

Suzanne V. Spain. Frances Renfrow Doak: A Twentieth Century Woman of Transition. (Under the direction of Dr. Mary Jo Bratton) Department of History, September 1994.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the life of Frances Renfrow Doak, a woman who lived in eastern North Carolina from 1887 to 1974. In order to understand the importance of this woman's life, research into her background, her contemporaries, and the historical context of her life was necessary. Extensive use of the Frances Renfrow Doak Papers provided the backbone of the work.

Three of Doak's job opportunities were especially influential on her life and the role she played in North Carolina history. While working for the law firm of former governor Charles B. Aycock and Judge Robert Watson Winston she was introduced to the world of politics and developed a deep admiration for Aycock that would affect her life. A later opportunity to work for Raleigh's WPTF radio station gave her the opportunity to exercise her creative talents and become the second female radio announcer in the nation, the first in North Carolina. During the New Deal era, Doak found employment with the Farm Security Administration, which allowed her to help fellow North Carolinians and to prove that women were capable of making contributions in an important governmental agency.

In addition to her job opportunities, Doak's involvement in social and political movements strongly affected her life. She was a valued participant in movements for prohibition, improved opportunities for blacks, better prison conditions, and the abolition of capital punishment. In the area of politics she campaigned for a number of candidates including W. Kerr Scott and John F. Kennedy; she was an ardent supporter of world peace and the United Nations.

Finally, Doak's involvement in women's clubs had a major influence both on her life and her community. By working through state and local organizations she was able to help the community and give women power and new roles in society. Doak emerged as a woman of transition, moving from the strict confinements of the Victorian era's idea of women's place in society to the opening opportunities that came with the move towards women's equality. She truly was a woman of transition between these two images.

FRANCES RENFROW DOAK:
A TWENTIETH CENTURY WOMAN OF TRANSITION

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
East Carolina University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in History

by

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September 1994

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INTRODUCTION

Frances Blount Renfrow Doak symbolized the changing woman of the mid 20th Century. She outgrew the prim Victorian pose but did not yet embrace the radical feminism that characterized the 1970's. She symbolized transition. Doak believed that a woman's place was wherever she wanted it to be. After the passage of the 19th Amendment, Doak recognized the opportunities that awaited women if they would be brave enough to step forward and grasp them. She saw woman's role as being a caretaker, not only of her family as had been conventional in the past, but also as caretaker of the world. Women could use opportunities that were opening to them in ways that would benefit all of mankind. Whether it was in politics, social work, or education, Doak believed it was her responsibility to work for a better tomorrow.

A native eastern North Carolinian, Doak was educated at Littleton Female College, Draughon's Business College, and Meredith College during the first decade of the 20th century. Her years at Littleton especially reinforced her belief in the importance of a career. She believed that a woman should educate herself as much as possible in order to better herself and prepare for a career. Many American women of Doak's era saw college as a means to broaden their opportunities. Between 1900 and 1920 enrollment in public women's colleges increased 1,000% and in private women's colleges enrollment

was up 482%.¹ Doak's formal education helped her secure several secretarial positions with professional and business leaders in Raleigh. Women were beginning to obtain more white collar jobs, with stenographic and typing positions held by women rising from the eighth largest category in 1910 to the third in 1930.² These types of jobs were open and acceptable to white, middle-class married women.

Doak gained valuable experience, political knowledge, and a sense of the importance of education while working for the law firm of former North Carolina Governor Charles Brantley Aycock and Judge Robert Watson Winston between 1909 and 1913. Her relationship with Aycock influenced her belief in the need for education for all children and the benefits of progressive political policies. After her employment with Aycock and Winston she took a break from the outside working world in order to concentrate on her husband and raising her three children. By 1928 she was once again out in the growing work force in the field of communications. Doak worked for several years at Raleigh's radio station WPTF where she used her access to the public to educate North Carolinians about their state's history and about the importance of social reform. She recognized her responsibility as a good Christian, good citizen and good mother to try to make the world a better place. She viewed it as her duty to improve society for the less fortunate citizens and to ensure that the world would be

a better place in the future. She personally tried to make changes and to influence others to follow her lead. The topics of reform that most interested Doak were prison reform, prohibition, and improved race relations. Women, such as Doak, who had been working for social reforms in community groups, were given a much stronger political structure through which to work for reform with the creation of the New Deal. The New Deal also gave Doak an employment opportunity with the Farm Security Administration.³ Not only did this opportunity help her family financially, it also allowed her to obtain experience in the work force, and prove that women were a positive influence in government. Although her title was stenographer, she broadened the responsibilities to include administrative tasks.

As a woman rejecting the Victorian image of woman's primary place in the home, Doak became enchanted with the world of politics. She actively involved herself with both United States and North Carolina governmental concerns. On the national level she was in constant correspondence with Representative Harold Cooley. She conferred with him often during World War II concerning the United States' involvement in the war, the possibility of keeping her two sons in college and out of the Civilian Public Service, her support of the United Nations, and her opposition to universal military conscription during peace-time. As a Quaker she was strongly

opposed to violence of any kind and felt it was her duty to influence politicians who could keep the United States from endorsing violence. In addition to corresponding with such politicians, she also campaigned for candidates who endorsed the causes she felt were important. Doak was one of the women who made political activity respectable and admirable. She had endorsed the fight for suffrage and believed that once women got the vote they should exercise their new privilege to shape society for the better. A diligent campaigner for candidates such as Charles Brantley Aycock, Cameron Morrison, W. Kerr Scott and John F. Kennedy, Doak helped pave the way for women to emerge in the world of politics.

In addition to her political concerns, Doak was active in one of the most popular innovations of the 20th Century: women's clubs. She used the influence of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs and the Raleigh Woman's Club for social reform, progressive legislation and community awareness. Emerging during the years following the Civil War as an acceptable way for women to become involved in public life, women's clubs were important for women who wanted to have an active role in shaping society. As women began to realize they deserved equal opportunities in the world they began to use the women's clubs to focus attention on the need for more opportunities for other groups. Doak spent years working in women's clubs to promote her ideals.

With Doak one sees a woman progressing from the traditional Victorian image of women to the more progressive women active in public life and committed to equal rights. She was not radical in her actions, but she was seriously determined to make sure that women took advantage of their newly created opportunities to establish a new image of woman in the 20th Century. She helped make it respectable for women to become active in politics and to have a professional career. Doak had experience in several professional positions but always gave priority to the concerns of her family. She believed that careers were important for women, but family values were just as important, if not more so. What was important to Doak was that women have the opportunity to have both a family and a career and not be criticized for wanting both.

Pushed by a feeling of responsibility to improve the world around her, she tried to expand opportunities for everyone. She wanted a peaceful world where everyone had the ability to reach their goals. No matter who they were, where they were, or what they were, Doak hoped that her fellow human beings could have the best the world could offer. Doak symbolized the transition from the traditional Victorian woman to the modern woman. In the following chapters Doak's personal life, professional history, social reforms, political activity and community work will be analyzed to determine her

role as an advocate for a more active role for women in all aspects of society.

CHAPTER I

BIOGRAPHY

On February 28, 1869 Ellen Douglas Sorsby married Perry Van Buren Renfrow in the small town of Nashville, North Carolina.¹ Ms. Sorsby was the daughter of Benjamin Henry Sorsby, the county clerk of court, and Frances M.E. Blount, a former student at Salem College.² Mr. Renfrow's parents, Wilson Renfrow and Kally Katherine Pridgen, relocated their family to Nashville when Perry was an infant. Perry had fought for the Confederate cause as a sergeant in Co. I of the 30th North Carolina Regiment.³ The newlyweds settled down in Nashville and started a family that would consist of seven children by 1887. At that time Perry Renfrow worked for Benjamin H. Bunn, attorney for the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, to surveying and laying off the streets of what would be a new town at the railroad's latest terminus on a branch track slightly northwest of Rocky Mount.⁴ Believing that this new town had potential, Perry decided to build a home for his growing family in Spring Hope. Not only were the Renfrow's the town's first family, but the first child born in Spring Hope was their daughter Frances Blount Renfrow (Doak), born October 13, 1887.⁵

The educational process intrigued Doak at a very early age. The fact that the four year old had to stay home while her older brothers went to school frustrated and upset her.

One day after her brothers left for school, she asked her mother for permission to go see the other children at school. With her mother's approval and the family's old almanac in her hand, she walked to the school where she immediately became the center of attention.⁶ Doak later attended this school from first through sixth grades. She spent her seventh grade school term with her aunt and uncle in Wilmington where she attended Hemingway Graded School. At the end of that year the thirteen year old daughter was called home to Spring Hope to help care for her sick mother.⁷ She did not return to Wilmington due to her uncle's death, but spent the next five years at Spring Hope Academy, graduating in 1900.⁸ She studied with a private tutor for one year and then entered Littleton Female College.⁹

Organized in January 1882 as Central Institute in the small Warren County town of Littleton, the school's name changed to Littleton Female College in 1888 and in 1912 the word Female was dropped from the name; however, it was always a women's college.¹⁰ In 1889 a Methodist minister, Reverend James Manly Rhodes, purchased the property from the school's stock holders and began what would be a thirty year term as the school's president.¹¹ Destroyed by fire in 1919, the school was never rebuilt.¹² Rhodes brought a strong religious influence to the campus and a belief in higher education for all financial classes.¹³ He often took trips

to eastern North Carolina to encourage prospective students with the possibilities of numerous scholarships and self-help programs.¹⁴ Doak received such a scholarship which paid for all of her expenses during her second year at Littleton.¹⁵

Littleton had many of the characteristics associated with a finishing school but a serious approach to educating students for a career set it apart from the traditional finishing school. Another aspect which set Littleton apart from many of the women's colleges at the turn of the century was the progressive ideas about education. In contrast to many of the women's colleges of the era, Littleton offered an array of physical and natural sciences which included chemistry, physics, physiology, and psychology in addition to the usual biology and general science courses.¹⁶ Littleton also led the way in offering business courses such as typing, shorthand and stenography.¹⁷ In addition to the business school, Littleton offered a preparatory department for those who were not yet classified as freshmen, a training school for nurses, and a practice and observatory school for future teachers.¹⁸ Religion, music, deportment, recitation and the correct style of speaking and writing the English language were all stressed at Littleton Female College.¹⁹

Even though Doak was not able to return to Littleton Female College for a third year (her father suffered a crippling accident so she stayed home to help the family), the

education she received had a lasting effect on her life.²⁰ Not only did she gain knowledge from the courses she took, but the religious and moral influences fortified her desire to help others and improve society. Annie Laurie Crew Crews, who also attended Littleton during the first decade of 1900, commented on the education she received: "We were taught the truth about life - that as we sowed so would we reap."²¹ This comment could also describe Doak's philosophy towards life. Doak continued her education at Draughon's Business College in Raleigh and then at Meredith College where she was a night student from 1907 to 1911 majoring in drama and theatre arts.²² Her drama experience at Meredith included roles in five Shakespearian plays.²³

The courses at Draughon's prepared Doak for a number of stenographic positions, the first of which was in 1906 at Raleigh's Seaboard Air Line Railways office.²⁴ She also worked at Power Construction Company and then in 1908 moved to Greensboro where she was employed by the law firm of King and Kimball as a legal stenographer.²⁵ This valuable legal experience helped her secure a position as secretary in 1909 with the newly established Raleigh law firm of former North Carolina Governor Charles Brantley Aycock and Judge Robert Watson Winston. Doak worked with this firm for four years, and even took care of Aycock's personal secretarial work during his 1912 campaign for the United States Senate.²⁶ Her

association and friendship with Aycock exerted a profound effect on Doak's life both in her attitudes towards education for all North Carolina children and in her political orientation and activity.

Another man who had a profound effect on Doak's life was Charles Glenn Doak (Chick). The son of James Wilson Doak, Jr. and Emily Ann Watson, her husband-to-be was a native of Greensboro, North Carolina, born October 7, 1884.²⁷ His mother had organized a music class in the Quaker village of Guilford College which later became the college's School of Music.²⁸ It was here at Guilford College that Chick began his college education in 1907. While majoring in math he found time to letter in four sports: basketball, baseball, football, and track.²⁹ It was on the baseball diamond that he would spend most of his long career in sports. In 1911, a year before graduating from Guilford, Chick began his coaching career. He coached baseball, basketball, and track at Guilford College from 1911 through 1914 while also serving as the Director of Athletics.³⁰ By graduation Chick was planning to marry Frances Blount Renfrow. The two had met in 1908 when both boarded at his widowed sister-in-law's house. At the time Frances was working at King and Kimball in Greensboro and Chick was attending Guilford College and playing on Greensboro's professional baseball team.³¹ After a courtship of five years the two were married at 10:30

Saturday morning, December 27, 1913 in a Methodist ceremony at Gibson Memorial Church in Spring Hope.³²

The couple made their home at Guilford College and then later moved to Raleigh in 1914 when Chick was named head baseball and basketball coach at the University of North Carolina in nearby Chapel Hill.³³ In the fall of 1916 Chcik began coaching at Trinity College (soon to become Duke University) in Durham while Frances remained in Raleigh.³⁴ Over the next few years while Chick coached in Durham, Frances continued to live in Raleigh, except for a few months she spent with her in-laws in Guilford College after their daughter Eleanor Douglas (Doug) was born August 7, 1917.³⁵ In October of 1919 their first son, Charles Wilson, was born and then a second son, Robert Renfrow, was born on November 1, 1921.³⁶

During the early years of her marriage Frances concentrated on providing a happy life and a comfortable home for all the members of her family. Throughout her life she put these two goals before any other opportunities for personal success. Her husband's commuting to Durham ended in 1921 when he was employed as coach and physical education instructor by North Carolina State College in Raleigh, where he continued to work until 1951.³⁷ Frances began a lifetime involvement with Raleigh's local civic and political groups in her spare time. She joined women's clubs, campaigned for

political candidates and worked for social improvements. She also converted to her husband's Quaker faith and became a strong believer in the Quaker tenants. The Quaker belief system reinforced many of Frances's more liberal views such as equality of all people, education for women and opposition to violences, including war and capital punishment.

In 1928 she became the state's first woman radio announcer at Raleigh's WPTF radio station. Her work included writing and producing features for the station such as "Woman's Hour," "A Radio Talk for Parents," "Over The Teacups," and "Highlights in North Carolina History." She was able to help her listeners with daily problems such as gardening, entertaining, or family health care during the "Woman's Hour" and "A Radio Talk for Parents" shows. "Over The Teacups" gave her a vehicle by which she could entertain and showcase personal concerns such as the use of alcoholic beverages, and "Highlights in North Carolina History" gave her the opportunity to educate the people of the state on their state heritage.³⁸ This career was cut short, however, by the depression and WPTF's need to reduce expenses. The depression hit North Carolina hard, closing ninety-three banks in 1930, sixty-three in 1931 and thirty-one in 1932 for a total loss of \$103 million.³⁹ By the end of 1932 the state and local government bonded indebtedness had risen to \$532,747,000.00, the second highest in the nation.⁴⁰ Funds were cut from

state programs to try to balance the budget. In 1932 Governor O. Max Gardner, contrary to the North Carolina constitution, let the budget go unbalanced rather than cut state employee salaries.⁴¹ In 1933 the General Assembly was forced to cut state employed teachers' pay by about one third.⁴² The previous year a teacher with an A-3 Certificate earned \$1,000.00 but the pay fell to \$672.00 in 1933.⁴³ Similar cuts at the state's colleges and the University of North Carolina hurt the Doak family financially since at the time Chick was teaching and coaching at State College. In a letter to her daughter Frances described this as the darkest hour the state had faced since the Civil War.⁴⁴ However, Governor John Christopher Bulcher Ehringhaus did make sure state employee's salaries were paid on time and in cash: unlike many states, North Carolina was never forced to result to scrip.⁴⁵

These hard times made it necessary for the Doaks to rent out several rooms in their house in order to help pay their bills.⁴⁶ Many of their boarders were students at State College. The Doaks had an additional room for renting since their daughter Douglas was attending a Quaker boarding school in Westtown, Pennsylvania.⁴⁷ Frances was thankful that her daughter was able to go to a good school, especially since the Raleigh schools had been cut back to an eight month school term and the classes were larger, due to a teacher

shortage.⁴⁸ Even though it meant sending her only daughter to a school hundreds of miles away, she felt the reward of a good education was worth it. She missed out on many months of her daughter's life and endured a great financial burden to do what she felt was best for her daughter.

