THE CONFEDERATE CONUNDRUM: AN ARTIFACT BASED EXAMINATION OF PUBLIC HISTORY THEORY AND PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

In the aftermath of the racially motivated murders of nine black churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina in 2015, a nationwide movement emerged advocating for the removal of monuments, statues, and other iconography connected to the former Confederate States of America. This conflict was further exacerbated two years later by a rally of self-identified white nationalists in Charlottesville, Virginia, that culminated in the death of counterprotestor Heather Heyer. In the wake of these events, the opponents of Confederate iconography rallied around the idea that vestigial appearances of the Confederate Flag, and more significantly statues commemorating Confederate leaders, could no longer be seen as artifacts of history, but only as symbols of hate and oppression. A unifying mission emerged in an oft-repeated and paraphrased slogan: Confederate iconography belongs only in museums.

Much has been written about the history of statues commemorating Confederate figures, as well as the expected questions of why they were first created, and subsequently if they should remain standing today. Critical examination of statues as vital tools of public history has been a far less common method of approach. This thesis questions the potential role of statues in serving public history by bringing interpretation to the non-academic public. It also examines the practicality of relocating statues and monuments to museums. In this regard, this thesis is as much an exploration of effective public history practice, as it is a report on Confederate iconography.

Accompanying specific suggestions, this thesis asks probing questions designed to
provoke further engagement. These questions include, do statues impart lessons of history, or heritage? What, if any, are the agreed upon differences between the two? Where has public interest and popular opinion placed the role of the public historian in the ongoing debate?

The answers to the preceding questions are frequently more nuanced than a simple yes or no. This thesis does not suggest that there is any one approach to conclusively addressing every controversy surrounding every piece of Confederate iconography. Rather, it seeks to examine the importance of monuments and statues to the field of public history. In this examination, it may provide guidance.

The form and content of this abstract are approved. I recommend its publication.

Approved: Thomas J. Noel
Dedicated to my mother, Lisa West. Undoubtedly the first person to teach me that history is very much alive.

Also to my wife, Samantha. Undoubtedly my biggest fan.
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When I began researching and writing this thesis in 2017, the question of how to manage Confederate iconography had only just begun to re-emerge. Although the topic is ever-evolving, in 2019 public opinion has become much more clearly defined, and aligned overall with the preference for removal of controversial statues and memorials. Nonetheless, I believe that the multifaceted issues of commemoration, racism, nationalism, national identity, and others explored in this thesis, will likely weigh heavily on the minds of Americans for some time. The conversation continues, and will for the foreseeable future, because the issues at hand are deeply entrenched in almost immovable convictions held by parties at all ends of the political spectrum.

There are neither quick solutions, nor quick compromise to be had, and I hope to be clear that I don’t pretend to have convenient, or complete solutions. I do believe, however, that it is the essential role of the public historian to ask questions to which there may be no answer, to defend unpopular opinions in the interest of proliferating empathy and human compassion, and to do so without fear of reprisal, with no expectation of reward.

Put another way, I’m reminded of working as an outdoor educator for the Boy Scouts of America, for a salary of less than pittance. In spite of the poor fiscal benefits, my colleagues and I nevertheless returned to our tasks day after day, driven largely by a specific mantra. The world may one day be a better place, the saying went, in ways that we cannot imagine simply because we were important in the life of a young person. I believe that this is also why the public historian participates in the debate on commemoration and memorialization. We do so only with the hope that in our contributions, we may be part of the creation of a more connected, and better informed future. I would like to thank the many mentors, colleagues, friends, and family who have given me support in this endeavor.
I am forever indebted to my parents, Paul and Lisa West. Thank you for introducing me to documentary films on public broadcasting, and taking me to museums and historic sites even when I was too young to truly understand their wonder. Thank you for introducing me to the value of sculptures and other artwork, and for allowing me the freedom to interact with and explore a multitude of subjects. Your support in every way has made my academic journey possible. I know that I will never be able to adequately repay you.

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Innumerable thanks, of course, are also due to the many public school teachers and educators who devoted countless underappreciated hours to myself and other students. I am
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Perhaps most importantly of all, thanks to my wife, Samantha. Thank you for supporting me in every endeavor, and encouraging me to believe that my work is important. Thank you for being a voice of reason, an editor and a proofreader, a steadfast partner all around. May this be the first of many dedications and acknowledgements to come, for each of us. Not only have you supported me throughout this project, but you also supported me in the very beginning. When we packed up all of our belongings and a cat to move across the country, I’m sure you thought I was crazy. I still think I probably was insane, but that insanity spawned an incredible adventure that has been well worth it. I’m beyond excited to see where the next one takes us. Thanks for always being there to hold my hand as we whisk down the waterslide and fly off into the great unknown.
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CHAPTER I

“TO IGNITE A CIVIL WAR”

On June 17, 2015, then 21-year-old Dylann Roof murdered nine black parishioners at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal church in Charleston, South Carolina. Roof gained entrance to the church under the auspices of a desire to join a bible study session, concealing handguns inside of baggy clothing. In the course of his crime, Roof was reported to have shouted multiple racial epithets. Survivors reported that Roof justified his actions by proclaiming, “you blacks are killing white people on the streets every day and raping white women every day.”

After Roof was apprehended on June 18, having fled to North Carolina, the investigation into his actions and motive promptly revealed that he had been open and forthright about his intention to commit murder and hate crimes. In photos posted to his personal Facebook page, Roof posed on top of a car with vanity license plates that read “Confederate States of America,” and regularly wore a jacket bearing the flag of apartheid South Africa. A close acquaintance told police that Roof had frequently expressed his desire “to ignite a civil war.”

At trial, a federal jury took less than three hours of deliberation to find Roof guilty of 33 charges, and to condemn him to death. At the time of this writing, Roof awaits the fulfillment of his sentence at United States Penitentiary (USP) Terre Haute, having pled guilty to avoid a

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second death penalty trial for additional charges brought by the state of South Carolina. Though Roof failed to instigate a second civil war, his actions have ignited a quest for both punitive and restorative justice extending far beyond the reach of his own crimes.

Driven largely by the fact that Roof was empowered and emboldened by Confederate iconography, a nationwide movement advocating for the removal of vestigial appearances of the failed nations’ battle flag, and other representations of the Confederate States, has emerged. It is a decentralized movement, which lacks identifiable leadership, but it has been known to appear as necessary to counter the proponents and purveyors of Confederate monuments, iconography, and ideology. It is also a movement that has inadvertently spawned a public history conversation, by thrusting to the forefront of national conversation questions of how to properly preserve, if it should be preserved, and how to interpret the most controversial and divisive elements of U.S. history.

Those who have advocated for the removal of Confederate iconography such as statues, monuments, and the widely displayed battle flag of General Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, commonly assert that remnants of the Confederate States are in fact artifacts that belong exclusively in museums and archives. By contrast, those who have opposed the removal of Confederate iconography claim that altering statues and monuments is tantamount to the erasure of history itself. The anti-removal movement has been further united by the belief that

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5 In all discussion related to the United States Civil War, this thesis uses the term “Confederate” to refer to iconography related to the Confederate States of America. The terms Union and federal are used to refer to the United States government.

the selective removal of iconography tacitly proclaims that certain pieces of culture, history, or heritage, are intrinsically more valuable than others. This unending conflict is the Confederate conundrum.

Though this debate is at least partially rooted in history, a public history approach to examination has been frequently overlooked in favor of political science, race and ethnic studies, academic history, and other fields and viewpoints. This thesis utilizes the conventions established by Freeman Tilden, a pioneering public historian, to examine the ways in which statues may stand to serve the field of public history. Public history, a practice similar to but separate from academic history, in turn stands to serve communities by providing guidance, mediation, and perhaps some conflict resolution.

Statues, gravestones, monuments, and other relics of the Confederate States are found outside of the classroom, placing them squarely within the purview of public, rather than academic, history. They interact with the public, consciously and subconsciously shaping the attitudes and opinions of communities. It is precisely because of the fact that statues and other monuments are equitably accessible to all, that a public history perspective might suggest they should be allowed to remain standing in their original locations. This thesis puts forth the argument that generally speaking, statues and monuments fulfill arguably the most essential function of public history based upon interpretation, which is the provocation of the public to engage.

It will be addressed and restated regularly, that this thesis is not a defense of Confederate ideology, or even of Confederate statues and monuments. The purpose of this composition is primarily to provide a vision for the practice of public history, and perhaps subsequently to defend that vision. Included in this is an argument for the necessity of statues and monuments as intrinsically public artifacts. The case studies of Confederate iconography
included in this thesis serve primarily as guiding artifacts in this evaluation. Among the many challenges that historians and the public alike must contend with when evaluating Confederate statues, is the ever-present knowledge that they were born from a desire to propagate white supremacy. This congenital extremism can never be removed from statues, and therefore this thesis examines only whether or not value can be found in, or ascribed to them, in spite of their abhorrent origins. This is accomplished through qualitative examination only. Quantitative data on public need, perception, or other matters of opinion, has not been gathered as a part of this project.

In order to accomplish this public history evaluation, this thesis examines Confederate iconography in three case studies. Chapter two explores the ways in which municipal government and members of the public have approached and interacted with the potential for preservation, sanctification, obliteration, and others. For the examination of local monuments, the city of Charlottesville, Virginia, serves as a guiding case study.

Chapter three removes local government and the voting public to examine privately funded and semi-privately maintained memorials. This is accomplished through exploration of the curious life of Silent Sam at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In chapter four, the final case study scrutinizes the allowance of military bases to carry Confederate namesakes as iconography that has gone largely unchallenged.

The final chapter revisits the dilemmas posed by the preceding cases studies with the aid of Freeman Tilden seminal publication on the theory and practice of public history, *Interpreting our Heritage*. By applying Tilden’s principles, this thesis will provide the reader with tools of understanding, and perhaps appreciation for the role of statues as essential elements of public history.
The public history perspective acknowledges that no possible solution to the Confederate conundrum is a panacea. It does suggest that the complete elimination of statues and monuments is only a nepenthe. Where statues are removed their legacy will remain uninterpreted, and therefore unmitigated. Alternatively, however, unilateral preservation does equal disservice to the populations that monuments were most often designed to intimidate and subjugate. Only when they are recognized for their potential to serve as the purveyors of properly managed interpretation, do statues and monuments have the potential to bridge divides.

Where they remain, whether by consent of the community or due to inaction, statues that are properly interpreted may yet serve as tools in the ongoing mission of the public historian. This mission is to ensure that history, including the sordid history of the Confederate States, its leaders, and its denial of the humanity of black Americans, is represented as completely as possible. This is not an erasure of controversial pieces of history, nor is it the allowance of damaging mythology to remain. Instead, the mission of the public historian is the desire for the public to appreciate, as described by the two-time Pulitzer Prize winning historian David McCullough that, “history tells us who we were, who we are, and who we will be.” It is the essential quest of the public historian to convey that history is not dead. It informs the future, and can serve as a tool of healing. In these ways, history is alive. History inhabits everyone, and in museums turned mausoleums it does not belong.

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8 David McCullough, “Knowing History and Knowing Who We Are,” (speech, Hillsdale College, Feb. 15, 2005), Hillsdale College, https://tinyurl.com/y4mvso7t.
CHAPTER II
THE CONTROVERSY OF COMMEMORATION: CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA.

Let the stranger who in future time reads this inscription recognize that these were men whom power could not corrupt, whom death could not terrify, whom defeat could not dishonor. Let the Georgians of another generation remember that their state taught them how to live and how to die, and that from her broken fortunes she has preserved for her children the priceless treasures of their memories.

- Inscription on a Confederate Memorial in Elbert, GA.

At the conclusion of the American Civil War in 1865, well over 250,000 Confederate Soldiers had perished.\(^9\) Four years of war had ravished once proud and prosperous cities such as the Confederate capital of Richmond, VA and the port city of Charleston, SC.\(^10\) As the surrender of the Confederacy loomed, appearing to became inevitable, one South Carolinian penned a letter to Governor Gordon Magrath and asked of the pending defeat, “What would become of our honor? To what depth of infamy and disgrace we should sink?”\(^11\) To many, it was unthinkable that the tolls paid by the men and women of the short-lived Confederate States would be for naught. It was from this profound despair that two consolations emerged: the need for commemoration, and the idea of the lost cause.

Referencing a term coined by the Scottish Jacobites, the editor of the Richmond Examiner, Edward A. Pollard, encouraged former Confederates to view their journey as a noble and honorable fight in the face of overwhelming odds, a “lost cause.”\(^12\) Not only was the South a

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\(^10\) At the conclusion of the Civil War, the Union General Sherman wrote, “Anyone who is not satisfied with war should go and see Charleston, and he will pray louder and deeper than ever that the country may in the long future be spared anymore war.” Paul Starobin, *Madness Rules the Hour: Charleston, 1860 and the Mania for War* (New York: Perseus Books Group, 2017), e-book chapter 32.


veritable David to the Goliath that was the North, but Pollard also suggested that citizens of the south need not view defeat as permanent. Pollard’s theory was that the righteous cause for which the Confederates had fought, ostensibly the states’ sovereignty, would never truly disappear. According to Pollard, the South needed only to bide its time, and prepare itself to strike back against the tyrants of the North once it had regained its strength.

A more immediate outlet of catharsis for the grieving southern widows, orphans, and the otherwise humiliated, was the commemoration of those who had laid down their lives for the cause. Not only did statues and ornate cemeteries begin to decorate the land, but other symbols of the Confederacy, such as the Battle Flag of Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia, were venerated as reminders of the men who gave their last full measure of devotion to protect them. Symbols of the Confederacy began to be seen in the South as representing not only what the states had sought to preserve in secession, but also for the remembrance of forbearers as heroes and martyrs.13

In 1983, author John J. Winberry penned one of the first comprehensive reports addressing the existence of Confederate monuments. Winberry wrote that although “Confederate monuments come in all shapes and sizes,” there are four basic types, and locations in which they are found.14 According to Winberry, monuments were generally found at battlefields, cemeteries, courthouses and urban centers, and state capitals throughout the south. At any of those locations, monuments might stylistically appear as: a confederate soldier atop a

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13 Proper commemoration, and celebration of life, was viewed across religions as a necessary element of ensuring a “good death.” Drew Gilpin Faust, This Republic of Suffering (New York: Vintage Books, 2008), 7.
column, soldier atop a column with a weapon or bugle at the ready, an obelisk, or miscellaneous plaques, stones, fountains, and all others.  

The memorials and statues described by Winberry, and other pieces of iconography have often been touted as essential tools of education. In quests for their preservation they are cited as helping to carry forward the proud, if long-repressed heritage of the south. The adoption of this essential philosophy has grounded the primary defense of Confederate memorials, which is that no race-based disrespect is ever intended. Memorials simply commemorate those who honorably stood against a war of northern aggression.

This ideology is clearly exemplified by a towering statue of an armed Confederate soldier perched atop an obelisk in the main plaza of Elberton, Georgia. This hybrid of Winberry’s first and third styles carries on its base a call to remember both the idea of the lost cause, as well as the heroic service of fallen Confederate soldiers.

Let the stranger who in future time reads this inscription recognize that these were men whom power could not corrupt, whom death could not terrify, whom defeat could not dishonor. Let the Georgians of another generation remember that their state taught them how to live and how to die, and that from her broken fortunes she has preserved for her children the priceless treasures of their memories.

By contrast, opponents have long criticized the role of Confederate iconography in acts of overt racism and violence. In addition to the murders committed in Charleston by a devout neo-Confederate, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) identified 130 separate active divisions of the Ku Klux Klan in 2016. The SPLC warned of a “cross ideological appeal,” in which neo-Confederates easily gravitated to the ideologies of neo-Nazis and other hate groups.

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15 This thesis uses the term statue and monument interchangeably. Winberry, 20.
The SPLC cautioned that this cross of ideologies would empower violent confrontation based on a perception of strength in numbers by previously isolated extremists.\(^{18}\)

In the immediate aftermath of the murders in Charleston, interest in removing public displays of Confederate symbols, including statues, monuments, and the Confederate battle flag increased dramatically. Statues of Confederate generals began to be challenged as misplaced monuments that served to perpetuate the myth of the lost cause, or worse still, to provide advertising for the appeal of cross ideological extremism. In South Carolina, where the mass shooting perpetrated by the self-identified neo-Confederate occurred, the state legislature voted to remove the Confederate flag from its previous place of display atop the state capitol building.\(^{19}\) In New Orleans, Mayor Mitch Landrieu sought and received the approval of the city council to remove statues that commemorated the racially motivated Battle of Liberty Place, an attack on the city’s integrated police force that occurred in 1875.\(^{20}\)

In Virginia, the state which harbors the most Confederate memorials of any, the City of Charlottesville proposed a similar plan of action to remove statues that venerated Confederate leaders.\(^{21}\) Charlottesville gained notoriety among its peers when the proposal by its city government was met with an unusually fervent resistance that culminated in an explosion of violence in August, 2017. In Charlottesville the members of various fringe groups brought together by Jason Kessler under the title “Unite the Right,” clashed with counter protestors, popularly described as “anti-fascists,” in dramatic and deadly confrontations. As in the case of the murders committed at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, the violence in

\(^{19}\) Stephanie McCrummen and Elahe Izadi, “Confederate Flag Comes Down on South Carolina’s Statehouse Grounds,” *Washington Post* July 10, 2015. 
\(^{21}\) Virginia has been identified as the home of more than 200 Confederate statues and monuments. https://www.splcenter.org/data-projects/whose-heritage.
Charlottesville once again propelled the debate on Confederate monuments to the forefront of national conversation.

Unlike many communities in the state of Virginia, which was host to the battles of Manassas and Appomattox Courthouse among others, the City of Charlottesville evaded major violence during the American Civil War. The unique and delicate architecture of Thomas Jefferson’s home, Monticello, and the University of Virginia (UVA) were spared the unmitigated destruction experienced by many cities of the Old Dominion. Today, Monticello and the Central Grounds at UVA enjoy designation as UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Many additional historic sites, such as the nearby home of President James Monroe, add to the abundance of publically accessible and highly capitalized history of Charlottesville.

Out of the many iconic, and traditionally cherished facets of public history in Charlottesville, two incongruous statues became the subject of heated debate following the racially motivated murders in Charleston. The statues, depicting the Confederate Generals Robert E. Lee and “Stonewall” Jackson perched atop fantastically tall horses, were commissioned in 1917 and fully erected by 1924. The documentation nominating the statues to the National Register of Historic Places argues that their historic significance stems from their

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connection to the City Beautiful Movement; a nationwide campaign to bring vitality to urban centers with parks, art, and elegant architecture.\textsuperscript{25}

Figure 1 – Statue of Confederate General Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson in Charlottesville, VA.

