

ASA PACKER

1805 ~ 1879

Captain of Industry;
Educator; Citizen



MILTON C. STUART



A Newcomen Address

ASA PACKER: 1805 ~ 1879

V i t a



December 29, 1805: Born at Mystic, New London County, Connecticut, the son of Elisha Packer, Jr.

1822: Walked to Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania; became a carpenter by trade.

January 23, 1828: Married Sarah M. Blakslee, daughter of Zopher Blakslee.

1833: Moved to Mauch Chunk.

1841-1843: Pennsylvania House of Representatives.

1843-1848: Associate Judge of Carbon County, at county seat: Mauch Chunk.

1852-1855: Built *The Lehigh Valley Railroad*.

1853-1857: Member of U.S. House of Representatives, as Democrat from 13th District, Pennsylvania.

1865: Founded and endowed *Lehigh University*.

1868: Received votes of Pennsylvania Delegation as Democratic nominee for President of the United States.

1869: Democratic nominee for Governor of Pennsylvania; defeated by narrow margin.

1876: Commissioner of *The Centennial Exposition*, Philadelphia.

January 23, 1878: *Golden Wedding*.

May 17, 1879: Died at Philadelphia.



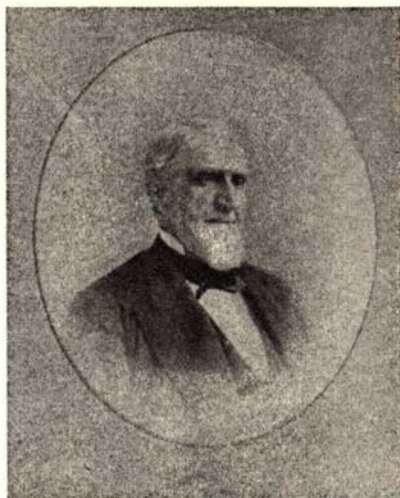
ASA PACKER

1805 ~ 1879



“We begin *The Story of Asa Packer* not on a December day of 1805, at the home of his fathers in New England, but on a sunny Indian Summer afternoon of *October 1938*, in a country cemetery on a Pennsylvania hillslope overlooking his beloved Mauch Chunk.”

—MILTON C. STUART



ASA PACKER

“THE Connecticut carpenter who became:
*Captain of Industry; Philanthropist; and
Public Servant.*

“He built *The Lehigh Valley Railroad*, and was
potent factor in developing the commerce and
industry and fostering the social and educa-
tional growth of *the entire region of the Lehigh
Valley.*

“He founded and endowed *Lehigh University*—
in 1865.

“He served his *community, State, and Nation:*
on the Bench and in Legislative Halls.

“*He left as legacy* not only a fortune, an indus-
trial empire, and a University, but the heritage
of one of the finest characters this Nation has
as its privilege to treasure.”

—MILTON C. STUART

THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY
AMERICAN BRANCH

ASA PACKER

1805 ~ 1879

Captain of Industry;
Educator; Citizen

By

MILTON C. STUART

Member of The Newcomen Society

*Professor of Mechanical Engineering
Lehigh University*



A Newcomen Address

1938

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MILTON C. STUART



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of The Newcomen Society of England, at a Dinner
in honor of Lehigh University, on December 6,
1938, held at the Union League Club of New York*



SET UP, PRINTED AND BOUND
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THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY OF ENGLAND

THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY OF ENGLAND was founded at London shortly after the World War, to encourage and promote research and study of material History, including the history of: Industry, Transportation, Communication, the Utilities, Mining, Economics, Finance, and Banking. Engineering provides a basis for these human activities.

With headquarters at The Science Museum, South Kensington, in London, the British membership includes industrialists, engineers, physicists, educators, historians, and technologists distinguished for their services in various parts of the British Empire.

The Society takes its name from Thomas Newcomen (1663-1729), the British Engineer, whose valuable contributions in improvements to the newly invented Steam Engine brought him lasting fame in the field of the mechanic arts. Newcomen, in partnership with the famous Thomas Savery (1650-1715), developed the Newcomen Engines, whose period of use was from 1712 to 1775. It was in 1764, while working on a model of Newcomen's engine, that James Watt first conceived the idea of a condensing engine: the Watt Engine.

