

Battle Hall

In 1912, the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina named this section of a three-part dormitory building to honor Kemp Plummer Battle, class of 1849. Battle was a signatory of North Carolina's ordinance of secession from the United States of America, and, as a leader in the university, opposed principles of equal citizenship and inclusive democracy. The other two sections were named for Confederate general J. Johnston Pettigrew, class of 1847, and Zebulon B. Vance, who served two terms as governor during the Civil War, and a third in the late 1870s, the time of North Carolina's so-called redemption from Reconstruction. Vance attended the university in 1851 to read law with Battle's father, Judge William H. Battle.¹

Nine months after the dormitories opened, the university dedicated a Confederate monument opposite them in McCorkle Place.² The four structures created a Confederate memorial space at the north end of campus and stood as a statement of the university's allegiance to Confederate principles: white supremacy and Black subjugation.

Battle:

- Enriched himself by enslaving and stealing the labor of Black men, women, and children
- Established a distinguished career as a lawyer and public official
- Committed treason as a signatory of North Carolina's ordinance of secession from the United States of America
- Served as a university trustee from 1862 to 1868, and again from 1874 until his death in 1919
- Led the restructuring of the university in the mid 1870s and served as its president from 1876 to 1891
- Used his positions of influence to perpetuate and sustain systems of racial oppression – first, slavery, and then the regime of Jim Crow

¹ "Opening Session of University," *Tar Heel*, September 18, 1912; "The New Dormitories," *Alumni Review* 1 (December 1912), 55-56; 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; 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; John G. Barrett, "Zebulon Baird Vance," in Williams S. Powell, ed., *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 6 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 85-87. 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 the three new dormitories. Work on the project was recorded in the Board of Trustees volume above, minutes above for January 22, May 31, and October 26, 1909; February 3 and 9, 1910; February 2 and 24, and June 3, 1912.

² James Leloudis and Cecelia Moore, "Silent Sam" digital exhibit, <https://silentsam.online>.

Kemp Plummer Battle, born in 1831, was one of seven surviving children in the household of William Horn and Lucy Martin Plummer Battle. He graduated from UNC at age seventeen and then read law under the supervision of his father, a distinguished jurist and member of the faculty. Kemp worked briefly as a university tutor in Latin and mathematics, and in 1854, was admitted to the bar. A year later, he married a distant cousin, Martha Ann (Pattie) Battle.³

Kemp and Pattie's matrimonial bond mirrored the economic interests that tied their two families together. Sometime between 1816 and 1819, Kemp's grandfather, Joel Battle, built a textile mill at the falls of the Tar River, in Edgecombe County. After Joel's death in 1829, ownership passed to a firm headed by Kemp's father, who managed the operation for the better part of two decades, then sold it to Pattie's father, James S. Battle, and one of her brothers. The Battles ran the factory with enslaved Black laborers who manufactured yarn and coarse cloth from the cotton grown locally by nearly nine thousand others held in bondage on Edgecombe's large plantations.⁴ At the time of his death in 1854, James owned more than four hundred of those souls as chattel. They lived and labored on several farms that sprawled across twenty thousand acres of land on both banks of the Tar River. Pattie inherited one of the farms, Walnut Creek, and owned another, Flagmarsh, five miles distant. By law, Kemp acquired a life interest in both properties when he married Pattie, and along with her, enslaved the seventy-nine men, women, and children who made the land bountiful. The couple left management of the Edgecombe farms to overseers and made their home in Raleigh, near Kemp's law office.⁵ They lived at Seven Oaks, a two-acre urban estate that occupied a full city square near the state capitol. There, the Battles enslaved another ten people – two men, four women, and four children – to maintain their household and attend to their needs. In the 1860 federal census,

³ W. Conrad Gass, "Kemp Plummer Battle," in William S. Powell, ed., vol. 1, *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 114-15; William James Battle, "President Kemp Plummer Battle," in Herbert Bemerton Battle, Lois Yelverton, and William James Battle, *The Battle Book: A Genealogy of the Battle Family in America* (Montgomery, Alabama: Paragon Press, 1930), 145-47, 150-52.

⁴ Kemp Davis Battle, "A History of the Rocky Mount Mills," in Battle, Yelverton, and Battle, *Battle Book*, 177-80; *Rocky Mount Mills: A Case History of Industrial Development, 1818-1943* (Rocky Mount: n.p., [1943]), 5-11; 1850 Federal Census, Slave Schedule, Edgecombe County, North Carolina, Ancestry.com. Much of the cloth produced at the Battle mill was sold locally for slave clothing.

⁵ "Cool Spring Plantation," NCGenWeb, <https://bit.ly/3ac5WkV>; Will of James S. Battle, December 8, 1847, Edgecombe County, North Carolina, Ancestry.com; Kemp Plummer Battle, *Memories of an Old-Time Tar Heel* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1945), 125-27; 1860 Federal Census, Slave Schedule, Edgecombe County, North Carolina, Ancestry.com. Martha may have shared ownership of a number of those slaves with relatives George and Mary Battle. James Battle's sons, William and Turner, inherited most of his land and 352 of the people he enslaved. The 1860 slave schedule for Edgecombe County is not well indexed on Ancestry.com. See instead "Edgecombe County, North Carolina, Largest Slaveholders from 1860 Slave Census Schedules, and Surname Matches for African Americans on 1870 Census," General Research/Resources, Battle Family Slaves and Rocky Mount Mills, <https://www.livebinders.com/b/2420468>; Population Schedules of the Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, North Carolina, microform, 128-29, 158-59, Internet Archive, <https://bit.ly/2ZTaAy0>. Page references point to numbers printed in the upper right-hand corner of each leaf, not the manuscript numbers written on the census forms. The extended Battle family in Edgecombe County enslaved 571 people in 1860.

Kemp valued his personal property – which consisted primarily of Black slaves – at \$125,000, the rough equivalent of \$3,940,000 today.⁶

As a young lawyer, Battle quickly began to move in high circles. He bought a partnership with a prominent Raleigh attorney, secured an appointment to the governing board of the Bank of North Carolina, and in 1860 – not yet thirty years old – made a bid for a seat in the state legislature. He lost, but the contest raised his profile and positioned him to fill an even more consequential office. In May 1861, voters in Wake County chose Battle to represent them in the secession convention that severed ties with the United States, so that North Carolina might join the newly established Confederate States of America.⁷

Through the late 1850s, as the national crisis over the westward expansion of slavery intensified, Battle had sided with Unionists who rejected the idea of dissolving the American republic. Those men decried abolitionism as fiercely as any fire-eater but argued against secession as a dangerous and potentially self-defeating gamble. It would inevitably lead to war, and war was likely to "end in the destruction of slave[ry]." Men of Battle's class worried especially about the loyalty of poor whites, whom they knew to be deeply resentful of the state's rich and powerful slave barons. In the face of war, would this "rabble" answer a call to arms, or join Black slaves in open rebellion against the men who ruled them both? State senator Jonathan Worth, Battle's friend and mentor, feared the worst. "Slavery is doomed if the South sets up a Southern Confederacy," he declared. Worth predicted that in the event of war, "with all hating us," slaveowners would have no choice but to sacrifice their property to their very survival – "to cut the throats of the negroes or have our own throats cut."⁸

