

JOHN THOMAS COOPER. One of the most widely known and successful oil producers in the United States, was the late lamented John Thomas Cooper, of Parker City, a representative man, whose highest aim was to serve his fellow-men. He was born in county Wicklow, Ireland, April 22, 1837, and was a son of Charles and Margaret (Morgan) Cooper. He came with his parents from Ireland to the United States in 1842, and in 1854 he located at Parker City.

He received his education in the public schools, and was variously engaged in honest labor until September 7, 1861, when he enlisted as a soldier in Co. A, 103d regiment, Pa. Vols., but at the end of about one year's service around Washington City he was discharged on account of disability. He then returned home and after having recovered his health, to a considerable degree, he again engaged in business pursuits. In the fall of 1868 he was one of the first to put down a paying oil well on the Butler-Clarion belt at Parker's Landing. Other wells were put down in rapid succession, and here on the flat beneath the vertical cliffs of the Allegheny river and on the terraces hundreds of derricks arose. They stood as thick as threes in a forest and drained the "Third Oil Sand," which lies eight hundred feet beneath the bed of the river. In this great oil excitement at Parker's Landing, Mr. Cooper was a prominent, active and successful producer. He associated with him his brothers, George and James S., in various oil enterprises, and the Cooper Brothers became well-known throughout the entire oil region as experienced and successful producers. John Thomas Cooper soon became a leading operator throughout the oil regions and remained as such until his death, of consumption, which occurred on Saturday, June 9, 1883. At the time of his death he resided in the first ward, or Lawrenceburg, and his late residence, which stands on a commanding site, is one of the finest mansions in western Pennsylvania. His remains lie entombed in a beautiful spot in the Presbyterian cemetery at Parker City.

On October 2, 1867, he united in marriage with Sarah Bailey, who still survives him. She is a daughter of E. H. Bailey, of Parker City, and is an amiable and intelligent woman. To Mr. and Mrs. Cooper were born five sons and three daughters: Albert H., now an oil producer; Elizabeth, Thomas, Margaret, Charles, Hope B., Kenneth and Catherine.

John Thomas Cooper was a republican in politics, a member of the Parker Oil Exchange and a director of the Parker Savings bank. He was a member and an elder of Parker City Presbyterian church, whose session, in resolutions passed upon his death, and sent to his bereaved family and the local and religious press, said: "We desire to bear testimony to his worth as a Christian, unassuming, tender-hearted, faithful, and as a member of this session, able in counsel and zealous in execution. We hold his memory precious."

A gentleman who is well acquainted with Mr. Cooper has recorded his high estimate of him in the following true and beautiful tribute to his memory: "As a citizen he was patriotic and enterprising. His attachments, not readily formed, were as deep and abiding as the worthiness of their object. His disposition was very sensitive and retiring, and forbade his taking prominence in public exercises; but for eight years he served conscientiously and ably as an elder in the Presbyterian church. His death is a bereavement common to the whole community. Many among the poor and wretched will miss his kindly word and open hand. While he was quick to mark and denounce a wrong, his heart was tender as a mother's and responded to every nobleness. A mean thing was utterly foreign to his nature. Such a life is the richest inheritance his friends can have.

The integrity which was universally recognized under the severest tests; the patriotism which meant with him not merely a sentiment, but a sacrifice; the generosity which, while quiet, was all the more genuine and worthy; the piety which grounded and rounded all his other virtues. These our memories love to linger over and train as the bright monument of John Thomas Cooper.”