

Today in Columbus History:

On Wednesday, October 24, 1883, both the *Columbus Enquirer-Sun* and the *Columbus Daily Times* ran a story on Justice Mark H. Blandford of the Georgia Supreme Court. Both articles were reprints of a story by an Atlanta correspondent for the *Macon Telegraph*. Blandford, a resident of Columbus, was recently sworn in as a justice on the court to fill the vacancy left by the death of another Columbus-based justice, Martin J. Crawford. People were very familiar with Blandford as a lawyer and were curious as to how he would do on the bench.

Blandford was born in Warren County in 1826 and raised in Jones County. He took up law at age eighteen through act of the Georgia Legislature allowing him to do so prior to reaching the full age of twenty-one. He was said to be one of the youngest people to practice law in the state of Georgia. He practiced in Tazewell, Georgia prior to the Mexican War. After joining the 1st Georgia Regiment, he served as a sergeant during the conflict. After returning from Mexico, practiced law in Buena Vista and married Sarah Daniel in 1852. The couple had children Martha, Robert, Josephine, John, and Lucy.

Blandford joined Co. K of the 12th GA Regiment in April 1861, as a captain of the Marion Guards, just as the Civil War was starting. The 12th GA took heavy losses in the Battle of McDowell, Virginia where Blandford lost his right arm on May 8, 1862. He was back home by June of 1862 and taking visitors. He wanted to return to the battlefield but was unable, due to his disability. Instead, he took the position of judge in a military court with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

In 1863, Blandford ran against incumbent Hines Holt to represent Georgia's third district in the Second Confederate Congress. He beat Holt who resigned and refused to finish his unexpired term. Blandford remained in the Congress until the end of the war.

He moved to Columbus to practice law in 1869, partnering first with B. A. Thornton and later with Louis Garrard until joining the Supreme Court. After eight years on the bench, he returned to Columbus and partnered with Thomas W. Grimes.

Blandford was highly regarded in his profession. In fact, the governor even remarked that he was the best lawyer in Georgia, at one point. The stories of his early career were also legendary and recounted by his admirers after his death. In one of them, he won a case against a doctor who couldn't translate the Latin on his diploma. Blandford claimed the document might not be a diploma but an old revolutionary land grant, for all he knew.

He was involved in many notable cases in Columbus. He defended Col. W. L. Salisbury in the case brought by Dr. R. U. Palmer and lost. Blandford was on the train station platform during Salisbury's assassination on April 21, 1878 (see my Today in Columbus History post for that day).

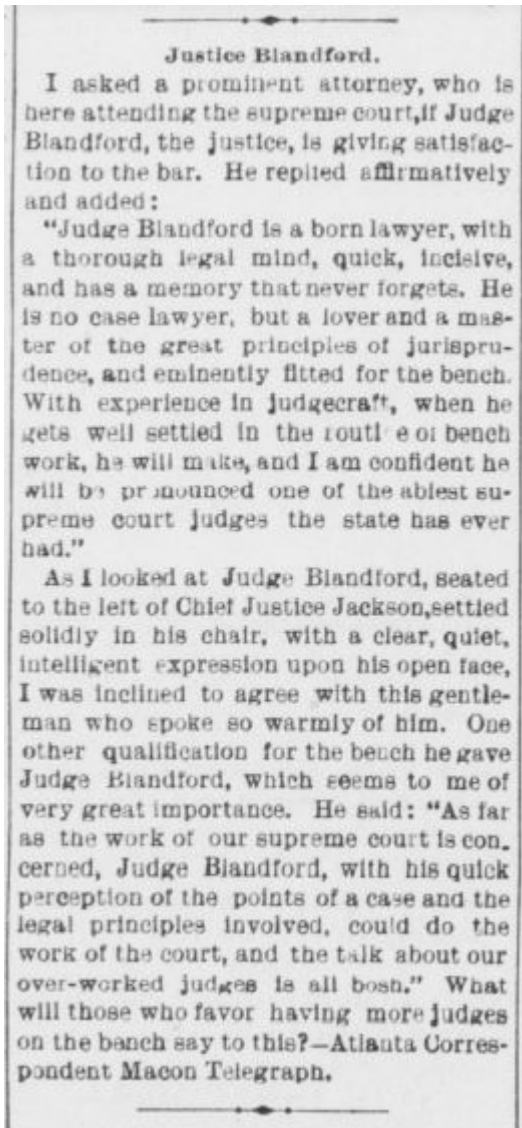
Blandford suffered from asthma but remained active until shortly before he died at his home in Wynnton in 1902. He is buried in Linwood Cemetery.

Compiled by Daniel A. Bellware, Muscogee Genealogical Society

Clipping from Georgia Historic Newspapers (GALILEO).

Our weekly snippets of Columbus history are usually based on a few days-worth of searching through the most popular sources for Muscogee County history. Meant to inspire readers to explore more about

Columbus history, they are not exhaustive dissertations on the topic and may contain mistakes. If you have corrections or additional information, feel free to share them with the group.



Article on "Justice Blandford" from the *Columbus Daily Times*, October 24, 1883,
<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.



Photo of the Mark Blandford, courtesy of FindAGrave.com
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7984973/mark-harden-blandford>



Photo of the Mark Blandford's gravestone, courtesy of FindAGrave.com
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/7984973/mark-harden-blandford>

NEW LAW FIRM.
Blandford & Thornton
HAVE this day formed a copartnership, and
solicit business in all the courts of the
Chattahoochee Circuits, Supreme Court of the
State, District and Circuit Courts of the United
States for the State of Georgia.
M. H. BLANDFORD,
B. A. THORNTON.

Ad for the new law firm Blandford & Thornton from the *Columbus Daily Enquirer* January 16, 1870.

MARK H. BLANDFORD. LOUIS F. GARRARD.
BLANDFORD & GARRARD,
Attorneys and Counsellors at Law.
Office No. 67 Broad street, over Wittich & Kin-
sel's Jewelry Store.
Will practice in the State and Federal Courts.
sep4

Ad for the law firm Blandford & Garrard from *The Sun and Columbus Daily Enquirer* January 20, 1874,
<https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.

JUDGE BLANDFORD
CLAIMED BY DEATH
Distinguished Columbus Citizen Dies
Suddenly at His Home.
WAS A VETERAN OF TWO WARS
Formerly Member of Confederate
Congress, One of Georgia's Best
Known Lawyers and an
ex-Justice of the Su-
preme Bench.

Headline from the *Atlanta Constitution* February 1, 1902, <https://gahistoricnewspapers.galileo.usg.edu/>.