

## Presentation to Commission Reviewing Baltimore's Public Confederate Monuments

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November 20, 2015  
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*"Every monument built in memory of the Confederacy will perpetuate that which it would be more creditable in the actors to desire to have forgotten." — Frederick Douglass (of Baltimore), 12/1/1870.*

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## Introduction

I'm impressed with what I understand to be your process for dealing with Baltimore's Confederate public history landscape. You seem able and qualified. As well, the process your mayor has put in place provides people with a route to voice their views. Eli Pousson's research and paper also impressed me. The signs placed around each monument are an effective part of



Sign in front of Taney monument

the process. Their very existence implies that the city may be removing its stamp of approval that the monuments' locations in prominent places otherwise suggest. Thus the signs themselves speak to the need of some residents to *de*-legitimize the monuments and the cause they extol. This may curb vandalism while providing an important alternative outlet — your hearings — for citizens to voice their opposition to the monuments.

## I. History Education In The United States

The education most K-12 schools provide to our citizens continues to lack substance, even competence, in U.S. history. The introduction to *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong* makes this point, with footnotes. One reason is poor teacher preparation. Too many high school teachers in history/social studies did not major in history, sociology, political science, or any other field related to the American past. One teacher in six never took a single college course in history! This means they cannot get students to *do* history — unearthing and evaluating primary sources, coming to conclusions, etc. Instead, they simply rely on textbooks.

Unfortunately, as three of my recent articles show (see Bibliography, below), these textbooks are sadly lacking in their treatment of the Confederacy. Not one quotes any of the Southern states' declarations of secession as to why they seceded. Instead, they mystify the Confederate cause, making it mainly for states' rights. Actually the states seceded for slavery and said nothing positive about states' rights. Partly these poor textbooks result from the fact that the famous historians listed as their authors mostly did not write them.<sup>1</sup>

These errors did not result from accident. My first full-time teaching experience, at Tougaloo College, a historically black institution in Mississippi, introduced me to "history as weapon." From deliberately inaccurate high school textbooks, my students had learned terrible lies about Reconstruction. Mississippi had passed its law requiring Mississippi history twice — in middle school and high school — as part of its response to *Brown v. Bd.* after 1954. The course was specifically designed to reinforce "our Southern way of life."

When I moved to the University of Vermont, I found that inaccurate history was a national problem. My first-year "UVM" students knew astounding "facts" about our past that never happened and did not know all kinds of important things that *did* happen. Thus I learned that Mississippi merely exemplified the problem of biased inaccurate history in a more exaggerated form, as it did some other national problems. This realization persuaded me to research and write *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*, a rejoinder to some of the most egregious errors in U.S. history books. *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* exposes similar errors, again usually deliberate, in monuments, museums, and historical markers.

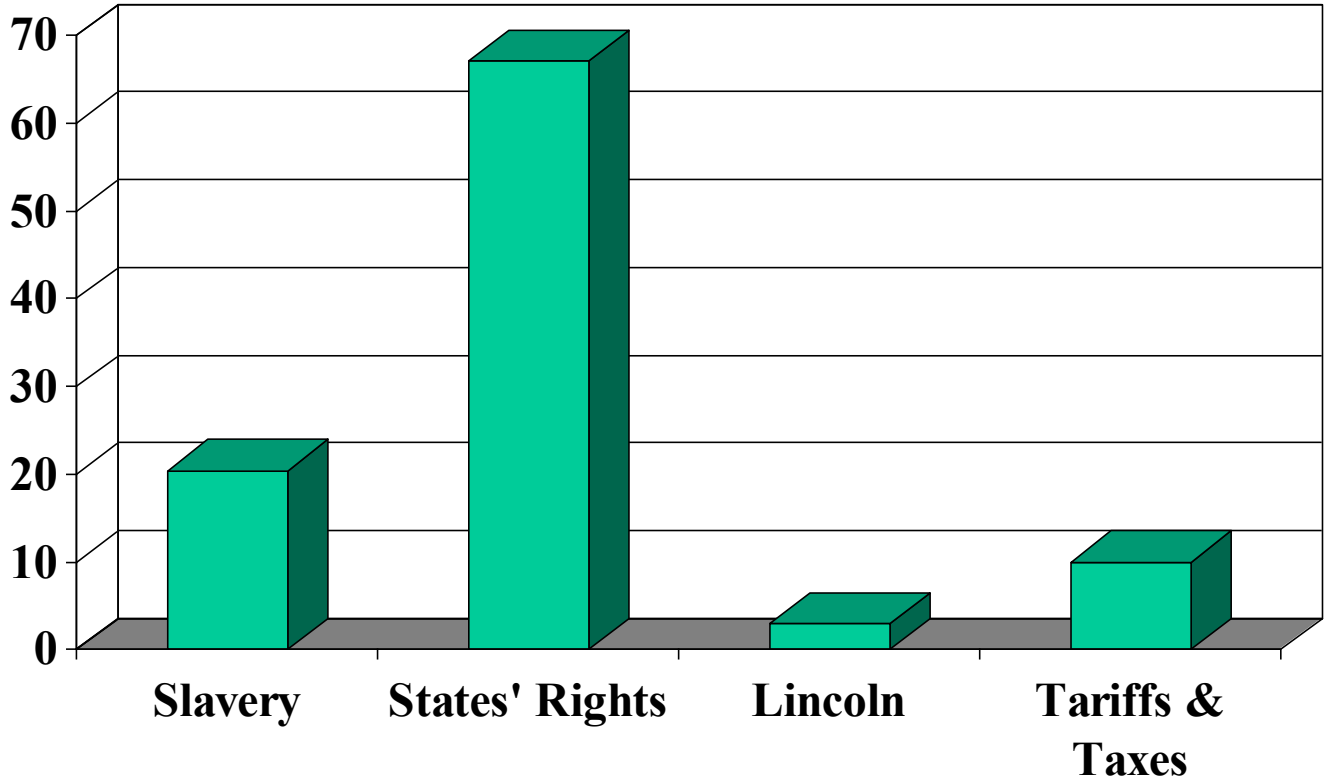
For the last five years, I have noted the sesquicentennial of the Civil War by asking audiences all across the U.S. why it occurred. Of course, they correctly reply, "Because the South seceded," whereupon I ask them, "Why did the South secede?" Eventually they give four alternatives:

