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Western North Carolina Baptists in the 1920's Evolution Debate

A Senior Thesis

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“These North Carolina Baptists are a great people. They have their differences but when they come to see eye to eye they all gather around the cross and sing, ‘All Hail the Power of Jesus Name,’ as they did last night.”¹ This was the report given in the North Carolina State Baptist Association paper, *The Biblical Recorder*, after one of the most intense nights in State Convention history. Much was at stake at the 1922 North Carolina State Convention. Wake Forest College had “been designated the storm center” as the controversy over the teaching of evolutionary theory in Baptist schools had reached its climax.² North Carolina’s Baptist State Convention came to the consensus that disagreement over the teaching of evolutionary theory in Baptists schools was not nearly as important as denominational unity and harmony based on a fast commitment to Jesus. William Louis Poteat, president of Wake Forest and pro-evolution biology teacher, proclaimed, “Let us have done with our questioning and follow where he (Jesus) leads. We shall be together if we follow him.”³ Baptists across the state made an end of their debating as a result Poteat’s sermon at the 1922 convention. Poteat concluded his sermon with a plea to meet the challenges of education that lay ahead with, “unwavering loyalty and devotion: by keeping Christ in the center of all of our education: by stopping our piddling with this great instrument of the kingdom.”⁴ Western North Carolina Baptists seem to have taken Poteat’s words to heart. In a region and among a religious denomination often characterized as populated by rabid, fire-breathing fundamentalists, the Baptists of the mountain region of North Carolina, more than any other region of the state, were extraordinary in their discourse of unity and

¹ “The Convention,” *Biblical Recorder* December 20, 1922, <http://recorder.zsr.wfu.edu/Default/Skins/WakeforestA/Client.asp?skin=WakeforestA&AW=1409845774335&AppName=2> (accessed September 7, 2014), 7.

² “The Convention,” 3.

³ William Louis Poteat, “Christianity and Enlightenment,” *Biblical Recorder* January 5, 1923, <http://recorder.zsr.wfu.edu/Default/Skins/WakeforestA/Client.asp?skin=WakeforestA&AW=1409845774335&AppName=2> (accessed September 7, 2014), 5.

⁴ “Christianity and Enlightenment,” 5.

fostering of Christian education, even in the midst of an ongoing firestorm over the teaching of evolution in the state from 1922 to 1925.

The fact that North Carolina's evolution debate started with a distinct denominational aspect is quite peculiar to the nation. The main reason for this was the presidency of William Louis Poteat at Wake Forest, N.C.'s largest Baptist College. Poteat held a high position in the eyes of North Carolina as a result of his position as president. Many Baptist pastors in the state graduated from Wake Forest during the tenure of Poteat. He was outspoken in his confirmation of "freedom of the mind," or the opportunity for students to be exposed to a wide range of scholarship and allowed to form their own ideas as a result. In the spring of 1920, Thomas Theodore Martin wrote a series of articles in which he attacked Poteat for his views on evolution.⁵ These well publicized articles brought Poteat to the forefront of Baptist attention in North Carolina and allowed the state Baptist convention the chance to hold their own internal debate before the issue generated intense statewide debate with the introduction of the anti-evolution Poole Bill in 1925. For the most part, through the course of Baptist debate, western North Carolina Baptists engaged in informed and peaceful dialogue. Surprisingly, despite stereotypes to the contrary, mountain Baptists were not anti-education, anti-modern, and, for the most part, not anti-evolution.

To understand this the evolution debate on the state level it is vital to understand the broader national context. Most people's knowledge of the evolution debate involves the Scopes Trial. The Scopes trial that took place in the small town of Dayton, Tennessee as the climax of the debate, at least in its earliest form. The trial that took place featured a young teacher who was represented by one of the best attorneys of his day, and avidly opposed to Christianity, Clarence

⁵ Willard B. Gatewood, *Preachers, Pedagogues & Politicians; The Evolution Controversy in North Carolina, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1966), 30.

Darrow. Opposing Darrow was the seasoned Presbyterian politician and blue collar hero William Jennings Bryan. While this “trial of the century” featured a cast of national superstars, it was definitely not the case that depicted the course of events in every state and local debate. Edward Larson’s *Summer For The Gods: The Scopes Trial and America’s Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion*, which won a Pulitzer Prize in History, frames the content of more localized debates as they pertain to the Scopes trial.⁶ While he attempts to place the trial in a larger context of the evolution debate before and after the trial, he still makes Dayton the central focus. This idea is limited when viewed in relation to the debate in other states; none of which produced a similar trial. In a work he published twelve years previously, *Trial and Error: The American Controversy Over Creation and Evolution*, Larson takes a stance that focuses more on the local debates and does not centralize the Scopes trial.⁷ This assessment is more beneficial in relation to North Carolina’s debate which predates the Dayton showdown.

To place the Scopes trial in a less centralized role George Webb’s *The Evolution Controversy in America* defines a timeline that encompasses a broader view of the U.S. in the twenties.⁸ Many events took place all across the map during the state debates that raged through the twenties, and to look at the Scopes trial without weighing the other conflicts would not offer the best grasp of the situation or outcome. More to the point in North Carolina, Willard Gatewood’s *Preachers, Pedagogues and Politicians: The Evolution Controversy in North*

⁶ Edward J. Larson, *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate Over Science and Religion* (New York: BasicBooks, 1997).

⁷ Edward J. Larson, *Trial and Error: The American Controversy Over Creation and Evolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁸ George E. Webb, *The Evolution Controversy in America* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1994).

Carolina 1920-1927 provides a history of the events in North Carolina.⁹ While Gatewood poses some dated arguments, he does very clearly show that the debate in N.C. had a twofold discourse. Gatewood's scholarship is the only comprehensive source on the evolution debate in North Carolina. First was a dialogue over the teaching of evolution in denominational schools, which focused almost exclusively on Baptist run Wake Forest College. Secondly, three years later, the general public debated the teaching of evolution in state funded schools. Gatewood offers a thoroughly explored account of the debate as it pertained to the major cities of the Piedmont region, but he does little to explore what was taking place in the mountains outside of a few notes about Asheville. Also, just as many others have done, he makes the same conclusion that the debate was a religious one with no description of what that means. The debate that brewed in 1925 in North Carolina was in no way a collective Christian movement, but rather the vote of individuals with religious convictions. Gatewood highlights a few small Christian groups that arose in Charlotte, but they had little influence, if any, on the outcome. While Gatewood claimed to cover all of North Carolina, he spoke little about the mountain region and its role in the statewide evolution debate.

Western North Carolina Mountains Baptists have been stigmatized as different, along with other religious groups of Appalachia. Deborah McCauley, in *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History*, takes great pains to show that religion as practiced in Appalachia is distinct and, contrary to the conclusions of some, is not backward, but of a different kind of sophistication.¹⁰ Howard Dorgan provides an anthropological perspective to McCauley's argument as he shares his experience in six separate Baptists sub-denominations in Appalachia.

