

Hyrum A. Belnap

In memoriam
this book is donated
to The Genealogical
Society of the Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-day
Saints containing a brief
sketch of the life of my
deceased brother Judge
Hyrum A. Belnap, who
devoted much of his life
to genealogy and temple
work. He left his law
office one day of every month
to officiate in the temple
for his dead ancestors.
Floora Belnap,
His sister

Hyrum A. Belnap was
a high priest counsellor
to Bp. James N. Peley
of the Ogden 19th Ward,
State president of the
M. M. M. I. A. of Heber Stake
and held many other
positions in the church
from his early boyhood.
The last thing he did the
evening before he was found
dead Jan. 20, 1940 in his
own home, was to make
out a High Priest's report,
with the assistance of his
son, David Foster Belnap.



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HYRUM A. BELNAP

In Memoriam

Hyrum A. Belnap

JUDGE WADE: This session is being called as memorial services to Judge Hyrum A. Belnap, and I understand Mr. Powell, President of the Weber County Bar Association, has some announcements to make.

MR. SAMUEL C. POWELL: May it please the court and members of the Bar of Weber County, the custom of the Bar Association has been to assemble on these occasions to pay tribute to deceased members and we are gathered here today for the purpose of paying our last respects to one of our deceased members, Judge Hyrum A. Belnap, who recently passed away.

I have requested that resolutions be prepared to be presented to the Court at this time. I have asked that Stuart P. Dobbs, Judge Lester A. Wade, and Arthur Woolley prepare these resolutions and I would like permission to have them presented.

MR. STUART P. DOBBS: May it please your Honors and gentlemen of the Bar, I present the resolutions prepared by the resolution committee appointed by the President of the Bar Association of Weber County.

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RESOLUTIONS

Hyrum A. Belnap a member of the Bar of Weber County, for many years Judge of its City Court, died January 20, 1940. He was born in Ogden, May 26, 1890, to Hyrum and Christina R. Belnap, passed through the public schools of Ogden, was graduated from Weber College, became a student at the Utah State Agricultural College and later in the Law School at the University of Utah, being graduated with the degree of Bachelor of Laws on June 3, 1918, and was admitted to practice law shortly afterward. Thereafter, in July of 1918, he left for Camp Lewis where he became a member of the United States Signal Corps, serving in the army of the United States until after the close of the World War.

After his release he entered the practice of law in Ogden, Utah, and as a practitioner and judge continued to serve the people of our community until the time of his death. He married Lois Foster of this city September 14, 1921, and she with his four children survive him.

Prior to his entering upon his studies in the universities of the state he served the church to which he belonged as a missionary, spending three years in that service in Germany and visiting in a large number of foreign countries before his return. He also taught for two years in the Ogden City Schools before resuming his studies. During his life as a practicing lawyer he was honored by

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the political party with which he was affiliated with its nomination for the office of County Attorney and was twice elected Judge of the City Court of this city.

Throughout his life Hyrum A. Belnap was faithful to the teachings of his church; devoted to his parents, his brothers and sisters, his wife and children; and loyal to his friends. As a lawyer he was serious in the defense of those whose causes he assumed and served his clients to the full extent of his professional skill and ability; while as a judge we knew him as being earnest in the search for truth, a student of law applicable to his cases, unswerving in judicial rectitude, but kindly and merciful where his duties permitted the exercise of those qualities. He had personal courage, manifested by his quiet and unassuming acceptance of the knowledge that his life term would be short, a capacity for genial humor, a compassion for the failings of his fellow man and unswerving fidelity to the trusts which he accepted and a high spirit of devotion and patriotism toward his country, to whose service in his earlier years he offered his life should it be required of him:

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THIS BAR ASSOCIATION, that in the death of Judge Hyrum A. Belnap we have lost a friend and well beloved fellow; that the citizens of this community have lost a just, upright, and compassionate judge and the state a patriot and loyal citizen; and

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FURTHER IT IS RESOLVED that we extend our sincere sympathy to Mrs. Belnap, their children and those brothers and sisters who survive him.

May his soul rest in peace.

*Pale sorrow leads us closer to our kind,
And in the serious hours of life we find
Depths in the souls of men which lend new worth
And majesty to this brief span of earth.*

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these resolutions be spread upon the minutes of the Bar and transmitted to the wife and family of our departed friend.

Respectfully submitted,

STUART P. DOBBS,
LESTER A. WADE,
ARTHUR WOOLLEY,
Committee.

MR. POWELL: May it please the Court, I would like to make a few remarks.

