



mon · u · ment (noun)

A statue, building, or other structure erected to commemorate a notable person or event.

1. A statue or other structure placed over a grave in memory of the dead.
2. A building, structure, or site that is of historical importance or interest.

<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/monument>

Essential Questions

- What is the purpose of memorials and monuments? What impact do they have on us and the way we think about history?
- What parts of the history of the Civil War and Civil Rights Movement are the most important for us to remember today? How can we ensure that this history is never forgotten?
- How do monuments memorialize events? Who erected them? Who designed them? How do they relate to the community and how are they used by the community since their erection?
- What memorials or monuments have you seen in person or pass by in your daily life? Do they have an impact on you?

Monuments as “Thought Objects”

James A. Percoco // Publish date unknown

Excerpt:

The German word for monument is *denkmal*, which means "thought object." And you really have to engage monuments. They're meant to be encountered, and the great artists understood how to get the people that were looking at the monument into the monumental space to view the monument and to understand their place in terms of the monument.

3 Angles to the Confederate Monument Controversy

Wayde Grinstead // June 5, 2017

<http://facingtoday.facinghistory.org/3-angles-to-the-confederate-monument-controversy>

Up until late last May, the bronze statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, was featured prominently in the center of Lee Circle in New Orleans, Louisiana. Now, the nearly 60-foot column it rested upon is bare and empty after the city removed the last of its Confederate era monuments. Sparked by Mayor Mitch Landrieu after the 2015 massacre of nine black churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, the effort to remove these monuments has ignited emotionally charged responses and debates all across the country: Are we erasing the past by removing them? Or are we upholding legacies of racism and discrimination by keeping them?

An ongoing dialogue has revealed three important perspectives from this controversy. Mayor Landrieu defended his decision to remove the monuments in a recent speech:

“These statues are not just stone and metal. They are not just innocent remembrances of a benign history. These monuments purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy; ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement, and the terror that it actually stood for...

This is ... about showing the whole world that we as a city and as a people are able to acknowledge, understand, reconcile, and most importantly, choose a better future for ourselves making straight what has been crooked and making right what was wrong. Otherwise, we will continue to pay a price with discord, with division, and yes, with violence.”

Meanwhile, Alabama Governor Kay Ivey argued to preserve Confederate statues and monuments, recently signing into law protections for them. Giving the rationale for this law, Senator Gerald Allen, who sponsored the bill, stated:

"Contrary to what its detractors say, the Memorial Preservation Act is intended to preserve all of Alabama's history—the good and the bad—so our children and grandchildren can learn from the past to create a better future."

Then, there's a third argument: Others suggest adaptations with contextual information, framing the event as it was understood then and as it is understood now. Richmond, Virginia Mayor Michael Signer suggests:

"Reimagining our parks by building new monuments as a powerful counter-narrative to their Jim Crow-era celebration of the Confederacy—neither forgetting the past nor accepting its grasp on our present and future."

So what role do monuments and memorials play in the way we think about history? The answers will require deep and meaningful reflection about the dark legacies of race and equality brought about by the Civil War and the ensuing Reconstruction era. This debate surrounding Confederate monuments has the potential to push Americans to do just this. Discussing how we understand and memorialize history is a crucial part of Facing History's exploration of difficult pasts and how we connect with them today. If we look back—from slavery to the Reconstruction era to Jim Crow segregation, to the Civil Rights Movement, and even to the Black Lives Matter Movement today—we can see the persistent challenges of race and racism in our society.

We ask teachers and students to grapple with these issues. You can use the different viewpoints above to guide your discussions in the classroom, or at home with your own children. The important thing is to face these societal tensions and come to an understanding about how the past shapes who we are as individuals and as a nation so we can work to move forward together.

