

## THE SUPREME COURT OF OREGON

The constitution of Oregon, as adopted by the people in 1858 and ratified by congress in 1859, provided that until the population should reach one hundred thousand, circuit judges for the several judicial districts should meet annually, or oftener if necessary, at the state capitol and hold supreme court, the judge whose decision was being reviewed not sitting as a supreme judge in each instance. On account of this provision it happens that during the early history of Oregon there were more judges upon the supreme bench than during the more recent years. In the year 1878 an act, as contemplated in the constitution, providing for the election of supreme and circuit judges in distinct classes, was duly passed, and from that date to the present time the supreme court has consisted of three justices, duly elected by the people and serving in that capacity only, the circuit and supreme courts being separate and distinct. The constitution designated the senior judge, or the one whose term is next to expire, as the chief justice at any particular period of time; thus, the office of chief justice rotates at each biennial election, so that in the case of a justice being reelected he serves in the capacity of associate justice four years and in the capacity of chief justice two years, the term for which each supreme judge is elected being six years. There have now been printed thirty-one volumes of the Oregon supreme court reports, or the written decisions of the chief and associate justices of the supreme court of Oregon. The records regarding the reporting of these books are somewhat indefinite, but appear to be about as follows:

From 1853 to 1870 Judge Joseph G. Wilson, serving part of the time as judge of the supreme court and part of the time as clerk, reported the principal decisions in three volumes, being volumes I, II and III. From 1870 to 1880, Mr. C. B. Bellinger was clerk of the supreme court, and reported volumes IV, V, VI, VII and VIII. From 1880 to 1884, Mr. T. B. Odeneal reported volumes IX, X and XI. Mr. J. A. Stratton became clerk of the supreme court in 1884, continuing until 1887, during which time he reported volumes XII, XIII and XIV. Mr. W. H. Holmes reported volumes XV, XVI and XVII, covering the period from 1887 to 1889. In 1889 a law was passed enlarging the powers and duties of the supreme court and imposing upon the chief justice the duty of reporting the decisions of the court. It thus happens that during the years 1889 and 1890 Chief Justice W. W. Thayer and Chief Justice R. S. Strahan reported, respectively, volumes XVIII and XIX of the Oregon supreme court reports. In 1891 the present law authorizing the employment of an official supreme court reporter, whose special duty it is to correctly arrange and have published the decisions of the Oregon supreme court, was passed, and Mr. George H. Burnett was elected the first reporter under this law. Between the years 1890 and 1892 he reported volumes XX, XXI and XXII. In 1892 the present supreme court reporter, Mr. Robert G. Morrow, began his duties, and has since that time reported volumes XXIII, XXIV, XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXX and XXXI, to XLIX inclusive.

- "Political and Official History & Register of Oregon"  
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