⁹ Willard B. Gatewood, *Preachers, Pedagogues & Politicians; The Evolution Controversy in North Carolina, 1920-1927* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1966).

¹⁰ Deborah Vansau McCauley, *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995).

In *Giving God Praise in Appalachia: Worship Practices of Six Baptist Subdenominations*, Dorgan does not just focus on differences, but rather on how these Appalachian Baptists collectively practice Christianity in ways alternative to the “mainstream” movement.¹¹ Bill Leonard’s *Baptists in America* insightfully describes the peculiar nature of Baptists. The peculiarity is not in practice, but doctrine. Baptists do not have any large ecclesiastical body, but believe that each local church is autonomous. Baptist associations were an early intervention to help congregations be linked for fellowship, for mutual encouragement, and to extend ministries jointly.¹² Baptist’s doctrine stresses the autonomy of the individual church and, as a result, theoretically only answer to Christ.¹³ Add to that the belief that every member is a priest, or has the right to interpret the Bible for themselves, and it is easy to see where problems could arise. Donald Mathews also contends in *Religion in the Old South* that there is something distinct about southern practices.¹⁴ He argues that an evangelical fervor gripped the South which was unmatched in the north; leading to the dominance of Presbyterians, Methodists, and Baptists in the South today.

Baptists in western North Carolina have not been the focus of any substantial research in regard to the 1920’s evolution debate. Richard Drake in *A History of Appalachia*, makes the claim about the Appalachian population in general that denominational differences between “county-seat elites,” who he associates with “mainstream religion” and “hollow folk” created an intensified level of tension between the two groups.¹⁵ While such a broad statement offers much truth, it also implies that these “hollow” folk were not as sophisticated intellectually and civilized

¹¹ Howard Dorgan, *Giving God Praise in Appalachia: Worship Practices of Six Baptist Subdenominations* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987).

¹² Bill Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 155.

¹³ Leonard, 11.

¹⁴ Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

¹⁵ Richard B. Drake, *A History of Appalachia* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001).

as the mainstream elites. In the mountains of N.C. this was simply not the case in regard to the evolution debate. While mountain Baptists in the 1920's did not fit Drake's mold, they still displayed some unique characteristics. Mountain practitioners' focused on different priorities than did more mainstream churches; a focus on charity more than knowledge, the spiritual dimension more than theology, and a worship that was "God generated of God initiated."¹⁶ Emphasis on the "Holy Spirit" and an emotional conversion experience have an Appalachian heritage that goes back to Revivalism.¹⁷ Most mountain congregations were too poor for much missions funding, but were rather of the conviction that their mission was to "spread the gospel in their communities."¹⁸ This orientation toward community and spiritual influence motivated the actions of western North Carolina Baptists in the 1920's. Western North Carolina Baptists were definitely peculiar, but their focus on spirit and community better define their differences.

To help dispel part of the myth of mountain Baptists, a proper context of their history as fundamentalists is necessary. The modern association of southern Baptists with fundamentalism is a newer idea indeed. According to Samuel Hill, "only the latter tradition and the Independent Baptists can claim to be part of the mostly northern fundamentalist movement that erupted in the early twentieth century."¹⁹ He goes on to state that old-style southern evangelicals only recently realigned themselves with the more conservative movements that have emerged.²⁰ To add to this understanding Beth Barton Schweiger further addresses the fallacy of misplacing ideology. She states, "Although revivals were ubiquitous in the United States, historians think they were

¹⁶ McCauley, 10-15.

¹⁷ Mathews, 13.

¹⁸ Dorgan, 43.

¹⁹ Samuel S. Hill, "Fundamentalism in Recent Southern Culture: Has It Done What the Civil Rights Movement Couldn't Do?", in *Southern Crossroads: Perspectives on Religion and Culture*, ed. by Walter H. Conser and Rodger M. Payne (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 358.

²⁰ Hill, 360.

different in the South.”²¹ She argues that historians viewed southerners as pushing traditional values, shunning innovation, and “remaining fiercely anti-modern.”²² As Barton and Hill demonstrate, many modern ideals of southern Christianity have not been grounded in historical facts. Western North Carolina Baptists of the 1920’s illustrate this point as they were not the fundamentalist one might have expected them to be.

World War I came to a close and many North Carolinians’ focused on what had happened socially in Germany. Innovations were brought to the public every day and after the war rapid change and development, like the change that had happened in Germany, was questioned.²³ As one mountain Baptist in Madison County put it, “We should stay close to the old landmarks and contend for the faith. We believe there is too much formalism and not enough spiritual power. We should search out the old paths where is the good way and walk therein and find rest for our souls.”²⁴ Clearly the idea was a need to go back to something obtained in the past. Inversely, others asked their peers to look, “back through the misty space of the ages” and see the nations which stressed “development of their people physically and intellectually,” while allowing their spiritual nature to “be dwarfed,” leading with the question, “where is Sparta, Greece, Rome and the more modern, where is Germany?”²⁵ The equation was clear to some; if Americans followed a similar course of action they too would be brought down. The consensus across N.C. among Baptists leaned toward an idea that “old-time religion” could “provide the

²¹ Beth Barton Schweiger, “Max Weber in Mount Airy, or, Revivals and Social Theory in the Early South,” in *Religion in the American South: Protestants and Others in History and Culture*, ed. by Beth Barton Schweiger and Donald G. Mathews (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 32.

²² Barton, 32.

²³ Gatewood, 5.

²⁴ A.J. Sprinkle, “Report on the State of Churches,” in French Broad Baptist Association Minutes 1921, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Box 112.

²⁵ W.J. Hannah, “Report on Education,” in Haywood Baptist Association 1921, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

only bulwark against secularism; its creeds were the only unchanging, infallible guides.”²⁶

William Poteat, as a scientist and Baptist preacher, continually claimed that there was no contradiction between the Christian faith and evolution. To Poteat’s disadvantage after the war, he had been educated in Berlin, which gained him the title of a “product of German rationalism.”²⁷

Poteat had a long history with theistic evolution, which was problematic for some North Carolina Baptist. His role as the President of Wake Forest College made him influential to Baptist leaders in North Carolina, and his role as a Biology professor there influenced the many young Baptist leaders in the state who were Wake Forest graduates. Poteat openly expressed his beliefs on the nature of science: “Science cannot explain its faith in the unity and regularity of nature, neither can it get on without it.”²⁸ Obvious for Poteat was the fact that faith was just as much a part of science as it was Christianity. Poteat’s unwavering defense of evolution and its role in Christianity was helpful in gaining the respect of western North Carolina’s Baptists. In 1900, twenty years before Martin’s attack, Poteat had asserted, “The body of Christian beliefs...offers itself for rational review, and at every stage in the intellectual advance of the race requires the fresh authentication of fitting itself into the spirit and thought of the time.”²⁹ Poteat fiercely advocated theistic evolution in which he found no contradiction between the Bible and evolutionary theory.

²⁶ Gatewood, 29.

²⁷ Gatewood, 31.

