

ABNER SMITH LIPSCOMB

Second Chief Justice - 1823-1835

BORN: February 10, 1789; Abbeville, South Carolina

DIED: December 3, 1857; Austin, Texas

Abner Smith Lipscomb was born and raised in South Carolina, where he studied law before moving to St. Stephens in the Mississippi Territory in 1811. He fought in the Creek Indian wars of 1813-14, served in the territorial legislature in 1818, and in 1819 became one of the circuit judges appointed to serve the new state of Alabama. When Clement Clay resigned as chief justice in 1823, the circuit judges chose Lipscomb as Clay's successor.

In 1832, when a three-judge supreme court was established as an entity separate and distinct from the circuit judges, Judge Lipscomb continued as chief justice. His opinions are in the first ten volumes of the ***Alabama Reports***. The University of Alabama awarded him an honorary Doctor of Laws degree in 1834, and in 1835 he resigned his post and moved to Mobile to practice law. He has been credited with simplifying common law pleading and improving judicial administration in the state.

After serving a term in the Alabama legislature in 1838, Lipscomb moved to Texas the following year and pursued another noteworthy career in public service. He served as secretary of state, as a member of the 1845 Constitutional Convention, and as an associate justice of the Texas Supreme Court. Lipscomb County, Texas, is named in his honor.

Abner Smith Lipscomb married Elizabeth Gaines in 1813, and in 1843 he married Mrs. Mary P. Bullock of Austin, Texas.

*Portrait by M. E. KIMBALL, unrecorded 19th century Texas artist
Oil on canvas after an unsigned early 19th century original*