Judge Belnap was admitted to the practice a few years after I was, I believe about the year 1918. It has been my pleasure to have been engaged in the practice of law with him since that time. Judge Belnap had many fine qualities. He was one of the most human men I ever came in contact with. Kind and considerate. I never heard him say an ill word of anyone. In talking to his wife yesterday, I received another view of him which I did not have before this time. She express-

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ed to me what a kind, considerate, husband that he had always been, and what a fine father he had been to his children. He had a splendid reputation in the community. It seems to me, a man should be judged by his accomplishments, taking into consideration what he had to overcome in connection with physical disabilities. Undoubtedly Judge Belnap, during the past several years, has been fighting a losing battle, and has been handicapped severely because of his physical condition. I doubt that there is one in this room who, under the same circumstances, would have filled the office of Judge of our City Court in the manner he has.

His passing will be a severe loss to the community and a loss to the many people who had occasion to come before him, and, I am sure, that it will be felt gravely by this community and by the Bar.

JUDGE WADE: Does anyone else wish to make any statement in regard to Judge Belnap?

MR. DOBBS: If the Court please, I have known Hyrum Belnap some twenty years, and my acquaintance with him was of somewhat different character from that of most of the members of the Bar, for the reason: those were the days when there were very few Democrats in this community, and Hyrum and I happened to be among that rather outcast few. I remember he was with Sam Powell in competition for the position of County Attorney, and, that time, I was the County Chairman. It was a very interesting campaign. Hyrum had the

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faculty of getting votes. He knew how to talk to people. He had the faculty of getting near to them and making them vote for him, and Sam, of course, had the advantage of being connected with the party that had by far the most votes in the county, with the result we had quite a scrap. At the end of the election, after every one had gone home, there still remained a contest between these two gentlemen for the position in a number of precincts. Judge Hyrum Belnap, at that time, was answering the telephone on 24th street at the end of the building, and the persons keeping track of the tally of the votes were in the rear of building, and we could tell the result of each precinct by the footsteps coming back—they were rather quick, jubilant, and with a hi-yi, and we knew then it was a Democratic vote, and the Judge had thirty or forty votes in the precinct voting, and when the forty-second came in we had 171 votes for Belnap as a majority, but the forty-second, unfortunately, gave Sam Powell 280 majority, and I do not recall any footsteps that might have been more of a dead march than the footsteps of the Judge as he came back from the front of the building. That is a very good illustration of his temperment. He found a great deal of pleasure in things and while apparently depressed that evening, the depression was more of a temporary type than real. He enjoyed things in life. He was not a hard loser. He was a good winner. Much has been said since his death of his friendliness as displayed to those who were brought before him, the unfortunates and misfits of our

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community, and I think it was that humaneness that made him a good judge in that particular office and in the handling of the city's business. I know we shall all miss him, and I know we all feel, at this time, a great deal of sympathy for those he has left behind.

MR. SEEGER: If your Honors please, and members of the Bar. I had no intention to say anything, but, I believe, I have tried as many cases or more than the average member of the Bar before Judge Belnap, and during all that time while I was practicing before him he was very kind to me. I generally made it a point to say something you know which would keep him a little bit more on the business in hand, and he would burst out laughing over what I had to say, and we would go right on again. There were two cases he decided against me, and I always claimed that he had been in error, but after the cases were brought here and your Honors decided against me, I came to the conclusion that perhaps you were also in error, but I didn't take it any farther. I don't know how many criminal cases I tried, about thirty-two, all different kinds of persons, and I think he was pretty fair with us, at least my clients felt they were treated alright. And here not long ago after I probably quit, I retired, the Judge made a statement congratulating me that I also spared the defendants when I was Assistant City Attorney and that statement itself made me feel extraordinarily good. He had a sense of humor at times. I

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remember not long ago I represented a couple of men who wanted me to go over in small claims court about fifty dollars. I got up and told the court we owed some money. The Judge says "How much you got Henry?" I says: "\$25.00." He says: "Let's see it." In doubt I had it. I pulled out \$25.00, and said keep it. I give it to this lady here. And he said "How do you feel now?" She said: "I feel pretty good now, those two fellows owe me another \$25.00." The Judge says: "I will tell you what I am going to do. I will give them sixty days to pay the other \$25.00." The two men went home, the woman felt good and Judge Belnap felt good, so everything was fine and dandy. As I said, I had lots of cases before him. I had been to his home when I had to have something signed quick or to sign something, and one time he told me to come on in. He was taking a bath. There was an awful commotion when he took a bath. I didn't know what in the deuce he was doing there, but in twenty or thirty minutes he came out and he signed my papers. He was a lover of flowers. That is one of the points I stress, if a man loves flowers there is nothing much bad about him. Now he has passed away, and I believe he was a good father, because I have heard him talk many times to his children up to his place and when the children, the boys, came to his office there. It is sad to see a man go that is of that age, but it is something we have to meet all the time. I buried one of my best friends last Sunday, forty-four years, a good man who never said an unkind

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word to anyone. That is quite a statement to make, and it was said by several speakers. And, I hope, when my time comes, perhaps, maybe there will be some members of the Bar that will say that I do love the common people.

