Bringing the Outdoors into the Community

Don’t Spill the Salt

T.R.R. Cobb’s Salt Story

Uncovering the Unknown
Dirt path lined with plants and palm trees near Thomas E. Watson’s vacation home in Las Olas, Florida.

– ca. 1910 –
The Watson-Brown Foundation, through creativity, diligence and financial support, labors to improve education in the American South by funding its schools and students, preserving its history, encouraging responsible scholarship and promoting the memory and values of our spiritual founders.
Lily Anzuoni, University of South Carolina Aiken, Senior: “This past academic year had some misfortunes as well as accomplishments for me. On the bright side, I was accepted into the Honors Program and started a job at my college’s library. I took a chance and changed my direction for research to something I am passionate about. I did some smaller research projects for one of my psychology courses and presented the findings at USCA’s Scholar Showcase, and the vice-chancellor loved my work. I was accepted into Psi Chi. However, none of these events really defined my experience for this past year. If I were to sum up this school year in one word it would be friendship.

“The year of friendship started when I needed some advice on which course to take to fill a gap in my schedule. While I love developmental psychology, I thought it would be better to try a clinical psychology course, since that is what I plan on pursuing in graduate school. The instructor and I hit it off right away. She has a vibrant personality
and is the only person I have met that loves football as much as my mom. Her lectures captivated me, and I really like how she had us complete case studies. It really helped me see how the material we were learning could translate into a clinical setting. I also like how approachable she is, whether I need advice on a personal or professional issue, I know I can turn to her.

“I also needed to take research methods for my degree. Research methods is a course with a lecture and lab component that gives psychology students the tools they need to conduct research, as well as professional writing in the field of psychology. It can make or break you as a psychology student. The course could be tedious at times, but I loved every second of it. I realized that I am a researcher. I have always loved science and research projects, but I was never truly aware about this part of myself. I planned on just applying to one master’s program, but I’m glad my instructor talked me into applying for some doctorate programs, including at her alma mater and my dream school, the University of Notre Dame.

“I have made a few friends through being in Honors courses and going to honors events. For a brief time I considered joining Greek Life to help me make friends, but I actually have a sorority of sorts through the Honors Program. I have a friend a year younger than me who is a biology major, but she is interested in neuroscience. There’s another girl who is a year older than me, and we have done research together in the past. Being in the program has helped us come closer. One of my friends has been accepted into graduate programs in clinical psychology and has told me the ‘dos and don’ts,’ for applying to graduate school, in addition to teaching me other things from fishing to random facts about cats.

“When the school year started, I began my new job at the college’s library. I love my job. It has been a neat experience because several of my coworkers are international students. I enjoy listening to stories about their culture and finding what we have in common. My supervisors sometimes share stories about their childhood. Through work, I have also become friends with some of the graduate students in our school’s master’s program for clinical psychology. They have given me tips on how to navigate graduate school applications, what extracurricular I should pursue to make me a more competitive application, and most important they encourage me to pursue my dreams. I feel like this is a very unique experience that I would not have if I went to another university. Extracurricular events hosted by my college, as well as the psychology honors society, Psi Chi, have helped me further these friendships.

“This summer in addition to working and studying for the GRE, I’m focusing on these friendships as well as some others that I haven’t had the time to mention ... I hope mom was right when she said the friends you make in college you’ll keep forever, because I have made several amazing friends while living in Aiken and attending USCA!”

