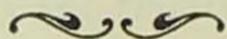


George Miller

George Miller, the founder of the Henry County Institute of Science, had helped organize a similar association at Media, in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. Word of Miller's death reached the Pennsylvania organization at a time when it was in session, and so, following its custom of preparing a biographical account of its deceased members, the president immediately appointed a committee to write his biography. On the same first Saturday of January, 1870, at the same hour, the Henry County organization, too, was making arrangements to draft resolutions in commemoration of their patron. Two weeks later they appointed a committee to write a biography. It was the sketch produced in Pennsylvania, however, that was later recorded in the secretary's minutes of the Iowa association.

For many years the Henry County Institute of Science met on October 30th to celebrate George Miller's birthday. Always one number on the program consisted of the reading of his biography. Whether the Pennsylvania or the Iowa version of his life was read on these occasions, the minutes do not disclose. The Pennsylvania biog-

raphy, approved by his contemporaries, is presented here just as it appears in the minutes of the Henry County Institute.



George Miller, the subject of this notice, was the son of George and Mary Miller and was born in Upper Providence township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania, on the 30th of the tenth month, 1797. His parents were both members of the Society of Friends, as their ancestors had been from their first settlement in this country. Inheriting a birthright with this religious Society, he had the advantages of a careful, early training; but his opportunities for obtaining a school education while young, differed but little from that of the sons of other farmers of the neighborhood, if we except some little instruction in Latin and French that he received from a competent teacher, during one or two terms.

While quite young he gave some attention to scientific studies, and took some interest in the collection of botanical specimens, and those of mineralogy and geology.

In early life he also manifested a fondness for reading, but his selection of books even at that time, was from those of a practical and instructive character. The progressive movements of the age in which he lived were generally in strict harmony

with his natural feelings, particularly such as had for their object the general improvement of the country, or the advancement of society; and these never failed to receive his hearty cooperation and support, however unpopular they might have been for the time being. From sectarian prejudices he was unusually free, but very firm and devoted to those political principles which in his judgment accorded strict justice and equal rights to all.

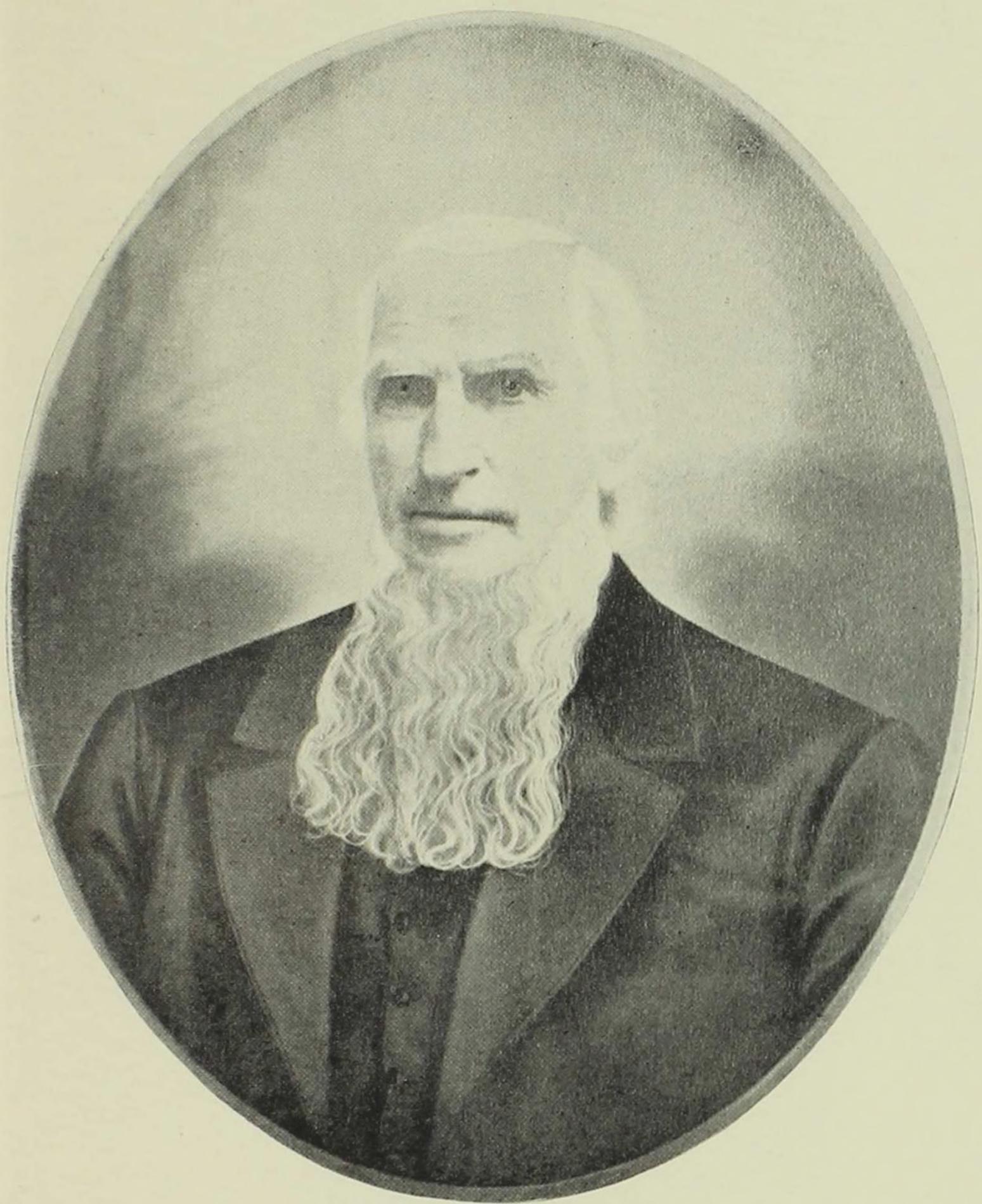
In the year 1820 he made a tour, mostly on foot, to the Falls of Niagara. His route was by the way of New York City, the Hudson river and the central parts of the State of N. Y. After reaching Black-Rock on the Niagara River, he took a passage on board of a steamboat and proceeded to the town of Erie in the state of Pennsylvania. This was the first steamboat that ever floated in Lake Erie. From Erie he proceeded on and to the Hocking or Hockhocking river near the present town of Logan, in the state of Ohio. From this point he walked to his home in Delaware County, the whole distance being more than six hundred miles.

