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February 5, 2014

THIS WEEK: United States Chief Judge Henry Clay Caldwell

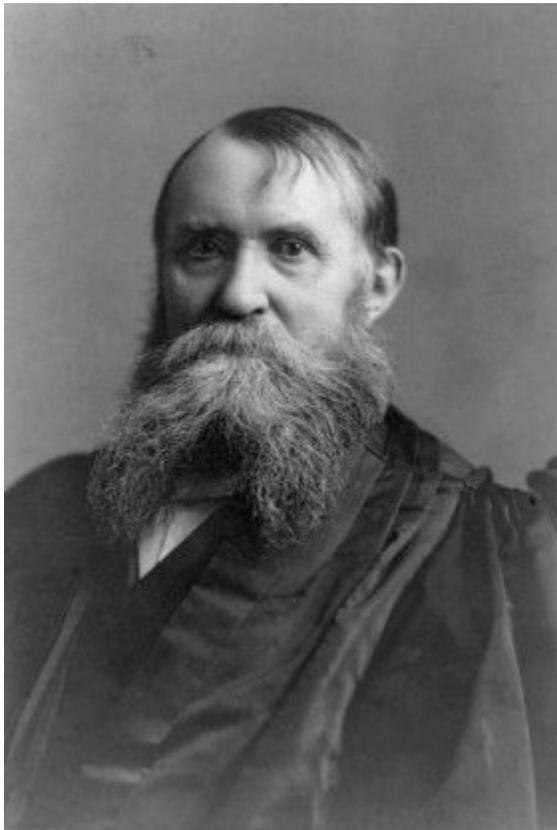
BACKGROUND: The Eighth General Assembly convened January 8, 1860, and adjourned April 3, 1860, an 87-day session. The Eighth General Assembly also met for an extra session from May 15 to May 29, 1861. There were 43 members in the Senate—20 Democrats and 23 Republicans. In the House of Representatives, the Republicans also had the majority—49 to 37, with a total of 86 members. The 129-member legislature convened at the "Old Brick" Capitol.



"Old Brick" Capitol

Representative Caldwell Becomes United States Judge

Henry Clay Caldwell served in the Eighth General Assembly in 1860 as a representative for Van Buren County. Of the 86 members of the House, there were 13 under the age of 30. Clay was among those, having been just 28 at the time. He listed his occupation as a lawyer (having served as a prosecuting attorney before becoming a legislator). He was one of 18 members of the House who listed law as an occupation during this time.



Henry Clay Caldwell

(b. September 4, 1832 - d. February 15, 1915)

Caldwell was the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee and served on the Improvement of the Des Moines River Committee during the regular session of the Eighth General Assembly. During the extra session in 1861, he served as the chairman of the committee on Ways and Means.

During the Civil War, Caldwell enlisted in the Third Iowa Volunteer Cavalry. He led the cavalry that captured Little Rock, Arkansas. He resigned from the military in 1864.

President Abraham Lincoln nominated, and United States Senate confirmed, Caldwell for the United States District Court for both Eastern and Western Districts of Arkansas. More than 25 years later, President Benjamin Harrison nominated Caldwell for the

United States Eighth Circuit Court. About a year later, Caldwell was reassigned to the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth District. This was a newly created court, and Caldwell became the court's first chief judge.

At 71, Caldwell retired to California where he died in 1915. He is buried in Little Rock, Arkansas, the city that hailed him as its most prominent citizen, and the same city he had captured during the Civil War.