

the WATAUGA Club

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by
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WOLF'S HEAD PRESS
RALEIGH

July 1980

Design: Mark B. Dearmon

Composition: Kathryn B. Hardee

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3929 Arrow Drive, Raleigh, North Carolina 27612

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William Joseph Peele
1855-1919

I. BEGINNINGS

In the mid 1880s, two decades after Appomattox, the state of North Carolina was slumbering, still immobilized in the aftermath of the Civil War. The political arena was dominated by old Confederates, looking backward romantically to the heroic years of the Lost Cause. So unconcerned were they about North Carolina's pressing needs that a forward-looking fellow like William Joseph Peele called them fossils, and Walter Hines Page spoke of them as mummies. Progress and change were words the fossils and mummies either ignored or, at best, misunderstood.

In spite of the apparent stasis of political, economic, and social affairs in North Carolina, there were young men other than Peele and Page who were restive under the stagnant conditions and were merely awaiting an opportunity and an issue to plunge them into action.

And so it was that one morning in May, 1884, near the postoffice on Fayetteville Street in Raleigh, on a corner¹ in front of the Citizens National Bank, Peele and Page and G. Edgar Leach were discussing the sad plight of North Carolina. Stepping up to join them was Alfred D. Jones, who had just come from the postoffice with a letter he had received from Senator Zeb Vance.

"Boys," said Jones, "Vance wants us to form a Tariff Club."

Page looked thoughtful, then said, "Why not form a club to discuss other economic questions as well as the tariff?"²

The offhand exchange between Jones and Page might have come to nothing if it had not been for Peele, whose quick mind immediately began transforming these indecisive comments into something concrete. He then and there extended an invitation for them to meet at an early date in the dingy office³ he shared with his law partner Ernest P. Maynard on the second floor of Dodds Building at 239 South Wilmington Street. His notion was to organize just such a club for the purpose of continuing their colloquy about the sorry situation in North Carolina.

On 26 May 1884 the first meeting of the club was held. Peele must have been excited as he anticipated the opportunity thus presented to discuss some ideas of his about the need for reforms in North Carolina. At that first meeting, a prospectus, presumably the words of Peele, was read, and it went like this: "We proceed upon the assumption, which cannot be denied, that there is in our community a serious lack of

accurate and practical information upon the most common economic questions which arise for our consideration."⁴

The adoption of this prospectus seems to have been the only business at that first meeting; no constitution was drawn up, no programs specified, no ritual prescribed, and no publicity sought.⁵ In attendance besides Peele were W. E. Ashley, Alfred D. Jones, Charles Latta, G. Edgar Leach, Sterling Price, John W. Thompson, and a few others including Dr. R. H. Lewis, who shortly thereafter withdrew from the club.⁶ Page was not present. Peele, twenty-nine years old, was named president. He was, in the words of one of his contemporaries, "a scholarly, public-spirited man, a historian and a philosopher, who devoted his life to advancing the educational and literary interests of the state."⁷

In preparation for the next meeting on June 18, Peele was asked to address the club on a subject of his choice, and so he "prepared and read . . . a paper upon Industrial Education and the feasibility of establishing an Industrial School in North Carolina."⁸ Thereafter, at every meeting, this subject became central to the members' discussions.⁹ The need of such a school was not in question, but of how to alert the citizens of North Carolina to the need, of how to get the job done, of how to go about soliciting the help of those in power and authority. A prominent newspaper editor said: "I never saw the words Industrial Education in print in this State till this agitation by the Watauga Club."¹⁰

But that remark came later. Though at first the club had no name, one was required if for no other reason than identification. "To have called it the Progressive Club," wrote Charles Dabney, "would have been like waving a red flag in the faces of the politicians."¹¹ The name Peele suggested was Watauga, which carried no meaning at all except to members of the club. Watauga, an Indian word for "sparkling water," was a mountain stream which, said John W. Thompson, was "the source of a mighty river that turns many thousand spindles and floats many ships of commerce," and the club, like the pure stream, was starting out "with a lofty and pure purpose to serve our state, and we may become a mighty force for the moral and material advancement of this grand old commonwealth."¹² As was also well known, the Watauga Association in American history was composed of a group of men who, like its best-known member John Sevier, struggled "to build up a new state out of the chaos of the old."¹³ And then too in North Carolina there was Watauga County, "famed for its vigour and its pioneering spirit."¹⁴ The word Watauga had thus an appropriate significance for those within, but was an abstruse word for those without. It fitted well.

The club met every two or three weeks, or at odd times whenever there was need for discussion. Often the men gathered in Peele's office at Wilmington and Martin streets, sometimes "in a bare room over the

Holleman store" on Fayetteville Street "reached by a stairway in the alley" and furnished only with "a large deal table and some split-bottom chairs. The only entertainment was talk," wrote Dabney, "and what 'talkfests' those were!"¹⁵ For refreshments, the Wataugans had "ice water, pipes, and tobacco."¹⁶ They were sufficient. Though not a charter member, Walter Hines Page soon joined the group, and frequently the Wataugans met at his newspaper office, where the accommodations were an "unfinished pine table," several chairs and packing crates.¹⁷ Occasionally they converged upon the home of one of the members, and "in a moment of brief prosperity, at a dining table in the Yarborough Hotel."¹⁸

The fact that the Wataugans were relatively secretive about the club "gave rise in a small town to a good deal of gossip."¹⁹ In and around Raleigh it was said that it was a social club whose "young men, too self-respecting to play in common resorts, did some 'high-rolling' in their club room. A minister took one of the members aside, a deacon in his church, and told him of his sorrow at hearing he associated with the gambling crowd."²⁰

But certainly the members' minds were not concerned with gambling or any frivolity of any sort. It was education and economic betterment they yearned for, and they had a potent mouthpiece to voice their concerns. After Page joined, hardly an issue of his *State Chronicle* appeared without reflecting what had been advocated by the Wataugans. Week after week, his *Chronicle*, which had become rather the "unofficial organ of the Club,"²¹ kept before the public whatever proposal was then being pushed. For example, on 2 August 1884, only some two months after the club was organized, Page ran an editorial in the *Chronicle* declaring that industrial education in North Carolina was hampered by "the lack of demand for a large class of industrially educated persons." Manufacturing plants were needed in which skilled workers could be employed.

Before long, the club attracted other bright, forward-looking young men, the membership reaching some two dozen in the next couple of years. Not a one of them was over thirty-six.²² Not a one of them had been in the war. Each of them had his face turned toward the future. Politics were barred. Zealots "with personal axes to grind" were not tolerated. The only goals were better educational opportunities and the economic advancement of North Carolina. With two or three exceptions, all were native of the State. On the roll were business men, engineers, lawyers, teachers, newspaper editors, and scientists.²³

Charles Dabney, the only public official in the club, was State Chemist and Director of the North Carolina Experiment Station. Arthur Winslow, graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was a

civil engineer then surveying the oyster beds in eastern North Carolina. President Peele was an attorney, vice president John W. Thompson an insurance man, and secretary-treasurer G. Edgar Leach a commission merchant.²⁴ Other lawyers besides Peele were Joseph G. Brown, Alex Feild [sic], Alfred Haywood, and Alfred Jones. Like Thompson, William W. Primrose was in insurance. Merchants, in addition to Leach, were Charles Latta and Frank O. Moring. W. E. Ashley was a contractor and manufacturer of machines, and Sterling Price ran a fertilizer factory. Educators were J. Y. Joyner, public school teacher; Charles D. McIver, instructor at Peace Institute; Edward Pearson Moses, superintendent of the Raleigh city schools; and Eugene C. Branson, high school principal who at twenty-two was next to youngest member of the group. Early in 1885 Page turned over the *Chronicle* to Josephus Daniels, who thereafter joined the club and became its secretary. He was twenty-four years old. As today, membership was not confined to residents of Raleigh. Edward A. Oldham, editor of the *Sentinel* in Winston-Salem, was frequently in Raleigh as an assistant to Page at the *Chronicle*, and he attended meetings. In January, 1885, Thomas Dixon, Jr., of Shelby, just barely twenty-one, exploded into town as a member of the House of Representatives in the General Assembly, and promptly became an active Wataugan. William H. Kerr, Durham engineer, was a valued participant in club affairs.²⁵

During the summer and fall of 1884, as the size of the group was slowly but carefully expanded, discussions ranged somewhat widely, but always foremost was the need of an industrial school. The need was strikingly illustrated in October when the North Carolina State Exhibition opened in Raleigh in a building erected especially for it. William S. Primrose, a Wataugan, was president of the Exhibition. On display were fifty thousand products from the State's various counties—a well-intended but unconvincing effort to prove that the State was progressive. Much curiosity was centered on an ice-making machine.²⁶ What discouraged the Wataugans was that not on display were numerous workaday items which, instead of being manufactured in North Carolina, as they should have been, were being purchased from outside the state. What was required for the improvement of the economic situation was an agency to collect and promulgate information leading to corrective action.²⁷

With the Exposition sharply etched in their minds the Wataugans, inevitably and sensibly, decided to eliminate consideration of other problems for the time being, however pressing and urgent, and concentrate even more intently on the industrial school. In its campaign the club would now finally go public, and every member, working both as one of a group and as individuals, would push for its establishment with

all the "youthful enthusiasm" they possessed. Each of them, once the movement was underway, would keep the proposition "before the people by correspondence, speeches, and publications until its purpose was accomplished."²⁸

At a meeting on 17 December, a committee was appointed to present in January a "definite report" upon the practicability of establishing an Industrial School in North Carolina, "with a view of submitting the same to the Legislature which should then be in session."²⁹ On 7 January the report was read to the club by Arthur Winslow, graduate technician whom Peele always referred to as exemplifying the kind of industrially educated man North Carolina needed.³⁰ The report was received with excitement, and at a called meeting on 15 January, Page offered a resolution "That a committee be appointed to memorialize the Legislature in the name of the club to establish an Industrial School in North Carolina" and inform the Legislature that it would provide its appropriate Legislative committee with "all the information on the subject in possession of the club." Not only that, but Winslow and his associates were "empowered, if need be, to publish such information also."³¹

What then happened was that, with time quickly passing and the Legislature in town, Winslow and committee members Peele and Page went ahead and published on 5 February ³² an eight-page pamphlet titled *The Need of an Industrial School in North Carolina, Together with the Estimates of the Cost of Establishing and Maintaining it. A Memorial to the General Assembly by the Watauga Club of Raleigh.*³³ The Memorial was introduced by this statement: "We, a committee appointed by the Watauga Club, an association in the city of Raleigh, . . . respectfully memorialize your honorable body . . . To establish an Industrial School . . . at Raleigh, in connection with the State Agricultural Department . . . [for] instruction . . . in wood-work, mining, metallurgy [and] practical agriculture." The pamphlet then proceeded to comment on other such training centers, most of them in the north. Strong arguments were advanced against locating the school in Chapel Hill. In a report on "Wood Manufacture," Dabney complained that, in North Carolina, furniture came from Grand Rapids, well buckets from Tennessee, wheelbarrows from Ohio, ax handles from Baltimore, bench-screws from Connecticut, carriage wheels from Indianapolis, and step-ladders from Pennsylvania. The state's economy demanded that such articles be manufactured here, and only young men trained in an industrial school could improve the unfortunate situation.

