

Granville G. Bennett helped to bring law and order to the mining camps of the Black Hills, organizing the region's tribunal system and holding its first court in a log cabin.

Granville Gaylord Bennett was born in Ohio on 9 October 1833 to Peter Bennett and Mary Pinkerton Bennett. In 1855, he moved to Iowa, where he studied law at Washington College and joined the bar. Shortly after his 1860 marriage to Mary Dawson, he joined the Nineteenth Iowa Volunteer Infantry, fought for the Union Army, and rose to the rank of adjutant. In 1865, he capitalized on his Civil War experience to win a seat in the Iowa Legislature, serving until 1871.

Bennett came to Dakota Territory in 1875 when President Ulysses S. Grant appointed him associate justice for the territorial supreme court. During his time at the capital in Yankton, Bennett helped to write a new territorial legal code; a revised version of this code is still in use today. When the United States government opened the Black Hills to non-Indians in 1877, he took an appointment as judge for the Black Hills Judicial District in Deadwood. There, he won the support of the citizenry with several pro-mining decisions.

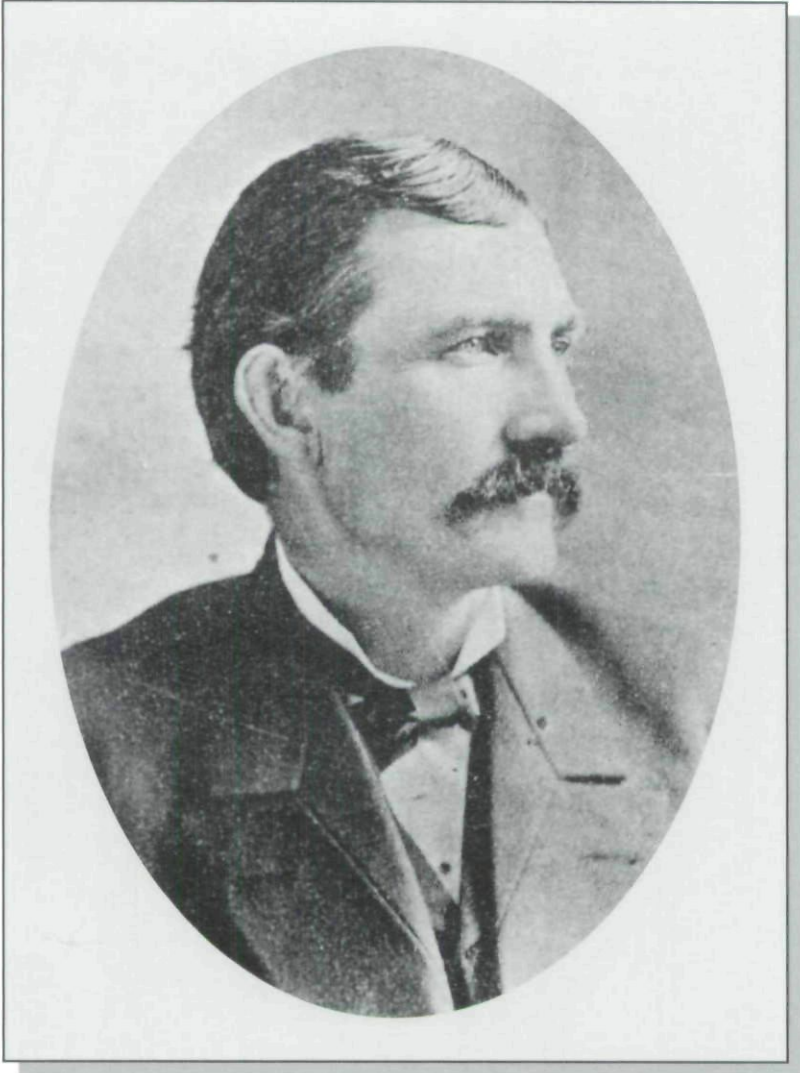
Bennett's opposition to the "Yankton ring," a group of political appointees who controlled most territorial affairs through political patronage, helped his political aspirations. In 1878, he wrestled the Republican nomination for Congress away from incumbent Jefferson P. Kidder. While in Congress, however, Bennett mended fences with his Yankton opponents and lost the 1880 nomination to Richard F. Pettigrew, who ran on a platform similar to Bennett's successful 1878 campaign.

Bennett returned to private law practice in Deadwood, where he became one of the town's most influential citizens. From 1892 to 1897, he served as a county judge, gaining a reputation for being hard on petty criminals. Bennett remained active in community affairs and Republican party politics in semi-retirement. An eloquent speaker, he was a popular lecturer on scientific and literary topics.

Granville Bennett died on 28 June 1910 at Hot Springs and was buried at Mount Moriah Cemetery in Deadwood. One of his three surviving children, Estelline Bennett, wrote of her father's experiences in a 1935 book, *Old Deadwood Days*.

by Greg M. Wysk

Dakota Images



Granville G. Bennett

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