

Monuments and Memorials in Randolph County

By L. McKay Whatley Jr.

Randolph County has a rather meager history of any kind of monuments or memorials. The county has no privately-erected monuments anywhere to battles, events or public figures; there are 12 state Highway Historical Markers, including one to Governor Jonathan Worth, which is on the Salisbury Street right of way on the courthouse property.¹ This program has been operated since 1936 by the Office of Archives and History in the Department of Cultural and Natural Resources, and has no connection with and requires no input from the county.

The Sheriff's Department has a Memorial Wall listing every Randolph County Sheriff. There are no memorials or even public lists anywhere on county property of the names of county commissioners, justices of the peace, Clerks of Court, Registers of Deeds, or other elected officials. Group photographs of the boards of county commissioners since 1984 are displayed on the wall leading to the county manager's office at the Randolph County Office Building so that visitors will have a historical image of those who made the decisions that have helped Randolph County get to where it is now, but no group photographs of the boards of commissioner prior to 1984 have not been found.

There are and have been a number of Veteran's Memorials erected in the county both on public and private property. There are no known memorials or monuments to veterans of the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, Mexican War, or Spanish-American War (although there is, on the grounds of the State Capitol, a monument to the first casualty of the Spanish-American War – Worth Bagley, the grandson of Governor Jonathan Worth). There are, or have been in and around the Randolph County Courthouse, monuments and memorials to veterans of the Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and subsequent national conflicts.

Taking them in reverse order, they are –

The Randolph County Veterans Memorial



¹ <http://www.ncmarkers.com/Results.aspx?t=Search&x=&c=Randolph&f=All>

For many years the Pilot Club of Asheboro honored county veterans by placing paper bag luminaries on the sidewalks in front of the 1909 Courthouse. Beginning around 1993, Frank Rose, organizer of the Randolph County Veterans Council, together with members of the local Vietnam Veterans chapter, proposed building a Randolph County Veterans Memorial on the courthouse grounds. This was evidently triggered by the emotional popularity of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall which opened on the National Mall in Washington, DC, in 1982. This was one of the first war memorials in the United States to list the names of all servicemen and women who were casualties of a war. Their original plan of the veteran organizations was that donations from the public and contributions from family members could fund the memorial, but this did not prove feasible. At the Randolph County Commissioners' meeting held in January 1995, the commissioners approved spending \$31,700 for construction of a granite monument to be built on the courthouse lawn. At the request of County Commission Chair Phil Kemp and County Attorney Alan Pugh, Superior Court Judge Russell G. Walker, Jr. approved the final placement of the 900 square-foot memorial in a grassy area at the entrance to Courtroom C. Rose stated that the memorial was "open to all honorably discharged Randolph County veterans who served in any branch of the military since 1898 during war or peace." At that time Rose stated that there were 11,310 living veterans in Randolph County, comprising more than ten percent of the population.

The monument was designed to look like the veterans memorial in Hillsville, Virginia, and was built by Wiley Brothers Marble and Granite Works. When dedicated on Veterans' Day 1995, it included the names of 3,333 living and deceased Randolph County veterans whose families or descendants applied for inclusion and paid a fee to have the name engraved on the granite panels. 400 additional names were added on Memorial Day 1996. In 2003 the names of some 20 soldiers killed in action were added, and in 2004 two additional granite panels were added to provide space for as many as 1800 more names. The Randolph County Commissioners approved spending \$8,439 for the expansion in November 2004. At that time it was clarified that to be added to the wall a veteran "must be a native of Randolph County, a county resident for at least two years, or have been inducted locally with active military service of at least two years;" members of the National Guard and Reserves are eligible only if called to active duty. The new panels were dedicated with 544 new names on Memorial Day 2005. Frank Rose stated at that time that the memorial honored 3,899 military personnel. Names have subsequently been added so that the memorial currently honors more than 3,900 persons, including the names of 165 service men killed in action. It is recognized that this does NOT include the name of every Randolph County casualty of war since 1898.

World War II

A concerted effort was made by North Carolina during World War II to keep track of service men and women and of the casualties of war. A War records committee was appointed with representatives from every county. In 1942 Mrs. Laura Worth, the county historian, was appointed War Records Collector for Randolph County, and Dr. C.A. Barrett, Principal of the Randolph County Training School, was appointed to collect "Negro War Records." Worth and Barrett regularly forwarded materials to the state archives.

