

## B. F. BONHAM

Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Oregon, 1874 to 1876.

Judge B. F. Bonham was born in Blount county, East Tennessee, on October 8, 1828. He resided at the place of his birth with his father's family until twelve years of age. In the year 1840 he removed with his father's family from Tennessee to Henry county, Indiana, where the Bonham family cleared and cultivated a farm, and in the work of which Judge Bonham materially assisted. During the nine years spent in Indiana Judge Bonham worked on his father's farm, attending the public school about three months in the winter time of each year. After reaching his majority he procured a license to teach school, and for the next four years he taught school and went to school alternately, studying industriously during the entire time. In the year 1853, inspired by the glowing reports from the eldorado of the west, Judge Bonham started with ox teams across the plains to Oregon, first settling near where the town of Gervais, in Marion county, is now located. In Oregon, Judge Bonham resumed his profession of school teaching, and in the year 1854 came to the town of Salem and taught school where the capitol of Oregon is now located. The entire public school system of Salem was then accommodated by one teacher, who held school in a small one-story school house. Two years later Judge Bonham was admitted to the practice of law by the supreme court of the territory of Oregon, in 1856. He entered actively upon the practice of his new profession and also took an active interest in politics. In 1856 he was elected territorial auditor and librarian, and in 1858 he was elected a member of the last territorial and first State Legislature.

After the admission of Oregon as a state, Judge Bonham again entered actively upon the practice of law until the year 1870 when he was elected one of the justices of the supreme court of this state, and was Chief Justice for a part of his term, and in the year 1874 succeeded in the regular order to the office of chief justice for the term from 1874 to 1876. In 1885 he was a candidate for the U. S. Senate. From 1876 to 1885 Judge Bonham continued the practice of the law and in October of that year received the appointment by the president of the United States, Grover Cleveland, counsul-general to British India to reside at Calcutta. He filled this office five years, returning to Salem in 1890. In 1894 President Cleveland again honored Judge Bonham by appointing him post-master of Salem, Oregon, which position he ably filled until August 1, 1898. Judge Bonham was one of the active pioneers of this state and did much to assist in elevating the standard of citizenship by his scrupulous honesty, careful business methods and carefully written legal opinions.

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