

Akerman, Amos Tappan ^[1]

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by Thomas C. Parramore, 1979

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Amos T. Akerman.
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^[2]Amos Tappan Akerman, lawyer, and U.S. attorney general, was born in Portsmouth, N.H., the son of Benjamin and Olive Meloon Akerman. He was educated at [Phillips Exeter Academy](#) ^[3] and [Dartmouth College](#) ^[4], being graduated from the latter in 1842. His first employment was as headmaster of a boys' academy in Murfreesboro, where his students included Pulaski Cowper, later private secretary to [Governor Thomas Bragg](#) ^[5] and General [Lawrence S. Baker](#) ^[6] of [Gates County](#) ^[7]. Years afterward, Cowper and Baker remembered schoolmaster Akerman as one who, "with a too painful frequency, exemplified the proverb of not 'sparing the rod,' and not 'spoiling the child.'"

Following a term in Murfreesboro, Akerman in 1846 found employment as a private tutor with John McPherson Berrien of Savannah, Ga. Akerman studied law under Berrien, was licensed to practice, and settled at Clarksville, Ga. Initially an opponent of secession, he accepted the fact of disunion and served first with Toombs's brigade and later with the quartermaster department. After the war he served in Georgia's state constitutional convention of 1868 and was appointed attorney general by [President Grant](#) ^[8] in 1870. An opponent of the vast claims to land sought by major [railroad](#) ^[9] interests, Akerman was attacked by Huntington, Gould, and other magnates, who were successful in persuading Grant to remove him from office at the end of 1871. He resumed his law practice in Georgia and continued with it until his death a decade later, at Cartersville.

Akerman married Martha Rebecca Galloway shortly after first moving to Georgia.

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Raleigh Observer, 17 Aug. 1877.

Additional Resources:

Amos T. Akerman, New Georgia Encyclopedia: <http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/nge/Article.jsp?id=h-660> ^[2]

William S. McFeely, "Amos T. Akerman: The Lawyer and Racial Justice," in *Region, Race, and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, ed. J. Morgan Kousser and James M. McPherson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

Amos Akerman, U.S. Department of Justice: <http://www.justice.gov/ag/aghistpage.php?id=30> ^[10]

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