, but Major McKinley, then a rising young lawyer, vanquished all rivalry, removed the young woman from the cashier's window and won from honest James Saxton these words when the hand of the daughter was gained:

"You are the only man I have ever known to whom I would intrust my daughter."

Mrs. McKinley always assisted her husband in politics. Her ill health in nowise deterred her from enjoying the political honors he won, nor did it prevent her from being a wise counselor. Her presence time and again served as an inspiration to her husband. When political preferment first came to McKinley, it was his wife who convinced him that he should accept. She believed implicitly in his talents, and that his service would be for the good of the state she was certain. She never wavered in her faith in her husband's convictions.

Mrs. McKinley had confidence in her husband not only as a public official,

M'KINLEY'S HOME, CANTON.

but as a man. Her illness was often overcome by her affection, and she traveled thousands of miles when she was weak in body merely that she might be near him. She encouraged him by word, look and presence, and he in knightly style returned the favors and reciprocated the sacred affection. Her home life was short, for out of the thirty years of married life more than twenty-four were passed by her husband in the public service.

Mrs. McKinley for years has spent much of her leisure in crocheting those dainty little slippers which have so many times brought sunshine into gloomy hospital wards in various parts of the country. It is said that she has knitted over 5,000 pairs of these slippers in her twenty-six years of invalid life. In appearance Mrs. McKinley is of medium height, with brown hair and large deep blue eyes. Although an invalid, she was fond of making and receiving calls and often went on shopping tours. Mrs. McKinley never cared much for dress, although her toilets have always been in excellent taste.

For many years Mrs. McKinley's face has betrayed a faint languor, suggestive of the invalid, but it is fair and bears a stamp of beauty, in spite of the fifty-five years she carries. Her ill health dates from girlhood. As a student she with difficulty undertook the studies of the course, by reason of this condition, but with constant care and frequent medical attention she overcame all trouble sufficiently to enjoy life and to taste of its pleasures. Her actual invalidism dates from the birth of her second child, in 1871. This child died in its infancy and was followed by the first child, a daughter of three years, a short time afterward. Mrs. Saxton, Mrs. McKinley's mother, also died about this time. These sorrows were more than she could bear, and she never recovered.

A little story of McKinley's home acts while governor may be of interest.

**As a Son.**

No less than his attention to his wife, his thought and care for his mother, particularly since his father's death in 1892, have attracted comment. It had been his custom while at home in Canton to take his mother to church each Sunday morning. When he went to Columbus as governor, he determined to keep up the practice as much as possible, and unless the press of public business was very great he always slipped quietly over to Canton from the state capital on Sunday mornings and walked to church with his mother on his arm. The next train would carry him to Columbus, where his wife awaited his coming. Naturally the mother looked with pride on such a son, and she followed with keen interest the progress of his first presidential canvass.

Young McKinley had been a keen observer, so far as his opportunities went,

**McKinley as a Soldier.**

of the political events that culminated in the firing on Fort Sumter. The call of the president for troops found a quick response in his breast, and when the drums and fifes aroused the echoes of the quiet streets of Poland among the first applicants for enlistment was William McKinley, Jr.

It was a new experience and a new school that the eighteen-year old boy entered, this school of war, but he had wonderful teachers. It was his good fortune that assigned him to the Twenty-third Ohio. The recruits that composed it were in June, 1861, mustered and formed into a regiment. Its first colonel was William S. Rosecrans, afterward major general commanding the department of the Cumberland. Second in command was Stanley Matthews, who was a splendid soldier, but won his greatest honors in civil life by becoming United Strtes senator and justice of the United States supreme court, and Ruthford B. Hayes, afterward govenor of Ohio and president of the United States. These are a few of the illustrous men who were born on the roll of officers of the gallant regiment in which marched Private William McKinley, Jr.

He carried the musket for fourteen months; then he was promoted. But he won his promotion honestly. His comrades of the rank and file bear testimony to the fact that he was a good soldier; that he performed every duty devolving upon him with fidelity and intelligence and without complaint. They congratulated him, therefore, when he was made commissary sergeant of the regiment. Later, after Antietam, he was made a second lieutenant, and the Mahoning county boy had risen from the ranks.

He was now to all intents and purposes a trained veteran. He had had his baptism in blood at Carnifex Ferry. He had gone through the West Virginia campaign and become a part of the magnificent Army of the Potomac under McClellan. South Mountain and Antietam had been made immortal by the blood of heroes, and the shoulder straps were worn with a due but not exaggerated realization of the responsibilities they implied. He became a second lieutenant on Sept. 24, 1862. He was promoted to first lieutenant Feb. 7, 1863. His commission as captain bears date July 25, 1864.

The brevet rank of major was conferred by President Lincoln "for gallant and meritorious services at the battles of Opequan, Fisher's Creek and Cedar Hill." He was with Sheridan in the Shenandoah campaign, was at Winchester, Cedar Creek, Fisher's Hill, Opequan, Kernstown, Floyd Mountain and Berryville, where his horse was shot under him, and in all the battles in which the Twenty-third participated. He served on the staffs of Generals Hayes, Crook, Hancock and Carroll. He was mustered out with the regiment July 26, 1865, after more than four years' continuous service.

When the war closed, McKinley was just twenty-two. He was full of youthful enthusiasm and ardor, and he returned to his home in Ohio fully expecting to accept the flattering offer made him of a commission in the regular army. But to this his parents offered strong opposition. They pointed out the small rewards that come to the soldier in time of peace. At length he yielded to their persuasions and reluctantly gave up his dreams of martial glory and bent his mind upon the pursuits of peace. The war had ended all thought of a collegiate career. He cast about for a profession, and naturally, considering the bent of his mind, he chose the law. He became a student in the offices of Charles E. Glidden and David Wilson, then leaders of the Mahoning county bar. He supplemented his reading by taking the course at the Albany Law school and in 1867 was admitted to the bar. He located at Canton, where he formed a partnership with Judge Belden.