The "Transactions" of The Newcomen Society, issued annually at London, constitute an unique and most valuable contribution to the history of Engineering and Industry. These annual volumes find their way to technical and university libraries throughout the World.

In 1923, through the initiative and efforts of the American Founder, Mr. L. F. Loree of New York, aided by a small group of well-known American industrialists, bankers, railroad presidents, historians, engineers, and educators, there was founded the American Branch of The Newcomen Society of England. The American Newcomen has its headquarters in those of The American Society of Mechanical Engineers at New York, one of whose officers is the Joint Honorary Corresponding Secretary for North America, in Newcomen Society.

Two principal events in the yearly program of the American Newcomen are: the Annual American Dinner at New York, held simultaneously with the British Dinner at London and with exchange of cable greetings; and the "Annual American Pilgrimage" to some point of historic interest concerned with the beginnings of industry, or transportation, or the mechanic arts in America. Papers presented at the Annual Dinners are read simultaneously at London and New York.

A collateral objective of the American Newcomen is to provide another informal link in the friendly and intimate relations between the United States and Great Britain. American Newcomen has three Honorary Members.

The American Newcomen comprises in its membership many American leaders in the fields of finance, industry, transportation, communication, the utilities, history, science, engineering, university education, and technology. The Newcomen Society of England enjoys international reputation in the value of its papers and meetings, which are based upon exhaustive scientific research in these special fields of History.

THE NEWCOMEN SOCIETY
AMERICAN BRANCH



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"On Lehigh's Campus"

HUMANISM EXEMPLIFIED

BY WHAT PROCESS did an orphan of no supernatural native gifts rise from the status of a workingman and carpenter to wealth, influence, public acclaim, and philanthropy so that The Newcomen Society of England, in its broad survey of the phenomena of technologic evolution, pauses to review his notable career is an arresting question. That the life of such a man can stand out on the landscape of human achievement as conspicuously as a Cheops on the plains of Egypt or a Shasta in the Coast Range shows that in the final count, *individual personality*—ability, will, faith, and character—transcends collectivistic abstractions among the forces of Civilization. As the influence of men lives after them, so the rugged spirit of Asa Packer pervades to this day his chief philanthropy, Lehigh University, in that its educational philosophy is based on individual capacities, scientific realities and natural economic relations of society engaged in free enterprise—a fact of biographic significance. Professor Stuart's discerning analysis of the works of this good man whose hand, brain and purpose contributed so potently to the welfare of mankind through industrial development merits thoughtful perusal.

*Bethlehem
Pennsylvania
December, 1938*

C. C. WILLIAMS
*President Lehigh University
Member, Northeastern Pennsylvania Committee
The Newcomen Society of England*

Biographical Sketch of The Author



Pennsylvania's mountains, valleys, and rivers have contributed not only to America's history but to America's resources. Mining got early start in the development of these resources. Lehigh University, child of Asa Packer, has long been associated with Mining Engineering and the other branches of the Engineering profession. MILTON C. STUART is Professor of Mechanical Engineering at Lehigh University. Graduate of the University of Pennsylvania in the Class of 1909, Professor Stuart is a native of Maryland and has been identified with university teaching, in Engineering, for nearly 30 years. During the World War, served as Mechanical Engineer at U.S. Naval Engineering Experiment Station, Annapolis. Member of leading scientific, honorary educational, and engineering societies; and author of numerous contributions in the field of Mechanical Engineering as related both to land and naval practice. Co-author of the widely-used text: "Principles of Engineering Thermodynamics." Student of history, Professor Stuart serves as Secretary of the North-eastern Pennsylvania Committee, in The Newcomen Society of England



ASA PACKER

1805~1879



Fellow Members:

WE BEGIN The Story of Asa Packer not on a *December day of 1805*, at the home of his fathers in New England, but on a sunny Indian Summer afternoon of *October 1938*, in a country cemetery on a Pennsylvania hillslope overlooking his beloved Mauch Chunk.

