

Whitfield, James Vivian ^[1]

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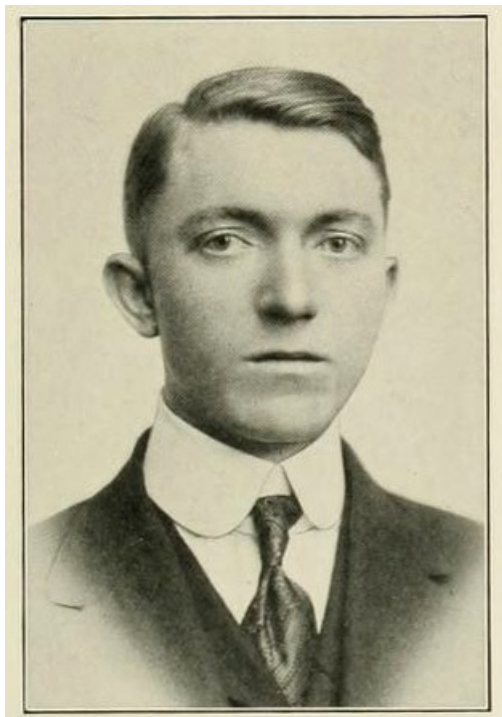


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Whitfield, James Vivian

by Gary F. Trawick, 1996

23 July 1894–19 Nov. 1968



Senior portrait of James Vivian Whitfield, from the University of North Carolina yearbook *The Yackety Yack*, Vol. 15, published 1915.

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^[2]James Vivian Whitfield, foreign service officer and legislator, was born in Seven Springs, the son of James A. and Vivian Powers Whitfield. He received his college preparatory education at Wallace High School in Wallace and at the Horner Military School^[3] in Oxford. After graduation from The University of North Carolina^[4] in 1915, he returned to Horner as commandant, a position he held until 1917, when he became a military instructor at the university and began graduate study. Majoring in economics, he received a master's degree in 1919.

With the end of World War I^[5] and his graduate education completed, Whitfield entered the U.S. Foreign Service in which he served until 1927. He filled tours of duty in Uruguay, Argentina, Cuba, and Mexico.

Leaving the foreign service, he stayed briefly in New York City before settling in Pender County^[6], N.C., where he became a farmer. He served in the North Carolina General Assembly^[7] between 1945 and 1953, first in the house of representatives and then in the senate. Whitfield's efforts for a clean environment and the protection and development of natural resources^[8] began in the legislature. In 1947 he was chairman of the House Committee on Conservation and Development and introduced a bill to authorize the issuance of bonds for the development of the ports^[9] of Wilmington^[10] and Morehead City. His first attempt failed, but in the senate he sponsored successful legislation that authorized the original \$7.5 million bond issue for this purpose. He helped establish the Stream Sanitation Commission in 1951 and served as chairman from 1956 to 1967, when the commission was merged into the State Board of Water and Air Resources. Governor Dan K. Moore^[11] appointed him chairman of the new board, where he served until his death.

Whitfield was president of the Moore's Creek Battleground Association, and in the period 1943–50 he was a director of the North Carolina Farm Bureau^[12]. At various times he was president of the Forest Farmer's Association, vice-president and director of the North Carolina Forestry Association, a member of the State Council of Natural Resources, president of the Off Shore Highway Association, and chairman of the Commission on Interstate Cooperation^[13]. He also was a

member of the Wallace Baptist Church and of several civic organizations.

He married Vivian Bartlett Stevens, and they had a son, John S. The elder Whitfield died in Burgaw and was buried in Rockfish Memorial Cemetery, Wallace. A portrait of him hangs in the lobby of Pender Memorial Hospital, at Burgaw, an institution he helped establish.

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