
Hooks - Holland

1 January 2015

The Periodic Newsletter on Family History and Genealogy of
Bennett Hardy Hooks (1890-1929) and Bertha Gertrude Holland (1896-1991)

Issue number 006

*Education Governor, Democrat, White Supremacist, and **Our Cousin***

Campus Controversies Erupt Over Gov. Charles Brantley Aycock

The father of Bennett Hardy Hooks was Ransom J. Hooks (1863-1932), and one of Ransom's second cousins was Governor Charles Brantley Aycock (1859-1912). Aycock and Ransom had grandfathers who were brothers. (See family tree on page 4 of this newsletter.)

Aycock, like Ransom, was born and raised in Wayne County, NC, and in fact his birthplace near Fremont is a North Carolina Historical Site.

"His parents, Benjamin and Serena

(Hooks) Aycock, moved into that home sometime in the 1840s. By 1870 Benjamin had the seventh wealthiest household in the township, owning more than one thousand acres.

The youngest of ten, Charles Aycock respected the work of farmers but was more interested in his father's involvement in local politics.

"After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in 1880, he opened a law practice in Goldsboro. Aycock had established himself as a skillful orator in college and used that talent to make a name for himself in the Democratic Party. From 1901 to 1905 he became known as North Carolina's 'Education Governor' because of his commitment to improving the state's public education system."¹

Aycock was justifiably proud of the statistic that, during his four-year administration, North Carolina opened a new school every day, "including Sundays," and three libraries every four days.

His strong, well documented white supremacist views, however, were typified by his leadership of the campaign in favor of a constitutional amendment for "eliminating the negro vote."²

Aycock died in Alabama in 1912,



Serena Hooks Aycock

literally in the middle of delivering the most important speech of his career, "On Universal Education." An excerpt of the introduction to that speech, written (and no doubt on that day spoken) in his folksy, rural way, is on page 3.

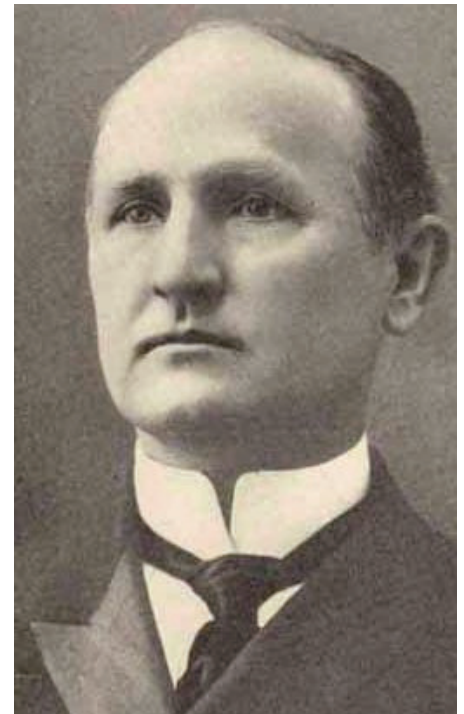
For more than five decades after his one term as governor and his dramatic, sudden death, Aycock was revered throughout the state as one of the greatest leaders the state ever had. His education reforms alone were enough to have him enshrined in the nation's Capitol as one of two North Carolinians honored with statues in Statuary Hall. (See photo, page 3.)

To honor the man who had worked tirelessly for universal education, over the years dormitories, classroom buildings, auditoriums, and other buildings were named after Aycock at UNC Chapel Hill, Duke, UNC Greensboro, East Carolina and many other schools. Until recently, the state Democratic party held an annual Vance-Aycock Dinner for the purpose of self-congratulations and fundraising — named after what it viewed as the party's two preeminent statesmen.

Gov. Aycock is No Longer Politically Correct

Public opinion about Aycock is, however, undergoing a radical change. His work, unequalled by any governor before or since, to build schools and to educate all the state's children (including girls and "negro children") is largely being ignored. Because of his leadership in the fight to pass an amendment to the NC Constitution to block all African-Americans from voting, and his completely unequivocal and well-documented belief in the supremacy of the white race, the name "Aycock" is in the process of being stripped from public and political life in North Carolina.

