

Grimes Residence Hall

The Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina named this building in 1922 to honor Bryan Grimes Jr., class of 1848, who 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.¹

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.²

¹ 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.

² 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 twenty-five 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."³

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 fifty-seven. 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."⁴

³ 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. Bran 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.

⁴ 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 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 romantick⁵ 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 meat⁶ and if you come to Edenton this winter, you shall surely have a good supply."⁷

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 pen⁸ 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

⁵ An obsolete variant of 'romantic.'

⁶ 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.

⁷ 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 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.

⁸ 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 Unremissive 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 21st 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."⁹

Rocky Mount 16th Feby. 1855
Dear Sir
Enclosed you will find a Bill of
Sale for Girl Sarah: send me Powells Bill of
Sale by Return mail, also Check on Farmers
Bank for "two hundred & fifty dollars" (\$250⁰⁰/₁₀₀)
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 16th Feby
1855
David McDaniel

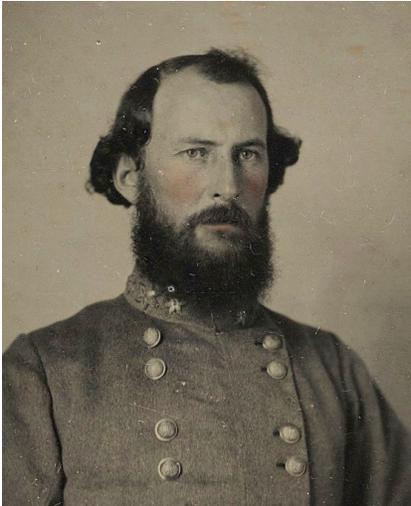
Bill of sale for "girl Sarah," whose name Grimes changed to Fannie. The cover note refers to Powel,¹⁰ an enslaved man – or, given the low price, more likely a young boy¹¹ – Grimes sold to David McDaniel for \$250. Bryan Grimes Papers, P.C. 3.1, State Archives of North Carolina.

⁹ 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 19th Century U.S. Slavery" (M.A. thesis, University of South Carolina, 2012).

¹⁰ 'Powel' is a name of Welsh origin, meaning 'eminent,' or was sometimes used in Ireland as the equivalent of the Gaelic 'Mac Giolla Phóil,' '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.

¹¹ 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 in¹² 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."¹³



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.¹⁴

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,

¹² To 'bid in' is to beat the highest competing offer in an auction.

¹³ 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; Permylla 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 Raffaello 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.

¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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 1866.¹⁶

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."¹⁷

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 states¹⁸ 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

¹⁵ Daniels, "Bryan Grimes"; Coffey, "Bryan Grimes," 159-60, 423.

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

¹⁷ 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 Loyalties: 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.

¹⁸ 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.¹⁹

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.²⁰

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

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ "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.²¹

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.²²

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.²³

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

²¹ "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]."

²² "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.

²³ 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."²⁴

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."²⁵

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.²⁶

²⁴ "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.

²⁵ "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 19th Century North Carolina," *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 7 (September 1982), 99-109.

²⁶ *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."²⁷

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.

²⁷ 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.²⁸

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.²⁹

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 eight hundred 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 three hundred residents, burned homes and businesses to the ground, and disposed of the dead in mass graves and the Arkansas River.³⁰

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

²⁹ 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.

³⁰ 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/3peliZI>; 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



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.

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.

UNC Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward

Dunaway quotation at 136; James S. Hirsch, *Riot and Remembrance: The Tulsa Race War and Its Legacy* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002).