²⁸ William Poteat. *The New Peace: Lectures on Science and Religion* (Boston: Richard Badger, 1915)<https://archive.org/details/newpeacelectures00pote>(accessed on Aug. 20, 2014), 143.

²⁹ William Louis Poteat, *Laboratory and Pulpit: The Relation of Biology to the Preacher and His Message*, Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1901, <https://archive.org/details/laboratorypulpit00pote> (accessed Aug 20, 2014), 45.

Many Baptists across the state joined T.T. Martin in attacking Poteat, especially as revivals swept through the major cities of the state in 1920 and 1921, declaring evolutionary science, “alongside sex and alcohol as a cardinal sin of the day and linked it to Bolshevism, German militarism, materialism and disintegration of the family.”³⁰ Certainly this fear ran through the mountains. L.C. Roberts suggested, “New doctrines are coming up that we didn’t use to have and we believe they are in great need of discipline;” further adding that churches should be united in “the doctrines of the Bible.”³¹ The call put forth in Sylva was that “churches pray with one accord for an old time revival of spiritual Christianity.”³²

A plethora of outside forces pushed Baptists across the country to believe evolution and Christianity were incompatible. One person central to fundamentalist ideology was North Carolina native Amzi Clarence Dixon, who helped edit *The Fundamentals*, a multi-volume collection of essays promoting conservative theology and attacking modernism.³³ In a sermon at the Baptist Tabernacle in Raleigh in 1922, Dixon asserted, “Evolution with its ‘struggle for existence’ and ‘survival of the fittest,’ which gives the strong and fit the scientific right to destroy the weak and unfit, is responsible for the oppression and destruction of the weak and unfit.”³⁴ The modernism that Dixon spoke of came to most of the country as a theological package which was “the outcome and expression of the Christian life of those who rely upon the

³⁰ Gatewood, 46.

³¹ L.C. Roberts, “State of the Churches,” in French Broad Baptist Association Minutes 1922, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Box 112.

³² W.F. West, “Christian Stewardship,” in Tuckasee Baptist Association Minutes 1923 “Religion in North Carolina,” Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/annualminutes1101tuck> (accessed Aug 21, 2014).

³³ Leonard, 57.

³⁴ Amzi Clarence Dixon, “The Root of Modern Evils.” in *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, edited by Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., 117-124 (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 121.

inductive method as a way to reality and upon freedom as imperative in religious thought.”³⁵ One person able to communicate the anti-evolution platform in a manner that resonated with most North Carolinians was William Jennings Bryan. Just as Bryan had done earlier for the nation’s economic issues, he carried the torch to save the “Bible” and “Bible Civilization.”³⁶ Bryan gave numerous speeches throughout the country, including several stops in Raleigh and Charlotte.³⁷ He asserted, “The purpose of education is not merely to develop the mind; it is to prepare men and women for society’s work and for citizenship.”³⁸ The point of education for Bryan was much the same idea that resonated with mountaineers opposed to the teaching of evolution. Bryan continued, “If I were compelled to choose between the two, I would rather that one should have a good heart than a trained mind.”³⁹ In another speech Bryan defined theistic evolution, which Poteat claimed to ascribe to, as “an anesthetic; it deadens the pain while the Christian religion is being removed.”⁴⁰ Big names in the national evolution debate flowed into North Carolina, but none were able to carry enough popularity to turn the masses to one side or the other.

Strong calls were issued across the mountains of North Carolina in 1921 and early 1922 for the education of members on the issues surrounding the evolution debate. In Asheville, Wayne Williams encouraged Baptists to read the *Biblical Recorder*, the publication of the North

³⁵ Shailer Mathews, “The Faith of Modernism.” in *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, edited by Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., 55-60 (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 56.

³⁶ George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 169.

³⁷ Gatewood, 57.

³⁸ William Jennings Bryan, “Education Without Morality,” in *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, edited by Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., p.226-232 (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 230.

³⁹ “Education Without Morality,” 231.

⁴⁰ William Jennings Bryan, “Darwin’s Christ was Nobody.” in *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, edited by Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., 135-138 (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969), 136.

Carolina State Baptist Convention, in order to make members “capable and effective as Christians.”⁴¹ Likewise P.C. Stringfield, a Marshall Pastor, declared “ignorance of the Lord’s will and work is not excusable in this day of progress, and our spiritual lives must be kept alive. Next to our Bibles, the *Biblical Recorder* should have a place close to our hearts.”⁴² While the emphasis here is on the *Biblical Recorder*, it was precisely the content and quality of this publication that makes these claims impressive.

Gatewood described the editor of the *Biblical Recorder*, Livingston Johnson as “a friend of intellectual freedom.” He “attempted to be fair to both sides in the evolution controversy and, at the same time, to plead for ‘unity and peace’ among Baptists.”⁴³ Throughout the course of the twenties Johnson proved true to this fair and unbiased stance as he published articles from both sides of the debate.⁴⁴ Johnson declared in an attempt to dampen the fierce written debate in 1922, “If science will stay in its own field and not assume a superior attitude in things religious, and if religion will remember that the Bible was not written as a scientific treatise... we believe much of the supposed conflict between the two will be removed.”⁴⁵ He claimed Christianity, being “for the good of mankind,” should “recognize with grateful appreciation the work of scientists,” and that at times both science and religion were too

⁴¹ Wayne Williams, in Buncombe Baptist Association Minutes 1921, “Religion in North Carolina,” Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/stream/minutesofannuals2130bunc#page/n9/mode/2up> (accessed Aug. 20, 2014).

⁴² P.C. Stringfield, “Report on Biblical Recorder,” in French Broad Baptist Association Minutes 1924, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Box 112.

⁴³ Gatewood, 65.

⁴⁴ Gatewood, 70.

⁴⁵ Livingston Johnson, “Science and Religion,” *Biblical Recorder*, April 12, 1922, <http://recorder.zsr.wfu.edu/Default/Skins/WakeforestA/Client.asp?skin=WakeforestA&AW=1409845774335&AppName=2> (accessed on September 1, 2014), 6.

dogmatic.⁴⁶ On the other side of the evolution debate there was at least one other Asheville minister, Charles L. Snider who argued, “Evolution, far from accounting for a universe without a Creator, may easily be interpreted as the method of God’s workmanship.”⁴⁷ Every issue of the *Biblical Recorder* was filled with multiple articles, giving Baptists virtually every angle to the evolution debate.

The *Biblical Recorder* also published arguments against teaching evolution, and its incompatibility with the Bible. Robert Spiro, an Asheville area Pastor, filled the pages of the *Biblical Recorder* in the Spring of 1922 with numerous articles in which he focused on the main argument that, “The theory of evolution cannot, in my opinion, be acceptable to him whose faith is in the Christ of the Scriptures.”⁴⁸ Others, like J.B. Tidwell concluded, “Darwinism cannot...be accepted...because it is unreasonable and out of harmony with all known laws of science...that is ridiculous.”⁴⁹ The voices on both sides of the issue were many.

