

University Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward

Meeting Agenda and Approved Minutes



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Virtual Meeting – streamed on HRWF YouTube Channel

Monday, December 7, 2020

3:30-3:40PM	Call to Order <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome• Roll Call• Approval of Minutes, November 5, 2020 Meeting.	<i>Jim Leloudis & Pat Parker,</i> <i>Co-Chairs</i>
3:40-4:00PM	Barbee Cemetery Project Update Updates from the project co-leads on work completed and a discussion on their proposed community advisory group	<i>Dawna Jones & Seth Kotch</i> <i>Project Co-Leads</i>
4:00-4:10PM	Presentation on <i>Cameron Morrison</i> Dossier Possible vote to recommend name removal	<i>Jim Leloudis</i> <i>Co-Chair</i>
4:10-4:25PM	Discussion on Commission Work to Date Commission discussion on work completed thus far and plans for the next year.	<i>Pat Parker</i> <i>Co-Chair</i>
4:25-4:30PM	Next Steps and Adjourn	

Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward (December 7, 2020)

Approved Minutes

Present: **Commission Members:** Patricia Parker, James Leloudis, Delores Bailey, Larry Chavis, Ronald Harris, Kenneth Janken, Dawna Jones, Joseph Jordan, Seth Kotch, Danita Mason-Hogans, Ariana Avila, Danita Horton, Graham Watkins, Amy Locklear Hertel. Giselle Corbie-Smith, Nicholas Graham

I. Welcome and Introduction

Commission Co-Chair Jim Leloudis congratulated the Commission on completing the semester, welcomed Commission members to the meeting and completed the roll call.

Minutes of the November 5th meeting were approved.

II. Barbee Cemetery Project Update

Chair Pat Parker introduced Seth Kotch and Dawna Jones who would be providing an update on the Barbee Cemetery Project.

Seth Kotch and Dawna Jones presented the following updates to the Commission:

- Site visit conducted by Seth Kotch, Dawna Jones, Anna Rose Medley, and Miriam Chisholm
- Conversation with colleagues at the University of Virginia about a similar project they are undertaking
- Plan to collate information regarding the Barbee Cemetery and the lives of enslaved people who lived at the labor camp as well as information on other labor camps in North Carolina
- Plan to create a community advisory board which will help guide this work by providing input. This board will consist of members of the Clark family, NAACP members, and representatives from other groups.

Co-Chair Parker thanked Kotch and Jones for leading this project. Parker opened the floor for discussion. Discussion centered around identifying local groups focused on reclamation projects, partnership with Kenan-Flagler, and expanding the scope of the project to other local burial sites where enslaved peoples might be buried.

III. Presentation on *Cameron Morrison* dossier

Co-Chair Leloudis presented a dossier on Cameron A. Morrison. A motion to approve and include this dossier into the next recommendation to the Chancellor was moved, seconded, and unanimously carried. Dawna Jones asked if there have been any updates in the process for re-naming buildings and Leloudis responded that in the near future the trustees will lay out a process for re-naming. Graham Watkins asked if there is a goal for when the next recommendation would be sent to which Leloudis answered early Spring 2021 as there is at least one other name that should be bundled with this current recommendation. Leloudis also informed Commission members about a potential National Defense Authorization Act which

would include the creation of a commission to explore the removal of Confederate names from military bases.

Danita Mason-Hogans noted that North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University removed Morison's name from the landscape. Giselle Corbie-Smith mentioned the importance of having this archival research included in an enduring way in the renaming. Jones brought up the possibilities of using the website, social media and technology to make sure people can follow along with the Commissions work and to access this research. Leloudis updated Commission members that the Commission is working with UNC Creative on updates to the website. Delores Bailey asked how the community knows about this work. Co-Chair Parker answered that some of the behind the scenes work of preparing a new website will support in informing the community of the Commission's work.

IV. Discussion on Commission Work to date

Parker transitioned to a discussion and reflection on the Commission's work to date. In February 2020, the Commission received its three-year charge to explore the history of race at the University. In January and February 2021, there is a goal to set priorities for the Commission. Co-Chair Leloudis noted that regarding research, there are voids in the knowledge about the University's relationship to indigenous peoples and the University's relationship with racial slavery. Regarding teaching, there is an opportunity to effectively share these narratives by pulling together research. Parker noted that the Commission is taking on this bold project and could serve as a catalysis for research, teaching, and engagement in other areas. She brought up Delores Bailey's point about ethical engagement and giving this research back to the people to whom it belongs - whether the local community or communities in other parts of the state. The goal in the New Year is to engage with the complexity of the scope of the work, have impact, and identify priorities.

