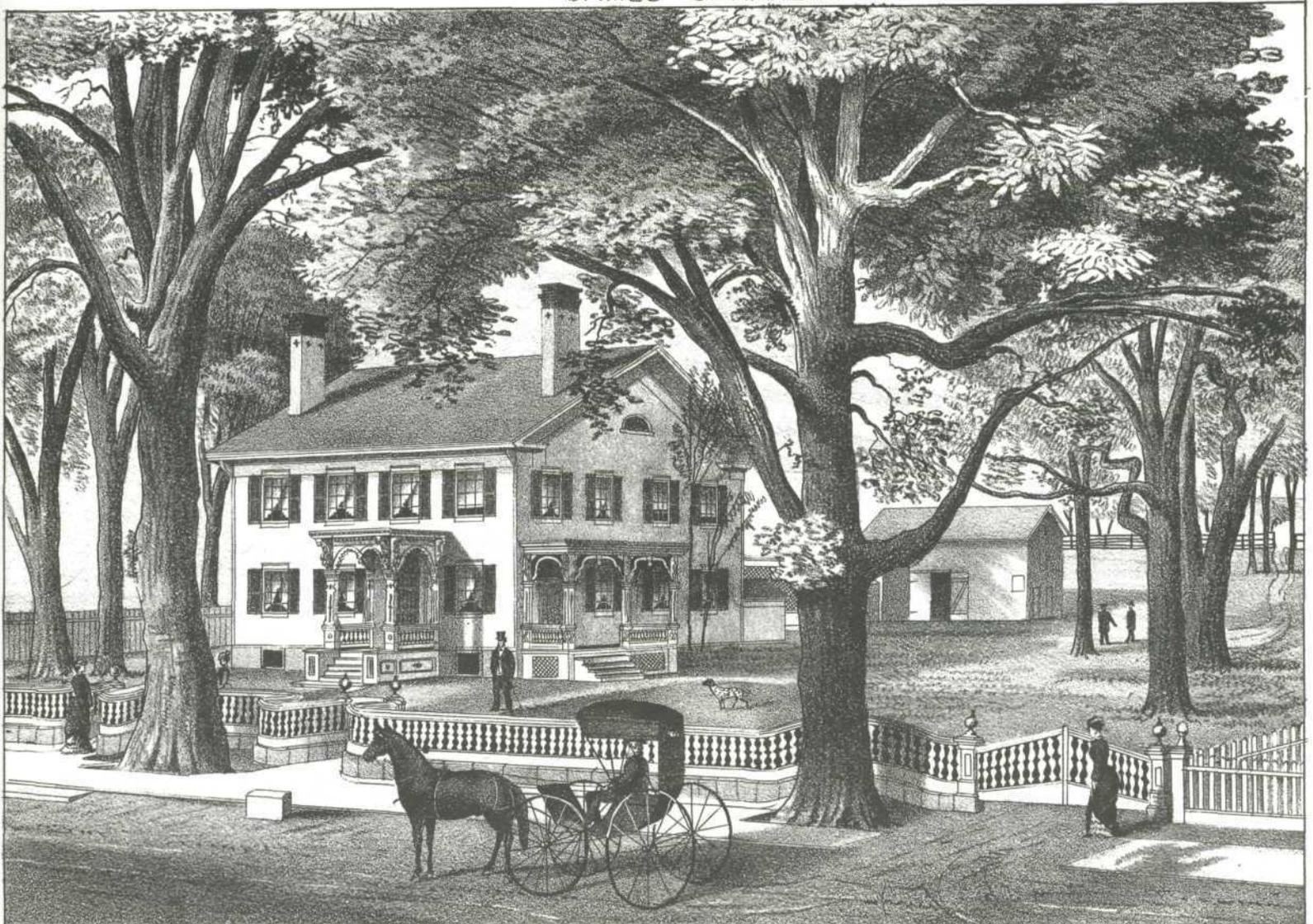


JAMES SPRAKER.