Baptist associations usually have one annual meeting where the past year is recapped and ambitions for future direction of the churches of the association are discussed. Associational meetings were the places where feelings and ideas were discussed as a larger group. Also important was the reality that each church had limited funds, especially in western North Carolina and, as a result, were drawn to associations as a way to bring funds together for

⁴⁶ Johnson, 6.

⁴⁷ Charles L. Snider, “Dr. Taylor and Evolution,” *Biblical Recorder* May 3, 1922, <http://recorder.zsr.wfu.edu/Default/Skins/WakeforestA/Client.asp?skin=WakeforestA&AW=1409845774335&AppName=2> (accessed September 7, 2014), 4.

⁴⁸ Robert H. Spiro, “Can The Evolutionist Be a Christian?” *Biblical Recorder*, May 10, 1922, <http://recorder.zsr.wfu.edu/Default/Skins/WakeforestA/Client.asp?skin=WakeforestA&AW=1409845774335&AppName=2> (accessed on September 4, 2014), 5.

⁴⁹ J.B. Tidwell, “Creation, Evolution, and Some Conclusions,” *Biblical Recorder* April 12, 1922, <http://recorder.zsr.wfu.edu/Default/Skins/WakeforestA/Client.asp?skin=WakeforestA&AW=1409845774335&AppName=2> (accessed September 7, 2014), 5.

“specific missionary, benevolent, evangelical, or educational task.”⁵⁰ Thus, associations are crucial to understanding Baptists in the mountains.

Mountain Baptists were wary of denominational education issues prior to the outburst of articles in the *Biblical Recorder* in 1922. Anxiety was at the forefront of the discussions at the 1921 annual session of the Green River Association. On the evening of September 28, Curtis Holland stood to give his “Report on Christian Literature” which included this scathing conclusion. “A book is some man’s thought canned so that those thoughts will not be lost when this man is dead. The Bible is the thoughts of God.” He continued, “If Paul were here today he would advise a lot of Baptist to have a book burning.” His address ended with, “Any man who does not own the Bible should be shipped to China where he belongs.”⁵¹ After Holland’s report was given, delegates unanimously accepted it.

In contrast, however, the next morning, as the session continued, the Education Committee gave their undivided support to Wake Forest and encouraged young members to attend if at all possible.⁵² This was in the midst of the attack on Poteat and a movement to have him removed from his position as president.⁵³ The members gathered in the August 21, 1921 Green River annual session displayed an explicit concern for new and unknown knowledge, but they trusted their Baptist educational institutions, including Wake Forest, to provide the proper context for students learning. One of the most crucial points in light of Holland’s address is that mountain Baptists were pro-education. In Haywood County, a clear definition of the church’s

⁵⁰ Leonard, 19.

⁵¹ Curtis Holland, “Report on Religious Literature,” in Green River Baptist Association Minutes 1921, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

⁵² Green River Baptist Association Minutes 1921, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

⁵³ Gatewood, 35.

place in education was presented; separating the state's interest in "physical and mental natures" and the church's role in spiritual matters.⁵⁴ Western North Carolina Baptists saw their role not as one to stop secular problems, but to move the church forward. At Morgan Hill Baptist Church on August 10, 1921, R.L. Creal revealed to his Buncombe Baptist association that "enrollment was increased twenty-five percent last year, and possibly could have been doubled, if our schools had been prepared to take those applying."⁵⁵

The desire to attend denominational schools among Baptists was high, but institutions could not keep up with the high demand, which meant that some students who desired to attend a denominational institution ended up in a public school. E.M. Goodwin concluded that in the public school system, "education is too often one-sided and sometimes too-heavy."⁵⁶ The implication was that educational pursuits were too focused on the sciences and not concerned with the whole person; physical and spiritual. While they may have had little education themselves these Baptists saw a great need as well as benefit to formal education. One of the strongest themes throughout the twenties for western North Carolina Baptists was resounding support for education.

The teaching of evolution was never expressly identified as an enemy of the church by western North Carolina Baptist associations in the 1920's. There was no doubt many mountain Baptists were ignorant of parts of the evolution debate or the theory of evolution itself. The *Biblical Recorder* offered its readers many articles that helped them gain a better understanding

⁵⁴ W.J. Hannah, "Report on Education," in Haywood Baptist Association 1921, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

⁵⁵ R.L. Creal, "Education Report, Buncombe Baptist Association Minutes 1921, "Religion in North Carolina," Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/stream/minutesofannuals2130bunc#page/n9/mode/2up> (accessed Aug. 20, 2014).

⁵⁶ E.M. Goodwin, "Christian Education," in Catawba Baptist Association Minutes 1921, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

of evolutionary theory and the evolution debate. Baptists were encouraged to read and gain information. In the Green River association, church leaders urged members to read as much as possible from a variety of sources, but keep the Bible first.⁵⁷ This general idea permeates the pages of western North Carolina associational minutes throughout the 1920's. One member described the gaining of knowledge through the state's paper as "a new fire kindled in the preacher's heart and his members sing and pray with new zeal."⁵⁸ It appears the more mountain Baptists educated themselves on the issues at stake in the evolution debate, the more they were able to unite, understanding that the crux of the debate was not to accept evolution, only understand the theory and expose students to the teaching in the safety of a Baptist school.

In 1922 there was only three of western North Carolina's Baptist associations that moved forward any kind of resolution to inhibit the teaching of evolution. In fact, one of the three should not be deemed a collective associational effort. In the Buncombe association, it was the Ridgeway Baptist Church that ended up bringing their own resolution to the 1922 annual session.⁵⁹ The hope was that the association as a whole would accept and pass a similar resolution, but instead the assembly voted down any resolution except a resolution to thank the host church for the session; a practice which seems customary for all associations. All that was agreed to in the 1922 Buncombe session was that the delegate from Ridgeway would be able to voice the resolution of his church at the state convention in December. On the other hand, both the French Broad and Brushy Mountain associations passed strongly worded resolutions to try to stop the teaching of evolutionary theory in any Baptist institution. Interestingly, it is the French Broad and Brushy Mountain associations that seemed to view evolution as a source of greater "falling away" of young Christians. In Brushy Mountain's resolution they cited the ramifications

⁵⁷ Green River Minutes 1922.

⁵⁸ French Broad Minutes 1922.

⁵⁹ Buncombe Minutes 1922.

of the “theory of evolution with all its demoralizing and harmful effects upon the young people of our county, weakening their faith, destroying their confidence in God and his word, leading to infidelity and ultimate rejection of God.”⁶⁰ Toward the end of their lengthy resolution they noted their belief that ninety per cent of North Carolina’s Baptists surely did not believe in evolution as “it is taught today.”⁶¹ The call was for the North Carolina convention to stop funding from Baptist schools that taught the theory of evolution. The French Broad association met at Forks of Ivy Baptist Church on August 24, 1922 and passed a similar resolution. As they put it, “We have no quarrel to make with Science when it is supported by the Bible, but when Science conflicts with the Bible then it is only the unsupported opinion of irresponsible men.”⁶² The problem was a lack of responsibility on the part of those who could not support science with the Bible. This problem of conflict was not one that William Poteat thought was inherent to evolution.