MR. DAVIS: If the Court please. My association with Hyrum Belnap was more that of a neighbor. I was familiar with his physical afflictions. It impaired very seriously his ability to discharge the duties of his office as he would have liked to have done, and he was very sensitive over that. The evening of his passing, I called at his home and there was in that home, that something that gave you the assurance that there was a sincere power here and with a remembrance of his children that goes far to find affectionateship. He was very attentive to the humble things in life, and those of you who are familiar with the duties of a Ward Teacher in the Church today will appreciate that it is not a pleasant thing to call on neighbors to determine the status of the home. His neighbors always welcomed Hyrum Belnap into their homes. There was one tribute his wife paid him. The night of his passing, or previous to the passing, he had been called for the reports, and after his duties, as a member of the Church, until midnight he sat up to complete the record, and it was in good shape. At twelve o'clock he called his young children in and had them kneel down in the humble capacity of a father, the head of a family, in family prayers, and they were impressed that something

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was serious with their father, and his last words was a blessing from the Bible to protect his family, and, his record was complete. He was a kind father and a good neighbor.

MR. WOOLLEY: If the Court please. My acquaintance with Hyrum A. Belnap goes back beyond my coming to this city. He and I were associated as Missionaries for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Germany together. Brother Dobbs has suggested a faculty possessed perhaps to an enviable degree by Judge Belnap, that of getting votes, which means, of course, the respect and esteem of a majority or large number of the citizenry of the community. I am glad to say in his capacity as a missionary in a foreign land, calling from house to house and engaging strangers in conversation, in a strange tongue, about a strange matter; introducing himself and stating his mission, being rebuffed, but in a kindly way he continued to do good to those who scoffed at him, and it did not detract from his capacity in that respect. It was our pleasure to have a call, a visit from Hyrum Belnap on his way home from his mission when we were living in Washington. When we first came here he was one of the first friends who greeted and welcomed us to this community. My association and friendship for him and with him since that time has not been obtrusive, but it been very sincere. I have followed his career. I have assisted him, and he has assisted me. As a Judge on the Bench, I have tried, of course, many

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cases before him. I have been to him in many delicate matters. I found him to be a man of the highest integrity. A man who had in rare degree, the faculty of getting to the kernal of people's little problems and solving them in a very effective and practical way. I enjoyed my association with him. I bear him this tribute, that I think he was a just Judge, a kindly man, a fine father and a splendid citizen, and we shall miss him.

MR. NORSETH: If it please the Court. I have known Judge Belnap for many years. I think my acquaintance with him goes back perhaps at least twenty-five or thirty years. I knew him as a boy in this community, and have known him quite intimately since he became a man, lawyer and Judge. Hyrum Belnap, like a lot of men, had handicaps to overcome. Too often in life we fail to appreciate the other fellow's viewpoint. To be tolerant sometimes isn't a virtue. I knew him as a father in his family. He lived neighbors with me one year, and I knew him to be a kind, considerate man. A man who was extremely solicitous of the welfare of his family. To his children he was kind and courteous at all times. He endeavored to impress upon them the necessity of right living and correct thinking. He was appreciative of their welfare, and tried to the very best of his ability at all times to discharge his duty as a father so that those children could get out of life a broad and correct perspective of what the problems of life constituted. I know him as a man who tried to

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overcome some of his physical defects. Very often early in the morning on many days, Judge Belnap got up and would go on long walks by himself. He was dressed in such a way as to produce heat, and would exercise quite violently. He would come back home and go to work. I think too often in life we meet one another without much consideration, or attempt to understand the other fellow's problems and predicaments. Sometimes a man asks for a little bread, and we cast him a stone. I think, this is too often true. All that has been said about Hyrum Belnap, and all that has been said about his fairness is true, and also all that has been said about his view point as it pertains to the other fellow's station in life is true. I think these words apply to Judge Belnap's life. I forget most of them, if I remember correctly they are as follows:

*"Question not, but live and labour,
'Till yon goal be won.
Helping every feeble neighbor,
Seeking help from none.
Life is mostly froth and bubble,
Two things stand like stone—
Kindness in another's trouble
Courage in your own."*

He was sympathetic with other's troubles, but he also had the courage, as suggested by President Powell, of day after day discharging his duties, which, if we were in his position, we would prob-

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ably quit and consider we could not do it, but he had that courage to go on. I know of no happier time in his life than when he was with his wife and children at home and being in a position to properly take care of their house, and in giving them the love they were entitled to.

