

= Serranus Clinton Hastings =

Serranus Clinton Hastings (November 22 , 1814 ? February 18 , 1893) was a 19th @-@ century politician , rancher and a prominent lawyer in the United States . He studied law as a young man and moved to the Iowa District in 1837 to open a law office . Iowa became a territory a year later , and he was elected a member of the House of Representatives of the Iowa Territorial General Assembly . When the territory became the state of Iowa in 1846 , he won an election to represent the state in the United States House of Representatives . After his term ended , he became Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court . He resigned after one year in office and moved to California . He was appointed to the California Supreme Court as Chief Justice a few months later . He won an election to be Attorney General of California , and assumed office shortly after his term as Chief Justice ended . He began practicing law again as Attorney General . He earned a small fortune with his law practice and used that fortune to finance his successful real estate venture . In 1878 , he founded the Hastings College of the Law with a donation of US \$ 100 @, @ 000 .

= = Early life = =

Hastings was born in Watertown , Jefferson County , New York , on November 22 , 1814 to Robert Collins Hastings and Patience Brayton . Robert Collins Hastings was a good friend and supporter of DeWitt Clinton , whom Serranus gets his middle name from . When Robert died in 1824 , the family moved to St. Lawrence County , New York . He completed a six @-@ year course at Gouverneur Academy , and in 1834 , he became taught and became the principal at Norwich Academy , located in Chenango County , New York . He introduced the Hamiltonian system of instruction and the Angletean system of mathematics to the academy . In 1835 , he resigned from his position at the academy to study law .

Hastings began to study law with Charles Thorpe , Esq . , of Norwich . After a few months of study , he decided to move to Lawrenceburg , Indiana . He completed his legal studies there with Daniel S. Majors , Esq . He did not immediately enter the practice of law and instead became an editor of the Indiana Signal , where he supported Martin Van Buren in his presidential campaign . He moved to Terre Haute , Indiana , in December 1836 and underwent a legal examination by Judge Porters of the Circuit Court .

= = Career = =

In January 1837 , Hastings moved to the Iowa District , which was part of the Wisconsin Territory . He settled in Burlington for a short time and then moved to Bloomington , which would later become Muscatine , Iowa . He was examined by Judge Irwin , was admitted to the bar , and opened a law office . Shortly after this , he was commissioned Justice of the Peace by Wisconsin Territorial Governor Henry Dodge . He had jurisdiction over the 90 miles between Burlington , Iowa , and Davenport , Iowa , the western boundary was undefined . He only had one case to deal with : a man accused of stealing US \$ 30 from a citizen and \$ 3 from the court . He found the man guilty and sentenced him to be tied to an oak tree , receive 33 lashes across his back , be transported across the Mississippi River to Illinois , and be banished from the territory forever . When Iowa Territory was organized in 1838 , he won an election to represent Muscatine County , Louisa County , and Slaughter County in the House of Representatives of the Iowa Territorial General Assembly . He served from November 12 , 1838 , to January 25 , 1839 . He was reelected to that position in 1839 , this time representing Muscatine County and Johnson County from November 4 , 1839 , to January 14 , 1840 . In 1840 , a border conflict with Missouri called the Honey War took place . He received the military title of Major and helped capture a sheriff . No battle took place , and the two states compromised on the border issue .

Hastings married Azalea Brodt on June 10 , 1840 , in Muscatine , Iowa . They had two children while living in Muscatine , Marshall and Clara L. He was elected to the Legislative Council that year , representing Muscatine County and Johnson County again , and served from November 3 , 1840 to

January 15 , 1841 . He was re @-@ elected the following year , and served from December 6 , 1841 to February 18 , 1842 . He was not elected to the Fifth and Sixth General Assemblies . He was elected President of the Legislative Council for the Seventh General Assembly , and also represented Muscatine County and Johnson County on the council . He served from May 5 , 1845 to June 11 , 1845 . He was elected to the council for the Eight General Assembly , which was also the final one since Iowa was to become a state on December 28 , 1846 . He represented the same counties he had previously , and served from December 1 , 1845 to January 19 , 1846 . During his time on the Legislative Council he helped compile the " Blue Book " of Iowa laws . It became known as the " Old Blue Book " and was the first legal code for the Iowa , Nebraska , Dakota , and Montana Territories .

In 1846 , Hastings was nominated to represent Iowa at large in the United States House of Representatives as a Democrat . On December 29 , 1846 , he was elected over the Whig candidate G. C. R. Mitchell . He was the second youngest member serving in Congress at that time . He served during the second session of the 29th United States Congress , which ended on March 3 , 1847 . Close to a year after his term ended as a member of the House of Representatives , Governor Ansel Briggs appointed him as the third Chief Justice of the Iowa Supreme Court . He started his term on January 26 , 1848 , and resigned on January 14 , 1849 to move to California , his family deciding to stay in Iowa .

Hastings settled in Benicia , California , and a few months later , California legislature selected him to be the first Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court . He started his term on December 20 , 1849 , but the court did not assemble until March 4 , 1850 . In 1851 , his family moved from Iowa to live with him in California . During his term as Chief Justice he ran for the office of Attorney General of California . Elections were held on September 3 , 1851 , and he won with 52 @.@ 2 % of the votes . The Whig candidate , William D. Fair , received the rest of the votes . His term as Chief Justice ended in December 1851 , and he assumed office as Attorney General on January 5 , 1852 . While serving as Attorney General , he could practice law as well , something he could not do as Chief Justice . The wealth he earned during this time became the foundation of the larger fortune he would later earn in real estate . He ended his two @-@ year term on January 2 , 1854 .

= = Later life = =

Hastings continued to practice law after his term as Attorney General ended , and also became a member of the Henley , Hastings & Co. bank firm located in Sacramento , California . The banking firm failed , with little loss to him though . Around 1857 , he left professional life , and started investing in real estate . He and his wife had seven more children after this : Charles Foster Dio . , Douglas , Uhler , Robert Paul , Flora Azalea , Ella , and Lillie . He gradually acquired around one hundred lots of real estate in San Francisco , and bought large tracts of land in Solano , Napa , Lake , and Sacramento counties . In 1861 , he put up many four @-@ room buildings in the south side of San Francisco for the poor with the money he earned in real estate . The rent was \$ 10 a month , and as a business venture it was a success . By 1862 , he was worth \$ 900 @,@ 000 , which was largely attributed to his real estate investments . In 1865 , he traveled to Europe ; four years later he accompanied William H. Seward to view the recently purchased territory of Alaska . Hastings College of Law , the law department of the University of California , was founded on March 28 , 1878 with his donation of \$ 100 @,@ 000 . The college offered him the position of dean and he accepted the offer . He was professor of comparative jurisprudence at the college as well , a position he held until 1887 . He helped establish St. Catherine Academy in Benicia , California , with a donation of \$ 6 @,@ 000 . He also helped publish two volumes of the botany of the Pacific coast . His contribution to botany would later be recognized by having the plant genus *Hastingsia* named after him .

Hastings died at the age of 78 on February 18 , 1893 in San Francisco , California . He was buried at St. Helena Public Cemetery in St. Helena , California .