Leloudis discussed the idea of place making and how McCorkle Place has become a space of memory at UNC. Danita Mason-Hogans thanked Parker and Leloudis for their leadership, discussed conducting research on the long-lasting impact of the historical legacy of the University on people native to those lands, and mentioned the idea of partnering with people in the community to gain a better understanding. Parker discussed the importance of developing a process in the New Year to identify priority items. She also noted the potential for facilitated conversations to support this task. Mason-Hogans supported the importance of prioritizing the development of this process.

Meeting adjourned was adjourned at 4:30PM

Attachments: 12/07/20 HRWF Presentation
 Cameron Morrison Dossier

The background of the slide is a photograph of a university campus. It shows a large green lawn with several people sitting on the grass. In the background, there are large, leafy trees and a building with a clock tower. A blue semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the text.

UNIVERSITY COMMISSION ON HISTORY, RACE, AND A WAY FORWARD

December 7, 2020

3:30-4:30PM

Virtual Meeting – HRWF YouTube Channel

Agenda

DECEMBER 7, 2020. FULL COMMISSION MEETING

I. Update on Barbee Cemetery project

- i. Updates from the project co-leads on work completed
- ii. Discussion on the proposed community advisory group

II. Presentation on Cameron Morrison dossier

- i. Possible vote to recommend name removal

III. Discussion on Commission work to date

- i. Commission discussion on work completed thus far and plans for the next year

Update on Barbee Cemetery Project



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

Presentation on Cameron A. Morrison



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

CAMERON A. MORRISON

THE BOT NAMED THIS BUILDING IN 1964 TO HONOR MORRISON, GOVERNOR OF NORTH CAROLINA, 1921-1925



Morrison Residence Hall

- Organized and led vigilantes called Red Shirts in the 1898 white supremacy campaign
- Staked his 1920 gubernatorial campaign on his credentials as an unrepentant white supremacist
- Supported a \$20 million-dollar state bond issue in 1921 to fund the construction of new classroom buildings and residence halls on the campus of the University of North Carolina
- Opposed Black claims on equal rights until the end of his life

Discussion on Commission Work to Date





THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL



CAROLINA
TOGETHER



Morrison Residence Hall

The Board of Trustees named this building in 1964 to honor Cameron A. Morrison, governor North Carolina, 1921-1925.¹

Morrison:

- **Organized and led vigilantes called Red Shirts in the 1898 white supremacy campaign**
- **Staked his 1920 gubernatorial campaign on his credentials as an unrepentant white supremacist**
- **Supported a \$20 million-dollar state bond issue in 1921 to fund the construction of new classroom buildings and residence halls on the campus of the University of North Carolina**
- **Opposed Black claims on equal rights until the end of his life**

Cameron Morrison was born in 1869, the son of Daniel M. and Martha C. Morrison. He was educated in the Rockingham public schools and at a private academy in Ellerbe Springs. Morrison did not attend the University of North Carolina, but he served on the Board of Trustees as an ex officio member from 1921 to 1925 and by appointment from 1929 until his death in 1953. Morrison read law with Greensboro jurist Robert P. Dick and was admitted to the bar in 1892. He had a long career in North Carolina politics, serving in a variety of posts: mayor of Rockingham in the mid 1890s; state senator, 1900-1901; presidential elector, 1916; governor, 1921-1925; member of the Democratic National Committee, 1928; U.S. Senator, 1930-1932; U.S. Congressman, 1943-1945; and North Carolina delegate to the Democratic National Convention, 1924, 1940, 1944, 1948, and 1952.²

Morrison's father, Daniel, served as a private in the Confederate army, but he was, at best, a reluctant secessionist. After the Civil War, the elder Morrison became a staunch Republican, casting his lot with a coalition of Blacks and dissenting whites who advocated equal

¹ The minutes of trustee meetings contain no record of the decision to honor Morrison, but the student newspaper, the *Daily Tar Heel*, referred to the building by name in 1964 and noted that construction was scheduled for completion by September 1965. See "11,200 Students Expected Here for Classes in Fall," *Daily Tar Heel*, August 6, 1964.