The pamphlet, printed at Page's *Chronicle* office, was circulated among the legislators and sent throughout the state to newspaper editors and influential citizens. As Peele wrote about it later, agriculture had

been tacked on at the last moment after Page, at his house "one Sunday afternoon effectually settled the question whether the school should be agricultural as well as industrial by saying that we would never get the bill" through the "damned farmer legislature unless there was some agriculture in it somewhere."³⁴

In the following weeks the House of Representatives' Committee on Education studied the Watauga Club's proposal, and the reaction was favorable. Thomas Dixon, with boylike impatience, dashed off a bill and plunged it into the hopper, while at the same time Peele, secreted in his law office, prepared a less hasty version, which Augustus Leazer edited. Peele's bill, which then replaced Dixon's, was introduced in the House by Leazer, and it was passed on 11 March 1885, but not without a struggle. "Some opposed it," wrote Peele, "because they were fossils and oppose everything; some feared it would ultimately draw the Land Script Fund away from the University [which it eventually did]. It was the general opinion of its friends at the time it was passed that it would have failed if it had called for one dollar from the general treasury."³⁵ In truth, no money was appropriated, and the school was to be financed by \$5000 in "surplus funds" from the Board of Agriculture—an unlikely source of cash, as any bureaucrat would know.

Without definite monetary implementation, no school of course was established, and the statute became moribund. But having got so far, the vigorous Wataugans did not accept defeat. Eight months later, on 4 November, the club voted to have in Raleigh "a mass-meeting of the friends of industrial education throughout the State."³⁶ Prime movers were William S. Primrose and Charles Latta, chairman and secretary respectively of a "joint committee of the city of Raleigh and the Watauga Club." The committee moved fast. Two days later, on Friday, 6 November, letters were mailed out "to the twenty-five gentlemen who [had] been invited to make five minute speeches and to the 100 gentlemen invited to take seats on the platform" in Metropolitan Hall at eight o'clock the following Wednesday. "This quick work was done with the Cyclo-style machine, a contrivance which makes any number of copies in black ink of whatever you write on it" On Sunday,³⁷ the *News and Observer* announced: "Everybody is invited, but especially the artisans, manufacturers and friends of education. Reserved seats for the ladies." The "speakers and invited guests" were requested to "assemble at the Mayor's office in front of the Hall at 7:30 promptly" on Wednesday.

Reporting on the mass-meeting, the local press noted that "Metropolitan hall was filled with a notable audience. It represented all classes and colors of Raleigh people. A number of ladies were present."³⁸ Among the more than forty-five men on the stage were thirteen members of the Watauga Club. The orator of the evening was George L. Chaney,

“father of the Atlanta Artisans Institute,”³⁹ who “described the plans and operations of the industrial school at Atlanta.” His theme was that an “industrial school is the people’s college.” The secretary of the club, Josephus Daniels, then read letters from those unable to be present, including Colonel Leonidas L. Polk. The next four speakers were Colonel Robert Bingham, Major S. M. Finger, state superintendent of public instruction, Colonel W. H. S. Burgwyn of Henderson, and William H. Kerr of Durham, who “was introduced as a young man who had had the benefit of industrial education.” At that point, Peele “offered resolutions, speaking upon them briefly and pertinently as a member of the Watauga club, which he said was the first to move in this matter of the establishment of an industrial school.” The resolutions, similar to those drafted the preceding February, “were adopted unanimously.” After Alfred Haywood, “on behalf of the Watauga club,” gave thanks to the speakers, “Col. W. F. Greer, of Franklin county, a member of the State board of agriculture,” was given the floor. The mass-meeting adjourned at 10:45.⁴⁰

But, it is sad to report, even this stirring, enthusiastic convocation had no immediate, tangible results. However fervent the Wataugans and their friends were, they could not hire professors or lay brick foundations. Yet by no means was the issue a dead one.

In February, 1886, Page, writing anonymously from New York, sent his famous “Mummy” letters to the *Chronicle* as a direct response to the “continuing opposition to the Watauga Club’s renewed proposals for an industrial school.”⁴¹ It was, he lamented, “an awfully discouraging business to undertake to prove to a Mummy that it is a Mummy.” The Mummies in North Carolina did not “want an industrial school. That means a new idea and a new idea is death to the supremacy of the Mummies.”⁴² He had in mind, of course, the old Confederates, and particularly Governor Alfred Moore Scales, revered Civil War hero. North Carolinians knew, at this point, that Page had defined the enemy and sounded the trumpet for battle.

During that same February, Leonidas L. Polk published the first issue of the *Progressive Farmer* in Raleigh, and from then on this politically powerful editor took over the Watauga program for an industrial school, and “absorbed [it] into a much greater and more powerful movement—the struggle for a land-grant agricultural and mechanical college.”⁴³ Before the year was up, the citizens of Raleigh had got into the act and offered money and a site for the institution.

Polk, too old for membership in the Watauga Club, was a formidable character, a belligerent sponsor of the unhappy, hard-pressed farmers. Though totally aware of what the Wataugans were up to and appreciative of their efforts, he felt the club did not go far enough. For some years

he had been thinking of an agricultural college in North Carolina, and he would settle for nothing less than a land-grant institution. As the year 1886 wore on, he mustered his militant farmers behind his proposal. Some years later, even Peele admitted that Polk was "the most powerful factor in the establishment of the Agricultural and Mechanical College."⁴⁴

During the legislative sessions of 1887, under the leadership of Polk, a bill combining the proposals of the Wataugans and Polk's farmers was written by Dabney and again introduced in the House by Leazer. It was then, according to Thompson, that "the entire membership of the [Watauga] club frequented the lobbies of the Legislature as regularly as did any paid lobbyist, and worked diligently and earnestly for the passage of a *mandatory* act creating a college of agriculture and mechanic arts."⁴⁵ It passed. The \$7500 Land Script Fund was wrenched from the University to the dismay of President Kemp P. Battle, whom Page had cited as one of the Mummies. President Battle was critical of all the Wataugans, especially of Peele, a man who was, according to Josephus Daniels, the "most brilliant graduate of his period"⁴⁶ at Chapel Hill and who Battle knew was devoted to the University. So grateful were the sponsors of the college for the initiative of the Watauga Club that at the ground-breaking ceremonies in West Raleigh on 22 August 1888, it was Peele, not Polk, who was invited to make the principal address, and it was at that time that the shy but fearless Peele spoke out against the "fossils" who "oppose everything." Among those present for the occasion was Governor Scales. It has been said that the Governor took "great offense" at Peele's undisguised castigation.⁴⁷ Neither Page nor Peele had any use for Mummies or fossils. There is, however, another account of those ground-breaking ceremonies which reported that Governor Scales, upon hearing Peele's speech, then and there "arose and declared that whatever his views may have been on the subject of an industrial college, after Peele's address he now supported it."⁴⁸

But, by this time, it was no longer of any importance what the Governor may have thought or said. Yet it cannot be denied that the Wataugans' outspoken hatred of Mummies and fossils was reciprocated. Here and there the brash and forward-looking Watauga Club was known as "that Guy Fawkes organization"⁴⁹ after that infamous British insurrectionist. At his quarters in the Yarborough Hotel while the Executive Mansion was being built, Governor Scales denied young infatuated Alfred D. Jones the privilege of calling on his adopted daughter Katie Scales, with whom he was in love. Jones's fellow Wataugans knew the Governor's ill-tempered behavior was a blatant affront to their group and maneuvered to get Miss Katie away from the Governor to meet with Jones elsewhere.⁵⁰ As a postscript, it must be reported that since

Miss Katie and Jones never met at the altar, the stratagems had no permanent benefits.

Meanwhile, the establishment of an industrial school, if the most notable activity of the club, was not its only concern. Its members discussed the no-fence law, the paving of city streets, and the need for improved roads and better public schools. They promoted modern agricultural methods and farmers' institutes.⁵¹ The club was, in short, always on the lookout for any chance to extend "the opportunities of the common man." This "was the idea that dominated all others."⁵² It called for the training of manual laborers, of young women, of blacks. The members "were not frightened by the epithet of 'nigger lovers' that was constantly hurled at them."⁵³ About 1886, for example, President Dabney asked Josephus Daniels to prepare a paper on the Blair Common School Bill, then before Congress. Among other things, the act was to provide surplus federal funds to educate the illiterate Southern blacks, and Daniels contended that since the North had freed the slaves, it ought to pay to have them educated. Governor Scales and the other old-timers were against the bill, unwilling that the blacks be educated regardless of who paid.⁵⁴

Though concerns like this which were beyond local or statewide solution intrigued the club, they provided unsatisfactory release for youthful green energies and gradually, as the 1880s moved into the 1890s, the club, without focus or a burning issue, drifted into inactivity. If a book of minutes was kept, it has not surfaced. The written recollections of its members do not tell just why the club ceased to exist or when.

And now, before learning of its revival some years later, we might enjoy for a page or so an intermission feature of sorts by leafing through a work which, while not history, goes history one better in expressing the very essence and spirit of the Watauga Club in its early days.

Walter Hines Page's active membership in the club lasted only a little more than eight months—from mid 1884 to February, 1885—yet his influence on it and its influence on him was long-lasting.⁵⁵ His pseudonymous novel *The Southerner* . . . *Being the Autobiography of Nicholas Worth* is based on his boyhood and young manhood in North Carolina. In it the Watauga Club, though not by that name or any other, figures rather prominently. *The Southerner* presents the social and political climate of North Carolina during the late nineteenth century, but makes no attempt at historical sequence or accuracy. It is, after all, a novel—as little faithful to raw fact as *Ivanhoe* or *Look Homeward, Angel*.

The inspired young men, Page writes, who had "had no more to do with the Civil War than with the Punic Wars and no more to do with slavery than with the Inquisition . . . yet . . . [suffered] the consequences

of both slavery and the war." Sometimes it seemed to them "that many of the men who survived that unnatural war did [the next generation] a greater hurt than the war itself"; for "their loyalties were loyalties, not to living ideas or duties, but to old commanders and to distorted traditions. They were dead men, most of them, moving among the living as ghosts; and yet, as ghosts in a play, they held the stage." Since they controlled the Legislature, they blocked all proposals for change. The capital city, site of their law-making, was, the narrator Nicholas Worth said he supposed, "the dullest settlement of English-speaking folk in the whole world." Page's distaste for Raleigh was obviously intense.

The leader of the restless young fellows who pushed for reforms in education was a dynamo named William Malcolm Bain. Schools, Bain proclaimed, should be practical and teach men and women to do their everyday tasks better. Boys should be taught to build tables and book-racks, girls given lessons in sewing. And "Wouldn't it be a good plan to have a Professor of Roads, and a Professor of Sheep added to the faculty of the University [which offered only a classical education], to travel about, and to teach the people?" Not only did Bain propose making public schools more practical, but he had in mind a state-supported "College of Housewifery and of Teaching . . . for the neglected country girls" and "also a School of Cotton Crafts, from farming to weaving to selling."

To bombard the reactionary Legislature, whose members were unconvinced of the necessity of instructing the poor or the blacks, Bain "organized a club of about a dozen active men who saw the need of better training for all the people." The Legislature of course voted down every proposal advanced by Bain and his Club, but the tide was turning. Two years later, a "rural discontent" with things as they existed was in the air, and the Club, now numbering only seven, went to work again.

This time, though the Club "had as its only purpose the training of the neglected youth of the State to useful occupations," the old Confederates in the Legislature "so shaped public discussion that every proposition of the Club [was] turned into an apparent defense of the Negro" and "hostile to the veterans" of the Lost Cause. Page writes of how the club "had not been, and . . . did not now wish to be, a political club," but in the face of unfair and strong opposition, it decided to draw up a platform addressed "To the Voters of the Commonwealth," in which it was urged that the low economic and educational situation in the State be remedied by the establishment of agricultural and trade schools for both white and black—to teach the young "the honour [sic] and the necessity of work." The old-timers, in vigorous disdain, contended that "a boy can . . . learn to farm—by farming; or to be a carpenter—by going to work with a carpenter." No schools were required, they

insisted, and the "Party of Seven," as the Club was called, was composed merely of " 'Seven Foolish Virgins.' " Rejected by the Democrats, the Club put up Nicholas Worth to run on a slate of Republicans and Populists for Superintendent of Schools. During the campaign, this was his creed:

I believe in this land—our land— whose infinite variety of beauty and riches we do not yet know.
Wake up, old Land!

I believe in these people—our people—whose development may be illimitable. Wake up, my People!