Elaine Ball, Georgia Southern University, Sophomore: “My time at Georgia Southern University so far has been wonderful; the community at GSU is very welcoming and supportive. This past year I received the Robert Focht Memorial Drawing Scholarship. I was required to write an artist’s statement and submit a portfolio of my best drawings that I had completed during my time at GSU. After all of the applicants’ portfolios had been reviewed, I was selected to be the recipient for the scholarship. I was quite honored to receive the award and gained a great deal of motivation to continue working my hardest. I also made it onto the president’s list in the fall and the dean’s list in the spring. Furthermore, I submitted some of my artwork into a juried exhibition held at GSU and won best 2D piece in the exhibition. I am very dedicated to my work and will continue to pursue an even more successful year next fall. The photo included is a picture of me with my self-portrait that won best 2D in show.”
Enzo Cervantes, Georgia State University, Sophomore: “My freshman year in Atlanta was definitely a blessing. Thanks to the Foundation, I made timeless memories. Campus life brought many great opportunities to make new friends and stay focused on my classes. Living on my own has definitely instigated many valuable moments in my life. With my spare time, I made friends and made sure that I had time to relax with them. But managing my own spare time was tough. At first I was killing time doing nothing after completing my homework, but the more time I wasted, the more I learned about making the most of my time. I was doing my laundry on time and making sure that my bed was made every morning, just like when I was living with my parents. But the best part of college is developing the framework for my adult life. All of the peaceful walks to class, meals shared with friends, and silent study sessions have made me feel comfortable and connected with those around me. I feel as if my passion and hard work is leading towards the most peaceful life I can live. Spending time in a big city has helped me network as well, trying to get internships for the NSA and Marta. I am looking forward to next semester!”

Madison Graham, Georgia College & State University, Junior: “This semester has been my best semester yet! Early in the year, our department got news that we would have the opportunity to travel to New York City this May and perform at Carnegie Hall. With the help of fundraising and financial aid, I was able to go on the trip! It was definitely one of the best experiences I have ever had. Additionally, I was elected to serve as the fundraising/events coordinator for the Carnegie trip. It was fun to have the opportunity to work between students, faculty, and the community to lift the financial burden away from the participants. “Also, as cliché as this sounds, I started a band! Within six months we already have a regular gigging schedule and plan to release our first EP this coming fall. Things have been going very well. Next semester, I plan to continue growing with my band, Habersham Sounds, and continue my coursework. I hope to open a lessons studio in Milledgeville for elementary through high school students, and I will be in the process of preparing for a study abroad trip next May and June. The GCSU Jazz Band is travelling to the Czech Republic to tour! “I want to say a huge thank you to everyone involved in the Watson-Brown Foundation. You guys are truly helping me reach my dreams.”

Candace Jensen, University of Georgia, Junior: “Freshman year was a crazy, fun ride with a lot of ups and some downs. Coming to the University of Georgia without knowing anybody at first was nerve wracking but it helped me grow as a person and brought me friends I never thought I needed. I came in as an intended accounting major, and, boy, did that not go the way I planned! After accounting did not go as well as I thought it would and I decided I needed to find something new to do and so, I changed my major to international affairs. I would have to say that was the best decision I made all year long. I now have a major I really enjoy and can’t wait to see the opportunities available for me in the future.”
“I would have to say my favorite thing about freshman year was cheering on the Dawgs ‘between the hedges.’ There’s nothing quite like Saturday in Athens. With over 92,000 fans screaming at the top of their lungs and calling the Dawgs, you can’t be anything but excited in Sanford Stadium. Our football team had a great run this past season winning the SEC Championship (our first time since 2005), beating Oklahoma in double overtime in the Rose Bowl, and making it to the national championship. Although we didn’t win the natty, I couldn’t be prouder of the team and I can’t wait for next season, where I’m sure we’ll take it all the way.”

Hansen Mou, Clemson University, Senior:

“This year I served as president of the Clemson Rifle Team. Under my leadership, our team swept the National Rifle Junior Olympics qualifiers for the state of South Carolina, reached new levels of membership and participation, and led our team to a fifth place finish at the National NRA Intercolligate Rifle Championships. On top of this, I kick-started the Clemson Chem-E-Car Team. After three years of disinterest, we successfully entered and participated in the competition at the Southern Regional AIChE Conference.

“A Academically, I won second place in the Materials Science and Engineering I section of the undergraduate poster competition in the annual AIChE Student Conference in Minneapolis last October. Then Clemson University nominated me for the Goldwater Scholarship, for which I received an Honorable Mention.

“My favorite activity is the Clemson Rifle Team, because our small numbers are more than made up for by our camaraderie and dedication to firearm safety and precision shooting. We pride ourselves on being the friendliest team on campus.

“For the summer, I will be doing an REU at the University of Delaware, working on anion exchange membranes.”

