

# **University Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward**

*Meeting Agenda & Approved Minutes*

Virtual Meeting – streamed on HRWF YouTube Channel



THE UNIVERSITY  
of NORTH CAROLINA  
at CHAPEL HILL

**Monday, January 25, 2021**

3:00-3:05PM	<b>Call to Order</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Welcome</li><li>• Roll Call</li><li>• Approval of Minutes, Dec. 7, 2020 Meeting</li></ul>	<b>Jim Leloudis &amp; Pat Parker,</b> <i>Co-Chairs</i>
3:05-3:45PM	<b>Commission Discussion - The ongoing work of the University recognizing Indigenous Peoples</b>  <u><b>Special Guests:</b></u> <b>Mr. Greg Richardson</b> Executive Director, NC Commission of Indian Affairs	<i>Led by Larry Chavis, Commission Member and Co-chair of UNC First Nations Council</i>
	<b>Dr. Daniel M. Cobb</b> Professor, UNC Department of American Studies Co-Chair of UNC First Nations Council	
3:45-3:50PM	<b>Barbee Cemetery Project Update</b> Updates from the project co-leads and grant announcement	<b>Dawna Jones &amp; Seth Kotch,</b> <i>Project Co-Leads</i>
3:50-4:00PM	<b>Presentation on <i>Grimes &amp; Pettigrew</i> Dossiers</b> Possible votes to recommend name removal	<b>Jim Leloudis,</b> <i>Co-Chair</i>
4:00PM	<b>Adjourn</b>	

**Commission on History, Race and a Way Forward (January 25, 2021)**  
**Approved Minutes**

**Present:** **Commission Members:** Larry Chavis, Nicholas Graham, Ronald Harris, Amy Locklear Hertel, Sherrick Hughes, Dawna Jones, Joseph Jordan, Seth Kotch, Danita Mason- Hogans, Ariana Avila, Danita Horton, Sydni Walker, Delores Bailey, Josmell Perez

**Guests:** Greg Richardson, Dr. Daniel M. Cobb

**YouTube Link for meeting:** [https://youtu.be/cDsCy2\\_T8ok](https://youtu.be/cDsCy2_T8ok)

I.Welcome and Introduction

Commission Co-Chair Jim Leloudis welcomed Commission members to the meeting and completed a roll call. Minutes of the December 7, 2020 meeting were approved. Commission Co-Chair Pat Parker welcomed Commission members to the first meeting of the New Year and introduced a video by the Office of the Chancellor regarding the University's commitment to diversity and inclusion. Co-Chair Leloudis read a few lines from the Amanda Gorman's inaugural poem to set the tone of the meeting.

II.Commission Discussion - The ongoing work of the University recognizing Indigenous Peoples

Co-Chair Parker reminded Commission members about the request from the Chancellor regarding a land acknowledgement and recognition of Indigenous Peoples and handed the floor off to Larry Chavis. Chavis gave an overview of the tribal communities in North Carolina and introduced the meeting's guests: Greg Richardson, Executive Director of the NC Commission on Indian Affairs, and Dr. Daniel M. Cobb, Professor of American Studies and Co-Director of the UNC First Nations Council.

Greg Richardson described the progressive efforts of American Indians in North Carolina and the precedent setting legislation within the state impacting the American Indian Population. This includes the establishment of North Carolina Indian Housing Authority and the State Advisory Council on Indian Education and legislation including provisions that allow tribes to apply for state recognition. He discussed the fact that compared to the rest of the Southeast, North Carolina has larger populations of American Indians who are college graduates, professional school graduates and business owners. Richardson mentioned that the Lumbee tribe came close to receiving federal recognition recently and discussed the benefits associated with federal recognition. Further, he discussed the process for pushing legislation forward through the work of the Commission on Indian Affairs.

Dr. Dan Cobb provided an overview of American Indian and Indigenous Studies at UNC. This program explores the historical and contemporary experiences of American Indian people. Cobb described the history of the program, the opportunities that students have within it, the various organizations that support this program, and events coming through the program. Cobb then led a discussion on land acknowledgements. He noted that when developing a land acknowledgement, one is acknowledging the land and the people, past, present, and future who interact with the land as well as the responsibility for reckoning with settler

colonialism. Adopting a land acknowledgement means accepting responsibility for the past, present, and future and telling the story of this place as an indigenous place. He concluded that a land acknowledgement is a first step toward making a long-term commitment to Native people in and beyond North Carolina.

Larry Chavis opened the floor for questions. Discussion centered around the current state of a land acknowledgement at the University, the various groups who have been working on land acknowledgements, other Universities that might serve as models for doing this work, and the idea of a baseline for a land acknowledgement in addition to principles that go beyond that. Further discussion arose about the University's responsibility for this work, involvement of individuals outside of Indigenous Peoples in the creation of a land acknowledgement, the recognition of Indigenous Peoples as being a part of the present and not just the past, and the vision for a land acknowledgement.

### III. Barbee Cemetery Project Update

Dawna Jones, project co-lead for the Barbee Cemetery Project, provided an update on the status of the project. She discussed the proposed tasks for the project, including research on the cemetery and history of race in Chapel Hill, commemoration of the lives of those enslaved laborers buried there, conducting an oral history project, development of a community advisory board, and making recommendations to Kenan-Flagler and the University as a whole. Jones also announced the receipt of a \$15,000 grant for the project.

### IV. Presentation on Grimes & Pettigrew Dossiers

Co-Chair Leloudis presented dossiers on Bryan Grimes and James Johnston Pettigrew and opened the floor for questions, discussion, and a vote for including these dossiers in a future recommendation to the Chancellor. Joseph Jordan brought up the importance of acknowledging the fact that this was a process of enslaving a set of people and dispossessing a set of people, which connects this to the earlier discussion of land acknowledgements. Danita Mason-Hogans discussed the importance of thinking about these issues in the present and the impact on the local community. Dawna Jones moved to send forth these dossiers as a part of a larger recommendation to the Chancellor. The motion carried unanimously.

Co-Chair Parker closed the meeting at 4:10 pm.

Attachments: 01/25/21 HRWF presentation slides  
Dossier on Bryan Grimes  
Dossier on James Johnston Pettigrew

# **UNIVERSITY COMMISSION ON HISTORY, RACE, AND A WAY FORWARD**

January 25, 2021

3:00-4:00PM

*Virtual Meeting – HRWF YouTube Channel*

# Agenda

**JANUARY 25, 2021. FULL COMMISSION MEETING**

- I. Community Discussion- The ongoing work of the University recognizing Indigenous Peoples**
- II. Update on Barbee Cemetery project**
- III. Presentation on Bryan Grimes dossier**
  - i. Possible vote to recommend name removal
- IV. Presentation on James Johnston Pettigrew dossier**
  - i. Possible vote to recommend name removal

# Community Discussion:

## *The ongoing work of the University recognizing Indigenous Peoples*



# Update on Barbee Cemetery Project



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

# Proposed Tasks

1. Collect information about the cemetery and about the history of race in Chapel Hill and Carrboro and at UNC and present it in a clear, accessible fashion off and on campus.
2. Study effective commemoration efforts and create a process, in consultation with community partners, for commemorating the lives of the enslaved people buried in the cemetery.
3. Plan and execute a remembrance ceremony at the Barbee Cemetery, put in place plans for a recurring event, and document how such a ceremony might take place at other burial sites.
4. Conduct an oral history project with white and Black descendants of the Barbee and Hargrave families and other Black residents of Chapel Hill and Carrboro and university staff, archiving those interviews in perpetuity at UNC and staging them at various spaces in town, such as the Hargraves Center, the Public Library, and the Marion Cheek Jackson Center.
5. Bring recommendations about a commitment by UNC broadly and by the Kenan Flagler Business School to mark and maintain the cemetery, including but not limited to signage, accessible pathways, and grave markers.
6. Bring recommendations for a commitment by UNC to address its deep relationship with slavery by considering redistribution of campus resources to substantive programs that promote equity on and off campus.

