

WILLIAM PARISH CHILTON

Eighth Chief Justice: 1852-1856

BORN: August 10, 1810; Adair County, Kentucky

DIED: January 20, 1871; Montgomery, Alabama



Portrait by UNKNOWN ARTIST

CIRCA 1860

Oil on paper mounted onto canvas

Born and raised in Kentucky, William Parish Chilton moved to Athens, Tennessee in 1828. There he studied law and was admitted to the Bar the following year. In 1834, he moved to Alabama and established a law practice in Talladega. Running as a Whig candidate, he was elected to the Alabama House of Representatives in 1839. Shortly after being defeated in a bid for a congressional seat in 1843, he moved to Macon County and began practicing law in Tuskegee.

In 1848, the General Assembly elected Chilton to the Supreme Court, and in December, 1852, Chilton succeeded Edmund S. Dargan as chief justice. He held the position until January of 1856 when he resigned to resume his law practice in Tuskegee.

In 1859, Chilton was elected state senator from Macon County. Although he opposed secession, he cast his lot with the South. From 1861 to 1866 he served in both the provisional legislature and the permanent congress of the Confederacy. Following the Civil War, Chilton resumed his law practice.

Chilton was married twice, first in 1829 to Mary C. Morgan of Athens, Tennessee, and after her death, to her sister, Elvira Frances Morgan. In December of 1874 the legislature changed the name of Baker County to Chilton County in his honor.

Junius Moore Riggs Collection

Location: Antebellum Gallery, 3rd Floor, Heflin-Torbert Judicial Building