

Chief Justice John M. Read (Reed)

1797-1874

Term

December 6, 1858-1873, Chief Justice, December 2, 1872-January 6, 1873

Education

- University of Pennsylvania, A.B., 1812
- Studied law

Professional Experience

- Admitted to Philadelphia bar, September 7, 1818
- Private Practice, 1818-1830
- Member, Pennsylvania House of Representatives, 1822-1824
- Solicitor, Philadelphia, 1824-1827
- Solicitor, Kensington District, September 1842-1846
- U.S. District Attorney for Eastern District, Pennsylvania, 1837-1841
- Attorney General, Pennsylvania, June 23, 1846-December 18, 1846
- Private Practice, 1846-1858
- Elected Justice, Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, October 12, 1858
- Retired from Office, January 1873

Honors and Awards

- Honorary LL.D. degree: Brown University, 1860
- President Tyler appointed him to U.S. Supreme Court, but Senate did not confirm

Memberships and Associations

- American Philosophical Society
- Vice-President, Historical Society of Pennsylvania
- General Secretary, Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of Pennsylvania
- Chief Organizer of First National Convention of the Republican Party, 1856

Publications

- Opinions of Messrs. Meredith & Binney as to the Right of the Corporation of the City of Philadelphia to the Use of the Water and Water-Power of the River Schuylkill at Fairmount Dam (1843)
- Opinion of John M. Read, Esquire, Against the Right of the City Councils to Subscribe for Stock in the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, and to Increase the City Debt and Taxes for That Purpose (1846)
- Opinion of John M. Read, Esq., Against the Right of the Legislature of New Jersey to Impose Tolls upon the Navigable Waters Between New York and South Amboy (1849)
- Speech of Hon. John M. Read at the Democratic Town Meeting in Favor of the Union and California (1850)
- Argument of Hon. John M. Reed: in Favor of the Constitutionality of the Subscription by the City of Philadelphia to the Capital Stock of the Hempfield, and Philadelphia, Easton, and Water Gap Railroad Companies : Delivered Before the Supreme Court of Philadelphia, on Monday, the 25th July, 1853: in the Case of Sharpless and Others v. the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of Philadelphia (1853)
- Speech of Hon. John M. Read, on the Power of Congress over the Territories, and in Favor of Free Kansas, Free White Labor, and of Fremont and Dayton. Delivered on Tuesday Evening, September 30, 1856, at Philadelphia. (1856)
- Speech of Hon. John M. Read in Favor of Free Kansas, Free White Labor, and of Fremont and Dayton: at the Eighth Ward Mass Meeting, Held in the Assembly Buildings, on Tuesday Evening, September 30, 1856. (1856)

- Views, Sustained by Facts, on the Suspension of the Privilege of the Writ of Habeas Corpus, Jan. 1863 (1863)
- Opinions of Hon. John M. Read, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in Favor of the Constitutionality of the Act of Congress of March 3, 1863, "For Enrolling and Calling out the National Forces and for Other Purposes." (1864)
- Opinion of Hon. John M. Read, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, in Favor of the Constitutionality of the Act of Congress of March 3, 1863, "For Enrolling and Calling out the National Forces, and for Other Purposes. Delivered at Pittsburg, on Monday, November 9, 1863, and at Philadelphia, on Saturday, January 16, 1864 (1864)
- Opinion of Hon. John M. Read, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, in Favor of the Constitutionality of the Acts of Congress, Declaring Treasury Notes a Legal Tender in Payment of Debts. Delivered at Harrisburg, on Wednesday, May 24, 1865 (1865)
- Opinion of Hon. J. M. Read, in Favor of the Passenger Railway Cars Running on Every Day in the Week, Including Sunday (1867)
- Opinion of Hon. John M. Read, in Baird and Others Vs. Rice and Others, Argued Before Hon. James Thompson, Chief Justice, at Nisi Prius, Assisted by His Brethren, on the 4th, 5th, and 6th January, 1871, upon a Motion for an Injunction to Prevent the Erection of the Public Buildings on Penn Square. Delivered Wednesday, 18th January, 1871 (1871)
- Letter of Ex-Chief Justice Read of the Supreme Court on the New Constitution, Its Abolition of Secrecy of the Ballot (1873)

Sources

4 Nat. Cyc. of Am. Biog. 500 (1891); 1 Who Was Who in American 434 (1963); 2 Frank M. Eastman, Courts and Lawyers of Pennsylvania: A History (1623-1923) 508 (1922); John M. Read, Wikipedia, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_M._Read; John M. Read Papers, Huntington Library, <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8c82gjd/admin/#bioghist-1.2.3>; John Hill Martin, Martin's Bench and Bar of Philadelphia (1883); John Meredith Read Papers, Collection 1668, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, <http://www2.hsp.org/collections/manuscripts/r/Read1668.html>; Bar Meeting, 31 Legal Intelligencer 396 (December 11, 1874).