

The House That Dr. Pope Built:
Race, Politics, Memory, and the Early Struggle for
Civil Rights in North Carolina

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Abstract

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(Under the direction of Dr. James L. Leloudis and Dr. Donald G. Mathews)

In 1919, Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope ran for the office of mayor of Raleigh, North Carolina, heading a slate of all African American candidates for the city's municipal positions. Born in 1858, Dr. Pope was part of a generation of college-educated black men in the South who came of age during Reconstruction, created successful businesses and professional lives, and were the backbone of political fusion in the 1890s. After the rise of white supremacy, which brought Jim Crow segregation and political disfranchisement, some African American men of Dr. Pope's generation gave up political activity and/or left the South altogether. A significant group remained in North Carolina, however, and resisted white supremacy between 1900 and 1920 by registering to vote, forming political organizations, and insisting upon their rights to participate in the political process as an essential component of their manhood and citizenship. The memory of these events, though not included in standard white histories, remained strong in the black community and influenced the next generation who participated in the post-World War II Civil Rights Movement. The story of Dr. Pope's life and the broader story of resistance to white supremacy after 1900 was uncovered through the discovery of his home in Raleigh, built in 1901. It remained in the family until his youngest daughter died in 2000, and serves a site of memory for this "lost" story, as it contains a remarkable collection of documents and artifacts dating to the 1850s which chronicle this era and this family's history.

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Chapter 1

“Do you have any family papers?”

- Author to Pope Trustee, May 1998

In December of 1900, Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope and his wife, Lydia Walden Pope, purchased a small empty lot at 511 S. Wilmington Street in downtown Raleigh, North Carolina. Located in one of the small city’s most diverse and densely built areas, the lot they purchased was the last one available on the block. Over the following months, they built a modestly sized but well-appointed two-story brick house for their residence. Married for fourteen years by the time the house was finished, and in their early forties, the Popes represented a class of educated, accomplished, politically active people of color entering middle age at the turn of the twentieth century. Ironically, just as their house was going up, the world of opportunities and optimism in which they came of age was being dismantled, piece-by-piece, by the politics of white supremacy.

Dr. Pope was part of a group of like-minded African American men in North Carolina and elsewhere in the South who shared similar backgrounds and who had worked for political and social advancement since the 1880s. These men were born in the 1850s and 1860s, and were largely spared the cruelties of slavery, either because they were born to free parents or because they were very young at the outbreak of the Civil War. They were college educated (a number at Shaw University in Raleigh), came of age during an unprecedented era of possibilities and opportunities for people of color, and became doctors, lawyers, ministers,

and newspaper editors. They formed the backbone of a biracial political coalition known as “fusion” in the late 1880s and early 1890s, and many rose to prominent positions, either through election or appointment. Their ranks included state legislators, United States congressmen, and even an official diplomatic attaché to an African nation. After the crushing realities of Jim Crow segregation and political disfranchisement brought on by Democratic white supremacy at the turn of the century, a number of these men left the state for the North and the promise of a better life. A few remained, however, and individually and as a group made various attempts to resist the loss of their rights—in every sense creating an early civil rights movement. Their efforts began in 1902, with a statewide call for African Americans who could get around the new euphemistically titled “suffrage” amendment to do so and to register to vote. Dr. Pope was one of a relatively small number of men of color able to answer that call. As explained in chapters five and six, other activities of black men in the state during the first two decades of the twentieth century kept sporadic pressure on white supremacists, and in part laid the foundation for the “modern” Civil Rights Movement of the post World War II era. These efforts culminated in 1919, when Dr. Pope did something likely without equal in the early Jim Crow South—he ran as a candidate for mayor of Raleigh, the capital city of former Confederate state. Dr. Pope’s bold and potentially life-threatening run for mayor was the culmination of three decades of political activism. Yet his story has not been told, and the story of others who resisted can be found only in a few, specialized history books. Cloaked by white supremacist fables and myths, and closely guarded by family memories mistrustful of the ways of white historians, it took “discovery” of the Pope House to bring this particular story to light.

By the late 1990s, the once bustling neighborhood where the Pope's built their house was unrecognizable. The surrounding homes, churches, and small businesses had all but disappeared, as the area had become a sort of no man's land between the encroaching skyscrapers of downtown to the west, and what remained of the once prosperous African American neighborhoods to the south and east. The Pope House stood like a lone sentinel amidst the empty parking lots around it. As I crossed the threshold of the small brick house at 511 South Wilmington Street for the first time in May of 1998, my ignorance and latent prejudice showed. I was not very impressed. I didn't think much of the small brick structure architecturally, and I had never heard of the Popes. To add to my less than enthusiastic first impression, the interior was stripped to the framing—one could literally see from the front door to the rear wall. Construction work was going on all around me, a total renovation brought on by recent damage caused by a broken water pipe. Little did I know, when I crossed the threshold that warm spring day, that the struggle to save this historic house and the research to resurrect the life of Dr. M.T. Pope would be a journey that would consume ten years and change the course of my life.

The telephone call asking me to come see the Pope House came out of the blue. After nearly a decade of working in the museum field, and after the publication of my first book, I decided to return to North Carolina and enroll in graduate school. Increasingly I was concerned about the paucity of meaningful dialogue between public historians and academic historians, and it seemed to me that both disciplines—and the general public--could benefit immensely from improved discourse. To support myself while in graduate school, I took on a number of consulting projects, and became certified as a consultant for the State Office of Historic Preservation to write nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. The



Pope Family on front porch, ca. 1915



Pope House, front and rear views, 1998



call I received that May was from one of the two trustees of the Pope Charitable Trust, established to oversee the family assets, and to care for the one living member, Miss Ruth Pope. The trustees were concerned about discussions the city was having regarding the construction of a new civic center, which might be placed on the block where the Pope House stood. Although they had no idea of the historic significance of the house or the Pope family, they hoped the structure could be saved from condemnation by placement on the National Register. My first question—which I was to be asked countless times by others over the course of the following years—was: “where is this house?”

I suppose I could be forgiven for not being able to place the Pope House, though I must have passed it dozens of times over the years. In many physical and symbolic ways, my life intersected with Dr. Pope’s, even though he died nearly thirty years before I was born. My family moved to Raleigh in 1968, and I grew up in the lily-white suburb of North Hills. I began first grade that fall, five months after Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was assassinated, an event which soon came to symbolize the end of the Civil Rights Movement for many Americans. My elementary school was named for E. C. Brooks, North Carolina’s superintendent of public schools from the late 1910s through the 1930s. As discussed in chapter 6, Dr. Pope’s run for mayor in 1919 created a climate of racial tension that led Brooks to meeting with a delegation of black leaders who wanted the state to improve facilities for African American students. Ironically, in 1968 E. C. Brooks Elementary and virtually all the public schools in Raleigh remained racially segregated, despite the *Brown vs. Board of Education* Supreme Court case of 1954.

Trips downtown were common during my childhood. I remember attending plays and symphony performances as a child at Memorial Auditorium, within sight of the Pope

House. I often visited my father at his office in the nearby Raleigh Building at the corner of Hargett and Fayetteville Streets. An elegant 1920s edifice, the Raleigh Building is one of the landmarks along the city's main street. Dr. Pope had an office about a block away, on what became known as the black business district on East Hargett Street, and would have known the Raleigh Building. My father's suite included a large corner office with big plate glass windows facing north and west. From his office windows one could see the copper dome of the North Carolina State Capitol, and all the bustling traffic on the streets below. My favorite part of these visits was a trip down Fayetteville Street to Briggs Hardware, an early "skyscraper" built in 1874 that still housed the original family business. Virtually unchanged since the 1870s, Briggs was a wonderland for a young boy. The old wooden floors creaked and the patterned tin ceiling high above reflected the bright light of uncovered bulbs. The walls were lined with an endless array of every conceivable type of screw and bolt, which, owing to the great height of the ceiling, were accessible only with ladders mounted on wheels. But for a child, the heart of Briggs lay in the toy department, located at the back of the store and up a few steps on a sort of open mezzanine level. Briggs had a knack for stocking wonderful and unusual toys that could not be found anywhere else in town. Dr. Pope certainly also tread those same wooden floors of Briggs & Sons Hardware. Thomas Briggs was an early trustee of Shaw University, Dr. Pope's alma mater, and it is likely that his Raleigh home was constructed with materials and possibly labor supplied by the store.

In 1973, two years after Raleigh public schools were finally fully integrated following the U.S. Supreme Court case *Swann vs. Mecklenburg County*, I was bussed across town to Crosby-Garfield, a few blocks away from the Pope House. The Crosby-Garfield I knew was a run-down Art Deco structure built in 1930s for African American children, replacing an

earlier school of the same name. Crosby-Garfield was rich with local black history, something that was lost on white children like myself. Dr. Pope's second wife, Delia, taught at Crosby in the 1930s, and both of their daughters attended school there. J.W. Ligon, who had been principal, was fired for having been involved in the 1919 campaign in which Pope ran for mayor. All I saw was an old neglected school, located next to a housing project. No one took the time to tell us about its proud history. No one cared. Apparently it was decided that all young children should attend elementary school in the former all-white sections of town, as it might be too shocking for the white children to see the poverty of the black sections and the neglect the schools in those areas suffered under "separate but equal" education. It was clearly evident, however, even to sheltered 11-year-old white children, that Crosby did not offer the same advantages as the schools we knew in the suburbs. But Raleigh was changing in 1973. That same fall I began sixth-grade at Crosby, the citizens of Raleigh elected our first African American mayor, Clarence Lightner. Fifty-four years earlier, his father, Calvin Lightner, had run along with Dr. Pope on a slate of African American candidates for the city's three elected municipal positions.

Thus how was it that Dr. Pope and I knew many of the same places in our city, and, though I was a trained historian, I had never heard of him? That question began to gnaw at me, slowly at first. Who was this man, and what was the significance of his life and the house he built? Therefore, my ignorance and latent prejudice aside, I might be forgiven for my second question, asked as I entered the house for the first time: "do you have any family papers?" I assumed the answer would be "no," but I needed somewhere to start to construct a case for listing the building on the National Register. To my surprise—the first of many—I was told in fact that there were a large number of family papers, most of which were in

storage along with the original furnishings and other artifacts. Eventually a remarkable family archive of nearly 2,000 documents and about 400 photographs surfaced, dating from the 1850s to the 1980s.

The story the Pope House, its artifacts, documents and photographs revealed—the story told in the following five chapters—did not appear easily or as a complete narrative. It was in essence a complex and jumbled jigsaw puzzle, in its original box (the house) but with the picture torn off the front and with dozens of pieces missing. Some of the story fit within the accepted historical narrative, but important aspects did not. What follows is much more than the biography of one man, or the recounting of the travails of the preservation of one historic site. This is a story of race, politics, memory and the early struggle for civil rights; it is a story of the politics of race, memory and the ownership of the historical narrative of civil rights. It is a story that provides an unusually rich opportunity to write history within its original context and in three-dimensional form, especially important when studying people whose past has not been preserved and archived as consistently as that of the majority culture.

French historian Pierre Nora has proposed the concept of “*lieux de memoire*” (sites of memory)—western cultural icons like flags or songs, but particularly physical locations, which are the link between living memory (lived events) and reconstructed history. Nora’s theory questions the accepted academic model that memory can be adequately stored in archives and then accurately “materialized in written form.” In an introduction to the English translation of Nora’s work, Lawrence D. Kritzman states that Nora’s theory is based upon the argument that “the discursive manifestation of archival memory for all the scientific pretensions it espoused was filtered through a romantic consciousness whose *modus*



Family photographs and artifacts



Parlor looking into dining room, original family furnishings and artifacts



Second floor bedroom, filled with family artifacts, 1998

operandi was to sustain political myths.” History written solely from “archival memory” limits “the parameters of the true memorialist enterprise since it put[s] constraint[s] on what constitute[s] cultural memorabilia and the many *loci*—museums, monuments, public spaces—from which representation could possibly emerge.” History and memory, Nora insists, are at odds. “Memory is life, always embodied in living societies and as such in permanent evolution...History, on the other hand, is the reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete.” Thus neither is totally satisfactory, as neither is a true representation of the past. But memory and history come together in meaningful ways at *lieux de memoire*. This is not to discredit the historical narrative drawn from traditional archival sources, of course, but rather to suggest that certain evidentiary sources—particularly material culture and the built environment—can be “read” like documents and utilized as primary documentation. And the Pope House is the perfect representation of that ideal: a site of memory that addresses significant lacunae in the historiography of African American political power, manhood, and resistance to codified segregation and disfranchisement during the first two decades of the twentieth century.¹

To understand the importance of the Pope House and the narrative that can be constructed from the history it represents both inside and outside its walls, it is important to understand some of the historiographical problems with southern history. Ironically, the story told in the chapters that follow is bound up inextricably with the story of the expunging of that very history by the victors; it falls within the time frame of the creation of what might be termed an official state history. The South did not have as extensive a tradition of genealogical and historical societies as existed in the northeast. Perhaps not surprisingly, state-sponsored organizations began to be sanctioned in rapid order at the very moment that

white supremacy regained its hold on the region. This is most evident in North Carolina, where the Hall of History (now the North Carolina Museum of History) was founded in 1902, the state archives in 1903, and the state library association in 1904. History in North Carolina, and elsewhere in the South, was gathered and interpreted in Orwellian fashion: large segments of the recent past were expunged, and narratives created to support the myth of the unchallenged hegemony of white supremacy. With purposeful omissions, of course, this also negated the achievements of the state's people of color, and their resistance to white supremacy. In the words of W. Fitzhugh Brundage, the "legacy of earlier hegemony of white memory is a landscape and public culture packed with symbols of white privilege and virtually barren of images endorsed by blacks." In addition, an historical narrative of the South developed after 1900 from the perspective of those who now controlled society as well as history. Slavery had not been a cruel institution; in fact, it was beneficial to the "child like" Negroes. Reconstruction was a farce, or worse, forced on the South by a vengeful North. Segregation and disfranchisement were thus necessary to return social order and put the South on a path of progress.²

The post-World War II era brought a new generation of historians with a new perspective, informed both by a commitment to the new social history and by the changing political climate around them. One of the earliest and most influential of works of this period was C. Vann Woodward's *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, first published in 1955. Woodward's main argument, that racial segregation and disfranchisement were not long-standing traditions in the South but were in fact political constructs of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, struck a chord. Of course Woodward was not the first historian to argue this—black historians had been making this case for decades—and the events were still

within living memory, but it took a respected white historian to write a book that was accepted by a white audience. Some historians in recent years have taken issue with some of Woodward's arguments, especially when applied broadly across the entire South, but based on the research that follows I remain an unreconstructed Woodwardian. *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* blurs the line between history and political activism; it was written, in part, to bolster the *Brown vs. Board of Education* case then before the Supreme Court. Ironically, it also seems to have unwittingly quelled much serious scholarship regarding resistance to white supremacy, or efforts to overturn Jim Crow and disfranchisement before 1954. Instead, it became part of the accepted national narrative of the beginning of the modern Civil Rights Movement.³

One of the most fascinating questions raised by the story of Dr. Pope and others is how and why the national narrative of the modern Civil Rights Movement was constructed and accepted so quickly. By the time I was in school in the mid 1970s, the Civil Rights Movement was being taught as a fourteen-year arc: beginning in 1954 and 1955 with the *Brown* decision and Rosa Parks' refusal to sit at the back of the bus; continuing through the ascendancy of Martin Luther King and non-violent protests, including the sit-ins in the early 1960s; followed by the 1963 March on Washington and the 1964 Civil Rights and 1965 Voting Rights Acts; and ending with King's assassination in 1968. Prior to 1954, according to the accepted narrative, African Americans in the South lived and toiled in conditions not much better than slavery, until they were set free by their own Messiah, Martin Luther King. It was a neat package that was accepted in popular culture by both blacks and whites, perhaps, because it was clear-cut, celebratory, and because legally (if not completely) the movement did break down segregation and disfranchisement. It also took on mythic

proportions and the symbolism of a Christian passion play, complete with spirituals and a Jesus-like martyr. Perhaps most important, this story did not have to deal with darker and more complex problems that arose after King's death, principally the Black Power Movement and the deeply ingrained systemic problems associated with educational and economic parity. Scholars are now beginning to question this narrative, and there is debate about the actual roots and course of the Civil Rights Movement.

My personal experiences over a decade attempting to preserve the Pope House as an historic site also provided an unexpected education regarding issues of race, the construction of narrative, memory, politics, power, and prejudice. To my surprise, I encountered suspicion to the questioning of the established civil rights narrative across lines of race and political ideology. Broadly speaking, African Americans did not want to question a narrative that was celebratory, victorious in many ways, and still within living memory. According to historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "black historical memory has legitimated struggle and has been a vision of the future." In essence, it is rooted in the role of African Americans as victims, and has resulted in what historian Fath Davis Ruffins terms "mythos," a narrative constructed of both evidentiary-based history and myth based upon oral tradition. Part of this mythos is the exultation of "firsts"—the first African American to accomplish something important in the white world, or the first to break down a racial barrier. While Dr. Pope's story does contain examples of "firsts" from both categories, the story also raises contentious and problematic issues within the community of class and skin tone, and challenges the local mythos and oral tradition of the Civil Rights Movement.⁴

Whites, on the other hand, are generally reticent to face uncomfortable realities of the essential brutality and inequality of white supremacy, the issues of ongoing prejudice, and

the inequities of the historical landscape. This includes, unfortunately, a general sense that somehow black history is less important, or secondary to the main white story. These issues reach deep into public history, as the non-slavery related “black experience” is woefully under-represented at the state’s museums and especially historic sites. This results partly from the fact that African American historic sites were all but ignored by white preservationists until the advent of the new social history of the 1960s and 1970s. Astonishingly, as late as 1970 only three structures built by or associated with African Americans in North Carolina were listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The North Carolina Division of Historic Sites, which now has twenty-six sites acquired from a variety of sources, has only one entirely devoted to African American history (the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum in Sedalia). When restored and opened to the public, the Pope House will be the only historic home built and occupied by a black family in North Carolina, and the only such site located between Richmond and Atlanta. By comparison, there are more than 130 other public or privately owned and operated historic house museums in North Carolina.⁵

Although academic historians have been looking further back in time to understand the roots of the modern Civil Rights Movement in recent years, the efforts to resist white supremacy in the early twentieth century have been largely ignored. In fact the struggle for civil and political equality is a continuum; a straight line can be drawn from the end of the Civil War to the beginnings of the modern Civil Rights Movement. It is no coincidence that one of the most important organizations of the modern Civil Rights Movement—the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC)—was founded in 1960 only a few hundred yards away from the Pope House on the campus of Shaw University. Nor, as previously

noted, that the first black man elected mayor of Raleigh in 1973, Clarence Lightner, was the son of Calvin Lightner, one of the men who ran for city council on the same ballot as Dr. Pope. The resistance and activism of the men described in the following chapters remained a living tradition in the black community, and laid the foundation for the successes that were to follow decades later.⁶

One of the few major historical works to deal with African Americans during this “lost” period is Glenda Gilmore’s *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920*. As important as that work is, Gilmore implies that African American men were politically emasculated during the early twentieth century, and that black women had to step in to negotiate a livable society within a white dominated world. Gilmore developed her arguments using the traditional sources of the academic historian; she consulted archival collections and analyzed religious periodicals, which led to an incomplete conclusion. She revealed the important work of middle-class black women in establishing networks of organized interaction among black women, but she virtually ignored the men whom she assumed had been driven from public life as a result of disfranchisement. In fact there was significant, organized African American male political resistance to white supremacy in North Carolina, and there were large-scale efforts to regain civil and political rights in the state during the first two decades of the twentieth century. In the course of this dissertation, part of the “lost” narrative of the achievements and contributions of these men will be told. But it required the discovery and thorough researching of that lone house at 511 South Wilmington Street and its accumulation of artifacts and documents to reconstruct this historical narrative. Thus the importance of the Pope House is two-fold: to function as a repository for its artifacts and documents, which contribute to the broader historical narrative

of civil rights; and by bringing together public and academic history in a way that illustrates how to provide access to the history of people who are not fully represented in traditional archives. The narrative built around the Pope House gives voice to the story of political agency of black men who were not defeated by disfranchisement and the indignities of Jim Crow segregation. It is the story of resistance to white supremacy and the early fight for civil rights in the South—a fight that began as soon as racial segregation and political disfranchisement were codified. And the Pope House, once restored and opened as an historic site, will be a vital public historical conduit through which this story of the “lost century” can be told. It is a genuine American *lieux de memoire*.⁷

Endnotes

¹Pierre Nora, *Rethinking France=Les lieux de memoire* (Chicago: 2001), pp. xi-xii, 3.

²For histories of public history in North Carolina, see Jeffrey J. Crow, editor, *Public History in North Carolina 1903-1978* (Raleigh: 1978), David Louis Sterrett Brook, *A Lasting Gift of Heritage: A History of the North Carolina Society for the Preservation of Antiquities, 1939-1974* (Raleigh: 1997), and Ansley Herrring Wagner, *History for All the People: 100 Years of Public History in North Carolina* (Raleigh, 2003). See also W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge: 2005), chapter 3, and W. Fitzhugh Brundage, editor, *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: 2000), p. 16.

³C. Vann Woodward, *The Strange Career of Jim Crow* (New York: 1955). See also John David Smith, editor, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?* (Boston and New York: 2002).

⁴Brundage, *Where These Memories Grow*, p. 16; Fath Davis Ruffins, "Mythos, Memory, and History: African American Preservation Efforts, 1820-1990," in Ivan Karp, et al, editors, *Museums and Communities: The Politics of Public Culture* (Washington: 1992), p. 511.

⁵See note 2.

⁶Increasingly, scholars are looking further back into the twentieth century to examine events that preceded the modern Civil Rights Movement. One work that at least touches on the early twentieth century is Adam Fairlough, *Race & Democracy: The Civil Rights Struggle in Louisiana, 1915-1972* (Atlanta: 1995). For efforts in the 1930s, see Robert Rodgers Korstad, *Civil Rights Unionism: Tobacco Workers and the Struggle for Democracy in the Mid-Twentieth-Century South* (Chapel Hill: 2003), and Patricia Sullivan, *Days of Hope: race and Democracy in the New Deal Era* (Chapel Hill: 1996). For the 1940s, see John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana and Chicago: 1994), and Charles M. Payne, *I've Got the Light of Freedom: The Organizing Tradition and the Mississippi Freedom Struggle* (Berkley and Los Angeles: 1995). Payne also includes a good history of Ella Baker and the formation of SNCC.

⁷Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: 1996).

Chapter 2

“A free person of color”

- 1851 Freedman Papers of Jonas Pope

According to oral tradition, the Pope family began in southeastern Virginia sometime in the late eighteenth century, with the union of an African woman and a man of European ancestry. The corroborating evidence, though incomplete and partly circumstantial, supports this tradition. The oldest artifact and earliest document found in the Pope House, the 1851 Freedman’s Papers of Jonas Elias Pope, father of M.T. Pope, provides a point from which to research the genealogy. The document itself is a remarkable and powerful artifact of antebellum life in North Carolina for free people of color. Written on sturdy vellum and carrying the notarized seal of the State of North Carolina, the Freedman’s Papers offer poignant testimony to the fragility of life for free people of color in the decades preceding the Civil War. Age-darkened lines mark the neat creases of being repeatedly folded and unfolded; silent evidence that Jonas Pope carried this document with him at all times when off his own land, lest he be taken and sold back into slavery as was possible (though not technically legal) in the state after 1835.¹

Aside from the tactile evidence of second-class citizenship that the Freedman’s Papers provide, they also serve as a blueprint for understanding Jonas Elias Pope the man, and his ancestry. Dated October 6, 1851, the papers consist of a sworn statement by a

prominent white citizen, James Beale, and attested by two other white men. Beale stated that: “the said Jonas Pope is a free person of color, to the best of my knowledge, as I have known his father, mother, and grandmother for many years.” Born February 1, 1827, Pope was 24 years old in October of 1851, and probably striking out his own—thus the need for official papers. He was physically described as “of bright yellow complexion, five nine inches in shoes, with a scar on the great toe of his right foot, cut by an axe.” The phrase “bright yellow complexion” indicates that Jonas Elias Pope’s skin tone was very light, and that he was of both African and European ancestry. As for his character, Beale described Pope as “industrious, hardworking, & etc. & etc.”

The fact that Jonas Elias Pope was a “carpenter by trade” may explain the unfortunate condition of his toe. It is probable that Pope, being free born, was apprenticed to an area carpenter at a young age. Many free blacks in North Carolina in the antebellum era not only were taught a trade in this manner, but also learned the essentials of reading and writing. Despite its small size, the Roanoke River Basin supported a group of talented carpenters and cabinetmakers from the 1750s to the 1850s whose woodworking skills were among the most sophisticated in the state. Additionally, historian John Hope Franklin found that free black carpenters in North Carolina were the highest paid tradesmen during the antebellum era, earning an average of \$323 annually by 1860. Only a handful of free black carpenters lived in Northampton County in 1860, thus Jonas Elias Pope’s skills most likely account for his economic prosperity during the 1850s and 1860s.²

The “grandmother” listed on the Freedman’s Papers is probably the African woman of oral tradition, whose name is lost to history. Virtually nothing is known of her, though she was probably born about 1770. She was almost certainly the free female of color, between

Handwritten text, likely a letter or document, written in cursive. The text is dense and spans most of the page. There is a circular stamp or seal on the left side of the lower portion of the page. The handwriting is somewhat faded and difficult to read in many places.

1851 Freedman's Papers of Jonas Elias Pope

55 and 100 years old, listed on the 1840 census as living in the household of Elias Pope, Jonas Elias Pope's father. As for the grandfather--who is conspicuously not mentioned in the document--one Jonas Pope, white, appears in the 1810 census records for Southampton County, Virginia, adjacent to the North Carolina border. In April of 1819, the elder Jonas Pope purchased 165 acres of land in Northampton County, North Carolina, and the census of the following year recorded his household as including three white males under the age of 26, two white men 45 or older, and three white females ages 26 or younger. There were no slaves or free persons of color listed. By 1830, Jonas Pope was living in neighboring Hertford County, and his household had decreased to one white male between the ages of 50 and 60, one white female between 5 and 10, and another white female between 30 and 40. Jonas Pope died sometime in early 1831, as the effects of his estate were sold at public auction on June 4th of that year. The census data suggests that he was born between 1770 and 1780, had a wife about fifteen years younger than he, and as many as six children. Items in the estate sale indicate that he was a literate, yeoman farmer, typical of the region and the era. The presence in the estate of various axes, hatchets, augers, hammers, chisels, planes, saws, and a "frow"—many more specific types of tools than a middling yeoman farmer would own—strongly suggests that he also worked as a carpenter.³

Assuming this African woman and this Caucasian Jonas Pope were indeed the grandparents of Jonas Elias Pope, born in 1827, what else can be surmised about their relationship? According to both the 1810 and 1820 census data, the elder Jonas Pope did not own any slaves. This fact, and the fact that the African woman named on the 1851 Freedman's Papers is noted to be free, suggests that their relationship was probably consensual, when they were both in their early 20s. However, there is no record of the

couple living together. Whatever the nature of their union, the result was a son, Elias Pope, born in 1793. Elias Pope first appears in Northampton County records in March of 1830, when he purchases “1 Gal. Pot Jug and Funnel” for twenty-eight cents from the estate of another free man of color, William Hawley. On September 5, 1836, Elias purchased 17 1/3 acres of land from another William Hawley (presumably the son of the former) for the sum of \$33. The 1840 census for Northampton County lists Elias Pope, a free mulatto, as heading a large household of seventeen persons, including four males ranging in age from under 10 to 23 (one being Jonas Elias Pope, age 13), one male between the ages of 36 and 55 (Elias Pope), six females from less than 10 to 23, one female 36 to 55 (assumedly his wife) and one female between the age of 55 and 100 (almost certainly his mother, the aforementioned African woman).⁴

It is not known what drew Elias Pope to Northampton County, North Carolina. Perhaps as the illegitimate mulatto son of a white man, he felt it was better to strike out on his own and move to an area with a fairly large free black community. Northampton County lies adjacent to the Virginia border in the northeastern corner of the state, and sits in the center of a group of counties in the Chowan and Roanoke River basins. Settled mostly in the third quarter of the eighteenth century, Northampton and neighboring counties of Halifax, Warren, Hertford and Bertie were closely tied to the Virginia tidewater economy. Tobacco was the staple crop in the eighteenth century, but after the introduction of the cotton gin in the early nineteenth century, agricultural production in the region shifted. Though few truly large plantations developed, a proportionately large number of enslaved African Americans constituted much of the labor force. During most of the antebellum era, Northampton was

one of several counties in the state with a majority black population; 55.8 percent of the populace was of color in 1860.⁵

No city or town of any size developed in Northampton County during the antebellum era. The nearest large towns were Tarboro and Weldon (the terminus of an early state rail line), and the closest city was Norfolk, Virginia. The region remained steadfastly rural, and the promise of better opportunities further south and west resulted in virtually flat population growth between 1810 and 1860; the citizenry of the county increased only 290 persons during that half-century interval. Churches were among the few organized institutions in the county, and most of the residents belonged to either Baptist or Methodist congregations. The first Quaker Meeting was established in Rich Square in 1758, and though the number of congregants was never great, this denomination was a highly visible minority in the county for the next century—principally because of the church’s attempted subversion of slave-holding.⁶

The large numbers of enslaved African Americans, the decreasing desirability of land in the region, and the tolerance of area Quakers are all factors that contributed to a significant population of free blacks in Northampton and surrounding counties. By 1860 about 600 free people of color lived in Northampton County (slightly less than 10 percent of the African American population), and over 2,400 free blacks resided in neighboring Halifax County. Historian John Hope Franklin noted that the condition of the free Negro in North Carolina was different largely because the population lived in a predominately rural environment. In general, this difference was manifest in a somewhat more tolerant society. During the late colonial era, the state legislature provided free blacks some basic rights, and certain portions of the white community were supportive of those rights. For example, in 1763, a group of

white residents petitioned the legislature to reduce the marriage tax for free blacks residing in Northampton, Granville, and Edgecombe Counties. The North Carolina Constitution of 1776 made no racial distinctions regarding the franchise, thus free black men who met all the other criteria were legally able to vote. However, as northern abolitionism increased after 1830, and as fears of slave uprisings grew, the state legislature passed a series of laws that restricted the civil rights of free persons of color. Travel in and out of the state, as well from county to county, became very difficult, and several of the larger towns required free blacks to register with local officials. The fallout from the Nat Turner insurrection of 1831 (which occurred in Southampton County, Virginia, adjacent to Northampton County, North Carolina) resulted in an amended state constitution in 1835 that disfranchised free men of color.⁷

Whatever his reasons for relocation to Northampton County as a young man, by 1850 Elias Pope had prospered and was head of a large extended household. The census of that year is much more detailed than previous reports, and provides specific information about Elias Pope and his family, including the first names of everyone else in the household. Unfortunately his mother must have passed away by 1850 (and thus her name is lost to history), as Elias, at 57 years of age, is the oldest person listed. His wife, Sarah, was 42, and the seven children still at home range in aged from 9 to 18. Whether or not Sara Pope was Jonas' mother is unclear. She would have been 19 in 1827, the year he was born. It is also possible she was Elias Pope's second wife, as there is one Peter Cook, age 14, also living in the household. Apparently Jonas Elias, who was 23 years of age in 1850 and does not appear in Elias's household, was already on his own, though he is not listed separately in the census.⁸

Elias Pope is listed as a farmer owning 65 acres of land, of which 53 acres were “improved.” The farm was valued at \$295, indicating that he, like his father, was of the yeomanry. The livestock on the Pope farm included three horses, two cows, three oxen, fifteen sheep, and twenty swine; the produce included wheat, corn, sweet potatoes, peas, honey, and \$14 worth of “home manufactures” (presumably processed wool).⁹

One more tantalizing bit of information exists about Elias Pope. In June of 1851, the Northampton County Court “ordered...that Elias Pope, a free person of color, [may] keep and carry firearms for twelve months from this time.” This was an extraordinary privilege afforded an African American in ante-bellum North Carolina, especially in the era following the Nat Turner slave rebellion. In fact, among a series of restrictive legislative acts passed in the years following the Turner Rebellion was an 1840 law that prohibited free blacks from carrying firearms “unless he or she shall have obtained a license therefore from the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of his or her county.” Historian John Hope Franklin states that in practice, the law permitted possession of firearms only “to those free Negroes who had satisfied the county authorities that they were capable of handling such weapons with propriety.” Clearly Elias Pope held a position of respect and trust among the white residents of Northampton County.¹⁰

Elias Pope died intestate sometime between January and September of 1860, before the census taker came to the area. Estate records are incomplete and muddled, perhaps the result of circumstances at the beginning of the Civil War. In the spring of 1861, his son Jonas Elias Pope petitioned the County Court to sell his father’s property to the highest bidder. This included a 100-acre tract of land that “decended (sic) to the heir Elias Pope for his life as tenant by the courtesy of England.” The language found in the court records

suggests that Elias inherited this land, though no estate papers from Jonas Pope (the elder, his probable Caucasian father), survive to support this contention. As Jonas Pope died in 1831—the same year as the Nat Turner Rebellion—perhaps it was not considered wise to publicly will land to a mulatto son.¹¹

As Elias's eldest son, Jonas Elias settled the land issues of his father's estate in 1863. Jonas paid \$320 in cash—not an insignificant amount in the midst of the Civil War—to purchase a little more than 83 of land. It also appears that he inherited 100 acres from his grandfather, as the court records note that the property “now descends to your petitioner (Jonas Pope) in the same manner as the tracts mentioned before.” Jonas was already a large property owner in Northampton County. In July of 1853, he had purchased 321 acres of land near Rich Square for \$700 from one James Revell. How the twenty-six-year-old Jonas was able to purchase such a large piece of property is not known, but he continued the tradition of improving upon the economic circumstances of the family. This land was to become his home and farm, and more than a century-and-a-half later a portion of it remains in the Pope family. Just five months after buying the property he sold 121 acres of this tract to Silas Tallow, a neighbor with an adjoining farm, for \$420. By purchasing the land for \$2.18 an acre, and selling it for \$2.46 an acre, Jonas realized a cash profit of \$47.88. Something of a real estate speculator, Jonas went on to buy twenty more tracts of land in Northampton County between 1854 and 1892, selling most for a profit but willing several parcels to his family after his death in 1899.¹²

The sale of 121 acres of his land in December of 1853 left Jonas Pope with an even 250 acres and cash on hand, which he almost certainly used to construct an unusually fine house along the southern edge of his property, which bordered what was known as the

“Quaker Road” to Rich Square. Though now in ruins, the home was clearly a statement of Jonas Pope’s relative affluence and stature in the community, as well as a testament to his skills as a carpenter. A two-storey wood-framed edifice with brick chimneys on each end, the house was meticulously constructed and finished with elegant Greek Revival details, such as front porch supported by turned columns and corner boards that resembled pilasters, terminating in carved Ionic capitals. The interior was altered over the years, but as originally built the house likely contained five to seven rooms. John Hope Franklin states that with an investment of a few hundred dollars, a free black family could live in a house “as modern as the age could provide.” In fact, few North Carolina families in the decades before or after the Civil War—white or black—lived in a home as commodious and refined as the one built by Jonas Pope in the mid 1850s.¹³

To this fine new home Jonas brought his wife, Permelia (born in 1828 or 1829). Their wedding date is not recorded, and little is known of Permelia Pope. Curiously, the Popes are not listed on the 1860 census. According to a granddaughter, Ruth Permelia Pope, Permelia was “of free birth, her family never experienced the perils of slavery...her educational training was above the average, and she like her husband was artistically inclined. After work hours she would do much needle work...in the winter she made all of the clothing and the household linens.” A photograph and large charcoal drawing of Permelia Pope survive in the Pope House collection, and show a woman of late middle age who appears to have been of African, European, and perhaps Native American ancestry.¹⁴

Manassa Thomas Pope, known as M. T., was born to Jonas and Permelia Pope on August 24, 1858. [Later in life M.T. Pope listed the place of his birth as Woodland, a small community a few miles north of Rich Square. Why he was not born in the family home in



House built by Jonas Pope, Rich Square, ca. 1853, Pope House Collection



Permelia Pope, Pope House Collection

Rich Square is unclear; perhaps his mother went to her family's home to give birth.] The world into which Manassa Thomas Pope was born was rural, agricultural, provincial and slow to accept change. Opportunities were limited, especially for the small number of free African Americans. Fortunately for M.T. Pope, he came from a relatively well-educated and prosperous family, and he was born just as the world around him was about to change dramatically and fundamentally. He was destined to leave the narrow confines of Northampton County at an early age; destined to spend his life in the burgeoning piedmont cities of central North Carolina, during perhaps the most optimistic, unpredictable, and frightening period of social, political, and economic change in the history of the state and region.¹⁵

M.T. Pope's early childhood coincided with the Civil War, but little is known about how the family was affected by the conflict. Unionist sentiment ran high among the citizenry, especially in the west, and the small number of large slave holders made elected officials reluctant to join the Confederacy in 1861. In fact, North Carolina was the last southern state to secede, forced finally by a call for troops for the Union army by Abraham Lincoln, and careful planning by secessionists. Jonas Pope's younger brother, Axom, served in the Union Navy, and John W. Walden (probably a cousin), joined the United States Cavalry in August of 1865. There were skirmishes in Eastern North Carolina, but the war was over relatively early there, as Union forces occupied the region from 1862. The fact that Jonas Pope was able to pay \$320 for a portion of his father's land in 1863 strongly suggests that this family did not suffer much economic loss as a result of the war.¹⁶

Despite the struggles of most North Carolinians following the Civil War, M.T. Pope appears to have been reared in a world of relative privilege. The 1870 Census records that

the family employed a farm laborer and a domestic servant, though M.T. is also listed as working on the farm. His daughter Ruth was told that he “grew up proud of himself and his beautiful clothing.” Clearly his life was unusual, both in terms of his status as a “mulatto” and the affluence of his family. Most likely he attended one of several area one-room schools, and received an education typical of the era. A modern system of standardized, graded education was not instituted in the region until the 1880s. As both of his parents were literate, it can be assumed they valued education and supplemented Pope’s education at home in whatever way possible. In fact, Jonas Pope donated land and was on the board of the first African American secondary school in the state, Chowan Academy, which opened its doors in 1886 in nearby Winton. Perhaps it was because of his somewhat meager formal childhood education that M.T. Pope was such an advocate for African American elementary education later in his life. He worked as a teacher briefly in the 1880s and then served on the boards of the Chowan Academy (later named the Waters Normal Institute), and the Wharton Normal Institute in Charlotte.¹⁷

The religious life of the extended Pope family in Northampton County was split between the Baptist and African Methodist Episcopal faiths. How and where they worshipped before the Civil War is not known, as little information exists about church attendance for free blacks. Despite the abolitionist attitudes and tolerance of the Quakers, few if any African Americans joined the Rich Square Meeting in the antebellum era. The first recorded baptism of African Americans had occurred in 1771, when several Church of England clergymen ministered in Northampton County. The legally weakened successor of the Episcopal Church (the Protestant Episcopal Church) declined in the area following the American Revolution, and did not experience a resurgence until the late 1840s. The first

Baptist church in Northampton County had been founded in 1775 in the village of Potecasi, near where the Pope family lived. In the late antebellum area some African Americans chose to worship in clear wooded areas known as “bush shelters,” rather than in white churches, and some white Baptist missionaries sought out those gatherings for instruction. After the Civil War, a few of these bush shelters provided the foundation for black Baptist congregations. Family tradition holds that Jonas Pope belonged to a church that probably began as a bush shelter, Pleasant Plains Baptist Church in nearby Winton, across the line in Hertford County. Not all of the Popes were Baptists, however. In 1866, two of Jonas’s siblings, Lazarus and Margaret Pope, helped to found Willow Oak A.M.E. Church in Rich Square. It is unclear as to why he should have broken with his family’s church to travel a farther distance in order to worship. M.T. Pope followed in his father’s footsteps, at least on matters of religion; he was a life-long Baptist.¹⁸

The political landscape around the Pope family changed dramatically after the Civil War. The men in the family over the age of 21 regained the right to vote, as provided in the 15th Amendment to the United States Constitution. Jonas Pope, only eight years of age in 1835 when the state constitution was amended to disfranchise free blacks, never had the opportunity to vote until after 1867. Almost certainly he aligned with the Republican Party in 1868, as nationally it was the party of Abraham Lincoln and abolition. A majority of white men in the state, including virtually all former confederates and supporters, became ardent Democrats. In 1870, partly as a result of Ku Klux Klan activity and the intimidation of black voters, Democrats regained control of the state legislature and, in the words of historian Eric Anderson, “seriously crippled Reconstruction in North Carolina.” William Woods Holden, the Republican governor elected under the Reconstruction government, was impeached in

1871 and removed from office. In 1872, the legislature redrew the state's political boundaries, and Northampton County became part of the Second Congressional District, which consisted of ten counties that stretched from the Virginia border to the edge of the Outer Banks. The district was clearly gerrymandered to corral the state's largest black, and therefore Republican, population, so that the Democrats could control the rest of North Carolina's congressional seats. The result was the election in August of 1874 of John Adams Hyman, a state senator from Warren, to be North Carolina's first African American representative to the United States Congress. Reconstruction may have been over in the state, but the Democrats had unwittingly created a political anomaly that was to prove a serious threat to their statewide hegemony in the following three decades.¹⁹

The congressional election of 1874 occurred a few weeks before M.T. Pope's sixteenth birthday. It must have seemed a time of great opportunity to the young man. The first African American in the state's history had just been elected to Congress—from his district, no less—and he was preparing to leave home to enroll at Shaw University in Raleigh. Pope left Rich Square in October, and, as there was no direct route between the two towns in the mid 1870s, he most likely traveled by horse and carriage to Weldon, where he boarded a train to Raleigh. Almost certainly he did not travel alone; his cousin, J.W. Pope, who was two years older, was already a student at Shaw. The choice of Shaw was logical. It was a Baptist school, and, though only established in 1865, was by 1874 the largest university in the state. Almost certainly the Pope family heard about Shaw through two prominent Baptist ministers in the area, Rev. L.W. Boon of Winton and Rev. Isaac Alston of Warrenton, who both sat on the board of the university. According to one historian, Rev. Boon was an activist minister in northeastern North Carolina following the war,

advocating “the formation of independent black churches and Baptist associations as a means of asserting the newly acquired black freedom.”²⁰

The scope of Pope’s world widened exponentially once he arrived in Raleigh. The education he received at Shaw, the students and faculty he came to know, and the introduction to urban life would define him as an adult. He could not have known it stepping off the train, but he would never again live for any extended period of time in rural Northampton County. In fact, he would live 44 of the remaining 60 years of his life in Raleigh.

