

# Chatham County and the Politics of Secession 1854-1861

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*Our goal in this paper is to document the political events that ended in taking North Carolina out of the Union and into the Confederacy, with a particular focus on any information about Chatham County's participation in or reactions to these events. While the four-year war itself was fought on battlefields, the preceding seventy-seven year conflict was fought in diplomatic battles. We will try to identify the views and votes of Chatham County citizens and their political representatives regarding slavery and secession. We begin by describing the state of affairs on the eve of secession and then turn to the events that brought the state to that conclusion.*

On May 1, 1861, North Carolina Governor John W. Ellis addressed a special session of the state legislature. This address was among the last in a series of events that culminated in North Carolina's secession from the United States of America and membership in the Confederate States of America. By this date, Governor Ellis assumed that the state would secede. He recommended a constitutional convention as the only legal method of doing so, and urged the legislature to prepare for war with sufficient funds to provide for arms.

When these historic events were taking place, Chatham County was represented in the N. C. House of Commons by **Turner Bynum**, **Robert N. Green**, and **William P. Taylor**. Bynum was a 52-year-old farmer with real and personal estate value of \$16,000 including 19 slaves. At age 38, he had been elected as a district constable and had also served on the county Board of Superintendents of Common Schools. Green was a 50-year-old farmer with real and personal estate value of \$16,000 including 13 slaves. Green had given land for the Pleasant Hill Methodist Church and during the Civil War he would become the Beaumont postmaster. Taylor was a 46-year-old farmer with real and personal estate value of \$19,150, including 14 slaves. He had previously been clerk of court, clerk of the school board, and sheriff. In 1862, he would become a state senator.<sup>1</sup>

Chatham's state Senator at the time was, we believe, **W. G. Harris**.<sup>2</sup> In the 1860 Chatham census, William G. Harris is 51, a farmer, and owns \$36,500 in real and personal property, including 36 slaves. He served as postmaster of the Adolph post office from 1849-1858 and also later ran, unsuccessfully, as a delegate to the state secession convention.

Chatham County's representatives in the state legislature were not atypical. In a state where less than one-third of white families owned slaves in 1860, more than eighty percent of the legislators owned slaves.<sup>3</sup>

State legislators were also more likely to be landowners and to own more land than the population they represented. In fact, substantial land ownership was a requirement for holding state legislative offices, and, up until 1857, to vote for these offices. See box at right for state constitutional requirements for holding legislative offices and for voting for these legislators.

Following the May 1, 1861, meeting with the Governor, both the state House and state Senate quickly passed a bill calling for the election on May 13 of 120 delegates to a convention on May 20 to consider secession. The convention was to be unrestricted in powers and its decisions final. An attempt in the House to amend the bill to require the submission of the ordinances of the convention to the people in a referendum failed and the House passed the bill unanimously. The bill passed the Senate with only three dissenting votes, cast by representatives from the districts including (1) Iredell, Wilkes and Alexander (a single district), (2) Alamance and Randolph (a single district), and (3) Orange.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the bill was supported by all four Chatham County legislators.

Other bills passed by the legislature in preparation for secession:

- authorized the governor to enroll 10,000 state troops, to accept and arm 20,000 volunteers, and to offer each a ten-dollar bounty.
- repealed the requirement of state officials to take an oath to support the Constitution of the United States.
- authorized the governor to appoint a commissioner to the government of the Confederate States.
- defined and provided punishment by death for treason against the state, including professing allegiance or fidelity to an enemy of the state or advising or conspiring with a slave to rebel or make insurrection. Though not executed, Chathamite **Martine Wilson**, a 33-year-old landless laborer, was imprisoned in June of 1861 for “treasonable talk or incendiary language.”<sup>5</sup>

**Constitutional requirements  
for office- holders and voters in 1860  
North Carolina**

As of the Constitutional Convention of June 1835, a member of the N.C. state Senate must have resided in the district electing him for at least one year prior to his election and he must own at least 300 acres in that same district. To vote for state senator a free man had to own at least 50 acres. This prevented more than half of the voters from voting for state senator. The 50-acre property ownership requirement for voting for state senator was eliminated by an 1857 amendment, but voters still had to meet minimum taxpayer qualifications.

The constitution required a member of the state House to own at least 100 acres. To vote for a House representative a free man had to be a tax payer.

Although all free male taxpayers were accorded the vote by the 1776 Constitution, the 1835 convention excluded free blacks and mulattos within the fourth degree (i.e., having at least one black ancestor as far back as great-grandparent) from voting, making race a qualification for voting for the first time.

Amendments passed at the 1835 constitutional convention made the offices of governor and state judges elected by voters rather than appointed by the legislature. The governor had no veto power.

*From: John Orth, North Carolina State Constitution with History and Commentary, UNC Press, 1993, pp. 8-11.*

On May 13, 1861, Chatham County voters elected three delegates to the convention (each county electing the same number of delegates as its representatives in the state House). **James H. Headen** was a 38-year-old lawyer living on his father's farm near Pittsboro with little real and personal estate value of his own—\$2,200. While Headen is not listed as a slave-owner in the 1860 slave schedule, his father, with whom he lived, owned four slaves. Headen does not appear to have served in the subsequent war. **John Manning, Jr.** was a 30-year-old lawyer with real and personal estate value of \$11,000 and nine slaves. He lived in the eastern district served by the Pittsboro post office. Manning served as lieutenant colonel in the 15<sup>th</sup> North Carolina, before resigning.<sup>6</sup> **Leonidus J. Merritt** was a 29-year-old lawyer living in the central district with post office in Pittsboro. Merritt had a real and personal estate value of \$4,100 and owned three slaves.<sup>7</sup> Merritt enlisted in the Chatham Rifles, made lieutenant, and was killed near Richmond, at age 32.<sup>8</sup>

On May 20, 1861 the North Carolina Secession Convention met in Raleigh. After a brief discussion of whether secession was constitutional, the conference unanimously agreed to support the Ordinance of Secession of North Carolina. [See box at right.] A proposal that the ordinances be submitted to a referendum of citizens was supported by all three Chatham delegates, but was voted down. The convention then ratified the Provisional Constitution of the Confederate States. All three of Chatham County's delegates voted in support of the ordinances of secession and ratification.

The convention also adopted other amendments to the state constitution. Because North Carolina was now preparing for war, the State had to raise taxes. Because the war was being fought to defend the institution of slavery, the convention agreed to tax slaves as property according to their value (“ad valorem”) rather than at a flat rate as had been the practice.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, on May 20, 1861, North Carolina seceded from the United States of America, being one of the last states—rather than *the* last state—to do so only because secession was decided

#### Ordinance of Secession of North Carolina.

An Ordinance to dissolve the union between the State of North Carolina and the other States united with her under the compact of Government entitled “The Constitution of the United States”.

We, the people of North Carolina, in Convention assembled, do declare and ordain, and it is hereby declared and ordained, That the ordinance adopted by the State of North Carolina in the Convention of 1789, whereby the Constitution of the United States was ratified and adopted, and also all acts and parts of acts of the General Assembly ratifying and adopting amendments to the said Constitution, are hereby repealed, rescinded and abrogated.

We do further declare and ordain, That the union now subsisting between the State of North Carolina and the other States, under the title of the United States of America, is hereby dissolved, and the State of North Carolina is in full possession and exercise of all those rights of sovereignty which belong and appertain to a free and independent State.

Done in Convention at the City of Raleigh, this the 20<sup>th</sup> day of May, in the year of our Lord 1861, and in the eighty-fifth year of the independence of said State.

*From: Ordinances and Resolutions Passed by the State Convention of North Carolina at its Several Sessions in 1861-62 (Raleigh: John W. Syme, 1862.)*

by statewide referenda in Virginia on May 23 and in Tennessee on June 8.<sup>10</sup> On May 21, North Carolina became a member of the Confederate States of America.

In this paper, we will focus on the question of why North Carolina seceded, particularly when it did, and how these events played out in Chatham County. We will try to identify the views and votes of Chatham County citizens and their political representatives regarding slavery and secession.

### **Early References to Secession Made by Chatham County Political Leaders**

Before getting into the details of events immediately preceding secession, let's take a brief look at some of the earlier comments made by Chatham County political leaders regarding slavery and secession. All should be seen in the context of years of fighting over whether a particular territory or state should permit slavery. Compromises were hashed out by admitting states to the Union in pairs—Arkansas in 1846 and Michigan in 1837; Florida in 1845 and Iowa in 1846; Texas in 1845 and Wisconsin in 1848; Maine in 1820 and Missouri in 1821. The Maine-Missouri duo was part of the Missouri Compromise which drew a line to the Pacific Coast, above which slavery was not to exist.