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<sup>1</sup>My exposure of this fraud led to a front-page *New York Times* story, "Schoolbooks Are Given F's in Originality," by Diana Jean Schemo, 7/13/2006, [nytimes.com/2006/07/13/books/13textbook.html?fta=y&\\_r=0](http://nytimes.com/2006/07/13/books/13textbook.html?fta=y&_r=0).

- for Slavery
- for States' Rights
- due to the Election of Lincoln
- because of issues about Tariffs and Taxes.

Then we vote: audience members agree that they will not abstain nor vote more than once.



% of Respondents Saying Why the South Seceded

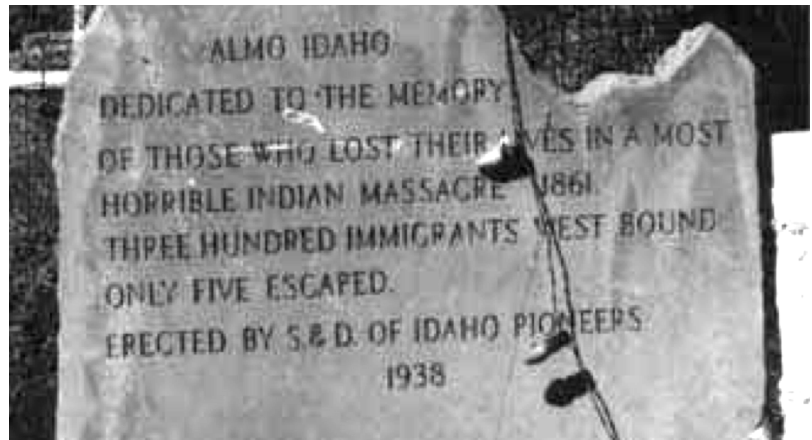
Across the U.S., here are the results. These respondents come from central Florida and North Dakota, southern California and Cuyahoga County, Ohio. Predominantly African American audiences, such as the teaching staff of the Memphis Public Schools, answer as badly as predominantly white audiences. College students answer the same; so do museum members in their 60s and 70s. Especially disheartening are the results from K-12 teachers, since their charges will be running the country fifty years from now, having absorbed this bad information in their youth.

Because of your expertise, and because one of you actually handed out and quoted from the South Carolina and Mississippi declarations of "the immediate causes" for secession, I know that you do not have to be persuaded that the Confederate cause amounted to treason on behalf of slavery. I participated in two extensive discussions in Rockville about their Confederate monument. The Rockville discussants, despite their relative lack of historical expertise, also agreed that the Confederate states seceded for slavery. Even those who argued for leaving the monument where it is were careful *not* to claim that the Southern states seceded for states' rights or about tariffs and taxes. But this is new information to most American citizens.

In addition to mystifying secession, neo-Confederates make Robert E. Lee saintly, claim that thousands of African American troops fought for the Confederacy (so the war *couldn't* have been about slavery), and, just before your October 29 hearing, argued that Abraham Lincoln, not Henry Wirz, was responsible for the murderous conditions at Andersonville Prison in Georgia. None of those claims relies on fact either. (Unfortunately, an important web resource on the Civil War created by Baltimore's Pratt Free Library (see Bibliography) repeats the fictional claim about "Afro-Confederates.")

## II. Historiography

To understand why Americans get the Confederacy so wrong, we must look at *when* they started to do so. Every history textbook, monument, museum, or historical marker is a tale of two eras: what it's about and when it went up. A historical marker from Almo, Idaho, makes that point vividly.

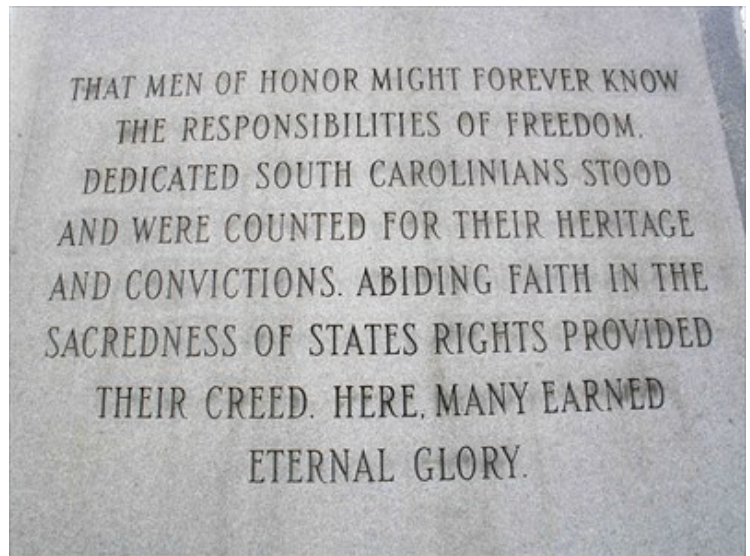


This marker turns out to represent only one era — 1938 — because in 1861 nothing much happened in southern Idaho. Three hundred emigrants in their wagon train were *not* massacred; 30 were not; 3 were not; it never happened at all. I use this stone as a teaching tool to introduce audiences to "historiography" — the "study of the writing of history." Historiography instructs us to ask, "Who wrote this?" "Who *didn't* write it?" "When was it written?" "With what audience and what purpose in mind?" Almo's beautiful marker should go to a museum. There display labels might help visitors see that during the Nadir of race relations (1890-1940, as discussed below), whites — "Sons and Daughters of Idaho Pioneers" — would believe a fantastic tale about "savage" Indians with no historical justification whatever.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (NY: Simon and Schuster, 2007), 75-79, shows that this massacre did not and could not have occurred and cites the relevant research.

