

JAMES FINLEY WATSON

James Finley Watson was born at Dubuque, Iowa, on March 15, 1840, and died in Portland, Oregon, June 12, 1897.

He removed with his parents to the state of Oregon, in 1853, and spent the years of his youth and manhood herein. He acquired a liberal education at the public schools and at Columbia College, Eugene, Oregon, at which institution he was one of the first students. After spending several years prospecting and mining, he read law in the office of Rufus Mallory, in Roseburg, and was admitted to practice by the Supreme Court in September, 1863. He immediately opened an office at Roseburg, and entered upon the work of his profession, to which he devoted the subsequent years of his life. He was twice elected Prosecuting Attorney of the Second District of this state and served full terms.

In 1872, he was elected to the State Senate from Douglas County, and in 1876 was elected Associate Justice of the Supreme Court from the same district. In 1878 the legislative act provided that the judges of the Supreme Court and of the Circuit Court be elected in separate classes, and that the Supreme Court be composed of three judges. Following this change he served but two years on the Supreme Bench. He was then appointed Circuit Judge for the Second District, and was elected his own successor in 1880.

In 1882, having been appointed United States District Attorney for Oregon, he resigned the office of which he was then incumbent and removed to Portland, and for the next four years discharged the duties of his new position. After the expiration of his term of office he returned to the practice of his profession and continued therein until his death.

(From History of the Bench and Bar of Oregon, p. 281.)