Every town had a Wall of Honor; in Liberty and Asheboro, pictures of servicemen were posted in storefronts. In Franklinville a large wooden sign was erected on the baseball field. In Asheboro the names of everyone in service were painted on 4x8' sheets of plywood erected in a grove of oaks at the present location of Wachovia/ Wells Fargo. The



Asheboro (top) and Liberty Walls of Honor during WWII.

newspapers of the time printed short biographies of every serviceman, particularly when killed or wounded, and Miss Worth clipped those and created scrapbooks for the Army, Navy/ Marines and others.

There are also handwritten casualty cards for 113 men and women reported killed or missing in action. Reports of deaths were slow to be released by the military and trickled out into public knowledge. By late 1943 enough deaths had accumulated that the Asheboro Rotary Club decided that some official memorial needed to be erected, and the club paid for a wooden plaque to be constructed by Lucas Industries, builder of furniture for the Army. That plaque was dedicated at the courthouse in a public ceremony on April 28, 1944. Names of those who died in service were engraved on bakelite plates and affixed to the plaque, which was inscribed –

IN MEMORIAM

Dedicated to those men and women from Randolph County who have given their lives in service of our country during World War II.

Erected by the Rotary Club of Asheboro.

The Courier Tribune article about the plaque stated that it would be updated to “contain the county’s war dead to date.” But as the war continued, the names outgrew the space on the plaque. So another, larger plaque was made, and it was suggested that the smaller plaque could be converted into a memorial for the dead of the First World War (this was evidently never done). By the end of the war the plaque had 75 names affixed to it; but the official count as released by the Army and Navy lists in 1946 showed that there were at least 135 Randolph County residents killed in action or who died in service. And that list evidently did not include all of those missing in action. But evidently there was little interest in finalizing the list of war dead, and neither plaque was ever completed as a World War memorial. When the court house was renovated in 1964, the plaques were given back to Joe Ross, historian of the Asheboro Rotary Club. He stored them in the basement of his building at 100 Sunset Avenue, where I found them in 1998. They are now in the collection of the Randolph Room.



Several other projects began locally immediately after the war to memorialize those who fought and died in Europe and the Pacific.

Blue Star Highways

During World War I, families with relatives in service flew flags with a gold star for each loved one fighting overseas. In World War II (and still today) a blue star is used to designate a home with active military members; a gold star replaces the blue star to indicate the home of immediate relatives who die in service. In 1950 the Garden Club of North Carolina designated US 64 as a “Blue Star Memorial Highway,” in “tribute to the National Armed Forces who served in World War II.” Bronze markers designed by the National Council of Garden Clubs were erected in Asheboro and Ramseur.



Asheboro Memorial Park

The Asheboro Memorial Foundation, Inc. acquired 12 acres of property in 1945 to build “An Everlasting Memorial to our Service Men and Women;” “A Tribute to Our Heroes of World Wars I and II.” Officers of the foundation were W.C. Lucas, President; A.I. Ferree, Vice President; Cleveland Thayer, Secretary; H.A. Millis, Jr., Treasurer; Roy Cox, Fundraising Campaign Chair; C.C. Cranford, D.W. Holt, J. Frank McCrary; S.B. Stedman; and W.L. Ward, Directors. Groundbreaking was held June 15, 1946, and grading work on the \$100,000 project began in August; the 235,000-gallon pool opened in June 1948. The contractor was A.H. Guion Co. of Charlotte, with the bath house built by S.E. Trogdon and the Cox-Lewis Hardware Co. A substantial element of the fundraising campaign were the proceeds from the annual Kiwanis Easter Monday Horse Show at the county fairgrounds. A bronze plaque in honor of World War veterans was installed at the wading pool, but when that feature was later removed, the plaque was also. The Asheboro Memorial Foundation transferred ownership to the City of Asheboro in September 1968; at that time the use of the pool was also opened to black citizens.



