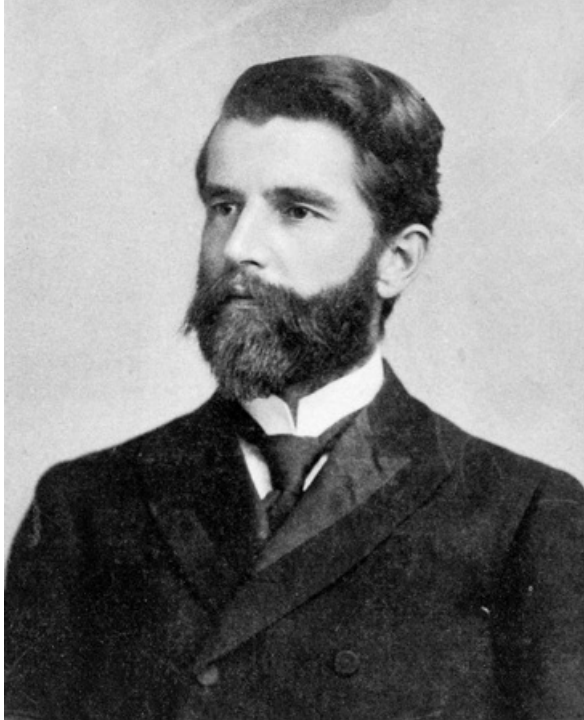


Caucasian ^[1]

Caucasian

by James L. Hunt, 2006



Photograph of Marion Butler. Image from the State Archives of North Carolina. Call number N_70_6_33. ^[2]The *Caucasian* was one of the state's most prominent reform publications in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Founded in Clinton in 1884 as the weekly organ of the local [Democratic Party](#) ^[3], the paper in 1888 acquired as editor [Marion Butler](#) ^[4], an aggressive young [Sampson County](#) ^[5] schoolteacher and future [U.S. senator](#) ^[6]. Butler, its chief editor for the next 25 years, transformed the *Caucasian* into a mouthpiece for the [Farmers' Alliance](#) ^[7] and one of the dominant voices of the North Carolina People's Party.

In 1893, after the paper's original plant was burned in a suspicious fire, Butler changed its venue to Goldsboro in an effort to expand readership. Following the [Populist-Republican Fusion](#) ^[8] triumph in the election of 1894, he moved the paper again, this time to Raleigh. For a brief period it functioned as a daily, the only [Populist](#) ^[9] paper of its kind ever published in the state. The *Caucasian* was also the only North Carolina paper and one of a few in the United States to promote populism continuously from 1892 until the party collapsed in the election of 1900. Mirroring Butler's political career, the [newspaper](#) ^[10] generally endorsed [Republicans](#) ^[11] after 1904, although it supported Theodore Roosevelt's Progressive Party campaign in 1912 before finally folding as a result of financial problems in early 1913.

At its peak in the mid-1890s, the *Caucasian* had more than 10,000 subscribers from all sections of the state and across the nation, from Maine to California. Between 1888 and 1913 it championed the full panoply of Populist and Progressive causes, including agricultural cooperatives, government ownership of [railroads](#) ^[12], the subtreasury plan, federal control of the money supply, a federal income tax, more money for education, and the direct election of U.S. senators. Ironically, the *Caucasian* was comparatively liberal on racial issues, opposing the Democrats' [disfranchisement](#) ^[13] legislation of 1898-1900.

Reference:

James L. Hunt, "Marion Butler and the Populist Ideal, 1863-1938" (Ph.D. diss., University of Wisconsin, 1990).

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