# Presentation on Bryan Grimes



THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL



Grimes Residence Hall

## BRYAN GRIMES

*THE BOT NAMED THIS BUILDING IN 1922 TO HONOR GRIMES, CLASS OF 1848, MAJOR-GENERAL IN CONFEDERATE ARMY AND UNIVERSITY TRUSTEE FROM 1877-1880.*

- Enriched himself by enslaving and stealing the labor of Black men, women, and children
- Sexually exploited enslaved women
- Committed treason by serving as a senior officer in the Confederate army and making war against the United States of America
- In partnership with William L. Saunders, led efforts to organize the Ku Klux Klan in eastern North Carolina and directed its terrorist activities

# Presentation on James Johnston Pettigrew



# JAMES JOHNSTON PETTIGREW

*THE BOT NAMED THIS BUILDING, ORIGINALLY CONSTRUCTED AS A DORMITORY, IN 1913 TO HONOR PETTIGREW, CLASS OF 1847.*

- Enriched himself with the plundered labor of enslaved Black men, women, and children
- Committed treason by serving as a general officer in the southern Confederacy's war to dissolve the American republic and preserve the institution of racial slavery



Pettigrew Hall



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*at* CHAPEL HILL



CAROLINA  
TOGETHER



## **Grimes Residence Hall**

**The Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina named this building in 1922 to honor Bryan Grimes Jr., who graduated from UNC in 1848, rose to the rank of major-general in the Confederate army, and served as a university trustee from 1877 until his death in 1880. For many years, university sources have identified the building's namesake incorrectly as Grimes's son, John Bryan Grimes. The younger Grimes was himself a trustee and served on the board's executive committee when its members made the decision to memorialize his father.<sup>1</sup>**

### **Grimes:**

- **Enriched himself by enslaving and stealing the labor of Black men, women, and children**
- **Sexually exploited enslaved women**
- **Committed treason by serving as a senior officer in the Confederate army and making war against the United States of America**
- **In partnership with William L. Saunders, led efforts to organize the Ku Klux Klan in eastern North Carolina and directed its terrorist activities**

Bryan Grimes Jr. was born in 1828, the youngest child in the household of Bryan Grimes Sr. and Nancy Grist Grimes, residents of Pitt County. The Grimes family were some of North Carolina's wealthiest slaveholders. They owned three large farms along the Tar River and derived their fortune from the labor of the Black men, women, and children they held in bondage. One hundred and thirty-five enslaved people lived and worked on those farms in 1850. Bryan Jr. studied at William J. Bingham's academy in Hillsborough, and in 1844, months shy of his sixteenth birthday, enrolled at UNC. He graduated with an A.B. degree in 1848. Three years later, Bryan Jr. married Elizabeth Hilliard Davis, the daughter of Franklin County physician, slaveowner, and well-to-do planter Thomas Davis. Elizabeth died in 1857. Bryan Jr. remarried in 1863, while serving in the Confederate army. His second wife, Charlotte Emily Bryan, was the daughter of John Heritage Bryan, a prominent attorney, former congressman, and longtime trustee of the university.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes, June 13, 1922, oversize volume 12, Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina Records, 1789-1932, #40001, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; "General Assembly," *Daily Review* (Wilmington, N.C.), March 5, 1877.

<sup>2</sup> James D. Daniels, "Bryan Grimes," in William S. Powell, ed., vol. 2, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 374-75; Michael William Coffey, "Bryan Grimes: Power and Privilege Among the Nineteenth-Century Planters of Eastern North Carolina" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi, 2002), 22-23, 117, 245-48; 1850 Federal Census, Slave Schedules, Pitt and Franklin Counties, North Carolina, Ancestry.com; Grimes family Bible records, folder 140, Bryan Grimes Papers #00292, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Daniel L. Mcfarland, "John Heritage Bryan," in William S. Powell, ed., vol. 1, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 255-56.

When Bryan Jr. married Elizabeth in 1851, his father gave him Grimesland, a farm that comprised 750 acres of fields and woodland near the border of Pitt and Beaufort Counties. The gift also included 25 enslaved people to work the land and make it profitable: "Lewis, Richmond, Aaron, Jordan, Lannon, George, Romeo, Roden, Edmund, Dempsey, Old Celia, Eliza, Ally and child, Mary, Harriet, Hannah and child, Ellen, Cherry, Hetty, Redmond, and Mars, Daniel, and Haywood children of Mary." Bryan Sr. reckoned that the land was worth \$20,000; the slaves, \$14,000; and the farm's livestock, implements, and household furnishings, \$3,000. All told, the gift would amount to roughly \$1.25 million today. On top of that, Bryan Jr.'s father-in-law added another four slaves as a wedding present. They were "Winney and her three children, viz. Ellick, Sam, and Daniel."<sup>3</sup>

Over the next decade, the size of the enslaved community at Grimesland fluctuated significantly. In 1855, an inventory of Grimes's property listed the names of "74 taxable negroes," a near tripling of the labor force. Five years later, the number had fallen to 57. These quick, sizeable changes suggest that Grimes was actively involved in the domestic slave trade, as does a will he drafted in 1858. In that document, he instructed his heirs that for a period of eight years following his death they should invest "all surplus revenue" from Grimesland in "the purchase of female slaves from the age of fifteen to twenty years" – in other words, women in their childbearing prime. There was obvious shrewdness in that directive. It was a stratagem for building a workforce that would remain youthful and fertile enough to replenish itself, and to produce what slaveholders called "extras" who could be sold "down the river" to the Deep South, where a boom in cotton production created an insatiable demand for bound labor. By each of these considerations, Grimes appears to have been purposefully engaged in "slave breeding," a practice that, as scholars Constance and Ned Sublette have observed, "capitalized [the] womb" and "classified [Black children] as merchandise at birth."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Coffey, "Bryan Grimes," 84, 90; Bryan Grimes Sr. to Bryan Grimes Jr., deed of gift, land and slaves, October 11, 1851, Bryan Grimes Papers, P.C. 3.1, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina. A copy of the deed can be found in folder 15, J. Bryan Grimes Papers #01765, Southern Historical Collection. With the exception of George, the individuals named in the deed of gift also appear on a list of slaves owned, purchased, and sold that Bryan Jr. began in 1852 and subsequently updated. The list indicates that a six-month-old named Sophia was included in the gift, but she may have been born shortly after Bryan Sr. made the transfer. Bryan Jr. also noted that an elderly woman known as Old Sarah came to live at Grimesland because many of the other slaves were her children and grandchildren. See untitled list, January 1, 1852, Bryan Grimes Papers, P.C. 3.4. Despite its date, the list is mounted in a volume of materials from the period 1883 to 1912. On the value of Bryan Sr.'s gift, see memorandum of the estate of B. Grimes, folder 176, Grimes Family Papers #03357, Southern Historical Collection. For the names of the slaves received from Elizabeth's father, see deed of gift, December 4, 1851, Bryan Grimes Papers, P.C. 3.1. Both gifts were made in exchange for the nominal sum of one dollar. Some accounts indicate that Bryan Grimes Sr. gave his son 100 enslaved people; that figure is incorrect.

<sup>4</sup> List of taxable property, ca. 1855, folder 176, Grimes Family Papers #03357; 1860 Federal Census, Slave Schedule, Pitt County, North Carolina, Ancestry.com; synopsis of a last will and testament, May 1, 1858, folder 15, J. Bryan Grimes Papers #01765; Constance and Ned Sublette, *The American Slave Coast: A History of the Slave-Breeding Industry* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2016), chap. 1. See also Gregory D. Smithers, *Slave Breeding: Sex, Violence, and Memory in African American History* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2012); Caitlin Rosenthal, *Accounting for Slavery: Masters and Management* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), especially chaps. 4-5.

Grimes's private papers also offer other glimpses of the ways that he and men of his ilk objectified enslaved women. In an 1845 letter, Tippoo Saib Haughton, a university friend, reveled in the prospects for sexual adventure in Edenton, the small eastern North Carolina town where his family lived. He told Grimes the story of walking a young white woman home from church, all the while thinking of his desire "to have communications with her [Black] maid." Haughton bid his friend good-night, hid in a hedge, and by some arrangement – he did not elaborate – the maid appeared. She "stretched herself beneath the overspreading foliage," Haughton wrote, "and favored me with a very romantick<sup>5</sup> go." "Bryan," he continued, "there is lots of the good stuff floating up and down the streets every night, it is cheap too, we don't have to pay a damn cent for it: now you may think that it is not of much account as it is to be had without pay. Allow me to say to you that it is the best sort of mulatto meat<sup>6</sup> and if you come to Edenton this winter, you shall surely have a good supply."<sup>7</sup>

Grimes appears to have shared his friend's appetite for light-skinned, mixed-race women, and he knew their value to other white men who bought and sold them for sex. In a slave inventory drawn up in the mid 1850s, he called attention to Sarah, whom he described as a "white negro" and "fancy girl" – slavemongers' terms for the women they trafficked into concubinage and prostitution. Grimes bought Sarah in 1855 for \$850 – the rough equivalent of \$25,400 today – and changed her name to Fannie. He clearly thought of her as a prize won from other men of property and standing. In the inventory, he took time to note that he had purchased Sarah from David McDaniel, the owner of a large cotton plantation in Nash County who made his fortune selling slaves to buyers in the Deep South. McDaniel maintained a business office and slave pen<sup>8</sup> in Richmond, where he acquired Sarah from another "keep[er] of a negro jail" – that is, a slave trader – who had bought her at auction from a son of deceased Virginia congressman and governor James McDowell. Did Grimes abuse Sarah sexually? The answer is almost certainly 'yes,' though details are wanting. What we know for certain is that he

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<sup>5</sup> An obsolete variant of 'romantic.'