The war that "Union men" had long dreaded began on April 12, 1861, when Confederate forces fired on Fort Sumter, a federal outpost in Charleston Harbor. Less than a month later, Battle declared a new personal allegiance in an open letter to Wake County voters. "I have labored hard to preserve the Union as best for the interests of North Carolina, and have failed," he wrote. "I am now for a prompt severance of our relations with the Federal Government, and joining with the other slave States, to defend our rights" – chief among them, the liberty to profit from the trade in human chattel. Men like Battle thought of the right to take possession of Black bodies as essential to their own freedom. They argued that if denied that right, they themselves would be reduced to "abject slavery" – never pausing, it seems, to consider the

⁶ William James Battle, "President Kemp Plummer Battle," 151; Kemp Plummer Battle, *Memories of an Old-Time Tar Heel*, 123; 1860 Federal Census, Population and Slave Schedules, Wake County, North Carolina, Ancestry.com. Seven Oaks had belonged to Joseph Blount Grégoire Roulhac, a prosperous merchant and grandfather of Joseph Grégoire de Roulhac Hamilton, who later succeeded Battle as Alumni Professor of History at the university.

⁷ William James Battle, "President Kemp Plummer Battle," 147, 153; Kemp Battle, *Memories of an Old-Time Tar Heel*, 167.

⁸ Kemp P. Battle, "The Secession Convention of 1861," *North Carolina Booklet* 15 (April 1916), 178; Jonathan Worth to J. J. Turner, December 17, 1860, in J. G. de Roulhac Hamilton, ed., vol. 1, *The Correspondence of Jonathan Worth* (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1909), 127. See also Paul D. Escott, *Many Excellent People: Power and Privilege in North Carolina, 1850-1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 22-36.

dark irony of that claim. Such a deeply racialized conception of freedom explains how Battle and other delegates to the state secession convention could posture as patriots when they gathered on May 20 to declare that North Carolina's ties to the United States of America were "repealed, rescinded, and abrogated." In the name of Liberty, they swore faithfulness to a new nation, founded, as Alexander H. Stephens, vice president of the Confederacy, proclaimed, "upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery – subordination to the superior race – is his natural and normal condition."⁹

Battle was young enough to have served in uniform but declined to do so as a common soldier. After failing to secure an appointment as an army officer, he decided not to enlist. That was a risk-free choice, he later explained in his memoirs, because under the terms of the Confederacy's conscription law, he qualified for the "safe bomb proof" exemption that was granted to men in civilian positions judged essential to the war effort. Battle held an appointment as Raleigh's city attorney, represented Governor Zebulon B. Vance as an occasional liaison to the Confederate government in Richmond, and occupied a seat on UNC's Board of Trustees. He also was president of the Chatham Railroad Company, which, at his urging, was granted state aid by the secession convention. Battle intended to use that investment to build a new rail line that would support the production of munitions and other military equipment by transporting iron and coal from Chatham County mines to foundries in the eastern part of the state. But Confederate authorities at the national level showed little interest in the project, and without their backing, Battle could not afford to lease a sufficient number of enslaved laborers to grade right-of-ways and lay rails. Fighting ended before construction of the Chatham line could be completed. Even so, Battle took pride in his effort. The presidency of the Chatham Railroad "suited me well," he wrote in his old age. "It gave me honorable occupation in behalf of the Confederacy."¹⁰

Battle's varied service to the southern cause 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. But there was no danger of prosecution. Eager to restore the rebellious southern states to the Union as quickly as possible, President Andrew Johnson announced lenient provisions for amnesty in late May 1865, just over a month after the Confederacy's defeat. Battle petitioned the president immediately, making the most of his

⁹ Kemp P. Battle, "Secession Convention of 1861," 178, 180, 182; Kemp P. Battle, "To the People of Wake County," *Semi-Weekly Standard* (Raleigh, N.C.), May 11, 1861; Kemp P. Battle to John Spelman, *Semi-Weekly State Journal* (Raleigh, N.C.), May 1, 1861; Henry Cleveland, *Alexander Hamilton Stephens, in Public and Private, with Letters and Speeches, Before, During, and Since the War* (Philadelphia: National Publishing Company, 1866), 721. For two foundational works on racialized conceptions of freedom published nearly half a century apart, see Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975) and Tyler Stovall, *White Freedom: The Racial History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2021).

¹⁰ Kemp P. Battle, "Reminiscences: The Chatham Railroad Company," folder 63, box 76, Civil War Collection, Military Collection, State Archives of North Carolina, Raleigh, North Carolina; Kemp Plummer Battle, *Memories of an Old-Time Tar Heel*, vii, 172-78, 187-88; Collier Cobb, "Dr. Kemp Plummer Battle," *High School Journal* 2 (April 1919), 116; *Ordinances and Resolutions Passed by the State Convention of North Carolina, 1861-1862* (Raleigh: John W. Syme, 1862), 83-86.

failure as head of the Chatham Railroad. The enterprise had "never been of the slightest use to the Confederate (so called) Government," he declared, nor had it "aided in prosecuting the war." On June 20, Battle received a full pardon for his crime.¹¹

In the decade after the war, Battle and other men of his class struggled to avoid financial ruin. The death of slavery erased their fortunes in human chattel and exposed them to foreclosure on mortgages they had secured with that same property. To make matters worse, North Carolina's repudiation of its war debt also transformed the Confederate bonds they held into worthless scraps of paper. Battle labored on a number of fronts to mitigate these challenges. In the summer of 1865, just months after the Confederacy's collapse, he and business partner Jonathan M. Heck incorporated a real estate firm that did business as the North Carolina Land Agency. They opened an office in New York City, began publication of a weekly commercial broadsheet called the *North Carolina Advertiser*, and attempted to persuade northern speculators to lease or purchase property from the state's former slaveholding elite, thus providing those men a fresh infusion of capital.¹² The venture went bust within months, but by that time Battle had won election as the Conservative candidate (later, Conservatives would call themselves Democrats) for state treasurer. In that office, he devised a plan to benefit old-guard investors by issuing new state bonds to cover public debt incurred before secession and therefore unaffected by repudiation. Battle might have done even more had his party not lost its hold on power in 1868, when a new state constitution afforded Black men the right to vote.¹³ But there was still room for him to maneuver. During the late 1860s, he worked as legal counsel for a group of railroad investors known as "the Ring" and was implicated in fraudulent schemes to buy lawmakers' votes and manipulate the market value of state bonds issued to finance railway construction.¹⁴ In the end, none of this saved Battle from

¹¹ U.S. Constitution, Article 3, Section 3; Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Harper Perennials, updated edition, 2014), 183-84; Kemp P. Battle petition, Confederate Applications for Presidential Pardons, 1865-1867, Ancestry.com; William James Battle, "President Kemp Plummer Battle," 148-49.

