

## MONUMENT

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Daughters themselves, and the children who would disrobe the statue. Then they marched back toward the courthouse and mounted a four-foot high stand to await the speakers.

Rev. A.H. Perry, himself a veteran, said a prayer, and then Henry London introduced the orator. North Carolina Chief Justice William Clark took what we might call a “small-p populist” approach to the issues of the day. Clark ran as a Democrat but won support from Populists and Republicans. He attacked the tobacco and railroad trusts and supported reforms such as popular election of U.S. senators, income tax and women’s suffrage. Known as the “Fighting Judge,” Clark stirred up controversy as he labored for “socialized democracy” with a fervor that presaged the New Deal. Yet for his audience of Lost-Cause warriors on the day of Chatham’s unveiling ceremony, he tucked into a states’-rights stemwinder.

The hopes of our perpetuity as a government and the maintenance of our liberties as a free people depend upon upholding this guarantee of the rights of each state, in its integrity. There are a few good men who panic stricken at the result of the war of 1861-5 have declared that “state’s rights died at Appomattox.” Nothing is farther from the truth. [...]

It is true that there is the fourteenth amendment which was passed solely (if indeed legally adopted at all) to secure the rights of the newly emancipated colored people. The monopolies and plutocracy of this country quickly seized upon it as a device to draw all jurisdiction of all questions concerning them from the state courts, whose judges are mostly elected by the people, and responsible to them, into the subordinate federal courts whose judges are in most instances selected by the great capitalistic combinations and hold for life. “Like sappers and miners,” to quote the words of Mr. Jefferson, they have been at work night and day to wrest the fourteenth amendment into something very different from its true meaning, and to make it repeal both the tenth and eleventh amendments and, indeed, nullify the whole spirit of the constitution.

Should this succeed, there would be no longer use for state judges or state legislatures, and even the acts of Congress would be set aside at will by judges appointed for life at the selection of Wall Street.

Clark’s reputation as a liberal and forward thinker on social and economic issues resonate still in the literature that recalls him. Yet he conformed to the damning social conventions of the time in his recognition of the color line. In 1920, Clark would deliver the commencement address at historically-black St. Augustine’s School of Raleigh, and utter the following:

It is true that our colored people wear “the shadowed livery of the burnished sun” and there is no social equality between the races, but the latter condition exists in every country

where there are two or more distinct races of people. The colored people do not wish social equality, and the white people would not tolerate it, and there the matter ends. It is not a matter of debate, but is settled and not a cause of strife like the divergence in language, in religion, in national aspirations which exists in nearly every other country.

The Chief Justice of North Carolina came to Chatham county for the unveiling of the Confederate monument and held forth with a populist-tinged but recognizable “states’ rights” argument against the U.S. constitutional amendment that enfranchised African-American voters and guarantees due process and equal protection under the law. This author will, following up in the next issue of Chatham County Line, draw a connection between the Chatham memorial and race, and some may protest. But let’s make it clear—the featured orator on the day of the monument’s dedication put forward the very arguments that held fast against racial equality until the civil rights movement cut them down to size.

A good orator finds ways to connect whatever cause he or she is addressing to past causes that resonate with the audience, and Clark went all the way back the Regulators and the Battle of Alamance Creek:

In short, I hold with that grand old patriot, James Hunter, who declared after the battle of Alamance was lost, “I believe that the people are as much master now as ever.” That was in 1771. At Mecklenburg in May, 1775, at Halifax in April, 1776, at Philadelphia in July, 1776, his declaration was taken up and repeated and its echoes have been rolling down the years ever since and will never cease.

Clark went on to speak in some detail, discussing the history of the various companies in which Chatham’s men served. The RECORD reports that he spoke for 50 minutes.

Following Clark’s speech, Bettie London “delivered a few appropriate remarks” in her capacity as president of the Winnie Davis Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy. Oran A. Hanner, a veteran of the 26th Regiment, made “an appropriate response” on behalf of the veterans. The RECORD did not reproduce their remarks. Then it was time for the unveiling.

Twenty children dressed in white, each bearing a red shield with the regiment and letter of a company in which Chatham men served, tugged red streamers attached to the top of the statue. The white covering “began to fall gracefully, first exposing to view the bronze soldier and then gradually the entire monument.” London goes floral describing the audience reaction:

A cheer from the upturned faces and the “rebel yell” from the veterans greeted that bronze figure as it was first seen, standing there as a silent sentinel with his empty musket at parade rest. And then tears filled the eyes of many veterans and others as that life-like figure recalled to their minds the “long ago” with all its sad associations. The unveiling

of that bronze soldier was like the raising of one dead, and like uplifting the shroud that covered the corpse of some loved one long since passed away!

A dinner followed for veterans in the corridors of the courthouse, then a meeting of the Leonidas J. Merritt Camp of United Confederate Veterans. The agenda included elections and the presentation by the Daughters of “crosses of honor” to selected veterans. Reading of verses, short speeches and then singing wrapped it all up, with the final number, “When the roll is called up yonder” echoing in the afternoon as the meeting adjourned.

London estimated the crowd at 6,000 strong and “only three men at all under the influence of liquor.” He called it “the grandest occasion ever known in Chatham” and suggested that the crowd would have been larger if not for the threat of rain earlier in the day. In any event, some of the young people of the town took advantage of the gathering to socialize. The RECORD reported the following:

The dance which was given in the old Academy building Friday evening by the young men of the town complimentary to the visiting young ladies was largely attended and was one of the most successful affairs of the kind that has taken place here in several years. The music was furnished by the Chapel Hill string band.

