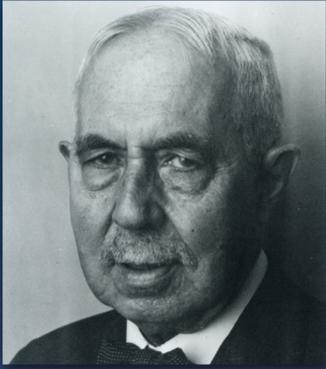




225th Anniversary
1789-2014



Augustus Noble Hand

Born:

July 26, 1869
Elizabethtown, NY

Received Commission:

September 30, 1914

Service terminated in 1927 due to appointment to the United States Circuit Court for the Second Circuit.

Died:

October 28, 1954
Middlebury, VT

Augustus Noble Hand came from a prominent family of lawyers and merchants. His father, grandfather, and uncles were all lawyers, and his mother's family were prosperous merchants. Hand attended local Elizabethtown schools and then Phillips Exeter Academy. He graduated summa cum laude from Harvard College in 1890; and received his law degree magna cum laude from Harvard Law School in 1894. In 1895 Hand joined his uncle's law firm in New York City, where he remained in private practice until 1914. He was a cousin of Judge Learned Hand.

Hand was active in several elite associations, and came to the attention of Attorney General James McReynolds as a Democrat untainted by any connection to the Tammany Hall political organization. Upon McReynolds recommendation, President Wilson appointed him to the SDNY.

President Coolidge elevated Hand to the Second Circuit Court of Appeals in 1927. Many of the cases before him on the appellate court turned out to be significant in legal and American history. These included the initial appeal by Alger Hiss of his perjury conviction, a request by Julius and Ethel Rosenberg for a new trial, and upholding a lower court ruling that *Ulysses* by James Joyce was not obscene. His writing stated facts and legal rules clearly and accurately. A common expression of his time was "Cite Learned but follow Gus." It was an acknowledgment of his cousin's well-deserved reputation but Augustus Hand's wisdom.

Among his law clerks was Judge Eugene Nickerson of the Eastern District of New York.

Sources:

Mark V. Tushnet, "Hand, Augustus Noble" American National Biography Online, Feb 2000

"Augustus N. Hand, Jurist, Dies at 85" New York Times, October 29, 1954, p. 23

Wyzanski, Charles E. Jr. "Augustus Noble Hand", 61 Harv. L. Rev. 573 (1948)

Biographical Directory of Federal Judges, available at <http://www.fjc.gov/>.