

Bledsoe, Moses Andrew ^[1]

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Moses Andrew Bledsoe, state representative and state senator, was born in [Franklin County](#) ^[2] of English ancestry. His father was Aaron Bledsoe, farmer; his mother was Elizabeth Radford. Reared on land granted his ancestors by the king, he attended the local schools and finished his education at Herndon Academy at age seventeen. A year later he worked as a clerk in a store in Henderson, but soon he moved to [Raleigh](#) ^[3]. There he studied law and was admitted to the bar in June 1844. In addition to practicing law, he formed a partnership with S. H. Young and became a merchant and also farmed near Raleigh.

Interested in local affairs, Bledsoe served gratuitously as county overseer of the public roads. He became chairman of the [Democratic](#) ^[4] county committee and actively campaigned for the Democratic candidate in the presidential elections of the 1850s. He was elected to the state House of Commons in 1856. During the next years, Bledsoe advocated the ad valorem tax, which proposed that all property be taxed at its true value. This measure was designed to tax slaveholders on the value of slaves as property and was an alternative to the existing system by which slaveholders paid only a poll tax for each slave. In the party conventions prior to the 1860 election, the [Whigs](#) ^[5] endorsed the ad valorem tax and the Democrats opposed it. Bledsoe chose to hold to his principles and ran as an independent for the state senate; he was elected after a hard campaign.

In 1856 the [General Assembly](#) ^[6] appointed Bledsoe a director of the Psychiatric Hospital; for six years he served as chairman of the board, managing the institution. In 1861, after North Carolina's secession from the Union, he was appointed by the governor as a director of the [Cape Fear and Deep River Transportation Company](#) ^[7], which position he held until 1865, when all state offices were declared vacant. During the [Civil War](#) ^[8], Bledsoe served first as quartermaster of the state and then as assistant adjutant general under General Lawrence Branch, General [John F. Hoke](#) ^[9], and General [James Martin](#) ^[10]. In 1863 he relinquished this second position in order to work collecting taxes for the [Confederate](#) ^[11] government.

Bledsoe was the [Wake](#) ^[12] and [Franklin](#) ^[2] County [Democratic](#) ^[4] candidate for the state senate in 1868 but was defeated. The Democrats gained control of the General Assembly in 1870 and appointed Bledsoe a director of the North Carolina Penitentiary. He was elected chairman of the board and directed the construction of the buildings begun under the former Republican board. He ran for elective office only once more and was defeated for a seat in the U.S. Congress in a three-way race with [Josiah Turner, Jr.](#) ^[13], and [Joseph J. Davis](#) ^[14]. He continued to practice law in Raleigh until the last years of his life.

Bledsoe was married twice, to Martha C. Hunter of [Wake County](#) ^[12], and then to Donna Holt of Enfield, who survived him.

References:

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John Nichols, *[Directory of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina for the Session Commencing Nov. 19, 1860](#)* ^[16] (ca. 1860).

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[Dictionary of North Carolina Biography, University of North Carolina Press.](#) ^[23]

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