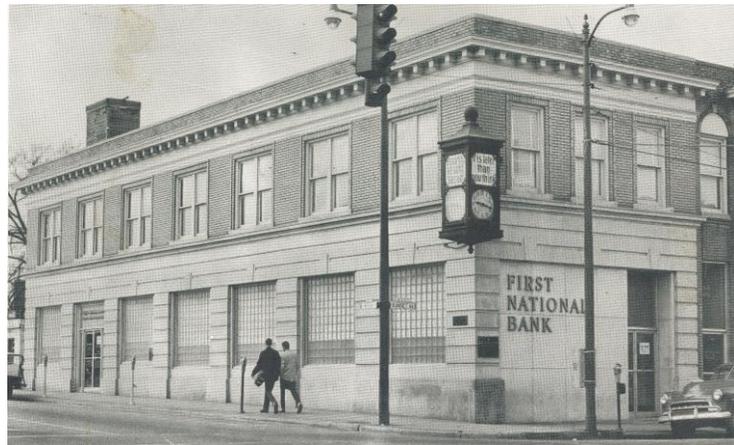
Memorial Park sign (top) and pool dedication, 1948.

The First National Bank Veterans Clock

On July 4, 1946, a bronze clock mounted on the corner of First National Bank at the southwest intersection of Fayetteville Street and Sunset Avenue was dedicated as a World War II Memorial. The dedication brochure states that “This beautiful and very living Memorial we are unveiling today was made possible by the graciousness of Mrs. J.B. Ward, Jr.”

The clock was made by the O.B. McClintock Company, which made street clocks, but specialized in bank clocks because they also made bank alarm systems.

There was a mahogany Seth Thomas master clock inside the bank, and the mechanism of the clock repeated that time, with Westminster chimes striking each quarter hour. The iron frame of the clock was covered by a bronze and copper skin with stained glass panels customized for each locality. The four faces of the Asheboro clock had three slogans:



"Honoring All Who Served"/ "Lest We Forget" / "It's Later Than You Think"

The last was from a poem by Robert W. Service, published in 1921 about an author in Paris –

Lone amid the café's cheer,
Sad of heart am I to-night;
Dolefully I drink my beer,
But no single line I write.
There's the wretched rent to pay,
Yet I glower at pen and ink:
Oh, inspire me, Muse, I pray,
It is later than you think!



The dedication brochure goes on to state –

"Lest We Forget Those Who Served..."

This big and useful clock is dedicated to those who served in World War II in any capacity whatsoever. As the years go by, may its chimes bring comfort to those whose sons did not come home. The victory is won. Now, we must not forget our obligation to those who shared in its cost.

The ideals on which America was founded still oppose aggression. Our sons and daughters of Randolph County took a large part in preserving America's freedom. We still believe that all men are created equal. To pay tribute to them, we regard as a privilege."

Asheboro and Randolph County's memory for this kind of thing being not much more than a generation long, the clock was dismantled in 1968 when First National Bank was rebuilt. The clock was given back to the American Legion, where it laid outside until it was vandalized and stolen by metal scavenger thieves. The wooden master clock hangs on the wall of the bar inside the Legion "Hut".



The First National Bank clock lies derelict behind the American Legion Hut.

World War I

The first veteran's memorials listing the names of veterans were erected privately during World War I. In Asheboro a list of the members serving in Company K, the local National Guard unit, was displayed on a painted wooden sign erected in the small park facing Fayetteville Street north of the Bank of Randolph. When a soldier was reported killed, a star was painted by his name. This list did not include all of the more than 1600 Randolph County men who served in World War I, but only those in Company K. Similar public lists were maintained by local municipalities such as Ramseur and Franklinville. When the war ended, these sign boards were not maintained and eventually were taken down.

Randolph County's official contribution to the war effort was Company K, the local National Guard contingent which had been formed in 1911. More than 200 Randolph and Montgomery County men were members of the company, which had also been involved in General Pershing's chase of Pancho Villa in 1916. On September 29, 1918, the 30th Division's was involved in the Battle of Bellecourt. The men of the 120th Infantry breached the famed Hindenburg Line, German's last frontier defensive stronghold. Twenty-seven of the men of company K were killed, and eighty-seven seriously wounded. The last survivor of Company K, Ernest Bunting of Asheboro, died in 1984. North Carolina sent more than 104,000 men to Europe, and more than 1,600 were killed. Few World War I memorials were ever erected in North Carolina, and none in Randolph County until after the Second World War.



Company K in front of Randolph County Courthouse, 1916 or 1917.

The Civil War



The Randolph County chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy was organized in 1906 at the suggestion of Mrs. E.E. Moffitt, the daughter of Governor Jonathan Worth. “The paramount interest of the organization” was to erect a monument to Confederate veterans in Asheboro. The ladies raised money for the statute through numerous public events: “Bazaar” sales, a “Biblical cantata,” an “Old Maids’ Convention,” a “Batchelor’s Congress,” a “Spinster’s Return,” a “home talent concert,” and through sales of post cards.