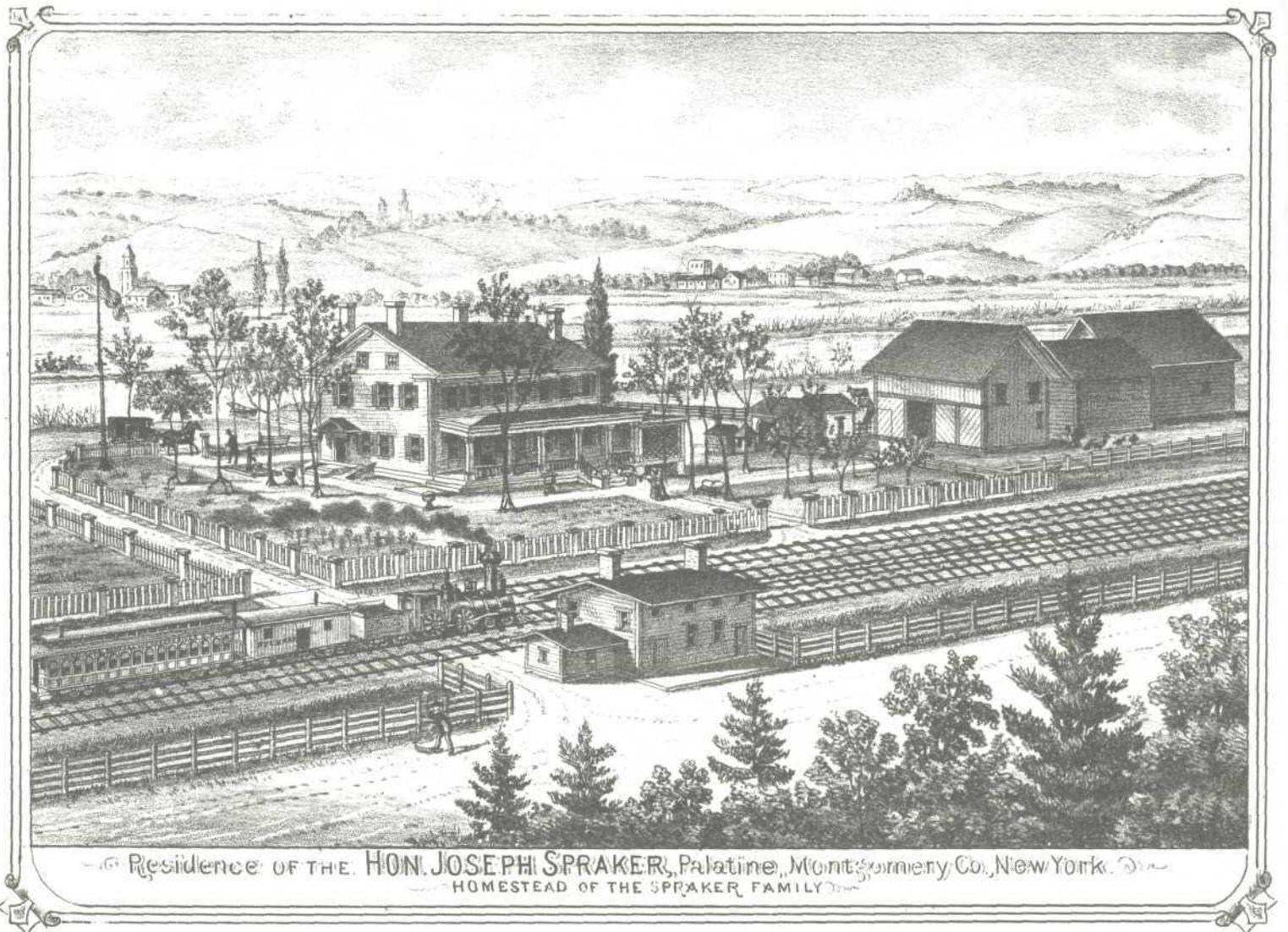
RES. OF JAMES SPRAKER, PALATINE BRIDGE, N. Y.



