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# Recycled statue guards the pass

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By MEG HIBBERT
News Editor

More than 136 years after the Battle of Hanging Rock in the Civil War, he's guarding the Salem area against Northern aggressors.

The guardian is a bronze Confederate soldier, standing in solitary, shining splendor with his sword half drawn – and facing north.

Since the statue was erected and dedicated on June 24, he has presented a puzzle for hikers on the Hanging Rock Trail. The statue itself and its granite pedestal looked as though it had seen the ages; the concrete foundation appeared to be new.

Gouged shadows on the pedestal where letters used to be read "In honor of George Morgan Jones – citizen, soldier, philanthropist."

The name didn't ring any bells for most Civil War-followers.

Jones was a private in the Second Virginia Cavalry Quartermaster Corps and later, his family endowed the Jones Memorial Library in Lynchburg where the statue used to stand.

The figure done by famed Danish sculptor Solon Borglum – brother of Mount Rushmore sculptor Gutzon Borglum – in 1911 isn't of Jones, however.

"It could be any Confederate soldier," explained Robert "Red" Barbour of Roanoke, who led the movement to purchase the statue and move it to downtown Hanging Rock.

"He's wearing a double-breasted frock coat, high knee boots and slouch hat, and his sword is about half drawn. He has a very defiant look and he's facing north," added Barbour, who is commander of the Fincastle Rifles Camp No. 1326 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

The saga of how the used statue wound up on the outskirts of Salem is a tale in itself.

"When I found out four years ago that the statue was for sale for $15,000 because the City of Lynchburg didn't want to go to the trouble of moving it after the library closed, I went to our membership," Barbour explained.

Barbour told the members, who include a number of men from Salem, about the statue and that there was no figure of a soldier at Hanging Rock.

"I asked each person to donate $100 towards the purchase, and for that, he would get the name of an ancestor on a tablet we would put with the statue."

The chapter got an excellent response from its members and other camps around the Roanoke Valley, from Daughters of the

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Confederacy and other groups, Barbour said.

There was enough money to purchase the statue and move it. Later, people came forward to donate services and time to move the statue twice more, and put it in place.

"First we moved it to a warehouse in Botetourt County to store it so we could clean it. It was Sandy Lucas, Grover McCloud and me," he said.

First, they had to blast the green patina and years of grime off the bronze, "and the next day it turned green again," he said.

"Then we sprayed it with WD-40, then a lacquer thinner to get WD-40 off and then a metal protective," he added.

Tom Crow with Crow Septic Tank Co. did the footings and Dan Drewry made a form for the 4-foot-tall base for the statue and its pedestal.

Members of the Fincastle Rifles poured the concrete base.

"We had to get it above flood level," Barbour explained.

The monument is in memory of the Confederate soldiers who fought with Gen. Jubal A. Early to rout Maj. General David Hunter's U.S. Army.

When she died in 1960, miss Massie Garst bequeathed Buzzards Roost, an area with a large granite outcropping where Confederates are said to have hidden, and Hanging Rock, still visible between Exits 140 and 141 on I-81.

The site was to be preserved in memory of the soldiers who fought and died in the Battle of Hanging Rock on June 21, 1864.

When the statue was dedicated in June of this year, the celebration included reenactors a the nearby Moose Lodge and a parade that marched by the Brubaker House, which was there when the battle took place.

"It's been said that some of the soldiers sat in the yard of the Brubaker home and ate their dinner," Barbour added.

In addition to the plaques that will include names of contributors who helped purchase the statue, the Fincastle Rifles plan eventually to inscribe various slogans on the base, he said.