Jesse Lynch Holman
Pioneer Hoosier

I. GEORGE BLAKE

Veraestau, the homestead of the Holman family, is located near Aurora, Indiana, on a high bluff overlooking the Ohio River. From this place one may enjoy a magnificent view of the surrounding countryside. The site, which is today one of the beauty spots of southern Indiana, was chosen by Jesse Lynch Holman in 1810, shortly before he brought his young wife and child from the neighboring state of Kentucky.

Indiana Territory was virtually a wilderness at this time, with few settlements of any consequence. Its population of about 25,000 was scattered along the Ohio, Wabash, and Whitewater rivers. Indians were to be found everywhere, trading “their peltries, wild game and moccasins ornamented with the quills of the porcupine” for such articles as “calicoes, whiskey, powder, lead, and beads.”

The pioneer conditions of Indiana appealed to young Holman, who, at the age of twenty-six, crossed the Ohio River into the territory which he had chosen for his home. He had been born near Danville, Kentucky, on October 24, 1784, under the primitive conditions of a frontier community, and was well adapted by background and training to the new land which lay before him.

From some scraps of manuscripts which Jesse wrote in later life, it is learned that his mother’s maiden name was Jane Gordon and that her family came from Scotland. He remembered that she sometimes corresponded with a brother John, who lived in Maryland. He had heard her speak, too, of a younger sister Polly, who also came to Kentucky.

---

1 Oliver H. Smith, Early Indiana Trials and Sketches (Cincinnati, 1858), 5.

2 Memorandum in longhand, giving also the dates of the birth and death of various members of the Holman family. This material was loaned by Mrs. E. E. Rees, of Aurora, Indiana, a granddaughter of Jesse Lynch Holman. There seems to be some uncertainty, however, concerning the date of Jesse’s birth. One authority gives the date as October 22, 1783. See Damaris Knobe, The Ancestry of Grafton Johnson (Indianapolis, 1924), 98.

3 Undated manuscript written by Jesse L. Holman. It was loaned by Miss Margaret H. Wagenhals, of New York City, and Miss Mildred H. Wagenhals, of Calistoga, California, great-granddaughters of Jesse L. Holman. Their collection, afterwards referred to as the Wagenhals
Jesse's father was Henry Holeman, who had migrated during the colonial period from Virginia to North Carolina. In the year that the colonies declared their independence from England, however, he moved to Fayette County, Kentucky. Eight children were born to Henry and his first wife, whose name is unknown. Jesse was one of six children born to Henry and his second wife, Jane. Henry met a tragic death in 1789, being tomahawked by the Indians when he went in defense of his wife and children, who were beleaguered in a nearby blockhouse.

Henry's death left his large family without adequate financial support, and it was extremely difficult to provide them with the bare necessities. Mostly through his own persistent efforts, however, young Jesse managed to obtain the equivalent of a common school education. In time, he "became accomplished in the higher branches of mathematics and general literature." He was a daily reader of the Bible throughout his childhood. At the age of seventeen he joined the Baptist church. He was not only one of the pioneer school teachers of his community, but it is said that he also began his long preaching career when he was still a youth.

Collection, contains much correspondence, besides numerous other items, such as rough drafts of speeches, official documents, and briefs of court cases in which Judge Holman was interested.

4 William O. Lynch, "Jesse Lynch Holman," Dictionary of American Biography, IX, 158. The date of Henry's birth is unknown. Earlier members of the family spelled their name Holeman, and such spelling is still found among some of the descendants. Additional information about family history was found in the Wagenhals Collection.

5 Knobe, Ancestry of Grafton Johnson, 93-94, stated that he settled in that section of Fayette County, Kentucky, "which was separated in 1788 as Woodford county—though, strictly speaking, Fayette county at that period was still a part of Virginia, being one of the three original counties into which its 'Kentucky country' had been divided . . . "

6 In the material loaned by Mrs. Rees, there is a statement by Jesse that his father had married three times, although there is no further proof of this.

7 History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties, Indiana. (Chicago, 1885), 152. Henry's death occurred shortly before the probating of his will at the September term of court in 1789. The document was witnessed by his son, Edward, and his nephew, George. One of the executors of the will was Richard LaRue, his son-in-law. Knobe, Ancestry of Grafton Johnson, 94.

8 "Jesse Lynch Holman," in A Biographical History of Eminent and Self Made Men of the State of Indiana (2 vols., Cincinnati, 1880), 1, 84. The original of this sketch, written by William Steele Holman, his son, was loaned by Mrs. R. H. Harvey, of Washington, D. C., a granddaughter of Jesse L. Holman.

thus receiving valuable training and experience for his later religious activities.\textsuperscript{10} Throughout his life his religious feelings “were manifested with a boldness and consistency that proved that he was not ashamed of his religion” and that “one of the ruling motives of his heart was the salvation of souls.”\textsuperscript{11}

Holman’s literary talents were rather extensive. He was especially fond of poetry; and he composed many short verses, which were published. Two lengthy poems, both legends of Indian life, are still in existence.\textsuperscript{12} Before his twenty-first birthday, he wrote a two-volume novel entitled, \textit{The Prisoners of Niagara}, or \textit{The Errors of Education}, which had a large circulation for that period. Because of this piece of fiction, Holman has been called Indiana’s first novelist, although the work was written and published outside the state of Indiana.\textsuperscript{13}

According to tradition, young Holman learned the fundamentals of law in the Lexington offices of Henry Clay.\textsuperscript{14} He was admitted to the Kentucky bar on September 2, 1805, and practiced law at New Castle, Port William, and later at Frankfort, Kentucky.\textsuperscript{15} While in Port William, now Carrollton, he met Elizabeth Masterson, a talented girl a little younger than himself and of sympathetic tastes which appealed

\textsuperscript{11} Horace Bassett, Jesse Lynch Holman, a manuscript in the Wagenhals Collection.
\textsuperscript{12} “Jesse Lynch Holman,” in \textit{A Biographical History of Eminent and Self Made Men}, I, 55. The two longer poems referred to, in his own handwriting, are now in the Wagenhals Collection.
\textsuperscript{13} Mrs. Herman T. Briscoe, \textit{The Hoosier School of Fiction} (M.A. thesis, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, 1934), 9n. In later life, however, Holman became convinced that the morals of the book were not suitable for the minds of young people, and he attempted to buy up and destroy the entire edition. Nevertheless, two copies are known to be in existence today. One is in the possession of Professor William I. Bartlett, of Roanoke, Virginia, and the other is in the Howard Memorial Library at New Orleans.
\textsuperscript{14} Although this statement is found in many reliable sources, yet no positive proof of its reliability has been found. It is very probable, however, that many aspiring young Kentucky lawyers of that day came under the influence of Henry Clay, either directly or indirectly. \textit{See History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties}, 152. The most authoritative source for this information is the brief account of the life of Jesse L. Holman in the handwriting of his son, William S. Holman, loaned by Mrs. Harvey.
\textsuperscript{15} Cathcart, \textit{Baptist Encyclopedia}, 535. If the date of his birth, October 24, 1784, is correct, then he was not yet twenty-one years old when he was granted a license to practice law.
strongly to the young lawyer. She was the daughter of Judge Richard M. Masterson, one of the leading jurists of the state and owner of large tracts of land in the surrounding region. The young couple were married in 1810; and the following year, after the birth of their first child, the three set out for their new home in the Indiana Territory.

