

[Hale, Ledyard P.]

DEATH OF JUDGE HALE

Life of Public Service

Was One of Outstanding Legal Lights of the North Country

Judge Ledyard P. Hale, for many years outstanding as a legal light in the North Country, died at his home in Canton Saturday afternoon, after a long illness of heart trouble.

Judge Hale was a man of kindly nature yet stern, and unflinching in the face of breach of the law, of strictest integrity and loyal to the utmost to his friends and to the institutions with which he was identified.

Always taking the liveliest interest in public matters and matters pertaining specially to his own and neighboring communities, he was always found working for the betterment of these. His influence in legal matters at home and abroad has been weighty and he has always given the best in him to everything with which he has been identified.

Judge Hale was born on the old Hale homestead south of Canton village May 17, 1854. His parents came into St. Lawrence county with that first emigration from Vermont that moved through the Champlain wilderness into the North Country.

His father was Horace W. Hale, native of Orwell, Vermont; his mother, Betsey Russell Lewis, a native of Cornwall, Vt. His father was born in 1810 and removed to the town of Canton in 1835. The old Hale homestead is not remote from Canton and Judge Hale continued to own the property until about two years ago. It is at Brick Chapel, a locality not remotely distant from the "Paradise Valley" section which Irving Bacheller has immortalized in his North Country stories, especially in "Eben Holden."

Ledyard P. Hale's boyhood was that of the average country boy of 60 and more years ago. He was active about the farm, performed the innumerable tasks of a farm boy, was interested in nature, loved to hunt and had a liking for books that was far more marked than that of the usual boy. As a youth he attended the old Canton Academy and there received his preparation to enter St. Lawrence University.

He entered St. Lawrence with the Class of 1876 and graduated with that class. He graduated from St. Lawrence with the degree of bachelor of science. Three years later his alma mater conferred upon him the degree of master of arts, and in later years the degree of LL.D. was conferred upon him by St. Lawrence. He was a member of the St Lawrence Chapter of Phi Beta Kappa.

For a time after graduation he studied law with the well known firm of Sawyer & Russell, the latter the celebrated Judge Leslie W. Russell, and the

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former Judge William H. Sawyer, a St. Lawrence county Democrat who was appointed to the supreme court bench.

Mr. Hale went to the University of Wisconsin to complete his study of law and was there two years, graduating in 1878. He was admitted to practice in all the courts of Wisconsin, the United States Circuit and District Courts and he formed a partnership for the practice of law in Madison, the firm being known as Lewis, Lewis & Hale.

In political life besides serving in village offices he was on the board of supervisors from 1890 to 1894. His most important service as a public official in St. Lawrence county was that in connection with the district attorney's office, possibly transcending in its importance his service as county judge.

Mr. Hale was thoroughly well trained when he became district attorney. He had spent twelve years as assistant. He knew every detail of the work. He was thoroughly familiar with St. Lawrence county and its people. It has always been asserted in St. Lawrence county that no county of the state ever had a better district attorney. He served until 1899 and this period was followed by three years of private practice, when he was appointed county judge to succeed Judge Theodore H. Swift who resigned to go to the court of claims.

He was county judge until he left the office to become counsel to the public service commission in 1908. With the rise of Charles E. Hughes as a political factor in New York State, Judge Hale became one of his most ardent supporters. They had much in common in type and temperament. Hughes was elected governor in 1906 over William Randolph Hearst. When he assumed office January 1, 1907, he began at once the advocacy of a public service commission for the state. A law was passed. In the organization of the commission for the upstate he induced Judge Hale to become its counsel. He was counsel to the upstate or second district commission, with headquarters in Albany from 1908 until it was abolished in 1921 to make way for the single commission and with the organization of the single commission he continued as its counsel until June, 1923, when he resigned to return to Canton and private practice.

He was commissioner of the state board of charities in 1907 and 1908. It was as counsel to the commission that Judge Hale reached his greatest heights as an attorney. He wrote some of the most important opinions of the commission and was the adviser in practically every important case before the commission for a period of nearly 15 years. He made his home in Albany, although his voting residence was still in Canton, and he made frequent visits there.

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He was elected a member of the New York state constitutional convention of 1915, as a representative of St. Lawrence county and was present at and participated in all the deliberations of that body. The convention, presided over by Elihu Root, drew a new constitution but it was defeated when it came before the people for ratification in November, 1915.

Upon his return to Canton three years ago he at once engaged in the practice of law and soon built up an extensive practice. He was the attorney of the Northern New York Utilities in several important cases and he had other large corporation clients. He was deeply interested in the development of the St. Lawrence ship canal and he spoke in season and out of season in favor of the proposal to make a lakes to the sea waterway. He wrote extensively on the subject and was not backward in addressing any person who put forward what seemed to him a false argument against the canal.

Judge Hale was a member of the American Bar Association, the New York City Law Association, the American Law Institute, the American Judicature Society, the Academy of Political Science, Director of the First National Bank of Canton, a member of the Sons of the Revolution, the Society of the War of 1812 and the National Security League. He was a member of the Fort Orange Club of Albany.

Judge Hale is survived by Mrs. Hale; by a son Horace C. Hale, in partnership with him in Canton; by a daughter, Mrs. Carl F. Pfund, Pittsfield, Mass., and by four grandchildren. He was a member of the First Universalist Church of Canton.

Funeral services were held at Canton Tuesday afternoon in the Memorial Chapel, Rev. R. E. Sykes, President of St. Lawrence and Rev. Hersey, Pastor of the Universalist Church, officiating.

Eloquent resolutions of respect and honor were passed by members of the St. Lawrence County Bar Association.

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