WREATH OF LAUREL

There, in imagination, *Mr. Chairman*, we join a small group, headed by the distinguished President of a great University, paying homage to a great American by the simple ceremony of placing *a wreath of laurel* at his final resting place.

In the gorge below lie winding river, abandoned canal, and busy railroad; all of the name of Lehigh, *which were Asa Packer's domain for half a century*. Far down the valley, on another hillside overlooking the winding river, stands Asa Packer's College. It too bears the name *Lehigh*. At that college and on the morning of this same day, in Asa Packer's Church, the faculty, students, and friends of the college had assembled, as they have done each recurring October during now sixty years—to honor the Founder. It is "*Founders Day*."

1879

Our scene shifts backwards: to 1879. From across the years and down these six decades of time, the railroad Asa

Packer built joins its tribute to that given this day by the college he founded. I read to you paragraphs from minutes of a meeting of the Board of Directors of The Lehigh Valley Railroad Company, held at Bethlehem on June 10, 1879:

"The Directors of The Lehigh Valley Railroad Company have heard with profound sorrow of the death of their President, the Honorable Asa Packer; by which each one of the Directors has lost a true and valued friend, the Company has lost its founder and its sagacious leader, the laboring man has lost a sympathizing benefactor, and our country has lost a useful and patriotic citizen.

"Our present point of view being from this council board, it would not be suitable for us to dwell on his personal qualities, his purity of life, the uprightness of his dealings, the simplicity, dignity, and integrity of his character, his freedom from all assumption and ostentation, his large and enlightened liberality, his firmness, his self-acquired and skilfully applied knowledge, and the perseverance and sagacity by which he honorably acquired distinction and wealth, not by taking that wealth away from somebody else, but by creating it. It is not for us to intrude into the sanctity of his tender domestic relations, or his reverent worship of his God."

* * *

Tonight, The Newcomen Society of England, chronicler of deeds of men of accomplishment, spends a characteristic hour recalling the life and times of this Captain of Industry, Philanthropist, and American Gentleman of another day. It shall be my high privilege to direct your thoughts in this happy task:

—FROM CONNECTICUT TO PENNSYLVANIA

Born at Mystic in New London County, Connecticut, on December 29, 1805, the boy attended winter district school, and worked in a tannery and upon a farm. Seeing little future, he determined to seek his fortune elsewhere.

So we catch our first significant glimpse of Asa Packer, in 1822 as a youth of 17, setting out on foot from his ancestral home in staid Connecticut bound for frontier forests in upper reaches of the Susquehanna. Our record is not clear, but with biographer's imagination, I would fain picture our tall young Asa, knapsack on back, swinging across New Jersey, perhaps along the future route of Morris Canal, and up into the Lehigh Valley, past Bethlehem and past Mauch Chunk, over the mountains to Berwick, and up the Susquehanna to the village of Brooklyn in Susquehanna County.

CARPENTER'S APPRENTICE

The goal was the home of an uncle, Edward Packer, a carpenter by trade, to whom young Asa apprenticed himself. We see in this movement of our Packer Family from Connecticut into Pennsylvania only a continuance of an earlier migration from the Nutmeg State into the Wyoming region of Northeastern Pennsylvania. In Susquehanna County, Asa spent ten years in a life not dissimilar to that history records of *another great American* of the time: felling trees, clearing land, building cabins of log, following his trade of carpentry in Winter, and of farming in Summer.

SARAH BLAKSLEE

On January 23, 1828, Asa married Sarah Blakslee who throughout a long life was to share with him hardships and successes, poverty and wealth, and who lived to celebrate with Asa their Golden Wedding.

