

BOOK OF BIOGRAPHIES

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THIS VOLUME CONTAINS

Biographical Sketches

—OF—

LEADING CITIZENS

—OF—

CHENANGO COUNTY, N. Y.

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“Biography is the only true history.”—Emerson.

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CURTIS E. KNICKERBOCKER.

education in the common schools of Preston, after which he tilled the soil in connection with carpenter's and joiner's work. He was a well read man and posted on all subjects of interest to the people. He was a leading politician in the county and was active in helping his friends to office, but would never accept one himself. He was united in marriage with Ann Finch, a native of Pitcher, and a daughter of Samuel Finch. Samuel Finch was a lieutenant in the War of 1812, and at one time was judge of Chenango County. He was one of the prominent men of the county. His nephew is now judge of Broome County, N. Y. This union resulted in the birth of the following children: Samuel A.; Mary; Thomas; H. B.; Silas R.; Daniel L.; John E.; Aurelius D.; and Apgar. Mrs. Rogers passed away in 1882, and her husband survived her eleven years. They favored the Seventh Day Baptists, in their religious belief.

Samuel A. Rogers attended the common schools of Pitcher, after which he took a course in Pitcher Academy. After completing his schooling, he learned the trade of a carpenter and builder, also that of a bridge builder. He followed his trade until 1880, when he entered the employ of Miller & Perkins of Oxford, N. Y., as traveling salesman. He remained with them for eight years, and then he accepted his present position, as stationary engineer on the N. Y. & O. W. R. R.

In April, 1854, Mr. Rogers was united in marriage with Susan (Kinney) Lake, a daughter of Samuel Kinney of Oxford. Her first husband was Israel Lake, by whom she had

three children, namely: Whitman E.; Mary E.; and one that died in infancy. Mr. and Mrs. Rogers' union was blessed by the birth of three children, whose records are as follows: George married Catherine Butts of De Ruyter, N. Y., and they are the parents of two children, Bessie E. and Jessie A.; Anna A. married Lyman Judd of Delaware County, N. Y., and reared one son, Frank H.,—her second husband is Romain Jackson of Treadwell, N. Y.; James H. married Anna Hutchins of Otselic, and has two children, namely, Henry O., and Mildred S.

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**C**URTIS E. KNICKERBOCKER, a resident of the village of Norwich, and assistant civil engineer for the O. & W. R. R., is a son of Edwin Knickerbocker of Morrisville, Madison County, N. Y., grandson of Harley Knickerbocker, a native of Connecticut, and great-grandson of John Knickerbocker.

Our subject's great-grandfather was born in the suburbs of New York City of an ancestry, which several generations before came from Holland to New Amsterdam, now New York. The father of John Knickerbocker fought on the side of the colonists in the Revolutionary War, and surrendered his life in the blessed cause of freedom. Soon after his father's death, John Knickerbocker went to live with an uncle in Connecticut, and resided in that state until 1804, when he emigrated to the State of New York, making the entire journey with a team of oxen. He settled in what is now the town of Eaton, Madi-

son County, purchased a tract of land covered with timber near Leland's Pond, built a log house, and began the hard and serious labor of clearing a farm, and preparing the land for the cultivation of crops. At that early day, there were neither railroads nor canals, even in the Empire State, which was one of the first states of the Union to give attention to internal improvements. Of manufactures there were few, except those rude and simple ones that were carried on in the domestic circle. For many years after settling in this new country, John Knickerbocker was obliged to travel one hundred miles to Albany to market the farm products and to obtain in exchange such supplies as were needed in the household and on the farm. The round trip required one week for its completion; on his return he was accustomed to bring with him various kinds of goods required by the pioneer merchants in their stores. With the assistance of his sturdy sons, he managed to effect a clearing of some 150 acres of his property, and continued to reside on his first purchase for many years, finally selling his estate, and thereafter making his home with his son, Henry, at Cincinnatus, Cortland County, and living to the remarkable age of one hundred years. His wife's name before her marriage was Lydia Jackson.

Harley Knickerbocker, the grandfather of our subject, was eight years of age when the family removed to this state. His youth was passed in agricultural pursuits on his father's farm. His first marriage took place in Potter County, Penn., the bride being a Miss Stannard, a native of the Keystone State.

After their union, the young couple settled on a farm in Potter County, where, after a married life of less than two years, Mrs. Knickerbocker died, leaving one daughter, Cordelia, who grew to womanhood, married and reared quite a large family, she, herself, dying in Chicago, Ill. After the death of his first wife, Mr. Knickerbocker removed to Madison County, and in Eaton township was married for the second time. Purchasing a portion of the old homestead near Leland's Pond, he moved into the farm-house already erected thereon, and began the life of a farmer on his own account, and under very auspicious circumstances, for he possessed better advantages than his father had formerly enjoyed, one of which was a market at Utica, only thirty miles distant. After residing a few years on this property he disposed of it to good advantage, and bought another farm near the present site of Morrisville Station, upon which he lived upwards of sixty years, and then retired to the village of Morrisville, where his death occurred at the age of eighty-seven. The maiden name of his second wife was Henrietta French; she was born in the State of Rhode Island, and was a daughter of Abel and Mary (Wilson) French. She died on the farm at the age of seventy-two. Seven children constituted the family, who were named as follows: Julia A.; Edwin, our subject's father; Maria; Jeanette; Sophia; Susan; and Jackson J.

