Class of 1897

Class Bulletin no. 54: Law Class of 1897

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ABBOTT, CHARLES F., Middlebury, Vt.—Deceased, April 27, 1929.

ABBOTT, CHARLES S., Chicago, Ill.—Deceased, March 12, 1946.

AIRD, C. W., Brantford, Ont.—Deceased, September 8, 1931.


BAER, AUGUST H., Bellville, Ill.—Deceased, October 27, 1918.


BARTLETT, CHARLES L., Detroit, Mich.—"Charles L. Bartlett, ’97, former Recorders' Court Judge at Detroit, died July 14, after a lingering illness. His death came in the month following a special class reunion which Judge William L. Hart, ’97, Class President, had arranged to be held at the Bartlett home, and which Judge Bartlett “characterized as one of the happiest occasions in his life-time.” Judge Bartlett was born in Battle Creek, Mich., and entered the University after private study and preparation through correspondence courses. Soon after the Spanish-American war, he formed his own law partnership, Bartlett and Wisner. Appointed Recorder and Judge of Recorders' Court by Governor Alex Groesbeck, he became a subject of national renown for the severity of the sentences which he meted out to automobile “killers,” speeders and drunken drivers. Judge Bartlett had an outstanding career in Masonry and was also a Past President of the Michigan Elks Association. He was an honorary member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, of the Detroit, Wayne and Michigan bar associations, and of many fraternal and patriotic societies. He was an accomplished violinist and was an honorary life member of the Detroit Federation of Musicians. He was also interested in boxing and often served as timekeeper or judge at professional contests. Surviving Judge Bartlett is his widow, Mary Carpenter Bartlett, A. M. ’38."—Michigan Alumnus.


Dear Classmates of ’97 Law:

For the past fifteen years in December, I have sat beside my beloved Charles while he affectionately penned his class report.
This year I sit alone. Scores of times I have read over his last class report — so cheerful, so hopeful, and filled with the joy of living, when he knew that his life was ebbing away. It was this indomitable spirit that carried him to greatness—loved and respected by all. Charles' life-saving work has left a lasting imprint on humanity. He was one of God's Noblemen. Across the miles, I send my greetings to you. Please write for I am very lonely.

Sincerely, Mary C. Bartlett.


BLACKBURN, JAMES H., Mt. Vernon, Ind.—No report.

BODMAN, HENRY E., 1400 Buhl Bldg., Detroit, Michigan—No report.


COOMBS, ROY R., 352B South Reeves Drive, Beverly Hills, Calif. There is nothing personal I can tell you about myself, that is interesting. I am still loafing, taking good care of myself so I can live as long as possible. Why I'm doing this, I don't know as present world conditions are such that life don't mean much. Our span of life is nearly finished. It's what we, by our foolishness, have wished on future generations that makes one's heart bleed. We have, ever since the New Deal came into existence, been on the road to financial ruin. And still the Fair Deal goes merrily on, attending football game while men are being shot and freezing to death in Korea. And all the while the game was going on, airplanes were flying around to keep some one from shooting Mr. Truman. How an airplane could give him any protection I don't know. I think this must have been another bright idea of our State Department. My blood pressure has started to rise so I am going to close. Wish all the class the compliments of the season and the best of luck.

DANCER, HERBERT A., 1000 Alworth Bldg., Duluth, Minn.—I have not seen any member of the class this year. When in New York once, I tried to reach Orton and Ransom but was unable to do so. You are right, we are getting fewer, but I think at an unusually slow rate. I was sorry not to see Charlie Bartlett. When at Coral Gables, during the winter, I telephoned the Hills nurse several times but Charles W. was always so very ill that she discouraged any callers. Anyhow I rather like to remember my friends as I last saw them, in vigorous health. We missed the Whites in Coral Gables last winter. When we are home, I am at the office every day, but with several younger lawyers in the office I take it easier. And while the winter here is always grim, it is even worse than usual this year, and Mrs. Dancer and I are leaving on the first of January. We will be at the Robert Clay Hotel in Miami after a brief stay in Palm Beach. Foreign travel has not been very appealing since the second World War started. We were in Italy at that time. I am tempted to open up
on the terrible condition the country is now in, due largely to
the almost incredible stupidity and stubborness in Washington,
but what is the use. I am sure that we all feel the same about it.
Our only daughter graduated from Michigan quite a few years
ago, and her only son is now thinking about going there as the
fourth generation of our family at Michigan, if he is permitted to
go anywhere else than in the army. Kindest personal regards to
all members of the class.

