

Charles M. Tompkins **(1822 – 6 Sep 1913)**

Tompkins. On Saturday, September 6, 1913, at his residence, 132 C street northeast, Judge Charles M. Tompkins. Interment (private) Monday, September 8 at 2:30 o'clock.

The Evening Star, September 8, 1913, p. 16

Charles M. Tompkins is Dead, Aged 91 Years

Former Lawyer and Judge and Many Years Employee of Pension Office

Judge Charles M. Tompkins, for many years an employee of the pension bureau, died Saturday at his home, 132 C street northeast, aged ninety-one years. Funeral services were held this afternoon at 2:30 o'clock at the residence. Rev. Dr. William I. McKenney, pastor of Wesley Methodist Episcopal Chapel, was the officiating clergyman, and interment was in Congressional cemetery.

Judge Tompkins was a native of Westchester county, N.Y. Born at Somers in 1822 he was graduated from New York University in 1844. Removing in the summer of 1847 to Fond du Lac, Wis., he became identified with the grain, lumber and warehouse business, and engaged in the practice of law, later serving as district attorney for Fond du Lac county and judge for the counties of Fond du Lac and Calumet, and postmaster of the city.

Coming to Washington in May, 1861, Judge Tompkins entered the pension office, where he remained for forty-nine years, serving on the board of review.

Judge Tompkins numbered among his ancestors former Gov. Daniel D. Tompkins of New York and Dr. Elias Cornelius, surgeon in the revolutionary army, who enjoyed the friendship and confidence of Gen. Washington. He is survived by one daughter.

The Evening Star, August 13, 1902, p. 6

Valuable Servant

Judge Tompkins' Long Career in Pension Bureau

80 Years Old Today

Entered the Service Under Barrett May 9, 1861

During Forty-One Years He Has Never Been Late or Tardy--His Recollections

Few men reach four-score years sound in mind and body. Today Judge C.M. Tompkins, dean of the pension office, was congratulated by friends in the office on his eightieth birthday. He is still alert and active--never late or tardy--and to all appearances able to render good service for some years to come.

Judge Tompkins entered the bureau as clerk May 9, 1861, when it contained less than 100 employees, and now it outranks some of the departments in the scope and importance of its work. That he has been in the bureau continuously for over forty-one years is good evidence that his service and experience are considered valuable to the government.

To know that during this long period of service he has had the confidence of his superiors in office and good will of his associates is of itself gratifying, and he considers it the most fortunate part of his life to have served under three of the most illustrious men of the country--Lincoln, Grant and McKinley.

Judge Tompkins went to his desk in the pension bureau today as usual. Throughout the day friends called to express the wish that he may live to celebrate many birthday anniversaries. The mail brought him not a few letters of congratulation.

Long and Active Career

This venerable servant of the government was born August 13, 1822, in Westchester county, N.Y. After pursuing the usual academic course in his native town (Somers) he entered the university in the city of New York in 1840, and graduated in 1844. Among his classmates were Dr. Howard Crosby and A. Oakey Hall of New York. Theodore Frelinghuysen was at the time chancellor of the university and ran for Vice President on the ticket with Henry Clay. Judge Tompkins reverts with pride to the fact that his first vote was cast for "Clay and Frelinghuysen."

Having prepared himself for the law, he moved to Wisconsin in the summer of 1847 and settled in Fond du Lac. In 1848 Mr. Tompkins was nominated for the office of district attorney for the county on the Whig ticket, running ahead of his ticket. In 1850 he was elected judge for the counties of Fond du Lac and Calumet, which office he held for four years.

Shortly after his election he was appointed postmaster of the city, serving nearly the whole of President Fillmore's administration. In 1849 Judge Tompkins was married to Miss Amelia Davis of Fond du Lac, eldest daughter of Col. C. Davis, a pioneer, and three children were the fruits of this union, but none survive.

Judge Tompkins was fortunate in his ancestral relations, being a lineal descendant of Gov. Daniel D. Tompkins of New York, while his grandfather, Dr. Elias Cornelius, was an eminent surgeon in the revolutionary army under Gen. Washington, whose friendship and confidence he enjoyed during life.

Interesting Recollections

"I came to Washington in 1861 to attend Mr. Lincoln's inauguration," Judge Tompkins said to an Evening Star reporter today. I had no thought of remaining here, and probably should not have done so had it not been for Senator Timothy O. Howe of Wisconsin, who was a personal friend.

"'War will break out, and you'll have a chance of seeing something if you stay,' Howe said to me.

"He secured a position for me in the pension bureau, and I have been with the bureau ever since. I witnessed the inauguration of Lincoln that year, and I have been present at every inauguration of a President of the United States since that time. I recall distinctly of attending the reception at the White House on the evening of March 4, 1861, and shaking hands with Mr. Lincoln. There was a vast crowd about the White House, and it was by the greatest effort that I succeeded in reaching the President. I saw Lincoln on various occasions while he was President. I lived on the Island, south of the Smithsonian Institution, and he frequently drove near my house.

"I called on president McKinley shortly before his death to introduce some friends who were visiting me. An hour after Garfield was shot at the 6th street depot I took a train for Trenton, N.J. I was at Englishtown when the train which conveyed him and his physicians to Elberon passed through. I was at Ocean Grove when he died, and went to Elberon a few hours after his death.

War-Time Excitement

Judge Tompkins gives a graphic description of the excitement in Washington when President Lincoln was shot. At the first battle of Bull Run he heard distinctly the cannonading. He recalls vividly the interest among the citizens of the District of Columbia when General Early tried to invade the national capital, and was only prevented from doing so by the timely arrival of the 6th Army Corps. With a hundred other clerks in the pension bureau he drilled in the open court of the patent office. Joseph H. Barrett was commissioner of pensions when Judge Tompkins first entered the service of the government. Mr. Barrett is said to be living in Cincinnati, and is hale and hearty, despite his advanced age.

"Wonderful changes have taken place in Washington since I first came here," Judge Tompkins said. "Many and many times during the civil war I saw government wagons stalled in the mud. Pennsylvania

avenue and 7th street were the only thoroughfares paved with cobble stones. Now you can go to any part of the city on the best of asphalt pavements, and you can walk under shade almost everywhere.

"In those days the people of the city were dependent on omnibuses. Now street cars will take you to any part of the city and miles into the country. Then Washington was a country village; now it is one of the finest residence cities in the world."

Blessed With Good Health

Judge Tompkins is blessed with good health. His hand is as firm and his nerves as strong as those of one much younger. He is strong in mind and body. His home at 132 C street northeast is a pleasant one. The judge often entertains his friends.

A year ago last May, upon the completion of forty years' service in the pension bureau, Judge Tompkins was presented by his colleagues in the bureau with a beautiful silver loving cup. This token of love and esteem has a conspicuous place within his home and he points to it with great pride to all who visit him.