South Carolina's monument at Gettysburg provides a second example. Erected in 1965, it does get the date right about the Battle of Gettysburg. But that's about all. As noted earlier, South Carolina's "Declaration of



the Immediate Causes" shows how *opposition* to states' rights provided their soldiers' creed at Gettysburg. In 1965, however, South Carolina's white leadership *did* favor states' rights — in opposition to U.S. court decisions ending segregated schools and requiring registering voters without regard to race. Appendix A is my essay about this monument from *Lies Across America*.

### III. The Confederacy In Maryland, 1862-64.

Contrary to the laudatory and triumphal sentiments expressed by Baltimore's three large Confederate monuments and Montgomery County's monument, when Confederate forces came through Maryland, they were not viewed fondly. The Rockville monument tells viewers what to think:

To our heroes of Montgomery Co. Maryland  
That we through life may not forget to love the Thin Gray Line

In fact, the Thin Grey Line came through Montgomery County and adjoining Frederick County at least three times, en route to Antietam, Gettysburg, and Washington. Lee's army expected to find recruits and help with food, clothing, and information. This did not happen.

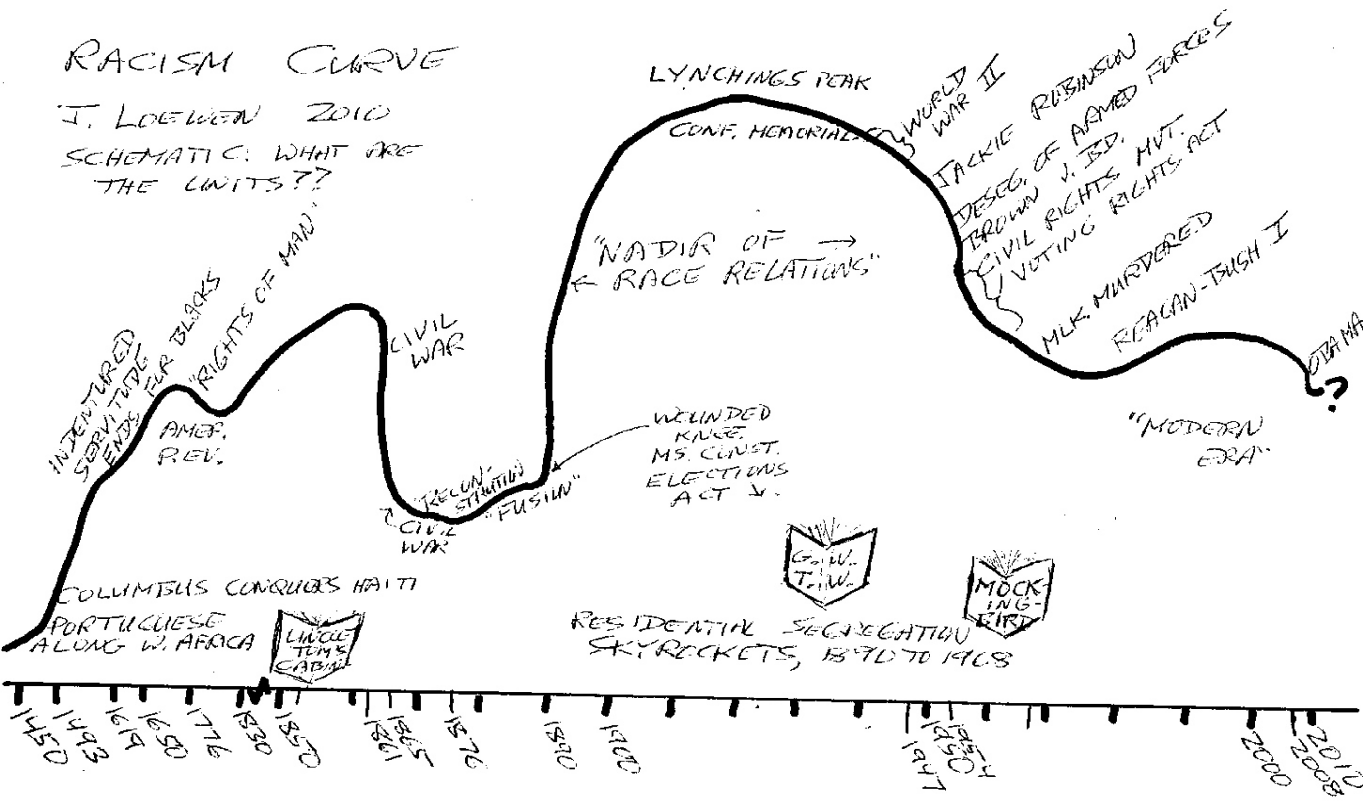
The first time, Maryland residents greeted *Union* soldiers "as liberators" when they came through on the way to Antietam, according to historian William F. Howard.<sup>3</sup> The second time, Lee's Confederates captured every African American they encountered, including more than a hundred in the vicinity of the Rockville monument, and sent them in shackles to Virginia. The last time, Confederate cavalry leader Jubal Early demanded and got \$300,000 from the leading merchants of Frederick, lest he burn their town, a sum equal to at least \$5,000,000 today. During most of the war, the Maryland legislature met in Frederick, because it was securely Unionist, while Annapolis was not.

