



SILENT STONES

Symbolism and Contested Memory of
Confederate Monuments at Gettysburg

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Abstract

Denne afhandling fokuserer på monumenter rejst i kølvandet på den amerikanske borgerkrig, med et særligt fokus på Gettysburg National Military Park. Dertil undersøges, hvordan disse monumenter er blevet brugt som symbolske redskaber til at fremhæve forskellige politiske og kulturelle fortællinger gennem tiden, herunder den kontroversielle "Lost Cause"-fortælling, der søger at retfærdiggøre Sydens kamp i borgerkrigen som en ædel stræben efter "states rights" snarere end en kamp for at bevare slaveriet. Der bliver udført en detaljeret analyse af monumenterne fra de tidligere Sydstater og deres skiftende betydning fra starten af det 20. århundrede til slutningen af det 20. århundrede. Afhandlingen undersøger også, hvordan disse monumenter indgår i moderne debatter om historisk hukommelse og racemæssig retfærdighed, særligt i forhold til fjernelsen af Sydstats statuer og monumenter i det 21. århundrede. Gennem en bred tidsmæssig ramme fremhæver analysen, hvordan monumenterne afspejler skiftende samfundspolitiske strømninger og deres indflydelse på både historisk bevidsthed og nutidens kulturelle landskab.

Resumé

Denne afhandling undersøger monumenter opført efter den amerikanske borgerkrig, især på slagmarken ved Gettysburg. Den ser på, hvordan monumenterne gennem tiden har afspejlet forskellige politiske og kulturelle holdninger, såsom "Lost Cause"-fortællingen, der glorificerer Sydens kamp for "states rights" og nedtoner slaveriets rolle. Afhandlingen analyserer monumenterne fra tidligere Sydstater og deres betydning, samt hvordan de er blevet en del af nutidens debatter om race og historisk retfærdighed. Den viser, hvordan monumenterne både har formet og er blevet påvirket af skiftende politiske og sociale strømninger fra det 20. århundrede til i dag.

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Introduction

"A house divided against itself cannot stand." - Abraham Lincoln, June 16th, 1858.¹

These famous words by Abraham Lincoln, were used to describe the ongoing political climate in the United States, where the debate on slavery was heating up, and dividing the country. In his speech, delivered at the Republican State Convention in the state of Illinois, Lincoln put forth his vision on how this issue would end:

*"I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half slave and half free [. . .] I do not expect the union to be dissolved- I do not expect the house to fall - but I do expect it will cease to be divided."*²

Even though he believed that the current government couldn't endure half slave and half free, and possibly even to some extent that the civil war was inevitable, he couldn't possibly have foreseen the sheer amount of brutality, death and hardship the civil war would bring along and cause. Nor could he have imagined the weight of the war, not only in contemporary relation to the conflict, but even in the United States to this day, where the American Civil War is still the cause of much division, almost along the same lines that were drawn before and during that terrible conflict.

The point of this thesis is to examine a selected few of the monuments erected in relation to the American Civil War at the Gettysburg National Military Park, on the site of the costliest battle, not only in the civil war itself, but in the history of the entire country. These monuments have been selected to understand the changes in politics and society, in the times that they were erected in, and to see if there is a distinct change in the symbolism and wording on the monuments themselves. Though, before we can begin to analyze the monuments at Gettysburg National Military Park, it is imperative to first understand why the American Civil War came to be in the first place, and what the people were fighting for. This will help us understand the monuments and the reasons for erecting them.

¹ "House Divided Speech" Consulted June 5th, 2024.
<https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/housedivided.htm>

² "House Divided Speech" Consulted June 5th, 2024.
<https://www.nps.gov/liho/learn/historyculture/housedivided.htm>

Even though the American Civil War officially began in the spring of 1861, it had been a long time coming. Some might say that the seeds of the conflict were sown at the birth of the nation, i.e., the 4th of July 1776. But surely the founding fathers would have seen the beginning of the imminent conflict and done everything they would to stop it at its conception.

The long road to chaos

The origins of the American Civil War are deeply rooted in the conflicting economic, social, and political ideologies between the Northern and Southern states. The central issue was slavery, which was deeply intertwined with the Southern economy and way of life. The industrial North, which favored a free labor system, was increasingly at odds with the agrarian South, which relied heavily on enslaved labor for its economic prosperity.

The United States' declaration of independence is one of the most revered documents of the modern era and is seen by the American people as the cornerstone of western society. Yet the beginning of the document leads to a confusing problem in the eyes of the modern reader.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”³

These words have been at the forefront of many conflicts in the American political system and in the beginning of the nation's life, these words ring hollow in the ears of the modern reader. Furthermore, these words come into conflict in how the nation looks upon its own citizenship and who qualifies to be a citizen in the eyes of the law. The question of slavery in the United States was not a new political debate when Abraham Lincoln came into the oval office in 1861. After the war of independence, the question of slavery was put forth for the ratification of the United States' Constitution. The north, which had a vastly different climate and population density, did not have the large quantities of slave labor, for agriculture, that the south had in order to exploit the vast fields and patches of virgin soil of the south. On the other hand, the south needed the cheap workforce of slavery to ensure the prosperity of the scarce populated south. One of the questions of slavery in the forming of the constitution was about the question of state population and whether the slaves were to be in-

³ National Archives, *Declaration of Independence*, consulted June 5th, 2024.
<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

cluded in the population of the south. This question can be seen as one of the pillars of the slavery question, as the slaves of the south suddenly became a question of whether or not the slaves were people, they settled on the fact that a slave counted as three-fifths of a person.⁴ The spirit of revolution and ideals of liberty for all was, for some, also included the slaves of both north and south. The question of the international slave trade was debated, and the likes of Thomas Jefferson voiced their opinion against slavery as morally inadequate for the new nation. This resulted in a compromise that saw the continuation of the trans-Atlantic slave trade until its abolition in 1808.⁵ This provision in the Constitution, Virginia's James Madison hoped, would lead to an eventual end of slavery in the United States, and people thought at the time in 1787, that slavery's days were indeed numbered and running out.⁶ The notion of the gradual abolishment of slavery and emancipation of slaves was put forth, yet augmented against by southerners as they saw the slaves more as forms of cheap labor, a labor that they could not afford to lose. Moreover, the slaves of the south would only rise in value following a stop to the importation of slaves⁷. The thought of an eventual abolition of slavery were soon crushed due to a technological innovation, brought forth by the American inventor Eli Whitney in 1793, the cotton gin. This cotton gin was a cheap, mechanical method for separating the cotton seeds from the plant. At the same time the British invented power-driven spinners and looms to process the cotton into cloth. Therefore, not only was the output able to be maximized, but the demand for American cotton skyrocketed. Due to this it became to profitable, to abolish slavery in the Southern states, and the price and demand for slaves only increased.⁸ The whole question of freedom from the declaration of independence was in large parts completely ignored by the South, when it came to the question of slaves and slavery.⁹ However, originally Thomas Jefferson had voiced his desire for a part of the Declaration of Independence to contain a written condemnation of the practice of slavery. In the original passage, Jefferson blamed the British Crown for introducing slavery in the colonies.¹⁰

⁴ John Niven, *The Coming of the Civil War, 1837 - 1861*. (Wheeling, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1990), p. 5.

⁵ Niven, *The Coming of the Civil War, 1837 - 1861*, p. 5.

⁶ Jonathan Daniel Wells. *A House Divided: The Civil War and Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2012, p. 11.

⁷ Jonathan Daniel Wells. *A House Divided: The Civil War and Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2012, p. 11.

⁸ Niven, *The Coming of the Civil War, 1837 - 1861*, p. 8-9.

⁹ Niven, *The Coming of the Civil War, 1837 - 1861*, p. 6.

¹⁰ "Why Thomas Jefferson's Anti-Slavery Passage was Removed from the Declaration of Independence" Consulted June 4th, 2024.

<https://www.history.com/news/declaration-of-independence-deleted-anti-slavery-clause-jefferson>

“He has waged cruel war against nature itself, (...) violating its most sacred rights of life & liberty in the persons of a distant people who never offended him, capturing & carrying them into slavery in another hemisphere or to incur miserable death in their transportation thither.”¹¹

However tragic it may seem that the passage was deleted, it wasn't a viable option at the time to keep it in the Declaration of Independence, simply due to the economy foundations of both the North and South. Whilst the South relied upon the free labor in the production of tobacco and cotton, the Northern merchants were an integral part of the triangle trade between Africa and Europe.¹²

One of the first acts against slavery was with the constitution of the state of Vermont, where they placed a partial ban on slavery in 1777,¹³ alongside Pennsylvania with the *“An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery”* in 1780.¹⁴ Which showed the beginning of the political and ideological difference between the North and South. Throughout the early to mid-19th century tension rose between the so-called Free-States and Slaves-States. One of the first escalations of tension came about under the discussion of whether the new states who sought inclusion into the Union would be either a Free-State or a Slave-State. With the purchase of the Louisiana territory in 1803, America acquired a land the size of the already existing United States. Sixteen years later in 1819, Missouri, as the first state in the aforementioned territory sought acceptance in the Union, which sparked a conflict between North and South. At this period of time, there was an equal amount of Free-States and Slave-States, which kept each other in check. As neither side of the argument wanted to give the other an extra state, the issue was only settled, when in 1820 Maine sought acceptance as a Free-State. To avoid further conflicts in the future, Congress decided that states would only be accepted as pairs to avoid a one-sided majority. Meanwhile, it was also accepted that slavery would be banned in any new states North of the 36th parallel, which was easy for the South to accept, as it was impossible

¹¹ “Why Thomas Jefferson’s Anti-Slavery Passage was Removed from the Declaration of Independence” Consulted June 4th, 2024.

<https://www.history.com/news/declaration-of-independence-deleted-anti-slavery-clause-jefferson>

¹² Allan Ahle. *Den amerikanske borgerkrig: forudsætningerne, krigen og genopbygningen: USA's historie 1776-1877*. 1. udgave. 1. oplag. Århus: Systime, 2001, p. 14-15.

¹³ Vermont Secretary of state, *Vermont Constitution - 1777*, consulted June 6th, 2024.

<https://sos.vermont.gov/vsara/learn/constitution/1777-constitution/>

¹⁴ Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, *An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery - March 1, 1780*, consulted June 6th, 2024.

<https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/portal/communities/documents/1776-1865/abolition-slavery.html>

to grow cotton North of it.¹⁵ The “peace” however, only lasted thirty years. Following victory in the American Mexican war, the United States acquired the states of California and New Mexico, the question of slavery came up again. California voted to be a Free-State, which angered the southern states, as they feared that California would become a haven for escaping slaves. Therefor they sought to clamp down on the law regarding escapees, otherwise they would leave the Union. The talk of secession escalated to the point where a convention of southern states formed to discuss the possibility of an independent South. De-escalation of the crisis was only achieved when a compromise incorporating a tougher law regarding escaping slaves was reached. Even though this compromise established a fragile peace, it wasn’t popular amongst the abolitionists in the northern states.¹⁶ In a way, the first shots of the Civil War weren’t fired at Fort Sumter in 1861, but on the plains of Kansas in 1854. The crisis that came to be known as *bleeding Kansas*, was a precursor to the violence that would cover the country seven years later. First of all, the southern states managed to appeal the Missouri compromise of 1820, where the ban on slavery in any future northern state was rescinded.¹⁷ With the Kansas-Nebraska act of 1854, the settlers in Kansas were to decide for themselves whether or not they wanted to be a Slave-State or a Free-State. This led to regular fighting and killing between anti- and pro-slavery civilians. The conflict evolved to civil war like scenes, where neighbors fought against each other, and families were torn apart due to differing views. With the death of the radical abolitionist John Brown, it was clear to all, both North and South, that there were no further compromises to be had, and that future conflicts regarding slavery, wouldn’t be solved by peaceful means.¹⁸

Between the political escalation, conflicts and compromises, a promising new political party arose, the Republican Party. Its founding platform was the opposing of the future expansion of slavery, however not the immediate emancipation. Following the Kansas-Nebraska act of 1854, Abraham Lincoln opposed the proponent of it, Stephen A. Douglas and though Lincoln didn’t emerge as the victor in their debates, it projected him across the country and made him a household name.¹⁹ By advocating and voicing his opposition towards slavery, Lincoln made himself an enemy in the South, who saw him as a threat to preserving

¹⁵ Allan Ahle. *Den amerikanske borgerkrig: forudsætningerne, krigen og genopbygningen: USA's historie 1776-1877*. 1. udgave. 1. oplag. Århus: Systime, 2001, p. 27-28.