Elvira Evelina Worth Moffitt

Their final appeal to the general public was published in *The Courier* of 26 Feb 1909: “We have set our hands to the sacred task of erecting in the town of Asheboro, near our beautiful new courthouse, a monument to commemorate the bravery and valor of the Confederate Soldiers of Randolph County who fell in the War between the States.”

“We would that all men in looking upon it might feel that it was a fit expression of the glory of the dead and of the love and reverence of the people for whom they died. It will speak to generations yet unborn of the simple loyalty and sublime constancy of the soldiers of Randolph county who fought without reward and who died for a cause that was to them the embodiment of liberty and sacred right.”

More than a hundred individual and business donors contributed to the final cost of \$1700. The monument was ordered through the “Blue Pearl Granite Company” of Winston-Salem. The base of Mt. Airy granite is 9’6” square and 22 feet tall. The 6’ tall statue itself was purchased from the W.H. Mullins Company of Salem, Ohio. It was Number 5608 in their catalog, “Confederate Infantryman/ Six Ft. high from top of base to top of head. One-eighth plate base 20x20x5 inches. Made in sheet copper, antique bronze finish; also in sheet bronze.” The company’s 1913 catalog featured a full-page photograph of the Asheboro statue atop its granite pillar.



W.H. Mullins catalog

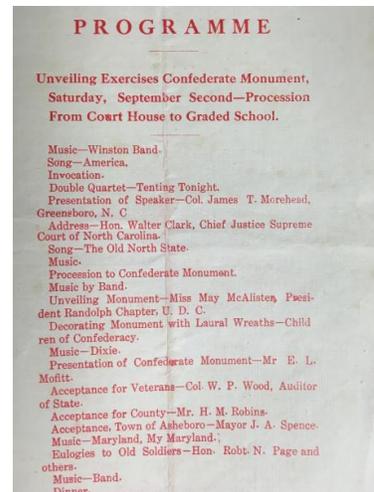
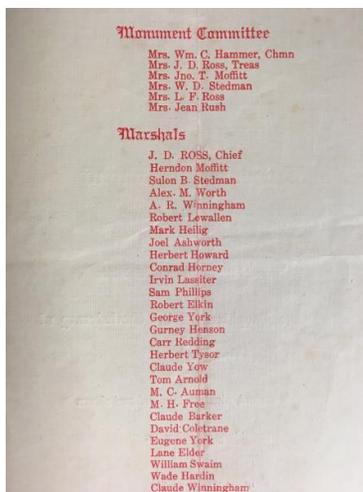
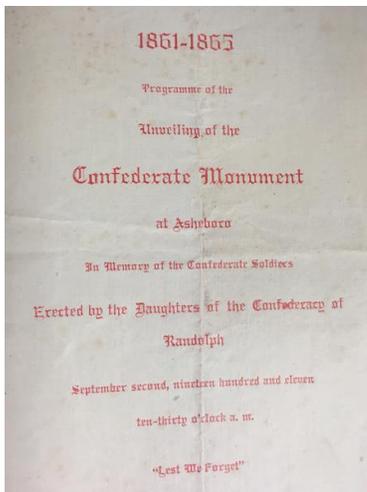
The Mullins Company sold statues of all varieties of soldier, both Union and Confederate, officer and enlisted man. After World War I they sold many more modern tin soldiers to memorials around the country. One page of the 1913 catalog prints a poem, “The Blue and the Gray”:

By the flow of the inland river,
 When the fleets of iron have fled,
 Where the blades of the grave-grass quiver,

Asleep are the ranks of the dead;
 Under the sod and the dew,
 Waiting the judgment day;
 Under the one, the Blue;
 Under the other, the Gray.

No more shall the war cry sever,
 Or the winding rivers be red,
 They banish our anger forever,
 When they laurel the graves of our dead.

Under the sod and the dew,
 Waiting the judgment day,
 Love and tears for the Blue,
 Tears and love for the Gray.



