

Smith, Charles Aurelius ^[1]

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by Ronnie W. Faulkner, 1994

22 Jan. 1861–31 March 1916



Photograph of Charles Aurelius Smith from the 191 Furman University yearbook. Image from Furman University.

^[2]Charles Aurelius Smith, merchant, banker, and governor of South Carolina, was born in [Hertford County](#) ^[3], N.C., the son of Joseph H. Smith, a farmer, and Eva J. Reddick. He was educated in the common schools before attending Reynoldson School in [Gates County](#) ^[4] to prepare for college. He entered [Wake Forest College](#) ^[5] in 1879 and was graduated with honors in 1882.

In order to pay off his considerable college debt, the young man accepted a teaching post in the schools of Timmonsville, S.C. He soon left teaching to found and manage Charles A. Smith Company, a mercantile business, and became co-owner of Smith-Williams Company of Lake City. Smith served as president of three banks: Citizens Bank of Timmonsville, Bank of Lynchburg, and Peoples' Bank of Lamar. He was president of Timmonsville Oil Company.

Smith's dramatic business success led to his inevitable rise in the ranks of the local [Democratic party](#) ^[6]. Chosen mayor of Timmonsville in 1903, he served in that position until his election to the South Carolina House of Representatives in 1910. He was lieutenant governor from 1911 to 1915. When Cole Blease resigned from the governorship on 14 Jan. 1915, Smith served the remaining five days of Blease's term.

Politically Smith was a conservative best known for his moral rectitude and strong support of [Prohibition](#) ^[7]. This was perhaps reflected in his lifelong dedication to the [Baptist](#) ^[8] faith. He served as president of the South Carolina Baptist Convention (1903–7), vice-president of the [Southern Baptist Convention](#) ^[9] (1905–6), and moderator of the Welsh Neck Baptist Association (1902–12). A deacon for twenty-seven years, he was likewise a member of the executive committee of the education board of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.

Smith's charitable and educational activities were many. His favorite charity was the Connie Maxwell Orphanage at Greenwood, S.C., to which he gave generously and for which he served as a trustee from 1900 until his death. He also served as a trustee of [Coker College](#) ^[10] in Hartsville and of Greenville Women's College, as well as chairman of the board of trustees of [Furman University](#) ^[11] (1909–16).

Smith married Fannie L. Byrd of Timmonsville on 3 Jan. 1884. The couple had eight children: Eva E. (Mrs. Henry P.

Lane), Charles Ray, Charles Lucien, Hugh P., Claire (Mrs. J. T. Lucius), Fannie Byrd (Mrs. Francis D. Pepper), Donald F., and Edwin B. Smith, a robust and impressive man, stood at six-feet-five and weighed 220 pounds. A Mason^[12] and a member of the Knights of Pythias, he died at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, Md., at age fifty-five.

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