

UDC chapter rose at the sound of 'Dixie' and marched

Winthrop College, after nine years in Columbia, came to Rock Hill in 1895, the same year the United Daughters of the Confederacy was organized in Rock Hill. In 1899, a UDC chapter was established at Winthrop.

In its first 25 years the Rock Hill chapter, known as the Anne White Chapter, never exceeded 60 members. But by 1906 the Winthrop chapter had more than 396 very active members, over one-half of the college's enrollment. This was re-

Louise Pettus



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markable because a requirement of membership was that one must be a direct descendant of a Confederate veteran.

Always, both chapters celebrated the birthdays of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee. Also, on Dec. 20 there was an annual meeting to commemorate the anniversary of the Secession Convention of 1860.

Students wrote essays on events that occurred during the War Between the States (as they called it) in competition for medals offered by the Rock Hill UDC. Winthrop had the only college chapter of the UDC in the state and as such, along with their highly visible navy blue uniforms, members were invited to participate in special ceremonies

honoring veterans at the State Fair, to the dedication of Confederate monuments, and to act as hostesses for the state legislature whenever they honored the veterans.

In turn, the Winthrop UDC chapter always invited the local "Catawba Camp" of Confederate veterans to join them when they had special events. One such occasion was the 43rd anniversary of the Secession convention on Dec. 20, 1903. This event included the presentation of gold crosses of honor, or medals, to the two young ladies who wrote the best essays on "The Confederate private — the man behind the guns — and what he did in the War Between the States." Local businessmen paid

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for the medals.

This particular day the Winthrop chapter was especially honored to have Mrs. Stonewall Jackson present. Mrs. Jackson was a Charlotte native and came down by train. She pinned the medals on the essay winners and kissed each girl "amid the thunderous applause of the audience."

At the same moment, the chapter's color bearers waved the Confederate battle flag "while above all could be heard the Rebel yell as in the olden time." The yell came from gray-haired veterans who occupied the front seats of the Main Building auditorium (now Tillman Hall).

A little later the electric lights flickered and went out. The pianist,

in a moment of inspiration, struck the notes of "Dixie," and the Winthrop chapter, equally inspired, "filed upon the great stage, singing the national air of the Confederacy, while the veterans on the front benches struck matches and held them aloft as torches, the young ladies marching and counter-marching by their flickering pale light. The going out of the lights was all an accident," said The Record reporter, "but it gave opportunity for a grand scene. . . ."

The fact that Winthrop had electric lights in 1903 is most interesting. The India Hook dam, the first electric power dam on the Catawba and the second in the state, was under construction but had not yet been completed. But Winthrop had

had electric power since it opened in Rock Hill in 1895, the only college in the state to have electricity.

From the newspaper account it appears that Mrs. Jackson did not speak other than to graciously accept the compliments of the Rev. James Henley Thornwell, but her "charm and beauty" were enough to excite the audience.

When the program had ended all present were treated to a reception in the college parlor at which Mrs. Jackson shook the hands of more than 1,000 "sons and daughters of the South. . . ."

Louise Pettus is a history professor retired from Winthrop University. Her column appears Saturdays.

12-5-98