

Bowman, Jacob Weaver ^[1]

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by Emily K. Hightower, 1979

31 July 1831–8 June 1905

Jacob Weaver Bowman, legislator and judge, was born in Relief, [Burke](#) ^[2] (now Mitchell) County. His parents were Joseph Bowman, a farmer and justice of the peace, and Sarah Garland. Bowman spent his early years on his father's farm. He attended the high school of Scott County, Va., in 1848 and 1849; with the encouragement of Morganton lawyer Colonel [Burgess S. Gaither](#) ^[3], he later studied law with Judge [Richmond M. Pearson](#) ^[4] and in 1868 was granted his law license.

While serving in the legislature of 1860, Bowman, a [Whig](#) ^[5], worked to establish [Mitchell County](#) ^[6]. He was elected to the legislature of 1868 and supported passage of [Reconstruction](#) ^[7] and homestead legislation. A representative in the 1872 legislature that struggled for three weeks to elect a U.S. senator from North Carolina, Bowman supported the Republican candidate, [John Pool](#) ^[8]. Opposing Pool were former Gov. [Zebulon B. Vance](#) ^[9] and Judge [A. S. Merrimon](#) ^[10]. After Bowman had satisfied the proprieties of party etiquette by his support of Pool, he backed Merrimon, the eventual winner, whom he greatly admired. Popular with his constituents, Bowman was unanimously elected to represent Mitchell County in the [constitutional convention of 1875](#) ^[11]. He served his last term in the General Assembly in 1882.

In 1898, Governor [D. L. Russell](#) ^[12] appointed Bowman to the superior court bench to fill the vacancy created by the death of Judge Leander L. Greene. After serving the remaining two years of Greene's term, Bowman retired to Bakersville to resume his law practice. It was said of his skill, "He is not eloquent and does not assume to be; but he is an antagonist worthy of the most eloquent man's best effort in the forum."

Bowman was an [Episcopalian](#) ^[13]. He and his wife, Mary Minerva Garland, had eleven children.

References:

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and Van Noppen Papers (Manuscript Department, Library, Duke University, Durham).

Additional Resources:

"Jacob W. Bowman." *Watchman & Old North State* [Salisbury, N.C.]. March 6, 1868.
<https://newspapers.digitalnc.org/lccn/sn87070107/1868-03-06/ed-1/> ^[14] (accessed October 18, 2013).

Subjects:

[Biographies](#) ^[15]

[Judges](#) ^[16]

[Lawyers](#) ^[17]

[Public officials](#) ^[18]

Authors:

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Origin - location:

[Burke County](#) ^[20]

[Mitchell County](#) ^[21]

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