¹⁶ Erling Bjøl, Niels Bjerre-Poulsen. *USA's Historie*. (Gyldendal, 2021), p. 128-129.

¹⁷ McPherson, James M.. 1996. *Drawn with the Sword : Reflections on the American Civil War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated. Accessed September 30, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central. P. 42.

¹⁸ Allan Ahle. *Den amerikanske borgerkrig: forudsætningerne, krigen og genopbygningen: USA's historie 1776-1877*. 1. udgave. 1. oplag. Århus: Systime, 2001, p. 31.

¹⁹ John Niven, *The Coming of the Civil War, 1837 - 1861*. (Wheeling, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1990), p. 86-87.

slavery. The last straw for the South came in the presidential election, where Lincoln had become so detested in the southern states, that he didn't even appear on the voting ballots. This meant that when he won the presidential election of 1860, he did it without any electoral support from the South, which was seen as a direct threat to the institution of slavery and the southern way of life.²⁰ In case of a Lincoln victory, the South had promised that it would secede, however, following the victory, none took the warning at face value, and mistook it for overblown rhetoric.²¹ However, they would soon be wrong.

States' rights to do what?

Lincoln's victory sparked what is known as the secession crisis, where the Southern states convened secession conventions, where they discussed and voted on leaving the Union. White southerners had for a long time argued that the individual states had a natural given right to secede from the Union, since the individual states had ratified the constitution, and therefore could rescind that ratification.²² The first state to secede was South Carolina in December of 1860. The plan was to secede one Lower South state at the time, as a tower of bricks, crumbling from the bottom.²³ Following South Carolina's exit, its neighbor state Georgia, which had been teetering on secession, narrowly decided to leave, and this tendency spilled over into the other neighboring states, and one by one they left. When Lincoln was eventually inaugurated on March 4th, 1861, seven Lower South states had already left.²⁴ It wasn't until the first shots had been fired on Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor on April 12th, 1861, that the die was finally cast, and the wheels set in motion for the secession of the final Southern states, and the onset of the Civil War.

But why did the Southern states secede from the Union? The fact that many states threatened with secession in case of a Lincoln victory in the presidential elections of 1860, following his official anti expansion of slavery stance, would imply that the South seceded over the issue of slavery. A lot of the history since the Civil War has sought to underline that

²⁰ John Niven, *The Coming of the Civil War, 1837 - 1861*. (Wheeling, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1990), p. 129-130.

²¹ John Niven, *The Coming of the Civil War, 1837 - 1861*. (Wheeling, Ill: Harlan Davidson, 1990), p. 130.

²² Jonathan Daniel Wells. *A House Divided: The Civil War and Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2012, p. 76-77.

²³ Lyde Cullen Sizer, Jim Cullen, *The Civil War Era: An Anthology of Sources*. (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 19.

²⁴ Lyde Cullen Sizer, Jim Cullen, *The Civil War Era: An Anthology of Sources*. (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 20.

it wasn't due to preserving slavery, but instead the case of preserving states rights.²⁵ But herein lies the question; states rights to do what? Vice-president of the Confederate States of America gave a speech in March 1861, where he himself outlined the reasons for secession.

*"... the formation of the old Constitution were, that the enslavement of the African was in violation of the laws of nature; that it was wrong in principle, socially, morally and politically... Those ideas however were fundamentally wrong. They rested upon the assumption of the equality of the races. This was an error. . . Our new Government is founded upon the exact 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 moral condition. This, our new Government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical, and moral truth."*²⁶

The lost cause and reconstruction

*"Most people would agree that the North won the Civil War. Not quite as many people would agree that it won the peace."*²⁷

With the conclusion of the Civil War and Union victory, the long reconstruction and reconciliation began. But what was reconstruction? And what did it achieve?

The end of the war heralded the end of a life in bondage and servitude for more than four million slaves in the United States, who following the Emancipation Proclamation of September 1862 had been freed. But the stroke of a pen does not wipe away the inherent injustice and racism. This became evident during the period known as Reconstruction. The thoughts behind Reconstruction were to mend the division between North and South and rebuild the devastated economy and infrastructure of the beleaguered states.²⁸ Some of the states had seen unprecedented violence and experienced enormous toil, most notably during the campaigns of Generals William Tecumseh Sherman, and Phillip Sheridan. Their marching and

²⁵ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 4.

²⁶ Lyde Cullen Sizer, Jim Cullen, *The Civil War Era: An Anthology of Sources*. (Blackwell Publishing, 2005), p. 53-54.

²⁷ Laura Edwards. " 'Privilege' and 'Protection': Civil and Political Rights during Reconstruction," in *Gendered Strife and Confusion: The Political Culture and Reconstruction* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1997), pp. 184-98. In *The Civil War Era*, Edited by Lyde Cullen Sizer & Jim Cullen. p. 353.

²⁸ Allan Ahle. *Den amerikanske borgerkrig: forudsætningerne, krigen og genopbygningen: USA's historie 1776-1877*. 1. udgave. 1. oplag. Århus: Systime, 2001, p. 168.

campaigning through Georgia, Virginia, North- and South Carolina, has been described by some as examples of “Total War”.²⁹ The consequences of actions such as these, were not just economically and militarily, but also had a long-lasting effect on the political landscape, and public opinion towards the North. The bitterness that had fostered towards Sherman and Sheridan specifically, was directed against the federal government and especially Lincoln. Due to these aggressive campaigns fought in Georgia and Virginia near the end of the war, the war itself would become known to the people of the South as *the war of Northern Aggression* to symbolize that all they wanted was peaceful separation from the Union.³⁰ For the entire duration of the war, Lincoln had strongly advocated for his personal wish of a peaceful end to the war without trials and executions. This was due to the strong division that flourished in the *antebellum* days. He wanted the people of both the North and South to first and foremost see themselves, but also each other as Americans, not just as Texians, Marylanders or Virginians and so forth.³¹ Immediately following southern surrender, the armies of the Union turned into a force of occupation and in some cases repression, which further spewed the animosity between the two sides. Furthermore, it was an embarrassment for the former Confederate soldiers, and even more the former slave owners. They had not only lost a war, but also lost part of their perceived culture, and in that their honor and pride. This titanic task of mending the bond was made virtually impossible following the assassination of Abraham Lincoln near the end of the war, by the southern sympathizer John Wilkes Booth. The task of seeing through the Reconstruction now fell to the vice-president, Andrew Johnson. Johnson was in some regards himself a paradox, as he in many ways was exactly what the Republicans and the North had fought against. A southern slave owning democrat, and in every aspect against the emancipation and enfranchisement of the slaves. The only reason he had become Lincoln's vice president to begin with was in an effort made by the Republican Party to appeal to the rather significant percentage of Democrats in the Northern states.³² The period of reconstruction saw an increase in the white supremacist militias, such as the Ku Klux Klan, which had become the armed soldiers of the Democratic party in the postwar South. In the time before the 1868 presidential election, a number of black politicians were even mur-

²⁹ Erling Bjøl, Niels Bjerre-Poulsen. *USA's Historie*. (Gyldendal, 2021), p. 196.

³⁰ Wetta, Frank J., and Novelli, Martin A.. *The Long Reconstruction : The Post-Civil War South in History, Film, and Memory*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2013. Accessed September 30, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central, p. 133.

³¹ Erling Bjøl, Niels Bjerre-Poulsen. *USA's Historie*. (Gyldendal, 2021), p.197.

³² Allan Ahle. *Den amerikanske borgerkrig: forudsætningerne, krigen og genopbygningen: USA's historie 1776-1877*. 1. udgave. 1. oplag. Århus: Systime, 2001, p. 168.

dered by the KKK. This had a devastating effect on the Southern Republicans as many feared that they also would become the target of these killings.³³

Prominent figures like Confederate general Jubal Early and organizations such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy played key roles in promoting the Lost Cause narrative. Early's writings and speeches glorified Confederate leaders and soldiers, portraying them as virtuous and heroic defenders of Southern values.³⁴ The United Daughters of the Confederacy and other heritage groups actively worked to memorialize the Confederacy through monuments, textbooks, and public ceremonies.

United Daughters of the Confederacy

One of the most prominent societies in the post reconstruction period and throughout the beginning of the 20th century, was the United Daughters of the Confederacy, (*UDC*). The society was made up of the descendants of confederate veterans, and those who in some way had aided the Confederacy.³⁵ Being founded in 1894, the *UDC* oversaw a period in American history, where the myth of *the lost cause* flourished, and embedded itself in the minds of not only the people in the south, but also in the wider United States.³⁶ But what was the goal of the *UDC*? First and foremost, it was to preserve the memory of the Confederacy, through monuments, wherein they could advance their own theory on the “correct” version of history. Furthermore, they sought to raise money for the widows of confederate veterans, and organized fellowships for young students. Even though their goals in some way may seem positive and helping, there was a hidden narrative, although it was never very hidden. These efforts were mostly made to expand the *lost cause* narrative, as the correct interpretation of the Civil War.³⁷ Historian Karen Cox argues that the women in the *UDC*, were tantamount in revising the history of the conflict between the north and the south.³⁸ Furthermore she underlines that the goal of the *UDC*, was not just to pay homage to the fallen Confederates, but to

³³ Cook, Robert. *Civil War America : Making a Nation, 1848-1877*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003. Accessed September 30, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central, p. 256.

³⁴ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 4-5.

³⁵ “United Daughters of the Confederacy” Consulted May 30th, 2024.

<https://encyclopediavirginia.org/author/carolineejanney/>

³⁶ “The Lost Cause” Consulted May 29th, 2024.

https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/lost-cause-the/#start_entry

³⁷ “The United Daughters of the Confederacy” Consulted May 29th, 2024.

<https://encyclopediavirginia.org/author/carolineejanney/>

³⁸ Karen L. Cox. *Dixies Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the preservation of Confederate Culture*. (University Press of Florida, 2003), p. 1-2.

transform the ignominious defeat of the Confederate States, into a form of political and cultural victory.³⁹ In some ways you could call it a victory over the mind, and in the meantime over the collective memory, in the midst of the taste of defeat. *The Lost Cause* that the UDC was promoting, was the memory of the “Old South”. An idealized world where the planter class was at the top of the social and political hierarchy, in an almost aristocratic society. Meanwhile the women were bound to their traditional roles, serving as the keeper of the house, and functioning as a socialite in the higher echelons of society.⁴⁰ Furthermore, even despite the military defeat, the confederate soldiers are remembered as heroes throughout the south, due to the fact that they fought for what they believed in, and in the eyes of the southern population, against a tyrannical government. These are just some of the aspects of what Cox calls *Confederate culture*. This culture was heavily promoted by the UDC, and in various ways, most notably in monuments and flags. These were considered important in what the UDC saw as educating the southern youth, and in so making sure that they were brought up under the right belief system, which in time would help promote the lost cause further.⁴¹ myths about the Civil War and the Confederacy. By downplaying the role of slavery and emphasizing states' rights, the UDC has been accused of whitewashing history and contributing to the romanticization of a society built on the exploitation of enslaved people.

In recent years, the UDC has faced increased scrutiny and criticism, particularly in the context of the national debate over Confederate symbols. Many of the monuments and memorials the UDC helped to erect have become focal points for protests and calls for removal. Critics argue that these monuments are symbols of white supremacy and racial oppression and that their presence in public spaces is incompatible with contemporary values of equality and inclusion.

