

Memorial Day...from Page 1A

association, plain and simple.” said event emcee Scott Ledford, who serves as adjutant for the Sons of Confederate Veterans David W. Payne Camp 1633. Continued Ledford: “We exist to uplift, protect and defend the names and

reputations of those who wore the gray during the American Civil War. It’s a noble calling. We defend soldiers who can’t defend themselves anymore, and they need it now more than they ever needed it.” Confederate Memorial

Day has been celebrated in Georgia and much of the South since the spring of 1866, when the Ladies Memorial Association of Columbus (GA) passed a resolution setting aside a single day every year, April 26, to pay tribute to fallen Confederate soldiers. Since 2016, however, Confederate Memorial Day has been excluded in name from the



Photo by Lowell Nicholson

Mike Kirkland readying his cannon for a three-volley salute to the Confederate dead.

official list of Georgia holidays, being marked instead by a meaningless “State Holiday” designation.

This year’s “State Holiday” observance occurred on Monday, April 23 – the nearest Monday to the historically recognized Confederate Memorial Day – and local observers of the holiday chose April 28 as their day to gather in remembrance.

However, those who came together at the War Memorial that Saturday were not there to celebrate “State Holiday.”

They gathered to honor the lives and sacrifices of their Confederate ancestors, who joined with their Northern brethren in a bloody war that cost nearly 700,000 American lives.

The keynote speaker for the SCV David W. Payne Camp 1633 Memorial Day event was Compatriot Gregory White, who told a number of stories about Confederate men who died fighting for causes in which they believed.

According to White, political correctness is to blame for the modern-day backlash against Confederate symbols and dates such as Confederate Memorial Day.

“How much longer will Confederate Memorial Day exist?” lamented White that Saturday. “For those of us with Confederate soldiers in our ancestry, the burden is on each of us – not the state and federal government or the public school system – to teach and remind our children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews that they are the heirs of an unparalleled American legacy.”

The Memorial Day celebration included men and women dressed in period clothing who carried out a variety of tributes to honor the Confederate dead.

Along with a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance led by Camp Cmdr. David Junghans, those gathered also pledged their allegiance to the Georgia flag and held a salute to the Confederate flag.

Camp Lt. Cmdr. Robert McTureous delivered the customary reading of the Charge of Confederate Lt. Gen. Stephen D. Lee, followed by the placing of a wreath at the Confederate Monument in War Memorial Park by members of the United Daughters of the Confederacy Smith’s Legion Chapter 2699.

Also part of the program, Junghans and McTureous led a symbolic removal of the Confederate Battle Flag from the monument, and Compatriot Mike Kirkland fired a three-volley cannon salute to mark the occasion.

Savannah Levi, 13, played “Amazing Grace” on her fiddle, with assistance from

12-year-old Emma Pittman, who held her sheet music down that windy day.

Camp Chaplain Russell Shreeve opened the Memorial Day ceremony with an invocation, and he closed it with a benediction, thanking God for the opportunity “to commemorate those who fought for their cause and for our freedom.”

Local Confederate graves were also marked with Confederate flags in honor of the occasion.

In early April, the sole commissioners of both Union and Towns counties signed proclamations in recognition of Confederate Memorial Day.

SCV David W. Payne Camp 1633 and UDC Smith’s Legion Chapter 2699 enjoy membership in Union, Towns and Fannin counties in Georgia, and Clay and Cherokee counties in North Carolina.

Local UDC members are in the process of starting up a local chapter of the Children of the Confederacy, and people looking for more information should contact Ann Atchison at TARA62860@aol.com.



4-H kids begin summer-long Giant Pumpkin Projects



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Front L-R: Maggie Payne, Reagan Covington, Jessie Holbrook, Morgan Penney and Jordan Pandolph. Back L-R: Aliceyn Covington, Timothy Jennings, Mickey Cummings, Tim Grizzle, Patrick Fix, Ray Covington and Kristy Penney. Not pictured: Skylar Miller.

By Shawn Jarrard
North Georgia News
Assistant Editor

Union County 4-H is teaming up with the Union County Farmers Market and the Georgia Mountain Research & Education Center to allow students to take part in 4-H Giant Pumpkin Projects.

Already seven students have committed to the project, which will take all summer long to complete and require meticulous recordkeeping and personal care of plants, as the students attempt to grow record-setting giant pumpkins.

Assisting the students in their endeavors are cousins Patrick Fix and Tim Grizzle, who last year set a new state record with their 1,306-pound giant pumpkin they nicknamed Big Fat Ralph.

The students will be growing pumpkins using seeds harvested from Big Fat Ralph, which they planted on Tuesday,



Photo by Shawn Jarrard

Jessie Holbrook watering her freshly planted giant pumpkin seed, with Patrick Grizzle.

April 24. Stay tuned for more in-depth coverage following the

students’ pumpkin progress throughout the summer.