Katelyn Overby, University of South Carolina Columbia, Senior:

“This year I was a junior, and as I am almost done with the requirements for my English major, I decided to add two minors, graphic design and media arts, both of which I love. This year in my media writing class (screenplay), I was chosen as the best script in the class and had the opportunity for a table reading in front of two judges who make independent films for a living and receive their feedback.

“I also became more heavily involved in my service sorority, Omega Phi Alpha. In the fall I was Insignia Chair (which means I designed T-shirts and worked with a few PR aspects for the sorority), and loved it so much that I now work with University Tees as a campus manager. And this past semester I served as secretary on exec and was nominated among other positions for membership director for next semester, which I, along with my co-membership director, got elected to do for the Fall 2018 semester!

“I’ll be interning this summer as an editor for Study Breaks student magazine.”
Kaley Scarfato, Appalachian State University, Junior: “Spring 2018 was a very challenging semester for me. I had just finished up my general education requirements in the fall of 2017 and began my major coursework. I found these classes to be more challenging but also more rewarding. I am beginning to make connections with a lot of the professors in my program and am getting to know many other students in my concentration as well. As an out-of-state student, I have been struggling with finances so I decided to take on two part-time jobs this semester. I started delivering sandwiches for Jimmy John’s a few days a week just to be able to pay for rent and housing. In January, I was hired to facilitate a high ropes course at Camp Broadstone, a property owned and managed by Appalachian State University. This was very exciting for me, as this is my first recreation job experience that I will be able to put on my résumé. The spring season has been very slow; however, I am excited to gain more experience and knowledge on the job as business always picks up in the summer. I am looking forward to an exciting outdoor summer while working and completing online coursework!”

Leanne Summers, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Senior: “As a member of my sorority, I was able to educate a new member class and welcome them in as my sisters. As treasurer of my sorority, I was responsible for planning and executing our ten-year anniversary celebration and my sorority sisters were all very happy with my work. “As a member of the Marching Tar Heels, I can say that we did six amazing shows for the football season. One of these performances helped spread the word about the huge campus fundraiser and one of the other shows celebrated our basketball team’s 2017 National Champion status. “This summer, I will be studying abroad in London. It will allow me to take an upper level psychology course on sex and gender and to experience classes at King’s College London.”

Jordan Tildon, University of Georgia, Sophomore: “My first year of college was very different from what I was used to. I think the main thing that was different was finding a balance. No one was there to say study or do your homework. No one is there to say wake up for class. No one is there to help you do your laundry or to cook dinner. “I honestly thought the classwork was going to be easy because high school was fairly easy, but I was in for a rude awakening. I did not really study until I got to college. I know that sounds bad, but really in high school all I had to do was skim over the information like for twenty minutes and I would be ready for the test ... but you cannot do that here. You have to spend hours studying and reading in order to prepare for test. So this year I definitely had to learn how to study! “I loved how free you are in college though. No one really tells you what to do. You decide what classes to take. You decide how to use your time. You decide almost every aspect of your life. It is truly the beginning of adulthood. I had my ups and downs this year and yet, I am still here and stronger than ever. “The University of Georgia was not my first choice, but I am very grateful I chose this university. We have the best football games, a twenty-four-hour dining hall, and so many
clubs and organizations. I have met the best people and discovered so many things about myself. I am proud to say that I am a Georgia Bulldog. GOOOOO DAWGS!!!

David Tran, Duke University, Senior:

“Although my junior year at Duke University has been my most academic and mentally challenging year yet, I have found it to be the most rewarding.

“One of my goals for the year was to apply for a summer internship involving computer science. After countless applications and several interviews, I finally was accepted into the Deutsche Bank summer internship program as a technology analyst. This will be my first internship in the field of computer science, and I am so excited to embark on this journey in June.

“Over the year, I was involved in the Duke University Marching Band, where I played the baritone at sporting events and parades. This opportunity has been very rewarding, as I found a warm community where I felt belonged.

“This past college year has opened me up to more social opportunities, as well. I have met more people this year than previous years as I begin to feel more open to others. Through class projects and assignments, I have found several things in common with other people and have found close bonds with them.