“I love the Union...But dear as it is—solemn as is the thought that it may be severed, I hail dissolution with contentment, yes, even with satisfaction, if the bonds of the union are to be maintained only to expose us to the taunts of fanatics and hypocrites.”<sup>11</sup>

These are the words of U.S. Congressman **Abraham Watkins Venable**,<sup>12</sup> representing Chatham County as part of North Carolina's new fifth district (including also Caswell, Granville, Orange, and Person counties), warning his congressional colleagues in response to an April 1848, event in which abolitionists seized seventy-seven slaves in the District of Columbia and attempted to take them to freedom on the schooner Pearl. Although the slaves were soon recaptured, the anti-slavery movement used the publicity about the event to highlight the evils of slavery. The 1850 U.S. Census indicates that Venable was a Granville County lawyer with property valued at \$75 and no slaves. By 1860, he is listed as a farmer, with real and personal property valued at \$89,000, and was the owner of 43 slaves.<sup>13</sup> Venable would later become a member of the Confederate Congress.

The abolition of slavery or the slave trade in the District of Columbia, or the exclusion of slavery from any of the territories “will be an act not only of gross injustice and wrong, but the exercise of power contrary to the true meaning and spirit of the constitution, and never contemplated by the framers thereof....”

Nevertheless “...the people of North Carolina...are devotedly attached to the Union...they believe it is the duty of their public servants to discountenance whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned.”

The statements above are portions of resolutions passed by the North Carolina General Assembly of 1848-1849, in response to the attempted slave escape on the Pearl. During these deliberations, Chatham County was represented by **William Albright** in the state Senate and in the state House by **Daniel Hackney**, **James H. Headen**, and **Spence McClenahan**. According to official records of the votes, Chatham County's **Albright** and **McClenahan** were among the 13 negative votes on the pro-slavery resolution opposing the abolition of the slave trade in Washington D.C. and the exclusion of slavery in any of the territories. No votes were recorded for **Hackney** or **Headen**.<sup>14</sup> The pro-Union proclamation was more controversial, at least in the House, where 30 representatives voted against its pro-union sentiment. All of Chatham's representatives voted for this resolution.<sup>15</sup>

In 1850, **William Albright**, for whom Albright Township is named, was a farmer in Upper Regiment, with property valued at \$8435, including eight slaves. Albright owned some 3000-4000 acres in Chatham County and ran the largest distillery in this part of the state.<sup>16</sup> **Daniel Hackney** was a farmer with property valued at \$5000, including eight slaves; **James H. Headen**, a lawyer with property valued at \$500, including one slave (though he lived in his father's household, which included twenty-two slaves);<sup>17</sup> and **Spence McClenahan**, a Pittsboro physician and President of the Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company, with property valued at \$600 and no slaves listed in 1850.

Efforts to defuse the divisiveness of the slavery issue were also taking place in the U.S. Congress, resulting in a package of bills called the Congressional Compromise of 1850. Chatham's representative in the U.S. House was **Abraham Venable**, who declared that he considered the Compromise

“...degrading to the South and a most pusillanimous surrender of all that we claim or that the North ever demanded...but we believe the question is now narrowed down to this—compromise or disunion.”<sup>18</sup>

The Congressional Compromise of 1850 provided that:

- California was to be admitted as a free state. Chatham's Representative Venable voted against the measure.<sup>19</sup>
- In the Utah and New Mexico territories slavery would be decided by popular sovereignty (citizen's vote). No vote is recorded for Representative Venable.<sup>20</sup>
- The Fugitive Slave Act was strengthened by requiring all U.S. citizens to assist in the return of runaway slaves. Representative Venable voted in favor.<sup>21</sup>
- In the District of Columbia, slave trade would be abolished, but not slavery itself. No North Carolina Senator or Representative voted in favor of this bill.<sup>22</sup>

**Charles Manly**  
(1795 — 1848 )

Charles Manly was born in Chatham County in 1795, son of Basil Manly and Elizabeth Maulsby. After graduating with honors from the University of North Carolina in 1814 at the age of 19, Manly read law with John Haywood and was admitted to the bar in 1816.

Manly was elected reading clerk in the House of Commons in 1823 and was chief clerk for seventeen years. He also practiced law in Pittsboro. Soon after coming to the bar he was elected county attorney. He probably traveled from Raleigh to discharge these duties, likely staying with his sister Louisa Thompson. Manly was elected Governor of North Carolina in 1848, serving one term. He died in 1871 and is buried in the City Cemetery in Raleigh.

Source: [www.chathamhistory.org/lawoffice](http://www.chathamhistory.org/lawoffice)

North Carolina Governor **Charles Manly**, [biography at left] a Chathamite, speaking to the North Carolina Legislature, echoed Venable's sentiments when he declared that North Carolina rejoiced "at the amicable settlement of this distracting controversy," but asserted that North Carolina's "deep and abiding devotion" to the Union would not make it insensible to its rights. Those rights it would never surrender.<sup>23</sup>

The North Carolina Senate proposed several resolutions in response to the 1850 Compromise. These resolutions collectively argued that the State had the right to secede and that secession would be contingent on the strength of the enforcement of the provisions of the Compromise, particularly the fugitive slave law. State Senator **John H. Haughton** [see biography at right], a Chathamite lawyer and planter, opposed any discussion of secession as long as the Compromise legislation was enforced. Lack of agreement among the legislators concerning slavery issues resulted in the failure to pass any resolutions.<sup>24</sup>

**John Hooker Haughton**  
(1810 – 1876)

In 1837, John Hooker Haughton and his father moved to Chatham County, where his father had acquired large land holdings on the Deep River. Haughton practiced law in Chatham and surrounding counties for the next thirty years.

In 1844, Haughton was elected one of Chatham's representatives to the House of Commons, where he sponsored legislation supporting the incorporation of Pittsboro. He was elected to the state Senate in 1850. He was an outspoken supporter of the Union while at the same time a defender of slavery.

Haughton was director of the Deep River Manufacturing Co., and the Gulf Coal Mining Co., and was attorney for the Cape Fear and Deep River Navigation Company, of which he also became a large stockholder—subsequently losing much of his personal fortune.

In addition to his law practice, Haughton also was a planter, with plantations in Chatham and Jones counties. Chatham County census records show that in 1850 Haughton owned 47 slaves and property worth \$15,000. In 1860, his property was listed at \$100,000, including 18 slaves.

*From: Ancestry.com 1850 and 1860 Census records; Hadley, Horton and Strowd, Chatham County 1771-1971.*

## Lincoln's Campaign and North Carolina Responses

During the 1860 campaign, candidate Lincoln refrained from making any policy pronouncements regarding secession for fear they would be misconstrued in both North and South. The closest he came was a comment he made to an 1856 Republican convention in Illinois stating, "We say to the Southern disunionists, we won't go out of the Union and you shan't."<sup>25</sup>

However, Lincoln's speeches offer a view of his public views on slavery. Keenly aware of strong anti-black sentiment even in the North, he denied that he believed in social or political equality for blacks, but insisted that they were included in the Declaration's promise of equality in terms of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness. He acknowledged that while the expansion of slavery might be stopped, what to do about slavery where it then existed was an immensely difficult question. In a speech at Peoria, Illinois on October 16, 1854, he explained,

Before proceeding, let me say I think I have no prejudice against the Southern people. They are just what we would be in their situation. If slavery did not now exist among them, they would not introduce it. If it did now exist among us, we should not instantly give it up. This I believe of the masses north and south....When it is said that the institution exists, and that it is very difficult to get rid of it, in any satisfactory way, I can understand and appreciate the saying. I surely will not blame them for not doing what I should not know how to do myself. If all earthly power were given to me, I should not know what to do, as to the existing institution. My first impulse would be to free all the slaves, and send them to Liberia—to their own native land. [But believing this solution to be impractical and impossible, he continued] What then? Free them all, and keep them among us as underlings? Is it quite certain that this betters their condition? [Once freed, he wondered, could ex-slaves be made] politically and socially our equal? My own feelings will not admit of this; and if mine would, we well know that those of the great mass of white people will not....A universal feeling, whether well or ill-founded, cannot be safely disregarded. We cannot, then, make them equals. It does seem to me that systems of gradual emancipation might be adopted; but for their tardiness in this, I will not undertake to judge our brethren of the south.<sup>26</sup>

On June 26, 1857, in a speech at Springfield, Illinois, Lincoln noted that when the authors of the Declaration of Independence spoke of equality,

I think the authors of that notable instrument intended to include *all* men, but they did not intend to declare all men equal *in all respects*...They defined with tolerable distinctness, in what respects they did consider all men created equal—equal in certain inalienable rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.... They did not mean to assert the obvious untruth, that all were then actually enjoying that equality, nor yet, that they were about to confer it immediately upon them....They meant to set up a standard maxim for a free society...which should be...constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated...and augmenting the happiness and value of life of all colors everywhere.<sup>27</sup>

