

Frank P. Alexander served as speaker of the house of representatives during the 21st Legislature. In 1889, that legislature passed an antitrust law, aimed chiefly against railroad rate-fixing associations, that was designed to prevent financial combinations from acting to restrict trade, limit production, or control prices. Following four weeks after passage of a similar measure by the Kansas Legislature, the Texas law was only the second antitrust statute to be enacted in the United States. It preceded by one year the better-known federal Sherman Antitrust Act.

Biographical information regarding Alexander is scanty, more so than is the case with any other occupant of the speaker's office. He was born in Pickens, South Carolina, apparently on September 1, 1853, although one source cites the same date in 1855. As a youth in South Carolina, Alexander learned the printing trade, and at age 17 he moved to Jefferson, Texas.

In Texas, Alexander worked as a journalist. Joining in a partnership as one of the editors and proprietors of the Daily Jefferson Democrat, he remained with that newspaper for three years and afterwards moved to Galveston. Alexander subsequently worked for the press in Fort Worth, and in about 1875, settled in Greenville in Hunt County, where he became editor of the Greenville Enterprise. Later, in 1879, he established the Greenville Herald, which he retained until 1884, when he sold it and retired from journalism. Thereafter, Alexander was engaged in the insurance business.

Alexander became active in state politics in 1878 as a delegate to the state Democratic convention in Austin. He ran unsuccessfully for state representative in 1882, but was elected two years later. Alexander served in the house of representatives in the 19th through 21st legislatures and was chosen speaker in his final term.

Politically, Alexander was known for his antimonopoly stance. In his initial term in 1885, he introduced the first bill proposing creation of a state commission to fix and maintain railroad freight rates. It was defeated, and not until 1891 after Alexander had left the legislature did the state create its railroad commission. Alexander also served during his legislative career on the internal improvements, state affairs, and printing committees, and in both terms before his speakership was chairman of the insurance and statistics committee.

The largest gap in information regarding Alexander occurs following his term as speaker. Nothing further, even the date or place of his death, is known about him. Perhaps he moved to another state, or at least to some other area of Texas, as he is listed neither in cemetery records for Hunt County nor in death records that have been maintained by the state health department since 1903.