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<sup>3</sup>William F. Howard, "Lee's Lost Orders," *Civil War Quarterly*, 9 (6/87), 27.

#### IV. The Nadir Of Race Relations, 1890 — 1940

After the Civil War, as we shall see, sentiments changed. Most of Maryland, including Frederick, Montgomery county, and Baltimore, went neo-Confederate. During the Nadir of race relations, 1890 — 1940, so did the entire United States, to a degree. In this period, lynchings rose to their all-time high. Sundown towns — communities that were (some still are) all white on purpose — sprang up across the North. African Americans were thrown out of all kinds of occupations where they had enjoyed some success, from organized baseball to postal carrier.



Racism Curve. Admittedly impressionistic; no units on the vertical axis; perhaps useful, nevertheless.

Historians date the beginning of the Nadir of race relations to 1890 nationally because late in that year, three terrible events took place. In South Dakota, what used to be called the Battle of Wounded Knee but is now known more accurately as the Massacre of Wounded Knee took the lives of more than 200 already-surrendered Dakota Indians. Native Americans sank into their Nadir culturally and even demographically.

Second, white Democrats in Mississippi forced through a new state constitution that removed African Americans from citizenship, in defiance of the 14th and 15th Amendments. The U.S. did nothing. Seeing this, every other Southern state and states as far away as Oklahoma followed suit by 1907.

Third, Maryland Senator Gorman led Democrats in the U.S. Senate to defeat the "Federal Election Bill," more or less by a single vote. After their victory, Democrats tried to tar Republicans as "nigger lovers."

Republicans for the first time *denied* the charge and moved on to new issues, leaving African Americans with no allies.

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These illustrations show the three underlying causes of the Nadir of race relations. Continued warfare against American Indians sapped our idealism. After all, it's hard to claim that people should have equal rights without regard to race while simultaneously taking American Indian land because "we" (non-Indians) had found gold on it, in Colorado and South Dakota. Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe persisted in voting Democratic, prompting Republicans to become anti-immigrant and pro-WASP. It's hard to maintain that people should have equal rights without regard to race while simultaneously considering non-WASP immigrants inferior. The European ideology known as imperialism washed over us, prompting our war against the Philippines. "Our little brown brothers aren't ready for Democracy," Republicans suggested to those who asked why we were attacking the Filipino democracy. All these strands underlay the collapse of anti-racist idealism in the U.S.

After 1890, neo-Confederates won the Civil War in at least three ways. First, they won it on the ground: most Confederate monuments went up between 1890 and 1940. Second, neo-Confederates renamed the conflict the "War Between the States." Surprisingly, Cindy Kelly's book on Baltimore's monuments, *Outdoor Sculpture in Baltimore*, uses the term in 2011!<sup>4</sup> It is a complete anachronism. No one called it the "War Between the States" while it was going on. Then it was called, of course, the "Civil War," or the "Great Rebellion" or "War of the Rebellion," hence "Rebel." Third, as we noted, neo-Confederates stood history on its head about the reasons for secession.

The Nadir has misrepresented our history in other ways as well. One would expect distortion, since it was a period of such intense white supremacy. During the Nadir, historians painted a distorted and glorified

<sup>4</sup>(Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. P., 2011). Such usage today is usually an attempt to curry favor with neo-Confederates.



portrait of Christopher Columbus. "We went west and subdued the vacant land, and so did he," was the mindset. Columbus Day became a national holiday late in the Nadir. In these decades, textbook authors did not mention that he started the trans-Atlantic slave trade from west to east (Native Americans, to Spain and the Canary



Alexandria's Confederate monument, put up *before* the Nadir, shows a pensive South, perhaps contemplating the cost of attempted secession. Richmond's Confederate monument, put up *during* the Nadir, shows a triumphant South, secure in the process of securing white supremacy.

Islands). Nor did they tell that his son started it from east (Africa) to west (the West Indies and North and South America). Historians vilified U.S. Grant during the Nadir as one of our worst presidents. His attempts to deal with the two most pressing problems facing the nation — black/white race relations and relations with Native Americans — now won him no credit. History written during the Nadir also made the Nadir itself invisible. Today, only one American in a hundred has heard of it.

#### **V. The Nadir Of Race Relations In Maryland, 1866 — 1940**

In most states, the Nadir of race relations set in around 1890. During Reconstruction in the South, African Americans had voted reasonably freely, despite violent opposition by some white Democrats. The combination of most black voters plus a sizable minority of white voters enabled Republicans to contest and usually win statewide elections across the South. In most of the North, which did not go through political Reconstruction of course, Republicans nevertheless enjoyed political ascendancy while arguing for an end to legal discrimination against African Americans. We might call that era "ideological Reconstruction" in the North.

