

# Bethinking of Old Orleans

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JUDGE W. CRAWFORD RAMSDALE 1856 - 1921

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William Crawford Ramsdale was born in Saratoga County and came to Orleans County at an early age with his parents. He received his education from the Albion Academy and graduated from the University of Rochester in 1879 as a member of Theta Delta Chi Fraternity. He married the former Ellen Wall and they resided on East State in Albion. He studied law under John H. White a prominent Albion Attorney and upon being admitted to the bar practiced law until his death in the firm known as Ramsdale and Church. His partner Sanford T. Church was at one time Deputy Attorney General.

Judge Ramsdale was widely known in Democrat politics during his time and was elected to public office on numerous occasions. He served as trustee on the Albion Village Board as well as being a clerk of the Village Board of Trustees. He also was president of the Board of Education. During both Democrat and Republican administrations, Judge Ramsdale served as clerk of the Orleans County Board of Supervisors. In 1890 he was appointed County Treasurer to fill the unexpired term of Augustus W. Barnett. In 1896 he was the first Democrat to be elected County Judge and Surrogate which office he held until 1901. The reason for this political upset occurred because Wm. P.L. Stafford whom he ran against had been the prosecuting attorney in 1888 against Geo. Willson who was the only person ever sentenced to hang in Orleans County. Public sentiment being against capital punishment and people in general, feeling ashamed that this execution had taken place in their county, brought about Stafford's defeat. Only one other Democrat has been elected to the position of County Judge since; that being Gerald B. Fluhrer in the early 1920's. In 1907 Judge Ramsdale was elected Orleans County District Attorney and served one term until 1910. He was a director of several large banking institutions, including the Orleans County Trust Company at Albion, the Wilson State Bank, and the Ransomville State Bank. He was also president of the Waterman Hardware Store, Inc. of Albion.

Having joined Renovation Lodge F & AM in 1885 he became prominent in Masonic circles. First serving as Master of the lodge he later became District Deputy Grand Master of the Niagara-Orleans District. His interest in fraternal organizations also included the Albion Lodge of BPO Elks of which he was a member. For many years he was extremely active in Christ Episcopal Church serving several years as Senior Warden of the Vestry. At the time of his death he was president of the Albion Historical Club and part owner of an Albion newspaper.

He was considered to be: "A man of kind heart and sterling integrity, the honors which were his left him always the same. To rich and poor alike he was considerate and courteous."