

## Andrew McConnell January

### ANDREW MCCONNELL JANUARY

Andrew McConnell January, of Maysville, is ably discharging the duties of county clerk and has been the recipient of many important trusts, all of which he has faithfully and satisfactorily fulfilled. He is a native of this community and represents an honored pioneer family that has contributed in notable measure toward its upbuilding and progress. His grandfather, Andrew McConnell January, for whom he was named, made his home in Maysville during the greater part of his life, and his name is inseparably associated with the history of Kentucky's transportation development during the first half of the nineteenth century. He is referred to in a volume in the Maysville public library entitled "Portraits of Eminent Americans Now Living" as "a man of humble but honored parentage, born at the pioneer period of Kentucky. Reared in the forest with a slight elementary education and no accomplishment but his trade, by force of high purpose, invincible resolution, industry, energy, enterprise, a bold and vigorous mind and an honest heart, he not only achieved independence, but made a name for sagacity, public spirit, punctuality and probity among the foremost and most distinguished men of the west."

Andrew McConnell January (I) was born August 3, 1794, in Jessamine county, twelve miles from Lexington. His father, Ephraim January, was a native of Pennsylvania and the grandson of a French Huguenot. His mother, Sarah McConnell, was a native of McConnellstown, Pennsylvania, and a daughter of Andrew McConnell, who aided in planting the seeds of civilization in Kentucky and lost his life in 1782 during the battle of Blue Licks. Ephraim January and his family joined the colony that migrated from the upper waters of the Ohio to Kentucky in 1780, and for several years they lived within the shelter of forts and blockhouses in order to escape Indian attacks. Their first home was near Spring Station, in the vicinity of Louisville, and they next moved to Harrodsburg, afterward locating in Lexington. Ephraim January preempted a tract of one thousand acres in Jessamine county and built a log cabin on the place, on which he settled in 1783. He devoted the remainder of his life to the cultivation and improvement of his land and died in 1823 at the age of sixty-four years. His widow long survived him, passing away in 1850, when eighty-seven years of age. They were members of the Associate Reformed church, a branch of the Presbyterian faith, and conscientiously observed its teachings. Their family numbered eleven children.

In 1812, when a youth of eighteen, Andrew M. January (I) entered a silver plating establishment at Lexington and at the end of three and a half years completed his apprenticeship. Being anxious to advance, he worked overtime, using a portion of his earnings for much needed wearing apparel, and in the spring of 1816 had accumulated sufficient capital to venture into business for himself at Lexington. A few months later he married Sarah Huston, a daughter of William Huston, and successfully continued his commercial operations until the spring of 1818, when the country became flooded with cheap manufactured goods from Great Britain following the resumption of trade relations with that kingdom after the close of the War of 1812. Mr. January closed out his business in Lexington and in October, 1818, came to Maysville, purchasing an interest in his uncle's commission house. A few months later he contracted for the entire business and at the end of three years completed all of his payments, although he lost heavily in security debts.

The following description of Mr. January's activities during the decade of the '20s is given in the volume mentioned at the beginning of this sketch: "Maysville at that time contained a population of only twelve or fifteen hundred inhabitants and but few of the streets were paved. There was no paved road to the river and the landing was bad. All the roads to the interior were rough, poor even in the summer and almost impassable in the winter and spring. He therefore turned his attention

to the subject of internal improvements, and in a few years, with the assistance of other enterprising citizens, he succeeded in having all the streets paved and good roads made to the river. In 1828, when there were not twenty miles of turnpike road in the state, a charter was procured from the legislature for a turnpike road from Maysville to Washington, a town four miles from the river in the direction of Lexington. The stock was soon subscribed and the road put under contract. In the summer of that year, being sanguine that the road could be extended a distance of sixty miles to Lexington, he mounted his horse and in company with an engineer explored the intervening country, and raised a subscription along the line to pay the expenses of a survey. When at Lexington he issued a card for a public meeting, had a conference with Hon. Henry Clay, whom he enlisted in the enterprise, and induced him to address the meeting in its behalf. The meeting was successful, public attention was excited, and means to defray the expenses of the necessary surveys secured. The next winter a charter was obtained extending the road from Washington to Lexington. As this road subsequently became famous in national politics, a short history of the efforts and means by which it was completed will be pardoned.

