

# Old Orleans

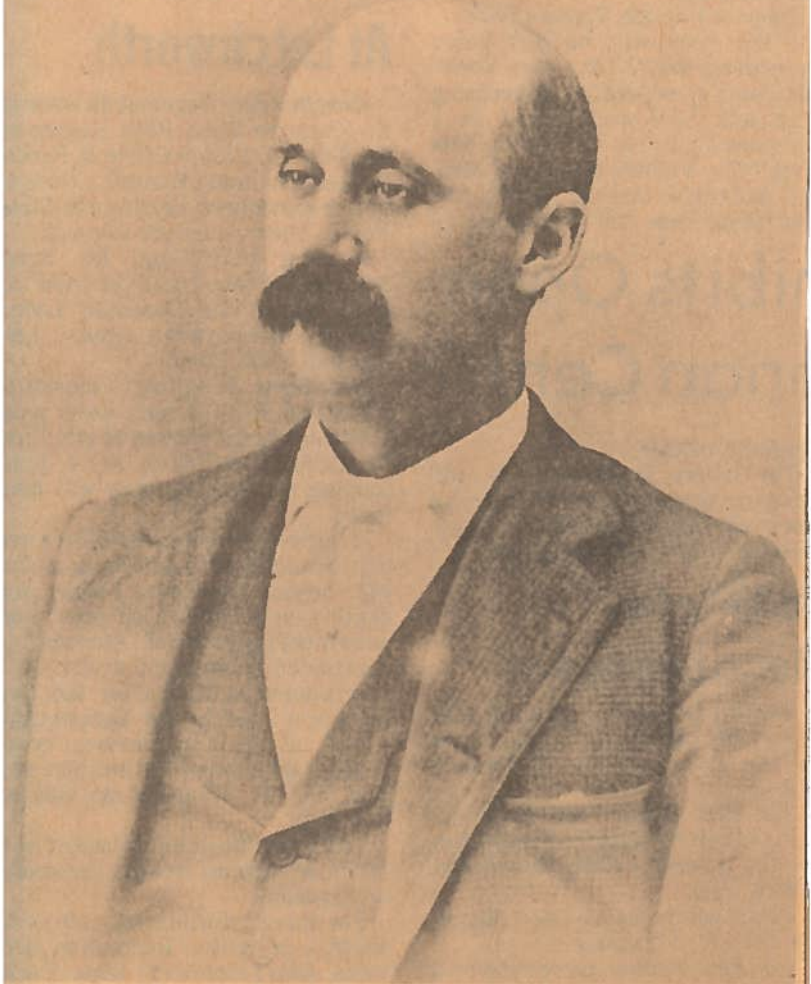
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## Judge Fred L. Downs 1855-1919



"Glorious is the fruit of good labors; and the root of understanding shall never fall away."

### The Wisdom of Solomon

Fred L. Downs was born in Medina on Aug. 14, 1855 to Lester C. and Susan Garter Downs. The grandfather, Simeon Downs was an early settler in Medina, arriving in 1825. He was by trade, a blacksmith and edge tool maker. Later he became a daguerrean artist and eventually an insurance agent.

Lester C. Downs, father of Fred, studied music and became a successful teacher of singing. He died at the early age of 34 when Fred L. Downs was only five years of age. This made it necessary for Fred to be brought up by an uncle, Darrius Fuller, with whom he lived for 10 years. Fred Downs attended district school and the Medina Academy for three years. At age 18 he determined he wanted to study law. He entered the office of Stanley E. Filkins of Medina where he studied for three years under the elder attorney's guidance. On April 10, 1880 he was admitted to the bar and immediately opened his own office in Medina. Subsequently he became a partner with Morgan L. Brainard for a short time and then H.B. Dayton for one year.

In politics Fred L. Downs was a Republican. In 1882 he was first elected Justice of the Peace for the Town of Ridgeway and held that office for four years commencing in Jan. 1883. In March 1885, he was elected a Trustee for the Village of Medina, a position he held for three years. In March 1892 he was elected Mayor and returned to that office yearly three more times.

In 1895 Fred Downs was elected Assemblyman for Orleans County, serving one term during the years 1896-97. In the fall of 1911 Fred Downs was elected County Judge and Surrogate at which time he succeeded Judge Isaac Signor. In the fall of 1917 he was re-elected to the same position. He was not able to complete that term as he died of pulmonary embolism on April 17, 1919 after suffering from influenza.

He was a member of the Orleans County Bar Association having practiced in Medina for close to 40 years. He was also a member of the Masonic and Odd Fellow Lodges in Medina.

In 1890 he had married Emma A. Emmons and they had one child who became Mrs. Oscar Acer.

Judge Downs was considered "....above all a man in whose heart the milk of human kindness ever bubbled pure and strong."