During the early thirties Frances kept busy in the civic arena by involving herself in such activities as planning a minstrel to raise funds for an adult night school, giving a group of readings for a newly formed Women's Club at Campbell College, and attending such speeches as the one given by Dr. Harry A. Garfield (the president's son) on "The Challenge to America."⁴⁹ She also was in a constant search for part-time jobs, such as typing, that she could do for friends and acquaintances to supplement the family's income. For example, she typed her friend Hope Sumerall Chamberlain's manuscript on the history of Rowan County, Done In A Corner.⁵⁰ When financial clouds were the darkest, a much needed financial opportunity came to the Doak household when Frances found work as a stenographer in the Senate Chamber of the North Carolina General Assembly in 1933.⁵¹ The next year finances improved even more when she found a secretarial position with the Farm Security Administration.⁵² This financial break enabled the Doaks to help their daughter graduate from the University of North Carolina with an A.B. degree in Journalism in 1938, and to also send both of their sons to school at Westtown, and

later to State College.⁵³

The United States' involvement in World War II made this last accomplishment somewhat difficult. Because of their Quaker heritage, both Charles Wilson and Robert Renfrow Doak were able to obtain conscientious objector status and, therefore, stay out of the actual fighting. However, they were sent to Civilian Public Service Camps to do their part in the war effort.⁵⁴ Douglas did her patriotic duty by qualifying as a volunteer for an ambulance service with the Raleigh Defense Center and by taking a nurses aid course.⁵⁵ Frances worked hard during the war years to educate citizens about the benefits of peace and the need for a world government. During World War I she had been a strong supporter of Woodrow Wilson and his plans for a League of Nations, so it was only natural that she become an ardent supporter of the United Nations. She was even able to attend a session of the United Nations Security Council where, as she wrote: "A new respect for [the] UN was born, a firmer belief that it will become an adequate instrument for making and keeping World Peace."⁵⁶

By the end of 1946 life in the Doak home was quite busy. Douglas married Luke Safran and moved back to the Doak home in Raleigh from Luke's home in Michigan.⁵⁷ Charles Wilson married Irene Herberg, graduated from State College, and the couples' first child, Frances Christine was born.⁵⁸ All

three were also living in the Doak home. Robert Renfrow married Betty Blair Stevick, graduated from State College, and moved to New Bern where he taught and coached football at New Bern High School.⁵⁹ Frances was busy serving as the executive secretary of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs and Chick was still teaching physical education at State College.⁶⁰ Five years later in 1951 he retired, one year after the mandatory retirement age of sixty-five.⁶¹

Unfortunately he was not able to enjoy his retirement for very long. He suffered two heart attacks in late 1955 and died April 21, 1956.⁶² His death brought hundreds of tributes from all over the state and a campaign for a memorial in honor of his work with students was immediately started. The alumni of State College were among the first to begin raising funds for his memorial.⁶³ Mrs. Donald Stone, executive director of the American Cancer Society of Raleigh, also made a large contribution to the memorial.⁶⁴ The presentation ceremony of the Chick Doak Memorial was held on the night of December 28, 1957 in William Neal Reynolds Coliseum on the campus of State College. The first of the three-fold memorial was the Chick Doak Loan Fund, which consisted of contributions made in his memory to the Student Loan Fund. The memorial also consisted of a trophy case and an oil portrait of Chick by Annie Hinsdale Joslin. The portrait, which was unveiled by Chick's sons Charles and

Renfrow, was to hang permanently over the trophy case in the coliseum.⁶⁵ Also, the State College administration honored the long-time baseball coach when it renamed the baseball diamond Doak Field.⁶⁶

By the end of 1959 Frances's daughter Douglas and her family moved to Fayetteville.⁶⁷ Frances's two sons and their families lived in Raleigh at Doak Lake where they operated a day camp for children each summer. Camp Doak was Raleigh's first day camp and offered such activities as archery, boating, fishing, swimming, fundamental instruction in baseball, basketball and horseback riding.⁶⁸ Work on the restoration of Governor Charles B. Aycock's birthplace and a continued search for world peace filled Frances's days.⁶⁹ She also continued to personally campaign for a number of political candidates, including John F. Kennedy for President in 1960. As she got older and her health began to fail, Frances moved to the Confederate Home for Women in Fayetteville where she passed away September 14, 1974.⁷⁰ Both Houses of the General Assembly of North Carolina passed a joint resolution on April 29, 1975 "...Honoring the Life and Memory of Frances Blount Renfrow Doak, Distinguished Citizen of North Carolina."⁷¹ The General Assembly passed this resolution in order to "...make record of its appreciation to her life and accomplishments and its sincere sorrow at her death."⁷² Her accomplishments described in the following

chapters help to explain the woman Frances Renfrow Doak was and why the North Carolina General Assembly would want to memorialize her life.

CHAPTER II

WORK FOR AYCOCK AND WINSTON

Frances Blount Renfrow left her home town of Spring Hope in 1905, at the age of eighteen, to move to Raleigh, a city buzzing with political activity and full of opportunities. She attended Draughon's Business College where she acquired the skills needed to obtain a secretarial position in a Raleigh business office.¹ Later, while working as a stenographer she found time at night to further her education at Meredith College.² The most valuable secretarial position she found in Raleigh, however, was at the law firm of former North Carolina Governor Charles Brantley Aycock (1901-1905) and Judge Robert Watson Winston in 1909. This association would prove to have a lasting effect on Doak's life.

After graduation from the University of North Carolina in 1880, Charles B. Aycock returned to his native Wayne County to serve an apprenticeship in the law office of A.K. Smedes. Aycock received his license to practice law in January 1881 and soon after opened the partnership of "Aycock & Daniels" with his former UNC roommate Frank Arthur Daniels.³ With thoughts of a political career in mind, Aycock made a name for himself as a crusader for public education. Aycock was so successful in gaining the loyalty of the Democratic party as a speaker for white supremacy during the late 1890's, that by the Democratic State Convention in April 1900, he was the

unopposed nominee to run on the Democratic ticket for governor.⁴ His campaign gained strength from that years' "grandfather clause" amendment to the state constitution. In 1899 an amendment to the state constitution required that voters must pay a poll tax and pass a literacy test, which was intended to disqualify many blacks in the process. Under the "grandfather clause" the literacy test was eliminated for men who had been qualified to vote on or before January 1, 1867 or who were lineal descendant of a qualified voter. The clause eliminated the test for many whites but not for blacks since they were not allowed to vote on January 1, 1867. During the campaign Aycock stressed this amendment as a means to eliminate race problems from politics and as a way to prepare blacks to participate in politics once they were literate.⁵ Aycock claimed he did want public education, fair treatment by the justice system, and freedom for the black race; however, he wanted them to stay in their own society, separated from whites.⁶ North Carolinians elected Aycock by a great majority and he took office in 1901. He spent his first year vigorously campaigning on behalf of public education. When he was elected governor in 1900, only thirty districts in the state levied a local tax to support schools; 950 school districts were without school houses; schools were open only 73 days a year; and less than one third of school age children attended school.⁷ Many North Carolinian's were opposed to

levying taxes for schools because they did not want to pay to educate other people's children, especially black children. Aycock's success came in the fact that he was able to give the prestige of the governor's office to the idea of universal education.⁸ With his support the idea began to grow and spread across North Carolina. During his term as governor he succeeded in raising appropriations for public schools and state colleges; raising teaching standards; promoting the establishment of 877 libraries in rural areas; and seeing that hundreds of new school houses were built. As governor he also supported the study and protection of land and wildlife; he had one of the most generous clemency plans in the state's history; and he took a strong stance against lynchings in the state, calling out the state militia on several occasions.⁹

By 1908 Aycock was eager to return to the legal profession, which he found interesting and challenging. He discussed the issue with his friend Judge Robert Watson Winston and the two decided to form a legal partnership. By the end of January 1909 the partners had set up a law office in downtown Raleigh.¹⁰ In their search for a good stenographer, they interviewed Doak and in February she began what would be a four year association with the law firm.¹¹ This was not, however, the first encounter between Doak and Aycock. She had first seen him in 1900 when he was campaigning as the Democratic candidate for governor. He had

given a speech at the courthouse in Nashville and Doak had been in the audience. She later said that the only thing she remembered of the number of speakers that day was Aycock saying, "We must educate all the children of our State."¹² This statement made quite an impact on her that day and reflected her attitude towards education throughout her life.

A second meeting between Aycock and his future secretary occurred during the third year of his term as governor when he gave the commencement address at Littleton College where Doak was a student. She was impressed by the fact that upon introduction to Aycock after the commencement ceremony he remembered having met her in Nashville in 1900.¹³ She felt this was typical of the man who was so genuinely interested in the people of North Carolina.

While working at the law firm of Aycock and Winston Doak's admiration and respect for the former governor grew even more. She also considered him a dear friend and made many of his political views her own. In 1911, at the height of the Progressive Era, Aycock decided to run for the United States Senate seat that was held by Furnifold M. Simmons.¹⁴ Governor William Walton Kitchin and Walter Clark, chief justice of the Supreme Court of North Carolina, were also running for the Democratic nomination. Aycock's campaign was poorly organized in comparison to his opponents'. He refused to criticize Clark, Kitchin or Simmons; instead he relied on

arousing the people by appealing to their higher ideals.¹⁵ Aycock's brother-in-law, Dr. Albert Anderson, took care of the duties of a campaign manager by handling the correspondence and by mailing literature.¹⁶ Doak also assisted in the campaign by handling Aycock's personal mail.¹⁷ Aycock suffered a heart attack in January of 1912 that, along with recurring health problems, sent him to University Hospital in Philadelphia in March for an extended stay.¹⁸ It was from his hospital bed that Aycock wrote his last letter to Doak. In the letter he thanked her and Judge Winston for taking over the burden of his work and giving him a chance to rest. He promised to get well in order to show his appreciation.¹⁹ Aycock did improve and was released from the hospital to continue his senatorial campaign. During this campaign Doak worked closely with former Democratic Governor Robert Brodnax Glenn (1905-1909), of Winston Salem, in an effort to get Aycock nominated.²⁰ Glenn wanted to make sure that neither Simmons nor Kitchen were nominated and felt sure that if Aycock could put together one of his old-fashioned campaigns he would be elected.²¹ A Charlotte Observer article editorialized that Aycock was worthy of being senator and that the majority of people wanted him as their senator; however, the article predicted that because Aycock was poor he could never be elected.²²

The article was correct in that Aycock would never be

elected but not because of his financial status. He died on April 4, 1912 while addressing the Alabama Educational Association in Birmingham, Alabama.²³ The news of Aycock's death shocked many throughout the nation. North Carolina went into mourning as thousands flocked to Raleigh to pay tribute to the late governor. For weeks newspapers across the state carried tributes to the "education governor."²⁴ Doak continued to work for the firm, later known as Winston and Biggs, for a year and a half after the death of her close friend and mentor.²⁵

After Aycock's death, Doak tried to perpetuate his image as one of the state's greatest governors. She contributed letters and information from her scrapbooks to Clarence Poe and R.D.W. Connor for their book The Life And Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock. She even typed most of the manuscript.²⁶ Oliver H. Orr, Jr. also interviewed her for his biography Charles Brantley Aycock.²⁷ Her work to honor Aycock was on-going. In 1941 when she tried to help initiate a movement to restore Aycock's birthplace. The Wayne County Society for the Preservation of Antiquities had first shown interest in preserving Aycock's birthplace in the late 1930's and had even gotten as far as a commitment from Mrs. Wiley Aycock (the wife of the Governor's nephew) to deed the main house, dining room, kitchen and two acres of land for the project. Obtaining adequate funding proved to be a constant

problem though. By 1941 the State Society for the Preservation of Antiquities adopted the project and it appeared that it would finally become a reality.²⁸ At this time Doak lent her support to the movement. Because Aycock was a native of Wayne County, Doak decided to write the county's state representatives J. Leslie Crawford and W. Frank Taylor.²⁹ In her letters she suggested that they introduce legislation to provide "...sufficient funds for the restoration and preservation of the house in which Charles Brantley Aycock was born."³⁰ She felt the timing for such a project was excellent since, as she explained, "In this day when democracy is assailed the world around, it seems to me that our state should gratefully and pridefully preserve the birthplace of a great public servant who was both a product and exponent of democracy in its truest sense."³¹ She felt the project would emphasize democracy and show that North Carolinians wanted to honor their educational leaders. Since the cost of the memorial would be very great, she suggested that the school children of the state could contribute funds to buy the furnishings. Doak closed the letters by stating that nothing was dearer to her heart than seeing Aycock's ideals and traditions preserved.³² Unfortunately 1941 saw the United States enter World War II, which meant the project had to be put on hold. Eight years later the restoration of Aycock's birthplace became a strong movement in North

Carolina.³³

By 1949 the revived movement to restore Governor Aycock's birthplace was underway. North Carolina had already provided Aycock with two memorials, one of which was a monument on Capitol Square in Raleigh.³⁴ The second was at Statuary Hall in Washington, D.C..³⁵ Doak had attended the unveiling of this Aycock statue in the nation's capital and was now working for his birthplace restoration.³⁶ A concerted effort to see the project to fruition came with Senate resolution 67 which authorized Governor Kerr Scott to appoint a joint legislative committee to consider the feasibility of the Aycock project.³⁷ The committee consisted of W. Frank Taylor, Wayne County; Hardy Talton, Wayne County; Marion Parrott, Lenoir County; Lewis Outlaw, Duplin County; and Joe Eagles, Jr., Wilson County.³⁸ The Aycock restoration was one of the state's first historic sites. The idea to restore historical landmarks began with the restoration of Mt. Vernon in 1856.³⁹ In North Carolina, Fort Raleigh was the first site to be considered for restoration in 1934.⁴⁰ Other sites to be considered by state commissions set up under the General Assembly were Bennet Place (1923), Vance Birthplace (1943), and Tryon Palace (1945).⁴¹

An enthusiastic crowd of Wayne County Society for the Preservation of Antiquities members and their friends attended the first legislative committee meeting held at the Goldsboro

community building on February 14, 1951. After the meeting the group decided to hold a meeting of their own to enable the citizens of Wayne County to become more involved in the project. On February 16 such a meeting was held and two project committees were established. One committee reported to the legislative committee with recommendations on how to complete the project and suggested that an Aycock memorial commission be established to supervise the project.⁴² Henry Belk, editor of the Goldsboro News-Argus, chaired the committee which also included Mrs. Martha Borden, a leader in state women's patriotic organizations; Mr. J.A. Batson, superintendent of Fremont schools; Mrs. Emma R. Edwards, an active member of the State Federation of Women's Clubs; and Mr. James W. Butler, general manager of the Goldsboro Chamber of Commerce.⁴³ Members of the second committee, which was responsible for tracking cost and securing financial support, included Hugh Dortch, chairman, a prominent Goldsboro attorney; Miss Gertrude Weil, local civic leader; and J.A. Best, county welfare superintendent.⁴⁴

In a News and Observer article on April 3, 1949 entitled "Time Lends Added Import to Aycock's Creed", Doak tried to arouse public sentiment and support for the restoration. The State Legislature had appropriated \$5,000 for the restoration and the citizens of Wayne County were expected to raise the remaining \$25,000 it was estimated the project would need.