North Carolina’s capital city had been created by an act of the state legislature in 1792. Chosen for its location in approximately the geographic center of the state, the town had neither the benefit of being an established trading post nor of being near any navigable body of water. As a result it grew quite slowly throughout the nineteenth century; on the eve of the Civil War, the population stood at approximately 4,800. Raleigh did benefit, however, from the business of government, and of a well-executed city plan. Laid out in a grid pattern, the town center was occupied by a Capitol Square, from which four wide boulevards radiated north, south, east, and west. Four smaller public squares were located in each of the quadrants created by the boulevards. Only a few public buildings of note were erected before 1860. The most substantial was a fine State Capitol Building in the Greek Revival mode, designed by the nationally-renowned New York architectural firm of Town and Davis, and completed in 1840 (to replace two earlier structures destroyed by fire). Fayetteville Street, which began on the south side of the Capitol Square, served as the city’s ceremonial boulevard. The Governor’s Mansion--or “Palace,” as it was somewhat derisively known--was erected at the terminus of Fayetteville Street in 1816. Businesses of all

descriptions and hostelrys were built throughout the nineteenth century at the north end of Fayetteville Street near the Capitol, while a few large private residences were constructed at the south end near the Governor's Palace. Prominent families--including the Haywoods, Blounts, Mordecais, Hinton, and Camerons--owned homes in town and a few large plantations that bordered the city limits. Several large churches were also built before the Civil War, including Christ Episcopal and First Baptist, both erected facing Capitol Square, and Edenton Street Methodist Episcopal Church, a few blocks to the east.²¹

Raleigh also had a small but visible population of free African Americans before 1860, several of whom had been quite prosperous. Remarkably, one of the most prominent educators in the city during the first quarter of the nineteenth century was an African American, the Reverend John Chavis. From about 1808 until the early 1830s, Chavis taught the children of some of Raleigh's prominent white families, and his pupils included a future governor, a United States Senator, and a minister to Portugal. Chavis was classically educated at Washington Academy in Virginia (now Washington and Lee University), and probably informally at the College of New Jersey (Princeton.) A white lawyer who knew him stated that "[h]is English was remarkably pure, containing no 'Negroisms'; his manner impressive, his explanations clear and concise." Chavis apparently intended to teach white and black students together, but after some resistance to this idea, he began offering a night school for children of color. Following the Nat Turner Rebellion and a change in state law in 1831, Chavis was allowed to teach only white children.²²

Another of Raleigh's free blacks, Lunsford Lane, became a national *cause celebre* of the abolitionist movement in the 1840s. Born a slave in the household of John Haywood about 1803, Lane was raised and educated by the white patriarch of the family in a manner

like that of his own sons. Allowed to earn money by working odd jobs in town, Lane was eventually able to buy his freedom. He established a prosperous pipe tobacco manufactory and shop, which he later expanded to include lumber and dry goods. In 1839 he bought a house and lot in town. Envy of his success, however, and the growing suspicions by slaveholders in the 1830s about free blacks and uprisings, led to Lane's being forced out of Raleigh on the technicality that his manumission papers were issued in New York. He soon returned to claim his wife and children, whose freedom he purchased, but he was literally tarred and feathered by an angry mob. Following this harrowing incident and his escape with his family to Boston, Lane became a favorite speaker at abolitionist rallies, and his autobiography was published in 1842.²³

But Chavis and Lane were exceptions. Most of Raleigh's free black residents, 466 by 1860 (about 10 percent of the total city population), worked the lowest paying jobs available. One white resident described the occupations of free people of color as "barbers, fiddlers, and jacks-of-all-trades." About 10% of the free blacks in the city boarded with white families for whom they worked. Codified residential segregation did not exist in the antebellum South, and African Americans who were not enslaved lived among whites of similar economic status. Historian Richard Mattson found that in southeast Raleigh in 1860, "the census taker recorded free black painter William Jones, bricklayer Sidney Dunston, and grocer Ben Mansley, maintaining households beside a pair of white families headed by a blacksmith and a conductor." The patterns of post-bellum African Americans neighborhoods were, however, beginning to emerge, especially around railroad tracks at the southern and northwestern edges of town, where the poorest members of the community built clusters of what one resident decried as "frail little huts."²⁴

Some white residents may have been derisive of the free black community in Raleigh, but by the 1840s it was strong enough to establish the first separate African American church in the capital city. The national Methodist Episcopal Church split in 1844, over the issue of allowing a Georgia bishop to own slaves. In 1849 black members of the Raleigh congregation separated from the white church and formed what was known as the African Church. A few years later the African Church acquired a wooden chapel from Christ Episcopal Church (which was building a new structure), and the members moved it to the northwest side of town “by night, after the labor of the day was over...with torches and whatever they could get to make a light.” A northern news correspondent later described the church as “a plain, white wooden building, with floor accommodations for about three hundred persons, and gallery accommodations for about one hundred more. Its floor is carpeted and its seats cushioned.” This congregation, known as St. Paul A.M.E. Church after 1884, became the city’s first public institution owned by African Americans.²⁵

Raleigh escaped devastation during the Civil War, though Gen. William T. Sherman and tens of thousands of Union troops occupied the city in the final days of the conflict. Sherman established his headquarters in the Governor’s Mansion, and though provisions were taken as needed to supply the troops, Raleigh was spared the destruction that befell other southern towns along his “March to the Sea.” Two major events that were to lay the foundation for a strong post-bellum black community in North Carolina also took place in Raleigh in 1865: the establishment of the state’s branch of the Bureau of Freedmen, Refugees, and Abandoned Lands (commonly known as the Freedmen’s Bureau); and the meeting of the North Carolina Freedmen’s Convention, the first in the nation.²⁶

The Freedmen's Bureau was established in the spring of 1865 at the northern end of town in an expansive four-storey brick structure with an impressive colonnaded portico, constructed just before the war as the first building for the new ladies' Presbyterian seminary, Peace Institute (later Peace College). Before the school could open its doors, the building was commandeered for use as a Confederate hospital. From this location the Freedmen's Bureau dispersed rations, undertook the establishment of schools, provided basic medical care, and "assisted former slaves in working out labor contracts with white employers." During the four years the Bureau operated in Raleigh, the African American population increased dramatically. By 1870, the city's black residents numbered over 4,000, more than twice the number a decade earlier. According to historian Richard Mattson, "black urban migration after the Civil War created unprecedented opportunities for educational and political influence, and for self-identity...[Further, it] fostered racial and neighborhood solidarity." In fact, no less than 13 separate African American settlements were created in and around Raleigh in the years immediately following the war. Several of these settlements would form the basis for distinct black neighborhoods in the following decades, including Oberlin (north of the city limits) and Method (west of the city limits). Not surprisingly white residents, who were dealing with the humiliation of the defeat and occupation by Union troops, felt a sense of "racial claustrophobia," and wrote of Raleigh being deluged "with the dirty negroes...[lured by] delusions of easy employment and high wages." The editor of the *Raleigh Weekly Progress* decried the "great mass of unbleached Americans...overcrowding our beautiful city with a population capable of at times being made a dangerous instrument in the hands of vicious men."²⁷

The meeting of the first statewide Freedmen's Convention in late September certainly did not assuage the few of Raleigh's white citizens. Over the course of five days 117 delegates from more than half of the counties in the state met in the African Church, which was decorated with a bust of Lincoln and a paragraph from his famous address "with malice toward none." The tone of the convention was conciliatory, with the presiding officer, Rev. James Hood of the African Methodist Zion Church, imploring the gathering to "keep constantly in mind that this State is our home, and that the white people are our neighbors and many of them our friends...we and the white people have got to live together." "Let us have faith, patience, and moderation," Hood went on to say, "yet assert always that we want three things,--first, the right to give evidence in the courts; second, the right to be represented in the jury-box; and third, the right to put votes in the ballot box." In October of 1866 a second convention was held, again at the African Church, with James H. Harris presiding. The focus of this meeting was education, and along with calling for the establishment of more schools, the convention formed the Freedman's Educational Association of North Carolina. The delegates, this time representing 82 counties, also voted to establish a permanent headquarters in Raleigh under the name of the North Carolina State Equal Rights League. Members also drafted a constitution that stated the organization's goal was "to secure, by political and moral means...the repeal of all laws...State and National, that make distinction on the account of color."²⁸

The presence of the Freedmen's Bureau, the gatherings of the Freedmen's Conventions, and the general influx of African Americans after the Civil War created a profusion of new religious institutions in Raleigh to serve the community. Each of the major protestant denominations soon established new churches, and these, along with St. Paul's

A.M.E. Church, were to become the city's principal African American places of worship and meeting for more than a century. In 1865, the American Baptist Home Missionary Society dispatched Dr. Henry Martin Tupper to Raleigh to establish a black congregation, which in 1866 became the Second Baptist Church (later named Tupper Memorial in his honor). Two years later the African American congregants of First Baptist Church formally separated and formed the First Colored Baptist Church. The Protestant Episcopal Church established a separate African American parish in 1867, which eventually formed St. Ambrose Church. Also in 1867, black Presbyterians called a congregation that became Davie Street Presbyterian Church. African Americans also created several non-denominational social organizations in the late 1860s, including a YMCA and a Masonic Lodge (which became part of the Prince Hall Grand Lodge of North Carolina in 1870).²⁹

All of this activity swirling around the burgeoning African American community helped to fuel a general building "boom" in Raleigh. A detailed aerial view of the city, drawn by the Drie's Company in 1872, shows a tree-lined town of comfortable residences and several large structures housing public and educational institutions. In fact, throughout the first half of the 1870s, growth and construction continued unabated. New businesses sprung up along Fayetteville Street, including Thomas H. Briggs and Sons Hardware Company, whose building boasted cast iron trim and was touted as the tallest structure in the eastern part of the state. On the block south of Brigg's the cornerstone was laid in 1874 for the first new United States Post Office in the South following the war. The early 1870s also brought development of the first real "suburb" in the city. Oakwood was created northeast of the original town limits on land once part of the Mordecai plantation. Casting aside the classically inspired houses that defined the antebellum era, ornate designs in the various

Victorian revival modes became the fashion. The mansard roofs, fussy porch fretwork and stained glass windows could not hide the fact, however, that more affluent white residents were beginning to leave the original residential areas of the city where African Americans were increasingly evident.³⁰

Thus the town M.T. Pope first entered in October of 1874 was a provincial state capital less than a century old; a town that had withstood Sherman's occupation in the final days of the Civil War, and experienced dramatic growth in the following decade. Most importantly, Raleigh was a town with a history of a small but strong free black community, and a town that became the epicenter of the hopes, aspirations, and political activism of North Carolina's African American citizenry in the post-bellum period. Those hopes and aspirations were to coalesce during the 1870s and 1880s at Shaw University--and M.T. Pope was to be among a group of Shaw graduates who were to change the course of North Carolina history during the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century and beyond.

Though Dr. H.M. Tupper was sent to Raleigh in 1865 to form a black Baptist Church, he quickly realized that theological education was critically needed to train ministers. In December of 1865 he began holding classes in a local hotel, and from these humble beginnings the South's first African American institution for higher learning was established. In March of 1866 classes were offered for women, making Raleigh Institute, as it was then known, the first co-educational African American college in the United States. A new building was constructed the same year at the corner of Blount and Cabarrus Streets that housed both the school and the Second Baptist Church. The rapid growth of the school and the influx of white teachers and funds from New England raised the ire of some local whites supremacists. The Ku Klux Klan tried to force Tupper and his wife to leave town with a late

night raid in 1868, but the night riders underestimated the missionary's zeal. The college was to be Tupper's passion for three decades, until his retirement in 1894.³¹

Dr. Tupper was constantly raising funds to expand the school, and in 1870 he convinced Elijah Shaw of Wales, Massachusetts, to donate \$5,000 for purchase of a former ante-bellum estate several blocks south of the college. In honor of the donation, Raleigh Institute became Shaw Collegiate Institute. The property Shaw occupied stood adjacent to the Governor's Mansion (which was abandoned after Sherman's occupation), and in the midst of a neighborhood that was somewhat sparsely populated by affluent white families who lived in homes mostly constructed before the Civil War. Sion Hart Rogers, elected to Congress in 1854 and again in 1872, and appointed a Confederate general during the war, built one of the finest houses in the neighborhood in 1855. In 1874, the house was sold to William Bagley and his wife Adelaide Worth, whose father, Jonathan Worth, was a former governor of the state. The juxtaposition of the antebellum white families and the rapidly expanding black college was to create an interesting dynamic tension in the neighborhood for years to come.³²

During M.T. Pope's first year at school, Shaw Collegiate Institute was incorporated as Shaw University. The school's growth in one decade was remarkable. The student population during the academic year of 1874-1875 was 290, making it the largest university in the state (the venerable University of North Carolina was closed during that academic year; but when it re-opened in 1875, the student body was approximately one-half the size of Shaw's). The student body consisted primarily of African Americans from across North Carolina, though there were students from every southern state, and even a few from Liberia in the late 1870s. M.T. Pope's classmates between 1874 and 1879 included two of his cousins, J.W. and Georgiana Pope, also from Rich Square. Without question, however, the

most important students he met at Shaw were three young men who would become leaders in the state during the 1880s and 1890s, and who would define the rest of M.T. Pope's life: James Young, Henry Cheatham, and J.T. Williams. Though of differing backgrounds, these young men not only learned scholastic lessons at Shaw; together, they also learned how to be men of the New South. They were educated in an era when old racial and class distinctions were (at least temporarily) cast aside, an era when possibilities must have seemed almost endless.³³

Certainly M.T. Pope and his fellow students took pride in the physical grandeur and growing prestige of Shaw University. The campus was designed to be impressive and impart a sense of permanence. By 1874 it boasted three large and stylish new brick buildings: a five-storey residence and classroom building in a vaguely Georgian-revival style, known as Shaw Hall; a two-storey chapel and dining hall in a Gothic-inspired castellated style complete with a tower; and the four-storey Italianate style Estey Hall, constructed as the women's dormitory and named for the donor from Vermont who made a small fortune manufacturing parlor organs. The university dominated the southern part of the city by 1875, and was the largest institution of any type in Raleigh for more than a decade. Oversight of the growing school came from the board of trustees, which included white benefactors from New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont. The members from North Carolina included Rev. L.W. Boon of Winton, Rev. Isaac Alston of Warrenton, and three white Raleigh residents: Thomas Briggs (the hardware merchant), Richard Shepard, and Jackson Yarborough.³⁴

As a Baptist school there was a strict code of conduct at Shaw. Along with strictures abstaining from tobacco and drink (except for medicinal purposes), the rules forbade

“frivolous conversation...lounging upon beds...[or throwing] water, slops, paper, or anything offensive or dangerous from the windows of any building.” The behavior, appearance, and virtue of female students were of particular concern, and was guided by an additional code. Women’s public conduct was increasingly regulated by society during the Victorian era, but this was especially important in the post-bellum South, as African American women had the additional burden of establishing a personal dignity not afforded them as slaves. Women at Shaw University were told there was “no necessity for costly wearing apparel...[because g]ood behavior and industrious habits of study will be regarded as the best adornment.” The young ladies were not allowed to converse with young men on campus, except for the first fifteen minutes after school. They were not allowed to have gentlemen callers without the express permission of the president, and the he read all their correspondence from male admirers. Finally, the young ladies were only allowed to shop in town on Saturday afternoons, in the company of a female teacher.³⁵

Upon his arrival in 1874, M.T. Pope entered Shaw’s one-year college preparatory program. In the fall of 1875 he enrolled in the general four-year classical program of study, each year consisting of three terms (the university also offered courses of study in science, theology, and “normal” or teacher education). His course load included nine terms of Latin, five of Greek, three of algebra, and three of geometry, along with a variety of one-term courses such as English analysis, English literature, logic, trigonometry, botany, chemistry, rhetoric, ancient history, United States Constitutional history, mental philosophy and moral philosophy. Two of Pope’s textbooks from his undergraduate years at Shaw survive in the small library at the Pope House: an 1860 volume entitled *Leaves and Flowers; on Object Lessons in Botany*; and an 1873 edition of *The United States Reader*. The second text is

particularly interesting because it bears a printed bookplate inside the front cover that reads “Shaw University Library. No. 127.” On the facing page is Pope’s signature, along with an inscription that reads: “H.M. Tupper, Presented to M.T. Pope.”³⁶

Two other small volumes of the era found in the Pope House are self-improvement books he likely purchased while a student at Shaw: one is a well-known 1866 book on manners, entitled *Martine’s Handbook of Etiquette and Guide to True Politeness*; and the other is *A Collection of Colloquial Phrases, on every topic necessary to maintain conversation*, published in 1857. Etiquette and self improvement books were published in large numbers and widely read in the United States during the nineteenth century by individuals desirous of improving their station in life. According to historian John F. Kasson, “gentility [was] increasingly available as a social desire and as a purchasable commodity” that could be learned through publications of this type. This was particularly important for educated African American men who wanted to be accepted socially in the new post-bellum Southern middle class. Kasson argues that for African Americans, learning good manners and proper public deportment through etiquette books expressed “aspirations of black gentility and hopes of the power of politeness to increase racial harmony.” Certainly M.T. Pope was interested in improving his social skills, as well as his mind, to prepare himself to be a gentleman of the New South. Exactly what he took from these books is not known. *Martine’s* promised to provide a “complete manual for those who desire to understand the rules of good breeding, the customs of good society, and to avoid incorrect and vulgar habits,” and covered all manner of topics including “courtship, marriage, domestic duties and fifty-six rules to be observed in general society.” Among the proscriptions are warnings against the discussion of politics in various “polite” situations—

particularly interesting in light of Pope's deep interest and involvement in politics throughout his adult life.³⁷

Shaw University's early records suggest that the awarding of a diploma did not necessarily occur following the completion of a course of study. Some courses required sitting for an exam to earn the diploma. It also seems likely that students who intended to go on to post-graduate education did not take a diploma in the 1870s. Such may be the case with M.T. Pope, whose name is not among the short list of students earning diplomas in 1879, and for whom no diploma exists. Pope himself noted years later that he "attended" Shaw University from 1874 until 1879. In fact, the year Pope completed his course of study, Dr. Tupper secured funds from his brother-in-law, Massachusetts industrialist Judson Leonard, to establish a medical school at Shaw. The need for African American physicians was great in the South, and only four other black medical schools existed in the United States at the time. Tupper noted this problem in a Shaw catalog, stating that "colored people at present are without educated Physicians, and thus are subject to all manner of quackery and imposition, and many suffer and die for want of medical attention." With the addition of the medical school, Tupper realized his goal of educating a new generation of African American ministers, teachers, and doctors. M.T. Pope was clearly one of Tupper's favorite students, and thus it is likely that the young man intended to return to earn a medical degree, once the Leonard Medical School opened. In the meantime he left Shaw in March of 1879, and presumably returned home to Rich Square. In the 1880 census, however, he appears as a tutor living in the nearby Halifax home of a mulatto family named Hewlin.³⁸

Work began on a classroom building and a dormitory for the Leonard Medical School at Shaw University in 1881. The imposing structures were built with student labor, of bricks



Estey Hall, Shaw University, built 1874



Leonard Medical School, Shaw University, built 1881

they made on campus. The medical school building, which still stands, was identifiable by its pair of circular towers on each side of the front façade, capped with conical roofs. It is likely that M.T. Pope returned sometime in 1881 to help with construction of the buildings. The Leonard Medical School officially opened in the fall of 1882, offering a four-year course of study—the first for a medical school in the South. The white medical community in the state did not view the opening a medical school for African Americans as a worthwhile endeavor. Thomas Wood, editor of the *North Carolina Medical Journal*, wrote that black people did not have the “degree of inborn quickness of which the higher races are remarkable...[and the capacity for learning] necessary for success in the medical profession.” Speaking for the white doctors in the North Carolina, Wood went on to state, “we trust that the good sense of the managers of it will prevail, and that they will allow it to cease, before much harm is done.” Tupper was aware of this criticism, and admitted “it took two years—from 1880 to 1882—to find half a dozen students in all our schools who were competent to enter our Medical Department.” He wanted to be careful to find students who would not fail, and M.T. Pope was one of those young men.³⁹

Great fanfare and celebration accompanied the graduation of the first six students of the Leonard Medical School in March of 1886. At 28 years of age, M.T. Pope became one of the first black doctors in the South. Though he was not valedictorian of the class, he did win the McKee Prize, named for one of the local white doctors who taught in the school. A photograph in the Pope House collection, taken about the time of graduation, shows a group of students arranged in front of an American flag, likely all the students enrolled at Leonard at the time. Pope’s signature is on the back of the photo, though he is not identified. Upon graduation, Dr. Pope was issued a large and elegant diploma, which was mounted in a

beautifully frame with applied composition decoration. Cherished by the family, the diploma remains on the wall of the Pope House, complete with its original frame and original glass cover.⁴⁰

Though Dr. Pope was now a graduate of the Leonard School of Medicine, he still needed to pass a new state medical board exam to be allowed to practice. He sat for the exam in New Bern in 1887, and upon passing became the first African American physician licensed to practice in North Carolina. Dr. Pope also married in 1887. His bride, Lydia W. Walden of Winton, was 28 years old and came from a family much like Pope's. It is likely that her father, John W. Walden, was a cousin of M.T.'s father, Jonas. John Walden was a successful merchant in Winton, and he and his wife, Annie, had seven daughters. Lydia was the oldest of the Walden daughters, and was apparently fairly well educated. The family was associated with Chowan Academy in Winton, and after marriage Dr. Pope taught mathematics for a year at the school. But the newlyweds were not to stay long in Hertford County. Politics in North Carolina were heating up in the late 1880s, and several of Dr. Pope's close friends from Shaw would draw him into the fray.⁴¹

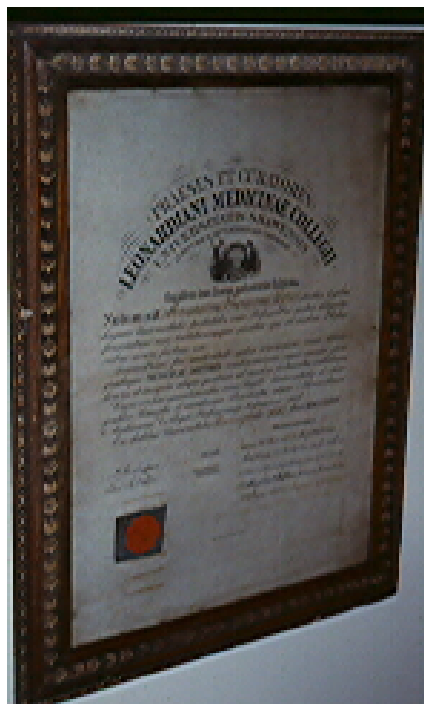
By the time he was 30 years old, M.T. Pope had already lived a remarkable life. Born to a prosperous, free black family on the eve of the Civil War, he was raised in an idyllic farm setting in rural northeastern North Carolina. Coming of age during Reconstruction and its immediate aftermath, he was able to benefit from the best education available to an African American in the South in the 1870s. His years at Shaw University not only provided him an excellent formal education, but introduced him to urban life and to other men of his generation who would go on to shape society in North Carolina during the late nineteenth century.



Students at Leonard Medical School, 1886

Dr. Pope may be the man standing on the second row, far right

Pope House Collection



Dr. Pope's 1886 diploma, Leonard Medical School

Pope House Collection



Walden Family, ca. 1890

Lydia Walden Pope is second from the left first row

Her parents, James and Mille Walden, are seated center and second from right

Pope House collection

Endnotes

¹Interview with Gloria Pope Jenkins, granddaughter of Jonas Pope, May 24, 2004; Freedman's Papers of Jonas Pope, October 6, 1851, Pope Family Papers, in the Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as Pope Family Papers, SHC); John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina 1770-1860* (revised edition, Chapel Hill: 1995), pp. 48-57.

²On carpenters and cabinetmakers in the Roanoke River Basin, see John Bivins, *The Furniture of Coastal North Carolina: 1700-1820* (Chapel Hill: 1988), Chapter 6; Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina*, pp. 123-129, 136 and 144. Franklin found only three free black carpenters in Northampton County on the 1860 Census. Despite the fact that Jonas first purchased land in the county in 1853 and is believed to have built the family home by then, he does not appear on the 1860 Census. Assuming the census taker missed him, he would be the fourth free black carpenter in the county.

³U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifth Census of the United States (1840)*, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh (hereafter, all census data will be cited with the number and the year only; unless otherwise noted, the original reports were viewed on microfilm); *Third Census (1810)*; *Fourth Census (1820)* *Fifth Census (1830)*; Northampton County Deeds and Land Records, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh (hereafter cited as NCSA); *Hertford County Inventories and Sales of Estates*, Vol. 1, pp. 106-108, typescript copy, NCSA.

⁴*Ibid.*; Northampton County Estate Records, microfilm, NCSA.

⁵*Ibid.*; *Footprints in Northampton*, (Northampton County Bicentennial Committee: 1976), p. 5, in the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, UNC-Chapel Hill (hereafter cited as NCC); Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: 1981), pp. 1- 12.

⁶*Ibid.*; Donald Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: 1977), pp. 68-69.

⁷Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina*, pp. 10, 17-19, and Chapter III, *passim*.

⁸*Sixth Census (1850)*, typescript copy, NCSA.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Minutes of the Northampton County Court, 1845-1858*, microfilm, NCSA. Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina*, pp. 76-78.

¹¹Northampton County Deeds, microfilm, NCSA.

¹² Ibid., 1863-1892; Northampton County Wills and Estate Records, microfilm, NCSA; 1898 Will of Jonas Pope, Pope Family Papers, SHC.

¹³ Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina*, p.158. The house bears architectural similarities to others in the state built in the 1850s. For example, see Joe A. Mobley, editor, *The Way We Lived in North Carolina*, (second edition, Chapel Hill: 2003) p. 343.

¹⁴ Permelia Pope's date of birth is calculated from information in the *Eighth Census (1870)*; Ruth Permelia Pope, "My Autobiography," p. 2 (a course paper written in June of 1939 when she was a graduate student at Columbia University in New York), Pope Papers, SHC. The photograph, currently in the collection of the Pope House Museum Foundation, bears a Henderson, North Carolina studio mark, so it was probably taken between 1888 and 1892, when M.T. Pope lived in that town.

¹⁵ "1st Lieut. M.T. Pope," *The Colored American* (Washington, DC), Vol. 6, Number 42, January 21, 1899, p. 2., Pope Family Papers, SHC. In this issue, devoted to the officers of the 3rd North Carolina Volunteer Regiment of the Spanish American War, M.T. Pope gives an interview that amounts to a short biography. This article contains information not found anywhere else, and is thus critical to this study as the facts were provided directly by Pope. According to family tradition, Jonas and Permelia Pope were buried in Woodland, though the location of their graves is not known. Interview with Gloria Pope Jenkins, May 24, 2004.

¹⁶ The information about Axom (or Exum) Pope comes from African American Sailors in the Union Navy (www.rootsweb.com/~ncusct/uscnavy7.htm). Axom died in 1865, and his brother Jonas claimed \$180 of his personal property, Northampton County Wills and Estate Records, microfilm, NCSA; the enlistment papers of John W. Walden were found in the Pope House and are now in the Pope Papers, SHC. For a map and brief history of the Civil War in the northeastern part of the state, see Mobley, *The Way We Lived in North Carolina*, pp. 338-339.

¹⁷ *Eighth Census (1870)*; Pope, "My Autobiography," p. 3; *Northampton County Footprints*, pp. 15-16; Records of Chowan Academy (now the C.S. Brown Regional Cultural Center and Museum), Winton; "1st Lieut. M. T. Pope," *The Colored American*. For more information about the public school system in North Carolina during the era, see James L. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: 1996), Chapter 1.

¹⁸ *Footprints in Northampton*, pp. 5, 9-11; Sharon V. King, "The Social Role of the Black Church in a North Carolina Community," unpublished Master's Thesis, UNC-Chapel Hill, 1983, pp.22-25; Interview with Doris Pope, May 23, 2004.

¹⁹ Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, pp.3-8, 40-45. Also see Paul Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: 1985), Chapter 6.

²⁰*Shaw Catalog, 1874-1875*, and *Shaw Catalog, 1875-1882*, Shaw University Archives, Raleigh; King, “The Social Role of the Black Church,” p. 23. M.T. Pope’s route from Rich Square to Raleigh is supposition, but seems logical as Weldon was the closest rail line in 1874. It is also possible, though less probable, that Pope road by horse and wagon for the entire route.

²¹This general sketch of Raleigh is drawn from Elizabeth Reid Murray, *Wake: Capital County of North Carolina, Volume 1, Prehistory through Centennial* (Raleigh: 1983); and Elizabeth Culbertson Waugh, *North Carolina’s Capital: Raleigh* (Bicentennial edition, Raleigh: 1992).

²²Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina*, pp. 171-174; Murray, *Wake*, pp.188-190.

²³Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina*, pp. 145-147; Murray, *Wake*, pp. 274-276.

²⁴Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina*, p. 18; Richard Mattson, “The Evolution of Raleigh’s Black Neighborhoods in the 19th and 20th Centuries,” unpublished draft report, 1988, North Carolina State Office of Historic Preservation, pp. 5-7.

²⁵Murray, *Wake*, pp.379-380.

²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 503-506. For more on the Freedman’s Bureau, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: 1988), pp. 68-69 and 142-156.

²⁷Waugh, *Raleigh*, p. 117; Murray, *Wake*, pp. 552-553; Mattson, “The Evolution of Raleigh’s Black Neighborhoods,” pp. 8-9.

²⁸Murray, *Wake*, pp. 553-555. Escott, *Many Excellent People*, pp. 124-126.

²⁹Murray, *Wake*, pp. 615-623.

³⁰Information drawn from Waugh and Murray; portions of the 1872 map, Drie’s “Bird’s Eye of the City of Raleigh,” are included in Murray, *Wake*, pp. 636 and 639.

³¹*Ibid.*, pp. 611-612; Wilmouth Carter, *Shaw’s Universe: A Monument to Educational Innovation* (Raleigh: 1973), pp. 1-3.

³²*Ibid.*, Waugh, *Raleigh*, pp. 104-105.

³³*Shaw Catalog, 1874-1875* and *Shaw Catalog, 1875-1882*. For more on the closing of UNC-Chapel Hill, and about the university in the 1870s, see Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, Chapter 2.

³⁴*Shaw Catalog, 1874-1875* and *Shaw Catalog 1875-1882*; Carter, *Shaw’s Universe*.

³⁵*Shaw Catalog, 1875-1882*, pp. 30-32.

³⁶*Shaw Catalog, 1874-1875*, p. 18.

³⁷John Kasson, *Rudeness and Civility: Manners in Nineteenth Century America* (New York: 1990), pp. 43 and 54. Warnings against the discussion of politics are mentioned on pages 17 and 36 of *Martine's Handbook*.

³⁸*Shaw Catalog, 1875-1882*; "1st Lieut. M.T. Pope"; Todd L. Savitt, "Training the 'Consecrated, Skillful, Christian Physician': Documents Illustrating Student Life at Leonard Medical School, 1882-1918," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, pp. 251-254; Todd Savitt, "The Education of Black Physicians at Shaw University, 1882-1918," in Jeffrey Crow and Flora J. Hatley, editors, *Black Americans in North Carolina and the South* (Chapel Hill: 1984), pp. 165-173; *Tenth Census (1880)*.

³⁹Savitt, "The Education of Black Physicians at Shaw University," p. 172.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 173; "1st Lieut. M.T. Pope."

⁴¹Pope is listed as the first licensed African American physician on the North Carolina Medical Board website, www.ncmedboard.org; Interview with Annie Nickens, Lydia Walden's niece, May 24, 2004; "1st Lieut. M.T. Pope."

Chapter 3

“One of the foremost men of the race...has taken much interest in politics”

- *Quote about Dr. Pope in The Colored American, January, 1899*

Although North Carolina was leading the development of the so-called “New South” in the 1880s, and though African Americans of M.T. Pope’s generation were achieving educational and economic success unimaginable three decades earlier, color lines were still firmly drawn in many areas. Chief among those were the fraternal and professional men’s organizations of the day, including the North Carolina Medical Association. Upon earning their licenses to practice medicine in the state, Dr. Pope and two of his Shaw classmates, J.T. Williams and Lawson A. Scruggs, requested membership in the North Carolina Medical Association. Not surprisingly, they were rebuffed. Undaunted, the three doctors, along with A.B. Moore, formed in 1887 what would later be called the Old North State Medical Society. This set a precedent in what would become a lifetime of organization building for Pope and other African American men of his generation, when faced with exclusion from white groups. Perhaps most importantly, the creation of the Old North State Medical Society also heralded the emergence of an elite coterie of Shaw alumni, who would come to be a dominant force in state Republican politics for the next decade.¹

In 1888, after one year teaching at Waters Normal Institute in Winton, Pope and his wife moved about one hundred miles east to Henderson, in nearby Vance County. This is the

first of three moves Pope would make over an eleven-year period, establishing a pattern of following prominent Shaw classmates to the fast-growing towns and cities of Piedmont North Carolina. Henderson was a natural choice for Pope, as it was a young, up-and-coming town in the late 1880s, with a population of about 8,000. Incorporated in 1841 and located on the Raleigh and Gaston rail line, Henderson became the county seat in 1881 when Vance was created from a portion of Granville County. Situated strategically between cotton producing areas to the west and tobacco producing areas to the east, Henderson was located on a major rail line, and markets for both commodities were established there in the 1870s. The name of one of the town's two newspapers, the *Golden Leaf*, succinctly stated the crop's importance to the region. Henderson was also a new town, physically; devastating fires in 1870 and 1885 leveled the business district, and Pope may have been attracted by the opportunities available in the rebuilding process.²

There seems little question, however, that Pope's move to Henderson was driven principally by his interest in politics, and was linked to the rising fortunes of two of his Shaw classmates, Henry Plummer Cheatham and James Hunter Young. While Pope and Williams were studying at Leonard Medical School, Cheatham and Young were building careers in the state Republican Party. Both men had similar backgrounds. Cheatham, born on a plantation near Henderson in 1857, was the son of an enslaved black woman and her white owner; Young, also born near Henderson in 1858, was the son of an enslaved African American woman and a "prominent white man in Vance County." Young's father supported him and sent him to Shaw University in 1874. Cheatham's father died when he was a child, but he was able to attend Shaw through the generosity of another white man close to his father's family. The fact that both men had white fathers likely gave them a sense of some degree of

entitlement, and possibly of a higher status in the racial pecking order. If so, they wore that sense of self very differently. Cheatham seems to have been more comfortable in his light skin; Young throughout his life displayed a need to both prove himself to whites and to be at the center of activity.³

A brash and ambitious young man, Young was the first to break into politics. He left Shaw in 1877 to work in the office of the collector of federal internal revenue for the state's Fourth District, a job he almost certainly obtained through connections with powerful white Republicans in the area. This was a lesson Young carried with him the rest of his life: currying favor with political leaders could result in lucrative patronage positions. This was especially important for people of color—at least people of his light color—who, if educated, now had opportunities for well-paying, white-collar employment in the New South. Young worked hard at his new post, and in 1882 he rose to the position of chief clerk and cashier. He also worked diligently for the Republican Party, and rapidly ascended within its ranks. He attended the state Republican convention as a delegate in 1880, and was a delegate-at-large to the national Republican convention in 1884. He lost his federal job in 1885, however, when Democrat Grover Cleveland became president. Undaunted, Young used his local political connections to secure appointment as chief clerk to the register of deeds in Wake County. Another important lesson learned: friends in local government could help even when national politics favored the other party.⁴

Henry Cheatham's rise in the state Republican Party was quick and dramatic. He remained at Shaw until 1883, taking a degree in law. Instead of practicing, however, he accepted the position of principal of the Plymouth Normal School, where he remained for almost two years. In late 1884, Cheatham decided to run for the office of registrar of deeds

in Vance County. Though nationally this was a Democratic year, Republicans, including Cheatham, won some state and county elections. During his four-year tenure as registrar of deeds, Cheatham worked with prominent white citizens as well as blacks in the district to build a political network to support his ambitions for higher elected office. In fact, throughout his career Cheatham advocated for the rights of African Americans through biracial cooperation, a position that at times led to his being unfairly labeled an accommodationist—or worse—by black political rivals.⁵

From the early 1870s until the mid 1890s, black political power in the state was concentrated in the 2nd Congressional District. This was natural, as more people of color lived in this district than anywhere else in the state, with all but two of the counties having majority populations of African Americans. Since 1872, the district had sent four men to Congress, and two of them—James Hyman and James O’Hara—were African American. Politics in this district was complex, with four groups vying for power: the so-called “bourbon” Democrats, who were unreconstructed whites fixated on maintaining racial supremacy; liberal white Democrats, who flirted with biracial coalitions; a few white Republicans; and a growing contingent of prosperous and educated black Republicans. Political power in the 2nd shifted back and forth between these groups, driven in part by the ever-changing boundaries of the district. From 1872 to 1891 the district was redrawn three times, stretching at times from the Piedmont county of Vance, created in 1881 along the Virginia border, to the down-east county of Craven, adjacent to the coast. Northampton County was always part of the district, as were Wilson and Halifax. The geographic composition of the district was of utmost importance in the nineteenth century, as many powerful local positions, such as county commissioners and justices of the peace, were

alternatively elected or appointed, and thus boundary changes affected their selection. In addition, congressmen controlled many of the best federal patronage jobs, most notably the coveted post office positions. As if to prove the adage that “all politics is local,” it is important to note that James O’Hara replaced Wilson’s longtime postmistress—one Mary Daniels—with a black man in 1882. This created consternation in the Daniels family, especially on the part of her young son, Josephus. He carried this perceived embarrassment with him for the rest of his life, and sought some measure of retribution more than a decade later with the use of his newspaper, the *Raleigh News and Observer*, as a propaganda outlet for the white supremacy campaign of the late 1890s.⁶

In fact, the congressional campaign of 1888 in North Carolina’s Second District presaged the infamous White Supremacy campaign of 1898-1900. The incumbent, Furnifold M. Simmons, was a one-term representative who had won his seat as a result of the fractionalization of the Republican Party in the district in 1886. Born in Jones County in 1854, Simmons took a degree at Trinity College in 1873 and was admitted to the state bar two years later. By the mid 1880s he was living and working in New Bern, the largest town in the district. With the election to the presidency of Grover Cleveland in 1884, Democrats regained the White house for the first time since the Civil War. Party faithful in North Carolina and throughout the South were encouraged and emboldened by the national resurgence of their party. Seeing an opportunity, the 30-year-old Simmons decided to run for congress against the two-term African American incumbent, James O’Hara. In addition, the congressman had become vulnerable to defeat by losing support even among black Republicans, who accused him of forgetting his people once he got to Washington. The result was a deep divide in the district’s Republican Party, which fielded both O’Hara and

another African American candidate, Israel Abbott. Simmons was helped not only by Republican dissension but also by his former father-law-law, the powerful local politico Col. L.W. Humphrey, who apparently paid Abbott to remain in the race, thus splitting the black Republican vote.⁷

Furnifold Simmons earned a record as a moderate during his one term in Congress, and was considered conciliatory on matters important to African Americans. He supported a bill that protected a tariff on imported rice, production of which was vital to many black farmers in the district. He also introduced six of the same bills as his African American predecessor, James O'Hara. Despite Simmons's moderate record, Republicans saw an opportunity to unseat him in 1888. Henry Cheatham was one of these men, and his friends and Shaw classmates rallied to his side—this was to be the first political test of this new generation. Chief among Cheatham's supporters was James Young, who was very involved in the campaign and probably served informally as his manager. Young was dynamic and energetic, though he was also quickly earning a reputation as a hot-head: the *Henderson News* reported in May of 1888 that Young was bound over for appearance at the circuit court for allegedly shooting one Frank Johnston in the shoulder (apparently he was acquitted, as this did not affect his political career). When M.T. Pope moved to Henderson in 1888, he did so in part to support his friend and fellow Shaw alumnus Cheatham. Their success was assured, according to historian Eric Anderson, because “the era of Bourbon equilibrium had trained a second generation of black political leaders, men who had much greater mass appeal than the white leaders.” This generation, Anderson further asserts, “had taken little part in Reconstruction, was far better educated than the Negro leaders of the 1870s, and had

numerous, even expanding, opportunities to participate in local politics or hold public service jobs in the postal service, internal revenue, public school system, and elsewhere.”⁸

To be nominated on the Republican ticket for Congress, Henry Cheatham first had to negotiate a crowded field of eleven contenders in the party primary. In late May of 1888, Cheatham and his supporters, almost certainly including James Young and M.T. Pope, donned blue-and-gold badges and boarded a special train for Weldon, where the district convention was to be held. The convention was raucous and contentious, with accusations of impropriety from many camps. But Cheatham emerged victorious, and became the party’s candidate. “I was fairly and squarely Nominated,” Cheatham wrote a supporter, even though certain opponents “did all in their power to bolt the Convention and did leave when they saw I had a majority.” One challenger, George Mebane, a twenty-six-year-old from Bertie County, believed both that he had been cheated out of the nomination and that he was the only candidate who could defeat incumbent Simmons in the general election, and thus he decided to continue the fight after the convention. Democrats in the district were thrilled, as they envisioned another splitting of the Republican vote between two candidates like the one that resulted in Simmons’s victory two years earlier. It was well accepted at the time that Mebane was secretly paid by a wealthy white Democrat to challenge Cheatham—and also accepted that he eventually withdrew from the race as the result of another payoff from Republicans in the district.⁹

