

## NATHANIEL JARVIS WYETH.

NATHANIEL JARVIS WYETH, son of Charles and Elizabeth Norris Wyeth, was born in Baltimore, Md., under the star of the Democratic thirties of the nineteenth century. He was schooled at Mount Hope in that city, and at the classical high school of Laurenceville, N. J., and was graduated from the college and law school of Harvard University, a student from 1846 to 1852, both included.

The Wyeth family was divided in colonial times, one branch settling in Massachusetts and the other in Virginia. George Wyeth represented the latter, having participated in the Declaration of Independence, beside being chief architect of the constitution of the United States.

Nathaniel Wyeth was named after his distinguished and valiant uncle, Nathaniel Jarvis Wyeth, of Cambridge, Mass., who crossed the American continent in the early thirties and settled in Oregon. After his return to his home, he became the largest ice harvester, horticulturist, brick maker and inventor and aboriginal linguist in the country, as Schoolcroft's work testifies.

Mr. Wyeth began to practice law in the city of New York in January 1853. His first memorable suit involved the title to the Wilson survey of sixty thousand acres in Virginia, with the eminent Josiah Randall as his opponent, and was successful. This gave him great eclat in wild land law, which he has sustained. Then followed the Jacob Wyeth will matter of Cambridge, Mass., assisted by the Hon. B. R. Curtis. In 1856, Albert Journeay, Edward Banker, Frederick R. Grote, Stephen Seguire and other enterprising residents of Staten Island, employed Mr. Wyeth as counsel for the construction of the lethargic Staten Island railroad, which became an operated road and earned attractive dividends soon after.

In 1856, Mr. Wyeth organized with Col. Henry S. Lansing and Prof. Morse, the People's Oil and Mining Company of West Virginia, with \$2,000,000 capital. As assemblyman of the New York legislature of 1867 he was on committee of colleges, academies and common schools and the sub-committee of the whole. He there advocated and passed the original elevated railroad act for the real projectors of rapid transit in New York, Messrs. Harvey and Jennings; also the East river bridge bill for his client, John A. Roebling. He addressed the house on the constitutional amendment, enlargement of the canal locks, removal of the quarantine and the Metropolitan harbor district, the

forerunner of greater New York. All these speeches were published by the hundreds and were disseminated for their worth.

In 1868, Mr. Wyeth drew the papers for the first petroleum railroad in the oil regions of Pennsylvania, to the great profit of the projectors, George H. Bissell, Miller and others. He likewise prepared the patent papers for Col. Roberts' oil torpedo and aided in sustaining them in the interference proceedings which culminated in revolutionizing oil production, and making the gallant colonel very wealthy.

In 1870, at the solicitation of Harlon M. Wilcox, of Buffalo, Mr. Wyeth gave much attention to the passage of the Arcade railroad bill of New York. The same year he originated, prepared and passed the Staten Island bridge and harbor improvement bill, which received the cordial approbation of the foremost engineers and scientists, James Hall, Harlon M. Wilcox, Wm. J. McAlpin, Albert C. Stimers, C. Delafield, Washington Roebling and others, Mr. Roebling writing "a great desideratum and the only practical scheme to accomplish this result." He also, that year, projected and obtained an act for a general commercial institution to be operated in Bureaux for the different kinds of business.

The following year, 1871, as chairman of the committee on transportation and inter-communication of the Richmond County Improvement Company, Lawyer Wyeth was the author of their famous January report. The same year, he labored about a month at Trenton, while the New Jersey legislature was in session, to procure the passage of his New Jersey Tube Transportation Company bill, by which the corporators obtained a franchise to construct railroads in New Jersey, thus breaking the monopoly of the Pennsylvania railroad, and helped to secure the passage of the general railroad act of that state.

Three years later, Mr. Wyeth introduced through Richmond county's then able assemblyman, Hon. Stephen D. Stephens, Jr., his Belt Railroad Improvement Company bill, with the object of reclaiming all the outlying marshes and meadows of the county and presenting to his fellow-citizens the finest beaches, purest airs and most attractive homes and most pleasant public resorts in the country. The previous two years were somewhat engaged in assisting Chief Engineer Abbott in securing terminal facilities for the Continental Railway Company to New York city through the New Jersey Tube Transportation Company.

In 1880, Mr. Wyeth argued successfully at length against the construction of the act of that year to facilitate the collection of taxes for state purposes, that would exempt corporations from taxes for local purposes (which was nine-tenths of the gross tax) before that eminent jurist, Jasper T. Gilbert, in Brooklyn at a special term, and won. About this time Counselor Wyeth became general counsel for the universal inventor, James Montgomery, of Philadelphia, and continued such till the death of Mr. Montgomery.

Beside originating, projecting and counseling such generally useful measures, the subject of this sketch pursues a systematic course of jurisprudence, science and literature in his select and capacious library at his "Florence home" and office on Richmond Hill, engaging in many cases at the bar of this county and elsewhere. His regular office was near Wall street, New York.

Progress and humanity are the emblems of his realization.