

Sons Of Rest Shared Whittling, Ideas

Veterans of all of the wars in American history have found reason to come together to reminisce about their shared experiences.

The first formal organizations we know of in this area were "camps" affiliated with the United Confederate Veterans (S.C. Division), which was organized in 1901.

They usually met twice a year. The spring meeting was frequently held in Winthrop College's Main Building (now Tillman) auditorium. The United Daughters of the Confederacy sponsored a college chapter that hosted the meeting. Statewide meetings were held annually at the state fairgrounds.

On occasion, the Confederate veterans joined excursion groups who traveled by train together to visit Virginia battlefields. They kept in touch through *The Confederate Veteran*, a popular magazine of the day.

Capt. Samuel Elliott White was one of the more vigorous leaders of Confederate veterans. He participated in formal activities, and he initiated a subscription drive to build a Confederate monument on land he owned that is now known as Confederate Park in Fort Mill.

Capt. White also initiated an informal veterans group that was known first as the Whittling Club, then as the Tabernacles and, finally, as the Sons of Rest.



Nearby History

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Capt. Samuel E. White and other Confederate veterans whittled and told war stories in a tent on Lancaster's Main Street, circa 1906.

Sam White liked to whittle wood while he talked. (His son-in-law, Leroy Springs, once characterized White as "nervous and excitable.") When there was good weather, he liked to sit on the side porch of the Bank of Fort Mill with his old cronies and talk.

Samuel Elliott White founded Springs Industries and probably made most of the plans for it in discussion with the townspeople on the bank piazza. The stockholders elected him president, but this didn't keep him from his whittling.

When White's wife died, he went to Lancaster to live with his only surviving daughter, Grace, and her husband, Leroy Springs. Leroy Springs took over the presidency of Fort Mill Manufacturing Co. The Springs home, now Lancaster's city hall, was within a short walk of Springs' office in the Bank of Lancaster on Main Street.

Capt. White secured a large tent and placed it in a vacant lot next to the bank. He placed about 10 seats in it, along with an old-fashioned stove with a little stove-

pipe sticking up out of the tent. A small table was intended to hold reading matter, but mostly held a good stock of pine boards, a large whetstone and a razor strop.

If a man didn't have a jack-knife, Capt. White rented him one for a penny. Boys were welcome and Capt. White taught many how to whittle, but they understood they weren't to open their mouths while the men discussed the affairs of the nation.

A newspaperman from Bristol, Conn., visited Lancaster and became fascinated with the Sons of Rest. When he returned to his home, he wrote an article about it in which he said: "While the regu-

lar habitues of the tent may not number more than twenty, yet at some time during the day practically all the business and professional men of Lancaster will have looked in on the regular assemblage to say good day and to ask questions and perhaps to briefly discuss some matter. . . . The Sons of Rest to all intents and purposes takes the place of a club in a more fashionable place."

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