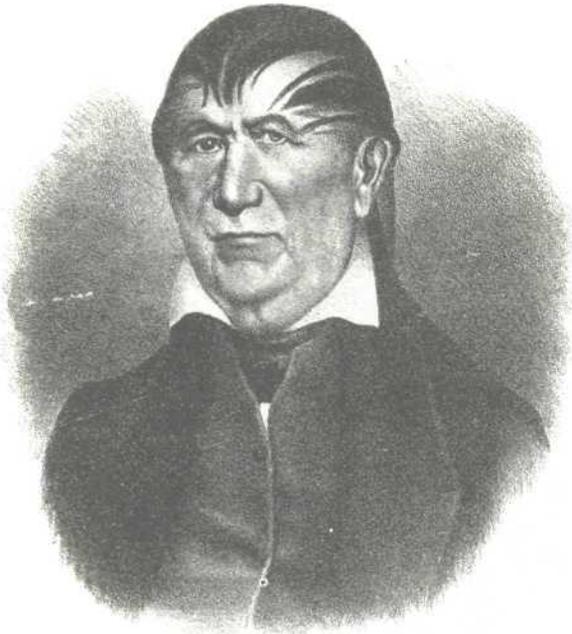
Hon. Joseph Spraker.



Mrs. Joseph Spraker.



Residence of THE HON. JOSEPH SPRAKER, Palatine, Montgomery Co., New York.
— HOMESTEAD OF THE SPRAKER FAMILY —



JOST SPRAKER



MRS. JOST SPRAKER

THE SPRAKER FAMILY.

This family, which has long been prominent in the Mohawk valley in wealth, business enterprise and social and political influence, deserves particular mention. George Spraker, the remotest ancestor of the family in this country, a native of Saxony, settled in the town of Palatine, Montgomery county, then a part of Albany county, about the year 1755. He married Maria House, who was also of German descent, and by honest industry became the builder of his own fortune and advanced from poverty to prosperity. At the time of his death George Spraker was the owner of some of the finest agricultural land in the valley, a part of which was on the Mohawk flats, and resided at the old homestead on the north bank of the Mohawk river, which has ever since remained in the family.

George Spraker had four sons and five daughters, and the sons, with himself, bore arms against the British, Tories and Indians in the war for independence and the early frontier struggles. John and George, sons of George Spraker, were with the detachment of the heroic Col. Brown in the bloody battle with the British and Indians on the 19th of October, 1780; and George Spraker himself, then an elderly man, and his younger sons, Conrad and Jost, were among the garrison of Fort Keyser, within the limits of the present town of Palatine, on that memorable day. Nancy Spraker, a daughter of George Spraker, and widow of Jacob J. Lawyer, still survives and resides at Schoharie, being nearly one hundred years of age.

On the death of George Spraker, Jost Spraker, his youngest son, succeeded to the paternal homestead. Jost Spraker became well known throughout and beyond the State. Travelers through the valley before the time of railroads were entertained at his hotel, which became famous for liberal hospitality. Mr. Spraker was personally noted for his humorous sayings, and many interesting anecdotes of his original wit have survived to the present day. He was an extensive land owner, and possessed many slaves until they became emancipated by law. In the village of Spraker's Basin, opposite his residence, was erected in early times the church known as "Spraker's Church." This old church was replaced in 1858 by a new edifice built upon another site, which was donated by George Spraker, the eldest son of Jost Spraker, to the Reformed Association. The station of the New York Central Railroad near the homestead of Mr. Spraker is appropriately named "Spraker's."

