

**Lots of Hate, Anger,
Misconceptions,
Misunderstandings, Lies and
Deceptions Surrounding the
July 7, 2020 Commissioners
Meeting!!! Regarding
Confederate Soldiers Memorial
Monuments!!! CC
Commissioners have their
heads in the sand!! –
Report, evaluation and
arguendo provided by Robert
A. Williams**

First, some facts:

1. The Cleveland County Commissioners, the Cleveland County School Board and the Cleveland Community College Board of Trustees do not care one bit about citizens participation at their Board meetings. In all my attendance of their meetings, in all my reviews of their meeting minutes and in all their actions, NOTHING has ever come close to being resolved because of any complaint made by any citizen during citizens

participation. Especially a request for an investigation. I have heard hundreds of people make complaints over the years, including my own, from citizens who have valid concerns and they all go in one ear and out the other ear of the various board members. With ZERO Discussion and NO actions. Even the Citizens Recognition rules adopted by these agencies all say something like this: ***“The Board is interested in hearing your concerns, yet speakers should NOT expect comment, action or deliberation on subject matter brought up during the public comment segment.”*** In fact, the only reason at all that these boards have a public comments segment in their meetings is that North Carolina Law requires it. For the stated purpose of allowing the public to have input into the agency business. A noble reason that is totally ignored every time.

2. The Cleveland County Commissioners refused to include an “agenda item” regarding the Confederate Soldier’s Memorial on the Court Square in Shelby. An agenda Item would allow presentations, discussions, adoption of a plan for resolution and other appropriate actions. The Commissioners apparently wanted no part of something they could not control from behind closed doors. Hey folks, attend more meetings. That is what the Boards do every time. Come see for yourself. In the case the July 7, 2020 Commissioner’s meeting, they just did what they always do.
3. The Shelby Star is always complicit in NOT keeping the public properly apprised of the true facts of the matter. They always play down anything negative about the various boards and what they actually do. They take the liberal socialist side of the issues and arguments

and the Star's article about this particular meeting is a good example. They reported much more on those who promote removing the monument based on hate, anger and often unrelated ignorances and their gallery of pictures has exactly the same MO.

4. There were 15 speakers at the July 7th 2020 Commissioners meeting amongst the many more that had signed up to speak. Robert A. Williams was number 13. And I spoke clearly and plainly about something that no other speaker even mentioned. I did not have time to ask all the speakers that spoke against the monument and demand that it be removed why they did not participate in any protest regarding the recent systemic racism by the Shelby City Council in their treatment of Mr. Willie Green's various proposals to do business in and with Shelby. That will come later in this article. Read on!

Recent statements reported in the Shelby Star by various Cleveland County Commissioners indicated that the Cleveland County Commissioners can do nothing about the Confederate Soldier's Memorial. That the **Monument Protection Act of 2015** protects the Statue and the Commissions can do nothing. One way or another. At the July 7th Commissioner's Meeting speaker Dale Guffey, an attorney, disputed the commissioner's narrative. According to Guffey, the Monument Protection Act of 2015 could easily be gotten around. Again, Read on.

The very next morning of July 8, 2020 I made a trip to the Cherryville Walmart and picked up (to read only) the Shelby

Star. There was not a peep about the previous day's Commissioner's meeting. However, next to the Shelby Star was a rack of Gaston Gazette papers and guess what? There was an article about the Gaston County Commissioners "Mulling over" what to do with their Confederate Soldier's Memorial Monument located at their Courthouse property. "What???" I wondered. "What does the Gaston County Commissioners know that the Cleveland Commissioners do not know???" When I get home, I will pull up that article on the internet.

And, I did. The Gaston County Commissioners don't seem to think that the Monument Protection Act of 2015 lets them off the hook. They commissioned a 12 member "Council of Understanding;" six for keeping the monument where it is and six for removal, to study the issue. One person on that Council of Understanding is an attorney who also says that getting around the Monument Protection Act of 2015 is a piece of cake. Read on folks, the plot thickens.

While I was searching for stuff about the Gaston County Commissioners, I hit on a WBTV article about the Anson County Commissioner's Meeting. (Note that all three Commissioner meetings, Cleveland, Gaston and Anson, were all on the same evening, July 7, 2020 and all three had different outcomes. Cleveland County did nothing to protect or remove the monument. Gaston County is trying to figure out what to do and Anson County voted (a split vote) to remove their monument and relocate it in a prominent location on PRIVATE Property.

So, Cleveland County Commissioners, get your head out of the sand!! YOU will very likely be soon required to forget about the Monument Protection Act of 2015 and to take a leadership position on this issue. And the decision is easy!! Read On!!