Analysis of Confederate Monuments at Gettysburg National Military Park

Why Gettysburg?

As this is a thesis with focus on historical monuments dedicated to the American Civil War, it is evident that some of these monuments must be analyzed individually to get a better under-

³⁹ Karen L. Cox. *Dixies Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the preservation of Confederate Culture*. (University Press of Florida, 2003), p. 2.

⁴⁰ Karen L. Cox. *Dixies Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the preservation of Confederate Culture*. (University Press of Florida, 2003), p. 3.

⁴¹ Karen L. Cox. *Dixies Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the preservation of Confederate Culture*. (University Press of Florida, 2003), p. 3.

standing of the changes in historical narrative since the end of the conflict. But how do you narrow it down to a specific field of monuments that is both in some way, quantitative and qualitative? There are more than six thousand different monuments and markers scattered throughout the United States, which are in some way dedicated or in reference to the Civil War. Due to the recent controversies regarding monuments and the relocation and dismantling of some of them in various towns and cities, it only seems logic that the selected monuments had to be from a battlefield, as it would be the best way to example the changes in symbolism and text on said monuments through time. This was also due to the fact that instead of the monuments being dedicated to various times and tribulations, they would all have roots on the aforementioned battlefield. In the American Civil War there were a vast amount of large, deadly, and influential battles, such as Antietam, Shiloh, Fredericksburg and so forth. However, the most “popular” battle, both regarding its importance and due to its place in the American people's psyche, was the battle of Gettysburg from July 1st to July 3rd, 1863.⁴² The late historian Jim Weeks wrote in his book, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine*, when describing the history and the grandeur surrounding the battle:

*“Yet bigger armies had faced off during the Civil War; grander and costlier assaults were made elsewhere; equally significant turning points occurred. So why has Gettysburg’s memory not only overshadowed other Civil War battles, but many other American historical events as well?”*⁴³

Regarding the war, and especially Lincoln's war aims, the battle of Antietam September 17th, 1862, was a much more important battle than Gettysburg.⁴⁴ This was due to the fact that following the Union victory at Antietam, Lincoln used the momentum of victory to announce the Emancipation Proclamation, and his intentions of ratifying it in the senate and congress, thereby freeing all African American slaves in both the northern states, as well in the rebellious states.⁴⁵ However, the battle at Antietam did not signify a change in the possible outcome of the war, and the Union was not closer to overall victory than it was before, almost to

⁴² Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), Kindle Version, p. 13.

⁴³ Jim Weeks, *Gettysburg: Memory, Market, and an American Shrine* (Princeton & Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), Kindle Version, p. 4.

⁴⁴ Cook, Robert. *Civil War America : Making a Nation, 1848-1877*. Oxford: Taylor & Francis Group, 2003. Accessed September 30, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central, p. 139.

⁴⁵ Allan Ahle. *Den amerikanske borgerkrig: forudsætningerne, krigen og genopbygningen: USA's historie 1776-1877*. 1. udgave. 1. oplag. Århus: Systime, 2001, p. 105-106.

the contrary. Following the battle of Antietam, the Union suffered horrific defeats and losses of men at Fredericksburg in the winter of 1862, and additionally at Chancellorsville in the spring of 1863.⁴⁶ This meant that the momentum had swung in favor of the Confederacy, and General Robert E. Lee chose that moment to go on the offensive, to try and force a major victory in the northern states. This decisive battle, he believed, would end the war with a conditional peace, and the establishment of the Confederate States of America as a sovereign country.⁴⁷ This victory that Lee went looking for, happened to culminate in the largest battle ever fought in the western hemisphere, and the costliest battle in terms of American lives in the entire history of the country, the Battle of Gettysburg. Erupting almost per chance in the state of Pennsylvania, the first shots were fired when Confederate infantry happened on the reconnoitering cavalry of the Union Army of the Potomac, just outside the town of Gettysburg. In the following days, more than 170.000 soldiers clashed together, with the battle itself resulting in nearly 50.000 combined casualties, dead and wounded, by which it earned the title of the deadliest battle of the entire conflict.⁴⁸ Historian Jonathan Daniel Wells, writes that the battle's significance was not all that clear at first, and even in some cases, the southern newspapers reported the battle of Gettysburg as a Confederate victory.⁴⁹

Since then, the battle has been etched in the public mind, most notably in the 1993 movie titled Gettysburg, in which you follow the course of the battle, from both the perspective of the Confederacy and the Union. The movie sparked a massive revival in interest surrounding the battle in civil war reenactors and civilian visitors alike. Today it is a common perception among civil war historians, that the battle of Gettysburg marked a turning point in the war, and from that point onwards the South lost its capacity to conduct large scale offensives.⁵⁰

Due to the historical and social importance of Gettysburg, the battlefield itself is preserved as close to original as possible, and a vast number of curators, historians and volunteers help preserve and remit the history surrounding the battle and the war.

⁴⁶ Allan Ahle. *Den amerikanske borgerkrig: forudsætningerne, krigen og genopbygningen: USA's historie 1776-1877*. 1. udgave. 1. oplag. Århus: Systime, 2001, p. 113.

⁴⁷ Jonathan Daniel Wells. *A House Divided: The Civil War and Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2012, p. 171-172.

⁴⁸ Allan Ahle. *Den amerikanske borgerkrig: forudsætningerne, krigen og genopbygningen: USA's historie 1776-1877*. 1. udgave. 1. oplag. Århus: Systime, 2001, p. 115.

⁴⁹ Jonathan Daniel Wells. *A House Divided: The Civil War and Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2012, p. 173.

⁵⁰ Jonathan Daniel Wells. *A House Divided: The Civil War and Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2012, p. 174.

The aforementioned historical context of the battle was the reason for it being used in this analysis. However, as there are more than 1,300 monuments commemorating the civil war, it was a difficult task to narrow it down to a selected few without losing the quantitative aspect of the analysis.⁵¹ With the basis of the analysis being the research of the symbolism and historical context of the dedication of the monuments, it was decided that the monuments dedicated to the soldiers of each Confederate state involved in the battle would give the broadest aspect of the study. In this case-study there are a total of twelve different state monuments from the former Confederate States of America; Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia, with Maryland being the odd one out, seeing as it wasn't part of the Confederate States of America during the war, but had volunteers in both the blue and the gray. These monuments are dedicated over a long period of time, spanning from 1917 to 1994. This broad time ratio is helpful in this study, as it can show an evolution regarding the symbolism and text on the monuments. Another reason for choosing the state monuments is due to the fact that they are not raised by an interest group with a private agenda, but more often than not raised by the respective state who they commemorate. This makes it possible, first and foremost, to see who the respective governor of the time in each state was, and what were their political affiliations and motives, thereby helping decipher possible narratives regarding the monuments.

Virginia

Not only is The State of Virginia monument the oldest of the twelve Confederate State monuments at Gettysburg, having been dedicated in June of 1917, but it is also the first monument at all to be dedicated to the Confederacy. However, it is not only the first but also in some regards the most important due to the fact that it represents the largest part of the Army of Northern Virginia which fought at Gettysburg. The state of Virginia contributed almost 20,000 soldiers in total and suffered almost a quarter of the total Confederate losses, the second highest.⁵² Due to the fact that the battle of Gettysburg was fought in 1863, it is peculiar that the first monument dedicated to the soldiers of the Confederacy was first raised

⁵¹ "Frequently Asked Questions," consulted May 29th, 2024.

<https://www.nps.gov/gett/planyourvisit/faqs.htm>

On the number of monuments present at the Gettysburg National Military Park.

⁵² "The States at Gettysburg," consulted May 29th, 2024.

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/battle-of-gettysburg-facts/the-states-at-gettysburg/>
Regarding the number of state casualties at Gettysburg.

in 1917, more than 50 years after the battle. However, it seems that there was a political aspect regarding this. First of all, in Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address in 1863, he underlines that the battlefield, and the newly acquired Soldiers National Cemetery, is supposed to be the resting " (. . .) for those who gave their lives that the nation might live."⁵³ With Lincoln's words it is possible to deduct that there was never a plan to also dedicate the battlefield to the Confederates that fought there, even less due to the fact that the speech was held in the middle of the ongoing Civil War. From 1872 the cemetery itself was transferred to the Federal Government and was thereafter administered by the War Department until 1933.⁵⁴ The administration of the War Department following 1872, might also have hindered the erecting of Confederate monuments at Gettysburg, as a large number of the senior officers at this time, would themselves have taken part in the Civil War on the side of the North.⁵⁵ An important thing to consider is the fact that while the National Cemetery was being developed under the administration of the state of Pennsylvania and the War Department, the preservation of a vast amount of the battlefield itself was under the direction of the Gettysburg Battlefield Memorial Association (GBMA).⁵⁶ The GBMA was in 1864 given the rights, by the state of Pennsylvania, to preserve the battlegrounds and aid in erecting memorial structures, that would honor the heroic deeds of the defenders.⁵⁷ This is where it gets interesting. With the wording of "defenders" the focus is on the defending soldiers of the Union, and not in any way the Confederates, which could also be a contribution factor as to why it took nearly 50 years for the first Confederate monument to be dedicated. The largest change happened in 1893, when the Federal Government took over from the GBMA, and made plans to establish a national park at Gettysburg, the Gettysburg Military National Park was thereby born. It is therefore also plausible that the acquisition by the Federal Government would later make it possible for the descendants and veterans of the Confederacy to erect monuments as the *lost cause* became more prevalent, and the Government became more impartial.

⁵³ "Gettysburg address delivered at Gettysburg Pa. Nov. 19th, 1863." consulted June 4th, 2024.

<https://www.loc.gov/resource/rbpe.24404500/?st=text>

⁵⁴ Harlan D. Unrau. *Administrative History: Gettysburg National Military Park and Cemetery, Pennsylvania*. (United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1991), p. 5.

⁵⁵ "Secretaries of War and Secretaries of the Army" consulted June 4th, 2024.

<https://history.army.mil/books/sw-sa/swsa-fm.htm>

⁵⁶ Harlan D. Unrau. *Administrative History: Gettysburg National Military Park and Cemetery, Pennsylvania*. (United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1991), p. 5.

⁵⁷ Harlan D. Unrau. *Administrative History: Gettysburg National Military Park and Cemetery, Pennsylvania*. (United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1991), p. 5-6.

The monument itself is rather atypical from the later monuments at Gettysburg due to the sheer size. Positioned on top of the plinth is an equestrian statue of General Robert E. Lee, commanding general of the Army of Northern Virginia during the battle.⁵⁸



State of Virginia Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park, topped with the statue of Robert E. Lee.

The fact that the commanding general of one of the engaged armies is immortalized on the site of the battle, is in and of itself not that unique, however it is important to remember that this was not a war fought between two sovereign countries, but rather a legitimate government and rebellious states. However, Lee was not just a general, he was a myth, the face of the rebellion and the south's fight for independence. Due to the lost cause narrative developing immediately after Confederate defeat, Lee was seen as an example of the southern will to fight and the military success of the Confederate States soldiers.⁵⁹ As the venerable civil war historian Gary W. Gallagher writes in his book *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*:

⁵⁸ "State of Virginia Monument" consulted May 29th, 2024.

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/virginia/>

⁵⁹ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 2.