In a speech at Chicago on July 10, 1858, Lincoln suggests that if exceptions to the Declaration of Independence are made for Negroes, why should not another man come along and say that it does not apply to some other group—Germans, for example.<sup>28</sup> He continues, "So I say in relation to the principle that all men are created equal, let it be as nearly reached

as we can. If we cannot give freedom to every creature, let us do nothing that will impose slavery upon any other creature.”<sup>29</sup>

In North Carolina, responses to Lincoln’s campaign were mixed. The Democrats of Catawba, Lincoln, and Sampson counties declared that the election of a “Black Republican”<sup>30</sup> would be considered as evidence of continued aggression on the institutions of the South and sufficient cause for dissolution of the Union. In the 5<sup>th</sup> Congressional District (at that time composed of Chatham, Alamance, Caswell, Guilford, Moore, Montgomery, and Randolph Counties), Union sentiment was strong. The Moore County Democrats proclaimed their “attachment to the Union is as unswerving as ever.”<sup>31</sup> Chathamite **John H. Haughton** was a delegate to the conference of the Constitutional Union Party in Baltimore where John Bell of Tennessee was nominated for president. Subsequently Haughton gave a speech in support of Bell and “against the abominal [*sic*] heresy of secession.”<sup>32</sup>

### **Lincoln’s Election**

Lincoln had three competitors in the 1860 presidential contest. John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky was the candidate of the Southern Democrats, who described themselves as the defenders of Southern rights and the Constitution, neither of which should be sacrificed in order to preserve the Union. Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, the creator of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, was the candidate of the Northern Democrats, whose policy was that the Union should be preserved and the decision on slavery made by popular sovereignty—i.e., by popular vote—on a state by state basis. John Bell of Tennessee was the candidate of the new Constitutional Union Party (former Southern Whigs, American, and Opposition Party members), which argued that the survival of the Union was paramount and everything else—including slavery—should be compromised to preserve it. The newly formed Republican Party, which had almost no presence in the South but which had substantial strength in the North, opposed the expansion of slavery into the territories. Its candidate was Abraham Lincoln, for whom no ballots were cast in North Carolina because the Republican Party made no effort to compete in the state.

Throughout much of the 19th century, Americans cast their votes using ballots printed by the individual political parties. The voter obtained a ballot for the party of his choice and took it to the polling place. Lincoln won the election nationwide without any assistance from Southern voters, garnering 180 of 303 (59% of) electoral college votes, even though he received only 40% of the popular vote. In North Carolina the election results were as follows: Breckinridge 50.4%, Bell 46.7%, and Douglas 2.8%. Most pro-secession voters supported Breckinridge. If we consider that the combined Bell and Douglas pro-union votes equal the Breckinridge pro-secession votes, it is clear that North Carolina voters were pretty well divided on the issue of secession.<sup>33</sup>

In Chatham County, the election results were Bell 54.9%, Breckinridge 34.1%, and Douglas 11%. The combined Bell and Douglas votes suggest that, though opinion was divided, about two-thirds of Chatham County voters favored preserving the Union and a majority was



willing to limit or compromise slavery for the sake of preserving the Union. [Map A shows the results of the presidential election by county in North Carolina.]

### Responses in North Carolina to Lincoln's Election

Following Lincoln's election, both of North Carolina's Senators, Thomas Bragg and Thomas L. Clingman, supported secession. On the other hand, three of the state's eight Congressmen<sup>34</sup> favored union—W. N. W. Smith, Zebulon B. Vance, and Chatham County's representative, **John Gilmer** [see biography at right].

Governor John W. Ellis, feeling that the rights of the South were seriously threatened by the incoming Republican administration, recommended to the General Assembly: (1) that North Carolina send delegates to a conference of all Southern states, (2) that a convention of the people of the state be called, and (3) that the state's military defense be strengthened in the formation of a corps of ten thousand volunteers. Opposing resolutions as well as majority and minority reports were introduced, suggesting much disagreement. For example, some argued that it was the duty of North Carolina to defend its right in the Union; that the election of Lincoln was not a sufficient cause for a dissolution of the Union; or that North Carolina had the right to withdraw from the Union whenever a majority of its citizens deemed such action necessary for the protection of its rights. The legislature recessed for Christmas holidays without reaching any agreement.<sup>35</sup> During this tumultuous session, Chatham County was represented by **W. G. Harris**<sup>36</sup> in the state Senate and in the N.C. House by **Turner Bynum, Robert N. Green,** and **William P. Taylor**. (These men are introduced on page 1 of this document).

Reaction among ordinary citizens was also divided. The election of Lincoln prompted secessionists to launch a series of statewide local meetings. The movement gained momentum

#### John Adams Gilmer (1805 - 1868)

John Adams Gilmer was born in Guilford County, N.C., the son of a farmer and wheelwright. As a child, he worked on his father's farm and attended local schools.

After teaching school in Laurel County, SC from 1826 until 1829, Gilmer returned to Greensboro to study law. He married Juliana Paisley in 1823, the same year that he was admitted to the bar, and built up a lucrative law practice. In the 1860 census, was listed as a lawyer and farmer, owning fifty-three slaves and property worth \$112,000.

Gilmer held several local offices, and in 1846 was elected to represent Guilford County in the North Carolina Senate—a position he held for ten years. As a state senator, Gilmer supported improvements in the public schools, the establishment of an asylum for the insane, and expansion of the North Carolina Railroad.

Gilmer ran for governor against incumbent Democrat Thomas Bragg in 1856, but was badly beaten. Apparently still popular in his district, which included Chatham, Gilmer was elected to the U. S. House of Representatives in 1857 and 1859. He became a leader of the Southern unionists in Congress, where he argued persistently and eloquently for moderation, and worked valiantly to save the Union.

After Fort Sumter was fired upon, Gilmer was elected as a delegate to the North Carolina secession convention, where he faced the dilemma of all Southern unionists. His son was already in Confederate uniform when Gilmer voted with the majority for disunion.

Subsequently, Gilmer took little part in public affairs until 1863, when he was elected to the Confederate Congress, where he argued that honor required that North Carolina continue fighting as long as feasible.

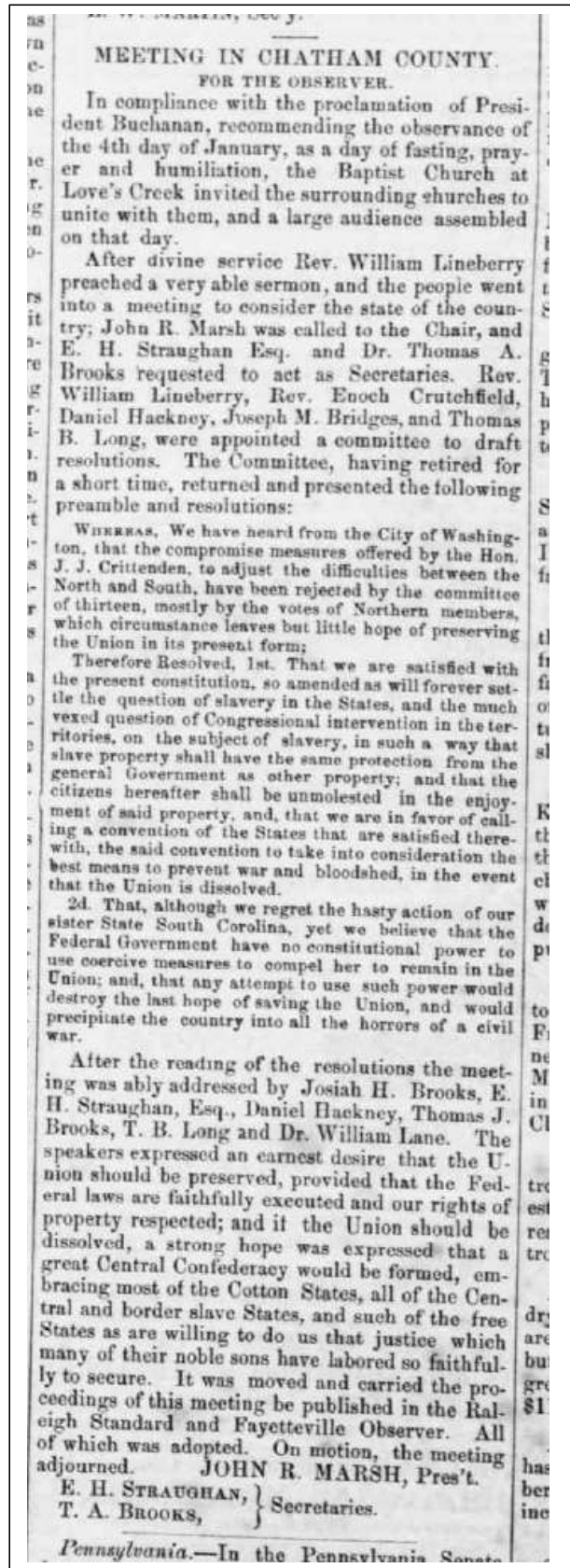
Gilmer received a presidential pardon in late 1865.

