

Tributes to the Past, Present, and Future:  
Confederate Memorialization in Virginia, 1914-1919

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ABSTRACT

Between 1914 and 1919, elite white people erected monuments across Virginia, permanently transforming the landscape of their communities with memorials to the Confederacy. Why did these Confederate memorialists continue to build monuments to a conflict their side had lost half a century earlier? This thesis examines this question to extend the study of the Lost Cause past the traditional stopping date of the Civil War semicentennial in 1915 and to add to the study of memorialization as a historical process. Studying the design and language of monuments as well as dedication orations and newspaper coverage of unveiling ceremonies, this thesis focuses on Virginia's Confederate memorials to provide a case study for the whole South.

Memorialization is always an act of the present as much as an honoring of the past. Elite white Virginians built memorials to speak to their contemporaries at the same time they claimed to speak for them. Memorialists turned to the Confederacy for support in an effort to maintain their status at the top of post-Reconstruction Southern society. Confederate monuments served as permanent physical role models, continuing sectional reconciliation, encouraging women to maintain prescribed gender roles, and discouraging African Americans from standing up for their rights. American involvement in World War I exacerbated societal changes that threatened the position of the traditional white ruling class. As proponents of the Lost Cause squared off against the transformations of the Progressive era, Virginia's Confederate memorialists imbued monuments throughout the Commonwealth with messages meant to ensure their continued dominance.

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The ephemera of memorialization is not always easy to find, especially in the case of local monument dedications. I would like to thank the library and archival staff at the United Daughters of the Confederacy archives, the Museum of the Confederacy, the Library of Virginia, the Virginia Historical Society, the Valentine Richmond History Center, and local history organizations including the Handley Library in Winchester, the Highland County Museum, Hanover County Historical Society, the Bristol and Lynchburg chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park, the Goochland Historical Society, the Craig County Historical Society, the Lynchburg Museum System, and the Page County Library. I would also like to thank the Special Collections staffs of Virginia Tech, the University of Virginia, Duke University, and Washington & Lee University, who have all been wonderfully helpful and supportive in tracking down materials.

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## ***Introduction***

*My privilege is this, ladies and gentlemen: To declare this chapter in the history of the United States closed and ended, and I bid you turn with me with your faces to the future, quickened by the memories of the past, but with nothing to do with the contests of the past, knowing, as we have shed our blood upon opposite sides, we now face and admire one another.*<sup>1</sup>

-Woodrow Wilson, speech given at the dedication of the Confederate Memorial at Arlington National Cemetery, 4 June 1914.

Traveling across the state of Virginia, the motorist is faced with a choice. Interstate highways 95, 81, or 64 make for quick, moderately scenic journeys. The traveler who leaves the interstate and opts for smaller highways, however, soon discovers that he or she is traversing the long history of Virginia as well as the landscape. Older cross-state routes such as US 11 and US 60 link Virginia's county seats, exposing the traveler to the pattern of the state's old courthouse towns. Some of Virginia's ninety-five county seats have grown into large cities. Others remain crossroads communities, home to the local government and not much else. But almost all of Virginia's county seats have one thing in common: a monument to the soldiers of the Confederate States of America.

Virginia is not unique in this. The most prevalent memorial to the Civil War, both North and South, is the common soldier monument. The urge to remember the war seems strongest, however, in the states of the former Confederacy. Monuments commemorating fallen soldiers were erected in Virginia before the war even ended.<sup>2</sup> The greatest number of Confederate monuments in Virginia were built between 1890 and 1920.<sup>3</sup> In his 1914 speech at the dedication

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<sup>1</sup> "Address of President Wilson Accepting the Monument in Memory of the Confederate Dead at Arlington National Cemetery, June 4, 1914," Frances Crane Leatherbee, *Addresses of President Wilson, 1913-1917* (1918).

<sup>2</sup> Timothy S. Sedore, *An Illustrated Guide to Virginia's Confederate Monuments* (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011), 3.

of the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, quoted in the epigraph above, President Woodrow Wilson declared the Civil War to be over. Despite this claim, men and women all over the South continued to both express and shape memory of the Civil War through memorialization of the conflict well into the twentieth century.

In this thesis, I argue that the memorialization of the Lost Cause by Virginia's Confederate monument builders served many purposes, collectively memorializing a culture that was disappearing by the 1910s. Elite white men and women turned to the Confederacy for support as they built monuments in an effort to shore up ideals of states' rights, gender separation, and racial hierarchy in a rapidly changing world. Confederate monuments, already a familiar form of memorialization, took on renewed importance as sites of public memory meant to serve as physical moorings of the established social structure. White Virginians used the tools they had at their disposal to further their own interests in society.

Confederate monuments have always been one of the most important ways in which Southern memorialists passed along the message of the Lost Cause. On the face of it, this message was deceptively simple. The Lost Cause taught the history of the Confederate nation as the true heir to the United States Constitution, which enshrined the rights of individual states to make their own laws regarding life, liberty, and property. Fighting against an overreaching and tyrannical federal government bent on subverting the interests of the South, the Confederacy struggled for four years until overwhelmed by the larger and better-supplied Union army.

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<sup>3</sup> Timothy S. Sedore, *An Illustrated Guide to Virginia's Confederate Monuments*, 3. Author and historian Timothy Sedore breaks up the periods of Confederate memorialization into three loose categories: the "Bereavement and Funereal Era" (1861-1889), the "'Reconciliation' or 'Celebration Era'" (1890-1920), and the "Commemorative Era" (1920-present).

Throughout the bitter war, the men and women of the Confederacy, led by heroes of almost godlike status, bore nobly the sacrifices their new country required.<sup>4</sup>

Monuments are the central focus of this paper since they were objects of great importance to the keepers of Confederate memory from the 1860s through the 1920s. An account of common soldier monuments with known unveiling dates places the number of monuments in Virginia built between 1863 and 1919 at 127. Eighty-three of those were built between 1900 and 1919, more than a third of that number in the years 1914-1919.<sup>5</sup> Erecting a monument to the Confederacy was not a casual undertaking. Monuments were expensive and raising funds often took years of work. Once in place, Confederate monuments became permanent fixtures on the landscape of Southern towns and cities, sites of memory meant to be uncontested. While Civil War monuments were not only a Southern phenomenon, the interesting dynamic that grew out of commemorating a lost war added importance to Confederate monuments in particular. Confederate monuments were meant to send a permanent message. I examine several aspects of that message and the ways in which the language, structure, and placement of these monuments was intended to perpetuate a worldview threatened by the unrest of the 1910s.

In Chapter I, I discuss memorialists' efforts to vindicate the South through reconciliation as well as memorialization. I also address the use of common soldier monuments as role models

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<sup>4</sup> The Lost Cause has been the subject of a large body of literature and several frameworks exist for trying to understand it. I find historian Gaines M. Foster's take on the Lost Cause the most useful. Foster defines tradition as "a cultural belief held over time," and the Confederate or Southern tradition as "primarily a public memory." Viewing the Lost Cause as a tradition allows an emphasis on memory, both personal and collective, that viewing it as either religion or myth, as other scholars have done, does not. The language of tradition also lends itself to the contestations of the 1910s, as white Virginians worked to uphold both the tradition of the Lost Cause and the traditions of antebellum society against new forces of opposition. See Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865 to 1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). For the classic take on the Lost Cause as a civil religion, see Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980).

<sup>5</sup> Thomas J. Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004), 24.



for Virginians during World War I, a conflict that exacerbated the tensions of an already changing society. Chapter II examines female roles in the erection of monuments to the Confederacy, emphasizing the antisuffrage sentiments of many memorialists and their efforts to portray Confederate women as the ideal of domestic duty. Chapter III addresses the complicated racial issues of the period as I look at Confederate monuments as physical symbols of codified white supremacy. Using Virginia's Confederate monuments as a case study, this thesis sheds light on Virginians' experiences of the 1910s as Confederate veterans and their heirs struggled to maintain the status quo of white male privilege and power in the face of growing opposition to the genteel traditions of the Old South. The process of memorialization reveals one of the ways elite whites reacted to internal and external threats to their status, including a foreign war, women's suffrage, and African American activism.

World War I, the largest single event of the decade, began 28 July 1914 and lasted through 11 November 1918. President Wilson asked Congress for war on 2 April 1917, revealing the continued importance of the Civil War with words out of the Lost Cause canon. Wilson's language in the war message reflected his background as a son of the South who came of age during Reconstruction. Steeped in the Lost Cause, Virginia-born Wilson's rhetoric exemplified the use of Confederate imagery and ideals to reflect on the present. "Our object," Wilson said, "is to vindicate the principles of peace and justice in the life of the world as against selfish and autocratic power... We enter this war only where we are clearly forced into it because there are no other means of defending our rights... We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion."<sup>6</sup> These words, applied to German imperial aggression in the context of the First World War, could have been written over fifty years earlier by Southern separatists. As

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<sup>6</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *War Messages*, 65th Cong., 1st Sess. Senate Doc. No. 5, Serial No. 7264, Washington, DC, 1917, 3-8, *passim*.

news of the war in Europe reached Virginia in 1914, and as Virginians watched their fathers, sons, and husbands depart for the trenches of France three years later, Confederate memorialists invested in the continued vindication of their Lost Cause used similar rhetoric as they constructed monuments to honor the soldiers of the 1860s and to influence their contemporaries. Memorialists worked hard throughout the decade to keep winning the peace, bolstering the reunion of North and South on Southern terms that had taken place between 1865 and the turn of the century.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to maintaining the Confederacy's image as time passed, Confederate memorialists struggled to influence their society by endorsing the ideals of the antebellum South, especially the separate spheres of men and women and the separation and hierarchy of the races. Faced with a renewed effort by suffragists to extend the vote to all women, both white and black, male and female memorialists honored Confederate women while highlighting the qualities of those women that they believed women of the 1910s should emulate. Meanwhile, memorialists ignored the legacies of Confederate women that did not fit into their patriarchal vision, such as the uncivil disobedience of the 1863 bread riots in North Carolina and Virginia. Keeping women out of politics and in the home, raising loyal Southern children in return for male protection and admiration, was one way Confederate memorialists believed they could check the social unrest of the era.

Another way to combat unrest was to build monuments to men who fought for a government committed to keeping black people enslaved. Memorialists glossed over the negative aspects of slavery and its role in causing the Civil War, instead extolling the virtues of state

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<sup>7</sup> See David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

sovereignty or even protesting the beneficence of Southern slavery. By ignoring or defending slavery, white memorialists spread the message of white supremacy through monuments erected on public land, staking their claim of ownership of both physical space and communal memory. Confederate memorialists worked hard to separate white from black, dedicated to preserving the reunion between North and South based on the shared whiteness of both regions' elite classes.

Looking at how these issues played out in Virginia provides a good case study for the South as a whole.<sup>8</sup> Virginia was arguably the most important state in the Confederacy, home to the Confederate capital—Richmond, “the eternal city of Southern dreams”—, site of the greatest number of Civil War battles, and birthplace of many of the Confederate heroes later venerated by the Lost Cause, such as Robert E. Lee, Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, and J. E. B. Stuart.<sup>9</sup> The memory of the Civil War in the South was also formed in Virginia, by organizations and places such as the Confederate Museum, the Confederate Memorial Association, Hollywood Cemetery, and Monument Avenue.<sup>10</sup> During the early twentieth century, Virginia became a battleground once again as debates raged over America's place in Europe's war, the equality of the sexes, and the proper place of African Americans in society. As the oldest Southern colony, birthplace of the Southern slave economy, a plethora of Founding Fathers, and the Lost Cause, Virginia shaped the rest of the region.

My thesis expands the historiography of memory and memorialization through the lens of war, nationalism, gender, and race during the turbulent 1910s. I view Confederate monuments as

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<sup>8</sup> Caroline E. Janney has made similar claims for the significance of the Old Dominion. See Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

<sup>9</sup> Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood*, 18.

<sup>10</sup> Sedore, *An Illustrated Guide to Virginia's Confederate Monuments*, 1.

“sites of memory,” taking the concept from French historian Pierre Nora.<sup>11</sup> Nora argued that sites of memory are “material, symbolic, and functional,” intended to render memories solid and unforgettable.<sup>12</sup> Monuments that immortalize memories of an event such as the Civil War, refracted by time and cultural change, coalesce into sites of memory that bear meaning that goes beyond the mere physical marker. Building on Nora’s ideas, I examine 1910s Confederate monuments to peel away some of the layers of memory that surround them, focusing on the meaning of these memorials to the men and women who designed and placed them.

Philosopher Maurice Halbwachs posited the idea of collective memory in his work in the first half of the twentieth century. As he pointed out, collective memory, the shared remembering of a community, relies on external societal cues.<sup>13</sup> Remembering the past is always an act of the present. “Depending on its circumstances and point in time,” Halbwachs wrote, “society represents the past to itself in different ways: it modifies its conventions. As every one of its members accepts these conventions, they inflect their reflections in the same direction in which collective memory evolves.”<sup>14</sup> The erection of physical memorials to the Lost Cause was one convention contributing to the development of a distinctive Southern collective memory. Halbwachs’s vicious cycle played out in Virginia as men and women steeped in the Lost Cause crystallized their memory in public monuments, influencing the next generation to take part in that same collective memory. Monument builders’ memories led them to create these works of art, which they in turn intended to form a specific collective memory for contemporaries and

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<sup>11</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*,” *Representations* 26 (Spring 1989): 7.

<sup>12</sup> Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 19.

<sup>13</sup> Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 172-173.

future generations. The memory they perpetuated involved a strategic forgetting of the memories seen by these men and women as antithetical to their message.<sup>15</sup>

Halbwachs's concept of collective memory has influenced a large body of literature on the ways people choose to remember the past. The "sense of history" (to borrow historian David Glassberg's term) that pervades society is not innate in people.<sup>16</sup> Instead, people are influenced by their surroundings and upbringing to have an idea of what came before them. Confederate memorialists knew that memory was a human construct and could therefore be manipulated. Other memorialist groups from ancient times to today have also recognized the power of physical objects to convey the desired lessons of history. Many historians have explored the process of memory-making, emphasizing the fact that memories shift over time, even memories tied to a permanent structure.<sup>17</sup> I focus on the initial point of memory creation in the process of Confederate memorialization, examining the process to come closer to understanding the intentions of memorialists and the history they chose to preserve.

Civil War memory in particular has been studied at length. David Blight is one of the most influential historians to examine Americans' memory of the Civil War in the decades immediately following the conflict. According to Blight, white Northerners and Southerners were able to reconcile by downplaying slavery's role in causing the Civil War and deliberately

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<sup>15</sup> W. Fitzhugh Brundage builds on Halbwachs, saying that "within collective memories a dialectic exists between the willfully recalled and deliberately forgotten past." See W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 6. For more on various influences on the collective memory of the Civil War, see Gary W. Gallagher, *Causes Won, Lost, and Forgotten: How Hollywood & Popular Art Shape What We Know About the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

<sup>16</sup> David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001).

<sup>17</sup> For more on the preservation and creation of memory, see John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994). For a discussion of monuments and their meaning in societies, see Donald Martin Reynolds, ed., *"Remove Not the Ancient Landmark": Public Monuments and Moral Values* (Amsterdam: Gordon and Breach Publishers, 1996).

forgetting the Union's legacy of emancipation. By the turn of the twentieth century, whites on both sides had reunited on the basis of shared racial superiority and the vindication of the Southern cause and way of life.<sup>18</sup> Kirk Savage's argument that the divisiveness of slavery led to its suppression in Civil War memorialization provided a platform for Blight's broader claims. I build on the work of both Blight and Savage by looking more deeply at 1910s Confederate memorialists' efforts to maintain the sectional reconciliation that had been accomplished earlier.<sup>19</sup> I also consider the scholarship of historians such as John R. Neff and Caroline Janney, who have both worked to complicate Blight's assertion that reconciliation was the dominant feeling of Civil War veterans. Janney has argued that fierce sectional loyalty remained pervasive in the memory of both sides for many decades.<sup>20</sup> I take both sides of this argument into consideration, expressing the dual nature of Confederate memorialization as an act of reconciliation based firmly on the perceived justness of the Lost Cause. The idea that reconciliation was at best tenuous is important for the period I study since it helps answer the question of why some Virginians continued to work for the vindication of the South years after Blight claimed reconciliation on Southern terms was complete. This concept also allows me to refute Gaines M. Foster's assertion that the Lost Cause lost importance by the 1910s, though I do build on his interpretation of the Lost Cause as a Southern tradition and his argument that social unrest at the turn of the twentieth century contributed to a resurgence of Lost Cause activities.<sup>21</sup>

Finally, I add to the work of several historians who have focused specifically on

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<sup>18</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*.

