

REAR ADMIRAL WILLIAM REYNOLDS A DISTINGUISHED LANCASTRIAN.

1815—1879

By PROFESSOR HORACE R. BARNES

William Reynolds, son of John and Lydia Moore Reynolds, was born in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, December 10th, 1815. The characteristics which marked the lives of both Admiral William Reynolds and his distinguished brother, General John Fulton Reynolds, may be traced back through both the paternal and the maternal lines. The family were Protestant Irishmen who settled in this country in the year 1762. John Reynolds, father of Admiral Reynolds, was born near Lancaster, Pennsylvania, in 1787. Left an orphan at an early age, he was apprenticed to Archibald Bartram, a Philadelphia printer. Before he reached manhood, he became a partner in the firm of Bartram and Reynolds. Returning to Lancaster, he became active and prominent in many avenues of service. From 1820 to 1836, he owned the Lancaster Journal. He was especially active in furthering the cause of education, and exerted considerable influence in establishing the public school system. For a short time he was a member of the State Legislature.

John Reynolds' mother, grandmother of the distinguished admiral, traced her ancestry back to the French Huguenot, Mary Ferree, who settled in this county in the year 1710. Although a widow with six children, Madam Ferree was apparently a leader in her group who had fled from persecution in France, and seems to have displayed much business ability. She secured four thousand acres,—two thousand by grant and two thousand by purchase,—which she divided among the settlers. It is recorded that her grandson was the first white child born in the Pequea Valley.

Lydia Moore Reynolds, the mother of Admiral Reynolds, traced her ancestry to the Protestant Irish, who early settled in Lancaster county.

Turning our attention more directly to the subject of our paper, it is interesting to note that in the catalogue published in 1865, Mr. John Beck, of Lititz, Pa., has the name of William Reynolds enrolled as a student in his school during the year 1827.¹

On November 17th, 1831, William Reynolds, a lad not quite sixteen years of age, was appointed a midshipman from Pennsylvania, by the Hon. James Buchanan, who, at that time, was a representative of Pennsylvania in Congress. December 7th of that year he was assigned to the schooner "Boxer."

¹ See address of Mr. J. G. Rosengarten delivered March 8th, 1880, before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania upon the presentation of portrait of Major General John Fulton Reynolds.

The next six and a half years we find him following the usual life of a naval cadet: namely, grants of absence; assignments to different ships, (in his case, to the "Potomac," August 6th, 1834, and to the "Pennsylvania," October 19th, 1837); and to special training. October 15th, 1836, he received permission to attend the naval school at Norfolk, Virginia, and on November 3rd, the same year, he was given permission to attend a similar school at New York. He preferred to attend the school at Norfolk.

During the four years from July, 1838, to July, 1842, he had a most interesting and valuable experience serving with the Wilkes' Exploring Expedition, to which he was assigned July 5th, 1838. It was while he was serving with this expedition that he received his commission as a lieutenant, dating from September 8th, 1841.

For the next several years he was doing duty on the U. S. S. "Cumberland," the U. S. S. "Alleghany," and in the Bureau of Construction, with the exception of a furlough period of over half a year, beginning May 4th, 1846. The health of the young lieutenant was not of the best, and we find, from the records of our Navy Department, that he was granted "leave till the Spring," as of October, 1850. June 21st, 1851, this leave was renewed for three months, and on August 16th he was granted "leave of one year from 15th September next, with permission to reside out of the United States and privilege of renewal." December 2nd, 1852, the leave was "renewed one year from 15th September last;" and on December 22nd, 1853, the order, "Furlough until health is restored," was issued.

The same blood as flowed through the bodies of his pioneer ancestors and his distinguished brother, General John Fulton Reynolds, gave the young naval officer the will and the spirit to succeed. Notwithstanding physical illness, May 28th, 1855, finds Lieutenant Reynolds again in active service, but only for a short time, for September 24th, the same year, he was granted another leave and is placed on the reserved list. The next year, November 6th, 1856, he is granted "permission to reside at Honolulu and to assume the duties of naval storekeeper there." He entered upon these duties February 23rd, 1857, and continued active in them until August 15th, 1861, when he returned to the United States.

