

## Chambers

**CHAMBERS, CHARLES JULIUS.** [See CHAMBERS, JAMES JULIUS, 1850-1920.]

**CHAMBERS, EZEKIEL FORMAN** (Feb. 28, 1788-Jan. 30, 1867), jurist, born at Chestertown, Kent County, Md., was the son of Benjamin and Elizabeth (Forman) Chambers. His father fought both in the Revolution and in the War of 1812. Ezekiel likewise distinguished himself during the War of 1812, in a militia company which was defending the Eastern Shore, Maryland, at Bel Air, against the British attack under Sir Peter Parker (*Baltimore Sun*, Feb. 2, 1867, *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 4, 1867). After a classical education in Washington College he studied law and was admitted to the bar in March 1808. After the interlude of the War of 1812 he practised until 1822 when he was elected against his will to the Maryland Senate. The famous case of *Prigg vs. The State of Pennsylvania*, which involved the right to recover fugitive slaves, was at this time discussed in the Senate and gave him an opportunity to pronounce his Southern state-rights views on slavery and secession. His activities in this case led the State of Maryland to appoint him commissioner to enter into negotiations with Pennsylvania regarding the return of fugitive slaves; the result of these negotiations was satisfactory to his state. Chambers served in the United States Senate from 1826 to 1834, during which time he became an ardent Whig, opposed to "Jacksonism." But he had little taste for politics and probably rejoiced when, in 1834, he was appointed chief judge of the then 2nd judicial district and judge of the court of appeals. In 1850 he was sent to the state convention which framed a new constitution. There he made himself unpopular by his unsuccessful fight against the provision that the people elect their judges. As a result, under the new constitution he was not elected to his old position. President Fillmore in 1852 offered him the appointment of secretary of the navy, which he seriously considered but declined on the ground of ill health. Instead, he turned his attention again to the bar and became celebrated as a *nisi prius* lawyer. When the menacing talk of secession grew at length into a distinct threat his sympathies were unmistakably with the movement, but like most Marylanders he advocated a calm and judicial view, advising compromise. He was in 1864 a member of the constitutional convention of Maryland where his state-rights ideas could but make his efforts ineffective, since the state was at this time controlled by the Unionists under military force. His candidacy for governor in the same year against Thomas Swann ended in fail-

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ure, as it was bound to do. At the time of his death he was president of the board of trustees of his alma mater, Washington College.

[*Baltimore Sun*, Feb. 2, 1867; *Md. Hist. Mag.*, vol. XVI, XVII; *Tercentenary Hist. of Md.* (1925), IV, 852-53.]  
C. W. G.

**CHAMBERS, GEORGE** (Feb. 24, 1786-Mar. 25, 1866), lawyer, was the grandson of Benjamin Chambers, a native of Antrim, Ireland, but of Scotch descent, who landed at Philadelphia in 1726 and settled near the present site of Chambersburg, Pa. Benjamin's son, also Benjamin, married Sarah, daughter of George Brown, a neighbor, and their eldest son, George, was born at Chambersburg. The family was well off, and George received a good classical education, proceeded to Princeton in October 1802, and graduated with honors in 1804. He then studied law at Chambersburg and Carlisle, and on his admission to the Cumberland County bar, Nov. 9, 1807, opened an office at Chambersburg, with every advantage which respected parentage and large local interests can confer. Devoting himself more particularly to the law of conveyancing and real property, probably because of his father's extensive land holdings, he in time acquired the reputation of being an expert in the intricate and obscure land laws of Pennsylvania. He entered public life through municipal channels, being elected a member of the Chambersburg town council in 1821, and serving as burgess from 1829 to 1833. In 1832 he was elected to Congress as Whig representative of Adams and Franklin counties, and served two terms, being reelected in 1834. He was a delegate from Franklin County to the Pennsylvania state constitutional convention which met at Harrisburg, May 2, 1837. A bitter controversy arose in the convention anent the judiciary article, it being proposed to substitute a short tenure for judges in place of the original tenure during good behavior. This change Chambers resolutely but unsuccessfully opposed. In April 1851 he was appointed associate judge of the supreme court of Pennsylvania by Gov. Johnson, and held this office till the following December, when the new constitution came into force. Nominated by the Whig state convention of that year for continuance in office, he suffered defeat in common with the whole Whig ticket, and thereafter neither sought nor held any public position. He did not resume his law practise, but devoted much time to the promotion of education and agricultural science in his community. He was the largest landowner in Franklin County, and is said to have known every boundary line and tree throughout his extensive properties. He also engaged in literary work, publishing *A Trib-*