

BIOGRAPHY OF
E. J. HARDNER

I was born in the year of 1844, June the 7th, supposed to have been at night. My father's name was Simon Heinrich Hardner, who was born the 8th of December, 1803 and died on the 24th day of December, 1894 in the City of Lauffen on the River Neckar, Kingdom of Wurtemberg, Germany. My grandfather's name was Melchior Hardner, a farmer by occupation and grandmother's name was Rosa Rebecker Raitlehuber, both living to a very old age. My father learned the trade of a shoe-maker and, after becoming a journeyman, went to Mainz on the River Rhine, one of the oldest and best fortified cities in Germany. When he was twenty-five years old, he married mother, whose name was Klever Hartman, a daughter of the celebrated Hartman family of that city. The wedding took place in the well known Dom in Mainz, one of the oldest Catholic Churches in Germany, on the 7th day of August, 1828.

My parents moved from Mainz in 1837 to Lauffen where father held citizenship and where mother died in 1850 after having eleven children, of whom eight survived, six boys and two girls. I was then six years old and can remember distinctly when I, with the others, went to the funeral and, after coming home, I missed mother and missed her bad for ever afterwards. As the oldest of us was 16 years, the youngest was two years old, so there was no wonder that father married again in the coming spring after getting a dispensation from the Consistory on account of the children that needed taking care of. From that time also dated the hard struggle Germany had to pass through, first the Revolution and then about seven years failure in crops, when bread and potatoes were all that we could get and that in a very limited quantity. This was also the time when the first railroad was built from Heilbrun to Stuttgart and passed through Lauffen which, after being completed,

had killed all the traffic for there was hardly any use for any hotels, blacksmiths, wheelrights, and dozens of other mechanics. They had to close up, sold out and moved to the United States of America, all hard working people in the prime of life, with good will and energy and their house and home made into ready cash, came over and helped to make this country what it is today, one of the grandest in the world.

It was during this period when father had the hardest struggle to pass through and I am very certain that, had mother lived, he would have sold out also to come to this country and perhaps some of his boys would have become one of the millionaires that are so plentiful in the North; but as it was, he pulled through anyway and became one of the foremost citizens in Lauffen, for he not only bought real estate, but later on considerable money lent out on good security.

In the year 1853, the writer of this sketch left home and traveled on foot a distance of twenty miles until I reached Mannheim, on the River Main, which runs into the River Rhine and from there took a steamboat for Mainz where my sister, Wilhemina stayed with my mother's sister, whose husband was considered rich and, through their influence, I soon became elevated and got entrance in good families, societies and clubs, which added a great deal to my future education and I can truly say that during those fifteen months I passed as happy days as any young man ever did. Besides, when I left, I had not only a big trunk of clothing but also a well-filled purse.

I stayed home only long enough to pass the muster roll for military and, having drawn a high number, got a free pass to travel in the inland and foreign land without being molested, so I went to Stuttgart, the Capitol of Wurtemberg, where I stayed just long enough until the news reached, that the President of the United States had been assassinated when I made preparation to travel to New York, so consequently I started on the 5th day