Lieutenant Reynolds' next step was to apply for active duty, but he was forced for a time to "wait orders in consequence of his lameness." July 12th, 1862, he was "commissioned a commander on the Reserved List," but on the following October 18th he was ordered "to command the store-ship 'Vermont.'" Although in service he was not "commissioned on the Active List" until May 11th, 1866, when his commission was issued and dated "from the 25th April, 1861." July 25th of the same year he was "promoted to captain."

Although it was into the last decade of his life that Amiral Reynolds crowded the most of his distinguished service, attention should be called to the fact that, during his assignment to the Sandwich Islands, February, 1857, to August, 1861, he was very active in the interests of our country. To him

is given the credit for being largely responsible in bringing about the Hawaiian treaty of reciprocity.

The year 1869, marked the beginning of a busy period on shore. March 11th, he was made president of the Board on breech-loading muskets, and on May 28th was appointed a member of the permanent Ordnance Board. May 5th of the following year, 1870, we find him appointed as a member of the Board of Visitors of the United States Naval Academy, and on July 18th, his appointment as chief of the Bureau of Equipment was received. June 10th of this year, 1870, he was promoted to the rank of commodore, his commission dating from July 1st. December 12th, 1873, he received his promotion to the rank of rear admiral.

Before he left the States in April, 1875, to assume command of the Asiatic Station of the United States Navy, Admiral Reynolds held the important post of chief of the Bureau of Navigation. During this period he was also assigned to special duty with the secretary of the navy. His post in the Far East was his last active assignment, for once again his health failed and he was compelled to retire. After having served a little more than two years in command of the Asiatic Station, he was placed on the retired list December 10th, 1877. November 5th, 1879, he died at his home in Washington, D. C. He is buried in the city of Lancaster, Pa., close to his distinguished brother, General John Fulton Reynolds, who was killed at Gettysburg on July 1st, 1863.

There is ample evidence to testify to the fine qualities of Admiral Reynolds. Mr. Joseph G. Rosengarten, in an address delivered March 8th, 1880, before the Historical Society of Pennsylvania upon the occasion of the presentation of a portrait of Major-General John Fulton Reynolds, said of Admiral Reynolds: "Sailing from New York in his flagship, 'Tennessee,' he went through the Suez Canal, receiving unusual honors from the Khedive of Egypt and British officers in India. In China and Japan, in Siam and Singapore, he discharged with great success the large discretion necessarily vested in our naval commanders in the East." Lieutenant-Commander White, who was a member of Admiral Reynolds' staff, speaks, in his rough notes of his last cruise, of the "thoroughness with which he carried out all his orders and visited all the points prescribed, notably working to secure the success of his negotiation with the King of Siam and to re-establish friendly relation with his kingdom; and in all his dealings and intercourse making a strong and favorable impression on all with whom he was personally and officially brought in contact. In Japan, his relations with native as well as foreign dignitaries, were always of the pleasantest kind. In China he took his flagship close to the great Chinese wall where it comes down to the sea, and afterwards visited Peking, where he was received by the regent with the distinction due his rank and the country he so well represented."²

Another tribute to the excellent qualities of Admiral Reynolds is noted in the order which announced his death. It was, in part, "In the administration

² See "Reynolds Memorial," page 11, printed by J. B. Lippincott & Co., Philadelphia, Pa., 1880.

of the duties committed to him he did much to improve the personnel and efficiency of the enlisted men of the navy; and in the discharge of all the duties devolving on him during a long career in the service, he exhibited zeal, intelligence and ability, for all of which he was conspicuous."³

We have called attention to Admiral Reynolds' service to his country in helping to bring about more cordial relations between the United States and the Sandwich Islands. Judge Allen, who represented the Hawaiian Islands at Washington, was another who paid tribute to the distinguished admiral. In speaking of his services both to the United States and to the Hawaiian Islands, Judge Allen said:

