

JUDGE OSMUND WOODWARD BUCHANAN

Osmund Woodward Buchanan was born in the town of Winnsboro, South Carolina, on the 16th day of September, 1858. His parents were Doctor Robert A. Buchanan and Rebecca Woodward Buchanan. The Buchanans and Woodwards have always been prominent in the county and State. For a long time the Fairfield delegation to the General Assembly included some members of these families. Very seldom was it without one member. Representatives of both families participated in the War of the Revolution. Captain Thomas Woodward, "the Regulator," who was killed by the British in the fight at Dutchman's Creek on May 12, 1779, was an ancestor of Judge Buchanan. Captain John Buchanan and Lieutenant Robert Buchanan served against the British in the same war. In the second war against England, John Buchanan, the uncle of Judge Buchanan, served, and at the time of his discharge was lieutenant and had become adjutant in the South Carolina quota. This same John Buchanan, being a member of the secession convention, signed the ordinance of secession, December 20, 1860. William Woodward and Joseph Woodward represented the district in the United States Congress.

After preparation, young Buchanan attended Mt. Zion College and Mt. Zion Military Institute in Winnsboro. Mt. Zion has always been dear to the Winnsboro people. This old school has been justly famed for its very thorough and efficient work and high standards. It has exercised an educational force second to none in the State. Entering the law office of the late Colonel James H. Rion, on the 4th of June, 1877, he finished the course prescribed and was admitted to the bar, after an examination before the Supreme Court, on the 16th day of January, 1880, and began the practice of his profession in his native town; Colonel Rion predicted his rapid rise and promotion. He was elected to the General Assembly in 1888 and again in 1890.

Happily, on the 2d day of January, 1889, he was married to Miss Sophia Tillman, a daughter of Honorable George D. Tillman, of Clark's Hill, Edgefield county.

On the 6th day of December, 1893, he was elected by the General Assembly to fill an expired term in the office of Attorney-General of the State. There were many cases of great importance that claimed his attention. He discharged the many duties of that office to the satisfaction of the public and protected the interest of the State. At the general election held on the 6th of November, 1894, he was elected for the full term. Having been elected circuit judge for the term of four years, he entered upon the discharge of his duties on the 8th day of December, 1894. He voluntarily retired from the bench and resumed the practice of his profession at Winnsboro. On the bench Judge Buchanan sought the justice of a case, and was courteous and firm. He loved the State, its traditions and its people.

Judge Buchanan was a strong man, mentally and morally, a decided character, staunch and true.

Judge Buchanan's death occurred on the morning of March 17, 1908, under peculiarly sad circumstances. In the afternoon before, he was riding in the Pullman car of the train going from Columbia to Augusta, in which latter city he was to meet some relatives for a conference upon matters of personal concern. As the train was passing a point about two hundred yards from Ward (a station thirty-seven miles from Augusta), Judge Buchanan, sitting with his back to an open window, was heard to say, as he rose from his seat, that someone had thrown a rock in the window. He was soon overcome and sank into his seat. An examination showed that he had been struck on his left side by a bullet of .22 calibre, thought to have come from a parlor rifle – though whence it came, and more particularly who fired the gun, is yet matter for speculation. When the train reached Johnston a physician attended the Judge, and after examining the wound advised that he be taken at once to an infirmary in Augusta. There the bullet was extracted, and at one time it seemed as if the stricken man would recover. But he grew gradually weaker until 11 o'clock of the day following, when he peacefully breathed his last. The untimely death of Judge Buchanan, under circumstances equally sad and shocking, was widely regretted, and much sympathy was expressed for his afflicted family.

[Brooks, Ulysses Robert. *South Carolina Bench and Bar* (Volume I). Columbia, South Carolina: The State Company, 1906 (Reproduction, no date), 288-289.]