



TILGHMAN A. HOWARD

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In the compilation attached to the "Iowa Historical Census" of 1880 and previous years it is stated that the county of Howard was supposed to be named in honor of General Tilghman A. Howard, of Indiana. That such is the case hardly admits of a doubt now. It is well, it is thought, to put into *THE ANNALS* a sketch of the life of the man thus honored. Much of what is here reproduced is taken from an obituary address delivered on July 4, 1847, by Joseph A. Wright, at Rockville, Indiana, the home of both men. This Mr. Wright was afterwards governor of Indiana, and a political partisan and friend of the deceased, and a brother of George G. Wright, noted Iowa jurist and United States senator.

Tilghman A. Howard was born on November 14, 1797, on George Creek, by the waters of the Saluda River, four miles northeast of Pickensville, South Carolina. He was the son of a Baptist minister and curiously enough the third son through a third marriage of each parent. His father was eighteen years old when he joined the American army under General Greene, and served under him at the battle of Eutaw Springs in South Carolina. In the words of one who knew him well, he "fought as became an American soldier." In the strong and nervous language of his son, "His musket told its own tale at the Revolution." As a preacher he had the reputation of being a successful one. He maintained his standing as a faithful herald of the cross until the year 1839, when he passed away in the state of Illinois. Tilghman's mother was of the family of Ashurst, whose name the son also bore. His mother died when he was two years old, and the rearing and education of young Howard devolved on a half brother, John McElroy, who moved in a couple of years to Buncombe County, North Carolina. There the boy remained until he was about nineteen, when he went into Tennessee without relations or friends, but relied on his own industry and perseverance

to make his way in the world. He soon became a clerk in a store and engaged in school teaching, devoting much time, however, to the study of law. He was his own preceptor, although he received some instruction from Hugh Lawson White, one of the most eminent men of the nation, a Tennessean, who was the choice of his state and Georgia for president in 1836 when Van Buren was elected. Senator Oliver H. Smith, who was a member of the Senate during White's later years in that body, said White spoke in the highest terms of General Howard. In 1818, at the age of twenty-one, he was admitted to the bar and at once commenced practice. In 1824 he was elected to the State Senate when Governor Samuel Houston put Howard on his staff, whence doubtless came his title of "General." The friendship between the Governor and his staff officer continued throughout their lives. In 1828 he was chosen a presidential elector and as such voted for Jackson and Calhoun.

In 1830 Howard removed to Indiana, and a few years later settled at Rockville, thereafter his home. He had not long been there when he was surprised to receive from President Jackson a commission as district attorney for Indiana, which office he held for six years. In 1835 he was appointed a commissioner to settle a large amount of conflicting claims under various treaties, acts of Congress, etc. The claims involved more than half a million dollars, in which a numerous lot of speculators were interested. It was held to be important to select a man who would hear the whole proof and report to Washington, and it was likewise important to have a man in whom the government, as well as the citizens that were pressing their claims, should have confidence. In respect to the appointment of a commissioner, General Cass, then secretary of war, related this incident: "After the names of several persons were presented for consideration, President Jackson, who being indisposed, was not present while the cabinet was considering the matter, came into the room, and, ascertaining the subject being considered, said, 'Gentlemen, I will tell you whom to appoint.' All were silent. 'Appoint General Howard, of Indiana; he is an honest man. I have known him long.' And the appointment was made, Howard's first knowl-

edge of it coming with the commission. He visited Chicago, spent three months in investigating the claims, and made a voluminous report to the government, and there never was heard a whisper of suspicion as to his integrity, or his fidelity to the government, or to the claimants."

At one time, being interested from public considerations in the construction of a canal, he went to Washington to urge the extension of that canal. A friend, having heard of the contemplated trip, wrote him, urging him not to take the trip; saying that there was a contest between the canal and the river interests, and that it would injure Howard in respect to his future political prospects. To this appeal Howard made an answer well worthy of being considered by public officials when assailed similarly: "The time for making everything bend to future political interests has passed; the state has been trodden down by such things; I am for the redemption of the state."