The feeling of Asa Packer towards his wife at the close of his career, as well as insight into his character, are given us by an item in his last Will and Testament. The document covered 21 printed pages and in minute detail disposed of an estate variously estimated at the time to have

a potential value of from 6 to 20 millions of dollars. This paragraph of the Will reads:

"I hereby give, devise and bequeath to my wife, Sarah M. Packer, such part of my estate, real and personal, principal and income, as she may at any time during her life-time desire, wish or select. This is to be hers absolutely, and the trustees are hereby authorized, empowered and directed, at any time or times, when she shall request them so to do, to pay, hand over and transfer to her any property or money, whether principal or income, according to her wishes and directions. Should she choose to indicate at any time what she wishes set apart for herself out of the principal, or as an annual income, the trustees may do so in accordance with her wishes, and may then administer the remainder of the trust as herein directed. My purpose is that she shall have whatever she wishes out of my estate, and all other provisions hereof are subordinate to this one."

To continue our chronicle, as of the early days of their married life: while the stout arms and axe of her carpenter husband clear the woodland, her nimble fingers and spinning wheel prepare every garment for household need.

—INTO THE VALLEY OF THE LEHIGH

Asa Packer was not to remain a humble worker in forest and field. In 1833, at age of 28, and impelled by the stirrings of a new industry, *coal*, he moves into the valley of the Lehigh, and here his career begins. To understand this career, associated at first with *coal and canals*, and later with *a railroad*, it is fruitful that we recall the state of industry and transportation, *in 1833*, in the Lehigh Valley and its environs:

COAL!

Pennsylvania's romantic story of Anthracite Coal discovered, as well as the early attempts to make it burn and market it—need not be retold. It is profitable to recount how, in 1812, *Colonel George Shoemaker of Pottsville* took

nine wagon loads of coal to Philadelphia, sold two loads, and, for lack of buyers, was obliged to give away the other seven. One of the two loads was purchased by *Josiah White* who operated a wire mill at Schuylkill Falls. Were we not portraying tonight the life of a Connecticut Yankee, I should like nothing better than to digress so as to tell the thrilling story of that Philadelphia Quaker, Josiah White, who courageously went into the wilds of the Upper Lehigh, established, in 1817-1820, The Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, made the Lehigh River navigable, and built his Lehigh Canal from Mauch Chunk to the Delaware.

CANALS

The decade of the 1820's saw not only completion of the Erie Canal, but a great network of waterways built to carry Pennsylvania's black diamonds to the metropolitan markets. Specifically, these were: The Delaware and Hudson Canal built by Maurice Wurts; The Schuylkill Canal; The North Branch Canal on the Susquehanna; The Delaware Canal south of Easton; The Morris Canal across New Jersey; and our own Lehigh Canal opened for tolls in 1829.

RAILROADS

In 1827, The Mauch Chunk Railroad was built by The Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company, under direction of Josiah White, to bring coal down to the canal. The rails were of wood, covered with strips of iron one and one-half inches wide and one-quarter inch thick. Coal cars came down by gravity and mules hauled the empty cars back up to the mines. The story is told that when the mules became accustomed to riding down in style, in empty cars, with refreshments provided, only with difficulty could they be persuaded to go down any other way. This railroad developed into the famed "Switch-back"

Railroad of Mauch Chunk, which for many years thrilled tourists to the Switzerland of America with a trip through the clouds *at the dizzy speed of 16 miles per hour*.

In these early days there were in operation within the United States several other short roads of rail, of a mile or two of length, the rails being of wood, over which cars were drawn by horses or mules; but at the time of its construction in 1827, this Mauch Chunk railroad, nine miles in length and with cars drawn by mules, was the largest and most important in the country. The *Stourbridge Lion*, of which our American Founder Mr. L. F. Loree has written, the first steam locomotive to draw a train in the United States, did not make its three-mile trial run on the Delaware and Hudson tracks until two years later, in 1829. By 1833, the year Asa Packer came down to Mauch Chunk, there had been a few other railroads constructed in the Lehigh Valley and surrounding countryside, some operated by steam locomotives. These were used chiefly as feeders for transporting coal to the canals, which were now flourishing. In this same year, the Delaware and Hudson Canal transported *110,000 tons of coal*, the Morris Canal *135,000 tons*, the Lehigh Canal *123,000 tons*, and the other canals corresponding tonnages.

