

I was actively involved in the Petition Mrs. Colson just submitted. Of paramount importance is that these 1200 plus names were all collected FACE TO FACE right here in Perquimans County. Every name on there either lives, works or plays in Perquimans County and has an economic interest here, they spend money here!

I personally have knocked on hundreds of doors and been invited into scores of homes. As a relative newcomer to the County, 90% of these are the homes of folks I never met, complete strangers to me. They are a random sampling of the people of Perquimans. **ALMOST ALL OF THEM signed my Petition.**

I began my portion of the drive in mid April, but by late April when I saw all the various forms of desecration the "Work Group" was considering, I quickly made it known to any potential signatory that I was requesting their signature as opposition to ANY CHANGE to the Monument or where it currently stands. While certainly not all, MOST of the signatures you have been presented with are persons **opposed to any change of any kind to the Monument and its surroundings including new signs around it.**

After seeking permission, I have stood in parking lots, visited swap meets, but mostly bicycled or walked door to door and the overwhelming majority feel changes are unnecessary and an overreach by a Board considering action on a non-existent problem. In fact, most of these folks feel the Board's actions ARE FUELING divisiveness in the County as the Board searches for ways to explain away their history and rob locals of their heritage.

Having walked many miles and spoken to hundreds of residents I say this with an extremely high level of confidence, this Monument, that so few even give a thought to in day to day life, has a very strong popularity when threatened by folks like you. The people do NOT want you messing with it!

As a military veteran myself, I take great offense to those that cast aside the ones that made the ultimate sacrifice when asked to do their duty. This State, this County, asked these men to do their duty and they responded as requested. Many of these men never came home and some forty years after the war ended, as the last survivors of that costly war died off, the UDC raised the funds necessary to build a Memorial to "Our Soldiers".

They asked the County for a place of honor on the Courthouse lot so it would prominently displayed, and on 4 March 1912, as recorded in the minute's book " On motion, the Board of County Commissioners grant unto the Daughters of Confederacy the right to erect a Monument to Confederate dead upon the Court House lot, ..."

The so-called "Confederate Monument" is not a monument to the Confederacy, it is a Monument to soldiers, men we would normally call "Heroes" or "First responders" in today's vernacular.

Myself, and most of the folks that signed that Petition don't feel comfortable with you "Modernizing" their sacrifice.

*—Terry—*

- **John Long:** Mr. Long supported the petition that was just presented. He further explained the process and how they obtained the signatures. He supports the petition and requests that the Board consider what the residents of Perquimans County truly feel about this matter. He further explained that this is a monument not a statute. It is a place where people can go to remember those who sacrificed their lives.
- **Koz Jackson:** Mr. Jackson stated that he supports the monument and does not want to have it moved or changed in any way. He talked about his Indian heritage and the struggles that his ancestors went through. He also served in the U.S. Army.
- **Edna Sidwell:** Ms. Sidwell stated that she is a citizen of the United States and she has history. She supports the petition and wishes no changes to the monument.
- Angela Burket & Janet Owens did not want to speak.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further comments or business to discuss, the Regular Meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. on motion made by Charles Woodard, seconded by Joseph W. Hoffler.

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Wallace E. Nelson, Chairman

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Clerk to the Board

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**SPECIAL CALLED MEETING / PUBLIC HEARING**

**August 16, 2021**

**7:00 p.m.**

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners met in a SPECIAL CALLED MEETING on Monday, August 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Perquimans County Library located at 514 S. Church Street, Hertford, NC 27944.

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Wallace E. Nelson, Chairman	Fondella A. Leigh, Vice Chair
	Joseph W. Hoffler	Kyle Jones
	Alan Lennon	Charles Woodard

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT:	Frank Heath, County Manager	Mary Hunnicutt, Clerk to the Board
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Chairman Nelson called the meeting to order. Commissioner Leigh gave the invocation and the Chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman Nelson explained that this Special Called Meeting was scheduled to hold a Public Hearing to receive public comments on the recommendations of the "Monument to the Confederate Dead" Work Group.

PUBLIC HEARING – “MONUMENT TO THE CONFEDERATE DEAD”

Chairman Nelson opened the Public Hearing stating that the purpose of the public hearing was to receive public comments on the following recommendations of the “Monument to the Confederate Dead” Work Group:

1. Recommend that the Commissioners add signage which contextualizes the monument to provide the whole story of that era.
2. Recommend that the Commissioners approach the private owners of the King Street Memorial for relocation to the Courthouse green in a location of equal stature and prominence.