On leaving Kentucky, the Holmans journeyed up the Ohio River and landed in Indiana near the present site of Aurora, in Dearborn County. Accompanying them was a large family of slaves which Mrs. Holman had inherited from her father; but because it was contrary to the Northwest Ordinance and the laws of the Indiana Territory to import slaves into Indiana, they were given their freedom. It is quite probable that some of them became indentured servants.

The country was virtually a wilderness, but the Holmans visualized its future possibilities. They chose a spot four miles down the Ohio River from the growing town of Lawrenceburg and about twenty-one miles below Cincinnati, the "Queen City of the West." Nine miles below them was the town of Rising Sun, a thriving community for that day. The site which Holman had selected was atop a bluff rising four hundred feet above the Ohio River, which sweeps around in a great bend at this place. Forests clothed all the higher ground, and rich bottom lands gave great promise for future development.

It was on the very summit of the hill that Jesse Lynch Holman built his log house. It was unpretentious, but sturdy and in keeping with the character of its owner. The Holmans decided to name their new home Veraestau, from parts of three Latin words, ver, spring, aestas, summer, and autumnus, autumn. Holman hoped that there would be no winter in the new home, no matter how violently the winds might blow about it.

Holman might have been influenced in the choice of a name by the circumstances of their arrival. It was in the dead of winter when he brought his young wife and child to their new home; and according to tradition, it was a bitterly cold night. After settling his family in the log cabin, Holman had to walk back two miles to the Eagle Hotel.

16 *History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties*, 152.
17 *Harlow Lindley* (ed.), *Indiana as Seen by Early Travelers* (Indianapolis, 1916), 148. This account by Samuel R. Brown was quoted from *The Western Gazetteer; or Emigrant's Directory*. 
at the mouth of Hogan Creek, to get a shovelful of glowing coals to start his fire. It is a miracle that he ever got them safely to the top of the hill, but the hearth of the new cabin was soon glowing brightly.\textsuperscript{19}

Holman lost no time in undertaking the arduous task of subduing the wilderness. There was much to be done; and it was a work of conquest, a struggle with the elements for supremacy. Roads had to be built, swamps drained, and lands cleared and made ready for farming. At first most of Holman's time was devoted to the land, but it was not long before his abilities as a lawyer were put to use. Men of brains, ability, courage, and daring were much needed in the new country; and Holman soon became a leader in the social and political life of Dearborn County. He became known as a man of affairs, and his neighbors and friends eagerly sought his advice. On May 28, 1811, Governor William Henry Harrison appointed him prosecuting attorney for Dearborn County to succeed General James Dill.\textsuperscript{19} A year and a half later he received in addition a \textit{pro tempore} appointment as prosecuting attorney for Jefferson County and on November 4, 1812, was formally commissioned to that position.\textsuperscript{20}

Holman's circle of influence was thus widening steadily. When, in 1814, Isaac Dunn's resignation left a vacancy in the Dearborn County representation in the General Assembly, Holman was chosen to complete the term. His actual service began that summer at the special session of the House called by Governor Posey to reapportion the territory for the election of councilors. With the House members from Knox, Warrick, and Gibson counties protesting vigorously that the session had been called illegally and voting against every action of the majority, Holman devoted himself to perfecting the phraseology of the reapportionment resolution to meet their criticisms. His name appears often in the record of the session, considering the fact that he was a new member.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{18} Elmer Davis, "Mt. Veraestau and the Holmans of Today and Yesterday," in Indianapolis \textit{Sunday Star}, October 13, 1907.

\textsuperscript{19} The original copy of the appointment, signed by Governor Harrison, is in the Wagenhals Collection. Logan Esarey, \textit{Messages and Papers of Jonathan Jennings, Ratliff Boon, and William Hendricks (Indiana Historical Collections, XII, Indianapolis, 1924), 37n.}

\textsuperscript{20} Louis B. Ewbank and Dorothy L. Riker (eds.), \textit{The Laws of Indiana Territory (Indiana Historical Collections, XX, Indianapolis, 1934), 847.}

\textsuperscript{21} Vincennes, Indiana, \textit{Western Sun}, July 2, 1814.
At the August election, Holman was chosen to represent Dearborn and Jefferson counties in the legislative council of the fifth General Assembly, which met in its first session from August 15 to September 10, 1814. He presided over the council. It was this legislature which approved an act for the formation of the county of Switzerland out of the counties of Dearborn and Jefferson. Holman was one of the commissioners appointed to fix the seat of justice in the new county.

Soon after the close of this session of the legislature, Governor Posey appointed Holman presiding judge of the Second Judicial Circuit, comprising Clark, Harrison, Jefferson, and Washington counties. He took the oath of office on September 20, 1814, before Isaac Dunn, clerk of Dearborn County, and served until December 21, 1816. For a part of this time he also served as judge of the Third Circuit, which included Dearborn, Franklin, Wayne, and Switzerland counties. His salary was $700.00 per year.

The territorial legislature again recognized Holman as a leading citizen of Dearborn County, when he was named one of the incorporators for a bridge to be erected over Hogan Creek, in the vicinity of Decatur (this was the original name of the town of Aurora). The act was approved by the legislature on December 26, 1815. Holman and the other incorporators were authorized to raise a sum not exceeding $3000, in shares of $25.00 each. The commissioners and subscribers were declared to be "a body politic and corporate, by the name and style of the Decatur Bridge Company."

It was also in 1815 that Holman advertised a sale of lots to be held at Decatur on September 4. One advertisement appeared in the Lexington, Kentucky, Western Eagle on August 12; and evidently it was expected that it would induce many Kentuckians to cross into Indiana. The notice mentioned the many advantages of the new town, "located

---

22 History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties, 152. The details of legislation enacted by this Assembly are set forth in Ewbank and Riker, Laws of Indiana Territory, 68-76, 801-02; and John B. Dillon, A History of Indiana (Indianapolis, 1859), 543-45.
23 Ibid.
24 Ewbank and Riker, Laws of Indiana Territory, 829.
25 Ibid.
26 Ewbank and Riker, Laws of Indiana Territory, 822; David D. Banta, History of Johnson County, Indiana (Chicago, 1888), 120.
27 Quoted in Ewbank and Riker, Laws of Indiana Territory, 660.
about seven miles from the mouth of the Great Miami River, in a fertile and populous country, rapidly increasing in improvements,” and situated on a “commanding eminence, of easy access from the Ohio.” It declared that it was “on the nearest route from the settlements of the Whitewater to Vevay and Port William, and also from Cincinnati to Vincennes and St. Louis.”