*“The commander of the Army of Northern Virginia was the preeminent Lost Cause hero, by focusing on him rather than Jefferson Davies, ex-Confederates could highlight the military rather than the far messier political and social dimensions of the war (. . .)”*⁶⁰

Therefor it was natural for Southerners and southern sympathizers to commemorate Lee, by erecting statues of him across the country. Furthermore, Gallagher alludes to the fact that to some Southerners following Confederate defeat, Lee was seen as a Christ like character, a savior with a pure heart. A religious symbol can help people connect with an unstable truth, which in turn permits them to come to terms with a traumatic event such as Confederate defeat.⁶¹ It was also believed at the time that Lee didn’t lose, it was the Union that won, but not because it had better generals than Lee, *“The army has been compelled to yield to overwhelming numbers and resources.”*⁶² Looking beneath the statue of Robert E. Lee, on the front of the monument, seven various types of soldiers are represented. The marker at the base of the monument describes them accordingly: *“The group represents various types who left civil occupations to join the Confederate Army.”*⁶³ From left to right they are said to represent: a professional man, a mechanic, an artist, a boy, a businessman, a farmer, and a youth. In other words, they are meant to show that every form of life picked up a rifle to fight for Virginia. The symbolism is not lost as they can almost be seen defending the reputation of Robert E. Lee, put atop on a pedestal. Which is also illustrated in the way they are placed, almost forming a crescent in front of him, as a last defense. However, the boy in the middle is sat atop a horse, maybe meant to represent the courage of the young generation, destined to carry forth the legacy of the Confederacy. An important thing to point out, is the fact that the boy on the horse, is carrying a flag. Even though it would be safe to assume that he would be carrying either the flag of the Confederacy or the battle flag of the Army of Northern Virginia, he is in fact carrying the state flag of Virginia (Today’s Commonwealth of Virginia) not to be confused with modern day West Virginia. Due to the fact that the monument was dedicated in 1917, when the lost cause was most prevalent, it would have been an easy way of com-

⁶⁰ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 2.

⁶¹ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 8.

⁶² McPherson, James M. *This Mighty Scourge: Perspectives on the Civil War*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Incorporated, 2007. Accessed September 30, 2024. ProQuest Ebook Central, p. 43.

⁶³ “State of Virginia Monument” consulted May 29th, 2024.

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/virginia/>
Description on the marker.

municating a narrative, if the boy had been sculpted to carry the Southern flag. The battle flag of the South was seen by the Confederate veterans as totems, under which they, their comrades, their fathers, and sons fell.

*"We have a deep and honorable respect for some things which we call our mementoes (. . .) They are many, and they are all sacred; but I will mention only three, each of which deserves our perpetual commemorations. Dixie, the battle flag, and the old soldier's grey jacket."*⁶⁴

– Brigadier General, Clement A. Evans, 1896.

In regard to the Confederate flag not being present on the monument, it is clear to see that there was a discussion on this exact topic in the correspondence between the Virginia Gettysburg Commission (VGC) and the Gettysburg National Park Commission (GNPC). On July 31st, 1910, the secretary of the VGC, Thomas Smith, wrote in a letter to one of the members of the GNPC, former Confederate General L.L. Lomax, that the VGC had discussed the presence of a Confederate flag on the monument. *"I am to-day authorized by the Virginia Gettysburg Commission to consent, in deference to the preference of the National Commission, to the substitute of the flag of Virginia, in the stead of the Confederate Flag."*⁶⁵ In this letter the VGC, relinquished its request for the presence of the Confederate flag on the monument, which might seem peculiar, especially given the fact that General Lomax, not only was a former Confederate general, but also a Virginian. It is possible that Lomax knew that there would be substantial criticism and controversy if the Confederate flag had been present on the final version of the monument. He also wrote in a letter to the Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, that *"The monument being a State erection and erected by State Laws, it would seem more appropriate to have the Virginia Flag as the one used to lead the troops in action."*⁶⁶ Since the Government took over the administration of the National Park, there was focus on honoring history *without praise and without censure*⁶⁷ This view was underlined in 1915 with the publication of *Regulations for the National Military Parks* issued by the War Department. As evident by the 4th paragraph in the 1915 regulations, monuments erected by a

⁶⁴ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 193.

⁶⁵ "Thomas Smith, Secretary VGC, to General L.L. Lomax, GNPC, July 31, 1910. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

⁶⁶ "General L.L. Lomax, GNPC to Secretary of War, Henry L. Stimson, July 1st, 1912. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

⁶⁷ "Gettysburg tells the story of more than a battle" consulted June 4th, 2024.

<https://penncapital-star.com/pa-history-legacy/gettysburg-tells-the-story-of-more-than-a-battle/>

State, were allowed to be inscribed with the name of the State and its coat of arms, thereby making it difficult to include the Confederate flag on the monuments.⁶⁸ However, as later monuments are concerned, this was in no way impossible.

The flag was, however, not the only source of discussion when it came to the Virginia State Monument. There was also a slight debacle over the proposed inscription on the monument. The VGC had originally in 1909 submitted the plans for the aforementioned equestrian statue of General Robert E. Lee. However, in 1912 the proposed inscription on the monument pointed to the fact that the soldiers of the state “*fought for the faith of their fathers.*”⁶⁹ This contrasted with what GNPC wanted on the monument as it did not conform to the idea of no praise, when it came to the soldiers of the Confederacy. This is due to the fact that the wording of *faith of their fathers* may refer to the *lost cause* of states rights as a cause for secession. This caused quite a crisis between the VGC and the GNPC. The chairman at the time John P. Nicolson, in a letter to committee member Lomax, doubted that the inscription would be approved by the War Department, referencing to the Law that there should be *no praise*. He also underlines that the inscription, despite perhaps being a fact, would open the monument up to adverse criticism, and moreover weaken the memorial tribute as a whole. Furthermore, he encloses two suggestions for Lomax to think over, and remarks that their simplicity would appeal to every soldier, North and South.⁷⁰ Following Nicolson’s letter, Lomax agrees with his colleague, and even outlines his own personal wish that the monument be free from inscription.⁷¹ Over the course of a few months of correspondence, even the New York Monument Commission, became involved and noted that they weren’t at all fond of the actions of the VGC, and even wrote “*Instead of conceded facts they persist in pushing to the front a sentiment unnecessary, and which tends to provoke discussion of antebellum subjects and which in my opinion should be allowed to become dormant.*”⁷² In this letter we see that the commission in New York, believe that the VGC are trying to push forth a narrative, such as the *lost cause* which they would rather see become dormant, or indeed fade away. This is an

⁶⁸ United States. War Department. *Regulations for the National Military Parks and the statutes under which they were organized and are administered.* (Washington, Govt. Print. Off., 1915), p. 8.

https://archive.org/details/regulationsfora00unit_1/page/8/mode/2up

⁶⁹ “State Memorials” consulted June 4th, 2024.

https://news.okstate.edu/articles/arts-sciences/2023/gettysburg_tells_the_story_of_more_than_a_battle.html

⁷⁰ “John P. Nicolson, Chairman Gettysburg National Park Commission GNPC to General L.L. Lomax, GNPC, February 7th, 1912. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

⁷¹ “General L.L. Lomax, GNPC to John P. Nicolson, Chairman GNPC, February 8th, 1912. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

⁷² “Major Charles A. Richardson, New York Monument Commission, Commissioner, to John P. Nicolson, Chairman GNPC, April 2nd, 1912. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

interesting insight in the internal politics between the different Monument Commissions at the time and proves that there was an air of mistrust between the South and North. The matter was ultimately settled due to the pressure from John Nicolson on the VGC, and they accepted his draft for the inscription on the final edition of the monument, *Virginia to her sons at Gettysburg*. An interesting note is that in a letter following the unveiling of the monument it was noted that the event attracted surprisingly little notice especially in the Northern newspapers at the time, and that it was anticipated that the ceremony would be make headline news all over the country. It was however believed that the ongoing First World War, “*had served to dwarf into insignificance practically all the evidences of previous wars and events.*”⁷³

North Carolina

Following the dedication of the Virginia State Monument in 1917, there was a rather long period before the next Confederate State monument was erected. That was until the dedication of the North Carolina State Monument in 1929. North Carolina’s importance at the Battle of Gettysburg, was monumental, as they made up the second largest contingent of soldiers in the Army of Northern Virginia during the battle. They made up the largest part of the casualties however, with a total of 40 percent of the total North Carolinians engaged becoming casualties, which also represented over one fourth of all the Confederate casualties during the three days of fighting.⁷⁴ The preparation for the monument began as early as 1926, highlighting the bureaucratic and artistic duration these monuments took before being able to be erected at Gettysburg.

⁷³ “W.B. Van Amringe, The Van-Amringe Granite Co., to Lt Col John P. Nicolson, Chairman, GNPC, June 12th, 1917. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

⁷⁴ “State of North Carolina Monument” Consulted June 4th, 2024.
<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/north-carolina/>



State of North Carolina Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

The monument itself depicts five Confederate soldiers charging a Union position. As was the case with the Virginia State Monument, these five soldiers are depictions of different types of soldiers. Kneeling at the front of the monument, is a wounded officer pointing his soldiers towards the enemy's position. With the emphasis being put on a wounded officer still coaxing his men forward, the perception is that of undying loyalty, and service even when faces with death. It is made clear that they are ordered to attack, as all of them are depicted in a forward moving position. In the rear is the color bearer, although it is not made evident what flag he is carrying, be it the Confederate or the North Carolinian. At the front are two rather younger looking soldiers, being encouraged by a veteran, appearing behind the two soldiers, on the other side of the monument.⁷⁵ On closer examination of the soldiers, they are depicted with vigor and dedication in their facial features, with less attention being paid to the other details of the figures. Which was also made clear as the goal of the monument in a letter from 1928, and that it was to express the energy and spirit of the soldiers of the state.⁷⁶ The sheer scale of the soldiers is also a contributing factor to the effect of the monument, as they stand towering at almost three meters, in solid bronze.

One of the more interesting aspects regarding the North Carolina monument, is that the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) played quite an important part in the legacy and his-

⁷⁵ "State of North Carolina Monument" Consulted June 4th, 2024.

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/north-carolina/>

⁷⁶ "State of North Carolina, The North Carolina Gettysburg Memorial Commission" Contract, March 31st, 1928. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

tory connected to the monument. The idea of a monument dedicated to the soldiers of North Carolina originated like many others in the heart and mind of the UDC. In 1913 a discussion came forward of a possible monument for South Carolina, and it was the North Carolinian department of the UDC, led by a Mrs. Williams, the spurred the movement for such a monument. There was a quite substantial political backing for such a movement, and in October that year, there were plans to begin a possible design. However, with the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, most of the support faded away, and the economic aspect due to the strain of war. Therefore, the project was abandoned, but not by the UDC. By the mid-1920s the economy had repaired enough, and the sense of patriotism and nostalgia for the Civil War had recovered. With the inauguration of the new governor of North Carolina in 1925, Angus W. McLean, who himself was the son of a Confederate veteran, and thereby had a natural alliance with the UDC, and in 1927 made a budget adjustment in the state for 50,000 dollars dedicated to a North Carolina State monument at Gettysburg. Not only were the plans now set in motion, but the UDC had five members out of a total of fifteen on the newly created North Carolina Gettysburg Memorial Commission.⁷⁷ However, the UDC were not done. As presented earlier when describing the monument itself, the symbolism is not that evident as could be imagined, that is because the most notable thing about the monument, is actually a granite slab placed beside it with a description matching the monument.

“1863, North Carolina. To the eternal glory of the North Carolina soldiers. Who on this battlefield displayed heroism unsurpassed sacrificing all in support of their cause. Their valorous deeds will be enshrined in the heart of men long after these transient memorials have crumbled into dust. (. . .) This tablet erected by the North Carolina Division United Daughters of the Confederacy.”⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Jerry Cross, Researcher to Jerry C. Cashion Supervisor Research Branch, October 7th, 1983. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

⁷⁸ “State of North Carolina Monument” Consulted June 4th, 2024.

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/north-carolina/>



Stone tablet dedicated to North Carolina at Gettysburg

The wording on this tablet, is bordering on the criminal, when considered in regard to the 1915 regulations, with regards to *no praise. The eternal glory, heroism unsurpassed sacrificing all in support of their cause*, these sentences seek to drive forward a narrative closely connected to the *lost cause*. However, it is possible that it was allowed only due to the fact that the wording is not the cause, but *their* cause. Thereby in some way keeping their forefathers' actions at a distance from the present-day Southerners. The superintendent at Gettysburg in 1929, also seemed to be against the inscription on the tablet, as it seemed to be contrary to the paragraphs of the regulations that monuments and markers be inscribed "*with suitable tablets, each bearing a brief historical legend, compiled without praise and without censure.*"⁷⁹ In the same letter he remarks that no other monument present at Gettysburg at the time, bore this sort of *eulogistic* inscription, and believed that it would provoke controversy. He even compares it with the original inscription the VGC wanted on their own State monument, before they were persuaded to change it. It has, however, been impossible to find any following letters connected to the inscription by the UDC, and since it was allowed, there must not have been any substantial criticism from the War Department. Whether or not there were any controversies, this monument and the inscription goes to show that the UDC, had tremendous power when it came to pushing a narrative.