**McKinley as a Lawyer.**

He was an excellent advocate, even in those early days, and made some of the best jury arguments ever heard at the Stark county bar. At the time he was first elected to congress he enjoyed one of the best general practices in the county.

As a lawyer Mr. McKinley was always thorough and careful in the preparation of cases. He had the confidence of everybody and soon became particularly prominent as an advocate. He prepared himself by thorough courses of reading for his public career. He resembled Garfield much in this respect and possessed elements of strength by reason of his thorough study of political subjects. He seems to have had in view from the beginning the devotion of his life to public service. During all his early professional years he was an active participant in Republican campaigns and early gave evidence of the power he later developed as a public speaker and orator. The plan of his political speaking was always the same. He first thoroughly mastered the subject in hand and then presented it forcibly.

Major McKinley was but thirty-three years old when he was elected by the

**As a Statesman.**

people of his district to represent them in congress. There he soon made his mark and was returned at each subsequent election until that of 1890, in which year a change in the boundaries of his district defeated him by a majority of only 302.

While in congress he served on the committee on revision of laws, the judiciary committee, the committee expenditures in the postoffice department and the committee on rules. When General Garfield received the nomination for the presidency, Mr. McKinley was assigned to the vacancy on the committee on ways and means. He served on the last mentioned committee until the expiration of his last term as representative. While chairman of the committee he framed the McKinley bill, which afterward became a law.

McKinley was a protege of ex-President Hayes, and up to the time of the latter's death he recognized the ex-president as his adviser and counselor. He was in General Hayes' regiment during the civil war. General Hayes knew him and his father well, and saw in the dashing young cavalier the germ of greatness. He needed a counselor, an adviser, a friend, and General Hayes watched over him with the filial love, devotion and pride of a father.

The war ended, McKinley still remained an object of hope, of interest and pride to General Hayes. McKinley became a candidate for congress and was elected. When Hayes was president, McKinley was in the house of representatives. The major was a frequent welcome visitor at the White House. One day the president gave McKinley advice, which made McKinley the foremost champion of a protective tariff. President Hayes thus spoke to the young representative:

"To achieve success and fame you must pursue a special line. You must not make a speech on every motion offered or bill introduced. You must confine yourself to one particular thing. Become a specialist. Take up some branch of legislation and make that your study. Why not take up the subject of tariff? Being a subject that will not be settled for years to come, it offers a great field for study and a chance for ultimate fame."

With these words ringing in his ears McKinley began studying the tariff and soon became the foremost authority on the subject.

The day upon which the "McKinley tariff bill" was passed in the house must always stand as the supreme moment of McKinley's congressional career. The bill, by adroit parliamentary generalship which had prevented it from being weighed down with amendments not approved by the committee, had been brought under the operation of the previous question. It stood complete, ready to go forth for good or evil. Upon McKinley devolved the task of smoothing its path and speeding it upon its way.

The occasion, thoroughly advertised, attracted to the capitol an immense

**The McKinley Bill.**

throng. The galleries were one mass of humanity, and the anticipation of the vote had compelled the attendance of every member. As usual, McKinley spoke without notes. His voice, penetrating but not harsh, filled the chamber. Every sentence was distinctly heard. Never was an orator more free from the ordinary claptrap than McKinley. So true is this that the incident when he suddenly drew from beneath his desk the suit of clothes which he purchased for $10 at the establishment of a fellow representative in Boston, in order to demonstrate the cheapness of wearing apparel, stands out with vivid distinctness.

It was this earnestness and self conviction that made McKinley's address in the house and on the stump so effective. Indeed the occasion is still recalled when he held an audience of Georgia people for two hours at a Chautauqua assembly near Atlanta while he preached to them the glories of the protective tariff system. "It was only by the greatest self control," said the late Henry W. Grady, speaking of this event afterward, "that I restrained myself from rising as McKinley concluded his wonderful speech and declaring myself henceforth ready to follow him as a disciple."

James G. Blaine in his "Twenty Years of Congress" reviewed the Forty-fifth congress, in which McKinley first sat, as follows: "William McKinley, Jr., entered from the Canton district. He enlisted in an Ohio regiment when but 17 years old and won the rank of major by meritorious service. The interest of his constituency and his own bent of mind led him to the study of industrial questions, and he was soon recognized in the house as one of the most thorough statisticians and one of the ablest defenders of the doctrine of protection."

At a great mass meeting in Indianapolis several years ago the late ex-President Harrison was presiding officer. McKinley was one of the speakers, and Harrison introduced him as follows:

"He has endeared himself to all by his record as a gallant young soldier

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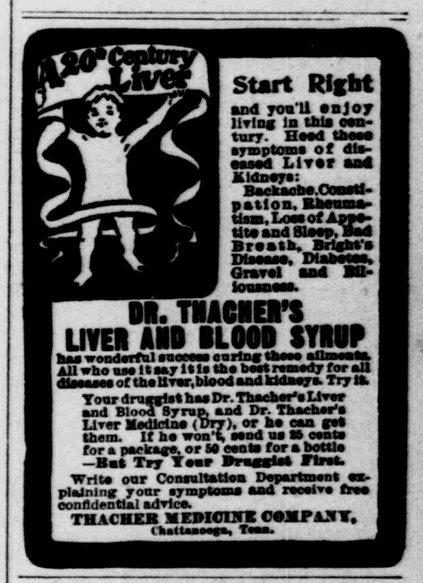


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