

Senator Henry Moore Teller

On February 23, 1914 at his home in Denver, Colorado, the Hon. Henry Moore Teller LL. D. , passed away at the age of eighty-four. He had been twenty-seven years in public life at Washington, six times elected to the United State Senate from Colorado and served in the cabinet of President Arthur as Secretary of the Interior. Mr. Teller was a native of Allegany County, New York, and was an early student in Alfred University while it was still Alfred Academy. He came from a farm home in the pioneer days and worked his way through such academic education as he could secure at Alfred at that time. He later studied law and was admitted to the bar in Binghamton, New York. In 1859, he went West, stopping for a short time in Illinois, but soon located permanently in Colorado. When Colorado was admitted to the union in 1876, Mr. Teller was elected one of the first United States senators from the state and continued as a prominent and distinguished figure in the national government until old age required his retirement.

The distinction of having been elected six separate times to the United States Senate was held by the late Henry Miller Teller, "the Grand Old Man of Colorado." At the time he retired from public life in 1909, he had represented the Centennial state in the Senate 30 of the 33 years Colorado had been a state.

Senator Teller was born in 1830 in Granger, Allegany County, N.Y., attending the common schools of New York and Alfred University. After several years of teaching he studied law and hung out his shingle at Binghamton, N.Y. Heeding the call of the great West, the young lawyer moved in 1858 to Illinois, where he practiced law until 1861. In that year he again changed his place of residence, settling at Central City, Col., then a struggling mining camp. For 18 years he practiced law and together with the late Judge Moses Hallett and others, helped to lay the mining law code which governs Colorado today.

In 1876, when Colorado was admitted to the Union, Teller was elected United States senator for the short term ending March 3, 1877. He was re-elected for the full term and served until April 17, 1882, when he resigned to become secretary of the interior in President Arthur's cabinet.

In January 1885, Teller was re-elected to the senate and resumed his cabinet portfolio. He served four more terms in the senate, retiring in 1909, with the distinction of having served longer in the upper house than any other man then a member of it. During his last four terms in the senate he had a varied political career. In 1891 he was elected as a Republican, but four years later, during the St. Louis convention of the Republican party he bolted the Republican party, together with a number of western men.

The following year, in January, 1897, he was sent back to the senate as an Independent Silver Republican. At the completion of that term, Senator Teller had affiliated himself with the Democratic party, and as a member of that party was again re-elected to the senate in 1903. Senator Teller voluntarily retired to private life at the expiration of that term and was succeeded by Chas. J. Hughes. For two years thereafter Teller served as a member of the Federal monetary commission.

Teller attributed his longevity directly to his abstinence from all stimulants. "Never drink," he advised a group of newspaper men recently. "Whiskey is the nation's curse. Don't smoke; it is costly to health and the pocketbook. Marry early, if you can, but late, if not early. Bachelors are an abomination. They are of no real good to the community."

Senator Teller is survived by one daughter, Mrs. Emma Tyler, and two sons, Henry B. and Harrison J. all residents of Denver.

Senator Teller always retained in his heart a warm place for Alfred and its educational work. The President has frequently met him in the Capitol at Washington and was always most cordially received. Senator Teller repeatedly planned to visit Alfred in these later years, but his busy life and his many public duties prevented him from carrying out this cherished hope. Alfred University conferred upon him in 1886, the honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

No finer type of American citizenship has been seen in his generation that is seen in Henry M. Teller. His name will long be honored and cherished in New York, his native state, in Colorado, the state of his adoption, and in Alfred University, his Alma Mater, as well as at the national control.

(Excerpted from *Fiat Lux*, March 3, 1914)