Most particular, the Democratic Party and the state's educational institutions (the two entities Aycock held most dear) are



Governor Charles Brantley Aycock

beginning to turn their backs on him. Duke University's Aycock Hall was renamed East Residence Hall in 2014. And in 2011 the Democrats changed the name of their annual gathering from the Vance-Aycock Dinner to the Western Gala.

The Aycock Controversy at East Carolina University

And now, it's East Carolina University's turn. In 1961, the ECU Trustees and Chancellor Leo Jenkins named a dormitory on that campus after Gov. Aycock. For quite some time, the students, administration, and recently the current Trustees have been debating removing his name from their Aycock Residence Hall. Both a campus study

Continued on next page.



Opposing views were expressed at the meeting by Trustee

Deborah Davis and the only African-American Trustee, Danny Scott, who introduced a motion to change the name. Scott declared that African-American alumni and prospective students are watching the board's deliberation. "We will be

held accountable for the decisions we make here."

Davis countered, "I believe we're trying to figure out how to not celebrate his name anymore. But how do we not lose the history and learn from these lessons of the past, to be able to fulfill the mission of East Carolina University?"

In their coverage of the Trustees meeting, the *Raleigh News and Observer* asked ECU students and leadership how they felt about the use of Aycock's name. Trustee Kieran Shanahan expressed concern about the university's study committee and its process. "The committee conducted an online survey that was unscientific, he said, and appears to have broken the state's open meeting laws by not providing notice to the public. There were no minutes of the meetings provided,

Shanahan said, and the panel only met for about seven days. 'I'm just very troubled that there's this emotional rush to do something to make some constituency feel better.'

"Alumnus Neal Crawford, who served on the review committee, said he grew up a mile from Aycock's birthplace and attended a high school named for him. 'When I read the man's own words – we cannot have that dorm named that anymore,' Crawford said. "If I were a young African-American student coming to East Carolina, I would not want to stay in a dorm with a man who believed that and said those things.'" ⁴

Since it is Aycock's words which are causing the current furor to remove him from the public forum, I have placed excerpts from two of his most famous speeches on the next page. Reading them may be difficult — not only because of his very obvious, blatant views on whites and blacks, but also since we are over 100 years beyond the speeches' historical context. I'll keep my conclusions to myself, in order to urge you to draw your own.

committee and the school's Chancellor are in favor of making the change.

According to the findings of the study committee, using Gov. Aycock's name "dishonors the University's standards and is contrary to the best interest of the University,"

Chancellor Steve Ballard agrees, noting that ECU's values have changed since the dorm was named for Aycock. "My view is what he represented does not represent ECU in 2014 or moving forward. I can't say it any other way than that."

By the end of what was described as a "tumultuous" 2½-hour meeting of the Board of Trustees on December 18, 2014, the decision was made to postpone a decision on the name change until February 2015. ³

Do you recognize the man in this photo? Hooks? Holland?

I found this photo searching through one of the photo albums I inherited from my mother. It was on a page that seemed to suggest either a Hooks or a Holland (or maybe Edgerton) connection, and those names in our family point toward Wayne (or Wake) County, NC.

One thought I had was that it might be Bennett Hardy Hooks' father, **Ransom J. Hooks** (1863-1932), or perhaps one of Ransom's other sons, **Barnes Cullon Hooks** (1887-1986) or **Ruffin Stedman Hooks** (1893-1965).

If we shift attention to Wake County, NC, another possibility is that it might be Bertha Holland Hooks' father, **Bryant H. Holland** (1867-1930).

I'm not sure of the date of the photo, but its condition and the man's suit and haircut suggest perhaps beginning of the 20th century ... maybe earlier?



If you recognize this man, please email me at: grover@groverproctor.us

The original photo in the album is only about 1¼ x 1½ inch. It was clearly cut from a larger photo, as we see the right hand of a person standing to his left. Someone really wanted this man in the photo album!

I'm trying to find ways to get this photo to as many people who might know him, in the hopes that someone will say, "Oh, that's great-uncle Charlie! He was my grandmother's baby brother. I hear tell he was someone you didn't want to mess with!" ... or some such. You just never know where the answer will come.

If you do not recognize him, is there any way you would consider getting it to people (especially any "old timers") that you know in Wayne or Wake Counties, to see if it rings any bells? (The more the better, without causing you too much work.) Any help would be greatly appreciated!