“In the upcoming year, I look forward to studying more deeply into computer science and electrical engineering to help jump-start my career after graduation. I also look forward to growing close with my friends and also to make several new ones. Right now, I am the happiest I have been in my life with the love and support of my family and friends and am excited for what my senior year has to offer.”
ANDREW DAVIS

Alumni Spotlight

BY SHANNON FRIEDMANN HATCH

If you charted the population of Warrenton, Georgia, over the last 150 years on a line graph, you'd get a serpentine trajectory of gentle rises and subtle dips from the 1880s through the 1960s. It was then that the population began to swell and crested at 2,200 residents; however, since the new millennium, there's been a waterfall exodus and each census report marks a drop in the central Georgia town's population.

Can the tide be turned in a small town like Warrenton? Andy Davis thinks so. He once called the area home and now is pursuing his master’s degree in environmental sustainability with a focus in municipal sustainability from Indiana University, the number-one ranked school by *U.S. News & World Report* for environmental policy and management.

“This part of Georgia is always in my heart and mind,” Andy says. “It could be brought back and be vibrant.”

To be clear, he’s not talking about a dramatic revitalization but rather a refocus on quality of life, underscored by a return to nature.

Growing up in Warrenton, there wasn’t much to do, Andy remembers, but he found an outlet in scouting. “We had a very active troop,” he recalls. “Once a month we’d go camping, we’d take canoeing trips and even did some long-distance hiking on the Appalachian Trail.” He made Eagle Scout by cleaning up Sallie Hill Cemetery, landscaping the entrance and clearing the headstones of his ancestors and those who walked the same woods as he did, long before they found their final resting place in the Georgia ground.

As for Andy, as soon as he got his driver’s license, he got out, driving the eleven miles of country road to Thomson to see his high school friends. He left town for good after his junior year of high school and enrolled at Young Harris College. “Right when I got there I knew I made the right decision,” he said. The private, then two-year, institution stands in the shadow of Brasstown Bald, Georgia’s highest peak, and is minutes away from hiking trails in the north Georgia mountains. Andy could navigate his way in nature but was unsure of the exact direction of his studies until he took a course in ecology.

“I never realized how interconnected the world was—I knew most people didn’t know it either, that I wasn’t the only one,” he said. “I wanted to dedicate my life to that effort.”

He went on to earn his bachelor’s degree at Georgia College, balancing an environmental science major with managing a restaurant to pay his way through school. After graduation, he examined his options: “I could have moved to Atlanta where there were jobs but no family. I could have moved closer to my family, who had moved to Florida, but there were no mountains. Instead I decided to stay in central Georgia where I had extended family and look for jobs in the area.”

Andy started volunteering for the Oconee Greenway Foundation and soon was elected to the board of directors of the Oconee River Greenway Authority. Around the same time, he also helped relaunch...
Keep Milledgeville-Baldwin Beautiful as executive director. Through these experiences, a central truth began to emerge. “How do you get people to understand nature? You get them to spend time in it,” he said. For example, when the volunteer crews he organized saw tire after tire pulled out of the river, the less likely they—and the community—were to litter. Andy extended this idea in his next roles overseeing recreational trails through AmeriCorps and then a nonprofit named Active Southern West Virginia. “Health issues like obesity and diabetes are called ‘preventable’ because their prevalence can be reduced by improving people’s access to physical activity,” he said. “In many communities, exercise is not convenient.”

Working at Active Southern West Virginia, Andy said he was “in my element.” Like the area he grew up in and many small towns across America, the area was economically depressed and, as Andy put it, “opportunity had left.” The nonprofit creates outdoor recreational outlets for the community through bike trails, pedestrian paths, free volunteer-led group exercise programs, and more. “I believe that there’s no limit to what nonprofits can do,” he said. “Many times, they are the light that shows a community the way that things could be.”

This past fall, Andy began an intense, one-year accelerated master’s program in Indiana University’s first municipal sustainability degree. “We study the city as a living organism, so there’s something for science nerds, but we also look at the city as a business, so there’s something for business nerds, too.” He explained sustainability as “efficiency for an equitably practical world” and strongly believes that it can improve quality of life in towns and contribute to long-term cost-savings.