About the period of the return of our youthful traveler there sprang up in this county a taste for the study of the natural sciences which was stimulated by the publication of the first local *flora* of the late Dr. William Darlington. George Miller

by his studies, his travels, and observations of nature in its varied forms was well fitted to join in any movements in that direction; and hence we find him among those young men who engaged more enthusiastically in the study of the natural sciences as the means of investigation increased. With him this was particularly the case in respect to botany.

But coöperative study has its advantages as well as coöperative labor. Our Institute had its origin in convictions of this kind; and George Miller was among the first to foresee the usefulness of such an Institute. With the view of bringing about its establishment, several meetings were held at different places in the county during the early part of the year 1833, but it was not till the 21st of September in that year that an organization was effected. As George Miller was the oldest of the five young men present at the meeting held on that day, his name was the first signed to the constitution then adopted.

While he continued to be a resident of Delaware County, he cordially coöperated with his fellow members in ensuring the permanency of the Institute and securing its usefulness by his presence at its meetings and his contributions to the Museum. But his stay with us was brief. His love of travel and his great admiration of the



GEORGE MILLER

West induced him to leave his home again in 1835. After traveling on horseback through Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Kentucky, and Illinois, stopping occasionally in the Miami country with old friends of his family, he settled for a short time in Illinois on the Vermillion River. From this place he made another extensive tour, passing through northern Illinois, and Prairie Du Chien on the Mississippi, and making extensive reconnaissance of the country on both sides of the river as he progressed. He eventually purchased an extensive tract of land in what is now Henry County in the state of Iowa. Here he made his final settlement and this has been his home for more than thirty-three years and until the time of his death.

When George Miller made his purchase, the Territory of Iowa was not organized. The country thereabouts was almost in a state of nature. The Indians and buffalo roamed freely over its vast prairies and limited timberlands. At the point on the Mississippi where he crossed that river, there was then but a single log cabin. Now the site is occupied by the populous city of Burlington, and the river is spanned by an iron railroad bridge. The Indians and the buffaloes have receded far away to the Rocky Mountains. The country has passed through its territorial exist-

ence and become the state of Iowa and is now numbered among the greatest in the Union.

Though engaged in agricultural pursuits, George Miller never lost his interest in science. As an evidence of this he erected, during the last year of his life, and at his own cost, a building containing a lecture room and departments for museum and library. The edifice, called the Henry County Institute of Science, is located on his own lands, and in close proximity to the thriving village of Trenton. While this building was in progress he was in declining health, as he had been for several years previously. He was also subject to severe attacks of illness, which he bore with almost stoical fortitude. On Christmas Day, though feeble, he dined with an old friend, but in the afternoon became more unwell. From that time he gradually sank till midnight of the last day of the year 1869 when he expired at the age of seventy-two years and two months.

George Miller never married. He was a man of retiring disposition, of the strictest integrity, but very firm in all his purposes. His aim was to do good to his fellow-man; and as to the kind of good that was uppermost in his mind towards the close of his life, no sculptured monument could more forcibly attest than the Henry County Institute of Science.

MELVIN GINGERICH