

THE
BIOGRAPHICAL CYCLOPEDIA

OF

REPRESENTATIVE MEN

OF

MARYLAND

AND

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA.

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GROOME, COLONEL JOHN CHARLES, Attorney-at-Law, was born at Elkton, Cecil County, Maryland, June 8, 1800. He was the son of Doctor John and Elizabeth Black Groome. Doctor John Groome was a distinguished and popular physician at Elkton, and repeatedly represented Cecil County in the State Legislature. He was the son of Charles Groome, of Kent County, Maryland, who was a prominent man in old Kent, and Register of Chester Parish from 1766 until his death in 1791. Charles Groome was the son of Samuel Groome, a distinguished citizen, and a churchwarden of St. Paul's Parish as early as 1726. John C. Groome, the subject of this sketch, after being prepared for college, entered Princeton at an early age, and graduated with the highest honors of his class. He read law with the Honorable E. F. Chambers and Levin Gale, Esq., and afterward graduated at the Litchfield Law School. He commenced the practice of law at Elkton in 1825. He soon took high rank as a lawyer, and thereafter, until his death, had a most extensive and lucrative practice. He enjoyed and justly deserved the reputation of an honest and conscientious lawyer, which secured him great influence in his profession. He was eminently a peacemaker, and sought to adjust claims and disputes without recourse to the courts. Few men have had so many law students. Among the number were the Honorable Alexander Evans, Honorable Hiram McCullough, Honorable John A. J. Creswell, Honorable J. Jewett, and Honorable James B. Groome, all of whom have served in Congress. Indeed, so numerous were his law students, that he was called the father of the Cecil bar. In politics, Colonel Groome was an old-line Whig, but he was never a politician in the usual sense of that word. In 1833 the Senate of Maryland, which then filled its own vacancies, selected Colonel Groome, without consulting him and before he was aware of the intention of that body, to fill a vacancy that had occurred. He yielded to the importunities of his friends and served the three remaining years of the Senatorial term, but could not be induced to accept a re-election. For twenty years afterward his professional duties, the management of his large landed estate, and his disinclination to public life, prevented his acceptance of office. He, however, filled many important business positions, and his wise counsels always carried weight with those with whom he was associated. In 1856 Colonel Groome, with many other old-line Whigs, supported James Buchanan for the Presidency. In 1857 the Democratic press throughout the State of Maryland advocated his nomination for Governor. The Democratic State convention made no nomination, but recommended all opponents of "Know-Nothingism" to support Colonel Groome as an independent candidate. He thus ran in opposition to Thomas Holliday Hicks, the nominee of the American party, and received a majority of the votes cast in the State outside of the city of Baltimore. In personal appearance Colonel Groome had decided

advantages. He possessed a handsome person, a fine open countenance, and a most pleasing address. He was a man of generous impulses, great natural tact, and of a genial vivacious disposition, polished and refined in manners, and of a remarkably social nature, together with an unusual share of wit and humor, which made him very popular and caused him to be regarded as a "society favorite." On December 6, 1836, he married Elizabeth Riddle Black, a lady of rare personal attractions, culture, and refinement. She was the daughter of Judge James Rice Black, of New Castle, Delaware, who for many years was a distinguished Judge of the Superior Court of that State, and highly esteemed for his ability as a lawyer, as well as for the fidelity with which he discharged his judicial duties. He was the son of James Black and his third wife, and James Black was the son of James and Jeannette Wallace Black. Colonel John Charles Groome died November 30, 1866, leaving a widow and four children. His son, James B., married, February 29, 1876, Alice L., daughter of Colonel Horace Leeds Edmondson and his second wife, Mrs. Maria Dawson, of Easton, Talbot County, Maryland. They have one child. Maria Stokes Groome, daughter of Colonel J. C. Groome, married April 27, 1864, Honorable William M. Knight, only son of William Knight and his first wife, Rebecca D. Ringgold, daughter of Samuel Ringgold, of Pleasant Hill, near Chestertown. Their children are William, John C. Groome, Elizabeth Black, Ethel, James Groome, and Maria Stokes. Elizabeth Black Groome, daughter of Colonel J. C. Groome, married June 13, 1866, Honorable Albert Constable, son of Judge Albert and Hannah Archer Constable. Their children are Alice, Arline, Albert, John C. Groome, Henry Lyttleton, Claire, and Reginald. Jane S. Groome, daughter of Colonel J. S. Groome, married January 31, 1872, Dr. John Janvier Black, son of Dr. Charles H. Black, and grandson of Dr. Samuel H. Black, of New Castle, Delaware. Their children are Elizabeth M. and Armytage. John C. Groome, a son of great promise of Colonel J. C. Groome, died in 1860, in the twenty-first year of his age.