

WILLIAM MCKENDREE BYRD

Associate Justice: 1866-1868

BORN: December 1, 1819; Perry County, Mississippi

DIED: September 24, 1874; Dallas County, Alabama



***Portrait by NICOLA MARSCHALL,
German, 1829-1917
Oil on Canvas***

A native of Perry County, Mississippi, William McKendree Byrd attended Mississippi College and the LaGrange College in Franklin County. He graduated from the latter school in 1838. After reading law in Holly Springs, Mississippi, he moved to Alabama and was admitted to the Alabama State bar in 1841.

Byrd began practicing law in Linden, Alabama and was elected in 1851 to represent Marengo County in the state legislature. Two years later, he moved to Selma to continue his law practice.

In 1863, he was elected chancellor of the middle division of Alabama. Two years later, the Legislature elected him to the Supreme Court of Alabama as an associate justice, and he assumed the office on January 2, 1866. He was removed from that post in 1868 as a result of Reconstruction legislation passed by Congress. Byrd then returned to Selma to practice law. He died in a train wreck.

Byrd married Mariah H. Massie, and they had four children.

Junius Moore Riggs Collection

***Location: Supreme Court & State Law Library, East Wall, Reference Area,
Heflin-Torbert Judicial Building***