DRUMHELLER, THOMAS J., Box 538, Walla Walla, Wash., from
Nov. 1 to April 15, and Box 515, Chelan, Wash., from April 15 to
Nov. 1—No Report.

FIELD, FREEMAN, Los Angeles, Calif.—Deceased, Jan. 10, 1931.

FREEDMAN, H. Y., 5305 Russell Avenue, Los Angeles 27, Calif.—
This year has been one of rest and recreation for me. I find it easy
to be a good loafer. Have been catching up on some of my long
neglected reading. Made two exploratory trips down in old Mexi-
co, and several other trips thru this large State. Many very in-
teresting old missions, mining camps and pleasure resorts are
scattered over this section of the country, and it will take a long
time to take them all in. Mrs. Freedman and I certainly enjoy this
climate and all the various attractions to be found down here, as
well as the freedom to go and come as the spirit dictates. I
sometimes regret that I did not retire some years sooner than I
finally did. It has been my very good fortune to visit with Roy
Coombs and his charming wife a number of times; but regret to
report that he has not been well for some time. However Roy
started with a strong, vigorous constitution, and will, I believe,
with the kind, patient and loving nursing and ministrations of his
better half, soon recuperate and be himself again. Should the war
situation change for the better, or should we have a complete
change in the administration, Roy would immediately get out and
celebrate, and forget all about being ill. I regret to report that
Mrs. Freedman has been in poor health for some months past,
which has delayed some of our planned trips, but she is now well
on the road to recovery, and we hope soon to resume our usual
rovinings. Greetings and best wishes for the good health and pros-
perity for all the members of the Class and especial thanks to
Judge Hart for getting out the report.


FORD, DELBERT E., 2233 East 70th St., Chicago 49, Ill.—I hasten
to answer yours of the 5th because I feel you should receive the
fullest cooperation of all classmates in preparing the annual Class
Bulletin. In fact I feel you should be rewarded with a medal
from the balance of the members for your devotion to these annual
reports. Having no children, my life has been a lonesome one
since the death of my wife four years ago. My health for the past
year has been none too good, but I hope to hang on long enough
to see "Poor Old Joe Stalin" wiped off the world map instead of
his wiping me off. Regards and best wishes to all members of
1897 Law, U. of M.
FOUTS, ROBERT M., Paradise Calif.—Deceased, April 25, 1943.

GALEN, ALBERT J., Helena, Mont.—Deceased, May 16, 1936.

GEORGE, RANSOM G., New York, N. Y.—Brother George died suddenly of a thrombosis while visiting at the home of his sister Mrs. L. G. Humphrey at Upper Montclair, N. J., on February 19, 1950. His wife had preceded him in death on December 12, 1948. Services were held in Upper Montclair and at Ypsilanti, Mich., where interment was made in Highland cemetery. He had reached a span of almost 80 years and his health had been generally good. He possessed a most genial personality, and was loved by all who knew him. Though he had no children of his own, he left two generations of adoring nephews and nieces of whom he was always very fond. While he expressed loneliness since the passing of his good wife, he lived graciously and joyously until the end.

HANDY, JAMES S., Chicago, Ill.—Deceased, September 27, 1941.

HARPER, DAVID N., 205 East Laurel St., Garden City, Kan.—I am now registered as an inactive member of the State Bar of Michigan and for several years have been in the dry Southwest, trying to get relief from a rather bad case of asthma. My general health is fairly good and except for the above trouble would still be practicing law which still interests me. My hair is continuing dark and my voice as strong as ever. Last summer I stopped off at Las Vegas, New Mexico and called on our classmate, Mr. Rogers and said I was a young attorney just getting started and looking for an opening. He replied, they didn’t have anything to offer. After turning away I came back and asked him if he was a '97 Michigan Law, when he said “Why this is Harper.” We had a pleasant visit and I enjoyed the evening at his home. He has been successful and still carries on some practice. He has one son who is an attorney in Albuquerque. You, Jesse Orton and I were some of the older members of our class and we seem to last longer than some of the younger men here. I would like to have been in Ann Arbor last June but that damper climate is more than I can stand. I wish to thank you for the wonderful work you have done keeping the class together.