In 1839 he was elected to the Twenty-sixth Congress where he made himself manifest as a good man in council. While there he made a long speech in favor of a bill granting aid to western states for internal improvements. In 1840 he was a delegate to the Baltimore convention that renominated Martin Van Buren for the presidency. In that body he made a powerful speech in support of the nomination made. In the same year he reluctantly resigned his seat in Congress in order to accept his party's nomination for governor of the state, in which campaign, one of the hottest known in that state, or indeed in any state, he went down to defeat, but he polled a larger vote than Van Buren did three months later. Two years afterwards he was a candidate for United States senator. He had the nomination for that office of his political friends in that body, of whom there were seventy-four. The Whig whose term was about to expire had the nomination of his friends in that body, but among the latter were two persons who were elected from strongly Whig counties, but whose fidelity to the party was suspected. The result of that contest was the defeat of both the men who were their parties' choice for the Senate, accomplished by the treachery of these two doubtful members, who voted for another man advanced by the Democrats,

on abandoning General Howard. The Whig, who was defeated through the same treachery that beat Howard, said, "I know that General Howard never got over the mortification of that defeat." Regarding the men who were responsible for the result the same writer said, "They have lived to be as comfortable in the presence of those who once respected them as General Arnold was when introduced, in England, to the friends of Major Andre."

In 1844, General Howard was appointed by President Tyler minister to the Republic of Texas. Arriving at Washington, Texas, then the capital of the Republic, on August 1, he met his old-time friend, General Houston, now president of Texas, and he was received as the duly accredited minister from the United States. But, only nine days later, General Howard was seized by symptoms of the malady that was soon to terminate his worthy life. This event occurred on August 15, 1844, at the home of John Farquher, a few miles distant from the town of Washington. His remains were brought to Rockville, and there interred.

Mr. Wright said of him: "Howard possessed a mind that always appeared to be athirst for information—ever on the alert—ever active—and no situation in life could prevent him from investigating things around him. How often have those who knew him well seen him, in the midst of conversation, suddenly stop and go to examine some old dictionary, or some ancient map or chronological chart! Aside from profound and exhaustive knowledge in his profession, his acquirements in history, politics, geography, geology, mineralogy, botany, moral and mental philosophy, and theological subjects were astonishing to ordinary minds. Combining such a mass of information, a massive intellect, and a vivid imagination with a powerful voice, a dignified and noble personal appearance, dark, piercing, expressive eyes, and a lofty liberality and earnestness of sentiment—these made him, what he truly was, a powerful speaker. With all this, connect his active and never-ceasing benevolence, his strict regard for justice, his high sense of honor, together with his deep feelings of piety and the well-known purity of his whole life—these gave him a power and influence in society, of which any man might justly be proud."

The same authority said of him: "Howard was a Christian, and as such, a liberalist. I never knew a man who took so wide a view of religious liberty. He kept constantly before him, and practiced through life this truth, that our political liberty grows out of, and must ever rest upon, the great Puritanic doctrine of the direct allegiance of every man to God, and his consequent duty to serve him according to the dictates of his conscience, whatever bishops, popes, presidents or moderators may say to the contrary. The forms and ceremonies of the churches had little to do with his Christianity. I verily believe that Howard could have lived and died in any church in Christendom, a pious and devoted man."

His last words, said to his physician, were: "All is right." To another he said, "I suffer much; the paroxysm is great; but the Lord is my shepherd." In his last letter to his wife, written just before his departure from earth, he wrote, "The Lord is my shepherd; surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life."

This summary of the man's career is given in the memorial address cited:

1. An orphan at two years of age.
2. A school teacher at nineteen.
3. A self-made lawyer at twenty-one.
4. A state senator at twenty-six.
5. A successful lawyer and profound jurist at thirty.
6. A dignified and useful member of Congress at forty-one.
7. An accomplished minister to a neighboring republic at forty-six.

Oliver H. Smith, a Whig leader in Indiana, said of Howard: "He was one of the great men of the state," adding, "I have sometimes thought him not fully appreciated, as he richly deserved to be."

It was this man, after whom one of the fifty counties that were established seventy years ago, was named. His own state, just after his death, changed the name of an old county to that of Howard.

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