Meanwhile, Indiana Territory was assuming some of the characteristics of statehood. By 1815 its total population was in excess of 63,000, and there was considerable agitation to bring the area into the Union on a par with the other states. While there is no evidence to prove that Holman took a very active part in this movement for statehood, yet his activity in subsequent events justifies the assertion that he was eager for the change and worked for it. At any rate, when the first state legislature met at Corydon on November 4, 1816, Holman was one of eight men nominated to represent the state in the national Senate. Only three votes were cast in his favor, however, as compared with twenty-six for James Noble and twenty for Waller Taylor. It was this legislature which, on November 11, designated him as one of the three presidential electors from Indiana. He received thirty-six votes, Thomas H. Blake twenty, and Joseph Bartholomew twenty-five. These three electors cast their votes for James Monroe.

Holman’s popularity and legal ability were recognized by Governor Jonathan Jennings, when he appointed him as one of the three judges of the state Supreme Court. The other two appointees were John Johnson and James Scott. These men were to serve for a seven-year term, according to the new state constitution. The law stated that the first term of the court was to commence on May 5, 1817.

---

28 Quoted in ibid., 79n.
29 Banta, History of Johnson County, Indiana, 122.
31 Esarey, Messages of Jennings, Boon, and Hendricks, 14n.
32 The original notification of Holman’s election, signed by Jonathan Jennings, and dated from Corydon, November 14, 1816, is in the Wengers Collection.
33 Smith, Early Indiana Trials and Sketches, 84. Johnson lived but a short time; and Isaac Blackford, of Vincennes, a young lawyer originally from New Jersey and a graduate of Princeton, was appointed in his place on September 10, 1817.
when the judges were to appear and take their seats. Their work at first was not very burdensome. Only two cases were on motion before the court in the first term and only three in the second. The judges were held in high esteem by the bar and the public alike. Holman himself was considered a good judge, “careful, laborious, and exact” in his deliberations. He had the reputation of being a very conscientious jurist. His friend Horace Bassett said of him: “His decisions . . . will compare with the most eminent Jurists of the country; showing the full exercise of a clear and decerning [sic] mind, and that stern integrity which constitutes one of the highest of Judicial ornaments.”

One case in particular which came up during Holman’s service on the bench deserves some notice, as it expresses rather conclusively his attitude toward the slavery question. It was purely a test case, which was brought into the state Supreme Court on appeal. No mention of it was made in the press of the day, either during the time it was before the court or after the decision had been announced. It seems unlikely, however, that this indicated little interest or feeling in the matter.

One side of the argument contended that slavery was excluded from Indiana Territory by the Ordinance of 1787, and from the state by the new constitution of 1816. The contrary argument maintained that the Ordinance of 1787 not only did not prohibit slavery that already existed at the time of its adoption, but that it even expressly preserved it, and that the slave property guaranteed by it could not be taken away by the constitution. Judges Scott, Holman, and Blackford took a middle ground. They held that the Virginia deed of cession and the Ordinance itself were immaterial, and that the question must be decided by the provisions of the constitution. They declared that it could not be denied that legislative

---

34 Isaac Blackford, *Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Judicature of the State of Indiana* (3 vols., Indianapolis, 1830-1836), I, 1. The original commission, signed by Jonathan Jennings, with the day of the month of December, 1816, left blank, together with the certification signed by Isaac Dunn that Holman took the oath of office on January 9, 1817, is in the Wagenhals Collection.

35 Smith, *Early Indiana Trials and Sketches*, 144.

36 Ibid.


38 Bassett, Jesse Lynch Holman.
authority, uncontrolled by any constitutional provision, could emancipate slaves. Such action had been taken in several of the states. The judges reasoned that it was within the legitimate powers of the constitutional convention to prohibit the existence of slavery in the state. They contended that the framers of the state constitution intended a total and entire prohibition of slavery, and they could conceive of no form of words in which that intention could have been more clearly expressed. By this decision, the slavery question in Indiana was brought to an absolute end, so far as any legal basis was concerned.  

While Holman was serving on the state bench, he was requested to help lay out the town of Decatur. In 1819, Holman was named a trustee for the “Aurora Association for Internal Improvements,” a group of about twenty men residing in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana, organized for the purpose of laying out the town. Holman was chosen president at the first meeting of the association, and the legal title of the land was vested in him. It was decided that the company “proceed by themselves or their directors to lay out a town, to build an ox saw-mill and grist-mill, a bridge across Hogan Creek, a warehouse or such other improvements as they may judge proper.” The land, except for a small reservation at Hogan Creek, was conveyed to Holman, in trust for the association, on January 14, 1819, and “the original plat of the town was acknowledged by Mr. Holman as trustee . . . on January 30, 1819, and recorded the same day.” Holman resigned as director, trustee, and treasurer of the association, however, on October 24, 1822, because of his duties on the state Supreme Court. He was thanked by the association for the “ability, wisdom, impartiality and integrity with which he managed the concerns of the company.”

According to tradition, because of the jealousy between the new town and the thriving community of Rising Sun, nine miles down stream, Holman used his influence to change the name from Decatur to Aurora, as “the Aurora comes before the Rising Sun,” he said. The latter town had been growing rather rapidly and, as early as 1817, contained

39 Jacob P. Dunn, Indiana, A Redemption from Slavery (Boston, 1888), 439-41.
40 History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties, 305.
thirty or forty houses, with a post office and a "floating mill anchored abreast of the town." It was expected to become "a place of considerable trade." 41

During his first term on the state Supreme Court, Holman was mentioned as a possible successor to Governor Jennings. In fact, early in 1819, he was the only one who was even considered as an opponent of the governor 42 But his popularity was not general throughout the state at this time, nor was he very much interested in leaving the bench.

Apparently his friends were boosting him for the position without his knowledge or approval. In a letter dated May 19, 1819, he attempted to remove the impression from the minds of his fellow-citizens that he would allow his name to be used at the ensuing election. He vigorously condemned those people who were determined on his candidacy. He asserted in the letter that the use of his name in the public press had originated by mistake, which he would have corrected earlier had he been aware of the circumstance. He wrote:

Flattered as I have been by the solicitude of my friends; feeling the warmest sentiments of gratitude for the honor their partiality would willingly confer upon me, it is not without some unpleasant sensations that I feel myself compelled by domestic concerns to act contrary to their wishes; and to inform my fellow-citizens generally, what I have uniformly declared to those with whom I have conversed on the subject, that it is not my desire to be considered as a candidate for the distinguished office of Governor. 43

He further stated in his letter that it had been reported that his name had been used as a possible candidate, on the authority of a letter which he had written; but he declared that this was undoubtedly a mistake, since he felt certain that he had not written a letter to any person on the subject. When his friends had first requested that he become a candidate, he had unhesitatingly replied that he did not seek the office; but he had later consented to take the subject under consideration, when his friends continued to insist. In a very short time, he wrote, he had become convinced that it

41 Lindley, Indiana as Seen by Early Travelers, 148. Quoted from the Western Gazetteer.
42 Vincennes, Indiana, Western Sun, May 22, 1819.
43 Jesse L. Holman to Brown, May 19, 1819. No post office address is given. Wagenhals Collection.
would not be beneficial to his own personal affairs or to those of his family to accept the gubernatorial office.