As I stated previously, I was speaker No 13 of 15 at the July 7, 2020 Cleveland County Commissioner's meeting. Almost at the end.

I never draft up beforehand a presentation for Citizens Recognition as I usually have much more to say than three minutes will allow me to say. This time, as I was listening closely to what everybody else was saying and knowing that many would be shut-down promptly at the end of their time. And they were. I decided to limit what I wanted to say to just the Monument issue. I wanted to give a loud and clear message on my position without going into a long description of my family history that had ate up much of the previous speakers' time. And I wanted to give a reason for my position based on something that NOBODY else even mentioned. This is what I said!!!

My name is Robert A. Williams, I live in Fallston.

I am a certified, verified and genuine Son of a Confederate Soldier. I have "Sons of Confederate Veterans" tags on my vehicles.

I reached voting age in 1968 and have voted in every election since then and intend to continue my voting record until I die.

I am AGAINST moving the Confederate Soldier's Memorial monument from the Court Square in Shelby. I repeat. I am AGAINST moving the Confederate Soldier's Memorial monument from the Court Square in Shelby.

I ask each of YOU. What benefit is there in moving the Confederate Soldier's Memorial?? How many jobs will that

create in Cleveland County?? How much economic development will moving that monument bring to Cleveland County??

The answer is ZERO. There is NO BENEFIT to moving that monument. We are wasting our time even talking about this.

I recommend putting a referendum on the ballot in November and ask the citizens of Cleveland County whether to leave the Monument where it is or to remove it.

MY recommendation is to leave the Monument EXACTLY where it is!!

Now, my statements and everybody else's will likely be "lost in space" in the minutes of this Commissioner's meeting. Minutes of Meetings are legal documents according to North Carolina law. But I predict that the minutes of the July 7, 2020 Commissioners meeting will be devoid of detail.

And, why do I say that: All you have to do is look up the approved minutes of the previous June 16, 2020 Commissioner's meeting. A number of people showed up and spoke during Citizens recognition urging the removal of the monument. Yet, the minutes only stated their name and whether or not they wanted to remove the monument. Nothing was said about the reasons any speaker had for removing the monument.

Bottom line here is the Cleveland County Commissioners have not allowed a fair and balanced discussion of the reasons for removing the Confederate Soldier's Memorial. I have not heard any reasons legitimate enough to change my mind. Hating the past, anger over what happened 400 or even 155 years ago should have long ago dissipated and be forgiven. Everybody has been free since 1865 by the passing of the Thirteenth

Amendment and what any of us have done with our freedom since 1865 is up to US as individuals. After 155 years, what we have in our bank account depends on how much we want to work and how much we as individuals want to save. As Beauford Burton put it, **"whether you are born black or white is an act of God. If you don't like what God has given you; take it up with God and see what that gets you."**

As for me, I would like to hear the reasons that those who want to remove the Statue or, like I do, want the statue to stay where it is. During the public Participation at the July 7th Commissioner's meeting just about everybody speaking was wearing a mask and those reading from a prepared statement were often reading too fast for me and most others to understand. And I was sitting on the first row.

Therefore, if anybody wants to send me the text of their statements, I would be glad to publish them on this website. I will certainly not promise to change my mind on anything, but I believe everybody has the right to speak and to be heard. I would also like to hear any dialogue on why the Black community has refused to support Mr. Willie Green, a black businessman trying to do business in Shelby. Mr. Green's egregious mistreatment at the hands of the Shelby City Council is a tangible and modern injustice that could happen to any of us. An almost perfect example of racism and retaliation. All you Statue protesters and black leaders, where were you during Mr. Green's ordeal that is still continuing? Are you proud of yourself? Why should anybody be interested in listening to a word that you say about anything when you appear to have been bought out so cheaply.

And what about the young black man, Irving Lucien Fenner, Jr. who appears to be spending a lifetime in prison without ever having the opportunity of a fair trial? Why do all these modern injustices get by without mention? And why do you call me a racist when I appear to be the only person, black or white, who is fighting today's injustices wherever I find them. And especially those close to home. Close enough to see the whites of their eyes while I am firing my shots in support of Mr. Willie Green's fight against injustice. And when I look around, there is nobody behind me.

I am all by myself, wondering where are the Black Preachers and the rest of the black community? Where are all these protesters that want to re-fight ancient history and come up with a different outcome?

I am not complaining, just wondering. Like my Great-Great-Grandfather at Chancellorsville, Fredericksburg, Gettysburg, Petersburg and more; I am fighting for what I believe is right and in the best interest of justice. I don't need an Army lead by Stonewall Jackson and Robert E. Lee at the ready right behind me. I can do well enough all by myself. And Mr. Willie Green is doing pretty well in his lawsuits against Shelby—all by himself too.