

Davis, Hayne ^[1]

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by Tyndall P. Harris, Jr., 1986

2 Nov. 1868–5 Mar. 1942

See also: [Richmond Pearson Davis](#) ^[2], brother.

Hayne Davis, lawyer and author, was born in Statesville to E. Hayne Davis, veteran captain of the Confederate Army, and his wife [Mary Williams Pearson](#) ^[3] of Richmond Hill. He was educated at the [Bingham School](#) ^[4] in Mebane, where he distinguished himself by winning medals in both Greek and Latin. He entered [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[5] in 1884 and was graduated in 1888. From the university Davis went into politics and campaigned for his uncle, Governor [Daniel G. Fowle](#) ^[6]. During this period he became secretary of the State Democratic Executive Committee.

When the election was over, Davis returned to Chapel Hill for the law course and received his license to practice. At this time he accepted an invitation to practice law with a distant relative, General James C. J. Williams of Knoxville, Tenn. Within a year Davis was admitted into partnership, and he handled many of the firm's cases in the Tennessee Supreme Court. He left the law firm of Williams, Henderson, and Davis in 1894 to practice in New York City. He became engaged in mining enterprises and was sent to London to investigate a company "which had been misconducting itself with European exports of the company he was connected with." It was during this trip that he became aware of European politics. He is quoted as saying, "I became convinced that the political situation of Europe could not continue, and that a union or federation of these nations, along the lines of our union of states would be the outcome." Upon his return to the United States, he began a series of articles in the *New York Independent* and in so doing convinced the editor, Hamilton Holt, of his point of view.

In the five years that followed Davis's 1903 articles, both he and Holt became known as authorities on international affairs. In part because of the articles, Congressman [Richard Bartholdt](#) ^[7] persuaded the American delegation to the Inter-Parliamentary Union to invite Davis to become secretary of that body for the 1904 St. Louis Meeting. When the Inter-Parliamentary Union returned to Washington after a tour of the country, Davis, among others, convinced President Theodore Roosevelt to call a second conference at The Hague. Davis was also secretary to the 1905 and 1906 international congresses held at Brussels and London; the program formulated at these meetings was the basis of discussion at the 1907 Hague conference. While at the Inter-Parliamentary Union, he formed a friendship with Baron Estournelles de Constant that led to his appointment as secretary of the International Conciliation. Through these many different peace boards Davis was the key leader in organizing the Peace and Arbitration League. From the Hague conference came the organization of the International Court of Justice and a proposal for a permanent international congress. But hopes for a Third International Congress to be held in 1914 were shattered with the outbreak of war and this country's subsequent refusal to join the League of Nations formed through the efforts of President Wilson.

Concurrently with his work for peace Davis maintained an active Wall Street law practice, and from 1904 to 1908 he was legal adviser to the Colombian delegation. His main task was to advise Colombia on the best method of obtaining compensation for Panama. He was dropped from this position when two close associates in the delegation left Washington.

In 1913, Davis became a member of the Christian Science church and worked diligently to raise funds for that organization and to restructure the New York churches. One year later he was elected to The University of North Carolina Alpha chapter for alumni membership in the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

Davis continued to contribute articles on international questions to periodicals; many of these pieces appeared in book form, notably *Among the World's Peacekeepers* ^[8] published in New York in 1907. As his law practice diminished during the twenties, he began making more frequent appearances as a lecturer. In 1932, Davis became the vice-president for world cooperation of the World Narcotics Association. He resigned from the post three years later after a dispute with the association's president. By this time he had completely retired from his law practice and spent a great deal of time lecturing at college campuses across the country.

Unmarried, Davis died in Boston, Mass., and was buried in the Chestnut Hill Cemetery, Salisbury, N.C.

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