¹² Kemp Plummer Battle, *Memories of an Old-Time Tar Heel*, 201-03. On the North Carolina Land Agency's business plan and pitch to speculators, see "North Carolina Land Agency," July 8, 1865, and "Increase of Immigration," July 22, 1865, *North Carolina Advertiser* (Raleigh, N.C.). Similar enterprises cropped up elsewhere in the South. See Lawrence N. Powell, *New Masters: Northern Planters During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998).

¹³ Kemp Plummer Battle, *Memories of an Old-Time Tar Heel*, 204-07; "Public Treasurer's Report," *Daily Journal* (Wilmington, N.C.), January 23, 1866; *Public Laws of the State of North Carolina, Passed by the General Assembly, at the Session of 1865-66, and 1861-62-63 and 1864* (Raleigh: Robt. W. Best, 1866), chapt. 37. On the new constitution and its consequences for the Conservative Party, see Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 136-44.

¹⁴ Horace W. Raper, *William W. Holden: North Carolina's Political Enigma* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 128, 131-37, 306 (n. 28); Jonathan Daniels, *Prince of Carpetbaggers* (Philadelphia: J. P. Lippincott and Company, 1958), 149-77, 207; Thomas E. Jeffrey, "An Unclean Vessel: Thomas Lanier Clingman and the 'Railroad Ring,'" *North Carolina Historical Review* 74 (October 1997), 389-431. The Ring included George W. Swepson, businessman and banker, who controlled the Western Division of the Western North Carolina Railroad; former Union general Milton S. Littlefield, who managed the bribes paid to lawmakers; and Swepson's attorney, Thomas L. Clingman, a former U.S. congressman and senator. Swepson and Littlefield also benefitted handsomely from Battle's program to replace depreciated prewar state bonds with more valuable postwar notes. They used their gains in North Carolina to finance other fraudulent railroad schemes in Florida. For more on these activities and Battle's involvement, see *Report of the Commission to Investigate Charges of Fraud and Corruption, Under Act*

straitened circumstances. He eventually lost both of his wife's Edgecombe County properties to debt and came to rely on an improbable source of income: a salary paid by the University of North Carolina.¹⁵

State lawmakers first appointed Battle to the university's Board of Trustees in 1862, and he served in that capacity for six years, through the Civil War and into the era of Reconstruction. Then, in 1868, an upheaval in state politics turned the sitting board and the faculty out of office. In that year's election, a biracial alliance that had formed within North Carolina's newly established Republican Party won control of the legislature and elected William W. Holden to the governor's office. Holden, in turn, directed the appointment of new trustees and endorsed their selection of Solomon Pool, class of 1853, to serve as university president. Pool shared Holden's vision for a thoroughly reformed institution. He had been Battle's pupil in the early 1850s, but the two men thought differently about UNC's past and its future purpose. Pool remembered the university as "a nursery of treason." The "aristocratic family influence that has controlled [it] ought to be crushed," he declared, "and the institution popularized." To that end, Pool and the new trustees petitioned the state legislature to amend UNC's charter in order to establish a branch campus, "equivalent in all educational facilities," for recently emancipated Black men.¹⁶

Governor Holden endorsed the plan. In a speech delivered at commencement in 1869, he looked back over the university's eighty-year history and reminded his audience that throughout that time the institution had served a closed elite whose wealth and political power was derived from the labor of enslaved Africans. "The great body of the people had been practically excluded," Holden observed, and the university's "benefits were confined to a few." Now, in a state revolutionized by the death of racial slavery, it was time to set a new course. Holden urged the trustees to fill UNC's classrooms with "meritorious poor young men," to establish a new campus for Black freedmen, and to bring the two branches together in what he described as "*one University . . . the people's University* (italics in the original)." Education, he declared, should privilege "no color or condition of mankind. It should be free, like the air we breathe, and as pervading and universal."¹⁷

of Assembly, Session 1871-72 (Raleigh: James H. Moore, 1872); "The State of Florida and the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund, Plaintiffs and Respondents vs. the Jacksonville, Pensacola and Mobile Railroad Company and Milton S. Littlefield, Defendants and Appellants," *Cases Argued and Adjudged in the Supreme Court of Florida, During the Years 1876-7-8*, vol. 16 (Tallahassee: Floridian Book and Job Office, 1878), 708-33.

¹⁵ William James Battle, "President Kemp Plummer Battle," 159.

¹⁶ Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, vol. 1, 1789-1868 (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1907), 767, 774-75, 825; Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 136-48; Raper, *William W. Holden*, 123-24; Solomon Pool to Charles C. Pool, January 23, 1868, series 1, folder 232, University of North Carolina Papers #40005, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 1868-1912 (Raleigh: Edwards and Broughton, 1912), 14; minutes, January 7, 1869, oversize volume 11, Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina Records.

¹⁷ "The University Commencement," *Daily Standard* (Raleigh, N.C.), June 12, 1869. Holden was the first person to refer to UNC as the "people's university." Contrary to myth and tradition, that characterization does not date to the institution's founding in 1789.

Holden was the first public official to refer to UNC as the "people's university." Contrary to myth and tradition, that characterization does not date to the institution's founding in 1789. It arose instead from Black freedom dreams and Reconstruction-era ideals of racial justice and equal citizenship.

Most alumni responded to Holden's speech with what one observer described as "unmitigated disgust." They cut all ties to their alma mater, refused to send their sons to be educated there, and raged against Black equality and popular democracy. In the political arena, these men identified as Conservatives and denounced the purported evils of "negro rule." By night, they fielded an army of Ku Klux Klansmen who terrorized and murdered their opponents. The situation became so threatening in Chapel Hill and surrounding Orange and Alamance Counties that Governor Holden sent troops to protect the faculty. The combined effect of these developments was devastating. Under Pool's administration, the university never enrolled more than thirty-six students, many of whom were in its preparatory department. On February 1, 1871, unable to pay the faculty and with no hope of securing state or philanthropic support, the trustees closed and boarded up the campus.¹⁸