Alabama

This narrative is also present on the next monument, dedicated to the soldiers of Alabama. The State of Alabama monument also came to be thanks to the work of the Alabama Division of the UDC. Being dedicated in 1933, it followed soon after the North Carolina monument. As early as autumn 1931, the UDC wrote the superintendent at Gettysburg, to

⁷⁹ Supt. Davis to Q.M.C., June 29th, 1929. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

make inquiries about the possibility of erecting a monument, stating that they had been accumulating funds for many years and were close to reaching the goal.⁸⁰ The superintendent, Davis, even suggests that the Alabama UDC and the North Carolina UDC, cooperate due to the fact that the NC UDC helped provide “*a splendid bronze monument to the North Carolina troops.*”⁸¹ This cooperation might also explain the similarities in the two monuments.



State of Alabama Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

Just as the North Carolina monument, there is a wounded soldier present, perhaps representing the lost war, or at least the lost battle in which he took part. At the front is his comrade, receiving ammunition from the wounded man, almost as if to symbolize the continuation of the struggle even in the face of defeat and death. Standing between the two men is the spirit of Alabama, grasping the wounded soldier, and pointing onwards. These symbols fit together as if to say, *we may have lost the war, but struggle is continuing in the future.* Which given the inherent racism and segregation in a state such as Alabama, in the 1960's become almost ominous. Beneath the figures is inscribed “*Your names are inscribed on fames immortal scroll.*” Which could serve as a simple way of remembering your ancestors. However, it is said with enormous pride, given the fact that at the top of the monument it says *ALABAMI-ANS!* As if to call the people to arms. The plans and inscription for the monument were ap-

⁸⁰ Mrs. Lewis (Irene) Sewall of the Alabama United Daughters of the Confederacy (AL UDC) to superintendent Gettysburg Battlefield, Nov 18th, 1931. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

⁸¹ Supt. E.E. Davis to Mrs. Lewis (Irene) Sewall Nov 27th, 1931. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

proved as early as August 1932, which compared to the Virginia and North Carolina monuments was rather quick.

Georgia

The erecting of state monuments became dormant from 1933 until the dedication of the State of Georgia monument in 1961. This monument was however nothing compared to the others as it was a very rushed process, which is evident in the name of the committee itself that was put together to oversee the construction and dedication of the monument. The Centennial Committee of Georgia, in contrast to the Monuments Commissions of the other state, had only one goal, which was to erect monuments to commemorate the 100th year since the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. This committee was entirely the UDC, as all the members were part of the UDC. However, it was not just at Gettysburg they intended to erect a monument but also at the battle of Antietam. The appointed chairman of the Centennial Committee, Mrs. Gertrude Kibler, wrote in July of 1961 to the GNMP superintendent Myers, that they intended to dedicate the monuments in September of the same year, which evidently isn't a lot of time to design a magnificent and eye-catching monument.⁸²



State of Georgia Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

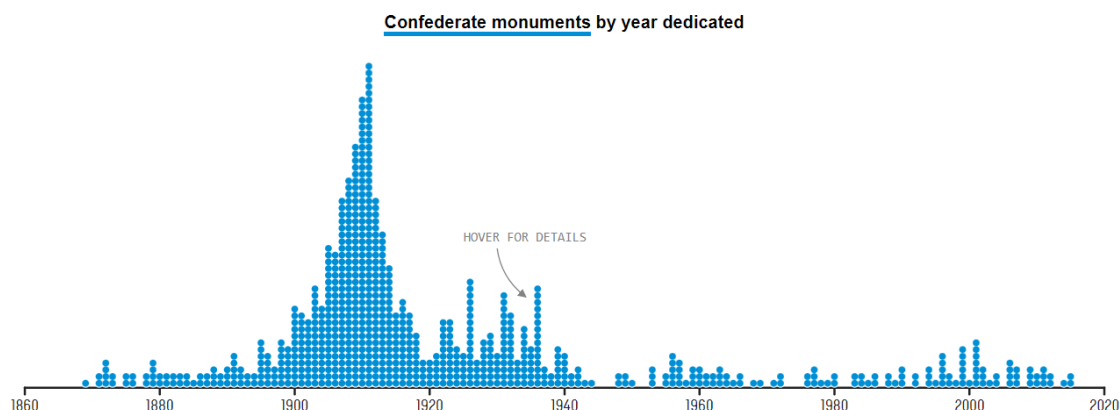
The monument itself is a simple pylon with *Georgia* written at the top. Constructed in Georgia blue granite, it stands at almost five meters, towering anyone who goes near it. It is

⁸² Mrs. Gertrude Kibler Chairman, Centennial Committee of Georgia to GNMP Supt. Myers July 9th, 1961. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

marked with the seal of Georgia, just as the Virginia State Monument, and thereby follows the 1915 regulations of being allowed to bear the seal of the state, due to it being a state monument. Which will later become evident is not the case of every monument. There is also a short inscription on the monument:

“Georgia, Confederate Soldiers, We sleep here in obedience; When duty called, we came; When country called, we died”

Keeping in mind that the UDC had the sole authority when it came to the monument at Gettysburg, it is likely that they decided on the inscription. By underlining the fact that the fallen soldiers of the Confederacy sleep in obedience, is to state that they did nothing wrong, which is made even clearer with the words, that they came when duty called, and they died for their country. Not that they died, trying to tear themselves away from their country, the United States, but that their country was in fact the Confederate States of America. This can be constructed as an attempt to wipe their forefathers slate clean, and in doing so whitewashing history to conform to a narrative that the CSA seceded not as a traitors or rebels, but as duty. One of the reasons for the dormant period following the monument in 1933, might have been due to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and the United States involvement in 1941. As described earlier, there was a break in state monuments following the First World War and would be remiss not to suggest that the Second World War would have a similar effect. During this time monuments dedicated to the World Wars were much more prevalent, and the Civil War took a backseat.



In this graph it is evident that immediately following the end of the First World War in 1918, there was a significant drop in Confederate monuments, and it is only in the mid to late 20's where we again experience a rise. This pattern repeats itself following the end of the Second World War in 1945, and rises just about the time, that the State monuments of not only Georgia, but also, Florida (1963), South Carolina (1963), Texas (1964), Arkansas (1966), Louisiana (1971) and Mississippi (1973) are erected at Gettysburg.⁸³ But what happened in this period in time, beside the memory of the Second World War fading further and further away. Primarily this period in the United States, is what is called the era of the Civil Rights Movement, which was a movement led by prominent civil rights advocates such as Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. to secure rights for the black population and disband the policies of segregation across the country.⁸⁴ Due to the growing racism in the South, it is possible that as a way of preserving the Southern history, groups such as the UDC, and state governors, decided to erect Confederate monuments, to glorify their past, whilst diminishing the present and future, due to Union victory, and perhaps even *call to arms*.

Florida

As mentioned before the next state monuments followed in close succession. Firstly, it the Florida State Monument, which in as early as 1959 had been set in motion with a commission, to investigate the possibility of erecting a monument at Gettysburg, as they found that the soldiers of Florida were not properly immortalized on the battlefield. Therefore, the state wanted to have a monument ready for dedication for the 100th year marking of the Battle of Gettysburg in July of 1963.⁸⁵ In a letter from the president of the Florida United Daughters of the Confederacy (FL UDC) Mrs. Herbert Vance to the governor of Florida Leroy Collins, she makes it evident that there would be quite a support not only in the press but in patriotic organizations. *"I feel sure this project will have the sympathetic support of the press in Florida as well as that of many patriotic organizations besides the UDC and SCV."*⁸⁶ The fact that the organizations are describes as patriotic, when they mean to push a narrative of righteous southern secession from the Union, is verging on a paradox. It is important to note that the SCV, Sons of Confederate Veterans, is the male equivalent of the UDC.

⁸³ "Confederate Statues Were Never Really About Preserving History" Graph "Confederate Monuments by year dedicated" Consulted June 4th, 2024.

<https://projects.fivethirtyeight.com/confederate-statues/>

⁸⁴ Erling Bjøl, Niels Bjerre-Poulsen. *USA's Historie*. (Gyldendal, 2021), p. 398-399.

⁸⁵ Paul W. Danahy Jr. Sasser & Danahy, to Honorable D.B. McKay, June 6th, 1959. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

⁸⁶ Tampa Tribune article, UDC Urges Gettysburg Memorial, June 7th, 1959. Consulted June 5th, 2024.



State of Florida Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

The Florida monument resembles the Georgia one when it comes to simplicity, however there is more focus on the inscription on this monument. Just as Georgia, the word Florida is written at the top with the state seal beneath it. Again, here we don't see any nods to the Confederate flag. This is perhaps due to the flag not exactly being subtle. It is on the contrary easier to be subtle, when it comes to the inscription. First, the inscription describes the regiments of Florida that took part in the battle, and how many men they lost. However, the following lines are the more interesting ones.

“Like all Floridians who participated in the Civil War, they fought with courage and devotion for the ideals in which they believed. By their noble example of bravery and endurance, they enable us to meet with confidence any sacrifice which confronts us as Americans.”

Once again, the inscription tries to distance the Floridians that fought at Gettysburg with present day Floridian, by referencing to *their* ideals. If this was to be the entire inscription it could be construed as being neutral. However, it is difficult to appear neutral, when describing the soldiers as *noble examples of bravery*. How noble is it to fight for a state which wants to preserve slavery, even with the hindsight of the Floridians in 1963, not very. The last part is a bit tricky to understand meaning of, and it can mean that Floridians are a tough and brave people, who will be ready to make sacrifices should the need arise. A more sinister view on

the verbiage could also be that with the present dangers against our way of life, just as in 1861, we must once again be ready to fight for what we believe.

South Carolina

Dedicated just one day before Florida, on July 2nd, 1963, was the South Caroline state monument. This monument was also meant to commemorate the centennial year of the battle. This monument somewhat differs from the previous, not only in design but also in symbolism.



State of South Carolina Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

When it comes to the design, there is a substantial amount of focus on the state and the symbols of the state. Firstly, it follows the trend of writing the name South Carolina at the top, with the seal beneath it, however, the seal is placed on top of a map of the state. On each end of the lower part of the monument, is the state symbol of the palmetto tree, which also figures in the state seal. All these different symbols are a contributing factor in garnering state pride in the monument. Once again it would seem that the monument conforms to the old regulations, when it comes to no praise, no censure, and no confederate flags. However, the praise and censure become evident in the inscription.

“South Carolina, The men of honor might forever know the responsibilities of freedom. Dedicated South Carolinians stood and were counted for their heritage and convictions. Abiding faith in the sacredness of States Rights provided their creed. Here many earned eternal glory.”

This is the first instance of *States Rights* being mentioned on a Confederate State monument at Gettysburg. The term *States Rights* become synonymous with the *lost cause* agenda and is an attempt from Confederate sympathizers to distance the southern secession from the issue of slavery. Gary Gallagher mentions *states rights* as the hallowed principles of the *Lost Cause*. This is one of the most prevalent forms of whitewashing the actions of the Confederate States when it comes to the Lost Cause.⁸⁷ The descendants of these soldiers wanted to believe, and make others believe that their ancestors fought for something more than just the continued bondage of others. The subject of *states rights* and *lost cause* was very prevalent in South Carolina, and in some regards, it had its own symbols there. Whereas in the rest of the South, Robert E. Lee, was a revered symbol of the *lost cause*, it was the former Lieutenant-General Wade Hampton, who rivaled Lee as the symbol of Christ.⁸⁸ Not only was he the highest ranking military officer from South Carolina during the war, he also become governor in the late 1870's, and helped restore the conservative *status quo* of the antebellum South Carolina.⁸⁹ In a speech delivered by Hampton in 1895, before an audience of SCV and UDC members, he recounted the proudest moment of his life was when federal troops left South Carolina in 1877, and that the rightful rulers of the state would resume their birthright, and reminded the audience that his struggle against reconstruction and federal occupation was for the conservative values of home rule and states rights.⁹⁰ With the verbiage of *Abiding faith in the sacredness of States Rights*, the text takes on an almost religious aspect. As the American sociologist Robert N. Bellah describes the use of religion in American politics: *“The answer is that the separation of church and state has not denied the political realm a religious di-*

⁸⁷ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 15.

