

## **Historical Cleveland Plain Dealer (1845-1991)**

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### **The Death Of Earl Bill. Demise of the Well Known Clerk of the United States**

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# **THIRD EDITION.**

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**2 O'CLOCK.**

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## **THE DEATH OF EARL BILL.**

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**Demise of the Well Known Clerk  
of the United States District  
Court.**

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**His Career In This City and In San-  
dusky, Where He Held Many  
Public Positions.**

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## **A Note Found Written By Captain McKay Before the Manistee Went Down.**

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Mr. Earl Bill, for many years clerk of the United States district court, died Tuesday morning at his residence, No. 806 Prospect street. He was nearly 72 years of age. His death was caused by consumption, with which he had been afflicted for many years. He was able to attend to his duties as clerk until a short time ago, when he became very feeble and was unable to leave his house.

Mr. Bill was a self-made man. Although his father was a prominent physician in Oneida county, N. Y., he was of quite limited means, as the people of those early days in that section were unable to adequately compensate him for medical treatment. Consequently Dr. Bill, whose name was also Earl, was unable to educate his children or give them a start in life. At the age of 16 young Earl was apprenticed to a carpenter and joiner, with whom he worked until he was 20.

In his 22d year Mr. Bill left the place of his



boyhood and came to Ohio, settling at Sandusky in the fall of 1835. He was elected to the office of sheriff of Erie county in 1841. After his term of sheriff he was elected justice of the peace, but resigned shortly afterward to accept the position of deputy clerk of the common pleas court, Mr. Rice Harper being the clerk of the court at that time. Mr. Bill was elected county treasurer in 1845, and five years later he was sent to the state senate by the people of Erie and Huron counties.

The Sandusky Clarion was purchased by Mr. Bill and Mr. Clark Waggoner in 1851. The name of the paper was changed to the Daily Commercial Register. Subsequently the word Commercial was dropped, and the paper is still published as the Sandusky Register. In 1852 Mr. Henry D. Cooke, formerly of the banking firm of Jay Cooke & Co. at Philadelphia, was associated with Mr. Bill and Mr. Waggoner under the name of Bill, Cooke & Co. In 1856 Mr. Bill disposed of his interest to Mr. Cooke and dissolved his connection with the paper. The Commercial Register was an organ of the Whig party. When that party committed harikari on the Kansas-Nebraska issue, the Register was one of the first newspapers of that faith to declare for the new Republican party. During his connection with this paper Mr. Bill was a strong advocate of John Sherman, and a warm friendship has existed between them ever since.



Mr. Bill removed from Sandusky to Tiffin, where he remained four years. In August, 1861, he came to Cleveland, having been appointed United States marshal for this district. He was appointed by President Lincoln, whose nomination had been supported by Mr. Bill in his capacity as delegate to the Chicago convention in 1860 in preference to Hon. William H. Seward. At the end of four years Mr. Bill was appointed marshal by President Lincoln. After serving a little over one year on his second term he was removed by President Johnson to make room for one whose opinions were more in accord with the president's policy. The duties of the marshal during Mr. Bill's term were often very hazardous on account of the war, and at the same time not very lucrative.

Six months after Mr. Bill's removal from the marshal's office he was appointed clerk of the federal courts by Judge Charles T. Sherman, a brother of John and General Sherman. In 1878 his duties were divided by the appointment of Captain A. J. Ricks as clerk of the United States circuit court. Mr. Bill then gave his entire attention to the duties of clerk of the United States district court, a position he held until his death.

Mr. Bill was a strong advocate of the temperance cause, especially during the earlier part of his career at Sandusky. His efforts in that behalf were very effective, as he often labored privately and quietly with those addicted to the use of liquor, appealing to their



better natures and touching their hearts with his influence.

Mr. Bill had many excellent traits of character. His manner was unobtrusive, with great geniality and kindness of heart, and there was a pleasant vein of humor running through his whole composition. He was a very pleasant man socially. His natural intelligence, sharpened with a varied experience and careful reading of selected literature, made him at all times an agreeable and entertaining conversationalist.

He was twice married. His first wife was a Connecticut woman. She died, and in 1848 he married Miss Eliza Johnson, whose parents lived near Sandusky.

Mr. Bill leaves a wife and four children, Mrs. B. J. Cobb, Mr. Charles Bill, Miss Carrie E. Bill and Mrs. Gertrude Higgins. The latter resides in Florida, but fortunately has been visiting her parents for some time.

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