

**GOVERNOR ALFRED M. SCALES, n.d., 1885-1889**

Arrangement: By record series, then chronological

Reprocessed by: James Mark Valsame

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**Alfred Moore Scales** (November 26, 1827-February 9, 1892), lawyer, legislator, congressman, soldier, governor, and banker, was born in Reidsville, Rockingham County. His parents were Robert H. Scales and Jane W. Bethel Scales. His grandfather Nathaniel Scales was a longtime representative to the North Carolina House of Commons from Rockingham County.

Scales attended the Caldwell Institute, a preparatory school for boys in Greensboro. In 1845 he entered the University of North Carolina, where he studied law but never completed work for a degree. The university awarded him an honorary LL.D in 1889. After leaving school Scales read law under Judge William H. Battle, and was admitted to the bar in 1852. In the same year he was solicitor for Rockingham County. After serving in the House of Commons in 1852 and 1856-57, Scales, a Democrat, was elected to the Thirty-fifth Congress (March 4, 1857-March 3, 1859). Following this term in office, Scales represented North Carolina as a presidential elector on the Democratic ticket of John C. Breckinridge and Joseph Lane.

With the secession of North Carolina from the Union on May 20, 1861, Scales volunteered for Confederate military service. Enlisting as a private in Company H (the Rockingham Guards), Thirteenth Regiment of the North Carolina State Troops on April 30, 1861, he was elected captain of the company on the same date. On October 12, 1861 he was promoted to colonel of the Thirteenth Regiment, succeeding fellow North Carolinian William Dorsey Pender of Edgecombe County. Scales commanded the regiment at Yorktown, Williamsburg, the Seven Days' battles, and Fredericksburg. During the action at Chancellorsville, VA on May 1-3, 1863, he was wounded in the thigh. While convalescing at home, he was appointed brigadier general on June 13, 1863.

Scales' brigade, consisting of the Thirteenth, Sixteenth, Twenty-second, Thirty-fourth, Thirty-eighth North Carolina Troops, was assigned to Pender's division in Ambrose P. Hill's Third Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. At the Battle of Gettysburg on July 1-3, 1863, the brigade participated in the action of all three days. Scales was himself wounded by a shell fragment during an engagement on July 1<sup>st</sup> near Seminary Ridge, in which every field officer in the brigade except one was disabled. After making a complete recovery he commanded the brigade at the battle of the Wilderness, the battle of Spotsylvania, and at the siege of Petersburg, but was home on sick furlough during the retreat to Appomattox Court House and the surrender of the army.

After the war Scales resumed his law practice in Greensboro. He was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives in 1866 and served until 1869. In 1874 he was elected as a Democrat from the Sixth District to the Forty-fourth Congress, and was subsequently

returned to the four succeeding congresses, remaining on Capitol Hill until 1884. In Congress Scales served as chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs and participated in the exposure of fraud in the Indian Bureau. In 1884 he was nominated for the governorship and ran against the anti-prohibitionist platform of Republican Tyre York of Wilkes County. After defeating his opponent by a majority of 20,000 votes, Scales resigned his seat in the House of Representatives on December 30, 1884.

Scales served a rather uneventful four year term as governor from January 21, 1885 to January 17, 1889. However, he did make an effort to call attention to the poor condition of transportation facilities in the state, especially railroads and public highways. He also pushed for more and better schools and suggested that the federal government use surplus funds to aid state education.

During the remaining years of his life, Scales lived in Greensboro where he was president of Piedmont Bank. He served as an elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Greensboro and as moderator of the Synod of North Carolina, the first layman in the state to hold that office.

Scales married Kate B. Henderson, daughter of Colonel Archibald Henderson and granddaughter of Chief Justice Leonard Henderson of present-day Vance County. Their only child, Kate Lewis Scales, was adopted. Scales died in Greensboro and was buried in Green Hill Cemetery.

Source: Downs, Alan C., "Alfred Moore Scales," Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, Volume 5, P-S, William S. Powell, ed., Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994, pp. 290-291.

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