

Stephen Wright Kellogg

"Of the large place which General Kellogg filled in this community, in the State and even in the nation, it is hard to speak without appearance of exaggeration."

- Waterbury American January 28, 1904

Stephen Wright Kellogg was born in Shelburne, Massachusetts on April 15, 1822. After he reached the age of sixteen, he taught school. At 20, he entered Amherst where he studied for two years. He then transferred to Yale where he earned high honors upon graduating in 1846. He continued his education and finished his studies at Yale Law School in 1848.

Kellogg began the practice of law in Naugatuck. In 1854, he was elected Judge of Probate of the Waterbury District and moved there to continue his law practice.

Kellogg served as clerk of the State Senate in 1851. He became a member of the State Senate in 1853 and the State House in 1856. He was city attorney for Waterbury from 1866 to 1869 and again from 1877 to 1883. During these tenures he was responsible for legislation necessary to bring water and sewage systems to Waterbury. Also, he was one of a committee of thirteen that drafted Waterbury's City Charter in 1870.

During the Civil War he helped organize the Connecticut "National Guard", a term he originated that was later adopted by many states. He served in it as a colonel and a brigadier general from 1863 to 1870.

In 1869, 1871 and 1873 he was the first Waterburian elected to Congress. While there, he served on the important committees of Judiciary, Patents, War Crimes and Pacific Railroads. He was a chairman of the Naval Expenditures and Civil Service Reform Committees. He prepared and influenced passage of bills that reorganized the Treasury and War Departments and was influential in securing legislation for the improvement of harbors of Connecticut.

In 1878 Kellogg declined the nomination for governor and withdrew his name as a candidate for United States Senator. He continued his interest in public affairs, writing articles on political matters. After President Garfield's assassination he wrote a piece on presidential succession. The system he advocated was later adopted by Congress and is still in effect. He was Presidential elector in 1900.



Throughout his life, he was ardently interested in all things leading to the development of Waterbury. He was a charter member of the Silas Bronson Library Board of Agents in 1868 where he served until his death. While in Congress, he succeeded in making the library one of the first public libraries in the country to be a depository for the publications of the United States Government. He also started a movement that led to the building of the city's first government building on Grand Street.

Kellogg was thought to be one of the best representatives the district ever had with an aptitude for honesty and the practical side of legislation. A well-known, respected figure of his time, he died on January 27, 1904.