<sup>6</sup> A slang expression for 'prostitute' or female genitals. *Oxford English Dictionary*, <http://unc.live/3aLZG46>; Norman E. Eliason, *Tarheel Talk: An Historical Study of the English Language in North Carolina to 1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 283.

<sup>7</sup> Tippoo Saib Haughton to Grimes, November 18, 1845, folder 4, Bryan Grimes Papers #00292. Haughton's parents named him for an Indian sultan who resisted British rule in the late eighteenth century. He began his university studies with Grimes in 1844 but did not continue. He later read law with an attorney in Edenton and was licensed to practice in Chowan County in 1848. See Kemp P. Battle, *Sketches of the History of the University of North Carolina, Together with a Catalogue of Officers and Students, 1789-1889* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1889), 140; "Supreme Court," *North-Carolinian* (Fayetteville, N.C.), January 8, 1848.

<sup>8</sup> A barracks where traders confined enslaved people, often in chains, prior to sale. The most notorious slave pen in Richmond, where McDaniel did business, belonged to Robert Lumpkin. See Abigail Tucker, "Digging Up the Past at a Richmond Jail," *Smithsonian*, March 2009, <http://bit.ly/2KKToXm>; "Lumpkin's Jail," AfroVirginia, <http://bit.ly/3nUuGTj>; Katharine Walker, "Buried in Unremitting Ground: Reading Richmond's Subterranean Signs," *Social Semiotics* 19 (Issue 4, 2009), 427-38; Kelley F. Deetz, Ellen Chapman, Ana Edwards, Phil Wilayto, "Historic Black Lives: Archaeology as Activism in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter* 15 (Spring 2015), <https://bit.ly/34B7BgE>.

had tired of her by 1857, when he bargained her away in exchange "for Flora, aged about eighteen."<sup>9</sup>

Rocky Mount 16<sup>th</sup> Feb: 1855

Dear Sir

Enclosed you will find a Bill of Sale for girl Sarah. Send me Powell Bill of Sale by Return mail, also Check on Tarboro Bank for two hundred & fifty dollars (\$250.00)

Your Friend  
David McDaniel

Received of Mr Bryan Grimes Eight hundred and fifty dollars for girl Sarah which I warrant sound, and the right & title good This 16<sup>th</sup> July

1855—

David McDaniel

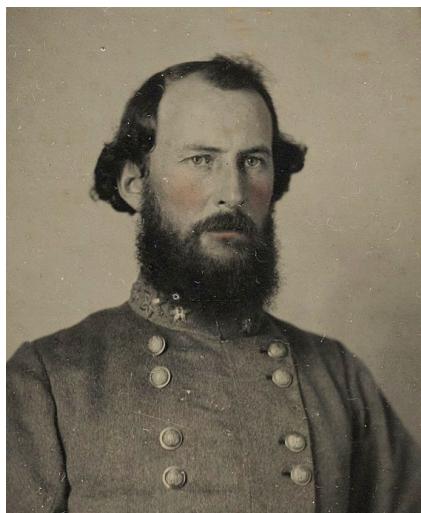
Bill of sale for "girl Sarah," whose name Grimes changed to Fannie. The cover note refers to Powell,<sup>10</sup> an enslaved man – or, given the low price, more likely a young boy<sup>11</sup> – Grimes sold to David McDaniel for \$250. Bryan Grimes Papers, P.C. 3.1, State Archives of North Carolina.

<sup>9</sup> Bill of sale for Sarah, February 16, 1855, Bryan Grimes Papers, P.C. 3.1, and untitled list, January 1, 1852, Bryan Grimes Papers, P.C. 3.4; M. Ellyson, *Richmond Directory, and Business Advertiser, for 1856* (Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1856), 176; Gordon S. Barker, "Secession and Slavery as a Positive Good: The Impact of the Anthony Burns Drama in Boston on Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 118 (No. 2), 138. In 1850, McDaniel enslaved 177 people on his land in Nash County (1850 Federal Census, Slave Schedule, Nash County, North Carolina, Ancestry.com). According to a contemporary account, he made his farming operation "subservient to the [business of] slave-trading. The slaves were always for sale, but while waiting for customers, they were kept at work instead of lying idle in barracoons." See Charles Emery Stevens, *Anthony Burns: A History* (Boston: John P. Jewett and Company, 1856), 199. On the American trade in sex slaves, see Edward E. Baptist, "'Cuffy,' 'Fancy Maids,' and 'One-Eyed Men': Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States," *American Historical Review* 106 (December 2001), 1619-1650; Tiye A. Gordon, "The Fancy Trade and The Commodification of Rape in the Sexual Economy of 19<sup>th</sup> Century U.S. Slavery" (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 2012).

<sup>10</sup> 'Powel' is a name of Welsh origin, meaning 'eminent,' or was sometimes used in Ireland as the equivalent of the Gaelic 'Mac Giolla Phól,' 'son of the servant of St. Paul.' See Patrick Hanks, ed., vol. 3, *Dictionary of American Family Names* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 123-24. Owners often assigned slaves names that were "whimsical, satirical, or condescending in intent," or that reflected their own erudition and worldliness. See John C. Inscoe, "Slave Names," in William S. Powell, ed., *Encyclopedia of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 1042-43. Other references to slaves in Grimes's papers suggest that he had a fondness for archaic names from the British Isles.

<sup>11</sup> Young children sold for considerably less than middle-aged adults because the cost of maintaining them exceeded their productivity until they became teenagers. See Samuel H. Williamson and Louis P. Cain, "Measuring Slavery in 2016 Dollars," Measuring Worth, 2020, <https://bit.ly/2VX5H5L>.

Three years later, while traveling on a grand tour of Europe, Grimes's thoughts turned again to the commodification of enslaved women's sexuality and the power of rape. He wrote a letter to his older brother, William, in which he described his eager anticipation of a visit to Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. There, "by way of varying [his] amusements," Grimes planned to "bid in<sup>12</sup> a fine looking Caucasian" – a reference to the sex slaves who, for centuries, had been transported by traders to western Europe, Russia, and Asia Minor from the Caucasus region between the Black and Caspian Seas. "Perhaps," Grimes jested, "it may be a feather in my cap when I return to the Old North State."<sup>13</sup>



Bryan Grimes. North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

By 1860, slavery had made Grimes a wealthy man. His personal estate – made up in significant measure by the fifty-seven souls he claimed as chattel – was worth \$130,000, the equivalent of \$4,077,000 today. In light of these figures, it is hardly a surprise that Grimes was an eager Confederate. His contemporaries knew him as an "ultra-secessionist" who opposed the efforts of more cautious leaders to keep North Carolina in the Union. In his campaign to represent Pitt County in the state's secession convention, Grimes declared his determination to "battle faithfully & earnestly . . . for Southern rights & Southern institutions" – euphemisms for the preservation of racial slavery. "Our cause is just," he continued, "for it I will fight, even for it I will die." Grimes won the election. When the convention met in May 1861, he cast his vote to secede, then resigned, freeing himself to enlist in the Confederate army and go to war against the United States.<sup>14</sup>

Even though Grimes had no military experience, Governor John W. Ellis commissioned him as a major, third in the hierarchy of command over the Fourth North Carolina Infantry. During the war, he rose steadily through the ranks of the Confederate army's officer corps,

<sup>12</sup> To 'bid in' is to beat the highest competing offer in an auction.

<sup>13</sup> Grimes to William Grimes, July 4, 1860, folder 1, Grimes Family Papers #03357. On the trade in sex slaves from the Caucasus region, see Nell Irvin Painter, *The History of White People* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), chap. 6; Permilla Myrne, "Slaves for Pleasure in Arabic Sex and Slave Purchase Manuals from the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries," *Journal of Global Slavery* 4 (June 2019), 196-225. The source of Grimes's knowledge of the slave trade in the Caucasus is unclear. He likely knew of Italian sculptor Raffaele Monti's erotic work, *Circassian Slave*, displayed with considerable fanfare at London's Great Exhibition in 1851, or had read Boston writer and publisher Maturin Murray Ballou's novella, published in the same year with a similar title, *The Circassian Slave, or, the Sultan's Favorite* (Boston: F. Gleason, 1851). The Circassians are an ethnic group in the northern area of the Caucasus region. See Joan DelPlato, "Seeing Through 'The Veil Trick': Heterotopic Eroticism in Monti's Sculpture *Circassian Slave* at the Crystal Palace in 1851," in Joan DelPlato and Julie F. Codell, eds., *Orientalism, Eroticism, and Modern Visuality in Global Cultures* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 83-114.