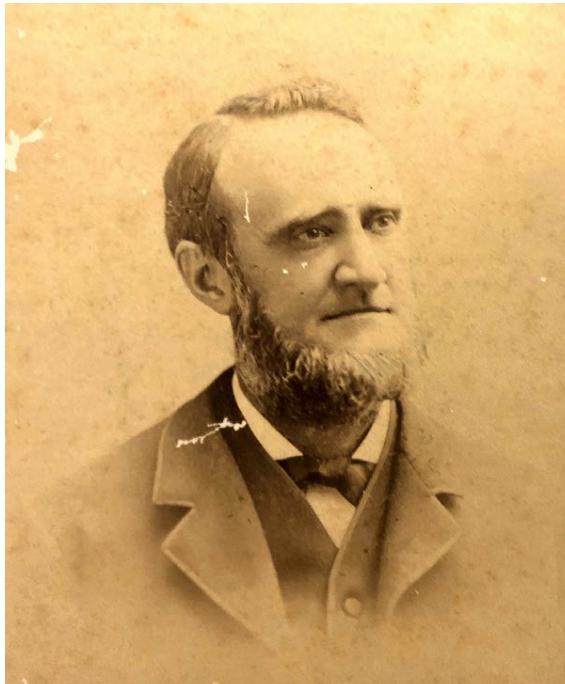
The campaign of race hatred and violence that shuttered the university also brought Reconstruction to an end in North Carolina. Conservatives regained majority control of the state legislature in 1870, impeached William Holden and removed him from office in 1871, and in 1876, elected Zebulon B. Vance, North Carolina's Confederate wartime governor, to an unprecedented third term as chief executive. As part of this broad program of retrenchment, Conservative lawmakers also filled the university's Board of Trustees with men – including Battle – who shared their views on race and democracy.¹⁹

Lawmakers instructed the board to devise a plan for re-organizing and re-opening the university. Battle led that effort, and in the process, brought UNC into line with innovations that were transforming sister institutions throughout the country. The so-called "new university" that opened its doors in September 1875 was made up of six colleges, each awarding undergraduate and graduate degrees. Students now had the freedom to choose electives and create individualized courses of study rather than follow a strictly prescribed curriculum. And in their methods of instruction, faculty began to replace rote memorization with library and laboratory work. In short, "the Battle plan" established the framework for what we recognize today as the modern research university.²⁰

¹⁸ Louis Round Wilson, *Selected Papers of Cornelia Phillips Spencer* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1953), 616; Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 147-60; Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 25-28, 40-41; Raper, *William W. Holden*, 125-26. The university was protected from the Klan by Black troops, an arrangement that did not sit well with alumni.

¹⁹ Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 160-70; Raper, *William W. Holden*, 155-223; James L. Leloudis, *Schooling the New South: Pedagogy, Self, and Society in North Carolina, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 54-55; Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 50.

²⁰ Leloudis, *Schooling the New South*, 54-60; Robin Brabham, "Defining the American University: The University of North Carolina, 1865-75," *North Carolina Historical Review* 57 (October 1980), 450-55.



Kemp P. Battle, ca. 1870-1875
Charles Phillips Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In advance of the re-opening, Battle also secured from the legislature a recurring annual appropriation of \$7,500, the first of its kind in the university's history. That figure represented projected interest on the Land Scrip Fund, which state authorities had established by selling property that the federal government awarded North Carolina under the terms of the Morrill Act of 1862. That legislation granted the various states and territories 10,769,440 acres of public land – most of it in the West, all of it violently expropriated from Indigenous Peoples – to support university programs in engineering and the agricultural sciences. In eastern states, including North Carolina, most federal land had long ago been transferred to private ownership. Therefore, those states received vouchers, called scrips, that could be used to claim allotments elsewhere in the surveyed public domain. With few exceptions, the states sold their scrips to investors, who, in turn, used them to acquire land for re-sale in speculative markets. Much of the

land that was eventually procured with North Carolina's scrip had originally belonged to American Indian tribes in California. In this way, distant acts of theft partially offset the economic disaster that befell the university after the Civil War, when its endowment, invested primarily in Confederate bonds that the South's defeat made worthless, simply evaporated.²¹

In 1876, the trustees rewarded Battle's industry by naming him president of the university, a post he filled until 1891, when he stepped down to return to the faculty as Alumni Professor of History. Several members of the board held out for a Confederate military figure, someone "strikingly identified on the part of the South in the recent war." They were inspired, perhaps, by Robert E. Lee's elevation to the presidency of Washington College, now

²¹ Benjamin F. Andrews, *The Land Grant of 1862 and the Land-Grant Colleges*, Department of Labor, Bureau of Education, Bulletin, 1918, No. 13 (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1918), 36-38; Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, vol. 1, 756-58, 763, and vol. 2, 2, 64-71; Thomas LeDuc, "State Disposal of Agricultural College Land Scrips," *Agricultural History* 28 (July 1954), 99-107. North Carolina received vouchers for 270,000 acres (30,000 for each member of the state's congressional delegation). See Robert Lee, Tristan Ahtone, Margaret Pearce, Kalen Goodluck, Geoff McGhee, Cody Leff, Katherine Lanpher, and Taryn Salinas, "Land-Grab Universities," <https://www.landgrabu.org>, for an interactive map that identifies the Indian tribes and nations whose expropriated land profited UNC. In 1887, state lawmakers transferred proceeds from the Land Scrip Fund to the new North Carolina College of Agriculture and Mechanic Arts (today, North Carolina State University) in Raleigh. The Second Morrill Act, passed in 1890, made additional allocations to support Black land-grant colleges, primarily in the southern states. Founded in 1891, the North Carolina Agricultural and Mechanical College (today, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University) was the second institution in the nation established under provisions of the legislation.

Washington and Lee University. But a majority supported a more restrained choice. They were political pragmatists. Their party had clawed its way back to power but still faced stiff opposition from the biracial coalition that voted Republican. Given that reality, it seemed prudent to choose a man of sound conservative principles, but not an "ardent politician" – a man whose "suavity of manner" could cast a spell over friends and adversaries alike.²²

Battle fit the bill. He kept his distance from politics and cultivated a reputation for generosity toward Blacks. But the university over which he presided was a nursery of violent white supremacist thought. The faculty used history and pseudo-scientific theories of racial character to affirm white men's right to rule, and in their classrooms, they taught students to think of racial conflict in the present day as part of a long, world-historical struggle.

George T. Winston, professor of Latin, laid out the overarching arguments in an essay on "The Greek, the Roman, and the Teuton," which he published in the *University Magazine* in 1884. "Among the races of men," he wrote, "conflict for dominion" was Nature's law. The evidence was visible at every turn:

The cowardly perish in war; the weak are swallowed up in the tide of advancing civilization . . . The ancestors of the Irish were once the masters of Europe. Stronger men drove them westward. Pushed off the continent, they now dwell on an island smaller than Cuba. Two centuries ago, the rivers and mountains of America were the property of the races whose names they bear; but the Roanoke, the Mississippi, and the Minnehaha will never again float the birch canoe, and the smoke of the wigwam fire will rise no more from the summits of the Alleghanies. Already the white races are struggling for Africa. Two centuries more will see the negro confined within the limits of Soudan and the Dark Continent transformed into a white Republic.

