

Civil War Justices

Joseph T. Copeland, 14th Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1852–1857



Justice Joseph T. Copeland was born in Maine on May 6, 1813. He attended Harvard University and later read law with Daniel Webster. President Andrew Jackson sent him on a “secret mission” to Michigan, and he returned in 1844 to settle in St. Clair.

Copeland had a long career as a gentleman soldier. When the Civil War broke out, he raised a Michigan cavalry regiment and drilled under

Gen. George B. McClellan on the Potomac. He lost command of his regiment when McClellan was removed, and was forced to watch while Gen. Custer led his regiment at Gettysburg, the bloodiest battle of the Civil War. Copeland resigned his commission on November 8, 1865.

He died on May 6, 1893, 80 years to the day of his birth.

Allen B. Morse, 29th Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1885–1892

Justice Allen B. Morse was born in Michigan and studied at Michigan Agricultural College (now Michigan State University). He taught school and had begun to study the law before enlisting in the Union Army. He served in a number of different capacities as a member of Michigan’s 16th Infantry. During the storming of Missionary Ridge, he was wounded and lost his left arm. Upon his discharge from the war, he resumed his law studies and began practicing law in Ionia County.



“Ever at the post of duty, either in the office or on the field, he won the esteem and confidence of his superior officers and the love and respect of his juniors.”

—F. T. Sherman, Morse’s superior officer

Charles D. Long, 30th Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1888–1902



Justice Charles D. Long was born in Grand Blanc, Michigan, on June 14, 1841. He was teaching and preparing to enter the University of Michigan when the Civil War began, drastically altering his plans. He served in Company A of the 8th Michigan Infantry. On April 16, 1862, during the Battle of Wilmington Island, Georgia, he lost his left arm. A bullet was also lodged in his thigh, where it

remained for the rest of his life.

Toward the end of his life, Long was engaged in various legal battles over his pension rights as a Civil War veteran. His service on the Michigan Supreme Court was interrupted in 1902 by pain from his wounds, and he subsequently died.

Edward Cahill, 31st Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1890

Justice Edward Cahill was born on August 3, 1843, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. In 1862, he joined the Union Army and fought in Kentucky until he was discharged later that year due to illness. He returned to Kalamazoo and began studying law in the offices of Miller and Barns.

In the fall of 1863, he raised the first African-American infantry unit in Michigan. He served with his men, eventually attaining the rank of captain, until the end of the war.

African Americans constituted 10 percent of the Union Army by the end of the war, and nearly 40,000 African-American soldiers died over the course of the war.

Cahill, who was the great-nephew of Michigan Governor and Supreme Court Justice Epaphroditus Ransom, was appointed to the bench in 1890 to replace Thomas R. Sherwood.



Claudius B. Grant, 32nd Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1890–1909



Justice Claudius B. Grant was born in Maine on October 2, 1835. He entered the University of Michigan at age 20 and, following completion of his studies, taught school in Ann Arbor. He resigned as principal in the school district to serve in the Union Army.

He participated in many notable battles and resigned from duty in 1864 with the rank of colonel, a title he carried proudly throughout the rest of his life. Later in life, he was disciplined in keeping in touch with his regiment and never missed a reunion with his comrades in arms.

Immediately after the war, Grant entered law school at the University of Michigan. Upon admittance to the Bar, he began practicing with former Justice and Governor Alpheus Felch and married Felch's eldest daughter, Caroline.

Republished with permission from the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Society. This article first appeared in the Spring 2014 Society Update newsletter. The biographies of the justices were drawn from the Michigan Supreme Court Historical Reference Guide.

Robert M. Montgomery, 34th Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1892–1910



Justice Robert M. Montgomery, born in Eaton Rapids, Michigan, enlisted in the Union Army and was a part of the 7th Michigan Cavalry, but did not see active service during the Civil War.

Joseph B. Moore, 37th Justice

Michigan Supreme Court 1895–1925



Justice Joseph B. Moore was born November 3, 1845. He tried to enlist in the Union Army but, upon arrival in the barracks, was refused acceptance by the surgeon. His brother took his place in the ranks instead.

75 years of Presidential Visions & Visages

This striking commemorative book features a portrait and visionary statement of every State Bar of Michigan president from 1935 to 2010. Add it to your library today.

\$21.95 each. Preview and order yours at:
<http://www.michbar.org/publications/>

SBM
State Bar of Michigan