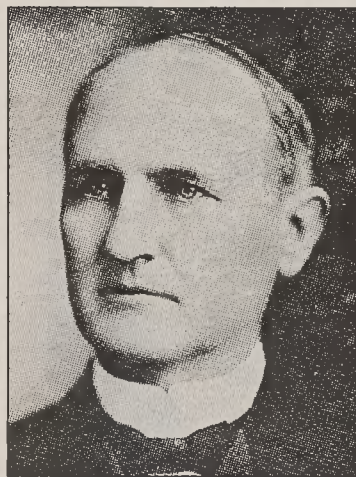


## CHARLES B. AYCOCK



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Charles Brantley Aycock was born in Wayne County on Nov. 1, 1859, the youngest of 10 children. After graduating from the University of North Carolina in 1880, he practiced law in Goldsboro and became involved in Democratic Party politics. As North Carolina's governor from 1901 to 1905, he championed education and white supremacy. He died in 1912 while delivering a speech on education.

## JOSEPHUS DANIELS



NEWS &amp; OBSERVER FILE PHOTO

Josephus Daniels was born in Washington, N.C., in 1862. His father, a shipbuilder for the Confederacy, was killed before the child was 3. His mother soon moved the family to Wilson, where she worked for the post office. At age 16, he entered the world of journalism; by 18 he had bought the *Advance*, a paper serving Wilson, Nash and Greene counties.

After studying at the University of North Carolina's law school, he was admitted to the bar in 1885, though he never practiced. Instead he continued to publish and edit newspapers, proving himself a fierce ally of the Democratic

Party. He purchased *The News and Observer* in 1894, making it a pivotal instrument of the white supremacy campaign. President Woodrow Wilson named him secretary of the Navy in 1913. President Franklin Roosevelt appointed him ambassador to Mexico in 1933. Daniels died in Raleigh on Jan. 15, 1948.

## FURNIFOLD SIMMONS



COURTESY UNC-CHAPEL HILL

Furnifold Simmons was born on his father's plantation near Pollockville in Jones County in 1854. After graduating from Trinity College (now Duke University) in 1873, he studied law and began practicing in New Bern. He served one term in Congress (1887-89), then lost the next two elections for that seat.

After losing statewide elections in 1894 and 1896, North Carolina's Democratic Party named him its chairman. Simmons orchestrated the campaign of 1898 that would restore the party to power. Showing its gratitude, the legislature appointed him in 1900 to a seat in

the U.S. Senate that he would hold for 30 years.

