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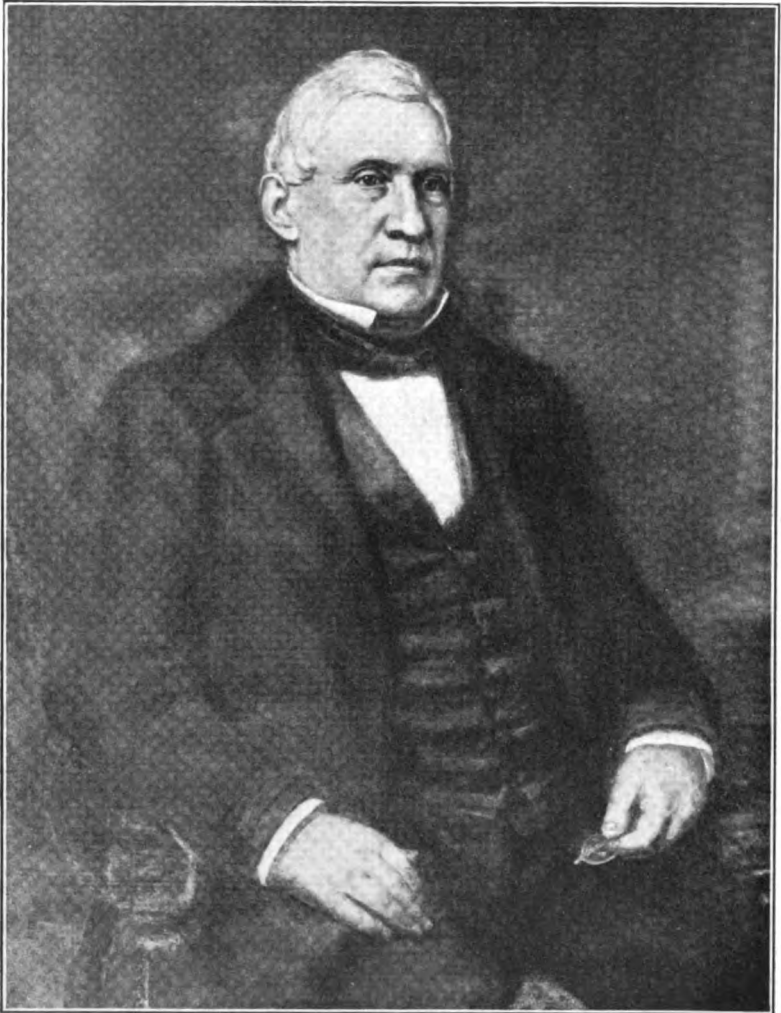
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GENERAL ROBERT ARMSTRONG.

THE TENNESSEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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*"I give and bequeath to The Tennessee Historical Society
the sum of.....dollars."*

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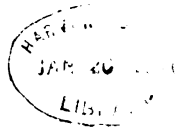
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PORTRAIT OF GENERAL ROBERT ARMSTRONG.

(The extract published in a former number of the magazine of the Minutes of the meeting of the Tennessee Historical Society for November, 1918, made mention of the presentation to the society of the portrait of Gen. Armstrong, in behalf of his granddaughter, Miss Catherine Vaulx, by the Hon. Robert Ewing. The details of this occasion were ably reported in the local press of Nashville, and the interest of the matter is so worthy and wide that a permanent record in this magazine is deemed appropriate. To this end an extract of the *Nashville Tennessean* of November 18, 1918, with an appended paper of Dr. J. H. Calendar of an earlier date, is herein set forth. Ed.)

