

**SKETCH OF BVT. BRIG.
GEN. SYLVESTER
CHURCHILL, INSPECTOR
GENERAL U. S. ARMY**

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Sketch of Bvt. Brig. Gen. Sylvester Churchill, inspector general U. S. army by Franklin Hunter Churchill

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FRANKLIN HUNTER CHURCHILL

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SKETCH OF THE LIFE
OF
Byt. Brig. Gen. Sylvester Churchill,
INSPECTOR GENERAL U. S. ARMY.



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SKETCH OF THE LIFE
OF
BVT. BRIG. GEN. SYLVESTER CHURCHILL,
INSPECTOR GENERAL U. S. ARMY,
WITH
NOTES AND APPENDICES,
BY
FRANKLIN HUNTER CHURCHILL.



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PREFACE.

IN the year 1884, two gentlemen of my name, residing in or near Boston, requested me to give them such information as I possessed concerning a branch of the descendants of John Churchill, of Plymouth, Mass., their ancestor and mine. I was not able to render them much assistance. In fact, I am under obligations to them for valuable information. I never had any taste for genealogy. But, from my earliest recollection, my father had some memoranda concerning his ancestry, and to these he made additions at various times. In the latter part of his life, he prepared a compilation which I found among his papers. Using it as a basis, I added a few facts which had not been ascertained, and brought everything down to a later date. This I did for the benefit of some young relatives of mine. After the receipt of the request, which I have mentioned, and in order that I might comply with it, I endeavored to obtain full particulars concerning the descendants of my father's brothers and sisters, but have not accomplished all that I wished.

In the course of my correspondence with those gentlemen, one of them wrote to me : " You have much in your father's history towards making a readable book." It is the result of this suggestion that the following sketch has been prepared. It was my intention, when it was commenced, to make it quite brief, and, on its being printed, to distribute it, with all the information in my possession concerning the descendants of my father's brothers and sisters, as well as of his own, among his adult relatives, and to ask for corrections and additions. This is all I contemplated.

The work grew upon my hands, and, as I think, in accord with the intrinsic merits of the subject treated. Irrespective of what might otherwise have been the case, the fact that my father was an officer of the army for fifty years prevented his exercising any influence in matters of legislation, or in giving shape to the measures of Government, State or National. But, public events

determined the course of his life, and he participated, personally and actively, in many occurrences which form parts of the history of the country, and some of which had important and lasting results. It is clear that, from early life, he took much interest in public affairs. He had nearly attained his majority when the Louisiana purchase was made, a transaction preceded and followed by much excitement. It may be said that "The West" assumed importance after his active life commenced. Certainly, with the exception of the present State of Louisiana, and a few settlements in the present State of Missouri, all of the country west of the Mississippi was a wilderness. The railroad and the magnetic telegraph were introduced and carried to perfection after he had passed his middle age, making changes in the methods of travel and communication which the present generation cannot realize. The contrasts presented by those events are made apparent in the sketch. His activity continued till near the beginning of the civil war, and he lived to be made sad by that occurrence.

There are still in the army, as in private life, a few who knew my father personally, and there are more who were his contemporaries in the service, though separated far from him in years and rank. I think that the sketch of the life of one who was his contemporary will be interesting. I hope that it will be interesting to others. I have sometimes regretted that it did not occur to me to prepare this sketch twenty years and more ago, when a much larger number of my father's contemporaries were living. But, probably, the time was not opportune. The war had terminated so recently, and the conditions which resulted from it engrossed so much attention that there was no room for the consideration of remote events. The army was in a chaotic condition, and there had been a large infusion of a crude element, not yet assimilated, to which the history and traditions of the army went for but little. The present is the more opportune time, and I fancy that there are some officers who will be pleased to read a narrative which will enable them to connect the past and present of the army.

I am of the opinion that I add to the interest of the narrative by giving, in notes, the outlines of the military life of every one of my father's companions in arms who is mentioned in the sketch.

I think that the brief accounts of the military life of my

brothers and my only nephew, which I have given, will also add to the interest of the sketch. It is exceptional that three successive generations in a family should be represented in the army.

These considerations have induced me to give a wider distribution to the sketch than was originally contemplated. I intend to send copies to the survivors of the graduates of 1840, a few officers of the army, retired or still in the active service, and a few civilians who, as I think, take a special interest in the occurrences mentioned or subjects treated. But I do not know the addresses of all the persons indicated, relatives and others. In addition to this, there are some officers of the army, as I have intimated, as there may be civilians, who, seeing the book, or hearing of it, may wish to obtain copies. In order that these wants may be met, if there should be any, the persons who print the book will be authorized to sell copies on terms to be named by themselves; but there will be an agreement with them that it is not to be placed upon the market or advertised, and that press notices are not to be obtained. I am averse to any such proceedings. They would not be consistent with my purposes in writing the sketch, or its scope and tenor. I have written it as I would tell it to any one wishing to learn the events of my father's life. The same statement applies to the notes. Many of the details refer to matters of a domestic nature; and, though most of them are connected with public events, and nothing is told the knowledge of which need be limited, the book is not to be thrust before the public. It is probable that it will reach certain classes of persons, as specified, and this will suffice. The appendices have been written in a spirit somewhat different, it is true, but they are largely incidental.

The military reader will see that I have obtained most of my information concerning officers of the army from Gardner's United States Army Dictionary, Cullom's Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the U. S. Military Academy, the Army Registers of various years, and a Register of the Graduates of the Academy, corrected to Sept. 1st, 1886, recently published. Some changes have taken place within a few months past; but, lest, if I should attempt to make the necessary alterations, all might not be included, I think it best to allow the statements to remain as they were written. I have placed some reliance upon newspaper slips, which seemed worthy of credence, and which I have been