The plans included relocating the house across the street to its original position and restoring it. Governor Aycock's sister-in-law, Mrs. Benjamin Aycock, was able to remember how the house had looked during Aycock's childhood and helped the architect in the restoration process.⁴⁵

The drive to restore Aycock's birthplace took ten long years of hard work. Doak contributed to the restoration process as a member of the Charles B. Aycock Memorial Commission, which was set up under Chapter 1021 of the North Carolina Session Laws and Resolutions of 1949, and consisted of twenty-one members. Three ex-officio members were Dr. C.C. Crittenden, director of the Department of Archives and History, Dr. Clyde A. Erwin, superintendent of public instruction, and George Ross, director of the Department of Conservation and Development.⁴⁶ The remaining eighteen members of the commission were appointed by the governor, six for two year terms, six for four year terms, and six for six year terms. The Aycock Commission held its first meeting at Griffin's Barbecue in Goldsboro on August 22, 1949 and elected the following officials: Dr. James Yadkin Joyner, honorary chairman; Dr. D.J. Rose, chairman; Mrs. Martha Gold Borden, vice-chairman; Miss Gertrude Weil, secretary; and Mrs. Estelle T. Smith, treasurer.⁴⁷ FRD was appointed by Governor William Kerr Scott on August 16, 1951. A large majority (14) of the appointed members lived in Wayne County, the site of Aycock's

birthplace. Other members hailed from towns such as Raleigh, Wilson, New Bern, Charlotte, Smithfield and Greensboro.⁴⁸

Doak conferred often with Dr. D.J. Rose, Dr. J.Y. Joyner, and Clarence Poe.⁴⁹ In April of 1952 she sent both Rose and Joyner copies of her proposed letter that was to be sent to North Carolinians interested in supporting the restoration. The letter began: "Dear Friend: In appreciation of Governor Aycock's service to all the people of our State, the General Assembly set up the Aycock Memorial Commission and appropriated \$5,000 as the beginning of a fund to restore his birthplace; in certainty that the people would provide any further necessary funds."⁵⁰ The letter explained that the commission needed to raise an additional \$35,000. Moreover, the commission requested that contributors enclose the names of people they thought would also be interested in supporting the project. The names of contributors would be preserved in permanent form at the Aycock house.⁵¹ The letter also gave reasons for the importance of the restoration: "Aycock dreamed, worked and inspired the State to provide schools and roads for all its children. The restoration of his birthplace affords opportunity to all who have profited by his efforts to show their appreciation, and to all who knew and loved the man to honor him."⁵² Joyner and Rose both approved and signed the letter.⁵³ A leaflet was also prepared and sent out with the letter, the cost to be covered by Dr. Poe.⁵⁴

Students and employees of state schools were also instrumental in raising funds. One such example was the Goldsboro school's gift on April 4, 1952 of \$196.75 made by students, teachers, janitors, maintenance workers and maids.⁵⁵ Aycock had first established contact with the education system in Goldsboro in 1881 when he campaigned for a special tax to support a graded school in the city. The tax was approved and provided that revenue collected from whites be applied to a white school, and revenue collected from blacks be applied to a black school.⁵⁶ Wayne County officials approved of his ideas on education and chose him to serve as county superintendent of public instruction on a part-time basis from 1881 until the summer of 1882.⁵⁷ It was hoped that North Carolinians of all ages would want to pay tribute to the man who had worked for many years to provide public education for all the state's children.

The Aycock Memorial Commission continued to explore all funding possibilities. One opportunity for further funding was a bill Dr. Christopher Crittenden planned to have introduced in the state legislature asking for state funds from which restoration projects already under way could get financial assistance.⁵⁸ A problem the Crittenden proposal did not address was the fact that the actual restoration process had not begun. When the Wiley Aycock family turned the deed to the land over to the commission, one of the

stipulations was that the land would revert to them on January 1, 1954 unless the restoration was complete or was in progress.⁵⁹ Fortunately the deed was later renewed by the Wiley Aycock family.

By the middle of 1957 funds were low once again and the restoration was far from being complete. Doak had been re-appointed to the Aycock Commission in 1955 by Governor Luther Hodges for a term expiring May 24, 1961.⁶⁰ It was as a member of the Commission that she was called on once again to raise more funds for the restoration. In May 1957 there was a bill in the North Carolina General Assembly which proposed additional funding be appropriated for the restoration of Aycock's birthplace. Hardy Talton, a member of the House of Representatives, sent Doak the list of members of the Appropriations Committee who would be reviewing the proposed bill. He suggested she write each member a short letter requesting a favorable report, which she did.⁶¹ In the letter she explained why the additional money was so important to an early completion. The first reason was that Mrs. Clarence Poe, Governor Aycock's oldest child, desperately wanted to see the house restored and was at the time suffering ill health.⁶² The second reason was that 1959 was the 100th anniversary of Aycock's birth. Additional funding would help ensure a 1959 completion date.⁶³

Doak also gave a presentation along with Dr. Rose and

Hardy Talton before the Appropriations Subcommittee that helped convince the members to vote favorably for the funding.⁶⁴ A year later the historic site had been cleared and graded and the buildings had been moved on to the site. Blueprints were being made and the actual restoration scheduled to begin that summer.⁶⁵ The restoration was successfully completed the next year. The town of Fremont sponsored a barbecue lunch for special guests of the Aycock Birthplace dedication to which Doak was invited. Approximately 1,500 people attended the dedication of the Charles B. Aycock Birthplace on November 1, 1959. Dr. Rose began the ceremony, the Goldsboro High School band played 'The Old North State'; Arthur D. Wenger, president of Atlantic Christian College, delivered the invocation; and Edwin Gill, state treasurer, closed the ceremony with the acceptance of the Aycock birthplace as a state shrine.⁶⁶ Doak had invested ten years of time and energy into seeing that Governor Aycock was remembered by the citizens of North Carolina. She viewed the part she played in the restoration of Aycock's birthplace one of her greatest and most satisfying accomplishments.

CHAPTER III

WORK FOR RADIO STATION WPTF

Frances Renfrow Doak's years of working for the law firm of Aycock and Winston had given her valuable experience and understanding she would rely on for years to come. During her four year stint with the firm, she had learned a great deal about law, politics, and human relations. She used these insights to her advantage at her next job as radio announcer and Director of the "Woman's Hour" at Raleigh's WPTF radio station.

Major changes had taken place in the world between the time Doak left Aycock and Winston in 1913 and the time she was hired at WPTF in 1928. While she devoted herself to family matters, the United States fought in World War I and Americans battled among themselves over the League of Nations as a safeguard against future wars. Americans approved national prohibition under the 18th Amendment and woman's suffrage under the 19th. The American people amended the Constitution so that the 1920's would see a sober nation and one in which women finally became equal citizens, but this was not to be.

During this era of drastic change Doak led the life of mother and homemaker while staying in tune with the social concerns of the day. She considered her family her top priority during this time; but she did find time for causes such as the League of Nations, prohibition, and woman's

suffrage. She felt strongly about these causes but always put her family first. By 1928 the youngest of her children, Robert Renfrow, was seven years old so she felt comfortable taking a job that would both help her family financially and give her the opportunity to express her hopes and concerns for society.

Doak began her two and a half year employment with WPTF in September, 1928, as North Carolina's first woman radio announcer and the nation's second.¹ Her initial assignment at the station was as director of one of WPTF's most popular features, the "Woman's Hour." In the program Doak addressed a multitude of concerns such as entertaining, cooking, sewing, gardening, menu planning, interior decorating and child rearing.² Very enthusiastic over the educational value of radio, Doak believed she was doing a great service by helping women in some of the most vital areas of their lives. She realized that the questions and problems contained in the hundreds of letters she received from women throughout the state were important issues to them. Even if the question was merely about table place settings, Doak was grateful to have the opportunity to help these women.³

Doak was not limited to directing the "Woman's Hour" at WPTF, however. She was responsible for other programs, such as the ten minute segment "A Radio Talk For Parents." This program covered subjects of concern to parents such as "No One

Need Have Scarlet Fever!," " When Children Quarrel," and "Gardening Together."⁴ On several occasions she also personally presented a characterization of an old black mammy "Aunt Chloe." Doak's authentic "Southern mammy" dialect ensured the program's popularity.⁵ The segments were similar to the Amos and Andy programs that were popular all over the country during this time.

Although working for better opportunities and more recognition for blacks through such programs as the Raleigh Community Chest, Doak saw nothing wrong in mimicking a black mammy on a public radio station. Like most white liberals of her day, she believed blacks should have more freedom, more opportunities and more recognition; but she did not see them as equals. In one episode entitled "Aunt Chloe Comes A-Visitin'," the mammy came to the radio station to visit one of her "chillun" who had a job there playing the piano. The following is an excerpt from the script of Chloe's dialogue: "I heard tell dat dis radius station was er habin' er birthday dis week, and I thought I'd drap in an 'gratulate de station and bring er long some ob my flowers fer yer to dec'rate wid..."⁶

Another popular program written by Doak was the "Radio Historical Panorama of Raleigh" which broadcast nationally from New York City in 1930.⁷ Doak also worked on a political satire for WPTF entitled "A Play on the Names of the Members

of the 1933 (NC) Senate." The satire worked all of the Senate members names into a story of a battle against the balanced budget.⁸ The satire opened with 'Alexander the Graham' questioning whether he should take Fort Balanced Budget with the aid of 'General Salestax' or by starving out the forces. The 'war campaign' went on to relate how the budget was balanced early in May; but if the tottering Salestax failed, the troops would have to meet again in the fall.⁹

Doak also wrote a fifteen minute program that ran weekly between 1930 and 1931 entitled "Over the Teacups." A spoof on modern living, the program allowed the audience to listen in on the conversations of a group of "ultra modern sophisticates".¹⁰ One program which aired Christmas Eve 1930 found the group of friends discussing possible gift ideas for the radio station manager, H.K. Carpenter, and for other station employees. At one point they called Doak for her opinion on possible gifts. After talking to her they discussed what kind of present to give her. Someone jokingly suggested a cocktail shaker since "...she's a fanatic against drinking."¹¹ They agreed she would just shake it off though since she had such a great sense of humor.¹² In the program the following week someone mentioned that Doak had called to thank the group for her Christmas gift of phonograph records.¹³ The friends discussed what they thought Doak did with the record "O Sole Mio" they gave her and predicted that

she probably sent it to the women at State Prison since she was always collecting records for them.¹⁴ Although the main purpose of the program "Over the Teacups" was entertainment, Doak was able to include and thereby popularize some of her beliefs and causes, such as prohibition and better prison conditions.

Doak's responsibilities included writing scripts for yet another program, "Highlights in North Carolina History." The program aired weekly during late 1930 from 6:15 to 6:45pm and took a number of approaches towards depicting major events in North Carolina history.¹⁵ Program formats included a grandfather telling his grandson stories about North Carolina history, conversations between Sir Walter Raleigh and Queen Elizabeth, and scenes from the colonization of North Carolina by John White and Ralph Lane.¹⁶ Topics covered included the settlement of North Carolina, Culpeper's Rebellion and the tale of Blackbeard.¹⁷ One particular program presented a biography of William Gaston, the author of the words to the state song, "The Old North State."¹⁸ This program also contained a conversation between Gaston and Louisa, the daughter of Mrs. Eliza Taylor with whom he was staying while in Raleigh. The conversation, which took place while Louisa played the piano, resulted in Gaston's penning the words to the state song.¹⁹ Doak used this opportunity to write programs that both educated and entertained her listeners.

She realized that for an educational program to attract a large audience it must also be entertaining. She succeeded in doing that and thereby gave many North Carolinians a chance that they otherwise may not have had to learn something about their heritage.

Unfortunately Doak's association with WPTF was cut short in March 1931 due, in part, to the economic hardships of the time. The depression made it necessary for the radio station to cut back on personnel. The station re-organized the production department and according to station manager H.K. Carpenter, "...eliminated the type of work she [Doak] has been handling."²⁰ After she left the station, Doak received fan mail from listeners who missed her work, particularly her woman's program. One follower wrote that she used to look forward to Doak's program but now turned off the radio during Doak's former time slot because it was no longer interesting to her.²¹ One can only speculate as to what kind of career Doak would have had in the radio field had the depression not forced WPTF to cut its production staff. She was a success both in writing and directing educational features such as the "Woman's Hour" and "A Radio Talk For Parents" and in writing entertainment programs such as "Over the Teacups." During her employment with WPTF she had been able to display her writing talents and theatrical abilities while also working to educate the people of North Carolina about their heritage. She also

managed to focus upon some of her own progressive beliefs about social reform.

CHAPTER IV

WORK FOR THE FSA

After her job with radio station WPTF ended in 1931, Frances Doak helped support her family through temporary ventures such as typing the manuscript for her friend Hope Sumerall Chamberlain's history of Rowan County, Done In A Corner.¹ More permanent financial security finally came in 1934 when Doak secured a position with the Farm Security Administration (FSA), as a junior clerk stenographer with an annual salary of \$1,440 in the Rural Rehabilitation Division of the Land Policy Section.² Set up under the New Deal, the FSA helped tenants become landowners, provided for homestead communities, and furnished short-term rehabilitation loans and long-term farm purchase loans.³ The factors that led to the necessity of such federal intervention in North Carolina agriculture began in the 1920's.

During that time agriculture supported North Carolina's economy; the state boasted the second largest farm population in the nation.⁴ The prosperity of the state depended largely on the success or failure of farmers. North Carolinians had always looked to the land for their needs and the years before the depression were no different from past ones in that aspect. The depression came though and brought with it severe economic conditions to North Carolina farmers. Between 1928 and 1932 the cash income of North Carolina's farmers fell

65.7%, by far the hardest hit segment of the Tarheel population.⁵ The tobacco growers constituted a large percentage of the farming population in North Carolina. By the late 1920's North Carolina growers were producing 70% of the nation's cigarette tobacco. This lucrative market led to overproduction, however; and when combined with a 40% drop in exports between 1930 and 1932, the result was disastrous for the farmers.⁶ The drop in exports, prices, and income hit both the tenants and landowners. The tenants' hopes to buy their own farms were crushed and there were often problems in getting the pay they deserved from the landowners. Not only did the landowners have to worry about paying their workers, but the high rate of property taxes and mortgages constantly hung over their heads.⁷ Something had to be done.

In 1929 Governor O. Max Gardner devised plans to help the farmers in this difficult situation. One program, the "Live at Home" campaign, urged farmers to produce on their own land what they would need to survive. Rather than produce a purely cash crop such as tobacco or cotton, they were encouraged to produce crops they could consume themselves or sell at local markets.⁸ This campaign helped farmers survive but did not reduce production enough to affect prices.⁹ Also, large farmers did not find the program appealing. They had thousands of acres which they harvested for high returns, not survival. Without cooperation from these farmers,

overproduction would continue.¹⁰ In order to make voluntary reduction more appealing to all farmers, Gardner worked for cooperation from Virginia and South Carolina. A cut in production would only help North Carolina farmers if Virginia and South Carolina did not flood the market. The three states cooperated for a time, but it was soon evident that a federal approach was needed.¹¹ That approach came in 1933 with the New Deal's Agricultural Adjustment Administration (AAA).

