

Confederate soldiers honored

■ Rock Hill's monument unveiled May 10, 1922.

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The idea of commemorating the service of Confederate soldiers dates back to 1866, when Mary Amarintha Snowden organized the Ladies' Memorial Association in Charleston. The idea spread over the South until almost



Nearby history

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every town had a memorial association. Markers and plaques in public buildings and cemeteries were the objects of money-raising drives.

A subscription drive spearheaded by Samuel E. White of Fort Mill resulted in the first Confederate monument in this area. With proper ceremony, Fort Mill's Confederate soldier was unveiled in 1891. Then Chester dedicated its monument in 1905, Lancaster in 1907 and Eben-

ezer in 1908.

Rock Hill's Anne White Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy was organized in 1897 with 10 charter members: Mrs. R.H. Fewell, Mrs. John Gelsler, Mrs. James F. Reid, Mrs. B.M. Fewell, Mrs. A.R. Witherspoon, Kate Fewell, Mary White, Mrs. Elizabeth Sherfese, Annie Louise Sherfese and Emma Roach.

The chapter was named for Ann White, who had two sons, James Spratt White and Andrew Hutchinson White, who served in the Confederate army.

The Ann White Chapter grew and during the first 25 years had as many as 60 members on the rolls. They helped organize a chapter at Winthrop College in 1899. By 1907 the Winthrop Chapter of the UDC had over 300 members. That year both groups worked to raise money to send to the UDC building in Jamestown, Va., where the first permanent English settlement was made 300 years before.

Each May 10, the Ann White Chapter members placed wreaths on the graves of Confederate veterans in Laurelwood Cemetery and

placed UDC crosses for identification. Each Jan. 19, Robert E. Lee's birthday, the chapter held a dinner or reception for the area Confederate veterans.

Always, the UDC looked after the welfare of the old veterans. It was sad that if one "drifted into the County Almshouse" the group would not rest until they got him into the Confederate Home at Columbia.

Some UDC records were destroyed in a fire so that it is not precisely known when the Ann White Chapter began raising money for a Confederate soldier monument, but it is known that they worked hard and during World War I, they purchased Liberty Bonds for the purpose.

The chapter received help from the Kiwanis Club, Rotary Club and the Rock Chamber of Commerce, which combined to pledge \$1,500 for the project. The Rock Hill city manager's office helped raised the final \$4,600.

Where to place the monument was another problem. Finally, after much difference of opinion, the club members, "weary of the long drawn out strain," allowed Charles Cobb, a prominent local banker, and the city manager to arrange for the placement in a newly acquired acreage for a future town park, which they decided to call Confederate Park. Academy Street had its name changed to Confederate Street.

On April 18, 1922, the cornerstone was laid with Masonic ceremonies. On May 10, the monument was unveiled before a large crowd who participated in "marching, singing, speaking and band-playing."

The statue of Georgia marble was unveiled as the band played softly, "Way Down Upon the Swanee River." Following the ceremony there was a march to the cemetery to decorate the graves.

Later, the monument was moved from Confederate Park to Laurelwood Cemetery. It became the custom each May 10 to have a program at Ebenezer Avenue School followed by students marching to Laurelwood to decorate the graves.

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