



Bartlett Tripp

Dakota Images

Bartlett Tripp was born in Harmony, Maine, on 15 July 1839, and was closely identified with the development of the judicial system of Dakota until the time of his death on 8 December 1911. After receiving his early education in country schools, he entered Colby College in 1857. While enroute to California, he visited a brother in Sioux City, Iowa, and also traveled to southeastern Dakota. The possibilities and the opportunities of that country made a lasting impression on him. Then, at Omaha he joined a party of sixty wagons that were crossing the plains, but he remained in Salt Lake City that winter and taught school before continuing on to Sacramento. While in Sacramento he assisted in the surveying of the Central Pacific railroad.

Because of failing health, he soon returned to Maine and entered a law school in Albany, New York. While there, he renewed a friendship with a fellow classmate, William McKinley, and they graduated together from law school in 1867. After practicing law for two years in Augusta, Maine, he returned to Dakota and settled at Yankton, joining his brother General William Tripp in a law partnership. Because of his ability and knowledge, he soon became recognized as one of the most eminent lawyers of the Dakota bar. In 1883 he was elected president of the first territorial constitutional convention, and in 1885 President Cleveland appointed him chief justice of the supreme court of Dakota.

In his later years he had a distinguished diplomatic career. He became the United States minister to Austria-Hungary from 1893 until 1897. His friend, President McKinley, appointed him chairman of the Samoan Commission in 1899. Later, he also served as minister to Australia.

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