Critics, such as the then 16-year old Charlottesville high school student Zyahna Bryant, rebut that Confederate statues erected in the 20\textsuperscript{th} Century were intended only to eternalize the Confederate fight for white supremacy. Bryant inadvertently brought national attention to the statues in Charlottesville when she penned a letter to the city council describing her daily interaction with them. In her letter, Bryant wrote, “I’m reminded over and over again of the pain of my ancestors and all the fighting they had to go through for us to be where we are now. I feel disgusted that my city wants to display a statue that celebrates my ancestors’ pain.”\textsuperscript{26} Bryant’s letter became an online petition, was signed by several hundred residents of Charlottesville, and

\textsuperscript{25} The City Beautiful Movement impacted major cities across the United States, including Denver, Colorado, as guided by Mayor Robert Speer. Thomas J. Noel and Nicholas J. Warton, Denver Landmarks & Historic Districts (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2016), 5.

garnered the attention of both the Charlottesville city council, as well as the ardent opponents of the removal of monuments.27

Advocates for the unilateral preservation of the statues of Jackson and Lee in Charlottesville responded with the claim that those who sought their removal lacked the cultural, if not legal, standing to do so. It was suggested that only transplants and other non-natives called for the removal of Confederate statutes, an idea supported by a Virginia gubernatorial candidate who tweeted “nothing is worse than a Yankee telling a southerner that his monuments don’t matter.”28 As city council members vocalized their support for removal, they were met with campaigns to recall and unseat the elected officials, which often monopolized discussion at city council meetings.29

It would not be until late January, 2016 that the Charlottesville City Council secured the votes necessary to pass their proposal to remove the statues of Lee and Jackson.30 Stymied only by a lawsuit and temporary injunction, the intention of the local government was clear: the monuments would be removed as quickly as legal challenges could be overcome.31 Legally unable to expediently remove the statues of Lee and Jackson, city counselors turned to different

31 At the time of this writing, legal action remains pending in court.
approaches to restorative justice. In July of 2018, the statues’ place of residence, formerly named in honor of General Lee, was officially renamed Emancipation Park.\(^\text{32}\)

A primary opponent of both the removal of the statues, as well as the renaming of the park, was Charlottesville native Jason Kessler. Described by friends and family as chronically unemployed, Kessler ran a website on which he posted attacks against the Charlottesville City Councilman Wes Bellamy, whom Kessler identified as the leader of the movement to remove controversial statues.\(^\text{33}\) Kessler also posted messages to his blog claiming that he could not find a date because, “women hate nice guys.”\(^\text{34}\) In May of 2017, Kessler partnered with the well-known white nationalist Richard Spencer to bring to Charlottesville a protest against the removal of the Emancipation Park statues.

Following what Kessler perceived to be success of the well-attended and peaceful protest led by Spencer, Kessler determined to lead another protest, and scheduled it to occur in August. Given the title “Unite the Right,” the protest was legally organized, and ostensibly designed to peacefully voice opposition to the planned removal of Lee’s statue. Kessler, however, secretly encouraged attendees to prepare for violence, writing in a message “we should bring picket signs that can be used as sticks to bludgeon our enemies if they get violent.”\(^\text{35}\) Kessler’s protests began in the late evening of August 11, with a large and coordinated group marching to the statue of Thomas Jefferson, the center point of the University of Virginia.

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\(\text{34}\) It has been noted by clinical psychologists, such as Dr. Peter Langman, that relationship failures are reliably seen as precursors to violent behavior. Peter Langman, \textit{School Shooters: Understanding High School, College, and Adult Perpetrators} (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015), 171.

The Unite the Right protesters carried household variety “tiki” torches that illuminated the night sky with an orange glow. As they marched, they were observed to chant phrases such as “blood and soil,” and “Jews will not replace us.” Kessler’s forewarning of the possibility of violence came to fruition as a small group of counter protestors deployed pepper spray, and skirmished with the larger group while law enforcement appeared largely absent.

By daylight the following morning, the protests and clashes continued. Agreements made by Kessler for the use of public space in Charlottesville, and the division of his protesters from counter protestors, were either accidentally or intentionally ignored. Members of the two groups fought physically in all areas of the city, leading law enforcement to declare that all events were “unlawful assembly,” by 11:22 AM. Police officers, however, remained what many considered to be notably un-involved.

At approximately 1:15 PM, the violence in Charlottesville reached its terrible crescendo, when a vehicle driven by James Alex Fields plowed into a crowd of counter protestors on a

![Figure 2 - “Unite the Right” demonstrators carry Confederate flags adjacent to a Nazi flag at the August, 2017 Charlottesville rally. Photo from New York Times, accessed Feb 5, 2019, www.nytimes.com.](image)

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37 Ibid.
Charlottesville street. 19 were injured in the attack, and 32-year-old Heather Heyer was killed.\textsuperscript{38} Witnesses verified that Fields first drove intentionally into one group of counter-protesters, and then reversed his vehicle into yet another. Days after the violent protests, Jason Kessler responded by tweeting, “Heather Heyer was a fat, disgusting, Communist [sic]. Looks like it was payback time.”\textsuperscript{39} Kessler’s act of calling like-minded supporters to arms, and Fields’ literal response to the call, can be seen as the dangerous realization of the crossed ideology forewarned by the SPLC. It is proof that the ideologies espoused by Confederate statues are and can be deadly.

The need to prevent the removal of statues in Charlottesville was likely driven by an unconscious dedication to the myth of the lost cause. The Confederacy, and indeed the south itself, had been defeated before. To lose the statues that commemorated Confederate heroes would be a second defeat, one worth killing to prevent. According to historian David Lowenthall, the need to protect heritage rather than history finds its roots in a Sikh mantra. According to Lowenthall, traditional Sikh wisdom advises, “If wealth is lost, nothing is lost. If health is lost, something is lost. If character is lost, much is lost. If heritage is lost, you are lost.”\textsuperscript{40} The mantra cited by Lowenthall also contributes to an explanation of the differences between history and heritage. The latter is more so a contrived understanding of identity, the former a more provable and tangible examination of people and places.

Less than fully 24 hours after Kessler’s protestors had marched on the University of Virginia, two more would perish when a Virginia State Police helicopter crashed on its return from monitoring the events of the day. More than a year later in December of 2018, James Alex

Fields would be found guilty of first degree murder in the death of Heather Heyer. A Virginia jury recommended that Fields receive a sentence of life imprisonment. In the aftermath of the deadly protests the City of Charlottesville ordered the statues of Lee and Jackson covered with black tarps to symbolically mourn the deaths of Heather Heyer, and Virginia State Police officers Lt. Henry Cullen III, and Berke Morgan Mathew Bates. Even the symbolic action of temporarily covering the statues was met with criticism. Activists on more than one occasion attempted to cut down the tarps, and a court quickly ruled that the shrouds could remain only temporarily, until a reasonable period of mourning had passed.

The chaos in Charlottesville, refocused nationwide attention to the issues presented by Confederate related statues and monuments. It was clear that they would be both passionately defended, and also denounced as powerful instigators of violence. Further complicating the debate was the official statement from U.S. President Donald Trump. When asked about his delayed response to the Charlottesville violence, the President replied “I’ve condemned neo-Nazis… But not all of those people were neo-Nazis, believe me…You also had some very fine people on both sides.” The President also posited a traditional slippery slope argument saying to reporters, “This week it’s Robert E. Lee and I notice that Stonewall Jackson is coming down.

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42 Fields was spared a death sentence in Virginia, which executes the highest proportion of those sentenced to death of any state. He is still facing federal hate crime charges which may result in a death sentence. “Studies: Virginia Leads in Death Sentences Resulting in Executions,” Death Penalty Information Center, accessed Feb. 5, 2019, https://tinyurl.com/yxouzaeh.
I wonder, is it George Washington next week? And is it Thomas Jefferson the week after? You know, you have to ask yourself, where does it stop?\textsuperscript{46}

The larger implication of the slippery slope argument is that the opponents of Confederate statues will inevitably come to oppose any veneration of national leadership, and eschew the patriotic recognition of all heroes and founders. Monument supporters correctly point out that virtually all of the United States’ founding fathers were known slave owners, and that historians have investigated claims that Thomas Jefferson even fathered illegitimate children with an enslaved maid.\textsuperscript{47}

Yet, Washington and Jefferson are continuously commemorated in places of prominence, such as their namesake monuments, and on American currency. Their contributions to history have been evaluated and it is clear that there are major differences in the


\textsuperscript{47} On this question the Thomas Jefferson Foundation equivocates, noting that children were fathered years after the death of Jefferson’s wife, and referring to Sally Hemmings as a “domestic servant.” Regardless of any uncertainty, the power dynamic present undoubtedly prevented a consensual relationship. “Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings: A Brief Account,” Thomas Jefferson Foundation, accessed Feb. 5, 2019. https://tinyurl.com/jj6948s.
lives of Confederate generals, and of the founding figures. While Lee is best known for leading a rebellion designed to fracture the unity of the nation, Washington is often remembered for holding an unwavering belief in the power of a cohesive, democratic government.48 David A. Bell, a professor of history at Princeton University, further articulated this response to the questionable danger of veneration in an article for the *Washington Post*.

Few, if any, prominent figures of the past lived up to the moral standards of 21st century Americans. Taken to the extreme this would mean tearing down the Washington Monument. Countries need their history. They need their heroes and leaders to venerate… Lee’s case is clear cut. Whatever personal qualities he may have had, he was also a man who took up arms against his country in defense of an evil institution.49

A persistent questioning of whose likeness deserves to be forever preserved in bronze, stone, or postage stamp, is unarguably a necessary and logical component of public history. The consistently arising conundrum, is the question of to whom the power to decide is, or should be delegated. In Charlottesville, the elected city council was presumed to act on behalf of the interests of the citizens. Zyahna Bryant expressed a concern, which was supported by many of her fellow citizens, and their petition was ultimately heard by the governing agents with the power to take corrective action. That those opposed to removing statues were outnumbered, and outvoted, suggests that the events in Charlottesville can be seen as democracy in action.

The public historian must continue evaluate and advise, if for no other reason than to counter the opposition claim that the democratic action seen in Charlottesville is destroying the fabric of national history. U.S. Vice President Mike Pence expressed this concern, saying to a reporter “what we have to walk away from is the desire to erase parts of our history just in the


name of some contemporary political issue.” In even less poetic commentary, Maine Governor Paul LePage said of the pro-removal movement, “they’re trying to erase history. How can future generations learn if they erase history?” The idea expressed by Pence and LePage is logically fallacious. The events of history cannot be undone, and memory cannot simply be expunged. History remains. The lasting impact of history, and the lessons learned, or not learned, are all that can be altered by the removal of statues and other iconography from public places.

Writing about the role of Confederate statues in public history, University of Virginia Professor of History Kirk von Daacke, urged readers to remember that the practice of memorialization constantly evolves. In a written interview with NBC News, von Daacke wrote, “rethinking the memorial landscape – whether that involves moving memorials, adding new memorials, and/or reshaping how the memorials are viewed – is a necessary step in creating a more inclusive history and more historic public spaces.” Not only are growth and change expected in the practice of public history, but where they occur, they do little to erase the memory of previous commemoration. The lasting impact of statues is clearly demonstrated by one of the first recorded cases of the forced removal of a controversial statue in American history.

On July 9, 1776 a large crowd attached ropes to a statue of King George III in Bowling Green, New York, and tore down the sculpture in celebration of the recently signed Declaration of Independence. The lead figure was promptly melted down to produce ammunition for the

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fledgling Continental Army. Though the statue of King George was contemporary, and could hardly have been considered an artifact in 1776, its removal did represent a desire to be symbolically rid of British governance entirely.


Were it possible for the act of removing the statue of George III to have completely obliterated the memory of British rule, the fall of the statue would not have been commemorated in painting fully 72 years later by the artist Johannes Adam Simon Oertel. King George III and his likeness remain in educational curriculum, and in collective memory. Only the landscape of memorialization changed when the statue fell. As with Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Nathan Bedford Forrest, and others, no controversial figure can simply and willfully be erased from the face of history.

Following the protests turned riots in Charlottesville, the city remained at the mercy of its previously pending court case, which has not yet been resolved at the time of this writing. Other U.S. cities and towns, however, expedited the removal of Confederate monuments citing the potential for violence demonstrated in Charlottesville. In Annapolis, Maryland a statue of the Supreme Court Justice and author of the majority opinion in the case of Dred Scott v. Sanford, Roger B. Taney, was removed from the grounds of the state capitol. As far west as Helena, Montana a monument erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy was removed at the request of state legislators. The post Charlottesville upsurge of removal inspired President Donald Trump to once again comment via Twitter writing, “Sad to see the history of and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments. you can’t change history, but you can learn from it.”

The recurring suggestion, as twice articulated by President Trump, that the act of removing monuments and statues serves to alter one or more aspects of American history, fails to understand and account for the history that monuments were erected to convey. Most often, this was not a complete story of the rise and fall of the Confederate States, but rather the

56 Ibid.
mythical history of the lost cause. Unlike the tombstones of Confederate cemeteries, statues such as those of Lee and Jackson were regularly erected years after the conclusion of the Civil War. The statues of the two Confederate Generals in Charlottesville were among many monuments not so much designed to commemorate the more than 200,000 fallen Confederate soldiers, but to lay the foundation for what University of Chicago professor Jane Dailey described as “a white supremacist future.”


Figure 5 - A political cartoon by Kevin Kallaugher of the Baltimore Sun depicts the opposition to Confederate Monuments, and implies the support of President Donald Trump for the cause of the Confederacy in the Civil War. Photo from Baltimore Sun, accessed February 5, 2019, www.baltimoresun.com.

The racist underpinnings of Confederate statues are frequently found completely undisguised in the documentation of their origin. This will be seen in the study of Silent Sam, in chapter three of this thesis. Others, such as the many Confederate statues of New Orleans, Louisiana, were outed later by their nominations to the National Register of Historic Places. In describing the historic background of statues in New Orleans being nominated to the register, it
was written “Like tragic heroes, Southerners had waged a noble but doomed struggle to preserve their superior civilization… This was the ‘lost cause’ and a whole generation of southerners set about glorifying and celebrating it.”59

This misguided view of history has been identified as a primary reason why Confederate statues should be removed, and why President Trump is incorrect in his evaluation that do so is tantamount to the destruction of current national identity. Said Professor of History at the University of North Carolina, Karen L. Cox, “todays defenders of Confederate monuments are either unaware of the historical context or do not care. Like generations of whites before them, they are more invested in the mythology that has attached itself to these sentinels of white supremacy, because it serves their cause.” Washington Post contributor Benjamin Dueholm expounded on the position put forth by Cox writing, “Any argument to preserve them [Confederate monuments] in their places of prominence, however earnestly protective of ‘history’ must first acknowledge that their very presence served to help people not remember, but to forget. Until that forgetting is undone, they will never do anything else.”60 This is essentially the same argument presented by Zyahna Bryant, that the statue of Lee in Charlottesville failed to acknowledge, and even suppressed the history of the suffering incurred by her ancestors.

The argument represented in Charlottesville by Bryant, Dueholm, Cox, and others, is that monuments, as they currently stand, do not accurately represent or convey a complete picture of history. Instead, they are a dangerous weapon designed to subvert both the civil rights movement, and what the Confederacy viewed as a tyrannical federal government. The historian

Charles Royster has even suggested that Confederate monuments install in the minds of the masses permission to live by the maxim of the 18th century philosopher Voltaire. “If we believe absurdities,” said Voltaire, “we shall commit atrocities.” Royster’s repetition of Voltaire is a warning worth considering. The absurdity of the Charlottesville statues may be as innocuous as the idea that they were installed to beautify a city already steeped in diverse architectural history. However, the atrocities that they and other statues have inspired may well include the murder of the nine parishioners at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, and the murder of Heather Heyer in Charlottesville.

Though the public history perspective would nonetheless encourage the residents of Charlottesville to revisit what interpretation might be added to the statues of Lee and Jackson where they stand, while they remain standing for the purposes of education, the public historian must also yield to the democratic consensus. In Charlottesville, this is the desire to remove the statues of Lee and Jackson from public space without expending further time or finances to first add components of interpretation. The collective voice of the public majority has proclaimed that as elements of history, Confederate statues belong in museums of history. Or if they are only relics of a moribund society and lifestyle, perhaps they belong in junkyards and landfills. The collective voice has also proclaimed that the public seeks the fulfillment of these requests no matter the challenge involved. It is in no way the task of the public historian to filibuster these decisions.

In this quest the Citizens of Charlottesville have already been, and continue to be, brutally rebuffed and criticized by pundits across the United States. Journalists nationwide

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62 The cost of removing the statues in Charlottesville was estimated by the city government to be at least $400,000. See more on the challenges of removal in chapter V.
rapidly weaponized the writing of the English novelist George Orwell and his landmark
dystopian novel, 1984. In a widely circulated excerpt of the novel, a character laments that,
“every book has been rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street has
been renamed... And this process is continuing day by day, minute by minute. History has
stopped.”63 Said New York Post opinion writer Seth Lipsky, “Orwell’s wisdom suggests Trump
was smart to raise the question of where all of this going.”64 Shaming the members of the pro-
removal movement by implied association, John Kass of the Chicago Tribune wrote, “destroying
public imagery and iconography isn’t the kind of thing Americans do. Actually it’s the kind of
thing that ISIS does.”65 Writing from a more superficially practical perspective, Stony Brook
University professor Michelle H. Bogart cautioned that when statues are removed, “the
meanings and the history that we are able to draw from them in a different site, especially a sort
of sanitized site like a museum are not going to be the same. That’s a historical loss.”66

Bogart’s opinion appeals to the emotional connection of historians to the value of raw
artifacts, and the idea that preserved history is inherently history that can be learned from. As
will be reiterated by the final chapter of this thesis, the reality that the public historian must
remember is that without carefully applied interpretation, artifacts do not serve as tools of
education. Writing about heritage tourism, the historian Thomas S. Bremer cautioned
practitioners to remember that traditionally, the field has been designed to appeal to those who

63 Seth Lipsky, “A Warning from George Orwell on the ‘Monument Wars.’” New York Post, Aug
64 Ibid.
65 John Kass, “While We’re Toppling Offensive Symbols, What About the Democratic Party?,”
66 Robin Pargrebin and Sopan Deb, “Trump Aside, Artists and Preservationists Debate Rush to
seek to “indulge themselves in the romantic fantasy of an imagined past.” The late historian Hal Rothman further expounded on this concern, coining the term “the cosmology of affirmation,” to describe a uniquely American willful blindness to the realities of the past and present. According to Rothman, it is a significant problem that Americans have historically expected to be able to freely encounter “sets of signs and symbols,” which they have “relied on to convince themselves that all was right in the world, when abundant evidence to the contrary existed.” The criticism of many pundits is likely born from a desire to resist the removal of familiar icons and landmarks, even though they have long provided misguided affirmation.

Further still, what few pundits have acknowledged is that the voice of the Charlottesville majority includes the opinion of one of the Confederate leaders whose very legacy the city has ostensibly commemorated for 95 years. In August of 1869, Robert E. Lee was invited to the dedication of memorial markers at the Gettysburg battlefield. The former Confederate General responded with his regrets in a letter, that although brief, has come to be held as the ultimate rejoinder to the claim that memorialization of the Confederate States is essential to American society.