I believe in the continuous improvement of human society, in the immortality of our democracy, in the rightmindedness of the masses. Wake up, old Commonwealth!

In spite of winning a majority of the votes, the dominant party falsified the results of the election and Nicholas Worth was declared the loser. It was to be expected. But the principles of the Club soon triumphed, inevitable when a sensible citizenry looked upon itself and dreamed of a better future.⁵⁶

Page's novel, like other Bildungsromans, has a love story, of course, and relates a young man's struggle toward personal maturity—but summarized here is only how the Club figured in the life of the narrator.

Among the most apparent novelistic readjustments in *The Southerner* is Page's combining the historical roles of Peele and McIver in his character William Malcolm Bain, and of course Page never ran for Superintendent of Schools on the Republican-Populist ticket. Only his twenty years of residence in the North at that time could have permitted such an unlikely madness, even in a pseudonymous novel. Page's story ran serially in the *Atlantic Monthly* in 1906, then in 1909 was published in book form.

A decade earlier, perhaps unknown to him, the Watauga Club had once more shown signs of life. Out at A. and M. College, the Alumni Association, organized in 1895, began promoting a textile department at the institution. Soon thereafter, Peele gathered together some of his old Wataugans and collaborated with the Association's textile committee of C. D. Franks, Charles Pearson, and C. B. Williams (all of whom later joined the Watauga Club) to move the idea along. A bill was prepared by the Alumni committee with the help of Peele, who arranged in 1897 to have it introduced in the General Assembly, but it came to nothing.⁵⁷ The Wataugans were not unacquainted with legislative inaction and now,

with the textile department and other exciting matters before them, they revived the Club in earnest and got to work.

The first significant indications of reorganization came later that year. Early in the fall of 1897 the club resolved to call attention to the issues at hand by having a sumptuous banquet at the Yarborough Hotel. At a meeting on 12 October in the office of Richard B. Raney, plans initiated several weeks before were concluded.⁵⁸ Corresponding secretary John C. Drewry sent out invitations to influential men throughout the area. From Aberdeen, Henry A. Page, prosperous lumberman, wrote to Drewry that though he could not attend, "The revival of the Watauga Club is a matter of interest to all North Carolinians. While in active existence it suggested and encouraged some of our most creditable institutions and industries, and its revival will be hailed with pleasure by all who are concerned in the industrial upbuilding of North Carolina. Let the new Watauga Club suggest, investigate and plan: suggest new industries, investigate possibilities, leaving the old beaten paths, and pointing the way to new methods and manufacturing enterprises that will add to the variety as well as the volume of our industries. Multitudes have the ability to execute, while the mental capacity to plan new things is rarely found. If your club will lead here, men and money will be found to execute."⁵⁹

The banquet was held on 19 October. President Edwin A. Alderman of the University at Chapel Hill was toastmaster. After his comments on "the Watauga Club and its achievements," and a speech of welcome to the city of Raleigh by Mayor W. M. Russ, several of those attending the dinner rose to respond to a number of toasts: to the A. and M. College by Giles Edgar Leach, Watauga secretary; to the Normal and Industrial College at Greensboro by President Charles D. McIver; to Street Improvement by John C. Drewry; and to "Industrial Education in the South for the past decade" by President A. Q. Holladay of A. and M. College. There were comments on the manufacture of tobacco by Wataugan Joseph E. Pogue, himself a producer of plug tobacco. The banquet concluded with President Peele's speaking on his beloved Watauga Club. Among the guests who were there, besides Alderman, were Colonel Julian S. Carr, Dr. D. E. Everett, and Judge T. B. Wormack. The menu, served in four courses, consisted of Lynnhaven Bay oysters, puree of tomato with croutons, celery, sliced tomatoes, roast beef, young turkeys stuffed with oysters, cranberry sauce, asparagus, cream potatoes, French peas, chicken salad a la McKimmon, vanilla ice cream, assorted nuts, cheese and crackers, Delaware grapes, bananas, coffee, and native wine.⁶⁰ The total cost was \$74.27, including fifty dinner plates for \$50, 58 cigars \$5.22, eight bottles of wine \$4, and other such expenses as postage and typing.⁶¹ In a press account of the

occasion, the club was singled out for praise in having been responsible for "much of the permanent road and street improvements in and around Raleigh."

Chairman of the banquet committee was W. E. Ashley, and in his report on the event he wrote: "We have forty-three active members on our roll at present; but some of them were elected so late that they did not attend the Banquet, and thirteen of this forty-three do not live in town. . . . The Executive Committee issued over eighty invitations, and received less than fifteen regrets, and therefore felt sure in giving the order for the Banquet for fifty members; but as the night was stormy, you who were there will no doubt remember that there were barely forty present, and some of those were invited that evening. . . ."62

At the club meeting on 10 November, Peele led a discussion about "publishing [the] letters and papers submitted or read at the Banquet." The primary subject of the evening, however, had to do with good roads, and the result was that committees were appointed on Broad Tire Legislation, a Topographical Survey, and the Working of Convicts. The club went on record again in promising to cooperate with those seeking a textile department at A. and M. In December the club decided to settle on a permanent meeting place, and the site selected was the office of Allen & Boyden Company, the rent of \$25 a year to be paid quarterly. In January, 1898, the committee appointed in December to visit the exposition car "City of Charlotte" at the Union Depot reported that it was "a first-class exhibit of the natural products of our State."

A formal resolution at this time to "co-operate with the movement for a Textile School" kept members busy throughout the spring. A committee recommended "that the Watauga Club cause to be prepared for the Press of the State several articles on the subject—in order to create a public sentiment in favor of State appropriations to aid the Agr. & Mechanical College in creating and operating a Textile Department. On account of the unsatisfactory conditions of Cotton Manufacturing in the East, it becomes important that N. C. should embrace the opportunity to prepare her young men for intelligent work. The new mills of the future will be created in some of the Southern States. We must prepare to obtain and manage our portion."⁶³ The necessity for speedy action was due to the fact that Charlotte had meanwhile decided to bid for the school. But as things turned out, the legislative bill supported by Heriot Clarkson and D. A. Tompkins and designating Charlotte as the location, when introduced in the General Assembly the following year, failed to pass, and the Charlotte interests swung over to the Alumni Association and Watauga groups. The textile school was finally granted to A. and M.⁶⁴

Less important concerns were taken up. For example, a committee was appointed "to look into the matter of the removal of the true

meridian stone from the Capitol square." Though new members were constantly being elected, too often the minutes do not indicate that they accepted. On 28 November 1898 (there had been no meeting since May) the club passed a resolution on Pure Food legislation—"a matter of considerable importance, touching the health and pockets of the poorer portion of our people." In December, Peele was once more elected president and five other officers named. To meet expenses of the past year, each member was assessed \$1. A constitution⁶⁵ had been drawn up and printed, providing for numerous officers and an elaborate committee structure. The "main object" of the club, stated the constitution, was "to promote the material interests of this community, and, as far as lies in our power, of the whole people of North Carolina." A "further purpose" was "to seek out and honor, by banquet and otherwise . . . [those who] have greatly distinguished themselves in the arts or industries." At the 9 January 1899 meeting, appointments to committees—executive, membership, literature and publications, and so on—were made, most frequently composed of the same old tried-and-true Wataugans again and again. The committee pattern appears to have been inordinately heavy, uninspiring, and onerous. And perhaps that was indeed the case, for the minute book of the club has no entries for the next three years.

Even Peele, who had guided the club off and on for a decade and a half, seems to have lost interest. In the years before and after the turn of the century, he was engaged in writing, in publishing, and in organizing historical groups. As to club activity, he presumably had found more pleasant stimulation elsewhere, though of a different sort. At that time he and Primrose belonged also to the Monday Evening Club, a nonactivist group similar to the traditional clubs in Great Britain, where papers were read and discussed, but no action was required or expected. For one meeting of the Monday Evening Club, Peele was asked to prepare a paper on "The Political Side to the Victorian Age."⁶⁶ That was a far cry indeed from textile schools and the paving of city streets.

On 10 February 1902, after the three-year hiatus, Professor W. A. Withers presided at a special meeting of the club with five members present: George Allen, Charles E. Johnson, Peele, Withers, and secretary C. B. Williams. When called on, Peele outlined "what the club had done in the past, and pointed out the absolute necessity for its revival as there was a great amount of important work that could be and should be taken up at this time."⁶⁷ Not members but present and making short talks were Paul Collins, Clarence Poe, and George T. Winston. The three, along with S. E. Ashbury and E. B. Owen, were elected to membership, and a "committee on permanent organization" was named.⁶⁸ As in the past, the membership, except for about a half dozen or so loyal souls, was quite haphazard. Many men received invitations to join the Watauga

Club, but whether they accepted is not known. The roster was considerably augmented by names from the faculty at A. and M.

On 25 February, a committee was appointed concerning "reorganization and nominations of officers." It was decided "to have a memorial meeting in honor of the late William H. Kerr, a charter [sic] member of the club, an honored son of the State and a valued contributor to our industrial progress." Then another committee was appointed "to memorialize the national Congress in reference to the division with the state universities of the proposed appropriation to the several agricultural and mechanical colleges of the Union for the purpose of a school of mines and mining." After that committee appointment, "Prof. W. C. Riddick . . . addressed the club on the subject of Road Construction," and the meeting adjourned.⁶⁹ For the 27 March meeting the "principal topic . . . was the 'Value of Industrial Text Books in the Public Schools.'" It "was discussed most ably by Dr. F. L. Stevens," wrote Clarence Poe in his diary. "He advocated most strongly Nature's Study for all grades of schools in order to teach the children the most fundamental facts regarding plants, animals, air and soil. This would create interest," according to the diary, "and to cultivate their power of education and investigation. . . . The discussion of the topic was further participated in by Messrs. Winston, Poe, Peele and Pogue."⁷⁰ Before adjournment, it was decided that the election of new officers would be postponed till "the next meeting."⁷¹ It all seems rather dispiriting.

But if there was a "next meeting," the fact cannot be proved by the book of minutes, whose pages thereafter are blank. Why, one may ask, did the club fade into at least temporary oblivion? Was it that the original members, now in their forties, had lost their youthful energies? And Nature Study—it was hardly on the same level as those burning issues of earlier days. One thing is certain: instead of the individual involvements of the past, ineffectual committees were now routinely appointed at the drop of a bare mention. Nothing forceful could be expected of that. The Watauga would not be the first nor last group to expire from an overdose of committees. As for new members of the club, a great many of them were from the faculty of A. and M.—busy professors undoubtedly and with already more than enough campus committees to plague their lives. On the run, too, were the Raleigh businessmen, who probably felt that, during the Aycock administration, the old problems were now being solved by government. But whatever the reason or reasons, the Watauga Club dropped from sight in 1902.

Yet the Watauga idea did not die. Let's take a look at the story of Eugene C. Branson. After only a brief time as a Wataugan in 1884, he left Raleigh and went on to other education posts. He had been impressed with the club's procedure of gathering information and

presenting data. Down in Georgia, remembering how the Watauga had "concerned itself primarily with studying the state's social and economic resources and making practical suggestions," he founded the Georgia Club, which put "into practical effect the ideals and purposes that animated the Raleigh group." When university President Edward Kidder Graham brought Branson back to North Carolina in 1914, his only instructions were "to sell the state to its natives." As head of the Department of Rural and Social Economics at Chapel Hill, Branson was directed to get the facts, especially on North Carolina's "faults and deficiencies," then make suggestions on how to remedy them. During his very first month back home, he organized the North Carolina Club, its program and procedures similar to those of the Watauga Club and the Georgia Club. Its some fifty members met fortnightly, studying one problem at a time. Branson's little printed *News Letter*, filled with statistics of every possible kind, soon was reaching seventeen thousand readers. It was not a propaganda sheet; it said simply that these were the facts, unpleasant and disgraceful though they might be. From then on, it was the newspaper editors and the people themselves who, shamed by their pride in their state, were impelled into action.⁷² And indeed they went into corrective action on many issues. Branson's service to the state, and the service of his Watauga offshoot the North Carolina Club, has never been fully recognized or acknowledged.