<sup>14</sup> 1860 Federal Census, Population Schedule, Pitt County, North Carolina, Ancestry.com; Kemp P. Battle, "The Secession Convention of 1861," *North Carolina Booklet* 15 (April 1916), 199; Coffey, "Bryan Grimes," 150-59, 182, quotation at 152-53; untitled speech, Bryan Grimes Papers, P.C. 3.4.

ultimately winning appointment as a major-general. Grimes and his troops fought in some of the most significant battles in the Civil War's eastern theater: Manassas in 1861, the Peninsular Campaign in 1862, Gettysburg in 1863, and the Shenandoah Valley Campaign in 1864. In April 1865, Grimes's men, along with other troops in Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, surrendered to federal forces at Appomattox Court House.<sup>15</sup>

This military service amounted to treason, which the Constitution defines as the act of "levying War against [the United States]" or giving "Aid and Comfort" to the nation's enemies. Under the provisions of an amnesty program for Confederate military officers and government officials, President Andrew Johnson pardoned Grimes for that crime in June 1866.<sup>16</sup>

Grimes returned from war to find his world torn asunder. Blacks, newly emancipated from slavery, now demanded fair pay for the labor that men like Grimes had once stolen from them. And many whites were openly hostile to the defeated Confederacy and the political leaders who, in 1861, set North Carolina on the path to ruin. As the Civil War had ground on, the Confederacy lost territory and the burden of sustaining the South's military machine weighed heavily on the shrinking civilian population that was left behind the battle lines. That was particularly the experience in North Carolina, much of which remained in Confederate hands until the very end of the conflict. Taxation and the confiscation of property to sustain the war effort left many families destitute. Children went hungry, women rioted for food, and the state's troops, distraught over the suffering at home, led all others in deserting the Confederate army. By 1865, a significant minority of whites had tired of what they called "the rich man's war & poor man's fight."<sup>17</sup>

What Grimes and men of his class feared most in the aftermath of the war was that former slaves and disaffected whites would join forces to block their return to power. That came to pass in 1867-1868, when Congress, as a precondition for return to the Union, ordered North Carolina and the other Confederate states<sup>18</sup> to acknowledge Black citizenship and revise their constitutions accordingly. In the election of delegates to a state constitutional convention, candidates backed by a biracial alliance within North Carolina's newly organized Republican

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<sup>15</sup> Daniels, "Bryan Grimes"; Coffey, "Bryan Grimes," 159-60, 423.

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Constitution, article 3, section 3; Grimes's pardon, U.S. Pardons Under Amnesty Proclamations, 1865-1869, Ancestry.com.

<sup>17</sup> Coffey, "Bryan Grimes," 440; Robert Hinton, "Cotton Culture on the Tar River: The Politics of Agricultural Labor in the Coastal Plain of North Carolina, 1862-1902" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1993), 134-46; O. Goddin to Zebulon Vance, February 27, 1863, in W. Buck Yearns and John G. Barrett, eds., *North Carolina Civil War Documentary* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 98. On internal dissent during the Civil War, see Paul E. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), chaps. 2-3; Judkin Browning, *Shifting Loyalities: The Union Occupation of Eastern North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011), chaps. 1-3; Wayne K. Durrill, *War of Another Kind: A Southern Community in the Great Rebellion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990). Between 1861 and 1865, roughly 23,000 North Carolina troops deserted; they accounted for nearly one-fourth of all desertions in the Confederate army. See Richard Bardolph, "Inconsistent Rebels: Desertion of North Carolina Troops in the Civil War," *North Carolina Historical Review* 41 (April 1964), 163-89.

<sup>18</sup> Except for Tennessee, which had been readmitted to the Union in 1866.

Party won 107 of 120 seats. When those men gathered in Raleigh, they laid out a radically democratic plan for state and local governance. They drafted a constitution that guaranteed free elections, afforded all adult male citizens the right to vote, removed longstanding property requirements for election to high state office, and, for the first time in North Carolina's history, instituted a system of elected rather than appointed county government. In April 1868, voters ratified the constitution, elected a Republican governor, and sent a Republican majority – including three Black senators and sixteen Black representatives – to the state legislature. At the local level, particularly in Pitt and surrounding eastern counties with majority or near-majority Black populations, Republicans also won election as county and town commissioners, constables, justices of the peace, and tax collectors. The scale of the Republicans' victory reflected the fact that the percentage of whites who crossed the color line and allied themselves with former bondsmen was larger in North Carolina than in any other southern state.<sup>19</sup>

For men like Grimes, these developments could not have been more threatening. The old slaveholding elite had lost control of government, and, with it, much of their ability to use the law and the police power of the state to force Blacks into new forms of semi-bound servitude such as sharecropping and tenantry. Grimes and other self-styled "best men" struck back with violence. In the years 1868 to 1870, they organized cells of the Ku Klux Klan across much of North Carolina. William L. Saunders, one of the Klan's state-level leaders, lived at Grimesland at the time. He ran the farm and encouraged Grimes to take an active role in managing vigilantes in the eastern section of the state. Years later, Joseph J. Laughinghouse, one of Grimes's lifelong friends, publicly identified him as a senior officer in the Klan's local organization.<sup>20</sup>

For more than a decade, conflict smoldered in the Tar River region that comprised neighboring Edgecombe, Pitt, and Beaufort Counties. Klansmen kept up a near-constant campaign of harassment and intimidation. In reminiscences published in newspapers across the state in the early 1920s, Joseph Laughinghouse recalled driving white Republicans from their homes. One was an agent of the Freedmen's Bureau, the federal agency established by Congress in 1865 to assist former slaves with food, housing, medical aid, schools, and legal advice as they made the transition out of bondage. Klansmen put the agent on notice: "Your presence . . . has grown so obnoxious that the K.K.K. have decided to give you twenty-four hours to seek other quarters. If you are found here, after that time, may the Lord have mercy upon your soul, for the K.K.K. will not have any for you." Another man, a poor white farmer whose political sympathies likely crossed the race line, received a similar threat. "This is to notify you," nightriders warned, "that you now own four and one-half acres of land, but if you

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<sup>19</sup> James L. Leloudis and Robert R. Korstad, *Fragile Democracy: The Struggle Over Race and Voting Rights in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 5-11; 1868 North Carolina Senate, <https://bit.ly/3616mXO>, and 1868 North Carolina House of Representatives, <https://bit.ly/3mOk0EG>, Carolana.com.

<sup>20</sup> "K.K.K. of Washington, N.C. in Reconstruction Days," October 22, 1922; "Pitt County's K.K.K. of Reconstruction Days," November 12, 1922; and "Persecution of the K.K.K. of 1868-'69-'70," October 19, 1921, *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.).

are [here] after ten days all the land you will own can be measured by 2 1/2 x 6 1/2" (the dimensions of a coffin or grave). There were reasons aplenty to believe that Klansmen would follow through on such threats. At a mass lynching in Edgecombe County, hooded vigilantes forced a group of "negro politicians" to watch as they "emasculated" eleven Black men. In another incident, Klansmen started a gun fight in a Pitt County courtroom, wounding a marshal and killing a white man who had come to seek justice for a Black neighbor.<sup>21</sup>

According to Laughinghouse, these and other criminal acts "were consecrated to saving Anglo-Saxon civilization." All, he added, were perpetrated under the command of "Maj. Gen. Bryan Grimes" and like-minded racial loyalists.<sup>22</sup>

Blacks and their white allies retaliated against the Klan by burning barns, cotton gins, and grist mills at Grimesland and on the farms of other wealthy landlords. Then, on August 14, 1880, an assassin – a young white man named William A. Parker – exacted the ultimate revenge. He ambushed Grimes and killed him with a single shotgun blast. From the outset, parties sympathetic to Grimes attributed the killing to competing economic interests and political ideologies. Parker was "from the laboring class and poor," and he was known to be a staunch Republican. That made him an easy recruit for brothers Howell and William B. Paramore, who paid him to murder Grimes. The Paramores owned a crossroads store near Grimes's farm and had been in a long-running dispute with him over a parcel of land between their two properties.<sup>23</sup>

The case against Parker was first heard in Beaufort County Superior Court, but a juror fell ill, and the presiding judge, David Schenck, declared a mistrial. The prosecutors, who had worried from the outset that disgust for Grimes and his politics would taint the jury, petitioned for a change of venue. Schenck – a well-known Klansman – granted the request and moved the trial to neighboring Martin County. The original jurors possessed "no intelligence," he opined, and were "much activated by political prejudice." They would never see through the testimony

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<sup>21</sup> "K.K.K. of Washington, N.C. in Reconstruction Days"; "Pitt County's K.K.K. of Reconstruction Days"; "Persecution of the K.K.K. of 1868-'69-'70"; J. Kelly Turner and John Luther Bridgers Jr., *History of Edgecombe County, North Carolina* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1920), 247. In "K.K.K. of Washington, N.C.," Laughinghouse recounted that on another occasion Klansmen threatened a Republican sheriff that if he tried to imprison them, they would "tie a keg of nails around [his] neck and make cat-fish bait out of [him]."