<sup>19</sup> Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 6.

<sup>20</sup> Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013); John R. Neff, *Honoring the Civil War Dead: Commemoration and the Problem of Reconciliation* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005).

<sup>21</sup> Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 6.

Confederate monuments and memorialization.<sup>22</sup> Caroline Janney's work on Ladies' Memorial Associations in Virginia sets the stage for my examination of women and memorialization in Chapter II.<sup>23</sup> Janney and William Blair also provide a grounding for my work on the political role of memorialists and monuments.<sup>24</sup> These historians and others, including David Blight, set time parameters for the study of Confederate commemoration which I go beyond in this thesis. Most historians who have studied the Lost Cause stop at 1913, the date of the famous Blue-Gray Reunion at Gettysburg, or 1915, the end of the Civil War semicentennial.

Instead of following the trend and stopping halfway through the 1910s, I push the history of the Lost Cause further into the decade to understand how Confederate memory and memorialization continued to shape political and social relations in the South long after the defeat of the Confederacy. I aim to highlight the fact that memorialization is often an act of the present rather than an honoring of the past. This becomes clear once we view the products of memorialists, such as monuments, in the context of the people who produced them. Many elite Southern whites saw themselves as heirs to a cultural heritage of hierarchy and privilege under attack by new social forces during the second decade of the twentieth century. By memorializing

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<sup>22</sup> For books that go into detail on individual Confederate monuments, see Benjamin J. Hillman, *Monuments to Memories: Virginia's Civil War Heritage in Bronze and Stone* (Richmond: Virginia Civil War Commission, 1965); Ralph W. Widener Jr., *Confederate Monuments: Enduring Symbols of the South and the War Between the States* (Washington, DC: Andromeda Associates, 1982); and Sedore, *An Illustrated Guide to Virginia's Confederate Monuments*. For more on the history of Confederate memorialization, see J. Michael Martinez and Robert M. Harris, "Graves, Worms, and Epitaphs: Confederate Monuments in the Southern Landscape," in J. Michael Martinez, William D. Richardson, and Ron McNinch-Su, eds., *Confederate Symbols in the Contemporary South* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2000) and Bruce E. Baker, *What Reconstruction Meant: Historical Memory in the American South* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007).

<sup>23</sup> Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past*. For a collection of essays on women and memorialization, see Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson, eds., *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> See William A. Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

the Confederate cause, these men and women attempted to create a focal point for the ideals of a dying generation, placing durable statues and obelisks in highly visible public spaces, staking a claim on the physical landscape to enforce their claim on the minds and hearts of the people.

Since Confederate monuments were erected to be permanent, it is easy to find and visit them in person. Usually the landscape around the monument has changed, often significantly, since it was built, but getting a feel for the monument's place in the space of a town or city can still reveal much about the intentions of the monument builders. The details of the monument's inscription, placement, and design tell a story—what is included as well as what is left out. The physical monument is both the beginning and the end of that story. Monuments were the culmination of long efforts, the details of which quickly faded into the background in the memory of a community. But the monuments remain as a starting point for people to reconstruct that history. They are truly, as the monument in Monterey, Virginia, states, “tribute[s] to the past, the present, and the future.”<sup>25</sup>

By reading closely speeches and orations given at monument dedications, reading the iconography and language of monuments, and exploring the context of 1910s America, I draw conclusions about public memory and the mindset of memorialists. I use Virginia as a case study given its importance during both the Civil War and at the turn of the twentieth century. The incredible turbulence of the seemingly brief time between 1914 and 1919, which spans from the earliest days of the Great War through the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the US Constitution, provides a rich backdrop for a deeper understanding of the function of monuments built to commemorate a lost war. The majority of my sources come from white men and women, mostly members of the upper class, since the records of the elite have traditionally been the best

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<sup>25</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Monterey, Virginia, 1919.



kept. Paying close attention to the silences of my sources on issues such as antiwar sentiment, female suffrage, and black empowerment, as well as their reactions to these issues, I bring the monuments I am studying into conversation with larger questions of identity, gender, and race during a time of seismic shifts in Southern—and American—society.

The language of the monument to John Singleton Mosby unveiled at the Fauquier County courthouse in 1920 summed up the fervent hopes of Virginia's 1910s-era Confederate memorialists. As they honored the Lost Cause, they worked to ensure that the Confederate soldier's "heroic devotion to state and southern principles" would be "the pride and admiration of his soldier comrades and fellow countrymen" and that his legacy would "live till honor, virtue, courage, all, shall cease to claim the homage of the heart."<sup>26</sup> The monuments these memorialists left behind, shaped by the unrest of their time, have continued to shape Southern identity over the past century and will probably do so for centuries to come.

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<sup>26</sup> *John Singleton Mosby Monument*, Warrenton, Virginia, 1920.

## *Chapter I*

### **Brave Men and Noble Women: Common Soldier Monuments as Role Models**

On 27 August 1914, a crowd of about 2,500 Hanover County residents, grizzled veterans, and out-of-towners gathered across from the old Hanover Tavern on the lawn of the 1730s courthouse where Patrick Henry once spoke out against British tyranny.<sup>27</sup> That year, the reunion of the 15<sup>th</sup> Virginia Infantry was a special one, as the grand new monument to Hanover's Confederate soldiers was also dedicated.<sup>28</sup> The orator on that August day was Robert E. Lee III. A Virginia Delegate for Fairfax County in the early 1900s and the grandson of his namesake, the Confederate General-In-Chief, Lee headlined several monument unveilings during the 1910s. An excerpt from a newspaper article preserved by relative Mary Custis Lee gives an idea of the typical reception he received when announced as orator: "men jumped up on their seats, waved their arms and yelled until they were hoarse; old ladies and young girls screamed and waived [sic] their handkerchiefs and—well, no man in any country ever received a greater, heartier welcome, nor one which was more sincere."<sup>29</sup> Concerning his speech at the Hanover ceremony, the *Hanover Progress* simply reported, "the oration was a masterpiece."<sup>30</sup> With songs, stories, and speeches, the white citizens of Hanover County spent the day celebrating the common men and women who had played their parts in the drama of the 1860s.

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<sup>27</sup> "2,500 Witness Unveiling of Hanover's Monument 'To Her Confederate Soldiers and to her Noble Women Who Loved Them,'" *Hanover Progress*, 28 August 1914; Rosewell Page, *Hanover County: Its History and Legends* (Rosewell Page, 1926), 33-35.

<sup>28</sup> Mary Grundman Vial, "Hanover Confederate Soldiers Monument: Hanover Court House, Virginia," *UDC Magazine*, March 2012, 20-21.

<sup>29</sup> Newspaper clipping, Mary Custis Lee Papers, 1694-1917, Section 61, Virginia Historical Society.

<sup>30</sup> "2,500 Witness Unveiling of Hanover's Monument," *Hanover Progress*, 28 August 1914.

This chapter examines the most often-encountered physical Lost Cause tribute, the monument to common soldiers. These memorials are often—like Hanover’s—found on courthouse lawns. They can also be found in cemeteries, parks, and other public areas. Common soldier monuments typically took the form of obelisks or soldier statues. Soldier statues usually portrayed a generic Confederate foot soldier, accoutered for battle and standing ready at parade rest. Obelisks used strength and scale to convey their message, rather than a realistic human image. Though explicit symbols of the Lost Cause, common soldier monuments erected during the World War I era are hardly just stone sentinels looking backwards to the Civil War. Looking closely at Confederate monuments in the context of the turbulent 1910s, I find latent meaning hidden beneath the veneer of Lost Cause symbolism. In this chapter, I argue that Confederate memorialists in the 1910s used common soldier monuments as role models to teach reluctant citizens the proper patriotic duties of Virginians in an effort to continue vindication of the Confederacy fifty years after its defeat.

This urge to vindicate the Confederacy grew out of the reconciliation of North and South in the fifty years after the Civil War. Once slavery was abolished in 1865 it became a moot point for many men and women on both sides. The destruction of the institution that caused the conflict enabled white men and women on both sides to look past their old differences and reunite on the basis of shared whiteness.<sup>31</sup> Reconciliation on Southern terms—ignoring the role of slavery in the Civil War and the Union’s avowed support of emancipated slaves during Reconstruction—was essentially complete by the Spanish-American War in 1898, when President William McKinley tactfully made sure that two of the four commanders in the US Army were ex-Confederates. The triumph of the Lost Cause was not tenable without continued

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<sup>31</sup> David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

efforts, however.<sup>32</sup> Having proved their military virtue in 1898, Southerners next had to prove the virtues of their hierarchical culture. Over the course of the 1910s, Virginia's Confederate memorialists and elite whites across the South continued to memorialize the Confederacy in an effort to maintain their increasingly insecure footing at the top of Southern society. Their selective emulation of the Confederate legacy glossed over the unpleasant aspects of the war, including slavery and the extreme violence of the conflict, to create a brand of Southern identity that fit neatly into existing American identities.

The 1914 Hanover County monument can be considered an example of the status quo of Confederate memorialization in the early 1910s. The First World War had not yet exacerbated the divisions in American society that would come to characterize the end of the decade. In August 1914, America had recently declared neutrality in the European conflict. While the crowd at Hanover Courthouse had likely been following the news as Europe's empires fell into war like dominoes, the focus of the day's proceedings was peace and honor. The European crisis took a back seat to a day "so perfect...that the crowd dispersed slowly and with reluctance."<sup>33</sup> The day belonged to the memorialists: white men and women of the upper classes who glorified the Lost Cause of the Confederacy not only to honor the heroes of fifty years past, but also to impose their worldview on the physical and mental landscapes of communities.

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<sup>32</sup> Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 291.

<sup>33</sup> "2,500 Witness Unveiling of Hanover's Monument," *Hanover Progress*, 28 August 1914.



Figure 1: *Confederate Monument*, Hanover Courthouse, Virginia, 1914. Photo by the author.

Hanover’s monument takes the form of a massive obelisk. The main inscription reads, “HANOVER/ TO HER CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS/ AND TO HER/ NOBLE WOMEN/ WHO LOVED THEM.”<sup>34</sup> The names of Hanover County’s Confederate soldiers are inscribed on four tablets—one each for infantry, cavalry, and artillery, with officers above the rank of lieutenant listed on the front—a total of 1,158 men. The women honored by the inscription remain anonymous. Naming the soldiers individually adds to the power of the monument as a persuasive object, as passersby could form tangible connections to ancestors who upheld the principles of the Confederacy.

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<sup>34</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Hanover Courthouse, Virginia, 1914.

The message of the monument at Hanover Courthouse is primarily one of peace and selfless sacrifice. The poem read at the unveiling ceremony is a classic example of Lost Cause literature: “Soldiers, who still survive your country’s call/ No bugle sounds today the battle cry/... The dead upon the field had victory./ Fighting for freedom, how they fought and fell.” The poem ends with an explicit statement of the intended meaning of Hanover’s Confederate monument:

Furled is your flag; your cause is counted lost,  
Your deeds declared by some of no avail;  
Yet of your sacrifice, and of its cost  
This monument doth tell the tragic tale.

Pilgrim and traveler here shall read the roll  
Unveiled for future years to see  
How many sons—indeed a glorious toll!  
Our country gave for love—not victory.<sup>35</sup>

As these verses reveal, the monument, built to honor veterans both dead and alive, was meant to serve as an instructional reminder to future generations of the sacrifices of Hanover’s Confederate soldiers. The *Hanover Progress* opined that “we have done well to record the deeds of these heroes in granite and bronze. It was our duty to the future generation and to the memory of the ‘Boys in Gray’ to do this. And that monument will stand on the Court Green in it’s [sic] simple grandeur to remind our children and our children’s children of the deeds of their forefathers and to teach it’s [sic] lesson of patriotism and valor.”<sup>36</sup> What the *Progress* failed to mention was the monument’s function in the present. Despite nods to the past and future, Confederate memorialization was often a more powerful act of the present, as memorialists crafted role models to influence their contemporaries.

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<sup>35</sup> Vial, “Hanover Confederate Soldiers Monument,” 21.

<sup>36</sup> “The Confederate Monument,” *Hanover Progress*, 28 August 1914.

The interplay between present vindication and the glorification of the past stands out even more explicitly on memorials such as the one erected in Victoria, in Southside Virginia's Lunenburg County. This monument exemplifies the form of the realistic soldier statue. Victoria's monument (since moved to the county seat of Lunenburg) also typifies the magnitude of the undertaking when a Confederate monument went up. Victoria's monument was dedicated Saturday, 12 August 1916. Several weeks before the unveiling, the *Lunenburg Call* began advertising the impending ceremony simply as "VICTORIA'S Big Day."<sup>37</sup> Five thousand people attended the ceremonies. Victoria's soldier stands at parade rest, his feet slightly apart and his musket held in front of his body. He wears a short shell jacket with a CSA belt buckle, slouch hat, and a blanket roll across his torso. He appears young and has no facial hair.<sup>38</sup> The original location suggests the desire of the monument builders to have as many people see the memorial as possible. More could appreciate the monument in the booming railroad town of Victoria than in the sleepy county seat.

The inscription on Victoria's monument reads, "IN MEMORY OF THE/ CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS/ OF LUNENBURG COUNTY,/ AND THE CAUSE FOR WHICH/ THEY FOUGHT FROM/ 1861-1865."<sup>39</sup> Here the focus is just as much on the cause as the soldiers themselves, a striking difference from the more straightforward tribute to the soldiers of Hanover County. The monument goes on to state exactly what that cause was, too: "WE FOUGHT FOR/ THE SOVEREIGNTY/ OF THE STATES."<sup>40</sup> On the last two sides of the monument base, inscriptions state

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<sup>37</sup> "VICTORIA'S Big Day August 12 1916," *Lunenburg Call*, 3 August 1916.

<sup>38</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Lunenburg, Virginia, 1916.

<sup>39</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Lunenburg, Virginia, 1916.

<sup>40</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Lunenburg, Virginia, 1916.

that “THE FAME AND DEEDS/ OF HEROES WILL LIVE” and that “OUR PATRIOTIC/ WOMANHOOD WAS AN INSPIRATION.”<sup>41</sup>

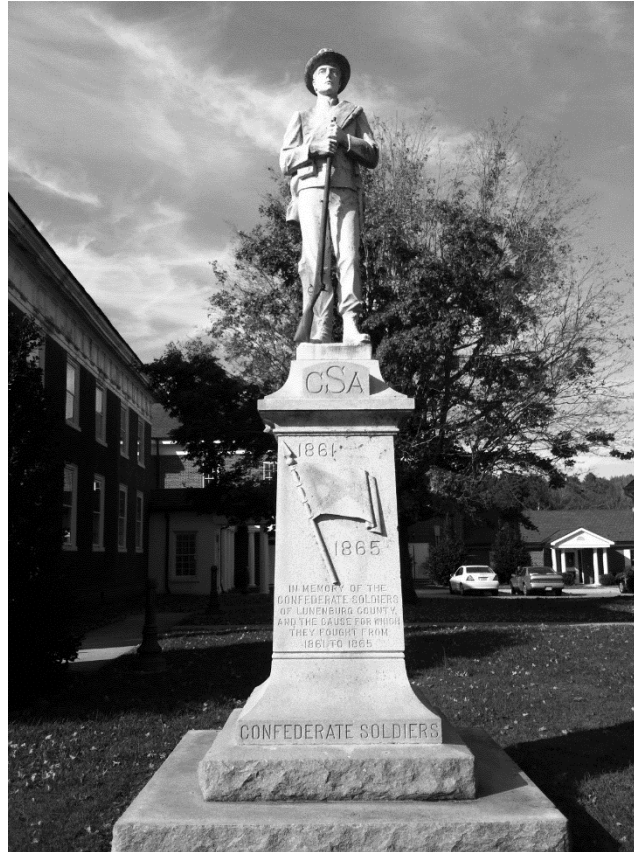


Figure 2: *Confederate Monument*, Lunenburg, Virginia, 1916. Photo by the author.