Rarely do historians have the opportunity to reconstruct the inner workings of a nineteenth century political campaign, especially one involving African Americans. Fortunately, a cache of papers surfaced in 2001 that belonged to Samuel Vick, a political operative for Henry Cheatham. Born in 1866, Vick, a native of Wilson, was barely able to

vote when he began to campaign for Cheatham in his hometown. A recent graduate of Lincoln College in Pennsylvania, Vick was beginning a distinguished career as an educator and public servant in 1888. How he came to support Cheatham is not known, but the candidate desperately needed a strong advocate in Wilson to win the election, and Vick saw an opportunity to move his career forward. In early 1888, Vick sent Cheatham a letter stating that his friends had urged him to write, as he was already working on Cheatham's behalf in the area. "What I have done for you was done for pure motives, and not so much for the emolument that there may be in it," Vick wrote, "yet I am not so unlike other people, I am at all times anxious to better my condition. Anything therefore that may bring about such a change will be gratefully received." Cheatham wrote back thanking Vick for his support, and asking him to set-up "a private meeting among the leaders [of the county] in my behalf." As the campaign developed, the two men became friends. Cheatham's letter of February begins with the salutation, "Dear Sir," but by April he was addressing Vick as "Dear Bro. & Friend." As the primary approached, Cheatham's letters became more strident, and outlined the dealings and small pay-offs that were common political tactics of the day. Six weeks before election day Cheatham wrote, "my chances seem exceedingly good...the leading men of my Race are uniting behind me as their choise [sic]." He instructed Vick to "seize every opportunity to give success to my cause in your county." Cheatham also noted that several supporters "have submitted propositions in regard to working for me but I can not comply with them as it is dangerous to have any specified leader; while I am willing to pay any expense incurred to advance my interest, I can not afford (though willing) to pay a salary to some one to take up the work." Cheatham was not opposed to greasing the wheels, however, and did ask Vick to give one Mr. Bynum five dollars, saying that he should tell him to



Henry P. Cheatham, Pope House Collection



Samuel Vick, Vick Family Papers

support the campaign “as he is a Col. Man, and should he be successful in doing work for me I will send more.” A post-script was added and underlined: “Strictly – Strictly confidential.”¹⁰

The campaign was not to begin officially until the fall, but during the summer Cheatham sent Vick several letters requesting specific tasks and asking him to set up meetings and rallies. “I have no doubt that what I shall be elected by a large majority,” Cheatham wrote in July, and in August he requested that Vick write up an account of a rally in Wilson and mail it to the newspapers in the district. Though Cheatham wrote Vick in August that he was “solid over the district,” Furnifold Simmons had no intention of giving up his seat without a fight. George Mebane’s withdrawal from the race in late September meant that there would be no repeat splitting of the Republican vote as in 1886, thus the Democrats needed another strategy to win the election. They settled on an unusual two prong strategy: Simmons continued to be generally moderate on issues of race and appealed to black voters, while party leaders and the Democratic press appealed to the base prejudice of whites on both sides of the political divide. This was to be the first post-Reconstruction white supremacy campaign in North Carolina, but it was not to be the last.¹¹

Led by the *Henderson News* and the *Kinston Free Press*, the white supremacist rhetoric steadily increased as the election neared. In late August, the *Henderson News* reported a “shameful” public event, “disgraceful to the town” at which “colored people crowded the platform so no white person could get standing room.” In September, the paper reported two lynchings of black men: three men were hanged on the 5th in Oxford, and two weeks later another man accused of rape was lynched in Whiteville amid the cry “we will protect our women.” By October editorials appeared questioning the consequences of black

rule, especially in state and county elections. “What sort of magistrates will we have...if the dark horse beats the race?” one typical editorial asked. Another predicted that women teachers “will be subjected to examination by African ignorance.” Days before the election, an editorial in the *Henderson News* warned that the “issues involved are of vital importance,” and implored voters to “go to the polls and vote for the men who promise *to keep your County government, and the young lady school teachers free from the domination of ignorance and vice*” [italics original].¹²

The Kinston *Free Press* was even more virulent, and went so far as to put words into Henry Cheatham’s mouth. Repeatedly during the fall the paper referred to white Republican candidates as “politically black.” Perhaps the low point of the campaign, however, occurred in early September, when the *Free Press* reported that at a speech in Kinston, Henry Cheatham “raised his eyes toward heaven and swore that he wished God would strike him dead if he didn’t honestly believe that if the Democratic party was successful in the coming election the negroes would be put back in slavery in less than ten years.” As historian Eric Anderson notes, “this language was out of character for Cheatham, and it is likely that his statement was exaggerated by the biased and irresponsible Kinston *Free Press*.” Certainly Cheatham was generally known for working with white political leaders, and the votes garnered from blacks by making a statement like this would not have offset the loss of white votes resulting from such an intemperate remark. Two weeks after the speech, the Henderson *Golden Leaf* reported that while Cheatham may have gotten a bit carried away, it was a “much more sensible and conservative talk than some of the other papers in the lower part of the district credit him with having made.”¹³

The two-prong strategy to win the election with race baiting to whites and moderate appeals to blacks did concern Henry Cheatham and his supporters. The day before the election James Young wrote to Samuel Vick: “please do all you can for Cheatham tomorrow...Simmons says he will get 100 Negro votes in Wilson town but I hope he is mistaken about it.” Simmons did in fact out-poll Cheatham nearly two-to-one in Wilson, but Cheatham won the election by a scant margin of 653 total votes in the district. There were widespread accusations of voter fraud on the Democratic side, and the United States Attorney brought charges to trial in Warren and Northampton counties. One of the Republican lawyers in the case, Daniel Russell (who would become governor a few years later), estimated the Democrats stole as many as 5,000 votes in the election.¹⁴

Another factor in the election of 1888 was the emergence of the Farmer’s Alliance as a political entity. Founded in Texas in the 1870s, with the first North Carolina chapter established in 1886, the Farmer’s Alliance sought to address a series of mostly economic issues that arose in the decades following the Civil War, which made agriculture increasingly less profitable for farmers in much of the southern and western United States. Deflation, a restricted national money supply still tied to the gold standard, the usury crop lien system, and other factors contributed to the loss of family farms, and the eventual shift of labor off the land to textile and tobacco factories. The Farmer’s Alliance had both black and white chapters, and though they remained separate, a political coalition began to emerge that was based on shared economic concerns. As the Farmer’s Alliance grew in size and influence, its leadership realized that it could be more powerful if allied with one of the two major political parties. In North Carolina during the elections of 1888 the alliance informally supported the Republican ticket, and that party’s candidate for governor, Oliver Dockery, was a member.¹⁵

Though impossible to predict at the time, the 2nd Congressional District election of 1888 proved to be the tinder for the white supremacy campaign of the late 1890s, one of the most significant watershed events in North Carolina history. That campaign would be ignited by the growing reality of a bi-racial political coalition between black Republicans and disaffected white farmers (members of the Farmer's Alliance, which grew into the Populist Party). In addition, two of the white supremacy campaign's principal leaders had roots in the 2nd District: Furnifold Simmons and Josephus Daniels. Thus, despite its relatively small population (no town had a population over 10,000), the gerrymandered 2nd Congressional District was both the epicenter of experiments in bi-racial politics in the fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, and the crucible of white supremacy in the 1890s.

Upon arriving in Washington, one of Congressman Cheatham's first orders of business was to reward his key supporters in the district with much sought after political patronage positions. Among the most desirable were appointments in the district's post offices. Throughout the late nineteenth century in North Carolina, as political power swung from one party to the other, postal appointments became flashpoints of rhetoric for white supremacists. According to Eric Anderson, there "had never been more than two or three Negro postmasters in the towns of the second district, but in the first fifteen months of the [Benjamin] Harrison administration black postmasters were appointed in at least nine places." The number of African Americans working in these offices was somewhat larger, as there were appointments within each of the local branches. Even when blacks were appointed to certain offices, white leaders—both Democrats and Republicans—could still block them from serving by refusing to accept the required personal bonds of these appointees. High on Cheatham's list of potential appointees was twenty-two-year-old

Samuel Vick, who was described by a contemporary as an “active political worker” to whom the congressman owed a “political debt.” But the appointment process was not easy or swift. James Young wrote Vick in February of 1889, assuring him that “the petitions have to be placed into session,” and that he anticipated the appointment would be made at the end of the term of the present postmaster, sometime in April or May. He advised Vick to “see your Bondsmen and have them selected so that you will know who to depend on in the matter.” Vick wrote to Cheatham in early May, and the congressmen responded “you need not be uneasy about your place...I will see that you are appointed in spite [of opposition].” Yet as the summer dragged on, there was still no appointment. On August 9, Cheatham again wrote to Vick: “Your matter is OK...I have had the Post Master Genl. to recommend you.” Cheatham did acknowledge that “these white Republican scoundrels may do just what they please, but they can’t down you in this very important fight—I am your friends & Bro. And will soon prove it to you.” He added in closing: “Don’t let anyone see this letter, as I am a little angry with the way the white Republicans are trying to do such with colored men of the party as yourself.” Vick was finally appointed in late September of 1889, nearly one year after the election, but not without vocal public opposition. The Henderson *Golden Leaf* editorialized that “Wilson, one of the prettiest and most attractive towns in the State, mourns over the fact that a Negro has been appointed postmaster. “ The editorial continued by quoting the *Wilson Advance*, which commented that “there are some fools who say the Republican party is not the negro party...[t]here are some idiots who say that Republican success does not mean negro domination [let them come] find a negro as postmaster...[w]ho says this is not a ‘coon’ administration?”¹⁶

M.T. Pope was also given a postal appointment, almost certainly as the result of his involvement in Henry Cheatham's congressional campaign. Sometime in 1889, he was appointed assistant postmaster in Henderson, a job that paid one-half the salary of the postmaster (about \$1,500 a year). It seems likely that Pope's contribution to Cheatham's campaign was not as great as Samuel Vick's, as he was not made postmaster. The post office in Henderson was, however, a large and important regional facility. According to a report of the public buildings and grounds committee of the United State Congress in April 1890, the Henderson post office was rapidly growing, serving as a "distribution center for eight or ten neighboring post-offices of considerable importance." Because the post office was located in "a hired frame building on a back street," the committee recommended that Congress appropriate \$25,000 for a modern new structure. Dr. Pope's reasons for accepting a position as assistant postmaster are unclear, and his daughter noted fifty years later that he found the work "monotonous." It is likely that he took the position to supplement his income while he established a medical practice in the area (it is interesting to note that the postmaster appointed a few years later was also a physician). He also may have thought he would not live in Henderson long, as he purchased no property while in Vance County. He did stay in the job about three years, which was something of an accomplishment, as the nine African American postmasters and some number of other postal workers appointed during Cheatham's tenure faced close scrutiny from the white community. Unfortunately several lost their positions due to fraud or incompetence. Samuel Vick and M.T. Pope, however, were complimented publicly for their service. Vick, against all odds and amidst periodic attempts to remove him, remained in the position for nearly two decades. Of Dr. Pope, the

Henderson News reported that he was “an intelligent, polite and respectable man whose course is such as to reflect credit on himself and his race.”¹⁷

In the spring of 1892, Dr. Pope decided to move to Charlotte and to go into the pharmaceutical business with another of his Shaw classmates, Dr. J.T. Williams. Pope’s decision to move was most likely predicated by the declining political fortunes of Henry Cheatham, as well as the exciting opportunities in North Carolina’s newest boom town. Though Cheatham was a moderate who diligently courted black and white supporters, circumstances of the period from 1889 to 1892 made it virtually impossible for him to remain in Congress long. With the exception of his election, 1888 was actually a strong year for Democrats, who remained in control of the state legislature. In an effort to solidify their power and restrict African American suffrage, lawmakers passed a bill in 1889 that gave local officials—mostly white Democrats throughout the state—considerable authority to decide who met the qualifications to vote. The passage of this bill, coupled with a weakening agricultural economy, created a significant emigration of African Americans to states in the Deep South and the Southwest, where it was thought that circumstances were better. As a result, Cheatham’s political base noticeably weakened. The final nail in Cheatham’s political coffin was the congressional redistricting of 1890, as Democrats sought to dilute African American strength in the 2nd District. The gerrymandering purposefully removed Vance County from the district, forcing Cheatham to move from his home in Henderson and establish residence in Littleton.¹⁸

Seeing Cheatham’s star dimming, Pope moved himself and his wife to Charlotte in April of 1892, to hitch his wagon to the rising fortunes of another promising friend and fellow Shaw alumnus, Dr. J.T. Williams. Born in 1859 to free parents in Cumberland

County, John Taylor Williams was privately tutored before entering the State Normal School (later Fayetteville State University) in 1876, where he graduated at the top of his class. After teaching for three years, he entered the Leonard School of Medicine at Shaw University, graduating with M.T. Pope in the first class in 1886. Establishing a practice in Charlotte, Williams soon distinguished himself in his field, serving as surgeon at two of the city's hospitals, and as a member of the Mecklenburg County Board of Health. He achieved the rank of captain as surgeon to the First Battalion of the North Carolina State Guards, an African American regiment. Like his fellow Shaw alumni Henry Cheatham, M.T. Pope, and James Young, J.T. Williams was active in Republican politics, and served two terms on the Charlotte Board of Alderman. Unlike his three Shaw friends, however, Dr. Williams was not a Baptist. At age thirteen he joined the African Methodist Episcopal Zion church, and eventually held all the lay positions in the congregation, as well as serving as a representative at numerous conferences. He was a founding member of Charlotte's Grace A.M.E. Zion Church, and a trustee of the denomination's affiliated publishing company, which published the politically influential *Star of Zion* newspaper. After the death of his first wife, Williams married Jennie Harris of Concord, niece of W.C. Coleman, founder of the state's only African-American owned textile mill. Professionally, politically, and socially, J.T. Williams represented the upper echelon of black society in North Carolina, and someone whom young African American men could emulate. W.C. Smith, editor of the city's black newspaper, the *Charlotte Messenger*, wrote of Dr. Williams that "we are proud of him because he is a negro, because he is a native North Carolinian, because he is an intelligent gentleman, because he is a regular M.D., [and] belongs to the same society with all our first-class doctors, because he is recognized by them and will do us good and honor our race." It was Smith's general

opinion that if more young black men aspired to the “higher order” like Dr. Williams, and not the “boot black and servant class,” they will “force all men to respect them as gentlemen.”¹⁹

By 1892, at the age of 34, Dr. Pope was himself among the up-and-coming young men in the state, judging from the publicity that heralded his move from Henderson to Charlotte. An article about his leaving town appeared in the *Henderson News*, and another noting his arrival appeared in the *Charlotte Observer*. The *Observer* reported that Dr. Pope arrived with “the highest testimonials” from some of the most prominent black and white citizens in the state. These eight letters, now among the Pope Family Papers in the Southern Historical Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill, provide the first contemporary picture of how Dr. Pope was viewed by his peers. Equally as important, they illustrate the status and relative ease of mobility some African Americans of the “higher order” achieved within the white community during the late 1880s and early 1890s. In this era, when lines of race and class were somewhat fluid, qualities of character, intelligence, industry, religious devotion and sobriety recommended the “manhood” of an African American male. The ultimate compliment for a black man, especially from a white, was to be referred to as a “best man.” As politics and society in North Carolina devolved into the grip of white supremacy later in the decade the term “best men” and similar phrases would come to have a more racially charged meaning, but these words were high praise for Dr. Pope in 1892.²⁰

Dr. Henry M. Tupper, president of Shaw University and the man who had known Pope the longest (eighteen years) wrote that he had “the greatest confidence in his integrity and manhood.” Both the former and current mayors of Henderson wrote on Dr. Pope’s behalf. Former Mayor T.T. Hicks noted the he had “frequent business transactions” with Pope, and he did not “know his equal in the colored race.” “I believe him to be a man of

good character and superior intelligence.” Hicks affirmed. Incumbent Mayor Andrew J. Harris wrote the Pope was of “a good character, has conducted himself in a becoming gentlemanly way...I consider him as being one of the best men of his race in this town.” Lawyer T.M. Pittman, formerly of Charlotte himself, stated that Pope was “of a worthy family,” and that he had “attained a position of recognized leadership among the people of his own race.” A letter from John Dancy confirmed Dr. Pope’s involvement with the highest echelon of African American politicians in the state. The Dancy letter is of particular interest both because it confirms the close connection between the two men, and because of its content. Born in Tarboro in 1857, Dancy attended Howard for a time before returning to North Carolina to teach school. He was an avid supporter of the temperance movement, and active in the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, editing the denomination’s *Star of Zion* newspaper from 1885 to 1892. Though not an elected official, Dancy was perhaps the most influential black politician in North Carolina during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, serving as chief secretary of the state Republican conventions throughout most of the 1890s, and as a delegate to the national convention in both 1884 and 1888, where he seconded presidential and vice presidential nominations. In 1891, Dancy was rewarded with the highest paying federal post in North Carolina, that of United States collector of customs in Wilmington, the state’s busiest port. In April of 1892 he wrote that he had “personally known Dr. M.T. Pope for a number of years, and I know him to be a gentleman of high character, studios habits, [and] rare intelligence...I take particular pleasure in recommending him to all friends interested in Negro intelligence and uplifting.”²¹

With these letters in hand, Dr. Pope surely arrived in Charlotte optimistic about a bright future. Charlotte was the fastest growing town in North Carolina during the 1890s,

and was well on its way to becoming the state's largest city by the early twentieth century. Founded in the late eighteenth century, Charlotte was little more than a small market center until after the Civil War. But the expansion of the railroads, and particularly the rapid proliferation of Piedmont textile mills, put the town near the center of a booming "New South" economy in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Charlotte was also in the process of what historian Thomas Hanchett terms "sorting out;" representative of a new model of a southern city growing and reordering itself based on economic, social, and racial factors. The first of these was a separation of business districts from residential, a process institutionalized by the development of North Carolina's first planned suburb, Dilworth, in 1891. Hanchett points out that formalized residential racial segregation, so emblematic of southern cities throughout much of the twentieth century, did not exist in Charlotte until the 1890s. Area maps and directories show that blacks and whites lived side-by-side in the two decades following the Civil War, and in fact the original plan for Dilworth contained a section with street names such as Congo and Zanzibar, almost certainly an effort to attract African American buyers (that section was never built). By the early 1890s, however, the city was sorting out by race, with several black neighborhoods of residences, churches, and businesses. The largest and most prominent of these was an area called Brooklyn, in the city's Second Ward. Grace AME Zion Church was located here, as was the large and elegant home of Dr. J.T. Williams.²²

Dr. Pope, however, chose to live in a predominately white neighborhood located a few blocks southwest of the city's center, Independence Square. In April of 1893, he bought a house at 424 W. Third Street, one block off of Trade Street in the Third Ward. This was the first house Dr. Pope ever owned, and it was most likely a two-story frame structure in the

prevailing late-Victorian style. Though he did not live in one of the rapidly developing black neighborhoods, he quickly became involved in the African American community, teaching Sunday school, serving on the board of First Baptist Church, and becoming a trustee of Charlotte's Wharton Normal School. Pope was a strong supporter of African American education throughout his life, and while in Charlotte he also continued to support Waters Normal School near his hometown, and to serve as a trustee at his alma mater, Shaw University in Raleigh.²³

Dr. Pope may have chosen to live on West Third Street because it was only a few blocks from the Queen City Drug Company, the business he founded in 1892 along with Dr. J. T. Williams and another partner, R.B. Tyler. (The title of the business derived from the city's nickname, in honor of Queen Charlotte of Mecklenburg). The original incorporation papers for the Queen City Drug Company were found in the Pope House in Raleigh. They show an initial capitalization of \$20,000, with potential of increasing to \$40,000. The purpose of the enterprise was to "be that of dealing in drugs, paints, oil & c and of conducting a general drug business." Acknowledged as the first African-American owned drug store in North Carolina, the establishment created an elegant appearance with glass "show bottles" and six large display cases. Prominently featured were both hot and cold fountains, serving sarsaparilla, varieties of fruit drinks, and the newly marketed Coca Cola. There were already several white owned pharmacies in Charlotte, and there is evidence that blacks had difficulty being served at soda fountains in those businesses during the 1880s. A few years later, however, the situation apparently changed, as some black citizens preferred to trade at those locations instead of the Queen City Drug Company. On August 15, 1895, a pointed announcement appeared in the *Star of Zion*—the newspaper to which Dr. Williams



Queen City Drug Company, 227 East Trade Street, Charlotte, ca. 1895

Dr. Pope is standing in the doorway, second from the left

Robinson-Spangler Carolina Room



Incorporation papers and prescription book, Queen City Drug Company

Pope House Collection

was closely connected—addressing this issue. “The Queen City Drug Company has one of the finest soda water fountains in the city,” the paper stated, and “colored people will suffer no disadvantage, either in the quality of the drinks or the appearance of the place.”²⁴

The location of the Queen City Drug Company, at 227 East Trade Street, was certainly a calculated choice. The center of Charlotte’s business district was the corner of Trade and Tryon Streets, two blocks to the west, and the area boasted an increasing number of both black and white owned businesses during the 1890s. Eventually Charlotte supported African American proprietors of grocery stores, butcher shops, restaurants, barbershops, funeral parlors, two area newspapers (the *Charlotte Messenger* and the *Star of Zion*), a bank, and a dry cleaner. In the mid 1890s, Henry H. Hayden opened the first “colored photograph gallery” in North Carolina on East Trade Street. The only known extant photograph from that studio is of Mrs. Millie Walden, mother of Lydia Walden Pope, who must have sat for the picture on a visit to Charlotte in the mid to late 1890s.²⁵

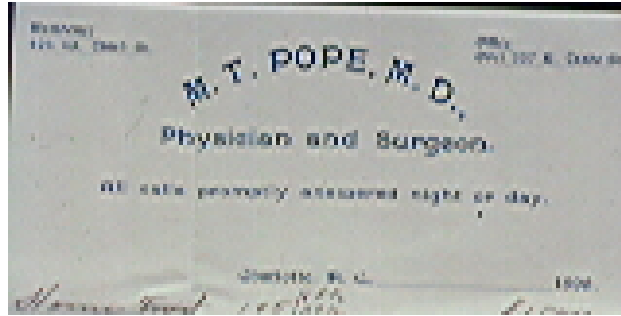
The building at 227 East Trade Street housed much more than just the Queen City Drug Company. It was, in fact, at the epicenter of the state’s African American economic, professional, social, and political aspirations of the 1890s—a period during which advancement and achievement, if not full equality, seemed an attainable dream. A photograph taken in front of the building about 1895 shows a group of black business owners, including Dr. Pope with a straw boater perched rakishly on his head. A doorway behind them opens to a staircase leading to the upper two floors. The second floor housed the medical offices of Dr. Pope and Dr. Williams, and offices for the People’s Relief and Benevolent Association of North Carolina, an insurance company they were instrumental in



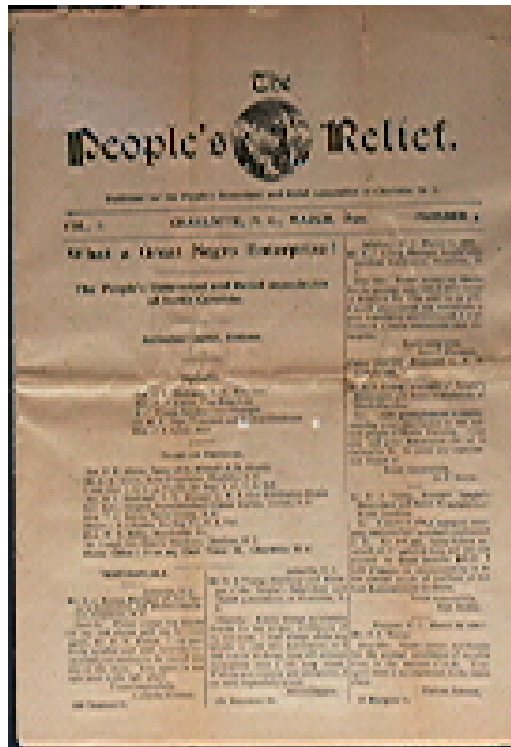
Photograph of Millie Walden, ca. 1895

Stamp on reverse of H.H. Hayden, Charlotte

Pope House Collection



Dr. Pope's Charlotte letterhead, showing office at 227 E. Trade
Pope Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection



People's Relief and Benevolent Society newsletter, 1899
Pope Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection

founding, and for which Dr. Pope served as treasurer and medical examiner. Many African Americans were wary of white insurance companies in the nineteenth century, unsure if they were being treated fairly. Founded in 1897, the purpose of the People's Relief and Benevolent Association was "to create a fund to protect its members when sick and furnish financial aid in case of death," as well as "to assist the Colored Orphan Asylum in Oxford." It was the first black owned insurance company in North Carolina, but it was soon to have competition. In 1906 the company went bankrupt, and its assets were purchased by the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company of Durham, destined to become one of the most successful black owned enterprises of its type in the United States.²⁶

On the third floor of the building at 227 East Trade Street was a large meeting hall, an arrangement typical of larger commercial buildings in small to medium sized towns in the nineteenth century. Judging from newspaper accounts, this hall was a hub of social activity for Charlotte's elite black residents. In August of 1895, the *Star of Zion* announced that the "Brooklyn Elite Club has fitted up an elegant club and reading room over the Queen City Drug Store, and there its members and visiting friends can spend the afternoons and evenings both pleasantly and profitably." In late 1898, the Montauk Social League held a banquet in the meeting hall, and many of the town's leading African American citizens were in attendance. Perhaps most significantly, the hall was the location where the area's black Republicans met, and in February of 1898 formed the Central Republican Club.²⁷

Professional, economic, and social achievement were important, but political participation and power remained central to the path of African American advancement in North Carolina and throughout the South. Central, at least, to the group of men at the top of North Carolina's black society, including Dr. Pope, who attempted to gain civil equality

through increased political activity during the 1890s. But ongoing uncertainty about the social orders of race and class meant that the political sands continually shifted under their feet. After the first attempts at a biracial coalition and the subsequent race baiting by the Democrats in 1888, the state Republican Party retreated, adopting the policy that it was “lily white” only. At the same time the influence of the Farmer’s Alliance was growing in North Carolina, under the leadership of Leonidas Polk, who was becoming a prominent figure on the national party stage. The Democrats retained power in the statewide elections of 1890 and 1892, but it became increasingly clear that they could be outpolled by a coalition—or “fusion,” as it was known—of Republicans and Farmer’s Alliance members. At the same time, the Farmer’s Alliance nationally was merging with the People’s Party, soon known as the Populists. The various attempts at alliances during this period are entangled and complex, and changed frequently during the early 1890s. The end result was a fusion in North Carolina of the Republicans, some white but predominately black, with the struggling white farmers of the People’s Party. With their forces combined, this coalition overturned a quarter-century of Democratic rule, and took control of the state legislature in 1894. It is important to understand that this biracial coalition was fragile, as issues of race and class remained unresolved three decades after the end of the Civil War. There was not a moment of color-blind understanding, as such, but there was a realization that certain economic and social issues bound groups of people together regardless of race and to some degree class, and to effect any change political cooperation was necessary.²⁸

Fusion reached its apex in North Carolina with the election of 1896, engineered by state party leaders Marion Butler, a Populist, and J. C. Pritchard, a Republican. The coalition was tenuous and remained uncertain throughout the campaign year, even among rank-and-

file African American voters, who felt mistreated by both the Democratic and Republican parties. Sensing a sweeping statewide victory finally within their grasp, Republicans were determined to garner every black vote, as a dramatic incident in Wilkes County during the May primary made clear. Concerned that “the democrats had created dis-affection among the negroes,” a white Republican political operative struck upon the idea for a stunt so powerful it would bring all the black voters back into the party fold. In a letter to gubernatorial candidate Daniel Russell, J. R. Henderson wrote that at a rally he “took a big black fellow, set him on a block and auctioned him off @ \$1500.00—I then made appropriate reference to the their former state and the Democratic party.” The stunt achieved the desired reaction. “The negroes went wild and swore they would lynch any negro that voted the Democratic ticket.” Most Black Republican leaders understood where their potential power lay, however, and needed no such stunts to remain loyal to the party. After a meeting with Marion Butler and J. C. Pritchard in July—by then both United States Senators—James Young sent a letter to Black Republicans on August 4, urging them to gather in Raleigh on the 11th, two days before the Populist State Convention. “It will be fatal to Co-Operation if we Republicans should break our agreement to meet here,” Young wrote, because “the Democrats have just called their State Committee to meet here on the tenth...to further negotiate with the Populists for Co-Operation.”²⁹

Black Republicans also saw the opportunity in 1896 to regain the 2nd Congressional seat lost by Henry Cheatham in 1892. Though Cheatham made another run for the seat, powerful Black Republicans like Samuel Vick and James Young shifted their support to a candidate more likely to be elected, George Henry White, a successful attorney and former state legislator. The switch was probably difficult on a personal level—especially for Young,

a friend of Cheatham's for nearly twenty years—but clearly it was politically expedient. White's background was in fact similar to that of Cheatham and Young. Born in 1852 to an enslaved mother and a free man of color in the “turpentine woods” of eastern North Carolina, White had risen above the circumstances of his birth through the assistance of a prominent white backer. He graduated from Howard University in 1877, and returned to North Carolina where he taught school for two years while reading law and earned his license to practice in 1879. Settling in New Bern, White became a well-known and respected attorney, and during the 1880s served terms in the North Carolina House and Senate. Early in their careers, White and Cheatham developed a political rivalry that probably had roots in personal animosity. In 1894, Cheatham wrote a friend that “White moved into this district to give me trouble on purely personal grounds.” Married to sisters Cora Lena and Louisa Cherry, the daughters of former state legislator Henry Cherry, the two men came to represent opposing views of how African Americans should maneuver on the state's political terrain. Cheatham earned a reputation for cooperating closely with whites, a tactic that sometimes brought criticism from African Americans, while White was described as “aggressive,” “race conscious” and even “venomous” in his unyielding demands for equality. Josephus Daniels later remembered Cheatham as a man who “won the confidence of both races,” while White was “the most militant of Negroes elected to Congress.”³⁰

The fusion coalition held in November of 1896, and Republicans and Populists were swept into office across the state, gaining an even larger majority in the state legislature. The election of George Henry White to Congress and Daniel Russell to the governor's office brought great hope to North Carolina's African Americans, and seemed to portend that the state would not again be “redeemed” by white supremacy and revert to the old racial

hierarchy being reestablished across most of the South in the 1890s. Russell's record on matters of race was complicated, and shifted to some extent with the political winds. As a federal judge, he had supported the rights of educated African Americans to vote, though he drew a clear class distinction between educated and uneducated blacks. As gubernatorial candidate, he embraced the influential black politicians in the state, most notably James Young, who became his closest African American advisor. Following the election, African Americans across the state celebrated North Carolina's first Republican governor since Reconstruction—and pointedly reminded him of his obligations and of how close the state had come to having an unjust government. C.S.L.A. Taylor, commander of “the only colored company in the state,” offered the services of his regiment as an escort during the inauguration. H.H. Falkner, an administrator at the state's Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race (now North Carolina A&T University), wrote Russell the day after the election: “I feel that we now have a man whom we can truly claim to be governor of All the people. Your election inspires us with new hope and zeal, and we firmly believe will mark a new era of prosperity for our Race and for the whole state.” Dr. D. J. Sanders, president of Biddle University in Charlotte, referred to the dark forces at work in the Democratic Party, and expressed his relief at the victory “in spite of the machinations of men who paused at nothing that might issue your defeat.” “[H]ad you faltered at the critical moment,” he wrote to Russell, “all would have been lost. Liberty still lives in North Carolina!” John Dancy put it more bluntly. “Your Democratic enemies led by Josephus Daniels made the meanest fight against you ever conducted against any man in the history of the state,” he wrote. “I know [you] will justify the highest hopes of your most devoted friends, and stand out as a lasting protest against wrong injustice and Democratic perfidy and

incapacity.” Some prominent white citizens also saw the possibility of a new era for the state with Russell’s election. T.B. Keough, a banker from Greensboro, summed up the major issues succinctly and advised the governor to get “close to the plain people, solicitude for the rights of the citizen in local government—for the public schools, and for the purity and protection of the ballot box...the work of rehabilitating this state is just as fresh for your hands now, as if we were all back in 1867.”³¹

The political, economic and social achievements of African Americans in North Carolina were dramatic in the 1880s and through the mid 1890s, culminating with the election of 1896. A generation of college-educated professional African American men, mostly in their 30s and early 40s, came of age and into some measure of political power during this period. Men like Dr. Pope, James Young, Henry Cheatham, Dr. J.T. Williams, John Dancy, Samuel Vick, George Henry White and others of their generation exemplified the increased opportunities for a burgeoning black middle class in North Carolina during the three decades following the Civil War. Education, followed by political participation and patronage, seemed a solid road to social and economic advancement—all of which were essential components to the construction of manhood and the uplifting of the race in the late nineteenth century. But the proverbial storm clouds were gathering, and the gains were to be short-lived, as the tide of racial politics took an ugly turn in the late 1890s. Those events would be so devastating and so traumatic as to largely blot out memory of the achievements made during this period, literally and figuratively. A sense of victory would be lost; the memory of a generation of achievers that grew to manhood in a trajectory of success. This loss of memory, a by-product of white supremacy, would stunt progress in the African American community and haunt the South for more than half a century.

Endnotes

¹“Old North State Medical, Dental, & Pharmaceutical Society, Inc.: Half Century of Progress, 1887-1937,” booklet, photocopy in author’s files.

²*The Colored American* (Washington, DC) January 21, 1899; “Souvenir Program, Century of Progress of the City of Henderson and 60 Years of Vance County,” 1941, pamphlet, NCC.

³William S. Powell, editor, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: 1990), pp. 359-360 and 296-298. Hereafter cited as *DNCB*. Biographies of Cheatham and Young have not yet been written, however much of the information about them in this chapter comes from Eric Anderson’s *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge, 1981). Another characterization of Henry Cheatham can be found in Benjamin R. Justesen, *George Henry White: An Even Chance in the Race of Life* (Baton Rouge, 2001), pp. 146, and 151-160. Justesen’s highly critical perspective of Henry Cheatham seems to be drawn from oral tradition in the family of George White, Cheatham’s brother-in-law and political rival. This perspective is not well documented, however, and is at odds with the opinion of historians Eric Anderson and Willard Gatewood.

⁴*DNCB*, pp. 359-360.

⁵*DNCB*, pp. 296-298; Anderson, 167-172.

⁶Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, pp. 3-58, 115 and 132.

⁷*Ibid.*, 136-138; Kenneth Joel Zogry, “Furnifold Simmons,” in Howard E. Covington Jr., and Marion A. Ellis, coeditors, *The North Carolina Century: Tar Heels Who Made a Difference* (Charlotte: 2002).

⁸ Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, pp. 146-148, and 159; *Henderson News*, May 17, 1888; *The Colored American* (Washington, DC), January 21, 1899.

⁹Anderson, pp. 149, 157-158; Henry Cheatham to Samuel Vick, July 9, 1888, photocopy in author’s possession. Hereafter cited as Vick Papers.

¹⁰Samuel Vick to Henry Cheatham, undated, early 1888; Henry Cheatham to Samuel Vick, February 13 and April 9, 1888, Vick Papers. A note about the Vick Papers. I was contacted in early 2001 by Vicki Cowan, granddaughter of Samuel Vick, who had heard about the efforts to save the Pope House. She wanted advice about saving her grandfather’s home in Wilson, and she told me that among the contents were thousands of pages of her grandfather’s personal papers. In May of that year, I photocopied several dozen of those papers relevant to my research. Although Ms. Cowan was considering donating the papers to an appropriate archive, unfortunately many of them disappeared when her car was stolen in late 2001. They have not been recovered, and are presumed destroyed.

¹¹Henry Cheatham to Samuel Vick, July 16, August 14, and August 22, 1888, Vick Papers.

¹²*Henderson News*, August 30, September 6 and 20, October 11, and November 1, 1888.

¹³Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, pp. 155-156

¹⁴James Young to Samuel Vick, November 5, 1888, Vick Papers; Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, pp. 160-161 and 347.

¹⁵Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, et al, *Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World* (Chapel Hill: 1987), pp. 5-10; Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: 1985), pp. 239-243; Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, p. 154.

¹⁶Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, pp. 168-169; James Young to Samuel Vick, February 14, 1889, and Henry Cheatham to Samuel Vick, May 9 and August 9, 1889, Vick Papers; *Henderson Golden Leaf*, October 10, 1889.

¹⁷*The Postal Laws and Regulations of the United States of America* (Washington: 1893), p. 198; "Public Buildings at Henderson, N.C.," United States House of Representatives, 51st Congress, 1st Session, Report 1641, NCC; Ruth Pope, "My Autobiography," June 1939, p. 3, Pope Family Papers; *Henderson News*, as reported in the *Charlotte Observer*, April 27, 1892. The theory that Dr. Pope took the position as assistant postmaster to supplement his income is supported by the fact that another local doctor, W.T. Cheatham (who was white and may or may not have been related to Henry Cheatham), became postmaster in 1894 (Aloha P. South of the National Archives to author, August 31, 2005).

¹⁸Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, p. 187.

¹⁹Powell, pp. 210-211; Janette Thomas Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy: The Black and White "Better Classes" in Charlotte, 1850-1910* (Chapel Hill: 1994), p. 134.

²⁰*Charlotte Observer*, April 27, 1892.

²¹Recommendation letters from: Henry M. Tupper, April 22, 1892, Andrew Harris, September 24, 1891, T.T. Hicks, September 23, 1891, T.M. Pittman, April 18, 1892, and John Dancy, April 28, 1892, all Pope Family Papers; Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy*, p. 79; *DNCB*, pp.7-8.

²²Thomas W. Hanchett, *Sorting out the New South City: Race, Class and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1876-1975* (Chapel Hill: 1998) pp. 54-61, and 133.

²³Mecklenburg County Deeds, Book 90, p. 582, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh; "Lt. Col. M.T. Pope," *The Colored American*, Washington DC, January 21, 1899, Pope Papers.

²⁴"Queen City Drug Co./Letters of Incorporation," November 4, 1892, and loan papers between M.T. Pope and John M. Scott, March 5, 1898, Pope Papers; *Charlotte Observer*, April 27, 1892; Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy*, p. 134; *Star of Zion*, August 15, 1895. Though the incorporation papers weren't drawn up until November, the business was operating as early as April, according to an announcement in the *Charlotte Observer*, April 23, 1892.

²⁵Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy*, pp. 134-137; *Star of Zion*, September 5, 1895; Photograph of Mrs. Annie Walden, Pope Papers.

²⁶ The quote is from the letterhead of the People's Belief and Benevolent Organization, E.J. Young to Dr. M.T. Pope, May 26, 1899, Pope Family Papers. There are also a few scattered issues of the organization's newsletter in the Pope Family Papers. The information about the demise of the company and the purchase of the assets by North Carolina Mutual comes from Hanchett, *Sorting out the New South City*, p. 304, fn. 52.

²⁷*Star of Zion*, August 15, 1895; Frenise A. Logan, *The Negro in North Carolina, 1876-1894* (Chapel Hill: 1964), pp. 113-114; Greenwood, *Bittersweet Legacy*, p. 186.

²⁸Political fusion in North Carolina in the 1890s is a complicated story. The first and still one of the best books on the subject is Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina: 1894-1901* (Chapel Hill: 1951). The subject is also well documented by the historians whose works are referenced in this chapter, including Eric Anderson, Janette Greenwood, and Paul Escott.

²⁹J. R. Henderson to Daniel Russell, May 21, 1896, and James Young to Republican leaders, August 6, 1896, Daniel Russell Papers, Southern Historical collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

³⁰Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina*, pp. 206-209; See also Justesen, *George Henry White*, passim. Various letters in the Vick and Russell Papers show the shift in support of Samuel Vick and James Young to George White by 1894.

³¹The information about Daniel Russell comes from an unsigned and unpublished biography of Daniel Russell, Russell Papers; see also Jeffrey J. Crow and Robert F. Durden, *Maverick Republican in the Old North State: A Political Biography of Daniel Russell* (Baton Rouge: 1977). The letters to Russell are all from the Daniel Russell Papers: C.S.L.A. Taylor to Daniel Russell, December 15, 1896; H. H. Falkener to Daniel Russell, November 6, 1896; Dr. D. J. Sanders to Daniel Russell, December 30, 1896; John Dancy to Daniel Russell, November 6, 1896; T. B. Keogh to Daniel Russell, December 1, 1896.

