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"Epic Poems in Bronze": Confederate Memorialization and the Old South's Reckoning with Modernity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

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“Epic Poems in Bronze:” Confederate Memorialization and the Old South’s Reckoning with
Modernity in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement
for the degree of Bachelor of Arts in the Department of History from
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by

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Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction 3

Chapter Two: Mourning Memorialization (1865 - 1880) 14

Chapter Three: Vindication In Urban Spaces (1881 - 1918) 57

Chapter Four: Commercialized Memorialization
and Historic Preservation (1919 - 1940) 113

Chapter Five: Conclusion 164

Bibliography 172

Chapter One: Introduction

On a suffocatingly hot night in June 2015, a white man named Dylann Roof joined a small bible study group gathered at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Roof found a seat in the back of the hall and sat quietly for the duration of the meeting. When those assembled closed their eyes and lowered their heads in prayer, Roof pulled out a gun and opened fire. As he fled, he left behind nine dead, including a South Carolina state senator, and three survivors. Roof was apprehended in North Carolina the next day. In the weeks following the shooting, legal experts and the general public alike dug through Roof's past searching for a motive to explain his horrific actions. It didn't take long for photos of the avowed white supremacist holding a Confederate battle flag and a gun to emerge, accompanied by reports that Roof had taken a "tour of American slavery" in the months prior to the Emanuel AME murders. He visited plantation sites, small Confederate museums, and paused at cemeteries where Confederate soldiers are buried.¹ More than 150 years beyond the end of the Civil war, Roof's diaries and curated photos demonstrate that the memory of the Civil War continues to hold a prominent place in the collective memory of the American South.

In the weeks and months after the shooting, Charlestonians struggled to come to terms with their grief. The tragedy prompted nationwide conversations about white supremacy and the legacy of slavery in American culture, but it also raised questions closer to home. Why were so many symbols of Confederate culture still visible in South Carolina and in Charleston? Had Charleston ever come to terms with its central role in the perpetuation of the institution of

¹ Neely Tucker and Peter Holley, "Dylann Roof's Eerie Tour of American Slavery at Its Beginning, Middle and End," *Washington Post*, July 1, 2015, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/post-nation/wp/2015/07/01/dylann-roofs-erie-tour-of-american-slavery-at-its-beginning-middle-and-end/>.

slavery? Why did so many people harbor a strong affinity with a failed slaveholders' republic that was defeated almost two centuries ago? Roof's actions prompted a reckoning about local collective memory and lingering Confederate symbols.

At the same time as South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley made national headlines for removing the Confederate battle flag from the State Capitol grounds, local organizations like the Historic Charleston Foundation (HCF) began to fundamentally reconsider their role as historical institutions and repositories of memory.² In 2015 and 2017, HCF launched major archaeological investigations looking for new evidence from the enslaved quarters at two house museums, the Aiken-Rhett House and the Nathaniel Russell House.³ These projects forced staff, locals, and visitors alike to re-consider whose narratives were being told at popular tourist sites and whose had been consciously suppressed. They prompted important questions about historical organizations' institutional histories, and Charleston's historical tourism industry at large.

Five years to the day after Roof opened fire in the basement of Mother Emanuel, Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg announced the city's intention to remove the monument to John C. Calhoun, South Carolina politician and pro-slavery ideologue.⁴ One week later, on June

² Ben Schreckinger, "Nikki Haley's Star Rises as Rebel Flag Comes Down," *Politico*, July 10, 2015, <https://www.politico.com/story/2015/07/nikki-haleys-star-rises-as-confederate-flag-comes-down-119940>. and George W. McDaniel, "Drayton Hall A New and Different Kind of Historical Preservation: Preserving Tangible Expressions of Public Sympathy for Emanuel AME Church," Accessed April 7, 2021. <https://www.draytonhall.org/expressions-of-sympathy-for-emanuel-ame-church-by-george-w-mcdaniel/>.

³ Historic Charleston Foundation, "Insight into Lives of the Enslaved at ARH," August 25, 2017, <https://www.historiccharleston.org/blog/aiken-rhett-house-archaeology/>.

⁴ Rick Rojas and Giulia McDonnell Nieto del Rio, "5 Years After Church Massacre, Charleston to Remove Symbol of Slavery," *The New York Times*, June 17, 2020 <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/17/us/charleston-sc-shooting-calhoun-statue.html>

23, the Charleston City Council voted unanimously to remove the Calhoun Monument.⁵ Work began almost immediately later that night, and the statue of Calhoun atop the monument was finally removed on the afternoon of the 24th after nearly eighteen hours of work. Citizens had begun raising objections to the 115-foot-tall monument, which overlooks the Emanuel AME Church, almost immediately after the shooting. Many viewed the presence of Calhoun, a famously aggressive defender of slavery, as an insult to the memory of the nine dead and their families. Others requested that Calhoun Street, one of the city's main boulevards, be renamed in honor of the Emanuel Nine. The city of Charleston took no major action in 2015, but calls for the removal of monuments across the city resumed in August 2017 after a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia turned violent. In the interim three years between Charlottesville rally and the highly publicized death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, protests had largely dissipated. However, Floyd's death at the hands of police officers sparked massive national protests, including several in Charleston. Black Lives Matter (BLM) protesters congregated around recognizable Confederate sites of memory like the Defenders of Charleston Monument on the Charleston Battery, and they returned to the pro-slavery Calhoun Monument.⁶ Both were painted with BLM messages, effectively re-contextualizing the monuments by physically drawing attention to their controversial status through the application of bright red paint.

⁵Fleming Smith, "'Take It down': Calhoun Monument Will Be Moved from Marion Square, Charleston Mayor Says," *Post and Courier*, June 17, 2020. https://www.postandcourier.com/news/take-it-down-calhoun-monument-will-be-moved-from-marion-square-charleston-mayor-says/article_e091943a-afdc-11ea-9ff0-a7abea2a3199.html.

⁶ Patrick Simmons and Alexis Phillips, "Groups Call for Removal of Calhoun Statue, Repeal of Heritage Act," *Live 5 News*, June 16, 2020. <https://www.live5news.com/2020/06/16/live-groups-call-repeal-heritage-act-removal-calhoun-statue/>.

However, one of the largest demonstrations was held not at a monument, but at the Market Building in the heart of the city's historic district. The upper floor of the building hosts the United Daughters of the Confederacy museum, but the lower floor and rear wings are one of the most popular tourist attractions in the city. Tourists flock to buy sweetgrass baskets, Geechie Boy rice, Benne Wafers, and other Charleston staples with roots in African American cultural traditions.⁷ Many visitors also confuse these buildings, known as the City Market, with a market where enslaved people were once bought and sold. The perceived ambiguity enhances the historicity of the attraction. By rallying at the Market Building, the protestors drew attention to the fact that the memorial controversy pervaded nearly every aspect of the modern city, including its core industry of historical tourism. By offering a critical re-consideration of Charleston's sites of Civil War memory, this thesis makes connections between traditional Confederate monuments and the city's early historic preservation and heritage tourism movements, and identifies common threads between the various phases of memorialization in the years between 1865 and 1940.

Existing scholarship on Confederate memorialization after Reconstruction mainly focuses on the period between 1876 and 1918, when the US entered World War I. Scholars see the drop in physical memorialization as the end of the era of the Lost Cause, and cease to examine Confederate memorialization between 1919 and 1940 in the same way that they do for the pre-war period. My research, focusing on the interwar period as well as earlier periods of

⁷ "The Historic Charleston City Market in the Heart of Charleston, SC." Accessed April 6, 2021. <https://www.thecharlestoncitymarket.com/>.

"Geechie Boy" has recently announced its intention to change its name after its white founders faced backlash for cultural appropriation. See: Hanna Raskin, "Geechie Boy Mill Drops Its Brand in Favor of a Name That Won't 'Cause Harm or Discomfort,'" *Post and Courier*, July 1, 2020, https://www.postandcourier.com/blog/raskin_around/geechie-boy-mill-drops-its-brand-in-favor-of-a-name-that-wont-cause-harm/article_cceb97e8-bbbf-11ea-8bec-7b09385c7312.html.

memorialization, is an attempt to fill this gap in the literature by expanding the definition of Confederate memorialization to include early historic house museums and other non-traditional sites of historical memory.

Moreover, the vast majority of research on Confederate memorialization in the South focuses exclusively on traditional war monuments. This study takes a different approach by establishing that, when the South underwent massive changes between 1865 and 1940, Confederate memorialization changed forms but still advanced Lost Cause ideology and a return to the patriarchal Antebellum status quo. It establishes that Confederate memorialization is not limited to obelisks and statues of soldiers. Non-physical acts of remembrance also memorialize the Lost Cause. Therefore, this thesis offers a more nuanced exploration of the nature of memorialization and collective memory in the South.

Throughout this study, I divide memorialization in Charleston into three distinct periods: mourning memorialization (1865-1880), vindication memorialization (1881-1918), and commercialized memorialization (1919-1940). In the first period, Confederate memorials were located exclusively in the city's rural cemetery, reflecting elite white Charlestonians' desire to come to terms with the personal grief of the Civil War. In the second period, monuments shifted away from the cemeteries and into town squares; these monuments celebrated a victory over Reconstruction rather than the Confederacy's defeat, and relied on artificially contrived historical memory than on historical fact. Instead of treating World War I as the end of Confederate memorialization, I argue that Charleston's historic preservation and heritage tourism movements in the interwar period actually functioned as a continuation of the earlier eras of memorialization but in a more nationally marketable form. In this third period, elite white Charlestonians

effectively commodified the artificial memories and identities created by their predecessors in the decades following Reconstruction in order to market the city as a retreat from modern pressures.

Despite Charleston's significance to the overall story of the Civil War, a surprisingly small amount of scholarship on Confederate memorialization has focused on Charleston. When compared to the massive statues formerly on Monument Avenue in Richmond or the large monuments of Confederate generals formerly in New Orleans, Charleston appears to lack a large footprint of expression of Confederate memory. Scholars frequently prefer to focus on Charleston's wartime contributions, rather than postwar sentiment. Others see the comparative lack of massive physical monuments as an indication that Charleston either quietly accepted postwar social changes or was too impoverished to put up any resistance. Instead of falling back on these paradigms of divisive war followed by crippling poverty as explanations for the lack of a traditional response, I choose to understand Confederate memorialization as a fluid type. I argue that Charleston did in fact spend a considerable amount of time and money responding to the events of the Civil War, and that local leaders took multifaceted approaches to memorialization that developed over time according to social and political transformations.

Ethan J. Kytte and Blain Roberts' influential recent book about the memory of slavery on Charleston after emancipation, *Denmark Vesey's Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy*, is one major exception to the dearth of scholarship on postwar Charleston.⁸ However, their extensive study focuses on so many different elements and time periods that it

⁸ Ethan J. Kytte and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy*, (New York: The New Press, 2018).

pays little attention to the totality of physical memorialization in Charleston. Instead, they focus mainly on the John C. Calhoun monuments as case studies in their section on postwar memorialization. My thesis applies Kytte and Roberts' critical lens to Charleston's whole corpus of Confederate monuments and more clearly defines a connection between twentieth-century preservation initiatives and nineteenth-century monuments.

This study also builds on work that focuses on ideological commemoration as a sociopolitical movement that presented itself through more than simply a series of static objects. Adam Domby's recent book, *The False Cause*, establishes that the Lost Cause supported a white supremacist vision of society, which was then reinforced both by physical memorials and racially motivated political policies. Domby argues that this two-pronged approach simultaneously reimagined the history of the Confederacy while also striving to re-create antebellum social and racial hierarchies in the postwar South.⁹

Through a close examination of memorial groups, I also build on the work of Caroline Janney and Karen Cox. In *Dixie's Daughters*, Cox makes an extensive and well-researched study of the impact of the United Daughters of the Confederacy on the Confederate memorial landscape in the South.¹⁰ Janney's book, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past*, focuses on the earliest memorial groups that were active just after the end of the Civil War.¹¹ She argues that

⁹ Adam H. Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville: UVA Press, 2019).

¹⁰ Karen L. Cox, *Dixie's Daughters* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003). Cox discusses the ways in which the women of the UDC imposed their idealized vision of Confederate memory on Southern minds, including through textbooks, monuments, and social work. Cox's study responds to earlier works that questioned why there was a massive increase in physical memorialization around the turn of the twentieth century; Cox argues that the UDC's founding in 1894 was the main reason for the spike.

¹¹ Caroline Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2008).

women, perceived as apolitical, were allowed greater freedom in their memorialization efforts during Reconstruction than ex-Confederate men were. As such, ladies' memorial groups had a massive impact on how memory of the Civil War was shaped and created from the years following the conflict through the remainder of the nineteenth century. Charleston's ladies' memorial groups follow many of the social patterns and memorial methodologies outlined in these works, and this particular body of scholarship allows me to contextualize Charleston's memorial efforts against the larger corpus of Confederate memorial societies.¹²

Still other scholars have focused on the mechanisms of reunion, both political and cultural, after the Civil War. David Blight's foundational work, *Race and Reunion*, discusses the ways in which Americans remembered the Civil War in the decades following the South's surrender, and argues that memory of the war relied on the manipulation of two fundamental ideas: race and reunion.¹³ Nina Silber's book, *Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South 1865-1900*, examines the role of gender in postwar memory arguing that using gendered terminology to construct an ideological reunion between North and South was essential to sectional reconciliation in the postwar period.¹⁴ In contrast, Sarah Catherine Bowman's excellent

¹² Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past*, 7-14.

¹³ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Nina Silber. *Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1993). She demonstrates that northern society allowed for cultural reconciliation with the formerly rebellious South by constructing it as an exotic and highly feminized land, and discusses the ways in which Northerners used popular culture to further suppress the Southerner in their own imagination.

dissertation, "The Problem of Yankeeland," analyzes the ways in which white Southerners talked about Northerners.¹⁵

Stephanie Yuhl's *Golden Haze of Memory* most clearly defines the intersection of tourism, preservation, popular culture, and Lost Cause memory.¹⁶ Yuhl explores how small groups of white men and women used architectural preservation, literature, art, and theater to create a vibrant local heritage that celebrated and commodified the Antebellum Lowcountry slave society and appropriated elements of local African American folk culture while ignoring the harsh realities of slavery. She argues that this sanitized and commercialized version of the past was created in part to maintain social control of the city and retain class and race-based hierarchies while also vindicating Charleston's reputation in the eyes of the nation. Yuhl's study is absolutely foundational to my thesis. Yuhl's analysis combines physical and ideological memorial landscapes in the city, a methodology that led me to explore the ways in which architecture, tourist ephemera, and monumental statuary were united by common conservative, sentimental, and white supremacist ideological threads.