The strong words of the monument’s inscriptions supported the continual efforts of Virginia’s memorialists to vindicate the Confederate cause. In contrast to the staunchly Confederate language of the inscriptions, Virginia’s monument dedication ceremony and the preparations leading up to it showed an interesting blend of Southern nationalism and American patriotism. The *Lunenburg Call*, for example, printed instructions in one article before the

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<sup>41</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Lunenburg, Virginia, 1916.



ceremony, saying, “everybody is expected to decorate for the day and it is desired that the stars and stripes as well as the Confederate flags be used.”<sup>42</sup> It is worth noting that the newspaper’s editor felt the need to remind the citizens of Lunenburg to fly the American flag, hinting at concerns that many citizens might not have done so otherwise. This suggests a desire on the part of the *Call*, in its official capacity, to make the celebration one of national pride as well as Confederate pride—perhaps in contrast to the desires of Lunenburg’s people, who may have seen the ceremony as a vehicle to reassert their support for the old Stars and Bars.

United States nationalism was on display in the monument dedication orations as well, though the speeches given at Lunenburg were all steeped in vindication for the Lost Cause. Confederate veteran George E. Smith gave the presentation address, which included a defiant rejection of the epithet of rebel while also upholding his still-strong belief in the right of secession. “We were not rebels,” he says. “George Washington and our ancestors who fought against the government of a despotic king were rebels; but Robert E. Lee and the Confederate soldiers were not rebels... We fought for the same rights under the stars and bars of the South for which our fathers fought at Bunker Hill.”<sup>43</sup> He went on, “I am as much a rebel today as I was when I donned the gray and joined the Confederate army to fight for the rights of the States of the South.”<sup>44</sup> Despite denying the rebelliousness of Confederate troops, Smith did not back down from identifying with their cause, even more than fifty years after the fact. Having appealed to the Southern sympathies of his audience, Smith then changed tactics and extolled the reunification of the former Confederate states with their onetime foes. Smith “was glad to realize

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<sup>42</sup> “The Big Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 10 August 1916.

<sup>43</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

<sup>44</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

that the surviving soldiers of the North and South had shaken hands across the bloody chasm of war and were once more American citizens of a united country, ready and willing to fight for our rights under the stars and stripes of the Union.”<sup>45</sup>

General Stith Bolling, a former Confederate cavalry commander and native son of Lunenburg County, echoed Smith’s sentiments in his speech, bringing up the reconciling effects of Southern service in the Spanish-American War as well. “We are all Americans now,” he said, “and as ready to defend the stars and stripes as loyally as we defended the stars and bars in ’61-’65, and we need no better evidence of it than the promptness with which our Fitz Lee, Wheeler and many other Confederate soldiers and their sons responded to the call of the President in the Spanish-American war.”<sup>46</sup> Not only did these Southerners prove their loyalty to the United States in 1898, but “should occasion arise these old soldiers whose forms are bent by the weight of years and whose locks are silvered by time would defend it loyally.”<sup>47</sup> Speaking directly to his contemporaries in the audience, Bolling used the Spanish-American War as an example to encourage his listeners to work for the continuation of good feeling between the North and the South. As he and George Smith suggested with their words, the best way for Southerners to justify their Confederate legacy was to faithfully serve the reunified nation.

Victoria’s memorialists did not ignore their duty to future generations, either. In the words of one Captain Allen, who also spoke at the unveiling ceremony, Victoria’s monument

will tell future generations (1) that there was a war in this country in 1861-5, and (2) that there was an army engaged in it on the Southern side that will live in history as one of the great armies of the world. . . ., that won the admiration of all peoples of the civilized world; (3) that the war, however unhappily begun, however happily or unhappily ended, however severe its hardships, however awful

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<sup>45</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

<sup>46</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

<sup>47</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

its sufferings, had a justifiable object under our form of government—the individual sovereignty of the individual states composing this great republic.<sup>48</sup>

Allens’s rhetoric once again combined Southern vindication with patriotism for “this great republic.” The repetition of Confederate themes in all these speeches can be read as an attempt to teach the people of Lunenburg County the meaning behind their new Confederate monument. The orations reinforced the message of the monument’s inscriptions, which remained visible to the audience long after the speakers and crowds packed up and went home at the end of the day. The show of American patriotism alongside the justification of state sovereignty indicated to listeners the natural relationship between the two. To be Southern was to be American, implying that the defense of Southern culture was a legitimate form of Americanism. Confederate memorialists drummed up support for Lost Cause ideals within the comfortable realm of US nationalism in order to combat the social forces buffeting their status in the 1910s. Creating a place within contemporary American identity for unrestrained Confederate sympathies made it easier for elite white men and women to maintain their privilege, which rested on the complacency of the rest of the white population.

As the presidential election of 1916 drew closer and the news from Europe worsened, the military legacy of the Confederacy became even more important to memorialists. The Confederate monument at Prince George, Virginia, dedicated 21 October 1916, is an obelisk “ERECTED BY THE PRINCE/ GEORGE CHAPTER U.D.C./ TO THE MEMORY OF THE/ CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS/ OF PRINCE GEORGE CO./ THAT THEIR HEROIC DEEDS,/ SUBLIME SELF-SACRIFICE/ AND UNDYING DEVOTION/ TO DUTY AND COUNTRY MAY/ NEVER BE FORGOTTEN.”<sup>49</sup> The keynote

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<sup>48</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

<sup>49</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Prince George, Virginia, 1916.

speaker that day, Honorable Charles T. Lassiter, a local politician, praised the Confederate soldiers of Prince George County, especially their preparation and training. His emphasis on preparedness highlighted the danger his listeners potentially faced. “The time is now upon us, ladies and gentlemen,” Lassiter said, “when we should emulate the deeds as well as preserve the memory of the great men of former days...Nothing can be so dangerous as the courage of our ignorance. For purposes of defence our weakness is surpassed only by the blindness of our self confidence.”<sup>50</sup> In short, he concluded, “I can conceive of no greater tribute, ladies and gentlemen, to the Confederate soldier, than that we in our day should emulate his virtues.”<sup>51</sup> The virtues Lassiter found worthy of emulation were military training and the readiness to leap into action when the country calls. These words must have struck a chord for the citizens of Prince George and nearby Petersburg gathered that autumn day. The *RMS Lusitania*, a British ocean liner, had been torpedoed by a German U-boat the year before, resulting in the deaths of 128 American citizens. The United States was still neutral, but the presidential election loomed just two weeks away. On 7 November 1916, Woodrow Wilson won a second term in the White House on the strength of slogans such as “peace with honor, preparedness, prosperity.”<sup>52</sup> On 6 April 1917, preparedness won out over peace as the United States declared war on Germany.

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<sup>50</sup> Unveiling Confederate Monument at Prince George Court House, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1916, Lassiter Family Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

<sup>51</sup> Unveiling Confederate Monument at Prince George Court House, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1916, Lassiter Family Papers, David M. Rubenstein Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Duke University.

<sup>52</sup> “Pinback button promoting Woodrow Wilson for president, 1916,” *Legacy Americana*, 2014, <http://www.legacyamericana.com/servlet/the-22097/Pinback-button-promoting-Woodrow/Detail>.



Figure 3: *Confederate Monument*, Prince George, Virginia, 1916. Photo by the author.

Following America's entry into World War I, Confederate soldier monuments took on another purpose as memorialists rallied behind the cause to further vindicate the Confederacy. Just as the Spanish-American War had done, World War I prompted Southern memorialists to advocate military service in the United States army as one way of proving the worth of the South, and by the same token, the Lost Cause. Monuments to the common soldier became role models for Virginians who found themselves embroiled in another war. The loyal support of the South for the war was essential to the goals of Confederate memorialists, especially when faced with antiwar sentiment in rural areas. Virginia, along with most of the former Confederacy, had

one of the highest desertion rates in the country during World War I.<sup>53</sup> Many people of lower socioeconomic status saw the war as another way for rich men to profit from the sacrifice of the poor. Elite white men and women, invested in preserving the military value of the South, used common soldier monuments as one tool to garner support for the Great War, raising statues to anonymous and relatable heroes to appeal to the common man.

A look at the program for the unveiling of the Spotsylvania Confederate cemetery monument gives a good idea of the reinvigorated balance between Confederate and American patriotism. First, the Confederate monument at Spotsylvania was unveiled 30 May 1918— Memorial Day. While Memorial (or Dedication) Day was a popular holiday in the South as well as in the North, the date of 30 May was established in 1868 by the Grand Army of the Republic, a Union veterans' association. The United States Marine Band provided music for the occasion at Spotsylvania, and the main oration was given by United States Senator Claude A. Swanson. At one point in the ceremony, the audience was invited to join in the singing of "America." Confederate symbols were also sprinkled throughout the printed program. The cover featured the third national pattern Confederate flag and the Confederate battle flag crossed.<sup>54</sup> Each of these banners made another appearance on subsequent pages. The program listed the man in charge of the ceremony, Judge John T. Goolrick, by his Civil War rank—Private, CSA. Finally, a children's chorus sang two songs of the 1860s: "Bonnie Blue Flag," which praised the Confederate states in roughly the order of their secession, and "Tenting Tonight on the Old

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<sup>53</sup> Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 5.

<sup>54</sup> The battle flag is the quintessential Confederate flag, a blue saltire with white stars on a red field. The third national pattern flag of the Confederate States is white with the battle flag in the canton and a red stripe on the outer vertical edge (fly).

Camp Ground,” popular on both sides during the Civil War but written by an abolitionist.<sup>55</sup> The mingling of Confederate and American patriotic symbolism underscored the main theme of the day: reunion and a renewed vow to serve the United States in the Great War.

Spotsylvania’s memorial is a soldier on a large base, standing in the middle of the Confederate cemetery near the Spotsylvania County courthouse. This monument is a treasure trove of Lost Cause memorialism. The inscription on the front of the monument provides background: “ERECTED AND DEDICATED/ MAY 12, 1918/ BY THE SPOTSYLVANIA CHAPTER/ UNITED DAUGHTERS OF/ THE CONFEDERACY,/ CONFEDERATED SOUTHERN/ MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION AND/ CITIZENS OF SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY/ TO COMMEMORATE AND/ PERPETUATE THE VALOR AND/ PATRIOTISM OF THE SONS/ OF SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY,/ VIRGINIA, AND OTHER/ CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS WHO/ REPOSE IN THIS CEMETERY.”<sup>56</sup> The inscription on the back of the monument base is taken from the poem “March of the Deathless Dead” by Father Abram J. Ryan, a Catholic priest and Confederate sympathizer. It reads, “WE HAVE GATHERED THE/ SACRED DUST/ OF WARRIORS TRIED AND TRUE/ WHO BORE THE FLAG OF/ OUR NATION’S TRUST/ AND FELL IN THE CAUSE/ ’THO LOST, STILL JUST,/ AND DIED FOR ME AND YOU.”<sup>57</sup> On the two sides are simple inscriptions, common throughout the South: “love makes memory eternal,” the motto of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and “lest we forget,” taken from Rudyard Kipling’s poem “Recessional.” The soldier is, if not an exact copy of the one erected in Victoria, a very close match. This indicates their origins at the same monument-producing company—the McNeel

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<sup>55</sup> “Tenting Tonight: Civil War Song Endures 150 Years Later,” *New England Historical Society*, 8 October 2013, <http://www.newenglandhistoricalsociety.com/tenting-tonight-civil-war-song-endures-150-years-later/>.

<sup>56</sup> *Confederate Soldiers Monument*, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia, 1918; the dedication date on the monument is incorrect, since it was actually dedicated 30 May, not 12 May. The intention when the monument was ordered was most likely to dedicate it on 12 May, the anniversary of the fighting at the Bloody Angle during the 1864 Battle of Spotsylvania.

<sup>57</sup> *Confederate Soldiers Monument*, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia, 1918.

Marble Company of Marietta, Georgia.<sup>58</sup> Young and well equipped, Spotsylvania's soldier keeps watch over the graves of almost 600 Confederate soldiers.

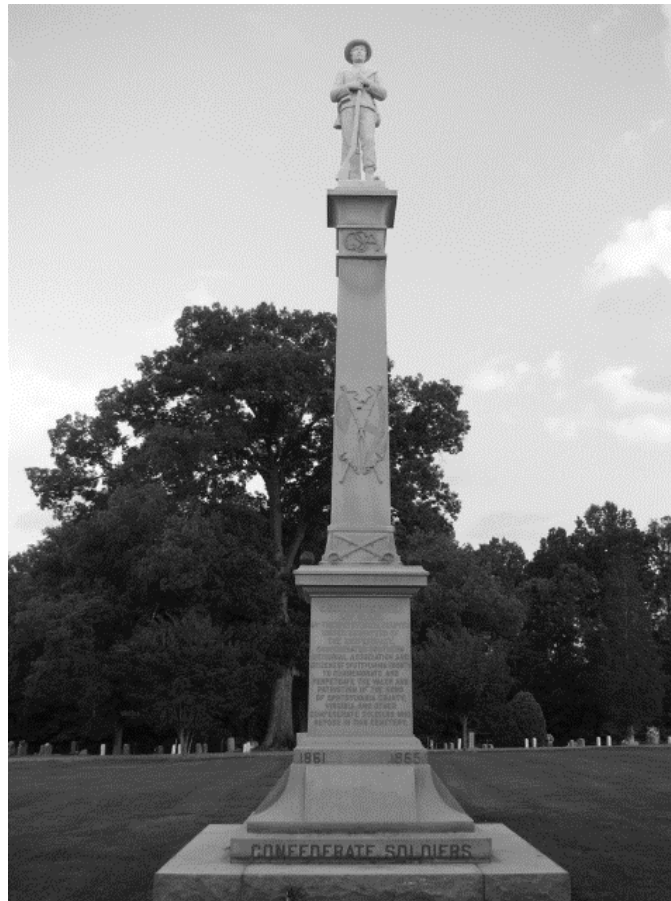


Figure 4: *Confederate Soldiers Monument*, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia, 1918. Photo by the author.

The choice of orator at Spotsylvania Courthouse highlighted the pro-war position of the county's memorialists. Senator Swanson supported American entry into World War I before Wilson asked for it.<sup>59</sup> In speeches given in the Senate on 4 April 1917 and 26 February 1918,

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<sup>58</sup> According to historian Virginia Wright Durrett, neither the designer nor the builder of the monument is known. However, similarities in the scrollwork CSA on the sculpture as well as the soldier figure itself indicate origins at McNeel. See Durrett, *From Generation to Generation*, 135.