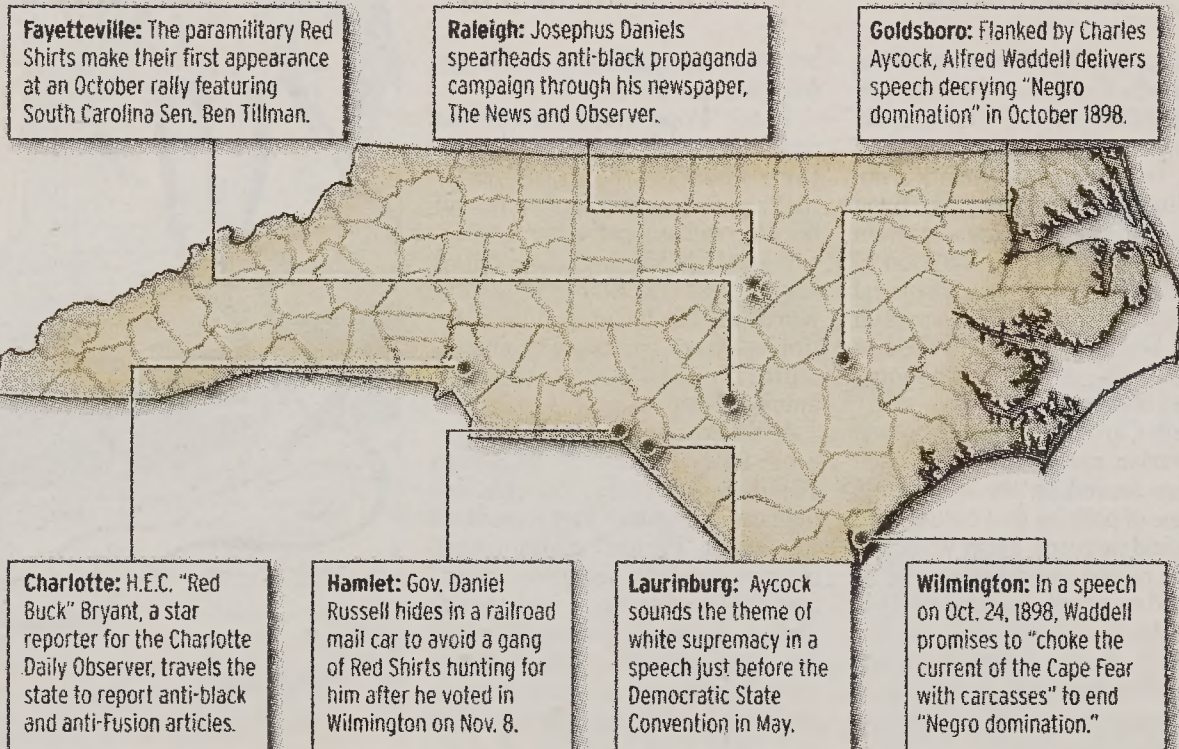
## Chapter 3

## THE STATEWIDE WHITE SUPREMACY CAMPAIGN

Charles B. Aycock, governor of North Carolina from 1901 to 1905, has become the central symbol of the state's progressive traditions, first and most illustrious of our "education governors." Politicians in North Carolina making high-minded appeals for education and civility routinely invoke "the spirit of Aycock." The contradictory truth is that Aycock earned his prominence by fomenting a bloody white supremacy revolution in North Carolina. This campaign — with Wilmington as its flash point — essentially overthrew the state government by force and by fraud, ending meaningful democracy in the state for generations. How this happened is a lesson in the politics of racial violence and the ironies of public memory.

## SPREADING THE WORD

Flash points of statewide white supremacy campaign in 1898:



Source: 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Commission Report

The News & Observer

As the 1898 political season loomed, the Populists and Republicans hoped to make more gains through Fusion. The Democrats, desperate to overcome their unpopularity, decided to place all their chips on racial antagonism. Party chairman Furnifold Simmons mapped out the campaign strategy with leaders whose names would be immortalized in statues, on buildings and street signs: Aycock, Henry G. Connor, Robert B. Glenn, Claude Kitchin, Locke Craig, Cameron Morrison, George Rountree, Francis D. Winston and Josephus Daniels.

These men knew that the Democrats' only hope was to develop campaign issues that cut across party lines. Southern history and practical politics had taught them that white discomfort with black political par-

ticipation remained a smoldering ember that they could fan to full flame. So they made the "redemption" of North Carolina from "Negro domination" the theme of the 1898 campaign. Though promising to restore something traditional, they would, in fact, create a new social order rooted in white supremacy and commercial domination.

A propaganda campaign slandering African-Americans would not come cheap. Simmons made secret deals with railroads, banks and industrialists. In exchange for donations right away, the Democrats pledged to slash corporate taxes after their victory.

At the center of their strategy lay the gifts and assets of Daniels, editor and publisher of *The News and*

*Observer*. He spearheaded a propaganda effort that made white partisans angry enough to commit electoral fraud and mass murder.

It would not be merely a campaign of heated rhetoric but also one of violence and intimidation. Daniels called Simmons "a genius in putting everybody to work — men who could write, men who could speak, and men who could ride — the last by no means the least important." By "ride," Daniels employed a euphemism for vigilante terror. Black North Carolinians had to be kept away from the polls by any means necessary.

Though it would end in bloodshed, the campaign began with an ordinary enough meeting of the Democratic ex-

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