Governor Joseph Melville Broughton at his desk in the Governor's Mansion in Raleigh, 1941-1945.
Image from the North Carolina Museum of History.
retirement plan and a salary raise for teachers, extension of the school term to nine months and addition of the twelfth grade, state aid to public libraries, reorganization of and larger appropriations for state hospitals and correctional institutions, aid to agriculture, organization of the Civilian Defense program, establishment of the state Medical Care Commission, and removal of the sales tax on food for home consumption. As North Carolina's first "regional governor" in several years, Broughton was active in regional and national affairs. He served on the executive committee of the National Governors’ Conference and participated in National Planning Association efforts for the postwar period. In 1944 he was nominated for vice-president when Roosevelt refused Wallace a second term.

Broughton maintained many interests. From 1941 on, he served on The University of North Carolina Board of Trustees. He was president of the North Carolina Engineering Foundation, which supported the School of Engineering at North Carolina State College. He served as president of the Roanoke Island Historical Association and was a member of the Raleigh Board of Directors of Wachovia Bank. He continued an extensive law practice and engaged in many business activities. He acted as general counsel for the Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corporation and the North Carolina State Ports Authority, both of which he had helped establish.

In 1948, Broughton ran for the U.S. Senate and defeated William B. Umstead, who had been appointed to fill the unexpired term of Josiah Bailey. Broughton took the oath of office on 31 Dec. 1948 and served the few months until his death. Throughout his career, he represented those not connected with the monied interests and the so-called machine, and he never lost a political contest.

An ardent Baptist, Broughton served as Sunday school superintendent at Tabernacle Baptist Church in Raleigh and taught the Men’s Bible Class there for twenty-five years. When he went to Washington, he organized the Broughton Bible Class at the First Baptist Church.

On 14 Dec. 1916, Broughton married Alice Harper Willson, daughter of William Willson, grand secretary of the Grand Lodge of Masons of North Carolina. She, like her husband, had been born, reared, and educated in Raleigh. They had four children, Alice Willson, Joseph Melville, Jr., Robert Bain, and Woodson Harris. Broughton died of a massive heart attack and was buried at Montlawn Memorial Park in Raleigh.

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Asheville Citizen, 7 Mar. 1949.


Durham Morning Herald, 10 Nov. 1940, 7 Mar. 1949.


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