

# W.M. Coldwell, Pioneer, Victim Of Heart Attack

**FUNERAL** services for judge William Michie Coldwell, 72, a practicing attorney in El Paso for half a century and the last of the "old stage" pioneers, who died Tuesday morning at 1:50 o'clock from a rupture of the heart at the home of his daughter, Mrs. J. A. Rule, 2514 Pershing Drive, will be held Wednesday afternoon at 5 o'clock from the church of St. Clement. Rev. B. T. Kemerer will conduct the services.

Four sons and two sons in law will act as pall bearers. They are Ballard, Colbert, Hugh and Philip Coldwell, J. A. Rule and William R. Collins.

The funeral cortege also will include six honorary pall bearers chosen from the attorneys of this city. Burial will be in Evergreen cemetery under the direction of the Hartford mortuary.

Judge Coldwell had been ill about two months. On June 7 he was seized with an attack of hardening of the arteries and was taken to the Masonic hospital. At that time it was feared that he would not survive the attack, but he seemed to rally although little hope was held out for his recovery.

On June 1 he was removed to the home of his daughter. He seemed to hold his own up until about an hour before his death. Shortly before he expired he told members of his family that he felt worse.

He rapidly grew weaker although he remained conscious until the end. As the shades of death began to creep over him he said to his son, judge Ballard Coldwell, "Everything is getting dark."

Judge Coldwell was a remarkable and a picturesque character. He was a philosopher and an exceptional student. He also possessed a keen sense of humor.

Judge Coldwell was born on June 25, 1855, at Mitchie's Landing, St. Francis county, Arkansas. Most of his life was spent in Texas and in this community.

He was brought to Texas from Arkansas with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Colbert Coldwell, when he was a child of two years. They settled in Tarrant county. Later they moved to Grimes county, where they lived during the Civil war period.

After the Civil war the family went to Austin. His father was judge of the supreme court there for a time.

In 1878 when the boy was 17 years old, Colbert Coldwell was appointed collector of customs here, and the family moved to El Paso, arriving on Christmas day.

Judge Coldwell has been a con-

tinuous resident of El Paso since that date. The family made the trip to this city in a buckboard pulled by a team of mules.

Although a buckboard was not a very pretentious vehicle in that day, the one which carried them to El Paso was distinctive in that the wheels were the ones that had once carried Cornwallis, the famous British general, during the Revolutionary war.

The wheels were captured from Cornwallis by judge Coldwell's uncle, Hamilton Ledbetter, a Tennessee mountaineer, who fought in the Revolutionary war.

After judge Coldwell came to El Paso he first got a job as a line rider with the customs department, which position he held for three years.

In the meantime he was studying for the bar. It was his life's ambition to be an attorney. In 1876 he passed the bar examination and was admitted to practice law at Ysleta, at that time the county seat of El Paso county.

Judge Coldwell first hung out his shingle in a one story adobe structure at San Francisco and Santa Fe streets, the present site of The Herald and The Times plant.

Later he formed a law firm with his brother-in-law, J. P. Hague, and they moved to the two story building at 105 San Antonio street, which is still standing.

In 1886 they dissolved partnership, and judge Coldwell opened an office in what was known as the Wells-Fargo building at 110 South El Paso street, opposite the present site of Hotel Paso del Norte.

Judge Coldwell again formed a law firm with J. U. Sweeney, former mayor of El Paso, in 1904. Their offices were in the Connerton and Lane building, the present site of the First Mortgage building. His professional relationship continued with Mr. Sweeney until the time of his death.

In 1910 they moved from the Connerton and Lane building to the Rio Grande bank building, the site of the American Trust and Savings bank. About two years ago they moved into the Caples building.

When judge Coldwell and his parents moved to El Paso they first lived in the building at 116 San Francisco, which is still standing.

He was married in 1881 to Miss Stella Brinck, of El Paso, in the first St. Clement's church to be built in this city, which was located on the present site of the Guarantee Shoe company.

They were the first American couple to be married in El Paso and to have reared an adult family here. Eight children were born to them, seven of whom now are living. His wife died in 1912.

