



Tar Heel file photo

Old East

The oldest state university building is located on the UNC campus.

Old East's cornerstone was laid Oct. 12, 1793, and nearly two centuries later its date is honored as University Day, a celebration in which professors don the traditional caps and long gowns of scholars.

In the late 1700s, both the residential and instructional life of the University was centered in Old East. Students would erect huts in the "forest" beside it and in the unfinished shell of the South Building to escape their fellow men. When the weather was too bad for students to study in their huts, it was considered a valid excuse for unprepared lessons.

Old East has been honored by the National Historic Society as a national landmark for possessing "exceptional value in commemorating the history of the United States."

Today, the structure operates as a male dormitory. Recently, University administrators decided to turn Old East into offices but reversed their decision after students and alumni protested the break in tradition.

Silent Sam

Located between the Old Well and East Franklin Street at the University's north entrance is a well-known Civil War monument nicknamed Silent Sam.

Sam was erected in 1913 by the N.C. Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to memorialize the 321 alumni of the University who died in the Civil War, as well as the 1,062 who entered the Confederate Army. Canadian sculptor John Wilson created him for \$7,500, using Harold Langlois of Boston as a model.

The legend surrounding Sam says his gun is supposed to fire every time a virgin walks by. Sam's gun, however, has been silent for as long as anyone can remember.

On the base of the monument, a young woman touches the shoulder of a young gentleman to call him from letters to arms.

In the spring of 1986, Sam temporarily deserted his post. He was taken to Cincinnati, Ohio, for an \$8,200 restoration to remove the effects of the weather and the tannic acid from trees and car exhaust from Franklin Street. His original bronze color had turned to green.

But now Sam's back — and better than ever. His restorers say he'll stay a bright coppery color for several years.



Tar Heel/Andrew Herman