

Battle, Herbert Bemerton ^[1]

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by W. Conard Gass, 1979

29 May 1862–3 July 1929



Herbet Battle, 1880.
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^[2]Herbert Bemerton Battle, chemist and industrialist, was the fourth child and third son of Kemp Plummer Battle ^[3], president of The University of North Carolina ^[4] (1876–91), and Martha Ann Battle Battle (his parents were distant cousins). He was born at Chapel Hill in the cottage of his paternal grandfather, while Raleigh ^[5], where his parents then maintained their residence, was believed to be under threat of attack by Federal troops. His paternal grandfather, William Horn Battle ^[6], was a distinguished judge and law professor. His maternal grandfather was James Smith Battle ^[7], a planter and textile manufacturer of Edgecombe ^[8] and Nash counties ^[9]. His brothers were Kemp Plummer, Jr. ^[10], Thomas Hall ^[11], and William James. His sister, Nellie, married Dr. Richard Henry Lewis II ^[12].

Battle received his preparatory education at the Lovejoy Academy ^[13], Raleigh. He early evidenced a strong interest in the sciences, especially chemistry. Following his graduation from The University of North Carolina with the B.S. degree (1881), he served from 1881 to 1887 as assistant chemist at the North Carolina ^[14] Agricultural Experiment Station ^[14]. In 1887 he was awarded his Ph.D. by the university and became state chemist and director of the Agricultural Experiment Station. He served there until the Republican ^[15] administration of Governor Daniel L. Russell ^[16] abolished his position (he being a Democrat ^[17]) and assigned his duties to the Agricultural and Mechanical College ^[18]. Battle then organized and became president and manager of the Southern Chemical Company, Winston ^[19], which manufactured agricultural



Cottage where Herbert Battle was born. Battle House, Chapel Hill, 1892. Courtesy of UNC Libraries.

Following the Hill, 1892. Courtesy of UNC Libraries. ^[20]company's sale to the Virginia-Carolina Chemical Company ^[21] in 1901, he joined in 1902 the Southern Cotton Oil Company of Savannah, Ga., and Montgomery, Ala. In 1906 he organized at Montgomery the Battle Laboratory, of which he became president, a position he retained until his death at Montgomery. He was buried in Oakwood Cemetery ^[22] in Raleigh.

A member of several professional organizations, he contributed numerous articles to scientific journals and coauthored (with F. B. Dancy) Chemical Conversion Tables ^[23] (1885) and (with W. J. Gascoyne) Chemical Conversion Tables ^[24] (1909). He was a charter member of the North ^[25] Carolina Sons of the Revolution ^[25] and was active in the promotion of

various civic causes. A devout Episcopalian ^[26], he attended the services of his church regularly, gave liberally to its



Members of the Alabama Anthropological Society at Fort Mitchell, 1918. Battle is among

financial support, and participated in its activities. On 25 Nov. 1885, he married ^[27] Alice Matilda Wilson, a native of Statesville and at the time a resident of Morganton. She was a daughter of James W. Wilson ^[28], chairman of the North Carolina Railroad Commission ^[29] and president of the Western North Carolina Railroad ^[30]. Herbert and Alice Battle were the parents of James Wilson and Nellie Lewis, wife of John Manning Booker. Mrs. Battle died in 1919.

A photograph of Herbert Bemerton Battle serves as the frontispiece of *The Battle Book: A Genealogy of the Battle Family in America . . .* (1930) ^[31], which he "planned and in great part executed." At the time of his death, a tribute in the *Montgomery Advertiser* ^[32] (8 July 1929) described him as a "citizen who builded up his town" and predicted, "Montgomery will miss Dr. Herbert B. Battle, but it will not forget him, for his memory will ever abide as a strengthening and comforting influence."

References:

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Additional Resources:

The Battle book; a genealogy of the Battle family in America, with chapters illustrating certain phases of its history. By: H B Battle; Lois Yelverton; William James Battle, Montgomery, Ala., The Paragon Press, 1930:

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Herbert B. Battle speech, 1920. By H B Battle, WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/title/herbert-b-battle-speech-1920/oclc/43887015> ^[38]

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Battle House, 1892. Courtesy of UNC Libraries. Available from <http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/exhibits/slavery/faculty.html> [20] (accessed March 8, 2013).

Members of the Alabama Anthropological Society at Fort Mitchell, 1918. Battle is among members in the front row. Available from <http://digital.archives.alabama.gov/cdm/singleitem/collection/photo/id/971/rec/2> [27] (accessed March 8, 2013).

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press](#). [42]

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