"Admiral Reynolds, when a young man attached to Wilkes' Exploring Expedition, made a thorough examination of the Hawaiian Islands. Returning there on account of ill health, he became strongly impressed with the importance of their position, not only as a resort for the mercantile and naval marine, but as an outpost of defense to the United States. He urged the establishment of more intimate commercial relations between the two countries, not only on the score of increased business, but as tending to strengthen the political position of the United States in its control of the great western world. His judgment was strikingly correct, not only in all that related to his professional duty, but in regard to promoting the commercial and industrial interests of the whole country. He seconded heartily the action of the government in negotiating the Hawaiian treaty of reciprocity, viewing it as of great political as well as commercial value, and urging on all the public men who consulted him on account of his long residence in the islands, the necessity of favorable action. His opinion was clear and emphatic that the treaty would give the United States a controlling interest in the islands. It had great and deserved weight with those who, knowing his thorough acquaintance with the subject, could rely implicitly on his sound advice and his mature judgment. The Hawaiians have always borne in grateful memory his long residence in their midst, and his action in forwarding the treaty which has secured them a strong alliance with the United States and saved them from the risks of an unwelcome protectorate from some distant power. It was eminently characteristic of Admiral Reynolds that in his successive visits to the islands and in his frequent intercourse with their representatives, he never failed to do and to secure justice to them and to maintain the high and well-earned confidence which has always been put in our naval representatives by those countries with which they have had most to do."⁴

In his private life Admiral Reynolds showed the same judgment and acumen which marked his public career. When one considers both his personal and real property it must be admitted that he accumulated a comfortable estate, especially for the time in which he lived—about two generations ago. The inventory of his personal property listed stocks, bonds, judgments, etc.,

³ Reynolds' Memorial, pp. 9 and 10.

⁴ Reynolds' Memorial, page 10.

were appraised at \$24,183.06.⁵ In addition, he left real estate in Honolulu, and a house in Washington, D. C.

That the admiral was a thrifty gentleman is evident from several receipts found among his papers and from the inventory of his personal estate.⁶ For example, on the letter head of C. & H. Borie, Philadelphia, Pa., under date of "Feby. 24th, 1871" there is the following confirmation of an order to purchase Reading Railroad stock:

"Mr. Wm. Reynolds, Bureau of Equip. & Recruit,
Navy Dept., Washington, D. C.

"Dear Sir:

"Your favor of 23d inst. to hand.

"We have bot. for your acct. 10 shares Reading R.R. @ 49½	\$495.
"Comm.	1.25
Stamp	.25
	<hr/>
	\$496.50

"Advise us in whose name you wish certificate made.

"Yours truly,

"C. & H. Borie."

At another time, we note from receipts among his papers, that he purchased forty shares of Reading Railroad stock, as is evidenced by the following:

"Bot. for % of Capt. Wm. Reynolds, U. S. N., 40 Shs.

Reading R. R. @ 47-¾	\$1895.00
"Coms.	5.00
Stamp on Ctf.	.25
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Cr. by Cash	\$1900.25
	1920.
Due him	\$ 19.75
Enclosed	19.75"

"Philada. 1/13/70."

In closing this paper on Admiral William Reynolds, the distinguished Lancastrian, it is fitting to make mention of his wife. Mr. Walter A. Heinitsh, in whose possession are many letters and original papers referring to the estate of the admiral, and whose generous co-operation, has made it possible to have access to original sources, has given the writer the following information relative to the late Mrs. William Reynolds: She was Rebecca Krug, whose father was a tanner in Lancaster.⁷ She was the first American woman

⁵ From records in possession of Mr. Walter A. Heinitsh, of Lancaster, Pa.

⁶ Originals in the possession of Mr. Walter A. Heinitsh, of Lancaster, Pa.

⁷ The old Krug tannery was located on the south side of West King street, from Prince to Water. It was demolished in 1873 to make room for the Stevens House.

who was permitted to walk on the Chinese wall with the Empress of China. From a letter addressed to the late Charles A. Heinitsh, of Lancaster, Pa., by Mrs. Reynolds, we learn the exact period in which the Admiral and Mrs. Reynolds were in Asia. In speaking of her late husband, Mrs. Reynolds wrote in part, "We were married in August, 1842; we sailed for the East Indies in June, 1875; we returned in September, 1877."

Lancaster may well be proud of the Reynolds family. Without detracting in the least from the glory and fame of General John F. Reynolds, we do feel that in honoring the distinguished general we have been prone to overlook the life and services of his no less distinguished brother, Admiral Reynolds. The name Reynolds stands forth as a beacon enlightening the military, naval, civic and diplomatic life of our country. Not the least of a family which, through several generations, showed the initiative and courage of leadership, in county, state, and nation, and even in foreign parts, was the subject of this paper;—Rear Admiral William Reynolds.