Rebecca Cawood McIntyre's book, *Souvenirs of the Old South*, also focuses on the creation of a distinct Southern culture and identity through tourism.¹⁷ Several of the cultivated

¹⁵ Sarah Katherine Bowman. "The Problem of Yankeeland: White Southern Stories about the North, 1865-1915." Order No. 10012441, Yale University, 2015. Bowman argues that white Southerners came to terms with their own defeat by telling stories through different mediums that allowed for a Southern cultural victory; Southerners frequently told stories in which the "Yankee" appeared weak or afraid in the face of proudly patriotic white Southerners. Through stories like these, Southerners were finally able to call themselves winners.

¹⁶ Stephanie Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Creation of Historic Charleston* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005).

¹⁷ Rebecca Cawood McIntyre, *Souvenirs of the Old South: Northern Tourism and Southern Mythology* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2011). She uses travel literature and promotional ephemera from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to analyze how different conceptions of an "othered" South were created and perpetuated through popular media.

identities she discusses, including that of the Aristocratic South and the Leisurely South, are applicable to the ways in which Charlestonians defined themselves and their culture for outside consumption. Other scholars have focused on the origins of tourism and the tourist in American culture, rather than Southern culture. Will Mackintosh's book, *Selling the Sights*, discusses the origins of the tourist by exploring the cultural and economic developments in the early nineteenth century that made such a new development possible.¹⁸ Like McIntyre, Mackintosh uses travel literature to demonstrate that tourism responded to the anxieties of the day, and that many of these same anxieties still shape the way that Americans regard tourism and travel today.

The fields of Civil War memory, tourism history, and preservation history are distinct, but they often share ideas. Above all, scholars agree that following the Civil War, Southerners looked to the past in order to find both glorious successes and conservative ideology that was reassuring in the face of rapid modernization. Whether through monuments, buildings, or travel ephemera, the American South in particular presented itself as a conservative haven of "days gone by".¹⁹ Especially after the Civil War, the South often sought to distinguish itself as unique or separate from the rest of the country, despite professing to be reconciled with the Union.

My thesis seeks to build on the works of the above scholars by firmly connecting historic preservation and tourism with Confederate memorials in Charleston. My study critically examines the totality of the memorial built environment in Charleston by expanding the definition of Confederate memorialization. This thesis reconsiders the various ways in which

¹⁸ Will B. Mackintosh, *Selling the Sights: The Invention of the Tourist in American Culture* (New York: NYU Press, 2019).

¹⁹ Robin Dattel, "Southern Regionalism and Historic Preservation in Charleston, S.C., 1920-1940." *Journal of Historical Geography*, 16, (1990), 197-213.

memory is expressed and re-shaped on the physical landscape, but it also critically re-examines institutional histories in order to assess how and when the Lost Cause ideas perpetuated by early memorial groups became codified into historical “fact.” My thesis argues that early preservation and heritage tourism movements were in essence a third period of memorialization following two waves of traditional memorialization in the late-nineteenth century. In my discussion of this third period, I illustrate how many of Charleston’s house museums functioned as monuments to the Old South in a nationally acceptable form. I therefore also closely interrogate the motivations behind historic preservation in Charleston, in addition to questioning the sociopolitical motivations behind traditional Confederate memorialization. Ultimately, my thesis seeks to understand how and when the image of “America’s Most Historic City” was constructed, and how that image was built upon earlier Lost Cause ideologies and memorial landscapes.

The concerted development and preservation of a landscape that commemorated an artificially conceived, idyllic, and pro-slavery vision of Antebellum society allowed Dylann Roof to go on a grim tour of sites of Confederate memory that fueled his genocidal white supremacist fantasies. The South may have lost the Civil War, but elite white men and women worked throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to re-write the historical narrative in a way that taught future generations of an ideological victory despite military defeat. In Charleston, this campaign began with direct responses to Civil War losses, evolved into a revisionist celebration of social and political victories over Reconstruction, and culminated with the codification of a Lost Cause ethos in the built environment of “Historic Charleston.” These phases, though different in scope and in form, share common ideological threads and reflect the influence of the same guiding actors. Confederate memorialization changed forms as the city of Charleston grew

and developed in the years following the Civil War. However, its intent to perpetuate carefully orchestrated mythology venerating a strict social and racial hierarchy never wavered.

Chapter Two: Mourning Memorialization (1865 - 1880)

Introduction

Charleston, South Carolina has proudly proclaimed itself to be “the Cradle of the Confederacy” almost since the Civil War itself. South Carolina seceded from the Union on December 20, 1860, after formally adopting the Ordinance of Secession from Institute Hall on Meeting Street.²⁰ The *Charleston Mercury* spread the message quickly throughout the city, and declared in bold letters later that evening that “The Union is Dissolved!”²¹ Just a few months later, on the morning of April 12, 1861, South Carolina militia artillery opened fire on Fort Sumter in the Charleston Harbor from a position at Fort Johnson on James Island. Their bombardment lasted a full day, after which Major Robert Anderson surrendered the fort to the South Carolina troops, and it marked the official beginning of the Civil War.²²

Giddy Charlestonians, some of whom had watched the action from rooftops along the Battery, celebrated the news in the streets. Mary Boykin Chesnut, a prominent South Carolina woman married to a Colonel who had participated in the attack, declared the scene around her to be “the very liveliest crowd I think I ever saw.”²³ William Howard Russell, a correspondent for *The Times* of London, agreed and boldly stated that “the streets of Charleston present some such

²⁰ Jon L. Wakelyn, “Secession,” South Carolina Encyclopedia (online), August 1, 2016, <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/secession/>.

²¹ “The Union Is Dissolved!, 1860,” The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History, November 2, 2012, <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/node/2210>.

²² Richard W. Hatcher III, “Fort Sumter,” South Carolina Encyclopedia (online), May 17, 2016, <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/fort-sumter/>.

²³ Chesnut, Mary Boykin. “Mary Boykin Miller Chesnut, 1823-1886. A Diary from Dixie, as Written by Mary Boykin Chesnut, Wife of James Chesnut, Jr., United States Senator from South Carolina, 1859-1861, and Afterward an Aide to Jefferson Davis and a Brigadier-General in the Confederate Army.” <https://docsouth.unc.edu/southlit/chesnut/maryches.html>, 40.

aspect as those of Paris in the last revolution.”²⁴ He observed that “secession is the fashion here... the founder of the school was St. Calhoun. Here his pupils carry out their teaching in thunder and fire.” Local military companies like the Charleston Light Dragoons and the Washington Light Infantry recruited hundreds of young men in the excited weeks following the attack on Fort Sumter, who were fueled by “that hot oxygen which is called ‘the flush of victory.’”²⁵

Just a few months after the attack on Fort Sumter, Union troops returned to the Charleston Harbor in an attempt to retake the city. Ships from the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron patrolled the harbor, cutting off any departure of rice, cotton, or other goods from Charleston and preventing the city from receiving any necessary supplies or aid. In response, Generals P.G.T. Beauregard and Robert E. Lee planned a network of earthenwork forts and well-defended batteries at regular intervals around the harbor, hoping to stave off a direct Union attack on the city. In 1863, Union efforts to retake Fort Sumter began in earnest; they continued until February of 1865. The fort was never officially surrendered, but General William T. Sherman’s advance from the south forced the Confederates to evacuate Charleston. In April of 1865, Major General Robert Anderson returned to Fort Sumter to raise the flag he had surrendered four years earlier over the ruined shell of the fort.²⁶

By the surrender in 1865, Charleston was utterly decimated. Many of its major buildings had been damaged or destroyed during the Great Fire of 1861, and those that still stood were in

²⁴William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*. (Boston: T.O.H.P. Burnham, 1863) 287.

²⁵ Russell, *My Diary North and South*, 281.

²⁶ Kytle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, 46.

real disrepair. Elite white Charlestonians returned to the city in 1865 to find their mansions ransacked and their lives upended. Most local families had lost at least one male family member during the war, and struggled to come to terms with their losses. These elite white men and women, who ruled the Lowcountry in the decades leading up to the Civil War, desperately searched for a way to deal with personal grief and come to terms with the implications of the loss of the slave society on which they had relied.

In the years following the Civil War, former Confederates turned to physical and ideological memorialization in order to come to terms with personal grief and societal devastation. The extent of Confederate commemorative ritual in the years immediately following the war was limited first by Union military occupation of the city, and next by the political implications of Radical Reconstruction. Republican political officials feared a second Southern rebellion; therefore, they banned Democratic political organizing and strictly limited the ways in which former Confederates were able to commemorate their dead.²⁷

As such, between 1865 and the early 1880s, Confederate memorials in Charleston were exclusively located in the semi-rural Magnolia, St. Lawrence, and Bethany Cemeteries, and were erected primarily by small groups of elite white women. These cemeteries afforded a quiet place for reflection, and allowed former Confederates to meet under the guise of mourning their dead.²⁸ Though ostensibly apolitical, annual memorial days nevertheless allowed for an

²⁷ William A. Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004) 62.

²⁸ Joy M. Giguere, "Localism and Nationalism in the City of the Dead: The Rural Cemetery Movement in the Antebellum South," *Journal of Southern History* 84, no. 4 (2018): 848.

organized celebration of Confederate ideology and military valor.²⁹ Sentimental allegiance to the defeated Confederacy was renewed yearly, as white Charlestonians gathered to lay flowers on Confederate soldiers' graves and hear lengthy speeches about their romanticized Confederate Cause. The "Lost Cause of the Confederacy" mythos was created during this period.

Eventually, memorial groups were able to erect fairly simple memorials that honored individual Confederate military groups. Monuments erected within this first commemorative period helped former Confederates come to terms with personal and societal losses, but they also served as stand-ins for organized male-led political activity in the years immediately following the Civil War. Monument dedications allowed former Confederates to demonstrate their allegiance to the ideology of the former Confederacy and to make speeches that quietly urged unity and patience during the "tragic era" of Reconstruction; speakers often urged their audience to look forward to the time when white Southerners could secure Democratic political control over the state. In other cases, monument dedications allowed for former Confederates to use their past service to define their present place in the community. Irish and German Confederate regiments erected monuments in St. Lawrence and Bethany Cemeteries in order to secure the sociopolitical status of their respective ethnic group within the larger white Democratic Charleston community. No matter who was erecting them, though, Charleston's Confederate cemetery monuments spoke more about contemporary issues than they did about past military valor.

²⁹ Thomas J. Brown, *Civil War Canon: Sites of Confederate Memory in South Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2015) 95.

Beginning in 1876, the political landscape in South Carolina changed. Former Confederate general Wade Hampton III was elected as the governor of South Carolina, and his tenure in office signaled the end of Reconstruction.³⁰ Within the next decade, Southern Democrats were elected to nearly every office in the state. In Charleston, the resumption of Democratic political control allowed former Confederates to bring their commemorative activities out of the rural cemeteries and into the city squares. Between 1880 and 1932, eight Confederate monuments were erected in prominent places across downtown Charleston, including beside City Hall and along the Battery.

Above all, these city square monuments were intended to vindicate the cause of the Confederacy. Unlike those that came before them, which mourned the end of the Confederacy and the deaths of individual soldiers, the monuments erected in this second period were often celebratory. Some celebrated the ideology for which the Confederacy stood, including white supremacy and states' rights, and sought to memorialize an idealized image of the Old South. Others celebrated the valor of Confederate soldiers, and their dedication to the fight despite the odds stacked against them. This group of monuments largely ignored the Confederacy's military defeat, in part because white Southerners felt that they had overcome the South's initial loss by winning a victory over Reconstruction. The South did not actually lose, they argued, because white Southern Democrats had regained political power and re-instituted versions of Antebellum social and racial hierarchies. The monuments erected in city squares were an effective visual

³⁰ Ethan J. Kytte and Blain Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy*, (New York: The New Press, 2018) 88.

reminder. They also etched the continued narrative of a glorious South permanently in stone and bronze for all to see.

By the early twentieth century, however, those most loudly proclaiming the greatness of the Antebellum South had been born during or after the Civil War. They drew their conviction about the righteousness of the Confederate Cause from the stories their parents told, which in turn had been shaped by the Lost Cause mythology that emerged after the Civil War ended. While the first period of memorialization in Charleston responded to immediate personal and societal losses, the second period of memorialization rhetorically replaced the Confederacy's military loss with the recent political and ideological victory over Reconstruction in order to create a victorious memorial narrative that vindicated the cause of the Confederacy. This aggressive propagandistic campaign of vindication was so successful that it entirely replaced postwar feelings of bitterness and grief among those who had actually experienced the Civil War. It also ensured that those born decades after the surrender would continue to celebrate the "Glorious Cause" with a righteous zeal. To these later generations, the Confederacy became an ephemeral ideology that provided a conservative counterbalance to rapid modernization and represented strict racial hierarchies that ensured that white Southerners retained their sociopolitical dominance.

This continued ardor for an artificially constructed vision of the Old South demonstrated that in the fifty years following the surrender, Lost Cause counter-memory of the Civil War had been entirely institutionalized and legitimized through Charleston's memorial landscape. Confederate memorials in the city began as a proxy for overt political action, and following the end of Reconstruction, transitioned into a tool for ideological vindication. Whatever immediate

purpose they served, however, Confederate monuments and memorials were always a tool by which white Southerners controlled the dominant cultural narratives and ruled the political landscape in the city of Charleston.

Laying the Memorial Groundwork in the Immediate Postwar Period

Before the Civil War had even concluded, cemeteries had been established as places for both mourning and commemoration. Small, local memorial groups gathered in cemeteries across the South to clean up and pay tribute to the graves of soldiers. Janet Weaver Randolph, the founder of the Richmond chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, fondly recalled weekly Sunday visits to the cemetery where she and other young women placed flowers on the graves of soldiers.³¹ Other women served the Confederacy by forming hospital groups and sewing circles. After Appomattox, the focus of these groups naturally transitioned from wartime work to memorial work. The same white Southern women who decorated gravesites during the war now took on the responsibility of maintaining and cultivating the memory of their Cause through the ritualized burial and reburial of Confederate dead.

