

Jordan, Pleasant ^[1]

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by Michael B. Dougan, 1988

17 Aug. 1812–27 May 1863

Pleasant Jordan, lawyer and Arkansas attorney general, was born in Henderson County ^[2], the son of a Baptist minister who owned land along the French Broad River ^[3]. Young Pleasant received an indifferent common school education before enrolling at a classical academy at Greenville, S.C., which was run on the manual labor plan. Lawrence Orr ^[4], congressman and ambassador to Russia, was a classmate. On graduation Jordan taught a term in a rural school. One of his pupils was Joseph E. Brown ^[5], a poor backwoods boy and hardworking student who sold two steers to pay for his schooling; he later became governor of Georgia.

Jordan had saved enough in teaching one term to enter the law office of Simpson Bobo at Spartanburg, S.C. On completing his legal education, he moved with his brother, Fleming, to Arkansas, arriving in Little Rock in January 1843. Pleasant entered the office of Absalom Fowler, a prominent attorney, but later practiced with his brother. In 1849, he ran for the office of prosecuting attorney of the Fifth Judicial Circuit; at the time, he was described as a young man of "enterprise, energy, and high aspirations for eminence at the bar" but he was defeated at the polls. In 1861, however, Jordan won election as prosecuting attorney, a position that made him ex officio attorney general of Arkansas. He held the office until his death.

Jordan's goal was to be a cultured gentleman. During his short life he succeeded in building up a large legal library (inventoried in the probating of his estate), a sizable fortune, and a good reputation at the bar. He was a Whig ^[6] in politics. In personal appearance he was five feet ten inches tall with black eyes, hair, and whiskers. Although raised a Baptist, Jordan joined the Campbellite denomination in Little Rock.

In 1851 he married Sallie E. Howell, the daughter of Seth Howell of Johnson County. The father of three girls and two boys, Jordan was buried at Mount Holly Cemetery in Little Rock.

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