With his election in 1932, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt set about to improve the lives of millions of Americans. He started with the farmers. On May 12, 1933 he signed the act that was to be the beginning of the New Deal: the Agricultural Adjustment Act. The goal of the AAA was to assist farmers in making a living by controlling prices through quotas and allotments.¹² Set up under federal guidelines, the AAA left management and implementation largely up to the individual states. North Carolinians on a large part resisted these federal New Deal programs because they felt the New Deal was a very strong organization, which scared conservative North Carolinians. Also, the New Deal favored business, which upset a state based in agriculture, and it seemed foreign to North Carolina's "state rights" tradition.¹³ However, the AAA made it easier for North Carolina farmers to trust and accept its programs by using committees of local farmers to administer the programs and by

employing local Agricultural Extension Service workers.¹⁴

North Carolina Extension Service director Ira O. Schaub cooperated with the program since association with cotton and tobacco programs only further strengthened his organization.¹⁵ Many of the farmers liked this program because they could trust the AAA employees, they were not required to participate in the allotment plans, the allotments were based on the land not the farmer, and the quota arrangements were agreed upon by both the farmers and the federal government.¹⁶

Farmers were dealt a hard blow, however, on January 6, 1936 when the AAA was declared un-constitutional by the United States Supreme Court Hoosac Mills Decision.¹⁷ In October of 1933 the Hoosac Mills Corporation, a Massachusetts cotton manufacturing company, had gone into receivership. One of the receivers, William M. Butler, brought suit against the government in Federal District Court arguing that the 4.2 cents per pound processing tax levied by the Agricultural Adjustment Act was unconstitutional. The district court held that the Act was unconstitutional, and upon appeal, the Federal Circuit Court in Boston upheld the decision. The government appealed to the Supreme Court and the case was argued on December 9, 1935. The decision was upheld by a vote of six to three based on the tenth amendment and the fact that the processing tax was not being levied for general revenue

but in order to regulate farm production, an act that was beyond the federal government's powers.¹⁸ They cited the tenth amendment of the United States Constitution for their decision: "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people." Meanwhile, another New Deal program, the Farm Security Administration, enacted September 1, 1937, tried to keep farmers on their land and assist tenant farmers in buying their own land; it went beyond crop control and confronted the problems of tenancy and attempted to implement agricultural reform.¹⁹

It was with these New Deal programs that Doak found employment. At the request of Dr. Carl C. Taylor, director of the AAA's Land Policy Section, United States Representative Harold Cooley endorsed Doak to set up a regional office in Raleigh. The position, which was supposed to last only three months until the office was in order, became a permanent one with the FSA.²⁰ As an FSA employee, Doak held positions with several sections of the administration. Shortages in funds and questions over the necessity of such programs meant constant re-appointments, shuffling through the divisions, and changes in salary. In May of 1935 she moved from the Rural Rehabilitation Division of the Land Policy Section to the Resettlement Administration, and then in September of that

year to the Farm Debt Adjustment Section.²¹ During her association with the Farm Debt Adjustment Section Doak met future governor William Kerr Scott, who had been appointed the section's chief in 1933 by Franklin D. Roosevelt.²² The two established a lasting friendship that would prove to be beneficial to both. Although a job with the FSA did not offer a great deal of security, Doak was pleased to be working and believed in the work the program was designed to accomplish. Having been raised in eastern North Carolina she knew the life of insecurity farmers faced.²³ She understood the fears of drought, frost, pests, bad crops & low prices. Personally suffering along with the farmers under the economic depression of the 1930's, she could sympathize with them and their plight, thus making her an effective employee for the FSA.

A description of her job as stenographer-clerk at the Farm Debt Adjustment Section details her duties at the FSA. These duties included managing the office work during absence of the chief (usually one to three weeks a month); compiling statistical reports for each of the fifteen districts in her region to show results of farm adjustment work; compiling statistical reports on mileage and accomplishments for all Farm Debt Adjustment supervisors in the region; and helping prepare publicity material.²⁴ During this time period many Americans wrote letters of hardship to Eleanor Roosevelt and various relief agencies in Washington, D.C. Once the letters

from Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and North Carolina were re-routed to the proper supervisors, Doak was responsible for reporting on the results of these letters for the final files in Washington, D.C.²⁵

After seven years with the FSA, Doak resigned from her position with the Farm Debt Adjustment Section in July 1941.²⁶ In her letter of resignation she stated that she wished to leave in order for her daughter Douglas Doak to be employed by the FSA (the FSA would not employ more than one member of a family at a time). She did request, however, that if her daughter's "...services should be terminated, and the organization should have a place for me, I should be glad to be called back to it."²⁷ Her daughter worked for a time at the FSA, but Doak's days with the program were over. As an FSA employee she had contributed to the relief efforts that helped farmers across the South. Between 1938 and 1940 the FSA approved \$3.3 million in loans for 691 North Carolina farmers and \$69 million for 12,053 across the nation.²⁸ Even though this New Deal program did help many farmers keep their farms and gave all farmers the feeling that there was someone they could turn to in this time of crisis, there were many who had their reservations about the program.

The AAA and FSA had numerous opponents throughout the state and the nation. Reasons for opposition to the FSA varied depending on the person. On the political level, many

feared the growing power of the FSA and the emergence of a new politically powerful group. On the other hand, many Americans disliked what the FSA was doing because they felt their own social status, prestige, and profits were threatened by helping those whom they considered to be below them.²⁹ Commercial farmers and landlords opposed the FSA because helping the poorer farmers threatened their cheap labor supply and increased competition.³⁰

North Carolina used the program to survive an economic disaster rather than reforming the state's agricultural system. In April 1936, after the Supreme Court had declared the AAA un-constitutional, 6,000 angry farmers met with Governor Ehringhaus at State College Stadium. They wanted him to create a compact with the other states to control the tobacco market. Ehringhaus was able to calm them and explain the need for a federal crop control program.³¹ A federal program was obviously soothing to the state's distraught farmers; but did it always work for the best interest of both the farmers and the state? For example, by 1943 only 2,327 loans had been granted by the FSA to farmers in order for them to buy their own land. This was distressing when almost one-third of the state's 120,000 tenants had applied for loans.³² Such statistics as this influenced many North Carolinians against the federal program. However, many North Carolinians did not realize that the FSA was a new program that was

attempting something that had never been tried before. They also may have failed to realize that the funds just were not available to help everyone who applied for assistance. For example, in 1939 147,972 farmers applied for assistance yet only 7,000 loans were actually available.³³

One of the FSA's leading critics, United States Representative Harold Cooley (a personal friend of Doak since childhood), opposed the program for other reasons. He attacked the program, and especially its resettlement projects, for "...reversing traditional land policy and for their alleged collectivism and excessive supervision of clients."³⁴ Cooley even went so far as to call the FSA a "rural slum clearance."³⁵ He also resented the "bureaucracy and the FSA's collectivist emphasis that he believed violated individualism, free enterprise and traditional American land policy."³⁶ In 1942 congressional concern about the controversy surrounding the FSA mounted and calls for an investigation increased. Cooley himself was named chairman of the House Select Committee to Investigate the Activities of the Farm Security Administration. Other members of the committee were: Democrats John W. Flannagan of Virginia, Orville Zimmerman of Missouri, and Stephen Pace of Georgia; and Republicans Clifford R. Hope of Kansas, Anton J. Johnson of Illinois, and Ross Rizley of Oklahoma.³⁷ Doak wrote to Cooley that while many people were upset over his stance on

the issue, she understood that he wanted to find out if the rumors of illegal procedures in the FSA were actually true.³⁸ In reply, Cooley admitted that while there were a number of people in the nation's capital who would like to see the FSA dismantled, he wanted to save it and put it in proper order. He went on to assure her that it would not be a witch hunt.³⁹ By the next year the investigation was still in the planning stages.

A group in Washington, D.C. which wanted to see the FSA preserved persuaded Doak to use her friendship with Cooley to find out when the investigation was to begin and any other pertinent information that could be beneficial to their cause.⁴⁰ She obliged them by learning from Cooley that most of the investigation would take place in Washington but some visits to Regional Offices could be made. Cooley knew the seven men who had been selected for the investigating committee and assured Doak that they were friends of the farm tenants and that the investigation would be "...fair, friendly and constructive."⁴¹ Doak even used her membership in the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs to support the FSA by preparing a resolution to be presented at their April 27-29 convention. The resolution endorsed the FSA and called for its continuance and for appropriations to ensure such.⁴²

The investigation resulted in the House Appropriations Committee abolishing the Farm Security Administration on April

13, 1943.⁴³ The committee justified ending the FSA by stating that the "...agency had lent excessive amounts to individual borrowers, retained careless and inefficient employees and experimented in 'collective farming, which seemed to resemble the collectivist practices followed in Russia'."⁴⁴ The committee also accused the FSA of failing to carry out Congress' intent to liquidate the resettlement projects.⁴⁵ They proposed that the FSA's remaining functions be transferred to the Farm Credit Administration.⁴⁶ The FSA thus came to an end in 1943, but the effects the agency had on North Carolina's agriculture and people were long lasting.

Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal programs had several beneficial effects on the people of North Carolina. Not only did the programs provide relief for those who so desperately needed it; but because people were needed to run these programs, this created employment opportunities. Women were offered a chance to prove their abilities in government offices. There were secretarial positions such as the one Doak found with the Farm Security Administration that could be secured by women who wanted to help support their families or start their own professional career. Many women, Doak included, expanded their job responsibilities to include more administrative tasks and more power. Opportunities for women in head administrative positions also developed.

Annie O'Berry found such an administrative position when

she was appointed by Governor J.C.B. Ehringhaus to head the North Carolina Emergency Relief Administration (NCERA).⁴⁷ The NCERA was set up under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to grant federal funds for relief rather than loaning the money to the states.⁴⁸ For a time the NCERA selected participants for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), which provided emergency jobs such as building roads and repairing schools. In 1935, at the height of its popularity, the CCC enrolled 16,200 young people in 81 camps. On the national level, 500,000 were enrolled in 2,500 camps.⁴⁹ The wife of one of Governor Ehringhaus's political friends and the sister of a prominent Statesville politician, O'Berry filled her administration with professional welfare personnel rather than political friends, which brought support from other relief workers but complaints from North Carolina politicians. State politicians disliked the fact that deserving political supporters were not being favored and even worse, that Republicans were being appointed.⁵⁰ O'Berry stood her ground though and gained support from officials in Washington, D.C. and from the governor for doing so.⁵¹ While head of the NCERA, O'Berry received praise for the competence of her administration. She proved that a woman could effectively run a government program without bowing to the pressures of state politicians. Although O'Berry had opponents, they attacked her for not using the NCERA as a

political reward for supporters, not for her competence as an administrator.

The New Deal was an important factor in North Carolina for all citizens. Programs were set up to help all suffering segments of the population. New Deal programs also provided women with the opportunity to prove their abilities and learn about state and federal government. Women like Doak and Annie O'Berry used their positions with New Deal agencies to learn, prove themselves, make political contacts, and earn the respect of many powerful leaders. Women realized they could be effective in the political arena and decided to strengthen their power in this newly opened opportunity. They gained confidence in themselves and a desire to work in a section of society that had real power and impact.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL REFORM

Along with the work Frances Doak performed for the law firm of Aycock and Winston, radio station WPTF, and the Farm Security Administration, she also found time to work in the community for social reforms she felt important to the building of a better world. Ever since the Civil War forced women to take on new roles in society, many women realized they enjoyed this new responsibility and continued their work in the community after their husbands, fathers, brothers and sons came marching home from the war. Many southern women even used the controversial interracial movement to test their new found social freedom. Why would southern women put their new roles as social reformers on the line with such an explosive issue? Perhaps Anne Firor Scott sums it up best;

"It is curious in view of the deep conservatism of the majority of southern women, many of whom never registered to vote, that those who did choose to live an active life were often found on the progressive side of the political spectrum. Part of the explanation is that the person who was bold enough to assume a role unusual for women was also likely to be radical on social questions generally."¹

Women who worked so hard for their own equality were also willing to work for equality for all races.

These women were not unopposed, however. There were women on both sides of every important issue fighting for what they believed. For example, in 1920 many North Carolina women

campaigned just as strenuously against suffrage as those who fought for it. Not only were these women concerned that suffrage would upset the natural roles of women as wives and mothers, they also saw it as a racial issue. It might be permissible for a few educated white women to vote, but to give the vote to a large number of poor, uneducated black women was out of the question.² The conservative anti-suffragists were just as motivated as those they opposed. Doak belonged to the more liberally minded group who felt that blacks should be given more opportunities. She assisted in organizing the first statewide Negro Parent-Teacher Association Congress in 1927.³ Also that year Raleigh's Mayor Culbreth appointed her to establish a day nursery for colored children and the next six years she served as the chairman of the board of directors.⁴ In October of 1931 she successfully appealed to the budget committee at a Raleigh Chamber of Commerce meeting to have blacks included in the Community Chest budget.⁵ A letter to her daughter at school in Westtown, Pennsylvania, sheds some light on her opinions regarding blacks in everyday society. She stressed the fact that she had worked hard to get them rights in regards to schools, streets, health protection and bus privileges and felt they should have the same opportunities as whites and even better if they could earn it.⁶

Doak believed the accomplishments of blacks in the fields

of music, literature and art should be recognized and that they should receive courteous treatment. However, she still felt that the two races should maintain separate schools, churches, playgrounds, and social activities to prevent interracial marriages and the eventual reduction to one 'brown' race.⁷ She explains her opposition to a 'brown' race by stating: "...biologist say that brown people are the most susceptible to disease and succumb quickest of any known people."⁸ Doak believed that one day the two races might have the "...strength of character and will power..." to mingle socially yet not mix racially, but not at that time.⁹ Although Jesus might have different beliefs, she admitted it was as liberal a stance as she could take at that time.¹⁰ As a classic liberal in North Carolina during the 1930's she was truly a supporter of "separate but equal."

Doak's views on this matter seemed to become somewhat more liberal over the next few years as race became a national focus in the post World War II era. Her conversion as an adult to the Quaker faith and its strong belief in equality for all people may have reinforced some of her views on race relations. The Quakers did not believe that the "golden rule" was to be limited by race.¹¹ The 1930's and '40's brought about new situations in which blacks and whites were placed in previously unheard of relationships. New Deal projects and duty in the armed forces during the war saw blacks and whites

working side by side.¹² By spending more time with each other their perceptions began to change. On December 14, 1945 Doak wrote a letter to Governor R. Gregg Cherry in regards to two articles she had read in the December 13 issue of the Raleigh Times. One article concerned Bruce Combs, a white man from Wake County, who had received a sentence of ten to fifteen years in prison for a crime against a black girl.¹³ The second article related the story of a young black boy aged fourteen or sixteen named Ernest Brooks who had received the death sentence in Craven County for the same crime against a white girl.¹⁴

In her letter Doak stated she was sure Governor Cherry recognized the inequality of this situation and the harm it could have on a society that was trying to build a good relationship between the two races.¹⁵ The letter was signed by seven of Doak's acquaintances who also were distressed by such an obvious inequality in the justice system.¹⁶ A note written in pencil by Doak at the top of the letter and dated 1960 calls it, "About the best job I ever did." The note also points out that Governor Cherry commuted Ernest Brooks sentence, which he should have almost finished serving by 1960.¹⁷ Such an active role in getting a social injustice overturned shows her growing interest and concern for the inequalities blacks were still facing.

Doak's reaction towards the 1954 Brown v. Topeka Board of

Education decision shows an even further liberalization of her ideals. The news ignited controversy in North Carolina, but Doak saw the decision in a different light. In a letter to a friend she called the decision and its repercussions, "...the biggest problem the South has ever met, even more perplexing than was the slavery question."¹⁸ She believed that if the slaves had been given equal opportunities in education after being freed there would be, "...a large number of physically clean, intelligent educated Negroes to help with the problem...."¹⁹ Doak also stated in this letter that she could sympathize with those parents who did not want to send their children to school with black children because she had at one time held such a narrow viewpoint.²⁰ By this time however, she had come to disagree with the separate but equal policy even though she did not fully believe that the black race was equal to her own. Even so her attitudes had undergone considerable liberalizations.

One event in particular shows Doak's change in attitude towards race relations during her lifetime. While in elementary school she wrote an essay entitled "Indians Have Suffered Greater Wrongs from American Government Than Negroes."²¹ As a seventy-two year old woman Doak re-read the essay and attached a note to it in which she admitted she was ashamed that she could have felt that way about anyone. She also noted that she had been told by her teacher to take that

side.²² In the essay she had listed her reasons for believing Indians had suffered more than Negroes. She wrote that the Negroes should be taken back to Africa, that they were "roguish and selfish," they tried to get white people in danger and steal anything they could get their hands on.²³ She admitted that some Negroes were treated badly during slavery but not nearly as badly as the Indians had been treated in the past.²⁴ She also wrote that she had heard of Indians saving white people's lives but had never heard such of the Negroes whom she believed got pleasure from seeing white people killed.²⁵

It is easily understandable how a young girl born in eastern North Carolina and raised by a Confederate veteran could have such feelings. An enlightened view of the equality of the black race would have been an exception for a young girl at this time rather than the rule. Through the years Doak's beliefs on this subject became more liberal and her attitudes were always consistent with those of people working on the forefront for equal opportunities for all people.

Doak also took special interest in seeing that changes were made within the North Carolina prison system. Those changes she worked for included providing entertainment for the prisoners and attacking problems within the criminal justice system itself. Her Quaker faith reinforced her opposition to injustice and violence such as capital

punishment. She sought changes in the system by personally entertaining prisoners at both the men's and women's prisons in Raleigh with readings and concerts, and by fighting for the abolishment of the death penalty in North Carolina, and in fighting for individuals whom she thought had been treated unfairly by the judicial system.

