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The Place of Confederate Memorials in America

GRANT KIEFABER
STAFF WRITER

The Civil War ended in 1865, but the United States has struggled to cope with its legacy ever since. Who is to be honored, and how should we remember those who fought and led troops on both sides? Recently the conversation over the place of monuments commemorating Confederate generals and soldiers has been prevalent in the news. To truly understand the issue, we must look to the origin of the monuments. Considering the time and place in which they were erected can help determine what to do with them.

While some people argue that all Confederate monuments should be taken down and destroyed, I believe that these monuments have a place in the United States. They shed light on the political and social atmospheres of the times when they were built. As such, they should be placed in a museum as historical artifacts. They should not, however, be in public parks to be viewed honorably.

The monuments raised following the Civil War were built to honor the fallen soldiers of the Confederacy. The monuments honoring leaders of the Confederacy such as Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis were built between 1890 and 1950. These years were the height of segregation and Jim Crow in the United States. These are the monuments that I believe should be viewed as historical artifacts that represent the social atmosphere of the times in which they were built. They honor the ideals of the Confederacy, ideals founded in racism. It is unacceptable to allow these statues and monuments in public environments. The men they depict were traitors to the United States

and do not deserve to be honored.

Placing monuments to Confederate leaders in museums allows Americans to reflect on their meaning and how they represent the time in which they were created. But it stops people from publicly honoring Confederate leaders and the ideals of the Confederacy. The Confederacy was a rebellion and those who supported it were traitors, so I find it ridiculous that monuments to these men are allowed. Not only that, but the monuments represent racist ideals. Monuments to Confederate leaders must not be allowed in a public arena.

The monuments that I believe pose a harder question are those that honor the soldiers who died. Yes, these soldiers were rebels and traitors too, but they were also young and sent to fight on behalf of the elites. In deciding what to do with those monuments, we must look at when they were constructed. If they were constructed following the war to remember those who died, I think they possibly have a place in the public arena. If they were constructed during the Jim Crow era, it's easier to say they should be destroyed (or, in my opinion, moved to museums).

We must remember what happened in our history. But there is a difference between remembering a horrible period and honoring it. Monuments to Confederate leaders are unacceptable in the public arena. They should be placed in a museum or perhaps destroyed. Monuments honoring the soldiers are a more difficult and complex issue that must be debated on a case-by-case basis, but Confederate leaders clearly deserve no honor.

To truly understand the issue, we must look to the origin of the monuments. Considering the time and place in which they were erected can help determine what to do with them.

Charles Ives, an American Composer

CLAIRE ANASTASIA KITZ
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Inspired by German Romanticism, Transcendentalism had its roots in the writings of Immanuel Kant. Hoping to see beyond the surface of things, transcendentalists ultimately rejected all things European, shed the stilted confines of the 19th-century Unitarian Church, and eschewed the cold, calculating gaze of the Enlightenment. It was a refreshing way of moving forward intellectually, spiritually, and artistically in the New World.

In the decades preceding the American Civil War, a colorful and eccentric group of New England intellectuals that included Ralph Waldo Emerson, Elizabeth Palmer Peabody, Orestes Brownson, Henry David Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Amos Bronson Alcott, and Louisa May Alcott began the transcendentalist movement. They were determined to create a uniquely American philosophy that would translate well into all spheres of human communication:

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literature, poetry, sculpture, architecture, rhetoric, theology, painting, and music.

Transcendentalism focused on a new way of being that included intuitive thinking, the importance of creativity, and passionate discourse. It also focused on spiritual progress, social reform, strident individualism, optimism, and the appreciation of natural beauty. This movement resonated with a broader circle of creative and intellectually gifted Americans and spread quickly past the Concord and Boston town lines. Nowhere was this transcendentalist verve more evident in the 20th century than in the experimental classical composer Charles Ives.

Born in a small town in Connecticut in 1874, Ives graduated from Yale with a degree in music. There, he was a first-rate organist and even composed a symphony for his senior thesis. After graduating, he was wildly successful in a business start-up, but his first passion was music. His compositions were uniquely American, a proud precursor to jazz and baseball.

Ives used a musical language that was complex and often dissonant. He often

continued on back

integrated parts of religious hymns, band marches, patriotic songs, ragtime, and popular melodies, in a deviation from the traditional European models. He borrowed old tunes and layered sounds to create something vibrant, beautiful, and new. His pieces had unusual harmonic structures, all of which paralleled the American transcendentalist vision of a raucous individualism, a rejection of formulaic methodologies, a fostering of creativity, and an elevation of the spiritual harmony found in nature.

