

REUBEN SAFFOLD

Third Chief Justice: 1835-1836

BORN: September 4, 1788; Wilkes County, Georgia
February 15, 1847; Dallas County, Alabama



Portrait by UNKNOWN ARTIST

Oil on canvas, unknown date

Reuben Saffold was born and educated in Wilkes County, Georgia. After reading law in the office of Edward Payne, he was admitted the Bar in Watkinsville. In 1813, Saffold left his law practice in Watkinsville and settled in Jackson, Clarke County, Mississippi Territory. Saffold fought in the Creek Indian War of 1813-14 and was present at the Battle of Burnt Corn Creek which initiated that conflict.

He served in the territorial legislature in 1818 and was also a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1819. On December 14, 1819, the Alabama General Assembly elected him one of the five circuit judges of the new state. Saffold continued as circuit judge until 1832 when the General Assembly elected him as one of the three justices chosen to serve on the newly created Supreme Court.

He succeeded Abner Lipscomb as chief justice in 1835. Chief Justice Saffold resigned his position in 1836 and resumed the practice of law, first in Mobile and later in Dallas County. Preferring to remain in private practice, he declined a position as associate justice on the Supreme Court offered to him in 1843 by Governor Benjamin Fitzpatrick.

Saffold was married in 1811 to Mary Phillips, of Morgan County, Georgia. They had 12 children, one of whom, Benjamin, also served on the state Supreme Court.

Junius Moore Riggs Collection

Location: Antebellum Gallery, 3rd Floor, Heflin-Torbert Judicial Building