**Governor Aycock speech on
"The Negro Problem" ⁵**
December 18, 1903

Note: This excerpt may be hard for 21st century minds to comprehend. But it accurately reflects the attitudes of the NC Democratic Party at that time.

I am proud of my State... because there we have solved the negro problem....

We have taken him out of politics and have thereby secured good government under any party and laid foundations for the future development of both races. We have secured peace, and rendered prosperity a certainty.

I am inclined to give to you our solution of this problem. It is, first, as far as possible under the Fifteenth Amendment, to disfranchise him; after that let him alone, quit writing about him; quit talking about him, quit making him "the white man's burden," let him "tote his own skillet"; quit coddling him, let him learn that no man, no race, ever got anything worth the having that he did not himself earn; that character is the outcome of sacrifice and worth is the result of toil; that whatever his future may be, the present has in it for him nothing that is not the product of industry, thrift, obedience to law, and uprightness; that he cannot, by resolution of council or league, accomplish anything; that he can do much by work; that violence may gratify his passions but it cannot accomplish his ambitions; that he may eat rarely of the cooking of equality, but he will always find when he does that "there is death in the pot."...

These things are not said in enmity to the negro but in regard for him. He constitutes one third of the population of my State: he has always been my personal friend; as a lawyer I have often defended him, and as Governor I have frequently protected him. But there flows in my veins the blood of the dominant race; that race that has conquered the earth and seeks out the mysteries of the heights and depths. If manifest destiny leads to the seizure of Panama, it is certain that it likewise leads to the dominance of the Caucasian. When the negro recognizes this fact we shall have peace and good will between the races.

But I would not have the white people forget their duty to the negro. We must seek the truth and pursue it. We owe an obligation to "the man in black"; we brought him here; he served us well; he is patient and teachable. We owe him gratitude; above all we owe him justice. We cannot forget his fidelity and we ought not to magnify his faults; we cannot change his color, neither can we ignore his service. No individual ever "rose on stepping stones of dead" others "to higher things," and no people can. We must rise by ourselves, we must execute judgment in righteousness; we must educate not only ourselves but see to it that the negro has an opportunity for education.

As a white man I am afraid of but one thing for my race and that is that we shall become afraid to give the negro a fair chance. The first duty of every man is to develop himself to the uttermost and the only limitation upon his duty is that he shall take pains to see that in his own development he does no injustice to those beneath him. This is true of races as well as of individuals. Considered properly it is not a limitation but a condition of development. The white man in the South can never attain to his fullest growth until he does absolute justice to the negro race. If he is doing that now, it is well for him. If he is not doing it, he must seek to know the ways of truth and pursue them. My own opinion is, that so far we have done well, and that the future holds no menace for us if we do the duty which lies next to us, training, developing the coming generation, so that the problems which seem difficult to us shall be easy to them.



*Governor Charles B. Aycock in the
U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall*

Universal Education ⁶
April, 4, 1912
Excerpt from Introduction

I am extremely gratified at the terms in which his excellency, the Governor of Alabama, has seen fit to present me to this magnificent audience; it is very gratifying; it is very satisfying.