There were 44 people present. Chairman Nelson explained the process that each speaker would have three minutes and that the Clerk to the Board would be the timekeeper. He asked that everyone be respectful of each person speaking and that the individuals would speak in the order that they signed up. The following public comments were made:

- **Brenda Huddleston**: Ms. Huddleston wanted the monument to remain as is and read the statement that is printed as **Attachment A**.
- **M. Ivey**: Ms. Ivey agreed with M. Huddleston’s comments. She further stated that she like historical things and this monument is part of our history and she would like for it to remain as is.
- **Ms. Tammy Miller-White**: After Ms. Miller-White explained that she served on the Work Group for the Monument for the Confederate Dead, she explained that she came tonight because she believes that there was a third option. She distributed copies of what her third option would be - **Attachment B**. She thanked the Board for allowing the public to express their opinions tonight and asked that they consider all options when making their final decision.
- **Terry Swope**: Mr. Swope wants the monument left as is and read the comments that is printed as **Attachment C**.
- **Chuck White**: Mr. White talked about the fact that he had talked with the Board at an earlier meeting and compared this situation to the Vietnam War Memorial. After explaining his comparison, he asked the Board to leave the monument as is.
- **John Long**: Mr. Long reviewed the history of the monument and how people wanted to remember those soldiers that gave their lives for this country and never returned home. He did not feel that the facilitator for the Work Group did his job. He recommends that they leave the monument as is. He referred to the petition that was signed by 1,384 citizens of Perquimans County not to change anything on the monument. Leave it as it stands.
- **Earl Owens**: Mr. Owens said that the monument has been where it is all his lifetime and feels that it needs to remain as is without extra signage.
- **Danny Privott**: Mr. Privott explained that he had attended all the Work Group meetings and heard their recommendations that we are considering tonight. He wants the monument to remain as is. To review his complete comments, go to **Attachment D**.
- **Rod Bowman**: Mr. Bowman explained his family history of individuals that served in the Confederate War and did not return home. His family has served this country for over 250 years. He feels that this monument needs to remain as is to commemorate the soldiers that have died for our country and did not return home. To view his entire comments, go to **Attachment E**.
- **Philip Madre**: Mr. Madre explained that his family has been here in Perquimans County for over 300 years. He is opposed to any changes to the monument.
- **Peter Messina**: Mr. Messina has been in Perquimans County for seven years. He is opposed to making any changes to the monument and hopes that the souls of the fallen soldiers would come back to haunt us for thinking about changing or removing the monument.
- **Dave Berger**: Mr. Berger said that he agrees with everyone that has spoken before him. He said that he does not feel that the monument needs to be changed and that it does not exemplify slavery. It is a sign of how the North did the South wrong. Those soldiers were fighting for their freedoms. He wants everything to remain the same.
- **Karen Wright**: Ms. Wright explained that her great-great grandfather fought in the war and never returned. She did not feel that he would fight for slavery but for all people. When she looks at the monument, she thinks of her great-great grandfather. Please leave the monument as is. She has no problem with the movement of the other monument on King Street to the Courthouse Lawn.
- **William Stevenson**: Mr. Stevenson is here to request that the monument be left as is and add no signage. He is a Vietnam Veteran and understands the importance of remembering those fallen soldiers who fought a war that was lost. He has no problem moving the other monument to the Courthouse lawn but leave this monument as is.
- **Roberta Stevenson**: Ms. Stevenson wanted the Board to know that she wants the monument to stay as is and no signage added. With regard to moving the other monument to the Courthouse lawn, she said that would be up to the owners of the other monument to make that decision.
- **Gene Dail**: Mr. Dail began by saying that God is good and He know all things. He went on to explain that he was a veteran and a lot of people complain about a lot of things but he stands for the monument and wants to keep it as it is. Clean it up and make it pretty and let us live together in harmony in Jesus’ name.
- **Gerald Flaughter**: Mr. Flaughter explained that he was a new resident to Perquimans County and thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak tonight. He also thanked the community for welcoming him to Perquimans County. He is a retired US Air Force pilot and has commissioned many monuments as a memorial to soldiers who have died while serving this country. If you want to protest the monument, stand outside like at the Arlington National Cemetery. Do not desecrate the monument. These monuments mean something to someone. Leave it as is.
- **Dennis Ray**: Mr. Ray said that he had prepared a long speech on how he felt but the bottom line is that the monument is a memorial to those soldiers who died in service for their country. These people were from all ethnic backgrounds. He hopes that the Board will decide to keep the monument as it is and where it is.
- **Philip Tetley**: Mr. Tetley strongly believes that the monument needs to stay where it is and place no signage on it.
- **Aubrey Ownley**: Mr. Ownley thanked the Board for allowing him to come speak tonight and thanked the public for coming tonight to discuss this monument. He further explained that he likes history and Perquimans County is rich in history. When we erect a monument to the soldiers who died during a war, we should leave the monument as is. He also said that he would like to see the County embellish the King Street monument if the community wishes. He wants this confederate monument to stay where it is. This represents Perquimans County. It is a very humble monument and feels that it was placed there to honor our dead soldiers and for no other reason. Therefore, he requests that the Board decided to keep the monument as is.
- **Kos Jackson**: Mr. Jackson stated that he was not a native North Carolinian but he is here by choice. He is a veteran and has served the country. This is a monument for soldiers that died and did not return home. He feels that the