It was also claimed in this letter that, before he had been able to reach his friends, his name had gone forward as a potential candidate. His friends, therefore, had continued to place his name before the people. While this had increased his reluctance to disappoint them and had increased his gratitude to them, it had not altered his domestic duties nor his final determination. Finally, he declared that while he thus declined the offer of his friends, he assured them that their zeal in my behalf, has exerted in me the most grateful feelings—feelings which I hope will have their proper object in stimulating my utmost exertions, so to discharge the duties of public and private life, that those, whose partiality would now confide to me the highest trust, may never blush to own that they were once my friends.**

In spite of the expressions contained in this letter, however, Holman had been advised early by Jennings himself that there was a movement under way to make him governor. In a letter from Corydon, dated December 19, 1818, Jennings described the political situation existing at the time and declared that there were several people who seemed very anxious to bring forth a candidate who could defeat him. "Those who are most desirous of affecting me," he wrote, "urge the idea of bringing you forward as a candidate for the office of Governor at the next election."**

The fears of Jennings regarding the ensuing election were without foundation, as future events proved. His opponent turned out to be Christopher Harrison, whom Jennings defeated by an overwhelming majority.**

On completing his first term on the state Supreme Court bench, Holman was appointed to another seven-year term by Governor Hendricks. His commission was dated December 29, 1823; and he took the oath of office before Daniel Bartholomew, one of the justices of the court in Dearborn County, on February 27, 1824.**

Although Judge Holman no doubt wished to be appointed for another term, he disliked to be away from his beloved

**Ibid.

**Jonathan Jennings to Holman, Corydon, December 19, 1818. Wagenhals Collection.

**Earey, Messages of Jennings, Boon, and Hendricks, 22.

**The originals of both documents are in the Wagenhals Collection.
family and fireside for any length of time. He had the welfare of the various members of his family pretty much at heart, as is revealed in the following letter addressed to his daughter and her husband at Fort Wayne:

    I regret to learn . . . that you my darling Emerine are unwell. . . . It becomes you to be extremely careful of your health, and to avoid all possible exposure that might bring on those chills & fevers to which it seems you have become so liable. By last letter I received a letter from your dear sister Eliza, stating that your ever to be beloved & honored mother was also unwell, & had been so for several days. I trust it is nothing serious. . . . I am extremely anxious to be at Veraestau. It is now nearly four weeks since I left home—A longer absence than I had expected. And it will be at least a week before I can return. . . .

    There is more business in our Court than common, & we shall dispatch more than we have done at any one term for several years. . . . The term of the Court thus far has been a pleasant one. But I am anxious to return to the beloved objects I have left behind me. . . .

During Holman's second term on the state Supreme Court, political jugglery ran riot throughout the state of Indiana, and the judges were soon to feel the political ax. Long before their terms expired in 1830, Governor James Brown Ray intimated that he would not reappoint them. In due time, therefore, Judge James Scott, of Clark County, and Holman found themselves the victims of the governor's threat. Judge Isaac Blackford, however, was reappointed, largely because, according to Oliver H. Smith, he had been the competitor in the gubernatorial race against Governor Ray, who now thought he could make friends in the Blackford ranks by renominating his former opponent.

    It had been fully expected at first that Governor Ray would not dare carry out his threat. Writing from Logansport on November 13, 1830, Horace Bassett reported to Holman that it was the general feeling there that the governor would renominate all three of the judges. Charles H. Test declared in a letter to Holman that the good of the country did not require a change to be made in the personnel of the court.

---

49 Smith, Early Indiana Trials and Sketches, 144.
50 Horace Bassett to Holman, Logansport, November 13, 1830. Wagenhals Collection.
51 Charles H. Test to Holman, Rushville, November 16, 1830. Wagenhals Collection.
The charge was made at the time, and it was very generally believed, that Ray had refused to reappoint Holman and Scott because they had declined to aid him in his senatorial aspirations. This action cost him many friends, and his popularity waned and finally disappeared. The people believed that Ray was prompted more by personal reasons than by the public good; therefore they withdrew their support and confidence from him.53

Shortly after Holman retired from the state bench, some of his friends persuaded him to seek election to the United States Senate to succeed his old friend, General James Noble, who had recently died in Washington. In a letter to "Brother Holman," Dennis Pennington, writing from his home in Corydon, expressed elation over such a possibility and pledged his full support.54

There was, however, considerable opposition to Holman's candidacy. Writing from his home in Richmond, August 13, 1831, his friend David Hoover warned Holman that the new legislature would be definitely against him, and would favor either John Test, Thomas Blake, or James Rariden, although it appeared that John Tipton had a slight edge over all the other candidates.54 A rather optimistic note was struck in a letter addressed to Holman from John A. Farnham, dated at Jeffersonville, August 22, in which he insisted that the legislature would support Holman.55

Holman evidently lost no time in attempting to enlist support. That fall he was very active throughout the state in the interest of his candidacy, even going into the home districts of his rivals. By early November, he had completed his tour through the Wabash Valley; and on November 9 he wrote from Indianapolis to his son-in-law at Fort Wayne: "My prospects on the upper Wabash are not flattering if Tipton is a candidate, but I do not think he will be. In that case I shall beat Blake in the West, and I do not fear his doing anything in the South or East."56

52 William W. Woollen, Biographical and Historical Sketches of Early Indiana (Indianapolis, 1883), 57.
53 Dennis Pennington to Holman, Corydon, April 11, 1831. Wagenhals Collection.
54 David Hoover to Holman, Richmond, Indiana, August 13, 1831. Wagenhals Collection.
55 John A. Farnham to Holman, Jeffersonville, Indiana, August 22, 1831. Wagenhals Collection.
56 Holman to Allen Hamilton, Indianapolis, November 9, 1831. Wagenhals Collection.
As the vote in the legislature showed, however, Holman and his friends were mistaken about his rivals and their strength, as well as his own chances of success. The legislature was strongly against him and on the sixth ballot chose John Tipton to fill the vacancy caused by the death of Noble.\footnote{Journal of the Senate of the State of Indiana, 1831, pp. 45-46. See also "Jesse Lynch Holman," in A Biographical History of Eminent and Self Made Men, I, 35. According to tradition, Holman was defeated by only one vote, but this is obviously an error, and no proof can be found to substantiate it.}

