

EDWARD B. WATSON

Chief Justice of the state supreme court of Oregon, 1882-1884.

Judge Edward B. Watson was born at Garnavillo, county seat of Clayton county, Iowa, on the seventh day of October, 1844, and lived there until 1853, when his parents, James and Emily Adams Watson, removed with their family to Oregon. They came from the Malheur by the new route proposed by a Mr. Elliott, and crossing the Cascades southeasterly from Eugene arrived down the middle fork of the Willamette, at the head of the valley, in October. Their first winter and spring was passed in the vicinity of Eugene. In the fall of 1854 they removed to the Umpqua valley, where they purchased a farm on a branch of the North Umpqua river, about seventeen miles easterly from Roseburg, and established the family home. Here Judge Watson passed the next eight years, working on the farm, riding over the range after stock, attending district school, supplemented by two winters at Wilbur Academy, and hunting in the neighboring mountains for pastime, after the prevailing fashion of boys of his age in those early days.

In the summer of 1863 he entered Pacific University at Forest Grove, and was graduated from that institution in June, 1866. Returning home, he began to read law under his eldest brother, Judge J. F. Watson, who was then engaged in the practice in Roseburg, and was admitted to the bar by the supreme court at its September term 1868. In the following October he went to Jacksonville, Oregon, and engaged in the practice there, first with the late B. F. Dowell, and afterwards with C. W. Kahler.

He was elected county judge of Jackson county in 1872, which county at that time embraced the territory now included in Klamath and Lake, as well as that within its present limits, and served four years. In 1878 he was elected county clerk of Jackson county, and in 1880 he was placed in nomination by the Republican State Convention as one of its candidates for Supreme Judge. Although well and favorably known in his own county, the name was not familiar to the people generally. On the judgment, however, of the convention that had placed him in nomination and on the reputation accorded him by well known citizens of Jackson county, and his extreme popularity in Southern Oregon, where he was best known, he was elected by a handsome majority over an opposing candidate, who was undoubtedly the strongest man the Democracy could have placed in the field against him. The first two years of his term he sat as an Associate Justice with Hon. William P. Lord, Hon. John B. Waldo. The rule of rotation made him at the commencement of the October term of 1882, Chief Justice. In October 1884, he removed to Portland for the practice of his profession. In January 1893, he associated himself with his brother, Judge J. F. Watson, and B. B. Beekman, in the practicerthere,

which relation continued until the former's decease on June 12, 1897.

Judge Watson was twice married, his first wife being Miss Mary E. Owen, of Jackson county, to whom he was united July 11, 1872. She died February 9, 1875, and on May 28, 1879, Judge Watson married his second wife, nee Miss Ella C. Kubli of Jacksonville, their family consisting of two children, a boy and a girl. The Judge was a member of the A. F. and A. M., Improved Order of Red Men and A. O. U. W.