Dear Sir - Absence from Lexington prevented my receiving until to-day your letter of the 26th ult., inclosing an invitation from the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association… My engagements will not permit me to be present. I believe if there, I could not add anything material to the information existing on the subject. I think it wiser, moreover, not to keep open the sores of war but to follow the examples of those nations who endeavored to obliterate the marks of civil strife, to commit to oblivion the feelings engendered. Very respectfully. Your obedient servant, R.E. Lee.

CHAPTER III

AN IMMOVEABLE MONUMENT: SILENT SAM AT UNC CHAPEL HILL

We are routinely told that the reason monuments to the thankfully departed Confederate States of America litter the landscape... i.e. “Silent Sam” is because this is merely a monument to history and that depositing this monstrosity where it belongs in the nearest museum would be like stowing away history.

- Gerald Greene, Professor of Communication, UNC Chapel Hill

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH) first welcomed students into its classrooms in 1795.¹ Because of its age and storied past, its very campus can be regarded as a living museum. It is replete with period architecture and a variety of monuments that recognize influential figures and moments in its history. Arguably no monument, memorial, or building at UNC-CH is more commonly recognized than one that stands at McCorkle Place, the northern end of the sprawling campus.² The statue, cast in bronze and set atop a towering stone base of light grey granite in a combination of John Winberry’s first and second styles, is known most commonly by its local moniker: Silent Sam.³

The officially titled UNC Confederate Memorial has become a rare emblem of success for those who oppose the removal of Confederate statues and monuments. It is a monument that has proven almost immoveable, but immoveable not for a lack of protests, controversy, and political pressure from students and community members alike. Rather, Silent Sam was made immoveable by the unwavering support of the University itself. Citing an intricate web of claims

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² McCorkle Place is a pedestrian plaza at the main entrance to campus that faces Franklin Street, a historic Chapel Hill thoroughfare. “McCorkle Place,” accessed Feb. 5, 2019, https://gradschool.unc.edu/funding/gradschool/weiss/interesting_place/landmarks/mccorkle.html.
³ When writing began on this thesis, evidence suggested that Silent Sam was likely to remain unaltered for years to come. In 2018, the statue was torn down by protestors. Rather than altering all wording to reflect the past tense, the decision was made to allow this chapter to examine a statue that was unalterable by all but brute force.
to ownership, pride in the history of the statue, and controversial state historic preservation laws, UNC-CH has tacitly and explicitly insisted that the monument must remain unaltered.

In 1908, The United Daughters of the Confederacy submitted a request to the Board of Trustees at UNC-CH seeking the allowance of a statue to be erected on campus grounds. Its stated purpose was to commemorate the university students who had joined the forces of the Confederate States in the United States Civil War. The statue’s construction, as with many Confederate-related monuments across the United States, was timed to coincide with the 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the conclusion of the Civil War in 1911. The Board of Trustees at UNC-CH approved the request for the statue’s construction with the stipulation that UNC-CH would not provide any funding. The United Daughters of the Confederacy would pay for one-third of the cost, while alumni were solicited to cover any remaining expenses. However, when fundraising stalled six years later, administrators at the University of North Carolina quietly acquiesced to paying the final five hundred dollars needed to complete the monument’s construction.

The Canadian artist John A. Wilson was commissioned to design and create the monument, at a total cost of $7,500. Wilson’s choice to model for the statue was a young Bostonian, 16-year-old Harold Langlois, whose likeness also lives forever in the representation of a Union soldier installed by Wilson in Brownfield, Maine. Unveiled to the public in 1913, the nameless Confederate soldier faces northward, ready to guard against an onslaught of aggression against his native South.

On the face of his pedestal, a bronze relief depicts a woman clad in a light dress,

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5 Ibid.
7 Teresa Leonard, “UNC's Silent Sam Statue was Unveiled in 1913 Ceremony,” News & Observer (Raleigh, NC), June 1, 2015.
designed to represent North Carolina. The woman rests her hand on the shoulder of a student, calling him to take up arms for the Confederacy. Although the soldier atop the pedestal grasps a rifle with both hands, he lacks the ammunitions belt commonly worn by Confederate soldiers. His rifle, were it real, could never be fired. It is from this perpetual handicap that the colloquial name of the monument, *Silent Sam*, was coined in 1954.8

The Nova Scotian sculptor Wilson once quipped that he was selected to create the monument solely because “no other northerner would do it.”9 Wilson may have been flippant, but his is an assertion supported by the fact that his creation lacks any inscription of his name, which is uncommon of works of art. This suggests that Wilson may have known that from the

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9 Teresa Leonard, “UNC’s Silent Sam Statue was Unveiled in 1913 Ceremony,” *News & Observer* (Raleigh, NC), June 1, 2015.
time of its dedication, the *UNC Confederate Monument* would be seen and treated as a sacred memorial to martyrs, rather than as a piece of public art, or as a purveyor of complete and accurate history.\(^{10}\)

In 1997 author Kenneth Foote claimed in his book, *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, that monuments and memorials tend to commemorate, and arise from, several specific situations. Foote wrote that one such catalyst, the veneration of heroes and martyrs, “can be found in every village and town that has had one of its children succeed.”\(^{11}\) In the case of the *UNC Confederate Memorial*, the veneration is of a large group of the University’s ‘children’ who died for fighting for the Confederate States.

As public opinion and perception of the Confederate cause has changed and evolved, the widely desired approach to the memorial at UNC-CH has shifted to yet another scenario examined by Foote: obliteration. As described by Foote, obliteration “stems from the wish to hide violence and forget tragedy.” Obliteration, Foote clarifies, is “almost the inverse of sanctification, which occurs when a community seeks to memorialize a tragedy, remember an event, and honor its victims.”\(^{12}\) This is the same suggestion made by Robert E. Lee for the site of the Gettysburg battle and historic markers everywhere, “to commit to oblivion the feelings engendered.”\(^{13}\)

Although obliteration is perhaps the closest historiographical theory that can be assigned

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\(^{10}\) The sculptor Wilson also pleaded with the University President to be given the contract to sculpt *Silent Sam*, writing that he was in desperate need of the money following the death of his mother. Letter from John A. Wilson to University President F.P. Venable, in the University of North Carolina Papers #40005, University Archives, Wilson Library, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.


\(^{12}\) Foote, 176.

to the pro-removal movement, it is not likely one that activists would willingly subscribe to. The response to the criticism that activists are destroying heritage, and erasing history, is that activists have no desire to hide the sordid stories of the past. Instead, those who have called for the removal of Confederate monuments espouse a mantra repeated with such frequency that it has become a veritable slogan: Confederate memorials belong inside of museums.

When asked about the nature of his criticism of Confederate monuments, opinion journalist Berny Belvedere wrote, “I’m not even saying that Confederate soldiers don’t deserve to be memorialized. But perhaps it’s not too much to relocate those who fought for the continued bondage of their fellow human beings to a museum.”\(^4\) A museum curator in Maine expressed to a local newspaper, “In a museum or archive, researchers and visitors can study such symbols within a larger context.”\(^5\) Said Jacob Kowalski of dailycampus.com, “to paraphrase Indiana Jones, they belong in a museum.”\(^6\)

The pro-removal movement holds as foundational to the cause a 2016 study undertaken by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which found that significant increases in the construction of Confederate monuments have occurred twice in the twentieth-century. The first increase in proliferation aligned with the 50\(^{th}\) anniversary of the end of the Civil War. Half a century later, the second increase accompanied the 100\(^{th}\) anniversary.\(^7\)

With the release of its study, the Southern Poverty Law Center asserted that a majority of the monuments created around the anniversaries of the Civil War were attempts for white

Southerners to “cling to the myth of the lost cause as a noble endeavor fought to defend the region’s honor and its ability to govern itself in the face of Northern aggression.”\(^{18}\) A recurring argument raised against the persistence of Confederate monuments, as evaluated in chapter II of this thesis, is that Confederate statues were erected to remind black Americans that they would forever be subservient to the southern white Americans who refuse to acknowledge their own defeat in the Civil War. Rather than being crucial elements of history, statues have been described by their detractors as symbols of terror and intimidation, which do not belong in public places.

Dedicated in 1913, Silent Sam falls barely outside of the first visible peak in Confederate monument expansion. In this regard, the monument is an anomaly. It is perhaps not exclusively a product of the Jim Crow era, which when confined to a timeline is often accepted to have commenced in the 1870s and continued through the 1950s.\(^ {19}\) Neither was the monument directly produced by the Ku Klux Klan, whose nation-wide presence reached one of several recognizable peaks in 1920.\(^ {20}\) Still, the opponents of Silent Sam are adamant that despite the year of its unveiling, the existence of the statue has little to nothing to do with honoring fallen Confederate veterans, and rather that it was built as a tool designed to advance the hegemony of Southern white culture in North Carolina. O.J. McGhee, Chair of the Carolina Black Caucus, said “It [Silent Sam] was erected purposefully to remind all who walk in its shadow, that no


matter our advancements as a people, we would always be viewed as not equal and
unwelcome.”

Critics of the UNC Confederate Monument point specifically to its dedication speech,
delivered by UNC-CH alumnus and Confederate veteran Julian Carr. In a speech in which Carr
thanked Confederate veterans for “saving the very life of the Anglo Saxon race in the South,” he
also digressed to tell a personal tale of his disdain for black Americans. Carr spoke of how very
near to the site of the monument being dedicated, he had personally “horse-whipped a negro
wench until her skirts hung in shreds, because upon the streets of this quiet village she had
publicly insulted and maligned a Southern lady.”

Carr’s words have been repeatedly held as demonstrable proof that the statue Silent Sam
is inseparable from institutionalized slavery, racism, and oppression. So much so that the
monument is egregious, perhaps even for North Carolina, which is second only to Virginia in
the number of Confederate monuments that can be counted within its borders. Said W.
Fitzhugh Brundage, Chairman of the UNC-CH department of history, “There are very few
shrines as unambiguously representative of white privilege and white power.”

Detractors also note that a more inclusive monument to UNC students who served and
died in various wars and conflicts was erected on campus in 2007. The Carolina Alumni Memorial
in Memory of Those Lost in Military Service lists fallen alumni who served in both the Union, and

21 Lisa Phillip, “Debate Over Silent Sam Reveals Differing View of University’s History,”
22 Hilary N. Green, “Julian Carr’s Speech at the Dedication of Silent Sam,” University of
23 “Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy,” Southern Poverty Law Center,
24 Adam Harris, “As Support Grows for Ditching Confederate Statues, Colleges Weigh Their
25 “In Memorial to Carolina’s War Dead,” Carolina Alumni Review, April 25, 2007,
https://alumni.unc.edu/news/war-memorial-complete-list/.
Confederate armies during the Civil War. Unlike *Silent Sam*, the memorial installed in 2007 does not bear the likeness of any soldier, or other military icons. Its inscriptions list only the names of alumni who have been verified as having served, and died, in battle or in training missions from the War of 1812 to the conflict in Afghanistan.

Throughout its history, *Silent Sam* has consistently been a site of controversy, and a gathering ground for protests. Following the conclusion of all Rodney King-related court cases in 1992, protestors gathered at *Silent Sam* in solidarity with rioters in Los Angeles. At more peaceful times, *Silent Sam* has been the end point of Martin Luther King Jr., Day marches, although it was defaced following the assassination of the civil rights leader in 1968.\(^26\)

![Carolina Alumni Memorial in Memory of Those Lost in Military Service](https://museum.unc.edu/items/show/1762)

*Figure 7 – The Carolina Alumni Memorial in Memory of Those Lost in Military Service. Smith, Maggie, artist, “Carolina Alumni Memorial in Memory of Those Lost in Military Service” Carolina Story: Virtual Museum of University History, accessed February 5, 2019, https://museum.unc.edu/items/show/1762.*

Whether targeted in protest, or competitive jest, *Silent Sam* has also been the frequent object of vandalism during sporting events. While cleaning paint off of the pedestal of the statue, a groundskeeper was once reported to have said “we have to do this after every darn home

On a website promoting the sites of its campus to prospective students, UNC-CH attempted to downplay the role of the statue as a place of protest, claiming instead that “Nowadays, many students view Silent Sam as simply another place to sit on a warm spring afternoon.” This tepid statement from the graduate school is not, however, indicative of the prevailing attitude of the UNC-CH administration regarding the existence of the statue.

The Controversial UNC Confederate Memorial has been allowed to remain standing at McCorkle Place because of the tacit and explicit support of the University administration. Were it not for stalwart trustees and chancellors, there would be arguably little reason to doubt that the student body, faculty, and local population alike would have long ago forced the removal of the statue. Protests and calls for the removal of the UNC Confederate Monument are documented as far back as 1959, but are commonly accepted to have begun in earnest in 1967.

In May of 1967, the poet John Beecher, a relative of the famous abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe, held what he described as a debate. The poet stood on the upper quad next to the monument, and read to the statue the tales of suffering incurred by slaves and black Americans, as recounted in his book To Live and Die in Dixie. Protests have been noted to appear yearly ever since, though they occur with varying degrees of poetry versus vandalism.

In 2003, communications professor Gerald C. Horne utilized a semi-poetic comparison to contemporary world events to inspire pro-removal protestors. In an opinion letter to the student newspaper, The Daily Tar Heel, Green wrote that in the same way that statues of Saddam

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Hussein were actively being destroyed in Iraq, so too should *Silent Sam* be forcefully removed from the UNC campus.

We are routinely told that the reason monuments to the thankfully departed Confederate States of America litter the landscape... i.e. “Silent Sam” is because this is merely a monument to history and that depositing this monstrosity where it belongs in the nearest museum would be like stowing away history. So where are the voices on this campus bellowing in outrage against Iraqis “destroying their history”?...Rather than cheering the pulling down of statues in Iraq, residents of Chapel Hill should be insisting on removing the Confederate eyesores that dominate this campus, this state, and this region.  

The University responded to Horne’s call to arms with a statement of unequivocal support of the monument. A spokesperson’s written comment to the local television news station WRAL was that, “The statue is part of the universities [sic] history, and there are no plans to remove it. UNC embraces diversity and has several buildings named after prominent African Americans.”

Even when an anonymous letter claiming to represent an additional 17 senior faculty members delivered an ultimatum to the university threatening the forceful removal of the statue, Chancellor Carol Folt held firm, and the deadline passed with no such action.

Though *Silent Sam* remained standing, pressure continued to mount against the University’s position. In 2011, a community group calling itself The Real Silent Sam was founded based on a mission “to ensure that we acknowledge our wrongs to gain perspective necessary to collectively build a more just future.” Less than one year after its formation, The

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Real Silent Sam was joined by the department of Anthropology at UNC-CH, which called for additional interpretive signage to be added to the monument.

The Department of Anthropology, and the advocacy group The Real Silent Sam, argued that visitors had the right to be made aware that the statue commemorated white supremacy equally as much as fallen Confederate soldiers.\(^{34}\) On a makeshift website, the Real Silent Sam coalition wrote “Our intent is not to remove monuments, or revise history; rather we seek to challenge the university to provide a more complete historical narrative.”\(^{35}\) Recognizing the need for interpretation would bring the monument in line with other controversial memorials, such as The Colorado Civil War Monument, which was amended in 2014 to recognize the events at Sand Creek as a massacre, rather than a battle.\(^{36}\) The proposal by The Real Silent Sam, and the Department of Anthropology for added interpretation would, however, be the only audible suggestion from within the University that value could be found in leaving the statue at its original location.

As The Real Silent Sam lobbied for additional interpretation to be added, tensions escalated when the perpetrator of the Charleston mass shooting was apprehended in North Carolina. As evidence of the murderer’s racist motives emerged, calls to remove vestiges of the Confederate States grew louder, and overwhelmed the proposals for a public history based management of Silent Sam. In the wake of the Charleston murderer’s apprehension, the pedestal of the statue was once again covered in graffiti which proclaimed that the unnamed soldier represented was a murderer, and emblazoned its pedestal with the letters “KKK”. An online


\(^{36}\) Similar controversy and conversations exist surrounding many Native American monuments and statues in the United States, but fall largely outside the purview of this thesis. Tom Noel, “Don’t Toss Out Confederate History, Too,” Denver Post, Sept. 6, 2017.
petition also gathered more than two thousand signatures in support of the complete removal of the monument. Among many protests, letters of opinion in local newspapers, and varied suggestions as to what should become of the Confederate sentinel, the majority opinion seemed to be that the statue should be removed.

![Graffiti on Silent Sam pedestal](https://exhibits.lib.unc.edu/items/show/3656)

Figure 8 – Graffiti covers the pedestal of *Silent Sam* following the spike in tensions ignited by the mass shooting at the Emanuel AME Church.


Since 2015, the Chapel Hill Chamber of Commerce has continuously suggested that for the sake of the community’s nationwide reputation, the statue should be sent to “a more appropriate place where both the Civil War, and the Jim Crow era of its installation, can be appropriately remembered.” An editorial in a local newspaper read, “Silent Sam belongs in a museum, or some similar setting.” Another pleaded for the statue to be “moved to a

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Confederate cemetery so Sam could stand guard over soldiers from the south who died in the conflict.”

Although UNC-CH is home to multiple acknowledgements of the Confederate past, including even the frequently cited campus newspaper, The Daily Tar Heel, protestors have insisted that Silent Sam is unique. At Memorial Hall, the stone tablets that contain the names and narratives of Confederate-affiliated founders of the University are shielded behind its doors. Students can choose to enter, or not. By contrast, Silent Sam casts an unavoidable pall over McCorkle Place, one of the most heavily trafficked campus locations.

Any hope for expedient resolution from the University of North Carolina was cut short by the state government soon after protests began to escalate. On July 22, 2015, Republican Governor Pat McCrory signed into law a prohibition on any local government or organization removing or altering “an object of remembrance” without the explicit permission of the legislature. Soon after McCrory signed the controversial monuments bill into law, administrators at UNC-CH began to cite the new preservation law as the sole reason that they were unable to heed protestor’s calls for the removal of Silent Sam.