"The ceaseless conflict goes on," Winston exclaimed, "the victory is ever to the strong. There is no alms-house for decrepit and pauper races."²³

By Winston's account, these currents of conquest were driven by the cultural patrimony of "three races, surpassing all others in the grandeur of their civilizations": the Greeks, who taught the world to think; the Romans, who were "colonizer[s]" and empire builders; and the Teutons, German tribesmen whose "inborn qualities of courage and liberty" birthed the genius of the modern age. "It is the Teuton that has given . . . to science a Newton . . . to literature Shakespeare, to humanity Luther and Washington," Winston explained. "It is the Teuton that has ribbed the earth with steel and sent the engine ploughing through the mountain. It is the Teuton that gave speech to the wire and whispered thought around the globe." In this advance of civilization, white America was the vanguard. "To-day, the Teuton rules," Winston declared.

²² Escott, *Many Excellent People*, 171; Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 114-21.

²³ George T. Winston, "The Greek, the Roman, and the Teuton," *University Magazine* 4 (New Series, November 1884), 49. Winston, who studied at UNC from 1866 to 1868, graduated from Cornell University in 1874. He joined the UNC faculty the next year. See Neil Fulghum, "George Tayloe Winston," in William S. Powell, ed., *Dictionary of North Carolina Biography*, vol. 6 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 245-46.

"His throne in the old world is England and Germany; his home in the new world is our Northern Continent. He is king of the old world and king of the new. He is king by the divine right of noble manhood. He has lifted civilization to a higher plane of thought and action, where he stands towering above other races."²⁴

These ideas were the lessons that a new generation of graduates carried from Battle's university into communities across the state. As they built their careers and came of age politically, these men kept in close touch through the university's alumni association. They gathered in local chapter meetings and at special campus events to learn from one another, to take in faculty lectures, and to hear the declamations of graduating seniors who were preparing to follow in their footsteps. Often, alumni invited likeminded civic leaders and business associates to join their circle as friends of the university. They did so with such regularity that by 1892 nearly a fourth of the alumni association's members had never attended UNC. The topics addressed at alumni events were wide-ranging but tended to cluster around explicit racial themes. Examples from the late 1870s to early 1890s include "The Color Line," "The Conquering Race," "Safeguarding of Citizenship," "The Anglo-Saxon," and "Saxon Ideas in America." Through these experiences, as historian Gregory Downs has shown, self-styled "university men" developed a sense of themselves as a "thinking class" called by history to build a "modern regime of white supremacy."²⁵

That commitment was put to the test in the 1890s, a time of political upheaval that looked and felt like a reprise of Reconstruction. The financial Panic of 1893 plunged the nation into one of the most severe economic downturns in its history. As hardships mounted, a sizeable minority of white farmers and laborers were persuaded to join a third-party Populist movement and to oppose the ruling Democrats (once known as Conservatives) by forming a Fusion alliance with Black and white Republicans. In the elections of 1894 and 1896, Fusion politicians won control of state government, and once in power, they enacted a sweeping program of progressive reform in education, taxation, and local governance.²⁶

Democrats responded by waging a war for the restoration of white rule, led largely by an officer corps of university men. In the campaigns of 1898 and 1900, Josephus Daniels, who studied briefly at UNC in 1885, used his paper, the *Raleigh News and Observer*, to whip up race hatred with charges of corrupt "negro rule" and warnings that political equality had let loose Black rapists to prey on white women. On the hustings, Locke Craig, class of 1880, distinguished himself as one of the Democrats' most effective speakers, a true "apostle of white supremacy." He was quick to share lessons that he had learned as an undergraduate. At a rally in Reidsville,

²⁴ Winston, "The Greek, the Roman, and the Teuton," 49-51, 54, 66.

²⁵ Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 154, 450-51, 473, 516; Gregory P. Downs, "University Men, Social Science, and White Supremacy in North Carolina," *Journal of Southern History* 75 (May 2009), 282-88.

²⁶ For accounts of politics in the 1890s and the Fusion alliance, see Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 1894-1901* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1951); Deborah Beckel, *Radical Reform: Interracial Politics in Post-Emancipation North Carolina* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 155-204; James M. Beeby, *Revolt of the Tar Heels: The North Carolina Populist Movement, 1890-1901* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2008).

for instance, he riled up the crowd by quoting Wolfgang Menzel – a mid-nineteenth-century German literary critic, anti-Semite, and theorist of racial nationalism – to demonstrate that "the Anglo-Saxons of North Carolina are the heirs of the qualities that have civilized and ruled the earth." Francis D. Winston, George's younger brother, played on similar themes to organize "White Government Unions" across the state and to win a seat in the state legislature. There, in 1899, he partnered with two of the university's most loyal friends, Henry G. Connor and George Rountree, to draft an amendment to the state constitution that would disenfranchise Black men and a considerable number of their white allies by means of a literacy test and a poll tax. Editors of the *Hellenian*, a yearbook published by the university's fraternities, took notice. They dedicated the 1899 issue to Winston, "who by loyal service to his State and University [had] shown himself to be a statesman and alumnus worthy of . . . esteem."²⁷

At the head of this group stood Charles B. Aycock, class of 1877, who won election to the governor's office in 1900 with a promise to usher in a new "era of good feeling" and prosperity among whites. On the stump, Aycock argued that Black political participation had "kept the white people at enmity with each other" and that only the removal of Black voters would heal the body politic. "We must disenfranchise the negro," he explained to white men at his rallies. "Then we shall have . . . peace everywhere. . . . We shall forget the asperities of past years and . . . go forward into the twentieth century a united people." On Election Day, Aycock and Francis Winston's constitutional amendment won voters' approval by a fifty-nine to forty-one percent margin.²⁸

Democrats would not have achieved that victory without the use of terror as a political weapon. In both 1898 and 1900, party leaders organized squads of vigilantes known as Red Shirts to intimidate Fusion voters in nighttime raids and at the polls. The name referred to the red jackets the men wore, a symbol of the bloody sacrifice of Confederate soldiers who had died in the defense of slavery. By far, the worst violence occurred in Wilmington, a majority Black city and the site of the only municipal coup d'état in American history. In 1898, a white mob led by UNC alumni Alfred Moore Waddell (class of 1853) and William Rand Kenan Sr. (1860-63) rampaged through Black neighborhoods, killing wantonly, and forcibly removed the city's biracial Fusion government. In the run-up to the election, Waddell had exhorted an angry white crowd: "You are Anglo-Saxons. You are armed and prepared, and you will do your duty. . . . Go to the polls . . . and if you find the negro out voting, tell him to leave the polls, and if he refuses, kill him. Shoot him down in his tracks." Two years later, Charles Aycock invoked memories of events in Wilmington in a not-so-veiled threat. He advised voters in Greene

²⁷ 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), 14-26; "Evils of Ignorant Negro Suffrage," *The Review* (Reidsville, N.C.), July 14, 1899; Downs, "University Men, Social Science, and White Supremacy in North Carolina," 284, 294; Helen G. Edmonds, *The Negro and Fusion Politics in North Carolina, 178-97; Hellenian* (Chicago: H. L. Swift and Co., 1899), 4, 7. On Menzel, see Joachim Kalka (translated by Isasbel Fargo Cole), *Gaslight: Lantern Slides from the Nineteenth Century* (New York: New York Review Books, 2017), 57-80.