Edwin Knickerbocker received his early education in the district schools, and later attended the academies of Morrisville and Hamilton. He began teaching at the age of twenty, and followed that occupation for a

portion of each year, until he settled down to farming. In 1852 he purchased a farm two miles north of Morrisville, upon which he resided until 1867, when he moved to the village of Morrisville, where he lived until his death in October, 1896. He was born in the town of Eaton, Madison County, January 5, 1824. In 1852 he was united in marriage with Mrs. Mary T. Stafford, nee Curtis, who was born in Nelson, Madison County, March 20, 1829. Her father, Ransom Curtis, died in Chittenango while yet in the prime of life, being about forty years old, and when his daughter, Mary T., was but fourteen. Mr. Curtis was born in Nelson, Madison County, in 1803, and was a son of Jonathan Curtis, a native of Connecticut, and of New England stock, who after his marriage to a Connecticut lady, Miss Johanna Wilkinson, emigrated in the most primitive and rude fashion to Madison County, N. Y., and settled on a farm in the town of Nelson in the closing years of the last century. Some years later, Johanna Thankful (Wilkinson) Curtis died, leaving a family. Some time after the death of his first wife, Jonathan Curtis formed a second matrimonial alliance with a Mrs. Newell, who survived him several years, and died in Waterville, N. Y., at the home of a son by the first marriage, Ebenezer Newell, after having attained to a good old age. Jonathan Curtis died in the town of Nelson when quite advanced in years. He was the father of five children, of whom Ransom was the third in order of birth. The latter grew to manhood in Nelson and became a farmer, in middle life removing to the village of Chittenango, where he died in 1843, being only

forty years of age. He was a Whig in politics, and in religion a member of the old school Baptist Church, his father before him being a deacon in that church. Ransom Curtis was married in the town of Nelson to Miss Aurelia Billings, who was born, reared, and spent her married life in Nelson and Chittenango, after the death of her husband residing some years with her daughter, Mrs. Edwin Knickerbocker, the mother of our subject, and dying in 1862. She was born in 1803, and was a daughter of Lemuel and Priscilla (Locke) Billings, pioneers of Madison County. Like her husband, she was a member of the Baptist Church, and a devoted Christian woman. Mr. Edwin Knickerbocker was a Democrat in his early life, was then a Free-Soil Democrat, and upon the organization of the Republican party became a Republican, to which party's principles he ever afterwards remained true. Education, the mainspring of civilization, the force that sets in motion and regulates the complicated machinery of human action in its various spheres of labor and lines of development, ever found in him a friend and champion. Mrs. Knickerbocker died in September, 1896.

Curtis E. Knickerbocker, the subject of this history, graduated from Cazenovia Academy in 1887, and from Princeton College with the class of 1891. He then located at Middletown N. Y., in the city engineer's office, with Charles Everson, in July, 1891; in October, 1891, he advanced to the chief engineer's office at Middletown, and remained there until March, 1893, when he came to Norwich, and located as assistant civil engineer for the O. & W. R. R. He is well versed

in all the details and intricacies of the civil engineer's profession, and is capable of filling almost any position in the engineering line. His work claims his whole time, so that though he is a loyal Republican and a consistent member of the Presbyterian Church, he has never found the time or requisite opportunity for engaging in either politics or religious work to any great extent. He is a whole-souled, genial fellow, and has any number of warm friends, who unite in wishing him the best of success through life.

On November 16, 1893, in New York City, he was united in marriage with Miss Jennie E. Wilkinson, a young lady of intelligence and varied accomplishments, who grew to maidenhood and was educated in the place of her birth, Middletown, N. Y. They have one child, Kenneth E. The publishers of this work present Mr. Knickerbocker's portrait on a preceding page, in connection with this sketch of his life.



**D**R. LEWIS E. DIXSON, a disciple of Æsculapius, within the length of time during which he has followed his chosen profession among the people of Chenango County, especially of New Berlin township and its vicinity, has made for himself a place and won a standing that may well be envied. Belonging to a class of men whose duties compel them to be not only healers, but also counsellors and advisers as well in matters of the most delicate nature, he has done well by his large clientele. That his name is respected and his individu-

ality esteemed is but a well-earned reward for his faithful efforts. Dr. Dixson is a son of Samuel R. and Ruth L. (Kinney) Dixson, and was born in the town of Butternuts, Otsego County, N. Y., April 29, 1861.

Robert Dixson, grandfather of our subject, was a native of Stetsonville, Otsego County, and a manufacturer of hats. He was twice married; to his first wife, Miss Clinton, six children were born—three sons and three daughters. He was again married, and was the father of three children—one son and two daughters. He died in 1850 at the age of fifty-four years.

Samuel R. Dixson was born in New Lisbon, Otsego County, N. Y., in 1827, and died September 20, 1894, in the town of Butternuts. He received a good education in the common schools of his native town and then took a course in the academy at Gilbertsville; he also had a private teacher for some time. Upon leaving school he taught for several years and then followed the pursuits of an agriculturist. Having been more than ordinarily successful, and a man whose character was above reproach, his name was a familiar one throughout the county of his residence. He was an earnest and sincere Christian, and an active member of the Episcopal Church, with which organization he was identified for many years. To this society his death was an almost irreparable loss, for he was looked upon in confidence as a wise counsellor and interested friend. He was a strong Republican, and for eighteen consecutive years was elected commissioner of highways in the town of Morris. He was united in marriage with Ruth L. Kinney, and