No, after 1902, neither the Watauga idea nor the Watauga Club really died.



II. THE CLARENCE POE YEARS

Concerning the revival of the Watauga Club a decade or so later, the data are both few and vague. Since no contemporary documents defining the exact nature of the club or its activities have surfaced, one can only conjecture about the matter. What is undeniable is that Clarence Poe had not forgotten how a group of dedicated men could influence important decisions. He obviously thought such potential must not be sacrificed or ignored. In 1926 he said: "I had the privilege some years ago of helping organize [a] group of leading Raleigh men who meet regularly as the successor of the original Watauga Club to discuss and promote matters affecting North Carolina progress."¹

This reorganization must have been effected about 1920, a while before or maybe soon after, for one of the members at that time was Governor Thomas Walter Bickett, who died in December 1921.

The group, at first perhaps not even called the Watauga Club but simply inspired by that turn-of-the-century organization, was presumably a small one, loosely regulated, hardly a club at all in the formal sense. The members got together and they talked. Gilbert T. Stephenson remembered that, when he was sponsored for election to Watauga by J. Melville Broughton in early 1922, there were "not over six or seven members." He recalled that "Clarence Poe served as convener," and in the group were T. E. Browne, W. T. Bost, E. C. Brooks, and R. L. McMillan.²

What seems soon to have happened during the 1920s was that the Wataugans, in spite of Dr. Poe's altruism and public spirit, began to think of themselves no longer as activists like their predecessors. They met for dinner, most often at members' homes, and they spoke about what concerned them, but without feeling any responsibility for concerted action. After a while, the evening's procedure had evolved into the reading of a prepared paper followed by discussion. In the rather mild decade of the 1920s, the Wataugans were unwilling to push for municipal or legislative action, however desirable. This realignment of intention and policy reflected the tenor of Raleigh life in the mid 1920s, when two similar clubs were established.

In February 1924, Captain Sam Lawrence proposed to Charles E. Johnson that they "assemble a group of ten or twelve kindred souls to meet each Friday," at which time the "host would outline the subject for

debate . . . to be followed by limited period for rejoinder . . . not to exceed five minutes." It was promptly done, and thus was founded the Sandwich Club, its members "supposed to represent a cross section of the available intelligentsia of Raleigh."³ From the beginning, the Sandwich Club was a thriving and hardy company of men, and so it is today.

Another group, the History Club, was organized on 6 March 1927 in the home of F. M. Harper with the express purpose of undertaking a "systematic and serious study of prominent characters, events and movements in American history." Among the charter members were Hugh T. Lefler, A. R. Newsome, and Charles Lee Smith. No president was elected, and at the monthly meeting the host presided. To keep "some record of the club's proceedings, A. R. Newsome was chosen permanent secretary." Procedures and purpose of the History Club have changed but little over the years. Membership nowadays in this very alert group is limited to eighteen.⁴

Among the three clubs, dual membership was not uncommon. Clarence Poe was also in the Sandwich Club, as in more recent years his son Charles has been. Arch T. Allen, E. C. Brooks, B. F. Brown, A. J. Maxwell, Carl C. Taylor, and perhaps others, were both Wataugans and Historians. Edwin Gill belonged to all three.

By 1930 meetings of the Watauga Club were being held about every two or three weeks in accordance with a rather strict schedule, and right through the summer too. This meant that each member, in alphabetical order, was called upon to entertain the club at least twice a year, and sometimes more often. Clarence Poe, both president and unofficial secretary, would write a letter to the up-coming host, reminding him of the date and enclosing a list of names to be notified.

Visitors were frequent. On 6 March 1930 Carl Vrooman, assistant secretary of agriculture during the Wilson administration, was in Raleigh as the guest of Carl C. Taylor. In the morning he spoke to employees at the State Hospital and had lunch there with Albert Anderson; in the afternoon he appeared before a group of graduate students at State College; and in the evening he addressed the Watauga Club.⁵ Both Anderson and Taylor were Wataugans.

On 5 August 1930, Josephus Daniels, no longer a Wataugan, wrote to Governor O. Max Gardner: "I thank you for the invitation to attend the meeting of the Watauga Club. I think Judge John Thompson and your humble servant are the only living members of the original club. . . ." More than a year later Frank Graham wrote to Gardner about the possibility of being "present at the Mansion on the occasion of your entertaining the Watauga Club" and promised to let him know later if he could attend.⁶ Gardner was host again 3 May 1932. The tradition of having all governors as members of Watauga (there was only one exception

thereafter) began with Gardner. Others who by the nature of their positions were traditionally invited to join were the president of the University and the chancellor at N. C. State.

In the early 1930s, the practice of accepting or declining invitations by postcard had also begun, but sometimes a telegram was sent or a telephone call was made. Meetings, when not at members' homes, were often held at the Carolina Pines or a downtown hotel. Room 301 at the Hotel Carolina was one of the regular spots. During the Depression, expenses could be a problem. On one occasion Frank Graham notified the Raleigh host that his finances would not allow him to drive over from Chapel Hill.

In May 1932 there were eighteen members: A. T. Allen, Albert Anderson, W. T. Bost, E. C. Brooks, J. M. Broughton, B. F. Brown, T. E. Browne, Governor Gardner, Thurman D. Kitchen, R. L. McMillan, A. J. Maxwell, Frank Page, Dr. J. M. Parrott, E. McNeill Poteat, Carl C. Taylor, Colonel J. W. Harrelson, Dr. Graham, and Dr. Poe. An invitation to Frank Graham's "supper in my home in Chapel Hill at seven o'clock, Tuesday evening, May 24," prompted this reply from McNeill Poteat in that penniless springtime: "You bet I'll put myself in your bread-line, be very resolute but non-revolutionary, with a bourgeois appetite & proletarian willingness to be fed!"⁷ The topic of the evening's discussion following the supper is not known.

In October 1932 Clarence Poe wrote the membership that there was "a growing feeling" that the hosts "should make it a rule to prepare their own talks, and that some of us have been dodging this responsibility too frequently." He thought, even so, that every now and then the "rule" should be put aside when an opportunity arose of having "a guest of honor" who could "present some subject sufficiently out of the ordinary." And so it was, he said, that, for his meeting on October 31, he had "asked Senator Josiah W. Bailey to give us some confidential impressions of the Senate and the Senators."⁸

In February 1933 R. L. McMillan wrote that on the 21st at the Carolina Pines Hotel he would lead a discussion on the "Use of our leisure time." Furthermore, the manager of the hotel had extended to club members "the privilege of the grounds" for the whole day, and Mr. Mac hoped the Wataugans would come early to play golf or tennis or go horseback riding. On April 4 Justin Miller entertained at his home on the Duke campus, his subject "What Is Crime?" to follow up a prior discussion by guest Albert Coates. For a meeting two weeks later at the Sir Walter Hotel, Frank Page wrote that he was "going to try to find something interesting in the present banking situation to talk about" and hoped to have R. M. Hanes, president of the Wachovia Bank and Trust Company, on hand.⁹ (Remember that this was 1933, when almost any banking discussion was



Clarence H. Poe
1881-1964

enormously "interesting.") In May, Dr. Poe had the Wataugans at his home to discuss "The New Deal."

Early in 1934, Poe, ever assiduous at keeping the Wataugans in line, complained of recent "irregularities in meeting dates" and urged his charges "to make an especial effort to have the club meet regularly every other Tuesday night of this year." W. T. Bost entertained at his home February 13 with a program on "Orthodoxy and the Death Penalty." Poe maintained that there should be one excusable departure from the schedule. This was to be on Saturday, May 26, to celebrate the "50th anniversary of the club." For the occasion, ex-members Josephus Daniels and Judge John W. Thompson were to be "special honor guests."¹⁰ Invited but unable to attend were former members R. D. W. Connor, W. S. Rankin, and O. Max Gardner, the last of whom wrote from his Washington law office: "The Watauga Club has played an important and unselfish part in placing the thinking behind many movements in the interest of Raleigh and North Carolina on a high and unpersonal [sic] plane. It has had many distinguished members. I consider my association with the fine group of citizens making up this club a distinct privilege and an honor."¹¹

"Please bring your ideas," wrote Poe when announcing his meeting in January 1935 on "What Should the Legislature Do?" Ambassador to Mexico Josephus Daniels was Colonel Harrelson's guest speaker at 1902 Hillsborough Street on May 14, and a week later Governor J. C. B. Ehringhaus entertained at the Executive Mansion.¹² And so things went. In November of the following year W. T. Bost warned the club: "Mrs. Bost is going to talk social security for me and I think you'll enjoy her study of the question. I should have talked about football, the Graham Plan, if you will, had I not felt that the other theme is even more timely." For his program of July 20, 1937, Bost invited Attorney General A. A. F. Seawell to outline "his proposal for a North Carolina Department of Justice." A few months afterwards, Dr. Poe had the Wataugans out to his home "Longview" for a discussion of the "Three Great Problems Before Congress": crop control, wages and hours legislation, and neutrality.¹³

For some time before this November meeting, the attendance had been so small that Poe felt the roster should be enlarged. To stimulate the selection process, he provided these criteria:

1. Is the proposed member *personally acceptable* to the entire membership?
2. Is his *range of interest* sufficiently wide and keen to enable him to make a real contribution to our discussion continuously over the years?
3. Is he willing to give club membership the serious attention involved in preparing *one or two carefully prepared and well thought*

out papers or discussions of specific subjects each year as his turns come by alphabetical progression as long as he is a member?

To Frank Graham, Dr. Poe wrote: "As membership in the club is for life on good behavior, it is important that new members offer not merely one or two good messages at the beginning, but that they be able to make real contributions as long as they live. Furthermore, as the Watauga Club since its inception has been primarily concerned with the development and upbuilding of North Carolina, men who will help most in discussions of this character will naturally make the most useful members, but in such a program of development, cultural and spiritual factors of course must be kept in mind as well as economic and material factors."

From a list of some eighteen possibilities, including Thomas Dixon, Jr., who was then living in Raleigh but who Poe seems not to have been aware had been in the club briefly during 1885, four men were issued invitations: Christopher Crittenden, secretary of the N. C. Historical Commission; Calvin B. Hoover of Duke University; George S. Mitchell, regional director of the Farm Security Administration; and Blake R. Van Leer, the new dean of engineering at State College.¹⁴

Though the nonactivist nature of the club during the 1930s was all too evident, Dr. Poe retained a vision of what Watauga had once meant and, from time to time, essayed a move to honor a concept quickly fading away and no longer observed or even understood. "It was unanimously voted last night," he wrote Jonathan Daniels on 2 March 1938, "that the Watauga Club will adopt as one of its major objectives this year, securing for State College one of the four 'Agricultural Research Laboratories' provided for in the 1938 Farm Act."¹⁵ Whether the Wataugans girded on their armor to fight for the research facility is not known.

In the spring of 1939, only a few months before the world started turning topsy-turvy, members were asked to come to the meeting and "bring along some of your own favorites" for an evening of Highlights of North Carolina Prose and Poetry. A peaceful way it was to signal the end of the Depression decade and the beginning of the war years. An indication of what was to come might have been perceived from Frank Graham's guest on 23 April 1940. He was isolationist Senator Burton K. Wheeler of Montana. "After the supper," Graham notified the club, "we will go to Memorial Hall to hear Senator Wheeler."¹⁶ In early 1941 T. E. Browne's program had to do with defense training in the public schools. Soon thereafter, host Paul Green spoke on the "dramatic and tragic life of Andrew Johnson." Later, on 9 February 1942, Green wrote from Hollywood where he was once again preparing scenarios for motion pictures: "I think Mr. Connor and Mr. Binkley would be fine additions to the club." He then added: "Nationalism as an absolute criterion of value

and practice must go. The heart of man and the concept of the universal machine demand it. And Woodrow Wilson still remains one of my heroes."¹⁷ It was a crucial time in American history.