It is quite apparent from a letter written by Seth M. Levenworth to Holman soon after his defeat that the Masonic Order had much influence in the election and that Holman was not supported by its members.\footnote{S. M. Levenworth to Holman, dated from "Levenworth," December 24, 1831.}

In a lengthy letter written to Allen Hamilton of Fort Wayne, Holman gave his own account of the political manipulations during the election. "It was such a conflicting sum of intrigue and deception," he wrote, "that much of the mysterious perplexity still hangs over it. And accounts were so confused and contradictory that I grew sick of the details and left Indianapolis in two days after the election was over." He remarked that Test had been talked of as a candidate until a day or two before the election, when he declined. "Rariden was kept in heart by O. H. Smith & Wabash Jackson men who did not intend to support him," he declared. "Blake was also supported by a number of Jackson men who did not want him elected—they wanted to push him ahead of me at first," Holman said. As to his own support for senator when the balloting occurred, Holman claimed that he was not able to determine who were his friends. So many told him and his friends that they had voted for him that he was at a loss "to select among them the number of votes I really got."

The letter continued:

Tipton’s conduct is involved in mystery. . . . Test says that Rariden & Tipton made an express bargain to support each other. . . . On the other hand, Tipton’s confidential friends as well as himself assured me at Logansport & at the time of the election that Tipton wished me elected. . . . It was said of Tipton and with his express sanction that he did not wish to be a candidate . . . but was afraid . . . the Jackson party would all turn against him. I knew if I had to contend with Tipton I was in great danger of being beaten. . . . Tipton I knew would get 16 Clay votes. Some of them stood pledged to support him if he was a candidate, & others on the Wabash voted for him because he was a
Holman claimed that he had less regret over the election than had the great body of his friends. He would as a matter of choice remain quietly at home rather than have a seat in the Senate of the United States. He assured his son-in-law that no office of honor or profit could repay the "sickening feelings I endured while witnessing the corruption & duplicity that attended the senatorial canvass." He had done all that his friends had asked of him, and "there was no arrangement left untried that seemed to promise success." He felt that one vital reason for his defeat was the very powerful combination against all advocates of temperance, Sunday schools, and Bible and tract societies, in which he had always taken a strong interest.

Holman further declared that the rotation-in-office policy had spread in favor, and that the people were now demanding younger men in office. "A man acts wisely in knowing the proper time when he should cease to struggle for public office," he wrote. He also tried to console himself by contending that his family, "especially Richard," required his attention at home. He believed that in many cases where men had filled high offices, "it would have conduced to the welfare of society & the happiness of their families" if they had devoted more time "to the rearing up of their children." 60

When Holman retired from the state bench after fourteen years of service, he found abundant opportunity to engage in the many activities which had always meant so much to him. He really enjoyed this vacation from political labors. He loved to spend his time with his family at Veraestau, which had become one of the most celebrated homesteads in Indiana.

---

59 Holman to Allen Hamilton, from Veraestau. The letter is dated December 3, 1832, but this is obviously a mistake; it should have been 1831. Wagenhals Collection.

60 Ibid. The Richard referred to was Richard Henry Holman, who died ten years later of pulmonary consumption.
His tastes "were eminently domestic and social, and, although so long on the bench, he was more devoted to . . . the society of friends than to the profession of law." His domestic contentment is shown in a letter which he wrote to his daughter and her husband. After relating some items of community interest, particularly in regard to the recent Ohio River flood, when the waters had risen higher than ever before, and "several feet higher than the celebrated flood of 1792," he wrote:

I am now settled down for farming, listening occasionally to the political . . . [illegible] abroad. Some of our Representation are very much dissatisfied with Senator Tipton. . . . I suspect from the general rumor that Tipton's race will not be a long one, but who will be his successor is doubtful. My own career must be left to time & circumstances. I feel far better on my farm & at my fireside than in canvassing for office.62

Now that Holman was relieved of his official duties, he could turn his attention to various projects for community betterment. He had always taken a leading part in the encouragement of religious and educational movements. He entered into the benevolent activities of his day with rare boldness and energy and was a willing and able advocate of all those who came to him for advice and help.63

From his early life, his mind had been directed to the subject of religion. His friends said of him that his religious feelings "were at all times and under all circumstances, manifested with a boldness and consistency of character, that satisfied everyone that he was not ashamed of the Cross of Christ."64 He was one of a group of elders and laymen who met at Aurora on February 26, 1820, for the purpose of organizing a Baptist church there. He was chosen clerk of the meeting. The first services of the new church were conducted in a log house which had been built originally for a private residence and was afterwards used as a schoolhouse. All Christian denominations were allowed to use it for church purposes, "as occasion might require."65

Holman was so greatly interested in the work of the

---

61 Biographical History of Eminent and Self Made Men, I, 35.
62 Holman to Allen Hamilton, from Veraestau, February 29, 1832. Wagenhals Collection.
63 Bassett, Jesse Lynch Holman.
64 Ibid.
65 History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties, 328.
Aurora church that he pledged five times more money for its support than any other member. The money was used largely to pay the salary of its first pastor, who was paid a fixed compensation. Such an arrangement for the benefit of the minister was rather unusual in those days. As a result of Holman's encouragement, the Baptists of Aurora, before the end of their first decade as an organized church, had built the first real meeting-house in the town. It was constructed of brick. This was the famous church in which the noted preacher, Lorenzo Dow, later conducted services.

In 1834 the dream of Holman's life was realized, when the Aurora church voted unanimously "to invite a council to consider the propriety of setting apart to the ministry Jesse L. Holman." He was accordingly ordained. He served the Aurora church from then until his death, without salary, and preached regularly when not away on public duty. Even when he traveled the judicial circuit, it was no unusual thing for him to address his fellow-citizens on Bible subjects, missions, Sabbath schools, general education, and temperance. There was no incongruity in this, because his whole life was so consistent and earnest that there seemed to be a singular harmony in his two offices of judge and preacher.

Holman's services as pastor of the Aurora church more than met the expectations of his congregation, and the church grew and prospered under his leadership. His public as well as his private life was so unsullied that men were always glad to hear him preach.

