

LEON ABBETT IS DEAD

New-Jersey Supreme Court Justice Succumbs to Long Illness.

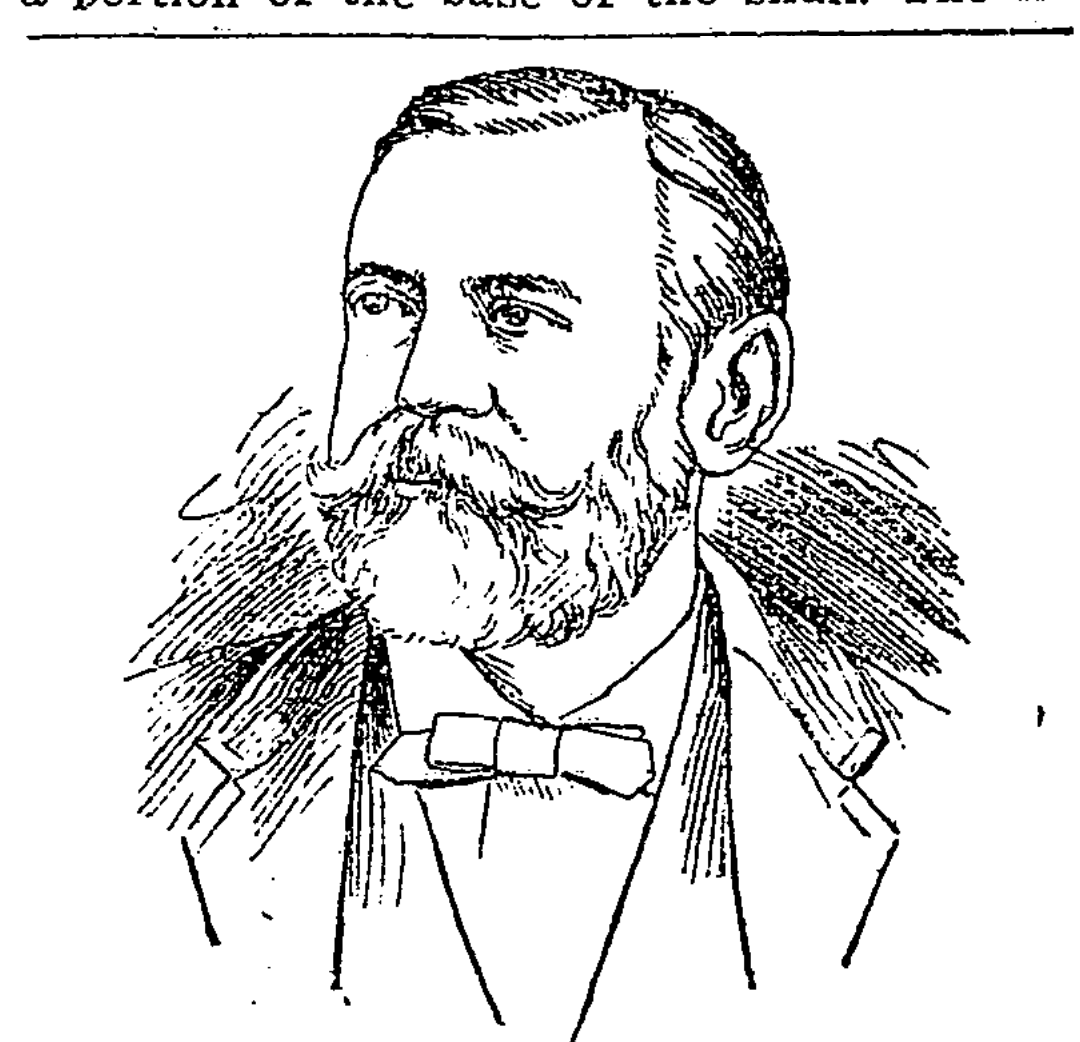
HIS MANY POLITICAL HONORS

A Self-Made Man Who Was Twice Governor of the State and for Many Years a Leader Among Democrats.

JERSEY CITY, N. J., Dec. 4.—Leon Abbett, Supreme Court Justice and twice Governor of New-Jersey, died in his home, Montgomery Street and Jersey Avenue, at 2:58 o'clock this afternoon. His only daughter, Mrs. Mary Post; his only surviving son, Leon Abbett, Jr.; his brother, B. Frank Abbett, and Mrs. Dodd, his sister-in-law, were at his bedside.