Confederates were not the only ones to focus on their dead. The National Cemetery System, created in 1861 through General Order 75 of the United States War Department, created and provided financial backing for dozens of federal cemeteries across the Eastern Seaboard. They were usually located in towns that had been the site of great battles, due to the number of dead soldiers that remained in those areas. As such, these sites were not evenly geographically

³¹ David Blight, *Race and Reunion*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 278.

distributed, and the majority were concentrated in the newly readmitted Southern states.³² In addition to being a place to honor the Union dead, the cemeteries also served to reinforce the political and memorial authority of the Federal government. Catherine Zipf argues that in form, function, and intention, the Federal Cemetery System served as an architectural and political extension of the United States government.³³ Quartermaster Montgomery C. Meigs, in charge of the federal cemeteries, created standardized designs to ensure aesthetic continuity across state lines. Graves were usually arranged in concentric circles around a large American flag. Each cemetery included a decorated rostrum for speeches, carefully curated gravesites, and a lodge building staffed full-time by a former Union Army officer. These cemeteries were the visual embodiment of Reconstruction-era occupation of the former Confederate states, and they signaled a potential monopoly on memorial narratives of the war dead.³⁴

Confederate dead were intentionally excluded from these cemeteries, with the exception of those who had been buried hurriedly during the war. In addition, former Confederates in most occupied states were forbidden from flying their old flags, wearing their old uniforms, and holding memorial ceremonies explicitly honoring their cause. In other words, the federal cemeteries proudly displayed patriotic symbols and employed tactics for the cultivation of memory denied to former Confederates. Not surprisingly, these cemeteries were sources of

³² Catherine Zipf, "Marking Union Victory in the South: The Construction of the National Cemetery System," In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, 2nd ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2019), 28.

³³ Catherine Zipf, "Marking Union Victory in the South: The Construction of the National Cemetery System," In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, 2nd ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2019), 27-49.

³⁴ Zipf, "Marking Union Victory in the South: The Construction of the National Cemetery System," 32.

resentment for many Southerners, who viewed them as a disrespectful encroachment. However, the Civil War had left the governments of the former Confederate states destitute. State governments could barely afford to provide basic services to their citizens, let alone properly bury Southern dead.³⁵ The dearth of official memorialization efforts ensured that the small but determined local memorial groups bore the brunt of the responsibility for managing Confederate burial grounds.³⁶ By extension, these groups were also assigned themselves the duty of creating and curating proper narratives of Confederate memory.

The same factors that forced Confederates to rely on private commemorative groups also hindered those groups' memorial efforts. Former Confederates' desire to commemorate both personal losses and the loss of their short-lived slaveholders' republic was hampered above all by Union occupation. On February 18, 1865, two months before the official surrender at Appomattox, the city of Charleston under Confederate General P.G.T. Beauregard surrendered to U.S. General Q.A. Gillmore.³⁷ Dozens of northern newspapers excitedly reported the victory. *The New Haven Palladium* wrote that when "comparing the performances of the South Carolinians with the large promises which they were rash enough to give when they thought themselves safe from ever being called on to redeem them, how abjectly contemptible the

³⁵ Caroline L. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2008) 43.

³⁶ Shannon Bontrager compares dedications of cemeteries at Marietta GA and Arlington VA to understand how cemeteries can be "storage" places for memory and counter-memory. He argues that Confederates used cemeteries as places for the cultivation of both Lost Cause artificial memory and also political identities, during a period in which both were suppressed by occupying Republican governments. He argues that through cemeteries (and the national cemetery system), Republicans and former Confederates waged a war of cultural memory largely from the bottom up. Cemeteries were sites of debate about the meanings and intentions of the dead. Bontrager, Shannon. *Death at the Edges of the Empire: Fallen Soldiers, Cultural Memory, and the Making of an American Nation, 1863-1921*. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2020) 37-60.

³⁷ "The Latest News By Telegraph. Occupation Of Charleston," *The Daily Age* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) February 22, 1865.

cowardly braggarts appear!”³⁸ *The Bangor Daily Whig and Courier* agreed, and predicted that Charlestonians, now soundly defeated, would have to “eventually throw themselves on the mercy of the Old Flag, which they once boasted to have humbled!”³⁹

Contrary to the *Courier's* mocking predictions, however, white Charlestonians balked at the idea of laying themselves at the mercy of the “Old Flag.” They resented feeling like second-class citizens, and they particularly loathed having to silently watch the jubilation of newly emancipated men and women.⁴⁰ Formerly elite white Charlestonians traded horror stories of freed people’s insolence and supposed cruelty. Every injustice recounted was meant to legitimize their claim that slavery was the ideal state for African Americans. Enslaved people were submissive and dutiful, white Charlestonians recalled, the opposite of the rebellious freedmen marching through the streets. One celebration of Emancipation on March 21, 1865 represented the sum total of white Charleston’s fears. The Citadel Green, where cadets charged with crushing slave rebellions had formerly drilled, was now a gathering place for African Americans celebrating their freedom.⁴¹ To add insult to injury, the 21st U.S. Colored Troops marched triumphantly past the square in an orderly formation. A *New York Times* correspondent remarked that he overheard “expressions of dislike... from a knot of young ladies standing on a balcony,

³⁸ “South Carolina Chivalry-Promise and Test,” *New Haven Palladium* (New Haven, CT) February 24, 1865.

³⁹ “The Stars and Stripes at Charleston,” *Bangor Daily Whig and Courier* (Bangor, ME) February 23, 1865.

⁴⁰ Kytte, Ethan J., and Blain Roberts. *Denmark Vesey’s Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy*. (New York: The New Press, 2018), 44.

⁴¹ Kytte, Ethan J., and Blain Roberts. *Denmark Vesey’s Garden: Slavery and Memory in the Cradle of the Confederacy*. (New York: The New Press, 2018), 42.

who declared that the whole affair was ‘shameful’ and ‘disgraceful.’”⁴² White Charleston’s Antebellum anxieties had been realized- an organized group of armed Black men was marching through the city while former planters sheltered in exile.

Black Charlestonians and the Postwar Memorial Landscape

Black Charlestonians competed with former Confederates not just for political and social control of the city, but also for control of the memorial narratives. In May of 1865, Black Charlestonians held the first Memorial Day ceremony at Washington Racetrack, the former planter’s racetrack-turned-mass grave on the upper peninsula. Most recently used as a Confederate prison camp, Union soldiers remembered it as one of the most brutal in the South. Its conditions rivaled those of the infamous Andersonville Prison in Georgia. Union soldiers who died while at the camp were hurriedly thrown in shallow mass graves without any identifying markers.

Having recently secured their freedom, Black Charlestonians now asserted their own political agency and demonstrated their respect for the Union occupiers by assembling at Washington Racetrack to rebury and honor Union soldiers who died at the camp. More than five thousand African American men, organized through Zion Presbyterian Church, gathered to build a fence around the burial ground to prevent damage from animals in the area. They called it the “Martyrs of the Racecourse Cemetery”. Two African American voluntary groups, the Friends of the Martyrs and the Patriotic Association of Colored Men, took on the responsibility of cleaning

⁴² “The Oath of Allegiance in Charleston,” *New York Times* (New York, New York) March 30, 1865.

and maintaining the graves. A war correspondent from the *New York Tribune* estimated that the men had put in more than two hundred days of work on the cemetery, but noted that they had asked for no compensation for their labor.⁴³

Finally, on May 30, 1865, hundreds of African American men, women, and children gathered to celebrate the sacrifices of the Martyrs. They assembled in a parade that snaked around the city and ended at the cemetery where members of the procession laid flowers on the soldiers' graves.⁴⁴ The parade and other commemorative acts were traditional nineteenth century memorial practices, but took on a new meaning when performed by freed slaves. By honoring a specific memorial narrative that acknowledged and celebrated both Union military victory and Emancipation, the freed men and women at the racecourse created and attached themselves to a victorious past.

As William Blair attests, "whoever appeared in public spaces, and under what auspices, testified to the distribution of power at a particular moment."⁴⁵ While formerly enslaved people publicly celebrated freedom and honored the dead, Union commanders in Charleston limited the ability of former Confederates to hold elaborate commemorative ceremonies in large urban spaces. They worried that these large-scale commemorations might lead to another insurrection. That fear led to strict ordinances forbidding ex-Confederates from flying flags, displaying tokens of allegiance, or wearing old uniforms. The only exception was made for destitute men, who

⁴³ James Redpath, "The Work at Charleston," *Freedman's Record* 1 (Oct. 1865): 157, as quoted on Kytile and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 56.

⁴⁴ Kytile and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 57. See also: Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 12. for the importance of the commemorative procession in antebellum civic celebrations.

⁴⁵ William A. Blair, *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2004) 78.

were permitted to wear their old uniform if it was the only set of clothes they owned. Northerners visiting the city noted the absence of Confederate iconography and subdued attitudes of the former planters. One correspondent for the *Boston Daily Journal* remarked with pleasant surprise that “William Lloyd Garrison or Wendell Philips or Henry Ward Beecher can speak their minds in the open air...without fear of molestation.”⁴⁶ Separate from the public spaces of downtown Charleston, Magnolia Cemetery therefore became a politicized space where former Confederates could gather and celebrate their Lost Cause.⁴⁷

The Impact of Ladies’ Memorial Associations

Even in the earliest periods of memorialization, women were perceived to be the “guardians” of soldiers' memory. With men of all ages away at war, the women who remained at home were left with the difficult job of maintaining the spirit of the Confederacy.. As Caroline Janney attests, Southern women took pride in demonstrating their allegiance to the Confederacy. They showed this allegiance through actions as small as hanging battle flags on their Christmas tree, or as great as raising funds to support increasingly ragged troops. Many observers agreed that these white Southern women possessed a greater zeal for the Cause than the soldiers who fought for it.⁴⁸ Following the surrender, former soldiers were able to distance themselves from

⁴⁶ Charles Coffin quoted on Kytle and Roberts, *Denmark Vessey’s Garden*, 44.

⁴⁷ Interestingly, Joy Giguere argues that “despite Northern efforts, either real or imagined, to ‘other’ the South and discount its participation in the national culture, white urban Southerners’ embrace of the rural cemetery movement is indicative of their patent rejection of the othering process.” She continues, arguing that, “Southerners embraced the idea of the rural cemetery as an inherently American cultural institution and then used the landscape in ways that affirmed the role of the South in the national historical narrative and collective identity.” She thus takes a slightly different approach, interpreting the retreat out of urban spaces as a part of a larger national movement, rather than as a regionalist act of individualism. Joy Giguere, “The Rural Cemetery Movement,” 850.

⁴⁸ Caroline L. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause*. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2008) 40-43.

the war by laying down arms and returning home. However, for Confederate women long accustomed to waging an ideological war rather than a material one, the separation was much more difficult. When the war ended, white women simply shifted their energy from patriotic wartime work to repairing their shattered society. They mustered their resources and focused on ensuring that the Confederacy, though defeated on the battlefield, would live on in the memories of its former citizens.

Women took such a prominent role in memorialization efforts that Northern observers often accused Southern men of hiding behind their women's skirts. Critics mocked Southern men by accusing them of taking on the submissive "feminine" role; former Confederates were "unmanned" by allowing their wives to orchestrate rituals of mourning.⁴⁹ However, women were logical organizers in occupied Southern states. Not only did women's expected social roles make them predisposed to memorial work, but their status as "apolitical" beings made them effective Confederate organizers.⁵⁰ Since Southern women were assumed to exist outside of the political world, they could plan and execute memorial day ceremonies without arousing the suspicion that a group of Confederate veterans might have.

As such, many of the earliest memorial days in Charleston and other Southern cities were subdued, cautious affairs organized almost entirely by women. Local women's memorial groups organized small flower-laying ceremonies, and veterans were either absent from the proceedings or virtually silent. Rather than invite veterans to give a keynote speech about stirring memories

⁴⁹ Nina Silber, *Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1993) 28-29. Silber also argues that formerly elite white women later became sympathetic figures in the eyes of a Northern audience. Some saw them as naive pawns in a morally corrupt system, while others pitied them for nobly trying to preserve ideals of womanhood despite catastrophic loss. (Silber 49-51)

⁵⁰ Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past*, 64.

of war, memorial associations invited local religious leaders. These ministers spoke of mourning with quiet undertones of resilience- just enough to stay under the radar.⁵¹

Confederate Memorial Days

The dates of memorial days also varied across the South out of an abundance of caution. If there was just one day of mourning for the Cause and lost soldiers, Union troops would act quickly to shut down commemorative ceremonies for fear of seditious behavior. Instead, Southern towns and cities chose a variety of memorial days that had a personal significance to their citizens. Frequently, they selected the anniversaries of local battles or the birth and death days of famous Confederates.

Despite the regional variation, nearly all of the memorial days were in April, May, or June. Military tactics ensured that most major battles were fought in those months, as armies camped over winter and advanced in spring. The concentration of battles in late spring and early summer meant that most “death days” were also found in those months.⁵² For instance, South Carolina still acknowledges Confederate Memorial Day on May 10, the anniversary of General Thomas J. Jackson’s death at Chancellorsville in 1863. Charleston also frequently celebrated Confederate Memorial Day on June 16, the anniversary of the battle of Secessionville in 1862.⁵³ Spring and early summer brought large quantities of flowers for gravesites, and since Secessionville was local, many veterans of the battle could return for commemorative ceremonies. It was Charleston’s own battle, and was a logical choice for a memorial day.

⁵¹ Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 77.

⁵² David Blight, *Race and Reunion*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001), 256-257.

⁵³ Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 29.

In December of 1866, General Daniel E. Sickles ordered that all Confederate memorial organizations must confine themselves to charity or memorial services.⁵⁴ With this order Sickles hindered the execution of, but did not prohibit, ceremonies honoring Confederate dead. Decoration Days, therefore, became carefully choreographed dances that toed the line between outright political dissent and respectful commemoration. Allowing women's groups to take the organizational lead lulled occupiers like Sickles into forgetting "the bitterness behind these early occasions" and only regarding them as "benign rituals of mourning," designed to foster reconciliation.⁵⁵ Coverage in local newspapers of various Memorial and Decoration Days celebrated in Magnolia Cemetery give an indication of how Charlestonians used these days to both grieve personal losses and to take quiet stands against the new political order.

On May 13, 1869, the *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* faithfully reported the Confederate Memorial Day proceedings at Magnolia Cemetery three days prior. With reverent language, the *Courier's* correspondent began his description of the day's event with the observation that "we can imagine no more affecting sight than that of two thousand people with bowed heads at the graves of the men who sacrificed their lives in defense of their country."⁵⁶ The correspondent's choice of "*their* country" emphasizes that while South Carolinians might be ostensibly reunited with the Union, they were far from accepting of their fate. The 1869 ceremony and coverage thereof is characteristic of Decoration Days of the mid-Reconstruction period; observers and participants were subdued "with all the solemnity which the occasion called for," but were far

⁵⁴ Kytle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 80.

