

# Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania

## BIOGRAPHY

BY

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life insurance attracted wide attention and were favorably noticed by the European press; and his addresses before Alumni College Associations and State conventions were scholarly and forcible. He was one of the three Pennsylvania underwriters appointed to secure anti-rebate legislation at Harrisburg, and the successful passage of this bill was followed by similar statutes in over forty States.

Mr. Lyne has been identified with civic and public interests, serving on the directorate of a national bank, trust company, and insurance company, and as trustee of the Pittsburgh Art Society, the Mozart Musical Society, board of directors of Bethany College, Sons of American Revolution, and as a member of the Academy of Science and Art, Historical Society, the American Academy of Political and Social Science of Philadelphia. He is a member of the Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce and the Duquesne Club.

Mr. Lyne's children are: Wickliffe Bull, of Princeton, 1901; Robert Addison, Sarah Harman and Virginia Brown. His wife, Mary Winters, deceased, was a Colonial Dame by direct descent of Governors Henry Bull, William Hutchison and John Coggeshall, Colonial executives of Rhode Island and founders of Portsmouth and Newport.

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## **BOOTH, James J.,**

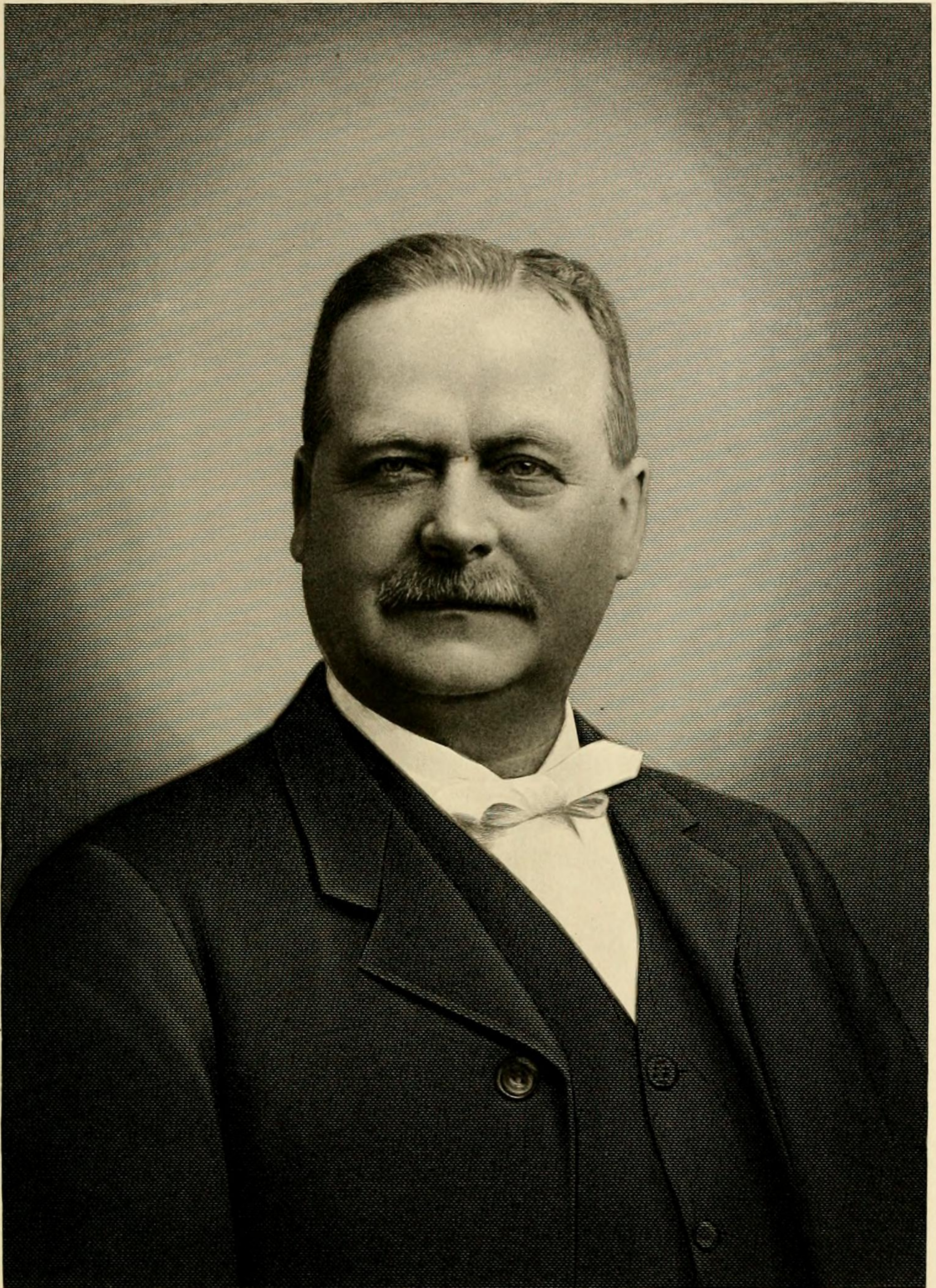
### **Large Contractor, Financier.**

Few men in Pittsburgh are better known and none are more highly respected than is James J. Booth, for many years head of the famous contracting firm of Booth & Flinn, but now withdrawn from the arena of business. Mr. Booth has been for more than half a century a resident of the Iron City and is officially connected with a number of her leading financial institutions, being also closely associated with her political, fraternal and social life.