Administrators had previously championed diverse representations of history on campus, and asserted that they lacked clear and unquestionable ownership of the UNC Confederate Memorial. For most of its existence, the memorial had been treated as the private property of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Until it was revealed that the University

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41 Of uncertain origin, many consider the term Tar Heel to stem from a derogatory title given to shipyard slave laborers, which was later appropriated by Confederate soldiers to describe their tenacity in warfare. Madaleine Fraley, “Tar Heel Meaning Evolved from Derogatory to Proud,” The Daily Tar Heel, Nov. 3, 2016.
had paid for the final costs of construction, it was the steadfast position of Trustees that they lacked the authority to make decisions about removing the monument because they did not clearly own it. If anyone owned Silent Sam, Trustees suggested, it was the long deceased University President F.P. Venable who had personally paid the final balance due to the sculptor.\textsuperscript{43}

In July 2015, Chancellor Carol Folt began instead to convey the message that it was because of the North Carolina preservation law that her office lacked the power and authority to remove \textit{Silent Sam}. Paradoxically, the Chancellor’s office also continued to agree that there was clear and present need to take action to preserve public safety.\textsuperscript{44} Law professors at UNC-CH responded to Folt by highlighting provisions in the law that allowed for the removal of monuments as necessitated by safety concerns.\textsuperscript{45}

In 2017, Governor McCrory’s successor, the Democrat Roy Cooper, penned a letter to the Chancellor granting permission for the removal of \textit{Silent Sam} with a pledge that the state would not prosecute the University for doing so. Cooper cited the decision by neighboring Duke University to remove a statue of Robert E. Lee as evidence that such action could be undertaken without consequence.\textsuperscript{46} In a response described by critics as “baffling,” the University stated that

\textsuperscript{43} Series 1, Minutes, 1789-1932, in the Board of Trustees of the University of North Carolina Records #40001, University Archives, Wilson Library at University of North Carolina Chapel Hill.

\textsuperscript{44} In one of many conflicting statements, Chancellor Folt wrote in 2018, “Silent Sam has a place in our history and our campus where its history can be taught, but not at the front door of a safe, welcoming, proudly public research university.” Sarah Lundgren, “Folt and the Board of Trustees Are Asking for your Opinion on Silent Sam’s Future,” \textit{The Daily Tar Heel}, Sept. 24, 2018.


it disagreed with the Governor’s interpretation of the law, and refused to take steps to remove the monument.\textsuperscript{47}

Without the explicit permission of the State Historical Commission, as she interpreted to be required by the controversial law, Chancellor Folt claimed that University was powerless.

Speaking to the UNC-CH Board of Governors, Folt said “I have a preference to move it \textit{[Silent Sam]} off campus, but like everyone here, I swore to obey the law.”\textsuperscript{48} UNC Professor of English John McGowan led the response to Folt by writing, “The chancellor is acting like a tinpot \textit{[sic]} autocrat…Afraid of her own shadow, she can’t act decisively when handed a green light by the Governor.”\textsuperscript{49} Rebutting McGowan, House Speaker Tim Moore praised Folt’s inaction in the face of what he viewed as bullying and harassment saying, “Acquiescing to threats of criminal vandalism and confrontation sets a dangerous precedent that state law can be circumvented in the presence of potentially violent intimidations.”\textsuperscript{50} When pressed to respond to concerns about the potential for violent protests similar to Charlottesville, a spokesperson told reporters, “Chancellor Folt has already been on the record many times saying she is concerned about public safety surrounding the monument, including a letter to the Governor last fall. That position has not changed.”\textsuperscript{51} A local newspaper proclaimed the showdown to be “at an impasse.”\textsuperscript{52}

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
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\item Will Doran, “UNC Declines Cooper’s Invitation to Remove ‘Silent Sam’ Confederate Memorial,” \textit{The News & Observer} (Raleigh, NC), Aug. 22, 2012.
\item Will Doran, “UNC Declines Cooper’s Invitation to Remove ‘Silent Sam’ Confederate Memorial,” \textit{The News & Observer} (Raleigh, NC), Aug. 22, 2012.
\item Jane Stancil, “Would UNC Faculty Actually Tear Down Silent Sam?,” \textit{The News & Observer} (Raleigh, NC), Feb. 28, 2018.
\end{thebibliography}
Protected by state legislation, as well as the explicit support of University administration, the voice of the people in deciding the fate of Silent Sam appeared to be inaudible. Said Kari Holloway, the founder of an advocacy group called the Make It Right Project, “For five decades UNC administrators have ignored Students’ request to remove an homage to an army that fought to defend chattel slavery.”53 Neither student body, nor municipal vote held any power over the controversial statue. Altering the law protecting objects of remembrance would require a statewide referendum, and the pro-removal movement lacked the coordinated leadership necessary to initiate and guide a ballot measure.

Undaunted by a virtual lack of power, protests of Silent Sam continued with regularity at the upper quad. On April 30, 2018 Maya Little, a black doctoral student protestor, doused the monument’s pedestal in red paint. In a dramatic display, Little also sliced the palm of her hand and smeared her own blood on the bronze face of the monument. Asked what inspired her, the student replied, “These statues symbolize violence towards black people. Without that blood on the statue, it’s incomplete.”54

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54 Blake, Suzanne, “We Talked to Maya Little About Protesting Silent Sam and her Arrest Monday,” The Daily Tar Heel (Chapel Hill, NC), May 1, 2018.
For much of the summer of 2018, *Silent Sam* stood as a frustrating reminder that the request of the majority had not been heard, or acted upon. For others, such as Greensboro Representative John Blust, it became an unlikely trophy in the quest to preserve history that was viewed as under attack by the pro-removal movement. In a statement of support for North Carolina’s preservation law Blust wrote, “I cannot disagree any more with modern liberalism which wishes to condemn anyone who did not hold present day views on race and equality.”

Caught in the maelstrom of the contrasting ideologies of Little, Blust, Chancellor Folt, and others, *Silent Sam* was momentarily made immoveable by the inability of any ideology to compromise, or act decisively.

The conundrum presented by *Silent Sam* has appeared at times to be an all but completely irresolvable conflict. This was foreshadowed, perhaps, by the words of then-Governor Locke Craig at the statue’s 1913 dedication. “The soul of the monument’s beholder,” Craig said, “will determine the revelation of its meaning.” In 2018, it appeared that *Silent Sam* would remain standing though forever controversial, because the completely disparate

ideological views of both its supporters and opponents were paralyzing. Then, quite suddenly, the stalemate was broken.

On a stormy August evening in 2018, a crowd gathered around the statue at McCorkle Place. This was far from unusual, but on this particular occasion, the passion of the pro-removal protestors reached a breaking point. A crowd estimated in size to be 250 students, faculty, and local residents, stormed the statue. The protestors overwhelmed an unprepared security presence, secured ropes to the statue, and in a matter of minutes had pulled the likeness of Harold Langlois to the ground. There, protestors kicked the bronze figure, and attempted to cover the fallen statue in dirt.\(^5^7\)

The protestors were led by Maya Little, the Ph.D. candidate previously charged with vandalizing the statue by covering its base with her own blood. Little proclaimed to those in attendance, “It’s time to build monuments to honor those who have been murdered by white supremacy.”\(^5^8\) Dwayne Dixon, an Assistant Professor who had joined the protest, further articulated the magnitude of the event saying to a reporter on scene, “It feels biblical. It’s thundering and starting to rain. It’s almost like heaven is trying to wash away the soiled contaminated remains.”\(^5^9\) Before the statue could be washed away, however, the scene was secured by arriving law enforcement. Shortly thereafter the fallen statue was removed from the quad, and taken to an unidentified storage location.

Capping the strange saga of *Silent Sam*, UNC-CH Chancellor Carol Folt declined to immediately resurrect the statue at its previous location at the McCorkle Place Quad. Although

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\(^5^8\) The idea of commemorating and venerating the oppressed and overlooked will return in chapter five of this thesis. Vanessa Romo, “After a Year of Rising Tensions, Protestors Tear Down Confederate Statue on UNC Campus,” National Public Radio, Aug. 21, 2018, https://tinyurl.com/y5w8rjou.

\(^5^9\) Ibid.
Folt continued to insist that she was bound by North Carolina’s preservation law, which required the University to restore the statue, the Chancellor instead proposed an alternative solution. Folt, backed by the UNC-CH Board of Trustees, proposed the construction of a $5.3-million-dollar heritage center to house *Silent Sam*. The short-lived proposal was rejected in December of 2018 by the UNC Board of Governors, one of whom said that the cost of the proposed heritage center was, “pretty tough for a lot of us to swallow.” In a move that both Trustees and the Board of Governors would describe as surprising, in early January of 2019 Chancellor Carol Folt submitted her resignation.

Folt insisted that her resignation was entirely unrelated to *Silent Sam*, but in her final act as Chancellor, she ordered the removal of the only remaining piece of the statue. The stone base and bronze relief depiction of a young soldier being called to war had remained when the bronze statue atop had initially been toppled. At Folt’s direction, the base of the statue was removed by heavy equipment under the cover of darkness several months later. The stalwart Sam had finally been vanquished after more than a century of standing guard at McCorkle Place.

In the decision to move the toppled statue to undisclosed, semi-permanent storage, the University of North Carolina added to an ever growing list of monuments that reside in similar legal limbo. *Silent Sam* no longer stands out as an icon of immovability. Instead, the *UNC Confederate Memorial* joins the removed statues and monuments of New Orleans, a statue

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depicting Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney removed from a courthouse in Baltimore, and many others that reside in secret storage.\footnote{Audie Cornish, “Where Do Confederate Monuments Go After They Come Down?,” National Public Radio, Aug. 5, 2018, https://tinyurl.com/y5bgiqwe.}

At Chapel Hill, a recurring phenomenon had brought an end to the controversial statue that once appeared to be immoveable. As in Charlottesville, it was the will of the people, students, faculty, and community members alike, that the statue should not remain. No amount of resistance or reasoning from the University government was able to prevent the toppling of the vilified statue. Yet at UNC-CH, this was not essential democracy. In Charlottesville, the city council held meetings to hear the concerns of the citizens, and ultimately a vote was taken. At Chapel Hill, the final action was one of two possible extremes: forced removal, or complete inaction by the University. There had been no attempt to achieve compromise.

The ad hoc action of protestors that led to the downfall of Silent Sam is a sobering reminder that the voice of the public historian is merely a voice of suggestion. Providing new elements of interpretation at the original location of the statue on the UNC-CH quad may be suggested to be the best practice from a theoretical perspective. If, however, the theoretical practices are not seen as meeting the practical needs and concerns of the public being served, the academic theory will be moot. The public historian does not, and cannot rule despotically.

Although the act of tearing down the statue was decisive, it does not guarantee finality. Gina Balamucki, a UN-CH student interviewed by the Washington Post acknowledged that the divide between the community and North Carolina’s Republican legislature made the future of the monument uncertain. “They could appoint a chancellor tomorrow to replace her [Folt] that would put the thing right back up,” said Balamucki.\footnote{Susan Svrluga, “UNC Chancellor Says Confederate Monument Silent Sam Must go - And So Will She,” Washington Post, Jan. 15, 2019.}
Folt’s proposal for the construction of a heritage center had been rejected ostensibly due to its price tag. It was apparent, however, that Trustees and the Board of Governors intended to find a solution to bring the school into compliance with the state mandate to resurrect the statue at a “similarly prominent and accessible location.” As Chancellor Folt prepared to depart UNC-CH, a state committee was appointed to devise a new course of action, due to be reported on by March 15, 2019.

To those who defended the statue as a monument to their history, the forced removal of *Silent Sam* was viewed as yet another attempt to selectively erase moments of unfavorable history. Writing for *The Daily Tar Heel* Zach Kosnitzky opined, “we want to remember the past in a way that is useful, rather than destroy it altogether.” Although Koznitsky’s writing joins the erroneous warning of President Trump - that history can be willfully erased at any moment - it is significant that until such time as a final decision is made on where to relocate *Silent Sam*, the space once occupied by the statue stands noticeably empty.

The outline of the behemoth stone pedestal, imprinted temporarily in the earth that it once stood upon, is all that remains of *Silent Sam*. The absent statue is reminiscent of an empty museum display case, or perhaps the foundation of a building in the earliest stages of construction. Critically, however, there is no exhibit designed to take its place. No museum has yet been designed to interpret the contentious 106-year saga of Confederate iconography on the UNC-CH campus.

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66 Ibid.
Most significant to the public history perspective, is the possibility that the lack of interpretation at UNC-CH may eventually have the greatest impact on those who never knew that the statue referred to as *Silent Sam* ever existed at all. There is no signage explaining the circumstances under which the memorial was first erected. No costumed interpreters demonstrate how the statue was protested, and there is no displayed video footage of how the bronze figure was ultimately brought tumbling to the ground. There has been no attempt to provoke thoughtful conversation about the connections of the controversy in Chapel Hill, to the similar fate of the statue of King George III at Bowling Green, New York. Instead of interpretation, where once the beholder was invited to interpret the soul of the monument, there is now a public history void.
CHAPTER IV

ICONOGRAPHY IGNORED

How can we ask a soldier to sacrifice his or her life if we have to add: By the way, a half century after we bury you, we might strike a political deal to honor the fellow who took your young life?


On April 10, 1861, a small rowboat approached the dock of Fort Sumter in the harbor of Charleston, South Carolina, and its waiting Union commander, Major Robert Anderson. Onboard the boat were black slaves commanded to do the labor of rowing the small craft, accompanied and directed by the Confederate officer Pierre Gustave Toussaint (P.G.T.) Beauregard. The young Confederate Brigadier General was ironically on route to meet with his former West Point professor, who had instructed Beauregard in the practice of artillery.¹

Upon arrival at Fort Sumter, Beauregard delivered a demand to Major Anderson on behalf of the government of the newly created Confederate States: the surrender of Fort Sumter, in exchange for the safe passage north of the Union garrison of 87 officers and enlisted men.²

The Confederate navy had encircled the last bastion of the federal government in South Carolina, but Anderson cited a duty to his country in his refusal to retreat, or to surrender. Two days later, Confederate ships began an artillery bombardment of the pentagonal fort. Their attack set fire to its wooden structure, and forced Major Anderson to surrender.

The attack on Fort Sumter is widely considered to mark the beginning of the American Civil War. Though it was perhaps inevitable, it was a turning point from which there could no longer be peaceful resolution to the growing ideological divides. The commanding figure behind

the monumental transgression was the Louisiana native, and first appointed general of the Confederate Army, P.G.T. Beauregard.³ Beauregard was a mustachioed Creole, who would become infamous to, and cursed by Union soldiers following his success in the Confederate victory at the first battle of Manassas.⁴ As an educated, ambitious, and decorated veteran of the Mexican American War, Beauregard built understandable though temporary notoriety.⁵

Beauregard’s eventual downfall in the Confederacy came at the hands of ongoing disputes with the Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Davis believed that Beauregard repeatedly failed to effectively lead and inspire his troops, and subsequently failed to successfully defend critical Confederate infrastructure.⁶ Beauregard in turn assigned blame to Confederate failures elsewhere, writing of Lee’s tactics the battle for Richmond, “I would have attacked differently.”⁷ Reassigned to the often-overlooked western theatre of the Civil War, Beauregard retired and eventually passed with significantly less name recognition than peers such as Jackson, Lee, and Forest.⁸

The relatively unremarkable life of P.G.T Beauregard was nonetheless celebrated in the General’s native Louisiana. His likeness was erected in statue in New Orleans, the city of his death and final resting place, where it would remain standing until 2017.⁹ The statue of

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⁶ Davis, The Cause Lost, 24
⁷ Williams, 161.
⁸ Biographer T. Harry Williams wrote “when the southern people made their bitter myths, they constructed them of sacrifice, poverty, and frustration… There was small room for the prosperous Creole [Beauregard].” Williams, 2.
Beauregard was removed, along with several additional Confederate monuments, at the direction of Mayor Mitch Landrieu in response to the racially motivated murders in Charleston.

Today, the life and legacy of P.G.T. Beauregard lives on at Louisiana’s Camp Beauregard. The largest national guard base in the Pelican State also trains soldiers from across the nation in the practice of artillery fire, and in engineering sciences. It is one of ten military bases nationwide named after Confederate figures. While statues, street names, buildings, and even Confederate cemeteries have been scrutinized, military bases such as Camp Beauregard paradoxically stand out because they have been comparatively ignored.

![An undated postcard shows barracks at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana.](https://www.flickr.com/photos/vernonparish/2849347630/in/photostream/)

Figure 11 - An undated postcard shows barracks at Camp Beauregard, Louisiana. Photo from Vernon Parish Library, accessed Feb 5, 2019, https://www.flickr.com/photos/vernonparish/2849347630/in/photostream/.

Louisiana’s Camp Beauregard began life as a military academy, led by the iconic Union General William Tecumseh Sherman. Later relocated due to a need for expansion, the base was renamed in honor of its contemporary commander, the Adjutant General David T. Stafford. Stafford’s legacy, however, would be short lived. In 1917, four years after the dedication of Silent

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12 Ibid.
Sam at UNC Chapel Hill, the Louisiana legislature successfully lobbied for the base to be renamed in honor of the man often referred to as the Napoleon of the Confederacy.\(^\text{13}\)

The assigning of Confederate namesakes to military bases began, ostensibly, as an extension of the olive branch from the United States Federal Government to the remnants of the Confederate States. To address the concern that assigning Union names to bases in the heart of the former Confederate nation would perpetuate the humiliation of defeat, nominations were solicited from state legislatures, politicians, and local interest groups.\(^\text{14}\) Among the nominations that were accepted by the War Department were General Braxton Bragg, NC, John Brown Gordon, GA, and Ambrose Powell (A.P.) Hill, in Virginia.\(^\text{15}\) Brigadier General Malcolm Frost, then head of public affairs for the U.S. Army, told reporters in 2015 “these historic names represent individuals, not causes or ideologies…the naming occurred in the spirit of reconciliation, not division.”\(^\text{16}\)

Frost’s idea that individuals can be separated from the causes and ideologies of the armies that they led or fought for, may be found to be grounded in the more familiar words of Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. In 1884, the Supreme Court Justice and Union veteran was invited to deliver a speech to commemorate Memorial Day at a New Hampshire post of the Grand Army of the Republic. Though Holmes’ address was unlikely designed to reach a broader audience than the veterans fraternity, it has come to hold similar recognition to Robert E. Lee’s opinion of memorial markers. In his address, Holmes described the perhaps surprising degree to which


\(^\text{14}\) It has been noted that allowing local government to suggest base names was also a time and cost-saving measure. Mark Thompson, “U.S. Flag Waves Over 10 Army Bases Proudly Named for Confederate Officers,” Time, June 23, 2015.


the soldiers of the Union and Confederate armies recognized their shared humanity, and encouraged his audience to propagate the same empathy.

We believed that it was most desirable that the North should win; we believed in the principle that the Union is indissoluble; we, or many of us at least, also believed that the conflict was inevitable, and that slavery had lasted long enough. But we equally believed that those who stood against us held just as sacred conviction that were the opposite of ours, and we respected them as every man with a heart must respect those who gave all for their belief. ¹⁷

The eloquent words of Holmes aside, it would yet be simple for present day opponents to decry the Army’s explanation of diplomacy as specious reasoning. The fact can again be cited that bases, such as Camp Beauregard, were most often named or renamed at the same time that an explosive proliferation of Confederate statues and monuments was taking place. Camp Beauregard was renamed within three years of the 50th anniversary of the American Civil War. Both Fort Gordon and Fort Bragg opened only one year later. As suggested in the previous chapters of this thesis, this spread of Confederate iconography was born not from a need for commemoration, or reconciliation, but rather from the desire to keep alive the mythical idea of a heroic and tragic cause fought for by Confederate soldiers.