Most prolific from 1908 to 1918, Ives composed the soundtrack of an intellectual moment. Some of his most noted works include Variations on America, Calcium Light Night, Three Places in New England, Central

Park in the Dark, The Unanswered Question, and Sonata No. 2 for Piano – otherwise known as the Concord Sonata. The four movements of this sonata are named after five of the prominent founders of the Transcendentalist Movement -- Emerson, Hawthorne, the Alcotts, and Thoreau. In 1927 Ives stopped composing altogether due to a debilitating illness.

While composers and conductors like Aaron Copland, Arnold Schoenberg, Gustav Mahler, Michael Tilson Thomas, and Leonard Bernstein greatly valued Ives's unique contributions to experimental and classical music, American audiences were somewhat baffled by his unconventional compositions. Sadly, his works were all but ignored in his lifetime; they lived mostly in his mind and on paper. It would not be until after his death

that audiences, musicians, orchestras, and conductors would begin to understand and boldly praise his music as the invention of a genius. Current American orchestras and chamber ensembles pay tribute to Ives's original works by playing and recording them. He is now considered an American icon who custom-made a form of Transcendentalism with his cacophony of rhythms, luminous sounds, and adopted melodies.

Charles Ives, the man who found consolation in his happy marriage and the writings of Emerson and Thoreau, persevered and created a body of American music, all while running a successful insurance company, raising his daughter, and financially supporting struggling composers. That alone is revolutionary and sublime.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Southern Society, and the Sectional Divide

ANDREW JUCHNO
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

In *Within the Plantation Household: Black & White Women of the Old South*, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argues that women in the Old South differed fundamentally from their Northern counterparts. Unlike women in the North, Southern women lived in a household that remained at the center of economic production. Accordingly, they lacked a separate private sphere and were perpetually subject to masculine influence. Fox-Genovese's conception of the Southern household, as distinct from the Northern home, helps to explain the evolution of the South's slave society and provides an explanation for distinctly Southern cultural mores that reinforced and exacerbated the divide between the regions.

Fox-Genovese's concept of the household as the basic unit of social relations in the South is central to her understanding of its development of a slave society, as distinct from a society which had slaves. The coexistence of slavery and the push for freedom in the Upper South, when understood through the lens of the Southern household, best exemplifies this assertion. At the time of the American Revolution, slavery in the Upper South remained unchallenged, and this poses a difficult question. What exactly bound the Upper South to slavery?

Ideologically at the very least, the

argument for slavery as a necessary evil dominated the pro-slavery defense. At the very root of slavery's supposed necessity was the household's ability to keep production within the family. Although the household developed differently in the Chesapeake Bay region than in other parts of the South, it still provided the structural basis of life there.

... large-scale urbanization did not happen there, as it did in the North, [so] Southern culture remained dominated by interconnected, cherished rural communities.

Were the household not the dominant form of social relation, intimately linking master to slave, the Revolution might have produced more support for abolition of slavery in the Upper South. As

Fox-Genovese argues, the Revolution "deeply affected the imagination of southerners but did not significantly disrupt their established social relations." The household's role as the predominant unit of production in the South was important in the South's development as a slave society, a society that was really defined by slavery or to which slavery was truly central. Just as the household contributed to paternalism, strengthening the bond between masters and slaves, it gave birth to the fully developed Southern culture.

From the household that defined the South emerged cultural practices and attitudes that placed Southern life in even greater contrast with life in the North. The household stood as a bulwark against capitalist modes of production, according to Fox-Genovese,

creating a South that was "in but not of the bourgeois world." However much the South might have modernized, such developments nonetheless served the plantation economy. As a result, a system of interconnections among cities failed to develop in the South. The fact that large-scale urbanization did not happen there, as it did in the North, meant that Southern culture remained dominated by interconnected, cherished rural communities.

From the higher value placed on rural, non-bourgeois life there emerged other values that fundamentally widened the sectional divide between North and South. Paramount to the Southern mind, and perhaps most antithetical to the development of full American nationhood, was a specifically Southern patriotic worldview. Patriotism as defined by George Orwell means "devotion to a particular place and a particular way of life ... Patriotism is of a defensive nature, both militarily and culturally." Fully binding the South to the North, then, would have been difficult. Southern hearts, wrote Alexis de Tocqueville, were in many ways gripped by "the taste for old customs, with respect for ancestors and memory of the past." That these customs were locally rooted in a network of households which guarded against the influence of capitalistic norms and outlooks could only have further alienated Southerners from Northern bourgeois society.

The Southern-style household contributed to the South's culture in a way that further distanced it from the North. The rural values it perpetuated in many ways precluded a nationalist project or full American nationalism, further distancing Southern people from their Northern contemporaries, whose culture had become increasingly capitalistic and city-oriented. In this sense, the historian Ulrich B. Phillips seems to have been mistaken in asserting that the essence of the South was the white man's supremacy there. A full definition of the South would have to include its type of pre-capitalist household, another important factor which united it as a culture.

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