In the 1930s, membership had become stabilized at about eighteen, though E. C. Brooks had been made "honorary" and others were frequently "on leave." The situation worsened after 1941. In 1944 the roll contained twenty-three names, but Connor, Daniels, Green, Thurman D. Kitchen, and Robert Lee Humber were among those "on leave of absence for the duration." Wataugans remaining in Raleigh carried on. Colonel Harrelson brought in Professor A. C. Shaw to speak on livestock development, and A. J. Maxwell presented a series of "thumb-nail sketches of distinguished North Carolinians" such as Zeb Vance, Matt W. Ransom, David S. Reid, Charles B. Aycock, and T. W. Bickett.¹⁸

It was in June 1943 that Robert Lee Humber, a guest of the club, spoke on the need for a state art museum. Governor Broughton was present and invited him to come by his office at the Capitol and explain his proposition more thoroughly. Humber did so, and the museum movement was soon underway.¹⁹ (Question here: Can the Watauga Club take credit for the North Carolina Museum of Art as, since the early days, it has taken credit for North Carolina State University?) Shortly after this, Humber became a member.

The war, however dominant in the lives and thoughts of all North Carolinians, did not deter Dr. Poe from planning a celebration of the 60th Anniversary of Watauga in May 1944. At the Raleigh Woman's Club, the dress was "formal"; Calvin Hoover's subject was "The Outlook for War and Peace"; and "members and their wives [were] invited to ask questions and present viewpoints (concisely, please)." The cost of thirty-three plates @ \$1.50 was \$49.50; flowers for the table were \$1; tips for waiters \$5; total cost \$55.50.²⁰

More and more often meetings took place at the Woman's Club. On 19 August 1944 host W. C. Davison was there to discuss "the proposed Hospital and Medical Care Program in North Carolina," and in December at the Woman's Club, host Judge Emery Denny spoke on "Changes in Government since 1910."

On 18 January 1945 at the Hotel Carolina, not at the Woman's Club, David Clark of Charlotte, conservative textile leader and fierce N. C. State College supporter, attended a meeting of the Watauga Club on the invitation of Frank Graham. Most probably it was on this occasion (though of course no minute book provides documentation) that Clark tore into the gentle but unmovable Graham with the verbal claws of a wolf. Never before had the gentlemanly Watauga Club been the scene of invective and shouting.

At war's end, the club sought a return to the familiar old ways. When Dr. Davison entertained at the Hope Valley Country Club, Clarence Poe, always on the lookout for promising new members, asked Dr. Davison to bring along several Duke men as prospective Wataugans. A different sort of evening came on 7 December 1948. J. M. Broughton had written: "It has been our privilege each time heretofore to entertain the Club in our home, but owing to the fact that we are in the process of packing up to get off to Washington later in December, this will not be feasible at this time. Therefore, I am asking the Club to meet at Gresham's Restaurant, which is on the lake on U. S. Highway No. 1 about seven miles north of Raleigh. The proprietor has promised to give us either a fried chicken dinner with barbecue on the side, or a barbecue dinner with chicken on the side. . . . I plan to talk about some problems that will confront the 81st Congress."²¹

According to Paul Green, it was in the late 1940s that Gerald Johnson, though almost entirely deaf, was asked to read a paper to the club. About this time, too, Green had become so impressed with the quality of the papers read that he approached the director of the University of North Carolina Press with the proposal, though nothing came of it, to collect and publish the best of them in a book. There were moments when Green was less enthusiastic. He hosted the group in Chapel Hill and, while reading a version of one of his recent Negro plays, began to sense that the reading of a Negro play was the wrong thing to be doing at a Watauga gathering. Eventually, when he became totally aware that the club was a discussion and paper-reading group only—"and brilliant papers many of them were," he said, but never followed by action based on them—he resigned.²² Like a few other less than assured Wataugans during these decades, Green wanted results, but the Wataugans no longer combined their efforts on an issue or wrote to the newspapers or paced the legislative halls. They were pleased with things as they were. Perhaps it was this sedentary and passive nature of the club which caused W. Kerr Scott, after settling in at the Executive Mansion in 1949, to express politely his pleasure in receiving an invitation to join the club, but add he would not at that time (4 March 1949) accept it.²³ (He joined later.)

Throughout the years, one of the most delightful aspects of a Watauga Club evening came just before the diners arose from the table and adjourned to more comfortable quarters for the program. This feature was called the Table Topic and was in the form of a question which went something like this: What do you think Congress will do about so-and-so? Since the answers were always treated in confidence, governors and university administrators and justices of the supreme court could speak their minds without fear of being quoted outside. The interrogator, who soon came to be known as the Propounder of the Question, held a position

of honor. For almost a lifetime, R. L. McMillan was the Propounder of the Question. After voicing the query, Mr. Mac would then say: "Be clear, curt, and complete. Keep to the point, say it all, and make it brief." Not everyone was able to "make it brief," and Mr. Mac felt no hesitancy in saying "That's enough" as he moved on to the next person at the table.

Membership and scheduling vacillated. In 1951 there were twenty-six names on the roll. A decision in 1952 was to limit the number to twenty, and a standing membership committee of three was elected. The rule at that time was that "Not less than fifteen affirmative votes shall be required for election, with no negative votes."²⁴ In 1953 only one meeting was held in June, July, and August, but for the next year two meetings a month were ordered, including the summer.

On the whole, programs reflected the hosts' professional interests. In May 1952 Colonel Harrelson's subject was the Southern Regional Education movement, with D. B. Anderson, E. J. Preston, and Carey H. Bostian as guests, for, he explained, the three of them had "had some experience with this educational operation."²⁵ In February 1953 Charles F. Carroll wrote that he had "been requested to discuss public school legislation," and he planned "to invite each member present to express himself on this question: What course should North Carolina pursue if the Supreme Court of the United States holds that segregation in the public schools is unconstitutional?"²⁶ In October 1954 Robert Lee Humber's topic was world peace.

As early as 1946 it had been recorded that the club had long followed the practice of celebrating "its birthday each year by having our wives join us."²⁷ So popular was the occasion that in November 1952 a "Fall Ladies' Night" was held. For the gala, each of the men was to prepare a comment on some book he had recently enjoyed, and the women were warned that "At our Club Anniversary Ladies' Night meeting next spring the wives of members will be expected to make similar reports."²⁸ Unfortunately no account of the distaff participation has survived.

In order to impose some discipline on the unsystematized succession of programs, Clarence Poe in 1954 asked for suggestions about topics Wataugas would like to hear treated. Among those who objected to such a plan was Gilbert Stephenson. Instead of an assigned topic, he preferred "to have each member at his meeting discuss with the rest of us what of general interest is taking place or going on in his special field." Chancellor Robert House said he "would hate to tie the boys up by subjects" and, to be perfectly honest, he preferred "the bull sessions to the papers."²⁹ So the plan to have assigned topics was abandoned.

For the 70th Anniversary on 25 May 1954, Clarence Poe was asked to review the club's history. In preparation, he began compiling a "directory" of members since 1884 along with "certain historical club

material.”³⁰ What resulted was a concise seventy-year summary fitted into “a 15 to 18 minute” slot on the program, which also had to accommodate five-minute answers from members and wives to the question: “What one thing (or what two or three or four things) do you think might do most for the betterment of North Carolina and its people in the years just ahead?”³¹ It was a typical Clarence Poe evening, and the only imaginable regret is that of a future Watauga Club historian who wishes the club’s history³² had not been so brief.

On 22 February 1955 Governor Luther Hodges was host at the Mansion. He was a firm believer in the camera and its value in preserving significant moments of his administration. Members of the club were positioned in the Mansion library, some sitting and some standing, and a photographer made permanent the happy-looking group.

In September 1955 Poe, who would soon be seventy-five years old, announced that he would step down from the presidency at the end of the year. A committee was appointed to confer with him and come up with a slate to take office in January 1956.³³ For over three decades, Clarence Poe had, almost single-handedly, guided the club and kept it stimulating and spirited.



III. FROM 1956 ON

Histories of contemporary times are, of course, much less readable than histories of times somewhat remote. The minute book which Mayne Albright started keeping in 1956 could, if a month-by-month sequence were desirable, provide a detailed account of Watauga. But such a presentation would soon appear to be merely repetitious and, in the long run, become incredibly monotonous. And so our Chapter III will attempt to avoid that narrative trap—if indeed it can be avoided.

The first meeting of 1956 was designated by Christopher Crittenden, the new president, "as a business meeting for a discussion of the Club's organization and program." Dr. Poe, officially named "President Emeritus," was still a member. A number of decisions were reached: (1) instead of two meetings a month, only one on the third Tuesday; (2) one annual Ladies Night in May (the Anniversary nature of this occasion seems more and more to have been forgotten); (3) increase "membership to a maximum of twenty-five," but instruct the membership committee "to leave one or two places open"; (4) have the secretary "to keep a record of attendance, of the speaker, and his subject," and when "a formal paper is presented, a copy may be filed" with him. (Note the verb *may*.)

The "proper role" of the club continued to disturb a few Wataugans. Members were queried about the club: "Should it aim to make its influence felt in the life of North Carolina as contemplated by its Founders? Should its papers be published? Should it occasionally make public expression on current issues? Should it make private recommendations or suggestions to public officials or groups? Or should its efforts be toward making its influence felt only through its individual members?" Though no decisions on these questions were reached, a Committee on Long-Range Planning, with R. L. McMillan as chairman, was appointed. It sought advice on such proposals as having "a major theme for a certain period of time, say one year," or having "as our main theme, at least for a part of the time, some broad topic related to the advancement of our own State." Mayne Albright, for one, believed that while the club "should not undertake projects, endorse specific measures or otherwise become partisan, political or in any way involved in matters which might divide or embarrass the membership," he favored "more planning and direction of our



Executive Mansion, Raleigh, 17 September 1957

First row: Governor Luther H. Hodges, R. Mayne Albright, Christopher Crittenden, Charles Babcock (guest). Second row: Edwin Gill, Richardson H. Preyer (guest), William Joyner (guest), William H. Bobbitt, T. E. Browne. Third row: Charles Lynnwood Brown, R. Leroy McMillan, Charles F. Carroll, Richard Walser, William B. Aycock. Fourth row: Dean W. Colvard, William D. Poe, Henry Brandis, Emery B. Denny, Cary H. Bostian. Fifth row: Robert B. House, William Friday, Gilbert T. Stephenson, Jonathan Daniels.

programs."¹ But, as in the past, nothing was settled. Still and all, the problems, even as the Watauga Club pursued its capricious ways, would not disappear.

A year later, there was more talk about "whether the Club should remain a discussion group only or if it should adopt some theme or purpose as originally planned." The minute book once more noted: "No decision was reached."

Membership was another seemingly unsolvable concern. In the 1960s, a membership committee was appointed to review the list and recommend inactive status for those whose attendance was sporadic. No action was taken. Soon thereafter, when two vacancies occurred, appeals were made to fill them with bright young fellows "under forty." As might be expected, the two spots went to men much beyond that magic age.

A more mundane concern was the physical well-being of the members. In December 1956 the Woman's Club was solemnly requested to provide "more comfortable chairs for the meeting." The Woman's Club did so—and with no tremendous strain, either, for the average attendance at that time was only thirteen. Soon, when it was observed how few showed up for the June meeting, that month was eliminated from the Watauga calendar.

One of the constants throughout the years was the long memory of those at the "college" out in West Raleigh. They had not forgotten the role of Watauga in its founding, and memorialized the club and its members in naming its buildings. After the first Watauga Hall (1893) was destroyed by fire, a second Watauga Hall (1903, still standing) was erected. Primrose (1896), Page (1922), Daniels (1926), Peele (1928), and Poe (1971) are buildings honoring early Wataugan activists. To keep in mind the connection between the club and North Carolina State University, Wataugans were invited in March 1957 to the 70th Anniversary celebration of the institution. Ceremonies at 11:30 a.m. in the Coliseum were followed by a luncheon in the College Union.