From: American National Biography Online via (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/political-graveyard/message/3858>).

when South Carolina seceded on December 20, 1860. To counter the secessionist zeal, unionists also convened. Between November 1860 and February 1861, secession meetings were held in at least twenty-one counties, and union meetings in at least thirty counties. In Chatham County, union meetings were held, with **John H. Haughton** being among the most active participants.<sup>37</sup>

**John Gilmer**, Chatham County's Congressman in the U.S. House, wrote President-elect Lincoln a letter on December 10, 1860, urging him to disavow any intention of interfering with slavery where it already existed. Lincoln responded on December 15 assuring Gilmer he would not interfere with Southern slaves. However, Lincoln continued, "You think slavery is *right* and ought to be extended; while we think it is *wrong* and ought to be restricted. That I suppose is the rub. It certainly is the only substantial difference between us." Gilmer made another appeal on December 20. He warned Lincoln that he thought Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Mississippi were sure to join South Carolina in the "stampede" to get out of the Union. But, he suggested, Lincoln might confine the secession contagion to these Deep-South states by taking a flexible position on issue of slavery in the territories and by endorsing a constitutional amendment reaffirming that the federal government could not interfere with slavery in the states where it then existed.<sup>38</sup>

South Carolina did secede on December 20. In response, President James Buchanan designated Friday, January 4, 1861 as a day to be "set apart for fasting, humiliation, and prayer throughout the nation." Apparently, many citizens, both in the North and South, heeded this call. Chatham County was no exception. On January 17, *The Fayetteville Observer* published the proceedings of one such meeting, which provides a rare window



on the sentiments of Chatham citizens of the time. Held at the Baptist Church at Love's Creek, which had "invited surrounding churches to unite with them," the meeting drew a large audience, with many notable Chatham citizens in attendance.<sup>39</sup> The speakers "expressed an earnest desire that the Union should be preserved, provided that the Federal laws are faithfully executed and our rights of property respected; and if the Union should be dissolved, a strong hope was expressed that a great Central Confederacy would be formed..." [See box on previous page and transcription at end of this paper for the entire contents of the article.]

On the 26<sup>th</sup> Federal troops moved from Fort Moultrie to Fort Sumter in Charlestown Bay. On the 29<sup>th</sup> **John Gilmer** again wrote to Lincoln, urging him to pursue a conservative Southern policy, saying, "You may divide from you many party friends, but by the preservation of peace of the country you will nationalize yourself and your party."<sup>40</sup>

### **Vance's Central Confederacy**

About this time, North Carolina Congressman **Zebulon Vance** wrote that he had little hope of maintaining the existing Union; but that union with the Lower South would be suicidal to the interest of the states of the Upper South such as North Carolina. Instead, he was making plans for a Central Confederacy.<sup>41</sup> This statement may seem a bit farfetched, except for the fact that the economic conditions in the Upper South and Lower South were diverging. In some ways, the Upper South was becoming more like the North and less like the Lower South.

In the Upper South, which included Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, North Carolina, Kentucky, Arkansas, Missouri, and Tennessee, the fertility of the soil had been depleted on many large, slave-based tobacco plantations and farms. Farmers began to diversify the crops they planted—increasing production of grains, corn, potatoes, and hogs. These crops and livestock were produced on smaller farms not requiring a large number of slaves. As a result, many slaves from these states were sold to large plantations in the Lower South where the dominant crops were cotton, rice, and sugar-cane—all of which were most efficiently produced on large plantations using large numbers of slaves.<sup>42</sup>

At the same time that the agriculture of the Border South was becoming less slave-dependent, the supply of slaves in the Lower South was not keeping up with demand. Thousands of acres of land were added to agricultural production in the Lower South in the 1850s. The 1808 ban on importation of slaves meant that the increase in the slave population had to rely on births to slaves. With the increased demand, the price of slaves nearly doubled between 1850 and 1860. At the higher price, slaves became more concentrated in the hands of larger, wealthier slaveholders in both the Upper and Lower South.<sup>43</sup>

The diverging cultures between the Upper and Lower South are reflected in the Upper South's comparative reluctance to embrace secession. Hence, we find **John Gilmer** and colleagues from Virginia pleading for compromise in what appears to be the last hour. The order of secession of what would become the Confederate states is also reflective of this

division of interests. Yet, in spite of the reluctance of many North Carolinians to follow the path of the Lower South, the state's legislature was preparing for secession.

On January 8, 1861, the state legislature passed a bill to appropriate \$300,000 for the purchase of arms and munitions of war and to set up a military commission to advise the governor on expenditures. There were only three dissenting votes in the state Senate, none of which represented Chatham County. Disregarding the disapproval of Governor Ellis, a group of citizens of Wilmington and Smithville seized Fort Caswell on the Cape Fear River.<sup>44</sup>

### **Lower-South States Secede**

On the 9<sup>th</sup>, the state of Mississippi seceded. On the 10<sup>th</sup>, South Carolina forces fired on a federal ship, the Star of the West, as it attempted to resupply Fort Sumter. A cascade of seceding states (all from the Lower South) followed: Florida (10<sup>th</sup>), Alabama (11<sup>th</sup>), Georgia (19<sup>th</sup>), Louisiana (29<sup>th</sup>), and Texas (February 1).

### **N. C. Referendum on a Secession Convention**

On January 29, 1861, the North Carolina General Assembly called for a referendum to be held on February 28 to address the question of whether a state convention should be called to consider the issue of secession. The Act states:

Whereas, the present perilous condition of the country demands ... that the sovereign people of this State should assemble in Convention to effect an honorable adjustment of existing difficulties whereby the Federal Union is endangered, or otherwise preserve the honor and promote the interests of North Carolina; and whereas, this General Assembly, on matters of such grave import, involving the relation of North Carolina to her sisters in the Confederacy, is reluctant to adopt any settled policy without the sense of the people to whom, under our governance, all sovereignty resides, being first ascertained.<sup>45</sup>

At the same time that voters were to cast their votes on whether to hold a secession convention, they were also to elect delegates to the potential Convention. Each county was to elect a number of delegates equal to the number of representatives the county had in the state House. For Chatham County, that number was three. The referendum bill passed the state Senate 37 to 9 and the House 86 to 27. Differences in the Senate and House bills were settled when the House approved a revised bill 81 to 24. In yet another example of the division of opinion in the county, Chatham County's Senator Harris and Representative Bynum supported the bill, while Representative Green opposed it, and Representative Taylor did not vote.<sup>46</sup>

After the passage of the state referendum bill, the legislature passed laws (1) making all white males ages 18-45 liable for military service, (2) organizing a volunteer corps of 10,000 men with the Governor authorized to increase the number by 20,000 in case of invasion, (3)

imposing the death penalty upon persons convicted of circulating any publication intended to cause slaves to become discontent with bondage or inciting slaves or free negroes a spirit of rebellion, (4) prohibiting free negroes from owning arms or from having control of slaves, and (5) forbidding the emancipation of slaves by will.<sup>47</sup>

With the passage of the referendum bill, unionists as well as secessionists began active campaigns to obtain control of the convention. In Chatham, county meetings were held opposing a convention.<sup>48</sup> Chatham's Congressman **John Gilmer** distributed over 100,000 copies of anti-secession speeches made by members of Congress. **John Manning, Jr.** of Chatham County had great influence with the voters, arguing that a vote against the convention would be a pro-union vote.<sup>49</sup>

On February 28, the state referendum was held. Those eligible to vote were white male taxpayers. Of the almost 95,000 who voted on the question of whether to call a secession convention, a bare majority—50.5%—voted “no.”<sup>50</sup> While showing the divided opinion on secession in the state, this vote under-represents unionist sentiment since some voters would have voted for the convention *and* for union delegates. Of the 120 delegates chosen, 81 (67%) were unionists and 39 were secessionists. Interestingly, analysis shows that the percentage of slaves in a county did a pretty good job of predicting the political position of its chosen delegates, but was not true for the largest slave-holding counties. Half of the largest slave-holding counties voted Union.<sup>51</sup> [See Maps B and C for distribution of slaves by county and results of the secession convention election in North Carolina counties.] It is important to note that unionists came in two forms: union “as it was”—with slavery, and union “as it might be”—without slavery. *So unionism should not be equated with abolitionism.*