<sup>22</sup> "K.K.K. of Washington, N.C. in Reconstruction Days"; "Pitt County's K.K.K. of Reconstruction Days"; "Persecution of the K.K.K. of 1868-'69-'70." In 1920, Laughinghouse published a long, boastful account of notable Klan lynchings. The victims included Wyatt Outlaw, a Black constable and town commissioner in Alamance County, and John W. Stephens, a white Republican state senator from Caswell County. See "A Bit of Reconstruction History," *Greensboro Patriot*, October 21, 1920. A comparable typescript account, unsigned and without attribution, can be found in folder 148, Bryan Grimes Papers #00292. The similarities between the two documents suggest that J. Bryan Grimes and Laughinghouse may have collaborated on recording Klan history. The younger Grimes commented on numerous items in his father's private papers, and some documents of his own are intermingled in that collection.

<sup>23</sup> Coffey, "Bryan Grimes," 509-15; "Parker's Crime," *Wilmington Messenger*, March 13, 1888; State vs. William Parker, diary entry, December 8, 1880, transcript volume TV-652/8, David Schenck Papers #00652, Southern Historical Collection. The spelling of the brothers' surname varies across newspaper accounts of the trial. Sometimes, it is 'Paramore'; at other times, 'Paramour.'

of Parker's witnesses, who, in Schenck's judgment, "were ignorant, generally ragged, and [showed] no regard for truth or propriety." "This is a conflict between castes," the judge avowed, "and the lower caste is in the jury box." Parker's defenders bristled at Schenck's snobbery but agreed with his appraisal of the class interests at stake in the trial. They dismissed the prosecution's case as "a rich man's fight against a poor man's life."<sup>24</sup>

The change of location made no difference. During the Civil War, Unionist sympathies had run deep among non-elite whites in Martin County, and class resentments remained raw. In June 1881, the jury in the second trial acquitted Parker of Grimes's murder. Critics of the verdict pointed to the obvious explanation. Grimes "was not only a wealthy and aristocratic gentleman," said the editor of the Raleigh *Farmer and Mechanic* newspaper, "but also a man of strong will and vehement feelings. His friends were warm friends, but his enemies hated him with a deadly hatred." Parker went about life as usual until March 10, 1888, when he was arrested for disorderly conduct. Drunk and disinhibited, he had been bragging publicly of killing Grimes. That night, "a party of ten or fifteen masked men" abducted Parker from the town jail in Washington, the seat of Beaufort County. They lynched him and left his body hanging from a bridge over the Tar River that the Grimes family had once owned. A note attached to Parker's clothing read, "Justice at Last." Days later, a coroner's jury ruled that he had died "at the hands of parties unknown."<sup>25</sup>

Death by an assassin's bullet was an ignominious end for Bryan Grimes, and an emphatic reminder that many in Pitt County had reviled both the man and his politics. It was a judgment that his son, John Bryan Grimes, and faithful friend, Joseph Laughinghouse, sought to erase from public memory. In 1883, they published Grimes's memoir of military service, interspersed with excerpts from wartime letters to his second wife, Charlotte. The presentation was carefully crafted to "demonstrate the character, honor, and chivalry" of the man. The memoir opens with a reference to the South's defeat at the Battle of Appomattox Court House and reads as a long prelude to the claim – disputed in Grimes's own time – that he led the final skirmish there, and that he and the troops under his command deserved a special place in history as the Confederacy's bravest and most resolute warriors.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> "The Grimes Murder Case," *Chatham Record* (Pittsboro, N.C.), December 16, 1880; untitled news item, *Morning Star* (Wilmington, N.C.), January 12, 1881; Rodney Steward, *David Schenck and the Contours of Confederate Identity* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2012), chap.5; State vs. William Parker, diary entry, December 8, 1880, transcript volume TV652/8, David Schenck Papers #00652; "The Other Charge," *Times* (Concord, N.C.), November 2, 1888.

<sup>25</sup> "Not Guilty," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), June 24, 1881; "Pitt's Pity," *Farmer and Mechanic* (Raleigh, N.C.), June 30, 1881; "Hung," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), March 13, 1888; "Lynching in Washington," *Washington Progress* (Washington, N.C.), March 13, 1888; "Avenged at Last," *Wilmington Messenger*, March 13, 1888; "Judge Lynch at Washington," *New Berne Weekly Journal*, March 15, 1888; James M. Campbell, "The Lynching of William Parker: The Criminal Justice System at Work in 19<sup>th</sup> Century North Carolina," *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 7 (September 1982), 99-109.

<sup>26</sup> *Extracts of Letters of Major-General Bryan Grimes, to His Wife, Written While in Active Service in the Army of Northern Virginia, Together with Some Personal Recollections of the War* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1883), 4. Laughinghouse and John Bryan Grimes included a hagiographic preface written by Pulaski Cowper, Bryan Grimes's brother-in-law and a widely respected attorney, insurance executive, and journalist. On

Over time, the story of Grimes's heroism worked its way into white North Carolina war veterans' sacred declaration of Confederate patriotism: "First [to die] at Bethel, Farthest to the Front at Gettysburg and Chickamauga, and Last at Appomattox." The story-turned-legend was also immortalized in stone, thanks largely to the influence wielded by John Bryan Grimes, who won election as North Carolina's secretary of state in 1900, and Henry A. London, a banker, newspaper publisher, and former state senator from Chatham County, who had fought under Grimes's command. London acquired three parcels of land near the town of Appomattox Court House, Virginia, where Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered at the end of the Civil War, and with John Bryan's assistance, secured public funds to erect a monument there. The monument, made of North Carolina granite, was above all else a tribute to Bryan Grimes. The inscription on its face reads, in part:

At this place, the North Carolina Brigade  
of Brigadier-General W. R. Cox of Grimes' Division  
Fired The Last Volley 9 April 1865.  
Major-General Bryan Grimes of North Carolina  
Planned the Last Battle Fought by the  
Army of Northern Virginia and Commanded the Infantry  
Engaged Therein, the Greater part of whom  
were North Carolinians.

The Grimes family enjoyed a place of honor at the dedication ceremony on April 10, 1905. London invited John Bryan and his brothers to retrace their father's movements across the battlefield "step by step," and Grimes's daughter, Mary Grimes Smith, had the privilege of unveiling the monument. The Raleigh *News and Observer* reported that when she pulled back the drape, "a great shout went up," "men, women, and children crowded around to read the inscription," and the "Daughters of the Confederacy covered [the monument] with flowers" sent from communities all across North Carolina. For the paper's correspondent, the entire scene "made a picture that memory [would] be glad to treasure up for all time."<sup>27</sup>

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Cowper, see his obituary, "Pulaski Cowper Died Yesterday," *North Carolinian* (Raleigh, N.C.), October 31, 1901. Contrary to this headline, Cowper actually died on October 28. See "Pulaski Cowper Dead," *Morning Post* (Raleigh, N.C.), October 29, 1901. For the controversy over Grimes's role at Appomattox, including his own efforts to shape the historical record, see Coffey, "Bryan Grimes," 505-08; "At Appomattox," June 26, 1881, "Gen. Grimes at Appomattox," June 30, 1881, "On to Appomattox," August 7, 1905, *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.); "Inscription is the Simple Truth," *Robesonian* (Lumberton, N.C.), August 7, 1905.

<sup>27</sup> Walter Clark, ed., *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions of North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-1865*, vol. 1 (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell, 1901), 3; *Public Laws and Resolutions of the State of North Carolina, 1905* (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell, 1905), chapt. 10; *Programme of the Unveiling of North Carolina's Monument at Appomattox, April 10, 1905* (N.p: n.p., 1905?); "Appomattox Memorial," January 4, 1905, and "Notable Day at Appomattox," April 12, 1905, *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.). Some North Carolinians saw the Confederacy's last stand in a different light. The *Yellow Jacket*, a Wilkes County newspaper published in one of the remaining Republican strongholds in the western part of the state, gloried in the fact that "treason [had been] buried" at Appomattox, and a loyal reader encouraged the editor to keep up the "work of telling [that] truth in plain style." See letters, *Yellow Jacket* (Moravian Falls, N.C.), January 22, 1903.