From the moment he joined, Luther Hodges was one of the proudest members of the club. A memorable occasion was his meeting at the Mansion on 17 September 1957. Guests were Judge Richardson H. Preyer, Colonel William Joyner, chairman of the Highway Commission, and Charles Babcock, director of the Highway Commission. All but four Wataugans (Davison, Humber, Purks, Stealey) were present when the Governor's ubiquitous photographer lined up members and guests on the handsome Mansion staircase for a group portrait. The subject for the evening was, of course, the state's plans for highway development. . . . In March 1963, when Hodges was in Washington as President John Kennedy's Secretary of Commerce, he invited the club to come north to the Potomac River for the gathering aboard the Presidential Yacht on May 10.

The invitation was declined with regret when only three members (your historian among them) indicated they could go on such a jaunt.

From time to time, someone—obviously someone with a historical and reflective cast of mind—would be troubled about the preservation of Watauga records, of which there were only too few. What was being done about them, and what should be done about them? The answer was that the secretary did indeed have a minute book, which was considerably more than could be said of the first seventy years of the club. At another time it was suggested that Charles Poe and Richard Walser expand and update Dr. Poe's brief history. No action on that, of course. The Watauga Club enjoyed its fine dinners and stimulating talks. Action on any matter was rare. It was a very loose organization. Since there were, for example, no dues, an assessment of \$10 was voted every now and then to take care of "occasional incidental expenses such as florists' bills, postage stamps, and the deficit for Ladies Night."

Meanwhile, everybody enjoyed Mr. Mack's Table Topics: "Will President Eisenhower run again in spite of his illness?" (June 1956). "Are we to have another depression?" (January 1957). Should the United States "defer the revision of the United Nations charter?" (January 1963).

With the host and his guests settled down in those comfortable/uncomfortable chairs at the Woman's Club, all was in readiness for the paper of the evening. Jonathan Daniels read a chapter from his upcoming book *The Forest Is the Future* about the paper-making industry of the South (November 1956). William D. Poe spoke on "The Future of Farming in North Carolina" (December 1957). Carey Bostian talked on "Radiation and Genetics" (January 1959). Edwin Gill read an early version of his imaginary "Mr. Jefferson and Friends: An Evening in 1824" (February 1960). Robert B. House told of his experiences in teaching Greek, Roman, and English literature to 1400 sophomores at Chapel Hill (June 1960). Charles A. Poe's "Fact and Fantasy about the Federal Bureau of Investigation" was based on his years as an agent in that powerful organization (November 1960). Sydnor Stealey enlightened the club on recent trends in theological thought (January 1961).

Often the programs centered on matters of current significance: William Bobbitt's talk on the legal aspects of the Civil Rights controversy was followed by a heated discussion (March 1964), and this discussion was continued with hardly a pause a month later after Henry Brandis's paper on the filibuster in Congress over the Civil Rights bill (April 1964).

Micou Browne, with the assistance of several professional associates, illustrated a modern mystery by setting up in the parlor of the Woman's Club a teletype connected by telephone line to a computer in the Occidental Life Insurance building (March 1967). Robert Lee Humber had a members' roundtable in which he requested (1) nominations for the "five

most influential North Carolinians since 1900" and (2) the "greatest personality in each member's lifetime" (April 1968). At the Carolina Country Club, Mayne Albright read a sympathetic paper on the current racial disturbances (November 1969).

At the Executive Mansion, Governor Bob Scott gave a dinner featuring wild game of the state. He served up duck, pheasant, partridge, and 'possum with collards, grits, sweet potatoes, and pumpkin pie for dessert.² Copies of his paper "North Carolina and Her Governors: The Road We Have Traveled" were distributed to those present.

In these years, guest speakers were not so commonplace as later, and the ones who came were always enthusiastically welcomed. Lynn Brown brought in Walter Hines Page's son Robert A. Page, born in Raleigh at the time Watauga was founded, who now had traveled down from New York to visit his father's club during its 75th year (June 1959). Among other guests were Raymond L. Murray, nuclear physicist at N. C. State, who spoke on "Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy" (March 1962) and Justus Bier director of the North Carolina Museum of Art, who gave an illustrated lecture on the German sculptor Tilman Riemenschneider (November 1962).

Ladies Night programs varied. Hugh T. Lefler delighted the wives with his "Women in North Carolina History" (May 1957). Writing about the Diamond Anniversary meeting at the Hotel Sir Walter, the secretary recorded that several short talks were made, including one by Dr. Poe. For this occasion, "Mrs. McMillan made and presented ceramic figurines to each member and guest; flower decorations were prepared by Mrs. Denny and Mrs. Purks; and place cards, made by Mrs. Albright, carried out the Diamond Anniversary theme" (26 May 1959). Two years later Robert B. House gave a "delightful talk interspersed by tunes on the harmonica" (May 1961). William Friday presented gift books from the University of North Carolina Press to "each family" at the Morehead Planetarium (May 1965). Ladies Night at Peace College (May 1969) and Meredith College (May 1970) continued the campus visits.

Invitations to members' homes had almost ceased by the early 1960s. In November 1966 Mayne Albright was host at his Raleigh residence, and a last "at home" was given by George Paschal in January 1969.

Another "last time" had come a year earlier when the Wataugans assembled for a final gathering at the Raleigh Woman's Club in the third block of Hillsborough Street, the site soon to be cleared for the building of a circular high-rise hotel. Meetings thereafter were held mostly at the Sir Walter, but the NCSU Faculty Club, Ballentine's Restaurant, and the Carolina Country Club were also used. Watts Hill was host in March 1968 at the Blair House between Durham and Chapel Hill. In December 1970 the new Raleigh's Woman's Club building off Highway 70 west became, by

arrangement made with the management, the permanent location for all future meetings, the only exceptions being when there were invitations to Duke's University House or the Executive Mansion.

Wataugans experienced an innovation in April 1966 when upon arriving at the Mansion they ascended to the second-story parlor for cocktails. Though in no time flat the cocktail hour had become routine, all was not well. Objections were voiced, not because abstainers disapproved, but because seating at dinner was delayed, pushing adjournment to ten o'clock and beyond. This was particularly unsatisfactory to out-of-town members. And so the short-lived custom was soon abandoned by mutual consent, not by fiat.

But nothing could stop the Table Topics. The propounder of the question was always ready to enliven the post-dessert interval. What about Nixon's freeze on wages and prices? (September 1971). "Should the Senate confirm the nomination of Patrick Gray to be the head of the FBI?" (March 1973). Should Nixon be impeached? (December 1973). What about "Streaking"?—with the secretary jotting down in the minutes, "For the sake of posterity, which might not know that this term refers to the current fad among college students of running rapidly unclothed, an explanation is given," adding that "The topic gave the more witty members a good opportunity for a humorous and light treatment of a topic" (March 1974). "What killed ERA?" (March 1977). "Shall governments give in to hijackers?" (October 1977). "Is it all right to lie and to what extent?" (April 1978). "If you were adviser to President Carter, what action would you suggest he take to conquer inflation?" (March 1979). "Should we deport Iranian students who are illegally in the United States?" (December 1979).

Guest speakers gave constant stimulation. After a Table Topic asking "Should North Carolina repeal the sales tax on food?" (most were for repeal, but *not*, they said, in 1975), Governor Jim Holshouser introduced James E. Harrington, who reviewed "the recently completed projections of the Research Triangle Institute for the industrial development and economic growth of North Carolina until 1990" (November 1974). Over from Duke came James Charlesworth, who enlightened Wataugan minds with recent discoveries in the field of pseudepigrapha (November 1976). Dan Moore brought in Judge Frank Parker for a talk on "The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians" (November 1977). Albert Whiting's guest was William Turnbull, president of the Educational Testing Service in Princeton, N. J. (September 1978). Ivy L. Clayton provided a tense evening when Walter A. Johnson, chairman of the UNC Board of Governors, spoke frankly on the conflict between the University system and HEW (December 1979). Albert Edwards' guest was William Finlator, a frequent visitor to Watauga in the past, who expounded on secular and Christian humanism (February 1980).

One unforgettable evening at Ladies Night, James Cleland "gave a delightful, entertaining and humorous biography of his Scottish mother" (May 1973). The Ciompi Quartet of Duke (May 1974) and soloists from the National Opera Company (May 1976) furnished pleasant musical entertainment for the ladies.

But the bread-and-butter nourishment of the Watauga Club was always the papers written and presented by its own members. John Caldwell came up with "Some Thoughts about Our Worries," dealing with the attitudes of youth toward conditions of the times—attitudes which, he said, represent a protest against the conventional organization of a society that minimizes the importance of the individual (September 1970). Charles Carroll's paper was titled "Public Support of Secular Education: Shall the Tax Dollar Be Shared with Private Colleges?" (October 1970). George Paschal took as his topic "The Health and Medical Needs of America" (April 1971). The distinctive quality of Southern newspaper editors was discussed by Claude Sittou (March 1972), and Vermont Royster analyzed the causes for long periods of Republican and Democratic "reigns" (April 1972). During one autumn alone, William Friday spoke on the proposed second state-supported medical school in North Carolina (September 1973), George Herbert traced the history of the Research Triangle Institute (November 1973), and Watts Hill, Jr., read a paper on various public issues and the difficulties of coping with them (December 1973).

The world of business was not neglected. A paper by Karl Hudson, Jr., dealt "with the composition, duties, and responsibilities of boards of directors of business corporations" (February 1974), and Edward Rankin, Jr., presented a capsule history of the Cannon Mills (October 1974).

The variety encountered at Watauga meetings can be illustrated by Terry Sanford's ten-point program for the "next President of the United States" (January 1975), and Joab Thomas's slide show "The Botanist Tours a Grocery Store" for Ladies Night (May 1978).

From 1975 on, secretary Ivy Clayton made a special effort to keep copies of papers on file for deposit in the club archives. Among them were William Aycock's discussion of the ERA³ (December 1975) and William Synder's "Too Proud to be Proud: The North Carolina Way" (October 1978).

Beginning in 1975 the Watauga Medal, established by the Board of Trustees of North Carolina State University and named for the club, was presented annually on Founders Day in March to no more than three recipients who had made "notable and distinguished contributions to the advancement of the University."⁴ It was the institution's highest non-academic honor, and one of the recipients that first year was Watauga Club member Carey H. Bostian. The medal was simply one more reminder that N. C. State was ever conscious of the club's early history.

In 1978 the club once more made an effort to define its identity and to affirm its policies concerning membership, objectives, and programs. In an early memorandum, chairman Watts Hill, Jr., wrote his committee "that one of the substantial pleasures of being a member of Watauga is the absence of constraints and the corresponding reliance on the good judgment (and taste) of members. We are," he opined, "a group of gentlemen who, when we meet together, know that we can rely upon each other to act as gentlemen. Formal rules are largely unnecessary." In a concise description of a typical evening, he noted that "Members assemble at 6:30, usually at the Raleigh Woman's Club, and have dinner. The question of the evening is propounded after dessert." Upon rising from the table, "the members adjourn to hear the host (or a guest of the host) present a paper lasting about thirty minutes. Discussion is held for fifteen to thirty minutes depending on the reaction to the paper." At about 9 o'clock the president thanks the host, and the evening is over.

To initiate a debate on membership, chairman Hill sketched a portrait of the club as it was in 1978: "Many members are over seventy, the average age is well over sixty." Those under fifty are the least active in attendance and participation. "While the past contributions of the members unquestionably have been outstanding, the potential for future contributions of many is limited by mandatory retirement and/or lessened positions of influence. There is little infusion of 'new blood' from the election of young members—in part because membership is limited and present members understandably are reluctant to step down to make room, and in part because young members are not nominated when vacancies exist. There is [only] one class of membership. . . . There are no women members." Tentatively proposed were four classes: (1) active, (2) inactive, (3) emeritus, and (4) former.