Death resulted from a complication of diseases, several of which had been of long standing, but the immediate cause was diabetes, catarrh of the stomach, and exhaustion produced by overwork.

Justice Abbett was prostrated several years ago by an ailment of the brain, and his life was saved only by the removal of a portion of the base of the skull. The illness which terminated fatally to-day manifested itself in serious form Thanksgiving Day. While not prostrated, the Justice was seriously ill and told his family that he thought he would be benefited by a Turkish bath. He was persuaded to go to bed instead. The following day he was able to be about the house, but was not well enough to go to Trenton. He was again prostrated Saturday, and Dr. John D. McGill, his physician, arranged for a consultation with Dr. A. Brayton Ball, the New-York specialist, which was to have been held this afternoon.



Leon Abbett,
Ex-Governor of New-Jersey.

All the members of the family were summoned, and all arrived in season except a brother, Edwin L. Abbett, who lives in New-York, and the aged mother, Mrs. Sarah Abbett, who lives with B. Frank Abbett at Trenton, and who has completed her eighty-third year.

Justice Abbett was born in Philadelphia Oct. 8, 1836. He came of Quaker stock, his father, Ezekiel Abbett, being a descendant of a Quaker family that settled in Pennsylvania in the early years of the eighteenth century. His mother was a member of an old New-Jersey family, being a Miss Howell of Mauricetown, in Cumberland County.

Justice Abbett's parents were not wealthy, nor did he enjoy unusual educational advantages in his youth. He was what is styled a self-made man and an example of indomitable pluck and energy. He made no secret of the fact that his father was a journeyman hatter and unable to give a college education to his sons. Justice Abbett attended a public school in Philadelphia, and in 1853 was graduated from the High School in that city. The degree of A. B., and subsequently of M. A., was conferred upon him by that institution, and during his first term as Governor Princeton College conferred upon him the degree of LL.D.

After leaving High School he entered the law office of John W. Ashmead, at that time United States District Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania. Immediately after attaining his majority he began the practice of the law. Shortly after, he married Miss Mary Briggs, and moved to New-Jersey, making his home at Hoboken, where, with the small beginning of an election as Assemblyman, he embarked on a political career, the success of which is unequalled in the annals of the State. At the same time he formed a law partnership with William J. A. Fuller of New-York City, which continued for thirty years, and was terminated only by Mr. Fuller's death.

Mr. Abbett was elected to the Assembly from Hoboken in November, 1865. He had already shown marked ability as a political speaker, and, although he was a new member and a comparatively young man he was chosen Chairman of the Democratic Assembly caucus. He was re-elected the following year, and was again made Chairman of the caucus. Shortly after his second term expired he removed to this city, where he made his home up to the time of his death. He was elected in 1869 to the Assembly from the First District, which he again represented in 1870.

While Mr. Abbett was serving his first term in the Legislature, Gov. Ward called an extra session, for the purpose of ratifying the Fourteenth Amendment, and in the debate which ensued Mr. Abbett was one of the foremost Democratic speakers. During his first term as Assemblyman from this city he was elected Speaker of the House, and upon his return, in the year following, he was made Speaker a second time. On both occasions he discharged his duties to the satisfaction of both parties, and was honored with a unanimous vote of thanks. During these years Mr. Abbett was also Corporation Counsel of the cities of Hoboken, Bayonne, and Union Hill.

Mr. Abbett went to Europe in 1874. While he was absent the Democrats of Hudson County nominated him to the State Senate, and he was elected by a majority of 4,940. He was elected President of that body in 1877. It was during that session that John R. McPherson was first elected to the United States Senate. The Democrats had but one majority, and Mr. Abbett was requested to become a candidate. He steadfastly refused, because he had pledged himself to Mr. McPherson. The joint meeting at which Mr. McPherson was chosen was an unruly body, and it was mainly due to Mr. Abbett's firmness that a bolt and a coalition with the Republicans was prevented.

Mr. Abbett was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 1872 and acted as one of its Secretaries. He cast his vote for Thomas F. Bayard because he foresaw that the nomination of Mr. Greeley meant disaster to the Democratic Party. New-Jersey indorsed his views by giving to Gen. Grant 15,000 majority. He was a delegate to the National Convention at St. Louis in 1876. He was unanimously chosen Chairman of the New-Jersey delegation and earnestly advocated the nomination of Joel Parker, New-Jersey's famous war Governor, until he saw that there was no chance for his success, when he swung New-Jersey's vote to Samuel J. Tilden.