Swanson waxed poetic about the American flag and its defense. At Spotsylvania Courthouse three months later, the Fredericksburg *Daily Star* reported, Swanson was introduced “not as an ex-Congressman, not as an ex-Governor and not as a distinguished Senator, but as the honored and much beloved son of a gallant and brave Confederate soldier.”<sup>60</sup> His oration drew the Civil War and the World War together with the familiar theme of sectional reconciliation: “He then spoke of the loyalty of the South and North, of the Confederate and Union veterans, all in fraternal accord in this war [World War I], and for this war, which, he said, we will win by an overwhelming victory for a permanent peace, if to do so it shall require the exhaustion of all the man power, money power and munition power of the republic.”<sup>61</sup> Swanson’s call for victory in Europe at all costs is reminiscent of the Lost Cause. The Confederacy also spent their man power, money power, and munition power in the Civil War, yet failed—a reunited America, Swanson argued, would win through similar exertion. Through this and similar rhetoric, the speakers and memorialists at Spotsylvania verbally passed on the message of their monument to their fellow citizens, reinforcing the thoughts that should come to mind whenever anyone passed the statue and confirming the reconciled bond between the South and the North that would allow Southern whites to maintain their position in society.

The story behind the Confederate monuments in Luray, the seat of Page County and home of the famous caverns, shows the importance of proper Confederate role models during the World War I years. Luray is unique in that it is home to two separate Confederate monuments. The first, erected in 1898, depicts an older, more ragged Confederate soldier. He wears a frock

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<sup>59</sup> Speech of Hon. Claude A. Swanson of Virginia in the Senate of the United States On the Resolution Declaring the Existence of a State of War between the United States and Germany, April 4, 1917 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1917).

<sup>60</sup> “Addresses at Spotsylvania,” *Daily Star* (Fredericksburg, VA), 31 May 1918.

<sup>61</sup> “Addresses at Spotsylvania,” *Daily Star* (Fredericksburg, VA), 31 May 1918.

coat—unusual for most Southern monuments—and sports a large, bushy mustache, but no socks. This turn-of-the-century monument was sculpted by local Page County artist Herbert Barbee. The monument is inscribed “TO THE HEROES/ BOTH PRIVATE & CHIEF OF THE/ SOUTHERN CONFEDERACY.”<sup>62</sup> The second monument, erected in 1918 at the height of World War I, is also peculiar, though not unique. The soldier himself is familiar—young, clean shaven, well equipped. His comrades, also manufactured by the McNeel Marble Company, stand in Lunenburg and Spotsylvania. Unlike them, Luray’s soldier perches above an archway designed, most likely, to contain a drinking fountain that was never installed. An advertisement from McNeel in the September 1916 *Confederate Veteran* magazine shows the “Confederate Memorial Drinking Fount” in all its glory. Meant to “combine art, sentiment, and utility,” the drinking fount “will beautify your city park or street and will slake the thirst of man and beast, and whenever used or merely looked upon will be a reminder of the heroism and sacrifice of the Soldiers and Women of the Confederacy.”<sup>63</sup>

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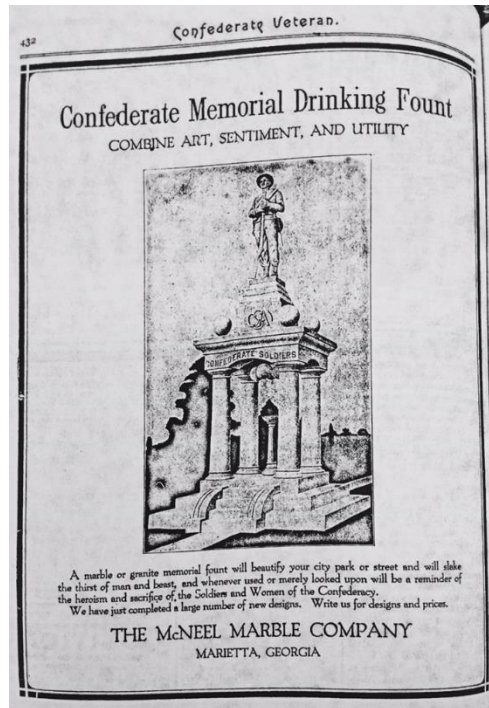
<sup>62</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Luray, Virginia, 1898.

<sup>63</sup> McNeel Marble Company, “Confederate Memorial Drinking Fount” advertisement, September 1916, *Confederate Veteran*, 432.



Figure 5: Herbert Barbee, *Confederate Monument*, Luray, Virginia, 1898. Photo by the author.

Why did the citizens of Luray feel the need to erect a second Confederate monument when they already had one? The best answer is that Page County's veterans (or the local Confederate Memorial Association, who built the 1918 monument) did not feel adequately singled out for honor by Barbee's monument, which was dedicated to all Southern soldiers. Other considerations include the Barbee monument's location on the edge of town. The newer monument stands downtown right across from the old railroad depot, where visitors to Luray would be sure to see it as they disembarked. The message of the monument would be lost, after all, if people could not access it.



Figures 6-7: *Confederate Monument*, Luray, Virginia, 1918. Photo by the author; McNeel Marble Company, “Confederate Memorial Drinking Fount” advertisement, September 1916, *Confederate Veteran*, 432. Public domain.

Barbee's grizzled Confederate soldier could also have been a source of annoyance due to his more unkempt appearance. The idea of the poorly-clothed and ill-supplied Confederate army holding out against all odds for the duration of the war against well-equipped Northern soldiers was key to the Lost Cause, but for memorialists of the 1910s this image was more damaging than useful. Barbee's soldier was not the soldier any young man in 1918 would aspire to be, visibly aged, tired, and threadbare as he was. The uncouth old soldier could also be seen as a reminder of the hardships Southern troops faced at the hands of Yankee invaders, and stirring up old feelings of resentment was antithetical to the purpose of Page County's vindication-hungry memorialists.<sup>64</sup>

Whatever the reasoning, Luray's 1918 Confederate memorialists placed more trust in a mass-produced memorial to properly represent the memory they wanted preserved than in a custom, locally-produced sculpture that did not measure up. The 1918 Luray soldier, as scholar Timothy Sedore points out, is "of the type intended to serve as a role model."<sup>65</sup> The culmination of the 1918 ceremony, much like the ceremony at Spotsylvania, was the singing of "America."<sup>66</sup> By making this song the focal point of the proceedings, Luray's Confederate memorialists brought the Lost Cause into the fold of American patriotism. Dedicated on 20 July 1918, the day before the anniversary of the first Battle of Manassas, Luray's marble soldier vindicated the Southern cause by standing as a role model not merely for Confederate sympathizers, but for all

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<sup>64</sup> Historian Ann Denkler offers another reason for the second monument: Herbert Barbee developed a scandalous reputation as a sculptor of nudes. See Ann Denkler, *Sustaining Identity, Recapturing Heritage: Exploring Issues of Public History, Tourism, and Race in a Southern Town* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2007), 21.

<sup>65</sup> Timothy S. Sedore, *An Illustrated Guide to Virginia's Confederate Monuments* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011), 50.

<sup>66</sup> The Confederate Monument Unveiled at Luray, Virginia, July 20, 1918, Research Files, Page County Public Library, Luray, VA.

patriotic Americans going overseas to fight in France or helping win the war from the home front. Raised above eye level, the soldier even looks more akin to the doughboys of 1917 than to the ragged rebel standing across town, his neat, high-collared jacket and bloused trousers more reminiscent of the American Expeditionary Forces uniform than the outfit of a typical Confederate soldier.

Luray's monument lacks the drinking fountain touted in the advertisement. The memorial was also supposed to include plaques listing the names of Page County Confederate veterans "who served honorably."<sup>67</sup> Ironically, however, the expenses of World War I waylaid these plans and the plaques were never installed.<sup>68</sup> Without the intended plaques, Luray's 1918 monument remains completely un-personalized. The only words on the monument are "CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS," with the years 1861 and 1865.<sup>69</sup> Had the plaques been erected, the message of this monument could have been interpreted as a commentary on duty and honor: only soldiers who serve their country properly are fit to be remembered.

The 1919 Confederate monument in Monterey, Highland County, is an even clearer example of the conflation between the butternuts and the doughboys in the process of memorialization at the time. Monterey's monument is a soldier, shielding his eyes as he faces north in front of the Highland County courthouse. He wears a short jacket, slouch hat, and—atypically—a knapsack instead of the usual Confederate blanket roll. Most unusual, he holds a bolt action rifle which would look less out of place in the trenches of the Western Front than on the battlefields of 1860s Virginia. Everything about the Monterey monument, whether

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<sup>67</sup> Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce, "Civil War Markers & Monuments in Page County, Virginia" (Luray, VA: Page Printing Connection, 2005).

<sup>68</sup> Luray-Page County Chamber of Commerce, "Civil War Markers."

<sup>69</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Luray, Virginia, 1918.

intentionally or not, combined elements of the Civil War and World War I. It was dedicated 4 July 1919—Independence Day, the highest holy day of the American patriotic calendar. The program advertising the unveiling ceremony stated, “the occasion will also be a day of welcome to the returned soldiers,” that is, the troops recently returned from Europe. One of the songs sung at the ceremony was “Good Bye, Old Khaki Lid,” a sentimental tribute to the end of American involvement overseas.<sup>70</sup> The inscription on the monument base reads, “TO THE/ CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS/ OF/ HIGHLAND COUNTY/ A LOVING TRIBUTE TO/ THE PAST, THE PRESENT,/ AND THE FUTURE.”<sup>71</sup>

The language here is particularly revealing and gets to the heart of memorialization. As a tribute to the present as well as the past, Monterey’s memorialists intended their monument to honor the efforts of Virginia’s World War I soldiers as well as her Confederate soldiers. The mixing of Confederate and World War I-era gear on the statue, whether intentional or simply an error made by the sculptor, causes the soldiers of both conflicts to blend in the imagination—a visual counterpart to the monument’s inscription. This commingling suggests the righteous nature of the Confederate cause by imbuing the soldiers of 1861-1865 with the spirit of the victorious American forces of 1918. By comparing World War I soldiers with Confederate soldiers, Highland County’s memorialists continued the vindication of the Confederate cause, playing on the patriotism of the period to support the ideals of the Old South.

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<sup>70</sup> “Good Bye, Old Khaki Lid,” James Edward Myers Sheet Music Collection, 1836-1986, University of Illinois Library. <http://imagesearchnew.library.illinois.edu/cdm/ref/collection/myers/id/1228>.

<sup>71</sup> Confederate Unveiling of Monument at Monterey, Virginia, Friday, July 4, 1919, Highland Historical Society, McDowell, VA; *Confederate Soldiers Monument*, Monterey, Virginia, 1919.



Figure 8: *Confederate Soldiers Monument*, Monterey, Virginia, 1919. Photo by the author. The soldier carries a bolt action rifle.

Throughout the 1910s, Confederate memorialists sought to influence public memory and consciousness by erecting monuments on courthouse lawns, in cemeteries, and in other highly-trafficked places. These men and women created stone role models to permanently vindicate the Confederate cause during a time of social upheaval. Imbuing their monuments with messages specific to the times during unveiling and dedication ceremonies, elite whites built monuments that expressed support for the antebellum Southern culture that bolstered their position at the top of the social pyramid. The legacy of Confederate military service had been important since the Spanish-American War, but the entry of the United States into World War I provided memorialists with a platform for even stronger vindication of the Lost Cause. Invested in



maintaining the status quo of white privilege in the Jim Crow South, Virginia's Confederate memorialists used common soldier monuments as one tool in their efforts to rally the white population behind the ideals of the Confederacy and the continued reconciliation of Southern and American identities.

## *Chapter II*

### **Patriotic Womanhood: Memorialization and Female Suffrage**

She towers above the circles of graves, one hand resting on a plow of peace, the other extending a laurel wreath to her fallen sons. The allegorical figure of the South, standing proudly atop the Confederate Memorial in Arlington National Cemetery, represents both the sacrifices of loyal Confederates and the sectional reconciliation of the turn of the twentieth century. Around the base of the statue, other women sculpted in relief say goodbye to men leaving home to join the Confederate cause: a black slave woman, two sorrowing wives, and a young lady sadly girding her lover's sword onto him.<sup>72</sup>



Figure 9: *Confederate Monument*, Arlington, Virginia, 1914. Courtesy of Lorraine Seabrook. Used with permission.

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<sup>72</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Arlington, Virginia, 1914.



Figure 10: Women on the Arlington Monument, including a minister's wife (far left) and a soldier's sweetheart (center). Courtesy of Lorraine Seabrook. Used with permission.

In the shade of the enormous stone pyramid marking the Confederate soldier section of Hollywood Cemetery in Richmond, Virginia, sits another memorial commemorating the women of the Confederacy. Small and unassuming, lacking either the scale or figural representation of the Arlington Memorial, the simple metal plaque on a stone base is inscribed “A MEMORIAL TO THE CONFEDERATE WOMEN OF VIRGINIA, 1861-1865.”<sup>73</sup> Thousands of silent headstones marking the final resting place of 18,000 Confederate soldiers surround the granite memorial.

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<sup>73</sup> *Memorial to the Confederate Women of Virginia*, Richmond, Virginia, 1915.

Women played a major role in erecting both the Arlington monument in 1914 and the memorial plaque in Hollywood Cemetery in 1915. Considered together, the two monuments are striking symbols of one view of female agency. While the allegorical figure on top of the Arlington monument takes the form of a powerful, peace-bringing woman, the women portrayed on the monument's base are all members of a firmly domestic world. The plaque in Richmond shows the actions of 1910s women in the same nurturing light: the rest of the inscription reads, "THE LEGISLATURE OF VIRGINIA/ OF 1914, HAS AT THE/ SOLICITATION OF LADIES/ HOLLYWOOD/ MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION/ AND UNITED DAUGHTERS OF/ CONFEDERACY OF VIRGINIA/ PLACED IN PERPETUAL CARE/ THIS SECTION WHERE LIE BURIED/ EIGHTEEN THOUSAND/ CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS."<sup>74</sup> Both monuments, built at the behest of women descended from the Confederate generation, uphold the women of the Confederacy and their daughters as caregivers, sadly sending their menfolk to war and carefully maintaining their burial sites after they fall. The small plaque in Hollywood Cemetery belies its true nature as a memorial to Southern women: the Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association intended the soldiers' section of the cemetery to be their true memorial, a lasting tribute to the women who lovingly tended the graves of the Confederate soldiers. On Memorial Day 1915, the Hollywood Memorial Association celebrated the reception of an annual appropriation from the Virginia General Assembly to care for the Confederate dead, "a fitting climax to the activities of the Association during the past fifty years."<sup>75</sup>

In this chapter, I argue that Confederate monuments were one part of elite white Virginians' response to the perceived threat of female empowerment and suffrage during the

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<sup>74</sup> *Memorial to the Confederate Women of Virginia*, Richmond, Virginia, 1914.

<sup>75</sup> Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Richmond, *Our Confederate Dead* (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1916), 17.

1910s. Invested in maintaining the status quo of Southern life as handed down by the antebellum planter class, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and other, often female-dominated groups used memorialization as a form of nonthreatening political activism. These Southern women perceived changes in society during the 1910s, including the renewed growth of the women's suffrage movement, as antithetical to their way of life. Since one of the tenets of that lifestyle was female exclusion from politics, female memorialists found a way to express their political agency within their "proper" sphere through an avenue open to them since the Civil War—monument building.



Figure 11: *Memorial to the Confederate Women of Virginia*, Richmond, Virginia, 1915. Ladies' Hollywood Memorial Association, Richmond, *Our Confederate Dead* (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1916), 18.

Public domain.

Pointing to Confederate women as models of behavior during a time of social unrest, memorialists attempted to bolster the traditional role of women as caring and supporting men. By erecting Confederate monuments, women memorialists also exemplified the role of republican motherhood emphasized in antebellum society, acting as teachers of the next generation by crafting role models. Monuments served as markers on the physical landscape of Virginia's towns and cities, rallying points for conservative ideologies.

The threat of war and American involvement overseas exacerbated the existing struggle for female equality. Just as common soldier monuments dictated the proper role of men during wartime, stone and bronze memorials represented to women on the World War I home front the desirability of self-sacrifice. At the same time, the monuments reminded women that the advantages of females left behind to take control while men fought were by nature temporary. The UDC and other groups such as the Hollywood Memorial Association included noncombatant women in their memorialization of the Civil War to identify the Lost Cause of the Confederacy with their personal antisuffrage views—ultimately another lost cause. They used an idealized image of Confederate womanhood to justify their increasingly tenuous antisuffrage stance, glossing over the unpleasant legacies of the war such as the 1863 food shortages that brought Southern women out of their homes and into the streets in protest.