"The Tennessee Historical Society held its first meeting for this season Tuesday evening in its rooms in the Watkins Building, the prevalence of the influenza having caused a postponement of the October meeting. There was no set address delivered, though the meeting was rendered quite interesting by the receipt and examination of many valuable gifts of a historical nature. The principal one of these was a splendid portrait in oil of General Armstrong, the life-long friend and staff officer of General Andrew Jackson at the battle of New Orleans, the gift of his granddaughter, Miss Catherine C. Vaulx of this city. In presenting this portrait in behalf of the giver, Mr. Robert Ewing, a member of the society, spoke as follows:

"Mr. President: Miss Catharine C. Vaulx, granddaughter of Joseph Vaulx, Sr., who is well remembered by the older citizens of Nashville as a man of great character, has authorized and requested me, in her name, linked with that of her family, and in tender memory of her mother, to present to this society the portrait of her distinguished grandfather, General Robert Armstrong. This I now do with a feeling of very great pleasure and honor. The portrait was painted by George Dury, a Nashville artist of no mean ability, whose works are now highly prized, gaining daily in artistic appreciation. So that in this gift the society receives a very distinct addition to its collection of valuable portraits, historic and artistic."

"You are aware that the society already has in this room, hanging prominently on its walls, a splendid portrait of Gen-

eral Andrew Jackson in his old age. There also hangs near this portrait an interesting sketch of his death scene. If I may be pardoned for doing so, I suggest that this portrait of General Armstrong, which the society is now about to receive, be hung as near as possible to that of our great hero, for the strong reason that in life they were very closely associated, and now that they have long since gone to their reward, we, who cherish the memory of their glorious deeds, should not separate them, for they were admirable in their lives, and in death should not be divided.

“That such action of the society would have the earnest sanction of General Jackson himself, if he were here, there can be no sort of doubt, for I hold in my hand a copy of a letter from Chief Justice and United States Senator A. O. P. Nicholson to General Lewis Cass, which recites that shortly before General Jackson came to die, when he realized that death was near, he sent for Judge Nicholson, who was his close friend, and put into his hands the sword which he had used at the battle of New Orleans, with instructions to deliver it to General Armstrong as a testimonial of his warm personal friendship and as evidence of his high appreciation of his military services and his patriotic devotion to the honor of his country. Higher testimony than this as to the personal worthiness of him whose picture you now receive it would be impossible to obtain, for General Jackson had ample opportunity to know; was abundantly capable of passing correct judgment, and, above all things else, was sincere in his expressions.”

INDIAN FIGHTER.

“By birth General Armstrong was a Virginian, the son of Trooper Armstrong of that state, who took a very prominent part in the Revolutionary War which established the freedom of his country. In his twentieth year General Armstrong came to Tennessee, and immediately joined an artillery company under General Jackson, and rendered notable service in the Creek War, turning the fortunes of the day in the battle of Enotchapko, as General Jackson himself testified. He was severely wounded in that battle, and throughout his life suffered from the effects of that wound. The extraordinary gallantry of action which he displayed caused General Jackson to take him on his staff that he might have very close to him so brave and dependable an officer. In the following year he served as aide-de-camp to General Jackson at New Orleans, fighting there bravely to defend and forever preserve the liberties of the people whom his father had helped to free.”

“In civil life General Armstrong served his state and coun-

try as actively and efficiently as he had done as a soldier. He was postmaster of Nashville for sixteen years, and afterwards proprietor of the *Washington Union*, a paper which ably advocated the political views of his beloved chieftain. He was serving the national government in an honorable capacity at the date of his death, February 23, 1854, and his loss was severely felt. The House of Representatives took appropriate official notice of his death, and President Pierce and his cabinet attended his funeral in a body, with members of the House and Senate as pall-bearers."

HEROIC LIFE.

"General Armstrong may be said truly to have heroically lived a life heroic, and so it must now appear eminently proper that this society should gladly receive, take charge of, and always carefully protect, this excellent representation of him as he appeared in life. He chose this State as his mother, and served her nobly in dangerous days. It behooves those citizens of Tennessee who follow him to be inspired by his example to noble deeds, willingly at this perilous juncture in national affairs to answer her call as a part of our beloved country. That citizens of the State may cherish her glory most truly represented by such men as General Armstrong, is the higher purpose of the Tennessee Historical Society, and this purpose it always steadily keeps in view, for men and their glorious deeds constitute the state."

"I feel highly honored that the granddaughter of this great patriot, who now does her full part to this end by placing this portrait where it can be seen by every citizen who visits the capital of the State, should have honored me by appointing me, her friend, to present this portrait, which I feel sure the society will gladly receive, properly prize and guard and cherish as it so fully deserves to be."