However, in comparison to statues, monuments, flags, and other iconography, military bases have enjoyed a relative reprieve from criticism. Though they represent the names, and thereby the actions, of highly controversial figures, military bases have escaped protests, legislation, and the general attention of the otherwise proactive movement for the removal of Confederate iconography. Military bases have survived even the few challenges that have been

presented, such as legislation introduced in 2017 that would have required the renaming of any military base “currently named after any individual who took arms against the United States.”

There can be no doubt that the namesakes of the ten controversial Army bases, did indeed “take up arms” against the United States, and the United States government. Beauregard led the very first battle against the federal government of the deadliest war in American history. Not only was John Brown Gordon a trusted confidant of Robert E. Lee, the Confederate General later held high ranking positions in the Georgia branch of the Ku Klux Klan. There, he waged war against not only the federal government, but also against the citizens of his own state, through his tacit support of campaigns of terrorism designed to propagate white supremacy. Braxton Bragg of North Carolina, was known as a quick tempered, irrational leader, who led the defeat of Union troops in the Battle of Chickamauga. When it is indisputable that the military leaders honored in the naming of Army bases at one time actually fought against the predecessors of the very forces now housed and trained there, how then have they been allowed to remain so-named for so long?

This is the essential question posed by the few journalists and legislators that have challenged the blind acceptance of bases named for Confederate leaders. Writing for the New York Times, editorial journalist Jamie Malanowski suggested that the practice is foremost an affront to active duty military. Asked Malanowski, “How can we ever ask a soldier to sacrifice his or her life if we have to add: ‘By the way, a half century after we bury you, we might strike a

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political deal to honor the fellow who took your young life?” Malanowski was echoed by the legislators who fought unsuccessfully for a Congressional mandate in 2017. Representative Mike Thompson (D-Calif.) wrote to then Defense Secretary James Mattis that, “These designations only serve to promote a dark and divisive time in our history and do not uphold the best of our country.” Though Congress has the authority to legislatively mandate name changes, the decision is not required to come from the legislature. The U.S. Army itself holds the power to unilaterally rename installations, in the same way that it once exercised unilateral power to bestow controversial names.

According to the policies of Army Regulation (AR) 1-33, “the naming of installations is the responsibility of the Assistant Secretary of Army Manpower and Reserve Affairs.” That secretary is guided by multiple directions including, “Only deceased persons will be memorialized,” and that installation names should “honor deceased heroes and…present them as inspirations to their fellow Soldiers.” The same Army regulation admonishes that “Renaming actions are strongly discouraged, and seldom appropriate.” If such an endeavor is undertaken, AR 1-33 warns officers to, “Expect strong resistance from local residents, heirs, historical societies and others.” Strong resistance has been seen from local residents in the cases of Confederate statues, but it has been an equitable resistance, coming from both the opponents of removal, and the pro-removal movement. In that situation, the scales have been tipped by

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25 Ibid.
historians, who have shown overwhelming support for the idea that removing statues from public places does not erase history. As noted in chapter two, in the case of Robert E. Lee, historians and the public have even found support in the words of the commemorated soldiers themselves. If the same support for the removal of iconography was applied to military bases, it must be imagined that they too could be transformed.

There is no shortage of available candidates to replace the Confederate namesakes of U.S. Army installations. Offering suggestions to a reporter, military historian Mark Jacobson said “Joshua Chamberlain is one of the most revered figures in U.S. military history. Why isn’t there a Fort Chamberlain?”26 From a public history perspective, the answer to Jacobson’s question lies partially in the fact that military bases do not interact with the public in the same fashion as statues and monuments. Access to military bases is controlled, limited only to those with the proper credentials. They are not encountered by chance as are statues in public parks and libraries. Statues inspire audiences to ponder their origins, and wonder whom they represent, whereas lettering on a sign does less to command attention and provoke exploration.

It is possible that in their relative obscurity, military bases have been sheltered from the scrutiny of the public, and public historians alike. It is also a possibility that military bases have been intentionally excluded as targets of criticism. A 2018 study on patriotism conducted by The Foreign Policy Group concluded that, “Deference to the military is widespread among all Americans.”27 Regardless of the possible cause, military and congressional leaders have faced little public pressure, and to date neither have taken any corrective action.

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Even without establishing exactly why military bases have been discounted in the quest for restorative justice spawned by the mass shooting in Charleston, public history practice suggests that they should be revisited. Military bases hold similar positions to public schools named after Confederate leaders - of which the SPCL has identified 103 nationwide – in that they are of central importance to their communities. Changing the familiar names of military bases would ignite conversation, and inspire exploration of the topic by upsetting the status quo.

Army bases might also find benefit in adding interpretive displays to publically visible and accessible locations to attract a more diverse appreciation of their existence. At Camp Beauregard, a decommissioned tank that sits at the base’s main entrance already contributes as any statue would. The tank stands ready to thrill its viewers, particularly children, with the idea that at any moment it could spring to life. This is an element of the art and science of interpretation, and the benefits that this practice brings to the public will be further discussed in chapter five of this thesis.

Figure 12 - The main entrance to Camp Beauregard, Louisiana. Photo from geauxguardmuseums.com, accessed Feb 5, 2019, https://geauxguardmuseums.com/history-of-camp-beauregard

Most importantly, the potential for schools and military bases to be renamed offers recognition to the students and soldiers who work and study within their halls. At public schools, removing the names of Confederate leaders restores a level of agency to black students. Speaking on the issue Ashley Woodson, a professor of education at the University of Missouri, said “I think that the school name becomes one of those subtle messages that communicate to young black kids… that you don’t matter.”\(^{29}\) When names are changed, Woodson suggested that students will begin to ask, “we understand that this was a part of our history, but is it necessarily part of our future?”\(^{30}\) This exploration and appreciation recalls the words of the historian David McCullough cited in chapter one. It must be championed by public historians.\(^{31}\)

At Army bases, eliminating Confederate branding would bestow a similar message of value to soldiers, of whom one in five self-identify as black or African-American.\(^{32}\) Removing Confederate namesakes would further consign to obscurity the words of Nathan Bedford Forest, who wrote that he hoped the massacre of black soldiers at Fort Pillow would, “demonstrate to the Northern people that Negro soldiers cannot cope with Southerners.”\(^{33}\) Further still, name change would remove any ambiguity surrounding the value placed by the armed forces on loyalty of soldiers to their country. Said Washington post columnist Joe

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\(^{30}\) Ibid.


Davidson, “defining opposition… as a racial thing, as important as that is, does not go far enough. The names and flags honoring the Confederacy venerate traitors.”

Whereas public history best practice suggests that the statues of Confederate figures that remain in their original locations should be properly reinterpreted, the recommendation of this thesis for military bases is that Confederate namesakes should simply be removed. In contrast to statues and monuments, the purpose of military bases has never been to convey messages of history or heritage to the general public. The audience that interacts with military bases is primarily composed of the soldiers who live and work within their confines, and the unambiguously stated purpose of naming bases for deceased leaders is to inspire this captive audience.

In order to inspire, as well as to honor the continuing service and sacrifice of contemporary soldiers and their historic predecessors, installation namesakes should be chosen from a different pool of candidates. There are countless soldiers and officers not yet venerated in this way who did not commit acts of treason, as did Beauregard. Others still did not fight for the preservation of slavery and white supremacy, as did John Brown Gordon.

In order to properly venerate those who fought for national unity, to honor and commemorate soldiers lost, and to inspire soldiers currently serving, military bases must be viewed as dynamic communities rather than artwork and artifacts. By accepting that in this way military bases are not essential elements of public history, the practitioner yields to Lee’s suggestions “not to keep open the sores of war,” and “to obliterate the marks of civil strife.”

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As the purpose of naming military bases is only to inspire, let us refuse to keep open the sores of war by inspiring with namesakes that evoke only unity.
CHAPTER V

THE PUBLIC HISTORY EPILOGUE

The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma.

- Judith L. Herman, M.D. Trauma and Recovery

The final chapter of this thesis takes an occasionally repeating four-part approach to conclusion. The chapter begins with a review of some of the literature that has previously addressed the intricacies of using statues and monuments to commemorate the past. This review brings particular focus to the scholarly writing that has previously sought to address and critique Confederate statues and monuments in the United States. The second piece of this chapter seeks to describe, and partially define, the field of public history and the role of the public historian in the particular scenario of the Confederate conundrum.

The third section, and its reoccurring elements, introduce and examine the unique arguments specifically put forward by this thesis. These are the arguments that value as tools of public history may yet be found in, or ascribed to Confederate statues, that the fundamental principles and guidelines of public history should be constantly referenced in this process, and in this process the current understanding of public history theory should itself be continuously challenged. Perhaps more aptly described as a series of suggestions submitted for consideration in the ongoing debate, the aforementioned content segues neatly into the final piece of this chapter, which contains the most critical recommendation of this thesis. In every evaluation this thesis has, and this chapter will attempt, to convey the importance of understanding and appreciating that any suggestions, or suggested solutions, that fail to recognize the inalienable fact that Confederate statues and monuments are structured by white supremacist ideals, are themselves destined to fail.
Review of Existing Literature

The questioning and critical evaluation of the role and existence of Confederate statues, as with many additional subsets of controversial public iconography, is not a new undertaking.¹ The debate which is described in this thesis as the “Confederate conundrum” has been acknowledged long before the twenty-first century, and has certainly not been discovered as a subject by this thesis. The topic has only been rekindled, tragically due largely to the murders of the Emanuel AME nine in Charleston, and Heather Heyer in Charlottesville.

Surrounding these events, there has been extensive scholarly literature published on the topic. To establish the location of this thesis within the canon, select authors and publications will briefly be examined in this chapter. In the interests of brevity and practicality, this thesis does not review the entirety of the canon. Instead, it will highlight certain scholars and writings that have specifically addressed Confederate monuments in the United States, or subjects directly related. To further narrow and define the criteria for inclusion, scholars who have specifically pondered the possibility of inherent or ascribed value in statues, or addressed other closely related public history considerations, have been specifically sought out and selected.

To connect this literature review to the finale component section of this chapter, also included are scholars and scholarship that has addressed the ways in which American citizens have been continuously damaged by white supremacy, and related extremist ideology. The persistent repetition of this message recognizes the challenge of author Uzodinma Iweala that, “when somebody says that six million people died in the Holocaust, there is nobody in the world who can understand that. It’s only through story, reading books by Elie Wiessel or Primo Levi,

¹ The Confederate cause is far from the only controversial subject represented in public iconography. Statues and monuments that recognize, or fail to recognize, Native American history, gender oppression, and failures of the scientific community such as the Tuskegee Experiment, Carrie Buck as referenced in Chapter two, and many others, are also worthy of examination and scrutiny.
that you really begin to understand the trauma and how horrible it actually was.” Though the Holocaust and questions raised by Confederate iconography are categorically disparate subjects, the principle that an exponential amount of human suffering cannot simply be assumed to be understood is nonetheless foundational to effective public history, and to the examination of the Confederate conundrum.

A multitude of historians and scholars have long recognized the conspicuous nature of statues and monuments erected on United States soil to sanctify the leaders and ideals of a defeated rebellion. A sampling of the many critiques and evaluations of this phenomenon and its lasting effects are reviewed in this chapter. The specific aim of this literature review is to identify contributions and suggestions that serve either to enhance the unique suggestions of this thesis, or to refute and contradict them.

Kenneth Foote, previously introduced in Chapter three of this thesis, writes about the nature and possible management of sites of shame in *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy.*

It should require only little use of imagination to accept the suggestion that anything related to the Confederate cause neatly fits this categorization. No matter what other elements of history are involved, or how they are interpreted, Confederate monuments inherently represent moments from, and the leaders of, the deadliest war in American history. Put in other words by the historian James Loewen, “Memorials… declare what is worth dying for, which turns out to be mostly the state, in war.”

The details of the endless suffering that surrounds Confederate ideals, and the damage caused by its propagation, will be further

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expounded upon in later mention of Loewen’s writing, as well as *At the Dark End of the Street*, by Danielle McGuire. The simple acknowledgement of the systematic violence caused by Confederate ideology leads, according to Foote, to recognizing that monuments and statues have a lengthy history of serving as “rallying points.”

According to Foote, these are objects that protestors and demonstrators can point to, and identify as the instigators of righteous indignation. Foote explores the relatively recent movement that has sought to eliminate a one-sided approach to identifying rallying points, what he describes as the idea of bringing “equal honor” to monuments and historic sites. A prime example of applying the concept of equal honor, Foote writes, is the management of the infamous Andersonville prison camp. Now a unit of the National Park Service, Andersonville is currently dedicated to “all Americans ever held as prisoners of war.”

Foote, however, is quick to recognize the potential and inherent failures of this approach. To ensure that the obvious is never taken for granted, Foote writes “this idea of equal honor is proving of little value reinterpreting African American sites, perhaps because so little honor was involved in the beatings, lynchings, and massacres through which slavery and racism were enforced; The sense of honor,” Foote writes, “was at best one sided.” In this writing, Foote articulates the impossible question that scholars must forever contend with. What can the public historian do to rectify the injustices of the past? Indeed, what can anyone?

*At the Dark End of the Street*, by Danielle McGuire works to ensure that the death and destruction caused by white supremacist ideals are never overlooked in the pursuits of academic and public history. McGuire’s writing is foremost an examination of the struggles, but also

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5 Foote, 32.
6 Foote, 312.
7 Foote, 327.
innumerable, incredible contributions of women to civil rights movements. By championing dozens of overlooked and untold stories, McGuire shines light on a subject filled with shame, tragedy, and darkness. Simultaneously, *At the Dark End of the Street* requires the reader to confront the ways in which gender was systematically exploited as a tool of oppression during the Jim Crow era and beyond. The book reports in graphic detail on the calculated, war-like violence that was waged against black Americans and their allies. McGuire demonstrates that the same atrocities that are seen in acts of genocide - rape, murder, and the apathy of what should have been benevolent and protective government - also compose much of the trauma encountered in the ongoing fight for civil rights. In this writing, McGuire makes it clear that future generations must forever contend with the damage that this veritable warfare has done to the fabric of American society.

The former Mayor of New Orleans Mitch Landrieu documents his book, *In the Shadow of Statues: A White Southerner Confronts History*, the attempts that he made to provide justice for the many Confederate atrocities that were commemorated by his city. After learning about the myth of the Lost Cause, and the ways that monuments were designed to carry Confederate ideals into perpetuity, Landrieu made removing such statues from his city a political priority. In his book, Landrieu asserts that removing the statues that carry Confederate messages is essential, because, “treating the cause and not just the symptoms is important.” Ultimately, Landrieu was responsible for the successful removal of several monuments and statues, including those

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10 Landrieu, 135.
previously mentioned in this thesis, the likeness of P.G.T. Beauregard, and the Monument to the
“battle” of Liberty Place.\textsuperscript{11}

Landrieu ends his autobiographical writing with multiple extended calls to action. The
last of these, is a plea by the former mayor for an understanding of the importance of history,
and historiography. “As the scientists continually course correct a mission error in order to make
the next flight safer,” Landrieu writes, “so we must learn to revise the mistakes in our
perceptions of history, to acknowledge with honesty what went wrong, so that we can learn how
to make it right. We are all being called to a better day, a better South, a better America.”\textsuperscript{12} This
thesis attempts, where possible, to embody Landrieu’s optimistic approach while also
maintaining reasonable objectivity.

At the turn of the twenty-first century, the editors J. Michael Martinez, William D.
Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su released their volume \textit{Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary
South}.\textsuperscript{13} In this volume, the editors and additional authors address most often the power of the
Confederate flag, with many prophetic arguments for its removal peppering the chapters. Even
though it is more flag-focused than David B. Allison’s later similarly styled volume, its
exploration of systematic oppression, and other damaging messages contained within
Confederate iconography, are quite similar. J. Michael Martinez and Robert M. Harris discuss the
Lost Cause mythology in “Graves Worms and Epitaphs: Confederate Monuments in the
Southern Landscape.” Martinez and Harris cite the words of William Hand Browne, who called
on Confederate veterans to carry forward “what is good and noble of our old Southern customs

\textsuperscript{11} See pages 9 and 49 of this thesis for additional mention of The Battle of Liberty Place and
P.G.T. Beauregard, respectively.
\textsuperscript{12} Landrieu, 207.
\textsuperscript{13} J. Michael Martinez, William D. Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su, eds., \textit{Confederate Symbols in
the Contemporary South}, (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000).
and ways,” by means of “the resistance of all pernicious innovations.” Appropriately, the writing by Martinez and Harris reminds the reader that long before the events of Charleston and Charlottesville discussed in this thesis, scholars had come to recognize that it was the idea of the Lost Cause, rather than reconstruction, that was the most pernicious ideology.

In a report issued by the Southern Poverty Law Center, “Stone Mountain: A Monumental Dilemma,” Debra McKinney addresses what is perhaps the lone Confederate monument that cannot simply be removed. Consisting of the relief carving on the face of a granite mountain, the monument of nearly inconceivable magnitude is further described by McKinney as the “Mt. Rushmore of the Confederacy, only bigger.” The depiction of Robert E. Lee on Stone Mountain, McKinney notes, “is as tall as a nine-story building.” Stone Mountain is complex according to McKinney, not only because its removal would require the carving to be dynamited off the side of the mountain, but also because it is owned by the State of Georgia. Purchased in 1958, the carving would not be completed until eight years after the landmark Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court ruling.

In its report, the SPLC, quotes multiple Georgians who perceive the state’s ownership of the mountain to be equivalent to officially sanctioned terrorism. Said Richard Rose, President of the Atlanta NAACP, “If Joe Blow wants to put a statue of Robert E. Lee in his front yard or on his farm, I think that’s great. I mean, this is America; he ought to be able to do that. But the

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16 McKinney notes that the monument is so gargantuan, that stone carvers could, and would sometimes take refuge inside of mouths and nostrils of the depicted horses when their work was interrupted by rainstorms.
State of Georgia should not be promoting white supremacy and racism.” The report also takes care to note, that some of the visitors to the state park in which the monument is located, are far more ambivalent. McKinney observed, “when a black visitor was asked for their thoughts, the woman shrugged and said ‘I don’t even know who that is up there.’” These solicited views and opinions are representative of the quantitative data that this thesis is not based upon. Instead they are referenced from data driven sources, such as this report, as necessary to lend credence to specific arguments or evaluations.

In his 2018 edited volume *Controversial Monuments and Memorials: A Guide for Community Leaders*, David B. Allison attempts to provide instructional guidelines on the management of statues. This thesis does not provide a step by step manual on management and interpretation that can be applied universally, in part because guides of this nature have already been attempted by well-meaning historians such as Allison. Mitch Landrieu reappears in Allison’s volume, putting forward once more his experience as proof positive that no amount of resistance to removal is insurmountable. W. Todd Groce offers the suggestion most prescient and relevant to this thesis writing, “Ultimately, how we decide to see our past – through either the lens of history, or that of memory – will determine the future and the kind of people and society that we will become.” This concept, questioning and establishing roles of the public historian in relation to specific suggestions, will be revisited as a recommendation of the second and third components of this chapter.