Jost Spraker married Catherine Frazier, a descendant of one of the Scottish pioneer families who first settled Johnstown, and died in 1848, in his 84th year, having outlived his worthy and accomplished wife five years. Six sons and two daughters survived him; and the sons, acting in concert in important enterprises for upwards of half a century, have deserved and realized a rare degree of prosperity, and made their family name the guaranty of honor and responsibility. These six brothers have been very prominent in the social, business and political circles of their time, and

have justly merited their singularly high reputation for business ability and integrity. A brief sketch will be given of the sons and daughters of Jost Spraker:

NANCY SPRAKER.

Nancy Spraker married, and settled at an early day at Sackett's Harbor, New York, where she recently died at an advanced age, leaving descendants.

CATHERINE SPRAKER.

Catherine Spraker after marriage resided in Cobleskill and Richmondville, in Schoharie county, New York, at which last named place she died in 1866, having attained old age among her children.

JAMES SPRAKER.

James Spraker, the fifth son of Jost Spraker, commenced business as a merchant at Spraker's Basin in 1832; the location of his store being upon the south bank of the old canal. At this place Mr. Spraker carried on an extensive and prosperous trade for six years.

Prescient and successful in financial enterprise, Mr. Spraker at an early day saw the field, as well as the public necessity, which existed at Canajoharie and Fonda, for the successful establishment and operation of banks; and by uniting his counsels and efforts with those of his brothers, organized the Spraker Bank at Canajoharie in 1853, and the Mohawk River Bank at Fonda in 1856; each of those institutions being the pioneer bank in its own locality. Mr. Spraker removed to Canajoharie in 1853 to take charge of the Spraker Bank, and resided there until 1865, when he removed to Palatine Bridge, and purchased the residence of Henry Loucks, counsellor-at-law. James Spraker is one of the original directors of the Spraker Bank and of the Mohawk River Bank; he has been president of the first named institution since its organization, and his able and careful management of its affairs has ever been manifest in its flourishing condition.

But not in financial achievements alone is his fame memorable; for in the midst of a busy and yet tranquil life, Mr. Spraker still finds time to relieve the distressed and assist the young in the battle of life. He is well known as a generous donor to religious, charitable and benevolent objects, and his name is often sought to head the subscription list. Although frequently urged to accept nominations for office, Mr. Spraker has always preferred the freedom of private life, and for half a century has given to the Democratic party the aid of his wisdom and experience in council and the support of his untarnished personal character.

The home of James Spraker at Palatine Bridge, guarded in front by two huge and beautiful elms of primeval growth, which are doubtless older than the settlement of the county by Europeans, is one of the most charming in the valley.



LIVINGSTON SPRAKER

Livingston Spraker, the fourth son of Jost Spraker, was extensively and favorably known both within and beyond the limits of his native State; having been sheriff of Montgomery county; delegate to the national Democratic convention held in Chicago in 1864; assistant superintendent of the Utica and Schenectady Railroad; and a director of the New York Central Railroad for many years; and having held other prominent positions. He resided at Palatine Bridge, amassed a large fortune, and died September 15th, 1873, in his 71st year, leaving a widow and children. Livingston Spraker was prominent in the politics of his native county and State for a quarter of a century; and was one of the original directors and founders of three banks: the Spraker Bank of Canajoharie; the Mohawk River Bank of Fonda; and the Fort Plain Bank; being the first vice-president of the last-named institution. Mr. Spraker and lady were liberal donors to the English Lutheran Church of Canajoharie, of which he was a member at the time of his death.

The mansion of Livingston Spraker was one of the most hospitable in the valley; and his many friends, scattered far and wide, will long miss his imposing presence, courtly manners, and generous hospitality.

JOSEPH SPRAKER.

Joseph Spraker, the youngest son of Jost Spraker, resides upon the original family homestead in the town of Palatine, which he has recently fitted up with all the modern improvements. In 1853 he married Angelica Mitchell, daughter of the late Hugh Mitchell of Spraker's Basin, and has four sons and one daughter. His spacious mansion is the scene of many a youthful frolic and of princely entertainment. Mr. Spraker is one of the founders and a director of the Spraker Bank of Canajoharie and of the Mohawk River Bank of Fonda; and is now vice-president of the first named institution. Among other important positions held by Mr. Spraker is that of supervisor of the town of Palatine two terms; and in 1856 he represented Montgomery county in the Assembly.