THE CANAL BOATMAN

In Mauch Chunk, Asa Packer lost no time in finding employment at his trade as carpenter, in the construction of canal boats. (He had done some winter canal boat construction in the North, at Tunkhannock.) *Soon he chartered a boat of his own and, doing all the manual labor himself, undertook a traffic between Mauch Chunk and Philadelphia*. He was entering the transportation field! Success-

ful in this first venture, he secured a second boat. His rapidly expanding business led to forming a partnership with his brother, under title of *A. & W. B. Packer*.

ENTREPRENEUR!

The brothers open *a store of general merchandise* in Mauch Chunk. The field of operation is extended to Pottsville, where they build boats for the Schuylkill Canal. Packer was the first to take coal directly into Metropolitan New York from the Lehigh region through intervening canals, rivers, and bays. Until then, the coal was first shipped to Philadelphia and next trans-shipped by sea-going vessels to New York. The firm continually extended its operations and became celebrated for large transactions in both the Lehigh and Schuylkill Valleys, as well as in Philadelphia and New York.

In a pamphlet published in 1867, I find a statement: "The high character of *the house of A. and R. W. Packer* ✓ is to this day proverbial in those valleys, and in Philadelphia and New York."

"CAPTAIN OF INDUSTRY"

By mutual consent the partnership was soon dissolved, the brother taking the business centering about Pottsville and the Schuylkill, and Asa remaining in the Lehigh Valley. Operating alone, Asa Packer took upon himself the task of developing the mineral and agricultural products of the entire Lehigh Valley, and providing the best means of placing these products in the great markets of the Atlantic Seaboard. He bought coal lands and operated his own mines; and marketed coal, lumber, and other natural products. The time came, in the mid-forties, when Packer considered *a railroad* along the banks of the

Lehigh essential for the trade of the region. For years, he urged upon the Navigation Company to build such a railroad. Always the answer came back that the proper use of a railroad was as a feeder to a canal; that the experience of railroads in competition with canals elsewhere showed that heavy and bulky articles like coal, iron, and lumber could only pay water-freights.

RAILROAD BUILDER

A movement towards a railroad in the Lehigh Valley arose in 1846, when a charter for a Delaware, Lehigh, Schuylkill, and Susquehanna Railroad was issued. An organization was effected in 1847, but the project languished. Canals still were the approved means of transportation, especially the Lehigh Canal, which at this time carried over *a million tons of freight* a year.

In 1851, Mr. Packer's name first appears on the list of the Board of Managers of the non-existent railroad. He grades one mile of already level right of way to preserve the charter, which would have expired in 17 days. He secures control of this new enterprise, risking in it his entire fortune, that had been built up over a period of years by his own efforts. Acting practically as promoter, contractor, and engineer, he pushed the work to completion in the face of many difficulties and discouragements.

THE VALLEY RAILROAD

The road, renamed The Lehigh Valley Railroad, ran its first train from Easton to Mauch Chunk on *September 12, 1855*. Asa Packer was 50 years of age. As president and guiding genius of "The Valley Railroad" for a quarter of a century, Packer became one of the foremost railroad figures in the United States. At the time of his death, the Lehigh Valley's 658 miles of track extended into New Jersey to the Seaboard and up into New York State, the

Company's capital account amounted to \$53,000,000 and in one year 4,360,000 tons of coal alone were carried.

ASA PACKER, THE MAN

In this recital of financial success and material accomplishments we must pause to observe the human and personal qualities of Asa Packer: *the man*. From all I can gather from published accounts and through conversations with persons still living who knew Asa Packer, or whose parents were associated with him, the word picture already given in a quotation from resolution of his Board of Directors at the time of his death *is the true one*. All records agree as to the respect and love in which he was held by all who knew him, and the fairness and consideration with which he dealt with associates and employees.

The *New York Times*, for November 10, 1912, in reporting the death of the last of his seven children, Mrs. Mary Packer Cummings, says: "Still in the Lehigh Valley they speak of him as lovingly and tenderly as though his death had been but yesterday, instead of 33 years ago."