Chapter 4

“Negro howling sheets... Democratic pie suckers”

- *Editorial by James Young in The Raleigh Gazette, 1898*

Historians have described the fusion victories of 1894 and 1896 as “a virtual revolution in North Carolina politics.” In the words of Janette Thomas Greenwood, “with an impressive mandate from the people of North Carolina, the fusionist legislature of 1894 struck down the laws that had provided the framework for Democratic hegemony since 1867.” These new laws included direct election of county commissioners, and election statutes with numerous provisions to insure fair voting practices. This was important, as it took powerful county positions out of the hands of small groups of white elites. The legislature also increased state spending for public schools, and capped interest rates at six percent, to stop predatory lending practices that were financially bleeding poor blacks and whites. As a reward for engineering the fusion victory, Populist Marion Butler was elected to the United States Senate for a full term, and Republican J.C. Pritchard was appointed to fill the unexpired term of the late Zebulon Vance. Pritchard’s appointment was certainly a case of poetic justice, as Vance was the Democratic governor during the Civil War who was removed from office during Reconstruction, and who became governor again once the state was fully “redeemed” by the Democrats in 1876. Irony aside, the liberalized election laws

resulted in an astonishing 85.4% voter participation in 1896, increasing the fusionist's control of the legislature from 62 to 78 percent of the seats. North Carolina came as close as it ever had—within the franchise conventions of the era—to being a true participatory democracy.¹

The fusion reforms made the state's Democratic leaders see red—literally and figuratively. According to historian Paul Escott, “fusion's tide of reform directly challenged both the undemocratic hierarchical system of power in North Carolina and the economic institutions that benefited from it.” Those economic institutions included the railroads, tobacco factories, textile mills, and so-called “crossroads” mercantile establishments that sprang up after the war, the owners of which made their money from the crop-lien system and by charging exorbitant interest rates. Though Democratic hegemony had been successfully challenged before, the fusion coalition posed a far greater long-term threat. During Reconstruction, which was short-lived in North Carolina, the federal government had backed Republican victories by the presence of troops and the Freedman's Bureau. But the biracial fusion coalition of 1894 and 1896 was largely a home grown, grass-roots effort by people across lines of race, politics, and to some extent class, with the purpose of bringing real democratic reform to the state. In late nineteenth century North Carolina, with the humiliation and loss of the Civil War within living memory, this was not a state of affairs that many white leaders and the Democratic Party could tolerate.²

Licking its wounds, the Party regrouped and decided to take offensive action to regain political power and to reestablish what many saw as the proper social hierarchy of race and class. Furnifold Simmons, the former 2nd District congressman who lost his seat to Henry Cheatham in 1888, was named head of the party in 1898. Simmons was part of a triumvirate of powerful Democratic leaders along with William Brantley Aycock and Josephus

Daniels—also both with roots in the 2nd District—who developed a two-pronged strategy of propaganda and intimidation to break the fusion coalition and regain power. Aycock, a lawyer from Goldsboro, began his political life in the early 1880s, when he was in his early twenties. He and two other men founded the Goldsboro *Daily Argus*, which promoted Democratic Party ideals. A graduate of the University of North Carolina, Aycock also had a deep interest in improving public education in the state, a position that would become central to later white supremacist efforts. Like Aycock, Josephus Daniels had attended UNC law school, passed the bar, and become a staunch Democrat. While Aycock only remained in publishing briefly, owning and editing newspapers became Daniels’s lifetime passion. By his early thirties he had owned papers in Wilson, Kinston, and Rocky Mount. He was also socially ambitious, and in 1888 married Adelaide Worth Bagley of Raleigh, daughter of former governor Jonathan Worth. With the backing of his wife’s family, he was able to buy the failing Raleigh *News and Observer* at auction in 1894. He set out to make it one of the preeminent newspapers in the state, and used it as the primary propaganda outlet for the state’s Democratic Party.³

The propaganda attacks, launched through the *News and Observer* and other leading state newspapers, focused on undermining the concept of black manhood, along with the twin threats of “negro domination” and the potential wholesale pollution of the state’s white women, thus raising the specter of miscegenation. Though the claims of this propaganda were greatly exaggerated, if not created from whole cloth, they proved an effective strategy. By belittling and degrading the achievements of African Americans, the Democrats were able to chip away at three decades of racial progress, and undermine the fragile fusion coalition. These incendiary attacks on potential negro domination and miscegenation were

carried out through vicious editorials, which became more virulent as the 1898 mid-term elections approached. In July, the *News and Observer* ran a series of articles with titles such as “Fruits of Fusion: Negroes are More Assertive,” and “Too Much Negro: Lady Teacher Had to Go to Negro Committeeman to Get Pay.” In September, the *Charlotte Daily Observer* published what purported to be an expose of abuse by black office holders, entitled “Negro Rule: Shall It Last Longer in North Carolina?” To support claims of abuse, the special report included articles with titles such as “Negro Jurymen a Travesty on Justice,” and “Human Devils in Command.” The Raleigh *Caucasian*—a newspaper with a title that left no doubt about its perspective—dropped all pretense of decorum. “More Nigger Outrages,” one headline blared, “A Big Burly Negro to Arrest a White Woman.”⁴

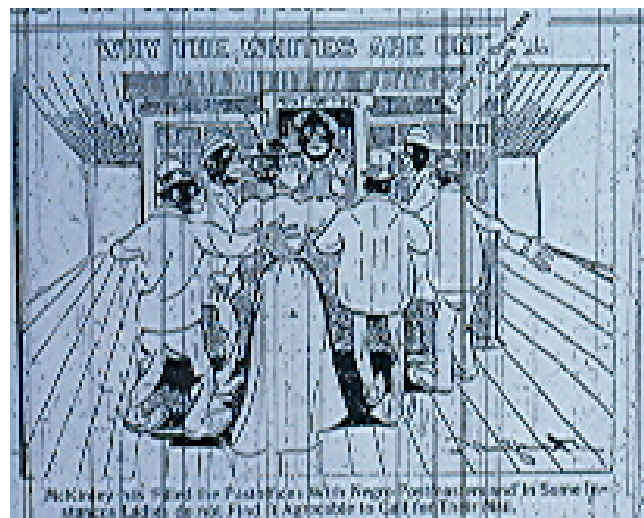
Accompanying many of these editorials and articles were sharply drawn political cartoons, and once again, the *News and Observer* led the pack. In 1898, Josephus Daniels hired a young illustrator from New York City, Norman Jennett, to wield his caustic pen for the cause of white supremacy. Unlike today, when political cartoons are run on the editorial page, these over-sized cartoons were placed above the fold on the front page, usually just under the masthead. For a populace with a significant level of illiteracy, these cartoons carried the message of white supremacy in a graphic and effective manner. One cartoon showed a large foot, labeled “The Negro” crushing a small person, labeled “White Man.” Another showed a weeping Lady Liberty, wrapped in a flag with the words “North Carolina” on her crown, shackled to a large ball marked “Negro Rule.” The caption reads, “On the 8th of November [election day] these shackles will be broken.” Perhaps the darkest and most extreme of these cartoons pictured an African American man as some sort of demon with bat wings, a tail, and large hairy claw-like hands, swooping down on several tiny, terrified white

people. The words “Negro Rule” appeared on his wings, and under his foot was a fusion ballot box. Historian Glenda Gilmore links this cartoon to a speech made at a Democratic rally by Rebecca Strowd, a young woman who embodied purity, who implored the white men of the state to protect their women from the “black vampire.” Several cartoons were particularly irksome for Dr. Pope and his political allies. One showed the interior of a post office, with a group of African American men drawn in minstrel-style black face, surrounding a white woman. The caption reads: “ [Republicans have] filled the Postoffices With Negro Postmasters and in Some Instances Ladies do not Find it Agreeable to Call for their Mail.” Others directly attacked James Young, and portrayed the appointed positions he held as a danger to white women. One showed Young instructing a group of white women at the state’s institution for the blind, for which he was head of the legislative oversight committee. Another, referring to his federal appointment as revenue collector in Wake County, showed him bathing in a public trough, while a white collector had to wait his turn.⁵

As strident, alarmist, and racist as the editorials and cartoons were, they paled in comparison to the more sinister side of white supremacy—intimidation and eventually violence. Inspired by the tactics of white supremacist Ben Tillman of South Carolina, and encouraged by Furnifold Simmons, Democratic men across the state formed clubs and held rallies denouncing black rule and pressuring white Populists to come back into the party’s fold for the sake of their women. Known as the “Red Shirts” because they often stripped off their shirts at rallies revealing their red long underwear, these groups had their mythical roots in the Reconstruction era were reminiscent of vigilante violence usually associated both in legend and history with the Ku Klux Klan. According to Janette Greenwood, in “the final days of the [1898] campaign, the state bordered on race war.” The Red Shirts broke up



“Negro Rule” cartoon, *News and Observer*, 1900



“Post Office” cartoon, *News and Observer*, 1898

Populist and Republican meetings, and on a handful of occasions took the lives of African Americans.⁶

Though much has been written in recent years about the vile nature and outright atrocities of the white supremacy movement, African American response has received relatively little attention. Of course North Carolina's black community did not think or act as a monolithic body, a fact made clear by the significant minority who rejected the Republicans and fusion and consistently voted with the Democratic Party. It is important to understand that many of North Carolina's "better sort" within the black community were convinced that through education and economic advancement they would be accepted by whites as citizens worthy of equal rights, if not completely embraced as equals. They were often people of lighter skin tone whose ancestors had been free (like Dr. Pope), were members of the ante-bellum planter class, or had worked as house servants during slavery. These African Americans drew distinct class lines between themselves and darker, less well-born blacks whose ancestors had toiled in the fields. As a result, some African American leaders were willing to sacrifice the advancement of their darker-skinned brothers and sisters in an effort to show their worthiness to be accepted as citizens by whites. In this effort they were blind-sided; the white supremacists successfully created an environment in which all people of color—no matter how light skinned, well educated, or economically prosperous—were corralled together and branded as members of a lower caste.⁷

African American resistance to the rhetoric of white supremacy in North Carolina was expressed principally through three black-owned newspapers: two weeklies, the AME Zion's *Star of Zion*, published in Salisbury, and the *Gazette*, published in Raleigh; and one daily, the *Daily Record*, published in Wilmington. Understanding the importance of

newspapers in the effort to sway public political opinion, James Young bought the *Gazette* in 1896 and served as editor until 1898. Of the three newspapers, the *Gazette* was the most politically partisan and critical of Democrats white supremacist tactics. In his editorials, Young, himself a frequent personal target of the *News and Observer*, pulled no punches in attacking the fallacious and racist propaganda promulgated by the Democrats. Responding to exaggerated stories of “negro domination” in elected and appointed offices in the state, Young turned the tables by sarcastically questioning whether or not the large number of white Democrats still employed would resign their government jobs out of disgust. “The ‘Police Gazette,’ occasionally honored with the name *News and Observer*,” Young wrote in February of 1898, “and other negro howling sheets are horror-stricken that the White people of the state have to live under and be governed by the fusion party...They stigmatize this party as a set of incompetent, corrupt scoundrels, and under negro domination to such an extent that any one coming in contact with it will be contaminated with the vilest thief.” Referring to the editors of these newspapers as “mud slingers” and “blatant foul mouths” spoon-feeding propaganda to “Democratic pie suckers,” Young predicted that “the voter of 1898 will look at things as he sees them, and not as he hears them from low grade journalism.” Unfortunately, this was not to be the case.⁸

Just as the Democratic propaganda tactics began to win over white voters, the nation’s attention turned to events in Cuba, which would provide an opportunity for another type of African American resistance to white supremacy, but would also have a profound effect on racial identity and the construction of manhood in North Carolina politics of the period. Following an insurrection in 1895, Cubans struggled to win independence from Spain. White Americans in general supported independence and the creation of a democratic

government—not realizing the extent to which mulattoes led the insurgents. African Americans, who understood the racial and ethnic make-up of Cuba far better than their white neighbors, supported the efforts of a population they viewed as their “cousins.” Following the sinking of the *USS Maine* in Havana harbor, national sentiment drummed into a chauvinistic frenzy led Congress to declare war on Spain in April of 1898. What became known as the Spanish-American War was short-lived and relatively insignificant in the canon of American military engagements, but it was of great importance as a political and social event that helped to define and shape the United States as it shed the sectional divisions and isolationism of the nineteenth century, and moved toward becoming a world superpower. The psychological reunion of the North and South three decades after the Civil War was of particular importance, along with the attendant issues of race and manhood at home and abroad. As historian Gaines Foster notes, “Southerners who sought both to vindicate the Confederate soldier and to reunify the nation might have staged the Spanish-American War if it had not come along when it did.” Historian Nina Silber argues that to “a great extent, the Spanish-American War made northerners of different ideological persuasions recognize and accept the manliness and martial heroism of southern white men.”⁹

Manhood and manliness were considered significant political characteristics in the nineteenth century, and used as benchmarks for determining who should be enfranchised and thus who should hold positions of power. Ever since the days of the early Republic, when enslaved African Americans were counted under the United States Constitution as three-fifths of a person, defining manhood had been an integral part of determining who participated in the political process. Historian Kristin Hoganson argues that in the late nineteenth century there was a “belief that ‘manly’ character was a prerequisite for full

citizenship and political leadership,” and that the “links between manhood, military service, and political authority led a number of political leaders to think that it would enhance their political standing if they supported martial policies.” As the United States began to look beyond its borders and see itself as a nation that had a responsibility to police the world, the concept of white manhood became a prevalent ideology that extended to protecting or ruling people of color who were somehow less developed and less able to rule themselves—the so-called “white man’s burden.” By taking on the “white man’s burden” and fighting in the Spanish-American War, the sons of the Confederacy saw an opportunity for the South to shed its image of feminine weakness that had resulted from defeat in the Civil War. That image was figurative, but prevalent. The South was often characterized as having suffered a “rape” by the North, and one of the most popular stories of the era—probably exaggerated—alleged that Confederate President Jefferson Davis was caught wearing women’s clothing in an attempt to escape Union troops. The Spanish–American War provided the opportunity for men from the North and the South to fight under the same flag for the first time since the Civil War, and for southern soldiers to regain symbolically the region’s manhood on the international stage of battle.¹⁰

White North Carolinians of the “better sort” understood the ideological importance of the Spanish-American War and the opportunity it provided to show their national patriotism. Julian Carr—successful tobacco manufacturer, proud Confederate veteran, and staunch Democrat—offered to financially assist soldiers and pay various expenses for the families of volunteers in two Durham regiments. On July 4, 1898, the *Charlotte Observer* ran an editorial stating that “Since the civil war the Fourth of July has not been a favorite holiday with the whites of the South. The war and its results divorced Southern affection from this

day and the event which makes it conspicuous in history, and the whites have left the celebration in the hands of black people.” The editorial continued by noting the South’s key role in American independence, and predicting that “Doubtless with the revival of the national spirit as the result of a foreign war in which we are now engaged, a livelier interest will be felt hereafter in the Fourth of July than has been felt for nearly forty years past in this part of the country.” While wealthy industrialists and newspaper editors rallied around the flag, working class North Carolinians—those most likely to end up in harm’s way—were not as enthusiastic about going to war. Enlisting and retaining soldiers was an ongoing problem. As memories of the brutal realities of the Civil War still lingered, along with ambivalence over fighting in a foreign land to free people who were not Americans (and not racially “pure,” as well), enlisting and retaining soldiers was an ongoing problem. Desertion ran high in the First North Carolina regiment, and the Second struggled constantly to fill its ranks.¹¹

Nationally, African American opinion about the Spanish-American War broke predominately into two camps. Some black leaders, feeling the increasing heat of white supremacy, saw the war as a unique opportunity to promote African American patriotism and manhood, and to prove their worthiness for full rights as citizens. As one man wrote of the war in a black newspaper, “it is a blessing in disguise for the Negro...[h]e will become trained and disciplined...[h]e will get much honor [and he] will have the an opportunity of proving to the world his real bravery, worth, and manhood.” There was also hope that exposure to other cultures of color would broaden the world-view of otherwise racist white Americans. Other black leaders felt that the United States’ imperialistic and paternalistic policy toward Cuba (and soon after the Philippines) was gross hypocrisy, considering the blatant racism and the rapidly constricting civil rights of African Americans at home.

According to historian Willard Gatewood, these black anti-imperialists “envisioned a Jim Crow war resulting in a Jim Crow empire, which would leave colored Americans as well as the colored population of the Spanish colonies in a more oppressed condition than ever.” Further, Gatewood argues, “black anti-imperialists contended that only when the American government guaranteed its own black citizens full constitutional rights at home would it be in a position to undertake a crusade to free Cuba from Spanish tyranny.” This sentiment, coupled with a healthy dose of skepticism regarding the true extent to which African Americans could rely on the support of the Republican Party, was voiced by an editorial in one of the nation’s leading black newspapers, the Washington, D.C. *Bee*, in March of 1898:

The colored man is beginning to learn some sense and will cease jumping after “glittering generals” and imaginary inducements or adventures from political parties. As a matter of fact, the democrats as a whole will not tolerate the negro and it is becoming so that that sooner or later the Republicans will shift the responsibility of carrying him, but will no doubt use him to advance their own interest. The negroes favor the independence of any nation. The negro has no reason to fight for Cuba’s independence. He is opposed at home. He is as much in need of independence as Cuba is. He is living under a flag that the blood of his ancestors and forefathers fought for and is powerless to protect him. His own brothers, fathers, mothers and indeed his children are shot down as if they were dogs and cattle. Is he living among the brave or is he on the home of his enemies? There is no inducement for the negro to fight for the independence of Cuba.¹²

Despite strong opposition to the war by blacks such as this editorialist, North Carolina’s African American leaders enthusiastically proscribed to the idea that the benefits for people of color in the United States outweighed the potential problems of imperialism. Led by James Young, they saw an excellent opportunity to combat the increasingly negative public image of black men promoted through the Democratic press by forming a volunteer regiment that was organized, disciplined, and patriotic—thus proving black manhood and their entitlement to the rights of full citizenship. The actual formation of the regiment required overcoming certain logistical problems, but Young had the political clout in

Raleigh, and George White and Henry Cheatham had the political connections in Washington to remove the obstacles. Chief among these issues were the terms under which President McKinley first called for volunteer troops. The War Department requested two infantry regiments and one artillery battalion from each state, and required that they be comprised of existing militias (presumably because these men would require less training). Though some 500 African Americans had served in two North Carolina infantry battalions in the 1870s, white opposition in the 1880s eventually reduced that number to 40 soldiers and officers in the Charlotte Light Infantry, which largely served ceremonial events during the 1890s. Immediately following the declaration of war, black volunteer militias began to form in the state's major cities and towns, including Charlotte, Wilmington, Raleigh, and Asheville. Acknowledging his political debt to Young and his African American constituents, Governor Daniel Russell sent one of his top advisors, J.C.L. Harris, to Washington in an attempt to persuade the War Department to allow him to substitute a black unit for the required infantry battalion. Senator Marion Butler, himself politically indebted to black voters, also used his influence to obtain permission for a black unit, arguing that African American men could "stand the climate of Cuba and are anxious to enlist." Second District Representative George Henry White, and his political rival, Henry Cheatham (who was now register of deeds in the District of Columbia), used their influence in Congress and with the White House to allow the unit to be commissioned. All of these efforts were ultimately successful, and on April 27, 1898, Russell created an all black battalion, appointing James Young major and commanding officer. After President McKinley's second call for volunteers in May, Russell was able to raise the status of the battalion, and the 3rd North Carolina Volunteers was formed. In gratitude for his efforts, the men of the regiment

presented J.C.L. Harris with a silver tea service. The biracial political cooperation that created the 3rd North Carolina Volunteers was to be the last major victory for fusion in North Carolina. Though no one could have foreseen it at the time, the absence of so many of the state's African American leaders while serving their country weakened the fusion coalition during the racially charged election in November, and certainly contributed to the narrow Democratic victory and the draconian political retribution that followed.¹³

The 3rd North Carolina was one of three all-black regiments commissioned during the Spanish American War, and contemporary accounts referred to it as “the first Negro Regiment ever organized and entirely officered by Colored men,” and “the first Negro regiment in the English-speaking world to be fully equipped with Negro officers.” Prominent black men from across the state rushed to join, including Dr. Pope. Officially commissioned on July 4, 1898, Dr. Pope enlisted as a first lieutenant and first assistant surgeon. His commission document, which is among the Pope Papers, is a large ornate certificate signed by Governor Daniel Russell. The regiment consisted of ten companies of 106 men each, and 40 commissioned officers. Among the officers were a number of well-known and accomplished men, including E.E. Smith of Durham, C.L.S.A. Taylor of Charlotte, Marcus Alston of Asheville, Dr. James Dellinger of Greensboro, and Andrew Haywood and David Lane of Raleigh. Dr. Pope was just one month shy of his 40th birthday at the time of his enlistment, and a number of the other officers were of a similar age. That Pope and others were about 40, considered a somewhat advanced age in the 1890s, supports the contention of the importance of the regiment to these men, and of the perceived need to prove their patriotism and manhood in the face of the rising tide of white supremacy.¹⁴

The regiment was mustered in at Fort Macon, North Carolina, on July 23, 1898. Apparently Dr. Pope needed to wrap up some business in Charlotte, as the second regimental order issued by his friend Colonel Young was for a one-week leave until July 30. By this time Dr. Pope was the sole proprietor of the Queen City Drug Company, presumably buying out his partners in about 1896 (Dr. Williams left Charlotte in 1897, when he was appointed consul to Sierra Leone, making him the highest-ranking African American diplomat in the United States at the time.) Fort Macon, near New Bern and Morehead City on the North Carolina coast, was an early nineteenth century fortification that had been captured by Union troops in 1862. Because of its proximity to the beach and the prevailing ocean breezes, it proved a perfect location for the troops (in heavy wool uniforms) to be stationed and to train during the worst of the summer heat. Though hostile action in the Spanish-American War officially ended in August, hopes that the regiment would be sent to Cuba were revived in mid September, when the regiment received orders to move to Camp Poland outside Knoxville, Tennessee. Their arrival was less than auspicious, however. Several all white regiments were also stationed at Camp Poland, including the 1st Georgia, known as the “terrors of the camp.” Racism ran high both among the white citizens of Knoxville and the 1st Georgia, soldiers of which pelted members of the 3rd North Carolina with rocks and actually opened fire on them when they first appeared on the drill field. This resulted in what one black soldier called “quite a little battle,” and the two regiments “blazed away at each other for nearly an hour.” The Georgia regiment, clearly the instigators, was put under arrest until it was mustered out a few days later. ¹⁵

On a more positive note, while at Camp Poland the 3rd North Carolina had the honor of marching in review before the Secretary of War, Russell Alger, they “received special

recognition for their appearance and soldierly bearing from the Secretary, as also from the vast throng that witnessed the review.” Despite this and other glowing reports of the discipline and order of the 3rd North Carolina and other African American regiments, Democratic newspapers, the propaganda arm of the white supremacy movement, took every opportunity to degrade and belittle the image of the black soldiers. Josephus Daniels and the *Raleigh News and Observer* led the charge, wielding cries of Negro domination and referring to the Third North Carolina as “Russell’s Black Battalion” or “Russell’s birds of prey.” Colonel Young was singled out for especially harsh criticism, being sarcastically labeled “Jim Young of chocolate hue and resplendent regimentals,” and ridiculed for riding in first-class rail cars on his trips from camp to Raleigh. Perhaps most stinging was another of Norman Jennett’s cartoons, published on the front page of the paper on September 30, 1898, showing a giant-sized Daniel Russell wearing a coat with a pattern of minstrel-like black male faces, and a lapel button with the words “Negro Rule.” Standing on a ladder pulling at Russell’s ear is a dwarf-sized James Young, in his military uniform, whispering: “Do this, Do that.”¹⁶

Serious though this propaganda was, it paled in comparison to the violence that plagued Wilmington in November of 1898, while many of the state’s black leaders were away serving in the 3rd North Carolina regiment. For many years known as the Wilmington Riot, the two-day event was really an armed *coup d’etat* – the only one in post Civil War United States history. Wilmington in 1898 was the state’s largest city, with African Americans making up a majority of its more than 20,000 citizens. Black businesses and culture thrived in the city, to the increasing chagrin of some of its white residents. White supremacists whipped up racial hatred at rallies by declaring that some black homes had lace



Col. James Young in his Spanish-American War uniform

Pope House Collection



Cartoon in the *News and Observer*, 1898

curtains, expensive carpets, pianos, and even servants, and then asked how many in the audience could afford those luxuries. Such rhetoric must have alarmed African American professionals across the state, who, like Dr. Pope, in fact had all those comforts in his home. Probably even more troubling to Dr. Pope was a statement by Red Shirt leader Alfred Moore Waddell, who railed that “nigger lawyers are sassing white men in our courts; [and] nigger root doctors are crowding white physicians out of business.” The democratized election laws passed by the fusionist legislature during the mid 1890s had also resulted in more blacks serving in public offices. In Wilmington’s municipal election of 1897, a Republican was elected mayor and three African Americans won election to the ten-seat board of alderman, which was controlled by a fusionist coalition of Republicans and Populists. As the Democratic white supremacy campaign gained momentum from late 1897 into 1898, there was increasing pressure among disgruntled elitist whites to remove the city’s elected officials.¹⁷

The spark that lit a flame of white fury was an editorial on August 18, 1898, that appeared in the *Daily Record*, North Carolina’s only African American daily newspaper. The editor and part owner, Alexander Manly, was the light-skinned illegitimate grandson of ante-bellum governor, Charles Manly. Decrying the practice of lynching as a means of punishment for black men who rape white women, Manly took exception with a Georgia woman, Rebecca Felton, who made a public speech about the subject. Manly wrote that “like so many so-called Christians, [she] loses sight of the basic principle of the religion of Jesus Christ in her plea for one class of people as against another.” Appeals to religion were acceptable, but then Manly entered the treacherous territory of interracial sex when he went on to state that “the whites should guard their women more closely,” and that “our experience

among poor people in the country teaches us that the women of that race are not any more particular in the matter of clandestine meetings with colored men, than are the white men with colored women.” Taunting white men with their women’s preference for black men was a dangerous game, based in part of what neighborhood gossip throughout the South recorded as a distinct possibility. This was not about fundamental equality but white manhood, and Manly increased the insult by admonishing whites to “tell your men it is no worse for a black man to be intimate with a white woman, than for a white man to be intimate with a black woman.” He warned provocatively that white men shouldn’t “think ever that your women will remain pure while you are debauching ours.” If Wilmington’s men smarted under the insult, they waited until they could transform it into a political cause.¹⁸

Within days of the statewide Democratic victory in November of 1898, which wiped away the fusion majority, the flame flickering in Wilmington for months was blown into an inferno. Led by Alfred Moore Waddell, a mob emboldened by the election demanded, among other things, that the city government resign. When black residents failed to comply with mob orders quickly, including the repudiation of Manly and his editorials, whites instigated violence across the city on November 9 and 10. Approximately two-dozen African Americans and several whites lost their lives, and though Manly had already fled the city and ceased publication of his newspaper, the mob burned the offices of *The Daily Record*. The Wilmington coup had its desired effect, and a Democratic mayor and board of alderman was installed. One of the most blatant and violent episodes during the white supremacy movement anywhere in the South during the era, the Wilmington coup sent chills through black communities across the region. The violence marked not only the end of political

fusion, it also brought to a close a period of hope and possibilities not just for African Americans, but of societal progress for all North Carolinians. It is probable that the Red Shirts were emboldened to carry out their violent activities because many of the state's most prominent black leaders—not to mention its only armed black military unit—were out of the state at the time. Though no direct documentation has been found to support this contention, it seems likely this set of circumstances contributed to the encouragement of vigilante violence.¹⁹

Less than two weeks after the Wilmington coup, the 3rd North Carolina boarded trains for Camp Haskell, near Macon, Georgia, on orders that this would make a better location for winter. By this point apprehension ran high and morale ran low among the soldiers. They had already suffered at the hands of the 1st Georgia, and, as one historian put it, the state “represented for most Negroes the very nadir of the black man’s existence.” One black soldier referred to the state more succinctly as “the pest hole of the South.” Added to the apprehension of moving to Georgia was the news of the events in Wilmington, and the realization that the war was over and they would never see action, relegating most of them to garrison duty and other mundane assignments for the duration of their enlistment. Racial tensions in general and the specific disdain expressed for black troops (including several other regiments also stationed there) by many white citizens in Georgia proved as onerous as feared. Over the course of their ten-week encampment, four soldiers of the 3rd North Carolina were shot and killed by white men while out of camp and in the town of Macon. All four shooters were tried and subsequently acquitted by local juries, on the grounds of “justifiable homicide.” Despite the violence visited upon the African American regiments, many major papers in the South increasingly belittled the soldiers, and falsely accused them

of all manner of impropriety and disorderly conduct. The only significant act of vandalism on the part of African American troops occurred in early December, and was actually an attempt by members of another black regiment, the 6th Virginia, to stand up to the most reviled type of racial violence. Between Camp Haskell and Macon was a public park, restricted to whites only. In that park was “a tree on which six or seven Afro-Americans have been lynched, and it was common knowledge that the tree was kept for that purpose.” A sign on the tree read “D (for dogs) and niggers not allowed here.” According to a contemporary account, when the soldiers heard of the tree a “squad of them made it their business to go to the park and cut down that tree, and when the park-keeper (white) came to remonstrate, limbs were cut from it and he was given a good thrashing.” Some black soldiers were so proud of this act of retaliation that they sent pieces of the limbs home to loved ones.²⁰

By early 1899 it was clear that hostilities in Cuba would not resume, and the federal government began to muster out troops in volunteer regiments. Certainly most of the enlisted soldiers were disenchanted as they had never seen combat, and were eager to go home, despite apprehensions about what awaited them. The officers, however, were reluctant to muster out. Dr. Pope wrote to Congressman George Henry White, apparently requesting that the regiment remain activated. White wrote a letter back on January 2, 1899, which remains with the Pope Family Papers, noting that he had seen President McKinley regarding the matter. But there was no longer a military need for the volunteer regiments, and the McKinley administration increasingly saw the bad press and the hostility of white southerners towards them as a political liability. Accordingly, the 3rd North Carolina Volunteers were mustered out during the first week of February 1899. Despite one officer's

account that the “men went immediately home like gentlemen and soldiers,” there was trouble along the route. Apparently alarmed by false reports from municipal officials in Macon, the city of Atlanta sent a small army of policeman to meet the train when it arrived. The police boarded the train and several soldiers were “very promptly clubbed into submission,” resulting in “many bloody heads.”²¹

In addition to the violent treatment, a barrage of savagely racist and falsely negative press accompanied the regiment’s departure from Georgia and arrival back in North Carolina. The *Atlanta Journal*, under the title, “A Happy Riddance,” said of the 3rd North Carolina that “a tougher and more turbulent set of negroes were probably never gotten together before,” and that the soldiers “displayed the same ruffianism and brutality that characterized [the regiment] while in service.” The *Atlanta Constitution* expressed relief that this “experiment” with colored troops was at an end, stating that it was a mistake “to quarter them where their presence would be a source of terror to women and children.” Despite the high number of college-educated and professional men within the regiment the *Washington Post* editorialized that “it has been made too plain that they are not adapted to the conditions of civilization, and that to equip and arm them...is to make a certainty of offense against every interest of enlightened and organized society.” In the face of an increasingly hostile press throughout the South, the white president of Shaw University, Charles Francis Meserve, had earlier decided to make an unannounced personal inspection of the troops and conditions at Camp Haskell, which he did in late December. A number of Shaw alumnae served in the regiment as officers and enlisted men, including Colonel Young, Dr. Pope, and Dr. Dellinger. What Meserve saw had impressed him, and he wrote a long letter to the editor that was published in the *Raleigh News and Observer* in February. Meserve spoke of the

cleanliness of the camp, its hygienic conditions, and the order and military bearing of the troops. Though the letter was published, the Raleigh newspaper editor was not impressed; he ran Meserve's letter under the banner "Are They Very Bad? Or Are They Altogether Good? --A Symposium on the Character of the Negro Troop," and alongside several of the most critical editorials from other newspapers.²²

Despite the false reports and public drubbing, Dr. Pope recognized that his service during the Spanish-American War was one of the significant events of his life, and he kept a number of mementos, including official documents, photographs, artifacts, and promotional souvenirs. Together they form the largest extant collection of material relating to the 3rd North Carolina Volunteers. The twelve photographs include several images taken in the field, among the only ones known. Dr. Pope appears in two of the pictures, standing in one alongside Col. James Young and Assistant Surgeon Marcus Alston; in another he is astride his horse in a group shot probably taken in downtown Macon, Georgia. The first of these photographs is of particular interest, as it shows Dr. Pope carrying a small leather case and wearing his sword by his side. Both the case and the sword were found among the artifacts in the Pope House. The case bears the label of the Queen City Drug Company, and still contains 52 of the original 54 vials of medication, almost all with the pills and powders still intact. The elegant sword has a leather grip, and the blade is ornately engraved with an American eagle on one side, and "U.S." on the other. The sword is housed in a highly polished scabbard, decorated with gilt mountings. Of the remaining photographs, one of the most amusing shows a man holding a horse by the reins, and has the handwritten notation "Col. Young's horse, Dude." The name of this horse is intriguing, as the appellation of

“dude” had specific negative connotations during the Spanish-American War. In contemporary parlance, a “dude” was an effete dandy; a highly educated, excessively well



Dr. Pope, Col. James Young, and Dr. Marcus Alston encamped in Georgia, 1898

Pope House Collection



Medical bag with medicines intact, and sword and scabbard, as seen above

Pope House Collection

dressed and well groomed man who was reluctant to get himself dirty—much less engaged in the field of battle.²³

Also among the Spanish-American War related mementoes kept by Dr. Pope were three souvenir pieces, created by African Americans at the end of the war as an effort to counter the white supremacist propaganda of the state's Democrats. In 1899 both a book and a large broadside were published in North Carolina and offered for sale as a means of correcting the false newspaper images of the men of the regiment. The book, entitled *History of the Negro Soldiers in the Spanish American War*, was written by Edward A. Johnson, a schoolteacher, and was published in Raleigh. Johnson had previously written what is considered one of the first textbooks on black history in the United States, *A School History of the Negro Race*. The book on the Spanish-American War is something of a compilation of chapters on the war itself, chapters on African American progress and achievement from his textbook, and several chapters of sharp and eloquent criticism of the ways in which white supremacists were constricting rights of African Americans. "The colored troops just did so well that praise could not be withheld from them even by those whose education and training had bred in them a prejudice against Negroes," Johnson wrote. "The Negro race has a right to be proud of the achievements of the colored troops...[t]hey did not fail, but did their duty nobly—a thousand hurrahs for the colored troopers of the Spanish American war!!"²⁴

The broadside, nearly two feet wide and over three feet high, shows many of the officers of the regiment framed by heroic scenes of battle at the top (fanciful, as the regiment never saw action) and short biographies of the men at the bottom. Published by Capt.

Thomas Leatherwood of Asheville and printed in Chicago, it is a grand and elegant
“Souvenir Portrait Group,” proclaiming “A New Epoch in Our History,” and stating



Broadside showing officers of the 3rd North Carolina Volunteers

Dr. Pope is marked with a red ribbon

Pope House Collection

emphatically that the “record of the regiment will compare equal to any of the volunteer regiments that were in the service, and all newspaper criticisms. etc., were bias and unjust.” Col. James Young’s portrait appears at the center of the broadside, and that of Dr. Pope appears just below. The proximity of the images is perhaps the result of the close friendship between the two men. Along with the book and the broadside, Dr. Pope kept several copies of a special issue of the Washington, D.C., *Colored American*, dedicated to the soldiers of the 3rd North Carolina Volunteers. Printed in January of 1899, just before the regiment mustered out, the paper features photographs of the officers and their biographies, which are somewhat more detailed than those included on the broadside. Dr. Pope’s biography is a particularly important source of information, as it was dictated directly by him to the reporter from the paper. Interestingly, among the artifacts found in the Pope House is the engraved copper block used to print Dr. Pope’s image.²⁵

Memory of the heroism of the Spanish American War was important to white North Carolinians as well as black. Ensign Worth Bagley of Raleigh, 24 years of age, was killed when a shell hit the *USS Winslow*, to which he had been assigned. As the first naval officer killed in action, Bagley was accorded the status of war hero. Brother-in-law of Josephus Daniels, Bagley’s ultimate sacrifice was given extensive coverage in the Raleigh *News and Observer*, as well as in newspapers across the country. Bagley’s remains were returned to Raleigh, and his funeral on May 15, 1898 was the largest processional the capital city had ever witnessed. The state was “swept up in a bathos of emotion and sympathy,” and a public subscription drive led to the erection in 1907 of a heroic statue of his likeness on the state

capitol grounds. Edward Johnson points out in his book, however, that Bagley did not die alone. Elijah B. Tunnell, a black cabin cook from Virginia, left his post when shelling began and went on deck to assist in tying the ship to the *USS Wilmington*, which was to tow the *Winslow* out of harm's way. "All honor the memory of Elijah B. Tunnell," Johnson wrote, "who [was], if not the first, certainly simultaneously with the first, martyr of the Spanish-American War. While our white fellow-citizens justly herald the fame of Ensign Bagley...let our colored patriots proclaim the heroism of Tunnell of [Virginia]."²⁶

The North Carolina to which M.T. Pope and the other Spanish-American War veterans returned in early 1899 was vastly different than the state they left scarcely six months before. The Democratic election victories and the Wilmington coup of the previous November cast an ominous shadow across the landscape. The new legislature worked quickly to reverse many of the fusionist election statutes, and then set about to insure that a biracial political coalition never again threatened Democratic hegemony. This was a seismic cultural shift; the demasculation of black men was codified into law, turning back the clock of racial progress decades. The first order of business was to separate the races as much as possible in public and private, creating in essence a black pariah caste. In January white legislators passed an act "to make the fornication and adultery of the white race with the negro race a felony," thus discouraging miscegenation, and any further "muddying" of the population. On March 4, 1899, legislators passed "An act to promote the comfort of travelers on railroad trains, and for other purposes." The law instructed all railroads and steam ship lines that operated in North Carolina to provide "separate but equal accommodations for the white and colored races...either by separate passenger cars or by compartments in passenger cars." The language of the statute was taken directly from the

landmark 1896 Supreme Court judgment in *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, in which the court upheld a Louisiana law separating the races on public transportation. While there is debate among scholars about the traditions of *de facto* segregation in North Carolina and throughout the South, this was in fact the first *de jure* segregation statute in the state's history. The law did provide for certain exceptions, such as on sleeping cars, express trains, and—sounding ominously similar to slave provisions—in the case of “negro servants in attendance on their employers.”²⁷

The transportation act proved to be the proverbial thin edge of the wedge, and what became known as “Jim Crow” segregation (probably named for an ante-bellum minstrel character) soon spread in North Carolina and throughout the South in virtually every aspect of life. “The Two Races Must Live Forever Apart,” crowed an 1899 headline in the *News and Observer*; “The Line of Cleavage Will Be Maintained: No Social Relations.” While embarrassing and degrading for all people of color, this new social order was particularly galling to African Americans of the “better sort” such as Dr. Pope, who saw themselves as having earned the right to be treated as full citizens. It is virtually impossible today to understand the psychic damage caused to people by the swift and reality of Jim Crow. As difficult as segregation would be for the generations to follow, it must have been hardest on this first post-bellum generation of African Americans, who had achieved so much and lived through three decades of hope and possibilities. Perhaps the only relevant analogy is the treatment of German Jews by the Nazis in the years leading up to the Holocaust. One poignant story illustrates the pain of the realization of segregation. Sadie and Bessie Delany, daughters of the archdeacon of St. Augustine's College in Raleigh, and friends of the Pope family, remembered all their lives the moment at which Jim Crow slapped them in the face.

As young girls, the sisters had delighted in going to Raleigh's Pullen Park with their family on Sunday afternoons. One Sunday when they boarded the trolley for the park, they were ordered by the conductor to sit in the back. The girls objected, as they liked to ride up front where the wind whipped through their hair, but their parents took them to the back. When they got to the park, they were faced with an equally heinous symbol of segregation—separate water fountains. In this instance, officials had placed a big wooden sign across the middle of a stream where park visitors drank. In an act of defiance, Bessie “took the dipper from the white side and drank from it.” This poignant incident symbolizes the crushing blow of white supremacy that swiftly spread across North Carolina in the late 1890s, and severely restricted African American progress for more than half a century.²⁸

Amidst the turmoil and uncertainty of events in the spring of 1899, Dr. Pope and his wife Lydia decided to move from Charlotte to Raleigh. The timing of the move seems unusual, although it is possible that Pope's interest in politics, and a desire to support efforts by his friend James Young to stem the tide of white supremacist policies, drove his decision. Young, always a favorite target of the Democrats, had suffered public humiliation in early 1899 when the legislature ordered his name to be cut out from the cornerstone of the state's institution for the blind in Raleigh, a facility he worked to build as a state senator. The *News and Observer* gleefully and sarcastically slapped the hands of the legislators responsible in a front-page article, sadistically accusing them of “cruelty to animals.” Other factors may also have influenced the Pope's decision to move. In a 1929 history of medical care in Mecklenburg County, the author asserts that Dr. Pope “struggled for three years without avail” to establish his practice, though other evidence refutes that assertion.²⁹

The Popes also remained very much involved with their families, thus it possible that they moved in part because they wanted to be closer to their hometowns in the northeastern part of the state. Lydia's mother and sister came for visits while the Pope's lived in Charlotte, and at least one of her sisters lived with them there in the late 1890s. Dr. Pope's mother, Permelia, died in 1889, and after her death his father Jonas apparently decided to live life to the fullest, which increasingly concerned his son. With an estimated worth of \$4,000 in land and assets unencumbered by debt—a tidy sum at the time—Jonas Pope, nearly 70, bought a new buggy and “two fine grays” and raced about the county “taking around the young ladies.” Despite an accident in which the elder Pope was pulled from the buggy and dragged by the horses, he was determined to find a wife. “I am not married yet,” Jonas wrote his son in July of 1896, “but shall be just as soon as practible [sic].” He added “[t]his is a matter I am almost compel[sic] to do.” What that statement meant is open to interpretation, but Dr. Pope's cousin wrote that his father already had one broken engagement, and that “he does not want to marry a girl too young [for] fear he will have too many babies.” The cousin also quoted his father as saying that “there must be some more Popes [and] that his son is not doing anything for the country” (a jab at his son, who was childless). Jonas Pope did eventually marry one Mattie Reynolds, a woman four decades his junior, and in 1898, at the age of 71, sired another son, Jonas Pope, II. Thus at age 40, Dr. Pope now had a half-brother. Though further information is sketchy, it appears that M.T. Pope was none too pleased with his father's behavior. There was particular concern over inheritance of the estate upon Jonas's death the following year, which was resolved by a prenuptial agreement in which Mattie Reynolds Pope had been promised \$1,000 in cash or property, with remaining assets to be split between the two sons.³⁰

Whether for personal, professional, or political reasons (or perhaps a combination of these), Dr. Pope and his wife Lydia packed up and moved to Raleigh in early June of 1899. Before leaving Charlotte, he settled his debts and made arrangements to sell the Queen City Drug Company to W.H. Vick, brother of Samuel Vick and a graduate of the School of Pharmacy at Shaw University. He also bought a new buggy and harness, which he had shipped to Raleigh via the Seaboard Airline Railroad. On June 3, two days before the Popes left for Raleigh, the *Charlotte Observer* reported that the Seaboard's segregated rail cars were now in operation, fashioned from former sleeping cars and fitted with compartments for first-class and second-class black passengers. Thus Dr. Pope's departure from Charlotte stood in stark contrast to his triumphal arrival a mere seven years earlier. While his arrival in 1892 was accompanied by glowing letters of recommendation from prominent black and white citizens who knew him, as well as a laudatory article in the *Charlotte Observer*, on his departure he suffered the painful indignity of riding out of town in a Jim Crow rail car. All of the promise of the future possible in 1892 must have seemed a distant memory, as Dr. Pope now rode off toward an uncertain future.³¹

Endnotes

¹Greenwood, p. 177; Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: 1984), p. 252.