The official life of Mr. Spraker was characterized by the same courtesy and honor which distinguish him as a man, and realize the true ideal of a republican form of government—official power united with integrity and intelligence. Mr. Spraker and his brothers have always been identified in politics with the Democratic party, and influential in its councils. Joseph Spraker and lady have been leading members of and liberal donors to the Reformed Church at Spraker's Basin from the time it was rebuilt in 1858.

The numerous guests who have been entertained by Mr. Spraker and his accomplished lady at their elegant and beautiful residence, will not soon forget either the abundance and good cheer of the table, or the hearty laugh and kind welcome of the host and hostess.



GEORGE SPRAKER

George Spraker, like his father familiarly known as "the Major," was the eldest son of Jost Spraker, and settled at Spraker's Basin, in the town of Root. He built at the canal lock a large and imposing stone mansion and store, and there carried on a prosperous mercantile business for many years, in sight of the paternal homestead across the river. Among the important and responsible positions filled by George Spraker are those of justice of the peace and supervisor of the town of Root, director of the Spraker Bank of Canajoharie, and superintendent of the Erie Canal for many years under the appointment of the late Governor Bouck, who was then a canal commissioner. He enjoyed the life-long friendship of this distinguished man, and after his retirement from political life the governor and his wife frequently visited Mr. Spraker at his residence. George Spraker married in early life, and died January 14th, 1869, in his 73d year, leaving a family of three sons and two daughters. Although George Spraker and lady were members of the Methodist church, yet they liberally and constantly supported the Reformed church at Spraker's Basin, the site of which was donated by George Spraker to the church society.

George Spraker was courteous in manners, kind and social in disposition, and an eminently honest and upright man. His charities and hospitality were well known, and during his whole life he possessed the confidence and respect of all who knew him.

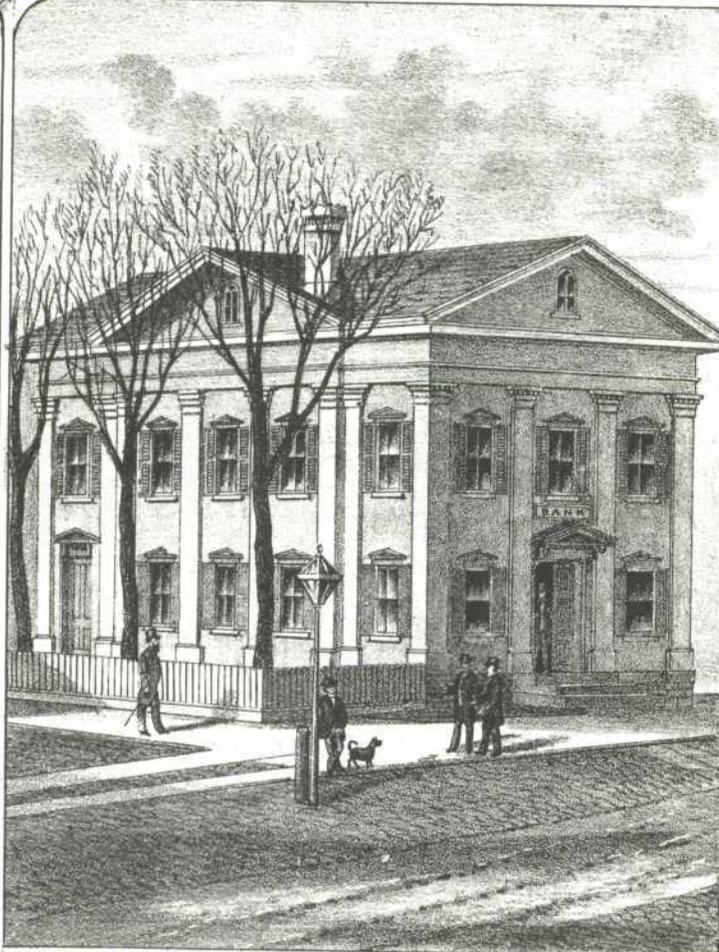
DANIEL SPRAKER.