MR. WILSON: I think there is little to be added to what the members of the Bar have stated; however, I do want to raise my voice with the others in expressing tribute with the friends of Hyrum Belnap. Hyrum Belnap and I started practicing law in the same year and on the same floor of the Eccles Building. I became rather intimately acquainted with him. There was a quality the Judge possessed to a marked degree, which I think has been mentioned at least this morning. I was told yesterday by a sister who is an intimate friend of our family that some two years ago Judge Belnap was told it would be impossible for him to live more than a short period. That fact he asked the physician and those who knew not to divulge to his family. He said: "I want it kept away from my wife and children. It has got to be between ourselves. I will go on as long as I can; but I do not want the pall of impending death to be over the household." He carried on courageously, knowing he had an affliction which the human system cannot overcome. Of course, his condition was dropsical. He was told by his physician that nothing could be done to cure him, and, of necessity, he would have to close his career within a short per-

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iod, and, he lived cheerfully and as we met him day by day, knowing full well that the end of the road was ahead of him in a very short time. That, gentlemen, requires courage. He never communicated that fact to anybody. He carried it in his own heart. He went courageously and cheerfully on. One other thing I would like to refer to in the makeup of Hyrum Belnap. He was a man of devoted faith, having an abiding conviction in eternity of the human soul, and died, I am sure, with the firm conviction that the end is not this earthly existence, and as Victor Hugo often said:

“Life is not a blind alley, but a thoroughfare.”

And Judge Belnap died as he did with hope and faith in the future.

MR. WALLACE: I have been sitting here listening to the kind remarks about Judge Belnap, and at the same time I recall a statement made to me a few days ago, which now takes on a rather new meaning since listening to what Mr. Wilson has said.

One of the officials in the City Hall reported that about a week ago he had been standing near the top of the stairway when Judge Belnap came to Court, and, as he climbed the stairway, rather slowly, and getting near the top, saw this man, his friend, and rather whimsically and with a smile on his face, said: “Climbing the Golden Stairs”. I have wondered what perhaps it was he had in mind when he said that, if that had been a premonition

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of impending transition. From what Mr. Wilson has said it is apparent he knew he was not long for this life, and he had the courage to think of it and at the same time live on happily, peacefully and courageously. When the Saviour was asked what the first great Commandment was, the Saviour said: "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God; and the second Commandment unto it—Thou shalt Love thy neighbor as thyself." I think that perhaps is the simple message of Christianity today and those simple truths must be burned in upon the souls of men if this civilization is to be saved. I think Hyrum Belnap expressed a willingness to express that truth, and live it, as he was indeed a "good neighbor", as has been expressed here, and his passing will be felt immeasurably in this community.

JUDGE TRUEMAN: I would like to say I found Judge Belnap to be a very considerate Judge during the two years I practiced before him. As assistant county attorney I had an opportunity to come into direct contact with him during that time, and I regarded Judge Belnap as a Good Man.

JUDGE WADE: If no one else wishes to talk, I would like to say a few words in regards Judge Belnap. I have probably known him as long as any member of the Bar in Ogden. I went to school with him, and, prior to the time when Mr. Woolley was acquainted with him and at what was then the Weber Academy. I occupied the same office with him for about ten years, after he was practicing law. When I graduated from the University of

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Chicago he was attending the law school at the University of Utah, and I was acquainted with him during part of that time. I remember joining a class in the Supreme Court of Utah that Justice Frick had, and at his invitation I attended this class, and while I was in Salt Lake for a short time, and during that time I learned to admire and respect Judge Belnap. I felt the highest regards for him at all times while I was associated with him. I have been with him and presented my problems in the practice of law, and received his advice and help, and I tried to give him the same kind of advice and help that he had given me. I have also visited his home many times and have associated with his family. I have always noticed about him a very kindly spirit. A man who could "take it" when things didn't go his way. It was mentioned here that he lost several political battles, he failed to be elected. I was intimately acquainted with him during some of this time and I noticed how quick he could throw off disappointment of this kind, and I think it has not been over emphasized here his courage to live under the conditions that he did and the fact that he probably would not live to be very old. I found him also to be very congenial as an office companion. Honest and straightforward in every way. In my long association with him I learned to respect and love him as one man does another. Is there anything further?

MR. DOBBS: I move the Court that the resolutions and remarks in this connection be made a

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part of the minutes of the Court and a copy thereof be transcribed and furnished the family of our deceased Brother, in testimony of the respect of the members of this Bar to Judge Belnap.

MR. HENDRICKS: I second the motion.

THE COURT, JUDGE WADE: It has been moved and seconded that the resolutions and remarks be spread upon the minutes of the Court and sent to the family. All those in favor will signify by saying "Aye".

All Members: "Aye".

JUDGE WADE: And, it is so Ordered.

JUDGE WADE: If there is nothing further to come before the Court, the Court will be in recess.

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