Program for dedication of Confederate monument

The monument was unveiled Sept 2, 1911, at the two-year-old county courthouse at a public event attended by an estimated 3,000 persons (about twice the population of Asheboro at the time). The keynote speaker was North Carolina Chief Justice Walter M. Clark, a Confederate veteran and author of the Regimental History series *N.C. Troops*. Congressman Robert N. Page delivered a “Eulogy to Old Soldiers,” and the President of the Randolph Chapter of the UDC, Miss May McAlister (the granddaughter of Dr. John Milton Worth), unveiled the monument. It was “presented by” E.L. Moffitt, the President of Elon College; “accepted for the veterans” by the State Auditor, W.P. Wood; “for the county,”

by county attorney H.M. Robins; and “for the town” by Mayor J.A. Spence. Bands played, songs were sung, and the UDC hosted a dinner on the grounds of the Presbyterian Church across the street, at which 250 watermelons were cut and served to the crowd.

Chief Justice Clark’s speech was a lengthy and meticulous account of the regimental histories of each of Randolph County’s companies. “To some this recital of bare facts will seem tiresome, but to these veterans they recall memories that will never die. The ‘days of our youth are the days of our glory.’ Bear with me then as I recall the battles, marches and sieges of not long ago.”



Walter Clark, N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice.

He closed by saying “From what I have already said, it will be seen that from the very beginning of the war to its close, wherever there were hardships to be endured, sufferings to be borne, and hard fighting to be done, there the county of Randolph was represented, and represented with honor, in the persons of her gallant sons.” Absent from Clark’s speech was any “waving of the bloody shirt,” or any reference to “the Anglo-Saxon race” (features of many other such dedicatory addresses). Clark’s only overt political remarks concerned the perceived unfairness that southern states were taxed to provide pensions to Union veterans, but not to Confederate veterans – a position that no doubt resonated with the hundred or more Confederate veterans in his audience.

One hundred years later, just before Veteran’s Day in 2011, an additional footstone marker was installed at the monument to correct the misidentification of Company M, the “Randolph Hornets,” as Company D. The marker goes on to note eight additional companies which included large groups of Randolph County men.



Listing of Confederate units on monument and correction marker installed in 2011.

In mid-September 1989, the remnants of Hurricane Hugo swept up from Charlotte and nearly toppled the statue from its granite pedestal. An iron armature inside the sculpture had corroded over the years, allowing the hollow statue (which weighs less than 100 pounds) to flip over. Ad Van der Staak of Van der Staak Restorations of Seagrove, reconstructed the shattered shoe, rifle butt and arm crushed in the fall. The statute was also cleaned and coated with a preservative, under a bid of \$4,880. Cablevision of Asheboro donated half the expense, with the county covering the remainder. Alice Dawson, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, told the newspaper that the statue would have to be known as “Hugo” thereafter, in recognition of his near ‘death’ in the hurricane.



Confederate monument toppled by Hurricane Hugo, 1989; sculptor Ad Van der Staak makes repairs.

Questions I have been Asked:

Is Randolph County's Confederate Monument a monument to White Supremacy?

In my opinion, no. Many other monuments erected at or around the same period were used overtly to advance a racist agenda, but my reading of the record does not find any evidence that this was the case when the UDC planned the Asheboro monument.

Elvira Evelina Worth Walker Moffitt, Governor Worth's daughter, was involved with community improvement projects at all stages of her life. During the Civil War, she organized the women of Asheboro to sew tents out of material woven by the mills in Cedar Falls and Franklinville. During the Spanish-American war she helped establish the Soldiers' Aid Society in Raleigh; during World War I she was a leader in the War Relief Society of Richmond, Va.

Besides being honorary president for life of the Johnston-Pettigrew Chapter of the UDC, she was honorary state regent for life of the DAR. She was an early member of the NC Literary and Historical Association and served as editor of the North Carolina Booklet, its history magazine. She was one of the first to suggest that Asheboro and Randolph County needed a public library; she was a founder of the Randolph County Historical Society and of the Women's Club of Raleigh.

She was instrumental in having a bronze tablet to "Ladies of the Edenton Tea Party – 1774" placed in the rotunda of the state capitol; and she was the chief fundraiser in building the Stanhope Pullen Gate, which stands at the entrance to the grounds of NC State University. When she moved to Richmond to live with her son, she joined the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities and personally launched the movement to organize the Matthew Fontaine Maury Association, presiding just a few months before her death at the unveiling of a monument to America's first and foremost oceanographer. Maury's statue is perhaps the least Confederate of any on Richmond's Monument Avenue, excepting that of Arthur Ashe.