Daniel Spraker, the second son of Jost Spraker, resided at Spraker's Basin until 1853; and while there was engaged extensively in the mercantile, storage and forwarding business on the Erie canal for many years, in which by the aid of energy and economy he became one of the leading merchants of the valley. In 1853 he removed to Canajoharie and lived a retired life for a few years. In 1856, upon the establishment of the Mohawk River Bank at Fonda by the enterprise of himself and brothers, he removed to Fonda and accepted the presidency of that institution, which position he has held to the present time. As manager of the Mohawk River Bank he has shown such financial ability, sagacity and prudence as have conspicuously contributed to the success and sound condition of that institution. Mr. Spraker has also been one of the directors of the Spraker Bank at Canajoharie since its organization. Daniel Spraker married Eliza Dykeman, daughter of Stephen Dykeman, and has one son and two daughters living, his wife having died several years ago. Mr. Spraker is a prominent member and a liberal supporter of the Reformed church of Fonda.

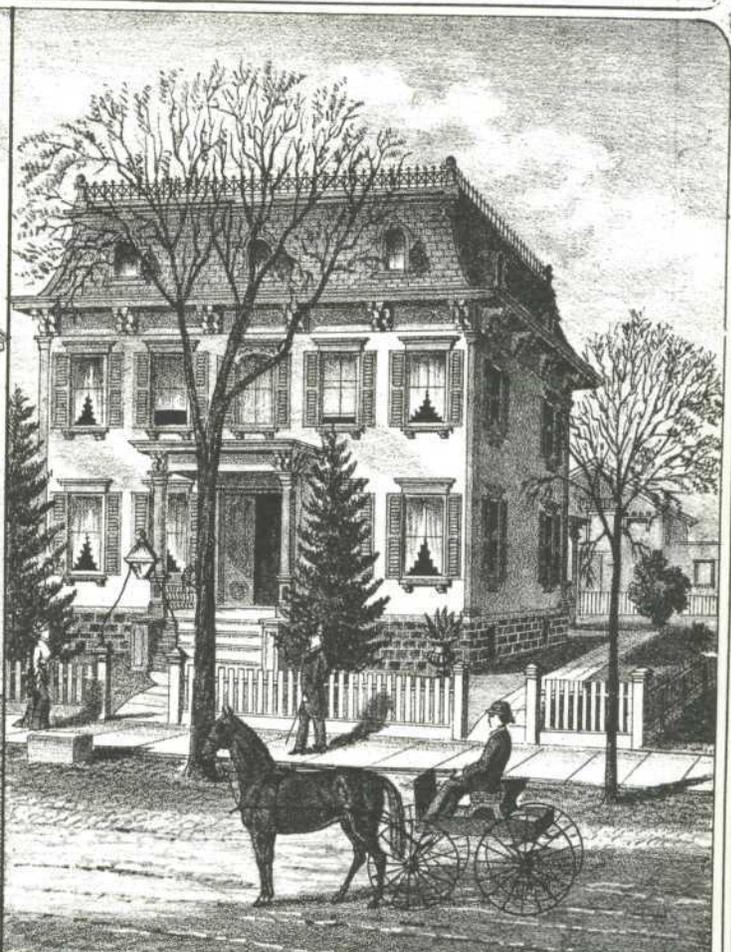
Unmoved by the smiles or frowns of fortune and of power, the conduct of Daniel Spraker has been always guided by justice and integrity, and his manners tempered by the courtesy of the old school and the gentle impulses of a kind heart; and now, far advanced in age, for many years he has enjoyed the pleasant fruits of a noble life, the respect and esteem of all, and an ample fortune which he has honestly acquired.