Even when considering Groce and Landrieu, Allison’s writing and selections are

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17 McKinney, Stone Mountain: A Monumental Dilemma.”
18 McKinney, Stone Mountain: A Monumental Dilemma.”
generally, unfortunately characteristic of the instructional literary canon: so choked by academic jargon that they are actually inaccessible to a layperson audience. A prime example of this inaccessible writing style is Allison’s attempt to convey the importance of conflict resolution to the reader. In summation of his volume’s contribution, Allison wrote “Consider the multitude of conflicts and discord that now intrude upon our lives: We sow divisions wrought by blinkered faith in our own moral rectitude.” Allison continued, introducing a mixed metaphor by writing “We cling to the belief that the ‘other’ side is intent on remaking the ship into a badly programmed self-driving car, bound to crash into the median of societal ruin, and international irrelevance.”

In contrast to Allison’s publication, a more concise and coherent guide can be found at the website of the Atlanta History Center. The virtual guide to navigating interpretation of Confederate statues suggests, more immediately than many others, that a critical step in interpretation is for the public to “reach out” to those who control or otherwise maintain monuments. Similarly, the site also recommends that curators and city planners attempt to gather an understanding of the prevailing public opinion before taking any governmental action.

The most superficially incongruous work noted in this chapter is not a work of history, but instead a publication on the subject of psychology. Judith Lewis Herman’s seminal evaluation of suffering, psychological damage, and healing *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* offers a more scientific foundation for the public historian to stand on in proclaiming the permanence of the damage done by extremist ideology. Herman forbids the reader to carry any false notions that trauma can be buried, forgotten, or

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21 Allison, 257.
simply erased. Whatever its cause, Herman asserts that trauma will always make its way to the surface. This pertains to public history because it demonstrates that no type of action from any campaign, political persuasion, or otherwise opposing viewpoint can ever “erase” history, memory, or the trauma that has occurred.

Herman also writes extensively on her assertion that there must be a conscious decision to confront trauma in order to heal from it. “We need to understand the past in order to reclaim the present and the future,” Herman writes, “therefore, an understanding of psychological trauma begins with rediscovering history.”

Further pertaining to the conundrum of statues is Herman’s evaluation of an unconscious attraction to the position of perpetrators, rather than victims. Herman notes, “It is very tempting to take the side of the perpetrator. All the perpetrator asks is that the bystander do nothing. He appeals to the universal desire to see, hear, and speak no evil. The victim, on the contrary, asks the bystander to share the burden of pain. The victim demands action, engagement, and remembering.”

This conflict will be revisited in this chapter’s exploration of the ways in which the public historian may be called upon to foster restorative justice. It must be noted, that Herman was not writing about Confederate statues and monuments. The reference to Herman’s suggestions in this thesis is unsanctioned extrapolation, based only on logical extensions of Herman’s own positions.

The evaluation provided by constitutional lawyer, and University of Texas professor Sanford Levinson in Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Societies, comes most closely to fully connecting to the intent behind the creation of this thesis. Levinson’s is most nearly an evaluation of the question of whether statues have any place at all, and if they do, what the

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24 Herman, 2.
25 Herman, 7.
damages of, or potential bridges built by their presence might be. To accomplish this evaluation, Levinson visits case studies of statues and monuments around the world, favoring at times at times the examination of those most critical of removing statues. Levinson quotes a person described only as a “Russian dissident,” who in 1991 observed the removal of a Russian statue and opined “this is a classic old Moscow technique: either worship or destroy. Bolsheviks topple czar monuments, Stalin erases old Bolsheviks, Khrushchev tears down Stalin, Brezhnev tears down Khrushchev… No difference.”

More than simply a fight against the concept of removal, the dissidents observation evokes the traditional understanding that the landscape of commemoration is decided upon by the ruling party. Levinson also offers a more proletariat evaluation, suggesting that the conundrum persists not only due to government management, but also because “a sometimes bitter reality about life within truly multicultural societies is that the very notion of a unified public is up for grabs.” In his 1995 publication, Levinson foretold the extended debate on the place of controversial statues and monuments, writing “The reason why the debate continues, rather than being settled, is precisely because we are a multicultural society wrestling with how, if at all, one produces unum out of the pluribus of American society.” Levinson’s writing serves as a model for the structure of this thesis in its constant recognition of the damage caused by statues, and by its inclusion of a series of suggestions for what might potentially be done to manage both statues and the damage that they cause.

An identifiable, unifying challenge of all of the literature reviewed above, is that each piece is arguably subject to the pitfall described in the preface to the second edition of Interpreting our Heritage. Extolling the virtue of Freeman Tilden’s writing, Christopher Crittenden praised

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27 Levinson, 14.
28 Levinson, 38.
Tilden’s ability to escape the scrutiny of an academy that believed, “Woe to any so-called scholar who attempted to make his writing understandable to the general reader.” Crittenden observed that the ivory tower of academia was so elitist that, “One distinguished historian is said to have remarked that if historical writing could be understood by the common man it simply was not good history.” Even Levinson, who speaks repeatedly of the need to address the issue outside of the academy, writes with the parlance of the constitutional lawyer that he is. One of the primary tasks of this thesis is to put forward the argument that the field public history risks languish at best, obsolescence more likely, if it does not take on a calculated approach to connecting with the out of classroom public. The dangers of inaccessibility arguably affect not only the classroom, museums, and public places, but also the pages of books as well.

In, Lies Across America: What Historic Sites Get Wrong, James Loewen begins to bridge the divide between the academic scholarship reviewed above, and the exclusively public approach taken by Freeman Tilden. In his book, Loewen acknowledges many familiar concepts, including the utilization of storytelling to maintain privilege and power. Loewen writes, “the efforts of the upper class to commemorate their history help them feel better psychologically; the results also help them to stay upper. History is power.” Loewen also recognizes the difficulty in combating narratives of power, and in this writing establishes the task of the public historian. “Our challenge,” Loewen writes, “is to create a public history that functions for us as we go about our business as Americans, which is to bring into being the America of the future.”

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31 Levinson, 75.
33 Loewen, 14.
this task, Loewen writes, is the fact that “the grandeur of monuments intrinsically includes an element of consecration, which not only sanctifies the past but also sanctions future actions. Their very existence implies that the person or event portrayed is worth emulating or the cause symbolized is worth advancing. They embody a moral imperative: go thou and do likewise.”

This is yet another essential dilemma to be considered by the public historian. As statues were built to inspire acts of racism and violence, how might their message be recaptured and changed? Should it be changed at all? Or should it instead be recognized for exactly what it was? A potential impossibility of fully and completely addressing these questions may prove to be the greatest obstruction to fulfilling the public historian’s task.

Sherrilyn A. Ifill, author of *On the Courthouse Lawn: Confronting the Legacy of Lynching in the Twenty-First Century*, is one of many who have suggested that reformatting existing interpretation to fit new, updated, or corrected narratives may be a reasonable alternative to punitive justice. “Truth telling,” Ifill writes, “is also a critical form of reparation.” Ifill bases her writing on the process of healing implemented in post-apartheid South Africa, which required entire communities to collectively admit wrongdoings. More than any particular forms of commemoration, or memorialization, Ifill argues that it is institutions that hold the power to acknowledge and rectify the injustices of the past. According to Ifill, those same institutions have been, “particularly adept at avoiding responsibility.”

Ifill’s dramatic examples of this avoidance, are post-apartheid, and post-Nazi Germany courts which continued to be operated by the same judges that had previously ruled against reparations and protections for its citizens that were the targets of violence. This is because, Ifill

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34 Loewen, 434.
writes, “institutions by their very nature are among the most powerful forces in a community. They protect and reflect the interests of the most successful and influential members of a community.”

The public historian can glean from Ifill’s writing a message that change and healing begin and end with issues far greater than statues and monuments.

**Defining Public History**

To conclude the examinations of this thesis in the manner promised by the title and introduction, through a public history perspective, the fluid nature of the field of public history itself must first be addressed. The practice of public history has long evaded simple definition. This is exemplified by the fact that the University of Colorado Denver makes no attempt to list a comprehensive description of the field on its own degree program website. To cite an academic definition of public history, this thesis utilizes a conglomeration of sources, including the University of Virginia (UVA). On its degree program webpage, UVA advertises that public history is “the application of the historical method, outside of academia in both the public and private sphere.” Furthermore, according to UVA, “Public historians… Answer specific questions posed by an audience that exists outside of the historical profession.”

The American Historical Association parallels the UVA definition, declaring that public history is “designed to help people write, create, and understand their own history.” This thesis

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38 This is not a failure of the University, nor a criticism by the author. This is a note on the desire of many instructors to avoid the risk of stereotyping the public historian. “Public History Program,” University of Colorado Denver, accessed Feb. 5, 2019, https://clas.ucdenver.edu/history/public-history-program.
40 Ibid.
builds upon the aforementioned descriptions to define public history as the practice of bringing the knowledge of history, and the subsequent benefits of knowledge, to the out of classroom public. In every endeavor, this thesis recommends that the public historian should first measure their success against the simple metric: does the public, and public education stand to benefit?

A significant question that remains unanswered, is at what point does the practice of public history, carried forth by the public historian, enter any of the debates that compose the Confederate conundrum? How will the public historian know that their input is wanted, and that they are being called upon to deliver their services? Historians must contend with the possibility that they may not be invited by the public at all. In Charlottesville, the city council had plentiful opportunities to specifically call for the input of historians, or museum curators. To the best understanding of this research, they did not.

At UNC Chapel Hill, Chancellor Carol Folt was extensively criticized for acting autocratically. Seeking input of neither students, faculty, nor protesters fighting either for removal or preservation, Folt initially refused to take any action. Even when Silent Sam was forcefully torn down, Folt proposed the creation of a multi-million-dollar heritage center to house the relocated statue. As this chapter will demonstrate, Folt’s proposal was in contravention to logical public history suggestions. If Folt had sought out the counsel of public historians, this might have been addressed before it became the embarrassment that contributed to the Chancellor’s resignation. At Chapel Hill, however, there was little if any visible interest from any party in the involvement of public historians.42

There may not be a moment when any community puts up a veritable bat-signal, calling for the assistance of public historians. This thesis is not designed to suggest that public

42 The advocacy group “The Real Silent Sam” may have come closest in their call for additional interpretation, as seen on page 37 of chapter three.
historians are waiting in the wings, desperate to bestow divine knowledge on those who seek it. Rather than sovereign solutions, public historians have only suggestions and opinions that may contribute, providing possible guidance and mediation. Reviewing the work of Freeman Tilden, whose principles of public history practice guide the next section of this chapter, the environmental psychologist Dr. David Uzzell wrote “Interpretation should be a force for change. It has got to be as powerful a force as those which it has been designed to counter. It will only be a force of change when practice is built around firm theoretical foundations.” This thesis uses the Confederate conundrum as an artifact to guide the examination of how public history can answer Dr. Uzzell’s call to arms, and act as a force for change. It suggests only ways in which the public historian can be prepared in the event that they are invited, and that they should not inject themselves into debates where they are unwelcome.

**The Artifact Based Examination of Public History Theory and Practice**

With the admittedly subjective basic understanding of public history put forth by this thesis fresh at mind, the practical implementation of this definition, and the role of the public historian as related to Confederate statues are ripe for further evaluation. The creation of this thesis was driven by the desire to put into the ether three considerations for the field and its practitioners. These considerations are: how interpretation may serve the interests of restorative justice, how museums may fall short of serving the entirety of public history - particularly as veritable silver-bullet solutions to the debate surrounding Confederate statues - and finally, that existing public history practice may itself be in need of re-evaluation. These considerations are intended to provoke, to gently or greatly challenge, and perhaps to disorient the reader from

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traditional pathways of understanding.\textsuperscript{44}

It is understood by the author that they are highly controversial. In that admission, there is also the recognition that any suggestions contained herein, are exclusively suggestions put forward by the author. They are not prescriptive. The suggestions of this thesis are designed to be read more as questions that serve to provoke further engagement. They may be dismissed, or otherwise rejected, by the reader at any time.

The use of the word “provocation” in this thesis, stems from the writing of Freeman Tilden, an early pioneer of the art and science of interpretation. Tilden’s seminal 1957 publication, *Interpreting Our Heritage*, is still regarded by the National Park Service, the National Association for Interpretation, and others, as the foremost authority on the subject.\textsuperscript{45} In his guide, Tilden wrote that six principles are foundational to the practice of interpretation. Among these principles, Tilden writes, is that “The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.”\textsuperscript{46} This is a categorically different use of the word from how it has also come to be utilized by many of the most noted purveyors of hate speech in the twenty-first century. Among these purveyors are Milo Yiannopoulos, whom according to the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) bills himself as “the world’s most fabulous supervillain.”\textsuperscript{47}

In actuality, the ADL reports, Yiannopoulos aligns more closely with another self-description “a provocateur.” Yiannopoulos’ identity is built around his penchant for attacking groups and persons that he dislikes or disagrees with, ranging from feminism and Muslims, to

\textsuperscript{44} The author Sara Ahmed writes that disorientation from traditional paths of understanding “does not involve bracketing out the familiar but rather allows the familiar to dance again with life.” Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientation, Objects, Others*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 164.

\textsuperscript{45} Presidential biographer Jon Meacham has referred to Tilden as “the godfather of the interpretation movement.” *Journal of Material Culture* 43, no. 2 (2011): 88.

\textsuperscript{46} Tilden, 32.

any number of so-called “liberal” ideals in general. A common defense of this behavior is that he and other provocateurs are simply exercising first amendment rights. Responding to this idea, one Arizona newspaper columnist opined “provocateur is too civilized a word for Milo Yiannopoulos… He is an ass.” It is the hope of this thesis that the evaluation of a continuous need to incite public connection to history and education for the purposes of growth and healing, will be readily be acknowledged as qualitatively different from the desire to propagate hate speech and white supremacy.

Public history – previously defined in this chapter as the practice of bringing the knowledge of history, and the subsequent benefits of knowledge, to the out of classroom public – depends on the successful delivery of interpretation. Though many legitimate definitions of, and theoretical approaches to interpretation are potentially available, arguably none are as simultaneously complete, erudite, and accessible as the framework put forward by Freeman Tilden’s publication *Interpreting our Heritage*.

Tilden’s success is due largely to the fact that he was not a trained historian. His observations and recommended foundations were born from his personal love of National Parks and historic places. Inspired by his background as a writer, and designed in consultation with existing National Park Service manuals, the new methodology that Tilden created was specifically designed to reach the layperson. To better serve the non-academic audiences most often encountered at parks, historic sites, museums, and others, Tilden posited six foundational elements of interpretation theory. Directly quoted below, Tilden’s principles are referenced throughout this chapter.49

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49 Tilden, 9.
I. Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.

II. Information, as such, is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.

III. Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical, or architectural.

IV. The chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.

V. Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.

VI. Interpretation addressed to children should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach.

Connecting with the non-academic community is particularly essential in the case of statues and monuments, which are often encountered accidentally. Public statues are not hidden behind the paywalls of museums, where visitors may know what they expect to view. Instead, statues are encountered during visits to parks, plazas, libraries and courthouses, and other equitably accessible places.

It must also be recognized that those who have campaigned for, and against, statues and monuments are most often not trained historians. That matters, according to Tilden, because it means that the needs of the audience have most often not been met by statues and monuments. “The visitor’s chief interest,” Tilden wrote, “is in whatever touches his personality, his experience and his ideals.” Confederate statues conveyed only the history of race-based violence to the Charlottesville student Zyahna Bryant. To Julian Carr, who spoke at the

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50 Tilden, 11.
dedication of *Silent Sam*, the statue represented the noble struggle of Confederate soldiers to preserve the Anglo Saxon spirit.\(^{51}\) “Remember,” Tilden writes, “the visitor ultimately is seeing things through his own eyes, not through those of the interpreter, and he is forever and finally translating your words as best he can into whatever he can refer to his own intimate knowledge and experience.”\(^{52}\)

Careful consideration of this warning is vital if the public historian seeks to play a role in determining whether or not value can be found in existing Confederate statues and monuments. In consideration of Tilden’s warning, the guiding question at hand must be: what can be done to disorient the audience from the traditional paths of their own understanding? Dr. David Uzzell suggests that it is critical for public historians to remember that it is an incorrect assumption that “we can somehow know the past by simply investigating it.” This simplistic approach, Uzzell writes “leaves aside questions such as whose history are we interpreting?... Rarely is interpretation presented as precisely that – one interpretation amongst several possible interpretations.”\(^{53}\) Uzzell recommends as a measure of success, and objectivity as much as it is possible, a metric similar to that previously suggested by this thesis. The interpreter can seal their work with a stamp of approval if it is designed to contribute to global citizenship.

Following the violence in Charleston and Charlottesville, most Confederate statues have been identified as being counterproductive to the public welfare. The lone message that they are forever destined to convey is that through the power of warfare and mob violence, white Americans are foreordained with the power to one day see the Confederate cause to its rightful place of power. In this regard Confederate statues do not serve as purveyors of historic

\(^{51}\) As noted in chapter three Julian Carr, a Confederate veteran, made several overtly racist statements in his speech at the dedication of the statue known as *Silent Sam* at UNC Chapel Hill.

\(^{52}\) Tilden, 14.

education, but rather as magnets of violence, damaging to common peace and safety. Where this is identified, it may be said that statues have no inherent, or potentially ascribed value. In these communities, it has been repeatedly argued that statues should be removed from public places to mitigate the damage that they cause.

Although the idea of removal may be superficially abrasive to the opposing ideologies, the ultimate goal of the pro-removal movement is almost always viewed by its own members to be a compromise. The ideology behind the push to remove statues is that when removal is accomplished, the public is no longer in danger of suffering from the messages of oppression that Confederate monuments were designed to overtly convey. Writing on behalf of the pro-removal movement, political commentator Brandon Kesselly opined, “plain and simple: Confederate Monuments should be displayed – in the American Civil War Museum.” The theory and philosophy behind Kesselly’s statement is that in museums Confederate statues can be visited like tombstones in a cemetery, or sacred objects in a house of warship. There, they are simultaneously accessible to their audience, but also separated from those who prefer to live a more secular lifestyle. In theory, a more egalitarian lifestyle awaits the community that removes statues from public places.

What even the most well-intentioned protesters may not realize, however, is that the quest for removal to museums can never truly yield the all-appeasing compromise that many believe it will bring. The many potential interruptions to this ideal solution begin with expense of removal and storage, which can by itself be staggering. In Charlottesville, the city council estimated that to simply remove the statues of Lee and Jackson from their pedestals would cost

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the city between $400,000 and $700,000. If the price tag alone is not enough to give pause, it should also be noted that even if the task was completed, the statues of Lee and Jackson would join Silent Sam and the majority of the Confederate statues that have been removed throughout the United States. To prevent vandalism, removed statues reside in secret storage facilities, rather than in museums accessible to the public.