Mr. Abbett was also a delegate to the National Conventions of 1884, 1888, and 1892. In the first of these he opposed the nomination of Mr. Cleveland, but at the last National Convention of the party he not only favored Mr. Cleveland's candidacy, but made an effective speech by way of placing him in nomination in behalf of the Democracy of New-Jersey. He was always prominent in State affairs and was among the first of New-Jersey's Governors to advocate a general water supply under the direction of the State. He was also active in protecting the riparian rights of the State.

Gov. McClellan appointed Mr. Abbett a member of the commission to draft a general law for cities, and Gov. Ludlow made him a member of the commission to devise means for a more equitable mode of taxation than had prevailed in the State up to 1882.

It was while a member of this body that Mr. Abbett formed his views in regard to equal taxation as between railroad and other corporate property and the property of private individuals, and which he afterward so clearly enforced during the two terms he served as Governor of the State.

He defeated Judge Jonathan Dixon in 1883 for the Governorship by a majority of 6,809, and in 1889 he defeated Gen. E. Burd Grubb by a majority of 14,253. He was Corporation Counsel for Jersey City for five years.

But Gov. Abbett, like many other men, did not so much value the successes he achieved as he regretted his one failure. It is an open secret that the ambition of his life was to be United States Senator, an honor which ever seemed close at hand, but which he never grasped. He was defeated in 1887, after the eleventh hour had struck, by a combination which agreed upon Rufus Blodgett, not so much because Mr. Blodgett wanted the position as because the combination was determined to defeat Gov. Abbett.

In the same way he was beaten in 1892, by a combination which gave to James Smith, Jr., the honor that Gov. Abbett so dearly coveted. He was made Governor for the second time in 1889, to compensate him for his defeat in 1887, and when he was defeated in 1892 he was made Supreme Court Justice for the same reason.

Gov. Abbett's wife died fourteen years ago, and his eldest son, Gen. William F. Abbett, about two years ago. Both of these losses affected him deeply, as, despite the turmoil of political life, he was always bound up in the welfare and happiness of his family.

Gov. Abbett will be buried in the family plot in Greenwood Friday morning. The funeral services will take place at the house Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. They will be conducted by the Rev. George S. Bennett, rector of Grace Episcopal Church.

vocate a general water supply under the direction of the State. He was also active in protecting the riparian rights of the State.

Gov. McClellan appointed Mr. Abbett a member of the commission to draft a general law for cities, and Gov. Ludlow made him a member of the commission to devise means for a more equitable mode of taxation than had prevailed in the State up to 1882.

It was while a member of this body that Mr. Abbett formed his views in regard to equal taxation as between railroad and other corporate property and the property of private individuals, and which he afterward so clearly enforced during the two terms he served as Governor of the State.

He defeated Judge Jonathan Dixon in 1883 for the Governorship by a majority of 6,809, and in 1889 he defeated Gen. E. Burd Grubb by a majority of 14,253. He was Corporation Counsel for Jersey City for five years.

But Gov. Abbett, like many other men, did not so much value the successes he achieved as he regretted his one failure. It is an open secret that the ambition of his life was to be United States Senator, an honor which ever seemed close at hand, but which he never grasped. He was defeated in 1887, after the eleventh hour had struck, by a combination which agreed upon Rufus Blodgett, not so much because Mr. Blodgett wanted the position as because the combination was determined to defeat Gov. Abbett.

In the same way he was beaten in 1892, by a combination which gave to James Smith, Jr., the honor that Gov. Abbett so dearly coveted. He was made Governor for the second time in 1889, to compensate him for his defeat in 1887, and when he was defeated in 1892 he was made Supreme Court Justice for the same reason.

Gov. Abbett's wife died fourteen years ago, and his eldest son, Gen. William F. Abbett, about two years ago. Both of these losses affected him deeply, as, despite the turmoil of political life, he was always bound up in the welfare and happiness of his family.

Gov. Abbett will be buried in the family plot in Greenwood Friday morning. The funeral services will take place at the house Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. They will be conducted by the Rev. George S. Bennett, rector of Grace Episcopal Church.