Doak's first opportunity to accomplish change in the prison system came in 1910. She worked with Colonel Fred A. Olds, the director of the State Hall of History, presenting concerts and readings at such places as the Confederate Soldiers Home and the State Blind Institution.²⁶ Doak decided that these programs would be appropriate for the prisoners in Raleigh's Central Prison and presented the warden, T.P. Sale, with the idea. The request had to be approved by Governor William Walton Kitchin before any such programs could be scheduled. Kitchin approved and on August 19, 1910, Doak became the first "outside person" to enter Central Prison to provide entertainment for the inmates.²⁷ That Christmas Doak helped present a Christmas program and party, a tradition she would continue for forty years.²⁸ During the five years Doak lived away from Raleigh she made sure the Christmas tradition continued by turning the program over to friends.²⁹ After their marriage, Doak's husband accompanied her on the Christmas visits. They also visited the women's prison, in addition to the men's, throughout the

year, telling stories, giving readings and providing bags of candy and fruit for the inmates.³⁰

Doak also performed other services for both the system and the individual prisoners. Through her affiliation with the Raleigh Women's Club she helped get the first chaplain installed at Raleigh's Central Prison.³¹ Doak also worked on behalf of prisoners whom she thought had been treated unfairly by the judicial system. On an occasion previously noted she took action after reading about what she saw as an unjust sentencing in the case of Ernest Brooks. She also helped to rehabilitate a woman who had been convicted of murder and sentenced to death. The changes in the woman's personality resulted in her sentence being reduced to life imprisonment; later the reformed inmate became such a model prisoner she was pardoned.³² These two examples show that Doak was not a woman to just sit by and watch people being treated unfairly. In these cases she was motivated by what she saw as one of the gravest injustices of the day - capital punishment.

As a member of the Society of Friends, Doak fought to abolish capital punishment in the 1950's. Following her marriage to a life-long Quaker, Doak decided to convert to the religion. She agreed vehemently with the Quakers opposition to capital punishment. In 1953 at the North Carolina Yearly Meeting of Friends she was appointed to the Peace and Social Order Committee. The committee investigated and prepared a

statement on capital punishment which could be used as a study guide aimed at younger members of the Society of Friends.³³ Her work for the abolishment of the death penalty was so well known that Byron Haworth, a member of the North Carolina General Assembly, invited her to attend a hearing on capital punishment bills to be held April 26, 1955.³⁴ The House Judiciary Committee took no action, however, on the six bills presented during the hearing that proposed to limit capital punishment in North Carolina. The bills proposed to eliminate the automatic death sentence for first degree burglary and arson and to require a jury to recommend the death penalty before it could be invoked for first degree murder and rape.³⁵ At the time all four crimes were punishable by death unless the jury recommended mercy and a life sentence in lieu of death.³⁶

The proposed bills would have made a life sentence mandatory for the crimes unless death was recommended by the jury. In 1955 North Carolina was one of only eight states that had not abolished the death penalty for arson and one of only six states that punished first degree burglary offenders with the death penalty.³⁷ The state legislators did not want to make any changes at the time. Doak felt differently, however. Her strong Quaker faith had convinced her that killing another human being under any circumstance was wrong. Whether it was as punishment for crimes such as burglary or

murder, or in a war to settle national problems she believed killing someone to be morally wrong. Doak did her best to educate others on the Quakers' stance towards capital punishment and to persuade state politicians to take action to abolish the death penalty. Even though she was not always successful, Doak did more than talk about social reform: she took action.

One of the most important and successful social campaigns Doak undertook was that of prohibition. As was characteristic of many women of her time, and men to a lesser degree, Doak strongly opposed the consumption of alcoholic beverages. It went against her strong moral and religious convictions. In order to better understand the climate in which Doak worked for prohibition it is beneficial to examine the background of the prohibitionist forces in North Carolina during the early twentieth century.

During the first decade of the 1900's the prominent force in support of state prohibition was the North Carolina Anti-Saloon League.³⁸ The League held a convention in Raleigh on January 21, 1907 where they adopted a resolution calling for prohibition.³⁹ The resolution, which came to be known as the Long-Dowd bill, was presented to the state legislature and on May 26, 1908 was approved by the people of North Carolina.⁴⁰ Governor Glenn signed the proclamation on January 1, 1909, thereby making North Carolina the first state in the union to

adopt prohibition by a direct vote of the people.⁴¹ On December 22, 1917, the 18th Amendment, which called for national prohibition, was presented to the states for ratification.⁴² North Carolina ratified the amendment on January 14, 1919. Two days later the required number of states approved the amendment, and the following year the 18th Amendment went into effect.⁴³

The year the 18th Amendment became law was a special year in Doak's fight for prohibition; that year she held the office of President of the Raleigh Women's Christian Temperance Union.⁴⁴ Established in 1883, the North Carolina WCTU's goal was to protect the home and family from the evils of society. According to contemporary assumptions, women had been given the responsibility of protecting their families and society because of their inherent moral superiority. The WCTU succeeded because it gave women a public voice and defined temperance as a woman's issue.⁴⁵ The major part of her fight, however, would come thirteen years later during the national drive to repeal prohibition. Groups waged strong campaigns on both sides of this issue. The prohibitionists claimed defense of the home, protection of the family, and concern for youth as reasons to vote against repeal.⁴⁶ On the other hand, the anti-prohibitionists cited the violence, corruption, alcoholic excesses, and disregard for the law that prohibition had generated as reasons to vote for repeal.⁴⁷

The largest anti-prohibition group, the Association Against the Prohibition Amendment, was almost entirely male. There were several female organizations that fought against repeal, however, including the Molly Pitcher Clubs and the Women's Organization for National Prohibition Reform (WONPR).⁴⁸ The WONPR received national media coverage as an organization that favored true temperance over absolute prohibition.⁴⁹

States throughout the nation voted for repeal and North Carolina repealists believed the momentum would carry over into their own state.⁵⁰ What they did not count on was the diligent work done by such people as Doak. Under the North Carolina Constitution all "special elections" were to be held at the next general election, which was slated for November 1934. The repealists did not want to wait this long, though, and by removing the words "special election" from their bill persuaded the Supreme Court to allow an election on November 7, 1933.⁵¹ This is where FRD's drive and determination came into play.

In May 1933 the United Dry Forces (UDF), North Carolina's leading prohibition organization, met in Raleigh to organize against the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors and elected Doak executive secretary.⁵² As such, Doak was responsible for recruiting trustees from each county who were in turn responsible for raising funds for UDF educational purposes.⁵³ Doak was later elected to the executive

committee of the UDF of North Carolina in June of that year.⁵⁴ Members of the United Dry Forces and the Raleigh Women's Christian Temperance Union used FRD's dining room as their headquarters, sending out invitations to prospective members of the central committee of the United Dry Forces.⁵⁵ The Doak dining room also doubled as an office from which the prohibitionists sent out campaign literature, which included a copy of their platform, the list of central committee members and an appeal for cooperation. This information was sent to the two United States senators from North Carolina, all North Carolina congressmen, the governor, state and county officials, officers of the Young Democratic clubs, members of the 1933 General Assembly, and every newspaper in the state.⁵⁶

The prohibitionists were well-organized and strongly motivated. Their platform consisted of four main objectives: to educate the voters to keep the laws against the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors on the books; to educate school children about the dangers of liquor and narcotics; to cooperate with other organizations to achieve these goals; and to keep the organization non-partisan, non-political and non-denominational.⁵⁷ Doak also wrote a newspaper article entitled "An Open Letter to the Women Voters of North Carolina" in which she urged them to vote against repeal of the 18th Amendment on November 7, 1933.⁵⁸ An old friend of

Doak's, Capus Miller Waynick, sat on the other side of the fence on this issue. Correspondence between Doak and Waynick, State Director of the National Re-employment Service, reveals the ardor with which Doak addressed this issue. In a letter dated July 20, 1933 Doak wrote Waynick that she would fight his 'wets' as long as there was breath left in her body and warned him that it would be a tough fight.⁵⁹ Waynick later wrote Doak that he was no longer certain of a wet victory, and realized success lay in the hands of the young voters who could turn the tide.⁶⁰ In a letter dated 16 March 1934, Waynick wrote that he attributed the success of the dry campaign on a large extent to Doak's counsel.⁶¹

The hard work and persistence paid off for the prohibitionists with a vote rejecting repeal of the 18th Amendment by 293,484 to 120,190, a majority of more than two to one.⁶² Doak attributed the victory to the undefeatable spirit of the prohibitionists and the hard work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union and of the young people of the state.⁶³ Doak received letters from all over the state congratulating her on her hard work in keeping North Carolina dry. She even received some cards from Virginia, including one from a Mrs. Meredith of Richmond who wrote to congratulate Doak on her work to ensure that, "...North Carolina could not be stampeded into voting for repeal."⁶⁴ The following quote from the United Dry Forces Scrap Book sheds light on Doak's

important role in the fight: "The two big leaders of the campaign workers were Cale K. Burgess and Mrs. Chas. G. Doak. There were many valuable assistants, but the management of the campaign rested largely in their hands. The splendid outcome was a tribute to their masterly efforts."⁶⁵

At a meeting in Greensboro on January 16, 1934 the United Dry Forces became a permanent organization, adopted a constitution, and pledged to make "North Carolina dry in fact as well as theory."⁶⁶ At the meeting Doak presented her account of the campaign against the repeal of the 18th Amendment. The members of the United Dry Forces voted unanimously to have her account published in pamphlet form for distribution.⁶⁷ Doak's statement was published in 1934 by the Capital Printing Company of Raleigh and entitled "Why North Carolina Voted Dry."⁶⁸

Doak contributed a great deal to the fight against the repeal of prohibition. She felt strongly about the dangers of alcohol and about the benefits of avoiding it. She used these feelings to help wage one of the most successful campaigns in North Carolina history. She provided her time, her excellent powers of persuasion and even her own dining room to the fight to keep North Carolina dry. Once again Doak achieved the goal she set out to accomplish. But even though she had convinced North Carolinians to vote for a dry state, other forces beyond her control ultimately prevailed. On December 5, 1933 the

campaign to repeal prohibition ended with state conventions in Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Utah choosing to support repeal of the eighteenth amendment. It was the first time in the nation's history that the public had rescinded a constitutional amendment.⁶⁹ Doak remained proud, however, of the work she had done to try to keep North Carolina dry. Her work for better opportunities for blacks, better prison conditions, and the abolishment of capital punishment, and prohibition are characteristic of a woman with strong religious and moral convictions who wanted to improve society for herself and her children.

CHAPTER VI

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Before examining in detail several of the political actions Frances Renfrow Doak undertook, it may be beneficial to review political life during the decades spanning the 1930's into the 1960's. In 1932 she organized the Women of the State for Cameron Morrison, a United States Senate hopeful who supported three of Doak's favorite projects: prohibition, the World Court, and the League of Nations.¹ The former North Carolina governor lost the election, however, to his opponent Robert R. Reynolds.² In 1934 Doak made a speech on radio station WPTF in Raleigh supporting Harold Cooley's bid for the United States House of Representatives.³ On February 3, 1949 she gave a speech entitled "Our Task Today" before the Joint Appropriations Committee of the 1949 General Assembly at the hearing on the State Department of Education's request for public school funding. Doak used this opportunity as a representative of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs to emphasize Charles Brantley Aycock's desire for equality of opportunity for all children of North Carolina.⁴ In 1950 she worked for the election of Senator Frank P. Graham.⁵ In 1952 she wrote letters to friends urging them to vote for Luther Hodges, and she did the same for her childhood friend Justice Itimous T. Valentine.⁶ Other recipients of Doak's support included Governor Adlai E. Stevenson for

president in 1952, Governor William B. Umstead in 1952, and Senator Sam J. Ervin, Jr. in 1954.⁷ In 1960 Doak received a letter from Senator John F. Kennedy thanking her for her help as a precinct worker for the North Carolina Democratic Party and promising to wage an active presidential campaign in North Carolina.⁸ A few months later she received an invitation to the January 22, 1961 inaugural ball for John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson.⁹ She worked hard for the causes she believed in and for the people she thought could best help those causes. Although she never ran for office herself, she was active in politics and gained the respect of many politicians who admired her convictions, knowledge and perseverance. Her political awareness became especially acute in the years surrounding the second world war.

World War II forced Americans to take a close look not only at the world they lived in but also at their own personal beliefs and values. Questioning the United States' involvement in another world war brought out numerous different reactions. Doak was a patriotic American but did not support United States involvement in this war. She did not believe violence should be used to settle any disputes. The Quaker religion to which she had converted soon after marrying Chick Doak strongly reinforced this opposition to violence and war.

Doak often communicated with United States Representative

Harold Dunbar Cooley about her concerns over possible United States involvement in the war in Europe. A native of Nash County, Cooley opened a law office in 1919 in Nashville, North Carolina after graduating from the University of North Carolina Law School. Elected to his first of seventeen terms in the United States House of Representatives in 1934, Cooley had a major interest in agricultural affairs and actively participated in the formulation of New Deal policies which concerned agriculture.¹⁰ As Nash County natives, both Cooley and Doak had an interest in North Carolina agriculture and opposed an early involvement by the United States in the war in Europe. In a letter to Cooley dated October 10, 1939, Doak expressed her approval of his attempts to keep the United States out of war. She related that she had been an advocate of peace since the days when she supported Woodrow Wilson's efforts to establish "...an effective organization through which the differences of nations might be adjusted and wars prevented."¹¹ She further explained, "I know that war is the wrong way, and I do not believe anything can ever be settled the right way by using the wrong method."¹²

By August of 1941 the Doak family faced a personal confrontation with the hardships of war. The Doak's twenty-two year old son, Charles Wilson, a healthy able-bodied young man was naturally expected to serve his country as war raged in Europe and Asia. However, because of his Quaker heritage

Charles Wilson obtained religious objector status and would, therefore, not be called into combat. He was expected to report to the Civilian Service Camp in Buck Creek, Marion, North Carolina on August 28, 1941.¹³ As a senior at North Carolina State College he had requested a student deferment so that he could finish school. The request was denied.¹⁴ Doak's longtime friend and political ally Harold Cooley advised the Doaks to have Charles Wilson appeal this decision on the basis that he was studying agriculture, which would be vital to national defense.¹⁵ The Local Board for Religious Objectors denied the appeal and Charles Wilson was ordered to report to camp on September 2, 1941.¹⁶ During the appeals and letter writing Doak tried her best to keep her son at home and in school. She even appealed to the United States Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Agricultural Economics. Carl C. Taylor, a friend from her days with the Farm Security Administration, replied to her letter. He explained that the government did not want to show overt favoritism to conscientious objectors and that he was sure he would not be able to get Charles Wilson assigned to an office in South America.¹⁷ Charles Wilson reluctantly began what would be four years of service for the Civilian Service.

The Doak's younger son, Robert Renfrow, also obtained religious objector status and was called, as Charles Wilson had been, to report to the Civilian Public Service in

September of 1942.¹⁸ Also a senior at North Carolina State College when called, Renfrow lacked only thirty-four hours of credits to complete his degree in textile manufacturing.¹⁹ The Doaks appealed to the National Service Board for Religious Objectors in hopes that Renfrow would be allowed to complete his education, at which time he would be better qualified to serve his government as a fabric inspector.²⁰ The appeal failed; and on October 8, 1942, Renfrow was ordered to report to the Civilian Public Service Camp No. 52 in Powellsville, Maryland, where his service to his country would include clearing and repairing a fourteen mile drainage ditch on the Pocomoke River.²¹ While serving at Camp Pocomoke Renfrow suffered several medical problems and in mid February of 1943 underwent surgery to remove a kidney.²² It took the Selective Service System several months to rule that this operation was grounds for Renfrow's discharge from the Civilian Public Service. He returned to Raleigh where he finished his senior year at North Carolina State College.

As a concerned mother and strong Quaker who disapproved of violence and especially war, Doak had attempted to keep her sons safe from the hardships of war. They were spared the violence of battle but no one completely escaped from the devastation of that great war. Doak admired her sons for standing up for their Quaker beliefs in non-violence and for their patriotic passion which pushed them to do their best

when they were required to participate in the Civilian Public Service camps. After a dinner held in Raleigh in March 1945 at which Josephus Daniels spoke on the war and its repercussions, Dr. Paul Wager of Chapel Hill told Doak that he had thought of her boys when Daniels had praised those Quakers who had stood up for their faith.²³ This filled her with a great sense of pride and accomplishment.