How the U.S. Got So Many Confederate Monuments

Becky Little // August 17, 2017

<http://www.history.com/news/how-the-u-s-got-so-many-confederate-monuments?scrllybrkr>

While every statue in every town has a different origin, taken together, the roughly 700 Confederate monuments in the United States tell a national story. Many of these commemorations of those on the losing side of the Civil War are a lot newer than one might think.

According to the Southern Poverty Law Center, which compiled a list of these monuments last year, these monuments are spread over 31 states plus the District of Columbia—far exceeding the 11 Confederate states that seceded at the outset of the Civil War.

Most of these monuments did not go up immediately after the war's end in 1865. During that time, commemorative markers of the Civil War tended to be memorials that mourned soldiers who had died, says Mark Elliott, a history professor at University of North Carolina, Greensboro.

"Eventually they started to build [Confederate] monuments," he says. "The vast majority of them were built between the 1890s and 1950s, which matches up exactly with the era of Jim Crow segregation." According to the Southern Poverty Law Center's research, the biggest spike was between 1900 and the 1920s.

In contrast to the earlier memorials that mourned dead soldiers, these monuments tended to glorify leaders of the Confederacy like General Robert E. Lee, former President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis and General “Thomas Stonewall” Jackson.

“All of those monuments were there to teach values to people,” Elliott says. “That’s why they put them in the city squares. That’s why they put them in front of state buildings.” Many earlier memories had instead been placed in cemeteries.

The values these monuments stood for, he says, included a “glorification of the cause of the Civil War.”

White women were instrumental in raising funds to build these Confederate monuments. The United Daughters of the Confederacy, founded in the 1890s, was probably the most important and influential group, Elliott says.

In fact, the group was responsible for creating what is basically the Mount Rushmore of the Confederacy: a gigantic stone carving of Davis, Lee and Jackson in Stone Mountain, Georgia. Its production began in the 1910s, and it was completed in the 1960s.

By then, the construction of new Confederate monuments had begun to taper off, but the backlash to the Civil Rights Movement was spreading Confederate symbols in other ways: In 1956, Georgia redesigned its state flag to include the Confederate battle flag; and in 1962, South Carolina placed the flag atop its capitol building. In its report last year, the Southern Poverty Law Center said that the country’s more than 700 monuments are part of roughly 1,500 symbols of the Confederacy in public spaces.

Protesters and city officials have taken down statues in Baltimore and Durham, North Carolina. And many cities—including Washington, D.C.—are calling on their elected officials to do the same. Two of Stonewall Jackson’s great-great-grandsons have written an open letter to the mayor of Richmond, the former capital of the Confederacy as well as the grandsons’ hometown, regarding Jackson’s statue there.

“[W]e are writing today to ask for the removal of his statue, as well as the removal of all Confederate statues from Monument Avenue,” they wrote in their letter published on Slate. “They are overt symbols of racism and white supremacy, and the time is long overdue for them to depart from public display.”

Even Robert E. Lee V, whose understanding of his great-great-grandfather’s legacy is steeped in Lost Cause-ism, made a similar recommendation about statues of him. Speaking to The Washington Post, he said: “if it can avoid any days like this past Saturday in Charlottesville, then take them down today.”

Confederate Statues Were Built To Further A ‘White Supremacist Future’

Miles Parks // August 20, 2017

<http://www.npr.org/2017/08/20/544266880/confederate-statues-were-built-to-further-a-white-supremacist-future>

As President Trump doubled down on his defense of Confederate statues and monuments this week, he overlooked an important fact noted by historians: The majority of the memorials seem to have been built with the intention not to honor fallen soldiers, but specifically to further ideals of white supremacy.

More than 30 cities either have removed or are removing Confederate monuments, according to a list compiled by The New York Times, and the president said Thursday that in the process, the history and culture of the country was being “ripped apart.”

Groups like the Sons of Confederate Veterans defend the monuments, arguing they are an important part of history. One of the leaders of that group, Carl V. Jones, wrote a letter on Aug. 14 condemning the violence and “bigotry” displayed in Charlottesville, but he also denounced “the hatred being leveled against our glorious ancestors by radical leftists who seek to erase our history.”