Indiana University gave him credit hours for his AmeriCorps service, plus he is using his educational stipend from his two years service to fund this academic pursuit—a benefit he thinks more people should look into. “There are huge problems in the world, and people get discouraged because they think they can’t make a difference,” he said. “Instead, think globally, act locally.”

After graduation, Andy intends to do just that, consulting city governments on how to solve real-world problems with sustainable solutions. Small towns are feeling tossed and turned by economic and population loss, and this one-time river guide hopes to navigate them to calmer waters. “I’m at peace in a boat with a paddle in my hand,” Andy says. “It doesn’t matter where it is—it’s a state of mind.” After all, the idea that nature heals is nothing new—sustainability could just turn the tide.

“With the help of Watson-Brown, I had options available to me.”
side from Jimmy Buffett sitting on his front porch swing in Margaritaville searchin’ for his long lost shaker of salt, most people take for granted the white mineral. Throughout history, and before refrigeration, salt was an essential commodity used in packing cheese and eggs, preserving foods like meats and fish and raw goods like hides, and the processing of leather, especially as the Civil War approached, in the dying process for military uniforms. Salt was so crucial to society that Roman soldiers were paid in part with salt, called salarium from which the word salary is derived and where we get the term “worth his salt.”

More than 150 years ago though, that wasn’t the case. Salt was a necessity. As a general rule, it took two bushels, about 110 pounds, of salt to cure 1,000 pounds of pork and 1.25 bushels to cure 500 pounds of beef. A sack of salt, generally the way it was purchased, was basically two bushels. During his march to the sea, General William Tecumseh Sherman famously stated that “an army that has salt can adequately feed its men.”

With the outbreak of the war and the establishment of the Union blockade of the Southern coast, Southerners immediately began to feel the salt shortage and the dramatic rise in salt prices reflected the effectiveness of the ever-tightening blockade as the war progressed. At the outbreak of the conflict, a 150-pound sack of Liverpool salt (considered to be the best quality) sold for 50 cents in New Orleans. By the fall of 1862, that same sack was being sold for $125.

David Golightly Harris, a farmer from the South Carolina Piedmont, recorded in his diary in April 1862: “I wanted to buy two sacks of salt. But I only found a few bushels for sale [of a domestically made variety] and that at rates of $20 to the sack.” In June, with salt becoming so scarce, Harris and a number of his neighbors banded together to purchase salt from the salt-making enterprise in Saltville, Virginia. “I went to the village and saw our friends & wagons from the Salt Works,” Harris recorded. “They have returned in good condition, but with rather light loads of salt… I expect salt enough to save one goat. Salt is worth from $30 to $60. No telling how it will be next fall.” By the fall, a sack cost 12 times as much in Richmond, and by the first of 1863, the price of a sack was said to be 50 times as much in Savannah.

Salt Prices Recorded in the Diary of David Golightly Harris:

- October 9, 1861: $6.50 per sack
- October 17, 1861: $7 per sack
- November 8, 1861: $12 per sack
- December 13, 1861: $13 per sack
- April 3, 1862: $20 per sack
- June 25, 1862: $30 to $60 per sack
- August 4, 1862: $23.50 per sack
- October 4, 1862: $40 per sack
- July 15, 1863: $30 per sack
- November 4, 1863: $75 per sack
- February 12, 1865: $200 per sack
- March 14, 1865: $400 per sack

The Confederate government left it to the states to supply salt to their residents. The states, in turn, established ways to distribute the mineral and how it should be doled out. In Georgia, the local court clerks submitted salt requests to the state government. The state, in turn, allotted the requested amount of salt to the counties. The price of salt from the state depended on a family’s circumstances. The family head was able to purchase from a state agent a half-bushel of salt for $2.50. If the head was a widow with a son in the Confederate army, the price was only $1. If the widow’s husband had lost his life fighting in the war, then she was allowed the half-bushel free of charge.

In September 1862, James Jewel, a private in the Echols Light Artillery from Oglethorpe County, wrote his wife, Sallie, from Atlanta, “Tell Pa I want him to lay in a claim for Eliza [his aunt] for some of governor Browns salt if there is such a thing going on there. All Soldiers wives are allowed a bushel of salt for one dollar.”