HARRISON, GEORGE B., Kansas City, Mo.—Deceased, March 4, 1930.

HART, WILLIAM L., 135 Overlook Drive, Alliance, Ohio, and State House Annex, Columbus 15, Ohio—I have just completed my twelfth year on the Supreme Court of Ohio. I was a candidate for reelection to the Court at the Ohio general election Nov. 7th, and was reelected over a well-known Cleveland lawyer by an unprecedented vote. I received 1,518,348 votes to 724,015 for my opponent, with majorities in 86 of the 88 counties of the state. Last June classmate Jesse Orton and his wife and Mrs. Hart and I spent a day with classmate Charles Bartlett and his wife at their Detroit home. It was a memorable but sad occasion. One month later Charles passed away. I want to express my earnest thanks to Alumni Secretary, Hawley Tapping and his assistant Robert
Morgan for their invaluable assistance to me in numerous ways and especially in connection with the publication of the Bulletin.

HAYES, HENRY N., Salt Lake City, Utah—Deceased.

HILLS, CHARLES W., Miami Beach, Fla.—Charles Wilford Hills, Sr. of the Class of 1897 Law (LL.B.-LL.D. Blackburn College, 1932) passed away at his home in Miami Beach, Florida on April 2, 1950. He was born at Ottawa, Illinois on June 23, 1860, the son of Isaac and Sarah A. Hills. He received his preparatory education in the public schools at Gilman, Illinois and after preparatory work in educational fields was engaged in educational work in Michigan and other States until the time that he entered the University of Michigan. He was married on August 30, 1887 to Anna Blanche Corcoran of Oceana County, Michigan, who passed away in 1934. He had one son, Charles Wilford Hills, Jr., who also preceded him in death in 1943. At the beginning of this Century he founded the Firm of Charles W. Hills, a firm specializing in the practice of patent, trademark and copyright law. He continued actively in the practice of law with that Firm until the middle 30's when he partially retired acting as counsel for the Firm, however, up until the time of his death. From 1897 to 1910 he was professor of patent law at the Illinois College of Law. He was a member of the American Patent Law Association, Chicago Patent Law Association, American Bar Association, Chicago Law Institute, Illinois Manufacturers' Association, Chicago Association of Commerce, and of the Lawyers' Club of the University of Michigan. He was a Mason (32nd Degree St. Bernard Commandery, KT., Shriner) and an Odd Fellow. He was a member of the Union League and Adventurers Clubs of Chicago and of the Committee of One Hundred and of the Bath Club at Miami Beach, Florida. From the time of his graduation he maintained a keen interest in the affairs of the University of Michigan and kept close contact with his classmates of the law class of 1897. His contributions in the field of education and in the field of patent law brought him respect and eminence which will long be remembered.

KOCOUREK, ALBERT, 448 Wisconsin Ave., Beloit, Wis.—I am now at Miami. I am sorry to have missed seeing you and Orton at Ann Arbor last summer. When I learned that Judge Bartlett would not be at the reunion, I called on an old friend of mine, Herbert Harley who resides just outside of Ann Arbor. I am sorry I have nothing new to report this time. Best wishes to all our classmates.

LAWTON, CHARLES T., Toledo, Ohio—Deceased, June 13, 1929.


LUX, ARTHUR W.—Deceased, September 25, 1910.

MILLER, HARRY A., Glen Ellyn, Ill.—Deceased.

MILROY, CHARLES M., Toledo, Ohio—Deceased, December 12, 1931.

MINER, KARL R., Newton, Conn.—Deceased, August 28, 1947.

NORRIS, JAMES T., Wilkinsburg, Pa.—Deceased May 29, 1949.