²Ibid., p. 251.

³As with the fusion movement, there is a growing body of scholarship on the white supremacy campaign. Helen Edmond's *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* was one of the first to treat the subject fully. See also Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: 1996), Greenwood, chapter 6; Escott, chapter 10; and Anderson, chapters 14-17. A good analysis of Aycock and his roll in white supremacy and the issues related to public education, see James L. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: 1996), chapters 4 and 5. For brief biographies of Aycock and Daniels, see Christine Flood, "Charles Brantley Aycock," and Kenneth Joel Zogry, "Josephus, Jonathan, and Frank Daniels," in *The North Carolina Century: Tar Heels Who Made a Difference, 1900-2000* (Charlotte: 2002), pp. 302-305 and 391-393.

⁴*News and Observer*, July 24, 1898; *Charlotte Daily Observer*, September 10, 1898; *Caucasian*, September 22, 1898.

⁵For information on Jennett and for the cartoons mentioned, see the *News and Observer* for the following dates: August 13 and 18, October 28, and November 3, 1898; July 4, 5, and 15, 1900; Gilmore, p. 99.

⁶Gilmore, pp. 98-99; Escott, p. 255 and Greenwood, p. 195. See also H. Leon Prather, Sr., "We Have Taken a City: A Centennial Essay," in Timothy B. Tyson and David S. Cecelski, editors, *Democracy Betrayed: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898 and Its Legacy* (Chapel Hill: 1998), pp. 25-35.

⁷For more on the black "better sort" and their attitudes about skin tone and class, see Greenwood *Bittersweet Legacy*, also Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: 1990), and Stephen Birmingham, *Certain People: America's Black Elite* (Boston: 1977).

⁸Raleigh *Gazette*, February 5, 1898. Other issues from 1896-1898 contain similar sentiments. Only an incomplete run of this newspaper exists, these issues are on microfilm at the State Library in Raleigh.

⁹Willard B. Gatewood, "North Carolina's Negro Regiment in the Spanish-American War," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, vol. xlvii, number 4, October, 1971, p. 370, hereafter cited as Gatewood, *NCHR*; Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (Oxford: 1987), p. 145; Nina Silber, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: 1993).

¹⁰Kristin L. Hoganson, *Fighting for American Manhood: How Gender Politics Provoked the Spanish American and Philippine American Wars* (New Haven: 1998), p. 10. The phrase "white man's burden" comes from the title of a Rudyard Kipling poem of 1899, in which he warns against American imperialism in the Philippines. A number of historians have addressed the concept of the "feminization" of the South during and following the Civil War; Nina Silber probably explores the issue most completely in *The Romance of Reunion*. Silber's analysis of the incident regarding Davis's capture is also probably the most complete (p. 29-38).

¹¹Foster, p. 147; *Charlotte Observer*, July 4, 1898; Joseph F. Steelman, "North Carolina's Role in the Spanish-American War" (pamphlet published by the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 1975), p. 23.

¹²Willard Gatewood, "*Smoked Yankees*" and *the Struggle for Empire: Letters from Negro Soldiers, 1898-1902* (Urbana: 1971), pp. 5 and 21; *Washington, D.C. Bee*, March 5, 1898, as quoted in George P. Marks, III (editor), *The Black Press Views American Imperialism (1898-1900)* (New York: 1971), p. 13.

¹³All of the information in this paragraph comes from Gatewood, *NCHR*.

¹⁴Souvenir broadside, 1899 (see endnote 24); *Colored American*, January 21, 1899; Commission, 1898, Pope Family Papers.

¹⁵*Ibid.*; *North Carolina Regiments in the Spanish-American War*, Pope House Collection; Gatewood, *NCHR* pp. 381-382 ; Gatewood, *Smoked Yankees*, p. 125-126.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Prather, pp. 15-41; Edmonds, p. 161-165.

¹⁸*Wilmington Daily Record*, August 18, 1898.

¹⁹*Ibid.* See also "The Ghosts of 1898: Wilmington's Race Riot and the Rise of White Supremacy," special supplement in the *Raleigh News & Observer*, November 17, 2006.

²⁰*North Carolina Regiments in the Spanish-American War*, p. 90; Gatewood, *NCHR*, pp. 382-384; Gatewood, *Smoked Yankees*, pp. 139, 154 and 157.

²¹George Henry White to Dr. M.T. Pope, January 2, 1899, Pope Family Papers; Gatewood, *NCHR*, pp. 384-385; Edward A. Johnson, *History of the Negro Soldiers in the Spanish American War* (Raleigh: 1899), pp.108-109.

²²*News and Observer*, February 1899.

²³The meaning of the term “dude” during the period comes from Hoganson, pp. 119-121.

²⁴Johnson, pp. 132-133.

²⁵Copies of the broadside and commemorative newspaper remain in the Pope House, but another copy of the broadside is in the North Carolina Collection in Wilson Library at UNC-Chapel Hill, and another copy of the newspaper is among the Pope Family Papers in the Southern Historical Collection.

²⁶Steeleman, pp. 31-33; Johnson, pp. 18-19.

²⁷*News and Observer*, January 29, 1899; *Public Laws of North Carolina* (Raleigh: 1899), pp. 539-540. The classic work on segregation is C. Vann Woodward’s *The Strange Career of Jim Crow*, first published in 1955. For more on the complex origins of Jim Crow, see John David Smith, editor, *When Did Southern Segregation Begin?* (Boston/New York: 2002).

²⁸*News and Observer*, January 29, 1899; Sarah and A. Elizabeth Delany, with Amy Hill Hearsh, *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters’ First 100 Years* (New York: 1993), pp. 66-67.

²⁹*News and Observer*, January 14, 1899. Charles M. Strong, *History of Mecklenburg County Medicine* (Charlotte: 1929), p. 50. Strong assertion is probably based on hearsay, nearly three decades after Dr. Pope left Charlotte. According to Mecklenburg County property records, Dr. Pope took out at least two mortgages while in Charlotte, though one was apparently used to buy out his partners in the Queen City Drug Company, and both were paid in full.

³⁰The Walden family visits are confirmed by photographs of them taken in Charlotte studios in the 1890s, and found in the Pope House; E.J. Young to Dr. M.T. Pope, May 26, 1899, Pope Family Papers; Jonas Pope to M.T. Pope, February 17, 1896 and “Cousin” to M.T. Pope, February 18, 1896, Pope Family Papers; various estate papers of Jonas Pope, Pope Family Papers.

³¹Mecklenburg County Property Records, Book 127, November 14, 1899, microfilm, State Archives, Raleigh; Receipt from J.W. Wadsworth’s Sons to M.T. Pope, February 13, 1899, and receipt from the Seaboard Airlines Railroad, June 5, 1899, both in the Pope Family Papers; *Charlotte Observer*, June 3, 1899.

Chapter 5

“Certificate of Permanent Registration”

- Title on Dr. Pope's 1902 Voter Registration Card

M.T. Pope stepped off the train in Raleigh on June 5, 1899, and found a city that had grown steadily, if not dramatically, during the thirteen years since his graduation from medical school at Shaw University. Not as large or as fast-growing as Charlotte, Raleigh's population of about 13,000 did make it the fifth most populous city in the state at the turn of the century, and it was increasing at a rate of about five percent per year. Perhaps most noticeable to Dr. Pope would have been the commercial and institutional building that had occurred since the late 1880s, including two textile mills, a large five-story office building on Fayetteville Street, a new governor's mansion, and the elegant Park Hotel. In addition, four new institutions of higher learning had opened: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College (now North Carolina State University) in 1889; Baptist Female Academy (now Meredith College) in 1899; and two more African American schools, Latta University in 1892, St. Augustine's College (affiliated with the Episcopal Church) in 1899.¹

One ominous addition to the city's landscape was the imposing Confederate veteran's monument, given pride of place on the state capitol grounds. Erected in 1895 with a combination of privately raised funds and a state appropriation, the seventy-five-foot high

obelisk, capped with a bronze statue of a Confederate soldier, faced down Hillsborough Street, the fashionable thoroughfare that was the western gateway to the city. The call for creation of such a monument came from none other than Alfred Moore Waddell, leader of the vigilante Red Shirts and central figure in the 1898 Wilmington *coup de'tat*. The dedication of the monument drew about thirty thousand spectators—three times the population of the city—and was purposefully held on May 20, 1895, the 120th anniversary of the historically disputed “Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence” (a supposed 1775 North Carolina precursor to the nation’s Declaration of Independence). Waddell was on hand as the featured speaker, and gave an oration that drew a continuous historical line from that early call for independence through the trials of the Civil War, Reconstruction, and up to the political struggles created by the fusion coalition. He spoke to correct a “monstrous perversion of the truth,” because, he stated, for the previous thirty years “my countrymen, kinsmen and my friends have been pilloried before the world as ignorant, barbarous, cruel traitors and rebels, who, without the slightest justification or excuse, sought to destroy the best government under the sun, and deluged a continent in blood.” Amidst the rising tide of white supremacy, Waddell’s address was widely praised. Henry Groves Connor, a Democratic Party leader, lauded Waddell for “setting forth our side of the question,” adding, “we must preserve our integrity and make our fight in the struggle now confronting us.”²

By the time Pope and his wife arrived in Raleigh, the struggle by white supremacists to regain control of the state was nearly complete. With the first segregation laws now on the books, the legislature turned its attention to permanently crippling any future form of biracial political alliance through the disfranchisement of African American men. This was not a simple process, as any means employed would have to subvert the 15th Amendment to the

United States Constitution. Louisiana, Mississippi and South Carolina had successfully accomplished African American disfranchisement in the 1890s, so Furnifold Simmons, in his last term as chair of the North Carolina Democratic Party, looked to those states to craft similar legislation. In 1899 the North Carolina legislature devised an amendment to the state constitution, which would take effect on July 1, 1902. The so-called “suffrage” amendment allowed local officials to impose a poll tax and give a literacy test to anyone who attempted to register to vote. Because so much of the state’s white population was illiterate, the proposed amendment also included what was known as a “grandfather clause,” which provided that anyone who had a direct male ancestor who could vote prior to January 1, 1867—the date of the beginning of Radical or Congressional Reconstruction—could register without taking the literacy test, provided he did so by December 1, 1908.³

The suffrage amendment needed to be approved by a majority of the state’s voters, and the election was called for July 4, 1900. Prior to that date the Democrat’s white supremacy propaganda machine went back into operation, led by Josephus Daniels and the *News and Observer*. Through editorials and more political cartoons, along with printing various versions of the text as debated on the Capitol floor, the paper pushed passage of the amendment. The Democrats also added a new dimension to the discussion, by linking a statewide effort to improve public education with the need to rear a generation of literate white children who could qualify to vote. Leading the campaign was Charles Brantley Aycock, the Democratic candidate for governor. “We have ruled by force, we can rule by fraud, but we want to rule by law,” Aycock stated at one rally. As if to emphasize this statement, the militant Red Shirts made their presence known as the election approached. Scared and disorganized, the Republicans and Populists could not muster significant

resistance. Aycock was elected governor, and the suffrage amendment passed by a margin of 51 to 49 percent.⁴

The result of the passage of the suffrage amendment on the state's African American population--particularly the group of men who had held some degree of political power during the previous three decades--was chilling. Seeing the handwriting on the wall, a group of the state's black Republican Party leaders went so far as to attempt to pass a resolution in 1899 stating that if the amendment became law, educated blacks should leave the state. Actually, this was not the first time migration out of the state was suggested in the post-Reconstruction era. Scarcely a decade before, in 1889, many of Raleigh's African Americans citizens, frustrated with what they perceived to be lack of progress in the capital city, seriously discussed the possibility of relocating en masse to Kansas. The 1899 resolution failed because of strong opposition by several prominent men, including Dr. Lawson A. Scruggs of Raleigh (Dr. Pope's colleague and Shaw classmate). Over the next few years, however, a number of the most prominent black leaders did decide to leave. "I cannot live in North Carolina and be a man and be treated like a man," Congressman George Henry White famously stated in the last months of his term. Indeed, he left the state and eventually settled in New Jersey. Other well-known African American men moved themselves and their families to the northeast, especially to Washington, D.C., and New York City. These emigrants included John Dancy and several members of the prominent Delany family of Raleigh, who joined the ranks of such men as Alexander Manly and Charles Chestnutt, who had left a few years earlier. Though what is generally known as the "Great Migration" of African Americans to the North occurred between 1916 and 1918, black historian Carter Woodson first noted a mass migration of "the intelligent laboring class" in

the first decade of the twentieth century. In fact, between 1900 and 1910, 27,827 people of color left the state, more than half of those being adult men.⁵

A significant number of North Carolina's African American leaders and politicians, however, chose to stand their ground and not leave their home state. Among this group were doctors Lawson Scruggs and J.T. Williams, newspaper publisher and state legislator James Young, and Wilson postmaster Samuel Vick: college-educated men who had come of age in the 1870s and 1880s, and who formed the backbone of political fusion in the 1890s. A few other "best men" of this era, like former United States Congressman Henry Cheatham, who had been living and working in Washington, bucked the emigration trend and decided to return to North Carolina. Considering the remarkable accomplishments of this generation, it must have been impossible for them to accept that the political and social tide had turned so sharply and so completely. These men believed that they had earned their "manhood" through education, economic and professional success, and ultimately political participation. They constructed their identities more in terms of class than race, and assumed that white leaders would perceive them in the same manner. In addition, many of these men were lighter-skinned and of African and European ancestry, and thus saw themselves as separate from the "common" black population. But the politics of white supremacy left no room for shades of black and tan, and indeed it was the more successful, lighter-skinned African Americans who concerned many upper class whites and Democratic leaders the most.⁶

Dr. M.T. Pope was among the group of African American leaders who chose to remain in North Carolina and make the best of the situation. As a physician, a Shaw alumnus and trustee, and as an active member of the Republican Party, Pope was in a position to be a "race man"—in contemporary parlance, someone who had the education, respect, and

connections to work toward improving conditions for the state's African American population. It is likely this was one of the factors that precipitated his move to Raleigh in the spring of 1899, where he could be close to the center of the state's political activity and support his old friend and Republican operative, James Young. Upon arriving his first order of business was to establish his professional credentials, essential not only to being able to earn a living, but to codify his social standing—and thus proclaim his manhood—in a society that was rapidly working to emasculate black men. On June 6, 1899, the day after arriving from Charlotte, he went to the clerk of court's office and requested a license to practice medicine in Wake County. Presenting his 1886 certificate from the North Carolina Medical Board, Pope was issued license number sixteen, apparently referring to the number of doctors practicing in the county at the time. Of that number Dr. Pope and his colleague, Dr. Lawson Scruggs, were the only two physicians of color. He opened an office at 403 Fayetteville Street, in the heart of the city's business and professional district. He and his wife Lydia, who began teaching sewing and dressmaking at Shaw, rented a house near the university on South Street and made plans to build a new home of their own. The tax records for 1900 show the Pope household contained a library, furniture valued at one hundred dollars, and something perhaps necessary during those unsettled days—a pistol.⁷

In December of 1900, the Popes purchased a narrow city lot at 511 South Wilmington Street, which had recently been subdivided from a larger lot that continued north to the corner of East Cabarrus Street. An 1872 "Bird's Eye" drawing of Raleigh shows several wooden framed houses in this vicinity, and a Sanborne Insurance Company map of 1896 records a two-and-one-half storey brick warehouse on the property. The warehouse was demolished before 1900, and the large corner portion of the lot was sold to St. Ambrose

Episcopal Church, whose congregation moved a Gothic-style framed chapel built in 1865 in another part of Raleigh to the property. The Popes bought the remaining portion of the lot, which was bordered to the south by Stronach's Alley, for \$300. There are several reasons why the Popes probably chose this particular location. It was a short walk to his office on Fayetteville Street, much as he had lived relatively near the Queen City Drug Company in Charlotte. The area was certainly familiar to Dr. Pope from his days as a student at nearby Shaw University, and convenient walking distance for Mrs. Pope to get to the class she was teaching there. Residential segregation was not yet codified in urban deeds, so ostensibly they could have lived anywhere. By tradition, however, most African Americans lived in five communities within or just outside of the city limits. The South Wilmington Street property was located at the edge of the Third Ward, one of the traditionally black communities, and it was also near another known as South Park. Many of the city's professional men of color lived in the area, though the neighborhood was unusually diverse in terms of both race and class status. A century later, Dr. Pope's daughter, Ruth, remembered that across the street white families lived in large frame houses, behind the Popes lived an immigrant Greek family, and behind that family in the small row houses lived the "coal blacks." Thus this area constituted a sample of stratified racial hierarchy: white, light-skinned (multi-ethnic) African Americans, olive skinned immigrants, and then dark-skinned blacks.⁸

Insurance maps and city directories confirm that facing the Pope's lot across South Wilmington Street were large Victorian homes owned by prominent white families, and beyond those homes to the west was the city's main thoroughfare, Fayetteville Street. On the same side of the street as the Popes and across an unpaved alley stood a large, rambling

framed Victorian style home purchased a few years later by another African American physician, Dr. L.E. MacCauley. To the east of the Pope property, along the alley, were rows of so-called “shot gun” houses occupied by less affluent families. At the end of the alley, on the corner of East Cabarrus and Blount Streets, was the large Baptist Missionary building, which faced Second (later Tupper Memorial) Baptist Church. The Pope’s most famous neighbor was none other than Josephus Daniels, white supremacist editor and publisher of the *News and Observer*, who lived around the corner on South Street in the antebellum family home of his wife, Adelaide Worth Bagley Daniels. Though the neighborhood was now predominately black, and though the Daniels home looked directly upon Shaw University, the family remained there until 1919, when they moved into a grand stone mansion north of downtown in the new racially restricted neighborhood of Hayes Barton.⁹

Construction on the Popes’ house probably began in early 1901, and was completed in time to be included in the city directory for that year. It was built at the end of the Victorian era and the beginning of the new century; a time at which “modern” meant radical simplicity of design. The prevailing ideal followed the dictate of one of the great American architects of the era, Louis Sullivan: “form follows function.” New homes of this period stripped away decades of excessive ornament and faux historicism in favor of pared down design and practical floor plans that incorporated the latest domestic amenities. Certainly this modern approach to building and design would have appealed to well-educated people like the Popes, and this philosophy is reflected in the layout and decoration of their home. In addition, the absence of ostentation fit well into the concept of a lifestyle of “thrift,” an ideal espoused and followed by some African American leaders of the era, who believed that such an image was important for advancement of the race and for broader white acceptance.¹⁰

Of moderate size, the floor plan of the approximately 1800 square foot Pope house was relatively rare for Raleigh: a side hall and staircase on one side with double parlors on the other, a layout more typically found in urban row houses. The two-storey home was constructed of brick, also less common among the city's residences. The brick appears to be older than the house itself, and may have been salvaged from the warehouse that previously stood on the site. The gable end of the structure faced South Wilmington Street, and the front façade also featured a one-storey wooden porch with turned columns and simple milled balustrades and corbels, painted a light buff color. Crowning the structure was a standing-seam galvanized tin roof, which both gave a modern appearance and shed water faster than traditional wooden shingles. The house was solid and dignified, an appropriate residence for a prominent physician with a wife but no children. The lack of grandeur and the modesty of design and furnishings bespeaks a couple not given to ostentation, but desirous of a practical, comfortable, and modern home.¹¹

Visitors to 511 South Wilmington Street were greeted in the front hall by a cheerful large round window with panes of different colored and patterned glass, the overall form resembling the petals of a flower. Similar windows could be found in Oakwood, a fashionable white residential neighborhood established in the 1870s and located to the north of downtown. A tall oak hallstand tucked under the staircase provided a place for hats and coats and a looking glass to check one's appearance. To the right was the formal parlor, with a tall window that opened from the floor to allow access to the front porch. The room was heated with a small parlor stove, and an electric button on the doorframe could be pushed to summon the maid. A copper and frosted glass chandelier with both gas jets and electric bulbs illuminated the room, as electric service at the turn of the century was still somewhat

unreliable. The finish on the copper chandelier—along with all the door hardware and switch plates throughout the house--was distressed or “patinated,” a stylish flourish popular at the turn-of-the-century. Lace curtains hung at the windows, and rugs of “Oriental” design were scattered about on the polished wood floor. The walls were papered, probably in a large leaf or floral pattern in muted tones, first made popular by the English designer William Morris in the 1880s.

The furniture, apparently acquired from merchants in Charlotte and Raleigh, was typical of middle-class homes anywhere in the United States at the time. It was light and easily moveable, with an ornate table in the center under the chandelier and seating pieces and a few other tables casually placed about the room. A mahogany settee and matching chair with upholstered seats, in what would have been considered “Colonial” style, were the most formal pieces. Additional furniture included two mahogany rocking chairs of different but still vaguely “Colonial,” style, and a few straight-backed chairs. In the corner was a plant stand of darkly stained oak, supporting a large fern. Suspended from long wires on the walls hung several pictures in ornate frames, including large charcoal drawings of Lydia Pope’s parents and Dr. Pope’s mother, all deceased. The most conspicuous item in the room was the elegant mahogany upright piano, made by the Crown Company of Chicago. Pianos were not uncommon in middle-class homes of the period, but this model was more expensive than most. As a whole the parlor was a study in the aesthetic informality of the age, bespeaking the comfortable but not ostentatious home of a white-collar professional like Dr. Pope.¹²



Stained glass window, entrance hall



Call box for maid, back hall

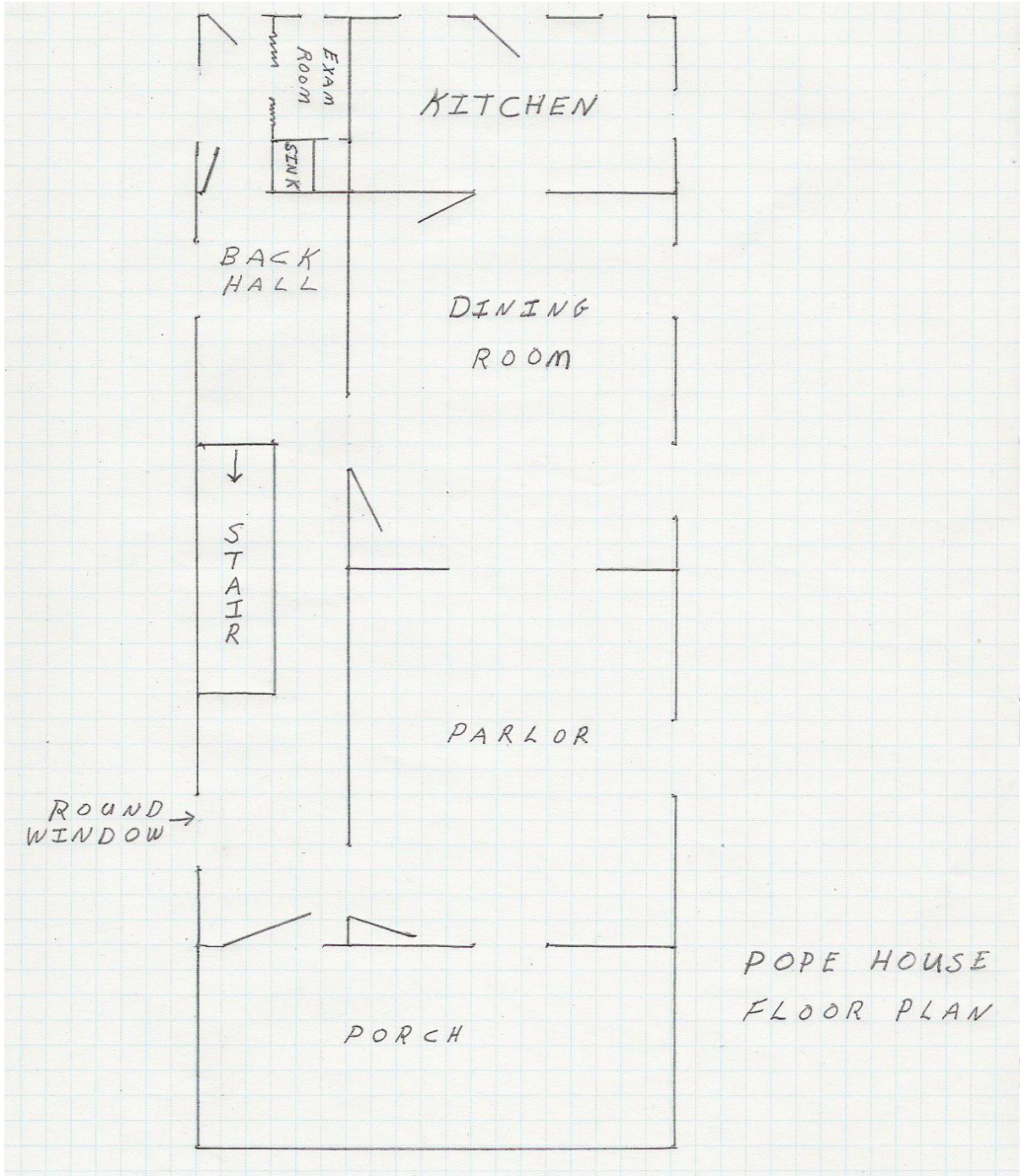


1901 chandelier, parlor



Corner of parlor, showing original furniture

Framed needlework "Honest, Industry, Sobriety" on top of piano



Through a pair of pocket doors that slid into the walls was the second parlor, used as a dining room. This room had one door leading to a small kitchen at the rear, another leading to the back hall on the northern wall, and a pair of large south-facing windows that made the dining room bright and cheerful during the day. Another simple copper chandelier, which hung over the large dining table, provided light at night. The furniture in this room was of a more consistent style and formal arrangement than that of the parlor. The pieces were mainly of quarter-sawn oak and oak veneer, “fumed” in the popular finish of the day to achieve a warm, mellow golden-brown hue. Dominating the room was the large table, which stood on feet carved in the shape of lions’ paws, and could be extended with leaves to seat twelve people. The six high-backed chairs had woven cane seats, a feature which provided coolness in the summer and an ease of cleaning. Along one wall was a china cabinet with curved glass front that displayed prized objects, such as decorative European porcelain and American cut glass. One of the most interesting items displayed in this cabinet was a tall mug or stein made in New Hampshire featuring a rendering of the North Carolina State Capitol on the front. Between the windows stood a large sideboard in the Colonial Revival style (actually inspired by pieces from the 1820s). The Popes set their table with crisp white linens, china in the popular blue-and-white Chinese pattern popular since the 18th century (though these were English and American copies), simple clear glassware and silver-plated flatware. The dining room was the setting for formal dinners and more informal family meals, as well as teas and other social gatherings.

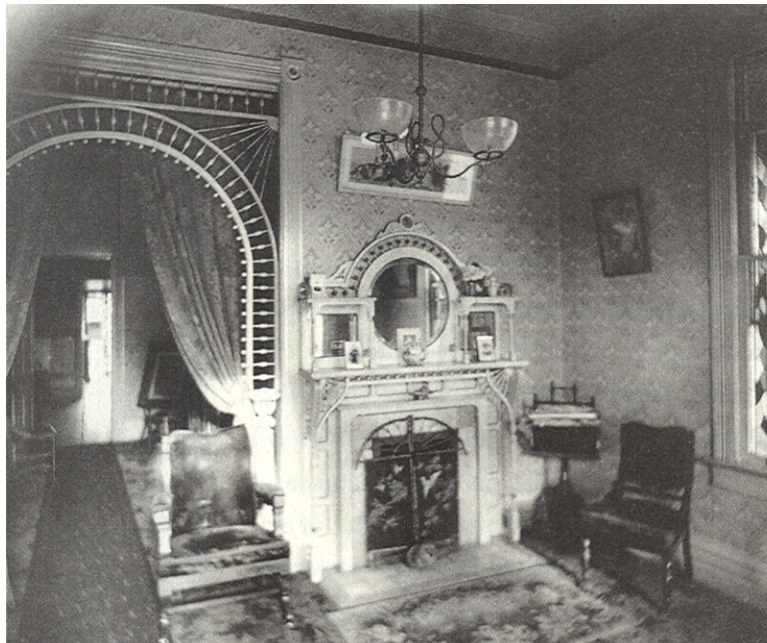
In either the parlor or the dining room hung a framed rectangular piece of needlework, probably made by Lydia Pope, which read “Honesty, Industry and Sobriety,” in large flowing script. Framed needlework homilies were widely popular in the late nineteenth

and early twentieth centuries, but this example likely had particular significance in middle-class black homes of the era. Many families like the Popes made a conscious effort in their home life to counter widely held views of African Americans as dishonest, lazy, and prone to moral depravity (which included abuse of alcohol and sexual promiscuity). Noted white sociologist Howard W. Odum, who spent most of his career studying southern culture, wrote in 1910 that the “negro has little home conscience or love of home...little conception of the meaning of virtue, truth, honor, manhood, integrity...in his home life the negro is filthy, careless, and indecent.” The good order and cleanliness of the Pope’s respectable and stylish house, particularly the formal public rooms, belied this stereotype. More importantly, Dr. Pope’s domestic arrangements also provided to any white visitors tangible evidence of his virtue, decency, integrity, and manhood.¹³

Several period photographs of interior spaces of middle-class African American homes of the early twentieth century also show lifestyles of “honesty, industry, and sobriety,” like that of the Popes. A photograph of the dining room of the home of an administrator of Hampton Institute in Virginia, taken about 1910, shows a respectable middle-class black family sitting down to a meal in a setting strikingly similar to that found in the Pope house. Two images of the interiors of African American homes in Georgia were included among a display of photographs of middle-class black life organized by W.E.B. Du Bois for the Exhibit of American Negroes at the Paris Exhibition in 1900. Du Bois’ purpose in organizing this exhibit and taking it abroad was to show an international audience how far the race had progressed in terms of education, business, and social refinement in the thirty – five years since the end of the Civil War. One photograph shows a man giving a lesson to a young lady at a piano in front of a large bay window in an elegantly decorated room, and the



Photos from Paris Exhibition of 1900, showing Atlanta interiors of
African American homes



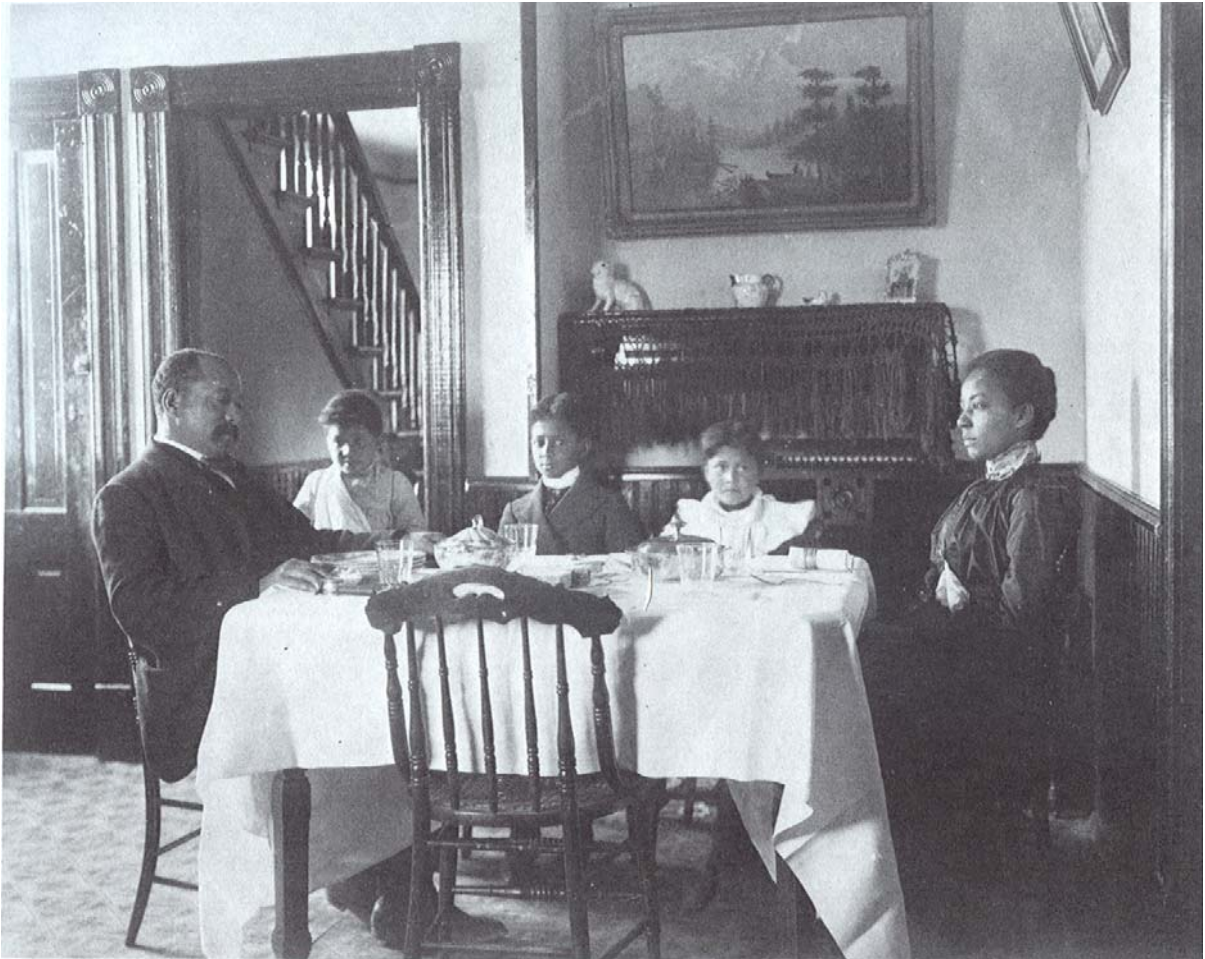


Photo of a family in their dining room, Hampton Institute, Virginia, 1899

other shows the corner of a more modest parlor that is outfitted with wallpaper, Oriental rugs, a stained glass window, and a small gas chandelier. Dr. and Mrs. Pope would certainly have felt comfortable in either room, similar elements of which could be found in their own home. According to photographic historian Deborah Willis, public displays like the one at the Paris Exposition “of interiors of well-furnished living rooms and music rooms, with art, flowers, and family photographs prominently placed, changed perceptions about the home life of black people.”¹⁴

The entry, parlor, and dining room comprised the formal public space of the Pope house, while the remaining areas were designed for private and service functions. Through the dining room was the kitchen, built with a brick wall separating the two areas, presumably to lessen the risk of a cooking fire destroying the entire house. As the Popes had no children, and as they employed a maid to do the cooking and housework, it is not surprising that the kitchen was very small. Like the rest of the house the kitchen was modern for its era, with a large sink, a coal- or wood-fired cooking stove, and built-in cabinets. A wall-mounted metal tank heated water for both the kitchen and the upstairs bathroom. Food preparation was done on a wooden table, and perishable items were kept in an icebox, likely located on the enclosed back service porch behind the kitchen. The wooden service porch led to a small backyard, where laundry was probably hung out to dry, and where a little vegetable garden may have been cultivated.

Dr. Pope apparently designed the back northern portion of the first floor beside the dining room and kitchen for his specific professional needs. He most likely set up a home office in the open back hall adjoining the staircase, where a wall-mounted hand-cranked telephone was located. Dr. Pope was assigned number 467—attesting to the small number of telephones in a city of nearly 15,000 residents. Here may have been located his glass-fronted bookcase, filled with volumes that ranged from his old school books to medical treatises to popular literature and religious tracts. A door from the back hall led to a short, narrow corridor with a small sink on the right side and a very small room with a closet that originally contained a built-in cabinet with shallow drawers and a fitted marble top (presumably for medical instruments). A curtain was probably hung across the opening to this small room, where examinations and surgeries were likely performed. Windows in the corridor and the

small room provided natural light, and artificial light came from a copper-plated gas fixture with a swing arm and a special wick mechanism that increased the lamp's intensity. At the end of the short corridor was another door that opened to the backyard. There seems little question that Dr. Pope outfitted this section of the house to see patients, probably to perform surgeries and to handle emergency cases after normal office hours. The separate back entrance provided some degree of privacy for the patients and did not disturb the rest of the Pope household.¹⁵

The staircase, also located in the back hall, led up to two bedrooms and a bathroom. The bathroom was among the features of the Pope House that made it one of the most modern residences in Raleigh in 1901. Indoor baths were still relatively uncommon, and this one included all the latest plumbing features, such as a copper-lined tub built-in to the wall and a porcelain sink and commode. The front bedroom was apparently used for guests (and possibly patients recovering from surgery) before the births of the Pope daughters in 1908 and 1910. Dr. and Mrs. Pope slept in the back bedroom, which had a decorative wooden mantel framing the stove that warmed the room, and a door to the adjoining bath. Apparently the room was furnished with a suite of walnut furniture with marble tops, likely dating from the time of their wedding in the 1880s. The hall, bath, and bedrooms were lit with gas wall sconces of brass with glass shades, which were converted to electricity sometime in the 1910s.