I think Mrs. Moffitt and the UDC members would have agreed with Chief Justice Clark (considered one of the most progressive political figures of his era) that the Asheboro Confederate Monument was first and foremost a Veteran's Monument. It depicts only a common infantry soldier, not any general or divisive political figure. While Confederate history can and has often been co-opted to

advance a racist agenda, and lately has also been hijacked to provide rallying points for domestic terrorism, the history of the Confederacy is unavoidably the history of the American South, just as much as is the history of slavery. Monuments such as ours have been part of the civic landscape of the country for decades, and have now become intertwined with the history of two world wars, civil rights battles, and courtroom drama of all kinds. It may be unintentional that Asheboro’s Confederate monument faces South, while the norm was to site them facing resolutely North. I prefer to see it as a subtle and intentional reference to Randolph County’s reluctant participation in the war, and to the constant desire of its men to come back home.

The NC General Assembly in July 2015, passed the “Historic Artifact Management and Patriotism Act,” (Senate Bill 22), which prevents the removal of monuments such as the Confederate Statue in Asheboro. But protestors in Durham recently ignored the law and pulled down a similar statue at the old Durham Courthouse. If such a law did not “protect” our monument, what would be a valid argument against removing or destroying it?

For an apt comparison out of history, consider the actions of the Allied forces occupying Germany after World War II. Directive 30, issued in May of 1946, directed the “de-nazification” of Germany by ordering the removal of all National Socialist emblems and insignia, and prohibited the “design, erection, installation or other display” of any monument, memorial, poster, statue, edifice or highway name marker “which tends to preserve and keep alive the German military tradition, to revive militarism or to commemorate the Nazi Party, or which is of such a nature as to glorify incidents of war...”

However, Article IV of the Directive states:

“The following are not subject to destruction and liquidation:

- a. Monuments erected solely in memory of deceased members of regular military organizations, with the exception of paramilitary organizations, the SS and the Waffen SS.
- b. Individual tombstones existing at present or to be erected in the future, provided... the inscriptions... do not recall militarism or commemorate the Nazi Party.”



Monument for World War I and II soldiers in Luhmühlen, Germany. Photo by Jan Luca Schmedt, CC BY-SA-3.0

I would argue that the Asheboro Confederate monument was “erected solely in memory of deceased members of regularly military organizations”, albeit members who served in a losing cause in rebellion against the constituted government of the United States of America. If it was removed at the request of any individual or group which is offended or disagrees politically with the history of the monument, I think a precedent would be created that would make it difficult to refuse an identical request made by any anti-Vietnam War activists.

But don't people have a point? Isn't Confederate history racist history?

Yes. Despite many modern attempts to re-write history, the war that began in April 1861 was fought by Southerners to defend and protect their "peculiar institution." Attempts to recast and redefine the roots of the war began in Reconstruction and have continued ever since, particularly during the Jim Crow era in the South. The only reason for states to leave the federal Union was to keep slaves in bondage. "State's Rights" was an excuse put forward to maintain the system of Negro slavery. That was wrong then, and we fought a war to end it. The United States won. The Confederacy lost.

The more pertinent question in regard to this particular monument is whether Confederate history is Randolph County history. My opinion as a Randolph County historian is that our local history was significantly different in many important ways from traditional Confederate history. And our unique local history has never been recognized, commemorated or memorialized in ways that would give it the educational value it deserves.

I've been told by those who object to the Confederate statue that their biggest objection is to the inscription, "Our Confederate Heroes." I think this is a valid point. There were many more heroes in the conflict than just Confederate heroes. Randolph County history of the period is full of examples.

Our county had one of the lowest slave population percentages of any North Carolina county east of the mountains. It had one of the highest percentages of "free people of color," former slaves who had been emancipated before the war years. This was due to the fact that Quakers historically made up the predominant religious group in the county, and the Friends had been in the forefront of manumission and abolition activities in North Carolina since the 18th century. The Quakers from Randolph and Guilford counties were in the forefront of those smuggling slaves out of the South on the Underground Railroad. It is perhaps no surprise that there are no Quaker monuments, as Friends did not even mark their own graves with more than an uninscribed rock until after the Civil War.