² Nathaniel F. McGruder, "Cameron Morrison," in William S. Powell, ed., vol. 4, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 328-30; North Carolina Senate, 1901, Carolana.com, <https://bit.ly/3olG6QA>; "Cameron Morrison," in *History of North Carolina*, vol. 5, North Carolina Biography (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Company, 1919), 227-28; Cameron A. Morrison, "Biographical Dictionary of the United States Congress," <https://bit.ly/35wqG3n>; North Carolina delegate lists, Democratic National Convention, Political Graveyard, 1924, <https://bit.ly/34z06qZ>, 1940, <https://bit.ly/3e0FLhp>, 1944, <https://bit.ly/3e3RKKY>, 1948, <https://bit.ly/2HA9eT7>, 1952, <https://bit.ly/2G4d72e>. As governor, Morrison served on the Board of Trustees ex officio from 1921 to 1925. He was an appointed member from 1929 until 1941, an honorary member in 1942, and a lifetime member from 1943 to 1953. *The University of North Carolina Catalogue, 1927-1928* (n.p.: n.p., [1928]), 6; *The University of North Carolina Record, 1939-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 5; *The University of North Carolina Record, 1941-1942* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1942), 5; *The University of North Carolina Record, 1942-1943* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1943), 5.

citizenship for men and women newly emancipated from slavery. Cameron seemed prepared to follow in his father's footsteps when, at age twenty-one, he was elected to the executive committee of the state Republican Party. But a year later, in 1891, he bolted to the Democrats – the party of white supremacy. It was in that party, and with fealty to that racial principle, that he made his long political career.³

Morrison was a zealot for the cause. An admiring contemporary biographer reported that in the 1892 election "he came near being killed" in Richmond County's Beaver Township, where he challenged more than two hundred Black men at the polls "and prevented them from voting." Morrison's actions provoked a brawl with a local Republican leader that ended only when the two men had exhausted themselves. "The times were dangerous," Morrison's biographer observed, and the brave champion of white rule "lived [under] constant [threat] of personal violence."⁴

Morrison rose to prominence at the state level in 1898, when Democrats launched a vicious campaign to wrest control of the General Assembly from a biracial Fusion alliance of Republicans and third-party white Populists. In the run-up to Election Day, Democratic newspapers filled their pages with racist fearmongering and party leaders organized vigilantes known as Red Shirts to harass and intimidate Fusion voters. North Carolina was a "white man's country," Democrats declared, "and white men must control and govern it."⁵

The Red Shirts were particularly active in Richmond County, where Morrison served as chairman of the Democratic Party's local executive committee. Newspapers reported that on November 1, a week before the election, he and other white men "showed their determination to rid themselves of negro rule." One-thousand strong, they donned their red jackets – emblems of

³ McGruder, "Cameron Morrison." After the Civil War, Daniel Morrison made a living first as a carpenter and later as a postmaster and deputy sheriff. See 1870 Federal Census, Population Schedule, Richmond County, North Carolina, and 1900 Federal Census, Population Schedule, Richmond County, North Carolina, Ancestry.com; "Postmasters," *Congressional Record* 23 (1892), 487.

⁴ Heriot Clarkson, "A Biographical Sketch of Cameron Morrison," in William H. Richardson and D. L. Corbitt, eds., *Public Papers and Letters of Cameron Morrison, Governor of North Carolina, 1921-1925* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1927), xxi. Heriot Clarkson was a Charlotte lawyer who served as a city alderman and vice-mayor in 1887-1889 and 1891-1893. He organized a white supremacy club in the city in the late 1890s, and, as a member of the state legislature, supported an amendment to the state constitution in 1900 that disenfranchised Black men by making the right to register to vote contingent on a literacy test. Clarkson was manager of Morrison's 1920 gubernatorial campaign – service that the governor rewarded in 1923 with an appointment to the state supreme court. In a 1930 case that involved segregated seating on buses, Clarkson characterized Jim Crow as an expression of white benevolence. "We believe, in this State, that the negro has 'equal protection of the laws,'" he wrote. "In fact, the best friends that the negro has are his white neighbors. The negro has been in many respects a chosen people – brought here, the land of opportunity, among civilized people, without any effort on their part, from Africa. The burden imposed, not sought, has been on the white people of this State to civilize and Christianize them. The trust has been and is faithfully performed. The race is making great strides." See "Nathaniel F. McGruder, "Robert Heriot Clarkson," in Williams S. Powell, ed. vol. 1, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 382-83; *Corporation Commission v. Interracial Commission*, 198 N.C. 317 (320).