In Chatham and surrounding counties, voters overwhelming voted “no” to the question of whether there should be a secession convention: Chatham County 86%, Alamance County 81%, Randolph County 98%.<sup>52</sup> Chatham elected three union delegates: **W. A. Rives**—presumably, this is William Rives, aged 56 in 1860, a farmer with property valued at \$28,000, including 29 slaves; **Leonidus J. Merritt**, a 29-year-old attorney, introduced on page 3 of this document as a delegate to the subsequent secession convention; and **N. Clegg**—probably Nathaniel Clegg, a 59-year-old farmer with property valued at \$21,000, including 13 slaves. The two unsuccessful disunion candidates were **W. G. Harris** (see page 1 of this document for information) and **J. A. Moore**—presumably John Moore, a farmer with property valued at \$11,700, including 10 slaves.<sup>53</sup>

### **Unsuccessful Last-Minute Compromises Proposed Regarding Slavery in the Territories**

At the same time that North Carolina was preparing for the referendum on its Secession Convention, several efforts were being made by committees both in the U.S. Congress and Virginia Legislature proposing compromise solutions to the slavery issue. (The final compromise effort, sponsored by the Virginia Legislature, the “Peace Conference” with five N.C. delegates, met on February 4—at the same time men were organizing the Confederate States of America in Montgomery, Alabama.) Each of these efforts attempted to craft

compromises that might keep the Upper-South slave states in the Union, and that might even attract some Lower-South states back to the Union, while at the same time would be acceptable to Republicans in the North. The focus of the compromises was the protection of slave states from the increasing political power of the free states that would result from the admission of additional free states to the Union.

The committee members involved in these efforts included many Upper-South politicians favoring both slavery and union, including **John Gilmer**, who made an appeal for compromise and preservation of the Union.<sup>54</sup> One reporter had never seen “such an effort as was produced” by Gilmer’s “appeal to the Republican side to come forward and save the Union men of the Border States.” This “honest appeal of a great heart” was judged the “most effective” speech of the session and “dozens of Republican and Southern Union men rushed forward to congratulate him.”<sup>55</sup>

Even though some of the proposed compromise bills were approved by a committee, they were rejected by enough anti-slavery members of Congress that they ultimately failed—many by very close votes. One of the longest-surviving bills was a proposed Constitutional amendment stating that governments would not interfere with slavery in the current territories south of the parallel 36° 30’, a flip-side version of the Missouri Compromise. An earlier version of the bill would have required Congress to “*protect*” slavery, not just “*not interfere*” with it. The difference was emphasized by Gilmer when he argued that the more extreme “protection” demand was “a useless and foolish abstraction” by disunionists who were being unreasonable, as most of the southwest territories were not conducive to slave-based agriculture.<sup>56</sup>

Gilmer had been offered an appointment in Lincoln’s cabinet, but he wrote Lincoln that his acceptance of the offer was contingent on Lincoln’s acceptance of the territories compromise. Lincoln failed to agree, and Gilmer refused the cabinet offer. Congress did pass a bill organizing three western territories—Dakota, Colorado, and Nevada—where slavery was to be decided by popular sovereignty; but a bill establishing statehood for New Mexico (where Chathamite **Abraham Rencher** was Territorial Governor) was tabled. The Southern unionists were pleased that Congress rejected a “force bill” authorizing the president to use military force against secessionists.<sup>57</sup> However, the critical “not interfere” territories bill failed to be acted on before Congress recessed and then events of war made the question moot.

Just prior to the recess, the U.S. House voted to reconsider its action concerning the bill that created a constitutional amendment protecting slavery in the states where it was currently legal. By a bare two-thirds majority needed to pass the proposed 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, it did so by a vote of 133 to 65, with Gilmer voting with the majority.<sup>58</sup> The Senate concurred with an equally close vote of 24 to 12.<sup>59</sup> In a letter to Stephen Douglas on March 8, Gilmer wrote that he thought Congress’s “perpetual guaranty against Congressional interference with Slavery in the States” had helped to restore a “plain common sense view of things” for deluded Southerners. “What more,” he asked, “does any reasonable Southern man expect or desire?”<sup>60</sup> However, even this compromise was not to be implemented, as the war was about to interfere with states’ ratification of the amendment. Things were happening too fast. The

passage of the amendment had occurred four days after the North Carolina vote on the secession conference and only two days before Lincoln’s inaugural address.

### Lincoln’s Inaugural Address

On March 4, 1861 Lincoln gave his inaugural address, in which he made several important points for the issue at hand. First, Lincoln said that he would not interfere with slavery where it existed, would not fail to enforce the fugitive slave law, nor would he use political patronage to promote an anti-slavery agenda.

*“I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists.”*

*“No person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another, shall in consequence of any law or regulation therein be discharged from such service or labor; but shall be delivered up on claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due.”*

*“Where hostility to the United States in any interior locality shall be so great and universal as to prevent competent resident citizens from holding the Federal offices, there will be no attempt to force obnoxious strangers among the people for that object.”*

*“The power confided to me will be used to hold, occupy, and possess the property and places belonging to the Government and to collect the duties and imposts.”*

*“The mails, unless repelled, will continue to be furnished in all parts of the Union.”*

*“No State...can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void, and that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances... [It is] the declared purpose of the Union that it will constitutionally defend and maintain itself...In doing this there needs to be no bloodshed or violence, and there shall be none unless it be forced upon the national authority.”*

Second, Lincoln said that he would continue to collect duties and fees due the federal government and see that the mails continued. He declared that no state could lawfully leave the Union and promised to defend the Union from any state’s attempt to leave it.

*“Perpetuity is implied, if not expressed, in the fundamental law of all national governments. It is safe to assert that no government proper ever had a provision in its organic law for its own termination...it is impossible to destroy it except by some action not provided for in the instrument [our National Constitution] itself.”*

He argued that the Constitution did not allow for secession.<sup>61</sup>

And, finally, he reasoned that the responsibility for bringing war to the country lay with the secessionists.

*“In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the Government, while I shall have the most solemn one to ‘preserve, protect, and defend it.’”*

The following day, in an address in Wilmington, N.C., Governor Ellis pointed to the failure of compromise, the perceived coerciveness of Lincoln's inaugural address, and "the inevitable course of things leading North Carolina to join her fate with her sisters of the South."<sup>62</sup> **John Gilmer's** frantic effort to save the Union continued. Between March 7 and March 12, Gilmer wrote four letters to Secretary of State William Henry Seward (a supporter of unionists in the Border States) proposing what became known as the "hands-off policy." He advised Seward to prevail upon the administration to adopt a policy which would strengthen the unionists in the Border States. The radicals, he said, desired a collision of arms between federal and state troops in one of the seceded states and he feared that if this occurred, the Union men would "be swept away in a torrent of madness."<sup>63</sup> Gilmer argued that the Union could be saved by the federal government's voluntarily relinquishing the two Deep-South coastal forts that it controlled—Fort Pickens, offshore from Pensacola, Florida, and Fort Sumter, in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina. "The only thing now that gives the secessionist the advantage ... is the cry of coercion—that the whipping of a slave state, is the whipping of slavery." An interval of time should be allowed to pass, he argued,—perhaps a year or two—to allow new, strongly pro-union leadership to take power in the Upper South.<sup>64</sup>

On March 22, a convention of the newly formed Southern Rights or States' Rights Party was held in Goldsboro, advocating secession and membership in the Confederacy. On April 3, North Carolina's U.S. Senators Thomas Clingman and Thomas Bragg urged the state's secession.<sup>65</sup>

On April 8, with the support of his cabinet—excepting Seward, who argued for protecting Fort Pickens but surrendering Fort Sumter, and Calib Smith, Secretary of the Interior—Lincoln announced that he was sending provisions to Forts Sumter and Pickens, but that he would not fire the first shot.<sup>66</sup>

On April 12, Gilmer posted a letter to Seward, saying, "I am so deeply distressed that my heart seems to melt within me ... If what I hear is true that we are to have fighting at Sumter and Pickens, it is what the disunionists have most courted, and I seriously apprehend that it will instantly drive the whole South into secession."<sup>67</sup> On the same day, Fort Sumter was fired on.

### **Lincoln Calls for Troops**

On April 15, Lincoln called for 75,000 troops to "coerce" the seceding states and North Carolina was asked to furnish two regiments. Governor Ellis responded,

I have to say in reply that I regard a levy of troops for the purpose of subjugating the states of the South, as in violation of the Constitution and a usurpation of power. I can be no party to this wicked violation of the laws of the country, and to this war upon the liberties of a free people. You can get no troops from North Carolina.



Ellis immediately ordered the seizing of Forts Macon, Caswell, and Johnson, and, on the 17<sup>th</sup> called for the seizure of the federal arsenal at Fayetteville.<sup>68</sup>

On April 17, Virginia's convention voted (88 to 55) to secede on condition of ratification by a statewide referendum. At that moment North Carolina became a state that in all probability would share both its Southern and Northern borders with Confederate states—states that at the time were its most important commercial partners.