In two preliminary reports issued by Hill's committee are some amusing on-the-spot comments: (1) Regardless of limitations, there would always be a "vacancy" for a new governor. (2) There was precedent for serving wine at meals if the host so desired. And (3) "It is an unspoken rule that *applications for membership* will not be received."

Only the last of these appeared in the POLICY GUIDELINES adopted on 2 October 1979. "The primary role of Watauga," according to the preamble, "is that of providing an opportunity for fellowship among a membership constituted of persons who have a demonstrated interest in and record of service in public affairs in North Carolina at a regional or statewide level either in addition to or as part of their professions."

Some of the nine short paragraphs in the GUIDELINES on membership had to do with (1) provisions for "leaves of absence" and an "emeriti classification"; (2) emphasis on selecting and bringing into the club new members in their thirties and forties; (3) avoidance of "overconcentrations

in a particular field"; (4) keeping membership to approximately twenty-five active members and preferably not over thirty; and (5) always providing a cordial reception for guests of members.

Three of the six paragraphs on meetings dealt with (1) the hosts' being encouraged to prepare their own papers (though guests' presentations were welcomed too); (2) the depositing of copies of papers in the club's archives; and (3) the adamant insistence that all discussions "are off the record."

As can be quickly observed from even a partial look of these GUIDELINES, the club, in spite of its soul-searching, had really not changed much since the 1920s. But with its identity problem settled—at least for the time being—the Watauga Club could look forward to celebrating its One Hundredth Birthday on 26 May 1984.



NOTES

I. Beginnings

¹ [Daniel Harvey Hill, Jr.], "The Watauga Club," *Agromeck* (yearbook, N. C. State College), 1924, p. viii. Ms. in Daniel Harvey Hill, Jr., Papers, State Archives, Raleigh.

² Mark Squires, "History of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts," *Red and White: Organ of the Athletic Association of the North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts*, Special Magazine Edition (Raleigh, 1899), p. 42.

³ John W. Thompson, "The North Carolina State College of Agriculture and Engineering," typescript of a talk made to the Pine Burr Society at N. C. State College [4 March 1923], p. 1, University Archives, D. H. Hill Library, N. C. State University.

W. J. Peele, "A History of the Agricultural and Mechanical College," typescript of an address made at the laying of the cornerstone of the first building at N. C. College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts, 22 August 1888, p. 1, W. J. Peele Papers, University Archives, D. H. Hill Library, N. C. State Univ. Reprinted with additions and deletions in *North Carolina Teacher*, 6 (September 1888), 12-25; and in *Red and White* (1899), pp. 43-55.

⁵ Charles William Dabney, *Universal Education in the South* (Chapel Hill, 1936), I, 184.

⁶ Peele typescript, p. 1.

⁷ Dabney, I, 182.

⁸ Peele typescript, p. 1.

⁹ Thompson typescript, p. 2.

¹⁰ Peele typescript, p. 6.

¹¹ Dabney, *Universal Education*, I, 183.

¹² Thompson typescript, p. 1.

¹³ Dabney, "The Watauga Club: Its Work and Its Workers," typescript, Charles W. Dabney Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, unpagged.

¹⁴ Burton J. Hendrick, *The Training of an American: The Earlier Life and Letters of Walter H. Page, 1855-1913* (Boston, 1928), p. 170.

¹⁵ Dabney, "Some Reminiscences of the Watauga Club," typescript, p. 5, also loose pages, mss., Dabney Papers, U. N. C.

- 16 Dabney, *Universal Education*, I, 185.
- 17 John Milton Cooper, Jr., *Walter Hines Page: The Southerner as American, 1855-1918* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1977), p. 68.
- 18 [Hill], 1924 *Agromeck*, p. viii; Hendrick, *Training of an American*, p. 169.
- 19 Dabney, loose unnumbered pages, ms., Dabney Papers, U. N. C.
- 20 Dabney, loose pages.
- 21 Dabney, *Universal Education*, I, 185.
- 22 Peele typescript, p. 1.
- 23 Dabney, *Universal Education*, I, 182.
- 24 [Hill], 1924 *Agromeck*, p. viii.
- 25 Though Judge Walter Clark is frequently mentioned in connection with the early history of the Watauga Club, i have uncovered no evidence to verify his membership. In August, 1884, he was thirty-eight years old. For this period, see the eight-page account by Clarence Poe, *The Watauga Club* (Raleigh, 1955).
- 26 *Raleigh: Capital of North Carolina*, Writers' Program of the Works Projects Administration (New Bern, 1942), p. 39.
- 27 [Hill], 1914 *Agromeck*, p. viii.
- 28 Dabney, *Universal Education*, I, 185.
- 29 Peele typescript, p. 1.
- 30 Peele typescript, p. 2.
- 31 Peele typescript, p. 2.
- 32 Cooper, *Page*, p. 409, footnote 27.
- 33 A copy of this pamphlet (possibly unique) is in the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, Chapel Hill.
- 34 Peele typescript, p. 2; also Clarence Foe diary, 16 September 1901, extract in typescript, Clarence Poe Papers, State Archives, Raleigh.
- 35 Peele typescript, p. 2.
- 36 Peele typescript, p. 3.
- 37 "The Industrial School," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh), 8 November 1885.
- 38 "A Great Success," *The News and Observer*, 12 November 1885.
- 39 Dabney, *Universal Education*, I, 533.
- 40 "A Great Success."
- 41 Cooper, *Page*, p. 78.
- 42 Hendrick, *The Training of an American*, p. 176.
- 43 Stuart Noblin, *Leonidas LaFayette Polk: Agrarian Crusader* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1949), p. 168.
- 44 W. J. Peele, "Col. L. L. Polk: A Brief Sketch of His Life and Work," *North Carolina Baptist Almanac for the Year 1893* ([Raleigh]: C. T. Baily, [1892]), p. 47; see also Peele's obituary sketch of Polk in *Progressive Farmer*, 29 July 1892.

- 45 Thompson typescript, p. 4.
- 46 Josephus Daniels, *Tar Heel Editor* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1939), p. 296.
- 47 Daniels, p. 298.
- 48 Robert Watson Winston, "William Joseph Peele, Philosopher," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh), 23 November 1919.
- 49 Peter Mitchell Wilson, *Southern Exposure* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1927), p. 172.
- 50 Daniels, pp. 298-99.
- 51 Dabney, *Universal Education*, I, 189; also "The Watauga Banquet," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh), 20 October 1897.
- 52 Hendrick, *The Training of an American*, p. 171.
- 53 Dabney, *Universal Education*, I, 184.
- 54 Daniels, pp. 292-93.
- 55 Burton J. Hendrick, in *The Life & Letters of Walter H. Page* (Garden City, N. Y.: Garden City Pub. Co., 1927), erroneously states that the club had only "a brief existence of a little more than two years" (I, 47). Hendrick is also in error in declaring that it was Page who organized the club (I, 73) and that the idea of an industrial school "originated in his brain" (I, 47).
- 56 [Walter Hines Page], *The Southerner, a Novel, Being the Autobiography of Nicholas Worth* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1909), pp. 46, 75, 121, 124, 129, 133, 138, 193-94, 208, 212-14, 222-30, 234-37, 265, 284, 312, 335, 339, 400.
- 57 Charles A. Pearson, "Reminiscing . . .," *State College News*, March 1957, pp. 14, 17.
- 58 Watauga Club Minute Book, 1897-1902, ms., University Archives, D. H. Hill Library, N. C. State Univ., Raleigh.
- 59 Letter dated 18 October 1897, in Wm. J. Peele Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, Chapel Hill.
- 60 "The Watauga Banquet," *News and Observer*, 20 October 1897.
- 61 D. H. Hill, Jr., Papers, State Archives, Raleigh.
- 62 Hill Papers.
- 63 Ms. in Hill Papers; see also Watauga Club Minute Book, 21 February 1898.
- 64 Pearson, "Reminiscing . . .," pp. 14, 17.
- 65 A copy of this four-page brochure is among the D. H. Hill, Jr., Papers, State Archives, Raleigh.
- 66 W. S. Primrose to Peele, 8 November 1897, Peele Papers, So. Hist. Coll.
- 67 Clarence Poe diary, private family papers.
- 68 *Raleigh Times*, 12 February 1902, typescript of clipping presumably titled "Watauga Club," private Clarence Poe family papers; see also Watauga Club Minute Book, 10 February 1902.

69 Watauga Club Minute Book, 25 February 1902.

70 Clarence Poe diary, private family papers.

71 Watauga Club Minute Book, 27 March 1902.

72 Lucy M. Cobb, "E. C. Branson, Prophet of Carolina," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh), 20 November 1927; "Dr. E. C. Branson Called by Death," *News and Observer*, 14 March 1933; "Dr. Eugene Branson—He Sold North Carolina to Tar Heels," *Durham Herald-Sun*, 19 March 1933.

II. The Clarence Poe Years

¹ *Col. Leonidas Lafayette Polk . . . , An Address* [pamphlet, Raleigh, 28 July 1926], p. 3. Among the Clarence Hamilton Poe Papers, State Archives, Raleigh, are two typed sheets which further confuse the problem of establishing a date for the reorganization of the club: one, dated "6/7/34" lists six "Deceased Members of Watauga Club since organization about 1912"; the other has the names of "Former Members Sometime 1924 to 1954." Poe's blue-back pamphlet *The Watauga Club* (1956) has printed on its cover "By Clarence Poe, President, 1925-1955."

² "The Watauga Club and the Quill and Grill Club," mimeographed, September 1970, pp. 1-2.

³ Charles E. Johnson, "The History of the Sandwich Club," mimeographed, paper read at club meeting 11 March 1960, p. 1.

⁴ Jack Riley, in conversation, Raleigh, 15 February 1980.

⁵ Beth Crabtree, "Looking Back," *The Raleigh Times*, 6 March 1980, p. 18-C.

⁶ O. Max Gardner Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

⁷ Frank Porter Graham Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. These numerous papers, with separate year-by-year folders labeled "Watauga Club," provide generous, detailed data on club activities during much of the 1930s and 1940s. These papers will not ordinarily be cited for such routine information as membership lists, announcements of meetings, and so on.

⁸ Graham Papers.

⁹ Graham Papers.

¹⁰ Graham Papers.

¹¹ Clarence Hamilton Poe Papers, State Archives, Raleigh. Like the Graham Papers, these will not be cited for routine information.

¹² John William Harrelson Papers, University Archives, D. H. Hill Library, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

¹³ Graham Papers.

¹⁴ Graham Papers.

¹⁵ Jonathan Worth Daniels Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

- 16 Graham Papers.
- 17 Harrelson Papers.
- 18 Allen Jay Maxwell Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also Raymond C. Maxwell, *Life and Works of Allen Jay Maxwell, 1893-1946* (1949), p. 185.
- 19 Robert Lee Humber, in conversation, Raleigh, 18 November 1969.
- 20 Harrelson Papers; also Graham Papers.
- 21 Graham Papers.
- 22 Paul Green, in conversation, Chapel Hill, 24 May 1977.
- 23 Poe Papers.
- 24 Harrelson Papers.
- 25 Harrelson Papers.
- 26 Daniels Papers.
- 27 Clarence Poe to Graham, 10 May 1946. Graham Papers.
- 28 Poe Papers.
- 29 Poe Papers.
- 30 Harrelson Papers.
- 31 Poe Papers.
- 32 Poe's history appeared as a feature article in the *News and Observer* (Raleigh), 30 May 1954, and was reprinted in pamphlet form early in 1956. It covered only the early years of the club.
- 33 Daniels Papers.

