To the Honorable Judge of this Circuit Court, and Members of the Boyd County Bar:

This excellent portrait of a former regularly elected Judge of this Circuit Court, Judge William Crutcher Ireland, is presented to the Boyd County Bar by his only surviving grandson, the Honorable Ireland Hampton, a well-known attorney of Ft. Worth, Texas.

When informed by this writer that the Boyd County Bar was endeavoring to place upon the walls of its courthouse as many portraits as they could secure of the eminent men who had served terms upon this Judicial bench, and would greatly appreciate a portrait of his distinguished grandfather, Judge Wm. C. Ireland, one of the ablest jurists to ever occupy it, he responded at once by having this enlarged life-sized photograph made from a smaller one in his possession and sent it to this writer to have it properly framed and presented in the accepted manner of these ceremonies.

The sole reason of this sketch by one not related to the family, but always a close friend, lies in the regrettable fact that not one of Judge Ireland's kindred or contemporaries now reside in this community to contribute a personal biography of this splendid man and jurist. The majority of the friends of his day and time have passed into the long silence many years ago and this writer who knew him well from 1881 to the day when he was laid to rest in our beautiful Ashland Cemetery in 1894, esteems it an honor and privilege to pay this sincere, though inadequate, tribute, to the memory of a great lawyer and valued friend whose good life was spent in most part in this community. No finer citizen ever lived in Ashland.

William Crutcher Ireland was born in Lewis County, Kentucky in 1823 and spent his boyhood there. After his marriage to Miss Pamela Robb, also of Lewis County, they settled in the town of Greenup. Six children were born to them there., three of the older ones passing away in infancy.

Ashland was founded in 1856 and some time in the sixties the Ireland family moved to this new town to reside permanently, becoming at once an important part of its social and civic life.
In his early youth, being always of a deeply religious nature and a close student of the Bible as well, he became interested in theology for a time, but later turned to the study of law to become one of the outstanding and truly great lawyers of Northeastern Kentucky. His thorough study of the Bible was a most helpful and fortunate foundation upon which to build a successful legal career. Having studied earnestly those eternal truths embodied in its pages which teach courage, justice, forbearance, patience, mercy, honesty, charity, fair dealing toward men, unselfishness, brotherly love and compassion. Guided also by the immortal Sermon on the Mount, the judgments of Solomon, the mighty Epistles of St. Paul, the Ten Commandments, the forceful prophecies of Isaiah and countless other inspired precepts. Thus equipped he came to his life work with a clear understanding of those spiritual lessons taught in Holy Scripture which guide aright the heart and conscience of all men of whatever walk in life. Judge Ireland adhered to these religious principles and teachings throughout his long career at the bar.

It goes without saying that any lawyer whose studies his Bible reverently and earnestly seeking out these truths of right and justice can never be either a bad lawyer or a bad man. He cannot be better fortified to meet the legal battles ahead of him with his fellow mortals than to possess a knowledge of these laws in Scripture which touch every phase of human life.

Every lawsuit, no matter how common place, has its spiritual side. Is it a dispute over a line fence or the settlement of a large estate, or a man on trial for his life, these inexorable laws of right and justice are there. Blackstone and other great minds may interpret and apply them to the practical needs of mankind, but the fundamental truth of all right living is from God.

Judge Ireland was a scholarly man, interested in the sciences, history and literature. Ashland at that time was a very small and rather primitive town, but in it were several deep thinking well-educated men of strong intellect, who made up a limited group that met now and then to discuss subjects on science, philosophy,
metaphysics, literature and other matters of interest to them. Among
these men were Dr. Thomas Young, and his brother Dr. Matthew
Young, Judge Edward Dulin and Dr. Spaulding of the nearby town of
Greenup, Judge D. K. Wise, Mr. John Means, Dr. James Montmoulin,
Col. Douglas Putnam, Judge Ireland, and a few others whose names the
writer can not recall. At one of these intellectual gatherings Judge
Ireland gave a very unusual paper entitled, The Oceanic Currents,
which created quite a sensation by its profound thought and clear
analysis of this complex subject. These incidents are cited to show
his versatile mind and research into scientific fields a part from
his profession.

His term of office as Circuit Judge began in 1874. Deeply
conscious of the power vested in him by this exalted position as
Judge, he exercised it with a wise and understanding spirit, tempering
justice with mercy when conscience permitted but always firm and im-
partial in his decisions.

In his church he was a pillar of strength, giving freely and
generously of his time and means, and serving faithfully in all
official matters of business and stewardship. A truly Christian
man and consistent church member to the end of his busy life.

His home was one of unfailing hospitality, culture, refinement
and much charm. With his children and grand children about him,
and many distinguished and interesting guests often welcomed there.
His wife and daughters, Mrs. John W. Hampton, Mrs. Edward Norton,
as also his son and daughter-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Sam. R. Ireland,
each possessed unusually brilliant minds and talents to a marked
degree. His beloved wife, while physically frail, was very artistic,
excelling in the arts of painting and hand embroidery. He was very
proud of her and her accomplishments and when rather late in life
she sustained a severe fall from which she was an invalid for a long
period of time, his devotion and tender care of her was both touch-
ing and beautiful. Lifting her about, reading to her, sitting with
her as often as his office duties would permit and shielding her
as far as possible from domestic cares while so ill; seeing that
the large lawn in which she took much pride was properly kept, and also, her flower garden and the roses she loved so well.

He was indeed a rare spirit in his home constantly engaged in doing kindly helpful things for relatives, friends and family, giving unselfishly his whole life for those near and dear to him.

A man of stainless reputation, he rang true in every department of life, public and private, social, civic, professional, political, loyal to church, family and friends, charitable and kind to those in need and responding with characteristic generosity to the many demands of whatsoever nature, made upon his time and purse.

Judge Ireland is survived by only one grand child, the donor of this portrait. Many others having passed away through recent years. There are five surviving great-grandsons and two great-great-granddaughters. Three of these great-grandsons, viz: Dr. John Hampton Miller, and his twin brothers, Henderson and Ireland Miller, live in New York City. These are sons of Dr. Joseph Miller and Pamela Hampton Miller of Thomas, W. Va. Mrs. Miller, a granddaughter of Judge Ireland, passed away in 1925. Two other great-grandsons live in Fort Worth, Texas and are sons of the Honorable Ireland Hampton, the only surviving grandson, and the two little granddaughters are also of his direct line. A daughter-in-law, Mrs. Sam. R. Ireland of Los Angeles, California, also, survives him.

While these descendants are sundered far, some in the East, some in the West, their life lines all lead back to Kentucky and Ashland and straight into this Boyd County Court House, where the founder of this singularly gifted family, Judge William C. Ireland, was for many, many years one of its most noted and able practitioners. In 1894 at the age of 71 following a long illness of many months, surrounded by his devoted family, he passed gently down the slope into "that quiet valley that leads to eternal peace", leaving the precious memory of a life well lived, filled with good deeds of a loyal friend and upright revered citizen of spotless character, a wise and impartial
counsellor and judge who wore the ermine of this judicial bench with superior dignity, honor and distinction.

The Honorable Ireland Hampton of Ft. Worth, Texas, presents to the Boyd County Bar this portrait of his distinguished grandfather, William C. Ireland of Ashland, Kentucky.

Respectfully,
Margaret M. Hager

Mrs. John F. Hager
Ashland Ky.

June 3rd 1939