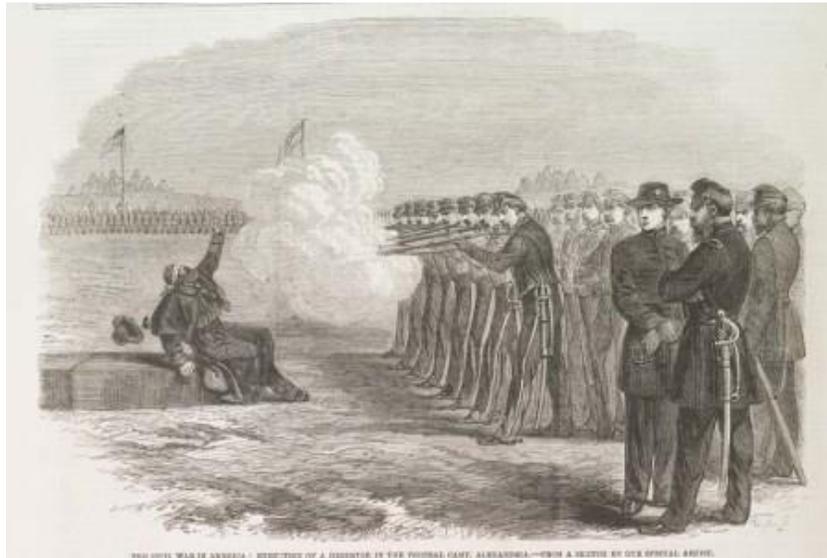
When the war did finally come, Randolph County residents were reluctant to embrace it. When the state legislature called for a referendum on secession, Randolph County's state senator Jonathan Worth actively campaigned against it. The Greensboro Patriot editorialized, "The 28th of February, the day which perhaps will decide the fate of the Union, is close at hand.... Let every man then who loves his country be at his post... There is a battle to be fought. A battle upon the result of which hang the destinies of this Nation. The enemies of our Union have been marshaling their forces. The hand is already uplifted to strike down the flag of our country! Union men, to the rescue! To the rescue!"

On that election day, the voters of North Carolina narrowly rejected the secession Convention. But in the Piedmont, the traditional Piedmont Quaker counties overwhelmingly voted for the Union. Chatham County voted against by a margin of 15 to 1; Guilford by a margin of 25 to 1. In Randolph, editor E.J. Hale exulted in the Asheboro Herald of March 3, 1861: "Listen to the thunder of Randolph!" The final vote of 2,579 against to 45 in favor of secession was the largest in the state – 57 pro-Union voters to every one pro-Confederate secessionist. That lopsided proportion struck newspapers in eastern North Carolina as fishy... the *New Bern Progress* [quoted in the April 11, 1861 Greensboro Patriot], headed its editorial "Something Wrong."

But whatever it was continued to be wrong throughout the war. Several times each year during the war, government troops were sent from Raleigh to restore civil order and arrest deserters and "outliers," or draft dodgers. The county was under martial law for much of the war. In the election of 1864, the anti-Confederate Peace Party or "Red String" candidates won every elected office in the county, from Confederate Congress to Governor to Sheriff. Again, the state newspapers cried foul. But that was the true voice of Randolph County, despite sending more than a thousand of its boys off to war.

Historian Bill Auman points out that Randolph County in 1861 had the third-lowest volunteer rate in the state. The enlistment rate for North Carolina as a whole was 23.8%; in Randolph it was 14.2%. As the war went on, conscription acts were passed by the CSA to force men into service; 40% of the state's draftees in 1863 came from the recalcitrant Quaker Belt counties, with Randolph contributing 2.7% of its population to the draft that year. North Carolina as a whole contributed about 103,400 enlisted men to the Confederate Army, about one-sixth of the total, and more than any other state. But this does not mean those troops were all loyal Confederates; about 22.9% (23,694 men) of those troops deserted, a rate more than twice that of any other state.

The Confederacy did not publish statistics on desertion, but at least 320 of Randolph's nearly 2,000 men deserted from their regiments, with 32 deserting twice, five deserting three times and one deserting five times! Forty-four of these deserters were arrested, 42 were court-martialed, and at least 14 were actually executed. So many deserters and outliers hid in underground dugouts, with their camp fire smoke seeping up out of the dirt, that their rugged mountain hideout took on the name Purgatory Mountain- wreathed in the fires of Hell. Even when they returned to Confederate duty, there was no guarantee that these men would stay. 196 captured Randolph county Confederates took the Oath of Allegiance to the Union before the end of the war, with 67 joining the Union Army.