Though modern and comfortable, the Pope's new home stood in stark contrast to a group of houses constructed just a few blocks away by prominent white families on Hillsborough Street, the city's most fashionable residential thoroughfare. During the first decade of the twentieth century a series of houses rose within sight of the new Confederate

Monument that were, in the words of architectural historian Catherine Bishir, “landmarks of power,” structures that gave form in wood and brick to white supremacy and the realities of a rapidly segregating society. Unlike the modern simplicity and “thrift” of the Pope House, the grand residences of Hillsborough Street were conspicuous historical monoliths, weighed down with dramatic porticos, columns, and all manner of neoclassical ornament designed generally to evoke America’s “colonial” past, and specifically to recall the grandeur of antebellum southern plantation houses. Not only did the formality and symmetry of these houses (no matter how historically inaccurate) signal a sharp change in taste from the whimsy and asymmetry of the brightly painted Victorian homes popular just a few years before, but their stridently white exteriors made a bold statement about racial purity and Caucasian dominance—especially when lined up one after another like sentinels, as on Hillsborough Street. A 1907 article in the *News and Observer* lauded these new homes and what they represented, noting that “the callow [Victorian] period has passed...the bumptious period of uncertainty has been weathered,” and that “the progress of the new thoughts in the homes of the people...speak the public mind,” presenting “a notable taste and a evident building for permanency.”¹⁶

Of the new houses Dr. Pope’s attention was probably most caught by the home built in 1903 by a white Raleigh physician, Dr. Andrew Watson Goodwin. It is instructive to compare the two doctors and their respective houses, both in terms of style and in terms of the realities of a rapidly segregating society, which limited the role and stature of black men. Dr. Goodwin paid the princely sum of \$10,000 for the lot in late 1902, a stark contrast to the \$300 Dr. Pope paid for his lot two years earlier, and clear indication of the desirability of Hillsborough Street property. The overall design of the house Dr. Goodwin built fits within

the formal vocabulary of the popular “Colonial Revival” idiom of the era: a white clapboard structure laden with classical elements including a dramatic portico supported by large Ionic columns and ornate window and door surrounds. In the case of grand Southern houses built in the half century following the Civil War, this style represented a confluence of both a taste popular around the country at the time, and the glory days of the Greek revival plantation houses of the Old South. Lest anyone mistake his new house for an old one, Dr. Goodwin emblazoned “1903” in large raised numerals in the center of the pediment of the front portico. To signify his status in the city, and to complete this *tableau* of the Old South, Dr. Goodwin employed an African American man and woman to serve as butler and cook at his residence.¹⁷

In fact, Dr. Goodwin’s status in the medical community, partly represented by his ability to construct such a grand home, clearly illustrates the professional inequities—and challenges to African American manhood—wrought as a by-product of white supremacy. Goodwin, a native of Raleigh from a prominent family, was five years younger than M.T. Pope. After attending medical school in the 1880s, he returned to Raleigh to practice. In 1902 he was appointed dean of the Leonard Medical School at Shaw, and head physician at St. Agnes, the city’s hospital for African Americans on the St. Augustine College campus. Opened in 1896, St. Agnes was one of the largest black hospitals in the South, and also operated a school for nurses. That a white physician held the most prominent positions at Raleigh’s two largest African American medical institutions must have been a difficult pill to swallow for the city’s qualified black doctors. Along with Dr. Pope, that small number included Dr. Lawson A. Scruggs. Born in 1857, Scruggs was a classmate of Pope’s at Leonard, graduating with him in the first class. Like Pope, Scruggs passed the state medical



Dr. Andrew Watson Goodwin House, 1903

board examination in 1886. He returned to Raleigh, and by 1902 had a successful practice of fifteen years and served on the faculty at Leonard. Almost certainly Scruggs, Pope, and other qualified black doctors were passed over for these positions because of concerns about losing funding for these African American institutions, which exposed the racist attitudes of the northern white donors. As historian Todd Savitt has noted, many black medical schools, and Leonard in particular, suffered financially from white prejudice about African Americans lacking the innate intelligence to study medicine, let alone teach it.¹⁸

The inability of Drs. Pope and Scruggs to secure top administrative positions, even at black institutions, is emblematic of the totality and swiftness with which white supremacy spread across all classes and aspects of life in North Carolina in the first years of the twentieth century. Casting aside their fitness for top administrative positions solely based on race was a direct assault on their manhood; and if the manhood of successful professionals of their standing could be so easily dismissed, certainly it would be easier to deny the manhood of all African Americans. Along with the new Jim Crow laws and political disfranchisement, the tightening grip of white supremacy in the South sparked debate among the African American intelligentsia nationally about how to respond, or whether they should respond at all. Among the general public, this debate has traditionally taken the form of a clear-cut dichotomy between the accommodationist philosophy of Booker T. Washington, and the more activist approach advocated by W.E.B. DuBois. Scholars have long since rejected this notion, and, as with many post-facto historical constructs, this debate was not so clearly delineated in the early years of the twentieth century. Some African Americans adopted portions of the philosophies espoused by each of these men; some were just unsure about how best to proceed. According to historian Willard Gatewood, “[d]espite the polarization of

the black community...some aristocrats of color more or less divided their allegiance between the philosophies of Washington and Du Bois...[n]ot all aristocrats of color, any more than other blacks, possessed coherent philosophies of racial advancement; they did not view the strategies of [each man] as incompatible.” Gatewood notes that in the early twentieth century such elites were likely known as “straddlers,” and that term probably applies to many of North Carolina’s black elite, including Dr. Pope.¹⁹

Born into slavery, Washington’s views were largely the result of his long personal struggle as a man and as an educator, which he chronicled in his widely read 1901 autobiography, *Up From Slavery*. He became the most prominent black leader in the country in the late nineteenth century and founded Tuskegee Institute in Alabama, a training and trade school for African Americans. Washington argued that it was best for blacks to give up fighting for civil rights, participating in the political process, and aspiring to higher education, and focus instead on vocational education and economic advancement. Washington laid out this philosophy in a famous speech given at the 1895 Cotton States Exposition in Atlanta, in which he stated metaphorically that blacks and whites could live as fingers on a hand, separate but still one nation. Historian David Levering Lewis has labeled the speech “one of the most consequential pronouncements in American history.” Not surprisingly, southern white supremacists praised Washington’s words as sensible, and many northern whites, tired of dealing with racial strife and looking toward reconciliation in a national still healing from the Civil War, agreed.²⁰

This discussion was in essence a debate about the competing conception of black manhood. Washington, seeing the futility of fighting white supremacy, promoted the dignity of work as the way to achieve manhood under these conditions. W.E.B. DuBois, however,

argued that manhood was not possible without full civic participation. A rising political activist and writer who as the nation's first person of African American ancestry to be awarded a Ph.D. from Harvard, DuBois was born in Massachusetts in 1868 and traveled and studied in Europe before embarking on a career as a teacher in rural Tennessee and Georgia. That experience, which exposed him to the poverty and systemic economic and social racism of the American South, transformed him. Beginning in 1901, he published a series of essays that strongly disagreed with Washington's philosophy, alarmed that this type of accommodationism would permanently destroy African American manhood so recently hard won and codified by the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution. Du Bois predicted that it would be "utterly impossible, under modern competitive methods, for working men and property-owners to defend their rights and exist without the right of suffrage," and that "silent submission to civil inferiority...is bound to sap the manhood of any race in the long run." His manifesto, *The Souls of Black Folk*, published in 1903, argued that the "talented tenth"—the top ten percent of the nation's black population in terms of education and socio-economic status—should lead the race through sustained political involvement. Though he praised the concept of national reconciliation, he warned that if "reconciliation is to be marked by the industrial slavery and civil death of...black men, with permanent legislation into a position of inferiority, then those black men, if they are really men, are called upon by every consideration of patriotism and loyalty to oppose such a course by all civilized methods."²¹

North Carolina had its share of "Bookerites," as followers of Washington were known, who subscribed to the idea that it was better to forgo civil equality and political involvement for industrial education and economic development. One of the most prominent

and iconoclastic of the North Carolina Bookerites was Rev. Morgan London Latta of Raleigh. Born a slave on the expansive Cameron plantation in 1853, Latta attended Shaw University, where he took an A.B. degree and received ministerial training. In 1892 he founded the self-named Latta University in the Oberlin community in Raleigh, a section of town settled by free blacks after the Civil War. Although Latta and M.T. Pope were on the Shaw campus during the same era, their personal philosophies could not have been more diametrically opposed. Latta not only mimicked Washington by establishing a school to provide young African Americans a practical industrial education, but he also wrote and published his own autobiography in 1903. A curious mixture of sycophancy and self-promotion, the book chronicles Latta's life and his attempts to found and fund his eponymous university. He favorably compared himself to Frederick Douglass and Booker T. Washington, and among the numerous photographs of him in the book is a page on which he is pictured as an equal with Presidents Cleveland, McKinley, and Roosevelt.²²

The self-promotion aside, Dr. Pope and other black leaders must have found parts of the book offensive, if not onerous and potentially damaging to racial progress and the struggle for civil and political equality. In fact, Latta charged that black leaders in Raleigh tried to stop him from creating his school, and he heaped praise on prominent white supremacists who supported his efforts. "The white people are not enemies to the colored people, when they find they are doing something to better their condition," Latta asserted, noting that Raleigh's white community was "of the kindest nature." Of Charles Aycock, Latta wrote, "we have a governor we all feel proud of—a high-toned Christian gentleman," and that North Carolina needed "more such men as Mr. [Josephus] Daniels...a man of high reputation." Considering the activities of both men over the previous decade and their key

roles in the coming of Jim Crow segregation and disfranchisement to North Carolina, such statements are remarkable and certainly must have rankled many blacks. Even more disconcerting was his stance on lynching—which he blamed largely on the black victims—claiming so much widespread “ignorance among the colored people that such extreme depredations as assaulting white ladies of the South takes place.” Summing up his beliefs and echoing the philosophy of Washington, Latta proclaimed that there was “nothing in politics for colored people.” He urged African Americans to “get religion, educate themselves, buy property, stay out of politics, and put money in the bank.”²³

Certainly a number of black North Carolinians did decide to focus their energies after 1900 on building successful businesses and community organizations. A number of the state’s African American businessmen supported Booker T. Washington’s National Negro Business League, created in 1901. According to David Levering Lewis, the guiding principle of the organization was that “through financial successes and making themselves indispensable to the South’s economic growth, eventually African-Americans would earn their way into full citizenship—regaining all and more of the rights and privileges they had provisionally surrendered.” Indeed, by the 1910s Raleigh had a thriving business district on Hargett Street, and in Durham successful enterprises such as the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company and Mechanics and Farmers Bank earned its business district the moniker “Black Wall Street.” In 1910, the North Carolina chapter of the National Business League hosted a dinner for Booker T. Washington in Wilson at the home of Samuel Vick. Among the luminaries in attendance were prominent African Americans from around the country, including David Merrick and James Spaulding, founders of the North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company.²⁴

But building businesses did not stop black men from attempting to exercise their right to participate in the political process. Though disfranchisement was effective in all but eliminating political power among African American men, it could not wipe away the professional class of doctors, lawyers, ministers and others that had blossomed in North Carolina since the 1870s. And those men were not about to quietly give up their public manhood and hard-won political and voting rights. Over the course of two particularly active periods during the first two decades of the twentieth century—1902 to 1905, and 1916 to 1919—members of North Carolina’s “talented tenth” worked and fought to regain a political voice and to mitigate some of the civil inequities wrought by white supremacy. Their actions reveal the difficulties with which Democratic leaders had to contend to maintain codified segregation and disfranchisement, and constitute the first civil rights movement of the twentieth century.

The first organized efforts occurred as a result of an incident at the state Republican convention in September of 1902. The catalyst for this effort was the hard line taken by the state Republican Party, which adopted a “no negro” or so-called “lily white” policy that summer. At the state convention in Greensboro in September, delegates of color were refused seats. That two of these delegates—Henry Cheatham and James O’Hara—were former United States congressmen drew loud consternation from the state’s black leaders. The editors of the *Star of Zion* were outraged at this treatment, and printed a series of blistering articles and columns that condemned this latest affront. Under the heading “Stabbed By False Friends,” the paper reported that the “drifting of the Republican party from its traditional moorings a few days ago in Greensboro” was “wrong in principle and bad in practice,” and would not lead to any political gains by attracting back whites who had

defected to the Democrats. “Treachery creepeth like a snake in the grass and biteth the horse’s heels, “ one column warned, as the “only people in the South who are true blue Republicans are Afro-Americans.”²⁵

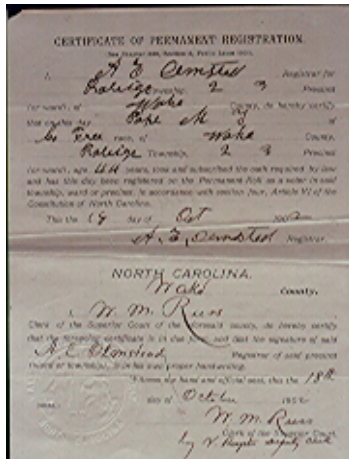
Anger over abandonment by the state Republican Party, added to the reality of codified segregation and disfranchisement brought by the Democrats, led black leaders to organize and plan for action. On September 17, a group of about three-dozen men met in Salisbury and drafted a resolution creating the Colored Voter’s League of North Carolina. Under the front-page heading “Negroes Aroused Over Their Political Situation in North Carolina: Form a Voter’s League,” the *Star of Zion* published the full text of the resolution, which condemned both the Democratic and Republican Parties and called for “a complete and permanent organization of the Negro vote.” The resolution went on to state, “we believe that the number of colored voters in the State, if thoroughly organized, would be a most potent factor to be reckoned with,” and further resolved:

That we organize ourselves into the “The Colored Voters League of North Carolina,” whose purposes it shall be to pledge its vote to no particular party; to throw its influence only on that side which offers the best inducements in the best interest of the citizens of the State; to make active efforts to increase the number of Negro voters by encouraging and promoting increased facilities for the requisites and proper qualifications of voters, and to make the Negro vote and organized power to be recognized by all parties.”²⁶

The paper applauded this resolution and noted that it was “evident from the earnestness which characterized the meeting and the sentiments so freely expressed that the colored voters are thoroughly aroused to the situation, and it hoped that this movement begun in Salisbury will not stop until the entire colored vote of the State is thoroughly and effectively organized. The movement is on; look for its development.”²⁷

How effective the Colored Voter's League of North Carolina was is difficult to quantify. Scattered county records of voter registration survive for the period prior to December of 1908, when the grandfather clause of the new suffrage amendment ended. Clearly a voter registration drive of some type was instigated, as most African American men who registered did so within about eight weeks of the drafting of the League's resolution. Records for Wake County show that only seven men of color registered in Raleigh, and only thirty-one in the county, a number that represents approximately one-half of one percent of total registered voters. Neighboring Johnston County rolls list three men of color registering, all between October 18 and 21, 1902; and it is interesting to note that polling officials there also recorded the name of each man's free black ancestor who could vote. The *Charlotte Daily Observer* reported in April of 1903 that twenty-eight African Americans successfully registered in that city to that date, out of a total of 2,397. The *Star of Zion* reported that 10,000 African Americans registered out of a potential pool of 120,000, though the *News and Observer* listed the number as 6,145. The limited evidence suggests the actual number was even lower.²⁸

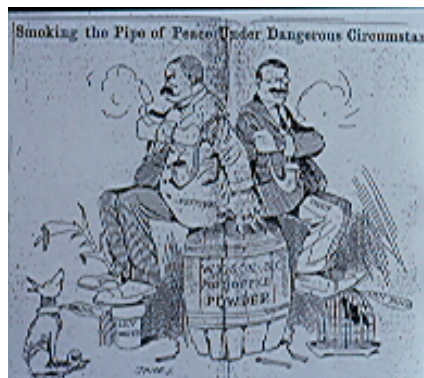
Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope was one of the seven African American men to register in Raleigh, and the only such registrant in the predominately black Third Ward. Challenging white supremacy and the new suffrage amendment, Dr. Pope appeared before the precinct registrar on October 18, 1902, and requested that he be added to the roll of eligible voters. This was an act of political defiance, and one that demanded that he be treated as an equal to white men. The small piece of paper that he was given—his "Certificate of Permanent Registration"—was tangible proof of his manhood. The importance of this document was



Dr. Pope's 1902 voter registration card



Cartoon showing Samuel Vick appealing to President Roosevelt, Vick Family Papers



Cartoon from the Asheville Citizen, Vick Family Papers

understood by Dr. Pope and his family, and along with his father's 1851 Freedman's papers, was carefully preserved by the family throughout the twentieth century.²⁹

Unfortunately, there is no documentation about the circumstances under which Dr. Pope registered. His motivation was likely three-fold. First, he was a man of strong convictions, and was determined to continue to be politically active as he had been all of his adult life. Second, he was answering the call of his peers, who had formed the Colored Voter's League. And third, he was likely alarmed by the rapidly deteriorating civil liberties for North Carolina's African American population, and the indignities brought about by segregation. He felt these affronts both personally and professionally, as he now had to ride in a Jim Crow rail car and watched as a younger, probably less experienced white doctor, A. W. Goodwin, was named head of both the Leonard School of Medicine and St. Agnes Hospital. Thus on October 18, 1902, he went to his local precinct official, and presented him with the 1851 Freedman's papers of his father, Jonas Pope, as on the line marked "race" is written "Col. free." Although he registered under the provisions of the grandfather clause, technically this should not have been allowed. Though Jonas Pope was free in 1851, the North Carolina Constitution of 1835 forbade free men of color from voting. Whether this historical fact was either unknown or overlooked is unclear, though apparently it was a moot point because some officials did not take the registration of African American men seriously. The *Star of Zion* reported on October 23 that a Raleigh registrar "acting under in instruction of the county chairman, is not swearing upon the Constitution of the United States those persons who register under the 'grandfather clause'"—implying that officials did not think those registrations were valid. Certainly the rules for registration were applied unevenly across the state, and the possibility exists that Dr. Pope was allowed to go through the

process because of his status in the community, or, paradoxically, as a sign that white supremacist Democrats were applying the new law fairly. Whatever the reason, his registration was duly recorded and therefore valid.³⁰

When Dr. Pope registered to vote in October of 1902, he did so not as a lone act of defiance, but in fact as part of a larger, orchestrated effort to not only enfranchise as many African American men as possible that year, but to fight white supremacy and reawaken black political activity across the state. Through the fall of 1902 the *Star of Zion*, by this time the state's only African American newspaper, kept up the call for black political activism. "Why should the Negro, who is a citizen of this country, loyal to the flag, heroic in every war, and whose labor has enriched the soil, give up politics?" the paper queried. "Though he is a little battered now in the political ring, he will again come up smiling with a grim determination...as long as the fifteenth amendment stands." "With both the Democratic and Republican parties against them," one editorial argued, "the time has come for the intelligent Negroes who can vote to sink jealousy and petty differences and unite politically. We must now 'hang together or hang separately.'" The paper also took a strong stand regarding the question of accommodation, especially as raised by Booker T. Washington:

Some of our Negro leaders since the enactment of the disfranchise law and the turning down of the Negroes by lily white Republicans are advising the Negroes to go out of politics and enter business. It is bad advice, for it means to give up one of our rights as citizens. If we give up the fifteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States, which gives us the ballot, our political enemies will attempt to force us to give up the thirteenth amendment which set us free, and the fourteenth, which made us citizens. Let us not grow indifferent or discouraged to any of our rights, but agitate in the newspapers, on the platform, in the pulpit, in the legislative and congressional halls and, if necessary, contend for them in the highest courts of the land until they are granted. Right, though checked temporarily at times, is invincible and on the steady march to sure conquest.³¹

The call for action spread beyond the drive to register black voters and the formation of political clubs. That October black Republicans of the 2nd Congressional District met in Weldon and nominated Samuel Vick as a candidate for Congress. George White, the last African American remaining in Congress, had left the previous year, famously stating that though his departure was “perhaps the Negro’s temporary farewell...Phoenix-like he will rise ups some day and come again.” “These parting words,” White continued, “are in behalf of an outraged, heart-broken bruised and bleeding, but God-fearing people, faithful, industrious, loyal, rising people—full of potential force.” With so few African American voters registered, and with the specter of violence by white supremacists ever present, Vick’s campaign faltered. But soon Vick had a bigger battle on his hands: pressure was building to remove him, the last black postmaster in the state, from office. In an effort to show that the Republican Party was now lily white, Sen. J.C. Pritchard—the same architect of fusion who had supported Vick’s previous reappointments—nominated a white man in late 1902 to replace him.³²

Pritchard’s action put him in direct conflict with President Theodore Roosevelt, who had decided to reappoint Vick. Roosevelt’s stand on racial matters was complicated, as he tried to negotiate the rough waters of southern politics. Clearly he was a racist, writing to a friend: “I entirely agree with you that as a race and in the mass they are altogether inferior to the whites.” But he also recognized African Americans as citizens with the potential for advancement, and early in his administration had invited Booker T. Washington to dinner after a conference at the White House. The first time a sitting president ever invited a black man to dine as an equal at the White house, the incident outraged many white supremacists. Josephus Daniels remarked coolly but pointedly: “It is not a precedent that will encourage

southern men to join hands with Mr. Roosevelt.” Indeed, the president faced a chilly reception when he gave a speech in Raleigh at the State Fair several years later, where he was given a “peanuts ‘n pickle” lunch which one biographer described as coming “close to being a denial of hospitality.”³³

Scarcely a year after the furor caused by dining with Washington at the White House, Roosevelt was faced with another political debacle in the form of Samuel Vick, who by this time was garnering national attention in his fight to keep his appointment. Newspapers across the country (including the *Washington Post*, the *Boston Herald*, and the *New York Age*) followed events as they unfolded in late 1902 and early 1903. The *Asheville Citizen* ran a political cartoon suggesting the situation was about to explode, showing Roosevelt and Pritchard smoking pipes and precariously perched on a barrel marked “Wilson, N.C. Post Office/Powder,” with the caption “Smoking the Pipe of Peace Under Dangerous Circumstances.” Roosevelt’s feet rest on a birdcage containing a black bird with the label “Lily Black,” while Pritchard’s feet rest on a flowerpot containing a white lily. The black press framed this battle as a test of how the federal government would handle discrimination in the South. Vick fought ardently to retain his appointment, including traveling to Washington for a face-to-face meeting with the president. Though Roosevelt publicly declared, “I certainly cannot treat mere color as a bar to holding office, any more than I could so treat creed or birthplace,” in the end he buckled under the pressure, and Vick was replaced with Pritchard’s white nominee.³⁴

Vick’s loss was certainly a blow to African Americans across the country, and it was immediately followed by a United States Supreme Court decision which denied the claims of a man from Georgia, Jackson Giles, who brought suit on behalf of himself and 5,000 other

blacks in that state charging that their constitutional rights were being violated because they were not being allowed to register to vote. Despite these setbacks, black leaders in North Carolina did not stop their political activity, nor did they stop leaders from looking to Washington for support. Two other prominent federal appointees in the state fought to hold onto to their positions, and were able to do so at least for a few years. Dr. J.T. Williams served as consul to Sierra Leone until 1906, and James Young remained federal tax collector for Wake County until 1913. In March of 1905, a black delegation from the South went to see President Roosevelt and presented him with a resolution “urging the appointment of a commission to investigate the denial of suffrage to negroes in the southern states.” The full text of the resolution was printed on the front page of the *Raleigh Post*. “Judging from the facts already at hand,” the resolution read, “we believe that a large number of negroes who are fully prepared to meet the qualifications imposed by the revised constitutions of the south are denied the right to register and vote on account of color and previous servitude, which is in violation of the federal constitution.” No commission was appointed, but the language of this resolution was remarkably similar to that employed sixty years later, leading to the Voting Rights Act of 1965.³⁵

One of the members of the delegation was Edward A. Johnson of Raleigh, a contemporary and likely friend of Dr. Pope. Born into slavery in 1860, Johnson was a man of many talents. He was educated at Atlanta University in Georgia, and began his professional career as a teacher and principal. He returned to Raleigh, and while continuing to teach earned a law degree from Shaw University. After graduation he successfully argued several cases before the North Carolina Supreme Court. He was an unabashed “race man” who promoted the achievements, patriotism, and manhood of African Americans in two

books, *A School History of the Negro Race in America, 1619-1890* (1891) and *A History of the Negro Soldiers in the Spanish American War* (1899). As he became prosperous, Johnson invested in black enterprises, including being one of the original investors of the W.T. Coleman textile mill in Salisbury and North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company in Durham. In 1902, he and a white partner began developing a residential area near Shaw University for middle-class African Americans known as South Park. Despite his belief in black economic advancement, Johnson was vehemently opposed to Booker T. Washington's advice to step out of the public arena. Politically active and ambitious, Johnson served as a Wake County alderman before enactment of the suffrage amendment. Frustrated by Roosevelt's lack of action and his own disfranchisement, Johnson left North Carolina in 1907 and settled in New York, where he was the first black man elected to that state's legislature a decade later.³⁶

The effort of Edward Johnson and the committee that went to Washington in 1905 to see President Roosevelt was the last organized public attempt by North Carolina's black leaders to combat white supremacy and disfranchisement for more than a decade. The likely cause for the abrupt cessation of activity was the increase of racial violence against African Americans throughout the region, and the lack of protection by the supposedly friendly Republican-controlled federal government. Most notable were two incidents in 1906, beginning with events surrounding a riot in Brownsville, Texas. In August a group of soldiers from the all black Twentieth-fifth Regiment were involved in a riot that resulted in one death and the injuring of the white police chief. A racially biased report of the incident was sent to Washington, and Roosevelt dishonorably discharged the entire regiment, barring the men from ever holding military or civil service positions. African Americans across the nation were stunned by the president's actions. White supremacist Senator Benjamin

Tillman of South Carolina gleefully referred to Roosevelt's handling of the situation as an "executive lynching." A month after the Brownsville incident a race riot erupted in Atlanta, which led to wholesale looting and burning of black homes and businesses. It was the most destructive riot since Wilmington in 1898, and despite attempts by some white citizens to improve race relations in its wake, a number of prominent African Americans left the city permanently. The effects of events like those in Brownsville and Atlanta reverberated across the South. At Raleigh's annual Emancipation Day celebration in 1907, black educator and event organizer Charles N. Hunter, who had previously promoted voting rights, gave a Booker T. Washington style accommodationist speech, counseling African Americans to "seek honorable employment and render faithful and efficient service," and to "keep out of the courthouse."³⁷

Weakened in numbers because of migration north and apparently in spirit following an increase in racial violence, a number of the state's prominent black men who had been politically active for decades turned their attention—at least temporarily—to building and strengthening their neighborhoods, businesses, and community institutions. These efforts were certainly also driven in part by the reality of the hardening color line, as segregation was increasingly codified in public spaces and residential areas. In the first decade of the twentieth century three all-white suburbs with racially restrictive covenants were established to the north and west of downtown: Cameron Park (1906), Boylan Heights (1907), and Glenwood (1910). The first suburb created and marketed for African Americans was the aforementioned Southpark, located southeast of downtown and developed by Edward Johnson, along with a white partner. The creation of these neighborhoods signaled the direction of racially divided growth in Raleigh for decades to come; at the end of the

twentieth century, areas to the north and west of downtown continued to be predominately white, while black citizens lived primarily in the south and eastern sectors.³⁸

As the races separated black businesses of all descriptions began to emerge to serve the community. Existing black businesses began to move off Fayetteville Street after about 1902, and resettled on East Hargett Street, where a segregated but flourishing district developed. Through a series of oral histories conducted in the 1950s, historian Wilmouth Carter concluded that African American business and professional men were both “pushed” onto Hargett Street by white property owners and “pulled” there by a sense that there would be strength in numbers. Sometime before 1910 Dr. Pope joined the exodus, and moved his office from Fayetteville Street to 11 1/2 East Hargett Street, above the People’s Drug Store, a black owned enterprise. He later moved another block east, into a building with other black doctors and professional men.³⁹

Along with building neighborhoods and businesses, a key means of strengthening the African American community during the Jim Crow era was through establishing and supporting an infrastructure of black churches, civic organizations, and schools. John N. Winters, a prominent African American developer whose free ancestors settled in Raleigh in 1793, stated in an oral history interview in 1989 that “most of our real history either exists in structures relating to educational institutions like Shaw and St. Augustine’s or to fraternal organizations like the Masons, the Odd Fellows, or with the churches...[b]ecause these were the institutions where the majority of our people assembled and, with their meager earnings, placed their monies together to at least hold and develop the land.”⁴⁰

Dr. Pope was very involved in efforts of this type, particularly during the first two decades of the twentieth century. A life-long Baptist, he was very active in the congregation

of First Baptist Church, serving as Sunday school teacher and in various administrative capacities. Although there were several prominent black churches in Raleigh by 1900, most of the town's African American leaders belonged either to First Baptist or St. Ambrose Episcopal (associated with St. Augustine's College and relocated next door to Dr. Pope's house on South Wilmington Street in 1900). First Baptist was actually two congregations—one white, one black—created soon after the Civil War when the original church split along racial lines. In 1904 the black congregation erected a grand neo-Gothic structure at the corner of Morgan and Wilmington Streets, facing the North Carolina State Capitol. Solidly built of brick with an imposing spire and bell tower, the sanctuary featured elegant woodwork and stained glass windows bearing the names of those men (including Dr. Pope) who had helped finance construction. Three of Raleigh's preeminent churches anchored the other three corners of the Capitol Square: First Baptist (white), Christ Episcopal, and First Presbyterian. As the only black congregation to build in this prominent location, clearly the members of First Baptist were making a symbolic statement about the equality of all men in the eyes of God—even if the current state government was trampling upon African American civil and political rights.⁴¹

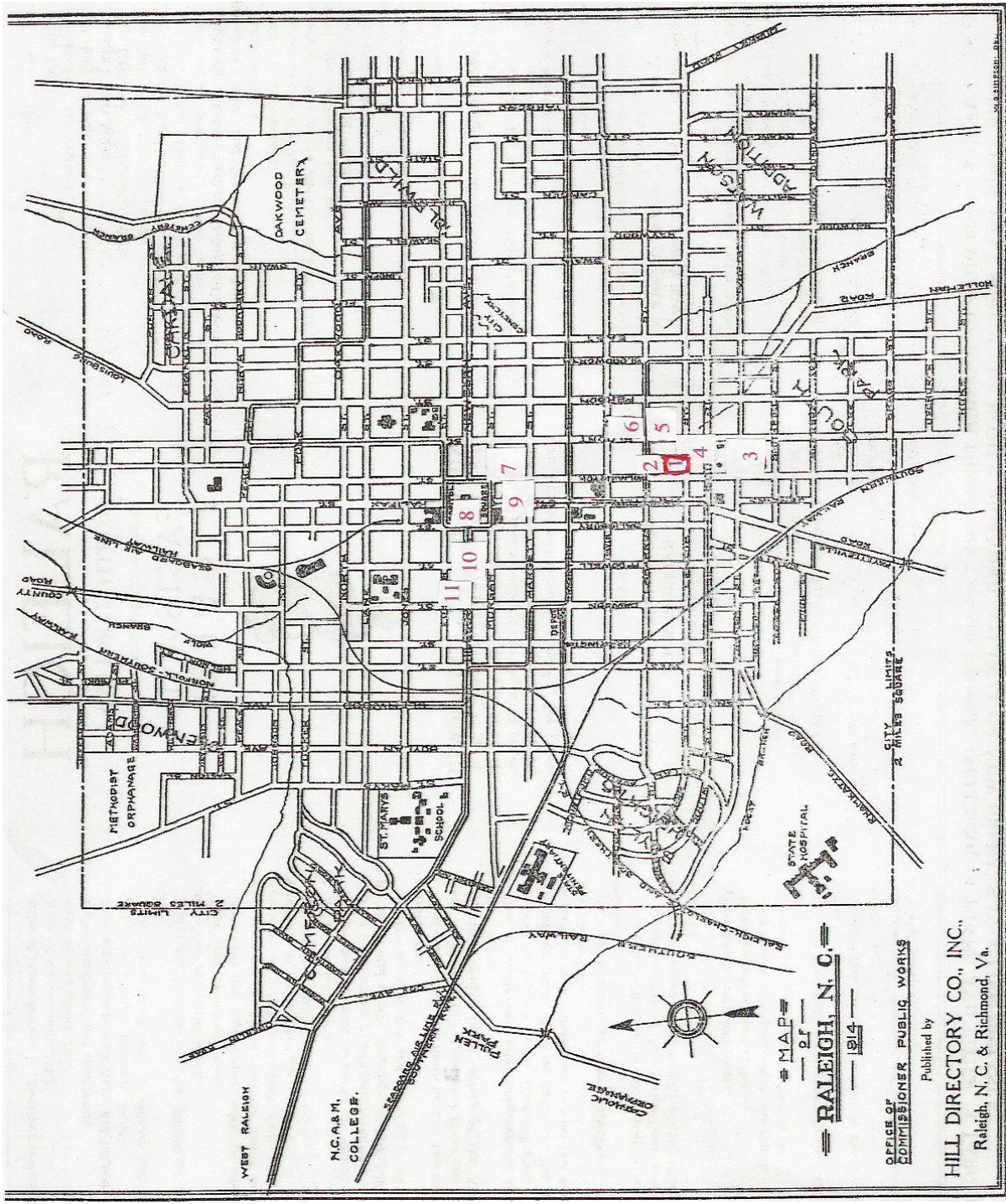
The male leaders of First Baptist church, including James Young and M.T. Pope, were also among the founders and leaders of the Raleigh chapter of the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge. Religion, masonry, and the construction of manhood have always been intertwined in American society, and that relationship had heightened importance in the African American community from Reconstruction to the dawn of the modern Civil Rights era. According to Angela Hornsby, in her detailed study of black masonry in North Carolina, church and lodge “were critical racial sites where black leadership found expression and validation,” especially

in a segregated society. Established in the 1787, the Prince Hall Masonic Lodge (named for its free black founder) was created as an alternative to white-only fraternal orders. Bishop James W. Hood of the A.M.E. Zion Church established the first Prince Hall lodge in North Carolina in 1870, and by 1910 there were 358 chapters with more than 10,000 members in the state. The Raleigh chapter built a three-storey brick meeting hall at the corner of East Cabarrus and Blount Streets in 1906, a block behind Dr. Pope's house. Like the Queen City Drug Company building in Charlotte, the Raleigh lodge building was a center for African American enterprise, providing commercial space for black businesses on the first floor, and serving on occasion as a meeting site for black leaders. The various positive by-products of masonry prompted both Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois to praise its benefits. Washington viewed Masonic lodges as places where black men could learn business skills and establish economic networks. Du Bois saw the benefits of black men learning to master "the art of social organized life." But the most important psychological component of masonry was the construction of black manhood. Hornsby argues that "masonry's larger purpose remained the self-fashioning of an autonomous black masculine image," and that during the "nadir of Jim Crow, black men wielded the secret tool of freemasonry to realize black empowerment and secure race and gender solidarity."⁴²

Along with churches and fraternal orders, African American educational institutions provided the third leg that supported the stepstool of progress during the early twentieth century. Dr. Pope understood the role of education as a means of racial uplift, and was an active supporter of African American schools throughout his life, particularly in the 1890s and first decade of the 1900s. He was a trustee of the Wharton Normal School in Charlotte, and his own alma mater, Shaw University. Dr. Pope sat on the board of Shaw from 1890 to

Key to Map

1. Pope House, South Wilmington Street
2. St. Ambrose Episcopal Church, South Wilmington Street
3. Shaw University
4. Josephus Daniels House, South Street
5. Tupper Memorial Church, Blount Street
6. Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, Blount Street
7. First Baptist Church, S. Wilmington Street
8. Confederate Monument, State Capitol Square
9. Beginning of Black Business District, East Hargett Street, off Fayetteville Street
10. Hillsborough Street
11. Dr. Andrew Watson Goodwin House, Hillsborough Street



Raleigh Map, 1914



First Baptist Church, South Wilmington Street, 1904



Prince Hall Masonic Lodge, Blount Street, 1906

1902, along with mostly white men from New York and New England. Few black men served as trustees with Dr. Pope, but two of the most prominent included Dr. H. L. Morehouse of New York City (for whom Morehouse College in Atlanta would be named in 1916), and his fellow alumnus, former congressman Henry Cheatham. However, Pope's relationship with the administration at Shaw, particularly the white president, Charles Meserve, soured beginning in 1905, as the result of a series of incidents involving one of the school's doctors, M. D. Bowen. The incidents, which occurred during 1905 and 1907, provide a rare opportunity to understand Pope's character—and his temper—and illuminate issues of race, class, and manhood in the South during the early twentieth century.⁴³

Dr. Bowen graduated from the Leonard Medical School in 1895, and immediately joined the faculty. Apparently he was not well liked, as Dr. Pope noted years later that the students regarded him with “disgust and hatred.” More important, Bowen had a history of sexually harassing women, to such an extent that Dr. Pope referred to him as a “grand immoral scoundrel.” In 1905, Pope and his wife were invited to a reception at Shaw, hosted by President Meserve. Two days before the reception, the Popes received an anonymous letter accusing Bowen, a married man, of being “caught in a compromising attitude” with a female patient of the Colored Blind and Deaf Institute in Raleigh, who happened to be a cousin of Mrs. Pope. Upon receipt of the letter, Dr. Pope paid a call on Meserve to tell him that he and his wife could not attend an event where this man would be present. He showed the letter to Meserve, who responded in a somewhat dismissive manner and told Pope that these were only charges and that they should attend the reception. Pope, in his own words, “lost [my] temper” and explained that there was a great deal of evidence of Bowen's immoral behavior toward women. The matter finally came to a head two years later, when a young

nurse at Leonard Medical School came forward and accused Bowen of harassment and attempted rape. Medical students at Shaw were also increasingly alarmed at Dr. Bowen's behavior, and one publicly censured him in a speech in front of the dean of the medical school. Not only did Meserve refuse to take action against Bowen, he threatened to expel any students who made such accusations. A group of students then went to Dr. Pope for help, and he arranged for the recording of several official affidavits, sworn in front of a white magistrate. A damning statement was given by the nurse who had been assaulted, along with others accusing Bowen of having an affair with a white woman who lived near the university. Included among these was the affidavit of the white woman's husband, who stated that he was beginning divorce proceedings and would name Bowen as a correspondent.⁴⁴

Despite the overwhelming evidence of Bowen's improprieties, it was only his involvement with a married white woman that finally prodded Meserve to take action and remove him from the Shaw faculty. As Dr. Pope put it, only "that in case this matter got out, [and] might make a great deal of trouble for the school," did Meserve take action, and "what could not be secured upon evidence of immorality in connection with a lady right on the grounds of the school was promptly accomplished as soon as a white woman was involved." "That," he added sharply, "had a very bad impression upon those knowing about it."⁴⁵

As a man who led his life in an upright, moral manner, this incident deeply offended Dr. Pope. More importantly, it emphasized his lack of power and influence as black man—even at his own alma mater, where he had served as a trustee. It is significant to note that he refers to the black nurse as a "lady," but that the "white woman" is not given that distinction. Apparently the white woman in question was of the working class, a fact that must have further angered Pope, who, like men of his generation, believed in the importance of class

over race in determining a person's station in life. In addition, Bowen's behavior was not only morally reprehensible, it was "unmanly" by the social standards of the early twentieth century. It was clear to Dr. Pope that Meserve's inaction until a white woman became involved signaled his dismissal of the idea of black manhood as equal to white manhood (and presumably that all black men were inherently savages and sexual deviants, no matter how well-educated), and that white women of any class were worthy of protection, while black middle class black women were not.

Anger and indignation about this series of events and what they represented gnawed at Dr. Pope for many years. In 1911, when he was seriously ill and in a Philadelphia hospital following an operation, Meserve wrote him a note of encouragement. Pope responded angrily, "I can not accept your sympathy as sincere until known grievances have been settled." Meserve, apparently forgetting the Bowen incident and clearly offended, wrote back that "my heart prompted me to write you a letter that I hoped might be of comfort to you," and that "as far as known grievances are concerned, I do not know to what you refer" (both men underlined these words in their respective letters). As late as 1916 Dr. Pope still was seething over the incident, and wrote an angry and detailed letter to a colleague outlining what had occurred.⁴⁶

It is possible that Dr. Pope's anger over the Bowen incident was exacerbated by the illness and death of his wife, Lydia Walden Pope, in 1906. Little is known about her death, though she apparently lost her life to tuberculosis, and family tradition holds that she was returned to Winton for burial. Though nearly fifty years old, he was now an eligible widower in the community, and was soon courting Delia Haywood Phillips. Twenty-two years younger than Dr. Pope, Delia was from prominent black and white Raleigh families. Her

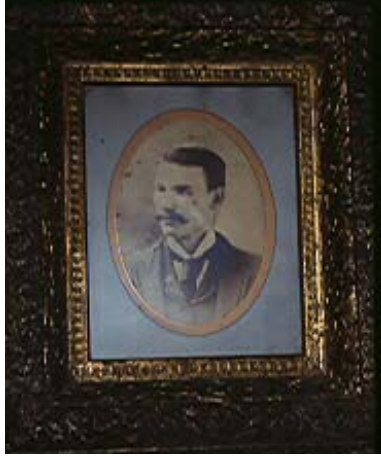
great-grandfather was likely John Haywood, first mayor of Raleigh and an early state treasurer. One of his sons is believed to have had a relationship with a light-skinned African American woman, probably a slave in the household. From that union was born Frank Phillips, Delia's father. An early twentieth century photograph in an ornate frame in the Pope House collection, thought to be of Frank Phillips, shows a distinguished looking man of very light complexion with a moustache. Through the Haywood family Delia was related to a number of prominent African Americans, including cousins Anna Julia Cooper, a prominent educator in the Washington, D.C., area, and Major Andrew Haywood, a fellow officer of Dr. Pope in the 3rd North Carolina Volunteers. Her sister was Mary E. Phillips, a well-known teacher in the city, for whom a public school was later named.⁴⁷

The couple was married on November 17, 1907, in a ceremony "at home," as the engraved announcement sent out by Delia's aunt notes. A souvenir deck of playing cards from the 1907 tri-centennial celebration of the founding of Jamestown, Virginia, suggests that the couple may have taken a honeymoon trip there, or visited during their courtship the previous summer. The exposition did have a "Negro Day" in August, and the Raleigh and Gaston Railroad offered excursion trips to the exposition aimed at black riders. One of the highlights of the celebration was an exhibition hall devoted to African American history, featuring a North Carolina exhibit organized by Charles Hunter of Raleigh. To the chagrin of the celebration's white supremacist organizers, the federal government appropriated \$100,000 for the Negro Exhibition Building, and Hunter was able to secure \$5,000 from the North Carolina Legislature for the exhibit he was organizing (North Carolina was the only southern state to make such a donation). Designed by an African American architect, the building housed displays that chronicled black progress since the Civil War and promoted

racial uplift. One of the main exhibits was a series of three-dimensional dioramas by the accomplished and academically trained black sculptor, Meta Warrick. Representing significant events and themes in African American history from a black perspective, the dioramas depicted scenes from the arrival of the first enslaved Africans at Jamestown in 1619 to a contemporary tableau of “Improved Home Life.” The latter, which portrayed a family at home in a comfortably furnished parlor, would have looked familiar to the Popes.⁴⁸

A year after their wedding the couple welcomed a daughter, Evelyn Bennett Pope, and two years later a second child, Ruth Permelia Pope. Both children were given middle names in honor of their grandmothers; Bennett was Delia’s mother’s family name, and Permelia was M.T. Pope’s mother’s first name. One of the most engaging photographs found in the house is of Evelyn and Ruth, taken about 1912, showing the girls in white dresses clutching fairly expensive porcelain dolls with white faces and blond hair. The picture was apparently taken on the front porch, with a large piece of cloth strung across two posts as a backdrop. Imitating the setting in a professional studio, a settee, plant stand, and carpet were brought out from the parlor (the furniture remains in the Pope House). At an age when most men were becoming grandfathers, Pope now had young children, and by all indications he took great pleasure in his daughters. He was perhaps a bit indulgent, as numerous toys and children’s books found in the house nearly a century later attests. Among the most interesting items are several pieces of hand-made doll furniture, clearly imitating the oak hallstand and dining table and chairs in the house, likely made for the girls by Dr. Pope.

Despite the limitations and prejudice wrought by segregation, Dr. Pope appears to have been successful both as a physician and a businessman during the first two decades of the twentieth century. Documents in the Pope family papers suggest that he attended



Frank Haywood Phillips, Pope House Collection



Delia Haywood Phillips, ca. 1905, Pope House Collection



Evelyn and Ruth Pope, ca. 1912, Pope House Collection

meetings of the National Medical Association in 1906 and 1907, and the president of Raleigh's Citizens National Bank wrote in 1910 that Pope had a "lucrative practice, seems to be saving his money, and owns a bit of good real estate in the city." W. B. Jones, a white attorney and state senator, wrote the same year that he had "been connected with [Dr. Pope] in a great many business transactions and I know him to be a man of the highest type of character and integrity." Pope's business ventures included serving as secretary of the the Progressive Real Estate Company, ownership of a local dairy, and the leasing farmland in Northampton County that he had inherited from his father to tenants who grew cotton.⁴⁹

As a man of means and a leader in the community, Dr. Pope kept up with new technologies and was one of the first people in Raleigh to own an automobile. In 1911 or 1912 he bought his first car and built a wooden garage behind his house that was accessed via Stronach's Alley. In August of 1912, a Baptist newsletter in Bertie County reported that "Dr. M.T. Pope, of Raleigh, spent a few days visiting relatives and friends in our community...[h]e came down in his splendid auto." He apparently was stopped for speeding in 1914, as the mayor of Raleigh, James Johnson, wrote a letter in September of that year that noted "he has been driving an automobile here for two or three years and has never been up for exceeding the speed limits or anything else." A late 1910s photograph of a breakfast at St. Augustine's College shows Dr. Pope in a group photo seated in front of three automobiles, two Ford's and one that is unidentified. Clearly the inclusion of the vehicles was meant to indicate the prosperity of the group.⁵⁰

By 1915 Dr. Pope was well established as a respected physician, community leader, and family man. Personally and professionally, his life exemplified the ideal of American manhood of the era. Without flinching or capitulating, he withstood the dramatic and

wrenching political and social change in the years since his return to Raleigh at the dawn of the new century. Soon national events, as well as renewed calls for equality at home, were to ignite a period of civil rights activity that would culminate in a bold attempt to regain voting rights and a political voice for African Americans in North Carolina. Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope, who never relinquished his manhood, would be called upon to be a leader in these efforts, and to stand up for the rights of all black men.