While the associations intent on passing a resolution talked about the decline in interest among young Christians that were related to the issue, so to were the associations that did not even propose a resolution. In the Buncombe association, which failed to adopt the one church resolution that came to the floor, Robert Spiro stood before the vote at Ridgeway Baptist Church in 1922 to encourage his fellow members to be more educated on the debate and learn from the *Biblical Recorder* “the influence and effect of the theory of evolution as taught in our denominational schools.”⁶³ Spiro had a personal conviction that lay close to that of Ridgeway, which is evidenced by his articles in the *Biblical Recorder*, but he wanted his association of churches to make the best decision together. Likewise, William Fitzgerald stood before the

⁶⁰ Annual Minutes of the Brushy Mountain Baptist Association 1922, “Religion in North Carolina,” Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/details/annualofbrushymo1648brus> (accessed on Aug. 22, 2014).

⁶¹ Brushy Mountain Minutes 1922.

⁶² French Broad Minutes 1922.

⁶³ Buncombe Minutes 1922.

audience at Ridgeway and declared, “Under the stress of much that is questionable in the teaching of science, theology, and the interpretation of the Bible, we do well to attend to the spirit and instruction of our schools from the lowest to the highest, remembering the principles of liberty of conscience, the right to free speech, the moral obligation of corporate religious institutions to be loyal to their constituents and inviolable fidelity to God’s word.”⁶⁴ These timely addresses by Spiro and Fitzgerald, at a moment when the host church wanted to move the association to a resolution against the teaching of evolution, give a clearer understanding of the intentions of mountain Baptists in 1922: a balance in denominational schools between educational freedom of the mind and adherence to the desires of Baptists constituents.

Western North Carolina Baptist discourse over denominational education is better understood when compared to how Baptists in the mountains addressed external problems, like prohibition. A good place to focus is the Brushy Mountain association. Along with the resolution passed on August 26, 1922, the association also passed two other resolutions, both of which concerned prohibition. Keep in mind the wording of the education resolution mentioned earlier, which was followed by an education report that encouraged Wake Forest as the top choice for “collegiate training.” While the problems of evolutionary theory were discussed, it was with far greater tenacity that alcohol was attacked. The first resolution placed the blame for “ninety percent of criminal litigation in Wilkes County” on alcohol. The resolution, “We deem it to be the Christian Duty of members of the church composing this association to take an active, united and firm stand against violations of the prohibition laws.”⁶⁵ The second resolution carried the same weight of Christian duty, but called for the members to call upon law officials to “faithfully

⁶⁴ Buncombe Minutes 1922.

⁶⁵ Brushy Mountain Minutes 1922.

and energetically enforce the prohibition laws.”⁶⁶ Buncombe association called for every church in their membership to elect a superintendent of prohibition to keep their congregation “posted as to the enemies movement.”⁶⁷ Notice again the call was for unity, but in this case unity against an external problem. Every association in the mountains had similar measures to try and guard against “the enemy.” Internal issues required a much more passive and mild temperament if the unity of the fragile network of churches that composed the association was to be kept intact.

The centrality of Christ was the point that William Poteat was able to drive home in 1922 at the state convention. To view the sermon delivered by Poteat at the convention as pivotal may be an overstatement, but with every association in the state mentioning the topic in their annual sessions discussion and action were bound to happen. The *Biblical Recorder* describes the scene the night Poteat delivered his memorable sermon: “Every seat in the auditorium was taken and many were standing in the rear.”⁶⁸ After the Education report was read Poteat took the podium. The *Biblical Recorder* reported “It was a tense moment when Dr. Poteat faced that great congregation. The convention was on tip-toe of expectancy. Nobody knew what turn the discussion would take or what might follow Dr. Poteat’s address.”⁶⁹ In his address, Poteat reinforced the notion that science was only a way of better seeing “the invisible things of God.”⁷⁰ Poteat asserted at the convention, “Modern education is a race between education and catastrophe.”⁷¹ Of Christ, Poteat deemed, “We shall get beyond Him, for our progress is

⁶⁶ Brushy Mountain Minutes 1922.

⁶⁷ James M. Williams, “Report on Temperance,” in Buncombe Baptist Association Minutes 1922, “Religion in North Carolina,” Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/stream/minutesofannuals2130bunc#page/n9/mode/2up> (accessed Aug. 20, 2014).

⁶⁸ “The Convention,” 3.

⁶⁹ “The Convention,” 3.

⁷⁰ “Christianity and Enlightenment,” 5.

⁷¹ “Christianity and Enlightenment,” 4.

conditioned upon our following Him.”⁷² In Poteat’s convention sermon, “He unbared his heart to the convention, and told them of that deepest and most sacred experience that could come to any human soul - the time of complete surrender to Christ as Lord.”⁷³ Poteat shared about his personal experience of conversion, “One thing was now certain, I was his and he was mine, forever. I do not know what occurred in the deeps of my nature then. I have no psychology of conversion. I do not have to understand it to be assured of its reality.”⁷⁴ It was a focus on personal faith that seemed to calm the crowds and lead the 1922 convention to be satisfied to disagree. An observer noted, “He showed that we should not be afraid to follow truth wherever it might lead.”⁷⁵

After the 1922 convention a stronger unity than ever before resonated through the mountain Baptist associations of North Carolina. G.C. Kirksey, from the Catawba association summed up the grander thoughts of many mountain Baptists when he declared, “If there is a real need in our schools and colleges, it is necessary that we, as Baptists, support them with our means and patronage.”⁷⁶ The obvious route laid out for resolving problem was a slower process of support and unity. The fact is quite impressive that all of the associations in the mountains region of N.C., even those with resolutions opposing the teaching of evolution, gave explicit praise to Wake Forest College by 1925. Baptists in the mountains were concerned about the new knowledge that flowed into their institutions as well as the dominant role that science had taken, even after the 1922 convention. Wake Forest University was the premier educational institution for North Carolina Baptists. It was the place the state’s Baptists sent their aspiring leaders to

⁷² “Christianity and Enlightenment,” 4.

⁷³ “The Convention,” 7.

⁷⁴ “Christianity and Enlightenment,” 4.

⁷⁵ “The Convention,” 7.

⁷⁶ G.C. Kirksey, “Christian Education,” in Catawba Baptist Association Minutes 1927, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

receive an education. The thought among some mountain Baptists was that, “Those ideals that distinguish our civilization from those of the ancient world or the pagan nations of today; those ideals that separate us from Prussia, are directly traceable to the teachings of Christ.”⁷⁷ What made mountain Baptists different in respect to education was not their fears, but their overwhelming support of Baptists education and Wake Forest.