Maryland avoided both forms of Reconstruction. Of course, not having seceded, Maryland never went through political Reconstruction. It did vote down slavery in 1864, but racist Gov. Thomas Swann, in office



Like most monuments that ostensibly mark the Spanish American War, Baltimore's carries the dates of our war against the Philippines, 1898-1902, which is what it's really about. The Spanish American War was allegedly anti-imperialist, while our war against the Philippines was directly imperialist. Baltimore's monument needs a historical marker to explain these wrong dates and tell why Americans didn't want to say "Philippines War."

from January of 1866 to January 1869, embarked on a campaign of "Redemption" and "restoring to Maryland a white man's government. His strategy was built on the platform of entrenching white power and displacing independent African Americans."<sup>5</sup> Since overt proponents of white supremacy regained control so quickly in Maryland, many former Confederates relocated to Maryland to avoid experiencing Reconstruction in their formerly Confederate home states. After the Civil War, Maryland did not really admit African Americans to equal citizenship; indeed, it did not ratify the 14th Amendment — the equal rights amendment — until 1959!

Unlike most other states, then, which waited until after 1890 to celebrate the Confederacy, politicians in Maryland began to argue for white supremacy on the landscape as well as in the state legal codes almost as soon as the Civil War ended. They began by putting up statues to Roger Taney, whose notorious *Dred Scott* decision, as well as his open hatred of abolitionists and of President Lincoln, made him *non grata* to the anti-racist thinking of Reconstruction. As I argue in my separate paper on Taney (Appendix C), Maryland Democrats memorialized Taney to celebrate *Dred Scott* and thus show opposition to racial justice.

Opposition to racial justice was tied to the erection of all five Confederate monuments in Baltimore, including that to Severn Teackle Wallis. In 1861, Wallis was elected to the Maryland House, where he became a leader of the pro-Confederate faction. He denounced Maryland's governor for not assembling the legislature

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<sup>5</sup>"Thomas Swann," in *Wikipedia*, accessed 11/2015.

or a convention to consider secession. His apologist, Bernard Steiner, admits Wallis “was regarded as the forefront of the movement to take Maryland out of the Union.” Eventually the U.S. jailed him and a dozen other like-minded legislators on the eve of a possible secession vote in September, 1861. I believe further research will show that these “achievements” prompted his remembrance on the landscape.<sup>6</sup> All five monuments thus are additional examples of “history as weapon.” Even the last one, the Lee/Jackson Monument, is a product of the Nadir. Its 1948 dedication is artifactual, delayed by materials shortages during World War II.<sup>7</sup>

During the Nadir, like other Northern states, Maryland got its fair share of sundown towns, including all of Garrett County, islands in the Chesapeake, suburbs of D.C., and various other towns. In some towns whites held mini-riots to drive out their small black communities. Some places, including Oakland and Tilghman Island, put up signs saying something like “Nigger / Don't Let The Sun Go Down On You In \_\_\_\_\_.”

Within Baltimore, the Democratic city council passed an apartheid ordinance (later passed by Louisville, St. Louis, Atlanta, et al.) requiring residential racial segregation. In *Buchanan v. Warley* in 1917, the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed these ordinances — almost the only positive decision it rendered on racial discrimination between 1890 and the 1930s. Ironically, they did so on the basis that a *white* right was infringed upon: the right of white sellers to sell their home for more money to a black buyer than its market value in the white community. Despite this nevertheless constructive decision, Baltimore, like other cities across the nation, became much more residentially segregated between 1890 and 1940. Sociologists use D, the Index of Dissimilarity, to measure residential segregation, partly because it is so clear intuitively. When  $D = 0$ , every block in the city has exactly the same racial composition. When  $D = 100$ , pure apartheid reigns: not one black lives on any white block, and not one white lives on any black block. Baltimore's D grew from less than 50 (somewhat integrated) in 1890 to 90.1 (near-apartheid) by 1940.<sup>8</sup>

During all these years, even during and after the Civil Rights Movement, Baltimore's Confederate monuments furnished the city with a white supremacist landscape that complemented its intensified residential segregation. Sited in prominent places, they signaled to everyone that the city venerated Confederate “heroes” and the Confederate cause. They continue to do so.

## VI. The Modern Era

Now we are in a new era, post-Civil Rights and post-Dylann Storm Roof. In this era, across the United States, Nadir monuments to the Confederacy are being questioned, challenged, removed to museums, and even destroyed. In South Carolina, after Roof's murderous rampage, Gov. Haley proposed removing the Confederate flag from its place of honor in front of the Capitol. She got one of the reasons for removal right: the flag offended nonwhites, especially African Americans. The Baltimore monuments similarly celebrate a movement, an ideology, an armed revolt, and ultimately a government whose stated reason for being was to keep African Americans in chains.

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<sup>6</sup>See S. Teackle Wallis, *Correspondence between S. Teackle Wallis, esq., of Baltimore, and the Hon. John Sherman, of the U. S. Senate...* (Baltimore: 1863), where he carefully avoids claiming he was for the Union or opposed secession. Also see Bernard C. Steiner, “Severn Teackle Wallis: First Paper,” *Sewanee Review*, 15 #1 (1/1907), 65-72. Steiner, writing in 1907 when secession is a dead cause, avers that Wallis, while pro-Confederate and an open advocate at times of disunion, was not pro-secession!

<sup>7</sup>As well, the racism of the Nadir only *began* to turn around in 1940. Note the overt hostility Jackie Robinson faced in 1947 as he struggled to become the first black player in Major League Baseball since the Nadir in 1890.

<sup>8</sup>1940 figure from Karl E. and Alma F. Taeuber, *Negroes in Cities: Residential Segregation and Neighborhood Change* (Chicago: Aldine, 1966), 40. 1890 figure estimated from comparable cities in the above and other sources.