The veneration of Bryan Grimes – in print, at Appomattox, and ultimately on the campus of the University of North Carolina – was part and parcel of the myth of the Lost Cause, fabricated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the United Confederate Veterans, and other neo-Confederate organizations. In their telling of the past, the southern nation was not born of treasonous insurrection, but arose instead to defend the sacred principles of liberty on which the American republic had been founded. The white South fought not to preserve and expand the geographic reach of racial slavery, but rather to protect hearth and home from invasion. And Grimes was a "true citizen and brave soldier," not a traitor and a Klansman who opposed Black freedom with vigilante violence.<sup>28</sup>

This is the deceit that UNC's trustees sought to teach and perpetuate when they chose, in 1922, to name a newly constructed residence hall for Grimes. With that act, they endorsed white supremacy as a virtuous principle and attached the university's moral and intellectual authority to the "age of racial terror" that followed Emancipation and, in various forms, persists to this day.<sup>29</sup>



Aftermath of the Tulsa Massacre, May 31 - June 1, 1921, less than a year before the naming of Grimes Residence Hall. A white mob killed as many as 300 Black residents and razed the city's all-Black Greenwood District. Courtesy of the Library of Congress, National Red Cross Photograph Collection.

<sup>28</sup> Extracts of Letters of Major-General Bryan Grimes, 4. For excellent recent scholarship on the Lost Cause, see Adam H. Domby, *False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020).

<sup>29</sup> The quotation is from Susan Neiman's illuminating study of efforts to come to terms with the historical crimes of German fascists and American racists, *Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2019), 19.

Worse still, the trustees did these things amid an orgy of violence set off by whites who were determined that Black veterans of World War I would have no claim on the democratic rights they fought for on the battlefields of Europe. The Ku Klux Klan was reborn during the 1920s, and by mid-decade recruited somewhere between two and five million members nationwide. In the South, lynchings spiked, and in more than two dozen towns and cities across America, white rage fueled deadly riots. In 1919, whites in Elaine, Arkansas went on what one observer described as a "crusade of death," slaughtering upwards of 800 Blacks, most of them sharecroppers who had attempted to form a union to counter the power of white landlords. Two years later, whites in Tulsa, Oklahoma rampaged through the city's all-Black Greenwood District, where they massacred as many as 300 residents, burned homes and businesses to the ground, and disposed of the dead in mass graves and the Arkansas River.<sup>30</sup>

With these events as their backdrop, UNC's trustees lifted up Bryan Grimes – a race warrior – to inspire students who would one day shape North Carolina's future. Nearly a century on, an honest reckoning with that decision and with Grimes's legacy is long overdue.

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<sup>30</sup> Linda Gordon, *The Second Coming of the KKK: The Ku Klux Klan of the 1920s and the American Political Tradition* (New York: Liveright Publishing, 2017); Nancy MacLean, *Behind the Mask of Chivalry: The Making of the Second Ku Klux Klan* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), membership figures at 197n2; *Lynching in America: Targeting Black Veterans* (Montgomery, Alabama: Equal Justice Initiative, 2017), <https://bit.ly/3pelizl>; David F. Krugler, 1919, *The Year of Violence: How African Americans Fought Back* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Kavin Ross, "Remembering 'Red Summer,' When White Mobs Massacred Blacks from Tulsa to Washington, D.C., National Geographic online, History and Culture – Race in America, <https://on.natgeo.com/3mTr3vz>; Brian K. Mitchell, "Soldiers and Veterans at the Elaine Massacre," in Mark K. Christ, ed., *The War at Home: Perspectives on the Arkansas Experience During World War I* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2020), Louis Sharpe Dunaway quotation at 136; James S. Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance: The Tulsa Race War and Its Legacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002).

## Pettigrew Hall

In 1913, the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina named this building – originally constructed as a dormitory – to honor James Johnston Pettigrew. Pettigrew graduated from UNC in 1847, made his career as a lawyer and state legislator in South Carolina, rose to the rank of brigadier general in the Confederate army, and died in 1863 from a wound suffered at the Battle of Gettysburg. Over the course of his lifetime, Pettigrew made no significant contribution to the work of the university.<sup>1</sup>

### Pettigrew:

- Enriched himself with from the plundered labor of enslaved Black men, women, and children
- Took up arms to defend and preserve the institution of racial slavery and to affirm the inalienable right of any "one man" to enslave and profit from "the unwilling labor of another"
- Committed treason by serving as a general officer in the southern Confederacy's war to dissolve the American republic and preserve the institution of racial slavery

James Johnston Pettigrew (known as Johnston by friends and family) was born in 1828, one of five surviving children in the household of Ebenezer and Ann Blount Shepard Pettigrew. The Pettigrews ranked as one of North Carolina's wealthiest slaveholding families. At the time of his death in 1848, Ebenezer owned three large plantations – Bonarva and Magnolia in Tyrrell County, and Belgrade in neighboring Washington County – where he enslaved upwards of 150 Black men, women, and children. Those bound laborers produced corn, rice, and wheat; they salted fish and cut giant cypress trees into dressed timber and shingles – all of which the Pettigrews shipped to merchants up and down the East Coast, from New York to Charleston. Much of that trade moved along a canal that connected Lake Phelps in Tyrrell County to the Scuppernong River, and from there opened into the Albemarle Sound and coastal waterways. The canal had been dug in the late 1780s by captives brought directly from West Africa aboard the *Jennett* and the *Camden*, slave ships commissioned by a group of Edenton merchants for that express purpose. Few of the one hundred and sixty slaves who landed in Edenton survived to produce descendants. Some drowned in a failed attempt to escape; most of the others died of overwork and the diseases that preyed on human life in the swamplands of eastern North Carolina.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes, January 28, 1913, oversize volume 11, Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina Records, 1789-1932, #40001, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In 1908, the university purchased land at the northwest corner of campus, with plans to demolish the hotel that was located there and to replace it with three new dormitories. Five years later, the trustees announced their decision to name the buildings for Pettigrew, Civil War governor Zebulon B. Vance, and former university president Kemp P. Battle. Work on the project was recorded in the minutes above for January 22, May 31, and October 26, 1909; February 3 and 9, 1910; February 2 and 24, and June 3, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> Clyde [N.] Wilson, "James Johnston Pettigrew," in William S. Powell, ed., vol. 5, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 77-79; Clyde N. Wilson, *Carolina*

Johnston Pettigrew received his early education from private tutors and at William J. Bingham's academy in Hillsborough. He enrolled at the University of North Carolina in 1843, shortly after his fifteenth birthday, and graduated four years later at the top of his class. Over the course of his later life, Johnston distinguished himself as an amateur scholar. He read Latin and ancient Greek, skills required of all university students; possessed exceptional talent in mathematics; studied music and earned a diploma in civil law in Berlin; mastered four modern European languages, as well as Arabic and Hebrew; and undertook original research for a book he hoped to write on the history of the Moors in North Africa and Iberia.<sup>3</sup>

After earning his A.B. degree, Johnston had no interest in returning to the rural isolation of Tyrrell and Washington Counties. He worked briefly as an astronomer and chart maker at the U.S. Naval Observatory in Annapolis, Maryland, thanks to an appointment arranged by President James K. Polk, a fellow UNC graduate, class of 1818. But the job was tedious and confining, factors that encouraged Johnston to turn his attention to studying the law under the tutelage of a family acquaintance and who practiced in Baltimore.<sup>4</sup> Then, in the summer of 1848, Ebenezer Pettigrew died. Shortly before his death, he had deeded Bonarva plantation and its enslaved work force to his eldest son, Charles, and under the terms of his will, second son William now inherited Belgrade and Magnolia plantations, together with the nearly one hundred souls held in bondage there. To provide for Johnston, Ebenezer instructed William to set aside a \$15,000 legacy – the rough equivalent of \$500,000 today – payable, with interest, over a period of five or more years.<sup>5</sup>

The stolen labor of Black slaves had made Ebenezer Pettigrew a wealthy man, and now it gave his third son the means to follow ambition wherever it might lead. This would not be the only time that Johnston profited from such theft. A decade later, James C. Johnston, the family friend for whom young Pettigrew was named, gave him a gift of \$50,000, the equivalent of just under \$1.6 million today. Johnston the benefactor could afford to be generous. At the time of the gift, he owned 12,000 acres of land and 555 slaves in Halifax, Chowan, and Pasquotank Counties. There is no evidence that Pettigrew ever expressed remorse for the fact that his financial independence and personal liberty were rooted in an organized system of exploitation that visited violence and death upon millions of fellow human beings. Throughout his life, he

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*Cavalier: The Life and Mind of James Johnston Pettigrew* (Rockford, Illinois: Chronicles Press, 2002), 1-5; Ebenezer Pettigrew, Find a Grave, <https://bit.ly/3bcDSyS>; Wayne K. Durrill, "Slavery, Kinship, and Dominance: The Black Community at Somerset Place Plantation, 1786-1960," *Slavery and Abolition* 13 (Issue 2), 3-4. The number of slaves owned by Ebenezer Pettigrew is based on the holdings of his sons William and Charles as recorded in the next federal census after the property transfer. See 1850 Federal Census, Slave Schedules, Tyrrell and Washington Counties, North Carolina, Ancestry.com.

