

Manning, James Smith ^[1]

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by Elizabeth W. Manning, 1991

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Photograph of James Smith Manning. Image from the North Carolina Museum of History.

^[2]James Smith Manning, judge, was born in Pittsboro, the son of John ^[3]and Louise Hall Manning and the grandson of Commander John Manning ^[4], U.S. Navy. His father was a distinguished professor of law at The University of North Carolina; his mother was the granddaughter of Judge John Hall of the North Carolina Supreme Court ^[5]. He was educated at Pittsboro Female Academy (Dr. Sutton) and A. H. Merritt's School, then entered The University of North Carolina ^[6], graduating in 1879 and receiving the Phi Beta Kappa key years later. After teaching school in Pittsboro for a year or two, he reentered the university to study law and earned an LL.B. degree in 1882. Subsequently he obtained his license to practice and established himself in Durham in 1883. Manning was attorney for the city of Durham during the period 1886–87. On 12 Dec. 1888 he married Julia Tate Cain, of Hillsborough, the daughter of Dr. James F. and Julia Tate Cain.

In 1906 Manning, a Democrat, was elected to the legislature from Durham County ^[7] and served as chairman of the Committee on Public Service Corporations. In 1908 he won a seat in the state senate and became chairman of the Judiciary Committee. In 1909 Governor W.W. Kitchin ^[8] appointed him to fill an unexpired term as justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court ^[5], where he served until January 1911. In 1912 Manning moved to Raleigh with his wife and family and joined a partnership with former Governor Kitchin in the firm of Manning and Kitchin. In 1916 he was elected attorney general of North Carolina, a position he held for eight years. He served as a trustee of The University of North Carolina from 1899 to 1931 and for a time was president of the North Carolina Bar Association ^[9].

An Episcopalian ^[10], Manning took a leading part in various efforts to enhance the well-being of his community and state, despite his pressing legal activities. He was esteemed throughout North Carolina as a lawyer of exceptional ability and integrity. Judge and Mrs. Manning had four sons and two daughters: John Hall ^[11], James S., Jr., Frederick C., Sterling, Julia Cain, and Anna Louise. He was buried in Raleigh. His portrait hangs in the North Carolina Supreme Court building.

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