monument needs to remain as is and without any additional signage. It has been there for over 100 years and he feels that it needs to remain as is.

- **Angela Burket:** Ms. Burkett explained that she was from England and she is proud of her English and American history. There are a lot of English history that may need to have been changed as is in American history. We cannot change our history but we can learn from it. She requests that the monument remain as it is.
- **Edna Sidwell:** Ms. Sidwell said that what she has heard tonight has truly broken her heart. Just the fact that people want to deface the monument because it doesn't satisfy some part of their history. She further explained that she has had many family members served the country. Just thinking about how they would feel that people will want to remove or deface the monument. She just does not feel that there needs to be any changes and no signage added.
- **Corey "Bubba" McCreery:** Mr. McCreery does not think that the monument should be changed in any way. They fought for what they believed and it should stand as it s.
- **Pete Perry:** Mr. Perry displayed a picture of how things should be. The picture displayed the Monument to the Confederate Dead and the Colored Soldiers Monument from King Street side by side on the Courthouse lawn. This displays unity and that is what we need to do. He discussed how they obtained the signatures on the petition. He also mentioned that he had reached out to the President of the NAACP twice but received no reply. He talked about how Connie Brothers held a forum group meeting where the individuals discussed things calmly and rationally. No one was shouting at each other or calling each other unusual names. There are two items on the agenda tonight: signage and approach the First Church to move their monument to the Courthouse square. The last item is his position. He further stated that, if you do not do the second one, you don't need to do the first. The monument needs to stay where it is. Some people will look at it and like it and others will look at it and dislike it. It doesn't mean that adding signage will make any difference. We need to unify the county. He asked the Board to vote their conscience.

Chairman Nelson thanked everyone for their comments and their attendance tonight. He further explained that no action would be taken tonight to allow the commissioners to study the information that has been provided to them through e-mails, phone calls, public comments at other meetings, Work Group recommendations, and the public comments tonight. This item will be added to the September 7<sup>th</sup> Agenda for action to be taken. He asked the Commissioners if they have comments. There being none, he closed the Public Hearing at 7:52 p.m. and explained that the Board needed to go into Closed Session.

**AGENDA**

After the public had left, Chairman Nelson asked for approval of the Agenda. On motion made by T. Kyle Jones, seconded by Charles Woodard, the Board unanimously approved the Agenda.

**CLOSED SESSION: TO DISCUSS AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT MATTER AND CLOSED SESSION MINUTES**

Chairman Nelson stated that, pursuant to NC General Statute 143-318.11(5), the Board will need to go into Closed Session to discuss an economic development matter and closed session minute approval. On motion made by Alan Lennon, seconded by Charles Woodard, the Board unanimously voted to go into Closed Session.

The Closed Session was adjourned and the Special Called Meeting reconvened on motion made by Fondella A. Leigh, seconded by Charles Woodard, and unanimously approved by the Board.

No action was required from the Closed Session.