On April 21, **John Gilmer** wrote to Seward that the firing on Fort Sumter had not destroyed Union sentiments in his region, but that Lincoln's request for troops had extinguished all hopes. Gilmer declared that if he had thought the administration intended such a policy he "would have returned to Washington, and have gone daily to my knees...to avert that shedding of human blood which now seems inevitable...All hope is now extinguished. The Administration, *but doubtless inadvertently*, has done the very thing which the disunionists most desired."<sup>69</sup> The legislative war of words had been lost and the war of swords and guns would begin.

## Conclusion

This paper began by describing the events of May 1861 and the Chatham County men who participated in them: N.C. Governor Ellis's call for a constitutional convention to consider secession and to prepare for war, the state legislature's response, the delegates to the secession convention, and North Carolina's ultimate secession from the Union.

The events recorded here suggest that the men who represented Chatham County during these turbulent times overwhelmingly owned slaves themselves, voted for legislation protecting slave labor, and supported a secession ordinance (but also unsuccessfully voted that it be subject to a public referendum). In contrast, the great majority of Chatham County voters of the time did not own slaves, supported pro-union presidential candidates, did not support the call for a secession convention, and supported convention delegates who were pro-union.

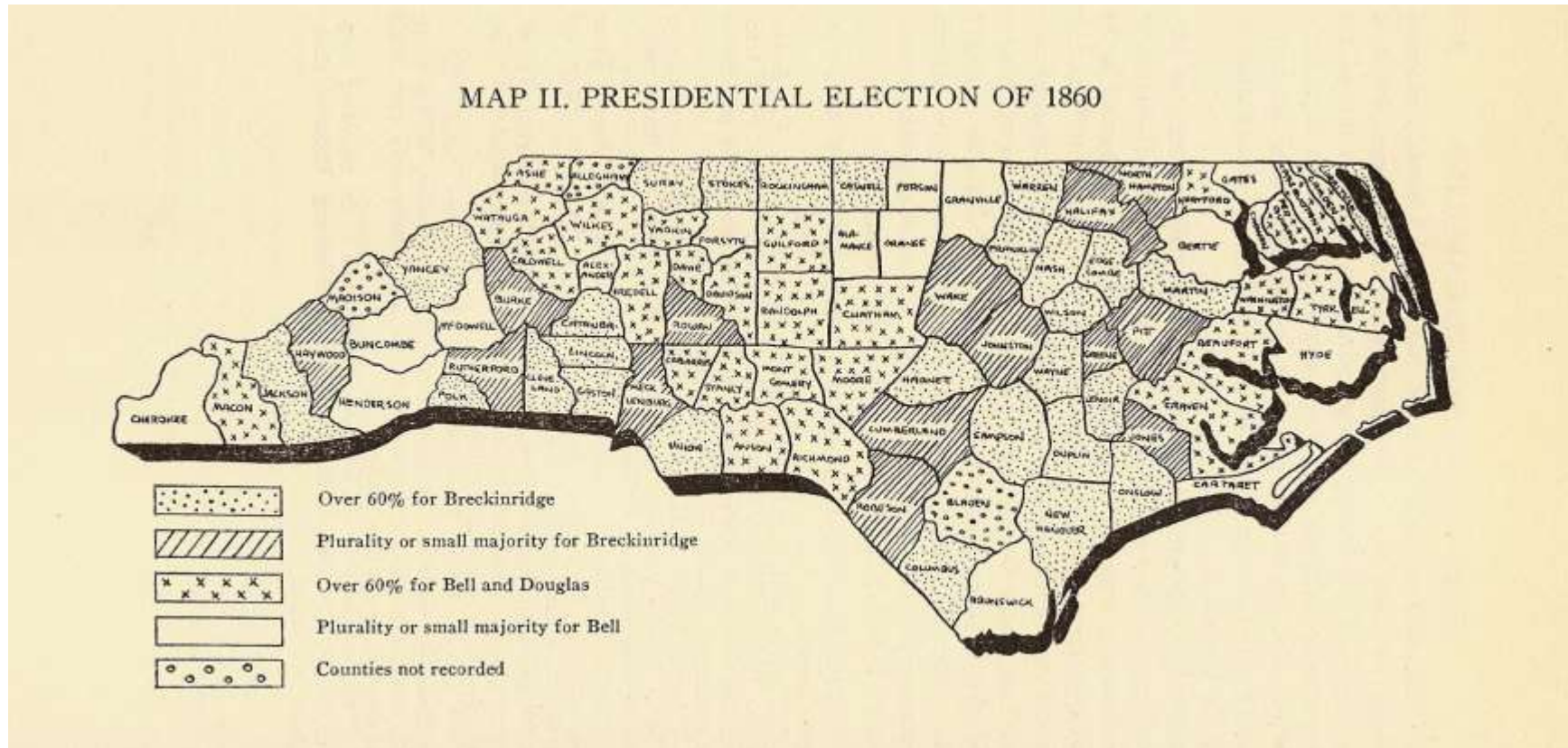
Once North Carolina joined the Confederacy, many who had been strong unionists turned their efforts to supporting their state. **John Gilmer**, who had fought long and hard in Congress to save the Union is reported to have said of North Carolina, "She went out of the old Union reluctantly; she went into the new Confederacy with enthusiasm."<sup>70</sup>

In Chatham County, where division of opinion on secession long been the rule, nearly 2,000 men would eventually join the Confederate troops. This number would include some of the men mentioned in this paper, and the sons of others. The great majority, however, would be men whose names do not appear in history books or official documents. Nearly one-fifth of Chatham's troops would die in battle or succumb to wounds or disease. Chatham would organize eleven full companies and have heavy enlistments in units in other counties.<sup>71</sup>

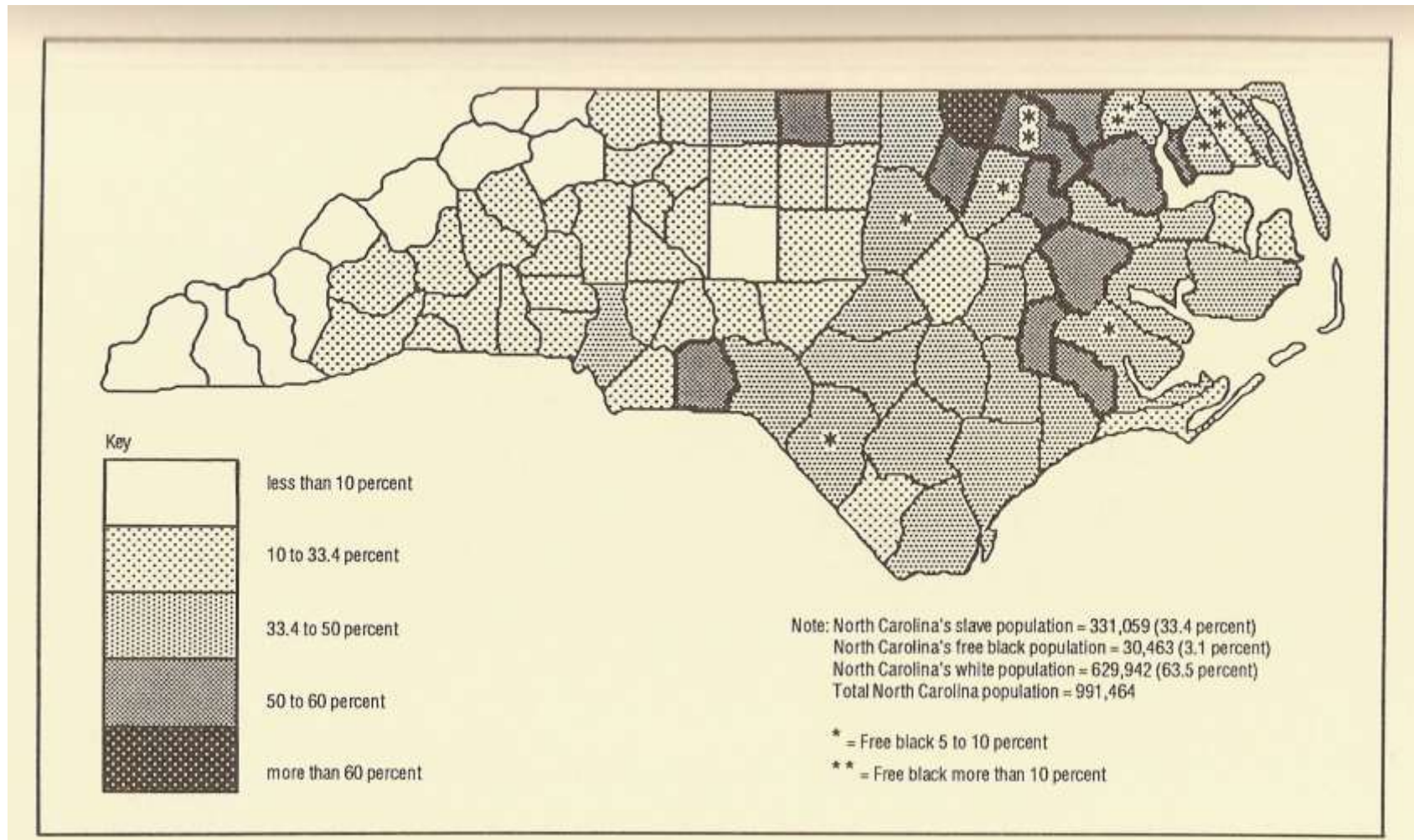
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And so the Civil War commenced. One must wonder “what if...” one of the outcomes in the twisted and torturous path had been different. Could compromise have been reached? What if there had been sufficient time to ratify the constitutional amendment protecting slavery in the states where it was currently legal? What if there had been no incident at Fort Sumter, or if the reaction of either the South or the North to that incident had been different? Could the war have been averted and the 625,000 deaths avoided? Perhaps not, as the war was going to have to settle not only the question of slavery but also of secession.