Endnotes

¹The date of Pope's arrival is surmised from the contract with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, June 5, 1899, for shipping his horse from Charlotte to Raleigh, which is now in the Pope Family Papers, SHC. The *News and Observer* noted his arrival on August 11, stating simply "Raleigh has a new colored doctor, Dr. M.T. Pope, who comes from Charlotte." Elizabeth Culbertson Waugh, *North Carolina's Capital: Raleigh* (Raleigh: 1992), pp. 157-166 (hereafter cited as *Raleigh*).

²Catherine W. Bishir, "Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past in Raleigh and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1885-1915," in W. Fitzhugh Brundage, editor, *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: 2000), pp. 142-145.

³For an overview of disfranchisement in the South during this era see J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1888-1910* (New Haven: 1974); Michael Perman, *Struggle for Mastery: Disfranchisement in the South, 1888-1908* (Chapel Hill: 2001); and Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, MA: 2003), especially pp. 442-464. Scholarship on the politics of disfranchisement and the 1900 election in North Carolina includes Helen Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: 1952), pp. 179-217; Eric Anderson, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1876-1901: The Black Second* (Baton Rouge: 1981), pp. 292-312; Paul Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: 1985), pp. 241-267; Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, *Gender and Jim Crow: Women and the Politics of White Supremacy in North Carolina, 1896-1920* (Chapel Hill: 1996), pp. 120-126; Thomas Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: 1998), pp. 81-88; and James L. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: 1998), pp.133-141.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Elizabeth Reid Murray, "Lawson Andrew Scruggs," in William S. Powell, editor, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: 1985), pp. 307-308 (hereafter cited as *DNCB*; Edmonds, p. 180; Anderson pp. 308-309; Gilmore, p. 131. For a biography of White, see Benjamin R. Justesen, *George Henry White: An Even Chance in the Race of Life* (Baton Rouge: 2001).

⁶For more on skin tone and class identity during this era, see Willard B. Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color: The Black Elite, 1880-1920* (Bloomington: 1990), pp. 9-10, 23-25, 70-71, and 150-156.

⁷"Physician's Certificate of Registration," June 6, 1899, Pope Family Papers, SHC; *Maloney's Raleigh City Directory*, vol. 5, 1901, p. 225; Shaw University Annual Report,

1900, Shaw University Archives p. 6; Dr. M.T. Pope to Dr. S.N. Vass, April 18, 1916, Pope Family Papers, SHC; Wake County Tax List, Raleigh Township, 1900, microfilm, North Carolina State Archives. The tax record lists a value of five dollars under the category of firearms, and a late nineteenth century pistol is in the Pope House collection.

⁸The relevant portion of the 1872 map is reproduced in Elizabeth Reid Murray, *Wake: Capital County of North Carolina, Volume 1, Prehistory through Centennial* (Capital County Publishing Company: 1983), p. 639; Sanborn Insurance Map, 1896, North Carolina Collection, UNC-Chapel Hill; Deed of Property, 1899; Linda Simmons-Henry and Linda Harris Edminsten, *Culture Town: Life in Raleigh's African American Communities* (Raleigh: 1993), passim; Waugh, *Raleigh*, p. 127; Author's interview with Ruth Pope, January 30, 1999.

⁹For a brief biography of Dr. Lewyn E. McCauley, see "Association Recognizes McCauley Hospital Here," *News and Observer*, Raleigh, April 26, 1942. The history of the Josephus Daniels house is described in Waugh, *Raleigh*, pp. 104-105.

¹⁰Leland A. Roth, *A Concise History of American Architecture* (New York: 1979) pp. 178-184.

¹¹The information on the house, room use, and furnishings in this and the following paragraphs is based on examination of the existing structure, extant artifacts, and general knowledge of domestic arrangements of the period.

¹²Lace curtains can be seen in the parlor window a ca. 1915 photograph of the Pope family standing on the front porch of the house, and an Oriental rug, along with an extant settee and the leg of a plant stand, are visible in a photograph of Evelyn and Ruth Pope taken a few years earlier. The family portraits that hung in the parlor are mentioned in a letter to Delia Pope, 1936, Pope Family Papers, SHC. The portraits of Permilia Pope and J.W. Walden are still in the Pope House collection, along with ornately framed photographs of the Walden family and of Frank Haywood Phillips (added after Pope's 1907 marriage to Delia Haywood Phillips). Certain pieces of furniture bear labels or inscriptions from Charlotte and Raleigh stores. In *Aristocrats of Color*, Willard Gatewood notes that oak and mahogany furniture, musical instruments, ancestral pictures and small libraries were often to be found in the homes of black elites across the country (pp. 195-196).

¹³Odum made these statements in his doctoral dissertation at Columbia University, entitled *Social and Mental Traits of the Negro*, which was published in 1910. As quoted in Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York: 1976), pp. 458-459. For more on Odum, see Daniel Joseph Signal, *The War Within: From Victorian to Modernist Thought in the South, 1919-1945* (Chapel Hill: 1982), pp. 115-152.

¹⁴The Hampton Institute photograph is reproduce in William Seale, *The Tasteful Interlude: American Interiors Through the Camera's Eye, 1860-1917* (Walnut Creek:1995), p. 155. The two photographs from the Paris Exposition are reproduced in *A Small Nation of People:*

W.E.B. Du Bois and African American Portraits of Progress (Washington: 2003), frontispiece and p. 68. The quote is from an essay by Deborah Willis in the same publication, p. 67. For more on African American photography, see Deborah Willis, *Reflections in Black: A History of Black Photographers, 1840 to the Present* (New York: 2000).

¹⁵Dr. Pope's telephone number appears on his business card and letterhead, Pope Family Papers, SHC. The Sanborn Insurance Map of 1903 shows the two rear exterior doors, and the existing architectural evidence strongly indicates the original layout as described in this paragraph.

¹⁶Bishir, "Landmarks of Power," pp. 155-161.

¹⁷Waugh, *Raleigh*, pp. 182-183.

¹⁸*Ibid.*; Murray, "Lawson Andrew Scruggs," p. 307. On the history and development of St. Agnes Hospital, see: W. Montague Cobb, "Saint Agnes Hospital, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1896-1961," *Journal of the National Medical Association*, September, 1961; "Training School for Nurses," *The Gazette*, Raleigh, July 24, 1897; and "Appeal of Woman Brought Hospital," *The News and Observer*, Raleigh, April 26, 1942. Todd L. Savitt has written extensively about the Leonard Medical School and black medical schools in the United States during the era, including "Training the 'Consecrated, Skillful, Christian Physician': Documents Illustrating Student Life at Leonard Medical School, 1882-1918," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 75 (1998), pp. 251-254 and "The Education of Black Physicians at Shaw University, 1882-1918," in Jeffrey Crow and Flora J. Hatley, editors, *Black Americans in North Carolina and the South* (UNC Press: 1984), pp. 165-173.

¹⁹Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, p. 316.

²⁰A first edition copy of Washington's *Up From Slavery* was found in the Pope house, and was presumably owned by Dr. Pope. For basic biographical information on Washington, and discussion of the debate with Du Bois, see John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom, A History of African Americans*, seventh edition (New York: 1994), pp. 270-277, and Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African-American History and its Meanings 1619 to the Present* (New York: 2006), pp. 154-157. The classic biography of Du Bois is David Levering Lewis, *W.E.B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race, 1868-1919* (New York: 1993), and this quote is from p. 174.

²¹*Ibid.*: W.E.B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: Bantam Classics edition, 1989) pp. 37-40.

²²Rev. M.L. Latta, *The History of My Life and Work: Autobiography by Rev. M.L. Latta A.M., D.D.* (Raleigh: 1903), pp. 15-16, 21, 32, 39, 44.

²³*Ibid.*, pp. 93-96, 309-311.

²⁴Lewis, *Du Bois*, p. 240. On the development of black businesses in Raleigh after 1900 see Wilmouth Carter, *The Urban Negro in the South* (New York: 1961), pp. 230-231, and various oral histories in Linda Simmons Henry and Linda Harris Edminsten, *Culture Town: Life in Raleigh's African American Communities* (Raleigh: 1993). For development of black business in Durham, and specifically North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company, see *Black Business in the New South: A Social History of the North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company* (Chicago: 1973), and Leslie Brown, "John Merrick, Aaron Moore, and C.C. Spaulding" in Howard E. Covington Jr. and Marion A. Ellis, coeditors, *The North Carolina Century: Tar Heels Who Made a Difference, 1900-2000* (Chapel Hill: 2002), pp. 163-167. Program entitled "The Booker T. Washington Visit to Wilson, N.C.—Auspices of the Negro Business League, November 1, 1910," from the Vick papers, photocopy in possession of the author.

²⁵*Charlotte Daily Observer*, August 19, 1902; *Star of Zion*, September 18 and October 2, 1902.

²⁶*Star of Zion*, September 28, 1902.

²⁷*Ibid.*

²⁸Wake County voter numbers and percentages are calculated from a typescript copy of the original voter registration log in the North Carolina State Archives. The Johnston County information is courtesy of Todd Johnson, director of the Johnston County Heritage Center. *Charlotte Daily Observer*, April 28, 1903; *Star of Zion*, November 6, 1902; *News and Observer*, October 27, 1902.

²⁹The "Certificate of Permanent Registration," is in the Pope Family Papers, SHC.

³⁰*Ibid.* On the North Carolina Constitution of 1835 and disfranchisement of free blacks, see John Hope Franklin, *The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860* (Chapel Hill: 1995), pp. 105-114.

³¹*Star of Zion*, September 25 and October 2, 1902.

³²Anderson, *The Black Second*, pp. 310-312; Justesen, *George Henry White*, p. 311; *Star of Zion*, October 23, 1902. The Vick controversy is described in Seth M. Scheiner, "President Roosevelt and the Negro, 1901-1908," *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 47, July 1962, p. 174.

³³The quotes from Roosevelt and Daniels are published in Scheiner, "President Roosevelt and the Negro," pp. 169-182. For a more complete analysis of Washington's dinner at the White House and its fallout, see Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex* (New York: 2001), pp. 52-58, and p. 424.

³⁴The newspaper clippings dating from October of 1902 to March of 1903 (not all identified), and the cartoon, were found among in the Vick home in Wilson. As mentioned in chapter four, they are now lost and presumed destroyed. Photocopies are in the author's possession. The Roosevelt quote is from the same article, p. 176.

³⁵The Giles cased is described in the *Charlotte Daily Observer*, April 28, 1903. Williams, Young *DNCB*; *Raleigh Post*, March 9, 1905.

³⁶*Culture Town*, pp. 52-52.

³⁷Scheiner, "President Roosevelt and the Negro," pp. 181-182; Morris, *Theodore Rex*, pp. 453-482; pp. 314-315. The Charles Hunter quote is found in Angela Hornsby, "'Cast Down But Not Out': Black Manhood and Racial Uplift in North Carolina, 1900-1930," unpublished doctoral dissertation, (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill: 2003), p. 194.

³⁸For more on the development of early Raleigh suburbs, see Richard Mattson, "The Evolution of Raleigh's Black Neighborhoods in the 19th and 20th Centuries," unpublished draft report, North Carolina State Office of Historic Preservation, p. 25. For a classic case study of the emergence of residential racial segregation in the South during the twentieth century, see Thomas Hanchett, *Sorting Out the New South City: Race, Class, and Urban Development in Charlotte, 1875-1975* (Chapel Hill: 1996).

³⁹Carter, *The Urban Negro in the South*, pp. 53 and 230-231; Mattson, "The Evolution of Raleigh's Black Neighborhoods," pp. 23-24. The year that Dr. Pope moved his office to Hargett Street is not known, but letterhead from before 1910 lists him at that address. A business card probably from the 1910s lists him at 13 East Hargett, over Hamlin's Drug Store. For more on the development of Hargett Street, see *Culture Town*, pp. xvi-xviii, 60-64, 72-74.

⁴⁰The Winters interview is quoted in *Culture Town*, pp. 57-59.

⁴¹For a brief history of First Baptist Church, see *Culture Town*, p. 145.

⁴²A general description of the development of the Prince Hall Masonic Order can be found in Gatewood, *Aristocrats of Color*, pp. 212-213. For an in-depth analysis of the Prince Hall Masonic Order in North Carolina and the construction of African American manhood, see Hornsbee, "Cast Down But Not Out," pp. 136-154. For more on the lodge building in Raleigh, see *Culture Town*, pp. 60-61. Among the artifacts in the Pope House are Dr. Pope's Masonic pin and a ceremonial sword, suggesting he served in a leadership or administrative capacity.

⁴³See Chapter 3, endnote 23. Shaw University Annual Report, 1900, p. 6.

⁴⁴The information about Bowen's behavior and Meserve's lack of action is from a collection of documents Dr. Pope kept together, now with the Pope Family Papers in the SHC. These

include sworn affidavits from Virginia Jenkins, March 13, 1907, Dempsey Holdman, March 14, 1907, and Caroline Medlin, March 15, 1907. The letter quoted from here is Dr. M. T. Pope to Dr. S. N. Vass, April 18, 1916.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Charles F. Meserve to Dr, M. T. Pope, March 7 and 11, 1911; Pope to Meserve, March 9, 1911, and Pope to Dr. S. N. Vass, April 18, 1916. All in the Pope Family Papers, SHC.

⁴⁷Genealogical information on the Phillips family comes from a bible in the Pope House Collection, and from Louise Daniel Hutchinson, *Anna Cooper: A Voice from the South* (Washington: 1981), pp. 3-14.

⁴⁸The marriage announcement is in the Pope Family Papers, SHC, and the deck of souvenir playing cards is in the Pope House collection. For more on the Negro Exhibition Building and Charles Hunter at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition, see: Hornsby, "Cast Down But Not Out," pp. 204-205. For an analysis of Meta Warrick's display, see Fitzhugh W. Brundage, "Meta Warrick's 1907 Negro Tableaux and (Re) Presenting African American Historical Memory," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 89, March 2003, pp. 1368-1400.

⁴⁹Pope's attendance at these conferences is suggested by existence of the minutes of the 1906 meeting and the program of the 1907 meeting in the Pope Family Papers. These statements come from a series of recommendation or reference letters written in August of 1910, though it is not known for what purpose. Joseph G. Brown, August 29, 1910, and W. B. Jones, August 29, 1910, Pope Family Papers, SHC. Documents in the Pope Family Papers from the 1920s relating to his business ventures include: letterhead and a stock certificate from the Progressive Real Estate Company; letterhead from the Rock Hill Diary listing Dr. Pope as proprietor; and a lease dated 1926 and a letter dated 1927 regarding rent and the farming of cotton on the Carter Walden farm in Rich Square in Northampton County. Although these documents all date to the 1920s, it is reasonable to assume that Dr. Pope was involved in these business or similar ones between 1900 and 1920.

⁵⁰The 1914 Sanborn Insurance Map of the property shows a one-car wooden garage, which does not appear on the 1909 map. It was torn down in 1997. The quote is from an August 1912 newsletter now the collection of the C.S. Brown Regional Cultural Center and Museum. James Johnson, September 21, 1914, Pope Family Papers, SHC. Dr. Pope's 1923 and 1931 Raleigh driver's licenses are in the Poper Family Papers, SHC. The photograph is published in *Culture Town*, p. x. Dr. Pope is seated to the far right, and it is assumed one of the three automobiles pictured is his.

Chapter VI

“We knew we wouldn’t win”

- *Calvin Lightner reflecting on the Raleigh municipal election of 1919*

In December of 1915, the *Raleigh Times* published a letter to the editor from a “Citizen” entitled “Constructive Suggestions on ‘Negro Question.’” The unnamed writer discussed the recent citywide effort to retire the debt on the Y.M.C.A., built for whites only. Noting the lack of facilities for African American youth, the writer pointed out that young black men faced even greater temptations and obstacles than whites, and that they too would become “future citizens of our city; they are in our midst...[and] something ought to be done to better their moral education.” Written in stridently paternalistic tones, the author notes with pride that “Raleigh has an unusually good negro population, especially is this true of the older generation,” and that there “is the kindest of feeling for the white people on the part of the negro...which accounts for the perfect harmony that has prevailed here between the races for generations.” The “Citizen” urged meetings between white and black leaders “for the purpose of considering carefully and thoughtfully what steps should be taken toward the uplift of the of the younger generation of our negro population,” so as to avoid developing “a very dangerous element among us.”¹

The editor of the *Raleigh Times* praised this letter under the title “Where Races May Cooperate,” referring to disfranchisement and codified Jim Crow segregation while acknowledging that times were changing. “We fool ourselves if we for a moment think that we are done with the ‘negro problem’ with a law; the negro is a continuing question of vital moment in the material and moral economics of our life.” The editor lamented that “a generation of negroes...are in danger of growing into citizenship without benefit or example of guidance from the white people or the more thoughtful members of their own race,” which could lead to “dreams of license by a freedom of action that calls for but gets no check to the raw impulses incident to environment and lack of training.” In other words, stepping out of their carefully crafted place in segregated southern society. In an effort to have a meaningful discourse on the subject, the editor invited black and white citizens to send their views. Two of Raleigh’s professional black men responded, T. L. McCoy, an employment agent, and A. B. Johnson, a teacher at the Berry O’Kelley Training School in Method. McCoy’s carefully worded letter was the sharpest of the two, agreeing that in Raleigh blacks and whites got along very well, but noting that “the dominant race is dependant on the inferior race (so to speak) for services that no other race can or will render,” and that this service “goes into every civic and economic channel of domestic life.” “Granting this to be a fact,” he queried, “is it the part of wisdom of the white people to erect uncomfortable tenement houses, uncomfortable school houses, for negro use?” Referring to the recently completed white Y.M.C.A., McCoy asked if it was right to build these places for the purpose of white moral development while “leaving the young colored men and women at home to uplift themselves as best they may, is this the role of Christianity to be practiced by the dominant race?” He concluded by calling on the white citizens of Raleigh to follow the Golden Rule, such that

“the dominant race withhold nothing from the negro that will make of him a better man, a better woman, useful man, a useful woman, in every department of civic life.”²

In response to the McCoy and Johnson letters, the *Raleigh Times* received a racist rant from one H.T. Roberts, a “true Blood Southerner,” asking that the paper print no more letters from negroes, “but if you will continue to Publish them anyway Please Black your face and send the SMUTTY SHEET to some YANKEY north.” The *Times*’ editorial response to this letter reveals the paternalism and duality of reason at the core of white supremacist thinking, as well as a certain class distinction among whites. Of Roberts and men like him, the *Times* editor asserted that they “cannot be expected to understand that their very prejudice against the negro because of his color is even more dangerous than the Northern fanatic blindly partial to him because of it,” and that “such an attitude means two things which any white man should blush to admit: fear of the negro as a competitor, and a determination to ‘keep him under’ by methods of repression and injustice.” In other words the superiority of the white race was unquestioned, and rather than oppressing the black race, white supremacy was providing a peaceful, positive solution by drawing a firm color line and maintaining social and political control. “Can they not see,” the editor posited, “that the leaders in those great revolutions which ended ‘Reconstruction’ in the South and again in the State in 1898 and 1900 asserted the principle of ‘White Supremacy’ were directed by leaders who, so far from hating the negro, felt for him?” Roberts wrote back, stating that he did not intend his first letter for publication, and resented “the insults you Hurlled at me in a true Southern stile.” (The paper published both of Robert’s letters with misspellings and incorrect use of punctuation and capitalization, obviously to emphasize what the editors considered the thinking of an ignorant and uneducated man). On the “negro question” Roberts fired the

final shot. “[Y]ou ask for the whites to Help the Negro, yes I say help but help him out of news papers out whites parlors out whites carriages out of Postoffices and out Politics and into the field where he belongs.”³

What this extraordinary exchange reveals is awareness among Raleigh’s citizens—white and black—that certain national events and the evolving attitudes of a new generation of African Americans threatened to disrupt the fragile color line established in North Carolina and the South scarcely a generation before. Focused on the city’s young men, the discussion also reveals concern among white leaders that if left unchecked, black youth might question their role as second-class citizens in a segregated society. Though couched in terms of black men turning to crime, clearly the underlying fear was that there might be an attempt to assert their citizenship and manhood through efforts for equal civil and political rights. Indeed, over the next five years North Carolina’s white leaders would continue to extol the virtues of a racially segregated and partially disfranchised society, while black leaders of both the fusion era and those who came of age after 1896 would test the boundaries and strength of that hegemony. It would not be a clear or easy path for African American leaders, and personalities would prove as problematic as cracking the grip of white power. For the city’s black men, issues of patriotism and citizenship would be paramount, tied ultimately to the central right of American manhood: access to the ballot box and a voice in government. Their efforts would culminate in a bold if symbolic action unprecedented in the South during the dark early years of Jim Crow—the fielding of a slate of African American candidates for city offices in Raleigh in 1919. At the top of that slate was Dr. Manassa Thomas Pope, the only African American to openly seek the office of mayor of the capital city of a southern state during the nadir of race relations.

By the mid 1910s, North Carolina's black leaders had reason to be concerned about the direction not only of state government on matters of race, but also the federal government. Disappointed by the lukewarm support of the Roosevelt and Taft administrations and the national Republican Party, a small number of politically active African Americans chose in 1912 to support the Democrat Woodrow Wilson, who promised a "fair deal to the colored people." For all of his lofty international idealism, Wilson was a southerner by birth and believed in the inferiority of the black race. Following his election a record number of pieces of segregationist legislation was introduced into Congress, and though much of failed it to become law, Wilson did segregate the federal government by executive order. In February 1915, Wilson agreed to a screening of one of the first important full-length films produced by the nascent industry in Hollywood, D.W. Griffith's *Birth of A Nation*. Based on the book by North Carolina native Thomas Dixon, *Birth of a Nation* was a dramatic interpretation of the Civil War and Reconstruction, told from the white supremacist perspective. A gross distortion of historical events, the movie portrayed African American men as lazy, dangerous, and in pursuit of white women. Opening across the country in the new movie theatres springing up in every city and town, the film had a powerful effect on the nation's psyche, though there was some organized black protest to the showings. After screening the film, Wilson—whose own 1905 book was used to set up certain scenes—is purported to have said that it was "history written with lightning."⁴

Into this hostile climate, however, came a ray of hope. In July of 1915, the Supreme Court declared parts of race-based disfranchisement amendments in Oklahoma and Maryland unconstitutional. Specifically the court targeted the so-called grandfather clauses that in essence exempted illiterate white men from meeting literacy requirements to register to vote.

The *News and Observer* printed the text of the opinion in its entirety, but noted that lawyers looking at North Carolina's amendment felt that its language was such that it would withstand scrutiny by the Supreme Court, if it were ever challenged. This victory was particularly important, as the decision was handed down by a predominately Democratic court, and it emboldened some black leaders in the South to again test the waters of voter registration. Though no other state's disfranchisement laws were successfully challenged for decades, the Supreme Court action did cause concern among Democratic leaders in North Carolina, who carefully monitored any sign of black political activity and manipulated stories in the press to periodically raise the specter of "Negro Rule" in an effort to maintain political and social hegemony. A good example of this tactic is a front-page article in the *News and Observer* during the 1916 presidential election entitled "Plots to Steal Election Found By Department." The article describes a report by the Department of Justice regarding potential voter fraud in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, emphasizing that upwards of 60,000 African Americans had moved from the South into those states and were being illegally registered, ostensibly to support Republican candidates.⁵

In fact, the movement of a large number of African Americans from the South to the North, known as the "Great Migration," was a major national issue in the second half of the 1910s. The promise of jobs, the hope for a better life free of codified segregation and disfranchisement, and the fear of increasing racial violence in the South were all factors that drew tens of thousands of people north. This mass exodus was a serious concern for many southern white leaders, alarmed at the loss of their cheap labor force. Under the heading "Negro Migration Movement Great," the *News and Observer* published a lengthy article in November of 1916, estimating that more 100,000 people had left from states in the Deep

South, although North Carolina was “hardly touched by the exodus fever yet.” The issue was more complicated for southern blacks. While the promise of a better life was understandable, some black leaders wanted to stem the tide that was depleting African American communities of their “best men,” both educated professionals and blue-collar citizens. In addition, some southern blacks (including T. L. McCoy of Raleigh, whose letter was published by the *Times* during the discussion about the “Negro Question” in 1915) worked as labor agents matching southern blacks with northern employers. There was also concern in the African American community that the Promised Land would not be all that it promised to be, and that racism in the North would prove equally prevalent, if not as public. Sadly that fear that would be borne out in a series of riots against blacks in northern cities during the summer of 1919.⁶

These national issues, along with continued concerns about racial violence and the fundamental inequities wrought by segregation and disfranchisement, energized and mobilized black men in North Carolina. Between 1916 and 1920 a series of actions were taken in an organized effort to increase political activity and involvement, aimed at challenging white supremacy and disfranchisement. According to historian John Hope Franklin, “this was the time, some of the more aggressive leaders believed, to consolidate and achieve unity in thought and action that had been hitherto impossible.” These efforts put pressure on white leaders and tested the boundaries of the racial order of the New South. Viewed broadly, the actions of these black men can also be understood as part of the foundation for what became the modern Civil Rights Movement of the post World War II era. Unity and consolidation were indeed key to this movement, as men from Dr. Pope’s generation, who came of age during Reconstruction and formed the backbone of Fusion in

the 1890s, joined forces with younger men who came of age in the late 1890s and early 1900s, and who had witnessed both the zenith and the nadir of racial progress in the state.⁷

The first order of business was to reenergize the “true” Republican Party in the State. Under the title of “Headquarters of the North Carolina Republican Executive Committee (Colored),” a notice was issued on March 11, 1916, calling for a “Mass Convention of all true Republicans” to meet in Raleigh on April 24. The organizers of the event were a newly formed group consisting of some twenty members representing all of the state’s congressional districts and a number of towns east of Raleigh. Chaired by H.H. Taylor of Warrenton, members included friends and colleagues of Dr. Pope, such as Dr. J. E. Dellinger of Greensboro, Samuel Vick of Wilson, and David Lane and Charles Hunter of Raleigh. The convention was charged to “take such action and devise such plans as may be deemed necessary to make effective the principles of the Republican Party as they were handed down by the founders and fathers of that organization.” This action was being taken, according to the notice, “by reason of the many letters coming to these headquarters from negro Republicans in various sections of the state,” and as the result of “informal conference” with other black leaders. “It is hoped that negro Republicans in each county will bestir themselves,” the notice continued, because “we can no longer afford to be made the football of the bosses and designing politicians.”⁸

The Raleigh and Charlotte newspapers editorialized on the call for the convention in terms that both ridiculed the effort and warned of potential consequences. The *News and Observer* stated that the convention was “without immediate significance or importance,” and that even the state’s white Republicans “avoid the negro as a political plague.” Of the G.O.P. the writer noted with glee that its “disowned child is about to hit back...[the] worm

has turned,” noting that the party had tossed aside African Americans like “squeezed lemons on a trash heap.” The paper ascribed the call for this meeting to two events: first, that former Senator Marion Butler, who had been elected on a Fusion ticket in 1892, was once again in a position to promote issues important to the state’s African Americans; and second, that black leaders wanted to send delegates to the national Republican convention. Despite the editor’s dismissal of the importance of the convention, he hastened to add that “[n]othing could be imagined...that would be more hurtful to the race and dangerous to the State than the success of a movement which would solidify colored voters into an organization aiming at the control of the balance of power.” The *Charlotte Observer* warned that the “negroes lapse into politics would be the very worst thing that could befall the race in this state,” adding that “[s]ince his practical elimination from politics the negro in North Carolina has turned his attention to industrial and professional pursuits, and in the past few years he has made greater strides toward independence and happiness than in all the period since the Civil War.”⁹

Not surprisingly, the state’s black political leaders did not agree with such a white supremacist assessment, and the April 24 convention in Raleigh became a call to action. A series of resolutions was adopted with the intent to “carry the grievance of the negroes to the National Republican Convention for the purpose of making the National Republican Convention insist on the negro having his proper representation in the councils of the Republican organizations in the Southern States.” The strongest of the resolutions carried “a demand for equal civil and political rights and the equality of all Republicans without regard to race or color in the party organization.” Twenty-three men were selected to go to the Republican National Convention, including a number of Dr. Pope’s friends and associates: Samuel Vick of Wilson, Dr. R. H.W. Leake of Raleigh, and three fellow officers from the 3rd

North Carolina Volunteers, James Hamlin, David Lane, and H.H. Taylor. Clearly the strategy was to try to force the national party to live up to its heritage and be racially inclusive, which in turn would hopefully translate into pressure for some measure of civil and political rights at the state level.¹⁰

The delegation was not officially received at the Republican National Convention, as had happened in 1912, but its leaders were undaunted. On Emancipation Day of 1916, a call had been made to form a new grass-roots African American political organization in Wake County. On October 17, the Twentieth Century Voter's Club was formally created and adopted the following resolution, as reprinted in the *Raleigh Times*:

As our government is now administered we are not only ignored, but specifically excluded from any effective participation in its affairs. We are citizens and many of us are substantial tax-payers...If we continue to remain quiescent under present conditions, the day will come, as it has in many parts of the country, when property rights, so far as we are concerned, will pass away and be reduced to a condition of vassalage. It is urged, therefore, that non-partisan clubs of the voters of each precinct in the county be formed with the purpose of educating our people along the lines of civic, educational, moral, and material betterment. That they be urged to exercise their right of franchise under the constitution and laws.¹¹

The resolution was sent out as a circular letter to black leaders countywide, and was accompanied by a folder with a plan of organization, constitution and by-laws. The *Raleigh Times* treated the creation of this organization as highly suspect and subversive, referring to it as a "deep-laid plot" and likened the person who "unearthed" it to Sherlock Holmes. While ridiculing the organization as futile for the black man and an embarrassment for the lily-white Republicans, the *Times* editorial did note the recent "cave-in of the Constitutional Amendment...as regards race discrimination between voters" and admitted that "[e]ver since the election of 1900 the inevitableness of [the black man's] return as a voter has been clear." It also acknowledged that during the previous sixteen years "the negro has become equipped

for voting in large numbers...and there is no reason why the literate negro should refrain from exercising what is his undoubted right.” The underlying message was that as long as African Americans voted Republican, Democratic hegemony and thus white supremacy were assured. “‘The Twentieth Century Voters Club’ may or may not bring some negroes to the polls; but it will certainly cost the Republicans some ballots—a circumstance about which Love and Hunter and the other ‘signers’ are worrying about as they would about a possum up a tree!”¹²

The two men specifically named in the *Times* editorial, Dr. J. W. Love and Charles N. Hunter, figured prominently in the new movement for African American civil and political rights in Raleigh during this important five-year period. Love, a graduate of the pharmacology program at the Leonard School of Medicine at Shaw University, owned and operated the Capital City Pharmacy. Hunter, born into slavery in Wake County about 1852, was principally an educator but held numerous types of positions throughout his life. He was very involved with a variety of activities that promoted racial uplift, including the annual state Emancipation Day celebrations, the Negro State Fair, and the North Carolina exhibit in the Negro Building at the 1907 Jamestown tri-centennial. Hunter also believed fervently in black political participation, and was at the forefront of most efforts aimed at expanding African American franchise during this era. He was a complicated man, and an inveterate letter writer who constantly expressed his opinions to government leaders and local and national newspapers. Despite his belief in black male suffrage, he vacillated between obsequious behavior towards white leaders and calls for radical action. His politics were also complicated, as he always characterized himself as a loyal Republican yet voted for

Woodrow Wilson and other Democrats at times when he was displeased with the G.O.P. leadership.¹³

Concerned about the bias and disapproval evident in the white press, particularly with regard to the Colored Republican Convention in April and the creation of the Twentieth Century Voter's Club in October, Love and Hunter decided the city needed an independent media outlet. Sometime in late 1916 or early 1917, the two men, along with a small group of other prominent black citizens, founded the *Raleigh Independent*, the first black-owned weekly newspaper in the city since James Young's *Raleigh Gazette* ceased publication nearly two decades earlier. Under the masthead "Independent In All Things...Neutral In Nothing" and "Standing Firm for Right—Justice for All," the paper was run by Love as president and edited by Hunter. With a circulation of about 5,000, the paper sought both to serve the black community and to provide the African American perspective on politics and important issues of the day. One of the founders was a young Shaw University graduate, Lawrence M. Cheek, who would take over the position of editor when Hunter moved to Virginia in 1918. Born in 1886, Cheek represented a new generation of young, politically active black men who came of age in the wake of codified Jim Crow and disfranchisement, and who were increasingly impatient with their elders, many of whom had spent the previous decade focused on internal community building and not on reclaiming a political voice.¹⁴

Part of the mission the founders of the *Raleigh Independent* saw for the paper was to promote the establishment of a local branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which was chartered in January of 1917. Founded in 1910, the NAACP evolved out of both black and white concerns over the status of African Americans in the early twentieth century, though at its inception the leadership of NAACP was almost

entirely white. Its antecedents included a number of black-led organizations created around the turn of the century, including the Negro Business League, the National Council of Negro Women, and the Constitution League, all of which sought to address a range of issues and provide what was known as “uplift” for the race. Among the most visible and radical of these organizations was the so-called Niagara movement, begun by W.E.B. Du Bois in 1905, which pushed for equality in education, access to the ballot box, and an end to racial segregation. Through a publication entitled the *Horizon*, Du Bois and members of the Niagara movement promoted their ideals and agenda. But the Niagara movement was strapped for cash and foundered, and Du Bois welcomed the opportunity to attend the first conference in 1909 for a new organization to be called the National Negro Committee. Organized by a group of whites with ties to Progressive Era causes and links to the pre Civil War abolition movement (some were even known as “neo-abolitionists”), the impetus for the creation of the National Negro Committee was the August 1908 race riot in Abraham Lincoln’s hometown of Springfield, Illinois, which resulted in the deaths of six blacks—two by lynching. Oswald Garrison Villard, publisher of the *New York Evening Post* and nephew of abolitionist leader William Lloyd Garrison, provided money and national press coverage. The name of the group was changed to the NAACP in 1910, and Du Bois, the only prominent African American involved at the time, was hired as head of publicity and research. He merged the members of the Niagara movement with the NAACP, and created a new national publication, the *Crisis*.¹⁵

By the mid 1910s the NAACP mounted an aggressive campaign to form chapters, called “branches,” across the United States, but particularly in the South. Between 1915 and 1920 branches were established in most of North Carolina’s larger cities and towns,

including Asheville, Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Rocky Mount and Winston-Salem. The application for charter of the Raleigh branch, dated January 25, 1917, lists twenty-nine founding members, each of whom paid the one-dollar charter membership fee. Clearly indicating the strong links between socio-economic status, community involvement and political activity, the founding members were almost exclusively white-collar professionals, including nine teachers, eight preachers, three doctors, two businessmen, one merchant, one printer, one clerk, and one employment agent (T. L. McCoy, who served as branch secretary). Only two of the twenty-nine men were employed in blue-collar professions, one as a butcher and one as a bricklayer. A number of the individuals were well known in Raleigh's African American community and beyond, and were associated with the city's most prominent black institutions. Among the charter members were Charles Hunter and Lawrence Cheek of the *Raleigh Independent*, which promoted the founding of the Raleigh branch. Of the teachers listed three taught at Shaw University, and three at St. Augustine's, including prominent professor Charles H. Boyer, a graduate of Yale University. Two men listed as preachers also taught at these schools: Dr. A. W. Pegues, a Baptist minister who was head of the Theology Department at Shaw; and Rev. James Satterwhite, an Episcopalian who officiated at the St. Augustine's Chapel, as well as at St. Ambrose Church (located next to Dr. Pope's house on S. Wilmington Street). J. W. Ligon, listed as a teacher, had been the minister of Tupper Memorial Baptist Church, but by 1917 was principal of Crosby-Garfield, the city's black grade school. Another prominent Baptist minister among the charter members is Rev. W.T. Coleman of First Baptist Church, Dr. Pope's congregation. The three businessmen on the list included Berry O'Kelly, a merchant who established a trade school in the Method area of town that bore his name, and two of Dr. Pope's fellow officers from the

3rd North Carolina Volunteers, James Hamlin, who owned one of the city's largest black pharmacies, and James Young, who by 1917 was involved in a number of business ventures.¹⁶

The name of Dr. M.T. Pope is conspicuously missing from the roster of those who founded the Raleigh branch of the NAACP, as is that of Dr. J. H. Love, president of the *Raleigh Independent* publishing company. Their absence from membership in the organization is puzzling. Three other black doctors are among the founding members, Dr. L.T. Delany, of the prominent Delany family associated with St. Augustine's, Dr. P. F. Roberts, and Dr. L.E. McCauley, who served on the staff of St. Agnes hospital. Dr. McCauley, who would open a small private hospital for affluent African American patients next door to Dr. Pope's house on South Wilmington Street in 1923, was listed on the NAACP form as president of the Raleigh branch. Dr. Pope's reasons for not joining the organization are not known, but it is likely he was somewhat wary of it. He had spent a lifetime working within the state's black elite, and with certain friendly whites in various situations. He was a man who stood up for his rights and for what he thought to be right in society, but he was not a man who felt the need to promote himself or be in the spotlight. And by 1917 he was a respected physician with a young wife and two small children, and less likely to put his reputation and family at risk. The NAACP was a new organization, formed and run from outside the South, and seen by many as radical, especially through the *Crisis* and other publications. There are indications that James Young joined the Raleigh branch in order to monitor its activity, which might explain why he joined and his close friend Dr. Pope did not. Yet other men in Dr. Pope's circle were members, including Rev. W. T. Coleman and James Hamlin. Dr. Love's reasons for not joining are even less clear, as

he was at the center of political activity in Raleigh during these years and played a very public role. It is interesting to note that of a list of twenty-eight prominent black Raleigh ministers, teachers, and doctors sent by McCoy to the national office in late 1917, only ten joined the organization. Perhaps the point to be taken from the selective membership in the Raleigh branch of the NAACP is that there continued to be no clear path to the goal of achieving full civil and political rights in the mid 1910s, and that the African American community was not monolithic in its approach to solving these problems.¹⁷

The radicalism of the NAACP was embodied in W.E.B. Du Bois, who served as principal ideological leader of the organization and as editor of the monthly publication, the *Crisis*. Erudite, artistic, and above all advocating an activist political agenda, the *Crisis* quickly became the most important and influential African American journal in the country. North Carolinians read the *Crisis* in some numbers, as evidenced by the advertising section and by the Raleigh branch correspondence. During the late 1910s six of the state's black institutions of higher learning advertised in the magazine, including the National Training School in Durham (later North Carolina College for Negroes), A. & T. College in Greensboro, Biddle University in Charlotte, and Livingstone College in Salisbury. North Carolina Mutual Insurance Company ran full-page ads in the magazine's classified section, one of only a few businesses to purchase that much space. Even though the Raleigh branch membership stood at about fifty (and not all of those men were active), secretary T. L. McCoy reported to the national office that he was selling one hundred copies of the *Crisis* a month in 1918, and could sell more if he had them. This supports the contention that some people in the community thought it best not to be publicly associated with the NAACP or have it known they were reading a radical publication like the *Crisis*. Dr. J.H. Love, for

example, bought a year's subscription in April of 1918, though there is no record of his membership in the organization. When Du Bois came to Raleigh in May of 1918 and gave a speech in support of the war effort, McCoy wanted to take the opportunity to sell subscriptions to the large audience. But he wrote to the national secretary, John Shillady, that he did not because "our president [Dr. McCauley] thought it not expedient to speak about the *Crisis* drive."¹⁸

The correspondence between officers of the Raleigh branch and the national headquarters of the NAACP provides vital information for understanding the city's black community at the time and its affiliation with prominent white citizens. Correspondence shows that the national headquarters was concerned about the low numbers of members, and for the first few years of the branch's existence it constantly prodded the officers to increase membership. In fact, all of the North Carolina branches grew slowly. At the end of 1918, the largest branch in the state was Asheville, with 103 members. Raleigh's membership had grown only to 49. At the same time Richmond had 405 members, Charleston 881, Memphis 1,024, and Atlanta 1,353. Though these were larger cities with larger African American populations, the Raleigh numbers were still proportionately low. In a series of sharply worded letters to the national headquarters, branch secretary T. L. McCoy placed the blame for weak membership squarely on the shoulders of James Young. While acknowledging that "war conditions have made the white people in the southern states very sensitive to every Negro movement," he also complained bitterly that Young was publicly criticizing the NAACP, even though he had joined as a charter member. Referring to Young as someone who "use[d] to be a Negro leader," McCoy reported that he "openly designated our branch as a strife breeder, one capable of bringing about race riots in the South." Now 60 years of

age and long since out of power, Young unfortunately thought he saw an opportunity to regain some of his lost influence, and seriously hampered the work of the NAACP in Raleigh. He wrote letters to both the black and white newspapers, praising certain individuals, criticizing others, and claiming for himself the role of spokesperson for the city's African American community. After nearly a year of Young's posturing, McCoy wrote an exasperated letter to James W. Johnson, the NAACP field secretary:

We are confronted with a "Czar" in the person of a man who dominates in all the principal secret societies in this state, and at one time the dictating spirits in the political part played by the Negro in this state. He was one of the charter members of our Branch, but has not affiliated with our Branch since its organization. He told me that since learning the full object of our national organization, he cannot afford to antagonize the sentiments of the white people...and therefore advised me to let the Branch die. He let it be known to many of our members that it is dangerous to affiliate with our Branch. His warning had the desired effect. Many of our good members dropped out and we have not been able to get them to our meetings since.

