

Judge Elijah Conner Phister

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PHISTER, JUDGE ELIJAH CONNER, Lawyer, was born October 8, 1822, in Maysville, Kentucky. His father, Conrad Phister, of German ancestry, was born in Philadelphia; was a carpenter by pursuit; came to Kentucky, and settled in Maysville, in 1818. His mother, Mary W. Conner, was a native of Maryland, and of Irish-English origin. He attended school during the greater part of his boyhood, and graduated, in 1840, at Augusta College, Augusta, Kentucky. He chose the profession of the law; passed two years in a course of preparatory reading; in the Spring of 1842, entered regularly upon the study of the law at Philadelphia, under the supervision of Hon. John Sargent, a distinguished Pennsylvania lawyer; completed his legal preparation with Payne & Waller, at Maysville; was admitted to the bar in 1844, and at once began to practice his profession in his native town. He was elected Mayor of Maysville, in 1847; was re-elected, in 1848; was elected Circuit Judge of the Tenth Judicial District, in 1856; performed the duties of that office for the term of six years; was elected to the Legislature, in 1867; was re-elected, in 1869, and served as Chairman of the Judiciary Committee. Judge Phister is, politically, a Democrat. He cast his first Presidential vote for Henry Clay, and was identified with the Whig party until 1856. He is of a most energetic, active temperament; rapid and skillful in his decisions, hardly ever escapes a point of law; seems always equal to any emergency, without exhausting his resources; is a fine speaker; a man of dignified manners; is strongly devoted to his profession, in which he has been eminently successful; has had few equals on the bench, probably few judges having made a more satisfactory record or gained more admirers—his quick perception, urbanity, and uncommon executive ability rendering him exceedingly popular; as an able lawyer, stands in the front rank of the profession in the State, and would fill any position with honor in the gift of the people. He has been intrusted with some valuable trusts; and established a reputation for liberality, integrity, and fair and just dealings with men, of which he might well be proud. He started out moneyless, in a trade that seldom brings honor or fortune to its followers; and, by good sense, great industry, and care, has accumulated a considerable fortune. He has become greatly attached to the people of Maysville; and, in order to fix this attachment in some tangible shape for their ultimate benefit, has recently deeded to the city a considerable property, for the founding of a Mason County Historical and Scientific Society, and a public library in Maysville; and not this deed alone should give him a place among its benefactors, and most generous and worthy citizens. He has never been much of a politician, nor taken but little interest in the social organizations that fret mankind. When the rebellion broke out, he took a stand in favor of the Union. This position he probably maintained throughout the war. Mr. Wormald is a bachelor.

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