To be sure, not all Virginian (or Southern) women shared the same opinions about their place in society and the changes on the horizon. Women's suffrage had its proponents in the Old Dominion and the other states of the former Confederacy. Historian Elna C. Green reports that “by 1913, every southern state had a permanent state suffrage organization... Virginia's state association had 13,000 members by 1916, 3,000 of whom were in Richmond.”<sup>76</sup> This was a

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<sup>76</sup> Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 12-13. The total white female population of Virginia in 1910,

result of what Green calls the “second wave” of suffrage organization in the South between 1910 and 1920.<sup>77</sup> As the New South continued to industrialize, many women began pushing for increased voting rights. The tension that played out between female laborers and elite ladies can be seen in an exchange of letters to the editor in the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* in December 1911. In response to a letter from “A Working Woman” in Staunton, “One of the Women of Virginia”—perhaps evoking her state pride and the genteel traditions of the South by her pen name—wrote, “It is principally for the sake of the ‘working woman’ that I protest against equal suffrage...The right to vote has never yet brought women increase of wages...Men sign the petition for ‘politeness’ mostly.”<sup>78</sup> To combat arguments for women’s suffrage, the writer tried to show the futility of the vote in achieving what she perceived as suffragists’ chief concern, higher wages. Her comment on men was most likely just meant to be demoralizing. Several days later, in a pointed rebuttal to another correspondent’s counter argument, she maintained that “the men who advocate woman suffrage after careful thought confess themselves either unwilling to do their own part in government, or unable to do it properly,” revealing her belief that government was the sole responsibility of men.<sup>79</sup> While women in Virginia were divided on the issue of equal suffrage, the voice of the antisuffrage faction was often louder due to the elevated status of its members. Letters to the editor were just one of the ways in which elite white women took their stand for the status quo.

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according to census data from the University of Virginia Library, was 685,446. This does not account for female minors, but by looking at other data I estimate the percentage of women in the Virginia State Suffrage Association to be between two and four percent. See Historical Census Browser (2004). Retrieved 26 March 2015 from the University of Virginia, Geospatial and Statistical Data Center: <http://mapserver.lib.virginia.edu/>.

<sup>77</sup> Green, *Southern Strategies*, 8.

<sup>78</sup> “Voice of the People,” *Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), 13 December 1911, 4.

<sup>79</sup> “Voice of the People,” *Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), 20 December 1911, 4.

To combat the issues that arose from women seeking the vote, antisuffrage memorialists turned to the past to strengthen their position, pointing to Confederate women as an ideal that could—and in their minds, should—apply to contemporary women. Just as memorialists imbued monuments to Confederate soldiers with meaning relative to the 1910s, they also used the concept of Confederate women in an effort to shape their present society. The United Daughters of the Confederacy, who built many of Virginia’s Confederate monuments during the 1910s, used monuments to both memorialize Confederate women and make a statement about the state of gender issues in their own time. The UDC grew out of the Ladies’ Memorial Associations that sprung up across the South in the wake of Confederate defeat. In 1894, the United Daughters of the Confederacy began as an attempt to consolidate memorialization efforts, present a united front in the face of “incorrect” anti-Southern viewpoints in schools, and limit memorial participation to women who could prove Confederate ancestry and had enough time on their hands to engage in philanthropy—that is, white women of the upper classes.

While the official political stance of the UDC was to have no political stance, this often translated into the idea that women should have no place in politics.<sup>80</sup> The minutes of the 1913 UDC convention reveal the delicacy of the organization’s apolitical position as well as the true feelings of many Daughters. Though a motion to allow the Suffrage Convention to present its greetings to the UDC was rejected due to its overtly political nature, “The Virginia Association, opposed to Women’s Suffrage” was able, ironically, to “send...greetings and thanks to the United Daughters of the Confederacy for keeping politics out of the Convention.”<sup>81</sup> This coy

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<sup>80</sup> Green, *Southern Strategies*, 71.

<sup>81</sup> United Daughters of the Confederacy, *Minutes on the Twentieth Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton Printing Company, 1914), 470.



statement let Virginia's antisuffrage organization get their name in the program while allowing the UDC to maintain a façade of impartiality.

This idea coincided with the position of elite white women as a class. Class was one of the most important factors in whether one supported female suffrage or opposed it. Those who opposed female suffrage tended to belong to the upper class of Virginian society, descended from planters and firmly entrenched in the Democratic Party.<sup>82</sup> As heirs to the social world of the antebellum plantation elite, the UDC strived to uphold the virtues of women prized by Old South society. The proper sphere of women in the view of many elite white Southerners was not in public life, but in the home, supporting men in their labors and raising children to embrace correct values.<sup>83</sup> The concept of republican motherhood stretches back to the early national period of American history. This idea of women as nurturing teachers, instilling republican ideals in their young, was highly regarded in antebellum Southern culture and, therefore, by the Daughters of the Confederacy. After 1865, republican mothers across the South took on the task of raising children steeped in the Lost Cause. One of the most important functions of these Confederate mothers was to make sure their children had good role models to follow, which is one reason UDC members and other Southern women put such emphasis on monument building.

Elite status and a longing for the comfortable gender roles of the Old South pushed many Daughters into the antisuffrage camp. Elna Green writes, “although one study had concluded that the UDC was ambivalent toward woman suffrage and another has claimed that in one state it actually worked for woman suffrage, the UDC was in reality quite strongly antisuffrage...In Virginia, an anonymous Daughter announced firmly in the *Times-Dispatch* that ‘no daughter of

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<sup>82</sup> Green, *Southern Strategies*, xv.

<sup>83</sup> Green, *Southern Strategies*, 84.

the Confederacy will be a suffragette.”<sup>84</sup> While the identity of this forceful lady was undisclosed, her sentiment was most likely shared by many others throughout the South. Irene Sagan Cockles of Nashville, Tennessee, was also explicit in her greeting to the 1913 UDC convention: “God bless the Daughters of the Confederacy for upholding the dignity and the tradition of the Old South in their refusal to recognize the suffrage body.”<sup>85</sup> One of the most powerful statements of opposition to suffrage was Mildred Lewis Rutherford’s speech to the Georgia Legislature in 1914. She accused Georgia’s female suffragists of “striking at the principle for which their fathers fought during the Civil war. Woman’s suffrage,” she claimed, “comes from the North and West and from women who do not believe in state’s rights and who wish to see negro women using the ballot. I do not believe the state of Georgia has sunk so low that her good men can not legislate for the women.”<sup>86</sup> Though Rutherford, president of the Georgia UDC and the national organization’s Historian General, was not speaking in her official UDC capacity at the time, her influence crossed organizational boundaries.

Rutherford’s focus on race and states’ rights points to the hot issues surrounding the woman suffrage question in the South. An advertisement in the 2 September 1919 *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, entitled “Shall the State Surrender to the Anthony Amendment?,” lays out the position of the Virginia and National Associations Opposed to Woman Suffrage. “THE PROFESSIONAL WOMAN SUFFRAGE AGITATORS,” the ad proclaimed, “want the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT to COMPEL the people who will not accept woman suffrage on its merits to TAKE IT BY FORCE OF FEDERAL AMENDMENT.” The ad continued to draw

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<sup>84</sup> Green, *Southern Strategies*, 71.

<sup>85</sup> United Daughters of the Confederacy, *Minutes on the Twentieth Annual Convention*, 472.

<sup>86</sup> Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, *New Women of the New South: The Leaders of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the Southern States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 25.

comparisons between the Fifteenth Amendment and the new suffrage bill, saying, “You CANNOT RATIFY the Anthony Amendment without INDORSING [sic] the Fifteenth Amendment,” clearly a thought meant to be abhorrent to white voters.<sup>87</sup> Escalating in its appeal to the deep-seated fears of white Southerners, the ad next stated unequivocally that “RACE RIOTS WILL INCREASE IF THERE IS MORE POLITICS BETWEEN THE RACES AND IF WOMEN ARE INVOLVED IN POLITICS!” Invoking archetypal Southern elite Thomas Jefferson (JEFFERSON, WAS RIGHT!), the advertisement asks, “WILL VIRGINIA, the MOTHER OF STATE RIGHTS, sign the SECOND DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE that will safeguard the right of each State to settle this question for itself by popular vote?”<sup>88</sup> Dubious grammar aside, this advertisement played on the concerns of white Virginians that the status quo of their privilege was about to crumble. An answering ad in the next day’s paper from the Equal Suffrage League of Virginia asked Virginians to “Stand by the Rights of the States and the Rights of the People. WOMEN ARE PEOPLE.”<sup>89</sup> This faceoff highlighted the fears of some Southerners that states’ rights were once again under attack by a tyrannical federal government. In response to these fears, elite whites took their fight against the threat of federal compulsion and racial upheaval to the public square by erecting monuments to the ideals of the Lost Cause, including women’s domestic sphere.

Between 1910 and 1920, over half of the Confederate monuments and markers built in Virginia were erected by the UDC or similar local women’s memorial groups.<sup>90</sup> Although many

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<sup>87</sup> The Fifteenth Amendment guaranteed a citizen’s right to vote regardless of color or former enslavement.

<sup>88</sup> Virginia Association Opposed to Woman Suffrage, “Shall the State Surrender to the Anthony Amendment?” *Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), 2 September 1919, 4.

<sup>89</sup> The Equal Suffrage League of Virginia, “Stand by the Rights of the States and the Rights of the People,” *Times-Dispatch* (Richmond, VA), 3 September 1919, 10.

of these monuments took the form of a rugged male Confederate soldier, many monuments bore inscriptions honoring Confederate women as well. Female memorialists were well aware of the importance of monuments in shaping their present society. Monuments such as the Arlington Memorial, in the words of 1914 UDC president-general Daisy McLaurin Stevens, “show the future how noble the past has been, and place it under bond to prove of equal worth.”<sup>91</sup> Robert E. Lee III, speaking at the Arlington dedication, summed up the Daughters’ position when he extolled the virtue of their Confederate mothers: “If it ever becomes necessary to point out model womanhood all that will be required is to open the doors of one of these old Southern homes and behold the true woman, enthroned by love, admiration and adoration.”<sup>92</sup> As female memorialists honored Confederate soldiers throughout the 1910s, they also chose to honor the women of the Confederacy as the ideal type in an effort to bolster their own social position in the traditional gender roles of the South.

Many Confederate monuments built in Virginia during the 1910s included inscriptions honoring the women of the Confederacy. Hanover’s 1914 monument, for example, was dedicated both to the county’s soldiers “AND TO HER NOBLE WOMEN WHO LOVED THEM.”<sup>93</sup> Hanover’s monument was erected with the help of both the local UDC chapter and the local Ladies’ Memorial Association.<sup>94</sup> Even this simple inscription placed the women of 1860s

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<sup>90</sup> Count taken from Benjamin J. Hillman, *Monuments to Memories: Virginia’s Civil War Heritage in Bronze and Stone* (Richmond: Virginia Civil War Commission, 1965). A total of thirty-six Confederate monuments honoring Virginians were built in the Commonwealth over the course of the decade. Twenty of those were sponsored at least primarily by the UDC. The UDC total does not include other women groups—the “Ladies of Lunenburg County,” for example, helped erect Victoria’s monument in 1916 without any official UDC involvement. Bristol, Virginia’s monument (1920) was given to the local UDC by a private male donor.

<sup>91</sup> Herbert, *History of the Arlington Confederate Monument*, 67.

<sup>92</sup> Herbert, *History of the Arlington Confederate monument*, 61.

<sup>93</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Hanover Courthouse, Virginia, 1914.

Hanover County in a specific context. The women's function during the war was to love their husbands, brothers, and sons who were defending the Southland. Women's love was key to the morale of soldiers, giving women on the home front a key role in winning the war while retaining the antebellum gulf between women and politics or physical labor. Other monuments, such as the one at Spotsylvania Courthouse, bear the simple inscription "LOVE MAKES MEMORY ETERNAL." This phrase again reinforced the work of female memorialists as essentially one of love, especially considering that "love makes memory eternal" was the official motto of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.<sup>95</sup>

The idea of white women as a class in need of protection is key to understanding the position of those who wished to deny women the right to vote. The Confederate monument built at Victoria, Virginia, in 1916, for example, gave women more credit than just love for bolstering the men of Lee's army. One side of the monument's base is inscribed "OUR PATRIOTIC WOMANHOOD WAS AN INSPIRATION."<sup>96</sup> Here the idea of women as a source of inspiration is explicit, though the figure portrayed on the monument is a male soldier. There is also a clear sense, once again, of the proper sphere of women in Southern society. For whom did the women serve as inspiration? Their male kin. What did the women inspire these men to do? Though not stated, the implication is that the Confederate soldiers were motivated to fight, at least in part, by a desire to protect their women.

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<sup>94</sup> Mary Grundman Vial, "Hanover Confederate Soldiers Monument: Hanover Court House, Virginia," *UDC Magazine*, March 2012, 20-21.

<sup>95</sup> *Minutes of the Sixteenth Annual Convention of the United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Opelika, AL: The Post Publishing Company, 1909), 301. The current motto of the UDC is "Think, Love, Pray, Dare, Live," which also appeared on some UDC material as early as the 1910s. "Emblem and Motto," *United Daughters of the Confederacy*, 2013, [http://www.hqudc.org/about\\_udc/index.htm#Emblem](http://www.hqudc.org/about_udc/index.htm#Emblem).

<sup>96</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Victoria, Virginia, 1916.

Confederate monuments that included women acknowledged the proper feminine role for women on the home front: giving love and support to men while demanding protection in return. The 1918 monument at Luray, for example, was meant to bear a plaque “inscribed to the women of Page county who at their homes sustained and cheered the heroes at the front.”<sup>97</sup> Ironically, perhaps, World War I interrupted the monument’s funding, resulting in no permanent memorial to Page County’s Confederate women. The intended message would have fit into the desires of elite memorialists to praise women who remained “at their homes” rather than engaged in any sort of overt political activity. Emphasizing “home” once again brought Confederate soldiers’ motivations to fight into the discussion on gender roles, since the defense of women at home was one of the primary concerns of Confederate soldiers. White women needed to be protected from Yankee depravity and vengeful slaves during the 1860s, according to men such as North Carolina governor Zebulon Vance, who headed off calls in his state for a separate peace with the North by exhorting his constituency to keep fighting rather than to make peace and “be drafted...to fight alongside [Lincoln’s] negro troops in exterminating the white men, women, and children of the South.”<sup>98</sup> The protection of white Southern womanhood was of concern to elites of the 1910s as well. Many elite white Southerners feared the increasing political power of African Americans and the possible impending erosion of white supremacy.<sup>99</sup> The implied power of the black vote terrified the traditional ruling elite. Adding black women into that mix pushed many white Southerners over the edge, since in their view, as the Virginia Antisuffrage

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<sup>97</sup> Timothy S. Sedore, *An Illustrated Guide to Virginia’s Confederate Monuments* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2011), 50. Sedore is quoting here from a 1913 article in the *Page News and Courier*.

<sup>98</sup> James M. McPherson, *Embattled Rebel: Jefferson Davis as Commander in Chief* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2014), 175.

<sup>99</sup> Green, *Southern Strategies*, xv.

Organization reminded the state legislature, “all who have had practical experience dealing with this problem know it would be ten times as difficult to deal with colored women and keep them from the polls as it ever was with colored men.”<sup>100</sup> The fear of unmanageable black women flocking to the voting booths to strike down the planters’ government kept women devoted to maintaining the status quo firmly in the antisuffrage camp. Yet this foundation of racial inequality was starting to shake by the 1910s, as I will address in the next chapter.

As I argued in Chapter One, Confederate monuments modeled the masculine role during wartime, standing as silent encouragement for men to enlist or support the patriotic cause in any way possible. Female involvement in monument building imbued these same monuments with meaning for women in wartime as well, especially those memorials dedicated dually to the sacrifices of Confederate women. One of the orations at the Victoria monument ceremony, given by Virginia state senator Patrick H. Drewry, contained praise that was also an exhortation: “The women of the Confederacy! For four years they gave of ‘their all’ to their country...full of ‘the tender grace of a day that is dead’ they bravely and fearlessly faced dangers that required the hardihood of men.”<sup>101</sup> In this quote, Drewry acknowledged first that the women of the Confederacy belonged to a world that had passed away. He contrasted their “tender grace” to the “hardihood” and bravery of men, making a distinction between the proper characteristics of each separate gender. The nostalgic tone with which he described “a day that is dead” brought attention to the fact that in 1916, these comfortable and prescribed roles were shifting. One way to bring back the good old days, then, was for women of the modern age to emulate the tenderness and grace of Confederate women.

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<sup>100</sup> Green, *Southern Strategies*, 97.

<sup>101</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

This emulation of Confederate women came with a caveat, however. Though they displayed the same strong qualities as men for the duration of the Civil War, it was only for four years. For four years Confederate women stepped outside their sphere to take on the burdens of men—albeit with the grace of women—before they stepped back into their proper roles as beings more suited to grace than to physical strength. Drewry brought the women he was addressing into the fold at the end of his speech, saying, “this monument will remain forever to the world as a memorial to the memory of the Confederate soldier, but it will also stand as a memorial to the faithful constancy and devotion of the women of Lunenburg, who helped to make possible this tribute of your citizens builded in the imperishable granite.”<sup>102</sup> The monument is an indelible symbol of the acceptable public agency of women, erected by women as a way to make their social standing as imperishable as the stone.<sup>103</sup>

Importantly, the speaker in this case, Senator Drewry, was a male. His presence on the speakers’ platform extolling the virtues of Confederate and modern women was not out of the ordinary. Often women’s roles at monument dedication ceremonies were limited to the actual ceremonial unveiling or to the presentation of appropriate art. Miss Kate McVicar wrote a poem entitled “Confederate Soldier 1861-’65. Confederate Monument 1916” for the dedication of the monument at Winchester in 1916.<sup>104</sup> Miss McVicar did not read her own work to the crowd, however—it was read by a man, Mr. R. Gray Williams.<sup>105</sup> Though the reason for McVicar’s absence on stage was unstated, the public presentation of women’s work by a man is telling in

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<sup>102</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

<sup>103</sup> The monument at Victoria was built by the Ladies of Lunenburg County and the County, not the UDC.

<sup>104</sup> Kate McVicar, “Confederate Soldier 1861-’65. Confederate Monument 1916,” *Winchester Evening Star*, 15 November 1916.

<sup>105</sup> “Great Throng at Unveiling of Monument,” *Winchester Evening Star*, 15 November 1916.



the context of Confederate memorialization. The Winchester monument was erected by the people of Winchester and Frederick County, not the UDC, and so the role of women took even more of a back seat to the contributions of “EVERY CONFEDERATE SOLDIER/ FROM/ WINCHESTER AND FREDERICK COUNTY/ WHO FAITHFULLY SERVED THE SOUTH.”<sup>106</sup>



Figure 12: *Confederate Monument*, Winchester, Virginia, 1916. Photo by the author.

In some instances, however, women spoke for themselves at monument dedications, increasing the visibility of their role in the process but walking a fine line between their expected part behind the scenes and their increasingly acceptable place at the front of the crowd. In Spotsylvania, as in most other Virginia counties, women were key players in the effort to

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<sup>106</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Winchester, Virginia, 1916.

memorialize the Confederacy. The officers of the Spotsylvania Confederate Memorial Association were all women, as was the chairman of the Confederate Monument Fund.<sup>107</sup> During the ceremony, the president-general of the Virginia Division UDC, Mrs. William Cabell Flournoy, gave an unscheduled address received by the *Fredericksburg Daily Star* as “a veritable literary gem.”<sup>108</sup> The *Star* reported that Mrs. Flournoy devoted much of her impromptu speech to the World War I relief work of the UDC. The UDC’s accomplishments included purchasing \$9,000,000 in Liberty bonds and establishing a hospital in France, “the beds of which are named after some Confederate general. Virginia has two, one named Lee, the other Jackson.”<sup>109</sup> While Mrs. Flournoy emphasized in her address the current work of the Daughters, Senator Claude A. Swanson took on the role of memorialist to the women of fifty years past, speaking of “the wondrous work, unselfish patriotism and unfaltering faith of the women of the Confederacy.”<sup>110</sup> Here again, as at Arlington, the actions of the UDC women spoke louder than the words of their male admirers.

The preserved memory depicted by the monuments at Victoria and Spotsylvania was one of unity and support, one that probably had more to do with the mindset of World War I-era memorialists than their Confederate forebears. By looking backwards to the contributions of Confederate women, female memorialists intended to draw a comparison with themselves as important members of a still male-dominated society. To be sure, this denied the possibility of dissent that has been traced throughout the Confederacy by scholars such as Stephanie McCurry,

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<sup>107</sup> Virginia Wright Durrett, *From Generation to Generation: The Confederate Cemetery at Spotsylvania Court House* (Spotsylvania, VA: Durrett, 1992).

<sup>108</sup> “Addresses at Spotsylvania,” *Daily Star* (Fredericksburg, VA), 31 May 1918.

<sup>109</sup> “Addresses at Spotsylvania,” *Daily Star* (Fredericksburg, VA), 31 May 1918.

<sup>110</sup> “Addresses at Spotsylvania,” *Daily Star* (Fredericksburg, VA), 31 May 1918.

who argued that “the mass of white Southern women emerged as formidable adversaries of their government...If the new political assertiveness of Southern women did not bring down the Confederacy, it did represent a powerful challenge to the Confederate vision of ‘the people.’”<sup>111</sup> In true Lost Cause fashion, Confederate memorialists brushed over this point to create a powerful image of faithful Confederate women intended to influence the women of 1910s Virginia. To this day, one objective of the United Daughters of the Confederacy is “to record the part played during the War by Southern women, including their patient endurance of hardship, their patriotic devotion during the struggle, and their untiring efforts during the post-War reconstruction of the South.”<sup>112</sup> Memorials to the riotous women of 1863 Richmond and Salisbury, who clamored against the Confederate government for lack of bread, would have undermined all that the demure ladies of the UDC stood for, especially during a new war that required the obedience and service of every American citizen. Throughout Virginia, female memorialists honored the ideal of Southern womanhood alongside the Confederate soldier with monuments such as the ones at Prince George, Goochland Courthouse, and Monterey, all of which bear the name of the United Daughters of the Confederacy among their inscriptions.<sup>113</sup>

By the end of the decade, the fears of elite white women seemed to be coming to a head as Congress passed the Nineteenth Amendment in 1919.<sup>114</sup> In Richmond, the former capital of the Confederacy and the hub of UDC activity in Virginia, at least one Daughter felt her influence

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<sup>111</sup> Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 4.

<sup>112</sup> “Object of the UDC,” *United Daughters of the Confederacy*, 2013, [http://www.hqudc.org/about\\_udc/index.htm#Emblem](http://www.hqudc.org/about_udc/index.htm#Emblem).

<sup>113</sup> The presence of the UDC “brand” kept viewers in mind of the driving force behind the monuments, that is, women.

<sup>114</sup> The Nineteenth Amendment granted women the right to vote.

slipping away as the 1910s drew to a close. The erection of the monument to Confederate general and martyr Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson on Monument Avenue in Richmond was an undertaking that lasted several years. The United Daughters of the Confederacy was intimately involved from the beginning, raising at least \$5,000 for the project through various events and fundraisers.<sup>115</sup> For Janet Weaver Randolph, founder and president of the Richmond Chapter UDC, getting the monument exactly right was a point of honor.<sup>116</sup> After all, a cornerstone of the UDC was their vigilance in presenting a “correct” version of history to the public.

There were several contentious questions that arose during the construction of the Stonewall Jackson monument. Which way should the statue face, for example? North, looking towards the sites of Jackson’s great victories at Manassas and Chancellorsville? Or south, so that passing motorists could admire the monument at their ease?<sup>117</sup> In the end, that question was settled amiably and General Jackson faces stoically north at the busy intersection of Monument Avenue and the Boulevard. The real issue arose over the monument’s simple inscription. The sides of the monument’s base read “STONEWALL JACKSON.”<sup>118</sup> The front face of the monument bears the inscription, “BORN 1824/ KILLED AT CHANCELLORSVILLE/ 1863.”<sup>119</sup> Jackson was wounded after the Battle of Chancellorsville, 2 May 1863, by his own Confederate pickets. He

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<sup>115</sup> James Power Smith, “Historical Sketch,” Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson Monument Corporation (Richmond) Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy.

<sup>116</sup> “DHR Donates Janet Randolph Portrait to Virginia Division,” Archive of Previously Posted Stories, *Virginia Division United Daughters of the Confederacy*, <http://vaudc.org/randolph.html>.

<sup>117</sup> Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting, 1 April 1918, Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson Monument Corporation (Richmond) Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy.

<sup>118</sup> *Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson Monument*, Richmond, Virginia, 1919.

<sup>119</sup> *Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson Monument*, Richmond, Virginia, 1919.

was taken to Guinea Station, Virginia, where on 10 May he succumbed to either pneumonia or blood poisoning from the amputation of his wounded arm.

Therein arose Janet Randolph's problem. The proposed monument inscription stated that Jackson was killed at Chancellorsville, but he only received his mortal wound there, dying eight days later. Despite being a distinguished member of the monument association's Board of Directors and the head of Richmond's United Daughters of the Confederacy chapter, Randolph could not persuade her fellow directors to change the inscription. Finally, on 20 March 1919, she sent this message to James Power Smith, head of the monument association: "After mature deliberation and many regrets, I am sending my resignation from the Board of Directors of the Jackson Monument Association. I cannot reconcile myself to remain and by silence seemingly consent to such a grievous mistake, as to the dates of General Jackson's death... I am 'starting no propaganda'—I have entered my protest, asked it to be recorded, and now retire with regret."<sup>120</sup>

Despite her resignation from the board, Randolph did participate in the dedication ceremony when the Stonewall Jackson monument was unveiled 11 October 1919. She rode in the fourth car in the parade. James Power Smith also thanked her by name in his address on the history of the Jackson monument, saying, "The Association and the people of Virginia are, in the largest degree, indebted, To Mrs. N. V. Randolph and the Richmond Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy," before dedicating the monument "to the State of Virginia, to the City of Richmond, to the people of all our Southland, and to the sons and daughters of all Confederates, with profound and grateful satisfaction."<sup>121</sup> Randolph and the other Daughters

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<sup>120</sup> Janet W. Randolph to James Power Smith, 20 March 1919, Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson Monument Corporation (Richmond) Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy.

<sup>121</sup> James Power Smith, "Historical Sketch," Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson Monument Corporation (Richmond) Collection, Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, Museum of the Confederacy. Smith referred to Janet

were too deeply intertwined with the memorialization effort to exclude them from the ceremony, even if there had been strong feelings of animosity towards Randolph for her protest to the dubious inscription.



Figure 13: *Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson Monument*, Richmond, Virginia, 1919. Photo by the author.

Randolph’s resignation letter provides a window onto the inner workings of the Confederate memorialists, who did not always see eye to eye. It also suggests possible tensions between male and female memorialists. It is hard to say what effect her failure had on

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Randolph by her husband Norman’s initials. The practice of using husbands’ names continues in the UDC today, and may indicate a deference to the patriarchal customs of the Old South.

Randolph's views towards women's suffrage. In the minutes of the 1913 UDC convention, she described herself as "generally considered to be for suffrage," though she agreed to block the greetings of suffragists in deference to other Daughters.<sup>122</sup> In a 1916 letter to the Warrenton *Democrat*, however, Randolph proclaimed, "I am not a suffragist, but it is such injustice [to not have a right to education] that will cause the women of Virginia to become suffragists."<sup>123</sup>

Whether the Stonewall Jackson monument incident three years later made any impact on Randolph's personal views is unknown, but the clash of wills over the monument's inscription must have caused alarm for the founder of Richmond's UDC chapter, herself a Confederate widow. As more states ratified the Nineteenth Amendment, giving women a political power many of them had never known, the traditional gender roles of the South seemed to be slipping further into the past despite the efforts of the Daughters and others to shore them up. Janet Randolph, a relic of the Civil War and one of the Confederate women so often praised by memorialists, was unable to persuade her fellow monument builders of the importance of getting history right, one of the basic tenets of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Though a small blip in the multi-year effort to raise a statue to Jackson on Monument Avenue, her failure perhaps indicates the decline of the old ways that Randolph and her fellow Daughters had fought to uphold for over twenty years. Though Virginia held out against ratification of the Nineteenth Amendment until 1952, women's suffrage became the law of the land in 1920.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> United Daughters of the Confederacy, *Minutes on the Twentieth Annual Convention*.

<sup>123</sup> Anne Leslie Greenwood, "'For Country and For Home': Elite Richmond Women and Changing Southern Womanhood during the First World War (master's thesis, Virginia Tech, 2008), 46, <http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/theses/available/etd-05012008-190650/>.

<sup>124</sup> Marjorie Spruill Wheeler, ed., *Votes for Women! The Woman Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, the South, and the Nation* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995), 67.

The 1910s were a turbulent time not only on the international political stage, but also at home in Virginia. Many conservative white women viewed changes in society such as female suffrage and the deterioration of separate spheres with a wary eye. For female Confederate memorialists, monument building took on added importance as a way to create physical moorings for a way of life in flux. Women had always been at the forefront of memorial activity, continuing the tradition of civic engagement begun during the Civil War. With the beginning of World War I, women's role in society took on even more importance as women took the place of men leaving for the front, echoing the social shifts of the 1860s.<sup>125</sup> Female Confederate memorialists were at a crossroads. Times were changing, but the changes did not bode well for the society to which the elite leaders of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and other groups belonged. Memorialization, therefore, became one way that elite white women could reaffirm their place in society. To these women, monument building proved that women in general had ample agency within patriarchal confines.

Monuments served as physical reminders of the characteristics Confederate memorialists wanted their female contemporaries to emulate. The characteristics emphasized were intended to remind women of their proper place in society. Words like love and nobility placed Confederate women firmly within the home, supporting their sons and husbands from behind the scenes. The role of women in memorialization also showed female memorialists' ideals in action as they strove to continue the tradition of republican and Confederate motherhood through the creation of public role models in the form of monuments. Faced by unnerving changes in society, female Confederate memorialists looked to monuments as a way of reinforcing ideals of antebellum culture in the public eye. These stone sentinels still stand as a reminder not only of the sacrifices

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<sup>125</sup> For more on working women during World War I, see Carrie Brown, *Rosie's Mom: Forgotten Women Workers of the First World War* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 2002).



of Confederate soldiers and their female supporters, but also the worries of a generation striving to hold fast to old ways in the changing world of the 1910s.

### *Chapter III*

#### **Keeping Public Space White: Monuments and Race**

The 1919 Stonewall Jackson monument in Richmond got a new neighbor in 1996. African American tennis star Arthur Ashe was the first black person to have a statue on Monument Avenue, formerly a collective memorial to the heroes of the Confederacy: Robert E. Lee (whose monument was unveiled in 1890), J. E. B. Stuart (1907), Jefferson Davis (1907), Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson, and Matthew Fontaine Maury (1929). The controversy surrounding Ashe’s arrival on Monument Avenue highlighted an important fact of memorialization. Monuments outlast the debates over their erection and often their builders. Monuments only seem to express unity of conviction long after the challenges and triumphs of their time have faded away. Confederate monuments, for example, are often the last remaining features of a landscape of white supremacy that spread across the South from the end of Reconstruction through the mid-1960s.<sup>126</sup> The statues such as the ones that line the streets of Richmond continued to convey that message nearly a century later when proponents of “integrating” Monument Avenue faced off against those who sought to uphold the area’s Confederate integrity. Anti-Ashe people unintentionally (or perhaps in some cases intentionally) paralleled the goals of the original Confederate memorialists—to keep public memory and space the realm of whites only.

I argue in this chapter that Confederate monuments served as a method of codifying white supremacy in the public sphere for white men and women disturbed by black activism in the 1910s. Though many sources from Confederate memorialists do not explicitly mention the

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<sup>126</sup> Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 211.

role of African Americans in society, their silence on the subject suggests much about their intentions. In some instances memorialists' use of Lost Cause language to deny the importance of slavery or, in some cases, actively defend the institution lays bare the debate over the causes of the Civil War that underscored the treatment of black men and women in the early twentieth century. By the 1910s, the Jim Crow laws of post-Reconstruction Southern governments had denied black Southerners the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Civil War and subsequent Constitutional amendments. Elite white men and women turned to the Lost Cause in their quest to combat a new wave of racial unrest and assert the dominance of the Anglo-Saxon race. White reactions to black empowerment ranged from the violent to the monumental, from widespread lynching to the attempted physical and psychological separation of the races. Monuments were only one medium of this effort, but they are among the most visible and lasting legacy of the period.

The 1910s was a time of great shifts in American racial and social structure. The women's suffrage movement was perceived by some to challenge white supremacy by threatening to open the floodgates of the voting booth to African American women. Ironically, the idea of black female voters scared some antisuffragists more than the idea of black male voters.<sup>127</sup> Some eugenicist theorists, such as Madison Grant in his book *The Passing of the Great Race*, postulated that the white race was being eclipsed by more fertile nonwhite people.<sup>128</sup> The release of D. W. Griffith's epic film *The Birth of a Nation*, ostensibly an antiwar movie, helped

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<sup>127</sup> Elna C. Green, *Southern Strategies: Southern Women and the Woman Suffrage Question* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 97. See Chapter II above for the Virginia Antisuffrage Association's take on the issue.

<sup>128</sup> Melvyn Stokes, *D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation: A History of "The Most Controversial Motion Picture of All Time"* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 212-213.

spark the resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in 1915.<sup>129</sup> Some whites took the law into their own hands in their effort to suppress black freedom: lynchings between 1910 and 1919 averaged sixty-five annually.<sup>130</sup>

New leaders and groups dedicated to acting against institutional racism grew out of the instability of the times.<sup>131</sup> White Southerners perceived their lives as unstable as well, but their privileged position in society allowed whites to take actions often impossible for their African American counterparts. Once America entered World War I, black and white Americans clashed over the role of soldiers of color in the armed service. World War I opened the eyes of many blacks to the possibility of change. As the United States entered the European conflict, some white men and women feared the possible consequences of arming a large number of blacks. Added to that fear was the concern that enemy spies would attempt to use racial discord to their advantage, dividing Americans to cripple the war effort. As historian Mark Ellis writes, “suspicion and dread welled up to create a ‘black scare’ of unprecedented proportions.”<sup>132</sup> Though pragmatists such as W. E. B. DuBois urged blacks to “close ranks” with whites against a common foe, expecting gratitude from the white nation, race riots tore across the nation in 1917

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<sup>129</sup> Stokes, *D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation*, 9. *The Birth of a Nation* was in many ways a memorialization that gave to sympathetic viewers a living representation of the danger to the Southern order if African Americans were given political power. It was also a piece of reconciliationist art. Even the film's title conveyed the idea that the Civil War and Reconstruction gave birth to a stronger, unified nation—at least for whites.

<sup>130</sup> Mark Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance: African Americans and the United States Government during World War I* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001), xiii.

<sup>131</sup> Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, xiii. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), for example, was founded in 1909. See Stokes, *D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation*, 6.

<sup>132</sup> Ellis, *Race, War, and Surveillance*, xv.

and 1918 and lynch mobs across the South killed eighty blacks, including soldiers in uniform, in 1919.<sup>133</sup>

Paradoxically, perhaps, in the state where African servitude was first introduced in 1619 and where the Confederate government defended slavery's utility to the last, Virginia's political elite disdained the violent tactics of the reborn Ku Klux Klan.<sup>134</sup> To be sure, there was significant Klan activity in the Old Dominion during this period—Richmond and Roanoke vied to have the largest klavern in the Commonwealth, with Richmond's membership hovering around two thousand in 1921.<sup>135</sup> The Norfolk chief of police, Newport News commonwealth attorney, postmaster, police court judge, police chief, and members of the city council were all accused of being Klansmen, though they vehemently denied the allegation.<sup>136</sup> Despite these facts, the Klan in Virginia seems to have been at odds with the state's political elite. This makes sense considering what I term the Jeffersonian ideal: according to this perspective, slavery was forced on the colonies by England but, though morally repugnant, was economically necessary and eventually would have faded out on its own. Based on the writings of Thomas Jefferson and others, this ideal became part of the Lost Cause as defenders of the Old South deflected responsibility for slavery as part of the campaign to rehabilitate the Confederacy in the eyes of its

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<sup>133</sup> J. Douglas Smith, *Managing White Supremacy: Race, Politics, and Citizenship in Jim Crow Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 45-46.

<sup>134</sup> Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 41-45.

<sup>135</sup> Kenneth T. Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City, 1915-1930* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 81-82. An estimated 20,000 men and women were initiated into the Klan between 1915 and 1944, a much lower number than some former Union states including Indiana (240,000) and Ohio (195,000). See Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City*, 237.

<sup>136</sup> Jackson, *The Ku Klux Klan in the City*, 81-82, 266.

postwar white detractors. Virginians especially seem to have carried this idea of slavery as a necessary evil into their discourse on the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>137</sup>

Since violence, though pervasive, was frowned upon by the elite society to which most memorialists belonged, many white Virginians instead took on African American agency via memorialization and public art. Monuments to the Confederacy were one of the ways white Southerners attempted to maintain their control of society through the delineation of physical space. By the second decade of the twentieth century, segregation had transformed public space into white space across the South. The best known process of segregation was the construction of isolated, often inadequate buildings, such as schools, for black use only.<sup>138</sup> Some public buildings, such as courthouses, could not be rendered totally separate in this way. Since African Americans necessarily conducted business at the same county courthouse buildings as whites, local governments used less isolated ways of maintaining segregation, including black-designated balconies, different water fountains, and duplicate bathrooms. Confederate monuments constructed on courthouse lawns took on added meaning as another symbol of the separation between white and black: whites could erect a stone memorial to soldiers who fought on behalf of a government committed to keeping slavery intact. Blacks had to pass and see these memorials every time they entered the courthouse.

Confederate monuments acted as “physical moorings” for Southern white identity.<sup>139</sup> Soldier statues and obelisks proclaimed the strength of the Lost Cause through their size,

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<sup>137</sup> “The Klan’s very presence,” according to J. Douglas Smith, “threatened paternalistic notions of noblesse oblige that formed the foundation of Virginia’s claim to friendly race relations.” Smith, *Managing White Supremacy*, 41.

<sup>138</sup> Robert R. Weyeneth, “The Architecture of Racial Segregation: The Challenges of Preserving the Problematic Past,” *The Public Historian* 27, no. 4 (Fall 2005), 11-44.

<sup>139</sup> Grace Elizabeth Hale, *Making Whiteness: The Culture of Segregation in the South, 1890-1940* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998), 9.

placement, and permanence. The erection of a stone or bronze monument visibly reconfigured both the physical and imagined landscapes in small Southern towns and large cities alike. Elite white men and women looked back to the Confederacy as the last days of racial stability before emancipation and Reconstruction, attempting to codify white supremacy in the public sphere through monument building.

Omission was key to the efforts of Confederate memorialists to construct a past rooted in enviable racial stability.<sup>140</sup> Virginia's Confederate memorialists suppressed the negative memory of slavery to present history that was acceptable to a wide (white) audience and to vindicate the Confederate cause. Left unspoken at most, though not all, monument ceremonies was the implicit assertion that to vindicate one part of the Confederate past was to vindicate it all, including the Confederate government's dogged defense of slavery. By defending the patriarchal system of slavery as at worst a necessary evil, Confederate memorialists also took a stand for segregation and a strict racial hierarchy in the present.

Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens set the stage for Lost Cause racism in his infamous "Cornerstone" speech in March 1861. Georgia-born Stephens spurned Thomas Jefferson's paternalistic views in his address, saying, "The prevailing ideas entertained by [Jefferson] and most of the leading statesmen at the time of the formation of the old Constitution were, that the enslavement of the African... was wrong in principle, socially, morally and politically." In contrast, Stephens continued, "Our new Government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas; its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests, upon the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and

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<sup>140</sup> W. Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 6.

moral condition.”<sup>141</sup> Many of Virginia’s Confederate monuments, in the post-emancipation world of the New South, returned to the tradition of gentility that grew out of the Jefferson ideal while tacitly maintaining Stephens’s assertion that the races were naturally unequal. There are very few Confederate monuments that acknowledge the existence of slavery in the Confederacy, let alone the role it played in the coming of the war. Where slavery is explicit, memorialists worked hard to portray it as a mutually beneficial institution that rested on the bond of love between master and servant.

Slaves are portrayed in sculpture on the Confederate Monument in Arlington National Cemetery, for example. One frieze shows a white father, off to fight for the South, handing his young child to a female slave. Another shows a male slave in uniform marching into battle alongside his master.<sup>142</sup> The imagery here vindicated the Lost Cause version of slavery as a benevolent system, characterized by faithful Mammies and servants willing to die for their white families. Hilary A. Herbert, former Confederate colonel, US Secretary of the Navy under President Cleveland, and Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Arlington Confederate Monument Association, recorded the history of the Arlington Monument in 1914. The images of slaves portrayed on the monument, according to Hilary, showed “the kindly relations that existed all over the South between the master and the slave...The astonishing fidelity of the slaves everywhere during the war to the wives and children of those who were absent in the army was convincing proof of the kindly relations between master and slave in the old South.”<sup>143</sup> As

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<sup>141</sup> Alexander H. Stephens, “Cornerstone Address, March 21, 1861” in Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, etc.*, vol. 1 (New York: O.P. Putnam, 1862), 44-46. Accessed 31 March 2015 from the *Internet Modern History Source Book*, Fordham University. <http://legacy.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1861stephens.asp>

<sup>142</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Arlington, Virginia, 1914.

<sup>143</sup> Hilary A. Herbert, *History of the Arlington Confederate Monument* (Washington, DC: United Daughters of the Confederacy, 1914), 77.



Herbert went on to point out, “one leading purpose of the U. D. C. is to correct history. Ezekiel [the sculptor] is here writing it for them, in characters that will tell their story to generation after generation.”<sup>144</sup> Thus the sculpted slaves on the Arlington Monument served two purposes: “correcting” a false history for contemporaries in a time “in which ‘Uncle Tom’s Cabin’ survives and is still manufacturing false ideas as to the South and slavery in the ‘fifties’” and perpetuating that correction for future generations.<sup>145</sup>

The uniformed slave on the Arlington Monument served another purpose as well: showing the proper place, according to the monument’s creators, of African Americans in the military. The “faithful negro body-servant” went to war at his master’s bidding, not with any eye to his own fortunes.<sup>146</sup> Though the citizenship status of Southern black soldiers in World War I was different from that of their enslaved ancestors, little else had changed in fifty years. The army was still segregated, with white officers commanding black units. Out of the two hundred thousand black soldiers who served in France, eight out of ten were used as laborers.<sup>147</sup> The Marine Corps, for one, did not accept black recruits.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> Herbert, *History of the Arlington Confederate Monument*, 77. The sculptor, Moses Ezekiel, was a Confederate veteran and the creator of other notable Virginia monuments, including the New Market memorial and Stonewall Jackson statue at the Virginia Military Institute.

<sup>145</sup> Herbert, *History of the Arlington Confederate Monument*, 77.

<sup>146</sup> Herbert, *History of the Arlington Confederate Monument*, 77.

<sup>147</sup> Martin Binkin and Mark J. Eitelberg and others, *Blacks and the Military* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1982), 17.

<sup>148</sup> Binkin and Eitelberg and others, *Blacks and the Military*, 17.



Figures 14-15. Details of the uniformed slave (back row) and female “Mammy” on the Arlington Monument.

Courtesy of Lorraine Seabrook. Used with permission.

The Jeffersonian ideal played out on many monuments through silence. Out of the monuments I have surveyed for this thesis, only the Arlington Monument has any explicit racial content, in the form of the images discussed above. Most monuments either ignored the cause of the Civil War or glorified the cause of states’ rights. Monuments erected at Hanover Courthouse, Goochland Courthouse, Winchester, Gettysburg, Luray, and Monterey make no mention in their inscriptions of the Civil War’s purpose for white Southerners. Victoria’s monument is perhaps

the most direct, since it proclaims, “WE FOUGHT FOR THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE STATES.”<sup>149</sup> Prince George’s monument praises the “UNDYING DEVOTION TO DUTY AND COUNTRY” of the county’s soldiers, but makes no claim as to what that duty was.<sup>150</sup> The monument at Spotsylvania Courthouse also mentions the cause, but makes no clear mention of what that cause may have been.<sup>151</sup>

By not stating the cause of the Confederacy directly on the monuments, memorialists implied that such was already common knowledge in the community. Monuments are repositories of established collective memory—in this case, the memory of the elite white memorialists. By building monuments that rested comfortably on the assumption that everyone knew what the Confederacy stood for and that it was in the right, memorialists crowded out any possible opposition. The United Daughters of the Confederacy, out to “correct” any false memories of the war, made sure that their monuments bore inscriptions that expressly vindicated the Southern cause. This sent a powerful message to those who might dissent, especially African Americans who were not apt to view the Confederacy or slavery in a favorable light. With a stone statue set prominently at the courthouse or in the town center, inscribed with a message meant to convey unity of memory, white memorialists symbolically asserted their power over public space at the expense of blacks.

Orators at monument dedication and unveiling ceremonies were more open about the purpose of their monuments and what they represented, including the causes of the Civil War. Confederate veteran George E. Smith, speaking at the ceremonies for Victoria’s monument in

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<sup>149</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Victoria, Virginia, 1916.

<sup>150</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Prince George, Virginia, 1916.

<sup>151</sup> *Confederate Monument*, Spotsylvania Courthouse, Virginia, 1918. The memorial was dedicated to those “WHO BORE THE FLAG OF/ OUR NATION’S TRUST,/ AND FELL IN THE CAUSE/ ’THO LOST, STILL JUST.”

1916, said, “the Southern States seceded from the Union to avoid war, as we saw that war was inevitable if we remained in the Union. We didn’t fight against the constitution or flag of the United States, we fought for the sovereign rights of the States... We fought against the invasion of our States by the armies of the North.”<sup>152</sup> Smith’s one concession to another cause of the war was his assertion that “the North then seemed mad with the fanatical ideas of such men as John Brown, Thad Stevens and others”—that is, radical abolitionists.<sup>153</sup> Smith’s implication was that those who fought for abolition were fanatics, no better than madmen. While Brown’s raid on Harper’s Ferry was, in the end, a counterintuitive way of going about his aims, the habit of Smith and other Confederate memorialists to lump all abolition efforts together and dismiss the lot as lunacy suggests default support for the institution of slavery.

By glossing over the causes of the Civil War, Confederate memorialists cast the Union and Confederacy as two sides that were both essentially correct, the North fighting for one vision of government and the South for another under the same Constitution. This idea continued the tradition of sectional reunion based on shared whiteness to the detriment of African American advancement in the decades after Reconstruction. To avoid negative confrontations and get beyond the bitterness of the Civil War, white Northerners and Southerners ignored slavery and emancipation in their commemoration of the conflict. Doing so necessarily pushed the social gains of former slaves into the background as whites reconciled via the commonality of their perceived racial superiority.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

<sup>153</sup> “Victoria Has Biggest Day,” *Lunenburg Call*, 17 August 1916.

