

ELISHA WOOLSEY PECK

Twelfth Chief Justice - 1868-1873

BORN: August 7, 1799; Blenheim, New York
DIED: February 13, 1888; Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Elisha Woolsey Peck began the study of law in 1819 and was admitted to practice in New York in 1824. That same year he traveled to Alabama and settled in Elyton, then the county seat of Jefferson County. He soon became one of the leading lawyers of the area.

In 1832 Peck moved to Tuscaloosa, where he established a law practice. Appointed chancellor of the middle division of the Chancery Court by Governor Arthur P. Bagby in 1839, he held that position until 1841.

Peck remained a Whig until the dissolution of the party and actively opposed secession. While not disloyal to his adopted state during the Civil War, he openly expressed sentiments in support of Union goals. During Reconstruction, he was elected to represent Tuscaloosa County in the Constitutional Convention of 1867, where he was chosen presiding officer. That assembly nominated him the Republican candidate for chief justice, and he assumed that office in the summer of 1868.

In his address to the state bar in January, 1869, Peck made an eloquent plea for cooperation in pursuit of justice. He remained on the bench until 1873, at which time he returned to Tuscaloosa.

Elisha Woolsey Peck was married in 1828 to Lucy Lamb Randall of Talladega. They had four children.