

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

JAMES M. IVY

After the termination of the great American civil war, a new era dawned upon the Southern States. Old landmarks were obliterated; old systems, industrial as well as social, under the influences--~~the influences~~--the changes--wrought in the government itself, were necessarily replaced by new methods. The loss of property, as well as inexperience, rendered the situation in which our people were placed, extremely complicated. But these great changes--this complete revolution in the entire Southern social fabric--which our people then regarded as a curse overflowing their cup of woe, prove now to have been a blessing. Hope supplanted despair; energy took the place of inexperience; devotion to the "land we love" encouragement while the enterprising spirit of a nobleman sought to build up the waste places and recover their lost fortunes.

The results of all these changes are now everywhere to be observed. Unimportant way-stations, which before the war, claimed but a single store, have rapidly assumed the proportions of towns and villages, with public and private buildings, public officers, schools, churches, etc., bearing the impress of a progressive spirit--indomitable perseverance--advancing civilization and enlightenment. The small stores at these stations, which once bartered for a few bales of cotton during the season, now purchase their thousands of bales and ship direct to all the principal markets of America.

Among the embryo villages which have arisen, Uranus-like, from the earth, armed and equipped to enter the lists and contend honorably for the trade of the up-country of South Carolina, is the little town of Rock Hill; and foremost among those enterprising spirits who have zealously labored and contributed to its growth during the past thirteen years, is JAMES MORROW IVY, the subject of this sketch, which is intended as a simple and modest compliment, not only to him, but also to the individuals composing the public-spirited, enterprising community in which he resides.

Identified as he is with the history of Rock Hill, especially that which has given it prominence in the markets of the State, a sketch of his life will, we feel not only be a deserving compliment to him, but will prove interesting to the reading public in connection with the growth and development of one of the most thriving little towns in the State.

James M. Ivy was born on the 5th day of December, 1839, in Lancaster county, S. C., and is a son of Rev. Adam Ivy, who is well known in religious circles, and is a highly esteemed and respected citizen of that county. His ancestors were directly from Virginia, and remotely from England.

He began his studies in school at Rock Hill, successively

under W. H. Thomasson, Col. J. M. White and Gen. J. A. Alston; and when Gen. Alston was called to take charge of old Mount Zion Institute, at Winnsboro, in the year 1858, he followed him there, where he remained one session, and then entered the school of John R. Shurley at Ebenezer. At this school he completed his preparatory course for the South Carolina College, which institution he entered in the year 1859. Here he pursued his collegiate studies during the eventful period of 1860, and was present in Columbia, an eye-witness to all those initiatory steps--the formation of the "minute-men" organization; the exciting processions and wild demonstrations, the outbreak of public feeling at that critical time; and the passage of the ordinance of secession, which led to the "war between the States."

The Spring of 1861 opened. War was declared. The attack on Fort Sumter was conceived, and the South Carolina College company, composed of all the students, and commanded by Capt. John Gary, was ordered to Charleston to report to General Beauregard. J. M. Ivy accompanied the College company, in the capacity of sergeant, and was an eye-witness to the inception of hostilities--that great historical event, the bombardment of Fort Sumter--on the 11th, 12th and 13th of April, 1861.

Some weeks subsequent to the surrender of the fort by Maj. Anderson to the South Carolina troops, the College company was ordered back to Columbia, and the old College bell was again heard, pealing its resonant calls to recitation.

But the subject of this sketch felt that duty to his country called him in another field of action, and accompanied by two young friends, he forthwith proceeded home and made hasty preparations to enter upon active service at the seat of war in Virginia, where the three joined the Washington Light Infantry, of Charleston, under the command of Capt. James Conner, one of the companies of the famous Hampton Legion.

He passed unscathed through the first battle of Manassas, on the ever-memorable 21st of July, 1861, although several times struck by spent balls; and was in that desperate charge on Rickett's Battery, where the Hampton Legion suffered so severely.

He remained in the Army of Northern Virginia during the fall and winter of 1861; and in the spring of 1862, was transferred, with his command, to the Peninsula, where, in the battle of Seven Pines, on the 31st day of May, 1862, he was severely wounded in the left shoulder by a Minié ball, which he still carries, and from the effects of which he has never fully recovered the use and strength of the arm.

In consequence of his severe wound, he remained in hospital at Richmond until about the middle of July, when he was honorably discharged from the Confederate service, and returned

from the theatre of war, a disabled soldier, to enter a new and happier life--the knight of Mars becoming the slave of Venus. He married, on August 5th, 1863, the daughter of Hon. Henry Conner, of Lincoln county, N. C., who, in 1814 entered the U. S. Army as Aide-de-camp to Gen. Joseph Graham, in the Creek war, and afterwards served as a member of Congress for twenty consecutive years--from 1821 to 1841--when he declined a reelection.

Owing to the failing health of Major Conner, Mr. Ivy settled at Beattie's Ford, in Lincoln county, the home of his father-in-law. It was then that the subject of this sketch first commenced his career as a merchant. He opened a store of general merchandise at that place in 1866, and conducted a successful and prosperous business for three years.

