

= Howard Llewellyn Swisher =

Howard Llewellyn Swisher (September 21 , 1870 ? August 27 , 1945) was an American businessperson , real estate developie , orchardist , editor , writer , and historian . As a prominent businessman , he established several companies responsible for the development of businesses and real estate in Morgantown , West Virginia .

Swisher was born in 1870 near Levels , West Virginia . He became a schoolteacher there at the age of 18 , then graduated from Fairmont State Normal School (present @-@ day Fairmont State University) and West Virginia University . He then remained in Morgantown , where he established a bookstore and stationery shop . Following the success of his bookstore , Swisher organized the Main Street Building Company , the Howard L. Swisher Company , and the Morgantown Building Association , each of which constructed a large number of residences in the city . He was also the inaugural secretary @-@ treasurer of the West Virginia Real Estate Dealers ' Association .

Swisher was secretary of the Royalty Oil Company , which owned mining rights for approximately 16 @,@ 000 acres (65 km2) of prospective oil lands throughout the United States . In addition , he also held prominent leadership and management roles in the Valley Wood Working Company , the Monongahela Valley Posting and Distributing Plant , the Federal Savings and Trust Company , and the West Virginia Tri @-@ Products Company . In Hampshire County , Swisher maintained fruit growing interests and served as the president of the South Branch Merchandising Company . He was an active member of the West Virginia Democratic Party and was selected as a delegate from West Virginia to the 1936 Democratic National Convention .

In 1897 , Swisher co @-@ authored History of Hampshire County , West Virginia : From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present with West Virginia historian Hu Maxwell . The book was the first comprehensive history of Hampshire County ever compiled . He composed a collection of poetry and short stories , Briar Blossoms , in 1899 , and was the editor of The Ghourki , a literary journal of poetry , short stories , and aphorisms . In 1908 , Swisher published Book of Harangues , a selection of passages from The Ghourki .

= = Family background = =

Howard Llewellyn Swisher was born on September 21 , 1870 near the unincorporated community of Levels , West Virginia . He was the son of David Warner Swisher and his wife , Mary Katherine Bonnifield Swisher . David was born in Augusta County , Virginia on April 29 , 1822 , and was of Swiss German and French ancestry . David moved to Preston County in present @-@ day West Virginia in 1838 , and a few years later , he purchased land near present @-@ day Levels in Hampshire County and relocated there . He then established a farm on this land , known as " The Levels , " and remained there for the remainder of his life . The Swisher family owned and operated one of the largest orchard operations in the Levels community . In 1846 , David married his wife , Mary Katherine Bonnifield , the daughter of Dr. Arnold Bonnifield of St. George , West Virginia .

= = Early life and education = =

Swisher spent his early years and adolescence on his father 's farm , until he became a schoolteacher in Hampshire County at the age of 18 . He began his post @-@ secondary education at Fairmont State Normal School (present @-@ day Fairmont State University) in Fairmont , which he graduated from in 1892 . While enrolled there , Swisher became affiliated with the Mu Mu Chapter of the Sigma Chi fraternity . Following his graduation , he traveled throughout the northwestern United States and the Canadian provinces and territories of Alberta , Assiniboia , British Columbia , and Manitoba . Swisher then moved to Fresno , California , where he worked as a public schoolteacher for two years . He then returned to West Virginia and attended West Virginia University in Morgantown . While at the university , he aspired to become a journalist and edited The Athenaeum , the institution 's official student newspaper . In 1897 , after three years of studies , Swisher graduated from the university with a Bachelor of Arts degree .

= = Business career = =

As a prominent businessman , Swisher established several corporations and companies responsible for the development of businesses and commercial and residential real estate in Morgantown . He remained in Morgantown after his graduation from West Virginia University , and in 1897 with \$ 700 in capital , he opened a book and stationery store known as the Acme Book Store . The business prospered , and in April 1898 , Swisher established the Acme Publishing Company , which he served as president of for several years .