Doak's protest against violence as an answer to national conflicts and her support of Woodrow Wilson's search for a world court portray her as a woman searching for world peace. Doak believed that all nations could settle both their internal conflicts and conflicts with neighboring countries through a democratic process of negotiations. If all nations could rationally and intelligently discuss sensitive matters, there could be peace on earth. She felt such a world was possible and fought for it wherever she saw politicians or the military favoring violence as an answer to world problems.

Her desire for a peaceful world seemed to intensify in the years immediately following World War II. Doak felt strongly about the potential success of the United Nations during such a trying time. In a letter to Mrs. Venetta Whitaker of Henrietta, North Carolina, dated January 11, 1946, she expressed what she believed must take place if peace on earth were to become a reality. She felt future destruction could be avoided by an American policy of support for

humanitarian relief efforts, economic aid, and rebuilding in those countries that needed help. A strong and effective United Nations organization would also be necessary for a peaceful world.²⁴ Doak worked within the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs to urge Congressional representatives to make the United Nations charter more encompassing. She had been so disappointed when the League of Nations had been abandoned that she saw this as a second chance for Woodrow Wilson's dreams.²⁵ She felt, however, that the charter did not go far enough. She supported the United States government's recognition of the fact that there was a need and use for some form of world government to safeguard against any future wars like the one the world had just suffered.²⁶ Doak had faith in man's ability to find peace on earth: "I shall never accept the idea that man has brains enough to find ways in which to destroy himself and the world, yet has not brains enough to find ways to save himself and the world."²⁷

Doak believed that along with a strong United Nations the quest for world peace needed the support of American women who could be on guard against any threatening developments. She had great confidence in what women could achieve when motivated: "I have often thought that if we could ever get women as aroused over peace as they once were over prohibition, we could really do something about preventing

war."²⁸ During the late 1940's she was particularly concerned about two developments she considered ominous: peacetime conscription and universal military training. In May, 1947, she wrote to her longtime friend United State Representative Harold Cooley about her fears that the Army was trying to dominate the country:

"The Army has so much money to spend and is spending it so lavishly to propagandize taxpayers to turn everything over to the militarists, it is criminal. I hope you will resist their efforts and turn all of your superb talent into the fight to save us from any further divergence from the way of democracy and true Americanism."²⁹

Cooley had given her advice on her sons' induction into the Civilian Public Service camps and she respected his opinions. Less than a month later she wrote Cooley again, this time she was upset over some information she had found in an issue of Conscription News. The issue contained a letter which explained how community leaders could sign up for a tour (including free air transportation) of the new experiment in military training at Fort Knox.³⁰ This kind of expenditure to convince the American taxpayers of the advantages of peacetime conscription infuriated her. She also told Cooley of a similar experience a year earlier when she had been one of sixty or seventy people invited to an elegant four course dinner at the Washington Duke Hotel in Durham. The dinner had been given by an area corps of the Army "...to let key people know the progress of recruitment and to thank civilians for

war services, etc."³¹ The overall purpose of the dinner was to convince the guests of the need for peace-time conscription. The Army's blatant, excessive expenditure of money to convince taxpayers the United States should take a more militaristic stance appalled FRD.³² In response Cooley agreed that peace-time conscription was unnecessary; but he did feel that the United States military needed to be prepared at all times. Cooley also agreed that the Army had been using funds to propagandize taxpayers on behalf of peace-time military training, and he assured her that he would check into the use of military aircraft for the transport of civilians to the experimental model at Fort Knox since there was a "...very definite presidential order prohibiting the use of military aircraft by civilians."³³ Doak's concern and correspondence with Cooley regarding this subject continued into the 1950's.³⁴

By writing to Harold Cooley and expressing her concerns over what she felt were threats to peace, she felt she was doing her part as a conscientious American citizen who wished to keep the nation from being drawn into another costly war. She believed that if other citizens would also keep a check on what was going on in the country perhaps World War II would be the last major conflict the United States would have to suffer.

In addition to working for a peaceful world, Doak also

worked to elect public officials committed to a better North Carolina and a better United States. One North Carolinian she felt could help make the world a better place by serving in public office was William Kerr Scott. A native of Haw River in Alamance County, Scott had received his Bachelor of Science degree in 1917 from North Carolina State College. He had worked as farm agent of Alamance County and in 1930 was named master of North Carolina State Grange. Franklin Roosevelt appointed Scott regional director of the Farm Debt Adjustment Administration in 1933 and it was in this context that he became friends with Doak.³⁵ The two worked together for seven months during which they established a mutual respect and friendship.³⁶

In 1948 Doak worked for Scott's election as Governor of North Carolina. In a letter to some friends she hoped would support him, she gave a glowing report on Scott and expressed her belief that he would help North Carolina become a progressive state.³⁷ Scott's 1948 campaign for governor was one of the most active campaigns in North Carolina history and one in which everyone involved worked extremely hard.³⁸ Some of the issues Scott addressed during his campaign were the poor living conditions in rural North Carolina and the state's practice of loaning monies to private financial institutes.³⁹ Doak's campaign work for Scott and his progressive "Go-Forward Program" was appreciated by both Scott and his campaign

managers. Doak received a letter from Robert Watson Winston and Charles Aycock Poe, the son and grandson of her former employee's and Co-Chairmen of Kerr Scott's Wake County Committee, thanking her for her support and assuring her that they could not have reached their victory without her help.⁴⁰ She also received a letter of appreciation from Kerr Scott's wife, Mary, thanking her for her friendship and support. Mary wrote that Kerr often said that he credited Doak with giving him his first lessons in politics when they worked together at the Farm Security Administration.⁴¹ The Doaks received a personal invitation from Mary Scott to attend the inaugural ceremony and a buffet luncheon to be held for a small group immediately following the ceremony.⁴² Scott's first year in office would prove to be a very busy and productive one. Under his leadership North Carolina built \$50,000,000 worth of new schools, installed 4,489 new hospital beds and paved 14,000 miles of roads.⁴³

As an active Democrat Doak was extremely interested in Scott's choice to fill the vice-chairman seat on the Democratic Executive Committee and wrote him asking about his selection.⁴⁴ His choice, Mrs. Daniel A. McCormick, lived in McDonald, North Carolina. She had a rich background of public service, which included a two year term as chairman of the advisory board of Flora MacDonald College from 1938 to 1940 and a seat on the sixteen member committee that invited the

Grange to organize in North Carolina in 1933.⁴⁵ Scott believed Mrs. McCormick was well-qualified and would speak for the greatly under represented rural population.⁴⁶ A letter to Doak from Scott concerning this appointment contained the following comment: "Always I have trusted your good judgment, and on many important occasions I have looked to you for guidance. In assuming the governorship of this State, more than ever I shall need the benefit of your counseling. I shall count much on your assistance."⁴⁷ This comment expressed the feelings of North Carolina's governor about Doak and how he valued and admired her opinions and advice. Scott further showed his admiration of Doak in February 1949 by honoring her at a luncheon for the ten women he felt had helped him the most.⁴⁸

In July 1949, Scott expressed his confidence in Doak's opinions by asking her to examine and respond to several questions he had received from Mrs. Adele Scott of the Women's International Exposition concerning areas of special interest to women.⁴⁹ Scott wrote Doak that he entrusted her with this task because, "...I believe you would have this information more readily available and be able to present it more effectively than anyone else."⁵⁰ She was honored to be chosen for this task and took great care in researching issues that were important to women in 1949. It was something to which she could relate and a way in which she could bring

women's concerns to the attention of an important figure in North Carolina politics. The trust and respect that had been established between Doak and Scott, together with Doak's work with the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs and the North Carolina State Legislative Council, made her an excellent choice to outline women's concerns. Doak approached her task by focusing on proposed legislation which was of special interest or benefit to North Carolina women.

To research such legislation she turned to three major sources: "Popular Government," a summary of legislation of the 1949 General Assembly; "Public Welfare News," a summary of legislation the North Carolina State Board of Public Welfare saw as important; and House Bill 81, which would effect a woman's responsibilities and rights in cases of abandonment.⁵¹ Within eight days of his request, Doak sent Kerr Scott an assessment of the legislation she felt was most important to women.⁵² She felt that legislation of interest to women included: salary increases for teachers; Confederate homes and pensions; Senate Bill 96 - care of premature infants; cancer control clinics - reporting cancer cases; registration of births and deaths; adoption laws; abandonment law changes; and regulation of business: cosmetologists.⁵³ She also believed that, "Legislation setting up the following commissions or boards will result in increased opportunities for the appointment of women to positions of honor and service

to the State:", Local Recreation Boards; Memorials: Charles B. Aycock Memorial Commission, Josephus Daniels Memorial; Tryon's Palace Restoration Project; and the State Planning Board.⁵⁴

Scott showed his support for women and the issues that affected them in several ways. During his campaign he had promised women greater representation in state government. He kept this promise by appointing more women to state boards and commissions than any North Carolina governor before him. He also appointed Susie Sharp as North Carolina's first female supreme court judge.⁵⁵ Other concerns of women he addressed included better pay for teachers; more funding for public school health programs; more hospitals and health care; and a cause close to Doak's heart, the establishment of the Charles B. Aycock Memorial Commission.⁵⁶

The relationship between Doak and Kerr Scott was one of mutual respect and admiration and turned out to be mutually beneficial. Doak was able to get some attention focused on women's rights and issues through her friendship with Kerr Scott. In return he found a strong and able campaign worker who helped him realize several political victories. Scott thanked Doak for her help in his 1954 campaign for United States Senate with the following words: "To have your name listed on the 'N.C. Women for Scott' committee, to know that you made that fine radio speech in my behalf and to have you

appear on television for me also, is most heart-warming."⁵⁷ Terry Sanford, Scott's campaign aide, added the following note at the bottom of Scott's letter: "They tell me you were terrific on T-V-!"⁵⁸ After his victory Scott thanked Doak for her help and claimed that he could not have won without her and her work in keeping the people informed.⁵⁹ Kerr Scott's actions show that Doak was considered a serious political consultant who was to be admired and valued as a friend. Although she never ran for political office herself, she constantly campaigned for political causes and candidates. She was also prepared to invest the political capital to further the causes to which she was committed.

CHAPTER VII

WOMEN' S CLUBS

One of the organizations in which Frances Renfrow Doak was active throughout her adult life was the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs (NCFWC) and its Raleigh chapter. She saw these clubs as a means through which women could become active in the social, cultural, political, and economic segments of their communities. Women's clubs had become a widely accepted venue through which mothers and housewives could participate along with women from the work force and humanitarian force in shaping the world around them. This field had not always been open to women. It had taken women centuries to finally assume the responsibility of being a force capable of changing society, and just as long for men to relinquish that power to them.

In order to understand the pride and importance Doak and her contemporaries felt towards their progress in these clubs, one must first understand the road that led to such organizations. During the 1800's women were expected to conform to a certain role that society dictated. This role usually meant being a good mother, obedient wife, and a saintly person who knew her place and never crossed the line into the man's world of politics and economic concerns. A woman's place was in the home, not out campaigning for changes in society. However, the Civil War changed the way women saw

their roles at home and in society. With their husbands, fathers, sons and brothers away at war, the responsibility of running the household, and often times a farm or business, rested solely on female shoulders. They took charge and succeeded. After the war the thoughts of giving up these new responsibilities and roles in society upset many women. They were not willing to relinquish their new roles for the delicate pedestal on which men believed they should be placed. In order to keep active in society without totally offending their husbands and fathers women turned to a system of clubs and organizations.

In the South women's clubs rapidly evolved from the multitude of societies and associations established to deal with the aftermath of the Civil War. Wartime soldier's relief and ladies aid societies became Confederate memorial associations after 1865 to honor the heroes of the South.¹ Women who had belonged to the aid and relief societies during the war found a way to transform the organizations so they could continue the work they so enjoyed. Women's clubs throughout the country grew rapidly during the end of the century. The 1870's saw a rise in the number of missionary societies, the 1880's brought the birth of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the 1890's was characterized by a rapid growth in the number of Women's Clubs which dealt with all aspects of society.² Women sought out these clubs

to learn about the outside world and how to deal with it.³ Women's clubs gave women skills and strategies and enabled them to establish themselves as leaders. In the beginning they used clubs to further issues that did not threaten their respectability as Southern ladies, but they later took on bolder social reform issues.⁴

The most popular woman's organization of the twentieth century got its start thanks to a dinner meeting of the men's New York Press Club in 1868 which featured Charles Dickens as the speaker for the evening. Wives and acquaintances of members of the club spent a day decorating and preparing the hall for that evening's dinner.⁵ In return they asked to be allowed to sit in the gallery behind a curtain so they could hear Dickens speak. Outraged at such audacity, the men refused. In retaliation the women formed a club of their own, the Sorosis Club of New York City, and held their first meeting on April 20, 1868.⁶ Sister clubs sprung up throughout the country over the years and in 1889 the Sorosis Club of New York City invited sixty-one clubs throughout the country to a convention and the General Federation of Women's Clubs was born. Within six years state federations could be found in thirty states.⁷

Sallie Southall Cotten became one of the leading forces in the establishment of the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs (NCFWC). Governor Elias Carr had appointed

Cotten as the North Carolina Lady Manager for the Chicago Exposition and she came back convinced that women's clubs were the best means for progress.⁸ With this goal in mind, Cotten and ten other women organized the End of the Century Club in Greenville on December 1, 1899.⁹ Cotten was elected president of the club on November 13, 1900 and was made honorary president for life in 1911. One of the clubs most noteworthy projects was establishment of Greenville's first public library. In February of 1903 the members voted to donate all the books the club had purchased, along with one of their own personal books, for the foundation of the library. By the next year they had rented a room in the Masonic Temple and Greenville's library was a reality.¹⁰ After three or four years the club members' concerns began to change from literature and culture to the needs of the community, current events, and social issues.¹¹ From 1910 to 1919 the End of the Century Club moved on to civic improvements and began to address the public by means of the press.¹² Members of the club showed their belief in women's equality in 1913 by having a bill sponsored that would allow women to serve on the school board. Unfortunately, the bill did not pass.¹³

Cotten's involvement with women's clubs was not limited to Greenville, however. In May 1902 Cotten brought the Sorosis and Round Table and Embroidery Clubs of Winston-Salem, the Sorosis Club of Wilmington, the Woman's Club of Goldsboro,

the Circulating Book Club of Salisbury, and the Alphen Club of Stateville together in Winston-Salem to form the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs.¹⁴ They joined the General Federation the same year and were incorporated in 1913 with the motto "The Union of All for the Good of All."¹⁵ Cotten gave the following assessment of the accomplishments of women's clubs:

"Club experience has been the university in which they have learned {about} themselves and other women and have seen men as one of the species and not as individual husbands and fathers. They have gained respect for their own opinions, toleration for the opinions of others and the necessity of cooperation for the successful accomplishment of all aims. They have discovered the needs and weaknesses of themselves and their homes and have learned how to improve both. Their knowledge has been increased...Gossip has decreased because clubs have given women better things to think about and having seen the needs of the world they have become interested in striving to make their own part of it a little better."¹⁶

The NCFWC made improvements and progress in all segments of society. North Carolina women realized that the club framework was an acceptable and successful means through which they could implement constructive and progressive ideas that their husbands might not support. Some of the accomplishments the NCFWC made over the years in the field of education included the establishment of county libraries; heightened awareness of the need for better pay for teachers; and assistance in establishing an eight-month, state-supported school term.¹⁷ The clubs helped start the North Carolina Art

Society, fostered the idea of a state school of forestry, inaugurated the use of living Christmas trees, and promoted the observance of Arbor Day.¹⁸ In the area of politics, the Federation formed the Legislative Council to consult the North Carolina General Assembly on what legislation they felt to be important. They also helped secure the Australian ballot for North Carolina in 1929 and formed their own "Get Out and Vote" campaign which resulted in almost 100% of clubwomen voting.¹⁹ Some of their most important work may have been done in the area of public health: pioneering the need for medical inspections of drinking fountains, schools, dairies, restaurants; fighting against tuberculosis; establishing nurseries, inoculation, school lunches, narcotics control; and raising some of the first funds for cancer research.²⁰ The Federation's hard work and success rate prompted North Carolina United States Senator Clyde R. Hoey to make the following statement: "...There is nothing under the shining sun the Federated Clubwomen of North Carolina cannot achieve if given the task."²¹ Doak also saw the utility of this organization and worked within the NCFWC, the Raleigh Woman's Club and the Legislative Council to personally help make changes in society she felt were best for North Carolinians of her day and the future.

