

**F**REDERICKS, JOHN D., Ex-District Attorney of Los Angeles County, California, was born September 10, 1869, at Burgettstown, Pennsylvania, the son of Rev. James T. Fredericks and Mary (Patterson) Fredericks. He married, in 1896, Agnes M. Blakeley, and they have four children, Doris, John D., Jr., Deborah, and James B. Fredericks. Mr. Fredericks comes from a professional family, every man on the paternal side in the direct line of descent for more than two hundred years having been either a physician, minister or lawyer.

He attended the public schools of his native town and Trinity Hall Military Academy, Washington, Pennsylvania, until qualified to enter Washington and Jefferson College. He graduated from that institution in 1890 and then moved to Los Angeles.

He taught at the Whittier State School for three years and meanwhile read law. He passed the State Bar examination and opened an office for practice at Los Angeles in 1893. He enjoyed a lucrative practice and was, in 1899, appointed Deputy District Attorney for Los Angeles.

As deputy he conducted a number of criminal cases with notable success, enough to attract the attention of his party and the voters, and, as a consequence, he was nominated and elected District Attorney of Los Angeles County in 1902, and served with such satisfaction that he was re-elected in 1906 and again in 1910.

In 1906 he handled the famous oiled roads patent litigation, in which the counties and the cities of California tried to break the patent on oiled roads. He maintained for his county and the rest of the counties of California that the process was not patentable, and although the claimants of the patent fought hard, and were of great strength, he was successful and the process became public property.

But the most notable of all his criminal prosecutions was that against the McNamara brothers, which he headed in behalf of Los Angeles County in the year 1911. John J. McNamara, secretary-treasurer of the International Bridge and Structural Iron Workers' Association, and James B. McNamara, his brother, were accused of blowing up the Los Angeles Times building with

dynamite, with the loss of much property and many lives; also of a score of other dynamiting crimes all over the United States. The case attracted world-wide attention because the charge seemed to implicate union labor in general, and because union men most generally believed them not guilty of the crime and prepared at great length to defend them. It was in this case that W. J. Burns, the detective, figured. Fredericks and Burns and the prosecution generally were accused by Gompers, head of the American Federation of Labor, and by Eugene Debs, of a conspiracy against union labor and of a diabolical plot to take the lives of labor leaders. The case aroused class feeling to a higher pitch than it had ever been before in the history of the United States.

District Attorney Fredericks made of himself a national figure by the manner in which he brought the trial to a close. He handled the general evidence, and evidence which under his personal direction had been secured, in such a manner that it became plain to the defendants and their attorneys that escape was simply impossible.

He discovered alleged attempts to bribe jurors and one case where money had been paid over. He undoubtedly could have convicted the

McNamara brothers in open trial, but he fully knew that a very large proportion of the labor union people of the United States and their sympathizers would not have had faith in the action of the court; would think it only the logical sequel of a conspiracy, already suspected and charged; so, with the evidence at hand, he forced the McNamaras to a confession which left not a shred of doubt of the fact of their guilt.

The outcome of this celebrated case is considered the most important single event in the history of the conflict between capital and labor in the United States, and will no doubt be of incalculable benefit to both bodies.

He served as adjutant in the Seventh Regiment, California Volunteers, during the Spanish-American War. He is a member of the University Club, the Union League Club and the City Club, the Automobile Club of Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, the Long Beach Commandery of the Knights Templar, the Fraternal Brotherhood, the California Club, the Los Angeles Country Club and the Gamut Club.



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