

Bunn, Henry Gaston ^[1]

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by Michael B. Dougan, 1979

12 June 1838–17 July 1908

Henry Gaston Bunn, Confederate ^[2] colonel and chief justice, Arkansas Supreme Court, was born at Rocky Mount, Nash County ^[3], the son of David and Elizabeth Bunn. He removed with his parents to Fayette County, Tenn., in 1844, and thence to Ouachita County, Ark., in 1846. He returned to North Carolina in January 1859 as a student at Davidson College ^[4], remaining there until the outbreak of the Civil War ^[5].

Returning to Arkansas, Bunn volunteered in the Confederate Army and became third lieutenant in Company A, Fourth Arkansas Regiment (McNair's). In November 1861 he was made adjutant of the regiment. At the battle of Pea Ridge he was wounded and taken prisoner but escaped. In April 1862 he was raised to the rank of lieutenant colonel. Fighting with the Army of Tennessee, he was wounded during the fighting around Atlanta in 1864 and did not see action again until early in 1865. At the Battle of Bentonville ^[6] in the closing days of the war (19–20 Mar. 1865), he commanded a brigade, retaining that command at General Joseph E. Johnston's surrender on 26 Apr. 1865. Bunn then marched his men back to Arkansas.

Settling in Camden after the war, Bunn was admitted to the bar in 1866. He served as state senator from Ouachita County in 1873 and as a member of the constitutional convention of 1874. He practiced law successfully, serving as a special judge on occasion, until Governor William Fishback appointed him in May 1893 to fill the vacancy on the bench caused by the resignation of Chief Justice Sterling R. Cockrill. In 1896, Bunn was nominated by the Democratic State Convention and confirmed at the polls in September for an eight-year term as chief justice. In this office he opposed Attorney General and Governor Jeff Davis in his efforts to drive all trusts from Arkansas. In 1904, with Davis at the height of his powers, Bunn was defeated in the Democratic ^[7] primary by Joseph M. Hill. After his retirement from the court, he moved to El Dorado, practicing law until his death in 1908.

Bunn was married twice: in 1865 to Louise E. Holmes, who died in 1866; and then to Aralee Conally, by whom he had five children. His remains were removed to Camden for burial.

Bunn was a lifelong Democrat and a Presbyterian ^[8].

References:

Arkansas Reports, 57–73.

Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas (1890).

C. A. Evans, ed., *Confederate Military History*, vol. 10 (1899).

Little Rock Arkansas Democrat, 18 July 1908.

Little Rock Arkansas Gazette, 18 July 1908.

Additional Resources:

Confederate Arkansas Troops, National Park Service: https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-regiments-detail.htm?regiment_id=CAR0031RI ^[9]

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