Lamenting the situation, an official wrote to McCoy that he understood and regretted the problem, "particularly with regard to having to deal with conditions brought about through action taken by a member of our own race to obstruct a real progressive movement for the sake of personal aggrandizement."¹⁹

In the face of concern over white reaction to the work of the NAACP, the national office requested the names of the city's white citizens who were "friendly to the colored people." The list McCoy compiled consisted of forty-two men, including bankers, lawyers, elected officials, newspapers editors and businessmen; some of the most prominent and powerful people not only in the city but in the state. These include former Governor W. W. Kitchen, the state treasurer, and four members of the state supreme court. Considering tensions over the lack of support for African American schools (which were to come to the fore the following year), it is very interesting that both the state superintendent of public

schools, J. G. Joyner, and the man in charge of black schools, Nathan C. Newbold, are on the list. However, Dr. Charles Meserve, who had been president of Shaw University for more than twenty years, is not. (The reason for this is not known, but one is reminded of the incident Dr. Pope had with Meserve in 1906, and thus it is possible that leaders in the black community were wary of him.) City officials on the list include the mayor, James Johnson, the sheriff and a city commissioner. Merchants include long-time Raleigh storeowners Thomas Briggs of Briggs and Sons Hardware, and Maurice Rosenthal, a member of Raleigh's small but growing Jewish population. Perhaps most surprising of the names on a list of friendly whites are two newspaper editors, C. B. Park and Clarence Poe. Park, editor and publisher of the *Raleigh Times*, did call in 1915 for a committee on race to address issues concerning the city's black youth (as discussed earlier in the chapter), but the paper strongly and consistently opposed African American involvement in politics. While Park's views on race likely were rooted in the paternalistic ideals of the Old South, Clarence Poe was a strident white supremacist of the New South. Editor of the *Progressive Farmer*, and son-in-law of former Governor Charles B. Aycock, Poe in 1913 called for rural residential segregation of the races in North Carolina—a proposal so radical that even Booker T. Washington spoke out against it.²⁰

Whatever constituted the issues dividing Raleigh's black leaders over membership and participation in the NAACP, there was general consensus that the community should come together to voice support for the United States on the eve of its entry into World War I. There was increasing concern in the country that Germany would try to undermine American efforts and support for Great Britain and France. One of the principal concerns was that the Germans would try to use propaganda to persuade African Americans, frustrated with the

hypocrisy of the nation's cries of worldwide democracy in the face of racial disfranchisement and Jim Crow segregation at home, not to fight or support the war effort. To quell these rumors and concerns, the city's black leaders called for a public meeting to be held at the Odd Fellows Hall on Hargett Street the night of April 16, 1917—two weeks after President Wilson went before Congress asking for a declaration of war, and two weeks after Governor Thomas Bickett issued a public statement assuring the nation of the loyalty of the state's black citizenry. The *News and Observer* reported the next morning that in “a monster mass meeting, opened with prayer and ended with a full throated chorus of ‘America,’ the negroes of Raleigh last night declared suspicion of negro disloyalty ‘a most foul aspersion of the entire negro race in America,’ and anew pledged their loyalty to the United States in peace and in war.” So many people attended that “the hall was filled to overflowing...[and many] who could not get in stood outside.” In what was certainly a calculated decision to bring together political leaders and men with military credentials, the ten rousing speeches were made by both founding members of the new Raleigh branch of the NAACP and veterans of the North Carolina 3rd Volunteer Regiment that served during the Spanish American War. NAACP members who spoke included Rev. James Satterwhite (vice president), and Charles Hunter; James Young and James Hamlin, who also spoke, were both veterans and branch members.

As a veteran and as a man who believed in the political rights of African Americans, Dr. M. T. Pope took an active role in this important meeting. He was part of a nine-man committee that drafted a powerful and elegantly worded resolution adopted by the mass audience that night; a resolution that swore allegiance to the country and declared the citizenship, patriotism, and manhood of African American men even in the face of

disfranchisement and segregation. NAACP members on the resolution committee included Rev. A. W. Pegue (chairman), Charles Hunter and Dr. J.H. Love, as well as Spanish American War veterans David Lane and James Hamlin, along with Dr. Pope. The resolution declared that though the German government might be trying to undermine the loyalty of African American citizens, “any suggestion of our disloyalty comes to us as a gross insult...assailing as it does a record of patriotism and devotion unmatched in the history of mankind.” It was further resolved “that now, as ever, we yield undying allegiance to our State and country...In every war of this country the negro has borne himself bravely on the field of carnage and in protecting and caring for loved ones left at home. He is an American without any hyphenating adjectives. This is his country. He knows no other.” Addressing the inequality and discrimination wrought by white supremacy, the committee resolved “that while regretting the fact that [the Negro] is deprived of the common rights accorded to other citizens of this country, even to those who are now assailing it and are ready to destroy it, he is ready now, as ever, to serve the government with a patriotic devotion that shall be excelled by none.” Following adoption, copies of the resolution were sent to the Raleigh newspapers, the Associated Press, and all members of North Carolina’s congressional delegation in Washington.

Throughout 1917 and 1918 many of North Carolina’s African American citizens did their part for the war effort, from making economies at home to serving overseas. Discrimination persisted in the armed forces, and some questioned the concept of fighting for democracy abroad when it was not afforded black citizens at home. Despite this thorny issue, prominent men of both races made a concerted effort to point out black loyalty and patriotism. But all dissenting voices could not be silenced. On July 14, 1917, the *Raleigh*

Independent published an open letter to Woodrow Wilson that historian John Haley has described as a “scathing attack on the racial policies of the president, who was branded an enemy of blacks.” Written by professor D. J. Jordan, head of the Department of History and Pedagogy at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical College in Greensboro (an African American school), the letter took Wilson to task for promoting democracy around the world but not uttering “even in whisper one word in behalf of twelve millions of your own fellow citizens.” Jordan pointedly asked, “Is this the kind of Democracy I am asked to give my fortune and my life to make safe in the world?” The letter created a furor statewide, and was called “foolish, yet treasonable, dangerous and full of dynamite.” It was a source of embarrassment for Governor Bickett, who saw himself as a friend of the state’s black citizenry. Black leaders rushed to stem the tide of bad publicity caused by the letter, and the white press castigated Charles Hunter for publishing it “in great style.” The editor of the *Raleigh Times* commented, “rarely have we seen so much folly packed in a space equal to that used by the *Raleigh Independent* by giving the letter publicity.” Hunter biographer John Haley surmises that the dust-up over the publication of this letter cost him a spot on the state education board for black schools, and also led to pressure by his white creditors who began calling in his debts.²¹

Two weeks after publication of the Jordan letter, prominent African American scholar and activist Kelly Miller of Howard University also published an open letter to Woodrow Wilson entitled “The Disgrace of Democracy.” The letter, placed in the Congressional Record in September of 1917, was printed in pamphlet form and sold for ten cents across the country. An advertisement in the *Crisis* noted that more than 100,000 copies had been sold, and some of those found their way to Raleigh. One of these was bought by or given to Dr,

Pope, as a copy with his signature on the cover was found among the books and papers in the Pope House. (It is interesting to note that despite his lifelong interest in politics, this was the only political document found in the house.) Miller eloquently and passionately addresses the alarming problem of lynching and racial violence in the United States, especially in the context of the Great War. “You have sounded forth the trumpet of democratization of the nations,” Miller writes. “But, Mr. President, a chain is no stronger than its weakest link. A doctrine that breaks down at home is not fit to be propagated abroad.” Referring repeatedly to “helpless Negroes” without a voice in government, Miller enumerated some of the worst racial violence of the recent past, including the “atrocious riot” that occurred in Wilmington in 1898, “the city in which you spent your boyhood as the son of a minister of the Gospel.” In graphic and poetic terms, Miller describes the horrors of lynching and the embarrassment of a democratic society:

America enjoys the evil distinction among all civilized nations of the earth of taking delight in murder and burning of human beings. Nowhere else do men, women, and children dance with ghoulish glee and fight for ghastly souvenirs of human flesh and mock the dying groans of the helpless victim which sicken the air, while the flickering flames of the funeral pyre lighten the midnight sky with their dismal glare.

Writer H. L. Mencken lavished praise on Miller’s letter, calling it “the best argument that any southerner, white or black, has contributed to governmental theory in a half a century.”²²

The problem of lynching and racial violence increasingly demanded the attention of the NAACP and black leaders throughout the South during the war years of 1917 to 1919. Three cases involving the alleged attacks of black men on white women in Wake County in 1917 and 1918 resulted in the Raleigh branch asking for assistance from the NAACP national headquarters. The most sensational of the cases involved Earl Norville, a black man charged with the rape of a white woman in Raleigh, the wife of a train conductor, in October 1917.

Norville was placed in the county jail awaiting trial, when a mob attempted to storm the jail and take justice into their own hands. Only the personal intervention of Governor Bickett stopped the lynching, and Norville was taken to Charlotte for his safety. The trial was widely covered in the press, and despite serious questions about Norville's guilt, an all-white jury convicted him in less than two hours. He was sentenced to die in the electric chair. The Raleigh branch appealed to the national office to "send a discrete white person here to investigate." Though the national office did send an attorney to help, Norville was executed. In a bitter letter to James W. Johnston, T. L. McCoy wrote that at about the same time as Norville was arrested, a white man was accused of "breaking into a colored man's house and committing rape upon his wife in the presence of his children." That man was given a small fine and released. McCoy was so angry about the injustice of the two cases that he wrote he was "thinking strongly about bundling up and leaving this part of the country," stating that he wanted to "shake the dust of this town and the South land from my feet." Unfortunately the fear of violence had the desired effect on the city's black citizens. When a meeting was called in November of 1918 to address the latest "lynching frolic," only McCoy and Rev. Satterwhite made an appearance. "What cowards we mortals be!" McCoy wrote to Johnston.²³

By Emancipation Day in January of 1919, however, Raleigh's black community decided enough was enough and it was time to take bold action. In the most politically charged celebration up to that time "a thousand Raleigh negroes enthusiastically adopted a set of resolutions advising members of their race to refrain where possible from accepting Jim Crow accommodations [,] asking parents to instill into the hearts of the negro children that to be black is no disgrace, and demanding full representation in the ballot." Declaring

education as the “lever” to progress, the resolutions also called for equality before the law and an end to lynching, a “relic of barbarism.” Dr. J. E. Samuels, editor of the *Franklinton Missionary Herald*, whipped up the crowd with words hauntingly similar to those Dr. Martin Luther King would use forty-four years later. “One hundred years from now, America will look not so much on the color of the skin as the soul under it.”²⁴

The Emancipation Day celebration signaled the beginning of a remarkable year. All of the political activism of Raleigh’s African American leaders over a four-year period climaxed that April with the biennial election for city council. The time was right to mount a serious and very public challenge to white supremacy. The Supreme Court had struck down the grandfather clause in two states in 1915; 1916 saw the rejuvenation of the African American wing of North Carolina’s Republican Party, the creation of the Twentieth Century Voter’s Club, and the founding of the politically active *Raleigh Independent*; branches of the NAACP were being created across the state, including Raleigh in 1917; and blacks had shown the depth of their patriotism by fighting and dying in the Great War and supporting the nation’s effort at home, despite the ignominy and oppression of Jim Crow. In addition, pressures created by a steady increase of lynching and racial violence, and the loss of southern blacks to the Great Migration, also contributed to the sense that a stand must be taken.

On the evening of March 25, 1919, the Twentieth Century Voter’s Club met in the Royal Knights Hall (Prince Hall Masonic Lodge) at the corner of Blount and Cabarrus Streets and nominated a slate of African American candidates for three city positions: Dr. Pope for mayor, Dr. L. B. Capehart for commissioner of public safety, and Calvin E. Lightner for commissioner of public works. In explaining the nomination, club president Dr.

J. H. Love told the *News and Observer* that while they knew the ticket would not be elected, “the action taken was in the nature of an expression of the feeling of the negroes in the city that they ought to have greater rights than afforded them.” “We pay taxes,” Love told the newspaper, “and we feel that some of the servile positions at city hall should be given to negroes. We feel too, that we ought to have an associate city physician who is a colored man and that there should be a colored sanitation inspector, as they have in Greensboro.” He added that the black cemetery was badly neglected and that the job of caring for it should be given to an African American.²⁵

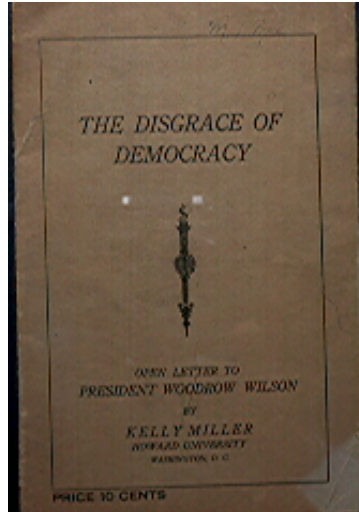
Leaving aside for the moment the fact that fielding a slate of black candidates for the top elected municipal positions of the capital city of a former Confederate state during the height of the Jim Crow era was without precedent, it is interesting to examine exactly what Love said to the white press. While declaring that it was time for African Americans to assert themselves and demand their rights, he is careful to couch the specific demands in terms that cross socio-economic lines. There is both the desire for “servile” positions in city hall and a cemetery caretaker, as well as for professional positions such as associate city physician and sanitation inspector. Certainly this statement was carefully crafted to be both inclusive for all black citizens (whom they wanted to encourage register and to vote) and palatable to white leaders.

It is also important to note that Love, though president of the Twentieth Century Voter’s Club and president of the *Raleigh Independent* publishing company, is not on the ticket. Perhaps he was considered too much of an agitator. Apparently it was decided that the ticket should represent both the “old” and “new” leaders in the black community: Drs. Pope and Capehart were in their early 60s, and Lightner, a successful businessman, was in

his early 40s. For reasons that are not known, Capehart soon left the ticket and was replaced by Lawrence Cheek, who was 33 and at the time editor of the *Raleigh Independent*. It may also have been considered important to show unity in the black community across ideological as well as generational lines, as Lightner and Cheek were both members of the Raleigh branch of the NAACP, but Pope was not.

After a lifetime of political activity and standing up for his rights—but never being the man out front—why did Dr. Pope decide to take this bold action? It was certainly a significant risk on many levels: to his practice, to his reputation, even to his life and that of his young family in this period of racial violence. Most likely the city’s black leaders persuaded him that he was the best man because he was highly respected by both the black and white communities and was above reproach. He certainly was not an “Uncle Tom,” but neither was he considered an agitator. He was his own man, and someone the white supremacists would have a hard time dismissing or belittling. It is also likely the cumulative weight of the events of the preceding several years brought him to action. There may have been one other factor in his decision. The Leonard Medical School at Shaw University had been forced to close its doors in 1918, the victim of white prejudice about the ability of black doctors and a lack of financial support. Almost certainly this affected Pope deeply, and brought into sharp focus the dramatic degree to which the progress his generation had made was being permanently denied to future African Americans.²⁶

Raleigh municipal elections were held, then as now, biennially on odd numbered years. Always non-partisan, a primary narrows the field of candidates for the general election (the times of the primary and general elections have changed over the years, but it remains non-partisan). Municipal government in 1919 consisted of three men who



Dr. Pope's copy of the "Disgrace of Democracy," with his signature in the upper right-hand corner, Pope House Collection



Dr. Pope, about the time of the 1919 election

Pope House Collection

comprised the city council, the mayor and the commissioners of public safety and of public works (also elected positions). For voting purposes the city was divided into eight precincts, designated as four wards with two divisions each. Polling places were established in each division, with a registrar and two and “judges” assigned to oversee the voting. With the aid of a policeman, also assigned to each polling place, these men were charged to “maintain order around the polls.” The officials could challenge any potential voter on four specific grounds: one, he had to be properly registered; two, he must have resided in the state for two years, the county for six months and the precinct for four months; three, for “inability to read and write the Constitution,” apparently at the judges discretion; and four, he must not had been convicted of a felony. The poll tax requirement was not an issue in this primary, as the deadline for paying it was May 1.²⁷

Though residential segregation was restricted to a few new neighborhoods and was not yet widespread in Raleigh, African Americans lived predominately in certain portions of each ward. The largest concentration of the city’s educated black citizens, and thus those most likely to be eligible to vote, was in the Second Division of the Third Ward, where Dr. Pope lived. Perhaps as a concession to African American voters, the polling place was the black Masonic lodge at the corner of Blount and Cabarrus Streets, the site where the Twentieth Century Voter’s Club met. Concessions did not extend, however, to appointing black election officials, though one of the judges assigned to that location was Dr. Charles Meserve, the white president of Shaw University. White leaders likely selected Meserve as a someone they thought would appease black leaders, but Meserve was not on the list of the city’s friendly whites sent six months earlier to the national headquarters of the NAACP. Dr. Pope certainly would not have been pleased with the selection of Meserve, as he still

harbored animosity towards him stemming from the incident at Shaw with Dr. Bowen in 1906.²⁸

In the month leading up to the election, news coverage reveals that women's suffrage had become a major issue, and that it was complicated in the South by the question of race. White male southerners had to contend not only with the possibility of white women as voters, but the language of the proposed 19th Amendment would not prohibit black women from gaining the franchise, and that would reopen the whole issue of black access to the ballot. The *Durham Morning Herald* reported that "suffragette unions have submitted to all candidates a questionnaire on the important [issue] of suffrage." "All of them subscribed to the woman suffrage program," the paper announced, "but some of them modified their agreement to support suffrage. They were willing to vote for a constitutional amendment." It would be reasonable to assume that the African American candidates were the "some of them" modifying their agreements in support of suffrage across both gender and racial lines. Along with the more radical suffragettes, some of the city's church women also made their voices heard. "For the first time in the recent history of local politics the women have taken a hand," the *News and Observer* reported. "Denied the ballot which they all but wrung from the last Legislature they have used their influence in a public way and as might be expected have stressed the moral element in the problem that the voters have to solve." That moral element was, in large part, protecting the sanctity of their homes and of the women's purity, a not-too-thinly-veiled reference to the fact that black men were running for office. The ladies society of the Edenton Street Methodist Church asked "their menfolks to nominate and elect for office men who can be depended on to stand for the best and highest things in municipal

life. They do not want a wide-open town. They want God-fearing men in office, who will throw safeguards around the home.”²⁹

Other than the question of suffrage, the papers tried not to fan fires of racial politics. Little direct mention of the black candidates was made in the weeks before the election. A large front-page article entitled “The Race Question” did appear on Sunday, April 13, the text of a lecture delivered to the Raleigh Ministerial Association by the Rev. C. A. Ashby, rector of the Episcopal Church of the Good Shepherd. Predictably, Ashby spoke of African American progress over the preceding century, and about how the South was the “best place for Negroes.” Presumably the prominent placement of the text of this speech was to suggest to black citizens that instead of challenging white supremacy they consider how good their lives were in the South (despite segregation and disfranchisement). The day before the election the *News and Observer* ran another front-page story under the heading “Here’s the Dope on the Primary,” cautioning voters to be careful because the candidates were listed on the ballot alphabetically, and thus “the three negro candidates are scattered out.”³⁰

The polls opened at 7 AM on April 21 and closed at sunset, 7:52 PM. The papers reported the ballots were then brought to the city courtroom, where “virtually all the candidates and the campaign workers together with other interested persons gathered.” The presence of Dr. Pope, the other black candidates and their supporters was not noted, so it can be assumed they were not there. A total of 2,561 votes were cast, representing a remarkable seventy percent of the 3,670 men registered in the city. In the mayoral race the incumbent, James Johnson, garnered 1,101 votes, with his principal challenger, A. H. Arrington, coming in a close second with 1,030 votes. Dr. Pope received 126 votes, 98 of which were cast in his home division of the Third Ward. That represented five percent of the total cast, and

assumedly those were all black voters. The three African American candidates received slightly different vote totals, though the majority for all of them came from the Second Division of the Third Ward (Calvin Lightner received the highest number of votes, with 142).³¹

Not surprisingly, the white-owned papers had sharp comments to make following the election about the slate of black candidates. The Durham *Morning Herald* tried to negate the true reasons Dr. Pope and the others ran by reporting, “All sides are suggesting that the opposition instigated the negro ticket in order to divide the vote and prevent the negro voters supporting the white candidates they would naturally.” The Raleigh *Times* applauded the “failure of the attempt to draw the color line,” and noted that as there were “something over five hundred colored voters in the city, it would thus appear that a large majority have a sense of proportion.” Presumably that sense of proportion meant not challenging white hegemony.³²

Clearly the run for the city’s top offices in April of 1919 was the strongest possible public action black leaders could take against disfranchisement and segregation. “[W]e knew we wouldn’t win,” Calvin Lightner remarked years later, “and even if we had won we knew the whites wouldn’t let us administer (apparently a reference to the Wilmington coup of 1898), but we just wanted to wake our people up politically. That did stimulate them to the point of voting.” Even though Lightner prefaced his remarks by saying there was “nothing real” about the attempt, in fact the city’s white’s leaders took it very seriously. Historian John Haley argues that nominating the slate of candidates was in fact designed “to show the strength of black voters and test public sentiment regarding their run for office,” and one black leader referred to it as a “very hot” election.”³³

The election may in fact have been too hot. In the following six months, tensions within the African American community and between blacks and whites rose to a level that alarmed many people. “There is an unconcealed nervousness in racial conditions in Raleigh,” the *Times* reported three weeks after election. “The negro population is torn to tatters by factionalism and the recent sortie into politics has not improved things at all. The fact that the minority among the colored people put out a municipal ticket and sought unsuccessfully to deliver the race vote in the election has not mitigated the feeling noticeably.” Referencing the ideological debate among African Americans regarding how to deal with white supremacy, the paper predicted that the “Du Bois and Washington elements will war,” adding that the “Du Bois faction, asserting its political and civil rights, has a more attractive slogan than the Washington factionalists, who urge work and a winning competency for individual wants.” James Young jumped into the fray, publicly warning against agitation and urging blacks to work with the city’s white leaders. Apparently he was severely criticized for taking an accommodationist stance by the editors of the *Raleigh Independent* (one of whom was Lawrence Cheek, who ran in the election), as he filed a libel suit against the paper. This likely caused a rift between Pope and Young, life-long friends, as Pope’s very public stand by running for mayor put him at the forefront of those asserting their political and civil rights.³⁴

In late May students at St. Augustine’s College, emboldened by the election, added their voices to the debate. At commencement exercises, “negro girl essayists” delivered speeches “demanding social and political rights, and suggesting if those rights were not given them, these rights would be prized loose.” If the content of these speeches was not inflammatory enough, they were delivered in the presence of the guest of honor, Dr. J. Y.

Joyner, formerly state superintendent of public instruction. The student's speeches "knocked him off his feet, and for a time it looked like the occasion was going to develop into a debating society between the negro girl essayists and the doctor, for the speaker had prepared a commencement address along just the opposite lines from that taken up by the negro girls." Joyner put aside his prepared remarks and "told the gathered crowd that he was going to speak very plainly...telling them it was a foolish and vain thing to talk about 'prizing loose' rights which the law does not give now, since neither the negroes or any other group of people had the right to take the law into their own hands." Other commencement speakers that spring at the area black schools echoed similar sentiments, though they were not directly challenged by students at St. Augustine's.³⁵

The election of 1919 did get the attention of North Carolina's top officials. In late September, state school superintendent Dr. Eugene C. Brooks, along with the man in charge of African American schools, Nathan Newbold, asked to meet with a delegation of twenty-four black educators and community leaders. Brooks was not in a conciliatory mood, however. According to historian John Haley, Brooks "reiterated the threat that blacks had better get in line because many whites had championed their cause in the past 'were growing suspicious of the Negro's aims and purposes.'" The message came across loud and clear. The black delegation issued a statement through Brooks' office calling for improved educational facilities and opportunities for African American students, but condemning "any advocacy for social equality and any appeal to force to secure social justice." The delegation included James Young, which is not surprising, but it surprising to see that several members of the Raleigh branch of the NACCP were also in attendance, including Charles Boyer, T. L. McCoy, and Berry O'Kelley. Absent in their report was any mention of political rights, but

it did include the statement that “Any individual or society that advocates the intermingling of the races in terms of social equality and intermarriage of races is doing great harm to the negro.” By Emancipation Day 1920, two months later, African American leaders retreated completely, apparently settling for promises of improved schools. The *News and Observer* reported that the speeches were in “better tone,” and that resolutions adopted were much more reasonable than those the previous year. “Instead of magnifying the wrongs done to negroes and minimizing the advantages given them, the resolutions acknowledged benefits granted the race including the most important benefit of better educational facilities.” White supremacy in North Carolina had prevailed once again.³⁶

Although he did not win, Dr. Pope’s run for mayor was neither in vain nor merely symbolic. It added African American voters to the rolls, it gave them the courage to stand up and exercise that right, and it shook up the white power structure enough to result in a high-level conference called by the state superintendent of public schools, which would lead to improvements in black public education in the 1920s. The “sortie into politics” also forced whites to keep at the hard work of maintaining the artifice of racial supremacy. This was a real victory, and though the abolition of Jim Crow segregation and the free exercise of the franchise for all citizens regardless of race was still several decades away, the efforts of this generation of African American men helped to provide the foundation for the modern Civil Rights Movement of the post World War II era.

Endnotes

¹*Raleigh Times*, December 11, 1915.

²*Ibid.*: *Raleigh Times*, December 15, 1915.

³*Raleigh Times*, December 18 and 22, 1915.

⁴John Hope Franklin and Alfred A. Moss, Jr., *From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans* (Seventh edition, New York: 1994), pp. 323-325; Nell Irvin Painter, *Creating Black Americans: African American History and Its Meanings, 1619 to the Present* (New York: 2006) , p. 177.

⁵*News and Observer*, July 5, 1915.

⁶*News and Observer*, November 9, 1916. One of the classic works on the Great Migration is Florette Henri, *Black Migration: Movement North, 1900-1920* (Garden City: 1975). The role of labor agents is discussed on pp. 61-62.

⁷Franklin, *From Slavery to Freedom*, p. 325.

⁸The circular, under the title “Headquarters of the Republican Executive Committee (Colored)” and dated March 11, 1916, is in the Charles N. Hunter Papers, Perkins Library, Duke University. Hereafter cited as “Hunter Papers.”

⁹Undated article entitled “That ‘Colored’ Convention,” probably from the *News and Observer*, in the Hunter Papers. The *Charlotte Observer* editorial is reprinted in the *Raleigh Times*, March 20, 1916.

¹⁰*News and Observer*, April 25, 1916.

¹¹*Raleigh Times*, November 4 and 8, 1916.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³The analysis of Hunter comes from John Haley’s excellent book, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: 1987).

¹⁴The exact date of the founding of the *Raleigh Independent* is not known, and only a handful of scattered issues exist. John Haley suggests that the paper was found in late 1916, but the disclosure information on the editorial page of existing issue gives the date the paper was registered with the United State Post Office as March 17, 1917. Cheek info.

¹⁵Kenneth W. Goings, “*The NAACP Comes of Age: The Defeat of Judge John J. Parker*” (Bloomington: 1990), pp. 1-18.

¹⁶Application for Charter of the Raleigh Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, January 25, 1917, Raleigh Branch File, NAACP Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. Hereafter cited as “NAACP Papers.”

¹⁷Ibid. The handwritten list was sent to national office on September 6, 1917 and is in Raleigh Branch File, NAACP Papers.

¹⁸The *Crisis*, various issues, 1919; T. L. McCoy to John R. Shillady, May 20, 1918, NAACP Papers; T. L. McCoy to James W. Johnson, January 31, 1918, NAACP Papers.

¹⁹There are a number of letters in the NAACP Raleigh Branch File about the low number of members during 1917 and 1918. The membership numbers of the various branches comes from the December 1918 issue of the *Crisis*, p. 285. The correspondence about James Young includes T. L. McCoy to John R. Shillady, May 20, 1918; T. L. McCoy to James W. Johnson, October 21, 1918; and unsigned letter to T. L. McCoy, May 27, 1918, all NAACP Papers.

²⁰James W. Johnston to T. L. McCoy, December 17, 1918, NAACP Papers. The list of friendly whites, which accompanied the copy of the letter, is marked “Place in special folder.” On Poe and his segregationist ideas, see Jeffrey J. Crow, “An Apartheid for the South: Clarence Poe’s Crusade for Rural Segregation,” in *Race, Class, and Politics in Southern History* (Baton Rouge: 1989), pp. 216-259; and Jack Temple Poe, “Clarence Poe’s Vision of a Segregated ‘Great Rural Civilization,’” *Southern Atlantic Quarterly* 68 (1969), pp. 27-38.

²¹Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, p. 193.

²²Kelly Miller, “The Disgrace of Democracy,” pamphlet in the Pope Family Papers, SHC.

²³T. L. McCoy to James W. Johnston, October 6, 1917; L. E. McCauley, J. E. Hamlin, Charles N. Hunter and T.L. McCoy to James W. Johnston, February 7, 1918; W. B. Jones to Messrs. Studin and Sonnenberg, February 18, 1918; and T. L. McCoy to James W. Johnston, November 13, 1918; all in the NAACP Papers.

²⁴*News and Observer*, January 2, 1919.

²⁵*News and Observer*, March 26, 1919.

²⁶Todd L. Savitt, “The Education of Black Physicians at Shaw University,” 1882-1918,” in Jeffrey Crow and Flora J. Hatley, editors, *Black Americans in North Carolina and the South* (Chapel Hill: 1984), pp. 183-185.

²⁷The polling locations, the names of the registrars and election judges, and the regulations for voting were all published in the *News and Observer* on April 20, 1919. A map of the wards and precincts appears in *Guide Book of Raleigh, N.C.: Historical and Descriptive* (Raleigh: ca. 1923), p. 44, Olivia Raney Library, Raleigh.

²⁸*News and Observer*, April 12, 1919.

²⁹*Durham Morning Herald*, April 22, 1919; *News and Observer*, April 21, 1919.

³⁰*News and Observer*, April 13 and April 20, 1919.

³¹“Minutes of the City Commissioners of the City of Raleigh, from May 8, 1917 – May 9, 1919, Inclusive,” City Clerk’s office, Raleigh, p. 264; *News and Observer*, April 22, 1919.

³²*Durham Morning Herald*, April 22, 1919; *Raleigh Times*, April 22, 1919.

³³Wilmouth Carter, *The Urban Negro in the South*, pp. 80-81; Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, p. 207.

³⁴*Raleigh Times*, May 13, 1919; *News and Observer*, May 13, 1919. The *Durham Morning Herald* reported on the libel suit on May 30, 1919, under the heading of a front-page article entitled “Raleigh’s Negro Population Split in Two Factions.”

³⁵*Durham Morning Herald*, May 30, 1919. Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, pp. 214-215.

³⁶Haley, *Charles N. Hunter*, pp. 216-217; *News and Observer*, October 2 and January 2, 1919.

Chapter VII

Manassa Pope Lane

- *New street name created in a Pulte Homes subdivision in Raleigh, 2005*

The election of 1919 and the attempt to win civil and political rights became a proud, if bittersweet, memory in Raleigh's African American community. Not surprisingly, it never became part of the "official" history of Raleigh, Wake County, or North Carolina, despite its historical and symbolic importance. The event was so threatening to the myth of uncontested white supremacy that when an article about Dr. Pope's death appeared in the *News and Observer* in 1934, no mention was made of his run for mayor, though most other major events of his life are noted, including his service in with the 3rd North Carolina Volunteers during the Spanish-American War. In fact, with the exception of a brief reference in John Haley's 1987 biography of Charles Hunter, the only historical references to the race and the events surrounding it are found in sources written by African American authors: Wilmoth Carter's 1961 *The Urban Negro in the South*; a brief biography of Calvin Lightner that appeared in the *Carolinian* in 1984, the newspaper that succeeded the *Raleigh Independent*; and *Culture Town: Life in Raleigh's African American Communities*, published in 1993.¹

Memory of the election and the resistance to white supremacy from 1916 to 1919 was so strong in Raleigh's black community that as the years went by people who were not

actually candidates were given credit for participating. For example, in a 1988 oral history interview, Maye E. Ligon spoke of the involvement of her father, John W. Ligon, in the election. Ligon had served as pastor of Tupper Memorial Church before becoming principal at Crosby-Garfield, the city's black grade school, about 1901. According to his daughter, Ligon ran for commissioner along with Calvin Lightner, whom she thought ran for mayor. Maye Ligon said that her father was called in by the superintendent of schools and fired for running for office because, as she said, "he dared to be a man." Of course Ligon was not on the ticket, but he was a charter member of the Raleigh branch of the NAACP, and likely was involved in the campaign in some way. John W. Ligon's memory lived on, as a new black high school was named for him in 1954. It should be noted that Maye Ligon was not the only person to give Calvin Lightner credit for running for mayor instead of Dr. Pope. This appropriation of memory is somewhat understandable, as Dr. Pope died in 1934 and his daughters lived many years away from Raleigh, while the Lightners remain to this day one of the most visible and prominent families in the city.²

More significant, however, than who claimed participation in the actual events is the strength of the memory of resisting white supremacy, which certainly influenced individuals who played a role in the Civil Rights Movement of the post-World War II era in Raleigh and beyond. On a national level, the best known of these people is Ella Baker. Raised in Littleton (in Halifax County, adjacent to Northampton County), Baker grew up in a middle-class Baptist home similar in many ways to that of Dr. Pope. She came to Raleigh in 1918 to attend high school at Shaw Academy, and she continued her education through graduation from Shaw University in 1927. Baker was something of an activist as a student (apparently leading the charge against women on campus having to wear stockings), and she was

valedictorian of her class. Her presence in Raleigh during the later part of the black political activism of 1916-1919—including the municipal election of 1919—certainly was a formative experience in her own political development. There must have been much talk and excitement on the Shaw campus about the events, as not only were they happening a few blocks away, but because many of the participants, including Dr. Pope, were alumni.³

After graduation Ella Baker moved to Harlem and began a lifetime of work with a number of organizations fighting for African American civil and political rights, including the NAACP. Over a fifty-year period she worked alongside many black leaders and activists including W.E.B. Du Bois, Thurgood Marshall, Pauli Murray, and Martin Luther King, Jr. In 1960 she was the guiding force behind the creation of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), one of the major organizations of the modern Civil Rights Movement. SNCC was founded at Shaw University, and this choice of location was likely more than coincidental. According to historian Barbara Ransby, “Ella Baker provided SNCC activists with a strong connection to history. A common myth about the Civil Rights Movement, especially the Black Power phase of the movement, is that these periods of intense political protest simply erupted on the national scene with little connection to early periods of struggle.” Ransby further notes, “Baker often railed against the stereotype that black southerners were passive and complacent before 1955.” Certainly Baker’s initial first-hand experience with the resistance in Raleigh in 1918 and 1919 had not only a significant impact on her own life, but the memory of Shaw’s long history of molding and fostering black leaders was part of the *zeitgeist* of the creation of SNCC.⁴

Memory of the events of 1916-1919 also had a lasting impression on the children of those who participated. In 1961, John N. Winters was elected to the Raleigh City Council—

the first African American to serve on the council in the twentieth century. Winters' father had been a community leader during the 1910 and 1920s, and he grew up hearing stories about how "Raleigh had more Negroes participating in the political area" than larger southern cities like Atlanta. Winters worked on the gubernatorial campaigns of Kerr Scott in 1956 and Terry Sanford in 1960, and his election to the city council in 1961 is particularly impressive as it was several years before the Voting Rights Act of 1965 brought a majority of the city's black citizens back to the polls. Following three terms on the city council Winters was elected to the North Carolina State Senate in 1975, becoming one of the first two black men elected to that body since the Fusion victories of the 1890s. Like Winters, Clarence Lightner also grew up hearing stories of political activity and resistance to white supremacy in the black community from his father, Calvin Lightner. After serving on the city council, Clarence Lightner was elected Raleigh's first African American mayor in 1973, thus achieving the goal attempted by Dr. Pope fifty-four years earlier.⁵

Through all of these milestones the Pope House stood like a silent sentinel on South Wilmington Street, lost in time as the context of the world in which it was built disappeared around it. After the election of 1919, Dr. Pope went into semi-retirement, suffering from physical ailments that resulted in part from an injury he sustained during his military service. He died on November 13, 1934, at the age of 76. Delia made some changes to the house, most notably replacing the original one-storey wooden front porch with a brick structure that supported a new sleeping porch on the second floor. She continued to live in the house until her death in 1955. Their daughters lived long and productive lives. Both received undergraduate degrees from Shaw, and both went on to earn master's degrees from Columbia University's Teacher College in New York City, one of the few major American white

schools that accepted African American women as students in the 1930s. Evelyn studied library science; Ruth, home economics. Both came back to North Carolina and had successful careers, Evelyn became head librarian of the law library at what is today North Carolina Central University in Durham, and Ruth taught at Chapel Hill High School (first a segregated school, and later integrated). As was relatively common for well-educated black women of their era, neither daughter married. When they retired in the early 1970s, they sold their respective houses in Durham and Chapel Hill and moved back to their childhood home. They made necessary repairs and updates, but lived with all of their ancestral possessions. In many ways time stood still at the Pope House, as the city rapidly changed around it. The *Raleigh Times* thought the sisters (and their few remaining neighbors) were an interesting relic from the past, and the newspaper did a feature story on them in 1975.⁶

Shortly before Evelyn's death in 1995, the sisters created the Evelyn B. and Ruth P. Pope Charitable Trust with their assets, as they had no heirs. Following Evelyn's death, Ruth went into a nursing facility, where she died in December of 2000. In early 1998, while no one was living in the house, a frozen water pipe burst causing a significant amount of damage. The trustees of the Charitable Trust put the contents of the house into storage and began renovating the structure to be used as office space, to generate income for the sisters' charities. When I first saw the house in May of 1998, the interior was stripped to the frame for the renovation. Those in charge of the renovation were relatively careful to save architectural elements, and they did not significantly alter the floor plan. They did install new mechanical and alarm systems, updated the kitchen and bathrooms, replaced the wood floors on the first level, and the lathe and plaster throughout the house with wall board. As I began to do the research for a National Register of Historic Places listing (granted in 1999),

we started discussions about restoring the house and opening it as a museum, instead of using it for office space. The non-profit Dr. M. T. Pope House Museum Foundation was subsequently incorporated in December of 1999, and efforts have been underway since that time to raise the necessary funds to preserve and restore it for future generations.

The arguments for restoring the Pope House to its appearance in the 1910s and opening it to the public as a museum are compelling. As a home built and occupied by two generations of an African American family, complete with original documents and artifacts dating back to the early 1850s, there is no other historic site like it in North Carolina, and precious few in the South. At North Carolina's approximately 130 historic house museums, the interpretation of black history, when it is included, focuses almost exclusively on slavery. The reason for this, of course, is that a majority of these sites are antebellum plantation homes of white families (including the four historic house museums in Raleigh). The legacy of white supremacy has left its mark across North Carolina's landscape in a number of ways; the preservation of a disproportionate number of homes of this type is a physical and public historical manifestation of that legacy.⁷

The most important argument for preservation of the Pope House is its importance as a *lieu de memoire*—a site of memory. The African American struggle for civil and political rights is not memorialized in bricks and mortar anywhere in North Carolina. There exists no permanent historic site where the complex story of the rise of white supremacy can be interpreted, and resistance to it commemorated. The potential surviving sites that might accomplish this task are few and far between. Thus the Pope House, creating a small but proud footprint on the land in downtown Raleigh, can serve as a historically important and remarkably well-preserved site of memory for all North Carolinians.

The future of the Pope House remains uncertain, but Dr. Pope’s name will live on attached to a most unlikely piece of real estate. In 2005, Pulte Homes named the main road in Copper Ridge, a new North Raleigh subdivision off Creedmoor Road featuring \$300,000 - \$400,000 luxury townhouses, Manassa Pope Lane. Evidently the choice was made somewhat at random as it was decided that the streets should be named for “famous” Raleigh citizens. Apparently someone with Pulte stumbled on the Pope House web site, and in quickly reading it mistakenly thought Dr. Pope was elected the first black mayor of Raleigh (the name of Isabella Cannon, Raleigh’s first—and thus far only—female mayor was also chosen). So if you are driving down Creedmoor Road one day toward Crabtree Valley Mall, look to your right just past the intersection with Millbrook Road and you will see a neat subdivision of upper-middle class brick townhomes, living on a street named Manassa Pope Lane. The Pope House may not be saved, but Manassa Pope Lane will live on in predominately white North Raleigh. Dr. Pope would likely be amused.



Endnotes

¹*News and Observer*, November 16, 1934; John Haley, *Charles N. Hunter and Race Relations in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: 1987) p. 207; *Carolinian* (Raleigh), January 2, 1984.

²Linda Simmons Henry and Linda Harris Edminsten, *Culture Town: Life in Raleigh's African American Communities* (Raleigh: 1993), pp. 85-86.

³For a complete biography of Baker, see Barbara Ransby, *Ella Baker and the Black Freedom Movement: A Radical Democratic Vision* (Chapel Hill: 2003).

⁴Barbara Ransby, "Behind-the-Scenes View of a Behind the Scenes Organizer: The Roots of Ella Baker's Political Passions," in Bettye-Collier Thomas and V. P. Franklin, editors, *Sisters in the Struggle: African American Women in the Civil Rights-Black Power Movement* (New York: 2001), p. 43.

⁵Henry and Edminsten, *Culture Town*, pp. 57-65.

⁶Documents relating to their education and careers can be found in the Pope Family Papers in the SHC. "A Bit of the Past Recalled," the *Raleigh Times*, October 3, 1975.

⁷The nearest examples of homes built by middle class African Americans of this era are the Maggie Walker House in Richmond, and the Herndon and King family homes in Atlanta. One important exception to this rule is the Charlotte Hawkins Brown Museum, a state historic site in Sedalia, North Carolina. Brown established the Palmer Memorial Institute in 1902, an exclusive school for African American woman from around the country that operated until 1971. Several buildings are now preserved, including Canary Cottage, the home where she lived on the property. There are a few other examples of homes of the period built by African Americans that are now preserved in the state, but they serve other functions than as historic house museums.

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