There is an even more important reason to remove these monuments. They miseducate all of us — whites and nonwhites alike. They tell us to revere as heroes people — Jackson, Lee, Taney, Wallis — who should *not* be revered as heroes, owing to their work on behalf of white supremacy. Indeed, they were erected to revere these men largely *because* of their work on behalf of white supremacy. The larger monuments also glorify the Confederate cause by their hieratic scale itself. Their very existence, size, materials, and prominent locations imply that we all should honor their cause. Roof's reverence for the Confederacy took an extreme form, to be sure, but such extremism arises within a context of the more widespread admiration for the Confederate cause expressed in — and partly produced by — these monuments.

## VII. Arguments For Doing Nothing

Some persons will argue against destroying the monuments by claiming that Baltimore would be removing revered sculptures that help earn it the nickname "Monument City." To those persons, I suggest a compromise (see Section IX below) that does move the monuments but also remembers them exactly where they now stand and does not destroy any of them.

Some will argue against even moving the monuments, claiming that where they now stand is somehow part of their history. Literally that is true, of course: they have been in place for decades. I would note, however, that cities are always changing. Just between 1993 and 2010, nineteen monuments and sculptures in Baltimore have been removed from view entirely.<sup>9</sup> Still others have been moved. Moreover, there is nothing historically significant about the siting of any of these monuments. They do not stand on ground that has anything to do with what they are about. Lee and Jackson, for example, did *not* hold their famous final parting in Baltimore.

As a white person, as well as a sociologist and student of race relations, let me suggest that sometimes whites, accustomed to a landscape that makes us feel comfortable, are loath to change anything, even a detail such as the location of a statue, especially if someone *else* pushes us to. Unfortunately, those on the other side of this situation will surely conclude that they have not been heard if they are told that nothing — not even the *location* of these monuments — can be changed.

Some persons will likely claim that *any* change violates "our Confederate heritage." One answer to this is the counter-claim that the Confederate heritage of African Americans is slavery. Thus the counterpart to Robert E. Lee's splendid uniform or his wife's lovely gowns is the ragged clothing their field hands typically wore. Unlike, say, St. Patrick's Day, Confederate heritage celebrations are intrinsically divisive.

Some will claim "you are erasing the past," especially if you choose to destroy any of the monuments. This assertion blurs the crucial distinction between recalling and revering, between remembering and celebrating. You can answer it completely by immediately installing historical markers at each site, telling of the monument that was here, when it was put up, why it went up at that time, its previous history (some have been moved), why and when it was removed, and where it now is. Such markers teach not only history but also historiography.

Some will try to reduce this matter to an absurdity by constructing false parallels. Must Baltimore tear down its Washington Monument, for example? After all, he was a slaveowner! Or, as an op ed in the *Baltimore Sun* noted recently, must Spain remove "all public recognition" of Salvador Dali? After all, he supported Franco!

You can answer this objection by noting that no one is without sin, but applying a simple rule allows for clearer thinking. Simply ask: *why* was this person, issue, or event memorialized? Was Washington, for example, memorialized *because* he was a slaveowner? Or because he held the army together through seven long years of war, then was our first president, then supplied a graceful example of stepping down from power? Did Dali get recognized *because* he supported Franco? or for other reasons?

My paper on Roger Taney (Appendix C) shows that Baltimore did *not* honor him because he freed his

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<sup>9</sup>Cindy Kelly, *Outdoor Sculpture in Baltimore* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. P., 2011), ix.

own slaves before becoming Chief Justice, nor for any other noble act. Rather, white supremacists in Baltimore honored him *because* of the white supremacy of his most famous decision, *Dred Scott*, precisely the reason why many Baltimoreans now want him removed.

In the case of the Lee/Jackson Monument, it is telling that each year on Martin Luther King Jr. weekend, neo-Confederates gather to play "Dixie" and wave Confederate flags there. "Dixie" of course is a lament for slavery. Singing it and waving flags on King weekend is a stick in the eye of those who stand for racial justice. As well, the statue lies. For example, it claims Lee and Jackson "waged war like gentlemen." In fact, as we noted, Lee's army captured every African American civilian they encountered on the way to Gettysburg and took them back to Virginia as slaves. That is a war crime today and in 1863.

A philosophy professor, suggested a final reductio ad absurdum in a recent *Baltimore Sun* op ed.<sup>10</sup> He argued that the very wrongness of the Lee/Jackson monument, for example, can prompt viewers "to learn and reflect." That can occur, I suppose, but it becomes a bizarre argument for *bad* history. Should we then adopt the *worst* available history textbook, so students will "learn and reflect?" We have seen how that didn't work in Mississippi — my students merely learned the bad history they were taught in high school. Monuments are even more problematic. After all, they are hieratic in size and written in stone. Such authoritative pronouncements encourage viewers to believe them, not to question them. Imagine a lone individual handing out a fact sheet showing what is wrong with the Confederate cause in front of the Soldiers and Sailors Monument. S/he would be dwarfed by it and come across as an eccentric, railing haplessly against the established opinion, established even in granite. Left where they are, these monuments simply do not provide useful teachable moments. On the contrary, they teach *inaccurate* history every day.

We must also note that none of the people who propose leaving the monuments as they are, to provide teachable moments, has ever done anything to teach against them. They have not stationed themselves at a statue on the weekend, showing passers-by what is wrong with it and then regaling them with accurate information about the past. They have not written up a broadside to leave at the site. They have not argued for an interpretive historical marker to provide corrective information.

### **VIII. Arguments Against Doing Nothing**

Those who argue to leave the monuments alone fail to understand that the status quo is not tenable. The statue honoring Confederate soldiers and sailors erected in 1903 by the Maryland Daughters of the Confederacy has already been vandalized with the phrase "Black Lives Matter." Only your "Special Commission to Review" signs stave off further attacks, and they are temporary, as is the pause they enable.