For Haywood Baptists in 1924 the work of the Baptist colleges, Wake Forest, Meredith, and Mars Hill, was to “administer to the heart as well as the head.”⁷⁸ In Madison County the summation was that “education should include the culture of the hand, head, and heart.”⁷⁹ The ideal of education in the mountains was thus not a modernist ideal as deduced by Shailer Mathews, but the place of logic and reason was at best alongside the role of the “heart,” which for evangelicals meant the place where the “Holy Spirit” presided. The Buncombe Baptist association concluded that education was “imperative in carrying out the great commission.”⁸⁰ Education was, for mountain Baptists, the means of bringing up a new generation to carry on the banner of Christ.

Another important factor in the evolution debate and its outcome in 1922 for mountain Baptists was the distinction between the teaching of the theory of evolution and the theory itself. While several associations addressed their problems with evolution, none called out Wake Forest, its staff, or Poteat. The French Broad association passed a resolution condemning

⁷⁷ T.C. Henderson, “Education Report,” in Transylvania Baptist Association 1923, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

⁷⁸ R.C. Campell, Report on Education, in Haywood Baptist Association 1924, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

⁷⁹ “Education Report,” in French Broad Baptist Association Minutes 1927, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Box 113.

⁸⁰ “Education Report,” in Buncombe Baptist Association Minutes 1926, “Religion in North Carolina,” Internet Archive,

<https://archive.org/stream/minutesofannuals2130bunc#page/n9/mode/2up> (accessed Aug. 20, 2014).

evolution, but, in 1925, the association agreed that, “because of the tendency of some students of science to attack the Bible from the standpoint of science, we must meet these scientist on their own ground, and while pursuing all knowledge in all realms, to relate all knowledge and science to God Almighty.”⁸¹ Mountain Baptists had decided an understanding of science, not necessarily an acceptance of it, was important to help students defend their faith. Western North Carolina’s Baptists had so much confidence in their schools, including Wake Forest that no association save the three exceptions mentioned earlier failed to praise all their institutions every year. Even the exceptions did not hold out long. In 1923 the French Broad association once again condoned and praised Wake Forest.⁸² By 1925, after three years of simply not mentioning Wake Forest, the Buncombe association embraced the college.⁸³ Brushy Mountain referred their young to Wake again by 1927, if not earlier.⁸⁴ This date could have been sooner, but the association did not discuss education at all in their meetings for four years previous. The main point here is that by the time the state began discussing the Poole Bill, western North Carolina’s Baptists had resolved their problems concerning the teaching of evolution at the denominational level, concluding that teaching their students the theory of evolution was acceptable, that William Poteat was a capable and beneficial leader at Wake Forest College, and that disagreement was fine as long as unity was preserved.

The Poole Bill was not the chance for the public to voice their opinion of state funded schools in North Carolina. Much anticipation surrounded the state in the 1924 election as some candidates promised to bring legislation to the floor in the 1925 session. One such candidate was Scott Poole, who did just that soon into the 1925 session, but his bill failed to pass in committee.

⁸¹ R.L. Moore, “Report on Christian Education,” in French Broad Baptist Association Minutes 1925, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Box 112.

⁸² French Broad Minutes 1923.

⁸³ Buncombe Minutes 1925.

⁸⁴ Brushy Mountain Minutes 1927.

The bill proposed by Poole defined the teaching of evolution as “injurious” to the citizens of the state, and would have prohibited all teachers paid “wholly or in part” by tax revenue from teaching Darwinian evolution. National anti-evolution leaders like Amzi Dixon and T.T. Martin crusaded through the piedmont region, focusing on Raleigh and Charlotte, where their support seemed the greatest. After much rallying by anti-evolution supporters, Poole wrote a minority report which allowed the Bill to be presented on the floor and voted upon. At the hearing University of North Carolina President Harry Chase was at the center of the controversy for allowing and supporting the teaching of evolution as his state funded institution. Poteat and most of the Baptists in the state, especially in the mountains were no major crusade attempted to stir action, took no substantial role in the Poole Bill debate. The Bill failed to pass by a vote of sixty-seven to forty-six, and any chance of a Scopes Trial in North Carolina was gone.⁸⁵

There is no doubt that Baptists in the mountains took individual roles in the debate in 1925, but there was no collective movement toward or against the Poole Bill. There were several factors that explain why no institutional movement was pursued. First, the churches in the mountains had seen much of the renewal that they had desired after the war. The French Broad association reported “wonderful revival meetings” and a substantial increase in membership in the churches.⁸⁶ Catawba Baptists concluded that God had “wonderfully blessed and prospered” North Carolina’s Baptists.⁸⁷ The Buncombe members came to the consensus that a new generation of leaders was needed for the growth they had seen.⁸⁸ Both Wake Forest and Meredith

⁸⁵ Gatewood, 125-135.

⁸⁶ Willie B. Metcalf, “State of the Churches,” in French Broad Baptist Association Minutes 1926, Mars Hill University, Renfro Library, The Southern Appalachian Archives, Box 113.

⁸⁷ Catawba Minutes 1926.

⁸⁸ Buncombe Minutes 1925.

were pointed to as places where young members could be “fitted for better service.”⁸⁹ A period of “revival” appears in the records of all the mountain associations during the early twenties.

A second reason why there was no collective movement among western North Carolina Baptists revolved around the principle of separation of church and state which they so dearly adhered to. For Baptists, more than any other denomination, the 1925 evolution debate was irrelevant. Mountain Baptists especially felt like if their youth was going to gain a proper education, it was the job of the church to do it. Most mountain Baptists seemed to share in the idea that it was the place of the church to make Christian “ideals dominant in education.”⁹⁰ One notable point made by Milton Ready was that in western North Carolina especially education and religion were often intertwined and public schools “existed, but only marginally.”⁹¹ Public schools posed no immediate threat to the dominant position of the church in western North Carolina in the 1920’s. Christians, therefore, had the responsibility of educating their children and Christ was indeed emphasized as central.

Baptists in western North Carolina proved to be very concerned with education as well as corporate unity during the evolution debate during the 1920’s. This conclusion brings into question several seemingly well-established inferences about what it means and what it has meant to be a Baptists in western North Carolina. While exact accusations vary, it has been the popular consensus to characterize western North Carolina’s mountain population as anti-education, anti-evolution, anti-modern; and fiercely traditional. While these sentiments may have some basis in select and specific instances, it is a fallacy to place such views on mountain

⁸⁹ W.H. Fitzgerald, “Education Report,” in Buncombe Baptist Association Minutes 1925, “Religion in North Carolina,” Internet Archive, <https://archive.org/stream/minutesofannuals2130bunc#page/n9/mode/2up> (accessed 8/20/2014).

⁹⁰ French Broad Minutes 1925.

⁹¹ Milton Ready, *Mystical Madison: The History of a Mountain Region* (Asheville: Ever Ready Publications, 2012), 140.