In speaking of the receipt of the gift Mr. Ewing said:

"The portrait of General Armstrong, which the Tennessee Historical Society has received, is one of the very best samples of the excellent work of George Dury, a Nashville painter. It is, in fact, worthy of the subject. The very strong features of General Armstrong are forcibly and clearly presented. Hung as this portrait will be, on the wall near that of General Jackson, it will be seen by every visitor to the society's rooms, and it will do much to enhance the reputation of the artist who, though he left many very beautiful samples of his work in pictures of the beautiful women of Nashville, is not appreciated as keenly as the very artistic nature of his work amply merits."

"Many years ago Dr. John H. Callender, well remembered as a newspaper writer of considerable power, when writing of General Armstrong, and particularly of this portrait, said that it should, and indeed prophesied that ultimately it would be given to the Historical Society for safe-keeping and a proper display, Miss Vault, the granddaughter of General Armstrong, by her magnanimous act, now verifies this prediction. This portrait will constitute a notable addition to the already large number owned by the society. They are lifelike representations of the most distinguished men of the nation and state, embracing the well-known ones of Presidents Jefferson, Madison, Van Buren, Fillmore and others, besides those of the three which Tennessee gave to the Union—Jackson, Polk and Johnson."

"The walls are also adorned with admirable portraits of such statesmen as Henry Clay, Felix Grundy, George W. Campbell and others. Those of Tennessee's orators and distinguished jurists, men like the brilliant Haskell and profound Catron, also have their appropriate places."

MANY VISITORS TO ROOMS.

"Though there are a number of daily visitors to the rooms of the society to see these pictures of the great ones of the past, and also the innumerable other objects of historical interest there to be found, it is to be doubted whether, in these very exciting days, citizens of Tennessee place the value they should on the preservation and cherishing of things which tend to keep in memory actions worthy to be remembered. These men made the State great, and gave it its glorious and interesting place in history, Tennessee has always had citizens of strong character and worth, men who did things of note, and who were always ready to their country's call, and who by their quick response crowned it with the name it now bears—that of the Volunteer State. Great deeds, and also the great men who performed them, should be remembered. "Haud Immemor"—not forgotten, the old Roman legend, has cheered and inspired its thousands. The Historical Society was organized and is maintained to keep keenly alive a just and continuing appreciation of the acts of those men who really constitute the State, as well as to secure and properly preserve valuable documents and other things of historic interest relating to them. Every citizen from any part of the State is always cordially welcomed and made to feel that he has his individual part in ownership. Those who have such things are being assured constantly that if they will commit them to the care of the society they will be carefully protected and placed where they can be seen by those whom they will interest.

A LEAF FROM HISTORY.*

A Portrait of Gen. Robert Armstrong.

The eminent artist of this city, Mr. George Dury, has recently completed for the family a portrait of the late Gen. Robert Armstrong, for many years a distinguished citizen of this State, and a resident of this city. More than the period of a generation has elapsed since his death, and the term "the late" we have used will only be significant to the minds of older citizens, who remember him as a conspicuous figure in this community and a prominent actor in the civil and military history of the State and the nation. Many of these who have examined the portrait pronounce it an admirable likeness and a work of art which will add to the reputation of the painter. In due time it will probably be presented to the Tennessee Historical Society, to take its place in the galaxy of those who have conferred renown on the State, and a brief review of his life will be interesting to his surviving contemporaries, and instructive to the younger generation.

Gen. Robert Armstrong was the son of Trooper Armstrong, of Virginia, a valiant soldier of the war of the Revolution, noted for his superb figure and great physical strength, as well as skill and enterprise as a partisan fighter in the struggle of that period in Virginia and the Carolinas. His son, who inherited in great degree these personal characteristics, was born in Abingdon, Va., on September 28, 1792. The father removed with his family early in the present century to Knox County, Tennessee, where descendants still reside. Besides the subject of this memoir, two brothers—Maj. Frank Armstrong and Maj. William Armstrong—were men of high character employed in the Indian service of the United States Government in the Southwest, both of them serving as Superintendent of the Indian Territory after the removal of the tribes west of the Mississippi River. They were beloved by the red men for their justice and humane treatment, and their service was recognized by the Government as of great value.