III. From 1956 On

¹ In the custody of the secretary of the Watauga Club, besides the minutes book, is a letterbox of documents concerning matters not directly part of the regular meetings. These two sources will not be footnoted in this chapter. Furthermore, in the fall of 1955, I became a member of the club, and I shall frequently use my personal recollections and observations in filling out the last twenty-five years of the club's history.

² Minute book; see also "Hominy Grits at the Mansion Tonight," *The News and Observer* (Raleigh), 14 December 1971.

³ An expanded version of this paper entitled "Equality of Rights under the Law between the Sexes" appeared in *The Chapel Hill Newspaper*, "A Special Reprint," vol. 54, no. 262, 2 November 1976.

⁴ *Statelog* (NCSU), April 1975, p. 1.

OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

These lists, based on an examination of all available documents, are as nearly accurate as the data allow. Identifications are of course only partial. Years of membership are often approximate. An out-and-out uncertainty is indicated by a question mark.

	President	Secretary	Propounder
1884	W. Joseph Peele John W. Thompson, vice president	G. Edgar Leach	
1885	Chas. Wm. Dabney	Josephus Daniels	
1897-98	W. Joseph Peele	G. Edgar Leach	
1899	W. S. Primrose	George Allen	
1902	W. S. Primrose W. A. Withers, vice president	C. B. Williams, acting	
1924-55	Clarence Poe		R. L. McMillan
1956-57	Chris. Crittenden	R. Mayne Albright	R. L. McMillan
1958-59	Emery G. Denny	R. Mayne Albright	R. L. McMillan
1960	R. L. McMillan	Charles Poe	R. L. McMillan
1961	Cary H. Bostian	Charles Poe	R. L. McMillan
1962	Cary H. Bostian	Richard Walser	R. L. McMillan
1963-64	Edwin Gill	Richard Walser	R. L. McMillan
1965-66	Wm. H. Bobbitt	Richard Walser	R. L. McMillan
1967-68	Chas. F. Carroll	Richard Walser	R. L. McMillan
1969	Richard Walser	Chris. Crittenden	R. Mayne Albright
1970	Richard Walser	Cary H. Bostian	R. Mayne Albright
1971-72	R. Mayne Albright	Cary H. Bostian	James W. Reid
1973-74	Wm. B. Aycock	Cary H. Bostian	Charles Poe
1975-77	George W. Paschal	Ivy F. Clayton	Charles Poe
1978-79	Charles Poe	Ivy F. Clayton	John T. Caldwell
1980	John T. Caldwell	Karl G. Hudson	Claude F. Sitton

Members 1884-1902

Allen, George	investments	1897-1902
Andrews, W. J.	mechanical engineer	1897-
Asbury, S. E. (?)	chemistry, A&M	1902
Ashley, W. E.	mgr Raleigh Machine Co.	1884; 1897-
Blacknall, O. W. (?)	nurseryman, Kittrell	1898
Branson, Eugene E.	high school principal	1884
Brown, Joseph G.	attorney, banker	1884-
Capehart, B. A.	planter	1897-
Carpenter, Eugene F.	----	1897-
Cobb, Collier	geology, UNC	1897-
Collins, Paul	chemist phosphate mill	1902
Cotten, Robert R. (?)	merchant, Falkland	1898
Dabney, Charles Wm.	state chemist	1885-1887
Daniels, Josephus	newspaper editor	1884-, 1897-
Dixon, Thomas, Jr.	legislator, Shelby	1885
Drewry, John C.	real estate, insurance	1897-
Emery, F. E. (?)	agriculture, A&M	1898
Feild, Alex. Jones	attorney	1885-
Francks, Charles E.	agriculture, A&M	ca.1898
Fraps, George S.	chemistry, A&M	1902
Gresham, J. S. (?)	military, A&M	1897-
Haywood, Alfred W.	attorney	ca.1885
Hill, Daniel Harvey, Jr.	English, A&M	1897-
Holmes, Joseph Austin	state geologist	1897-
Irby, Benjamin	mechanics, A&M	1897-
Jerman, B. S.	banker	ca.1899
Johnson, Charles E.	cotton broker	1897-1902
Jones, Alfred Daniel	Wake County treasurer	1884-
Kerr, William H.	engineer, Durham	1884-
Kilgore, Benjamin Wesley	chemistry, A&M	1902, 1920s
Latta, Charles G.	commission merchant	1884-, 1897-
Leach, Giles Edgar	commission merchant	1884-, 1897-
Lewis, Richard Henry	oculist	1884
McIver, Charles D.	faculty, Peace Institute	1886-88, 1897-
McMacklin, W. C.	road supervisor	1897-
Montgomery, Walter Alex.	NC Supreme Court	1897-, ca.1920-
Moring, F. O.	commission merchant	1886
Morson, Hugh	principal Ral. Male Ac.	1897-
Moses, Edward Pearson (?)	supt, public schools	1902
Oldham, Edward A.	journalist, Winston-Salem	1884-
Owen, Edward Bentley	librarian, A&M	1902

Page, Walter Hines	journalist	1884-1885
Patterson, Samuel L.	state comm. agriculture	1902
Pearson, Charles	architect	1897-
Peele, William Joseph	attorney	1884-, 1897-1902
Poe, Clarence Hamilton	editor	1902, 1920s-1964
Pogue, Joseph E.	tobacco manufacturer	1897-1902
Price, J. Sterling	supt fertilizer co.	1884-
Primrose, William Stuart	insurance	1884-, 1897-1902
Raney, R. B.	insurance	1897-
Riddick, Wallace Carl	mathematics, A&M	1897-1902, 1920s
Smith, Ed. Chambers	attorney	1897-
Thompson, Alfred A.	cotton broker	ca.1899
Thompson, Cyrus (?)	NC secy of state	1898
Thompson, John W.	insurance	1884-, 1897-
Williams, Charles B.	agronomy, A&M	1897-1902
Wilson, Henry M.	textiles, A&M	1902
Winslow, Arthur H.	civil engineer	1885-
Winston, George Taylor	president A&M	1902
Withers, William A.	chemistry, A&M	1897-1902
Yates, R. E. L.	mathematics, A&M	1897-

1920s-1980

Albright, R. Mayne	attorney	1953-
Allen, Arch T.	NC supt public instr	ca.1930
Anderson, Albert	supt NC mental hosp	ca.1930
Aycock, William B.	chancellor UNC-CH	1957-
Baver, L. D.	dean agri NCSt	1942-47
Beasley, R. F.	---	1920s (?)
Bennett, William J.	pres Nat Humanities Ctr	1980-
Bickett, Thomas Walter	governor NC	ca. 1920-21
Binkley, O. T.	prof Bible, Wake For Col	1942-
Bobbitt, Wm. H.	NC supreme court	1955-
Bost, W. T.	newspaperman	1920s-
Bostian, Carey H.	chancellor NCSt	1953-
Boyd, James	writer, Southern Pines	1941-44
Brandis, Henry	dean law sch UNC-CH	1949-72
Brewer, Charles E.	president Meredith Coll	1920s-
Brooks, Eugene Clyde	president NCSt	1920s-1940
Broughton, J. Melville	governor NC	1920-1949
Brown, B. F.	dean NCSt	1920s-1955
Brown, Chas. Lynnwood	Presbyterian minister	1956-66
Browne, Micou F.	insurance	1966-

Browne, Thos. Everett	dir voc ed NCSt	1920s-1965
Caldwell, John T.	chancellor NCSt	1959-
Carroll, Charles F.	NC supt pub instr	1953-
Clayton, Ivy F.	Citizens Assoc	1973-
Cleland, James T.	dean Chapel, Duke Univ	1973-78
Colvard, Dean W.	dean agri NCSt	1955-60
Connor, R. D. W.	historian	1920s-, 1942-
Crittenden, Christopher	NC archives and history	1937-69
Daniels, Jonathan	newspaper editor	1935-70
Davison, Wilbur C.	dean med sch Duke Univ	1933-63
Denny, Emery Byrd	NC supreme court	1944-73
Edwards, Albert G.	Presbyterian minister	1973-
Ehringhaus, J. C. B.	governor NC	1933-49
Erwin, Clyde A.	NC supt public instr	1935-52
Ethridge, Mark F., Jr.	newspaper editor	1956-57
Everett, W. N.	NC secy of state	1920s-
Friday, William	president UNC	1956-
Gaines, Francis P.	president Wake For Coll	1920s-
Gardner, O. Max	governor NC	1929-32
Gill, Edwin M.	treasurer NC	1953-78
Graham, Edward K.	chancellor UNC-Greensb	1950-53
Graham, Frank P.	president UNC	ca.1929-1952
Gray, Gordon	president UNC	1951-55
Green, Paul	writer, Chapel Hill	1939-55
Gross, Paul	dean grad sch Duke Univ	1949-51
Harrelson, J. W.	chancellor NCSt	ca.1931-1955
Herbert, George	pres Research Tri Inst	1971-
Hill, Watts, Jr.	insurance, Durham	1958-
Hilton, J. H.	dean agri NCSt	1949-53
Hodges, Luther H.	governor NC	1954-74
Hoey, Clyde R.	governor NC	1937-41
Holshouser, Jas. E., Jr.	governor NC	1973-
Hoover, Calvin B.	economics, Duke Univ	1937-55
House, Robert B.	chancellor UNC-CH	1947-64
Hudson, Karl G., Jr.	merchant	1971-
Humber, Robert Lee	pub service, Greenville	1944-70
Hunt, James B., Jr.	governor NC	1977-
Kilgore, Benjamin W.	chemistry, NCSt	1902, 1920s
Kitchen, Thurman D.	president Wake For Coll	1920s-1944
Knight, Douglas M.	president Duke Univ	1965-69
Laughinghouse, Chas. O'H.	NC bd of health	1920s
McMillan, Robert Leroy	attorney	1920s-1968
Marr, S. Wade	broker	1920s

Maxwell, A. J.	comm revenue dept	ca.1928-1946
Miller, Justin	dean law sch Duke Univ	1933-37
Mitchell, George S.	director farm security	1937-39
Montgomery, W. A.	judge	ca.1920-
Moore, Dan K.	governor NC	1965-
Page, Frank	banker (Wachovia)	ca.1928
Parrott, J. A.	state bd of health	ca.1928-1934
Paschal, George W.	surgeon	1966-
Poe, Charles A.	attorney	1958-
Poe, Clarence H.	journalist	1902, 1920-56
Poe, William Dismukes	journalist	1957-58
Polk, William T.	writer, journalist	1950-55
Poteat, E. McNeill	Baptist minister	1928-37, 1949-55
Purks, Harris	bd higher ed	1956-61
Rankin, Edwin Lee, Jr.	public relations	1970-79
Rankin, W. S.	Duke endowment	1920s-
Reid, James W.	public relations	1966-72
Robinson, Allyn P.	minister United Church	1942-55
Royster, Vermont C.	journalist, Chapel Hill	1971-
Sanford, Terry	governor NC	1960-
Scott, Robert W.	governor NC	1968-
Scott, W. Kerr	governor NC	1950-53
Sharp, Paul	chancellor UNC-CH	1965-66
Sitton, Claude F.	newspaper editor	1970-
Smith, Sherwood H., Jr.	pres power co	1980-
Snider, William	newspaper ed., Greensb	1973-
Stealey, Sydnor L.	pres Southeast Bap Sem	1956-66
Stephenson, Gilbert T.	banker, Pendleton	1922-29, 1950-70
Taylor, Carl C.	dean grad sch NCSt	ca.1926-1937
Thomas, Joab L.	chancellor NCSt	1976-
Tribble, H. W.	president Wake For Coll	1951-56
Umstead, William B.	governor NC	1953-54
Underwood, S. B.	supt pub sch	1920s (?)
Van Leer, Blake R.	dean engineering NCSt	1937-42
Walser, Richard	English, NCSt	1955-
Waynick, Campus M.	chr highway comm	1935-
Whiting, Albert N.	chancellor NC Central U	1973-