²⁸ R. D. W. Connor and Clarence H. Poe, eds., *The Life and Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page, 1912), 82, 218-19, 225; J. Morgan Kousser, *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), 193.

County, "we have ruled by force . . . but we want to rule by law" – that is, by ratification of the disenfranchisement amendment. The choice on Election Day could not have been clearer.²⁹

University men voiced no regrets about the violence they employed to win elections. For them, it was simply a matter of one "evil preventing a much greater evil" – political and social equality for Blacks. But they did worry that "permanent white supremacy" could never be established on the basis of force and repression alone. Nor would the state prosper if its citizens were constantly at war with one another. The way forward, university men argued, was "SEPARATION," with each race developing according to the limits of its natural abilities. That was Charles Aycock's message when he spoke to a large crowd at the 1901 Colored State Fair in Raleigh. "It is absolutely necessary that each race should remain distinct, and have a society of its own," he explained. "Inside your own race you can grow as large and broad and high as God permits. . . . You will find no generous-minded white man who will stand in your way; but all of them in the South will insist that you shall accomplish this high end without social intermingling. . . . This is well for you; it is well for us; it is necessary for the peace of our [state]." Aycock believed this to be a generous and altruistic offer, but it came with a caveat. The price for refusing the bargain would be dreadful. "[The negro] may eat rarely of the cooking of equality," Aycock declared on another occasion, "but he will always find, when he does, that there is death in the pot. Let the negro learn once for all that there is unending separation of the races."³⁰

Battle did not comment publicly on Aycock's approach to solving what whites called "the negro problem," but indirect evidence leaves little doubt that he approved. Indeed, he likely influenced young Aycock's thinking when the two were professor and pupil at the university.³¹

In 1867, Battle was a founding trustee of the St. Augustine Normal and Collegiate Institute (today, St. Augustine's University), a school to prepare newly emancipated slaves for teaching and the manual trades, established in Raleigh by the North Carolina Diocese of the Episcopal Church. For its patrons, the institute's purpose was to reconcile Black freedom with whites' desire to preserve racial order. Looking back on that work decades later, Battle

²⁹ "The North Carolina Race Conflict," *Outlook* 60 (November 19, 1898), 708; "Aycock at Snow Hill," *Morning Post* (Raleigh, N.C.), March 1, 1900; H. Leon Prather, Sr., "The Red Shirt Movement in North Carolina, 1898-1900," *Journal of Negro History* 62 (April 1977): 174-84; LeRae Umfleet, *The 1898 Wilmington Race Riot Report*, 1898 Race Riot Commission, Research Branch, Office of Archives and History, N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, May 31, 2006, <https://bit.ly/3dLwkRg>; David Zucchino, *Wilmington's Lie: The Murderous Coup of 1898 and the Rise of White Supremacy* (New York: Grove Atlantic, 2020).

³⁰ "Address Accepting the Democratic Nomination for Governor, April 11, 1900," and "A Message to the Negro," in Connor and Poe, eds., *Life and Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock*, 225, 250; "Negro Problem Solved," *New York Times*, December 19, 1903. The Colored State Fair was founded in 1879 by the Colored Industrial Association of North Carolina, a self-help and economic development organization for Black farmers and tradesmen. See Jeffrey J. Crow, Paul D. Escott, and Flora J. Hatley Wadelington, *A History of African Americans in North Carolina*, second revised edition, (Raleigh: Office of Archives and History, North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources, 2019), 99-100; "The Colored Fair at Raleigh," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, December 6, 1879, 241-43.

³¹ Connor and Poe, eds., *Life and Speeches of Charles Brantley Aycock*, 162.

conceded that some partisans had considered it a fool's errand, but, he insisted, there was no alternative other than to accept open conflict that would have "ruin[ed] the negro and ruin[ed] the white man" alike. "We cannot be a happy and prosperous people without the harmonious co-operation of the races," Battle declared. But how was that accord to be achieved? Battle's solution was to look back to slavery: "When in old times the planter trained some of his slaves to be carpenters, blacksmiths, wheelwrights, coachmen and gardeners, was not he successful? Did the noble matron, his wife . . . ever fail when she brought into the 'great house' from the cabin the young dusky lasses, to convert them into seamstresses and ladies' maids, house girls and cooks?" For Battle, such questions answered themselves. "When I recall . . . these glorious memories [of slavery time]," he exclaimed, "my heart throb[s] . . . You need not tell me . . . that negroes cannot be trained to manual dexterity, and discrimination and neatness and taste. *It has been done, it can be done again* (emphasis added), and the Southern gentlemen and gentlewomen are the agencies to effect this great result."³²

Battle thought of this assertion of white authority over Black lives as an act of kindness rather than subjugation. "Let the olive branch be our emblem," he advised a group of white college students in South Carolina. "Let us gather amicably around the corn pile and bury our ill humor in the compost heap; let us smoke the pipe of peace in the tobacco patch. *We are the superior race* (emphasis added). Let us make [the Negro] better." Here was white supremacy wrapped in what sociologist Mary Jackman has described as the "velvet glove" of fondness and solicitous concern. "Affection, far from being alien to exploitative relations," she writes, "is precisely the emotion that dominant groups wish to feel toward those whom they exploit. The everyday practice of discrimination does not require feelings of hostility, and, indeed, it is not at all difficult to have fond regard for those whom we subordinate," especially when the "subject of our domination has few options" other than outward compliance. "The abiding quest is to preserve an amicable relationship with subordinates and thus to preempt . . . the exercise of force," which by its very nature disrupts the settled authority that paternalism desires.³³

What Battle and younger university men offered Blacks was a social and political order in which civility took the place of equality, and physical violence, even when restrained, furnished an ever-present reminder of the paternal right to punish noncompliance. Viewed through the lens of civility, the pre-Civil War South became a land of benevolent slaveholders and contented slaves. Battle indulged just such a fantasy in his memoirs, published posthumously by his youngest son, William. "I was born and raised among slaves," he recalled, "and after I was grown was a slave owner. I not only never whipped a negro, say over twelve years of age, but my father never whipped one. . . . I am confident that such was the usual

³² Kemp P. Battle, *History of the University of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 120; Cecil D. Halliburton, *A History of St. Augustine's College, 1867-1937* (Raleigh: St. Augustine's College, 1937), 1-16; "The Head and the Hand, President Kemp P. Battle's Oration at Columbia," *Weekly Transcript-Messenger* (Goldsboro, N.C.), July 23, 1886.

