

APPLING COUNTY CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL DEDICATION SPEECH
November 1, 2008

Good afternoon and welcome ladies and gentlemen to the dedication of this beautiful Monument to the men and women of Appling County, who put their lives on hold and took up their part in the defense of their home and hearth. All the able bodied men between the age of 16 and 45 were called in to the service of the Confederate States of America otherwise known as the Southern Confederacy. . Between the years of 1861 and 1865 the struggle with the invading foe was so intense that its effects reached to every corner of the South and their Cause of Southern Independence was paramount to everyone.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those that contributed to this effort coming to fruition. The donors both great and small, from a \$2.00 donation to some outstanding contributions, The Appling Grays give our heartfelt thanks. Without your help this day would not have been possible.

I would also like to take this time to give our thanks to the United Daughters of the Confederacy who have been so very supportive of our efforts and are furnishing the refreshments for today's ceremony. The UDC and SCV membership is composed of descendents of Confederate soldiers and we invite anyone who is a descendent to contact us and to join up with our organizations.

In 1860 Appling County was large in land area but small in population. Nevertheless over five hundred men composed the four infantry companies that were organized in this county. The unit names along with the militia and cavalry units are inscribed on the side pillows of the monument. The Appling Grays, Company I, 27th Georgia Volunteer Infantry, The Appling Rangers, Company F, 47th Georgia Volunteer Infantry, The Appling Volunteers, Company B, 54th Georgia Volunteer Infantry and The Satilla Rifles, Company K, 54th Georgia Volunteer Infantry were the names of the four infantry companies from here. Company A, I and K of Clinch's 4th Georgia Cavalry had Appling Countians in their ranks along with Captain John Mayers Appling County Cavalry that patrolled the large county and protected it. Captain Benjamin Milikin formed a militia unit late in the war and joined in the Defense of Savannah in 1864 and Captain Silas Crosby organized another local Militia unit.

The bronze sculpture depicts the young Appling Soldier preparing to go to war and his wife that he left behind to take care of the home. The sculpture is atop a North Georgia Boulder with the face engraved. Upon it I the phrase "Dedicated to those who sacrificed all, save Honor."

We must never forget that over 500 Appling County soldiers went off to war and of that number over 125 did not return but gave the supreme sacrifice for their homeland – their lives. That number exceeds all the Appling County soldiers lost in all the wars since. They shed their blood from Sharpsburg to Vicksburg to Petersburg. From Richmond to

Jackson to Atlanta to Savannah. From South Mountain to Lookout Mountain to Kennesaw Mountain to Missionary Ridge. From Weldon Railroad to Olustee to Honey Hill to Doctortown to Tullinny to Seven Pines. From Cold Harbor to Battery Wagoner to Rivers Bridge. From Chickamauga to Chattanooga to Oostaunala to Mechanicsville to New Hope Church to Averysboro to Gaines Mill and at last to Bentonville.

After the Battle of Rivers Bridge Lieutenant Jim Patterson of the Appling Rangers in conversation, as the less than 200 of the 800 rifles that left for Jackson Mississippi were left headed for North Carolina, of their loss and the toll they had taken on the enemy “I believe that we good for two and one half Yankees each before this thing is over.” This is exemplarily of how the Appling county soldier felt about his mission and goal.

The following is an excerpt from the writings of Captain Benjamin S. Williams, Adjutant of the 47th Georgia:

reminiscent of that time that “tried men’s souls in” a fiery furnace of blasting withering war; when the fair bosom of our sunny South was drenched and swept by a crimson tide that bore upon its swelling flood – out into the ocean of eternity – the flower of our chivalry and manhood. Oh, in how many homes, even yet, is felt an aching void. And as memory brings the light of those whose footsteps are brushing the evening dews on the banks of that river whose sea shore sands will soon be marked by their last footprints how dims the eye the startling tear as sighs on the aching heart, ever and ever. “Oh for one touch of a vanished hand for one sound of a voice forever stilled.” Vanished illusion, dreary ideal, baseless fabric of a shadowy human hope.

Our fallen warriors are no more forever. Between them and us rolls, deep and dark the silent and mystical River. We can but honor their dust and treasure fondly in memory their imperishable glory. While it is not meet or becoming that we, living, who fought with those who fell should chant praises, it is well that the literature of to-day embrace the events of the most important epoch of our country’s pregnant annals and it is fair and fitting that the matchless deeds of the gallant men of the grandest army ever marshaled on earth should be treasured in heart and memory “like flowers kept fresh in water.”

In coming years, when our flags are dust and our good swords rust on history’s page and poet’s lay will be learned “The story of the glory of the men who wore the gray.

This monument stands as a permanent memorial to all those Appling Countians and their sacrifice. When folks ride by and see it they are reminded of those times of old and the people involved

Our goal and our purpose is that the accurate history be preserved and that those brave and gallant soldiers and their deeds never be forgotten and always be honored and that the wives they left behind never be forgotten.