

[Hale, Charles Meade]

CHARLES M. HALE PASSES SUDDENLY

FOR NEARLY FIFTY YEARS CLERK OF THE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

A Native of Ogdensburg, Whose Early Life Was Spent in Norwood—Enters the Office of Surrogate Stillman Foote of Ogdensburg When Fifteen Years Old—Clerk in Foote's Office and an Assistant Clerk on Board of Supervisors Under Foote—Admitted to the Bar When 21—Enters Practice in Madrid—Elected Clerk of Board of Supervisors in 1884, to Continue to the End—Removes to Gouverneur in 1889 and Enters Judge Abbott's Office as Clerk of Surrogate's Court—Police Justice with Law Office in Gouverneur—Deputy County Treasurer Under Martin R. Sackett—Marries Attorney Grace Robinson in 1895—Removes to Canton Jan. 1, 1900—Clerk of the Surrogate's Court, Clerk of Court of Record, Deputy County Treasurer to 1912—Becomes Special County Judge in 1914 Holding Office for Four Terms—Justice of the Peace of the Town of Canton 17 Years—Secretary of St. Lawrence County Agricultural Society—Engaged in Law Business First in Firm of Hale & Hale, then Hale, Hale & Hale

Charles Meade Hale, for nearly fifty years clerk of the Board of Supervisors of St. Lawrence County, and for many years enlisted in the service of other county and town offices, and doubtless one of the best known residents of the community, passed quietly at his home, 2 Pearl Street, Tuesday night at about 11 o'clock. Mr. Hale had been in frail health for several weeks, but family and friends had been encouraged at his improvement just before the end came, suddenly and quietly as he slept.

Funeral service was conducted at the First Universalist Church, Friday afternoon at 2:00 o'clock, the Rev. Dr. James M. Payson, pastor emeritus, and the Rev. Emerson H. Lalone, pastor, officiating. Interment at Evergreen, following service at the church, with prayers by the Rev. Mr. Lalone. The bearers were selected from representatives of the Board of Supervisors, which Mr. Hale served for nearly half a century; of the Town Board of Canton of which he was a member for many years and of the Masonic order with which he affiliated many years ago, as follows: Warren O. Daniels of Parishville, chairman, Board of Supervisors; Gaylord T. Chaney, Supervisor of the Town of Hermon, and Leon L. Gibson, Supervisor of the Town of Stockholm; Frank Crary, supervisor of Pierrepont, and Nathan T. Lovejoy, former supervisor of the first ward of Ogdensburg, long warm friends of Mr. Hale; G. Lester Flint and Frank J. Ellwood, members of the Town Board of Canton—at the last moment Mr. Ellwood was unable to serve on account of illness and his place was taken by Earl MacFadden of Morley, a member of the Canton Town Board; and Dr. W. A. McPhee, a member of the Masonic order.

The church was filled with county and town officials, friends from town and out of town who had known him for years. The floral tributes were profuse, filling the home and abundant in the church during the service. Dr. Payson spoke eloquently of the life of the man just gone, his friend of many years, and read a poem by Edgar Guest symbolizing his passing.

Charles Meade Hale was born in Ogdensburg on June 26, 1858, the son of Asa W. and Sarah Felch Hale. Both father and mother were natives of Vermont who came to this county in the days when the flow of pioneering was coming over the lake and through the Northern wilderness, to make homes in this promised land. That they were

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of Revolutionary stock is indicated by the naming of the son after a Revolutionary patriot and officer of the war for independence, Col. Meade, who was an ancestor of the family.

When the boy Charles was about a year old the family moved to Knapp's Station and a little later to Norwood, then known as Potsdam Junction where his early life was spent and where he attended the village school. When he was about fifteen years of age he entered the office of Stillman Foote, Jr., then Surrogate of County and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors. It is interesting that this Stillman Foote was born in Canton, the son of the first settler of Canton, Stillman Foote the elder, and the owner of the mile square on which the village of Canton was built. Stillman Foote, Jr., was born in the Foote tavern on the West side of the river, now the Bullis home. It is also of significant interest that Stillman Foote, Jr., was the first graduate in 1835 of the old Canton Academy on Pearl Street, which was later divided and made into homes, and that the Hale home, in which Charles M. Hales passed his late years is a portion of this old academy, much remodeled, modernized and improved. Stillman Foote continued in the office of Clerk of the Board of Supervisors until his death in 1883 and within a year of this time Charles M. Hale was elected clerk and continued to the close of his life.

He was a clerk in the office of Mr. Foote engaged in duties concerning the work of the surrogate's office and as a Clerk on the Board of Supervisors, coming to Canton with Mr. Foote during the sessions of the Board for five or six years and serving as assistant clerk. He also studied law in the office of Stillman Foote, who was prominent in legal affairs and the law partner of the late Col. Edward C. James, one of the most distinguished attorneys of the County in his day.

