

APPENDIX.

OBITUARY SKETCH OF HEUSTED W. R. HOYT.*

HEUSTED WARNER REYNOLDS HOYT was born in Ridgefield in this State on the 1st day of November, 1842. He was the son of the Rev. Warner Hoyt, who was rector of St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in that town, and of Elizabeth Phillipina Reynolds, who was a native of Greenwich. The Rev. Warner Hoyt died when Heusted was but three years of age.

His early death entailed a complete change in the life of his little family, his widow removing from Ridgefield to her father's home in Greenwich where she remained, except for a period of two years spent in New Canaan, and there Heusted Hoyt spent his boyhood days, the whole of his active manhood, and from that home he was carried to his last resting place in the neighboring cemetery of Christ Church.

As a child Heusted Hoyt is remembered as one possessed of a singularly alert mind, so that he was often spoken of as almost precocious, certainly bright, and giving the promise of keen intellectual power when he reached maturity; and these mental traits combined with gentleness, generosity and manly childlike attributes, so to describe them, brought to him even in his early days the great respect of the community, and caused the prediction not infrequently to be made that the career which lay before him was likely to be one of unusual success. He was a faithful student in the Academy of Greenwich, and there he prepared for Columbia College, to which he was admitted in his seventeenth year.

His college days, brief as they were, sustained the repute which he had gained in his own town, and he seemed likely to be graduated among the honor men of his class. But it was while he was in these early preparatory studies that he received his first warning, and the shadow of that disease to which he finally succumbed fell upon him and continued throughout his life. He was obliged, because of this illness, to leave college without taking his degree. He returned to Greenwich, and by careful habits seemed after a time so far restored that he decided to prepare for the law, a vocation to which his ambition had impelled him in his youthful days. He became a student in the office of Henry H. Owen, Esq., in New York, was admitted in due course to the New York bar, and at first proposed to practice in New

* Prepared by a friend at the request of the Reporter.

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York City. His brief experience at the bar in that city assured those with whom he was associated that his career would have been successful there, but an opportunity which seemed to him favorable was opened for him to practice in his own town of Greenwich, and there he opened an office just at the time when the country was beginning to recover from the turmoil and distractions of the Civil War. There he remained in practice until his illness compelled him to take to his bed.

Col. Hoyt always took an intense interest in politics, and his personal qualities, combined with a wide acquaintance and respect which he had gained by reason of his association with the military service of the State, early indicated him as a candidate for political honors. He was elected to the State senate in 1869, being at that time the youngest member of that body. But although he was youngest in years he was among the potent influences of that legislature, and gained a repute there which caused his name to become familiar throughout the State. He served a second term in the senate in 1872, was a member of the house of representatives in 1886 and again in 1887, being upon the last occasion so generally indicated as the choice of his party for the speakership that he was elected to that position with practical unanimity.

These were the only political offices that Col. Hoyt ever held. He was, however, elected the first judge of the Borough Court which was established in the town of Greenwich in 1889, and held that office as long as he lived.

Col. Hoyt took a great interest in military matters and he possessed capacities which would, had he been able to serve in the field, have brought him great prominence and success. He earnestly desired to enlist and go to the front with a company in the Connecticut Volunteers, but his family knew better than he that, while he might escape the perils of battle, he certainly could not have immunity from those of the camp and the exposures of the field. A letter written by him on the 17th of July to an old friend then in the field contains these words, and in them there is sufficient indication of the force of his character. He says: "If there is any indication of a draft in Connecticut (and I do not think in this busy season they can get enough without) I am going to volunteer forthwith." It appears from this same letter that Hoyt and ten or twelve others were "studying up on Hardee's tactics," and probably to this discipline and this impulse may be traced the successes of his subsequent career as an officer of the State militia.

Upon his appointment in 1868 as second lieutenant of Company F, 8th Reg. C. N. G., he began a career with the militia which gave him a reputation as one of the most competent and skillful as well as popular men in the service. His abilities brought him rapid promotion until he finally was named Colonel of the 4th Regiment, which he brought to a high state of discipline. That post he held until March 24th, 1877. But his intense interest in all military matters even after his resigna-

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tion, was second only to that which his practice created, and his friends many times thought that it was greater than the interest he found in the excitement of politics.

Col. Hoyt's career in the State senate revealed his unusual power and ability as a public speaker, and it perhaps was in that capacity that he became more familiarly known to the people of the State than in his power as a legislator, a quality which is not obvious to the public eye.

From the time of his admission to the Fairfield County bar his abilities as counsel and advocate were recognized, and soon brought to him a profitable, and by no means local, business. His theoretical and practical knowledge of the law, his unyielding will, his capacity for persistent and unflinching devotion to the interests of his clients, and an unconquerable determination of nature, caused him to be greatly sought for. He was true to the cause of his client, and could never be made to acknowledge that defeat was his lot while any hope of victory remained. He was engaged in many notable cases, and as his skill was disclosed, and the cleverness which marked all of his performances appeared, he took strong hold of those who watched him. No lawyer acquainted with him would think of meeting him in a trial without the most careful preparation, for the intricacies of the law were as familiar to Col. Hoyt as the parts of an engine to a master mechanic. And then too, he never had the wrong side of a case; his service once secured he was blind to all opposing claims or principles except so far as they were forced upon him by his adversary, and then he fought them with confidence, skill and tenacity. He was very properly considered a formidable opponent, for when apparently worsted, he would, without an indication of a change of front, commence a legal structure on the opposite side, and while one viewed the situation with wonder he rapidly and very substantially entrenched himself. Dislodge him you might, capture him you could not.

Col. Hoyt was ever ready and anxious to aid all of those plans which were for the benefit of his town. He never refused to give his assistance and endeavors to whatever was proposed for its improvement. His power as an orator, and his personal influence, were often sufficient to avail for the success of proposed measures, when without these influences they probably would have been defeated; and it was the very qualities which made him the able advocate that were of inestimable advantage to the community in his relation to it as a public spirited citizen.

The esteem and affection with which Col. Hoyt was held was tenderly and beautifully manifested upon the occasion of his funeral. In the midst of a blinding April snowstorm, and with all the discomforts and perils attendant thereupon, his body was taken from the home of his childhood and manhood to that narrow home where it will remain until the last great day. And there followed to his grave a great com

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pany of his professional associates of the Fairfield bar, of the local bar, of those who had been with him in the days of his triumphs as a public man, of those who had served with him in the militia, and of neighbors and remoter friends, the shops being closed, the emblems of affliction being displayed, and even the houses for the most part deserted, so that the only tributes that then were possible might be paid to him by a community which sincerely mourned.

At a meeting of the bar of Fairfield County on April 15th, 1894, after remarks eulogistic of Col. Hoyt had been made by R. Jay Walsh, James H. Olmstead, Frederick A. Hubbard, Russell Frost, Ernest Staples, and others, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted:—

Whereas, the Fairfield County bar has learned with deep and sincere regret of the death of the Honorable Heusted W. R. Hoyt, one of its members, at his home in Greenwich, on Sunday, the eighth instant,

Resolved, that in the death of Brother Hoyt this bar fully realizes the loss of one of its most respected and talented members, one whose kindly and genial qualities, loyal friendship, amiable, polished and courteous manners, heroic courage, unswerving integrity in the discharge of his professional duties, and superior intellectual attainments has long commanded the admiration of his fellows, and are worthy of emulation.

Resolved, that this bar extends to the family of our deceased friend and brother the assurance of our deep and heartfelt sympathy in their great bereavement.

Resolved, that these resolutions be recorded at length in the records of the bar, and that a copy of the same, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to the family of the deceased.