James J. Booth was born June 13, 1836,

in Dukinfield, Cheshire, England, son of Jonathan and Ellen (Hines) Booth, both of whom were bred in that neighborhood. In early life he was placed at work in a cotton mill, but ambition was a marked feature in his character and he was not satisfied to face a future circumscribed by the walls of a factory. Being denied his wish to learn the bricklayer's trade, he ran away from home in 1854 and came to the United States, settling in Pittsburgh, where he found employment on the river, but soon secured an opportunity to gratify his long-cherished desire. After learning the trade and for a time working both independently and as a journeyman, he began in 1869 to take contracts for street construction and buildings. In 1878 the firm of Booth & Flinn was established, and five years later began to manufacture brick. The work of the firm was for some years limited chiefly to street paving and they constructed many of the finest streets in Pittsburgh, including Winebiddle, Linden and Simon avenues and McPherson and Barton streets. They also paved Penn, Liberty and Second avenues with Belgian blocks. Gradually enlarging the original scope of their undertakings, they built in 1888 the Citizens' Traction railway and the following year the Central, soon becoming the leading contractors of Pittsburgh. At the present day this great concern builds railways and bores tunnels through mountains as easily as in earlier days it paved an ordinary street. This phenomenal success is mainly due to the systematic management, resolute courage and great tenacity of purpose of Mr. Booth. Fertile in resources and alert to seize opportunity, of kindly disposition and invariably just, he endeared himself to his associates and subordinates, winning their most loyal co-operation.

Mr. Booth has retired from the firm in order to devote more time to his extensive private interests. He is a director of the Commercial National Bank, the Commonwealth Trust Company and the Oakland



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*James J. Booth*

Savings and Trust Company, holding the office of vice-president in the last-named institution. He is also a director in the National Fire-Proofing Company. Although no longer engaged in business he is the custodian of numerous interests none of which he allows to suffer for lack of close and able attention and industry.

Seldom, indeed, is it that a man as successful in business as is Mr. Booth takes the keen and helpful interest in civic affairs which he has ever manifested. Affiliating with the Republicans and always fully posted on the subject of politics, he is frequently consulted in regard to matters of municipal importance. As the owner of considerable real estate he has done much for the development of certain sections of the city, possessing as he does clear and sound judgment in regard to the dormant possibilities of landed property. No good work done in the name of charity or religion seeks his co-operation in vain and his benefactions are bestowed with rare discrimination and thoroughness. He is president and director of St. Francis' Hospital, contributing liberally to the aid and support of other benevolent institutions. He belongs to the Botanical Society of Western Pennsylvania and is a past master in the Masonic fraternity, also affiliating with the Independent Order of Odd Fellows, and the Knights Templar. He is a member of Trinity Protestant Episcopal Church, aiding generously in its work and support.

The career of Mr. Booth demonstrates the possibilities for successful accomplishment in the business world—possibilities that exist only for the man able to avail himself of them, and this Mr. Booth has abundantly proved himself to be. Through energy, perseverance and honorable dealing he has acquired not only a handsome competence but the respect of the entire community and a position of merited prominence. His skill as an organizer and his insight into character which enabled him to put the right man in the right place were

important factors in his prosperity. His face is that of the ideal self-made man, the man whose sources of success are in his own nature and not in outward circumstances. It is the face of one who has prospered not only by reason of strong will and exceptional ability, but by sterling integrity, a genial, kindly disposition and an unaffected liking for his fellow beings,—the face of a man who has smiled on the world and the world has smiled on him.

Mr. Booth married, March 4, 1861, Priscilla Jane, daughter of Samuel and Drucilla Turbot, of Irish extraction, and they are the parents of the following children: Ellen, widow of Harry E. Bray; Ulrich Dahlgren; Carrie; Ethel May; and Blanche Olive.

A man of domestic tastes, Mr. Booth has always been devoted to his home and family and it has ever been one of his greatest pleasures to gather his friends about him at his own fireside. He is one of the few now living who can remember the Pittsburgh of "sixty years since." Through a period of three score years he has watched the marvelous growth of the now world-famed city and nobly has he contributed to its promotion. May the Pittsburgh of the future be able to boast of many citizens of the type of James J. Booth!

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### MEILY, John Jr.,

#### **Iron Manufacturer.**

The lineal descent of John Meily (deceased) is from John Meily, born in 1776, died 1844, and his wife, who was a daughter of Martin Oberholzer, born 1733, died 1815. These are two ancient and well known Lebanon county families, and John Meily, for many years one of the leading manufacturers of Lebanon, was well known and highly esteemed in commercial and private circles over the State of Pennsylvania. He was a grandson of John Meily and son of Martin Meily, a well known character in Lebanon county history.