⁵⁵ Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 105

⁵⁶ "Memorial Day." *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 13, 1869.

from submissive.⁵⁷ In addition, the correspondent makes no mention of any soldiers in attendance or any male military or political presence whatsoever. Instead, he emphasizes the role of women's voluntary organizations in the day's proceedings, commenting that "the women of Charleston, heaven bless them, are never missing when there is work to be done... they are always ready and willing to work steadfastly, unceasingly."⁵⁸ Decoration Days here represented unassuming "institutions of middle-class decorum," like women's charitable or voluntary organizations, rather than potentially threatening military groups. William Blair argues that during this period, "the Cities of the Dead wore a widow's black garb rather than a veteran's gray uniform."⁵⁹

The ceremony was notable for its length. The services dominated the workday, and superseded all other normal activities for attendees. The *Courier* reported that "after three o'clock business was generally suspended," and that services concluded "as the sun sank in the Western horizon."⁶⁰ A significant portion of the white Charleston community was involved, and "the various roads and avenues leading to Magnolia teemed with men and women and children, on foot and in every kind of vehicle." The inclusion of children was critical to the success of early memorial ceremonies and remained critical to monument dedications in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁶¹ Children provided the link between past and future; their involvement

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 69.

⁶⁰ "Memorial Day." *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 13, 1869.

⁶¹ Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 63.

in the ceremonies ensured that the rhetoric of the Lost Cause was passed on to future generations.

As with most early Decoration Days, the 1869 ceremony began with a prayer. The *Courier* notes that the “venerable DR. BACHMAN... attempted to read the opening ode.” Bachman, apparently overcome with emotion, could not go on and ceded the platform to another gentleman who gave the opening prayer. Because Decoration Days were the rare opportunity in which ex-Confederates could carefully air their displeasure with their current station, the opening prayer was wrought with politicized language. It began by thanking the Heavenly Father, who “hast implanted in our souls the love of country, and hast honored those who fought for their liberties, their firesides, and their homes.” With these lines, the prayer subtly reframes the narrative of the war. The prayer casts Southerners as brave defenders of homeland and Constitutional rights, rather than aggressors and staunch protectors of slavery. In doing so, Southerners created a viable postwar narrative, or usable history. What Southerners labeled historical truth actually responded to the politics of Reconstruction; they could hardly continue to cling to a dead institution, so they created a political motivation for war that would continue to be a viable rallying cry during and after Reconstruction. Ending with another reference to contemporary politics, the prayer begged God to “Redress our wrongs! Save us from the oppressor,” and “restore our lost liberties.”⁶² The prayer exemplifies how white Southerners, largely barred from political organizing, were able to effectively convey politicized messages under the guise of mourning.

⁶² “Memorial Day.” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 13, 1869.

After the reading of the dedicatory prayer and the singing of an ode to the fallen soldiers, the main event of the day commenced. The *Courier* reported that “while the notes of the singers were pealing out upon the open air and reverberating through the surrounding foliage,” the Ladies’ Memorial Association began the “loving” work of, “strewing with flowers the six hundred mounds that marked the resting places of the Confederate dead.” The correspondent noted that, thanks to the fond efforts of the women and the “vernal offerings of Nature,” the burial ground soon resembled a “Garden Spot.” Their work having been completed, the women concluded the ceremony, and the “immense multitude that had assembled... left... the hallowed spot to the solitude and peace that reigns in the City of the Dead.”⁶³ The ceremony was as predictable as the ones that came before it. Indeed, the success of these ceremonies was predicated on their predictability. Each year, white Charlestonians gathered to go through familiar rituals that reinforced their faith in their collective but largely imagined past. In the uncertain political and social worlds of the Reconstruction era, Southerners turned to the trappings of tradition for solace. They relished the ability to come together to celebrate their failed slaveholders’ republic, and invented small victories to mitigate the impact of their total defeat.

Cemetery Monuments 1865 - 1880: Politics Wear a Mourning Veil

A closer analysis of the four most prominent monuments dedicated in Magnolia, Bethany, and St. Lawrence Cemeteries demonstrates the commemorative and political work that these sites performed during Reconstruction. All four monuments ostensibly mourn the dead and honor the past sacrifices of Confederate veterans. However, each monument was also used to legitimize some aspect of Southern life at the time of its dedication. Even in the earliest stages, Confederate

⁶³ “Memorial Day.” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 13, 1869.

monuments were political tools that responded to contemporary social issues more than they reflected “true history.” The Confederate Monument at Magnolia, the Charleston Light Dragoons Monument at Magnolia, the German Soldiers’ Monument at Bethany Cemetery, and the Irish Soldiers’ Monument at St. Lawrence Cemetery all reflect Charlestonians’ attempts to come to terms with deep personal and societal trauma. Simultaneously, they also reflect Charlestonians’ rejection of the new political and social order through a wholehearted focus on the glories of the past.

The Confederate Monument at Magnolia and the Soldiers’ Ground

In 1882, the Ladies’ Memorial Association of Charleston unveiled the monument that marked their greatest project yet. The women of the LMAC had been involved with the memorial ceremonies held at Magnolia Cemetery for decades, but with the dedication of the Confederate Monument at the Soldiers’ Ground, they announced their expanded sphere of influence. The statue itself is large, and its form is more sophisticated than most of the earliest Confederate cemetery monuments. A bronze soldier stands atop a tall, square base, rising from four receding steps and crowned with a somewhat flat architrave. The LMAC commissioned the sculptor F. Von Muller of Munich to craft the soldier, and commissioned a local stoneworker to craft the base.⁶⁴

The statue stands at the center of the Soldiers’ Ground burial site, and is flanked by smaller stone monuments topped with stone urns. One stands to the west, and “is intended to commemorate the generals of South Carolina who fell during the war or who have died since.”

⁶⁴ “Ladies’ Memorial Association Records, 1866-1916,” Typewritten Manuscript, South Carolina Historical Society 34/0116, page 26.

The other, identical in form, stands to the east of the main monument and “is designed to commemorate the historic places connected with the defense of Charleston.”⁶⁵ With the combination of the three monuments and the Soldiers’ Ground, the Ladies Memorial Association was able to commemorate the sacrifices of individuals, larger Confederate ideology, and sacred places all in one location. To ex-Confederates and Southern sympathizers, this tableaux presented a history lesson like no other. However, that lesson was told from a perspective that was far from neutral.

*Close view of the Confederate Monument at the Soldiers’ Ground,
Magnolia Cemetery,
Charleston, SC.*

Photo by author.

Reports reproduced in *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* provide a description of the dedication. Breaking years of tradition, the monument was dedicated on Thanksgiving Day 1882.

The paper offered the memorial ceremonies in Charleston as evidence that “the memory of the brave men who fell in the civil war



survives the lapse of time.”⁶⁶ The article continued, noting that “every year witnesses the erection of monuments to perpetuate their fame in various parts of the country.” The increase in Confederate monuments across the South, noticeable enough to be commented upon in a national newspaper, reflected a changing political structure combined with a redoubled emphasis on tradition. The monument at Magnolia was a product of this trend toward more dramatic memorialization efforts, and was the culmination of more than a decade’s worth of work by the Ladies’ Memorial Association of Charleston.

Though it was a national periodical, *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* reported the day’s events in a tone that reflected sympathy towards the South. That sympathy is reflected even in the description of the bronze soldier’s pose. The correspondent rhapsodizes about the, “Confederate soldier accoutered for war... wearing the famous tattered gray coat,” who “clutches his musket... and the standard... looking defiantly at the enemy as he presses it to his heart.”⁶⁷ *Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper* appears to have interpreted the statue just as its designers intended it to be understood. The soldier encapsulates the ideals of the Lost Cause in his very appearance. His tattered coat suggests battling resolutely against all odds, which lends aesthetic credence to the Lost Cause tenet that “’twas Fate, not Valor, [that] failed to lay the Northman low!”⁶⁸ His dedication to the standard of the CSA suggests his passion for his homeland, which aligns with a

⁶⁶ “South Carolina-The New Confederated Monument in Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, Unveiled November 30th,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, January 6, 1883, 325. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers (accessed April 18, 2021). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3012608983/NCNP?u=viva_wm&sid=NCNP&xid=ed06cb24.

⁶⁷ “South Carolina-The New Confederated Monument in Magnolia Cemetery, Charleston, Unveiled November 30th,” *Frank Leslie’s Illustrated Newspaper*, January 6, 1883, 326.

⁶⁸ “A Few Thoughts on the Impending Issues,” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

cornerstone of the Lost Cause- the Confederacy fought for the love of home and country, rather than to protect the institution of slavery.⁶⁹ His singular and defiant pose against the enemy onslaught supports the Lost Cause notion that one Southern soldier was equal in strength and valor to a hundred Northern soldiers.

To ensure that their efforts stayed fresh in Charlestonians' minds, the LMAC planned various rituals of commemoration to mark each step of the monument's creation. On Confederate Memorial Day 1870, the LMAC planned an elaborate ceremony to mark the laying of the monument's cornerstone.⁷⁰ Once again, the *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* provided extensive coverage of the event. The *Courier* attested that "every year since the close of the war, the services upon this solemn occasion have become more imposing and impressive."⁷¹ The *Courier* even went so far as to say that "they have attained unto what may, with propriety, be called a degree of perfection." The *New York Times* took a completely different view. Writing about the growth of "Southern spirit" at late Reconstruction Decoration Days, the *Times* observed that the ceremonies had become "nothing more than potent political engines in the hands of unscrupulous Democrats."⁷² The thin veil of mourning behind which discontented Southerners hid was slipping, revealing their political motivations.

Like the ceremony a year earlier, the Memorial Day festivities began around midday, when "by the request of the Ladies' Memorial Association... the various places of business...

⁶⁹ Adam Domby, *The False Cause: Fraud, Fabrication, and White Supremacy in Confederate Memory* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2020) 7.

⁷⁰ Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 69.

⁷¹ "Memorial Day" *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

⁷² *New York Times*, June 28, 1866, as quoted on Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 62.

were closed.” In addition, “wagons were dispatched through our principle streets, and were speedily filled with... wreaths, crosses, [and] bouquets”, which were then promptly “conveyed to Magnolia to be used upon the soldiers’ graves.”⁷³ Unlike the ceremony a year earlier however, this excerpt testifies to the fact that the preparations and festivities were not confined to the roads surrounding the semi-rural cemetery, but rather spilled out into the “principal streets” of downtown Charleston. As Southerners grew more confident and federal restrictions more lax, Confederate memorialization efforts physically expanded into spaces formerly under the watchful eye of Union occupiers.

The paper described the scene at Magnolia Cemetery in typically sentimental and Romantic terms, writing that “the stately old live oaks... seemed to stand as living sentinels over the resting places of the dead, while... ten thousand flowers... robed the entire place in a garment beautiful to the eye.”⁷⁴ Laying the cornerstone for the monument was the first order of the day, and the *Courier* reported that the deed itself would be performed by the Grand Lodge of Ancient Freemasons of South Carolina. They were assembled on a raised platform surrounding the prepared area, and armed deacons ensured that no one entered the sacred area aside from Masons and members of the Ladies’ Memorial Association. It is notable that while women were (and are) excluded from societies like the Freemasons, the women of the LMAC stood equally beside the participants in the day’s ceremonies.⁷⁵ In addition, the Freemasons might have been a national organization claiming descent from the ancient civilizations, but the members of the

⁷³ “Memorial Day: On the Road” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

⁷⁴ “Memorial Day: Magnolia” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

⁷⁵ “Memorial Day: Grand Lodge” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

South Carolina lodge came from Charleston's oldest and most conservative families. Among those laying the cornerstone were J.R. Pringle and H. DeSaussure, two of the Lost Cause's most public and vocal defenders. They might not have been able to lay the cornerstone as ex-Confederates in name, but their presence was nevertheless a sign of their significance to Lost Cause commemoration.

Before the cornerstone could be laid, however, a local reverend read a benediction written for the occasion by Dr. Bachman, whose prayer had opened the previous year's ceremonies. Once again, Bachman's prayer spoke more to the contemporary political climate than it did to God. The prayer called upon God to, "grant that the monument here to be erected may foster in the hearts of our sons and daughters the spirit of patriotism." Of course, Bachman referred to Southern patriotism, rather than national patriotism. The prayer continued, calling for the monument to inspire future generations to remember the nobility of sacrifice, especially sacrifice for a cause as just as that of the Confederacy. Bachman's prayer concluded by calling a return to peace, where "sorrows shall end."⁷⁶ With this line, the Reverend refers not just to the biblically promised Second Coming, but also quietly to the eagerly anticipated end of Reconstruction.

After more carefully structured ritual, the LMAC and the Freemasons carefully lowered a box containing historical "relics" into the ground ahead of the cornerstone. This was a well-documented procedure repeated at monuments all across South; towns assembled artifacts that told a story about their own heritage and buried them beneath their respective Confederate

⁷⁶ "Prayer by Dr. Bachman" *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

monuments.⁷⁷ This particular box contained newspaper clippings, pieces of a Palmetto tree, South Carolina state flags, and Confederate battle flags. However, most critically, it also contained the roster and constitution of the Ladies' Memorial Association. By burying their essential documents in this box, they physically connected themselves to the monument they erected. In addition, this inclusion demonstrated that the LMAC's authority and influence in the community was pronounced enough to render their institutional artifacts equal in importance to the Confederate battle flag and the South Carolina state tree. With this box, the LMAC was officially enshrined as an essential part of Confederate history in Charleston.

The cornerstone was anointed with holy oil, and lowered into the ground as the women of the LMAC looked proudly on. When the deed was completed, General James Connor stood up to give the keynote remarks. Gen. Connor gave his speech under the auspices of his role as a prominent Freemason, but the *Courier* proudly listed his military service in the Confederate army as the most important of his many accolades. Connor used his speech to recall the glory days of the Civil War, and called for the greatest honors to be vested upon the dead soldiers buried at Magnolia. The most important aspect of his speech came in his conclusion. There he spoke to the assembled crowd about contemporary concerns and his hopes for the future. No matter what, he declared, the men buried at Magnolia did not die in vain. The future held one of two options, and "whether it restore a more pristine glory to the prostrate and discrowned Nation,

⁷⁷ Christina Morales, "Time Capsule Found in North Carolina Confederate Monument," *The New York Times*, July 8, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/08/us/confederate-monument-robert-lee-north-carolina.html>.

or deepens yet farther the sorrow which her true sons feel,” the South could look to their fallen soldiers for hope and guidance.⁷⁸

The service demonstrated that Southern men were no longer hiding behind the skirts of their women’s memorial associations, but neither were they outright waving Confederate Battle Flags. In this late Reconstruction period, Southerners still walked a careful line. Their services grew bolder, but came just short of defiantly celebrating Confederate heritage. General Connor told transfixing stories of South Carolina’s military greatness, but did so as a Freemason rather than as a former Confederate general. The Ladies’ Memorial Association still controlled the day, but ensured that all aspects of Confederate heritage were represented in the services, including male military elements that were banned just a few years earlier. As Connor himself said during his speech, “the old order changeth, yielding place to the new.”⁷⁹ Southerners were in limbo during the late Reconstruction period; they did far more than just mourn their dead in their memorial services, but they were not yet powerful enough to bring their rituals to the streets of downtown Charleston. For now, they could only wait for political reality to catch up with their lofty rhetoric.