⁸⁸ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 60.

⁸⁹ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 5.

⁹⁰ Gary W. Gallagher. *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*. (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000), Kindle Version. p. 75.

mentation.”⁹¹ Religion was and is seen as a way of garnering political backing and can be used to convert people to your political way of seeing.

Texas

The year following the dedication of the state monuments of Florida and South Carolina, the State of Texas, erected her own monument at Gettysburg in 1964. When taking a closer look at the correspondence between the assistant director from the Department of Interior, Jackson Price, and the Director of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee (TSHSC) George W. Hill, it is clear that there is a deep understanding between the two when it comes to the regulations regarding the monuments and their inscriptions at the National Military Parks. First and foremost, there is a mutual understanding that the monument should neither praise nor censure the deeds at Gettysburg, and that this rule has been generally effective.⁹²



State of Texas Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

Even though it is erected during the same period as the aforementioned South Carolina monument, the symbolism and inscription bears no real affiliation to the *lost cause* narrative, which might have been expected. It is however just a single slab of Texas red granite,

⁹¹ Robert N. Bellah. *Civil Religion in America*. Daedalus, Fall, 2005, Vol. 134, No. 4, 50 Years (Fall, 2005), pp. 40-55 (MIT Press, 2005), p. 42.

⁹² Jackson Price, Asst. Director, Department of Interior to George W. Hill, Director, TSHSC, March 11th, 1963. Consulted June 4th, 2024.

adorned by the lone star of Texas, which makes an appearance in both the seal and flag of the state. The reason for the simplistic look, might be so it is easy to replicate, as it is one of eleven identical monuments placed at battlefields across the United States, in relation to the Civil War. It is a rather beautiful symbolism in the fact that they are exactly identical, which goes to show that the state of Texas honored their soldiers equally on every battlefield. Most of the inscription focuses on the movement of the Texas soldiers at Gettysburg, and which exact regiments were involved. At the end of the inscription, it simply says *A memorial to the Texans who served the Confederacy*. Here there is no evidence of glorification, or justification, of what the soldiers did, but merely that they served the Confederacy. It is an interesting take on how to preserve the history of someone who might not have acted in the best interest of others, but more to simply acknowledge that this is a part of Texan history.

Arkansas

Continuing in the trend of rapid erecting of state monuments at Gettysburg comes the Arkansas State monument in 1966. This differs greatly from the aforementioned Texas monument.



The State of Arkansas Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

Just like most of the other monuments, the Arkansas monument, is made out of granite, although it differs from the fact that it is cornered by four aluminum blocks. The size of the monument is also rather noteworthy, standing at two and a half meters tall and six meters wide, in stark contrast to the monuments of Texas, Florida and Georgia.⁹³ Where the Arkansas monument truly stands out is the four aluminum blocks.

⁹³ "State of Arkansas Monument" Consulted June 5th, 2024.



Closeup of the aluminum blocks

Not only is the aluminum as a material on the monuments one of a kind, in this case due to the fact that Arkansas was a producer of a vast quantity of aluminum.⁹⁴ But also because of the engraved Confederate flags on the blocks, which is the first time a Confederate flag has appeared on a state monument at Gettysburg. Even though, it was earlier mentioned in reference to the Virginia State monument, that a state monument was allowed to carry the seal of said state, there does not seem to be a specific law prohibiting the Confederate flag. As early as in 1927, the North Carolina committee had requested the use of the Confederate flag on their monument, which wasn't denied by the Quartermaster Corps (Q.M.C.) of the War Department. *"There is no knowledge of any law which will prevent the use of the Confederate flag as a part of the design although the propriety of such representation might be questioned in some quarters."*⁹⁵ Even though there might not have been a law against the use of the Confederate flag on the monument, the symbolism is still very prevalent, with reference to Gary Gallaghers comment on the importance of the Confederate flag in the *lost cause*. If the wish had been to simply honor or commemorate the soldiers that fought and fell at Gettysburg, the same object could have been achieved without the use of the symbolism inherent in the Confederate flag. There seems to have been a more lax view on the design of the Arkansas monument by the GNMP superintendent George F. Emery, as he described the enclosed design as *"restrained and generally satisfactory."*⁹⁶ Also when it comes to the inscription on the monument there aren't any objections, except a small correction in the grammar, which

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/arkansas/>

⁹⁴ Bob Greenway, Cobb Memorials, Inc. to Supt. Wing, February 3rd, 1966. Consulted June 5th, 2024.

⁹⁵ U.S. Department of Interior File No. 680.47 Permission to use Confederate Flag on Monument, November 10-19th, 1927. Consulted June 5th, 2024.

⁹⁶ GNMP Superintendent George F. Emery to Regional Director, Northeast Region, February 9th, 1966. Consulted June 5th, 2024.

changed “*have made this forever hallowed ground*” to “*have made this ground forever hallowed.*”⁹⁷ This made the final inscription read as following:

“The grateful people of the State of Arkansas erect this memorial as an expression of their pride in the officers and men of the Third Arkansas Infantry Confederate States Army, who by their valor and their blood have made this ground forever hallowed.”

Whilst not being the most neutral wording, there isn’t any mention of *states rights* or *ideals*. The only thing about the inscription which may can be misconstrued it the emphasis on the pride felt by the grateful people of Arkansas in the officers and men. This could be read as a form of glorification of the Arkansas soldiers, and with the presence of the Confederate flags at each corner, it is not an unjust thought.

Louisiana

The Louisiana State monument of 1971 is again - in contrast to the last couple of monuments, due to it being more in line with the Alabama and North Carolina ones - with emphasis on figures rather than granite slabs, with inscriptions.



State of Louisiana Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

⁹⁷ Lemuel A. Garrison, Regional Director, Northeast Region to Supt. Emery, March 8th, 1966. Consulted June 5th, 2024.

The monument itself is entitled “Spirit Triumphant” which in and of itself is rather full of symbolism. Depicted on the monument is a fallen/wounded soldier, which again matches with the aforementioned monuments of Alabama and North Carolina. The soldier is supposed to be a wounded gunner of the New Orleans Washington Artillery, and whilst laying on the ground possibly dying, he is draping and clutching the Confederate flag to his heart, all the while the triumphant spirit above him holds aloft a flaming cannonball whilst sounding a trumpet. This depiction is full of symbolism. First of all, the title of the monument, *Spirit Triumphant*. This might symbolize the fact that whilst the young soldier is dying on the ground, the spirit of him, and not least the Confederacy, is still triumphant. Victory even in defeat, which correlates rather well with the post war narrative during the reconstruction, where the Southern mind and history won the war due to the *lost cause*. Just as with the Arkansas monument, we are once more presented with the Confederate flag, however, this time not as a still standing presence in the monument. This time it is to show what this brave young man died for, and even whilst dying, he still loves what he is ready to die for, and at the same time he shows the onlookers, what he is willing to die for. The artist behind the monument, Donald DeLue, described his intentions in a letter to the GNMP superintendent, George Emery. “*The purpose of this memorial is to pay tribute and to memorialize these brave men in a manner which is worthy of their sacrifice, respectfully and easily understood by onlookers of today, as well as the generations of the future.*”⁹⁸ Even though it can be easily understood, it can just as well be misunderstood in today’s political climate, fifty years after its dedication. When it comes to the interpretation of the onlookers it is indeed easy to see what is being shown on this monument, and even though it leaves little to the imagination, there is still an ounce of subjective interpretation. With the gift of hindsight in lieu of the controversies regarding monuments and Civil War history in recent years, a monument such as this can be easily misconstrued, as an unnecessary glorification of the causes and beliefs for which these soldiers gave their lives.

⁹⁸ Mr. Donald DeLue to Supt. GNMP George Emery, October 31st, 1968. Consulted June 5th, 2024.

Mississippi

State of Mississippi Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

The state monument of Mississippi was erected in 1973, only two years after the erection of the State of Louisiana Monument in 1971, which correlates given that there was a substantial amount of confederate monuments raised during the sixties and early seventies at Gettysburg. However, the idea of a monument dedicated to the soldiers of Mississippi, was brought forth as early as 1962, by the Commander in-Chief, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Ed C. Sturdivant, where he noted, wrongfully might I add, that he believed that the state of Mississippi was the only remaining confederate state with soldiers involved in the battle of Gettysburg, which didn't have an official state monument honoring those troops.⁹⁹ This was quickly corrected by the GNMP superintendent James B. Myers, to be false, and that seven more states besides Mississippi, weren't represented on the battlefield at that time. From the writing of the first letter in 1962, it wasn't until 1968 that an official commission was established to create and erect a monument at Gettysburg. The commission itself was appointed by the governor at the time, John Bell Williams, who was against the policy of desegregation and referred to it as anarchy.¹⁰⁰ It is therefore rather possible to assume that Williams, having chosen the commission members himself, had a rather substantial amount of influence over the

⁹⁹ Ed C. Sturdivant, Lt. Commander in-Chief, Sons of Confederate Veterans to GNMP Supt. Myers, April 27th, 1962. Consulted August 15th, 2024.

¹⁰⁰ Mississippi Encyclopedia, John Bell Williams, consulted September 23rd, 2024.
<https://mississippiencyclopedia.org/entries/john-bell-williams/>

final version of the monument and therein also the eventual symbolism inherent in the monument. The monument itself is in close resemblance to that of the state of Louisiana, not least due to the fact that it was made by the same sculptor, Donald DeLue, but also in what it symbolizes with the use of the figures atop. What we see are two soldiers, one lying down, and one standing tall above. The soldier on the ground is evidently a color-bearer, who has been wounded doing the violent fighting in which the Mississippi regiments were involved, on July 2nd, 1863. Above him is his comrade, stepping over the fallen soldier, and defending him with the club of his musket. If this was a monument made to symbolize the struggle of the Union soldiers during the battle of Gettysburg, it could be written off as patriotic. However, given the fact that this is a monument made in the late sixties, and erected in 1973, it is possible that there are different connotations. The fallen soldier clutching the banner of his confederate regiment with his dying breath, is full of symbolism, not only that he fell for what he saw as a just cause, but possibly also a message to the modern Mississippians, that although we lost the Civil War, there is still a struggle to be had. This is merely subjective suggestions, however, the fact that there is a soldier stepping over and standing above the fallen color-bearer, can be seen as the next generation stepping in to continue the struggle, that their forefathers fell for. As mentioned earlier, this is the period, although near the end of it, of the Civil rights movement in the United States, and therefore southern politicians and organizations such as the UDC, may have sought to glorify the struggle and the cause for which their fathers and grandfathers fought and died. When looking into the correspondence regarding the coming of the Mississippi monument, there isn't much evidence to substantiate the symbolism or controversy in the figures themselves. There is however when it comes to the inscription present on the monument, which on the finished monument reads:

*"On this ground our brave sires fought for their righteous cause; in glory they sleep who give to it their lives. To valor, they gave new dimensions of courage. To duty its noblest fulfillment. To posterity, the sacred heritage of honor."*¹⁰¹

This mention of the *cause* for which the Mississippi soldiers fought is just as earlier described in reference to the issue of states rights, and given the fact that it is preceded by the word *righteous* gives it an almost biblical, or at least holy meaning. In another sense of the word *righteous*, it can be used as a whitewashing of the legacy of these soldiers, and that their

¹⁰¹ "State of Mississippi Monument" Consulted September 25th, 2024.