Map A: Presidential Election of 1860 in North Carolina by County  
From Joseph Carlyle Sitterson, *The Secession Movement in North Carolina*, UNC Press, 1939, p. 176.

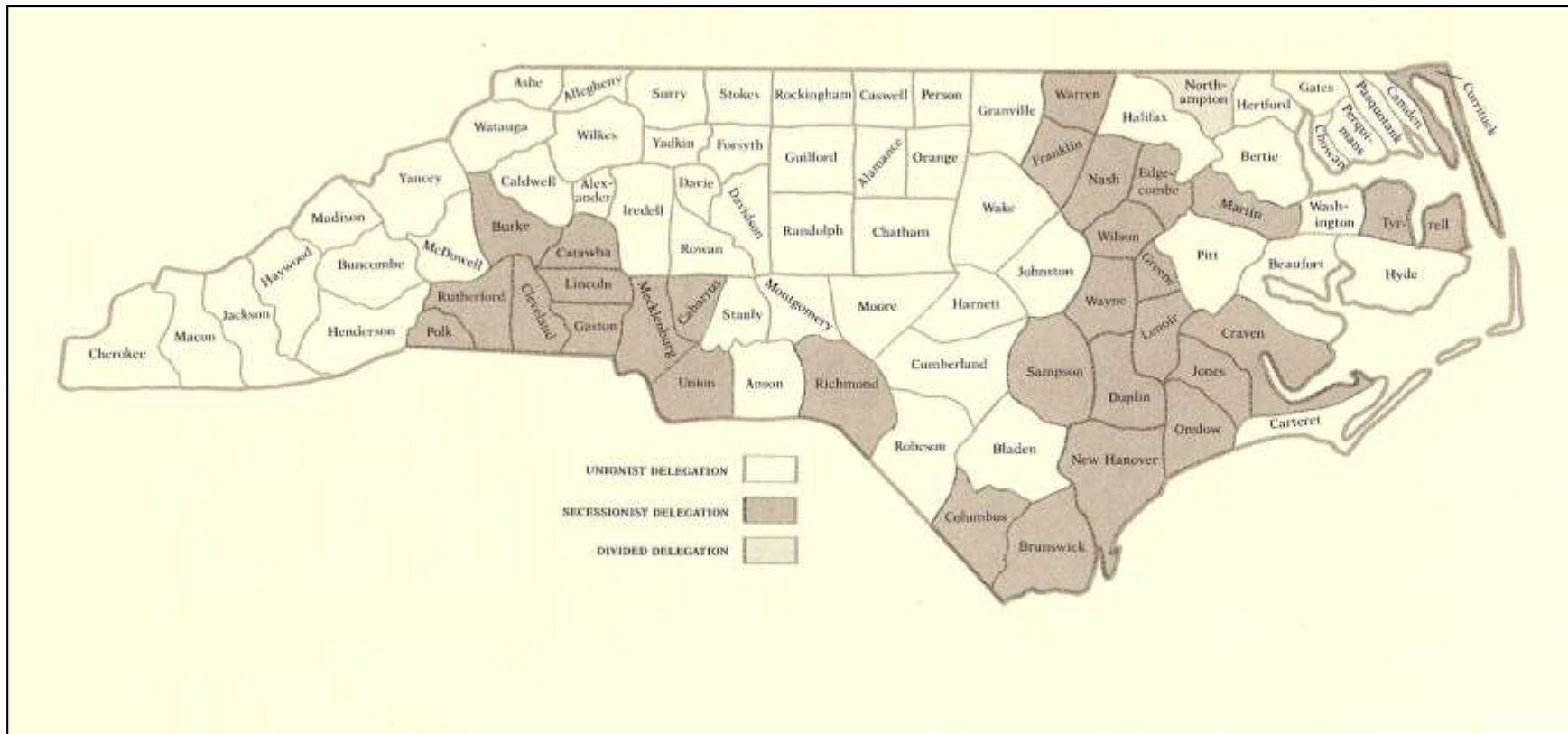


Map B: Percentage of Slaves in North Carolina's Population by County in 1860. From: Daniel W. Crofts, *Reluctant Confederates*, UNC Press, 1989, p. 41.



Map C: The Secession Convention Election of February 1861 by North Carolina County

From: Marc W. Kruman. *Parties and Politics in North Carolina, 1836-1865*, LSU Press, 1983, p. 274.



Transcription of 17 Jan 1861 article from *The Fayetteville Observer*.

MEETING IN CHATHAM COUNTY  
FOR THE OBSERVER

In compliance with the proclamation of President Buchanan, recommending the observance of the 4<sup>th</sup> day of January, as a day of fasting, prayer and humiliation, the Baptist Church at Love's Creek invited the surrounding churches to unite with them, and a large audience assembled on that day.

After divine service Rev. William Lineberry preached a very able sermon, and the people went into a meeting to consider the state of the county; John R. Marsh was called to the Chair, and E. H. Straughan, Esq. and Dr. Thomas A. Brooks requested to act as Secretaries. Rev. William Lineberry, Rev. Enoch Crutchfield, Daniel Hackney, Joseph M. Bridges, and Thomas B. Long, were appointed a committee to draft resolutions. The Committee, having retired for a short time, returned and presented the following preamble and resolutions:

Whereas, We have heard from the City of Washington that the compromise measures offered by the Hon. J. J. Crittenden, to adjust the difficulties between the North and South, have been rejected by the committee of thirteen, mostly by the votes of Northern members, which circumstance leaves but little hope of preserving the Union in its present form;

Therefore Resolved, 1<sup>st</sup>. That we are satisfied with the present constitution, so amended as will forever settle the question of slavery in the States, and the much vexed question of Congressional intervention in the territories, on the subject of slavery, in such a way that slave property shall have the same protection from the general Government as other property; and that the citizens hereafter shall be unmolested in the enjoyment of said property, and, that we are in favor of calling a convention of the States that are satisfied therewith, the said convention to take into consideration the best means to prevent war and bloodshed, in the event that the Union is dissolved.

2<sup>nd</sup>. That, although we regret the hasty action of our sister State South Carolina, yet we believe that the Federal Government have no constitutional power to use coercive measures to compel her to remain in the Union; and, that any attempt to use such power would destroy the last hope of saving the Union, and would precipitate the country into all the horrors of a civil war.

After the reading of the resolutions the meeting was ably addressed by Josiah H. Brooks, E. H. Straughan, Esq., Daniel Hackney, Thomas J. Brooks, T. B. Long and Dr. William Lane. The speakers expressed an earnest desire that the Union should be preserved, provided that the Federal laws are faithfully executed and our rights of property respected; and if the Union should be dissolved, a strong hope was expressed that a great Central Confederacy would be formed, embracing most of the Cotton States, all of the Central and border slave States, and such of the free States as are willing to do us that justice which many of their noble sons have labored so faithfully to secure. It was moved and carried the proceedings of this meeting be published in the Raleigh Standard and the Fayetteville Observer. All of which was adopted. On motion the meeting adjourned.

John R. Marsh, Pres't.

E.H. Straughan, T.A. Brooks Secretaries

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<sup>1</sup> Information on age, occupation, residence, slave-ownership, and economic worth was obtained from the 1860 Census records for Chatham County, N.C. on Ancestry.com.

