

Cowles, Henry Clay ^[1]

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by Horace W. Raper, 1979

17 June 1842–14 Jan. 1914

Henry Clay Cowles, U.S. clerk of court at Salisbury, Charlotte, and Statesville, U.S. commissioner, and leading industrialist and banker, was born in Hamptonville, the son of [Josiah](#) ^[2] and Nancy Carson Duvall Cowles. Like his brothers, Henry Cowles lived on the family farm and worked in his father's general merchandising store, attended the common schools, and was graduated from the Jonesville High School in [Yadkin County](#) ^[3]. He did not serve in the Confederate Army because of ill health but was captain of the home guard; later he was called colonel to distinguish him from his nephew, Andrew Cowles, a captain in the State Guard, but the title was purely honorary, and Cowles never claimed it.

In the fall of 1865, Cowles moved to Statesville and served first as station agent and later as conductor on the [Western North Carolina Railroad](#) ^[4]. During the presidency of Dr. [J. J. Mott](#) ^[5], he was appointed secretary-treasurer of the road and served until about 1877. In 1872, when the federal court was established, Cowles was appointed clerk at Statesville and Charlotte; he also acted as the clerk at Salisbury when the court was created there. Later, when the law was changed to provide one clerk for the entire judicial district, Cowles was made deputy clerk to J. M. Millikin of Greensboro but continued to supervise the court business in the same three cities. He held the position until his death. Cowles was active in [Republican party](#) ^[6] activities, serving in many capacities at all levels. At various times he was member of the Statesville Board of Aldermen, U.S. commissioner, and member of the National Republican Committee.

In addition to his official positions, Cowles was active in many Statesville business enterprises. He helped organize the First National Bank in 1886, serving as director and vice-president. He also helped to organize the First Building & Loan Association in Statesville and was a director of the Statesville Furniture Company.

Cowles was married on 14 Dec. 1869 to Juliet Moore (27 Dec. 1845–13 Jan. 1918), daughter of Dr. James Madison and Mary Haggins Moore of Statesville. From this union there were three children, Mary Caroline, [Henry Clay, Jr.](#) ^[7], and Eloise Irwin.

References:

[Calvin D. Cowles, *Genealogy of the Cowles Families in America* \(1929\).](#) ^[8]

Cowles Manuscripts, Charles L. Van Noppen Papers (Manuscript Department, Library, Duke University, Durham).

Additional Resources:

Casstevens, Frances H. *The Civil War and Yadkin County, North Carolina* Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland Publishers. 1997. 205. http://books.google.com/books?id=HwL_IdbN580C&pg=PA205#v=onepage&q&f=false ^[9] (accessed January 24, 2014).

Subjects:

[Biographies](#) ^[10]

[Public officials](#) ^[11]

Authors:

[Raper, Horace W.](#) ^[12]

Origin - location:

[Statesville](#) ^[13]

[Charlotte](#) ^[14]

[Salisbury](#) ^[15]

[Yadkin County](#) ^[16]

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1 January 1979 | Raper, Horace W.

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<https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/raper-horace-w> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmon-24> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmon-19> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/category/origin-location/piedmont/y> [17]
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