As well, the status quo promotes bad history. It's simply wrong to claim that the Confederate and Union causes were somehow morally equivalent. Slavery and freedom are *not* morally equivalent. True, the Union did not go to war to end slavery. It went to war to hold the nation together. But that too is a more laudable goal than secession for slavery. And by 1862 the U.S. *did* find itself fighting to end slavery.

Baltimore's Confederate monuments have always been intertwined with bad history. When Maryland's Governor dedicated the Lee/Jackson monument, for example, he called it "symbolic of our unity of purpose, as a nation." Of course, this statement is perfectly and completely false! In 2015, neo-Confederates waving Confederate flags in front of Lee and Jackson explained that they were there to "honor them as great

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<sup>10</sup>Alexander E. Hooke, "Politically incorrect statues provide teachable moments," *Baltimore Sun*, 10/27/2015, [baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-confederate-lessons-20151027-story.html](http://baltimoresun.com/news/opinion/oped/bs-ed-confederate-lessons-20151027-story.html).

Americans." Actually, Lee and Jackson tried not to *be* Americans and in so doing committed treason as defined by the U.S. Constitution. "They fought for the principles that they believed in," is another common claim. Such a statement so vague as to be content free. I am not claiming that the Confederacy is morally equivalent to the Third Reich, but Adolf Hitler fought for the principles he believed in.

Confederate monuments also intrinsically promote bad race relations. Note the argument in my Roger Taney paper. White supremacists put up that monument owing to Taney's service on behalf of white supremacy. Lauding Taney cannot be separated from white supremacy. Neither can lauding the Confederacy. Letting stand these monuments implies that the powers-that-be in Baltimore, notably its city government, still laud white supremacy. This sends bad messages to African Americans as well as to white supremacists.

### **IX. What Should Be Done With These Five Monuments?**

As I said in response to a question asked of me on October 29, early in the process of decided what to do with its Confederate monument, Montgomery County announced that it would remove the statue from its place adjacent to the courthouse. That reduced the decibel level of the ensuing discussions. Now people were merely debating what to do with it or where to put it, not *whether* to move it. My first suggestion, then, is that you make a similar initial recommendation for your monuments. Again, the status quo is not viable; making this recommendation publicly should buy you some more time by staving off public pressure to vandalize or even destroy the monuments.

What should be done as a permanent solution?

Various answers have been suggested in other locales, from doing nothing to destroying the statues. Doing nothing tells one group they have not been heard at all. That's not viable, as we have just noted. At the other extreme, destroying the statues removes any chance to use them as teaching vehicles in the future. As well, it tells another constituency that they have not been heard at all. Might there be a workable alternative somewhere in the middle?

At the Montgomery County hearings, one suggestion was to melt down the statue and shape the bronze into a new sculpture that symbolized inclusion and diversity. Another was to return the monument to the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). When someone pointed out that the UDC no longer had an active chapter in Montgomery County, another suggested that the monument be delivered to their national headquarters in Richmond, Virginia. The UDC put up two of your five monuments, so that might be a viable alternative for them.<sup>11</sup> However, the UDC might simply find private landowners in prominent locations and reinstall the statues in Baltimore. The likely solution in Montgomery County will be to move it to a museum setting, indoors or on the grounds. There it can be contextualized with a kiosk or labels that convey accurate information about the role this artifact played during the Nadir of race relations when it went up.

Across the U.S., other Confederate monuments and plaques are getting various treatments. Some have already gone into storage, where they will probably stay.

- Stone Mountain, Georgia, is far too large to move. The state has apparently decided to place atop it a monument to Martin Luther King Jr. with a tower and a replica of the Liberty Bell. It will symbolize the line from King's "I Have A Dream" speech, "Let freedom ring from Stone

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<sup>11</sup>Of course, I recognize that the UDC has no claim on those monuments; they belong to the City of Baltimore.



Mountain of Georgia."

- The various huge monuments along Monument Avenue in Richmond would also be challenging to relocate. Richmond is considering contextualizing them with historical markers that give an accurate account of what the Confederacy was about and why the monuments went up during the Nadir. I also suggested complementing the Confederates with additional monuments, such as one to Elizabeth Van Lew and Mary Bowser.<sup>12</sup>
- The statue of Jefferson Davis on the campus of the University of Texas has already come down and will wind up in a museum, contextualized. Other Confederate statues as well as one of Woodrow Wilson may be removed to locations as yet unspecified.

I suggest that Baltimore should move all of its Confederate monuments to one place. I do not presume to tell you where that should be. It should provide pedestrian access, so visitors who see the monuments will also see the historical markers or kiosks that provide context. Visibility from moving vehicles would be a detriment, missing the educational purpose of their display. It might be connected with an existing institution, perhaps a college or history museum; it might be an underused portion of a park. Competent historians can create a single context, appropriate to all of them, explaining the role these statues played during the era of intense white supremacy when they went up. Of course, each statue would also get its own marker, telling the actions of Wallis, say, that "earned" him his statue and then its removal to this "Nadir Park."

This solution will make Baltimore a model for the nation in handling this problem of pro-Confederate public history. At the same time, it will further reinforce Baltimore's claim as "Monument City."

I did not make this recommendation to the Commission on October 29 because I had not then developed it. Surely it makes much more sense than trying to contextualize *each* statue in situ or at different places to which they might be removed. Why tell the story five times when you can do a really good job telling it once?

As noted earlier, each present location of these monuments should get a competent historical marker that tells passers-by what was here, where it went, and why. Each marker will tell a story of three eras: the Civil War itself, the era when the statue went up, and the era when it came down.