Swisher subsequently organized the Main Street Building Company , which became responsible for building the Strand Building , a business and commercial block in Morgantown . He established and incorporated the Howard L. Swisher Company in November 1914 . He also organized the Morgantown Building Association in November 1918 with an authorized capital of \$ 250 @, @ 000 and himself serving as its general manager . The Morgantown Building Association undertook extensive construction of residences in the city . In December 1914 , following its organization in Parkersburg , Swisher was named the secretary @-@ treasurer of the West Virginia Real Estate Dealers ' Association . The association was formed in cooperation with the West Virginia Department of Agriculture and other state agencies for the promotion and development of the states 's agricultural resources , real estate , and investments .

In addition to his real estate and construction ventures , Swisher was an organizer and secretary of the Royalty Oil Company , which owned mining rights to approximately 16 @, @ 000 acres (65 km2) of prospective oil lands throughout the southern and southwestern United States . He built and operated the Swisher Theater in Morgantown . Swisher was also a director of the Valley Wood Working Company , the owner of the Monongahela Valley Posting and Distributing Plant , and the secretary of the Federal Savings and Trust Company prior to 1903 . By 1913 , he was the president of the West Virginia Tri @-@ Products Company , which invested in coal and oil production , glass manufacturing , and the production of timber and fruit . Swisher maintained fruit growing interests on South Branch Mountain (known as Jersey Mountain) in Hampshire County , and served as the president of the South Branch Merchandising Company .

= = Writing career = =

During his travels , Swisher contributed articles and poetry to newspapers throughout the Northwest . While attending West Virginia University , he published a small book containing approximately 600 lines of poetry , which he dedicated to his classmates . In 1897 , Swisher co @-@ authored History of Hampshire County , West Virginia : From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present with West Virginia historian Hu Maxwell . The book was the first comprehensive history of Hampshire County ever compiled . He composed a collection of poetry and short stories titled Briar Blossoms , which was published by his Acme Publishing Company in 1899 . Swisher was the editor of The Ghourki , a literary journal of poetry , short stories , and aphorisms . He began each issue with an introductory commentary entitled " Harangues to the Ghourki " in which he referred to himself as the " Chief of the Tribe " . In 1908 , Swisher published Book of Harangues , a selection of passages from The Ghourki .

= = Politics = =

Swisher was an active member of the West Virginia Democratic Party . In 1900 , he was selected as a candidate for State Superintendent of Free Schools . In the 1902 general election , he ran as the Democratic candidate for the Eleventh District of the West Virginia State Senate . Despite his loss , Swisher received the largest number of Democratic votes ever amassed in Monongalia County up until that time . Swisher was a delegate at the 1936 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia , and was selected as an alternate delegate to the Democratic National Conventions of 1912 and 1924 .

= = Personal life = =

In August 1897 , Swisher married Mary Dering of Morgantown , daughter of Edward A. Dering and his wife , Cordelia Walker Dering of Morgantown . Both the Dering and Walker families , from which Swisher 's wife descended , had arrived in the Colony of Virginia during its earlier periods of settlement .

Swisher was a member of the Morgantown Union Lodge No. 4 of the Free and Accepted Masons , Morgantown Lodge No. 411 of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks , the Morgantown Chamber of Commerce , the Kiwanis Club , the Country Club , and the Old Colony Club . Swisher served on the Old Colony Club 's National Advisory Council .

On August 27 , 1945 , Swisher died of a cerebral hemorrhage due to hypertension at his residence at 80 Donley Street in Morgantown . Swisher was interred on August 30 , 1945 at Oak Grove Cemetery in Morgantown 's Chancery Hill Historic District .

= = Selected works = =

History of Hampshire County , West Virginia : From Its Earliest Settlement to the Present . 1897 .
Co @-@ authored with Hu Maxwell .

Briar Blossoms : Being a Collection of a Few Verses and Some Prose . 1899 .

Book of Harangues . 1908 .