As the salt shortage grew more and more dire, Southerners resorted to a variety of increasingly desperate measures. They learned to boil the brine used in their pickling to draw off the salt; brush off grains of salt on their salted meat for reuse; or dig up the dirt floors of their smokehouses, boiling and straining it, then setting it to dry. “Some of the people in this neighborhood,” wrote Jewel, “are going down the
country after salt. They are going to carry their kettles and wagons down there.... As for our part, I do not know what we will have to do, without we dig up the smokehouse.” Through this method they found they could make a fair quality of salt but not in the desired quantity. To do this, they needed a much larger operation.

The Southern states relied on three ways to alleviate the shortage — extracting it from saline artesian wells, boiling off water from the ocean or inland salt lakes, and mining deposits of rock salt. The local and state governments sought ways to solve the shortage. The Confederate government exempted superintendents, managers, mechanics, and miners involved in its production from military service, a process that often flew in the face of the states’ recruiting efforts.

One of those faced with the problem of trying to adequately provide salt for the state, while at the same time continue to scrape the barrel trying to come up with new recruits, was Howell Cobb. After the disaster of the battle of Crampton’s Gap in September 1862, Howell was sent to take command of the newly created Middle District of Florida. This District covered the area between the Choctawhatchee and Suwannee Rivers in Florida and included the Georgia counties of Decatur, Thomas, Miller, Early, Baker, Clay, Calhoun, Randolph, Quitman, Stewart, Muscogee, Chattahoochee, Mitchell, and Dougherty.

Salt Works near St Marks
East Goose Creek Feb 25th 1863

Brig Genarl Cobb

Sir I hearewith give you a discription of my salt workes to which I ask your attention. I have 2 large Boilers & 6 Kettles which I am working day and night and which occupies the close attention of 2 white men besides my self. I also have 5 negros imployed in choping wood and driving the teams. The 2 white men are very essential in carrying on my works. Because I am compelled frequenty to be absent my self in taking salt to market and in procuring provision one of the white men is a mechinich which I need at all times about my workes I trust you will deem it proper to instruck the enrolling officer for this districk to give the necessary permission for me to retain those 2 men. I am working over the 20 Bushels per day. Hoping you may approve of the above I remains yours Truly

WW Livingston
Supr Salt works
My address is St marks

Howell’s region became one of the most important suppliers of salt. Numerous salt works sprang up along the Florida coast, particularly along the western shore between Saint Andrews Bay and St. Marks, both large-scale operations, as well as smaller, more individual operations. It can be argued that Florida’s greatest contribution to the Confederate war effort was in producing salt.

People found that a relatively good quality of salt could be produced by boiling sea water. For each gallon of salt water, they could produce two and a half ounces of the necessary product through the evaporation process.

G.J. Kollock, wrote his wife in Clarkesville, Georiga, in February 1863: “I am afraid my ‘salt works’ are destined shortly to come to a close. I find the kettles are burning out. And indeed they are so small that it is impossible to make very pure salt with them. I have been going out constantly & directing operations; but I find it is not as white & dry as my neighbors, who have five or six large pans and kettles. These pans cost from eight hundred to one thousand dollars apiece. And I cannot afford to make any such investment now. They also employ from eight to ten hands, besides wagon & mules. I will try & send up some of the salt we have made this week for you to try.” James Jewel wrote the following month from Camp Brokaw, near St. Marks, that “Ips Ragan is down here at work making salt he lives about four miles from here.”

The process was so successful that the Union blockading fleets began to take notice. The main purpose of the blockaders, of course, was to prevent any supplies from getting into Southern ports. The East Gulf Blockading Squadron, covering the Florida Gulf from Key West to a line just east of Pensacola, had no ports to speak of which to blockade. Instead, most of their time was spent in raiding the numerous salt works that dotted the coast.

There are a number of reports of some of these Union raids in naval records, especially along the Florida coast under Howell’s jurisdiction. The raids ranged from small individually operated salt works to very elaborate works that produced several hundred bushels of salt a day. The ships would look for the telltale sign of smoke coming from rather obscure locations ashere. Rowing quickly to shore, the Union soldiers and sailors, armed with different types of weapons—sledgehammers, awls, and axes—would land and immediately move to their target and set about the task of breaking up brick furnaces, cast-iron boilers, caldrons, and drying pans. Occasionally, the operation was so large that the boilers and vats were destroyed through the use of explosives or a small howitzer.