## **X. What Should Be Done About Robert E. Lee Park And Other Confederate Names?**

Names merely honor people. They communicate nothing substantive about the past. All "Robert E. Lee Park" conveys is that "Lee was really important and we honor him." As I said on *All Things Considered* (see Bibliography), those last three words need to be rethought.

Any park, school, street, or other public place that honors Confederate leaders because they were Confederate leaders should now be renamed. Such men should not be honored — not for such a cause.

Some neo-Confederates make a special case for Lee, claiming he was a cut above other Confederate leaders. The saintly portrait of Lee that they now paint is at variance with how they portrayed him earlier. Appendix B presents material on Lee in his own words, those of one of his slaves, and of the KKK's chief historian. Baltimore did not honor General Lee because of his service as president of what is now Washington

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<sup>12</sup>Van Lew and Bowser would complement the existing monuments in several important ways. Both are women, of course. They were Unionists during the Civil War and performed exceptional service for the United States cause as spies, which would lend some balance to the Confederate nature of the avenue. During Reconstruction, both were Republicans, which would diversify the avenue politically; President Grant appointed Van Lew postmistress of Richmond.

and Lee College. Nor did Baltimore honor him because he supposedly advocated good race relations after the Civil War. On the contrary, Baltimore honored him because he commanded the Confederate armies in the service of Confederate values, notably slavery. Appendix B4 shows further that after the Civil War, former Confederates thought, probably correctly, that Lee shared their view of white supremacy and supported the Ku Klux Klan.<sup>13</sup> It follows that Robert E. Lee Park should be renamed. Baltimore should honor him no more.

The rich history of Baltimore and Maryland provides more suitable candidates for parks, schools, etc., that need to be renamed. Completely missing in Baltimore — so far as I know — is recognition on the landscape for any white person who played a positive role in helping Baltimore or the nation deal with racial injustice. This pattern is common in America. Monument Row in Richmond honors Confederate after Confederate ... and Arthur Ashe. Until the recent action by the University of Texas, its campus honored Jefferson Davis, generals Robert E. Lee and Albert Sidney Johnston, even the Confederate Postmaster General ... and Martin Luther King Jr. No wonder white kids can feel they have no humanitarian heroes of their own! No wonder black kids can feel whites have always been racist! That's what the landscape teaches.

One candidate for recognition is Samuel P. Lee, Rear Admiral in the U.S. Navy during the Civil War. Like his cousin Robert E. Lee, he grew up and lived in Virginia. When Virginia seceded, however, he stayed with his country, as did about 40% of officers from Virginia. When asked why, Lee famously replied "When I find the word Virginia in my commission I will join the Confederacy." He became a resident of Maryland, living in Silver Spring for some time, maybe in the famous Blair Mansion, which still stands. So he has more connection with Maryland than Robert E. Lee!<sup>14</sup> Lake Roland Park would be fine too. But changing from (Robert E.) Lee Park to (Samuel P.) Lee Park might be a delicious irony. Among other things, it would teach that Robert E. Lee's decision was a choice, a choice some of his compatriots derided.

Other deserving candidates for replacement names include James Monroe Deems, composer and Union officer from Baltimore; Christian Fleetwood, non-com officer from Baltimore and Medal of Honor winner; and Republican politicians in Maryland in the period 1863-68, especially those who led the state to change its constitution in 1864 to outlaw slavery. Baltimore can find more, once it begins to look.<sup>15</sup>

## Conclusion

Yours is a serious and important charge. You need to come up with an important and permanent solution. Simply removing the monuments, perhaps into some sort of storage, won't do. It just kicks the can down the road. History is replete with examples of monuments and markers that have been placed in storage or covered up. They come back to "life." Examples include the stone marker to Heyward Shepherd, put up by the UDC at Harpers Ferry, and the monument to the White League in New Orleans. Both were in storage for a while. Neo-Confederates forced both back into public view.

Besides, when might Baltimore convene a *better* commission than you?

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<sup>13</sup>We may never know for sure whether Lee supported the KKK, but certainly neo-Confederates believed (and still believe) he did and honored him for so doing.

<sup>14</sup>Something like this has been done before: King County in the state of Washington, whose county seat is Seattle, changed its name from [William Rufus] King County to [Martin Luther] King County. William Rufus King, vice-president under Franklin W. Pierce, was a slaveowner, Democrat, white supremacist, and had he lived would surely have been a secessionist.

<sup>15</sup>I realize your plate is full. Nevertheless, Baltimore's public history landscape needs non-laudatory markers for Senator Gorman and Governor Swann. Accurate markers about what they did would increase viewers' understanding of race relations and the Nadir.

Let me summarize the reasons for grouping the statues into one place, contextualized with a history of the era in which they went up, coupled with historical markers to indicate their former positions.

It gives complainants what they want: the removal of the monuments from their various present-day locations, generally in positions of public honor.

It gives historic preservationists what they want: no monument will be destroyed or removed from view.

It provides *more* history, not less, by erecting historical markers where each monument previously stood. These markers will not only teach history but also historiography, putting the erection and the removal of each monument into context.

It provides a new amenity to Baltimore: a "Nadir park," if you will. We noted that bad history written during the Nadir of race relations has made the Nadir itself invisible, including on our landscapes. It's easy to understand why: few towns want to memorialize lynchings, expulsions of African Americans, or other acts of racial disharmony. Nor do high school history textbooks want to interrupt their comforting narrative — a storyline of constant progress — to tell of this era when we went backward. As a result, only about 2% of my audiences know that it happened. Baltimore's new installation would provide a needed service to correcting this national amnesia.

Best wishes in your important work.