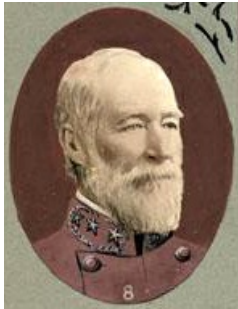


Hoke, John Franklin ^[1]

Hoke, John Franklin

by Roberta Sue Alexander, 1988

30 May 1820–27 Oct. 1888



A retouched photograph of John Franklin Hoke from Clark's Regimental Histories. "Photograph, Accession #: H.19XX.332.183." Photograph. 1900-1910. North Carolina

Museum of History. ^[2]John Franklin Hoke, lawyer, legislator, and Confederate officer, was born in Lincolnton of German parentage. His father was Colonel John Hoke, who arrived with his family in Lincolnton from Pennsylvania at the end of the eighteenth century. A merchant in Lincolnton, together with James Bivens and [Michael Schenck](#) ^[3] he built the first southern cotton factory. He married Barbara Quickle in January 1808 and raised a distinguished family, including John Franklin Hoke, the subject of this sketch, and [Michael Hoke](#) ^[4], also a prominent lawyer, Democratic nominee for governor of North Carolina in 1844, and father of [Robert F. Hoke](#) ^[5], a major general in the Confederate Army.

John F. Hoke was graduated from Pleasant Retreat Academy in [Lincoln County](#) ^[6] and in 1841 from [The University of North Carolina](#) ^[7]. He studied law with former governor [David L. Swain](#) ^[8] and Judge [Richmond M. Pearson](#) ^[9], later chief justice of the [North Carolina Supreme Court](#) ^[10]. After receiving his license in 1843, Hoke began practicing law in Lincolnton, a career he pursued for the remainder of his life.

He began his military career in March 1847, when he was commissioned a first lieutenant and assigned to Company G in the Twelfth Regiment of U.S. Infantry. Promoted to captain in June, he saw action in Mexico during the [Mexican War](#) ^[11]. After his company was mustered out in June 1848, he returned to North Carolina to resume his law practice. He soon became active in politics, serving in the 1850, 1852, and 1854 sessions of the North Carolina Senate as a [states' rights](#) ^[12] Democrat. As a member of the House of Commons in 1860, Hoke argued for the right of secession in a resolution in which he declared that "the people of North Carolina has the right to withdraw from the Union whenever a majority of them . . . assembled should decide that withdrawal is necessary for one of two reasons, viz., to protect their property or person from unconstitutional and oppressive legislation by the general government, or when the general government fails to fulfill its constitutional obligations."

During the same year, Hoke was appointed [adjutant general](#) ^[13] of North Carolina and in that capacity, in May and June 1861, organized and sent to Virginia fourteen regiments. On 10 July, he was commissioned a colonel in the Twenty-third Regiment of North Carolina Infantry (also known as the Thirteenth Regiment of North Carolina Volunteers). Because of transportation problems, his regiment arrived too late to fight at the first Battle of Manassas, but Hoke saw action in the Peninsula campaign. In 1862 his regiment was reorganized and he failed to be appointed as a colonel. Therefore, he, along with the other officers who were not selected, left to seek new positions. Not finding a suitable appointment, he returned to Lincolnton and was elected to the state senate in 1863. In the fall of 1864 he was commissioned a colonel of the Fourth Regiment of North Carolina Reserves, a senior reserve unit composed of men between the ages of forty-five and fifty assigned to guard prisoners, protect bridges, and arrest deserters. Serving in this capacity until the end of the war, Hoke came into contact with Union troops only once when a brief skirmish took place as the Union Army tried to gain the release of some prisoners.

After the war, Hoke was elected a representative to the House of Commons from Lincoln County in 1865 as a [Conservative](#) ^[14]. Although he remained an active [Democrat](#) ^[15] for the rest of his life, he sought no other political office.

Instead, he became a prominent lawyer in Lincoln and the surrounding counties. The *Shelby New Era* called him "one of the most distinguished members of the bar of Western North Carolina." He also engaged in business pursuits—he owned a gold mine and sawmills, and was active in railroad promotion—and he served as a trustee of The University of North Carolina from 1874 to 1879. An active Episcopalian although his parents had belonged to the German Reformed church, Hoke was a vestryman in his parish for many years.

On 30 Oct. 1850 he married Catherine Alexander, the daughter of [William Julius Alexander](#) ^[16] of Charlotte and granddaughter of Joseph Wilson. She died on 23 Dec. 1857 and Hoke never remarried. They had three children: [William A.](#) ^[17], also a Democratic legislator and lawyer who served as a judge on North Carolina's Superior Court and as chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court; Sallie Hoke Badger; and Nancy Hoke Childs.

Hoke died suddenly while viewing a political parade from the front porch of his home in Lincoln. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Luke's Episcopal Church in his hometown. A portrait of Hoke is in the second volume of [Walter Clark](#) ^[18]'s *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions from North Carolina in The Great War 1861–'65* ^[19].

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