Baptists as a collective. To the contrary, mountain Baptists in the 1920's debates surrounding evolution were leading the charge toward a pragmatic and progressive solution. To relate a modern ideal of western North Carolina Baptists on the participators in the twenties is not accurate. It was not until the movement of the New Christian Right in the 1980's that most Baptists became "fundamentalist" in a Dixonian form.⁹² Mountain Baptist associations in the twenties encouraged their members to be educated on the issues, to be slow to judge, and adamant about informed discussion instead of emotional heated debate. The fact that Baptists could conclude as a collective to form no definitive resolution in either direction is truly amazing. Almost a hundred years ago western N.C. Baptists laid the evolution debate to rest; something the rest of the United States is still struggling to do today.

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Annual of North Carolina Baptist State Convention 1922-25. "Religion in North Carolina." Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/stream/annualse9295192219251bapt#page/n5/mode/2up> (accessed Aug. 20, 2014).

Annual of the Brushy Mountain Baptist Association 1916-48. "Religion in North Carolina." Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/annualofbrushymo1648brus> (accessed on Aug. 22, 2014).

⁹² Frances R.A. Paterson and Lawrence F. Rossow, "Chained to the Devil's Throne: Evolution and Creation as a Religio-Political Issue." in *The American Biology Teacher* vol. 61.5. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4450698> (accessed on 4/9/14), 359.

Annual Minutes of the Caldwell Baptist Association 1920-40. "Religion in North Carolina." Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/annualminutesofc2040cald> (accessed Aug 25, 2014).

Buncombe Baptist Association Minutes 1920-27. "Religion in North Carolina." Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/stream/minutesofannuals2130bunc#page/n9/mode/2up> (accessed Aug. 20, 2014).

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Newfound Baptist Association Minutes 1920-27. Pack Library, Asheville, NC. North Carolina Room. N.C. 286.17568 BRO.

Transylvania Baptist Association 1920-27. Mars Hill University. Renfro Library. The Southern Appalachian Archives. Shelved by Ms. Harmon.

Tuckasee Baptist Association Minutes 1921-25. "Religion in North Carolina." Internet Archive. <https://archive.org/details/annualminutes1101tuck> (accessed Aug 21, 2014).

The minutes of each of these respective Baptist Associations will aid my research in providing general discussions and resolutions agreed upon concerning the topic. Each year the Associations have annual meetings were virtually every aspect of the churches is discussed; ranging from education to a State of the Churches Address to a report on state activities and the Biblical Recorder. These meetings provided a great forum for discussing the larger societal issues that the church encountered. In most cases individual church minutes may discuss some internal issues, but most churches were solidified on their stance for or against social issues. With no higher authority than the local church, particular importance was placed on the ideology proposed at these annual meetings.

Especially in the years 1920-27 the Associations were eager to pass resolutions stating the consensus of the churches on the issue of evolution. Much more cumbersome was the issue of education as it pertained to the teaching of evolution.

Other Primary Sources:

Bryan, William Jennings. "Darwin's Christ was Nobody." in *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, edited by Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., p.135-138. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969.

Bryan, William Jennings. "Education Without Morality." in *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, edited by Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., p.226-232. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969.

William Jennings Bryan was wildly popular in the south, and NC was no exception. Many felt Bryan was a friend to the common man, a person of integrity and grit in the face of a corrupt political aristocracy. Many would wait for Bryans weekly essays addressing the present national debate over evolution. It is easy to trace his influence in the debate in NC as a whole. These essays highlight the common sense tactics used by Bryan to evoke support for the antievolutionist abroad. In the Baptists realm, a people who are defined by local autonomy, it is surprising that Bryan's approach failed to have significant sway in the face of possible denominational divisions.

The Biblical Recorder. Wake Forest University. Z. Smith Reynolds Library, Winston Salem, NC. <http://recorder.zsr.wfu.edu/Default/Skins/WakeforestA/Client.asp?skin=WakeforestA&AW=1395327347721&AppName=2>

The *Biblical Recorder* is a great source to aid in comparing the sentiment of mountain Baptists with that of the state convention. The *Biblical Recorder* was very vocal on the issues of evolution and education. Many articles, especially during 1922, made bold statements about the desires of Baptists in our state as well as the intelligence of some of the state's intellectuals. To understand Baptists in the mountains, it is imperative to contextualize the information that fueled their decisions.

Dixon, Amzi Clearance. "The Root of Modern Evils." in *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, edited by Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., p.117-124. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969.

In the heat of the Baptist debate, Amzi Dixon, a North Carolina native, preached one of the most discussed sermons of the decade. The stage was the Baptist Tabernacle in Raleigh in December 1922. He was already well known in NC for his contribution in

editing *The Fundamentals*, a voluminous collection that stated the doctrine of “Fundamentalism.” In this sermon, as the name implies, he linked virtually every evil to the ultimate evil of evolution. Surprisingly, in the face of numerous voices devoted to pointing out ignorance that prevails in Appalachian religion, it was mountain Baptist who most explicitly denied this claim and addressed evolution as one of many separate issues of the time. Conversely, in other parts of NC, Raleigh and Charlotte specifically, Dixon’s rhetoric was used for the next three years as an attempt to fight all evil; a thought which influenced the formation of the Poole Bill in 1925.

Mathews, Shailer. “The Faith of Modernism.” in *Controversy in the Twenties: Fundamentalism, Modernism, and Evolution*, edited by Willard B. Gatewood, Jr., p.55-60. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1969.

As the debate over evolution raged on into the realm of public education in NC many looked to the Divinity School of the University of Chicago as the source of troubles; with special emphasis of Mathews, who was Dean of the Divinity School. In this attempt to disentangle myth and reality about modernist he tries to pull evolution and the Bible into an uncomfortable marriage. Interestingly, William Poteat’s theology was similar to Mathews, but Poteat had the eloquence and intelligence to silence his opposition and the common sense to not identify with Mathews or the University of Chicago. Thankfully for NC Baptists, Poteat managed to keep the support of Baptists in the state and protect freedom of the mind at Wake Forest.

Poteat, William Louis. *Laboratory and Pulpit: The Relation of Biology to the Preacher and His Message*. Philadelphia: The Griffith and Rowland Press, 1901.

<https://archive.org/details/laboratorypulpit00pote> (accessed Aug 20, 2014).

Poteat, William Louis. *The New Peace: Lectures on Science and Religion*. Boston: Richard G. Badger, 1915. <https://archive.org/details/newpeacelectures00pote> (accessed on Aug. 20, 2014).

These series of lectures given by Poteat at Theological Seminaries in 1900 are seen by many as the roots of the debate on evolution in the Baptist realm. It is these published manuscripts that T.T. Martin attacked twenty years later. In this series Poteat weaves together the intricacies of his theology in an eloquent and logical manner. To fully understand Baptist support for Poteat and Wake Forest it is crucial to examine his steady and unwavering position through the years.

Secondary Sources

Conser, Walter H., and Rodger M. Payne. *Southern Crossroads: Perspectives on Religion and*

Culture. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008.

This work provides tangible research to a common notion that the South is deeply religious. A variety of topics and times are discussed in this work. The common thread is the seemingly inseparable link between religion and the South. In NC, this fact was crucial to the political and social aspects of the evolution debate. Even folks who did not consider themselves deeply religious took heed to what the Baptists in NC were saying.