⁵ *Democratic Handbook*, 1898 (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1898), 38. On the white supremacy campaign generally, see Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 241-62.

Confederate soldiers' bloody self-sacrifice – and "paraded . . . through the negro precincts of the county." One reporter wrote: "For ten miles, through pine-forest and cotton plantations these men rode singling out the Negro hamlets as the special object in their visitation." Morrison's father – who had been persuaded by his son to abandon the Republican Party – led the way, carrying a banner that exclaimed, "The Whites Will Rule the Land or Die."⁶



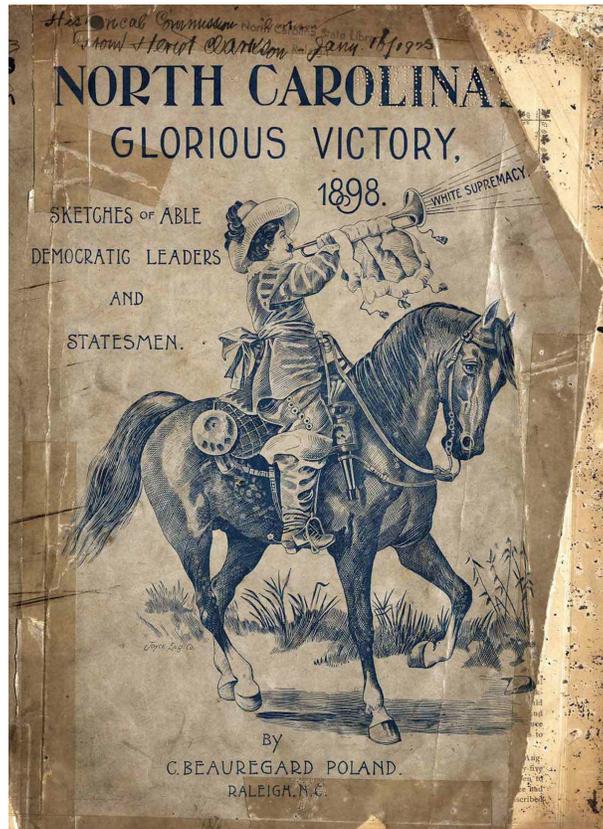
Red Shirts in Laurinburg on Election Day, 1898.
North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.



⁶ "Richmond County," *Morning Star* (Wilmington, N.C.), November 2, 1898; Clarkson, "A Biographical Sketch of Cameron Morrison," xxi-xxii; Henry Litchfield West, "The Race War in North Carolina," *The Forum* 26 (January 1899), 587. Throughout the 1898 campaign, Morrison signed his letters and official papers as "Cameron Morrison, chairman, executive committee of the White Man's Party of Richmond County." See untitled news item, *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), September 27, 1898. For more on Morrison's role as a Red Shirt organizer, see "White Government Union," September 24, 1898, and "The Rally of the Red Shirts," October 5, 1898, *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.). On the Red Shirts generally, see H. Leon Prather Sr., "The Red Shirt Movement in North Carolina, 1898-1900," *Journal of Negro History* 62 (April 1977), 174-84.

The march ended in Laurinburg, where the Red Shirts and thousands more whites cheered a speech by Claude Kitchin, a Democratic Party leader from Halifax County. Kitchin played to the crowd's resentment of black elected officials and urged them to follow the example of his neighbors back home. In Halifax, "if a negro constable came to a white man with a warrant in his hand," Kitchin exclaimed, "he [would leave] with a bullet in his brain." The Laurinburg rally had the desired effect. Many Blacks removed their names from the voter registration rolls and hundreds of white Populists and Republicans "put on white supremacy buttons."⁷