As did many of her contemporaries, Doak saw the Raleigh Woman's Club as an organization through which she could try to

improve the community in which she lived. Raleigh, however, had not always been so receptive to the idea of women working for changes in society. An 1850 article in the Raleigh Register contained the following opinion about women becoming more active in society: "Woman's sphere is about the domestic altar and within the tranquil precincts of the social circle. When she transgresses that sphere and mingles in the miserable brawlings and insane agitations of the day, she descends from her lofty elevation and becomes an object of disgust and contempt."²² Raleigh women were not content with their "lofty elevation", however, and in 1866 they organized the first woman's club in Raleigh, the Ladies Memorial Association.²³ The Association located the bodies of slain Civil War veterans and brought them home for burial.²⁴ The Ladies Memorial Association later established the Soldier's Home to care for veterans, established a Confederate monument on Capitol Square, and combined efforts with the United Daughters of the Confederacy.²⁵ In 1904 the Woman's Club of Raleigh was organized with interests that included the cultural, political and economic concerns of the community.²⁶

Doak's first association with the Raleigh Woman's Club came after World War I as the chairman of the Committee for Service to Veterans and Their Wives.²⁷ Other club work included two years as chairman of the Public Welfare Department (1924-26); two years on the Prison Committee of the

Public Welfare Department; and as a member of "The Players", a group that presented plays such as "Twelfth Night" at the Raleigh City Auditorium.²⁸ "The Players" were instrumental in getting the Raleigh Little Theatre established and in rounding up support for the theatre.²⁹ In 1932 the club honored Doak by dedicating their Year Book to her.³⁰ In 1935 she began a two-year term as the club's Vice-President.³¹ Her most important association with the Raleigh Woman's Club came in 1939 as president of the organization.³² The theme of her administration was "Adjusting Democracy for Human Welfare;" and she made the following statement about her goals as she was installed as club president: "...We must adjust democracy to human welfare, and if we do that we will make the world safe for democracy."³³

Doak believed that by giving everyone a legitimate opportunity at a good life society would benefit. Improving society diminished the chances of war. The Raleigh Woman's Club, under Doak's direction, sought to improve peace, equality and opportunity in society in several ways. They showed that blacks and whites could work together by contributing funds to the Negro Woman's Club to help build a fence for their day nursery and the also started an educational program at Raleigh's woman's prison.³⁴ Such deeds were intended to improve society for the benefit of all citizens, and therefore, reduce the hostilities that might

result in violence.

Doak had become the leader of an important social organization in Raleigh at a very confusing and tumultuous time in American history. With war spreading through Europe, Americans questioned the future of their own nation and lifestyles. She used her position in the club to ease the concerns of the people of Raleigh and to showcase her belief in world peace and a brotherhood of nations. The club's influence had been used in the past to promote peace through education.³⁵ To ease the tensions felt in the city and to promote the arts, the Raleigh Woman's Club planned a series of concerts to be held at the City Auditorium. Ten concerts were given over the two years of FRD's presidency and included such talents as Jeanette MacDonald, the Trapp Family Choir, and the opera "The Barber of Seville," (the first opera ever sung in Raleigh by an all-star metropolitan cast.)³⁶ Doak had a number of problems with this project. All of the bookings and arrangements were made with a New York agent, Charles Wagner.³⁷ Much of her time was spent in corresponding with Wagner regarding performers, dates, times, and especially ticket sales. She had incessant problems with members of the club who were supposed to help sell tickets, but who frequently did not follow through on their commitment. The organization had difficulties maintaining the public's interest in the concerts; therefore, the productions were not

financially successful, problems Charles Wagner did not fully grasp.³⁸ After the ten-concert series, Doak wrote to Wagner advising him that the Woman's Club had decided against sponsoring any future concerts. She deeply regretted this because she felt it was the club's cultural obligation and a potentially lucrative fundraiser.³⁹ Although the concert series was not as successful as she had hoped, she had helped provide the community with an opportunity to relax from the daily tension and enjoy some of the great artists of the 1940's.

During Doak's presidency the Raleigh Woman's Club aspired to assist all members of the community, especially the underprivileged. In particular, the Woman's Club found a room and job for an unwed expectant girl, Edith Young, and gave her moral and financial support. Doak advised Edith to move home and help out her mother, because her mother deserved a better life than the poverty she was forced to bear.⁴⁰ The Woman's Club members also made regular visits to hospitals, prisons, jails, shut-ins; gave a Christmas party for underprivileged teenage girls; and led a campaign which prevented the building of a new bus terminal on Hillsboro Street.⁴¹ The members opposed the proposed location of the terminal which would have placed it one block from their Club House.⁴²

Doak also used her position as club president as a soapbox to voice her opinions on the war raging in Europe. In

an article entitled "President's Message," in the February 1941 issue of the Raleigh Woman's Club publication Club News, she illustrated what Americans had to protect and be proud of:

"A spiritual heritage, the most precious gift from our forefathers. A people's government conceived by heroic men determined to be free. A great people, over 132,000,000 souls of many faces and creeds. A vast wealth found in our natural resources from sea to sea. A hopeful future, to leave to our children and to generations unborn."⁴³

In addition, she theorized that after the war was over women would have an important role creating "...sentiment for the right kind of a peace when this holocaust is over."⁴⁴ Doak was so successful and popular as president of the Raleigh Woman's Club that the club dedicated its YearBook to her in 1941.⁴⁵ Other projects sponsored by the Raleigh Woman's Club during Doak's presidency included: sponsoring institutes on crime, delinquency, and international relations; providing a club for teenage girls in a local mill village; sponsoring the Clare Tree Major Children's Theatre of New York with a profit of \$555; and operating a tuberculosis preventorium for seven weeks, caring for twenty-five children.⁴⁶

Her two years as president of the Raleigh Woman's Club had been happy, successful and full of hard work. She had succeeded in bringing cultural events to the people of Raleigh and in showing them the needs of those less fortunate in the community and the self-fulfillment they could obtain by helping these people. She had also attempted to show her

fellow citizens that they had a nation of which they could be proud and hold up to other nations as an example to be followed.

In addition to working with the Raleigh Woman's Club, Doak also was involved on the state level with the NCFWC and with the Federation's Legislative Council, which reported to the North Carolina General Assembly on legislation which directly effected or was of concern to the women of North Carolina. The Federation and the Legislative Council both labored for the betterment of the community in areas of cultural, environmental, health, economic, and legal improvements. The NCFWC set the tone for activity in its member clubs throughout the state and kept a check on their progress and problems.

Doak first became active in the NCFWC in the early 1920's when she joined the Raleigh Woman's Club.⁴⁷ She began her relationship with the NCFWC by encouraging the organization to endorse a survey by the State Public Welfare Department to determine the status and needs of welfare work for blacks.⁴⁸ This was the beginning of her drive to influence the Federation towards the needs of all persons in the community. Her most monumental task for the NCFWC began in June 1941 when she accepted the office of executive secretary. She worked five days a week, from 9:00am until 1:00pm at an office in the Carolina Hotel on such duties as preparing newspaper releases

on club activities and editing the monthly North Carolina Clubwoman.⁴⁹

During her first few years as executive secretary of the Federation, much of the work she did centered around different aspects of the war. In 1942 she was a leading force in gathering support for the National Youth Administration (NYA) for North Carolina through letters and newspaper articles.⁵⁰ The NYA had been set up to train boys for work that was essential to national defense but that could also be of use in civilian jobs.⁵¹ School authorities were responsible for selecting the students to participate based on need and scholastic ability. Nationally over 300,000 students were able to return to school due to the financial assistance the NYA provided.⁵² The students usually worked in libraries or school offices and the money enabled them to continue their education during financially troublesome times.⁵³ Doak received a citation in 1943 from J.B. Folger, State Director of the Salvage Program for "...excellence of publicity in promoting the program in the Federation."⁵⁴ She also received a citation in 1945 from the American Cancer Society for her great work in cancer education while working as editor of the North Carolina Clubwoman.⁵⁵ Other war programs she endorsed included the sale of \$150 Roosevelt Memorial E. Bonds in 1945, which provided care for sick or wounded soldiers, and the Victory Collection of Canned Food sponsored by the United

Nation's Relief and Rehabilitation Administration.⁵⁶

After the war Doak urged North Carolina clubwomen to support programs that would help the children of war ravaged countries. Two such programs were a collection of fabric to help clothe the children of Greece in 1946 and the sponsorship of American Overseas Aid, a United Nation's Appeal for Children Campaign.⁵⁷ She was manager of this latter campaign which raised \$55,000 between April 1948 and the fall of 1949, the largest amount raised for overseas relief by any state federation of women's clubs.⁵⁸

Federation work during the 1940's also included local concerns of the community. In 1945, at Doak's suggestion, the Federation began a birthday remembrance program which provided birthday gifts for children in correctional institutes.⁵⁹ The year 1945 also saw the beginning of a two-year project by both the North Carolina and General Federations of Women's Clubs to discover whether or not the needs of the youth were being met in the community and if not, to determine what could be done to meet them.⁶⁰ Doak was the coordinator between the press and the Wake County March of Dimes during the 1946 campaign.⁶¹ Her last official duty as the Federation's executive secretary was to compile a fifty page history of the State Legislative Council since 1909.⁶² She finally resigned from the NCFWC in August 1951 after more than ten years as executive secretary.⁶³ In her resignation letter she

explained that she had been suffering from poor health, had just had a throat operation, and felt that she could not give the office the time and energy the Federation deserved. She still wanted to work as a volunteer, and requested that she be listed as the Federation's historian.⁶⁴ Doak received a number of letters from women expressing their sorrow over learning of her resignation.

Doak's retirement from Federation work did not last long, however. In August of 1952, just one year after resigning from the office of executive secretary, she was asked to chair a committee to, "...compile facts about Federation giving the development through the years, the past accomplishments and the objectives ahead."⁶⁵ By 1962 she had completed three volumes of a sixty year history for the North Carolina Federation entitled "Toward New Frontiers."⁶⁶

NCFWC members revered her as a strong leader of the club and a shaping influence in its progress. During her association with the Federation as a member and as executive secretary, she helped focus the attention of North Carolina's women on the needs of the community. She tried to highlight the poor conditions with which underprivileged segments of society were faced and urged Federation members to improve those conditions. She also kept the Federation active in relief efforts during World War II and constantly promoted the importance of health research and education. Doak believed

that the Federation's primary goal should be to improve society for all citizens and she did much to spread this idea to all Federation members.

Doak's association with the women's clubs in the state extended to the NCFWC's State Legislative Council. The Council had been organized in 1920 under the sponsorship of the NCFWC to "...coordinate the legislative interests and efforts of statewide women's organizations in order to present a united front to the Legislature..."⁶⁷ In 1921, while representing the Women's Christian Temperance Union at a State Legislative Council meeting, Doak accepted the post of council treasurer, a seat she held for over forty years.⁶⁸ The council's membership included such organizations as the North Carolina State Nurses Association, the North Carolina Association of Jewish Women, and the North Carolina Federation of Business and Professional Women's Club.⁶⁹ During her years in office as treasurer, Doak helped gather support in the State Legislature for the passage of the following acts: Workmen's Compensation Act, the Australian Ballot, state aid for public libraries, state child labor laws, the establishment of correctional institutes for children of all races, and jury duty for women.⁷⁰

Her membership in the Raleigh Woman's Club, the NCFWC, and the State Legislative Council made Doak a popular figure in the public eye. Her reputation as a woman who worked hard

for the organizations with which she was involved and who succeeded in those endeavors brought a flood of invitations from organizations throughout the state. The requests and appointments included memberships on the advisory board of the Salvation Army in 1941 and on the Raleigh Advisory Committee of the National Youth Administration in 1942.⁷¹ During the 1940's she also served as Vice-President of Health Publications Institute, Inc., a non-profit corporation set up to develop, publish, distribute, and evaluate educational material for use in health work.⁷² The organization's accomplishments in 1949 included distribution of 168,797 copies of health education materials in 27 states and 3 foreign countries; production of a pamphlet on planned parenthood; and work on posters and pamphlets on subjects such as prenatal diet and rabies control.⁷³ From 1940-1943 she served as a member of the Board of Directors of the Wake County Tuberculosis Association.⁷⁴ She also accepted appointments to the Committee on Enrollment of Student Nurses of the North Carolina League of Nursing Education in 1946, and membership on the Board of Directors of the North Carolina State School for the Blind and Deaf from 1949-53.⁷⁵ Another honor came in 1954 when she was asked for the second year to present diplomas at the North Carolina School for the Blind in Raleigh.⁷⁶

Doak believed that one of her responsibilities as a

Christian and as a good citizen was to try to improve society for all citizens. She thought this could be achieved through such improvements as better health conditions, more opportunities for minorities, better working conditions for laborers, and community awareness. She saw organizations such as the Raleigh Woman's Club and the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs as vehicles through which she could achieve her goals. Not only could these clubs help improve the world, they were also instrumental in giving women power and new roles in society. Women gained greater opportunities because, "Through organization they became well-informed individually and powerful collectively."⁷⁷ Other groups saw her activity and success with these organizations and invited her attention to their programs. Her pride and sense of duty kept Doak from turning down many of these requests and made her one of the most active members of her community.

CHAPTER VIII

COMPARISONS AND EVALUATIONS

In order to better understand Frances Renfrow Doak and her place in North Carolina history, it is helpful to evaluate some of her contemporaries. To legitimize an evaluation of Doak comparisons to other innovative women of her era are necessary in determining her importance and influence in North Carolina. In addition to recounting her life's activities it is essential to evaluate why these activities make Doak an important figure. What makes her stand out among the thousands of her contemporaries as an engaging and influential personality in the history of North Carolina. By surveying other influential personalities of her era, Doak's importance emerges.

Mrs. Johnetta Webb Spilman is an excellent North Carolina personality with whom to begin comparisons. Born in the early 1880's, Spilman grew up in Chowan County, North Carolina. She received an early introduction to politics from her stepfather who was active in the local precinct and often took her along while working at the polls. In the process, she became aware of many of the injustices of the political process and, therefore, felt strongly about the importance of good government. One particular personal contact with injustice occurred when the Webb family spoke up for a black man who had been elected to public office but then arrested and sent to

prison on perjury charges. The incident took place in 1898, a very tumultuous time in North Carolina race relations. A strong Democratic campaign based on white supremacy was being waged at this time and few people believed in racial equality. The racial motivation of the incident outlined to Spilman the importance of justice for all people.¹ Spilman held a rather idealistic view of government's goals, seeing the institution as a righter of wrongs.²

Spilman received her formal education at Franklin Junior College in Virginia and Strayers Business College in Baltimore. Being the youngest of seven girls, she may not have felt as much pressure as her older sisters to settle down and get married, and, therefore, felt freer about pursuing a career. She succeeded in obtaining both marriage and a career; marrying J.B. Spilman, treasurer of East Carolina Teacher Training School, and teaching in Chowan County before deciding to enter politics. In 1924 she sought her first political position as precinct chairman. At the time she lived in Greenville with her husband and three children. She hoped that as precinct chairman she would be able to motivate women to vote. She knew that if women felt voting was a responsibility they would be more likely to get out and vote.³ In 1932 Spilman ran for State Senate and later confessed relief over not winning. Although she relished the idea of being a State Senator, she disliked the idea of having to

leave her family in order to go to work in Raleigh.⁴ In 1936 she worked as campaign manager for Clyde Hoey's gubernatorial bid. She focused strongly on organizing the women of the state to vote for Hoey.⁵ In August of 1936 Spilman was elected vice-chairman of the Democratic Executive Committee but later resigned in order to accept the position of Unemployment Compensation Commissioner.⁶

Several of Spilman's personal traits made her an accepted and successful woman in the political arena. Her experience as a teacher gave her a command of the language which was helpful in political speaking, persuasion, and advancement in any position.⁷ Her education at Strayers Business College gave her the business skills that were valuable in supervising others and running a political campaign.⁸ Sandra Peek sums up Spilman's success the following way: "As Mrs. Spilman's career in politics demonstrates, graciousness and social finesse, skills learned by a lady in the Southern tradition, aided her in realizing her potential."⁹

Similarities between Doak and Spilman can be seen in their political experiences. Although Spilman was more personally involved in politics than Doak, such as running for state senate, they both worked to get women involved in politics and to get worthy candidates elected to public office. Both women were able to balance a family with a career, thus proving that a woman could do both - she did not

have to choose one over the other. Before their time it was believed that a woman could either have a career or a family, but not both. Doak and Spilman proved this false and did it with such grace and style that women, and some men, looked up to them as the new ideal of the Southern Lady.