In 1867, he conceived the idea of seeking another and wider field for the exercise of his business tact and energy, and upon investigation decided that Rock Hill afforded rare facilities for opening and developing the mercantile business. Accordingly, he established and organized at Rock Hill, in that year, the firm of Ivy, Roach & Jones, and left the Rock Hill house with his partners, giving his own personal attention to his business at Beattie's Ford, but making occasional visits to Rock Hill.

In June, 1869, after the death of Major Conner, he closed out his business in North Carolina, and purchased his present home in Rock Hill, returning with his family to his native State, to seek his fortune amid the familiar scenes of his boyhood and among the friends of his youth. On the 1st of January, 1870, the well-known firm of J. M. Ivy & Co. was formed, composed of J. M. Ivy, John J. Roach and R. T. May. Allen Jones retired from the firm of Ivy, Roach & Jones, but was re-admitted in 1872, to the firm of J. M. Ivy & Co., upon the retiring of Messrs. Roach and May. The firm of J. M. Ivy & Co., has been continued, with Allen Jones as partner until the present time.

In 1877, the firm of Ivy & Fewell was established, the business of the two houses being so distributed--as at present conducted--that the latter has charge of the department of general merchandise, and the old ... (paper torn) of J. M. Ivy & Co., transacting a cotton, fertilizer and banking business. And it may here be remarked that in all the firms above mentioned, Mr. Ivy has devoted to cotton--its purchase and sale--his personal attention, while exercising a general control over other branches of the business.

At an early date, he introduced into his section the feature of dealing in futures. He began his purchases by this method as early as 1872, and has continued to study, improve and develop the system, until it is now reduced to, comparatively, a state of completeness. By his plan of operations, he has handled, with wonderful tact, sagacity and security, something near twenty thousand bales each season;

his purchases not being confined to Rock Hill, but extending to all the surrounding markets, including Charlotte, Yorkville, Chester, Lancaster, and recently entering the Columbia market. During the busy season he employs four or five regular buyers in other markets besides Rock Hill.

It is the system of selling in advance, and purchasing to cover, and purchasing and selling to cover, that has enabled him to deal so largely in spot cotton, and with, comparatively, perfect security. As a result, he is enabled to continue always in the market, and never compelled to say—"We are not buying to-day."

He was the first buyer in his section to afford to planters the facility they now possess, of selling their crops at remunerative prices in advance--to be delivered in the Fall--thus ensuring the planters against the fluctuations of the price of the staple and rendering their transactions in cotton also safe.

Some have supposed that his large purchases and heavy transactions imply very reckless speculation. This is a mistake. He never holds or carries cotton, nor does he "store" it, but always sells immediately upon arrival. As a result of his dealings, the shipments of cotton from Rock Hill, before he engaged in business there, amounted to not more than two thousand bales. Now the shipments amount to twelve thousand bales annually.

Another feature of the system in the conduct of business which he introduced at Rock Hill, is known by the common term of "quick sales and short profits;" while to him is also due the idea of offering inducements to country merchants. By all these means combined, added to a spirit of accommodation, liberality, and confidence in those of his customers worthy of it, he has contributed, more than any other man, to the growth and development of the thriving town of Rock Hill.

Besides his enterprise as a merchant, he has never failed to be among the first in all that concerns the public welfare. He has shown a liberality, a charity and a public spirit excelled by no man in the community in which he resides. He contributed liberally to aid in the building of the Episcopal church of Rock Hill, and has given generously to all other churches and charitable associations. He has ever shown a disposition to aid all who have sought to advance themselves. With this feeling, and for the convenience of the public generally, he established, or rather reestablished, the drug store under the name of Ivy & Robertson. He assisted mainly in establishing the Lantern, under the editorship of Gen. Johnstone Jones, in 1872, and when that paper, through its successive changes of names and editors, was about to collapse, in 1877, he assumed editorial control himself, and under his management the Rock Hill Herald is well known, not only by the entire State press, but is a welcome visitor to a large number of readers in our country.

Mr. Ivy has been twice elected intendant of Rock Hill, in which position he served with efficiency and satisfaction. Without taking a notably prominent part in politics, he has displayed a lively interest in all that concerns the public and political welfare of the State. He was president of the Democratic club of Rock Hill in the eventful struggle of 1876, and was accordingly chosen to introduce Hampton on the occasion of his visit to Rock Hill during that memorable campaign. He was also selected to welcome Governor Hampton to South Carolina, on his return from Washington after the historical interview between the Governor and President Hayes.

Such is a brief and necessarily imperfect outline of the life and characteristics of one of our leading citizens--not prominent, as one of the most enterprising and successful merchants in upper South Carolina. He is yet young, having barely reached that period of life denominated the prime of manhood, and has before him, let us hope, many years of prosperity and usefulness.

*as a citizen  
alone in York  
County with  
prominent*

Copied from Yorkville Enquirer - Thursday, July 10, 1879

(Property of Miss Emma London)

Store (Fewell & Ivey) located where Stevenson theatre now stands - Ran through to Trade St - Later changed to R. T. Fewell & Co.

Conversation with Mr. Ned Marshall - Nov. 21, 1952.