On Election Day, Democrats won a "glorious victory." Across the state, white voters ousted Black legislators, sheriffs, county commissioners, and city aldermen. When Democratic officials were inaugurated in Richmond County, they carried Morrison from room to room in the courthouse and "made him speak from a table in every office." State party chairman Furnifold Simmons also traveled to Richmond County for a banquet in Morrison's honor. "When the history of the movement for white supremacy came to be written," he declared, "no man would be given greater credit for the victory than Cameron Morrison." Local voters agreed. In 1900, they rewarded Morrison by electing him to the state senate.⁸



C. Beaugard Poland, *North Carolina, Glorious Victory*.

⁷ West, "Race War in North Carolina," 587. In the 1900 election, Kitchin warned Blacks' white allies in Halifax County, "If a [white] man takes [the side of] negro equality in Halifax, the worms must eat his body, and we will not [murder him] at night. We will do it in open daylight." See "A Thousand Men in Red Shirts," *The Times* (Richmond, Va.), July 27, 1900.

⁸ Clarkson, "A Biographical Sketch of Cameron Morrison," xxiii.

With the reins of government firmly in hand, Democrats worked to end the prospects for biracial politics once and for all. They crafted an amendment to the state constitution that disenfranchised Black men by making the right to register to vote contingent on a literacy test. They also passed the state's first segregation law, which required that railroads provide separate carriages for Black and white travelers. These were the foundation stones of a regime of law and custom that would become known as Jim Crow. The human toll of that regime is incalculable. For more than half a century, Jim Crow burdened Black North Carolinians with poverty, sickness, hunger, and the ever-present threat of violent death. Its cruelties persist to this day.⁹

Morrison withdrew from electoral politics after serving a single term as state senator. He did not run again until 1920, when he made a bid for the governor's office. In that campaign, he put his credentials as a former Red Shirt front and center. A newspaper reporter captured the scene when Morrison's Republican opponent charged that he had acted as "a lawless citizen in the nineties" and was thus unfit to be governor: "It is true that I wore a Red Shirt then,' he began. A great wave of cheers met his declaration, and he continued. 'I wore it to help roll back the black clouds of negroism and threw protection around the white womanhood of North Carolina,' he continued, and the packed house raised the roof."¹⁰

On the basis of that record, Morrison argued that white North Carolinians owed him for saving the state from what he and fellow Democrats had called "negro domination." Campaign advertisements and broadsides laid out the argument. "Does North Carolina reward her servants?" they asked. Morrison had fought "for the cause of white supremacy" alongside some of North Carolina's "greatest leaders," and all of those men had gotten their due by being elected to high office. Now, it was Morrison's turn. The "time [had] come" for grateful voters to "pay their debt" by making him governor. For good measure, the campaign materials added that Morrison had also opposed woman suffrage, and despite ratification of the Nineteenth

⁹ Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1951), 189-214. The amendment and the revised election law that subsequently put it into practice required that would-be voters wishing to register first demonstrate – "to the satisfaction" of local election officials – their ability to "read and write any section of the Constitution in the English language." That gave Democratic registrars wide latitude to exclude Black men from the polls. The amendment also included a grandfather clause that exempted white men who sought to register before December 1, 1908 and were lineal descendants of male citizens who were entitled to vote before January 1, 1867. The latter date was significant because the Military Reconstruction Act of 1867 had given Black men a limited right to vote in the election of delegates to constitutional conventions in North Carolina and the other former Confederate states (except Tennessee, which had been readmitted to the Union in 1866). Before that date, no Black men had been entitled to vote in North Carolina. The state legislature had stripped them of that right by constitutional amendment in 1835. The literacy test was thus designed to achieve the very thing the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution expressly outlawed – voter exclusion based on race. See *Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina, Adjourned Session 1900* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, and E. M. Uzzell, 1900), chap. 2; *Public Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina, Passed by the General Assembly at Its Session of 1901* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, and E. M. Uzzell, 1901), chap. 89, sec. 12. The literacy test, though no longer enforced, is still required by North Carolina's state constitution; see Article VI, sec. 4, <http://bit.ly/3kxYO52>.

¹⁰ "Morrison Closes Speaking Tour in Mountain Towns," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), October 12, 1920; "Mountain People Endorse Morrison's Red Shirt Record," *Union Herald* (Raleigh, N.C.), October 14, 1920.