Only a year later, on Confederate Memorial Day 1871, the LMAC dedicated their new “Soldiers’ Ground” at Magnolia Cemetery. One of their leaders, Mary Amaranthia Yates Snowden, was responsible for negotiating the repatriation of eighty-four South Carolinians from the Gettysburg battlefield.⁸⁰ Snowden was the widow of a Confederate soldier, and capitalized on

⁷⁸ “General Connor’s Address” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

⁷⁹ “General Connor’s Address” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

⁸⁰ Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 69

both her personal losses and her position as the leader of one of the South's most prominent Ladies' Memorial Associations to advocate for repatriation. She obtained legislative funding for the construction of the Soldiers' Ground, and even secured donations of excess marble and granite deemed "unusable" from the construction of the new state capitol building in Columbia.⁸¹ Both of these achievements testified to the fact that decoration days were no longer simple tributes to the dead organized at the local level; while still relegated to the outskirts of town, they were nevertheless becoming a central part of postwar Southern life. Following Snowden's diplomatic victory, the LMAC arranged for the soldiers' reinterment in a prominent part of Magnolia Cemetery. The dedication of the new area of the cemetery was the highlight of the 1871 Memorial Day festivities, which attracted more than six thousand people.⁸² Observers noted that "the population turned out *en masse* to do honor to the remains of the fallen heroes."⁸³

The *Charleston Daily News* noted that "the memories of the past, which seem of late to have been smothered by our present troubles, were once more awakened."⁸⁴ The paper declared proudly that the burial ground existed to educate future generations about the nobility of the Confederate struggle. The correspondent described gazing out across "the long row of freshly made graves," which "spoke louder than trumpets," and was overcome with the feeling that "the cause for which they died was invested with a brighter glory by the immensity of their sacrifice."

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ "Memorial Celebrations," *The Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, S.C.) May 11, 1871, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026994/1871-05-11/ed-1/seq-3/>.

⁸⁴ "Memorial Celebrations," *The Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, S.C.) May 11, 1871, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026994/1871-05-11/ed-1/seq-3/>.

In the midst of his raptures about the valor of Confederate soldiers, the correspondent paid homage to the women who orchestrated their reburial. He proclaimed “all honor to the ladies who have assisted in this sacred work.” Though the ceremony was dominated by the male military element more so than ever before, the Ladies’ Memorial Association still retained their place of honor in the minds of attendees.

*View of the Soldiers’ Ground,
Magnolia Cemetery,
with monument in the background.*

Photo by author.

The opening prayer was delivered by the Rev. Ellison Capers, an Episcopal bishop and former Confederate soldier. Like the Freemasons the year before, he did not officially give his remarks as a former Confederate.

Nevertheless, his words were intended as encouragement to his former comrades, rather than as a neutral benediction. Capers begged God to “look in mercy upon our distracted Land” and “remove the Evil, under which we groan.” Ostensibly, the



purpose of the day was still decorating soldiers' graves with flowers, an act performed in a cemetery by genteel Southern women. Observing similar rituals in Richmond, a Northern man observed that such ceremonies were "too sacred to be associated with the vulgar details of politics."⁸⁵ The observer interpreted the ceremonies exactly as they were intended to be seen by outsiders. However, his interpretation could not be further from the truth. Capers' benediction, like Bachman's benedictions in earlier years, toed the line between mourning and political dissent. Capers' words functioned like a dog whistle to the assembled audience, who understood his words exactly as intended. They took comfort in his confidence in their character as "a patriotic and courageous people untarnished" and his assertion that they had "nothing to regret in [their] defense of the rights and honor of [their] Southland", and looked forward to the near future when the "Evil" of Reconstruction might be laid low.⁸⁶

The keynote speaker of the day was the Reverend John Girardeau, who had given the address at the first Decoration Day at Magnolia only a few years earlier. True to form, Girardeau's speech was fiery and unrepentant. He proclaimed the fallen soldiers to be "Heroes of Gettysburg! Champions of constitutional rights! Martyrs of regulated liberty!"⁸⁷ In doing so, he effectively re-fashioned a narrative of Southern motivations for war that did not include a defense of slavery. By 1871, most Americans officially recognized slavery as a fundamental wrong. To aggressively defend the institution only a few years after the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution would be gauche and ill-advised.

⁸⁵ Blair, *Cities of the Death*, 105.

⁸⁶ "Memorial Celebrations," *The Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, S.C.) May 11, 1871. *See also*: Ellison Capers Prayer, Plaque at City Hall, Charleston, SC.

⁸⁷ Kyle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 82.

In addition, Southerners needed to convince both themselves and the nation of the righteousness of their Cause. In order to do so, they “gravitated towards arguments that spoke directly to Reconstruction politics.”⁸⁸ Rather than begin their argument on the defensive, fighting for an institution that was almost universally condemned, Southerners like Girardeau opted to re-fashion their history into something that allowed for the potential of a partial victory. Continuing to acknowledge that the war had been fought for slavery would be to admit total defeat, as the cause for which the South fought had been outlawed. If, however, the South had been fighting for States’ Rights all along, then they could continue that fight into the Reconstruction era without admitting total defeat. In addition, any Reconstruction-era victory for the States’ Rights cause would be, by extension, a Confederate victory as well.

Girardeau all but acknowledged as much in his speech. He dedicated his remarks at the Soldiers’ Ground to the “Soldiers of a defeated- God grant it may not be a wholly lost- Cause!”⁸⁹ The *Charleston Daily Courier* pronounced his words to be “soul stirring.” The paper declared that his words were “met with a warm sympathy from the audience,” and “his master delineation of our present situation... and our proper course excited the deepest interest.”⁹⁰ Southerners relished the opportunity to find an avenue for victory; they would be willing to accept that a victory over Reconstruction was just as satisfying as a victory over the Union. Before long, they would come to completely conflate the two.

Charleston Light Dragoons Monument

⁸⁸ Kytle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, 80.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 82

⁹⁰ “Memorial Celebrations,” *The Charleston Daily News* (Charleston, S.C.) May 11, 1871, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026994/1871-05-11/ed-1/seq-3/>.

On May 10, 1886, Charlestonians gathered in Magnolia Cemetery to dedicate a memorial to the Charleston Light Dragoons. This monument was the result of more than a decade of work by the male Survivors' Association and the surviving Light Dragoons veterans. It also reflected the stirrings of political change. With each passing year, Union occupiers grew either more lax or more sympathetic, and Confederate memorial groups grew bolder. Many Northerners, especially those in the military, looked sympathetically upon ordinary Southern citizens and believed them to be "misguided." They were unwilling to foist the blame for the rebellion on Southern soldiers and townspeople, as they believed the Confederacy's leaders to be primarily responsible for the war and its resulting destruction.⁹¹ As a result, Southerners were able to gradually re-introduce the male military element to memorial ceremonies across the South. Memorial groups and Survivors' Associations also moved away from simple grave decoration and toward larger memorial processions and commemorative ceremonies.⁹² The male-led dedication of a monument to a military group in Charleston was a big step, and reflected a shifting social order.

While the company of Charleston Light Dragoons that the monument honored had disbanded after the end of the war, a new group quickly took their place. In July of 1865, Provisional Governor Benjamin Perry called for the formation of white volunteer militias to prevent against lawlessness and the perceived unruliness of freedmen across the state. In response, a new group of Charleston Light Dragoons assembled.⁹³ Few wartime members returned, and the group itself became a "social club" when the 1867 Reconstruction Acts

⁹¹ Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 17.

⁹² Blair, *Cities of the Dead*, 82.

⁹³ William Eric Emerson, "Sons of Privilege: The Charleston Light Dragoons and the Civil War," Ph.D., The University of Alabama, 2002. <https://search.proquest.com/docview/304802652/abstract/8A09D3268EB8416BPQ/1>.

outlawed Southern militias.⁹⁴ Though deklawed, this new group held on to their mission to restore the authority of white men in South Carolina, and bided their time.

While the new Dragoons waited for the opportunity to take action, the wartime Dragoons formed a Survivors' Association "to preserve, by continued personal association, the friendships existing between the men, to dispense charity, as far as practicable, to the families of comrades, and eventually to erect a Monument to their fallen fellow soldiers."⁹⁵ The company, formerly composed of the heirs of some of the state's oldest and most elite families, now faced ruin and desolation. Many members were forced to work menial jobs, and the city they had once fought to protect was a burned-out shell of its former self. For these men, membership in the Survivors Association was a link to the antebellum years, and the planned monument was an opportunity to set that past in stone. Meetings with their former comrades allowed them to reminisce about their glorious past and mourn their fallen comrades. Through these meetings, they kept a mournful but nevertheless proud vision of the old South alive. In addition, the eventual unification of the old Dragoons with the new pseudo-militia group gave the ex-Confederates an opportunity to look forward to the future.

Though still ostensibly a social group, the new Charleston Light Dragoons had quietly become a "Saber Club," or the cavalry version of the "Rifle Clubs" that emerged across the South in the late nineteenth century.⁹⁶ They served the paramilitary arm of the Southern Democratic Party, and existed to intimidate Black voters and elected officials. Arguably, the Light Dragoons

⁹⁴ Emerson, "Sons of Privilege," 241.

⁹⁵ Emerson, "Sons of Privilege," 247.

⁹⁶ Emerson, "Sons of Privilege," 252.

Saber Club represented the political atmosphere of South Carolina in miniature. They derived their legitimacy within Charleston society through association with the sociopolitical structures of the antebellum era, and worked outside of the existing power structures to intimidate and coerce Black voters with the intention of securing power for elite white Democratic men.

Though it took time, the Survivors' Association gradually raised enough money to erect the planned monument to their "fallen fellow soldiers" in 1886. The final product was a stone obelisk on a raised plinth, imprinted with the seal of the Charleston Light Dragoons.⁹⁷ Inscribed around the base are dedications "to the heroic dead" that include the names of Dragoons killed in action, a list of battles and skirmishes in which the Dragoons participated, and a quotation celebrating the valor and sacrifices of the company. Lists of names were common on early cemetery monuments; the names on the Light Dragoons obelisk reflected personal grief as well as the Survivor's Association's concern for honoring and perpetuating the memory of the individual soldier. Monuments like the simple Light Dragoons monument, with its personal affectations and associations with individual loss, contrast with later monuments that recalled only the ideology and theoretical purpose of the Confederacy.

The main inscription on the Charleston Light Dragoons monument is taken from Thomas Babington Macaulay's "The Lays of Ancient Rome," and reads "For how can man die better, than

⁹⁷ In the decade immediately following the war, obelisks accounted for two-thirds of the monuments installed. The architect Russell Sturgis Jr. noted that the obelisk was, "a simple and not necessarily expensive kind of monument which is often used for a private tombstone." It therefore already had funerary connotations in the minds of nineteenth-century Americans. Additionally, Sturgis argued that the obelisk was particularly suited for a Civil War monument because it was, "an emblem of eternity" and because, "the Egyptian idea of this monument was the idea of an excellent place for inscriptions," particularly for lists of the dead. Finally, Thomas J. Brown points out that the obelisk had also been used for famous Revolutionary War monuments, and thus the form carried an added significance in American memory. He is speaking for the Northern perspective, but the speeches made at the dedication of the Dragoons monument and its inscription also demonstrate a desire to link the recent past with canonized military glory. See: Russell Sturgis Jr., "Something About Monuments," *The Nation* 1 (August 3, 1865): 155. and Thomas J. Brown, *Civil War Monuments and The Militarization of America*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2019) 38.

facing fearful odds, for the ashes of his fathers and temples of his gods.”⁹⁸ The inscription represents the desire to link the Confederate cause to ancient historical struggles, filtered through a nineteenth-century Romantic lens. According to Macaulay’s 1847 poem, Publius Horatius uttered the lines to inspire his two comrades as they stood ready to defend the Roman Pons Sublicus against the oncoming Etruscan army. For champions of the Lost Cause, Horatius’ struggle is easily equated to the struggle of the Confederate army.⁹⁹ They saw Confederates as noble warriors who were also willing to sacrifice everything to defend the home, even when facing impossible odds. The monument’s simple outward appearance and carefully chosen inscription are intended to convey tasteful appreciation for the soldiers’ sacrifice, while still respecting mourning tradition. As the dedicatory prayer declared, it was a “testimonial of our deathless affection for that heroic, melancholy past which can never be forgotten.”¹⁰⁰

*Charleston Light Dragoons
Monument,
Magnolia Cemetery,
Charleston, SC.*

Photo by author.



⁹⁸ Thomas Babington Macaulay, *The Lays of Ancient Rome* (1847), 37.

⁹⁹ At a monument dedication in the South Carolina upstate, the speaker Joshua H. Hudson maintained that “the phalanxes of Miltiades, the Legions of Caesar, the battalions of Napoleon, or the patriots of Washington deserve no higher eoniums for all soldierly virtues than the Confederate dead.” Just a few counties away, this speaker made similar connections to ancient and historic heroism in order to elevate the Confederate dead. *See: Brown, Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, 200.

¹⁰⁰ M.C. Butler., and B.H. Rutledge. *Proceedings at the Unveiling of the Monument to the Charleston Light Dragoons*. (Charleston: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1889).

Though the original Survivors' Association maintained that their motivation for erecting the monument was to mourn personal losses, the dedication was nevertheless used as an opportunity to link the old struggle to the new. The ceremony began with a solemn prayer, dedicated to the "memory of gallant comrades, who, amidst the thunder of battle, or in the suffering hospital, gave up their lives in patriotic maintenance of principle."¹⁰¹ The religious opening served to further venerate the Confederate Cause and make it an object of spiritual devotion. The minister prayed for peace and reconciliation, a petition that would fade from dedication rhetoric later in the nineteenth and early twentieth century as the mission of monumentalization shifted from mourning to vindication. Orations about the bravery and sacrifice of the soldiers followed the opening remarks. Several former officers (including the state favorite General Wade Hampton III) described in great detail the victories and defeats of the regiment. The ritualistic commemoration mirrored the ancient Greek traditions of lengthy orations upon the deaths of soldiers, which allowed the former Confederates to connect their cause to far more ancient endeavors, thus giving it further legitimacy.