The Rev. John M. Leavitt, President of Lehigh University at the time of the Founder's death, writes of him: "He was both gentle and inflexible, persuasive and commanding, in his sensibilities refined and delicate as a woman, and in his intellect and resolve clear and strong as a military leader; pliant as the limbs of a tree waving to the touch of the breeze, and sturdy as the trunk which defies the tempest."

CHURCH

Profoundly reverent in religious matters, he served for 43 years as vestryman in St. Marks Episcopal Church in Mauch Chunk, contributing freely of money, personal influence, and services. For him, the Sabbath was a day for worship and renewal of spiritual strength. Years later, Billy Sunday based one of his sermons upon Asa Packer's

life, holding Packer up as one who had amassed great wealth on the principles of fair dealing and hard work, as well as himself serving as a model for righteousness in personal life and leadership in helping his fellow men.

STATE

Throughout a busy life devoted to Commerce and Industry he found time to serve community, State, and Nation in public office. Quickly surveying his public career, we see Asa Packer successively as member of the State Legislature, Associate Judge of the County Court, Representative in the National Congress for two terms, Favorite Son of the Pennsylvania delegation at the Democratic National Convention in 1868 which nominated Horatio Seymour, and Democratic Candidate for Governor of Pennsylvania in 1869, defeated by a narrow margin at a time when Grant was receiving a large Republican majority. His five-year term on the bench earned for him the title of Judge, by which hereafter he was affectionately known to associates and public generally. In such public service, I believe he was happiest as Commissioner of the celebrated *Centennial Exposition* held in Philadelphia in 1876.

LEHIGH UNIVERSITY

Approaching the age of 60 his industrial conquest of the Lehigh Valley was well under way. Towns and industries were springing up whose origin and growth could be traced directly to the influence of Asa Packer, through his railroad and his development of the region's natural resources.

Packer next turns attention to the social and educational development of the Valley. To establish an institution of learning comes into his mind; and he turns for advice and guidance to a leader in his Church: *Bishop William Bacon*

Stevens of The Episcopal Diocese of Pennsylvania, who presently became President of the Charter Board of Trustees of Lehigh University.

The first announcement of intention of Mr. Packer to establish a university may best be told in Bishop Stevens' own words:

"In the Fall of 1864, an interview was requested of me by the Hon. Asa Packer, of Mauch Chunk. He came to my house in Philadelphia and said that he had long contemplated doing something for the benefit of his State, and especially of the Lehigh Valley. From that valley he said he had derived much of his wealth, which God had given to him, and to the best interests of that valley he wished to devote a portion of it in the founding of some educational institution for the intellectual and moral improvement of the young men of that region. After conversing with him a little while, and drawing out his large and liberal views, I asked him how much money he purposed to set aside for this institution, when he quietly answered that he designed to give \$500,000, I asked the noble donor what specific plans he had framed in his own mind in reference to it. His reply was, 'I am not much acquainted with these matters, but you are, and I want you, if you will, to devise a plan which I can put into effective operation.' I told him that I would make the attempt. I did so, I drew up the outline of such an institution as I thought would give the largest results for the means used, and submitted it in a few weeks to his inspection. He examined it with the practical judgment and business habits with which he deals with all great questions, and adopted the scheme as the basis of his future university."

The college opened its doors *September 1, 1866*, under the presidency of Henry Coppée. Turning aside suggestions that the new institution be named "Packer University" the founder chose the name of river and railroad.

The first bulletin describing courses of study stated it was the Founder's intention that the instruction it afforded should enable its graduates to play intelligent

parts in exploring and developing the resources of all portions of the United States and in applying the various modes of transportation and interchange.

Thus we see how Asa Packer intended, through education of the youth, to assist in a continued realization *for the whole Nation* of such developments of Industry and Commerce as those to which he had devoted his life in the Lehigh Valley.

Neither was instruction to be narrowly technical. It was Packer's educational philosophy that training in Engineering and Science should include a considerable content of cultural or general studies. One incident illustrates how sound were his views in this respect:

A committee of young and enthusiastic Alumni called upon Mr. Packer in 1878 to urge that Lehigh University be made a purely Engineering School, and that all studies, such as Literature and History, apparently not contributing directly should be "lopped off." The venerable Founder listened attentively, smiled, and—rejected their proposal.