Judge Coldwell, who was a practicing attorney in El Paso for 50 years, held different positions, connected with the city. He was first appointed city attorney about 40 years ago. He also occupied the same position during the Sweeney administration, which took office in April, 1907.

In 1910 Mr. Sweeney resigned as mayor, and judge Coldwell continued as city attorney under C. E. Kelly, who was appointed mayor by the council. He served as city attorney under Mr. Kelly two or three terms.

Judge Coldwell was elected judge of the corporation court in the early '90's and also served as alderman of El Paso in the closing years of the 19th century.

Recognized as one of the last of the picturesque pioneers of El Paso, judge Coldwell knew El Paso better than anyone else, growing up with it. He was a living reference of events connected with El Paso and the southwest.

A great scholar, he was recognized by his friends and associates as one of the best read men of his time in this part of the country.

In addition to his legal accomplishments, he was a linguist of much ability, having mastered eight different foreign languages. He was a regular reader of foreign newspapers, including French, German, Italian and Greek.

Judge Goldwell's remarkable accomplishments in the scholastic field are all the more striking when it is considered that he went to school very little. During his youth, schools were few and far between. He had an unquenchable desire for learning even in his youth, but he was unable to receive an academic education on account of the trying days which followed the Civil war.

Practically everything Judge Goldwell knew he taught himself by diligent study and wide reading, according to his friends. He was a voracious reader throughout his eventful life, his ordinary reading time being until about 2 o'clock in the morning.

The most striking thing about Judge Goldwell, according to an intimate friend was his powerful and original mind with its insatiable thirst for knowledge.

While his father was an able lawyer and a man of education and liberal ideals, Judge Goldwell nevertheless was in the strictest sense of the word a self educated man, a friend said.

"He had a practical working knowledge of foreign languages that would have done credit to any university scholar. During the last two years of his life he had been acquiring a reading knowledge of Portuguese.

"Judge Goldwell was a profound lawyer. His knowledge of history covered all eras of all countries. From the outbreak of the world war he was a close student of every development of the conflict and confidently predicted the victory of the allies.

"One of the great disappointments of his life was that he could not actively participate in the world war. He felt justly that his wealth of information on so many subjects ought to be useful in some capacity.

"He offered his services to the government, but on account of his age he was not called. It was a matter of intense satisfaction to him, however, that all his sons entered the military or naval service of the country."

With his taste for learning he united a keen personal interest in all local affairs. His counsel was sought in every important undertaking or crisis.

One of his intimate friends said that his sole desire apparently, was to prolong his life at this time so that he could carry through to a successful conclusion in the court of last resort a case he recently had won in the trials' court.

Judge Goldwell was a remarkable

lawyer in that the fire of life did not leave him even in his declining years, but retained that fighting spirit of the natural born attorney to the last, according to his intimate associates. "I am old enough to die but I would like to live long enough to conclude this law suit," he told a friend.

Judge Goldwell was the oldest practicing lawyer at the El Paso bar and unquestionably one of the greatest, one of the most prominent attorneys here said Tuesday morning.

"For two generations Judge Goldwell was actively engaged on one side or the other in a large proportion of the important legal cases tried in the El Paso courts," the attorney said.

"He had the absolute confidence of the early pioneers and to his death he still remained the attorney of some of the old houses he had represented for a generation.

"His speech, 'How Civilization Came to El Paso,' delivered before the El Paso bar association in 1903, acquired prestige far beyond the limits of Texas and is now included in the Lone Star edition of the World's Best Orations.

"Judge Goldwell also wrote some excellent poetry, including a volume of manuscripts, which it is hoped his family will see fit to publish. One of his poems 'Lee at the Wilderness,' has had a wide circulation.

His article on Woodrow Wilson entitled 'Wilson' after the breakdown of his health is to me as remarkable literary production as Phillip's Oration on Napoleon."

Judge Goldwell is survived by seven children, two daughters, Mrs. W. R. Collins and Mrs. J. A. Rule, of El Paso, and five sons. They are Judge Ballard Goldwell, of the 65th district court; Colbert Goldwell, Maj. Philip Goldwell, of San Antonio; Hugh Goldwell, of Abilene, and J. L. Harold Goldwell, an instructor in the United States Naval academy at Annapolis, Md.