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/confederate-state-monuments/mississippi/>

cause, with emphasis on their, was at least justified to them. This wording was also a cause for debate during the planning stages of the monument, and led to significant correspondence between the Mississippi Gettysburg Memorial Commission (MGMC) and the superintendent and his subordinates at Gettysburg National Military Park. At first when the inscription was proposed in a letter to the GNMP, the interpretive specialist in history at the park, Thomas Harrison, wrote to the acting superintendent that the MGMC should revise it to eliminate the word righteous, “*or else we will have to revise American History*”.¹⁰² The sheer verbiage of the letter and that it would be necessary to rewrite history to accommodate the false statement of righteous cause, is a testament to the fact that it is an attempt of the MGMC to sell a false narrative to the people, and to whitewash history. If a park historian in 1970, could see that the word righteous was wrong and that it would support the lost cause narrative, which was prevalent in the sixties and seventies, it isn’t difficult to imagine that modern Americans would find the monuments, and indeed the inscription offensive. However, it would be remised to not note the importance of the word *their*, as a deniable accountability for the modern Mississippians specifically, and for the Southerners generally. By using the word *their* before righteous cause, the MGMC shifts accountability towards the soldiers in the Civil War, and dismisses the cause as a bygone era or idea. This thinking is underlined in a letter from Judge Thomas Brady of the Supreme Court of Mississippi in October 1970. In the letter he firmly states that he personally would find it inconceivable that men would go into battle for a cause that they didn’t consider righteous, and even states that the Souths most bitter critics didn’t question that their cause wasn’t righteous.¹⁰³ Apparently it didn’t even occur to the MGMC that anyone would question their right to write what they wanted on the monument, given that it was their own flesh and blood who fought and died.¹⁰⁴ In this present day and age, it is clear that the secession crisis which occurred in the winter of 1860 and into the spring of 1861, was what we today would call a rebellion, and what the federal government of the United States at the time called it. However, Ed Sturdivant questioned the perceived motives that the postwar North has laid on the South.

¹⁰² Thomas Harrison, Supervisory Interpretive Specialist to Supt. Emery, October 2nd, 1970. Consulted September 18th, 2024.

¹⁰³ Judge Thomas Brady to Ed C. Sturdivant MGMC, October 21st, 1970. Consulted September 18th, 2024.

¹⁰⁴ Ed C. Sturdivant MGMC to Supt. Emery, December 12th, 1970. Consulted September 18th, 2024.

*“The words “rebellion” and “treason” have been hurled by emotionally-charged writers and speakers for over 100 years but it remains factual that no court of competent jurisdiction has ever made a decision to validate such charges”.*¹⁰⁵

To even question that the secession of the southern states weren't rebellion and treason, give us a clear indication of some of the thoughts present at the time, and given the fact that mister Sturdivant was a leading member of the MGMC, might be a clear tell-tale sign that there was a certain narrative that the commission were trying to promote and preserve. The reason for why the word righteous is present on the monument to this day, after it caused much controversy at the GNMP, might have some darker reasons than first led to presume. In November of 1970, a new superintendent was appointed at Gettysburg, and in contrast to the previous, this man was a Mississippian, Jerry L. Schober.¹⁰⁶ Given that the letters between Emery and Sturdivant teetered on aggressive, there is a clear shift in tone, when Sturdivant writes the new superintendent, and expresses his *“Genuine pleasure”* to know that a fellow Mississippian occupies the position.¹⁰⁷ It is not evident whether or not Schober accepted the proposed inscription featuring the word righteous due to his Mississippi roots, but the fact of the matter is, that in November of 1971, he wrote to the MGMC, that the final inscription should bear the word righteous, which is in stark contrast to the outspoken opinion of his own subordinate.¹⁰⁸

Tennessee

The state of Tennessee monument was the last of the confederate states monuments to be erected at Gettysburg, which was in 1982, quite a substantial period of time after the previous. However, the idea of a monument dedicated to the soldiers of Tennessee originated as early as 1969, once again at the height of both the Civil Rights Movement, and the Vietnam War. The way that Tennessee differs from the other monuments is that it wasn't funded by neither the state nor organizations such as the UDC, it was entirely funded by private and public investors. The reason for this is not just due to the fact that the state itself refused to fund a commission to erect a monument at Gettysburg, but it also played into the history of

¹⁰⁵ Ed C. Sturdivant MGMC to Supt. Emery, December 12th, 1970. Consulted September 18th, 2024.

¹⁰⁶ Harlan D. Unrau. *Administrative History: Gettysburg National Military Park and Cemetery, Pennsylvania*. (United States Department of the Interior/National Park Service, 1991), p. 291.

¹⁰⁷ Ed C. Sturdivant MGMC to Supt. Schober, July 14th, 1971. Consulted September 19th, 2024.

¹⁰⁸ Supt. Schober to Dr. Williams MGMC, November 4th, 1971. Consulted September 19th, 2024.

Tennessee, which has been known as the volunteer state, due to the people's willingness to volunteer in both the War of 1812 and the Mexican American War of 1848.¹⁰⁹



State of Tennessee Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

In contrast to the former monument, this one doesn't glorify its soldiers with the use of up-scaled bronze figures fighting or dying heroically. What it does depict, is the three different Tennessee regiments which took part in the Battle of Gettysburg symbolized with the use of three different soldiers marching in line. The symbolism at hand in the monument itself is with a significant focus on the state and the pride of said state, and not as much the soldiers. The base it stands atop is bearing the outline of Tennessee, and with it being sixteen feet long, it serves as a nod to the history of the country as a whole, given the fact that Tennessee is the 16th state of the Union.¹¹⁰ The only kind of symbolism inherent in the physical aspect of the monument is the last soldier looking back and calling the rest of the troops forward, which ones again serves as a reminder that this is the volunteer state, and is the first to answer the call to arms and is always at the front. In the inscription itself there is a stark contrast to the monument of Mississippi, which was filled with lost cause narrative. This time the focus is on the soldiers and not necessarily what they fought for, but just the sheer fact that they fought. "*Valor and courage were virtues of the three Tennessee regiments*".¹¹¹ These words

¹⁰⁹ "Volunteer State" The Tennessee Historical Society, Consulted July 15th, 2024.

<https://tennesseehistory.org/volunteer-state/>

¹¹⁰ "State of Tennessee Monument" Consulted August 17th, 2024.

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/tennessee/>

¹¹¹ "State of Tennessee Monument." Consulted August 17th, 2024.

<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/confederate-monuments/tennessee/>

don't see to unduly justify the soldiers, but just acknowledge that they took part in a massive battle, and they showed courage on the field of battle. Given the fact that the monument was raised in the early eighties where the country was mostly desegregated and the animosity and racism between black and white were on the decline, might also play a part in why the monument is basically neutral, and actually serves as a way of remembering the fallen, whilst not painting a glorified picture and selling a false narrative. The fact of the matter is that the commission behind the program in the late sixties and early seventies underlined the fact that the descendants of those who fought against each other in the Civil War, fought side by side in other wars, to protect the United States, and that those who cherish their state heritage should cherish their American heritage as a whole.¹¹² During the dedication of the monument in 1982, Regional Director James W. Coleman, Jr. pointed to the fact that throughout history, and indeed since biblical times, mankind has sought to commemorate the deeds and history of individuals, and that the dedication of the Tennessee monument, would complete the long history at Gettysburg of memorializing both the blue and the gray who fought and died.¹¹³

Maryland

The last monument dedicated to Confederate troops at Gettysburg, wasn't in fact by a former Confederate state, but it was dedicated to the native Marylanders that fought on both sides of the North and South divide during the Civil War. In 1994, many years after the Tennessee monument and far beyond the "monument boom" in the sixties and yearly seventies, it was decided that a monument dedicated to the soldiers of Maryland who fought against each other at Gettysburg, specifically at Culps Hill.¹¹⁴

¹¹² "The Confederate High Command International" Brochure Entitled "A Program to Erect the Tennessee Monument at GNMP, November 6th, 1968. Consulted August 19th, 2024.

¹¹³ "Dedication address by James Coleman", July 3rd, 1982. Consulted August 19th, 2024.

¹¹⁴ "A Monument to Maryland's Blue and Gray" Associated Press, Washington Post, November 17th, 1994. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1994/11/17/a-monument-to-marylands-blue-and-gray/f933d80a-8ba6-4f58-9c12-1fae141d7f4a/>



State of Maryland Monument at Gettysburg National Military Park

In contrast to the other monuments previously mentioned, this doesn't glorify death or a hopeless struggle. At first your eyes are drawn to the two figures holding each other, and the expressions on their faces. Both soldiers look worn out, and by hopping along, they also both appear as to be wounded. If the monument had been dedicated during the sixties it would be easy to imagine that the two soldiers were portraying the fighting southerner and the comradeship and hardship they shared. However, the two soldiers on this monument portrays a Northerner and a Southerner since Marylanders fought on both sides during the Battle of Gettysburg. As is evident by the inscription on a tablet in close proximity, more than three thousand Marylanders took part in the battle itself, and by showing two of them, wounded and helping each other, the focus is evidently on showing that they are both brothers, both Americans, sharing the same blood and history. The monument itself is a testament to the wish of reconciliation between the North and South divide.

*"Brother against brother would be their legacy, particularly on the slopes of Culp's Hill. This memorial symbolizes the aftermath of that battle and the war. Brothers again, Marylanders all. The State of Maryland proudly honors its sons who fought at Gettysburg in defense of the causes they held so dear."*¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ "State of Maryland Monument" Consulted September 2nd, 2024.
<https://gettysburg.stonesentinels.com/union-monuments/maryland/state-of-maryland/>

The striking part of the monument besides the fact that it represents two opposing soldiers, is that they are both unarmed, and there are no weapons present. It is simply two soldiers helping one another, and might symbolize that the struggle is finally over, and that there are no reasons any longer to hate each other. Author of the book *Marylanders at Gettysburg* said “*When the war was over, there was little animosity between veterans. They knew how hard each other had fought, but the war was over, and they went back to being Marylanders.*”¹¹⁶ Another reason for the neutrality in the monument, might also be due to the fact that during the late eighties and especially throughout the nineties, the public perception towards the South shifted dramatically, and historians burst the bubble of the lost cause narrative, and successfully underlined that the South succeeded to preserve slavery. From the seventies until the late eighties there wasn’t as much interest in the Civil War as there had been in the previous decades, however due to the publishing of novels such as *Killer Angels* (1974) and *Cold Mountain* (1997) and furthermore by Hollywood’s impact with movies like *Glory* (1989) and *Gettysburg* (1993). Especially *Glory* and *Gettysburg* heralded a return of Civil War movies, and the following fourteen years after *Glory* yielded movies such as the aforementioned *Gettysburg*, *Gods and Generals*, *Cold Mountain* and *Dances with Wolves*.¹¹⁷ With the successes of these publications the sparked interest in the Civil War also sparked a debate as to what is offensive especially regarding the Confederate flag still present in some state flags at the time and adorned on top or in front of government buildings in the South.¹¹⁸

To conclude on the analysis of the monuments at Gettysburg, it is evident that there are shifts in the way the monuments themselves are presented and what they symbolize. Whilst some try to justify the actions of their ancestors, others try to whitewash history and sell a false narrative, with close association to the lost cause. The time periods in which the monuments were erected also tells us a story about what they wanted to accomplish with them, and as most of them were dedicated in the sixties and seventies it is evident that they follow the movements in society and politics, especially in regards to the Civil Rights Movement, and the segregation inherent in the South specifically and the country as a whole.

¹¹⁶ “A Monument to Maryland’s Blue and Gray” Associated Press, Washington Post, November 17th, 1994. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/1994/11/17/a-monument-to-marylands-blue-and-gray/f933d80a-8ba6-4f58-9c12-1fae141d7f4a/>

¹¹⁷ Gary W. Gallagher. *Causes Won, Lost & Forgotten: How Hollywood and Popular Art Shape What We Know About The Civil War*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2008, p. 43.