The *Charleston Daily News and Courier* published an editorial on the Dragoons Monument dedication, reflecting on the messages that emerged from the ceremony. The editor again proclaimed the "valorous endurance of the knightly band of Carolinians,"¹⁰² but changed the message slightly by declaring that "the sons of those who fought for the South in the days that are gone will be the stay and strength of the American Republic."¹⁰³ He focused on the next

¹⁰¹ Butler and Rutledge, *Proceedings*, 4.

¹⁰² Butler and Rutledge, *Proceedings*, 29.

¹⁰³ Butler and Rutledge, *Proceedings*, 29.

generation as the heirs to their fathers' bravery and dedication to the Confederate Cause. His tone appears to be conciliatory, yet he still emphasized the superiority of the Southerners over other American soldiers. He made it very clear in his concluding paragraph that while Southerners might turn their singular talents to the United States in the spirit of reconciliation, "the one thing, the only thing, they cannot descend to... is to profess a contrition which could not be sincere, or to admit, or feel, that they are... below those who fought or talked on the other side in the cruel war."¹⁰⁴ In doing so, the editor subtly advised the sons of Confederates to keep their heads high and bide their time until they can demonstrate their "knightly" authority once again.

Ethnic Monuments: German and Irish Confederate Monuments

As the dedications of the Defenders of Charleston Memorial, the Soldiers' Ground, and the Charleston Light Dragoons Memorial attest, Southern men and women used these ceremonies to create a usable past for themselves and their community. They used these ceremonies and Decoration Days as unifying rituals that built solidarity between white Charlestonians and fostered a dedication to a common cause. However, elite white men and women were not the only people in Charleston to use the past to create a sociopolitical role for themselves in the present. The city also had a sizable population of German Americans, the majority of whom belonged to the working class. This group worked hard to strike a balance between preserving their ethnic and cultural identities and creating new identities as members white Charleston society.¹⁰⁵ Following the Civil War, many Germans believed that their best

¹⁰⁴ Butler and Rutledge, *Proceedings*, 30.

¹⁰⁵ Anderson, Kristen. "‘WIR AUCH IM SÜDEN HALTEN WACHT’: ETHNIC GERMANS AND CIVIL WAR COMMEMORATION IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY CHARLESTON." *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 117, no. 4 (2016): 295.

strategy for achieving acceptance in Charleston society was to claim connection to a Confederate past. Nevertheless, they strove to create their own distinctive historical narrative and collective memorial traditions so as not to be “absorbed into generic white southern-ness.”¹⁰⁶

However, German Charlestonians initially struggled to maintain their connection to their ethnic heritage and prove that they had been true and loyal Confederates at the same time. German Americans had fought on both sides of the Civil War, but because the majority of German immigrants were concentrated in the North, the preponderance of German Americans were Union soldiers. Three companies of Germans from Charleston had fought for the South, but their contributions to the Confederate war effort were overwhelmed by German contributions to the Union. In addition, German Southerners had to contend with the implications of Lost Cause mythology. One of the main tenets of the Lost Cause was the idea that the Confederacy had been vastly outnumbered by the Union, who had unfairly employed any number of foreign mercenaries to suppress the rebellion. Simply being German was enough to brand someone as disloyal to the Confederate cause.¹⁰⁷

Following the war, Southerners of all types struggled to make sense of defeat and explain why they had fought in the first place. Germans especially took advantage of this memorial reckoning to create a usable past for themselves, and to ensure that they contributed to the creation of Southern collective memory. In order to do so, German Southerners used the established Memorial Day customs to publicly assert their version of the Civil War that defended

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, “WIR AUCH IM SÜDEN HALTEN WACHT,” 296.

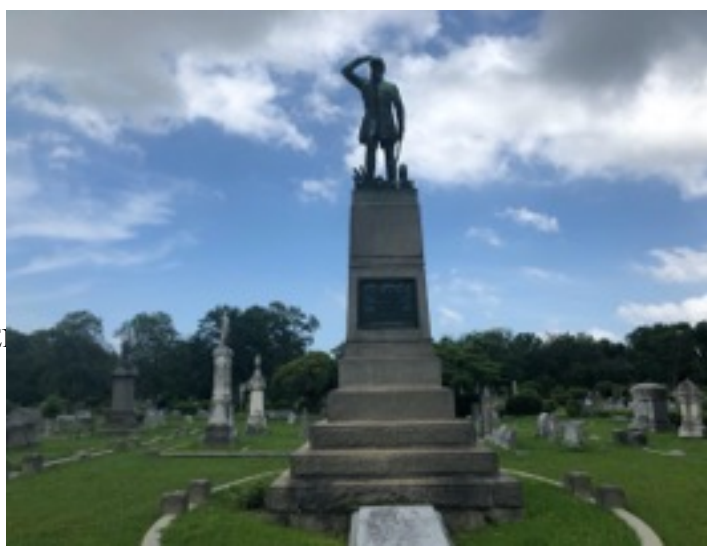
¹⁰⁷ Anderson, “WIR AUCH IM SÜDEN HALTEN WACHT,” 298.

their achievements and emphasized German bravery and loyalty. In Charleston, this memorial defense took the form of the Memorial to John A. Wagener in Bethany Cemetery.

In the years immediately following the Civil War, German Americans were present at Charleston Memorial Days, though they were not always visible participants.¹⁰⁸ Given the relative simplicity of the affairs and the almost nonexistent presence of male military groups in the early Memorial Days, German Americans had little room for participation. Therefore, they looked for other avenues through which they could assert their own loyalty, sacrifice, and cultural identity. They sought to do so by constructing and dedicating their own physical memorial. German Charlestonians were at a disadvantage when it came to memorial efforts, though. As discussed previously, elite white women were largely in control of fundraising for, designing, commissioning, and dedicating memorials to the Confederacy. However, the German population of Charleston was majority male, and as such was unable to form the same kind of Ladies' Memorial Associations that had functioned so effectively across the South.

*John A. Wagener Monument,
Bethany Cemetery,
Charleston, South Carolina.*

Photo taken by author.



¹⁰⁸ Anderson, "WIR AUCH IM SÜDEN HALTEN"

Nevertheless, they formed the same kinds of Survivors' Associations that functioned so effectively for the Charleston Light Dragoons. These associations, which were composed of veterans and which met regularly, created a space for former Confederates to cultivate their personal and collective memories of the war. Among German veterans, the associations were also vital to maintaining cultural cohesion and ethnic identity. The German Survivors' Association met for the first time in 1875, and by 1879, they were officially certified as a memorial association. Their aim was long-term vindication; German Charlestonian veterans sought to defend their "race of soldiers" through the memorial landscape.¹⁰⁹

The monument committee within the Survivors' Association chose Bethany Cemetery, the German cemetery located next to Magnolia Cemetery, as the site for their tribute. They also decided that the monument should honor John A. Wagener, a prominent Confederate general and well-respected German American citizen of Charleston. Wagener had been a central figure in Charleston society and politics for decades, and was even elected mayor in 1871. Not only was he a popular political figure, but was almost single-handedly responsible for the resurgence of German culture in Charleston in the mid-nineteenth century.¹¹⁰ During his lifetime, Wagener had founded the German Fire Engine Company, the German Colonization Society, a German-language church, and other voluntary associations that celebrated German ethnic identity.¹¹¹ Wagener's brother, Frederick, would later become one of the city's most prominent economic

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. 308 and 306.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 308.

¹¹¹ Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 46.

leaders. Thus, as a loyal Confederate, a favored member of elite Charleston society, and an important German citizen, Wagener was the perfect figure to represent Germans' contributions to the South.

In addition to Wagener himself, the memorial honored the German Volunteers, the German Hussars, and the German Artillery. Its design was rare in that it celebrated the achievements of an individual and a group simultaneously; it is the only monument or memorial in Charleston to do so. Their final design was markedly similar to that of the Defenders Charleston Memorial less than a mile away in Magnolia Cemetery. It is composed of a stone pedestal, about ten feet high, with inset bronze panels listing veterans of each of the German companies. A larger-than-life bronze statue of Wagener stands atop it, appearing in his role as an artillery officer. The memorial commission explained the symbolism of their intended design to the New York sculptor commissioned to execute their vision: Wagener would be stepping forward slightly, his hand raised as he gazed off into an unknown distance. Around him would rest various objects pertaining to an artillery unit, like the broken wheel of a gun carriage. The memorial commission professed that the statue was intended to represent the past, present, and future: Wagener's crisp uniform represented the idealized Confederate past, the broken wheel represented the presently defeated South, and Wagener's wistful forward gaze represented Southern hopes for the future.¹¹²

As with the other cemetery monuments discussed in this section, the processes of erecting and dedicating the monument were divided into individual ritualized ceremonies. In May of 1888, the cornerstone was laid, with former Confederate Captain Frederick Wagener offering the

¹¹² Anderson, "WIR AUCH IM SÜDEN HALTEN WACHT," 309.

keynote remarks. The following May, the final product was unveiled in a ceremony that was received extensive praise from Germans and non-German white Charlestonians alike. The ceremony was intended to celebrate German achievements in front of a general Southern audience, and as such, dedicatory prayers were offered in both German and English. Confederate General Wade Hampton III spoke at the dedication, which signaled a true victory for the memorial commission and German veterans. Hampton's presence as both a native-born South Carolinian from a proud old family and a celebrated Confederate veteran represented the official approval of elite white Charleston. Through the monument at Bethany Cemetery, German Charlestonians had successfully defended their loyalty to the Confederate cause and had legitimized their status as true Southerners.

Less than a hundred yards away from the monument at the Soldiers' Ground in Magnolia is a monument honoring the service of the Irish Volunteers Regiment. This monument, which actually stands in the Catholic St. Lawrence cemetery, acknowledges the Regiment's service in the War of 1812, the Mexican American War. However, it focuses primarily on Irish regiments serving the Confederacy during the Civil War. The monument is simple in composition, and takes the form of a simple shaft of granite about thirty feet in height. A Celtic Cross carved in stone and mounted atop the obelisk clearly marks its connection to Irish heritage, and its only other adornment aside from the carved dedication is a small panel of bronze mounted halfway up the obelisk. The memorial committee charged with designing the monument and overseeing its

construction deemed the simple design quite enough to “transmit to posterity the heroic record of the ‘unreturning brave.’”¹¹³

That memorial committee was founded and their mission articulated during an 1877 reunion meeting of the Irish Volunteers Company. Compared to German community, the Irish community was far more established in Charleston. In 1840, they dedicated the massive and ornate Hibernian Hall on Meeting Street, barely a block away from City Hall. Whereas German Charlestonians had to fight hard to establish themselves as loyal Southerners, Irish Charlestonians were well known as fierce Redeemers and loyal rebels.¹¹⁴ Irish Southerners repeatedly connected Irish rebellions against Great Britain to the Southern rebellion against the Union, arguing that they could understand the Southern cause better than most natives.¹¹⁵ Nevertheless, both monuments sought to create a usable past upon which each ethnic community could defend their present actions and contributions.

The 1877 memorial meeting at Hibernian Hall was lavish, composed of dozens of overwrought speeches celebrating both Irish and Southern heritage. The occasion featured remarks from some of Charleston’s most prominent citizens, including William Courtenay, who would later become mayor, and Edward McCrady, the firebrand state legislator who had

¹¹³ “Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting and Military Hall Festival,” Lowcountry Digital Library, College of Charleston Libraries, 1878, <https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:20207>, 22.

¹¹⁴ Susannah J. Ural, ed., *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in Americas Bloodiest Conflict*, (New York: NYU Press, 2010). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt9qg4vn>.

¹¹⁵ David T. Gleeson, “IRISH REBELS, SOUTHERN REBELS: The Irish Confederates,” in *Civil War Citizens: Race, Ethnicity, and Identity in Americas Bloodiest Conflict*, ed. by Susannah J. Ural, 133-156. (New York; London: NYU Press, 2010), 133.

supported both nullification and secession.¹¹⁶ Each speaker rhapsodized about the Southern Cause, defending their actions at every step while also celebrating the innate courage of Irish Southern soldiers.



*Irish Volunteers Monument,
St. Lawrence Cemetery,
Charleston, SC*

Photo taken by author

By the end of the meeting, the assembled group had resolved to construct a “worthy memorial to the dead” of the Irish Volunteers and organize a fundraiser to ensure that the memorial could be completed properly. Perhaps most critically, the assembled men invited the “co-operation of the ladies of Charleston, who, ever ready to honor the brave, have in this the opportunity to show their appreciation of the old Irish Volunteers.”¹¹⁷ The Irish veterans recognized the efficiency of the Ladies’ Memorial Associations, and understood that their support was almost essential to the successful construction and dedication of a monument. Their

¹¹⁶ “Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting and Military Hall Festival,” Lowcountry Digital Library, College of Charleston Libraries, 1878, <https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:20207>, 5.

¹¹⁷ “Irish Volunteers Memorial Meeting and Military Hall Festival,” Lowcountry Digital Library, College of Charleston Libraries, 1878, <https://lcdl.library.cofc.edu/lcdl/catalog/lcdl:20207>, 22.

support would also ensure that the monument would be recognized and honored not just by Irish Charlestonians, but by all former Confederates in the city.

The Irish Volunteers laid the cornerstone for their memorial in March of 1878, only a year after the memorial convention at Hibernian Hall. Andrew G. Magrath, the son of a Presbyterian man who had fled Ireland after the failed 1798 rebellion, gave the keynote speech at the dedication.¹¹⁸ Magrath was widely known not just for his Irish heritage, but also for the fiery speech he gave in 1860 after resigning from his position as a judge on the United States District Court. During the war, he briefly served as a South Carolina District Court Judge under the Confederate government before being elected as the last Confederate governor of South Carolina. As one personally connected to both the Irish rebellion and the Civil War, Magrath was the perfect person to rhetorically defend the Irish claim to the Confederate legacy.

During his speech, Magrath wove the “lost causes” of Ireland and the Confederacy together, describing an almost linear progression of events between political rebellions in Ireland and the Southern rebellion. Speaking directly to the audience, Magrath declared that someday, “you will come and look at this monument... and... it will tell not only of the worth and deeds of the brave men whose names are inscribed on it, but will carry you back to the land from which they came.”¹¹⁹ He continued, dramatically stating that “it will tell you of the historic fame of that land” and “how the children of that land maintained its fame everywhere... defiant of power”. Magrath made his case so effectively that the *Charleston News and Courier* declared that “the

¹¹⁸ David T. Gleeson, “Another ‘Lost Cause’: The Irish in the South Remember the Confederacy,” *Southern Cultures* 17: No. 1 (Spring 2011) 54.

¹¹⁹ “The Brave That Are No More,” *The News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) March 19, 1878.

Irish Volunteers [were] true patriotism personified... they stand before the people of Carolina [as] the representatives of all that is great and brave and true."¹²⁰

In painting the Irish Southerners' allegiance to the Confederacy as "inevitable, [and] preordained," Magrath created what historian Eviator Zerubavel calls a "time map."¹²¹ Zerubavel argues that groups of people form their own identities by "imposing a continuous historical narrative over noncontiguous events of the past."¹²² In order to do so, the process requires a kind of memory "adhesive" to bridge the gap between separate events. In Magrath's speech, that memory adhesive is an articulation of fundamental political principles. He provides a brief overview of the political history of both groups, arguing that for groups as principled as Southerners and Irishmen, rebellion was an inevitable and necessary course of action. Zerubavel argues that time maps are "socially constructed within cultural memory so that people can refer to it when building collective identity."¹²³ By ignoring the temporal and geographic discontinuity of the eighteenth-century Irish rebellions and the mid-nineteenth-century Confederate rebellion in the American South, Magrath could effectively cast the Confederates as the natural beneficiaries of the Irish spirit of rebellion. In doing so, he asserted a new cultural identity that

¹²⁰ David T. Gleeson, "Another 'Lost Cause': The Irish in the South Remember the Confederacy," *Southern Cultures* 17: No. 1 (Spring 2011) 54.; "The Brave That Are No More," *The News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) March 19, 1878.

¹²¹ Shannon Bontrager, *Death at the Edges of Empire: Fallen Soldiers, Cultural Memory, and the Making of an American Nation, 1863-1921*, (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press), 67, and Eviator Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 40.

¹²² Eviator Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004) 40.

¹²³ Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 41.

combined Southern and Irish identities and political arguments without sacrificing the individuality of either.

Like the dedication of the Soldiers' Ground memorial at Magnolia a few years earlier, the Irish Volunteers also buried a "time capsule" under the cornerstone of their monument. As with everything else associated with the monument, the contents of the capsule blended both Confederate and Irish heritage; it included both Irish coins and Confederate paper money. However, it also included examples of Irish American culture, like a copy of the constitution of the Hibernian Society and copies of popular Irish American periodicals. Through the selection of this diverse group of objects, Irish Charlestonians demonstrated the complexity of their ethnic and cultural identities.

Andrew Magrath declared in his address that "the Irish immigrant sealed with his life's blood the covenant between his people and the land in which he lived and for which he died."¹²⁴ Through his use of biblical language, Magrath rendered sacred the Irish devotion to the Cause. The monument dedicated in St. Lawrence Cemetery was a visual extension of that sacred devotion, and served as a physical testimony to the loyalty of the Irish soldiers. In addition, by creating a historical narrative of Irish loyalty to the South, it also justified and legitimized contemporary political action by Irish Charlestonians. It justified the aggressive Redeemer stance of many Irish Charlestonians by tying it to a long narrative of rebellion and fierce political loyalty. The extended and well-attended dedication ceremony also attested to the power and influence of the Irish community in Charleston society and politics. Just as the Bethany Cemetery legitimized German contributions to the Confederate cause, the St. Lawrence

¹²⁴ "The Brave That Are No More," *The News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) March 19, 1878.

Cemetery monument was a demonstration of the strength and historical prominence of the Irish community in Charleston. Irish Charlestonians asserted their own political power and demonstrated the extent of their wartime contributions at a time when the city was just beginning to transform counter-memory into legitimate history. The monument at St. Lawrence ensured that Charleston's Irish Confederates would be included in the official narrative.

The four monuments at these three cemeteries exemplify the covert form that Confederate memorialization took during the years of Reconstruction, when Republican politicians outlawed open expressions of Confederate nationalism. White, and mostly affluent, Charlestonians held annual commemorations and dedicated monuments at rural cemeteries on the outskirts of the city, where they straddled the line between mourning personal losses and making thinly political statements.

Chapter Three: Vindication In Urban Spaces (1881 - 1918)

Introduction

Historians traditionally designate the end of Reconstruction as the shift from Republican to Democratic rule. In South Carolina, Wade Hampton's 1876 election as governor announced very clearly that the optimistic period of social development, modernization, and Republican rule had concluded. Hampton's zealous followers, who called themselves "Red Shirts," led a vicious campaign of voter suppression and racial intimidation leading up to the election of 1876. Hampton himself, trying to maintain a public facade of moderation, organized a tour of the state intended to demonstrate that he could marshal electoral support without the threat of physical violence.¹²⁵ His tour drew excited crowds at every step; his status as a Confederate war hero and the heir to one of South Carolina's oldest families appealed to conservative voters eager for a return to an antebellum status quo.

The election results reflected the political and social chaos that reigned across the state. Two governors and two legislatures claimed victory once the votes were counted. Wade Hampton claimed the governor's seat and a Democratic majority in the legislature, and Daniel Chamberlin did the same on behalf of the Republican Party. However, Chamberlin was able to call upon federal troops still stationed across the state to enforce his victory and that of other Republicans. Once again, Hampton publicly called for peace and moderation, while privately negotiating for the efficient removal of federal troops from South Carolina. To complicate matters further, the presidential election of 1876 ended with no clear winner. Negotiations to end

¹²⁵ Robert Ackerman, "Wade Hampton III," *South Carolina Encyclopedia* (blog), accessed April 9, 2021, <https://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/hampton-wade-iii/>.

the presidential stalemate centered on the removal of federal troops from the South and the end of federal support for Reconstruction. After months of discussion, the Republican Rutherford B. Hayes claimed victory and ordered the removal of a federal presence from the South by April of 1877. Chamberlin, without military support, was forced to concede to Hampton. Governor Wade Hampton took office on April 11, ending a decade of Republican rule in South Carolina. To white South Carolinians, Democratic Governor Hampton was more than just the victor in a contested election. He was their savior, who had restored “a more than pristine glory to the prostrate and discrowned State.”¹²⁶

Whoever appears in public spaces, and under what circumstances, testifies to the balance of power at any particular moment and in a reversal of the former political order, the scales began to tip in the Democrats’ favor following Hampton’s election. Because they controlled politics at the state level, ex-Confederate Democrats were able to move their memorial commemorations from the cemeteries to the streets.¹²⁷ In addition to the location change, there was also a profound rhetorical shift that occurred in the late nineteenth century. Confederate memorial days no longer mourned a Lost Cause or responded to tremendous societal grief. Instead, they celebrated the Cause of the Confederacy as an ongoing struggle.¹²⁸ Hampton’s election had ensured that the Lost Cause was not truly lost, only dormant. Memorial celebrations became victorious celebrations of a vindicated cause as. Southerners celebrated victory over Reconstruction.

¹²⁶ “General Connor’s Address” *Charleston Tri-Weekly Courier* (Charleston, South Carolina) May 12, 1870.

¹²⁷ Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, 201.

¹²⁸ Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 65-67.

Hampton's election did not immediately introduce Jim Crow policies, but it did allow Democrats to gradually reintroduce policies designed to reinforce strict sociopolitical racial hierarchies. It was also a victory that gave ex-Confederates a greater sense of confidence, but that confidence did not manifest itself on the memorial landscape overnight. It took more than a decade after the 1876 victory for Confederate memorial celebrations in Charleston to regularly center around downtown public spaces. When they finally did, they once again served as a tool by which elite white Charlestonians remade the historical narrative to fit their own agenda. In the final decades of the nineteenth century, Charlestonians erected monuments that celebrated the literary, cultural, political, and military victories of the Confederacy and its citizens.¹²⁹ Monuments vindicating the achievements of the Confederacy created a continuous historical narrative through which contemporary Southern Democrats could find political and social legitimacy.

Monuments erected in central public spaces served three primary purposes. First, they effectively served as physical extensions of Democratic political authority. Democratic officials in Charleston donated funds for Confederate monuments, spoke at the dedications, and praised their virtues regularly. Frequently, the women of the Ladies' Memorial Associations and later the United Daughters of the Confederacy were the wives of prominent Democratic officials; they did

¹²⁹ Contrasting Stephanie McCurry's discussion of the exclusive makeup of the Confederate body politic with the broadly inclusive Confederate cultural identity honored in these monuments emphasizes the juxtaposition between historical events and collective memory. Stephanie McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) 18-26.

not hesitate to take advantage of their political position or that of their husband to achieve their memorial ambitions.¹³⁰

Second, they elevated Confederacy to a moral example and made idolization of the Cause a daily affair. Charlestonians were reminded of their collective Confederate “history” every time they walked by the forty-foot obelisk next to City Hall or admired the monument to the Confederate Navy while on a stroll through White Point Gardens.¹³¹ In many cases, Confederate monuments also responded directly to a perceived moral decline of society in the industrial age.¹³² The virtuous Confederate depicted and described on monuments in cities across the South was a moral example intended as a direct challenge to the social upheaval of the modern era. In addition, the model soldier was also intended to foster model male citizens loyal to the invented Confederate past, who would become the next generation of political leaders steeped in Lost Cause ideology.

Finally, the monuments’ clearest purpose was to remind African Americans that the spaces marked by monuments were not theirs to occupy. Monuments were a visible symbol of the ideology of white supremacy and were effective forms of intimidation.¹³³ In Charleston, for

¹³⁰ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, “‘Woman’s Hand and Heart and Deathless Love’: White Women and the Commemorative Impulse in the New South,” In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, Ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003) 69. See also: Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 41.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹³² David Currey. “The Virtuous Soldier: Constructing a Usable Confederate Past in Franklin, Tennessee”. In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, Ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003) 133.

¹³³ Doby, *The False Cause*, 17. Doby here argues that “the proponents of the Lost Cause helped construct Jim Crow... with both fabricated narratives and the physical colonization of public space in the early twentieth century, which in turn laid the foundation for all that has followed.” Here, he is speaking of North Carolina, but the same can easily be applied to Charleston as well as many other Southern cities.

example, the Ladies' Calhoun Memorial Association (LCMA) fought hard for the Calhoun monument's placement in what is now Marion Square, as opposed to placement White Point Gardens as proposed by the male Calhoun Memorial Association. The LCMA initially felt that Calhoun's presence in the predominantly African American "Northern Neck" neighborhood would serve as a reminder of who was in charge in the city and head off any hopes of a challenge to the new status quo.¹³⁴ By placing monuments to Confederacy in prominent locations across the city, memorial associations effectively declared that the celebration of elite white narratives was central to Charleston in the present as well as the past.

Urban Monuments 1881 - 1918: Bringing the Message From Cemeteries to Public Spaces

The following section focuses on the eight monuments in downtown Charleston that serve at least one, if not all, three functions. These monuments are concentrated in three central locations within the city: the Charleston Battery, Washington Square Park, and Marion Square. Some of these monuments do not specifically honor the Confederacy or a Confederate veteran, like the monuments to Henry Timrod, John C. Calhoun, and William Gilmore Simms. Nevertheless, each of the eight monuments discussed in this section were designed as an element of an invented past, and function as a piece of Charleston's collective Confederate memory.

I divide my analysis of the downtown "vindication" monuments into two main subsections, each discussing a cohesive group of monuments. The first section discusses monuments that, taken together create a falsified Southern past that is pro-slavery in all but name. This group includes the Henry Timrod Monument, the William Gilmore Simms Monument, the John C. Calhoun Monument, and the Defenders of Fort Sumter Monument. By

¹³⁴ Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 103.

analyzing their spatial distribution, inscriptions, composition, and the coverage of their dedications, I argue that these monuments together created a pro-slavery narrative by carefully avoiding any mention of slavery. Together, these monuments told the story of an artificially glorious Southern past. The John C. Calhoun Monument celebrated South Carolina's defense of states' rights without mentioning that the principal right worthy of defense was the ownership of enslaved people. The Simms and Timrod monuments celebrated those writers' contributions to a Southern literary movement that glorified the opulence of an elite hierarchical society while ignoring the coerced labor that made the Southern pseudo-aristocracy possible. Finally, the Defenders of Fort Sumter monument, erected in 1932, presented the "states' rights not slavery" motivation for war to a new audience. This monument served as a kind of culminating capstone on Charleston's memorial landscape; it celebrated Confederate soldiers as hyper-masculine defenders of virtue and culture, who fought not to preserve slavery but to eliminate tyranny. This monument unselfconsciously celebrates the artificial Southern past created by writers like Gilmore and Simms and cast in bronze by the Ladies' Memorial Association. Between the erection of the Simms monument in 1879 and the Defenders' monument in 1932, fiction had become fact and counter-memory had become historical truth.

The second group, on the other hand, is a more public continuation of the monuments to various people or groups involved with the Confederate military rebellion. It includes the Washington Light Infantry Monument, the P.G.T. Beauregard Memorial Arch, the Wade Hampton Monument and the Confederate Navy Monument. These monuments constitute "storage" spaces for memory, through which Southerners could access and remember particular

people or events in the Civil War.¹³⁵ In their central locations, these monuments served as touchstones that kept both personal and idealized memories of the war alive.¹³⁶

While these monuments were ostensibly objective markers of historical events or the lives of important people, it is important to understand who wanted who to remember what. In form, function, and character, these monuments legitimized a counter-memory of the Civil War and the Southern past. Each of the men celebrated by these monuments fought to sustain a hierarchical society based upon a foundation of white supremacist ideology. Local and state government officials spoke at each dedication, indicating the government's tacit endorsement of this racial hierarchy. By the time these monuments were dedicated, Southern Democrats had a firm hold on all aspects of Charleston's government. Memorial groups in Charleston no longer had to hide their work in rural cemeteries or mourn their Lost Cause quietly; they were now free to celebrate their antebellum past in combination with their victory over Reconstruction in plain view.

A Pro-Slavery-Sans-Slavery Approach: Simms, Timrod, Calhoun, and the Defenders Monument

Dozens of people walk by the statues of Henry Timrod and William Gilmore Simms today, at Washington Square Park and on the Battery respectively, without recognizing their significance. During modern discussions about the ideological implications of Charleston's Confederate memorial landscape in the summer of 2020, these monuments never entered the

¹³⁵ Here I refer to the concept of "memory storage" as articulated by Shannon Bontraeger in *Death at the Edges of Empire*, 67.