Mr. Hale was prepared and ready to take the State Bar examination when he reached the age of twenty-one and did so at Ithaca in 1882, the Northern and Central New York judicial districts being one at that time. Following his admission to the bar he went to the Village of Madrid to practice law and there remained four years. In 1889 he removed to the village of Gouverneur and became Clerk of the Surrogate's Court, under Judge Vasco P. Abbott, at this time Surrogate of St. Lawrence County, remaining to the end of Judge Abbott's term. He later opened a law office in Gouverneur and engaged in practice. At this time he was elected Police Justice of the village of Gouverneur continuing in that office up to the time he left that village to make his home in Canton in 1900. It was during this period that he married Miss Grace Robinson of Gouverneur, then engaged in practice of law as an attorney, the only woman attorney in Northern New York, who still holds that unique position. This marriage was solemnized at Gouverneur on June 26, 1895 and at once Mr. and Mrs. Hale formed the law firm of Hale & Hale which continued as such for a number of years. Mr. Hale was deputy county treasurer under County Treasurer Martin R. Sackett during the period Mr. Sackett held that office and after coming to Canton assumed a like position in the office of the late Royal Newton of Parishville. Following the death of Surrogate John A. Vance, Alric R. Herriman of Ogdensburg assumed that office, and Mr. Hale served as well as deputy county treasurer.

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Mr. and Mrs. Hale removed to Canton on Jan. 1, 1900, and during the following years up to about 1912 Mr. Hale was officiating in the following offices: Clerk of the Board of Supervisors; Deputy County Treasurer, Clerk of the Court and Clerk of the Surrogate's Court. Following the death of Special County Judge John R. Keeler, Mr. Hale was elected to that office, continuing in it four terms, from 1914 to 1926, when he voluntarily retired. In 1912 the firm of Hale & Hale was established in Canton. Mr. and Mrs. Hale being the members of that firm. In 1926, their older son, Robert L. Hale, a Columbia College man, just entering practice, joined the firm which became Hale, Hale & Hale, which it has continued, with offices at Gouverneur and Canton, Robert L. Hale having charge of the Gouverneur office.

In 1916 when Charles Y. Fullington retired from the office of Justice of the Peace of the Town of Canton, Mr. Hale was elected to that office and had continued to hold it to the close of his life during the week just past. In the early twenties Mr. Hale was elected Secretary of the St. Lawrence County Agricultural Society, giving that office the careful, close attention that had marked his service in all other of the many offices held and continued to be held for many years.

At the January session of the Board of Supervisors of 1932 Mr. Hale was elected clerk of that body for the forty-ninth time, having assumed the office and held it without break from the fall session of 1884, a period of nearly fifty years. It is as Clerk of the Board of Supervisors that he has been best known. His service here is without parallel for length in the state. And his service has always been of a kind that was eminently satisfactory to the Board. The new supervisor, unlearned in procedure, found here the willing tutor, the helpful friend and advisor that tided him over the rough spots of the beginner. From time to time the members of the Board remembered the clerk at the close of the session by presenting him one thing or another in token of their recognition of his loyalty and faithfulness to duty. At one time it was a valuable fur-lined coat—at other times it was other articles which the receiver prized more from the manner they were given than their intrinsic value. One year ago the present January at the meeting of the Board a fine photographic likeness of Mr. Hale was presented by the unanimous wish of the Board that it be given the place of honor on the wall of the Supervisor's rooms, back of the chairman's rostrum. The presentation was made by the newly elected chairman, Warren O. Daniels for the Board, and now there hangs a reminder of the loyalty and esteem in which this faithful public servant was held and his years of unparalleled service.

Something over a year ago Mr. Hale received from the head of the State Department of Taxation and Finance, Thomas M. Lynch of Poughkeepsie, a letter praising his work as clerk of the board as it appertained to matters of taxation. Mr. Hale was not one to speak about an honor of this kind—in fact extreme modesty caused him to withhold mention even of it unless to intimate friends or others close to him. The writer, aware of the receipt of this letter, urged him to release it for publication. This he would not do. It showed the mold and spirit of the man just gone.

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Mr. Hale, though quiet and unassuming in his way was of congenial habits. He liked to be with a few friends. He delighted in sitting down at a friendly game of cards at The Club. He was a member of the Gouverneur Lodge of Odd Fellows and a past Noble Grand of that Order. He was a member of the Blue Lodge of Masonry and also of the Canton Club.

Mr. Hale leaves his widow, Grace Robinson Hale, and three sons, all graduates of Columbia University, as follows: Robert L. Hale, Esq., of Gouverneur, a member of the law firm of Hale, Hale & Hale; Clifford and Everett Hale of New York City. An only sister, Miss Elizabeth H. Hale of Brooklyn, critically ill at her home in that city, was unable to come to Canton at this time; two nieces, Miss Alice Hale of Brooklyn and Mrs. Scott Button of Schenectady. A sister-in-law, Mrs. Immogene Weatherbee of Milwaukee, Wis., arrived Thursday and is here with her sister, Mrs. Hale, for the present.

[Three lengthy paragraphs of individuals from out of town present at the funeral are omitted here.]

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