"At that time but few persons in Kentucky had ever seen a turnpike; still fewer appreciated the benefit such an improvement could confer. Very few believed such a work practicable; the cost was considered beyond the resources of the country. The state up to that time had contributed nothing to the cause of internal improvements. It was an enterprise of great boldness and required great energy, perseverance and firmness. Upon the petition of the company to the legislature, a law was passed authorizing a subscription of twenty-five thousand dollars on behalf of the state as soon as fifty thousand dollars should be subscribed by individuals. By great exertions on the part of the directors of the road, of which Mr. January was one, the requisite amount of fifty thousand dollars was obtained from individuals, and the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars thus secured. The road was immediately put under contract to the extent of that sum, and at a succeeding session the legislature was induced to subscribe fifty thousand dollars more upon the condition that individuals should raise an additional seventy-five thousand dollars. This was done in a few months by extraordinary efforts, and the one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars secured. It required two hundred thousand dollars more to complete the road, and as it would be used by the United States government for the transportation of the great eastern and western mails, the directory determined to petition congress for aid to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The petition was favorably received, and a bill was passed appropriating that sum. The country recollects the fate of that measure. President Jackson struck it down with his veto and left the enterprising company to their own resources. They resolved to carry the work forward. The directory negotiated loans upon their individual responsibility and issued the scrip of the company to the amount of seventy thousand dollars. The whole road was put under contract and the legislature appealed to for further aid. It was granted by a subscription of stock equal to that of individuals, and in four years the road was completed at a cost of four hundred and twenty-six thousand dollars, being the first good macadamized road in the United States, and the pioneer road of internal improvement in the state of Kentucky. This important enterprise, commenced and completed mainly by the public spirit and perseverance of four or five citizens of Maysville, including A. M. January, gave a powerful impetus to the whole system of internal improvement in the state, and is still the best work of the kind probably in the United States."

In addition to his duties as president of the Maysville and Lexington Turnpike Road Company and head of a large commission house, Mr. January became president of the Maysville branch of the Bank of Kentucky in 1835 and was interested financially in several other turnpike corporations. In 1848 he purchased stock in the Maysville Cotton Mills, which began operations about 1834, and in 1851 he formed a partnership with B. W. Wood. They successfully conducted the plant, and the firm of January & Wood existed until the death of the senior member in 1877. He was a man of broad vision and tireless energy. He lived in a generation when typewriters were unknown and conducted his voluminous personal correspondence by hand, frequently answering letters until late at night. He was unspoiled by prosperity, retaining his democratic, unostentatious manner, and his wealth afforded him an opportunity for the expression of his generous nature and marked public spirit. He was the father of thirteen children, one of whom, Harriet Frances, became the wife of the talented Maysville lawyer, Robert A. Cochran, and the mother of United States District Judge Cochran, of Maysville. A son, Horace January, was a promi-

ment druggist of Maysville and was called to the office of mayor, in which he was retained for five terms, giving to the town a businesslike and progressive administration, productive of much good. He married Miss Louisa Willson, and their union was severed by his death in 1893.

His son, Andrew M. January (II), was born March 6, 1873, and received his education in the public schools of Maysville. At the age of seventeen he became a clerk in the Exchange Bank of Flemingsburg and held the position until 1895, when he was appointed deputy county clerk under William D. Cochran. Mr. January acted in that capacity for two years and then turned his attention to the insurance business, with which he was identified until 1908. For ten years thereafter he was secretary and treasurer of the Farmers & Planters Tobacco Warehouse Company of Maysville. From 1918 until January 1, 1922, he was a teller in the State National Bank of Maysville and then took office as county clerk, having been elected in the fall of 1921 by a majority of one vote. On the expiration of his term of four years he was reelected by a majority of two thousand, one hundred and ninety-seven votes, carrying Maysville by one thousand, two hundred. Mr. January is a republican, and he enjoys the unique distinction of having received both the smallest and largest majority in a county that is a stronghold of the democratic party. He has demonstrated that he is the right man for the office and his work has received unqualified praise. He had become city treasurer in November, 1917, and served until 1922, proving an efficient and reliable custodian of the public funds. Honesty, diligence and fidelity to duty have characterized his course throughout life, and no man in the county occupies a higher place in public esteem.

Mr. January was married June 8, 1910, to Miss Agnes Clarke, a daughter of Phillip Clarke, of Maysville, and they have become the parents of three children: Andrew McConnell (III), aged fifteen; Nellie, thirteen; and Margaret Herndon, eleven.