

## **Haughton, John Hooker** <sup>[1]</sup>

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by Lawrence F. London, 1988

**29 Aug. 1810–30 May 1876**

John Hooker Haughton, lawyer and planter, son of John and Mary Ryan Hooker Haughton, was born in [Chowan County](#) <sup>[2]</sup>. His parents later moved to Tyrrell, his mother's home county. He received his preparatory education in the [Edenton](#) <sup>[3]</sup> schools and entered [The University of North Carolina](#) <sup>[4]</sup> in 1828, graduating in the class of 1832 with a B.A. degree. In 1840 his alma mater awarded him an honorary M.A. degree. He read law under his kinsman, Thomas B. Haughton of Edenton, and on receiving his license practiced law for a few years in [Tyrrell County](#) <sup>[5]</sup>. In 1837 Haughton moved to Pittsboro, [Chatham County](#) <sup>[6]</sup>. The same year his father, a planter, moved to Chatham where he had acquired large land-holdings on the Deep River in the southern part of the county.

During the next thirty years, Haughton established a successful law practice in Chatham and surrounding counties. He was a member of the [Whig party](#) <sup>[7]</sup> and a staunch supporter of all its principles. In 1844 the Whigs elected him as one of Chatham's representatives in the House of Commons. Among the measures he successfully sponsored in the session of 1844–45 was the incorporation of Pittsboro, which gave the town a commission form of government. Six years later his party elected him state senator from Chatham. In the legislature of 1850–51 he demonstrated his support of the Whig program of [internal improvements](#) <sup>[8]</sup> by introducing five bills providing for building plank roads and turnpikes, opening coal mines, and improving water transportation to the mines, all of which were passed. In this session Haughton voted for the resolutions endorsing the Compromise of 1850. He was outspoken in his support of the Union while at the same time a firm defender of the institution of slavery. Reelected to the senate for the session of 1854–55, he again sponsored measures for internal improvements. In two bills passed at this session which incorporated the Gulf and Deep River Manufacturing Co. and the Gulf Coal Mining Co., Haughton was named an incorporator and a director. When the Free Suffrage Bill, sponsored by the Democrats, was being considered in 1854, he voted with the Whig minority against it.

Haughton's most important personal venture into the field of internal improvements began when the legislature of 1849 chartered the [Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company](#) <sup>[9]</sup>. He was appointed the company's attorney and became one of its largest stockholders. The company was chartered to make possible the navigation of the Cape Fear and Deep rivers by steam-boat from Fayetteville to Waddell's Ferry in [Randolph County](#) <sup>[10]</sup>. One of the objects of the improved waterway was to transport coal and iron from the mines in southern Chatham County. In consequence of poor management and the Civil War, the company was never able to complete this ambitious project. Haughton continued as its attorney until the company's dissolution in 1873. He lost a large part of his personal fortune in the once promising enterprise.

In addition to his law practice, Haughton engaged in farming. He owned plantations in Chatham and Jones counties. In 1858 he purchased a home in New Bern, where he lived and practiced law during the winter months. A member of the Episcopal church, he frequently served on the vestry of St. Bartholomew's Parish, Pittsboro, and was one of its delegates to most of the diocesan conventions from 1838 to 1868.

On 11 Dec. 1834 Haughton married Polly Ann Williams, daughter of Dr. Robert and Elizabeth Ellis Williams of [Pitt County](#) <sup>[11]</sup>. She died in 1835 shortly after the birth of their only child, Mary Ann (Mrs. Ross R. Ihrie). On 17 May 1837 he married Eliza Alice Hill (1812–64), daughter of Colonel Thomas and Susanna Mabson Hill of Chatham County. Their children were Thomas Hill, John Ryan, Arthur Lawrence, William Graham, Maria Caroline (Mrs. William L. London), Margaret Lane, Susan Mabson, and Alice Hill (Mrs. Thomas C. James). Four years after the death of his second wife, Haughton married Martha Harvey of New Bern, 13 Aug. 1868. He was buried in the churchyard of St. Bartholomew's, Pittsboro.

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Charles C. Weaver, *Internal Improvements in North Carolina Previous to 1860* (1903).

[John H. Wheeler, \*Reminiscences and Memoirs of North Carolina and Eminent North Carolinians\* \(1884\).](#) <sup>[12]</sup>

#### **Additional Resources:**

Haughton Family Papers (#2809-z) 1834-1862 (collection no. 02809-z). The Southern Historical Collection. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. [http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Haughton\\_Family.html](http://www2.lib.unc.edu/mss/inv/h/Haughton_Family.html) [13] (accessed April 4, 2014).

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