Dorgan, Howard. *Giving God Praise in Appalachia: Worship Practices of Six Baptist Subdenominations*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1987.

Dorgan, a prominent Appalachian scholar, takes a close look at some of the sub-denominations of Baptist in northwestern NC, East Tennessee, and southwestern Virginia. Through his own research, which was conducted through years of attending services in various churches, he is able to offer insight to some of the aspects of the Faith that make these mountain denominations unique.

Drake, Richard B. *A History of Appalachia*. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2001.

Appalachia is a massive portion of the United States and trying to find commonalities between all the inhabitants of this region has been a fairly recent development. With that stated, Richard Drake's survey of historical events in primarily central Appalachia highlights some significant events in the region. With a broad and shallow overview of European migration and settlement in the area, Drake weaves the fabric the ties the principles and desires of the earliest immigrants to the traditions that are still prevalent in Appalachia today. He also highlights the exploitation of the region at the turn of the twentieth century. While this exploitation varied by area, when this reality was combined with other fears in the twenties, following the first world war, it is easy to see why mountain people would be wary of change.

Gatewood, Willard B. *Preachers, Pedagogues & Politicians; The Evolution Controversy in North Carolina, 1920-1927*. Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1966.

Willard Gatewood is the authority on the evolution debate in NC. In this work he provides a chronological history of the events that unfolded in the 1920's. The primary focus of his research is on William Poteat, Harry Chase, and the North Carolina Baptist Convention. Gatewood's book adds a great deal of context to the events that unfolded in the Mountains during this time. While he touches specifically on the mountains, he does not do so in any significant detail.

Larson, Edward J. *Summer for the Gods: The Scopes Trial and America's Continuing Debate*

Over Science and Religion. New York: BasicBooks, 1997.

Edward Larson, in this work, goes into great detail about the Scopes trial that took place in Dayton, TN in 1926. This trial is significant to the evolution debate in NC because the law in question was very similar to the one outlined in the Poole bill that failed to pass in 1925. The trial not only displayed national sentiment over the debate, but also offers some contrast to the main tenets of the debate in NC. The crucial question in Dayton seemed to be in the existence of God, while in NC, as well as for most Tennesseans, “freedom of the mind” was the issue.

Larson, Edward J. *Trial and Error: The American Controversy Over Creation and Evolution*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Larson takes an in depth look at textbooks and the teaching of evolution in the late 19th and 20th centuries. From this approach Larson proves that Darwin’s evolutionary theory had been printed in American textbooks late 1800’s, yet only surfaced as controversial in the 1920’s. In NC, the debate revolved around education, but more specifically to the Poole bill, the content of textbooks was in question.

Leonard, Bill. *Baptists in America*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.

Bill Leonard research of Baptists in America covers the vast variety of Baptists movements across the country. Unlike some other historians, Leonard, in other works focuses on Appalachian religion, and in this work he is careful to give Appalachian Baptist their due coverage. Baptists in NC played a crucial role in the evolution debate that unfolded in the 1920’s, and that role was even more acute in the Baptist dominated mountains of NC. Leonard helps put mountain Baptists into perspective on a national level.

Marsden, George M. *Fundamentalism and American Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.

George Marsden has written many books on the topic of Christian Fundamentalism. In this book he focuses on the history of the movement. For him, the thing that stands out the most is the active role Fundamentalist are willing to play in society. While this argument may seem counter-intuitive on the surface, Marsden substantiates his claim with years of action, starting with the 1920’s evolution debate. Key to an understanding of the events that transpired in NC in the 1920’s is this notion that fundamentalist were not anti-political and anti-intellectual, as some have deemed them, but rather they were vocal and dogmatic in their beliefs.

Mathews, Donald G. *Religion in the Old South*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.

While the title of the book speaks of religion, Mathews' deals with the rise and pervasiveness of southern Evangelical Protestants. He highlights many of the foundational practices and beliefs of the major evangelical groups in the south; Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians. The platform built in the period of revivalism was still evident during the 1920's debate, which in most southern states was dominated by members of these same three denominations.

McCauley, Deborah Vansau. *Appalachian Mountain Religion: A History*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995.

McCauley makes a convincing argument about the common misconception of "Mountain Religion." By this term she is referring to a form of Christian Evangelical Protestantism that embraces different characteristics than some of its more mainstream counterparts. She defends the notion that these differences are not the result of ignorance or backwardness, but a decision to embrace tradition in their own way. Asheville is a city of progress in the middle of Appalachia and McCauley's work offers a more correct view of the cultural influence that transmits in both directions. Ideals flow out of, but also into Asheville, and other WNC cities from their rural surroundings.

Paterson, Frances R.A., and Lawrence F. Rossow. "Chained to the Devil's Throne: Evolution and Creation as a Religio-Political Issue." in *The American Biology Teacher* vol. 61.5. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4450698> (accessed on 4/9/14).

The theme, as evident in the title, is that evolution cannot escape the stigma it received in the evolution debate in the 1920's. The authors argue that the issue of teaching evolution is specifically different from other issues in education because it directly questions the Christian view of creation. In no other state was this relationship between politics and religion more obvious than in NC. Many Congressmen and Clergymen joked about the union of the Democratic Party with the Baptist Church. As argued in this article, many people viewed evolution as an attack on Christianity rather than an academic perspective.

Payne, Rodger M. *The Self and the Sacred: Conversion and Autobiography in Early American Protestantism*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1998.

The conversion was of particular importance to Protestant groups as they developed in the early history of North America. This importance would hold particularly true for southern practitioners and even more acutely realized by Central Appalachian "believers." Payne studies not only the process and experience of conversion, but the

weight of that process on lives. This point becomes especially pertinent when looking at the arguments used by western NC antievolutionist in the 1920's debate.

Ready, Milton. *Mystical Madison: The History of a Mountain Region*. Asheville: Ever Ready Publications, 2012.

In this work Ready provides a sweeping overview of Madison County in western NC. One of the benefits of his work is that he provides plenty of contextual information about what was taking place in the southern Appalachian region. Through this history the tenacious attitudes of mountain folk can clearly be seen, with their roots in the Buncombe Turnpike and the Civil War.

Schweiger, Beth Barton and Donald G. Mathews. *Religion in the American South: Protestants and Others in History and Culture*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

This collection of essays focuses on the attributes that are unique to the South. Relating to the evolution debate, many misconceptions persist about Southerners in general. The task of dispelling myths is laborious and the research presented in this volume offers a more true perspective of southern religion. In several essays North Carolina is specifically discussed as atypical, especially since it was a more progressive state than others in the south.

Webb, George E. *The Evolution Controversy in America*. Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1994.

George Webb offers a national history of the evolution debate of the early twentieth century. By viewing the expanse and variety of debates across the country, it becomes easier to see the unique situation that North Carolina Baptist faced in 1922. One key point that is highlighted by Larson is how diverse the situations were in the various states as well as how divided opinions were as to the future of evolution in public schools.