Holman rendered further service to his community along educational lines. He was one of the leading champions of a library for the town of Aurora. Largely through his efforts, the founders of the town made provisions for public schools by setting aside certain lands for school purposes. Under his encouragement, the town fathers made a "large and liberal donation . . . including 'Seminary Square,' to found a seminary of learning, and among the first educational institutions incorporated in the State was the Aurora Seminary." In 1826, Holman induced the Reverend Lucius Alden, a Presbyterian

---

66 John F. Cady, History of the Baptist Church in Indiana (Berne, Ind., 1942), 95.
67 History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties, 328.
68 Ibid., 329.
69 Cathcart, Baptist Encyclopedia, 535.
70 History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties, 324.
clergyman and scholar from Boston, to come out and conduct the school, which he did successfully for several years, at an annual salary of $300.00. In the fall of 1830, Mr. Alden returned to Boston wearing "a full suit of blue jeans, woven by Mrs. Judse Holman, on the old hand-loom."\textsuperscript{71}

In 1832, Holman was elected superintendent of the Dearborn County schools.\textsuperscript{72} He also aided in the establishment of another academy two years later, and Isaac McCoy was one of its teachers. Isaac's brother John wrote to his son William from Charlestown, Indiana, on September 17, 1834: "We have just recd. a communication from Judge Holeman of Aurora that there will soon be an acadamy [sic] or County Seminary started in his county, which may possibly give Isaac a chance as their teacher, altho' this is entirely uncertain. . ."\textsuperscript{73}

Judge Holman's interest in educational and cultural affairs is further demonstrated by his connection with the Indiana Historical Society. In the minutes of its first meeting, held at the courthouse in Indianapolis on December 11, 1830, it was resolved to form the "Historical Society of Indiana"; and a committee of seven was appointed to draft a constitution. This committee was composed of John H. Farnham, Jesse L. Holman, Jeremiah Sullivan, Isaac Blackford, William C. Linton, James Whitcomb, and David Wallace. At a meeting of the society four days later, Holman was elected one of the vice-presidents.\textsuperscript{74}

Throughout Holman's entire career, he was particularly interested in the missionary and Sunday school movements which were beginning to take shape in Indiana, despite tremendous resistance by various factions within the state. Such activities were not popular in those days in the western country, and many pious folk looked upon them as the dese-

\textsuperscript{71} Ibid., 605.

\textsuperscript{72} Ibid., 152. Holman must have been reelected to this position, as an original certification, dated the first Monday in August, 1834, and signed by James Dill, clerk of the Dearborn Circuit Court, is in the Wagenshals Collection. He took the oath of office on September 22, 1835, before Horace Bassett, justice of the peace.

\textsuperscript{73} This information was supplied to the author in a letter from Mrs. Sumner Hayward, November 17, 1939. Mrs. Hayward has been doing research on the life of John McCoy. McCoy's spelling, "Holeman," is interesting.

\textsuperscript{74} Christopher B. Coleman (ed.), Centennial Handbook Indiana Historical Society, 1830-1930 (Indianapolis, 1930), 6-7.
cration of God's house. As a result, they were usually promoted as undenominational enterprises.\(^5\)

The attitude of Holman on the question of Sunday schools is well expressed in a paper which he wrote on the subject. In refuting the arguments against such schools, he compared them to the common schools of the day. He declared that the best teachers of the public schools were also found in the Sunday schools, and that the one school was complementary to the other. He praised the inexpensiveness of the Sunday schools, which he attributed to the voluntary labor of the teachers. He hailed the movement as a "powerful guarantee of civil and religious liberty" and attempted to prove that the Sunday schools were strong factors in shaping the destinies of a republican form of government.\(^6\)

As early as 1824, Holman organized a union Sunday school, which is believed to have been the first in the state. He served as its superintendent until his death.\(^7\) During his travels throughout the state, he distributed many religious books and tracts. He established cooperating Bible societies in many places, and endeavored to provide every destitute family within his county with a copy of the Scriptures.\(^8\) Through these contacts, Holman became one of the most highly respected and best-loved men in the state, particularly among the more liberal and progressive element. One who knew him well said:

We have often been amused when traveling through the country, to hear honest-minded farmers speak of Judge Holman, and with what lively recollections they would refer to his visits, giving day and date; and often have we heard the remark that this (referring to some accident or occurrence) took place the fall after Judge Holman was here, or that that happened a year or two years after Judge Holman visited us and stopped over night—making his visits an era or important period in the history of the family.\(^9\)

For many years Holman was vice-president of the American Sabbath School Union and president of the Western Baptist Publication and Sabbath School Society.\(^10\) As a member of the latter agency, he supervised the work of all of

\(^5\) Cady, *Baptist Church in Indiana*, 94n.
\(^6\) The *Negro Question*, a rough draft manuscript in Holman's handwriting. Wagenhals Collection.
\(^7\) *Biographical History of Eminent and Self Made Men*, I, 35.
\(^8\) Cady, *Baptist Church in Indiana*, 94.
\(^9\) Quoted in *History of Dearborn and Ohio Counties*, 152.
its representatives who were sent into Indiana. He was authorized to control all the societies formed by such agents in connection with the board.\textsuperscript{81} It was the general policy of the board to set up local agencies wherever practicable, and Holman was considered the best qualified man in the state for the duty of supervising such activities.\textsuperscript{82}

After Holman had been relieved of his duties on the state Supreme Court, he was able to give almost his undivided attention to religious projects.\textsuperscript{83} In 1831 he helped to establish an Indiana Bible society, through which nearly four hundred volumes of the Scriptures were distributed in the first year alone, one fourth of the cost being paid by Holman from his own pocket.\textsuperscript{84}

So strongly did he feel on the whole Sunday school question that he was constantly urging his friends and relatives to foster such a program in their respective communities. In a letter to the Allen Hamiltons at Fort Wayne, he urged them to establish a Sunday school there:

Even if you labored under difficulties at first, yet by perseverance you would be enabled to succeed. If your school was but small at first, it would still be a gratification to promote the moral interest of even a few children, & it would give something of the appearance of a Sabbath among you. There is very great danger, my dear children, in being without Sabbath privileges. . . . But if you had no other show of a Sabbath, than a Sabbath-School, it would enable you to bear more strongly in mind that there is an everlasting Sabbath above which should be the first and main pursuit of every rational being. . . . I should be much gratified to hear that you were both engaged so far as you may have opportunity in promoting one of these important nurseries of morality and religion.\textsuperscript{85}

The Baptists of Indiana were somewhat hostile to the missionary movement which was spreading through the state in the decade of the thirties, but Holman was not afraid of such opposition. In fact, his church at Aurora became the headquarters for various missionary activities.\textsuperscript{86} It was at
the meeting of the Laughery Baptist Association in 1818 that Holman first raised his voice in favor of missionary support.\textsuperscript{87} He firmly championed the activities of Isaac McCoy, one of the first missionaries to the Indians.\textsuperscript{88} As early as 1820, Holman urged the formation of a state organization for the support of this work; but it was postponed, due to the great opposition aroused by the Baptist churches against all such benevolences.\textsuperscript{89}

The situation had become so acute by the early thirties, that it was decided to form a general association or state Baptist convention, to act as a clearing-house for the many problems facing the denomination. Forty-one representatives met at the Brandywine Church in Shelby County on April 26, 1833. They came from fifteen counties and from twenty different churches. Judge Holman was chosen the moderator, and it was he who prepared the constitution for the state organization.\textsuperscript{90}