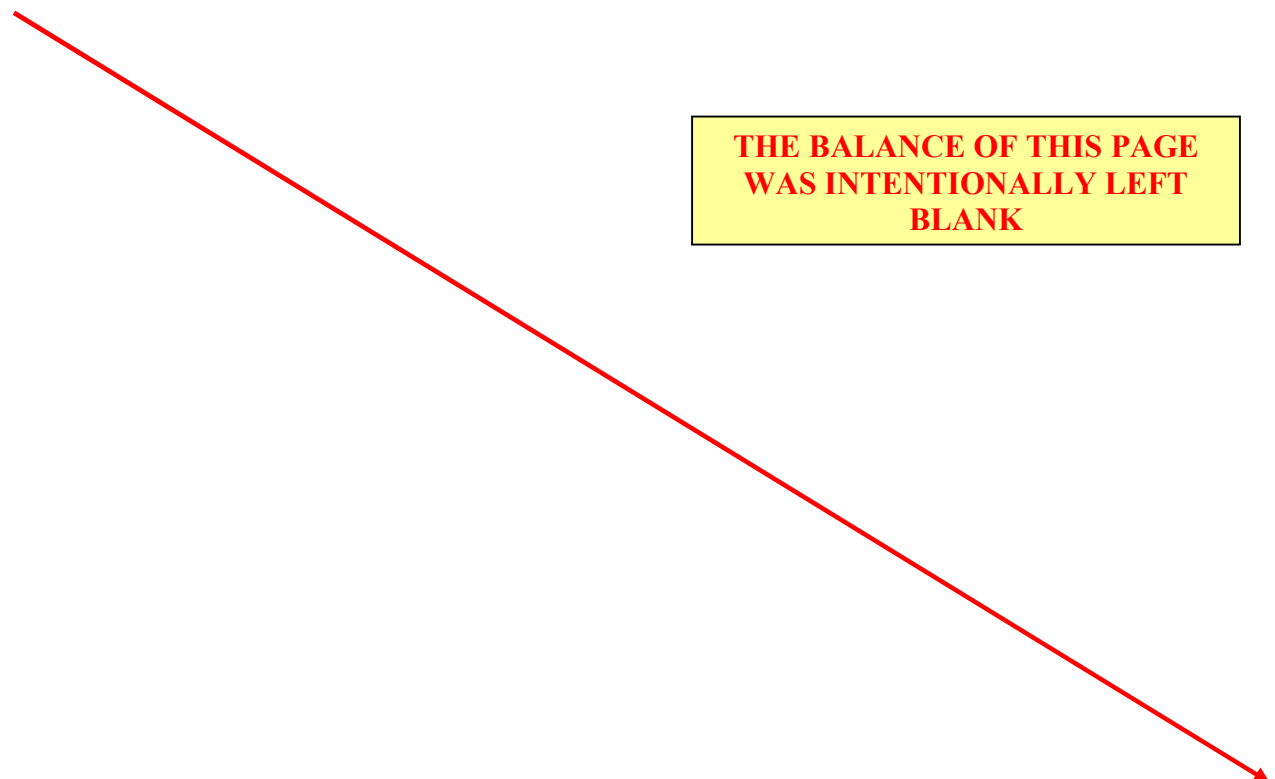
**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further comments or business to discuss, the Special Called Meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m. on motion made by Charles Woodard, seconded by Joseph W. Hoffler.

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Wallace E. Nelson, Chairman

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Clerk to the Board

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**ATTACHMENT A**

Hello, my name is Brenda Huddleston, and I am a proud resident of Perquimans County.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening about the Perquimans County Confederate Monument.

This monument was unveiled on June 12, 1912, and has remained a part of our county's history since then.

I do not wish to discount the feelings of anyone on either side of this debate. My great-great-grandfather Jacob A. Whetzel was a Sergeant in the Union Army serving under General Sheridan. He was present at the surrender of Lee.

I have thought long and hard about this issue, but I must strongly disagree with placing signage around the monument.

I do not want us to disparage its true purpose, a marker for the Confederate war dead.

There are other settings for contextualizations of the Civil War, museums and books, for instance, but a monument to the dead is not the right place. This monument does not celebrate the civil war and is not a declaration of approval of the war.

America was not perfect then, and it is not perfect now, but God is very clear. He is our only judge. Unlike Him, we do not know what was in our fellow man's hearts and minds. He does not grant us the right to judge them.

To me, this is comparable to the Viet Nam War Memorial. People still have very different viewpoints about the correctness of that war. Many of our military men and women were treated horribly by their own country when they returned. Many still suffer today, but it has not prevented us from erecting a remembrance to those war dead.