Amendment, stood ready to "safeguard the State against negro women voters." Such was Morrison's pitch to "make North Carolina safe for democracy."¹¹

**DOES NORTH CAROLINA REWARD
HER SERVANTS?**

**Cameron Morrison Fought a Glorious Fight For the Cause of White
Supremacy in North Carolina in 1898-1900 in Company With a
Number of the State's Greatest Leaders and Statesmen**

THE STATE HAS SHOWN ITS GRATITUDE BY GIVING TO A NUMBER OF THESE CONSPICUOUS LEADERS THE HIGHEST OFFICES IN THE GIFT OF THE STATE.

AYCOCK ----- Governor
SIMMONS ----- U. S. Senate
OVERMAN ----- U. S. Senate
GLENN ----- Governor
KITCHIN U. S. Congressman & Gov.
CRAIG ----- Governor
PAGE ----- U. S. Congressman, 14 yrs.
MORRISON The Thanks of the People

Even some of the younger group of Democratic leaders have been generously rewarded by continuance in high office.

NORTH CAROLINIANS ARE NOT UNGRATEFUL, AND THE TIME HAS COME WHEN THEY WILL PAY THEIR DEBT to the STATESMAN OF 28 YEARS VALIANT SERVICE TO THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY of THE STATE. PUBLIC OPINION IS MOVING LIKE A TIDE IN SUPPORT OF **CAMERON MORRISON**, AND FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS IT CANNOT BE SWEEPED BACK:

As a clear thinker on Public questions, he is without a superior in North Carolina.
As an Orator he probably has no equal since Aycock.
As a bold champion of what he believes to be right, regardless of consequences to himself, he is unsurpassed.
He has been one of the guiding hands in framing the policies of the Democratic party in North Carolina, which have brought us such marvelous prosperity.
You can always tell where Morrison stands on every public question.
For more than twenty years he has devoted himself to public affairs and to upbuilding North Carolina, without asking for political office.
Morrison has given more time and thought to public questions than any other man of his age in the State.
Morrison is a candidate for Governor in response to the demand of thousands of the solid and clear-headed farmers and business men, who realize that the times demand a strong man.
He was originally opposed to Woman Suffrage, and his record in the White Supremacy campaign is sufficient guarantee that he will safeguard the State against negro women voters.
He has declared himself in favor of keeping down taxes and Constitutional Amendments to that end.
He is in favor of a wise revision of the Revaluation Act.
He has declared himself in favor of universal education and better pay for Teachers.
Morrison has declared for a scientific system of good roads to connect the various parts of the State.
Morrison is heartily in favor of local self-government for towns, cities, and counties.
He is opposed to class legislation of all sorts.
Morrison's record shows that he is free from all control by special interests.
He is opposed to Socialism in all forms, and to the socialization of business by whatever name called.
He has given years of thought to the development of country life, and one of his great aims will be the improvement of rural conditions.
He is a wise, generous, experienced Democrat, qualified in every way for the great office of Governor.
His friends are rallying to him by the thousands. His manager's office is besieged every day with requests for him to speak. He is growing stronger every hour. If nominated, as he will be, he will meet his Republican opponent, and no Democrat need fear the result.

VOTE FOR MORRISON AND MAKE NORTH CAROLINA SAFE FOR DEMOCRACY

The Independent (Elizabeth City, N.C.) June 4, 1920.

These appeals to white racism worked. Morrison won the Democratic Party's nomination and went on to defeat his Republican opponent.

¹¹ Morrison campaign advertisements, *Charlotte News*, June 3, 1920, and *The Independent* (Elizabeth City, N.C.) June 4, 1920. For more on Morrison's opposition to woman suffrage, see Rob Christensen, *The Paradox of Tar Heel Politics: Personalities, Elections, and Events that Shaped North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 49-50. A Morrison leaflet circulated in eastern North Carolina read, "The Susan B. Anthony Woman's Suffrage Amendment confers the right to vote on the Negro women as well as the white women. Those who favor woman suffrage vote for [O. Max] Gardner (Morrison's leading opponent in the Democratic primary election). Those who are opposed to woman suffrage vote for Morrison."