Though most storage is designed to be short term, a temporary middle step between removal and new life in a museum, it is likely to continue indefinitely. According to a 2018 report of the Southern Poverty Law Center, more than 100 Confederate monuments have been removed since the 2015 attack on the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston. Still, more than 1,700 additional statues, monuments, and flags, as well as schools, streets, and military bases with names associated with the Confederate cause remain standing. This sheer volume of statues overwhelms the number of museums and other cultural institutions that are able and willing to house relocated iconography. Further complicating the issue are the undeniable facts that statues require ample vertical space to be housed inside of buildings, as well as movement by crane and other heavy equipment. Statues and other artifacts may also be rejected outright if they do not align with the missions or collections policies of community and national museums.

In a 2018 interview Christy Coleman, CEO of the American Civil War Museum in Richmond, Virginia said “the biggest reason, I’d say, that museums aren’t able to accept them [statues] is that they simply can’t afford to take care of them.” Speaking on behalf of the American Alliance of Museums in 2018, Elizabeth Merritt put forward the idea that directors

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55 Ned Oliver, “Baltimore paid less than $20,000 to remove four Confederate monuments last month. So what does that mean for Richmond?” Richmond Times Dispatch, Sep. 8, 2017.
and curators might turn down relocated statues if they felt as though museums were being treated only as convenient solutions to a complex and intricate conundrum. Said Merritt, “Some of us would argue that the ‘put them in a museum’ response to Confederate memorials reflects a misunderstanding of what museums are for – and an effort to sidestep conversations that we really need to have.” Exemplifying Coleman and Merritt’s concerns, in 2018 the Smithsonian Institution publically declared that it does not accept monuments “Confederate or otherwise,” into its collections.

Even interested and capable museums, when treated by the public as repositories of antiquated and unwanted statues and artifacts, risk losing sight of their educational missions. Instead of serving as organizations of learning and outreach, those museums risk becoming mausoleums for the otherwise obliterated commemoration of shameful violence and tragedy. When museums are treated as a place for society to congratulate itself on moving beyond the antiquated, morbid, or shameful lifestyles of yesteryear, they become what scholars have regularly described as cabinets of curiosity. In Defining Memory, the authors Jessie Embry and Mauri Liljenquist Nelson argue that although many fascinating museums have been formed by collecting unwanted, and unusual objects, there are few highly successful institutions that prioritize the taboo.

By the definition of scholar Stephen E. Weil, as written for the journal Daedalus, this

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61 Embry and Liljenquist Nelson write that for more than half a century, the most successful institutions have, “encouraged interpretation based on research, and designed installations that included carefully selected objects with thematic text.” Embry and Nelson, 162.
shifting modus operandi of museums is better described by noting that they and other cultural institutions have gone, “From being about Something to Being for Somebody.”

Museums no longer collect the unwanted in order to allow the public a space to gawk at the obscure. Instead, it has become the responsibility of museums to engage the audience in conversation that will in turn guide learning. This is a noble goal, but historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage cautions, “For all the talk of using museums to promote critical analysis of the connections between the past and contemporary concerns, too few actually do.”

This is not to suggest that museums have no place in twenty-first century America. The totality of even local history can never be represented by statues alone, and museums serve many additional essential roles in the larger equation of public history. From the preservation of artifacts in archives, to the operation of research libraries, public history as it is understood and valued by society, depends in part on the presence of museums.

The almost irreconcilable challenge, is that while sending Confederate iconography to museums where it can be rapidly identified as archaic may serve to mollify the protestors who fought for its removal, it does little to address the lingering ideological divide perpetuated by the myth of the Lost Cause. Even if statues and monuments are removed, the message behind the idea of the Lost Cause - that Confederate loyalists are endowed with a moral superiority - will remain embedded in the minds of those who have previously accepted it. In order to address the challenge put forward by Sherrilyn Ifill, Judith Hermann and others, that reparation and healing require total community participation and acknowledgement, public historians should

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64 For extensive case studies on the persistence of the lost cause ideology in the contemporary United States, see Tony Horowitz’ best seller, Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War, New York: Vintage Books, 1999.
recall Freeman Tilden’s fifth principle “Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.” What this means may be, in part, that statues, artifacts, and other displays both in and out of museums should strive to convey to their audience that there are always more than two simple and diametrically opposed stories of history to be approached at any given time.

Writing about the origins of the violent protests in Charlottesville, historian David Blight suggested that how historic information is conveyed is of central importance to whether it is understood, and utilized properly as applied education.

The Civil War sits like the giant sleeping dragon of American history, ever ready to rise up when we do not expect it and strike us with unbearable fire… All parallels are unsteady, or untrustworthy, but the present is always embedded in the past. When Moses sent the Israelites across the Jordan, he instructed them to put up memory stones to mark their journey and their story. Americans have put up more than their share of memorial stones, and are just now living through a profound process of deciding which ones will remain.65

Blight’s metaphor of the “sleeping dragon,” requires the historian to view Confederate iconography not as dead and forgotten relics, but rather as living and breathing sources of information that directly influence modern society. Blight’s position that “the present is always embedded in the past,” echoes the philosophy of David McCullough, that we can and must learn from history. The challenge delivered by Blight to Americans, to decide the fate of monuments, reflects the warning of Freeman Tilden’s second principle of interpretation. “Information, as such,” Tilden wrote, “is not interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based on information.”66

Whatever message statues convey on their own, or may have been designed to convey in their past, is not interpretation. In their uninterpreted condition, statues surreptitiously convey only the messages and ideologies of their founders and creators. Preventing this requires

66 Tilden, 9.
constant self-evaluation, and remembering that interpretation is additional, and it is deliberate. This is essential, as the messages of the myth of the Lost Cause do not serve global citizenship.

A significant dilemma for the public historian is that there have been few, if any, successful examples of statues and monuments that have been reinterpreted to better convey the entirety of their history to look to as sources of inspiration. Chapter three of this thesis referenced the *Colorado Civil War Monument*. At the Colorado monument which depicts a nameless Civil War era soldier, a single plaque was added to explain that the violence at Sand Creek was actually an unmitigated massacre of defenseless Native Americans, rather than a battle as it was originally identified in writing on the statue. This is critically important, but it too falls short of serving as complete interpretation. The plaque is small, and is at times nearly covered by vegetation at the base of its accompanying statue. It doesn’t necessarily fulfill the need to connect with the monument’s visitors any more thoroughly then the original statue did. It provides additional information, but not necessarily complete interpretation as defined by Tilden’s six principles.

Memento Park, a self-described “open-air museum” in Hungary, is often cited as an example of successfully relocated statues. Located just outside of the Budapest City Center, the museum park is home to 42 statues and sculptures originally erected elsewhere during Hungary’s communist rule. Because of its success in Hungary, Memento Park is looked to as a model example. To proponents of removal, it is a museum that has both preserved, and reinterpreted history, while also removing it from the spaces in which it does not belong. Memento park, as with all museums, does remove artifacts from the realm of the public. This fosters preservation.

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67 See page 36 in Chapter three.
and longevity, but it also prohibits the free interaction with statues, which unlike textiles and paper resources, are highly durable artifacts.

This might be insignificant, were it not potentially damaging to Tilden’s sixth principle, the need for a separate approach to interpretation for children. In his writing, Tilden advised historians and interpreters that they must “make full use of opportunities for satisfying a tactile experience,” in children, and indeed adult visitors alike.\(^6\) Not only are the statues and sculptures that Memento Park houses locked behind closed gates at night, with an admission fee charged during daylight hours, but most are also displayed behind ropes and fencing or high atop pedestals, prohibiting even the lightest touch.

To replicate Memento Park in the United States, public historians would have to contend with not only questions of accessibility, but a myriad of additional challenges. Whose likeness would deserve to hold precious museum space? Could a community be found that was willing to host such a controversial museum? To whom would the expense of the removal and transportation of statues be charged?\(^7\) Further still, it will no doubt be asked: regardless of the many potential logistical challenges, is it not more important that communities come together to bracket out Confederate statues as moribund representations of a vitriolic cancer? Are they not better off quarantined in a sort of hospice than left to continue the spread of their insidious messaging?

The answer must be an unequivocal yes. There can be no escaping the fact that Confederate statues have for decades been part of the provocation and legitimization of the

\(^6\) Statues in their original conditions can be freely touched, and perhaps even climbed upon. Tilden, 50.

\(^7\) The task of mediating the response to these questions recalls the second definition of public history provided by the UVA at the beginning of this chapter. “Public historians answer specific questions posed by an audience that exists outside of the historical profession.” “What is Public History?,” University of Virginia, accessed Feb. 5, 2019, https://tinyurl.com/y3qk25dc.
warlike violence committed by American citizens, against fellow American citizens. The challenge for the public historian is not to fight against a potential erasure of history, which as demonstrated in Chapter two is in fact a logically fallacious prophesy.

Instead, it is their role to ensure that the most complete representation of history is encountered as often, and in as many different ways and places as possible. This is one of many methods and processes undertaken by the greater public in the hope of preventing the further contagion of violence. Importantly, however, this practice does not require the presence of Confederate statues. The desire to foster education, healing, and the prevention of violence, must be approached with the recognition that there are plentiful situations in which statues are not the most effective means of achieving these ends. Healing from the damage caused by Confederate iconography may mean not only the removal, but also the potential demolition of statues. Asked about the proper place of Confederate monuments, one Tennessean opined, “I believe Confederate statues should be disposed of. You don’t need oppressive structures in museums.”

Despite its many challenges and uncertainties, Memento Park does successfully contribute to the mission of delivering a more complete understanding of history. This is due largely to its success in delivering interpretation not found at otherwise untouched statues. Visitors to the museum can pick up a telephone receiver and hear the actual voices of Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong, Che Guevara, and other communist figures. Propaganda music produced

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during the era of communist rule plays continuously over loudspeakers. These additions fulfill, at least in part, Tilden’s command and third principle of interpretation. “The interpreter must use art,” Tilden wrote, “and at best will be somewhat of a poet.”

Among the displays at Memento Park is a recreation of the oversize bronze boots that remained in place when the 26-foot-tall statue of Joseph Stalin in Budapest was torn down in the Hungarian Revolution. In this display, the museum begins to face the challenge of Tilden’s fifth principle, that “interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part.” The display of Stalin’s truncated statue suggests that not only did grand monuments exist to assert power, but that in certain cases the symbolism of their downfall played an equally important role in restoring power to the oppressed.

Figure 13 - The replica of the bronze boots from the statue of Stalin that was torn down in 1956, as seen at Memento Park, Hungary. Photo from CNN Travel “Budapest’s Memento Park: Where communist statues are laid to rest,” June 7, 2018, https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/memento-park-budapest-hungary/index.html.

Tilden’s fourth and fifth principles strike at the heart of why the practice of interpretation is so completely necessary. Whether in museums or in public spaces, properly managed interpretation puts the power of history into the hands of the audience. Interpretation

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73 Tilden, 27.
74 Tilden, 9.
quickly and effectively presents the whole story rather than fragmented pieces, but even when elements must be abridged, we remember the fourth principle: “the chief aim of interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.”  

Primarily, this is the provocation of the public to learn more and explore further. It is, perhaps, provocation to visit a public library, or museum, or even to pursue a field of study. Equally important is the provocation of the public to attend rallies, or protests, and to otherwise speak out when it feels that injustices are occurring. In the context of the Confederate conundrum, this thesis suggests that conscientious management of statues may yet allow for this provocation to be frequently encountered outside of books, classrooms, and museums. It is important to reiterate that these do not have to be Confederate statues. The movement seeking the removal of Confederate statues is, of course, not advocating for the removal of all statues and monuments. Even when Confederate statues are removed, less damaging pillars of public history will continue to stand.

The logical rebuttal to the idea that Confederate statues may serve to provoke an audience, is that Confederate statues have always provoked the public to act, with deadly consequences. Confederate statues provoked Jason Kessler to incite violence in the name of their protection in Charlottesville, and the response of the public was the call for their removal. This was, however, the provocation of statues in their uninterpreted condition. Interpretation should espouse the categorical dismissal by most historians of the notion that statues represent the honorable devotion of Confederate soldiers to their country. Interpreted statues should also clearly convey that, yes, the protection of the institution of slavery is known to have been the

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75 Tilden, 9.
founding ideal of the Confederate States. In this interpretation, statues might begin to shed their roles as rallying points for white supremacy and other extremist ideologies. By recapturing monuments of oppression, and using them to confront the possibility of healing from the traumatic past, value may yet be ascribed to statues.

Yet, no matter how strong the desire may be to provoke a specific response, interpretation is designed to lead to understanding through analysis, not vindication. Psychologists such as Uzzell remind us that “emotional and behavioral considerations are essential to attitude formation and change.” Therefore, the same interpretation that dismisses Confederate mythology, must also speak to the incredible loss experienced during the Civil War. Interpretation could attempt to connect to the understanding and empathy of the audience for the need of grieving Confederate families to find solace in commemoration. Interpretation could encourage visiting children to consider whom they view to be their heroes. Would they erect a statue to honor them? Although interpretation may be designed to ultimately achieve a specific understanding, it must first welcome a diverse audience by taking steps to connect with a broad range of values and interests.

From this is arrives the essential service of interpretation, and the raison d’être of the public historian: to bring the past to life in the present so that the public may learn from it.

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76 In 1861 Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens wrote, “Our new government’s foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man.” Miles Parks, “Confederate Statues Were Built to Further a White Supremacist Future,” National Public Radio, Aug. 20, 2017, https://tinyurl.com/ybv9jzgp.

77 It is worth noting that this style of interpretation was unlikely to reach the perpetrators of murder in Charleston and Charlottesville. This will be returned to in in the final section of this thesis, which examines the constraints on the practicality of its suggestions.

78 Uzzell, “Interpreting our Heritage: A Theoretical Interpretation.”

79 This touches on Tilden’s sixth principle of separate interpretation for children. Tilden encourages public historians to recognize that children, which he defined as visitors up to age 12, delight in both the superlative and the diminutive. If prompted, they may stand in awe of statues, and wonder how they themselves could one day be recognized in that way. Tilden, 49.
Freeman Tilden recognized, and urged his readers to recognize, that no other field has the same power - an almost magical ability - to immerse its subjects in learning. Tilden also recognized that public historians would likely struggle to verbalize this incredible power, and gave timeless aid to future practitioners by quoting in *Interpreting our Heritage* a passage from a biography of the philosopher Nicolas-Claude Fabri de Peiresc.

He held it always as a maxim, that History did greatly serve… to the ordering of a man’s life. For he counted it as, in certain ways, more effectual than Philosophy, which indeed instructs men with words; but History thrills them with examples and makes them partakers of things and times which are past.  

The public historian has a wealth of tools available for use in bringing the past to life in order to thrill an audience by example. At public monuments, audio and visual displays similar to the telephone at Memento Park might be installed. Interpretive signage detailing timelines, complete with colorful pictures, and quotations excerpted from dedications could be designed to surround statues in place of fencing. Interpreters dressed in period costume could be scheduled to perform for the public.

However else cities, campuses, and military bases choose to treat statues, monuments, and other historic artifacts, “we must remember,” said Tilden, “they represent the life and acts of people.” Recalling Tilden’s fifth principle - interpretation that presents a whole rather than any one part - public historians and interpretive planners should strive to acknowledge that statues of lone Confederate Generals also represent the armies that they led and fought against. Further still, statues of Confederate figures are inextricably connected to the lives and stories of the slaves that they owned and fought to retain. To accomplish this remembrance in accordance with the principles of interpretation, Tilden suggested “Ideal interpretation of the past implies

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80 Tilden, 68.
81 Tilden, 70.
re-creation of the past, and kinship with it.” Whatever methods are ultimately employed, a re-creation of the past that bonds itself to, and connects with its audience, cannot be accomplished exclusively by sealing antiquities behind protective glass.

Though the opportunities to bring history to life through interpretation are legion, it is also true that not every method need be employed simultaneously. Tilden cautioned that a saturation of information might in fact be damaging to interpretation, and was echoed by his peers. In the foreword to the second publication of *Interpreting our Heritage*, then National Park Service Director George B. Hartzog Jr. called on interpreters to use discretion by citing the words of Anatole France. The poet France wrote, “Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people’s curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire.”

An occasionally suggested approach designed to foster both restorative justice and a proliferation of information, while also avoiding oversaturation, is the idea of commissioning new statues and monuments to accompany the existing. The idea, in brief, is that statues erected in the twenty-first century would venerate the heroes of oppressed minorities, and other more thoroughly vetted contemporary figures. Alongside statues of Nathan Bedford Forest, visitors would encounter the likeness’ of Martin Luther King Jr., Harriet Tubman, or perhaps Barack Obama. Even the many nameless black American’s who died at the hands of the KKK and other domestic terrorists could, and indeed should, hold equal positions of prominence. An example of the application of this idea exists in Richmond Virginia, at the city’s so-called

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82 Tilden, 70.
83 Tilden, xiii.
84 From the national Korean War Memorial to a statue in Fort Collins, CO commemorating unnamed victims of a flood, many statues and monuments have been designed to present composite images of nameless persons lost to violence or other tragedy. Erin Udell, “5 Fort Collins Monuments and the Stories Behind Them,” *Coloradoan*, Dec. 4, 2017. This concept will later be seen on a larger scale with evaluation of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice.
“Monument Avenue.” In the midst of statues depicting Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Jefferson Davis, and other Confederate figures, the representation of the American tennis star Arthur Ashe stands alone.

Installed in 1996, at the suggestion of the nation’s first elected African-American Governor, the statue of Ashe does bring diversity to the list of figures commemorated.\(^{85}\) However, like all statues evaluated by this thesis, its installation was not free from controversy. Confederate groups protested the installation, claiming offense not at the veneration of a black man, but ostensibly at the idea of commemorating sports figures with the same esteem given to veterans. Wrote one local resident in an opinion letter, “Ashe was not a military hero, and General Lee and his Confederates were not playing competitive sports.”\(^{86}\) Conversely, the editor of the African-American interest news magazine the *Richmond Free Press* opined, “Arthur Ashe… deserves far more than Monument Avenue.”\(^{87}\) Today, the greatest modern controversy surrounding the statue stems from its appearance on a widely circulated list of the “10 Most Unintentionally Horrifying Statues of Famous People.” The viral article criticized the statue’s sculptor for choosing a design which causes it appear as though the tennis legend is tormenting small children cowering below his enormous figure.\(^{88}\)

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\(^{87}\) Ibid.

In Charlottesville, less than a mile from the controversial statues of Lee and Jackson, a memorial marker commemorates the life of native resident Carrie Buck. In 1924, Buck became the first victim of a eugenics-based forced sterilization program, to which the 17-year-old was remanded because of the claim that she was “hereditarily feeble minded and promiscuous.”