Always a commanding figure at Commencement and at other University exercises, the Founder's interest in Lehigh University continued unabated until his death. His total contributions, in money, during his lifetime and in his will amounted to some \$3,000,000.

Associated with Packer on the Board of Trustees were others whose names are inseparately linked with the development of the Lehigh Valley: *John Fritz*, the great Iron Master; *Garret B. Linderman*, Superintendent of The Bethlehem Iron Works; *Robert H. Sayre*, Superintendent and Engineer of The Lehigh Valley Railroad; and *Eckley B. Coxe*, pioneer coal operator.

GOLDEN WEDDING: 1878

Now we approach a close; but tarry to observe that crowning event in the life of Asa Packer and Sarah his Wife: their Golden Wedding, celebrated January 23, 1878. To the modest mansion at Mauch Chunk came, by special trains, men of all ranks and occupations: merchants, statesmen from Washington, educators, other captains of industry, young folks from the great cities, the old associates of Asa in the early days, and the aged Episcopal Rector, The Reverend Samuel Marks, who had married Asa and Sarah at Dimock Four Corners, in Susquehanna County, fifty years before.

The Newcomen Society perhaps can visualize the picture I gain of this Golden Wedding through reading accounts, *printed all in letters of gold*, in the "*Mauch Chunk Democrat*," or gained by roaming through silent rooms of a mansion now lovingly treasured as memorial by the people of Mauch Chunk:

The greetings, the feast, the older folk in spacious rooms of the Packer Home recalling old days, the young people dancing into the night at the home of son Harry across the way, more good wishes and congratulations, the last farewells, the lights extinguished; and Asa and Sarah, alone, with memories crowding. . . .

THE END OF HIS JOURNEY

Asa survived the Golden Wedding *one year*. Still alert in mind and body, the tall figure, venerable, but unbending at the age of 74, continued active and interested in all his enterprises. An unfortunate fall, a brief illness, and the end came peacefully on May 17, 1879.

It would serve scant purpose were we to examine almost extravagant eulogies that appeared in all metropolitan

papers. However, from a quite detached viewpoint, a eulogy coming from a totally disinterested and unexpected source is perhaps of greatest significance:

“NUTS FOR *Puck*”

The American satirical weekly, “*Puck*,” in issue of June 4, 1879, carried front cover cartoon and leading editorial extolling the life and character of Asa Packer! The cartoon portrays Asa Packer as a sower, with his seed-bag at his side, striding manfully along garden path, scattering with his own hand the good seed of Money, *garnered by honest toil*. Invidious contrast is portrayed with contemporaries who use their wealth for selfish ends.

The cartoon bears caption: “*In Memory of Asa Packer; be scattered the seeds of his benevolence with a liberal hand, and the fruits of Education and Science sprung up in his path.*”

When we consider that *Puck* usually was brutally critical and sometimes vituperative, even for its day, this cartoon and the tone of its leading editorial are the more indicative. In part, *Puck* said editorially:

“It is really nuts for *Puck* to get hold of the career of a really good man, for our nature leads us rather to caress than to chide. We only chastise when fraud and hypocrisy become an offense to the public eye, and a stench in the public nostril.

“But Oh! How sweet and pleasant a thing it is to do reverence to a noble life, which rounded its grand career in a beautiful death. From the modest mansion beneath the great mountain at Mauch Chunk have issued some of the noblest charities of the age.”

The charities to which *Puck* refers, include not only Lehigh University but \$300,000 to St. Luke's Hospital Bethlehem, and many smaller gifts to other schools and



institutions, made during his lifetime and by provisions of his will.

“THEIR NAME LIVETH FOR EVERMORE”

Many interpretations of the significance of Asa Packer's life occur to a student of his career; but the ultimate, enduring meaning of this human life we have been so briefly reviewing together tonight is revealed, I believe, in the Scripture lesson that is read *each Founders Day* in Packer Memorial Church on the campus of Lehigh University.