<sup>154</sup> See David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001).

An example of this reconciliationist language can be found in the poem written for the occasion of Winchester, Virginia's Confederate monument dedication by townswoman Kate McVicar:

And our re-united country  
Glories in each gallant son  
By their courage and devotion  
They a lasting peace have won;  
And no more the tide of battle  
Will roll o'er this Valley fair;  
Blue and Gray together mingle  
And their country's glory share.<sup>155</sup>

Despite the flowery assertion of reconciliation, the *Winchester Evening Star*, which printed McVicar's poem, also proudly pointed out that the sculptor of Winchester's monument "is a man of southern birth and rearing and his sympathies are southern."<sup>156</sup> Though reconciliatory language predominated, this case showed the continued Confederate sympathies of Southerners who believed they had won the "war of ideas" suggested by Confederate apologist Edward A. Pollard in 1866.<sup>157</sup> Pollard coined the term "the Lost Cause" to describe the struggle of the Confederacy in the 1860s. By the 1910s, Lost Cause ideas formed the foundation for sectional reconciliation on Southern terms. McVicar's poem mentioned neither black people nor slavery, perhaps because to the mind of Confederate memorialists those topics did not factor significantly into the war. As one African American spectator at an earlier memorial ceremony recognized, "The Southern white folks [was] on top."<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Kate McVicar, "Confederate Soldier 1861-'65. Confederate Monument 1916," *Winchester Evening Star*, 15 November 1916.

<sup>156</sup> "Great Throng at Unveiling of Monument," *Winchester Evening Star*, 15 November 1916.

<sup>157</sup> Edward A. Pollard, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederates*, 1st ed. facsimile, (Honolulu, HI: University Press of the Pacific, 2004), 738-740.

<sup>158</sup> William A. Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 118-120. The ceremony was the dedication of the Robert E. Lee statue on Monument Avenue in Richmond, 1890.

For some African Americans disappointed by the renewed friendliness of the North and South at black expense, the entry of their nation into the Great War was cause for hope that things would change for the better. “We of the colored race,” wrote W. E. B. DuBois in 1918, “have no ordinary interest in the outcome. That which the German power represents today spells death to the aspirations of Negroes...Let us, while this war lasts, forget our special grievances and close our ranks shoulder to shoulder with our own white fellow citizens and the allied nations that are fighting for democracy.”<sup>159</sup> African American Southerners and white Southerners had very different expectations for what war would bring, however. While black soldiers and their families thought World War I would be an opportunity for advancement, white men and women worked hard to maintain the status quo of racial inequality. One opportunity to make their stand for antebellum racial hierarchy came when Virginians once again invaded Pennsylvania, this time to erect a memorial on the site of one of the Confederacy’s most painful defeats.

The dedication of the Virginia monument on the Gettysburg battlefield set the stage for an explicit defense of the Old South’s peculiar institution in addition to the Lost Cause. The setting for the monument seemed perfect for the traditional Lost Cause defensive tactic of politely ignoring that slavery ever existed. The monument is on a battlefield, where politics did not count nearly as much as bullets and bravery. The men depicted on the monument are all soldiers engaged in the fight: General Lee on his horse Traveler and the archetypes of Virginian tradesmen and farmers who rallied to the cause of their state. Unlike most courthouse monuments, the Gettysburg monument was dedicated solely to the participants of a single battle,

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<sup>159</sup> Bernard C. Nalty and Morris J. MacGregor, eds. *Blacks in the Military: Essential Documents* (Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources Inc., 1981), 77.

and the monument's simple inscription—"VIRGINIA TO HER SONS AT GETTYSBURG"—made no mention of the cause for which they fought.<sup>160</sup>

The speeches of the day were not all so silent on the issues of race and slavery. There was some of the typical Lost Cause equivocation, such as US Assistant Secretary of War William M. Ingraham's invocation of "those brave men who fought and died for their State and for a cause that they sincerely believed was just and right."<sup>161</sup> Much of the day's oration was given over to the reconciliation of North and South and the Great War, especially since the dedication took place only two months after President Wilson called the American people to arms. Virginia governor Henry Carter Stuart, for example, attributed to "the blood that was shed on this and many other fields...our life and strength as a nation; our unity in heart and purpose, our supreme devotion to the flag of a reunited country, which today floats above us," especially "in this trying hour of our National existence."<sup>162</sup>

The lengthiest oration of the ceremony, however, belonged to Washington, DC, attorney and Confederate veteran Leigh Robinson. Robinson had no qualms about discussing slavery in the antebellum South and its relation to the Civil War. Instead of presenting a measured analysis of slavery as one of the most important causes of the conflict, however, Robinson immediately went on the defensive. First, he defended the principle of secession, a familiar theme in reconciliationist orations. Diverging from the normal assertion that both sides were in essence correct, Robinson came out in favor of the South right away: "'No man can serve two masters.' 'We,' said the South, 'will cleave to the States, the original creative power.' 'We,' said the

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<sup>160</sup> *Virginia Monument*, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, 1917.

<sup>161</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, *Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial On the Battlefield of Gettysburg* (Richmond, VA.: E. Waddey Co., 1917), 15.

<sup>162</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, *Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial*, 9-11.

North, ‘will cleave to the Union, the derivative power.’ Which is ultimate—creature or creator?”<sup>163</sup> It is clear which answer Robinson sought to this rhetorical question.

Moving past the issue of states’ rights, Robinson launched into his first discussion of slavery. “Few things could be more sardonic,” he said, “than the crucifixion of Virginia by New England, with the approbation of Old England, for the sin of slavery.”<sup>164</sup> Though he referred to slavery as a sin, Robinson soon backed away from this castigation: “It was not slavery; it was the slave trade which John Wesley branded as ‘the sum of all villainies.’”<sup>165</sup> Having quoted the founder of Methodism, the orator then quoted Thomas Jefferson, who wrote, “[the Missouri Compromise] was...under the false front of lessening the evils of slavery, but with the real view or producing a geographical division of parties.”<sup>166</sup> The purpose of these quotations was to draw blame from the South and point the finger instead at the North, a classic Lost Cause tactic. Robinson summed up this line of argument by saying, “the Rev. Nehemiah Adams...wrote later: ‘The South was on the eve of abolishing slavery. The abolitionists arose and put it back within its innermost entrenchments.’ As late as 1845, an article appeared in the *Richmond Whig*, advocating the abolition of slavery, and stating that but for the intemperance of Northern fanatics it would be accomplished.”<sup>167</sup> Robinson here took to heart the adage that the best defense is a

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<sup>163</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial, 22.

<sup>164</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial, 23.

<sup>165</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial, 23.

<sup>166</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial, 23.

<sup>167</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial, 27.



good offense, offering excuses for the Southern institution of slavery by blaming the North for both the introduction of the system and its longevity.

Leigh Robinson's next line of slavery apologetics relied not on the damnation of Northern interference, but on the scientific racism and imperial impulse prominent at the turn of the twentieth century:

If the service of the slave had been compulsory, it was a compulsion which had liberated from degradation... The noble way for one race to conquer another is by the development of higher modes of existence in that other. So the South conquered the Africans... Southern slavery will hold up the noblest melioration of an inferior race, of which history can take note—the government of a race incapable of self-government, for a greater benefit to the governed than to the governors. Southern master gave to Southern slave more than slave gave to master: and the slave realized it... This slavery was the school to redeem from the sloth of centuries... Freedom, which merely means freedom from work, is freedom to rot—not a thing for which to shed blood or tears.<sup>168</sup>

Robinson argued here that slavery was a beneficial system for the enslaved, even claiming the institution benefitted slaves more than their masters. This argument strongly resembled the reigning viewpoint of white Western imperialists at the time. According to Robinson, the reluctant slaveowners of the Old South took up the “white man’s burden” centuries before Rudyard Kipling coined the term.<sup>169</sup> Interestingly, in defending the Confederacy’s racial hierarchy, Robinson used language that seems out of place with the anti-imperial rhetoric of World War I, especially President Wilson’s call to “make the world safe for democracy” by force of arms only two months earlier.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial, 41-42.

<sup>169</sup> Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden: The United States & The Philippine Islands, 1899.” *Rudyard Kipling’s Verse: Definitive Edition* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1929).

<sup>170</sup> Woodrow Wilson, *War Messages*, 65th Cong., 1st Sess. Senate Doc. No. 5, Serial No. 7264, Washington, DC, 1917, 3-8, *passim*.



Figure 16: *Virginia Monument*, Gettysburg, 1917. Photo by the author. Lee rises above sculpted figures meant to represent the citizen-soldiers of Virginia.

Most of Robinson’s oration was a lengthy recounting of Robert E. Lee’s deeds during the Civil War, fitting on the occasion of the dedication of a large statue of the Southern general. Much like a rider on a legislative bill, he slipped his apology for slavery into an otherwise conventional speech. He concluded that Lee “and the cause for which he fought shall rise before the bar of history firm as marble and as pure”—including, by implication, the defense of black slavery.<sup>171</sup> The fact that Robinson was comfortable expressing his ideas on the beneficence of

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<sup>171</sup> Virginia Gettysburg Monument Commission, *Ceremonies Attending the Dedication of the Virginia Memorial*, 47.

slavery to a large crowd in a Northern state supports the idea that white people in the North and the South reconciled after the Civil War on the basis of white supremacy.<sup>172</sup> The Gettysburg Monument and the Arlington Monument, the two memorials that most explicitly vindicate slavery, were two of the largest Confederate monuments built by Virginians during the period, confirming the desired status of whites to be at the pinnacle of society, often at the expense of former slaves.

Though most Confederate monuments remained silent on the issues of slavery and race, examples such as the Gettysburg Monument hint at the unspoken motivations of memorialists. The 1910s were a period of upheaval in Southern society. Amidst lingering fears of the eclipse of the white race following imperial expansion, growing social unrest and the outbreak of the Great War catalyzed a backlash by elite white Southerners. World War I in particular highlighted the growing diversity of the United States, a fact that disturbed many white Southerners. Virginia's Confederate memorialists looked to the familiar white face of the rebel soldier, immortalized in stone and placed in the public square, for grounding in the midst of social insecurity.<sup>173</sup>

Confederate monuments took on added meaning as sites of certainty in the changing world of the 1910s. The nation for which the Confederate soldier fought was one of (literal) black and white divisions in society, at least in the dewy-eyed memory of Confederate veterans and their turn-of-the-century descendants. Everyone in the Old South of the UDC's imagining knew their proper place and stayed there contentedly. Wealthy white men were at the top of the pyramid, tasked with protecting the goddess-like status of wealthy white women. These women, in turn, were expected to gracefully accept protection in return for a life of domesticity. Black

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<sup>172</sup> See Blight, *Race and Reunion*.

<sup>173</sup> Stokes, *D. W. Griffith's The Birth of a Nation*, 207-208.

men and women were expected to uphold white status through labor. While surely few Confederate memorialists yearned for a return to the slave system, many viewed the reversal of black fortunes in the fifty years after the Civil War as threatening to the privilege Southern whites continued to enjoy after Reconstruction. To counteract African American upward mobility, white Virginians took steps not only to segregate blacks within the public sphere, but also to ensure that that public sphere remained staunchly white through the erection of Confederate monuments.

## *Conclusion*

As they saw the world around them changing, Virginia's Confederate memorialists renewed their dedication to the ideals of the Lost Cause by erecting monuments to Confederate soldiers. These monuments served many purposes, imbued with meaning for contemporaries and future generations alike. By the turn of the twentieth century, Southern whites had reversed the tide of Reconstruction and had placed themselves once again in positions of privilege. This privilege was never on solid footing, however, as growing challenges over the next several decades showed. Facing perceived threats to their status, elite white men and women of the 1910s sought a return to the well-defined social order of the Old South. These threats came from within their society as well as from external sources. The Lost Cause, the tradition of pro-Confederate writings and activities that characterized white Southerners' return to power in the late nineteenth century, took on new importance for 1910s-era memorialists as they worked to uphold the legacy of their Confederate forebears. Monuments to Civil War soldiers had been a popular form of memorialization across both the South and the North after the war. Confederate memorialists of the 1910s embraced monuments as one way to show support for Confederate principles in the public sphere.

Vindication of the Confederate cause was crucial to memorialists. Though the white North and South had reconciled by the turn of the century, especially through their combined service in the Spanish-American War, bitter memories of the Civil War persisted on both sides. To maintain the progress they had made to reunite largely on Southern terms, ex-Confederates and their children needed to continually renew the bonds of good feeling that kept Southern whites in their dominant position. Conflating American patriotism with Confederate pride allowed memorialists to justify the Confederacy and, by the same token, the antebellum

worldview they hoped to bolster. Memorialists tried to rally support for the patriarchal and hierarchical ideals of the Old South by convincing their contemporaries that the Confederate cause was justified. American entry into World War I provided Confederate memorialists with a surefire way to uphold the Lost Cause by drawing parallels between US soldiers going overseas to fight German tyranny and the citizen soldiers who had fought for Southern independence fifty years earlier. Monuments to common Confederate soldiers, therefore, took on great importance as the most striking and permanent way to make the connections between Confederate loyalty and American patriotism necessary to keep upper class white men and women in power.

Confederate memorialists also had a stake in maintaining the old gender roles of the Confederate South. As the women's suffrage movement gained new momentum in the 1910s, men and women committed to traditional Southern principles used monuments to idealize the women of the Confederacy in an attempt to encourage contemporaries to stick with the patriarchal status quo. Elite whites feared that political power given to women, especially black women, would topple their social hierarchy. Pointing to Confederate women as the pinnacle of proper femininity, meanwhile strategically ignoring the dissent of the actual women of the 1860s in favor of the fictionalized Southern Belle image, Confederate memorialists attempted to influence their fellow citizens. Groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy showed through their actions the political viability of non-voting women, while the men who helped them dedicate their monumental tributes to the people of the Confederacy extolled the virtues of female domesticity.

Another threat to the status of elite white memorialists was the continued rise of African American activism during the 1910s. As blacks began to chaff more openly under the rule of Jim Crow, whites committed to keeping them in their place at the bottom of the social pyramid laid

claim to public space across the South. Building monuments to soldiers who fought in defense of slavery sent the message that their cause was just. Ignoring slavery in the public discourse on that same cause rendered contemporary African Americans irrelevant to the Civil War, strengthening the political system that had denied their rights in the decades since emancipation. Confederate monuments served as a visible reminder that white history, memory, and power was the only story worthy of commemoration at the time.

Studying monument building provides a deeper understanding of the process behind the creation of public memory. Memorialization is an act of the present as much as it is an honoring of the past. In the 1910s, during a time of social unrest on several fronts, elite white Virginians turned to the Confederacy as an example of the perfect society—a society where white men ruled, supported by the mothering love of women at home and the labor of a race unfit to wield power over themselves or anyone else. To perpetuate the memory of the Old South as a paradise of proper order, memorialists raised monuments immortalizing the qualities they sought to instill in their contemporaries. This remembering involved a significant amount of forgetting to achieve its purpose: a return to the social principles upon which the Confederacy stood.

So far, most of the Confederate monuments discussed in this thesis have lived up to the expectations of their creators in terms of permanence. The meaning with which their creators tried to imbue them, however, has been lost in the century since their erection. Or has it? Culture wars still rage over the proper place of Confederate legacy in the New South. Whatever Confederate monuments may mean to the people who live with them today, it is useful to study not only the memorials themselves, but also the men and women who built them in order to draw conclusions about the collective memory of societies in flux. Understanding the history of monuments allows us to appreciate them not just as works of art or commemorations of the past,

but as dynamic sites of memory that preserve the hopes and dreams of their creators as well as all who have passed and taken notice of them since.



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