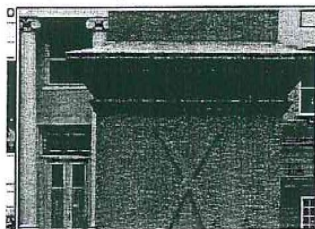
**ATTACHMENT B**

*Jammy Miller White*

Date: August 16, 2021

**If The Monument Is Not Removed**

If the monument remains in its current location, the following recommendation is offered for consideration and hopefully implementation: Encase a portion of the existing monument's base in 4 marble/granite panels. Thus, the original base will be untouched and covered by the new panels.

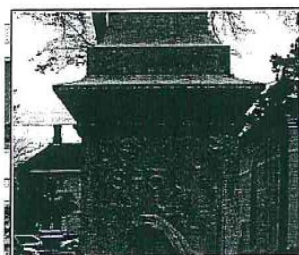


Cover with new panel



**New Panel – Draft Wording**

Ex. In 20\_ PCBC rededicated this monument to accurately reflect the history and sacrifices made by those of Perquimans County during 1861-1865.

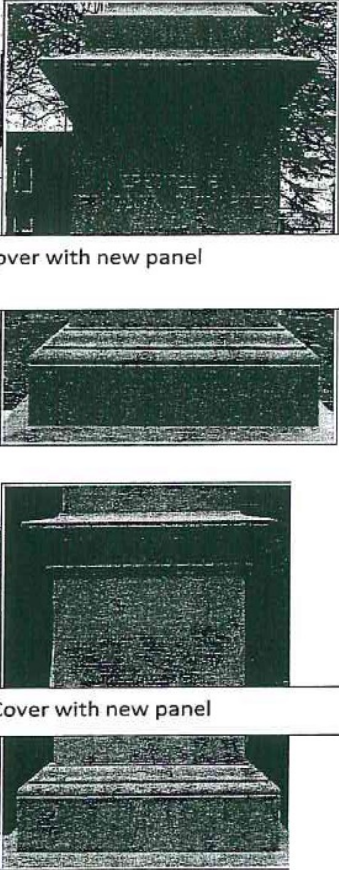


Cover with new panel

**New Panel**

EX. 1861-1865

**ATTACHMENT B CONTINUED**



New Panel

Ex. This monument was originally erected in 1912 by the \_\_\_\_\_, to honor Confederate Soldiers.

New Panel

Ex. To all that fought...

Photos - <https://www.waymarking.com/gallery/default.aspx?f=1&guid=8e9ff0fe-50c2-4936-b0b4-582db00df5ad&gid=2>

**ATTACHMENT C**

Having attended nearly every official public discussion on this issue for over a year now, I have seen and learned much.

The discussion began in June of 2020 with the request for removal. Since that time, this BOARD has seen fit to spend thousands of taxpayer dollars and hundreds of man-hours on this. Resources we can ill afford here in Perquimans.

One would think this was a crisis in the County as large as Covid itself, yet nothing could be further from the truth. No one actually believes that changes around the Monument are going to end any bigotries a few folks may possess towards one another. Those are issues you Six Commissioners simply cannot resolve. In fact, I will take that a step further and say your attempts have made matters worse. Perquimans is unique in that it has two Monuments, but the attempts to denigrate one Monument has fostered a one team vs the other team attitude in a **few** residents. This process has NOT been good for the County.

The selectively chosen "Work Group" submitted two suggestions, both of which are controversial and if exercised, expensive. Moving the other Monument to the Courthouse would be expensive in both dollars and heritage lost. That Monument stands, as has been said, "On sacred ground" and relocating it would cost us dearly. That Monument stands there because the folks who erected it had limited choices. Today, they can take it anywhere they wish, but preserving that heritage means leaving it where it stands now.

The other idea, placing signage around the Courthouse Monument would cost us just as much. The suggestion was the hiring of history professors, and as one work group member put it "...Clean the thing up and make it appropriate for today's standards".

" 1861-1865 OUR SOLDIERS" "They fought for what they believed to be right and sealed their faith in blood" Make it appropriate to today's standards huh?

I do not wield the influence of the work group, but I am willing to offer a third suggestion and this one doesn't cost anyone any money or any heritage. The bills have already been paid, the Monument is already there. It was erected by folks **WHO ACTUALLY KNEW** the people they were honoring. They SPOKE TO, LIVED WITH, and WERE DIRECT KIN TO these very soldiers, not some college professors 160 years later offering their interpretation of what the "Whole story" is. The Board of Commissioners of 1912 authorized this "Monument to Confederate dead" and contemporary accounts described it as a "Memorial ceremony" with the military honors of playing of taps and a gun salute; this needs no cleaning up!

Why don't we just thank the work group for their efforts, but respectfully reject their suggestions and leave everything EXACTLY as it has been for the last 109 years, rather than surround this Memorial to Soldiers with signs that belittle their sacrifice.

— Jerry —

**ATTACHMENT D****PAGE 1**

August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
County Commissioner's public meeting for open comments on the Monument at Courthouse.

My name is Danny Privott and I am a resident of Perquimans County. I attended all the meetings held by the volunteer "work group" that was created to make recommendations to the County Commissioners as a result of a formal written letter asking for the removal of the Monument which stands at the courthouse as a tribute to "**Our Soldiers 1861-1865**", that's what is inscribed on this Monument.

During the first work group discussion, the attorney addressed each of them and went over in detail a NC law, adopted in 2015 and codified as North Carolina General Statute (G.S.) 100-2.1, requires that objects of remembrance on public property cannot be removed or relocated except in certain circumstances. **He followed this comment with and this letter does not meet the requirements of either of these circumstances.**

During this same meeting, this work group was given results of actions taken and/or pending by other North Carolina counties faced with similar circumstances by person or persons asking for the removal of their like monuments. Some counties elected to keep as is, some to remove and /or relocate. The group was told that there were law suits pending in some of the counties that voted to remove. **There is a legal course of action that can be**

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**taken by any group that does not agree with the law as written; this is to petition the legislators to change the law. Unless and until the law is changed, asking the County Commissioners to do anything to this monument would in effect be unlawful.**

The brave Soldiers that fought and died deserve the Monument they have had for 109 years. They answered the call when they were asked to fight, they did not shy away from their sworn duty and they died as a result.....it is absolutely wrong to desecrate their memory NOW.

Please read the inscriptions on the Monument, it is simply a war memorial honoring brave soldiers that answered the call and died as a result, they did what was asked of them, they are buried, none of us knows where, but with this Monument which was erected in their memory, they are not forgotten.

**I urge the Commissioners to adhere to the law, to do nothing to this Monument, do not move it, don't change it! It is exactly what it says it is, a tribute to "**Our Soldiers 1861-1865**"**

Thank you for listening!!!

**ATTACHMENT E**

The Army of the Confederacy had, by most accounts, 900,000 men under arms. Over 400,000 were draftees.

I'm here tonight in Memory of Pvt. Alexander B. Bell Company C, 5<sup>th</sup> Virginia Regiment.

Alex was born in 1840 in Staunton VA and grew up on a farm with his brothers and sisters.

Alex was drafted into the Confederate Army in 1862 with his 3 older brothers (Hendren, David and John). His oldest brother, John, was doctor but Alex, Hendren, and David were just soldiers. David was wounded at the Battle of Chancellorsville but died from disease shortly after. Alex was captured by Union forces and died of starvation in a POW camp in Delaware in 1863. He was 23 years old. His remains are buried in an unmarked grave somewhere in Delaware.

Alex and his brothers were my Great-Great uncles.

My family has fought and served this great country for over 250 years. The American Revolution, War of 1812, the War Between the States ( WITH BOTH THE NORTH AND SOUTH), the good Lord spared us the Spanish American War, but we were there for WW1, WW2, Korean War, Vietnam, Invasion of Grenada, 1<sup>st</sup> Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan.

I ask you to leave the monument "as is" as a memorial for Alex and all the other soldiers who never came home from that war.

Thank you,

Rod Bowman

Pvt. Hendren Van Lear Bell of Company I, 5th Reg Virginia (Stonewalls Brigade)  
 Pvt. David F. Bell born 1831-1863 Company C, 5th Reg Virginia (Stonewalls Brigade) Wounded at Chancellorsville, died from disease.  
 Dr. John B. Bell 1836-1891 Confederate Surgeon  
 Pvt. Alexander B. Bell 1840-1863 Company C, 5th Reg Virginia (Stonewalls Brigade) Died from starvation in POW Camp in Delaware."

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