<sup>2</sup> In the 1860-61 Journal of the Senate of North Carolina, p.4, the Senator from Chatham, representing the 32<sup>nd</sup> district, is "W. J. Harris." That is the only location in the Journals for both of Harris's terms where his initials are provided. In John L. Cheney, Jr., *North Carolina Government 1585-1979*, 1981, p. 768, the initials for Senator Harris are given as "W. S." Neither W. J. nor W. S. Harris can be found in the 1860 Chatham census, and residence in the county was a requirement for holding office. Neither appears in Chatham County deeds of the time period. However, Chatham resident **W. G. Harris** would seem a likely candidate for the N.C. Senate in 1860. W. G. Harris was found on both deeds and censuses, and he met the prevailing property ownership qualifications for running for Senate.

<sup>3</sup> Kruman, pp. 47-50.

<sup>4</sup> Sitterson, p. 243.

<sup>5</sup> Bolton, pp.155-156.

<sup>6</sup> Colonel John Randolph Lane Society, Roster of Confederate Veterans from Chatham County, North Carolina, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> Information about age, occupation, residence, and economic worth was obtained from the 1860 Census for Chatham County, N.C. on Ancestry.com.

<sup>8</sup> From death notice in Standard of Raleigh 9 July 1862, <http://files.usgwarchives.net/nc/chatham/military/civilwar/other/merritt62mt.txt>  
Also see, [Lieut Leonidas John Merritt \(1830 - 1862\) - Find A Grave Memorial](#) for more information on Leonidas J. Merritt.

<sup>9</sup> In a matter unrelated to secession and war, a second amendment altered the religious test for state office by changing the wording requiring belief in the "truth of the Christian religion" to "divine authority of both the Old and New Testaments," thereby formally including Jews.



<sup>10</sup> From [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederate\\_States\\_of\\_America](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confederate_States_of_America).

<sup>11</sup> Sitterson, p. 42.

<sup>12</sup> Venable would later be a presidential elector on the Democratic ticket of Breckinridge and Lane in 1860 and a delegate from the State of North Carolina to the Provisional Confederate Congress in 1861.; member of the house of representatives of the Confederate Congress 1862-1864.

<sup>13</sup> From 1850 and 1860 census data for Granville County, NC. Ancestry.com.

<sup>14</sup> Votes recorded in the Journals of the Senate and House of Commons of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, 1848-1849 session, pp. 222, 734. [www.archive.org]

<sup>15</sup> Votes recorded in the Journals of the Senate and House of Commons of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, 1848-1849 session, pp. 262, 731. [www.archive.org]

<sup>16</sup> Hadley, et al. p.403. Information on occupation, property value and slaves from the 1850 federal census for Chatham County on Ancestry.com.

<sup>17</sup> Headen would later be a delegate representing Chatham at North Carolina's secession convention.

<sup>18</sup> Sitterson, pp. 69-71.

<sup>19</sup> A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875 [Annals of Congress](#), House of Representatives, 31st Congress, 1st Session [Library of Congress memory.loc. gov]. Page 1424 of the House Journal. Vote taken on September 8, 1850.

<sup>20</sup> A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875 [Annals of Congress](#), House of Representatives, 31st Congress, 1st Session [Library of Congress memory.loc. gov]. Page 1426 of the House Journal. Vote taken on September 8, 1850.

<sup>21</sup> A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875 [Annals of Congress](#), House of Representatives, 31st Congress, 1st Session [Library of Congress memory.loc. gov]. Page 1452 of the House Journal. Vote taken on September 12, 1850.

<sup>22</sup> A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875 [Annals of Congress](#), House of Representatives, 31st Congress, 1st Session [Library of Congress memory.loc. gov]. Page 1489 of the House Journal. Vote taken on September 17, 1850.

<sup>23</sup> Sitterson, p. 74.

<sup>24</sup> Sitterson, pp. 74-80.

<sup>25</sup> Fehrenbacher, Don E. and Virginia, *Recollecting Words of Abraham Lincoln*, p. 277.

<sup>26</sup> Cuomo, pp. 67-68.

<sup>27</sup> Cuomo, pp. 90-91.

<sup>28</sup> In other writings, Lincoln suggests that the Know Nothing Party might exclude from the protections of the Bill of Rights both foreigners and Catholics. Cuomo, p. 56.

<sup>29</sup> Cuomo, p. 117.

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<sup>30</sup> From 1854, when the Republican Party was founded, Democrats often pejoratively labeled its adherents as "Black Republicans" to identify them as proponents of black rights in the South.

<sup>31</sup> Sitterson, p. 158.

<sup>32</sup> Sitterson, p. 171.

<sup>33</sup> Kruman, p. 84.

<sup>34</sup> The other five being: Thomas Ruffin, Warren Winslow, Lawrence O'Bryan Branch, James Leach, and F. Burton Craig.

<sup>35</sup> Sitterson, pp. 181-187.

<sup>36</sup> See note 2 about the confusion concerning Harris's middle initial and identity.

<sup>37</sup> Sitterson, pp. 191-192, 197.

<sup>38</sup> Crofts, pp. 224-225.

<sup>39</sup> Thanks to Dr. Brooks Gilmore for bringing the *Fayetteville Observer* article about the Chatham County meeting to the attention of CCHA. Mentioned in that article are the following persons, who are listed here to insure that anyone searching this article for their names can locate them in the image on page 16: Rev. William Lineberry, John R. Marsh, E. H. Straughan, Dr. Thomas A. Brooks, Rev. Enoch Crutchfield, Daniel Hackney, Joseph M. Bridges, Thomas B. Long, Josiah H. Brooks, Thomas J. Brooks, Dr. William Lane. The image of the article was obtained from DigitalNC: <http://library.digitalnc.org/cdm/fullbrowser/collection/newspapers/id/41777/rv/compoundobject/cpd/41781/rec/1> The article appears about half-way down the fifth column on page 2.

<sup>40</sup> Kruman, p. 218.

<sup>41</sup> Sitterson, p. 199.

<sup>42</sup> Pargas, pp. 3-36.

<sup>43</sup> Freehling, p. 22.

<sup>44</sup> Sitterson, pp. 187, 203.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in: <http://randolphhistory.wordpress.com/2011/04/11/the-true-lost-cause-the-battle-for-peace-in-february-1861/>. According to author Mac Whatley, "The act was published in the Feb. 14<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Greensboro Patriot*. The Yoda-like sentence structure of its preamble is a potent combination of florid Victorian language and turgid legalese."

<sup>46</sup> Votes recorded in the Journals of the Senate and House of Commons of the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, 1860-1861 session, pp. 245, 440-441. [www.archive.org]

<sup>47</sup> Sitterson, pp. 209-210.

<sup>48</sup> Sitterson, p. 206.

<sup>49</sup> Sitterson, pp. 212, 218.

<sup>50</sup> Crofts, p. 181.

<sup>51</sup> Kruman, pp. 210, Appendix B.

<sup>52</sup> Crofts, p. 154; Hadley, p. 94.

<sup>53</sup> *Fayetteville Observer*, March 4, 1861, p. 3. The paper lists the candidates by initials only, making positive identification difficult. [library.digitalnc.org]

<sup>54</sup> Sitterson, p. 105.

<sup>55</sup> Crofts, pp. 206-207.

<sup>56</sup> Crofts, p. 197.

<sup>57</sup> Crofts, p. 256.

<sup>58</sup> A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875 [Annals of Congress](#), House of Representatives, 36th Congress, 1st Session [Library of Congress memory.loc.gov]. Page 428 of the House Journal. Vote taken on February 28, 1861.

<sup>59</sup> Crofts, p. 255.

<sup>60</sup> Crofts, p. 256.

<sup>61</sup> For a legal evaluation of Lincoln's "perpetuity" reasoning, see Amar, pp.25-39.

<sup>62</sup> Sitterson, p. 234.

<sup>63</sup> Sitterson, p. 235.

<sup>64</sup> Crofts, pp. 258-259.

<sup>65</sup> Sitterson, p. 237.

<sup>66</sup> Crofts, pp. 283-295. Historians have suggested that many factors were involved in Lincoln's decision: (1) fear of losing the support of the Republican Party who favored action; (2) the need to maintain control of ports for the collection of import taxes which was the primary source of the Union's revenues; (3) preventing foreign recognition of the Confederacy; (4) the suggestion of a Southern friend that the seceding states were "irrevocably gone;" (5) the advice of a naval officer sent to survey the Fort Sumter situation, who concluded that Lincoln's plan was entirely feasible so long as a strong naval force provided protection for the supply ship.

<sup>67</sup> Crofts, p. 311.

<sup>68</sup> Sitterson, p. 239-240.

<sup>69</sup> Sitterson, p. 241.

<sup>70</sup> <http://www.ncwbts150.com/RegimentsDefendOldNorthState.php>

<sup>71</sup> Hadley, p. 122. The "War Between the State" chapter, written by Jessie Ruth Seagroves, gives details of the various Chatham regiments, the life of soldiers, and conditions at home. Pp. 122-142.