³³ "The Head and the Hand"; Mary R. Jackman, *The Velvet Glove: Paternalism and Conflict in Gender, Class, and Race Relations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 10-11, 82-85. On civility and paternalism as instruments of racial oppression, past and present, see also Joel Williamson, *Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South Since Emancipation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984); Alex Zamalin, *Against Civility: The Hidden Racism in Our Obsession with Civility* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2021).

treatment in North Carolina. Indeed Raleigh, a fair sample of our towns, had the reputation of spoiling negroes. I knew families where it might have been truthfully said that the black folks owned the white folks." Did Battle mean to say that he only whipped children, perhaps leaving the adults to his overseers? We may never know. But one thing is clear: Set aside, neatly out of sight in this fiction, is the death and suffering of millions of Black Africans who were trafficked in the transatlantic slave trade, who were bought and sold as chattel in the domestic slave markets of the South, and whose labor was stolen by innumerable acts of violence to fuel the economies of both the region and the nation.³⁴

Similarly, in the age of Jim Crow, the masquerade of civility permitted Battle and the men he educated to imagine themselves as benefactors of a "child race" – though their kindness was always conditional. They offered it in exchange for Blacks' willingness to accept white authority, to show proper deference, and to seek fair treatment as supplicants rather than as white men's equals. As Aycock made plain, anything less risked swift and awful retribution. Civility thus had the power both to demonize Black defiance and to make white supremacy virtuous. "This," political scientist Alex Zamalin has noted, "is how rulers maintain a society in which inequality is the norm and injustice an incontrovertible fact: They silence opposition by disqualifying its legitimacy from the start." "From slavery to Jim Crow," he writes, "to Black ghettoization, to mass incarceration, to police brutality, the idea of civility has been enlisted to treat Black suffering with apathy and to maintain an unjust status quo. Worse, it has been a tool for silencing dissent, repressing political participation, enforcing economic inequality, and justifying violence upon people of color."³⁵

Battle stepped down from his post as university president in 1891. Over the next two decades, he devoted his time to teaching and to writing about the history of North Carolina. His most significant work was a chronicle of the university, which he published in two volumes – the first in 1907, at the time of his retirement, and the second in 1912.

Battle died in 1919. In remembrances of him, friends and family celebrated his distinguished service to the people of North Carolina as a lawyer, businessman, public official, and educator. Above all else, they credited his leadership in the reorganization and "revival" of the university in 1875. During his subsequent tenure as president, the *Raleigh News and Observer* reported, Battle "made known [the institution's] needs to the state legislature, and secured annual grants for its support; bore with patience calamities, and by lectures [and] articles in the press . . . firmly established the University in the affection and confidence of the

³⁴ Kemp Plummer Battle, *Memories of an Old-Time Tar Heel*, 185.

³⁵ George T. Winston, "The Relation of the Whites to the Negroes," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 18 (July 1901), 115; Alex Zamalin, *Against Civility*, 6-7. Historian William Chafe made a similar point forty years ago in his now-classic study of school desegregation in North Carolina. "Civility," he wrote, "is what white progressivism was all about – a way of dealing with people and problems that made good manners more important than substantial action." For Blacks, that meant being "forced to operate within an etiquette of race relationships that offered almost no room for collective self-assertion and independence. White people dictated the ground rules, and the benefits went only to those who played the game." In the end, Chafe argued, civility – as whites understood it – "was not compatible with the promise of racial justice." See *Civilities and Civil Rights: Greensboro, North Carolina, and the Black Struggle for Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 8-10.

people." Admirers attributed that success to Battle's strength of character. "Throughout his life," said the *Charlotte News*, Battle was "noted for faithfulness to duty, piety, benevolence, industry, temperance, and generosity." In return, he was much loved and widely admired as "Carolina's Grand Old Man."³⁶

What the papers did not report is that Battle used his positions of influence to sustain and perpetuate systems of racial oppression – first, slavery, and then the regime of Jim Crow. He did so not as a private citizen or simple man of his time, but as a leader who shaped public events. In his role as president of the university, Battle wielded frightful power to make white supremacy respectable. By doing so, he enlisted the institution in the incalculable violence done to Black lives and communities. We labor still under the thrall of that terrible legacy.

On October 12, 2020, faculty in the Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies petitioned for the removal of Kemp P. Battle's name from Battle Hall, the building in which their offices are located. See Appendix. The Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward endorses that request.

UNC Commission on History, Race, and a Way Forward

³⁶ "Dr. Kemp Battle, Dead," *News and Observer* (Raleigh, N.C.), February 5, 1919; "Dr. Kemp Battle Died Yesterday," *Charlotte News*, February 5, 1919; "Carolina's Grand Old Man is Dead," *Durham Morning Herald*, February 5, 1919."

Appendix

Request to Remove Kemp Plummer Battle's Name from the Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies Building

Ad-hoc Committee Members: Kia Caldwell (chair), Lydia Boyd, and Michael Lambert

October 12, 2020

The faculty of the Department of African, African American, and Diaspora Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill hereby submits this request to remove Kemp Plummer Battle's name from the building we occupy. Kemp Plummer Battle is widely known as a former president of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, leading its reopening at the end of Reconstruction. However, his involvement with slavery and promotion of racist ideas are lesser known aspects of his personal history and are not widely discussed by the University. As faculty in a department dedicated to researching and teaching about the histories, cultures, and experiences of African-descendant peoples and communities, we are deeply dismayed and demoralized to occupy a building named after a slaveholder, defender of the Confederate South, and leading ideologue of white supremacy.

Per the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees' Policy for the Consideration of the Removal of Names on University Buildings and Public Spaces (adopted July 16, 2020), the information found below provides evidence to support the removal of Kemp Plummer Battle's name from our building in the following areas:

- The specific conduct by the namesake of the campus building or public space that jeopardizes the University's integrity, mission or values.
- The character of the named individual and the extent of the harm to the University caused by continuing to honor the namesake.

Much of the evidence provided below is found in Battle's memoir, *Memories of an Old Time Tar Heel*, which attests to his personal views and behavior in his own words. The quotes we have provided are from this memoir, published posthumously in 1945.

He was a plantation owner and enslaved African Americans. As stated in Battle's memoir, *Memories of an Old Time Tar Heel*, "Under the law as it stood in 1855 on my marriage I became the owner of a number of slaves and acquired a life interest in my wife's two plantations in Edgecombe" (Battle 1945: 125). In addition to the enslaved people who became his property when he married Martha Ann Battle (his second cousin), Kemp Plummer Battle's family is known to have owned several plantations in the Rocky Mount/Edgecombe County area and was one of the largest slaveholding families in North Carolina. James Smith Battle, Kemp Plummer Battle's brother, owned over 500 enslaved people. The Battle family also owned and ran the Rocky Mount Mills with the labor of enslaved people. The Rocky Mount Mills were built in 1818 and are the second-oldest cotton mills in the state of North Carolina.

He actively supported efforts to defend and maintain the slave-based plantation economy in the American South. While, as Battle described himself, he was a "violent Union man" (Battle 1945: 168), he did not support Emancipation. To the contrary, he is very clear that he supported and worked to

defend the slave-based economy. He believed that this could be achieved without the southern states seceding from the Union (Battle 1945: 168).