Daniel Spraker.



MOHAWK RIVER BANK, Fonda., N. Y.
DANIEL SPRAKER, PRESIDENT



Residence of DANIEL SPRAKER
FONDA, N. Y.



HON. DAVID SPRAKER

David Spraker, the third son of Jost Spraker, attended the Johnstown Academy, and in 1819 entered Union College, graduating in 1822 with honor; being at the time of his death a member of the board of councillors of the college and of the Phi Beta Kappa Society. He excelled in literary composition and oratory, and participated in the commencement exercises of 1822 as one of the two orators chosen by the college literary society known as the Delphian Institute. Mr. Spraker studied law at Amsterdam with Marcus T. Reynolds, at Albany with Judge Alfred Conkling and at Johnstown with Daniel Cady, and was admitted to practice as attorney of the Supreme Court in 1825, and as counsellor in 1828, under the rigid requirement of seven years study by the old regime. In 1842 he was licensed in the Circuit and District Courts of the United States. In 1830 he became Supreme Court commissioner, an officer who, under the law of those days, exercised much of the jurisdiction of the present Supreme Court; and in 1833 was appointed master and examiner in chancery. In 1835 and for some years previous thereto he was a judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Montgomery county, and resigned his office in the fall of that year to take his seat in the State senate and the Court for the Correction of Errors, which was then the State court of last resort; to which offices he had been elected, and which he filled for four years from the first day of January, 1836. During his career in the senate, although probably the youngest member of that body, he established for himself a reputation for eloquence, ability and integrity, which extended far beyond the borders of his native State. Of that senate, Mr. Hammond, in his Political History of New York, mentions with approbation only Senators Spraker and Young, for their efforts to prevent the squandering of public money in private schemes, and in the interest of corporations; and in the widely separated counties of Erie and New York public resolutions were adopted thanking those two senators for their intrepid devotion to the cause of honesty and the public. The judicial ability of Mr. Spraker is illustrated by the fact that upon the construction by the Court of Errors of the complicated and numerous provisions of the celebrated James will, the opinion of Judge Spraker was the only one which was concurred in by

the court upon every point. Mr. Spraker resided in Canajoharie from 1825 to the time of his death, October 14th, 1873, in his 73d year. He practiced law for many years, and for a long time acted as secretary and treasurer of the Montgomery County Mutual Insurance Company. He was postmaster at Canajoharie six years, and was a director and vice-president of the National Spraker Bank of Canajoharie, and a director of the Mohawk River National Bank of Fonda. In 1839, and again in 1842, Judge Spraker was prominently mentioned in the newspapers as the Democratic candidate for governor of the State. He was a delegate to the national Democratic conventions which met at Charleston and Baltimore in 1860, where he supported the nomination of Stephen A. Douglas. He presided at the first war meeting, in Canajoharie, to enlist volunteers and aid in suppressing the rebellion; and, throughout the war, gave unwavering support to that end.

In 1845 he married Harriet F. Rowan, youngest daughter of Rev. Stephen N. Rowan, D.D., of New York, and left her and three sons and three daughters surviving him.

In politics Mr. Spraker was a life-long and consistent Democrat, and was widely known for nearly half a century as a man of great influence at home and abroad. He adorned the many public positions held by him with grace, dignity and honor, and was classed among those accomplished gentlemen and chivalrous statesmen who, not numerous in his own day, have now almost disappeared. Judge Spraker was intimately associated with President Van Buren, Gov. Marcy, Stephen A. Douglas, and many others of the noblest men of our country, most of whom have now passed away. He united the profoundest sagacity with wonderful organizing and executive ability; and his magnanimity, benevolence, and chivalrous daring in behalf of justice, won him universal popular love. His features were classic and commanding, his eyes dark and piercing, his voice musical and impressive, and his manners and movements refined, genial and graceful in the highest degree. He possessed the gift of natural eloquence and frankness, and the enthusiasm and vivacity of youth ended only with his life.