That letter to "compatriots" was signed the day before Trump's raucous press conference, in which he also cast blame on what he called the "alt-left" — comments for which he faced criticism from business leaders, nonprofits and members of his own party, among others.

Yet many historians say the argument about preserving Southern history doesn't hold up when you consider the timing of when the "beautiful" statues, as Trump called them, went up.

"Most of the people who were involved in erecting the monuments were not necessarily erecting a monument to the past," said Jane Dailey, an associate professor of history at the University of Chicago. "But were rather, erecting them toward a white supremacist future."

The most recent comprehensive study of Confederate statues and monuments across the country was published by the Southern Poverty Law Center last year. A look at this chart shows huge spikes in construction twice during the 20th century: in the early 1900s, and then again in the 1950s and 60s. Both were times of extreme civil rights tension.

In the early 1900s, states were enacting Jim Crow laws to disenfranchise black Americans. In the middle part of the century, the civil rights movement pushed back against that segregation.

James Grossman, the executive director of the American Historical Association, says that the increase in statues and monuments was clearly meant to send a message.

"These statues were meant to create legitimate garb for white supremacy," Grossman said. "Why would you put a statue of Robert E. Lee or Stonewall Jackson in 1948 in Baltimore?"

Grossman was referencing the four statues that came down earlier this week in the city. After the violence in Charlottesville, Va., when a counter-protester was killed while demonstrating, and the action in Durham, N.C., where a crowd pulled down a Confederate statue themselves, the mayor of Baltimore ordered that city to remove its statues in the dead of night.

"They needed to come down," said Mayor Catherine Pugh, according to The Baltimore Sun. "My concern is for the safety and security of our people. We moved as quickly as we could."

Thousands of Marylanders fought in the Civil War, as NPR's Bill Chappell noted, but nearly three times as many fought for the Union as for the Confederacy.

Still, in 1948, the statues went up.

"Who erects a statue of former Confederate generals on the very heels of fighting and winning a war for democracy?" writes Dailey, in a piece for HuffPost, referencing the just-ended World War II.

"People who want to send a message to black veterans, the Supreme Court, and the president of the United States, that's who."

Statues and monuments are often seen as long-standing, permanent fixtures, but such memorabilia take effort, planning and politics to get placed, especially on government property. In an interview with NPR, Dailey said it's impossible to separate symbols of the Confederacy from the values of white supremacy. In comparing Robert E. Lee to Presidents George Washington and Thomas Jefferson on Tuesday, President Trump doesn't seem to feel the same.

Dailey pointed to an 1861 speech by Alexander Stephens, who would go on to become vice president of the Confederacy.

"[Our new government's] foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man," Stevens said, in Savannah, Ga. "That slavery subordination to the superior race is his natural and normal condition."

To build Confederate statues, says Dailey, in public spaces, near government buildings, and especially in front of court houses, was a "power play" meant to intimidate those looking to come to the "seat of justice or the seat of the law."

"I think it's important to understand that one of the meanings of these monuments when they're put up, is to try to settle the meaning of the war" Dailey said. "But also the shape of the future, by saying that elite Southern whites are in control and are going to build monuments to themselves effectively."

"And those monuments will endure and whatever is going around them will not."

Let's Start a New Conversation on Confederate Symbols

Kendall Wills Sterling // July 27, 2015

http://www.richmond.com/opinion/their-opinion/guest-columnists/article_a0bd0f2f-bf78-5222-be21-ec73402ca410.html

The Confederate battle flag has come down from the State House grounds of South Carolina, and the National Park Service has removed the flag from all battlefields where it flew, sparking a debate between those for whom the flag carries hurtful connotations and others for whom it represents family and the land they love.