For the next five years, Holman served as the president of the convention.\textsuperscript{91} During this time, one of the major problems to come before the body was that of general education among the Baptists of the state. The more progressive church leaders believed that the poor scholastic attainment of their ministers was the cause of their opposition to benevolent projects. Holman, with a few of the others who brought about the birth of the state convention, insisted that steps be taken immediately to launch a state-wide educational drive; but the majority at first considered it unwise to hamper in this way the growing spirit of cooperation among their constituents.\textsuperscript{92}

In spite of this opposition, however, the Indiana Baptist Education Society was organized at Indianapolis on June 5, 1834,\textsuperscript{93} and a constitution was adopted in January of the following year. The society proposed "to promote sound literature and sciences including the literary and theological education of pious young men for the ministry, by establish-

\textsuperscript{87} Cady, \textit{Baptist Church in Indiana}, 93.
\textsuperscript{88} John F. Cady, \textit{History of Franklin College, 1834-1884} (privately printed, 1934), 15.
\textsuperscript{89} Cady, \textit{Baptist Church in Indiana}, 94.
\textsuperscript{90} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{91} Cathcart, \textit{Baptist Encyclopedia}, 535.
\textsuperscript{92} Cady, \textit{History of Franklin College}, 23.
\textsuperscript{93} Ibid., 25.
ing one or more seminaries and assisting worthy young men in attendance."94 The town of Franklin was chosen as the location for the Indiana Manual Labor Institute, and thirty-five trustees were selected to administer the affairs of the school and to report annually to the Indiana Education Society. Holman was named as one of the trustees. He served as vice-president from 1835 to 1839, and as president from then until his death.95

The first constitution of the "Institute" was written by Holman. Its purpose was "to promote a more general knowledge of Science, Literature, and Biblical criticism, through the Baptist connection in Indiana." On January 4, 1837, Holman was invited to become the principal of the school; but he declined, because his work on the federal bench, to which he had recently been appointed, demanded too much of his time.96 Yet he probably did more than any other person to support the school in its early years, and his death was a real loss to the Baptist constituency of the state.

Holman's interest in higher education was not confined to the Baptist college at Franklin. While the records are not entirely clear, it appears that he should be considered as one of the founders of Indiana College, which later became Indiana University. The college was established in 1828, and Holman was appointed a member of the board of visitors.97 When the college became a university on February 15, 1838, Holman was named a member of the board of trustees.98

In 1835, Holman again took an active interest in political affairs. Benjamin Parke, the first federal district judge for Indiana, had died, and Holman immediately sought the appointment to the vacancy.99 The annual salary of $1000

94 Quoted by Cady, ibid., 27.
95 William T. Stott, First Half Century of Franklin College (Cincinnati, 1884), 30, 47.
96 Quoted in ibid., 32.
97 Theophilus A. Wylie, History of Indiana University (Indianapolis, 1890), 19-20. A seminary was provided for by an act passed and approved on January 20, 1820; but it was not opened until May, 1824. The name of the seminary was changed to Indiana College in 1828. Bulletin of Indiana University, 1936, p. 67.
98 Mr. W. A. Alexander, Librarian of Indiana University, who is compiling material on all the former trustees of the university, wrote the author on April 1, 1942, that he was unable to find any record that Holman ever attended any of the board meetings. His records show, however, that he was a trustee for the period of perhaps one year, 1838-1839.
probably appealed to him.\textsuperscript{100} He wrote to numerous friends, both in Washington and elsewhere, and particularly to William Hendricks, Amos Lane, Jonathan McCarty, and John Tipton, requesting them to intercede in his behalf with President Jackson.\textsuperscript{101}

At first there seemed to be no serious opposition to his appointment; during the recess of Congress, Jackson, on September 16, 1835, about two months after Judge Parke's death, signed the commission which gave Holman the office until the end of the next session of Congress. He took the oath of office before Horace Bassett, a justice of the peace of Dearborn County, on October 8, and his first court was held on November 30.\textsuperscript{102}

Holman soon realized, however, that the forces against the confirmation of his appointment were very powerful. It was even feared that Jackson would not send his nomination in to the Senate. When Congress convened, the fears of Holman and his friends were increased. In a letter sent from Washington on December 19, Amos Lane wrote that Holman's opponents were charging that he was an anti-Jackson man and had opposed the various measures of the administration, that he was "destitute of all the necessary qualifications for the office," and that he was "a fanatic on the subject of religion."\textsuperscript{103} As a matter of fact, Holman had cast his vote as a presidential elector in 1824 against Jackson and in favor of John Quincy Adams.\textsuperscript{104} Holman's friend, Peter Brady, took him to task for his general attitude toward Jackson.\textsuperscript{105}

It was further believed that Jackson disagreed with Holman's attitude toward slavery. Although it is true that he had given freedom to his wife's slaves when they moved to Indiana in 1811, it was chiefly because of the prohibition against slavery in the Indiana Territory, and not so much

\textsuperscript{100} Taylor, \textit{Bench and Bar of Indiana}, 14.

\textsuperscript{101} Copies of the letters written to and from Holman pertaining to this appointment may be found in I. George Blake, "Seeking a Federal Judgeship Under Jackson," \textit{Indiana Magazine of History}, XXXV, 311-25. The originals are in the Wagenhals Collection.

\textsuperscript{102} Taylor, \textit{Bench and Bar of Indiana}, 14. The originals of both documents are in the Wagenhals Collection.

\textsuperscript{103} Amos Lane to Holman, from Washington, December 19, 1835. Wagenhals Collection.

\textsuperscript{104} Stoll, \textit{History of Indiana Democracy}, 31.

\textsuperscript{105} Peter Brady to Holman, from Washington, September 11, 1835. Wagenhals Collection.
because he held any humanitarian sentiments toward the negroes. However, both he and his father were firm believers in eventual emancipation, at least theoretically. But he was much more interested in the establishment of a colony in Africa for ex-slaves than he was in merely giving them their freedom. He was a very active member of the Indiana Colonization Society and had presided over its organization meeting in Indianapolis on November 4, 1829. From Holman's writings and letters, it appears that he was only a moderate abolitionist.

There was still another reason why Holman came to believe that his chances of securing the federal judgeship were in jeopardy. A favorite political sport in those days was the general practice of name-calling. Party labels were applied rather indiscriminately, and often they meant nothing at all. Much confusion resulted. Party relationship was subject to sudden and frequent changes, and men were known by the name of the man they followed at the moment. With such confusion in politics, it is little wonder that Holman found much opposition to his appointment.

Those who were opposed to him seemed to have such influence over President Jackson that the chances of sending Holman's name in to the Senate began to appear almost hopeless, and friends of the judge urged him to visit Washington in his own behalf. Acting on this advice, he set out for the capital on January 18, 1836. It was a long and difficult journey to Washington in the dead of winter. While in the mountains of Maryland, the stage in which he was riding upset; and it was several weeks before he had sufficiently recovered from the accident to proceed. When he finally reached the capital, he immediately learned of the political bickering in and out of Congress; and he came to the conclusion that the opposition was more against his friends than against him personally. He found the Indiana delegation in Congress very much at odds with each other.

---

106 Cathcart, Baptist Encyclopedia, 535.
108 See The Negro Question, Wagenhals Collection. See also the letter written by R. R. Gorby to Holman, from Washington, November 26, 1835, and the letter from G. H. Dunn to Holman, from Washington, January 2, 1837. Both are in the Wagenhals Collection.
At last he had an interview with President Jackson. He was received very cordially. His description of the meeting with the Chief Executive is interesting:

I was fortunate to find him alone. He conversed freely on a great variety of subjects. Talked some on the subject of my appointment, & the opposition that was got up against me. . . . He mentioned the charge of abolition . . . which I had answered in several letters, which I had shown him. I satisfied him completely on that subject, & especially by repeating my decision in the first Negro case I acted on a few days after I rec’d my commission, & which I gave a certificate for removal of the slave to Kentucky. I stated the principles upon which I decided. It gave him entire satisfaction & . . . the Gen’l was particularly pleased with my decision. . . .

President Jackson finally sent Holman’s name in to the Senate, and the appointment was confirmed unanimously on March 29, 1836. Holman held this position until his death on March 28, 1842; but the last day he sat on the bench was November 17, 1841.

During these seven years Holman was, in the opinion of Oliver H. Smith, a “first rate judge; patient, courteous, and kind in the discharge of his official duties.” So valuable were his services while on the federal bench that the court felt a real loss at his death. A special memorial service was held for him on May 17, 1842, in the courtroom in Indianapolis, on which occasion Associate Justice John McLean of the United States Supreme Court paid tribute to him. He said in part:

My acquaintance with him was not long, but it was long enough to impress me deeply with his high merit as a man and public officer. His mind was sound, discriminating, and practical. Of his legal research and acumen, he has left enduring evidence. But what most excited my admiration, was his singleness of heart;—he had no motive but to discharge his public duty uprightly. . . . He has left behind him the influence of a high moral example. This will be widely felt; and its salutary effects cannot be lost on society.

---

110 Holman to Allen Hamilton, from Washington, February 10, 1836. Wagenhals Collection.
111 William Hendricks to Holman, from Washington, March 29, 1836. Wagenhals Collection. The certificate of appointment, signed by William Forsythe, secretary of state, dated April 2, 1836, is in the Wagenhals Collection.
112 Taylor, Bench and Bar of Indiana, 14.
113 Smith, Early Indiana Trials and Sketches, 147.
114 Copies of the proceedings, written by Horace Bassett, clerk of the United States District Court, were loaned to the author by Mrs. Emmerine Rees, of Aurora, Indiana, and Mr. Cornelius O’Brien, of Lawrenceburg, Indiana.
At the same time, resolutions were adopted to the effect that “the members of this Bar feel with deep sensibility the loss which the profession and the country have sustained in the death of the Hon. Jesse L. Holman”; that they “cherish the highest respect for the deceased, not merely as a Jurist, but as a man and a Christian of varied and useful talent and ability, and of purity and uprightness of character, in all the diversified scenes of life”; that they wear the badge of mourning for thirty days; and that Isaac Blackford be requested to pronounce a discourse before the bar during the next term of court “upon the life, character, and virtues of the deceased.” Such was their opinion of a man, wrote Horace Bassett, “who stands before the country without a rival as a Jurist, a Christian Statesman without reproach, of one of whom it may be truly said, 'He is one of Nature’s noblemen.'”

Judge Holman died at his beloved Veraestau on March 28, 1842, in his fifty-eighth year. He was mourned by the men, women, and children who had known him. He left behind him his widow and six children, including William Steele Holman, who later became “the Watchdog of the Treasury.” He had been truly a kind husband and an affectionate father, but he was also a great citizen. It has been said that at the time of his death “one could look down from Veraestau and see fields of grain on every side, three busy towns along the river and the wilderness truly beginning to blossom as the rose. And much of this prosperity was due to Jesse Lynch Holman.”

In his private life, Holman had displayed all those vir-

---

115 Bassett, Jesse Lynch Holman. On April 1, 1939, the members of the bar presented to Judge Robert C. Baltzell, judge of the federal court for the southern Indiana district, photographs or portraits of all of his ten predecessors, including Holman. The pictures have been hung in the court library room at Indianapolis. The authenticity of Holman’s picture, however, has not been verified, although there is every reason to believe that it is a good likeness of the judge. It was taken from an original in the William H. English Collection in the William Henry Smith Memorial Library, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis.

116 The names of the children were Emmerine, Eliza, William Steele, Lucy, Mary Anne, and Jesse Lynch. Another son, Richard Henry, had died at Veraestau on December 27, 1841, after an extended illness. Although an attack of pleurisy had weakened the judge's physical condition, it was probably grief over the loss of this son which hastened his death.

tues which he attempted to inculcate in others. He was the champion of honesty in the relations of men and service for the welfare of the community. It is said that he had a "peculiar faculty of impressing his own moral feelings upon all with whom he came in contact. No one doubted the purity of his heart, and as his public and private character was without spot or blemish, all were ready to acquiesce in his views."118 His discriminating mind and religious zeal left a wide and extended influence, not only in the community where he was personally known, but throughout the state as well.

Holman believed that nothing should be done which would bring hurt or sorrow to another. He felt that individuals owed certain duties to society generally; and when his daughter Emmerine married Allen Hamilton, of Fort Wayne, one of his first letters to the young couple emphasized this point:

We should endeavor to live & maintain such a character that our standing in society will not depend on external circumstances. ... But we are not living to ourselves. ... There are various institutions of a public nature that it is our duty to support, besides many private demands will be made upon us. ... Above all this we should be exemplary in the matter [of economy]. ... Now I think there is such a thing as being real benefactors to society, by living a little below the highest standard, even when we are able to come up to it—it renders others better contented with their condition, and so far as it has any influence it prevents others from striving to make a more splendid appearance. ..."119

Such was the ruling motive in his own life. He was always a student, a lover of nature, a lover of books, a preacher of the Gospel. He was a good writer and a good speaker and was pleasant and entertaining in conversation. He was observant of all his duties as a neighbor and citizen. One of his admirers wrote, "Taking him all in all, he was a very remarkable man—a strong, serious, quiet, modest, manly, frank, kind and thoughtful man. ... He passed through life without an enemy and without ever shirking a duty."120

118 Bassett, Jesse Lynch Holman.
119 Holman to Allen Hamilton, from Veraestau, January 18, 1829. Wagenhals Collection.
120 Taylor, Bench and Bar of Indiana. 33.