



225th Anniversary
1789-2014



Francis Gordon Caffey

Born:

October 28, 1868
Gordonsville, AL

Received Commission:

April 30, 1929

Died:

September 20, 1951
Verbena, AL

Francis G. Caffey was educated in the South and received an A.M. degree from Howard College in 1887. From there he moved on to Harvard University where he earned both an A.B. (1891) and an A.M. (1892). From 1892 – 1894 he studied at Harvard Law School, and then returned to Montgomery, Alabama to a private law practice (1894-1902). During his time in Montgomery, he also served as Judge Advocate General for the Governor of Alabama (1900 – 1902).

A noteworthy interruption to his private practice occurred in 1898 when Judge Caffey served as Lieutenant Colonel in the Third Alabama Infantry. He organized and led the first company of African-American soldiers during the Spanish-American War. His work was a model for other Army leaders.

In 1902, Judge Caffey moved to New York City and entered private practice there. From 1913-1917 he was solicitor for the Department of Agriculture, and then became a U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York during the First World War. As such, he prosecuted many German spies and enemy aliens. Judge Caffey returned to private practice in 1921, which he continued until being appointed to the SDNY.

On the bench, Judge Caffey handled a wide variety of cases which reflected the times: fraud and bank defalcation, prohibition, tax, and espionage cases in the 1930's, and cases of saboteurs and violators of wartime regulations during the 1940's. He is famously known for spending 10 days dictating his decision from the bench in the ALCOA monopoly case in 1938.

Sources:

Biographical Directory of Federal Judges, available at <http://www.fjc.gov/>.

"F.G. Caffey Dies; Retired Jurist, 82", New York Times, September 21, 1951, pg. 24.

"Judge Caffey; Spanish-U.S. War Leader", The Washington Post, September 22, 1951, pg. B2.