James Patton Neeley was born August 15, 1891 in Francis, Utah to James Parley Neeley and Mary Elizabeth Hughes Neeley. There were seven children born to this couple: Parley Hughes, Louis Paul, Mary Lourette, Martha Maud, Lottie Ardelle, James Patton and Barbara Elizabeth.

He spent his early life assisting his father on their ranch and in his various business enterprises. At the age of twelve years, due to the illness of his father (erysipelas), he had to provide provisions for two herds of sheep, milk eighteen cows both morning and night, and manage the saw mill, dance hall, and skating rinks. When the family moved to Coalville, his father purchased a coal mine and it was the boys job to deliver most of the coal.

His early schooling took place in Francis. He attended the B.Y.U., at Provo, Utah for one year, and then entered the L.D.S. High School and Business College. After graduating he kept books for a number of years during the summers. He also attended the University of Utah for two years.

He met Stella Cox and they were married September 18, 1915 in the L. D. S. Temple in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Shortly after this, they left for Chicago, Illinois, where he attended the University of Chicago law school and graduated in the Spring of 1918 with an LLB degree. He then returned to Salt Lake City, took the Bar examination and was admitted to the Utah State Bar. He taught telegraphy in night school at the L. D. S. Business College for two years. For several years he filled in the names on the degrees for the University of Utah (a sample of his penmanship will be found at the end of this article) He served as Bank Examiner for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation for six months.

In the Fall of 1938, he was appointed Deputy County Attorney for Salt Lake County. He served in this capacity as Chief Criminal Deputy for four years, and for the next three years as Chief Deputy County Attorney.

On February 1st, 1949, he was appointed Judge to serve in the Murray City Court, and served there until December 31st, 1949. In November, 1949, he was appointed Judge of the City Court in Salt Lake City, Utah, and took office January 1st, 1950. In November 1961, he was elected to a full six-year term as City Judge. In the election of 1967 he was unopposed for re-election and served another six-year term. In the 1963 election, he was unopposed, and on January 6, 1964 took office for his 3rd six-year term as City Judge for Salt Lake City, Utah.

During his reign as City Judge, he has received many threatening letters. The police force thought some of them were from cranks, but never-the-less could not let it go unnoticed and we have had officers watching our home for weeks at a time.

The many wonderful compliments paid him are too numerous to mention. One thing is most certain, he has been a very fair Judge. Many people have said "You really threw the book at me, but I'm sure I had it coming."

He was appointed a member of the Committee of the Judiciary of the National Association of Municipal Judges.

He was given the title of "Honorary Citizen" by Father Flanigan's Boy's Home, in consideration for his help to them.

Following the publication of an editorial appearing in the Salt Lake Tribune, he received a letter from Mayor J. Bracken Lee, in which he said, "I agree wholeheartedly with the enclosed editorial. I appreciate your stand in handling not only the cases mentioned in this editorial, but all others. I admire you for your determined effort to punish the guilty instead of merely admonishing them or perhaps dismissing the case if you did not agree with the law they have broken. Again, thanks so much. You are indeed a credit to our City. If we had more judges of your character, perhaps we would have fewer violators and more respect for the law."

He has helped many boys by giving them good advice and counsel. Many parents have come to him thrilled with the way their boys have taken a turn for the better following these talks. A letter from a high official of the L. D. S. Church reads: "My wife and I would like you to know how much we have thoroughly appreciated your kindness, your patience, and your helpfulness in connection with our son. He left Tuesday night after having joined the Marine Corp and probably now is taking the first stages of his training."

"You have played a very important part in our lives in assisting us in helping our son to find the right course of action. We hope he will take advantage now of his opportunities and that it will help him to understand and appreciate the really worth while standards of life. We want you to know that you will always be very close to us in our appraisal of life's experiences and your assistance and understanding will always be a great source of strength to us in our lives."
A letter from Chief Justice Hournd reads: "... . . . . . . . This is to say, I appreciate such consideration, and that I believe your handling of his difficulty by affording this opportunity for readjustment to be consonant with high public service and sympathetic administration of justice."

A letter from United States Senator Frank E. Moss reads: "Congratulations on your appointment to the committee on Independence of the Judiciary of the National Association of Municipal Judges. It is a well-deserved honor for you as well as a testimony to your many years of fine service on the bench. With kindest personal regards and best wishes."

A letter from the University of Utah, signed by fifteen teachers of driver and traffic education says: "We, the undersigned teachers of driver and traffic education in the Salt Lake area, sincerely appreciate the mock trial you conducted in our class Monday evening, March 14, 1980. This was a fabulous, and highly educating experience."

Another letter from the Associated Students of West High, says: "The Associated Students of West High School wish to extend their appreciation for your participation in conjunction with the fine program presented on February 7, 1965. We sincerely believe that the program was well received and that this type of Guidance Program is thoroughly beneficial to each member of the student body."

Many letters similar to the following have been received during the time he has served on the Bench. "I feel that yesterday would not be complete without a special "Thank You" to you."

I would like to say that since our first acquaintance at the beginning of my serving days (April 1960) I have held the very highest regard for you; not only as a fine Judge, but also a fine gentleman.

I have constantly maintained that you administer the highest degree of justice that emanates from the various benches of the City Court, and that you accomplish this in the fairest, most equitable and consistent manner."

Many people come to his court day after day to listen. They seem to be fascinated with his administration of justice.

Dozens of officers in the Police Department have said, "I just love that man."
$1500.00


Nine months after date we promise to pay to the order of Martin Cunningham Co. Fifteen Hundred Dollars Value received.

By R. W. Reed.
Brown Bury, Neb.
Trinity College.