

**DAVIS, JOHN STEELE**, of New Albany, was born in Dayton, Ohio, November 14, 1814. His father, John Davis, was a merchant, and for many years magistrate of the county in which he resided. He was one of the few strictly temperate men of his time. He married Elizabeth Calcier, daughter of a farmer near Princeton, New Jersey. They had six sons and five daughters, most of whom grew to maturity. Emigrating westward, he settled in Montgomery County, Ohio. He took an active part with General Wayne in the Indian War, after the defeat of General St. Clair. He died aged sixty-six years. Judge Davis's grandfather, Captain Joseph Davis, emigrated from Wales, and settled near Princeton, New Jersey. He participated in the struggle for independence, and was with General Washington at the battles of Monmouth and Princeton, at the latter of which he lost a leg. John Steele Davis, the subject of this sketch, early gave his attention to study, and entered Miami University at the age of sixteen. A short time afterwards his father failed in business, which necessitated his return home. He was now thrown upon his own resources for acquiring an education, and was obliged to assist in the support of his father and family. He afterward read law with W. J. Thomas, of Troy, Ohio, and was admitted to the bar. He immediately came to Indiana, settled in New Albany, Floyd County, in the year 1836, where shortly after his arrival he commenced the practice of law. As a counselor and jurist few men can claim a higher record; he has been constantly engaged in the profession for a period of forty-two years, and has never prosecuted a man, nor allowed himself to be engaged to prosecute. He has probably defended more men for high crimes and misdemeanors than any other man in the state, and has been almost invariably successful. He was the first city clerk of New Albany, having been elected in 1839, and was chosen city attorney in 1846. In 1841 he was elected to the state Legislature for the first time, and has since served his county repeatedly in both branches – about twenty years in all. He was elected, without opposition, in 1876, Judge of the Criminal and Civil Courts of Floyd and Clarke Counties, an office he did not seek, and only accepted at the earnest solicitation of friends. Judge Davis was an ardent Whig until that party ceased to exist. He was violently opposed to "Know-Nothingism," and for a long time stood aloof from parties, but finally united with the Democracy. In 1843 he was the Whig candidate for Congress against Thomas J. Henley, Democrat, and, in a district overwhelmingly Democratic, was defeated by only thirty-seven votes. He was presidential elector for General Taylor; and in 1852 was a member of the National Convention that nominated General Scott for President. In 1860 Judge Davis was Independent candidate for Congress against James A. Cravens, Democratic nominee; and, although at the previous election the Democrats had a majority of four thousand five hundred, Judge Davis was defeated by a very small majority. He was a warm supporter of the war for the Union, and had two sons in the army. The younger, John S. Davis, junior, rose to the rank of captain and assistant quartermaster by appointment of President Lincoln; he was with General Burnside in the Cumberland Mountains in the severe campaign of 1863-64, and died of disease contracted at that time. The other son, William P. Davis, rose to the rank of lieutenant-colonel in the 23d Indiana Volunteers; he took part in all the well-earned victories of Shiloh, Vicksburg, and the campaign in Georgia. Judge Davis has been twice married, first to Elizabeth Stone, a native of Virginia, by whom he had four sons and two daughters. Mrs. Davis died in 1852, and Judge Davis afterward married Annie S., daughter of George Davis, of Dayton, Ohio, by whom he has one son. He is a member of the Independent Order of Odd-fellows and of the Episcopal Church.