Another influential North Carolinian of this era is Harriet Morehead Berry. Born in Hillsborough in 1877, Berry received her education at State Normal and Industrial School, graduating with honors in 1897.¹⁰ In 1899 she returned to school to take a two year commercial course which helped her get a job as stenographer to Dr. Joseph Hyde Pratt, mineralogist for the North Carolina Geological and Economic Survey at Chapel Hill.¹¹ The survey was especially influential in encouraging the building of better roads. Berry spoke in eighty-nine counties between 1919 and 1921 on the importance of good roads. Her work brought an increase in the membership of the North Carolina Good Roads Association from 272 to 5,500 and an increase in funding from \$2,000 to \$12,000.¹² Her work also helped get the 1921 road law passed which established a powerful state highway commission and established North Carolina's commitment to a state system of highways.¹³ Berry also worked for the Greensboro Daily News as editor of the Department of Industries and Resources where she campaigned for better schools and the benefits North Carolina offered industry and tourism.¹⁴ In 1924 she became

secretary of the North Carolina Credit Union Association. While working at this position she encouraged farmers to form local cooperatives and pool their money to create a fund from which members could borrow money at an interest rate lower than that of banks.¹⁵ This experience in working with farmers prepared her for a job as editor of Market News for the North Carolina Department of Agriculture.¹⁶ She ended her working career with a ten year appointment as state superintendent of savings and loan associations.¹⁷

Although Berry did not have Doak's experience working for political candidates, there are several similarities in their professional careers. Both women had business training which helped them get work as stenographers in the business world, Berry in state government and Doak with a leading law firm. Both were very determined women who believed in themselves and their abilities. They also each had careers that dealt with the state government's approach to agriculture and the plight of the farmers during rough times. Each woman used every experience to better herself and further herself in her career. Both were respected by the men they worked with and that respect was rewarded with requests and appointments of prestige. Berry and Doak did much to prove the capabilities of women in North Carolina during the first half of the twentieth century.

On the national level the most famous and prestigious

woman of this time was Eleanor Roosevelt. As first lady she projected the image of a strong, self-assured woman who was concerned about the world in which she lived and was willing to work to improve it. American women began to see Eleanor Roosevelt as a model for their own lives. Doak was one of these women who respected and admired the first lady.

Born in New York City on October 11, 1884, Eleanor Roosevelt grew up during an era that had very definite ideas about female roles.¹⁸ Roosevelt was not content with these domestic ideals, being more interested in helping those less fortunate than herself. This changed, however, when she married Franklin Roosevelt and felt more pressure to live up to the image expected of a wife of a wealthy up and coming politician.¹⁹ During the early years of her marriage Eleanor Roosevelt was not a feminist; she did support woman's suffrage, however, but only because her husband did. She believed that it was a wife's duty to share her husband's interests and to support his beliefs and causes. Her position on women's roles began to change when she began working in a canteen during World War I. She realized the extent of troubles in the world and that women could play a role in helping solve these problems.²⁰ A second event which influenced her changing attitude towards women's roles was Franklin Roosevelt's traumatic paralysis. Since her husband was not able to go out and physically make the political

contacts he needed, Eleanor Roosevelt became his personal representative.²¹ She began to establish herself as a political leader devoted to social reform. Both men and women alike respected her as a leader and organizer.²² Her personal involvement in the outside world opened her eyes to what the United States, and especially women, needed. Her aristocratic lifestyle had sheltered her from the realities of the outside world.

One of the problems she felt all Americans could work to eradicate was war. She was strongly opposed to war and in 1943 made a trip to the Pacific to get a first hand look at its effects.²³ While on this trip she made a radio address in New Zealand in which she described her hopes for the future:

"...a world which is peaceful because people have enough to eat, shelter for themselves and their families, enough clothes to wear, and above all, work to do which will pay a decent living wage. We want a world which is peaceful because all people have hope - hope that they can grow and build increasingly for themselves the kind of life of which they deserve."²⁴

She believed world peace was possible and that a world peace organization would be a necessity in achieving such an idealistic goal.²⁵

Eleanor used her position as first lady to promote her ideals and bring to the attention of the nation those causes she felt most worthy. She made sure that her husband heard the plights of those she felt needed the most help.²⁶ Among

her strongest causes were the advancement of women in politics and the workplace, social reform for the poor, and civil rights for black Americans.²⁷ After Franklin Roosevelt's death, Harry Truman realized the value of Eleanor Roosevelt's support. She had a large following of blacks and liberals, two groups Truman needed if he were going to be a successful president.²⁸ Truman appointed Eleanor Roosevelt as one of America's delegates to the United Nations.²⁹ When John F. Kennedy became president he appointed her to chair a commission on the status of women.³⁰ She had established a reputation as a woman who was well-informed on the day's events and whose opinions were highly valued.

Doak admired Eleanor Roosevelt and felt she would go down in history as a great woman.³¹ The two women both believed that war was unnecessary and that world peace was possible. Each saw the intelligence of world leaders and their abilities to negotiate as ways to avoid going to war. They also believed in the value of a world peace organization to assure that war would no longer be used as a means through which nations would try to solve their disputes. They also had similar ideas on the value of women's work in changing society for the better. All people deserved a fair chance in life and the government should make sure that this was a reality not a dream. They did realize that things could not be changed over-night and that to be effective women should not take too

radical a stance. Both Doak and Roosevelt were hopeful for a better future without being too idealistic or too radical. They knew it would be a long hard road but they felt the journey was worth making.

How did Doak view the roles of women in her lifetime and what kind of role did she envision for herself? She had some definite ideas on what women should be working for and how they should be treated. Her beliefs on just how far women should venture into the workings of society were governed by these very definite ideas. Although she felt strongly about the importance women could have in society, she realized most men had certain limits regarding what they felt was acceptable for women. Having been raised a "Southern Lady" with the awareness of what men would accept as suitable behavior placed limits on Doak's views of women's liberation and equality. She wanted women to go far in life but not by using radical means or if their home and family would suffer.

A letter written by Doak to her friend Dr. Guion Griffin Johnson in February 1954 regarding a Chi Omega award ceremony sheds light on how she perceived women's roles during her lifetime. Dr. Johnson was a historian, sociologist, and journalist who had received her Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina and had held professional positions such as Research Assistant for the Institute for Research in Social Sciences at UNC, 1924-27, member of the Carnegie Study of

Negros in America, 1939-40, and staff member of the study of St. Helena Island, South Carolina, 1928-29. Dr. Johnson also was active in the North Carolina Federation of Women's Clubs, serving as first vice-president 1950-52 and as a member of the board from 1948 to 1958.³² Doak wrote to Johnson about her concern for the slow march women had made in public service. Doak believed progress had been slow due to the lack of motivated and effective women like Johnson herself.³³ She hoped the young women at the ceremony would be excited at the opportunities ahead of them and join in public service. She also voiced her hopes for women's future opportunities: "If we can only show young women the contrast in the opportunities women had thirty years ago when handicapped (in our State) with poor colleges and no ballot with the opportunities awaiting today's women, perhaps they will think and bestir themselves."³⁴ In this letter Doak revealed her hope for women to become more involved in society. She believed that the young women of the 1950's had greater opportunities than her generation to further themselves and thereby improve society. She hoped they would realize this and take advantage of it. In this letter Doak related her feeling of urgency that the young women of the day take action rather than sit back and enjoy the status quo.

The following year Doak gave a speech entitled "Outline: Women's Part In The World Today" for the Junior Service League

in Chapel Hill.³⁵ In the speech Doak described the opportunities women had in the past and offered suggestions as to what they could hope to achieve in the future. Doak began her speech with an answer to the question concerning woman's part in the world today: "It is what she would have it."³⁶ Doak said that women still had the opportunities they were born with such as falling in love, getting married, having children, and raising them. These were all roles worthy of praise but at one time they were all a woman could expect out of life. Once in a while a woman would step out of this role but not very often. She described changes which began early in the nineteenth century with the opening of educational opportunities to women. The suffrage fight resulted in gaining legal recognition of women and the popularity of women's clubs brought women into the civic arena and gave them the confidence to venture into other professions. The two wrongs that Doak felt women still faced in the professional world were being paid less for equal work, and not obtaining the opportunities they deserved in government and political offices. Doak told the young women it was their job to keep the world going forward and to work for world peace. She concluded, "The door is wide-open. It may at times be slowly closed in her face or slammed shut, but being a woman, if she wants it opened, she can and should find the way."³⁷

This speech also shows Doak's feelings of urgency for the

young women to get involved in the new opportunities that were opening up to them. She believed that education was an important foundation to a woman's success. With educational opportunities and determination Doak felt these young women could go far in life. She voiced her dismay over unequal pay and the lack of political and government careers for women, which show she felt women were deserving of equality with men. Her speech was not radical in tone but rather like that of a mother urging her daughters to reach for the stars.

We have seen by her own words where Doak felt women on the whole fit in society, but as a woman what did she feel was her most important role and how did others see her as a woman in the mid 1900's? In 1962 Doak sent Chester A. Porta a letter along with her amended biography that the Historical Record Association in Hopkinsville, Kentucky was publishing in one of their books, William S. Powell's North Carolina Lives: The Tar Heel Who's Who.³⁸ In the letter she made a clear and revealing assessment of her life: "All of my adult life I have had to decline top offices and turn down appointments because of responsibilities my husband and I assumed for members of our families, and because we put owning a home and giving our children university education ahead of all else."³⁹ She described her home, children and happy marriage as, "...the personal triumphs I could never have risked on the possibility of making a brilliant career at something

else."⁴⁰ Clearly Doak felt that her personal life took precedence over any career moves. Although she felt strongly about the work she did, she always put the concerns of her family first. Doak realized that the time had come for women to take a more active role in society, yet she felt the Southern tradition of maintaining a strong family unit was important and should not be abandoned. In her own life she tried to keep a balance between work and family, but the needs of her family often governed the extent of her work.

Many people admired Doak for her political and social work and her strong family bonds. In 1951 Doak's daughter, Douglas Doak Safran, wrote several influential North Carolinians asking them to comment on her mother's life for an article that was to be written by Ms. Yarbrough for a Charlotte paper.⁴¹ The responses show how Doak's contemporaries felt about her. Mrs. Frank Smethurst, a columnist and former editor of the News and Observer Woman's Page, used the word 'facets' to describe Doak's years of service because she felt, "...Frances Doak's life and service have reached out in gem-like radiance to inspire others, often sowing without reaping, but shining still on the right side of everything women have tried to bring about for the good of this state and this community, particularly for the good of the people of this state and nation..."⁴² Smethurst also hailed Doak as a, "...wise counselor and an effective

campaigner even before women gained the franchise."⁴³ Smethurst's letter listed some of Doak's accomplishments she felt were most noteworthy. Those included were her work as "... 'the watchdog' of the true and real objectives of federated clubwomen, the keeper of the light, ..." for both the Raleigh and state clubs; her fights for child labor laws and prison reforms; her fine record with the Legislative Council; her annual Christmas presentations for both the men and women at Central Prison; and her vigorous work for the Democratic party.⁴⁴ Smethurst's letter concluded, "We have worked together in every campaign since woman suffrage 'turned us in'. We haven't always won, but women like Frances Doak never quit."⁴⁵ Smethurst touched on Doak's club, political and social work as all having great value. She saw Doak as a woman who worked hard for what she believed in and never gave up a fight she felt was worth fighting.

Capus Waynick, the American Ambassador in Managua, Nicaragua, also responded to Douglas Doak Safran's request with a letter of his impressions of Doak. Waynick commented on her finesse in the political arena in the following way:

"She is a great politician, transcending in this field the artifices of politics. She has such capacity for personal conviction that every position she takes in politics is fortified by a sincerity and an inner compulsion that disdains anything like cheap expedience. A stubbornly determined Democrat, she would make a wonderful dictator."⁴⁶

Waynick also praised Doak's honesty and the way in which she

was such a strong defender of persons she believed in and had compassion for. Waynick concluded his letter, "It's a great privilege for anyone to be blessed with that loyalty of your mother's."⁴⁷ Waynick's letter showed that he saw Doak's political work as her greatest achievement and admired her both as a person and for the work she had done. Doak wrote Waynick that she was very pleased with the things on which he had commended her, and was especially glad that he had mentioned her involvement in the women's movement. Doak felt that since the old guard had thinned out there were fewer women crusading for their rights, but hoped the youth would see the movement as an obligation and, therefore, persevere.⁴⁸

W. Kerr Scott also wrote a letter containing his assessments of Doak. Scott felt that Doak's service to her fellow man, especially those less fortunate, was most praiseworthy.⁴⁹ He felt that her sympathy for these people and her great desire to help them made her work so successful. Scott believed that her work for education, prison reform, and labor laws would especially be remembered by the people of North Carolina. He personally admired Doak and wrote that, "Her enthusiasm and sincerity have been a source of real inspiration to me, and I greatly value her counsel and friendship."⁵⁰ According to Scott, Doak's greatest accomplishments were in the work she did to improve the lives

of all persons. Her desire to help those less fortunate achieve a better quality of life was most commendable.

There are several important factors that influenced women and their changing roles in Doak's lifetime, education being one of the most important. In 1890 in the south Atlantic and south Central states there were 250,000 more illiterate women than men.⁵¹ Women realized that to have any voice in their world the first step, and the most easily acceptable to men, was to educate themselves. Southern Progressives agreed that an educated population was the best way to improve society.⁵² Once women moved away from home and family, they began to be introduced to a whole new way of looking at things. They learned a new way of being women. College faculty members held progressive ideas including the belief that women had the right to be independent and self-supporting.⁵³ Charles Duncan McIver, the first president of the [North Carolina] State Normal and Industrial School, even went so far as to say that the quickest way to elevate the entire southern population was by educating white women.⁵⁴ Women's education began to be seen as an extremely important factor for social well-being.

Another factor which played a part in changing women's roles was the technological improvements of the twentieth century. Today's conveniences such as the refrigerator, running water, and prepared food had a major impact on women's

lives. Such advancements freed them of many of the duties that were expected of them as wives and mothers.⁵⁵ Women now had time to pursue careers and work for social reforms. Fewer children also gave them more time for outside activities. With more people living in cities and towns, there was no longer the need for a large family to help out on the farm.⁵⁶

All of these changes effected Doak and the way she saw her role as a woman in society. Sallie Southall Cotten called this woman's movement "a call for emergence from selfish individuality into broader service to the world."⁵⁷ Doak had specific ideas concerning what roles women could and should play in all aspects of society. She felt that women had a certain responsibility to take advantage of their newly found citizenship to work for social improvements for themselves and everyone around them. She also realized that there were certain limits to the opportunities women were offered and they should work to loosen these boundaries. She was not radical in these ideas, however; she believed women should work for better opportunities but that they should retain their traditional "Southern Lady" characteristics while doing so. This is what Doak did, she worked for all types of social improvements yet maintained the aura of being a genteel Southern lady. This made her work more acceptable to the mainstream, since she did not appear radical. She worked for causes she believed in, yet kept the concerns of her family at

the head of her priorities. People admired her for the way she could work unoffensively for prison reform and opportunities for blacks. Doak fervently hoped that women would take advantage of their expanded opportunities and use them to make social improvements for themselves and their fellow man without betraying the traditional image of the Southern Lady.

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