No doubt some of the visitors left Pittsboro immediately following the ceremonies, but it’s no stretch to imagine many of them remaining in town at least an evening, visiting with old friends, spending time together perhaps one last time. The Rabbit’s imagination may be overstimulated in seeing a couple or two wriggling free from the chaperones at the Academy building where it stood on the corner of Chatham and Fayetteville Streets, and setting out for a stroll in the meadows beyond the Rectory two blocks southwest, or over to the groves of Kelvin off of West Street.

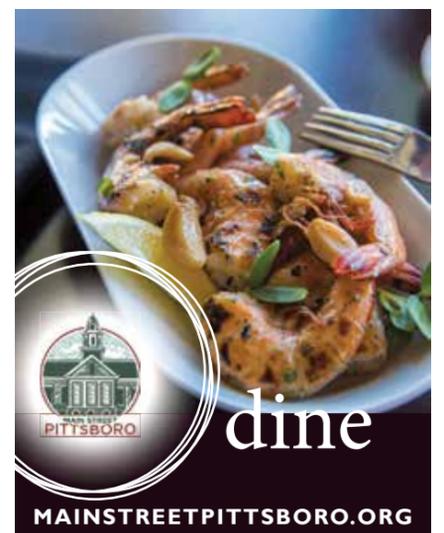
The RECORD had reported the day before on a comet “visible an hour so before daydawn in the sky a little north of east.” In fact, Daniel’s comet appeared for two months in the skies that summer. Maybe a handful of old friends stayed together reminiscing through the night, so they were awake in the early morning hours

to lay eyes on the comet for the few minutes that it rode low on the horizon.

For those who attended the festivities, the occasion must have seemed a wholly right and appropriate way to honor the lives of the veterans and place a final, monumental blessing on their service and sacrifice. But there are two points worth considering before we leave the story on this bucolic scene. First, one fact stands clear from the RECORD’s account—the events occurred on one side of the color line. The newspaper never failed to designate the African-Americans who figured in the life of Chatham with the word “colored,” or some other epithet, but not one reference to a “colored” person appears in the account of the unveiling. And second, the RECORD of September 5 makes it clear that not everyone in the county regarded the monument with the same reverence as London and the veterans. In the second half of this series, we will follow the lines that connect these two points.

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## PADDLERS

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in the middle of the flooded river with no canoe. By the way, cotton holds 100 percent of its weight in water when it gets wet and water wicks away body temperature 25 times faster than air. The kayaker and I carry my 80 pound canoe 100 yards upriver and attempt to paddle out to the two young ladies to rescue them. I feel wasted because of the long carry and the flu. We miss reaching them, but try again and turn over. I manage to pull myself up on a downriver island. Fortunately, my life jacket and wet suit give me some insulation. The kayaker managed to get out on the river bank right after we turn over.

Soon, it starts getting dark, and I am feeling pretty helpless. I can see flashlights moving up and down the river bank to the area where my attempted rescue had failed. A flashlight falls into the river, and I am hoping it is just a flashlight and not someone-else. Cold and shivering, I am thinking that the two young ladies have become hypothermic and probably drowned. The flashlights were people trying to find the bodies. While all this is going on, a world class paddler who teaches at North Carolina State University has been playing on the river and become aware that a rescue is taking place approximately eight miles upriver. He swings by my house and grabs a kayak I did not like and drives to the rescue site. His first rescue is the person who had been carrying

the flashlight and was hanging onto the river bank. Then, he paddles out to the two young ladies with their blue and white, UNC cotton warm ups. He says to them, “I teach at NC State and do you have a problem with that?”. One by one, he gets them on the back of the kayak and paddles to shore. Then, he comes looking for me. It is about 9 p.m. and totally dark. Out of the darkness, I see a large light coming toward me. He says to me “I know you do not like this kayak, but hang on to the back and kick”.

I acknowledge there are a lot of boaters out there that do not have a clue and are putting themselves and others at risk when they take on paddling rivers at flood stage. I know there are many very skilled, whitewater paddlers who have been paddling the Haw River for over 30 years when it has been at flood. It is a shame they are “assumed” to be incompetent because the opposite is true. River rescue skills are an essential part of any whitewater paddler’s skill set and instead of viewing these experienced, whitewater paddlers as a liability, they should be viewed as a resource.

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**Pittsboro Holly Days**  
**November 18 - December 15**  
 Visit downtown Pittsboro for a month of family-friendly holiday celebrations!

**Tree Lighting Celebration**  
**Sunday, November 18, 4-6 p.m.**  
 An old-fashioned Christmas celebration featuring school choirs, carolers, Santa Claus, shopping, and more. Festivities culminate with the lighting of an 18-foot Christmas tree at the historic Chatham County Courthouse. Businesses are hosting special events all day. Santa Visitation starts at 3:30! **Bring your cameras and phones!**

**Small Business Saturday**  
**Saturday, November 24, all day**  
 Come shop small and support locally-owned and grown businesses! Special events happening throughout town.

**First Sunday Artisan Fair**  
**Sunday, December 2, 12-5 p.m.**  
 An artisan market featuring crafts, music, and food. Shops, restaurants, and the Historical Museum host special events.

**Pittsboro Holiday Parade**  
**Sunday, December 9, 3 p.m.**  
 Marching bands, dancers, holiday revelers, and Santa Claus parade through downtown in this annual tradition. *Brought to you by the Town of Pittsboro*

**Miracle on Hillsboro Street**  
**Saturday, December 15, 2 Shows**  
 The trial of the century occurs at the historic courthouse, where Santa Claus is on trial. Enjoy audience participation, local actors and the real Kris Kringle. **Come root for a Miracle on Hillsboro Street!**

Presented by  **PITTSBORO BUSINESS ASSOCIATION**

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