

Shepherd, James Edward ^[1]

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by Grady L. E. Carroll, 1994

26 July 1847–7 Feb. 1910



A photograph of James Edward Shepherd, circa 1893. Image from [Archive.org](#).

^[2]James Edward Shepherd, jurist, was born at Mintonville, near Suffolk, Va., the son of Thomas S. Shepherd. Orphaned at age ten, he was placed under the care of his brother, William S. Shepherd, and attended school in Murfreesboro, N.C. In 1861, although only fourteen, he attached himself to the Sixteenth Virginia Regiment and served as a "marker" for the regiment. Later he became a military [telegraph](#) ^[3] operator and served in West Virginia and in Wilson, N.C.

In 1867 and 1868 Shepherd studied law at [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[4]. After being licensed in 1868, he practiced first in Wilson and then in Washington, N.C. He served as a member of the [constitutional convention of 1875](#) ^[5] and the next year became chairman of the Inferior Court of [Beaufort County](#) ^[6]. Between 1882 and 1888 he was a superior court judge. Elected to the [North Carolina Supreme Court](#) ^[7] in 1888, Shepherd was appointed chief justice in 1892 following the death of the incumbent, [Augustus S. Merrimon](#) ^[8]. He served in that position until 1895, when he was defeated for reelection. The University of North Carolina, where he taught law for eight summer terms, awarded him an honorary LL.D. degree in 1889.

In 1871 Shepherd married Elizabeth Bowen Brown of Washington, Beaufort County. They resided in [Raleigh](#) ^[9] after he became a member of the supreme court. An [Episcopalian](#) ^[10], a [Democrat](#) ^[11], and a [Freemason](#) ^[12], he was buried in Oakwood Cemetery, Raleigh. His portrait hangs in the North Carolina Supreme Court.



Engraving of James Edward Shepherd, circa 1907. Image from the North Carolina Museum of History. ^[13]**References:**

Samuel A. Ashe, ed., *Biographical History of North Carolina*, vol. 6 ^[14] (1907).

Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina* vol. 2 (1912).

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Daniel L. Grant, *Alumni History of the University of North Carolina*(1924).

North Carolina Bar Association, *Proceedings*, vol. 12 (1910).

Stephen B. Weeks Scrapbook, vols. 1–2 (North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill).

Additional Resources:

"James E. Shepherd The Eighth Chief Justice." North Carolina Supreme Court Historical Society. https://www.ncschs.net/Shepherd_JamesE.aspx ^[15] (accessed March 21, 2013).

James E. Shepherd Papers. State Archives of North Carolina. http://ead.archives.ncdcr.gov/PC_1876_James_E_Shepherd_Papers.html ^[16] (accessed March 21, 2013).

James E. Shepherd Papers (call #199). East Carolina Manuscript Collection, J. Y. Joyner Library, East Carolina University, <http://digital.lib.ecu.edu/special/ead/findingaids/0199/> ^[17] (accessed March 21, 2013).

Shepherd, James E. *An address by Hon. James E. Sheperd on the life and character of the late Judge David Schenck, delivered at Guilford Battle Ground on the occasion of the unveiling of a monument to his memory--July 4, 1904.* Greensboro: The Guilford Battle Ground Co. 1904. <https://archive.org/details/addressbyhonjame00shep> ^[18] (accessed March 21, 2013).

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A memorial volume of the Guilford Battle Ground Company. Organized May 6, 1887, at Greensboro, N.C. It contains a brief history of the battle of Guilford Court House, an account of the organization and progress of the Guildford Battle Ground Company, biographical sketches, and a full account of the Holt monument and its dedication, July the 4th, 1893. Greensboro, N.C., Reece & Elam, printers. 1893. <https://archive.org/stream/memorialvolumeof00guil#page/66/mode/2up>

^[2]

E.G. Williams and Brother. "Engraving, Accession #:H.19XX.318.117 ^[13]." 1890-1910. North Carolina Museum of History.

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Authors:

[Carroll, Grady L. E., Sr.](#) ^[24]

Origin - location:

[Beaufort County](#) ^[25]

[Wilson](#) ^[26]

Raleigh ^[27]

From:

Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.^[28]

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