

Q&A

Q: How many Confederate monuments are still standing?

A: More than 150 years after the Civil War, an estimated 780 Confederate statues and monuments still stand in the United States. Since the year 2000, more than 30 new monuments have been erected. These statues and landmarks romanticize the brutality of slavery and visibly reinforce white supremacist myths.

Q: Where are Confederate monuments located?

A: Most Confederate monuments are located in Georgia, Virginia and North Carolina, though a not insignificant number of Confederate statues are located outside the former Confederate states. Confederate markers dot the U.S. landscape, standing in 23 total states plus Washington, D.C.

Q: Why are Confederate monuments still standing?

A: Alabama, Virginia, Georgia, Tennessee, Mississippi, South Carolina and North Carolina passed “heritage laws” that protect Confederate monuments by making removal extremely difficult. These laws intentionally disenfranchise voters and disempower their elected representatives from removing unwanted statuary in their communities.

Q: What are people doing to take down Confederate monuments?

A: Documented resistance to and protest against Confederate monuments date back to the erection of the monuments themselves. More recently, the 2015 racial terror killing of nine black parishioners in Charleston, SC, exponentially increased calls for the removal of Confederate markers and other symbols of white supremacy. Since then, nearly 115 Confederate symbols have been removed. At the forefront of the movement to remove Confederate monuments are groups such as the Make It Right Project, Move Silent Sam, and Take 'Em Down chapters around the country. Resistance to the presence of Confederate monuments continues today, from college campuses to city streets.

THE MAKE IT RIGHT PROJECT

The Make It Right Project is dedicated to removing Confederate monuments and telling the truth about history.

makeitrightproject.com



No Monuments To White Supremacy



Cover Image Design: Farida Sheralam

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A Brief History of Confederate Monuments

Nearly all of the Confederate monuments that stand throughout this country were erected not in the years after the Civil War, but decades later, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Most were funded and erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), an elite white southern women's group that formed in 1894 and remains a fierce defender of Confederate monuments today. At the dawn of Jim Crow and the Civil Rights movement, Confederate statuary served to intimidate and terrorize African-American communities as they struggled toward racial equality and political empowerment. They venerate white men who fought to defend the Confederate Constitution, which declared the South would pass no "law denying or impairing the right of property in negro slaves." That is the unambiguous "states' right" the Confederacy was established to protect.

As historian W. Fitzhugh Brundage has written, "few if any of the monuments went through any of the approval procedures that we now commonly apply to public art...As a consequence, contemporaries, especially African Americans, who objected to the erection of monuments had no realistic opportunity to voice their opposition. Most Confederate monuments were, in short, the result of private groups [such as the UDC] colonizing public space." Still, there

A Brief History of Confederate Monuments (Cont'd)

is a lengthy record of many forms of overt and surreptitious resistance, particularly among African Americans, who often found creative forms of protest in the midst of Jim Crow.

Monuments on courthouse lawns and statehouse grounds continue to send a clear message about whom those institutions are intended to serve. The values a society elevates—literally and figuratively—impact culture and morality. It is not coincidental that Confederate monuments—in places like Charlottesville, Chapel Hill and across this country—are so often the sites of white racist violence and intimidation. Confederate statues cast a shadow over our understanding of history, and make clear that the line between the past and the present isn't so clear.

The movement to take down Confederate monuments is not intended to erase history, which cannot be undone with the removal of a statue. It's also not an effort to pretend that taking down Confederate statues will end racism or social injustice. Instead, Confederate monument removal will correct a dangerously inaccurate historical record, addressing American historical truths—however ugly and painful—that continue to affect us all.