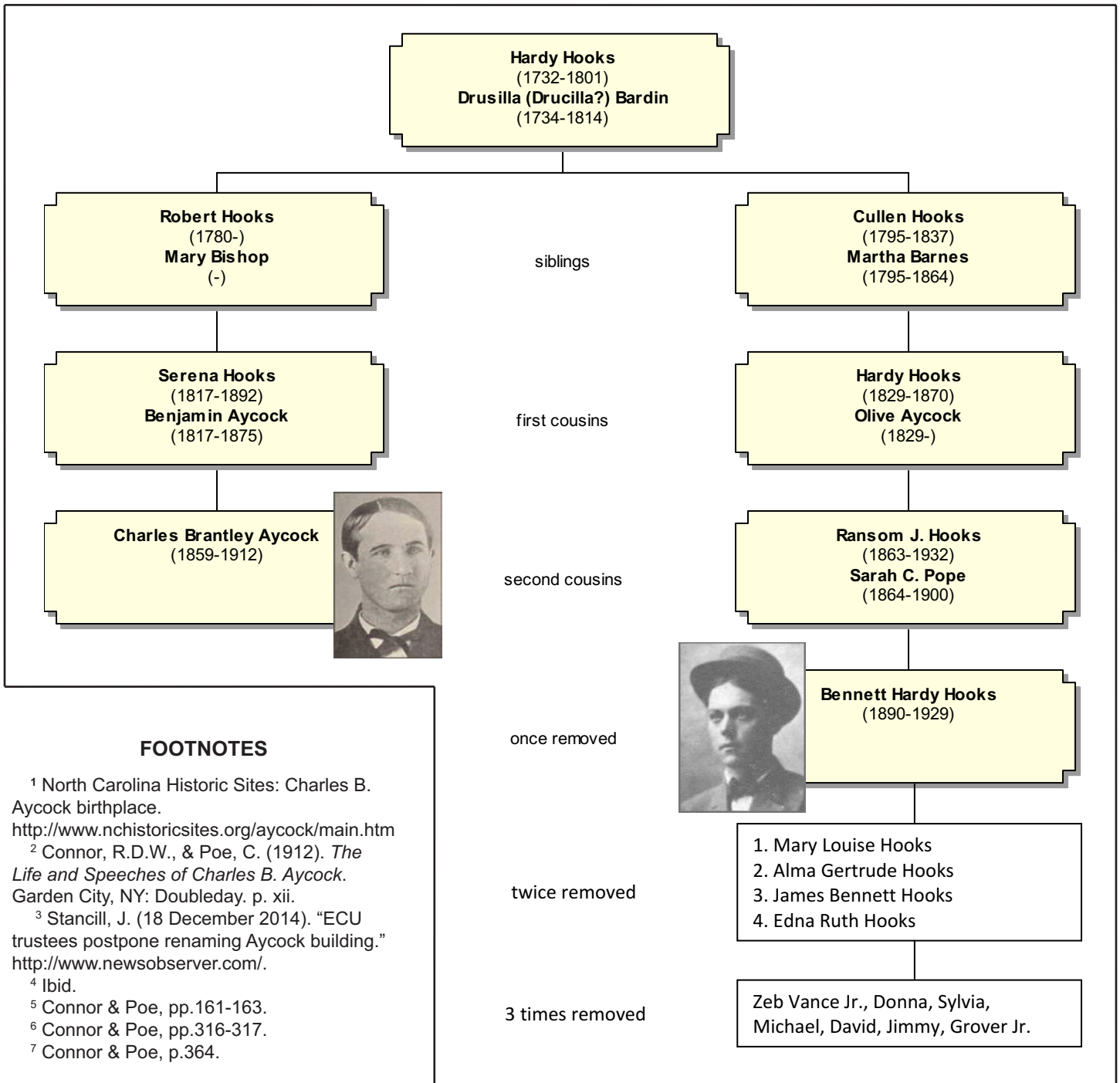
I knew, of course, that what he said about me wasn't the truth. (Laughter.) I am not afraid to say that the Governor does not tell the truth, because I have been a Governor myself and I know what I am talking about. (Laughter.) But I enjoyed it the more because it wasn't the truth. (Laughter.)

You know, it does not make a pretty woman glad to tell her so; she knows it before you tell her; but if you want to see joy irradiate a woman, you get an ugly woman — not in Alabama, for you couldn't find her here (laughter) — but you go up in New England and find an ugly woman and tell her to (laughter) — just tell her she is pretty and she will be the happiest, gladdest woman in the United States. (Laughter.)

And this is the way I feel tonight when the Governor says that I have done more for education in the South than any other Governor in it. After listening to his magnificent address it would be vanity on my part to believe it, but I am proud of the fact that we have built a schoolhouse in North Carolina every day since I was inaugurated as Governor, including Sundays; and I am here tonight to tell you that I am a thorough believer in education.

I believe in universal education.... I believe in educating everybody.

Note: More than 2600 words into this speech, Governor Aycock fell over dead.



*“Equal! That is the word! On that word I plant myself and my party —
the equal right of every child born on earth to have the opportunity
to burgeon out all that there is within him.”*

— Gov. Charles B. Aycock ⁷