He committed treason against the United States of America. Once it became clear to Battle that President Lincoln intended to use force to prevent secession and end slavery, he embraced the cause of the Confederacy. He voted in support of secession as an elected delegate to the North Carolina State Constitutional Convention in 1861, where he was a signatory to the Ordinance of Secession (Battle 1945: vii). During the war, he was President of the Chatham Railroad Company, which was established to aid the confederate war effort. Battle recalls his work with the railroad: “The place suited me well. It gave me honorable occupation in behalf of the confederacy” (Battle 1945: 173).

He lauded and supported the removal of the Cherokee Nation, and assisted the University in profiting from the dispossession of Indigenous nations. In his explanation for why he was a ‘fierce Union man,’ Battle provided the example of how President Jackson paved the way for the dispossession of the Cherokee Nation. “President Jackson declined to order troops to enforce the mandate of the Supreme Court in the disputes about the Cherokee Indians and his wisdom in delaying was shown by subsequent legislation which forced the removal of the Indians” (Battle 1945: 168). Later Battle acted on his disrespect for the sovereignty and rights of Indigenous nations by securing land grants through the Morrill Act of 1862 to fund the University. This land was acquired from Indigenous Nations through “over 160 violence-backed treaties and land seizures” (<https://www.hcn.org/topics/land-grab-universities>; Battle 1945: 243). Battle likely would not have been able to reopen UNC, his signature accomplishment, had he not actively secured funds that were derived from the dispossession of Indigenous nations.

Battle was President of the University when it reopened at the end of Reconstruction, a period defined by the reestablishment of white supremacist rule, the disenfranchisement of Black citizens, and rising levels of racial terrorism in North Carolina. Notably, Battle’s reputation as a University leader rests in large measure on the role he played in reopening the University following the Civil War. Reopening the University after Reconstruction and serving as its President enabled Battle to regain much of the political influence he lost when he was removed as the North Carolina State Treasurer and a University Trustee during Reconstruction. The fact that he became the President of the University of North Carolina at this time also suggests a strong link between his leadership and the increasing white supremacy which characterized the post-Reconstruction South.¹

He supported White supremacy following the Civil War by opposing the right of African Americans to vote. “My scheme was reasonable but was hindered from success by the wild legislation of

¹ “Conservative political leaders launched a massive campaign of propaganda and terror to overthrow Radical Reconstruction. Although they were temporarily excluded from political power, they controlled many influential newspapers and other public opinion outlets. They also moved quickly to organize paramilitary groups to subdue black movement building and Republican political mobilization. The gentry organized the Ku Klux Klan and other terrorist groups and recruited thousands of white North Carolinians by appealing to white supremacy” (Chapman 2006: 62, 63).

the General Assembly of 1868-1869, elected under the Congressional Reconstruction acts which disfranchised for a time a numerous body of our most intelligent men and, still worse, gave all negro men the right of suffrage" (Battle 1945: 206).

He confessed to uncritically holding racist attitudes and beliefs. There is ample evidence of his racism in his memoirs, including this memory of refusing refuge amongst free blacks during his travels: "When we arrived within ten miles of Cheraw, we found that the only inhabitants of houses near the roadside were free negroes. We were so tired that the colonel proposed that we should seek a night's lodging with one of them, but I had too much Southern prejudice in me and so we pressed on to the town, a bright moon-light ride, arriving there at nine o'clock" (Battle 1945: 177).

Recommendation to Remove Battle's name and replace it with Dr. Anna Julia Cooper

For the reasons discussed above, we urge the Chancellor and Board of Trustees to remove Battle's name from our building. We strongly believe that the placement of Battle's name on our building meets the following three criteria found in the Board of Trustees' Policy for building name removal. Furthermore, only one of these criteria is required for the Board to consider removing a name from a campus building.

- The repugnant conduct in question was central to a namesake's career, public persona, or life as a whole.
- Allegations of repugnant behavior are supported by documentary evidence that demonstrates both the extent and the intentionality of a namesake's actions.
- Honoring a namesake demonstrably jeopardizes the University's integrity and materially impedes its mission of teaching, research, and public engagement; or significantly contributes to an environment that excludes some members of the University community from opportunities to learn, thrive, and succeed.

Additionally, we support the replacement of Battle's name with that of Dr. Anna Julia Cooper. We believe that having Dr. Cooper's name on our building would appropriately and respectfully reflect the intellectual mission of our department.

Profile of Dr. Anna Julia Cooper

Dr. Anna Julia Cooper was a North Carolina native and highly esteemed African-American educator, author, sociologist, and leader. Dr. Cooper was born into slavery in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1858, later becoming one of the most prominent African-American scholars in United States history. Dr. Cooper earned a bachelor's degree in mathematics from Oberlin College in 1884. She subsequently earned an M.A. in mathematics from Oberlin, becoming the second Black woman in the U.S. to earn a master's degree. After beginning a doctoral program at Columbia University, Dr. Cooper completed her doctorate at the Sorbonne in Paris at the age of 66, making her the fourth African-American woman to earn a doctoral degree.

Dr. Cooper's 1892 book *A Voice from the South: By A Black Woman from the South* is regarded as one of the earliest articulations of Black feminism. In 1893, Dr. Cooper became the only woman elected to the American Negro Academy and was also an invited speaker at the World's Congress of Representative

Women, which took place during the World's Fair in Chicago. She was also a speaker at the First Pan-African Conference in London in 1900. Dr. Cooper taught at Wilberforce University and St. Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate Institute (Raleigh), which she had also attended prior to enrolling at Oberlin. In 1930, Dr. Cooper became president of Frelinghuysen University in Washington D.C., an institution that provided education to working African Americans. She was also a teacher and the principal of M Street High School, a highly regarded school in Washington D.C., for many years. Dr. Cooper was funeralized and buried in Raleigh after her death at the age of 105. In 2010, the state of North Carolina erected a historical marker near her grave site.

In 2009, the U.S. Postal Service released a commemorative stamp in Dr. Cooper's honor.

In 2010, a quote from Dr. Anna Julia Cooper's book, *A Voice from the South* was included in the U.S. passport booklet: "The cause of freedom is not the case of a race or a sect or a party or a class – it is the cause of humankind, the very birthright of humanity."

Our department would be honored to have our building bear Dr. Anna Julia Cooper's name. This action would make the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill the first U.S. university to name a building after Dr. Cooper. It would be a fitting way to recognize her invaluable contributions, accomplishments, and legacy as a scholar, leader, and North Carolina native.

Additionally, we feel that it is particularly appropriate to replace Battle's name with that of an esteemed Black North Carolinian whose race was used as justification for the university leadership to deny her access to an education at the university, or any other kind of affiliation, during her lifetime. Dr. Cooper was a contemporary of Dr. Battle. Despite the fact that she was born into slavery and confronted the exclusionary policies that Dr. Battle promoted, her record of accomplishment far exceeded his by any measure. It is well past time that her accomplishments be acknowledged on the campus of the flagship university of her home state.

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