As governor, Morrison promoted an expansive program of public investment in economic development. It included a \$50 million bond issue for building new farm-to-market roads in rural areas of the state, a near-doubling of the budget for public education, and a \$20 million bond issue for construction of new classroom buildings and dormitories at the University of North Carolina. The higher education bond was, at the time, the largest infusion of public funds UNC had received since its founding. In 1922, the university's trustees expressed their gratitude by awarding Morrison – who had never attended college – an honorary L.L.D. degree.¹²



Governor Cameron Morrison on his inauguration day, 1921.
North Carolina Museum of History.

The former Red Shirt also tempered his youthful enthusiasm for violence. As governor, he denounced lynching and routinely sent the state militia to quell unrest that threatened to develop into vigilante justice. In 1921, he also convened a meeting of Black and white civic leaders who subsequently founded the state's chapter of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation. The Commission had been organized in Atlanta two years earlier as a response to the white violence that greeted Black veterans when they returned from World War I. Its purpose

¹² Christensen, *Paradox of Tar Heel Politics*, 51-55; Louis R. Wilson, *The University of North Carolina, 1900-1930: The Making of a Modern University* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), 333-34; "Honorary Degrees Conferred," *Alumni Review* (University of North Carolina) 10 (June 1922), 255.

was not so much to dismantle Jim Crow as to manage its excesses, to create, as historian Charles Pilkington has observed, a "more humane and efficient system of segregation."¹³

How can we square such seemingly progressive policies with the noxious racism that animated Morrison's early career? He and others of his generation would have been perplexed by that question, because for them, there was no contradiction between the two, no paradox in their politics. The difference was simply one of ways and means. They believed that in the late 1890s, "bloodshed and rioting" had been necessary to remove Black men from politics and establish the "peace . . . and good order" required for the state to advance economically. As the *Charlotte Observer* explained, "the businessmen of the state [had been] largely responsible" for the white supremacy campaign. "Not before in years have the bank men, the mill men, and the businessmen in general – the backbone of the property interests of the state – taken such interest. They worked from start to finish, and furthermore they spent large bits of money in behalf of the cause." But maintaining what one of Morrison's contemporaries called "permanent white supremacy" was another task altogether. It required a more flexible and adroit racial policy – one that held violence in check and promoted interracial "understanding" so long as Blacks lived within the bounds of second-class citizenship. Throughout much of the twentieth century, this was the North Carolina way: white supremacy that masqueraded as civility and softened its blow with a velvet glove.¹⁴

Morrison never expressed regret or remorse for leading the turn-of-the-century white supremacy campaign, or for perpetuating Jim Crow's crimes against humanity. Neither did his admirers. When Morrison died in 1953, the *Raleigh News and Observer* titled his obituary "A Fearless Warrior" and opened its account of his life with a nod to the racism that defined his political career. "Cameron Morrison first attracted statewide attention as a leader in the White Supremacy campaign of 1898," the obituary recalled, "in which Democrats organized Red Shirt riders, of whom Morrison was one of the best known." The *Charlotte Observer* struck a similar note. A front-page story praised Morrison as a "veteran war horse of the Democratic Party," whose "half-century of vigorous leadership" had begun "with the Red Shirt campaign." The best either paper could do by way of acknowledging the moral bankruptcy of Morrison's political career was to concede that he had "lived long enough" to be regarded by some as "behind the times."¹⁵

That was an apt characterization. Late in life, Morrison had stood firm in his commitment to Jim Crow. At the 1948 Democratic National Convention, he and other white southerners

¹³ William H. Richardson, "No More Lynchings! How North Carolina has Solved the Problem," *The American Review of Reviews* 69 (April 1924), 401-04; McGruder, "Cameron Morrison"; Charles Kirk Pilkington, "The Trials of Brotherhood: The Founding of the Commission on Interracial Cooperation," *Georgia Historical Quarterly* 69 (Spring 1985), 56.

¹⁴ Robert W. Winston, *It's a Far Cry* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), 238; R. D. W. Connor and Clarence Poe, eds., *The Life and Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock* (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1912), 225, 261; Christensen, *Paradox of Tar Heel Politics*, 32; "Post-Election Reflections," *Charlotte Observer*, November 17, 1898. On the code of civility that defined the "North Carolina way," see William H. Chafe, *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 8-10.