Jewell wrote from Camp Leon in February 1864, “A squad of yankeys come out down here at one of the salt works and took all the men they could catch and broke up the kettles and went back.” That same February, a landing party from a blockading ship launched a raid that destroyed a large operation near St. Marks. A week later, another raiding party from a different blockader, the Tahoma, destroyed another works on Goose Creek near St. Marks.

Within a few weeks or months however, the salt works were once again established and producing salt, but even though they were constantly being rebuilt, the Union raids were able to disrupt the supply chain enough so that the production of enough salt and the supply of the necessary equipment never allowed the Confederates the ability to stay ahead of the game. By the war’s end, the Confederate States Almanac, published in Macon, offered advice to their readers: “To keep meat from spoiling in Summer: Eat it early in the Spring!”
A RELIC OF THE GREAT WAR

Sticks & Stones

BY MICHELLE ZUPAN

Almost anyone who visits Arlington, Virginia, makes a pilgrimage to the National Cemetery and the Tomb of the Unknowns to watch the changing of the guard and to pay their respects to those men and women who gave all.

But where did the idea of honoring the unknown dead originate? And what does it have to do with Tom Watson?

The movement to honor the unknown military is widely thought to have originated in England during The Great War when Anglican chaplain, David Railton who was serving in France, proposed the idea to the Dean of Westminster Abbey. Remains of an unknown U.K. soldier were interred in the Abbey on the second anniversary of the Armistice: November 11, 1920. France followed suit in January, interring a soldier beneath...well, they aren’t sure... it was...
either in the Pantheon or at the base of the Arc de Triomphe. The U.S. Congress followed with what was not the first Tomb of the Unknowns (that was in Philly), but by authorizing the first nationally mandated Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on March 4, 1921. Four American soldiers were exhumed from French battlefields—Triacort, Romagne, Bony, and Belleau Wood. The caskets were placed inside a chapel where half a dozen U.S. veterans of The Great War were waiting. One highly decorated soldier, U.S. Army Sgt. Edward F. Younger, was handed a bouquet of white roses and told he would choose which body would lie beneath the monument. Younger was left alone in the chapel where he paced around the caskets, finally laying the flowers on the third casket from the left. The other men were re-interred in the Meuse Argonne Cemetery in France.

After traveling through the countryside on a horse-drawn caisson, the Unknown Soldier’s remains were placed aboard the USS Olympia and taken to America. On November 11, 1921, President Warren G. Harding presided over the dedication. The monument, located in the Memorial Amphitheatre at Arlington consisted of just a base and a plinth. Those elements were demolished in 1932 and replaced with the famous iconic marble sarcophagus.

So, what of the Tom Watson connection? He was there with his intrepid, camera-toting, autograph-seeking granddaughters, Georgia and Georgia, who documented the event. Among the dignitaries they met that day was Amelia McCudden, Britain’s first Silver Cross Mother, who lost all three of her sons in The Great War.

Watson spent much of 1921 engaged in work related to the war. His correspondence reveals that he was working to secure the release of all remaining political prisoners, trying to prevent suspected dissidents from being deported to Russia, and securing information on the executions of soldiers in France. Always fighting for the underdog!
Walter J. Brown was a journalist and a broadcast pioneer who built and chaired what would become Spartan Communications, Inc., one of the larger privately held TV companies in the country.

Early in his career, Brown had an office in the White House when he served on the staff of Secretary of State James F. Byrnes. Brown’s enduring love for politics was eclipsed only by his respect for Jimmy Byrnes. Inspired in part by Byrnes’s philanthropy—which in 1948 established the James F. Byrnes Foundation—Brown created his own private Foundation in 1970. Named for Thomas E. Watson and J.J. Brown, the men to whom Brown attributed his success, the Watson-Brown Foundation today continues to ensure that hundreds of deserving students are provided the opportunity to excel at the college of their choice.