A case in point is the service history of Frank Toomes, great-grandfather of Richard and Maurice Petty. William Franklin Toomes (Jr.) was born October 25, 1838 in the Sumner community of Guilford County, less than a mile north of the Randolph County line. Frank followed his father into the blacksmithing trade, and when the Civil War broke out, both of them were working as blacksmiths, probably at one of the factories in Franklinsville. Male employees of the Deep River cotton mills and ironworks qualified as exempt "indispensable" employees until late in the war, but at some point the regional Enrolling Officer decided the cotton mill could do without one of its blacksmiths. When the Enrolling Officer came for him, Frank Toomes hid, submerged in the mill race, breathing through a straw. But on December 2, 1863 Frank Toomes was captured and forcibly drafted into Company E of the 58th North Carolina Infantry. Within days Toomes was sent to the Tennessee western front, and within days, he deserted. On or around February 1, 1864, 23-year-old Frank Toomes entered the Union lines, surrendered and was taken prisoner to Nashville. On February 12th, he took the Oath of Allegiance to the United States and was assigned to Company H of the 10th Tenn. Cavalry regiment. There Toomes apparently became a good soldier, as he was promoted to 1st Duty Sergeant of Company H on July 16, 1864, and then to Quartermaster Sergeant on June 30, 1865.



There are also numerous stories about Quaker Conscientious Objectors, who even though drafted, refused to bear arms despite humiliation and torture in the army ranks. Thomas and Jacob Hinshaw, Ezra, Nicholas and Simeon Barker, Simon Piggott and Nathaniel Cox, all Friends from Holly Spring Meeting, were forcibly enlisted in the 52nd NC Infantry when they refused to pay \$500 each as an exemption fee. They refused to hire substitutes and they refused to fight, even after being repeatedly “bucked down” – tortured by having their arms and legs bound so they could not move for hours. In camp they were harshly disciplined for refusing to carry guns or participate in military training. An officer wrote that “these men are of no manner of use to the army.” But they were kept in the ranks as virtual prisoners, hands tied and made to march at bayonet point. Finally left on the battlefield at Gettysburg, where they were nursing the wounded, the Quakers were captured by Federal cavalry and imprisoned at Fort Delaware as prisoners of war. A concerted effort by Quakers of Wilmington, Delaware resulted in their pardon and release by Secretary Stanton and President Abraham Lincoln himself.

Perhaps the most glaring omission in the Randolph County narrative of its Civil War history is the story of Howell Gilliam Trogdon (1840-1910), a native of the area south of Deep River between Cedar Falls and Franklinville. The Trogdon family is a classic example of one with divided loyalties; half a dozen served in Confederate uniforms and died on the battlefield or served all the way to Appomattox. Many of those who stayed at home became ring-leaders of the secret anti-confederate Peace movement, the Red String. Reuben F. Trogdon, who in 1866 won the vote for Sheriff and served as Randolph County's first Republican elected official, was said to have been the leader of the Red String during the war. His cousin Howell Gilliam Trogdon, on the other hand, moved to Missouri and became a Zouave in the Union Army. In the seige of Vicksburg, under orders from Ulysses S. Grant, Trogdon led the nearly-suicidal charge against “Stockade Redan,” a Confederate fort. Of the 250 men involved in the charge, only Trogdon and two others made it to the top of the parapet. For his actions in 1863, he was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor – the first North Carolinian and the only Randolph County soldier ever to win that honor. Where is his monument?



Medal of Honor winner Howell Gilliam Trogdon in 1906 with daughters Isabella and Jane.

When I was at Harvard from 1973 to 1977, we took exams in Memorial Hall, a huge Victorian dining hall built in 1869 to honor the 150 or more Harvard graduates who died while serving in the US

Army during the Civil War. We southerners would morbidly joke that Memorial Hall was the country's largest monument to Southern marksmanship, a pointed gibe at the fact that nowhere among the marble tablets inscribed with the names of those dead Harvard boys were to be found the names of the 39 southern graduates who also gave their lives.

Southern monuments aren't the only one-sided stories of that conflict. But perhaps the lesson is that we need to learn from multiple perspectives, and tell many stories, to get the full picture of history. Erasing one side is just as harmful to real education as is ignoring another.



Holocaust memorial, Berlin (photo by Orator, CC BY-SA-4.0)
Conscientious objectors monument, Sherborn, Massachusetts.