The program has long been rescinded, and apologized for by state and federal government alike. Buck’s history, however, continues to live in relative obscurity compared to the figures commemorated in statues just blocks away from her former residence. Whereas Jackson and Lee are depicted in Brobdingnagian sculpture, Buck’s full name is listed only once on a small historical marker. Buck’s commemoration, or lack thereof, exemplifies the challenges to be considered in erecting contrasting statues.

In order to effectively provide balanced interpretation, monuments old and new must be comparable in stature, so that neither attracts a disproportionately sized audience. Newly erected statues also cannot be vindictive, lest they risk becoming what they were designed to overcome. No matter how strong the public historian’s desire to lay bare the multitudes of atrocities committed by Confederates and Neo-Confederates may be, interpretation itself should not be designed to deliver punitive justice. It is however possible, perhaps even likely, that through effective interpretation contrasting statues will incite in their shared audience a recognition of the ongoing need for restorative justice.

Restorative justice, as defined by a pioneer of the field Howard Zehr, contrasts the focus of legal and punitive justice by focusing on the needs of victims rather than offenders. Addressing the topic, Zehr wrote “Rather than obsessing about whether ‘offenders’ get what they deserve, restorative justice focuses on repairing the harm of the crime, and engaging individuals and community members in the process.” Importantly, the practice of restorative justice does not require an admission, or conviction of the guilt of a perpetrator. Instead it acknowledges the plight of victims, seeking to restore whatever elements it can of their livelihood and humanity. Although delivering justice of any type is not necessarily an expected responsibility of the public historian, it must be accounted for when considering the management of Confederate statues. The question of their proper placement exists because they may have been inspired by, and in turn may have inspired, crimes and injustices against entire populations. No interpretation will be effective if these crimes, and the victims’ search for justice, are not universally acknowledged. If the logistical challenges of creating new sculptures can be overcome, contrasting monuments that exclusively interpret the plight of the oppressed and the victimized might indeed foster new learning and understanding by the out of classroom public.

Located on the lawn of the Pitkin County Courthouse in Aspen, Colorado the Aspen Civil War Memorial claims to provide if not restorative justice, at least complete neutrality. Recalling the expected components of statues previously described by John Winberry, the memorial depicts a soldier clad in a full length coat, leaning against a rifle, set high atop a

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92 Logistical challenges include questions of who should be chosen for representation in statue, and how will the construction of new sculptures be funded.
gradually tapering pedestal. Many examining researchers have suggested that the nature of the statue’s uniform indicates that it represents a Union soldier. Others assert that the statue’s dedication, which delivered the promise that equal commemoration and neutrality would provide resolution for the conflicting ideologies still at war, demonstrates that the statue represents both Union and Confederate soldiers in a purely benevolent manner.

The inscription on the monument’s pedestal indicates that the statue is dedicated “To the soldiers of 1861-1865.” At the statue’s dedication ceremony on Memorial Day, 1899, a commander of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) is reported to have said “Wherever Old Glory waves there is liberty and freedom for the oppressed. Under the stars and stripes there is no place for oppression or imperialism… He who claims such things utters treason against our country and our flag.” Another officer of the GAR concluded the ceremony with a poetic call for unity, declaring “Once again at the call of Trumpet, North and South Meet face to face. Not in deadly battle wrestling, but in brotherly embrace.” In 2017, Pitkin County cited the neutral atmosphere of camaraderie at the statue’s dedication as cause to decline several citizen requests for the removal of the statue.

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93 See Chapter two, page 7 for Winberry’s complete list of common styles of Confederate statues.
95 Ibid.
As superficially appealing as the concepts of equal commemoration, equal honor, or simple neutrality of representation may be, they are not, however, totally inerrant. Christy Coleman, CEO of the American Civil War Museum, expressed to a reporter “History is so much more complex and nuanced than the comfortable myths that have been established so that everybody can feel good and say we’ve reconciled the North and South.” Speaking on a related issue, Mark Naison, a professor of history at Fordham University said “Never underestimate the ability of ordinary people to look away… We are a country with a few million passionate white supremacists and tens of millions of white supremacists by default.”

Less ambiguous in its deliverance of commemoration and honor, is the National Memorial for Peace and Justice (NMPJ). Opened in Montgomery, Alabama in 2018, the project of the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI) is often referred to by a colloquial name, “the National

Figure 14 – soldier represented by the *Aspen Civil War Memorial*, an arguably ambiguous monument dedicated to deceased soldiers from both the Union and Confederate armies. Photo from *The Aspen Times* “Aspen’s Civil War Memorial Statue [sic] of Soldier Remains Neutral 118 Years Later.” Aug. 17, 2017.

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Lynching Memorial.” Erected on a verdant park space overlooking the city of Montgomery, the NMPJ consists of both an open park and an accompanying indoor museum. Although the museum is built within a site of shame, a warehouse that once imprisoned human slaves awaiting auction, the founder and CEO of the Equal Justice Initiative Bryan Stevenson has said that shame -at least on an individual level - is not designed to be part of the visiting experience.

“People do not want to admit wrongdoing in America,” Stevenson told a reporter from The New York Times, “because they expect only punishment. I’m not interested in talking about American history because I want to punish America, I want to liberate America.”99

The focal point of the memorial’s attempts to accomplish what Stevenson described as liberation, is the semi-enclosed pavilion at the end of the memorial park’s outdoor pathways. After passing by a set of sculptures depicting slaves bound by shackles and chains, with any enslavers notably absent, visitors find themselves standing beneath more than 800 steel columns suspended from the roof of the pavilion. Each steel column identifies a county within the United States. For each county represented, another list identifies all of the black Americans, even those whose names are unknown, who were lynched – murdered in usually torturous and visually dramatic fashion – by fellow Americans.

Placidity,” a review noted, “is not ultimately the prevailing mood.”100 Instead, Holland Cotter of The New York Times reported that the visceral nature of the memorial is designed to remind its audience that “the act of lynching was, by calculation, intensely visual. Its central recurring image of controlling white bodies surrounding a tortured black one projected a

message meant to grind black populations down with fear.” The liberation referenced by Stevenson only begins to occur, according to Cotter, because of the fact that the memorial is “meant to perturb, not to console – and to encourage truth telling far and wide.” Cotter is echoed by another architectural critic, Bryan Lee Jr. who wrote, “to remember our collective past… is itself an act of resistance.”

Figure 15 – The statue by Ghanaian artist Kwame Akoto-Bamfo at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Behind Akoto-Bamfo’s sculpture stands the pavilion that commemorates the lynching deaths of more than 4,000 black Americans. Photo from National Memorial for Peace and Justice, accessed Apr. 18, 2019, https://museumandmemorial.eji.org/memorial.

The Equal Justice Initiative, which operates the NMPJ, echoes the words of Cotter and Bryan Lee Jr. by noting on its website “EJI believes that publically confronting the truth about our history is the first step towards recovery and reconciliation.” For the public historian searching for the answers to both why they should be involved in the ongoing debate, and how they might contribute, answering the call of Cotter, Bryan Lee Jr., and the EJI may be the only

102 Ibid.
reasonable possibility. It has been established that the role of the public historian is *not* to fight for the unilateral preservation of Confederate statues as intrinsically vital portrayals of inherently factual history. Instead, this thesis suggests instead that interpretation created by public historians should aid institutions and communities in confronting the sordid past, in order to promote healing, and the building of global citizenship.

Confederate statues and monuments may potentially remain standing in their communities, if only temporarily, for any number of reasons. Whether due to logistical constraints on removal, successful counter protest by the anti-removal movement, litigation, or lack of interest as seen in the case of military bases, even statues and iconography identified as harmful may not quickly be removed. For the statues that remain, interpretation should be designed to de-weaponize them by belying the myth of black inhumanity.

This is, in some ways, taking a side on the issues at hand. Indeed, this is not an undertaking usually seen in works of history. In this scenario however, the role of the public historian is similar to how Washington, Jefferson, and other national leaders were seen to be given the OK for veneration in chapter two of this thesis. Just as the nation requires leadership to be inspired by, so too does it require a foundation for growth and development.

What then, outside of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, is the precedent for confronting the past? There may be some relevant examples from the realm of public history. In *Shadowed Ground* Kenneth Foote cites the transformation of what is known today as the Little Bighorn National Monument, from its previous identity as Custer Battlefield National Monument. Not only the name change, but the accompanying revisions to interpretation recognize, according to Foote, that the white American soldiers that perished at Little Bighorn

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104 See chapter two, page 18 for the introduction of this concept.
were not valiant heroes sent west to restore peace damaged by primitive savages. At the Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site, interpretation recognizes that what today are understood to have been war crimes, were once treated as heroic acts of conquest.

Even more than public history, the principle of confronting the past in order to promote healing is grounded primarily in psychology. Judith Lewis Herman, author of *Trauma and Recovery*, articulated the role of denial in causing harm by writing “The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and the will to proclaim them aloud is the central dialectic of psychological trauma.” Herman’s position has been connected to public history by the writing of Taasogle Daryl Rowe, a professor of psychology at Pepperdine University, and Kamilah Marie Woodson, a professor of psychology at Howard University. Reviewing the success of the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, the two psychologists called for further recognition of the ongoing damage caused by the events of the past.

For African Americans, history and trauma aren’t just in the past. Indeed, it would be simpler to help our communities heal if Jim Crow were but a memory. In the last 50 years or so, black Americans thought ole Jim Crow had died. But really, ole man Crow had simply gone to finishing school and emerged James Crow, Esq. He had polished up his language and was operating in an alleged system of diversity and multiculturalism, soft selling his system of exclusivity as “traditions.”

These words rebut the idea put forward by Sanford Levinson, that the conundrum is caused by the failure of a multicultural society to agree on commonalities. This is instead,

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105 Foote, 327.  
106 Upon returning to Denver, federal soldiers proudly displayed jewelry and even severed body parts that had been looted from the Native Americans massacred at Sand Creek. It would be three years before this was condemned by Congressional investigation. Thomas Curwen, “Confronting our History and ‘Unspeakable Acts’ at the Site of the Sand Creek Massacre,” *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 2016. See also https://www.nps.gov/sand/index.htm.  
107 Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 1.  
according to Rowe and Woodson, one of the many convenient excuses used to mask the
calculated dehumanization of American citizens as more nuanced, or even accidental. In addition
to their sharp condemnation of the allowance of Jim Crow ideology to persist, Taasogle Daryl
Rowe and Kamila Marie Woodson also offer suggested solutions with a call to action. “We
believe,” the authors wrote, “that the restorative memories developed in public spaces like the
National Memorial for Peace and Justice create a shared story that can inoculate African
Americans from ongoing dehumanization.” If the raison d’être of the public historian is to
bring the past to life through interpretation, this is perhaps the reason for doing so. The public
historian initiates and guides controlled exposure to the most complete picture of the past
possible, among other potential reasons, in attempt to ensure that selective understanding and
appreciation does not perpetuate extremist ideology.

The practitioner and public alike can hold up as proof that this is not an erasure of
history the writing of the theologian Lewis B. Smedes. “Forgiving,” Smedes wrote, “does not
erase the bitter past. A healed memory is not a deleted memory. Instead, forgiving what we
cannot forget creates a new way to remember. We change the memory of our past into a hope
for our future.” This methodology also recalls Judith Herman’s challenge for bystanders to

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take on the victim’s burden of pain.\textsuperscript{111} In this endeavor, the public historian must remember that the task at hand is creating an environment in which learning for some, forgiveness for others, and the development of global citizenship for all is the primary objective. “Forgiving,” Smedes admonishes, “is always a personal event. Only victims can forgive those who hurt them.”\textsuperscript{112} The public historian does not, and should not prescribe healing. Nor should the public historian attempt foist any condition of being upon any group. Public historians are not providential redeemers; they are the craftspeople that construct environments in which education for global citizenship can occur.

\textbf{Constraints on the Practicality of Arguments and Suggestions}

Putting aside, only momentarily, the unavoidable fact that Confederate monuments are forever steeped in the ideology of white supremacy, the limitations to the suggestions and explorations of this thesis begin even more fundamentally. Recent scholarship has revealed that studies dating to at least 1975 have demonstrated, with little deviation, that the presentation of factual information is often unlikely to bring about changes of opinion. Reporting on studies conducted on the subject by researchers at Stanford University, Elizabeth Kolbert wrote “Humans… aren’t randomly credulous. Presented with someone else’s argument, we’re quite adept at spotting the weaknesses. Almost invariably, the positions we’re blind about are our

\textsuperscript{111} Herman, \textit{Trauma and Recovery}, 7.
\textsuperscript{112} Smedes, 6.
own.”¹¹³ Not only is an aversion to admitting error ever present, Kolbert notes, but there may be little to nothing to be done about it. “Providing people with accurate information doesn’t seem to help,” Kolbert writes, “they simply discount it. Appealing to their emotions may work better, but doing so is obviously antithetical to the goal of promoting sound science.”¹¹⁴

Further still, the cognitive scientist Dr. Fritz Breithaupt has explored the ways in which the proliferation empathy, described in the acknowledgements section of this thesis as a fundamental task of the public historian, may not actually be entirely altruistic. Said Breithaupt, “Humans are very quick to take sides. And when you take one side, you take the perspective of that side. You can see the painful parts of that perspective and empathize with them, and that empathy can fuel seeing the other side as darker and darker or more dubious.”¹¹⁵ Put differently, Breithaupt says that audiences tend to perceive that “there’s always two sides and, in the end, they know their side… and withdraw from the other side.”¹¹⁶

The only immediately available response of the public historian to this natural draw of polarization may be the important task of suggesting that statues do not only represent a binary narrative of stories and ideas. More than just white supremacy and neo-Confederacy versus those who have been oppressed and murdered by these ideals, statues might be seen to absorb

¹¹⁴ Ibid.
¹¹⁶ Ibid.
additional stories and histories throughout their lifetime, and be useful tools of their interpretation. The statue of *Silent Sam* at the University of North Carolina was witness to the protests that followed the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., and later the Rodney King controversy. Its Union model provoked exploration of the complicated story of the ongoing relationship between the Northern and Southern United States. In Charlottesville, the statues of Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson contain not only the history of the myth of the lost cause, but also the irony in representing Lee, who called for the obliteration of memorial markers. Buried in their national register of historic places nomination paperwork, is further still the history of the nationwide movement called The City Beautiful, which advocated for the placement of public art including statuary.\(^{117}\) In response to Elizabeth Kolbert’s report, perhaps it can only be said that interpretation should still be designed to create an environment where learning is *possible*, even if it is not *probable*. Recalling David Uzzell, the public historian does well to remember “interpretation should be a force for change.”\(^{118}\)

This thesis is a qualitative examination. It is based in a polemic argument against accepting the status quo as adequate, accompanied by suggestions for the continued growth and relevance of the field of public history in response to the specific question: what should be done with Confederate statues? This thesis has not polled, studied, or otherwise connected with


members of the public in any of the cities or locations that it has utilized as case studies. In this fact, it can only be acknowledged that this thesis does not include a comprehensive study of the very public that is supposed to be served by public history.

The author has no empirical data to suggest that any of the arguments, suggestions, or possibilities noted in this thesis would even be willingly considered in Charlottesville, Chapel Hill, or any other community. Logistical constraints prevented the gathering and inclusion of this data, but perhaps it will eventually serve as the catalyst for a subsequent study, *The Confederate Conundrum: Part II*. Until this second evaluation is produced, this thesis will necessarily be read as being less about practical implementation, and instead viewed as an exploration of the realm of theoretical possibilities.

Further contributing to this shortcoming is the unavoidable matter of fact that, at the time of this writing, all that is known about the opposing viewpoints examined in this thesis is based largely on news reporting. The disparate ideologies – described here as the pro-removal, and anti-removal movements - have been subject only to limited studies such as those conducted by the Southern Poverty Law Center which are cited in this thesis. Larger ethnographic studies designed to fully probe the motivations and desires of either ideology in order to inform public history practice have yet to be undertaken. If public history is to remain relevant, eventually it will be forced to consider the desires of the public that it serves.
All other potential flaws aside, the most fundamental counterpoint to all that has been suggested in this thesis is not so much a calculated counterargument, as it is the necessity for persistent acknowledgement of the incontrovertible fact that all Confederate iconography first espouses deadly ideals. Statues, monuments, flags, and names assigned to schools, roads, and military bases, all inherently carry forward the ideology that certain American citizens were not only unequal to others, but also subhuman. As has previously been noted by this thesis, the systematic oppression of black Americans is irrefutably identifiable as the premise of the former Confederate States. Statues and monuments that recall the brief existence of the rogue nation will always represent at least as much as, if not more than anything else, the desire to prolong the life of its founding principles.

This representation cannot be pulled from the stone or metal skin of monuments. It is impossible to remove, and it should not be removed. The public historian can only interpret it. As the historian “Dr. Colorado” Tom Noel opined, “Happy history is no longer the only history we record.” Whether or not a great many communities will find value in this interpretation remains to be seen. As it is recognized that not every statue and monument can be removed or relocated, neither will every one remain. The communities that will inevitably chose to remove statues identified as being only the purveyors of damage and disorder cannot be categorized as, or chastised for, flatly refusing to engage with the past. As noted in this chapter, history

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continues to exist even if it is held in less public places, such as museums. Among the reasons that great care must be taken to address the needs and concerns of communities, is that public historians have only just begun to overcome decades of shame brought on by the insensitive mismanagement of Native American culture. Public historians are rightfully at risk of forever relegating themselves and their field to obscurity if they participate, even tacitly or accidentally, in campaigns of white supremacy.

**Conclusion**

Utilizing interpretation to contribute to the potential for healing, as suggested by this chapter, recognizes Dr. David Uzzell’s call for the understanding of history as a continuum. Wrote Uzzell, “While not necessarily being prescriptive about the future, interpretation could present alternative scenarios for the future direction of society, and challenge people to consider and make informed choices about the sort of society of which they wish to be members.”

This, in turn, recalls the words of David McCullough in chapter one, that history in the hands of the public has the power to inform “who we were, who we are, and who we will be.”

The conflicts described by this thesis, as well as the opportunities for growth and healing as described by Herman and others, are alive and persistently present. This thesis has sought to demonstrate that through application of the theoretical principles established by Freeman Tilden, public history may serve as a force of guidance, mediation, change, or even healing. More

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121 See page 5 of chapter one for the introduction of this idea by David McCullough.
than any single solution, however, this conclusion recommends the consideration of three
guiding principles. In however many diverse ways communities, institutions, and public
historians may ultimately come together to achieve their goals, may they recognize that history
has the power to create a more informed public, particularly when it is allowed to escape books
and classrooms. In relation to the debate on Confederate iconography, this practice should first
seek to address the damage endured at the hands of Jim Crow, and the myth of the Lost Cause.
In accomplishing this task, may the modus operandi of the public historian forever be
recognized as the desire to enable education for global citizenship. Lastly, may the mission of all
who address the Confederate conundrum always be the final defeat of the myth of black
inhumanity.