Robert Armstrong's education was chiefly obtained at a school in his native place, Abingdon, but before its completion and in his twentieth year, he returned to Tennessee and was made Lieutenant of a company of volunteer artillery, and soon joined the command of Gen. Andrew Jackson, engaged in what is known as the Creek war. At the battle of Enotochapko, January 24, 1814, one of the decisive engagements of that war, he displayed conspicuous courage and qualities as an officer, arresting a formidable movement of the Indian forces, and by the report of Gen. Jackson, turning the fortunes of the day. He was wounded severely and carried the missile through life, at times suffering greatly from its effects. His gallantry endeared him to his commander, and he was appointed on his staff and was his aide-de-camp in the battle of New Orleans the following year. At the conclusion of hostilities he became a citizen of Nashville. On June 9, 1814, he had married Margaret D., daughter of Josiah Nichol, a leading merchant. A daughter, the widow of Joseph Vaulx, who died in 1878, a resident of this city, survives him.

In 1829 he was appointed postmaster of Nashville by President Jackson, and held the office for sixteen years. In 1836, while in this position, he was made Brigadier General of the Tennessee Mounted

*Written by Dr. J. H. Calender, Oct. 28, 1888.

Volunteers, and commanded them when sent by the United States Government against the Seminole Indians in Florida. This was a brief campaign and ended in the battle of Wahoo Swamp, in which the Indians were defeated. Politically, he was a warm adherent of President Jackson and the measures of his eventful administration, and in 1837, after his return from Florida, was the candidate for Governor of Tennessee against Gov. Newton Cannon, who represented that portion of the people of the State who had become alienated from the Jackson influence under the lead of Hugh L. White and John Bell. In this contest he was defeated. Upon the advent of Mr. Polk to the Presidency in 1845 he was appointed United States Consul to Liverpool, one of the most important positions in the foreign service, which he held until 1849. Before his departure for Europe in the spring of 1845, and a few months preceding the death of Gen. Jackson, he was the honored recipient at the hands of his old commander of the sword worn by the latter at the battle of New Orleans, as a testimonial of his personal friendship and his estimation of Gen. Armstrong's military service. This sword, after Gen. Armstrong's death, was formally presented in 1856 by his family to the United States Government, and is deposited in the archives of the War Department. In 1851, Gen. Armstrong and Maj. Andrew J. Donelson, of Tennessee, became the proprietors of the Washington *Union* newspaper, and shortly thereafter, Gen. Armstrong became the sole proprietor, and in this capacity was made printer for the National House of Representatives. In this service he died, of congestion of the brain, February 23, 1854. The House of Representatives took notice of his death, and his funeral was attended by President Pierce and his cabinet, with a corps of pall-bearers from the Senate and House of Representatives. In January, 1855, his remains were removed to Nashville for final interment, which was conducted under the direction of a committee of prominent citizens appointed at a public meeting. The civic orders and military bodies and citizens generally composed the funeral escort and his body lies in the Nashville cemetery.

Born amidst the warm and recent memories of the revolutionary struggle for the independency of the country, and an enthusiastic and gallant participant in his manhood's prime in the war of 1812, the virtue of patriotism shone conspicuously in Gen. Armstrong's character, and was admired by all in later life, even when his temperament made him a stern, unbending partisan in a period of acrimonious political controversy never exceeded in this country, and in which he bore a notable part.

Ardent in convictions, unquailing in courage and devoted in attachments, he maintained the esteem and friendship of his fellow-citizens through confidence inspired by his candor and honorable dealing, not less than by his kindness of heart and gracious manners, and was at all times personally popular with men of all classes. He was of imposing and dignified carriage, commanding respect, and bore himself with credit, in every sphere in which he figured. He died in his sixty-third year, when the shadows falling from the west were growing long in an active and exciting life, and perhaps left no personal enemies, but instead a great troop of loving friends.