<sup>3</sup> Wilson, "James Johnston Pettigrew"; Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 38-40, 209.

<sup>4</sup> Through the end of the nineteenth century, the overwhelming majority of lawyers trained by apprenticing themselves to practicing attorneys. A movement to teach law as an academic subject did not begin in earnest until the founding of the American Bar Association in 1878, and university-based law schools did not fully displace the apprenticeship model until the 1930s and 40s. See Robert Stevens, *Law School: Legal Education in America from the 1850s to the 1980s* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1983).

<sup>5</sup> Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 19-29

denied that racial slavery was, in his words, an instrument of "plunder." As a matter of "Divine will" and natural law, he insisted, any "one man" had the inalienable right to enslave and profit from "the unwilling labor of another."<sup>6</sup>

In 1849, Pettigrew moved to Charleston, South Carolina, to complete his legal studies with jurist James Louis Pettigru, his first cousin once removed. He quickly won admission to the South Carolina bar, and in early 1850 departed for a grand tour of Europe, financed largely by his North Carolina namesake and patron. The expedition stretched across more than two and a half years, during which time Pettigrew drew inspiration from nationalist movements across the continent that seemed to mirror the secessionist politics of "fire-eaters" back home who pressed for southern independence and dissolution of the American republic. As a modern biographer has observed, "the perspective acquired by his sojourn in Europe intensified Pettigrew's identity as a southerner. From Europe it became more forcefully apparent that America was made up of two uncongenial nations." During the 1850s, as debate over the westward expansion of slavery intensified, this conviction became the defining principle of Pettigrew's politics. It ultimately prepared him to forswear his allegiance to the United States and to take up arms to establish a slaveholders' republic – what Pettigrew called "'a [southern] Nation among Nations,'" founded upon the principle that all men were *not* created equal and that white men possessed an irrefutable right to rule.<sup>7</sup>

Pettigrew returned to Charleston in late 1852, joined James Petigru's law firm, and was soon litigating cases in both state and federal courts. That work introduced him to influential power brokers, who in 1856 backed his election to the South Carolina legislature. Pettigrew also threw himself into preparations for a civil war that he believed was inevitable. He joined the Washington Light Infantry, a Charleston militia company; assembled a library of books on military tactics and engineering; and, along with his duties as a lawmaker, accepted appointment as Governor Robert F. W. Allston's aide-de-camp, a position that carried the rank of lieutenant colonel in the state militia. In 1859, Pettigrew made a short return visit to Europe, where hoped to translate book learning into practical military skills by joining Sardinian forces in their battle against Austria in the Second War of Italian Unification. That plan was undone by an armistice signed on the day after his arrival, but all was not lost. Peace in Italy afforded Pettigrew time to visit Paris, a city he described as "the metropolis of war." There, he studied the training of professional soldiers and conferred with French officers on matters of military organization, discipline, and logistics.<sup>8</sup>

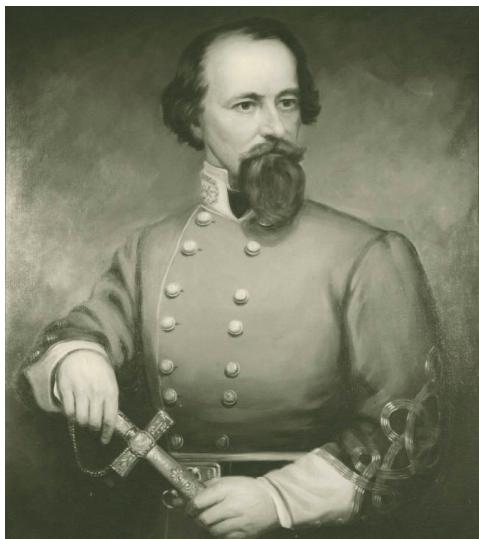
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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 80-81; Martha M. Smith, "James Cathcart Johnston," in William S. Powell, ed., vol. 3, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 303; *Report of the Minority of the Special Committee of Seven, to Whom Was Reported So Much of Gov. Adams' Message, No. 1, as Relates to Slavery and the Slave Trade* (Charleston: Harper and Calvo, 1858), 8-9.

<sup>7</sup> Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 27-63, 109-11. On Pettigrew's interest in European nationalist movements, see Paul Quigley, *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 28-30. James Petigru, unlike his young protégé, was a Unionist who opposed Nullification in 1832-1833 and South Carolina's secession in December 1860. See William H. Pease and Jane H. Pease, *James Louis Petigru: Southern Conservative, Southern Dissenter* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 71-72, 91-92, 98-111, 116-21. Pettigrew attracted national attention in the late 1850s as the author of a report that argued against calls from some prominent South Carolinians to reopen

Upon his return to Charleston, Pettigrew distilled all that he had learned into a comprehensive proposal to transform the South Carolina militia into a modern fighting force. He also took on the tasks of drilling new volunteer troops and fortifying Charleston against attack from the sea. Pettigrew attended to these duties until April 1861, when southern bombardment of Fort Sumter, a federal outpost in Charleston harbor, initiated a war-in-earnest between the United States and the insurgent Confederate States of America.<sup>9</sup>



James Johnston Pettigrew. Courtesy of the North Carolina Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

With fighting finally to hand, Pettigrew volunteered his services to his home state of North Carolina. In July 1861, he took command of just under 1,000 men in the Twenty-Second North Carolina Regiment; eight months later, the Confederate War Department promoted him to the rank of brigadier general.

Pettigrew's experience on the battlefield was a gift to hagiographers – particularly latter-day authors of the Lost Cause – who enshrined him in the pantheon of Confederate heroes. In 1862, at the Battle of Seven Pines, Pettigrew suffered a near-fatal wound to his neck and right shoulder. While recovering from that injury, he was shot again, this time in the left arm, bayoneted in the leg, captured by Union soldiers, and confined in a Federal prison.

Authorities in Washington eventually ordered Pettigrew's release in a prisoner exchange. Restored to his command, he spent the better part of a year in southeastern Virginia and northeastern North Carolina, skirmishing with Union troops who had captured a broad swath of territory that stretched from Suffolk to New Bern. Then, in July 1863, he met his apotheosis at Gettysburg. Pettigrew commanded one of three divisions in the assault on Union forces that came to be known as Pickett's Charge. In its own time, the attack was judged to be "a great military blunder." Confederate losses were staggering. Of the roughly 4,350 infantrymen under Pettigrew's command, an estimated 2,700 were killed, wounded, or taken prisoner. Pettigrew suffered only a minor hand wound in the primary engagement, but in the

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the transatlantic slave trade. He took that position because he viewed the proposal as a threat to slaveholders' economic and political interests no less dangerous than northern abolitionists' "diseased sentimentalism." Pettigrew contended that renewing the slave trade would create a glut in the domestic market for bound labor and significantly deflate the wealth of slave barons throughout the South. By his estimation, slaveholders in South Carolina alone stood to lose a minimum of \$56 million in net worth (approximately \$1.8 billion today). Pettigrew also reasoned that cheaper slaves would reduce the cost of producing cotton, and, in turn, lower the price that American and British manufacturers would be willing to pay for the South's most valuable crop. Added to that, there was the heightened risk of insurrection associated with the importation of "raw Africans," newly stolen from their homes, "unruly, discontented," and not yet "educated to obedience" and "peaceful submission." The report was persuasive enough that the question of resuming the transatlantic trade was dropped from the legislative agenda. See *Report of the Minority of the Special Committee of Seven*.

