

KERR, MICHAEL C., was born at Titusville, Pennsylvania, March 15, 1827. He received an academic education, and graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Laws at the Louisville University in 1851. He was an ardent and indefatigable student from an early age until the close of his life. His attainments in the broad fields of general knowledge were more than ordinary, while in the branches more directly allied to his public duties, such as political economy, the science of government, parliamentary law, etc., his acquirements were extensive and duly acknowledged by his contemporaries. He taught school for sometime in Kentucky, and settled in New Albany, Indiana, where he afterwards permanently resided. He began the practice of law in New Albany in 1852, was elected city attorney in 1854, and prosecuting attorney of Floyd County in 1855; was a member of the state Legislature in 1856 and 1857; was elected reporter of the Supreme Court of Indiana in 1862, and during his term of office edited five volumes of reports; was elected a Representative to the Thirty-ninth, Fortieth, Forty-first, and Forty-second Congress; was the Democratic candidate at large for Representative to the Forty-third Congress, but was defeated by the small majority of one hundred and sixty-two votes; he was elected in 1874 to the Forty-fourth Congress by a majority of thirteen hundred and nine. But the crowning honor of his public career was his election to the speakership of the House of Representatives, at its organization in 1875. Mr. Kerr made an able and impartial presiding officer, and commanded the undivided respect of all parties. For sometime previous to his election to the speakership his health had begun to fail, from the insidious progress of a serious pulmonary affection, which was quickened to action by the arduous duties of his office, forcing him, before the close of the first session, to seek relief from his toils and sufferings by a sojourn among the mountains of Virginia. But the disease had gained too much headway, and his death took place on the 19th of August, 1876, at the Alum Springs, in Rockbridge County, Virginia. His noble qualities of heart and mind endeared him to a large circle of acquaintances and friends. His death was regretted by the whole country.