

Poole, David Scott ^[1]

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by Alice R. Cotten, 1994

3 Aug. 1858–20 Apr. 1955

See also: [Poole Bills](#) ^[2]

David Scott Poole, newspaperman, legislator, and teacher, was born in [Montgomery County](#) ^[3], the oldest of eight children of William R. and Mary Eliza Ray Poole. He was educated at Jackson Springs Academy in [Moore County](#) ^[4] from 1868 to 1880. While teaching school during the winter, an occupation that he continued intermittently for many years, Poole also learned the printer's trade. He began his editorial career about 1894 in Red Springs, where he established the *Scotch Scion*, and he moved around the state until 1915, when he began editing the *Hoke County Journal* in Raeford. Poole was active in the political and religious life of Raeford, where he served as mayor and justice of the peace and was a lay leader in the [Presbyterian church](#) ^[5].

His religious beliefs were sincere though conservative. Darwin's [theory of evolution](#) ^[6] disturbed him, and he determined to protect his state from such heresy. Campaigning on an antievolution platform, Poole was elected to the [North Carolina House of Representatives](#) ^[7] in 1924 as a [Democrat](#) ^[8] from [Hoke County](#) ^[9]. In 1925 he introduced what became known as "the Poole bill" ^[10] prohibiting the teaching of [Darwinism](#) ^[11] in the public schools. The controversy that followed the introduction of his bill split the state. After heated exchanges between opposing sides in the legislature (which produced such memorable quips as Sam Ervin' ^[12]s remark that passing the bill would only help absolve monkeys from all responsibility for the human race), the bill was defeated, 67–46. This was a significant defeat for antievolutionists nationwide, for North Carolina was a key state in their program.

In 1927 Poole introduced a second antievolution bill, this one written largely by [Thomas C. Bowie](#) ^[13], which was more extreme than the first. It forbade the teaching of any theory that contradicted the biblical story of creation and provided penalties for teachers who did so. The bill died in committee, and that controversy disappeared from the state legislature. Poole served for an uneventful third term in the house.

He married Margaret Lenora Holliday on 28 Sept. 1884; she died in November 1948. They had five children: William L., Mrs. Luke Bethune, Mrs. A. K. Currie, Maude, and Mrs. Hugh Lowe. In addition to his religious and political affiliations, Poole was a Mason. He died at age ninety-six and was buried in Raeford Cemetery.

References:

Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., *Preachers, Pedagogues, and Politicians* (1966) and ed., *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution* (1969).

North Carolina Manual (1929). <https://archive.org/details/northcarolinaman1929nort> ^[2] (accessed August 11, 2014).

Raleigh News and Observer, 21 Apr. 1955.

Southern Pines Pilot, 29 Apr. 1955.

Additional Resources:

"In the News." The Evolution Controversy in North Carolina in the 1920s. Wilson Library, UNC Libraries. <http://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/exhibits/show/evolution/primarysources/news> ^[2] (accessed August 11, 2014).

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