<sup>9</sup> Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 117-45.

subsequent retreat, on July 14 at the Battle of Falling Waters, a Union soldier shot him through the abdomen. He died of peritonitis three days later. Pettigrew's body was returned to Raleigh for a funeral on the Capitol grounds. He was buried in a city cemetery, and at the end of the war, reinterred at Bonarva in Tyrrell County.<sup>10</sup>

Pettigrew's military service amounted to treason, which the Constitution defines as the act of "levying War against [the United States]" or giving "Aid and Comfort" to the nation's enemies. The gravity of his offense is underscored by the fact that he acted not as a conscript under duress, or even as an ordinary soldier, but rather as a general officer with decisive authority over the prosecution of war.<sup>11</sup>

This, of course, is not how Pettigrew has been remembered. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, his story became an anchor point in white North Carolinians' "Rebel Boast": "First [to die] at Bethel, Farthest to the Front at Gettysburg, and Last at Appomattox." To this day, that declaration shapes popular memory of the Civil War, and in some cases, scholarly treatments as well. It originated in the Lost Cause mythology fabricated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the United Confederate Veterans. In their telling of the past, the southern nation was not born of treasonous insurrection, but arose instead to defend the sacred principles of liberty on which the American republic had been founded. The white South fought not to preserve and expand the geographic reach of racial slavery, but rather to protect hearth and home from invasion.<sup>12</sup>

In 1920, Walter Clark, chief justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court and himself a Confederate veteran, gave voice to this myth in the eulogy he delivered at the dedication of a memorial to Pettigrew erected near Falling Waters, West Virginia, where the general died. Clark presided over the occasion at the invitation of the North Carolina Historical Commission (a state agency appointed by the governor) and the UDC. He placed Pettigrew in the company of ancient Athenian warriors who, badly outnumbered, repulsed a Persian invasion on the plain of Marathon in 490 BCE. He compared the Confederacy's general's selfless sacrifice to that of French soldiers on the World War I battlefield at Verdun, and he imbued Pettigrew with qualities of the

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<sup>10</sup> Wilson, *Carolina Cavalier*, 147-53, 159-60, 164-69, 195-204. Quotation from Robert Garlick Hill Kean, chief of the Confederate Bureau of War, in Gary W. Gallagher, *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), 49. Pickett's Charge was named for Major-General George E. Pickett, who along with Pettigrew and Major-General Richard H. Anderson, led the assault. On Pettigrew's losses, see Earl J. Hess, *Pickett's Charge: The Last Attack at Gettysburg* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 333-34. A significant number of the wounded men were also captured. As Hess notes, historians must estimate Pettigrew's losses in the assault because official records for his division only reported totals for the entire battle at Gettysburg and did not disaggregate them by engagement.

<sup>11</sup> U.S. Constitution, Article 3, Section 3.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Clark, ed., *Histories of the Several Regiments and Battalions of North Carolina in the Great War, 1861-1865*, vol. 1 (Raleigh: E. M. Uzzell, 1901), 3; Manly Wade Wellman, *Rebel Boast: First at Bethel – Last at Appomattox* (New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1956). On the Lost Cause, see Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003); Adam H. Domby, *False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020).

Divine, quoting the Gospel of John: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Above all else, Clark exclaimed, Pettigrew was an American patriot who, like the Revolutionary forefathers at Bunker Hill, Saratoga, and Yorktown, died in service to "duty" and "country."<sup>13</sup>

We might ask, what country was that, the United States, or the Confederate States of America? The very purpose of Lost Cause mythology was to elide that question, and in doing so, to wash away the sinfulness of a war undertaken to perpetuate the enslavement of four million Black souls. The country Walter Clark and his audience had in mind was a Jim Crow nation, its sectional differences reconciled on the basis of white brotherhood and the assumed right of white men to rule all others. As historian David Blight has observed, this "peace among whites" – a phrase borrowed from abolitionist and statesman Frederick Douglass – was built upon the "resubjugation" of people the Civil War had freed from chattel bondage.<sup>14</sup>

The trustees who named a new residence hall for Pettigrew were steeped in these Confederate values and historical falsehoods. They bestowed the honor in 1913, the same year they celebrated the dedication of UNC's Confederate monument. Both acts aligned the university with principles of white supremacy and positioned it as a bulwark against democracy and equal citizenship. That was an indefensible choice in its own time, and to let it stand today is unbefitting an institution that aspires to lead and serve as the "people's university."

The U.S. military is wrestling with a similar contradiction between its core values and mission and the Jim Crow legacy of ten bases named for Confederate generals, all located in former Confederate states. The list includes Fort Bragg in Fayetteville, which Congress named in 1918 to honor Major-General Braxton Bragg, a native of Warren County

In recent years, civil rights activists, politicians, and military officials have called for the removal of Bragg's name, along with those of his compatriots. Testifying in July 2020 before the House Armed Services Committee, General Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, explained the petitioners' concern. "Those generals fought for the institution of slavery," he said. "So, we have to take a hard look at the symbols, like the Confederate flag, statues, and bases. The Confederacy, the American Civil War, was fought as an act of rebellion. It was an act of treason at the time, against the Union, against the Stars and Stripes, against the U.S. Constitution." Milley advised members of Congress that the Confederate base names had become a significant source of "divisiveness" within the ranks and posed a direct threat to the

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<sup>13</sup> "Gen. James Johnston Pettigrew, C.S.A., Address by Chief Justice Walter Clark of North Carolina at the Unveiling of the Memorial Marble Pillar and Tablet to General Pettigrew Near Bunker Hill, W. Va., September 17, 1920," *North Carolina Booklet* 20 (Nos. 2-4, October 1919, January-April 1921), 171-80. Walter Clark was an outspoken proponent of Lost Cause ideology and the white supremacist principles at its heart. In 1907, at the dedication of the Confederate monument in Chatham County, he charged that the Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, violated the sovereign "people's will" and was adopted illegally. He urged his audience to oppose that injustice and honor the Confederate dead by taking up "the cross-barred emblem of our fiery Southern faith." The Fourteenth Amendment granted birthright citizenship to former slaves and guarantees every citizen "equal protection of the laws." See "Judge Clark's Speech," *Chatham Record* (Pittsboro, N.C.), August 29, 1907.

<sup>14</sup> David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3, 397.

military's preparedness to defend the nation. Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper, testifying alongside Milley, agreed. "Racism, bias, and prejudice have no place in our military," he declared, "not only because they are immoral and unjust, but also because they degrade the morale, cohesion, and readiness of our force." Lawmakers – Republican and Democrat alike – took that counsel to heart. In December 2020, they passed the National Defense Authorization Act, which established a process for removing from Department of Defense property all names "that commemorate the Confederate States of America or any person who served voluntarily with the Confederate States of America."<sup>15</sup>

These leaders recognized a poignant truth spoken by Reverend Fred L. Shuttlesworth, long-time head of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and a veteran of the civil rights struggles of the 1960s: "If you don't tell it like it was, it can never be as it ought to be." In that spirit, let us move forward by telling it like it was at our university, and by removing the misguided and pernicious honor bestowed upon James Johnston Pettigrew under the reign of Jim Crow.<sup>16</sup>

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In 1930, Johnston Pettigrew's nieces, Caroline and Mary Pettigrew, gave the university a large collection of family papers, now housed in the Southern Historical Collection in Wilson Library. In exchange for the gift, the university bound itself "in perpetuity to care for the Pettigrew Family Burial Ground on Bonarva Plantation in Tyrrell County." Joseph G. de R. Hamilton, professor of history and founding director of the Southern Historical Collection, negotiated the agreement and signed it on behalf of university president Harry W. Chase and the Board of Trustees. Thirteen members of the Pettigrew family are known to be buried in the cemetery, including Johnston's grandparents, parents, and siblings. Today, the graves lie within Pettigrew State Park, established in 1939. Since the 1950s (and perhaps earlier), general upkeep has been provided by park personnel.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> "Milley Calls for 'Hard Look' at Renaming Bases Honoring Confederates," *New York Times*, July 9, 2020; "Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper, Statement for the Record (as Prepared) to the HSAC on Hearing on DOD Authorities and Roles Related to Civilian Law Enforcement," U.S. Department of Defense, July 9, 2020, <http://bit.ly/2Xom4bA>; National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021, Pub. L. 116-283, Title III, Section E., gov.info, <http://bit.ly/2JYgPwg>. The other bases are Fort Benning (1917), named for Henry L. Benning; Fort Lee (1917), named for Robert E. Lee; Fort Gordon (1917), named for John B. Gordon; Camp Beauregard (1917), named for Pierre G. T. Beauregard; Fort A. P. Hill (1941), named for Ambrose P. Hill Jr.; Fort Polk (1941), named for Leonidas Polk; Fort Hood (1942), named for John Bell Hood; Fort Pickett (1942), named for George E. Pickett; and Fort Rucker (1942), named for Edmund W. Rucker.

<sup>16</sup> "David W. Blight, "'If You Don't Tell It Like It Was, It Can Never Be as It Ought to Be,'" in James Oliver Horton and Lois E. Horton, eds., *Slavery and Public History: The Tough Stuff of American Memory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 33.

<sup>17</sup> An Agreement Between the University of North Carolina and Caroline Pettigrew and Mary Johnston Pettigrew, June 2, 1930, and undated list of persons buried in the Pettigrew family cemetery, Administrative Control File for the Pettigrew Family Papers #00592, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. This file contains additional correspondence that documents Hamilton's negotiations with the Pettigrew sisters. On the arrangement for general upkeep of the burial ground by state park personnel,

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see Documents Related to Maintenance of the Cemetery at Pettigrew State Park, North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation Records, State Archives of North Carolina, North Carolina Digital Collections,  
<https://bit.ly/3bDHr0S>.