

## Jonathan H. Blackwell

### *Scannell's New Jersey's First Citizens*

JONATHAN H. BLACKWELL---Born at Hopewell, Mercer County, December 20, 1841; son of Stephen and Francenia (Hunt) Blackwell; married at Hopewell, N. J., on October 5, 1865, to Susan Weart, daughter of Spencer Weart of Hopewell.

Children: Stephen Weart, (who was lost in the sinking of the Titanic), Clara May, William Jewell and Henry Clayton.

Jonathan Hunt Blackwell, former State Senator from Mercer County, traces his descent back to an ancient English family. No less than six towns in that country bear the family name of Blackwell and his coat of arms is in Ricker's "Annals of Newtown."

Robert Blackwell, the founder of the Blackwell family in America, is recorded, in the seventeenth century, as engaged in business in Elizabethtown, whence he moved to Newton in 1676. His second wife, Mary Manningham, was of Manning's Island, in the East River. Mr. Blackwell became the proprietor of this island, gave it his name and cultivated the farm situated thereon and it has remained in possession of this family until within recent years.

Robert Blackwell, son of Robert Blackwell who died in 1757, was the

Blackwell, greatgrandfather, served as a private in Captain Israel's Troop of Light Horse, New Jersey Militia, Hunterdon County, during the Revolutionary war, and rose to be a Captain, Stephen Blackwell, grandson of Captain Stephen Blackwell, was a successful merchant of Hopewell. He was twice married, his second wife, Francenia A. Hunt, being the daughter of Jonathan Hunt, of the family that figured prominently in the early history of New Jersey. Francenia Hunt's cousin, Wilson Price Hunt, was the first white man to cross the Rocky Mountains, at the head of the fur trading expedition of John Jacob Astor. Her uncle, Lieutenant Colonel Abraham Hunt, was a prosperous merchant of Trenton, and postmaster there under the crown as well as during the Revolution.

Jonathan Hunt Blackwell was educated in the public schools of his native place, at the New Jersey Conference Seminary at Pennington and in the Claverack Collegiate Institute on the Hudson. Upon leaving school at eighteen, he began his mercantile training in his father's store at Hopewell, and remained there until attaining his majority. Desirous of obtaining a wider experience, he accepted a position in the business of William Dolton, a wholesale dealer in groceries at Trenton. Here he

remained for a period of one year, then went to New York City and engaged in business, remaining there until 1864.

At that time he returned to Trenton, and formed, with his former employer, William Dolton, a partnership which continued until the death of the latter. Mr. Blackwell then conducted the business under the firm name of William Dolton & Co. until 1902, when the firm was reorganized under the title of J. H. Blackwell & Sons.

In addition to Mr. Blackwell's private interests he has always shown great activity in local as well as state affairs. In his political affiliations a Democrat, he was in 1873 elected a member of the Trenton Common Council, serving for three years, and the succeeding year was nominated as candidate for State Senator and won the election in a Republican district. Although the youngest member of the Senate, he served on among others the Committee on Education, and on Banks and Insurance companies. During the session of 1877, he was chairman of the first-named Committee, and of that on Claims and Pensions; was a member of those on Militia, on Lunatic Asylums, on State Library, and on Printing. Of the latter he was also Chairman. In 1878 he was appointed Commissioner to the Paris Exposition by Governor McClellan.

Mr. Blackwell was appointed Commissioner of the State Sinking Fund April 6, 1885, by Governor Leon Abbett. On the death of George M. Wright, January, 1885, the legislature not being in session, Governor Abbett appointed him State Treasurer on January 12, and he served until the legislature elected his successor. Mayor Gnichtel of Trenton made him one of the Commissioners for the erection of the new City Hall for Trenton.

Mr. Blackwell has been President of the Interstate Fair Association; President of the Trenton Transportation Company; Director of the First National Bank; of the Standard Insurance Company; of the Mercer Hospital Board; of the Trenton Railroad Company and several other companies. He is also President of the Lotus Club of Trenton and of the Spring Lake Golf and Country Club, member of the Board of Managers of the State Sons of the Revolution and a member of the Sons of the Colonial War.

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### **Acknowledgements**

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