

[Judge Charles Rufus Brice]

Interview

Redfield, Georgia B.

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JUDGE CHARLES RUFUS BRICE

JUSTICE OF NEW MEXICO SUPREME COURT.

Judge Charles Rufus Brice, Justice of the New Mexico Supreme Court, was born in Ferrell, Texas, August 6, 1870. His parents were Rev. John W. and Harriet (Chambers) Brice.

Judge Brice is almost entirely self educated. He received his early education in the public schools of Texas, and credit is due him for successfully overcoming the many obstacles he encountered in obtaining his higher education, necessary for his chosen profession - the law.

He was admitted to practice, District Court, 46th Judicial District 2, Texas, in 1893 and was County Attorney of Hall County, Texas 1896 - 1900.

On October 14, 1896 he was married to Miss Mary Evelyn Pruitt, of Blooming Grove, Texas. The couple have two daughters, Gladys Brice Wyatt, and Evelyn Brice Dowaliby, and three grandchildren, Mary Evelyn Wyatt, daughter of Mrs. Wyatt and James Junior, and Charles Brice Dowaliby, sons of Evelyn Brice Dowaliby.

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Judge Brice, with his family, moved to Carlsbad, New Mexico in 1903. He was elected Mayor of Carlsbad 1904 - 1906.

In 1909 he was elected to New Mexico House of Representatives for two years.

In 1910 he was elected Delegate to the New Mexico Constitutional Convention, which convened in Santa Fe in 1911. He and his family moved to Roswell in 1916.

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In 1918 he was elected District Judge, 5th Judicial District of New Mexico - was re-elected in 1924, and resigned in 1927 to re-enter the practice of law which he resumed with the late Clarence J. Roberts, Chief Justice of New Mexico Supreme Court.

In 1934, he was elected Justice of the Supreme Court of New Mexico, for a term of eight years.

During the years of Judge Brice's residence in Carlsbad he worked untiringly in the long struggle for statehood, which had begun as far back, as 1870. Admittance to the union was deferred from year to year because of too small population for so large a territory.

Judge Brice was one of the few Democrats (there were only twenty-six) of the one hundred men, mostly Republicans that formed the Constitutional Convention that convened in Santa Fe in 1911, before New Mexico was made a state in January 1912.

As a member on appointment of Committees, Judge Brice appointed the late Judge Granvill A. Richardson, of Roswell as a member of the Judiciary Committee.

Judge and Mrs. Brice are of the First Baptist Church of Roswell. They are members of Roswell Country Club and other social club organizations. They are world traveled, having been abroad frequently - accompanied by different members of their family on numerous journeys.

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In their home 800 No. Richardson Avenue, there are treasures collected by them from many nations. Masterpieces of paintings and hand-carved woods and pieces of furniture, embroidered linens, and treasures of China (gathered by Mrs. Brice) and dolls, collected by Evelyn Wyatt, from all the countries she visited when traveling abroad with her mother and grand parents in 1935. The pleasure of possession of these treasures has been shared by the Brice family in frequent exhibits for benefit of the public.

Fraternally - Judge Brice is connected with the Masonic and Knights of Pythias Lodges. He is a member of the National and State Bar Associations, and is President of Chaves County Archaeological and Historical Society - succeeding Lieutenant Governor Hiram M. Dow in 1937

Sources of Information

Mrs. Mary Evelyn Brice - wife of Judge Brice.