In Memphis there is talk of removing the statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest and digging up the graves of Forrest and his wife. Here in Richmond, Confederate statues have been defaced, and nationwide there is a push to erase all mention of Confederates everywhere. It is difficult to fathom what this would accomplish other than to produce division and resentment. Certainly it would not materially alter the plight of black Americans. And in the process, millions of Southerners — some of them black — will feel that they are being deliberately humiliated and made to pay for something they did not do. It is nothing less than a cultural purge of the South — something historically associated with tyrannical regimes and unworthy of a free nation.

The story these symbols tell is more nuanced than what we typically hear. It is said that the South seceded to perpetuate slavery — and yet six slave states sent men to die for the North, and the Southern states rejected an offer from Lincoln that would have made slavery permanent in exchange for their return to the Union. In addition, although most Northern states had ended slavery by 1860, many had also passed “black laws,” a forerunner of Jim Crow, which placed tight restrictions on blacks and often forbade them from even living in the state. Furthermore, West Virginia was admitted into the Union as a slave state in 1863, and slaves in that and other Northern states had to wait until 1865, two years after the Emancipation Proclamation, for their freedom.

Slavery was more than just a Southern problem; it was an American problem. Instead of removing all vestiges of the Confederacy, let us use these statues and the names inscribed on them to start a new conversation, one that acknowledges the roles of everyone involved and offers hope for our nation and its people, both black and white. Let the statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest tell his full story, which might surprise many. Forrest is often reviled as a slave owner and the first Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. But seldom are we told that 45 of Forrest's slaves rode and fought alongside him as equals, their loyalty such that they remained with him even after he gave them their freedom papers; that the Klan's original purpose was to serve as a volunteer police force against rampant crime in the occupied South; and that in 1870, when the Klan morphed into a terrorist organization, Forrest resigned and ordered the group disbanded. Softened by an encounter with his God, Forrest spent his final years advocating for political and social advancement for black Americans. When he died in 1877, more than 3,000 blacks lined up to pay their respects as part of his funeral procession.

Let the statue of Robert E. Lee, and the schools that bear his name, remind us all of a Sunday in 1865 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church, where Lee worshiped when in Richmond. That Sunday, with the wounds of war still raw, a black man walked down the aisle of St. Paul's and knelt to receive Communion. The whites in attendance weren't certain if they could, or should, take Communion with a black man. For a moment no one knew what to do. Then came a rustle, the scrape of boots on the floorboards, and the congregation looked up to see Lee walking down the aisle to kneel beside that black man, by his own example teaching those around him the way of respect and tolerance.

America's history — both good and bad — has much to teach us, but those lessons are lost when their physical symbols are erased. This type of cultural cleansing, itself a form of intolerance, debases both America and its people and sets a dangerous precedent for our civil liberties. We should restore the battle flag to its historical context, the battlefields, which are arguably the museums for that war, and leave the statues as they are. Let us instead use these icons to start a new conversation.

In 1861, our nation came apart because neither side was willing to compromise, with both sides focused on differences rather than commonalities. The result was vast swaths of the South ruined, nearly a million killed, and millions of Southerners, both black and white, left homeless and destitute. Today we see a similar unwillingness to compromise, with skin color increasingly emphasized and the lessons of 150 years ago seemingly unlearned — perhaps because we are telling only part of story.

The names and faces of these Southern men, and even the flag itself, speak not only of slavery and oppression, but also of decency, possibility and the power of transformation. They tell us that a nation, and men like Forrest, can overcome division and differences in skin color and work for a better world; and that although slavery is part of our past — America's past — those on both sides of this debate can, like Lee, lead by example to offer respect, acceptance and forgiveness to all.

**PLEASE VIEW THE “MONUMENTS & CHARLOTTESVILLE”
SUPPLEMENTAL PRESENTATION POSTED ON GOOGLE
CLASSROOM FOR IMAGES, GRAPHS, AND EXTRA FACTS.**

Notes: