

JOSHUA C. KNICKERBOCKER.

JOSHUA C. KNICKERBOCKER was born in Gallatin, Columbia County, New York, September 26, 1837, and is of remote Holland extraction, although his ancestors, paternal and maternal, were for several generations natives of Columbia and Dutchess Counties in the Empire state.

In the spring of the year 1844, his father, David Knickerbocker, with his family, joined the tide of western immigration, and removed to Alden, in McHenry County, Illinois, where he settled upon a farm which he continued to occupy and cultivate until his decease, which occurred February 22, 1874, his relict, Susanna Knickerbocker, dying August 12, at the same place in that year. The children consisted of four in number, all of whom survive: Isaac D. Knickerbocker, who resides on the old homestead in Alden, the subject of this sketch, Mrs. Hannah M. Bowman, wife of Prentice Bowman, of La Porte City, Iowa, and John J. Knickerbocker, a well-known member of the Chicago bar.

Judge Knickerbocker was educated in the common schools and at the academy in Alden. In the winters of 1856, 1858 and 1859 he engaged in teaching district schools and in prosecuting his private studies in the more advanced branches of education. Having determined to devote himself to the law, he removed to Chicago in March, 1860, and at once commenced a course of legal study. In March, 1862, he was admitted to practice by the supreme court of the state, opened an office at number 14 Metropolitan Block, and at once entered upon a remunerative practice. In common with many others, he suffered the misfortune of having his office, including a valuable law library, burned in the great fire of October 8-9, 1871. He was joined in business by his brother, John J. Knickerbocker, in 1867, and thus was formed the well-known law firm of J. C. and J. J. Knickerbocker, which continued until December, 1877, when it was dissolved by the election of the senior member of the firm to the office of probate judge of Cook County. Judge Knickerbocker was elected supervisor of the first ward of Chicago in 1864, for one year, alderman of the first ward in 1864, for two years, and re-elected in 1867 for a like term. In 1868 he was nominated for representative in the Twenty-Sixth General Assembly, and in a close and doubtful district was elected by a majority of more than two thousand. In 1869 he was nominated by acclamation by the Republican county convention for county judge, but, owing to irreconcilable complications, the whole ticket suffered defeat. In 1875 he was appointed by the governor a member of the state board of education, to fill the vacancy occasioned by the death of Doctor John H. Foster, re-appointed in 1877 and 1883 for a term of six years. While at the bar Judge Knickerbocker devoted himself largely to probate business, a department of the law to which he had devoted much study, and which was congenial to him, and in October, 1877, he was nominated for the important office of probate judge of Cook County, with little effort on his part, while a contest for the nomination was made by several able competitors, who made a vigorous and protracted personal canvass. He was elected and organized the probate court of Cook County, December, 3, 1877, under the act of the General Assembly passed and

approved in April of that year. In October, 1882, he was nominated for probate judge by acclamation and was re-elected.

No man enjoyed a more extensive and favorable acquaintance with the people of Cook County than Judge Knickerbocker. All the public and private trusts committed to his charge were executed with promptness and fidelity. In the councils of the city and state his official influence and action have ever been in the interests of good government.

The court over which he presided had jurisdiction over the estates of all deceased persons, and over the persons and estates of all infants, lunatics, idiots, spendthrifts and drunkards in Cook County, and adjudicated annually upon more property than all the other courts of Cook County combined. To administer the delicate and sacred trusts of such an office required learning, industry, vigor and patience. We believe we express the universal opinion when we say these trusts have never been more promptly, impartially and satisfactorily executed than under the administration of Judge Knickerbocker.