ORTON, JESSE F., 89-10, 35th Ave., Jackson Heights, N. Y.—As in recent years, since my general retirement from law practice, I am doing some law work. The chief item each year is the securing of a reduction of real property assessments for a large industrial corporation which has been a client for more than thirty years. Such reduction of course compels the City to refund a portion of the taxes paid, as a result of a trial in Court or a voluntary settlement. The law requires assessments to be made at the full market value of the property, but no more. The City needs money badly, and often, if not usually, makes the assessments excessive. The cost of compelling reduction by decree of the Court is so great that, ordinarily, only large property owners can afford to indulge in enforcement of their rights. I am also engaged in study and writing on one or two legal subjects on which I hope to produce something for publication. But my hours of work per day are not so many as they were. Our oldest son, Malcolm Fuller Orton, has been since 1930 with the New York State Public Service Commission, in charge of the Department of Valuation and Research. The next, in age, Lawrence Mitchell Orton, has made City Planning his profession and has been since 1938 a member of the City Planning Commission of the City of New York. The next, Douglas Taylor Orton, has been many years with the Borden Company and for several years Assistant Secretary of that and related Companies. He has also obtained a Law degree from New York University and been admitted to the Bar of the State of New York. Our youngest son, Robert Merritt Orton, is the originator of a book, “Catalog of Reprints,” now in its eleventh annual edition and is its editor. It gives information concerning books reprinted at low prices. My health continues good. I hope to see all remaining members of the class next year. Mrs. Orton’s health is quite good and she is still writing books for children and young people, one each year, thirty in all.

PADLEY, W. H., Reardan, Wash.—Like all the survivors, I of course, regret the inroads death makes each year, but we realize it is inevitable. I have nothing of importance to communicate. I am still alive and still in practice. My health has been very good and practice is good. So as long as the two conditions continue to exist, I shall likely “stay on the job.” It is over half a century since we left Ann Arbor and I am glad to have lived through that period. I have enjoyed it and would like to live it over again. While I do not like to be pessimistic, I would not like to take a chance on the next half century.

PRATT, JOHN S., Room 2732 Department of Justice, Washington 25, D. C.—My situation at the close of 1950 is exactly as it was a year ago. I am busily engaged in the work assigned to me in the Department of Justice at Washington and, happily, I am in perfect health.
ROGERS, ALBERT T. JR., Crockett Bldg., Las Vegas, New Mexico—Nothing new to report except thank the Lord, we elected last month a Republican as Governor of New Mexico, Edwin L. Mechem of Las Cruces, an attorney,—a cousin of our beloved Floyd R. Mechem. Let us hope that two years hence we may get from under the yoke of the present national administration. What a catastrophe that such two persons as Roosevelt and Truman were ever born,—or at least elevated to such high office,—the management of the largest business in the world in the hands of utter incompetents. But enough of that, out of regard for my blood pressure. Business about as usual although I am confining my practice to only a few select old clients. I suppose I should retire from active practice, but too often that is a bid to the undertaker, so expect to “tinker along” to the end. Like most of our classmates, I feel that I should be satisfied and thankful for my career in our beloved profession, so have but few regrets. Am still president of the Bar Association of this Judicial District, and a member of the State Bar Commission, the governing body of the State Bar Association under our all or integrated Bar Association set up. Sorry to hear of Bertlett’s death, and sorrowful at the constant thinning of our ranks, but that is inevitable. Regards and best wishes to all classmates.


SALISBURY, DUANE C., Battle Creek, Mich.—Deceased, November 26, 1913.

STANLEY, FRED B., Beverly Hills, Calif.—Deceased, May 17, 1943.

STEARNS, CLAIRE H., Carmel by the Sea, Calif.—Deceased, December 29, 1943.

STEVENSON, ARCHIBALD, Rockport, Indiana—Deceased, February 10, 1925.

SHELDON, CLAUDE, Warren, Ohio—Deceased, June 7, 1930.

WEHRLE, EDWARD F., Los Angeles, Calif.—Deceased, May 30, 1941.

WHITE, CHARLES E., 510 North Fourth St., Niles, Mich.—As you already know, I retired from the active practice of law on January 1, 1949. Consequently, I have nothing in particular to report. I am very glad indeed, that you are continuing the publication of our annual bulletin, as it helps one to keep in touch with the surviving classmates. It is a weary and confusing world that we are living in, and I seem to have nothing to worry about, except inflation. Possibly, I might write a letter to Harry insomuch as he seems to have acquired the letter writing habit. To one who has arrived at my age, nothing much can happen that will affect me personally, but I dread to think of what kind of world those who
come after us will live in. I have hoped that we might be able to go to Florida for the winter, but Mrs. White's eye-sight is so bad that it seems impossible for us to make the trip. Please convey my respects to all the members of the class of 1897.

WILLIAMS, ROY H., Sandusky, Ohio—Deceased, December 18, 1946. Verna Lockwood Williams, widow of Judge Williams passed away at her home at Sandusky, Ohio on August 17, 1950. The members of our Court attended her funeral and acted as pall bearers.