¹⁵ "A Fearless Warrior," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), August 21, 1953; "Cameron Morrison, Political Patriarch of N.C., is Dead," *Charlotte Observer*, August 21, 1953.

objected to their party's embrace of Black civil rights and the nomination of Harry Truman for a second term as president. They especially resented Truman's appointment of a special Committee on Civil Rights, which in 1947 had called for the immediate "elimination of segregation . . . from American life." Thirty-five southern delegates walked out of the convention and threw their support to the break-away States' Rights Democratic Party, which nominated South Carolina governor and arch-segregationist Strom Thurmond for president. Morrison and the others who stayed behind were no less determined to oppose equal citizenship for Blacks; they differed from the firebrands only on the question of how best to achieve that objective. As historian Glenn Feldman has observed, "Cameron Morrison urged southern Democrats to persevere and remain loyal." "Let's step under the Democratic flag and help elect [Truman]," Morrison advised. "Then, we'll let our Congressmen and Senators beat him down when he needs beating."¹⁶

In 1964, when UNC's Board of Trustees named a new high-rise residence hall for Morrison, state leaders were working harder than ever to beat back demands for equal citizenship. The General Assembly had passed the Speaker Ban Act in June 1963. The letter of the law forbade the appearance of known communists on public college campuses across the state, but its backers announced publicly that its broader purpose was to silence student opposition to Jim Crow. Then, late that year, the Congress of Racial Equality, a national civil rights organization led locally by UNC law school alumnus Floyd McKissick, targeted Chapel Hill with an intensified sit-in movement. For months, high school and university students marched down Franklin Street and protested outside of businesses that refused to serve Black customers. They hoped that the university and the town – "symbol[s] of an enlightened South" – would "show . . . the way" toward racial justice, but that did not happen. Instead, local officials brought two hundred and seventeen protesters, most of them students, to trial on nearly fifteen hundred separate indictments. The presiding judge lectured the defendants on responsible behavior, criticized them as dupes of an "international [communist] conspiracy that [was] threatening to destroy America," and then dismissed charges for all but twelve. He gave that remaining group suspended sentences of two to five years and ordered them not to participate in future demonstrations. The *Daily Tar Heel* denounced the judge's handling of the case as the imposition of "Mississippi Law."¹⁷

Perhaps the timing of these events was simply coincidental. But Cameron Morrison was not the only white supremacist to be memorialized during Black North Carolinians' struggle for freedom and equality. In 1967, the trustees named a new student stores building for one of Morrison's closest political allies: Josephus Daniels, editor and publisher of the *Raleigh News and Observer*, which in 1898 had been the Democratic Party's chief propaganda outlet. Surely, university officials knew where the two men had stood on issues of racial justice; their records

¹⁶ President's Committee on Civil Rights, *To Secure These Rights: The Report on the President's Committee on Civil Rights* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1947), 166; Glenn Feldman, *The Great Melding: War, the Dixiecrat Rebellion, and the Southern Model for America's New Conservatism* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2015), 235, 261; "Delegates Given Free Rein at Democratic Convention," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), May 21, 1948.

¹⁷ Robert R. Korstad and James L. Leloudis, *To Right These Wrongs: The North Carolina Fund and the Battle to End Poverty and Inequality in 1960s America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 74-76; John Ehle, *The Free Men* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), 262-84; Jennifer Anne Edwards, "The Quest for Civil Rights in Chapel Hill, North Carolina," (Senior honors thesis, Department of History, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1989), 54; "Mississippi Law Comes to Hillsboro," *Daily Tar Heel*, April 24, 1964.

were common knowledge to anyone who paid attention to North Carolina politics. We are left to wonder, what were campus leaders thinking?¹⁸

On September 25, 2020, the Board of Trustees at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University (an historically Black institution in the University of North Carolina system) removed Cameron Morrison's name from a campus residence hall. A month later, the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library Board of Trustees followed suit by removing his name from a branch facility in south Charlotte.¹⁹

UNC Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward – December 7, 2020

¹⁸ On the Daniels naming, see minutes, October 6, 1967, series 1, vol. 11, Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina (System) Records, 1932-1972, #40002, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; "New Building is Named for Daniels," *Daily Tar Heel*, October 7, 1967.

¹⁹ "N.C. A & T Removes Names Tied to White Supremacy from Two Campus Buildings," *News and Record* (Greensboro, N.C.), September 25, 2020; "Library Removes Name of a White Supremacist from Branch," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), October 21, 2020.