The lesson is from *Ecclesiasticus: XLIV*; and is quoted in part in the following:

ECCLESIASTICUS: XLIV

1. Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us.
2. The Lord hath wrought great glory by them, through his great power from the beginning.
3. Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms, men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding, and declaring prophecies;
4. Leaders of the people by their counsels, and by their knowledge of learning meet for the people, wise and eloquent in their instructions;
6. Rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations;
7. All these were honored in their generations, and were the glory of their times.
8. There be of them that have left a name behind them, that their praises might be reported.
13. Their seed shall remain for ever, and their glory shall not be blotted out.
14. Their bodies are buried in peace; *but their name liveth for evermore.*

THE END



The Newcomen Dinner in honor of Lehigh University, at which this Address was delivered, on December 6, 1938, was under the direction of the American Newcomen's permanent New York Committee, whose roster is given on the following pages:



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“IN MEMORY OF ASA PACKER”

Leading editorial from “PUCK” June 4, 1879



IT IS REALLY nuts for *Puck* to get hold of the career of a really good man, for our nature leads us rather to caress than to chide; and we only chastise when fraud and hypocrisy become an offense to the public eye, and a stench in the public nostril.

“Some of our contemporaries, whom we esteem in spite of their stupidity, get angry now and again with us, because, forsooth, we have the courage to tear the mask off humbug, and don’t beslobber vice because it has many dollars in its pockets, and many toad-eaters to lift their voices and cry ‘hurrah’ to it.

“So let our fault-finding friends see if there is not a little glass in their own houses before they throw stones at us; and let the high and mighty of earth, be they priests, politician, or what not, clean their own skirts if they don’t want to feel the point of *Puck’s* pencil.

“But oh, how sweet and pleasant a thing it is to do reverence to a noble life, which rounded its grand career in a beautiful death. From the modest mansion beneath the great mountain of Mauch Chunk have issued some of the noblest charities of the age.

“Like many others of our millionaires ASA PACKER was what it is the fancy to call ‘self-made’; that is, he was the creator of his own fortune. But instead of hoarding his money until the last breath of life had gasped itself out of his expiring body, he did his good during his life-time; he saw to it that his money was really and truly put where it would do the most good, and that no humbuggery of trustees could divert it from its proper channels.

“He was not content with giving with a liberal hand. But he kept as watchful an eye upon his donations as he did upon his great business interests.

“So his liberal gifts and his sensible way of making them render his life a thing of beauty and his memory a joy forever.

“Surely it must be pleasant for a rich man, dying, to lie down to pleasant dreams of thousands he has never seen, mourning his loss and blessing him for his good deeds.

“No need to wait for the opening of his will; he lets the world know what sort of a man he is by his record while living.

“Now, here’s a great chance for some of our big millionaires who still live in the flesh. We present to them the record of ASA PACKER. Do good before your wills are opened by the family lawyer on the return from your funeral.

“If you seek an opportunity, look around you. There are as many as you have ducats in your coffers. But don’t, oh don’t, do what was once done by a great Boston merchant. Don’t offer to endow a great charitable institution in case it is called after your name. And don’t do good by stealth. This doing good by stealth which is told of rich men after their death makes our heart sick.

“Let your light shine. Rather let your well-fed clergyman say over your bier ‘he nobly sent eighteen dozen porous plasters to the Fiji Islanders,’ than to say ‘he did good by stealth.’ It seems such a groping about in the dark to say something which will ‘take’ the curse off the dead man’s memory, to mumble out ‘he did good by stealth.’

“So, O ye millionaires, scatter your dollars while you live, and while you live receive the love and admiration of your fellow man. You will all imitate ASA PACKER in his business shrewdness; imitate him also in his charities.

“There is one more thing, also, in which you might follow his example to advantage—make a will that can’t be broken.”

—From “Puck,” June 4, 1879



*“The roads you travel
so briskly lead out
of dim antiquity, but
you study the past
chiefly because of its
bearing on the living
present and its
promise for the future.”*

—GENERAL JAMES G. HARBORD
*American Member of Council
at London, The Newcomen Society*