¹¹⁸ Jonathan Daniel Wells. *A House Divided: The Civil War and Nineteenth-Century America*. New York, N.Y.: Routledge, 2012, p. 338-339.

Reckoning with the past

Monument-Crisis

In recent years, Confederate monuments have become focal points of intense controversy. Critics argue that these statues glorify a racist past and perpetuate harmful myths about the Civil War and its causes. They contend that public spaces should not honor figures who fought to uphold slavery and white supremacy. Supporters of the monuments claim they are important historical artifacts and symbols of Southern heritage, deserving of preservation.

The debate over Confederate monuments intersects with broader discussions about historical memory, public space, and racial justice. It raises questions about who gets to decide how history is remembered and whose stories are told. The movement to remove Confederate monuments gained momentum following high-profile incidents of racial violence and the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement. There are quite a number of incidents which can be considered the major sparks that ignited the powder keg and led to the rise of movements across the world, calling for racial equality and justice. One of these incidents is the Charleston shooting in 2015, where a young white man walked into an African Methodist church and shot nine people in South Carolina.¹¹⁹ The perpetrator, a 21 year old man, was an avid collector of Confederate memorabilia, and deeply interested in the Confederacy and its founding principles, as outlined earlier by Alexander Stephens. Within hours of his arrest, pictures of him posing with sunglasses, holding a gun, whilst the Confederate flag is in the background, began going viral across the internet, which led to calls for the Confederate flag to be removed from the state capitol in Columbia, South Carolina.¹²⁰ What is interesting in this scenario, is that when there was this massive call to remove Confederate flags, and the discussion heated around removing monuments too, it led to protestors and likewise counter-protestors to gather around said monuments. At these counter-protests, the Confederate flag was often prevalent, and was even sometimes accompanied by the Nazi swastika. This has had an extremely negative connotation for those people who were just there to make their voices and opinions heard in the matter that they didn't want the monuments removed, as it would mean erasing history, which at least as a historian can be accepted to a degree.

¹¹⁹ Karen, L. Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice*. (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2021), p. 149.

¹²⁰ Karen, L. Cox, *No Common Ground: Confederate Monuments and the Ongoing Fight for Racial Justice*. (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, 2021), p. 151.

The debate over Confederate monuments has led to numerous protests and riots, highlighting the deep divisions within American society. One of the most notable events was the 2017 Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville, Virginia. White supremacists and neo-Nazis gathered to oppose the removal of a Robert E. Lee statue, leading to violent clashes with counter-protesters. The fact that the removal of these monuments is openly opposed by white supremacist, neo-Nazis, and other extreme groups, seems to add fuel to the fire, that they must be removed quickly, so as to not act as a future shrine. Following the massacre, the Southern Poverty Law Center launched a program to catalog and map all Confederate place names and other symbols across the nation. Whilst not being comprehensive there was identified a total of 1,503, which include public schools named after Confederate generals, official Confederate holidays in six different states.¹²¹ This just goes to show that removing one Confederate flag in front of a state capitol isn't equal to erasing history, as some opponents would have it seem.

Legal and Social Responses

Responses to the monument controversies have varied widely. Some cities and states have taken decisive action to remove Confederate statues and rename public spaces. For example, New Orleans removed several prominent Confederate monuments in 2017, including statues of Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. These removals often involve lengthy legal battles and significant public debate. In other cases, state laws have been enacted to protect Confederate monuments, making it difficult to remove or alter them. These laws reflect the ongoing influence of Lost Cause ideology and the political power of heritage organizations. The debate extends to federal properties, such as military bases named after Confederate generals, with calls for renaming gaining traction in recent years. The controversy over Confederate monuments also intersects with broader efforts to address racial inequities and promote social justice. Activists argue that removing these monuments is a necessary step toward reckoning with America's history of slavery and racism. They advocate for replacing Confederate symbols with monuments that celebrate diversity and civil rights.

¹²¹ Southern Poverty Law Center. *Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy*. Montgomery, Alabama. 2017, p. 7.

The Future of Confederate Symbols

Many proponents of maintaining Confederate symbols argue that these monuments and flags represent Southern heritage, regional pride, and a historical narrative that is essential to the South's identity. They assert that removing Confederate symbols amounts to erasing history and dishonoring the ancestors who fought, often with valor, in the Civil War. For these individuals, the Confederate flag and monuments are viewed more as markers of cultural legacy than endorsements of slavery. This argument, however, is increasingly being challenged by historians and civil rights activists who emphasize that Confederate symbols were largely installed to promote white supremacy during segregation. They argue that these symbols celebrate a treasonous movement dedicated to maintaining a racial caste system, making it inappropriate for them to exist in public spaces without proper context.

The removal of Confederate symbols has sparked legal battles in several states, particularly where heritage protection laws exist. These laws, present in states like Georgia, Alabama, and Tennessee, restrict the removal or alteration of monuments without legislative approval. In some cases, efforts to remove monuments have led to lawsuits and protracted legal disputes, with defenders citing these laws as necessary to preserve history. Politically, the issue divides Americans along regional, racial, and ideological lines. Polling has shown that support for keeping Confederate symbols in public spaces is higher among Southern and rural populations, as well as among conservative voters. Conversely, younger, urban, and racially diverse groups tend to support removal. This division suggests that the future of Confederate symbols will likely remain contentious for years to come, with different regions and communities reaching varying conclusions. One potential compromise in the debate over Confederate symbols is recontextualization rather than outright removal. This approach involves adding plaques or educational materials that provide historical context for monuments, explaining the circumstances under which they were erected and the legacy of racism they represent. This strategy allows for the preservation of history while addressing the concerns of those who view the symbols as offensive. Museums or historical parks are also seen as alternative locations where these monuments can be placed, allowing for public learning without glorifying the Confederacy in everyday public life. Some cities have already adopted this strategy. For example, in Richmond, Virginia, some Confederate statues have been placed in museums rather than destroyed. This allows the public to engage with history in a way that confronts the uncomfortable truths of the past without celebrating them.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this thesis underscores the intricate and evolving discourse surrounding Confederate monuments at Gettysburg National Military Park, with broader implications for how historical memory is shaped, contested, and reinterpreted in American society. These monuments, once constructed to honor the memory of fallen Confederate soldiers, have now become focal points for debates that extend well beyond the battlefields of the Civil War. At the heart of this debate lies a complex intersection of historical narrative, public memory, and ongoing struggles over race, identity, and the legacy of the Confederacy.

Through an in-depth analysis of the various Confederate state monuments at Gettysburg, this study reveals that these monuments are far from neutral commemorative objects. Instead, they reflect the shifting political and social currents of their time. The erection of these monuments, spanning from the early 20th century to the late 20th century, often corresponded with key periods of social upheaval, particularly the Jim Crow era and the Civil Rights Movement. During these periods, monuments served not only as symbols of remembrance but also as tools for reinforcing a particular narrative about the past—a narrative closely tied to the ideology of the Lost Cause. The Lost Cause, as this study has shown, represents a revisionist version of history that sought to sanitize the Confederacy's motivations and actions during the Civil War. Central to this narrative is the assertion that the South's struggle was not primarily about the preservation of slavery but about "states' rights" and a defense of Southern "honor" and "heritage." This thesis demonstrates that the inscriptions, symbolism, and timing of these monuments often reflected this ideological stance. For instance, monuments such as those from North Carolina and Alabama emphasize the valor and sacrifice of Confederate soldiers, while deliberately downplaying or omitting the centrality of slavery to the Confederate cause. These inscriptions evoke the "righteousness" of the Southern cause, suggesting that the men who fought and died did so for noble and moral reasons, thus perpetuating the myth of the Lost Cause.

In recent years, the public has increasingly questioned these monuments and their place in public spaces. The resurgence of movements for racial equality and justice, particularly following incidents like the Charleston church shooting in 2015, has led to renewed scrutiny of Confederate symbols. Critics argue that these monuments glorify a past rooted in racism and white supremacy, offering a sanitized version of history that undermines efforts to reckon with the nation's legacy of slavery and racial oppression. Monuments, they contend,

are not simply artifacts of history; they are symbols of power and memory that have real impacts on how society understands its past and its future. On the other hand, supporters of Confederate monuments often frame their arguments around the idea of heritage and tradition, viewing the monuments as essential markers of Southern identity. They argue that removing or altering these monuments would be tantamount to erasing history. This debate is emblematic of broader cultural wars over how America should remember its history—whether it should be celebrated without critique or reexamined through a lens that acknowledges the violence and injustice intertwined with it.

This thesis has further explored the role of organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) in promoting and shaping public memory. The UDC played a central role in constructing and maintaining the Lost Cause narrative, particularly through its efforts to fund and erect monuments across the South and even on battlefields like Gettysburg. By embedding the ideals of the Lost Cause into public spaces through these monuments, the UDC and similar groups were able to perpetuate a vision of history that downplayed the Confederacy's defense of slavery, while elevating notions of Southern honor and valor. The extensive involvement of these groups in the design, funding, and inscription of monuments reveals that the commemoration of the Confederacy was as much about shaping the future as it was about remembering the past. It was an intentional effort to control how the Civil War would be remembered by future generations. The timing of the erection of many Confederate monuments at Gettysburg—particularly during the 1960s and 1970s—coincided with the height of the Civil Rights Movement, adding further layers of complexity to their meaning. As Southern states were embroiled in battles over segregation, voting rights, and civil rights for African Americans, Confederate monuments became a means of reaffirming a particular vision of Southern history and identity. By placing these monuments on such hallowed ground as Gettysburg, proponents of the Lost Cause were able to embed their version of history into the national consciousness, thus countering the emerging narratives of racial justice and equality. The resurgence of Confederate symbolism during this period can be seen not just as a commemoration of the past but as a reactionary response to the demands for civil rights and racial integration.

As Confederate monuments have come under increasing scrutiny, various solutions have been proposed for addressing their controversial legacy. Some argue for their removal, seeing them as relics of a racist past that have no place in contemporary public spaces. Others advocate for their preservation but with added context, such as explanatory plaques or

moving them to museums, where they can be viewed in a setting that allows for critical engagement with history. This approach seeks to balance the need to confront the nation's troubled past while preserving historical artifacts for future generations to study and understand. However, the debate over Confederate monuments is not merely a question of historical interpretation. It is also a debate about power, memory, and who has the authority to decide how history is presented in public spaces. The removal of these monuments is seen by some as a necessary step toward racial justice, while others view it as an attack on their cultural heritage. This tension reflects deeper divisions within American society, divisions that have their roots in the unresolved legacies of the Civil War and Reconstruction. The struggle over Confederate monuments is, in many ways, a struggle over how America defines itself—whether as a nation that confronts its past honestly or one that clings to a sanitized version of history. Looking to the future, the fate of Confederate monuments remains uncertain. Legal battles over their removal continue in many states, and the national conversation about their place in society shows no signs of abating. As this thesis has demonstrated, these monuments are not static relics of history; they are dynamic symbols that continue to shape public discourse and influence the way Americans understand their past. The decisions made about these monuments—whether to remove, preserve, or recontextualize them—will have profound implications for how future generations engage with the legacy of the Civil War and the Confederacy.

In conclusion, the Confederate monuments at Gettysburg stand at the crossroads of history, memory, and identity. They are powerful symbols that tell us as much about the time periods in which they were erected as they do about the events they commemorate. Through the lens of these monuments, we see how history is not a fixed narrative but a constantly evolving story, shaped by the values, priorities, and struggles of each generation. As the debate over Confederate symbols continues to unfold, it is clear that the conversation surrounding these monuments is not just about the past—it is about how we, as a society, choose to remember and learn from that past in order to build a more just and inclusive future. The enduring legacy of these monuments, and the debates they inspire, serve as a reminder that history is never truly settled. It is continually being reinterpreted and redefined, reflecting the ongoing tensions between remembrance, justice, and the quest for historical truth.

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