¹³⁶ Kirk Savage also argues that "the volunteers a local community sent off to war were its most concrete human link with the abstract entity of the nation." Monuments to soldiers and to military regiments made that human link more emphatically and permanently visible than ever before. See: Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth Century America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) 178.

conversation. These monuments, though not distinctly visible symbols of white supremacy or Confederate ideology in the same way as the Defenders of Sumter Monument on the Battery, nevertheless they were intended to bolster national opinion of the South as a society. They created and legitimized a Southern literary tradition that glorified the South's antebellum past. By extension, they also legitimized and nationalized a commodified Southern culture that celebrated the Confederacy and white supremacist ideology. By claiming prolific writers like Simms and Timrod, Southerners proclaimed the Confederacy to be more than just a failed military rebellion.

Wolfgang Schivelbusch argues that the South "drew a distinction between military defeat and moral victory" and articulated that distinction through the memorial landscape.¹³⁷ I argue that Southerners extended that distinction to include cultural victory, and that they strove to articulate and defend that cultural victory through the memorial landscape as well. The Timrod and Simms memorials defend that cultural victory by putting forward popular writers as symbols of Southern cultural supremacy. Sarah Catherine Bowman argues that society itself became a "battlefield over identity" because of the constantly changing definitions of sectional and social identity in the period after Reconstruction.¹³⁸ Southerners therefore used examples of sociocultural brilliance, like that of Simms and Timrod, to articulate their own identity as a superior counterpoint to that of the North.

William Gilmore Simms Monument, White Point Gardens

¹³⁷ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Culture of Defeat: On National Trauma, Mourning, and Recovery* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003).

¹³⁸ Sarah Katherine Bowman, "The Problem of Yankeeland: White Southern Stories about the North, 1865-1915," ProQuest Dissertations and Theses (Ph.D., Yale University, 2015), 33.

On June 11, 1879, a group of prominent Charlestonians gathered at White Point Gardens for the unveiling of a monument to William Gilmore Simms on the ninth anniversary of his death. As with the earlier Memorial Day ceremonies, the event began with a benediction from the Reverend C. C. Pinckney. However, it diverged from established customs from that point on, and became a medley of traditional memorial rituals and celebrations of Southern cultural heritage. Unlike most Memorial Days, this was not an affair that engaged the whole city. The crowd was composed of mostly elite men and women, and included prominent leaders of Ladies' Memorial Groups, lawyers, clergymen, cultural leaders, and reputable Confederate veterans. The president of the Carolina Art Association, Nathaniel Russell Middleton, presided over the occasion and spoke on Simms' artistic contributions. The Honorable W.D. Porter, the president of the Simms Memorial Society, also spoke at length about his life and dedication to the Southern cause. Simms' granddaughters and two young women from the Confederate Home, wearing neat white dresses and red sashes, unveiled the statue.¹³⁹

If the Soldiers' Ground at Magnolia Cemetery belonged to the common soldier and the common man, the Simms monument belonged to Charleston's white cultural elite. This was exemplified by the day's main speakers. Two of them, the Reverend Pinckney and Professor Middleton, came from some of Charleston's oldest, wealthiest, and most culturally significant families. Before the Civil War these families were some of the largest slaveholders in the state, and after the war, the Pinckneys and Middletons became vehement defenders of the old order. The keynote speaker was not a popular general who could speak about experiences common to

¹³⁹ "William Gilmore Simms: Unveiling the Monument Erected In His Honor," *News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) June 12, 1879.

all veterans, but rather the president of the Carolina Art Association. He appealed to the literate and culturally conscious white elites in the audience, who were desperate to re-establish Charleston as a cosmopolitan city known for its high society.¹⁴⁰

Moreover, the Simms monument occupied a space that was both racially and economically segregated. White Point Gardens, on the tip of the Charleston Battery, is still flanked on two sides by Charleston's oldest and most prominent homes. In the late nineteenth century, it was a park space in which privileged white men and women could stroll during their leisure time, a concept reflected in an engraving reprinted alongside an article about the Simms monument in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*.¹⁴¹ The image shows a fashionably dressed white couple examining the Simms monument as they walk through the park. The woman angles her parasol back so she can see the bust of Simms properly, and the man leans back on his walking stick as he too reflects on the monument; both of these objects are props indicating refinement. The couple are the only people depicted in the park, and as such, they are clearly intended to be symbolically representative of the ideal audience rather than a pair of actual visitors.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ "In Memoriam: William Gilmore Simms," *News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) June 11, 1879.

¹⁴¹ "The Simms Memorial at Charleston." *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, July 19, 1879, 337. Nineteenth Century U.S. Newspapers (accessed April 18, 2021). https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3014893344/NCNP?u=viva_wm&sid=NCNP&xid=a701755c.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

*Simms Monument,
White Point Gardens.*

*Image from
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Journal,
July 19, 1879.*



Henry Timrod Monument, Washington Square Park

In contrast to Simms' appeal to the cultural elite, the poet Henry Timrod was painted as "South Carolina's own son" at his monument's dedication on May 1, 1902. Like the Simms monument, though, the Henry Timrod monument was located in a prominent place and was intended to vindicate an element of Southern culture rather than Southern military prowess. The *News and Courier* declared that it was "without the ostentation or display, without flattery or superfluous ceremonies or vain pomp," yet it was still an occasion where "South Carolinians came together and viewed the testimonial raised to the South Carolina poet."¹⁴³ Rather than being the product of large donations from a few individuals, the *Courier* wrote, the Timrod monument was "made possible by a full and free assistance from the best people of the grand old state of South Carolina."¹⁴⁴ Despite pretensions to the ordinary, the Timrod dedication was a chance for

¹⁴³ "Timrod, Hayne, and Simms," *News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 2, 1902.

¹⁴⁴ "Timrod and Hayne," *News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 5, 1902.

Charleston to demonstrate its resilience and its loyalty to its own in front of an audience that included more than a few Northerners.

*Henry Timrod Monument
Washington Square Park
Charleston, SC*

Photo by Author



Like with Simms, the Timrod monument was intended to honor the poet's contributions to Southern culture and his influence on the ways in which Southerners remembered their pasts. As the editor of the *News and Courier* remarked, "the occasion is thus lifted above... personal memories... and marks a new period in our culture."¹⁴⁵ By 1902, Charlestonians were remembering the Civil War in different ways. Poets like Timrod created a past in which the Confederacy fit into a larger arc of Southern memory, rather than existing as a stand-alone event. It was a defining moment, to be sure, but not the only point of pride in South Carolina's history. By de-commodifying and softening the brutality of slavery in their work, poets like Timrod were able to create an image of an idyllic antebellum past. These images of bucolic bliss served as a

¹⁴⁵ "Henry Timrod in Bronze," *News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 2, 1902.

respite from the challenging post-war period, as South Carolina and other Southern states were forced to embrace industry and move away from an entirely agrarian economy.

These images were attractive nationwide, as they created a South that was an exotic “other” in the minds of many Northerners. The idea of national reconciliation was not distasteful, because the South created in these poems was an innocuously pastoral, almost foreign land. On the other hand, South Carolinians relished Timrod’s national popularity because, as a Southern poet, he “declares in a forceful way that ‘the poetic literature of a land is the finer and purer ether above the material advance and the events of its history.’”¹⁴⁶ By claiming Timrod as their own, Charlestonians declared their “intellectual growth” and their status as a cultured society.

This ceremony also highlighted the extent to which Charlestonians had achieved reconciliation. However, it is evident that reconciliation did not mean assimilation. Charlestonians had accepted the military failure and subsequent political collapse of the Confederacy, and recognized that they were American citizens. However, they were unwilling to accept total cultural assimilation or social submission to the North. Southerners, and more specifically Charlestonians, wanted reconciliation on their terms. They were determined to hang onto a notion of Southern cultural prominence, and the national success of authors like Timrod and Simms gave them an avenue through which to claim cultural distinction and even a measure of superiority.

It was not an accident that two of the Timrod monument event’s speakers were Northerners; the image of a distinguished Northern author traveling all the way down to Charleston to give remarks praising the talent of a Southern poet was no doubt pleasing to the

¹⁴⁶ “Henry Timrod in Bronze,” *News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 2, 1902.

assembled crowd. One Northern speaker, a Mr. Henry Austin of New York, read a poem he prepared for the occasion. In his poem, Austin proclaims the South to be a new Troy, “beleaguered long” before finally falling nobly in defense of honor and romance. After witnessing the fall of this new Southern Troy, Austen’s Timrod uses his “clarion song” of poetry to “soften even the foeman’s breast.” Then, the poem’s speaker changes, and Austin begins addressing Timrod directly, telling him that “the whole world trembles to thy charms/ Is chastened by thy mystic spell.” Austin declares that because of the lingering popularity of Timrod’s poetry, “art rose a victor over arms.” In Austin’s mind, Timrod’s elegiac treatment of antebellum Southern society and poignant descriptions of the Lost Cause had been superimposed over national memory of Confederate military defeat, ensuring that a positive view of the antebellum South survived while wartime bitterness and resentment long since faded away. As he noted in his closing stanzas, “music is its own reward/... Bright when... the sword/ Rusts in the sheath of time.”¹⁴⁷

Austin’s poem effectively articulated why Timrod’s legacy mattered to Charlestonians. His work was a tool of reconciliation in itself by demonstrating to a national audience what South Carolinians believed to be the inherent beauty and sophistication of their state. It was also a tool of vindication. Austin was correct in noting that art has a greater staying power than personal memory. Timrod produced popular literature that transformed the Confederacy from a failed slaveholders’ republic into a great society crushed at the height of its brilliance. Timrod and others like him effectively ensured that the Lost Cause was not really lost; rather, it lived on as a romanticized fantasy through their work. In addition, despite the fact that they celebrated the

¹⁴⁷ “Henry Timrod in Bronze: The Monument Unveiled,” *News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 2, 1902.

South's antebellum prosperity, these authors had created a narrative that almost completely ignored the institution of slavery. If they appeared in the poems or literature at all, enslaved people were loyal and docile caricatures that served more as window dressing than as legitimate actors. In Timrod's conception, the Southern planter was a glorified aristocrat, and the coerced labor that ensured his prosperity was ignored. These artificial conceptions of Southern history, central to Lost Cause ideology, only served to reinforce existing racial hierarchies through false history and to vindicate the slaveholder by rendering them a benevolent aristocrat. By relying on these artificial conceptions of Southern history in their work, authors like Timrod were able to turn regional counter-memory into romantic and artistic truth. By celebrating Timrod through the construction of a monument in his honor, Charlestonians celebrated the national vindication of Lost Cause ideology and suppressed cultural memory of the brutality of slavery.

John C. Calhoun Monument, Marion Square

While the monuments to Simms and Timrod served to distinguish Southern culture by reminding passers-by of their literary sophistication, the John C. Calhoun monument celebrated Southern political history. In addition, just as both monuments created a glorified pro-slavery past without mentioning the reality of the institution, the Calhoun monument was a celebration of the statesman's political defense of slavery in all but name.

Calls for a monument to Calhoun in Charleston began almost immediately after his death in 1850.¹⁴⁸ Though Calhoun himself had a notoriously low opinion of Charleston during his

¹⁴⁸ Charlestonians also tried to honor Calhoun with a memorial even before his death. In 1843, the cotton merchant Henry Gourdin and a number of dedicated Calhoun supporters commissioned the sculptor Hiram Powers to craft a sculpture of Calhoun. Powers, who was living in Italy at the time, completed and shipped the sculpture to the United States in 1850 aboard the *Elizabeth*. However, it famously sank just off the shore of Fire Island in New York, and the Calhoun supporters hired divers to rescue their statue from the wreck. It finally arrived in Charleston six months after Calhoun's death, and was proudly displayed in City Hall. (Kyle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 96)

lifetime, local government officials and memorial associations were determined to claim Calhoun for their city. They worked diligently to ensure that he would be buried in St. Philips Cemetery in downtown Charleston, rather than on his Fort Hill plantation in the Upstate. At his funeral in 1850, massive crowds gathered to view his body as it lay in state at City Hall.¹⁴⁹ The *Charleston Courier* reported that even enslaved and free Black Charlestonians made the journey to see the statesman; city officials permitted them to do so in the paternalistic belief that Black men and women would embrace the opportunity to pay their respects to the man who “used all his great powers to crush the negro.”¹⁵⁰

During the Civil War, Calhoun’s remains were secretly moved away from their original resting place, prompted by fears that Black Charlestonians or Northern soldiers might dig them up. These concerns demonstrated that Calhoun’s body had quickly become as much symbol of Southern identity in death as the statesmen had been in life. In 1883, the South Carolina state legislature appropriated funds to erect an “appropriate memorial” in which Calhoun could be reburied.¹⁵¹ Though this elaborate repatriation occurred in the same year as the first successful election of a Democratic President of the United States since before the war, the firebrand editor of the *Charleston News and Courier* slyly declared it to be “a singular coincidence.”¹⁵² He wrote proudly that at the very moment when the American people had “signified their determination” that the federal government “must and shall be cleansed from the corruption.... of continuous

¹⁴⁹ Maurie D. McInnis, *The Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005) 153-154.

¹⁵⁰ “Calhoun,” *Charleston Courier* (Charleston, SC) April 27, 1850.

¹⁵¹ Kytlye and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, 99.

¹⁵² “The Grave of Calhoun,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) November 15, 1884.

Republican rule, the bones of the great Calhoun have for the first time found... a memorial stone worthy of his imperishable fame.”¹⁵³

Just a few years later, in 1887, Charlestonians erected an even larger monument to Calhoun’s “imperishable fame.” It was the product of the efforts of the Ladies’ Calhoun Memorial Association over the span of nearly four decades. The LCMA had initially competed with the all-male Calhoun Memorial Association for everything from honor of building the monument to the location in which it would stand, but the LCMA’s superior organizational abilities ensured that they maintained the upper hand.

They chose the Citadel Green, now known as Marion Square, for the monument after rejecting White Point Gardens as “a mere pleasure promenade.”¹⁵⁴ Calhoun’s memorial needed a more symbolic landscape, and the Citadel Green served a multitude of symbolic purposes. First, the Green was close to the Northern Neck neighborhoods. These were the northernmost residential areas on the peninsula, and had been occupied primarily by African Americans for decades. In the months following Calhoun’s death in 1850, the city of Charleston annexed these formerly independent neighborhoods in an effort to increase their control over the Black residents. Placing Calhoun so close to the areas of Charleston designated as Black spaces sent a not-so-subtle message: the Charleston establishment embraced his ideological defenses of slavery and white supremacy at a fundamental level. They chose him as their *primus inter pares*, as the symbolic epitome of Southern white manhood. That symbolic statement made it very clear

¹⁵³ “The Grave of Calhoun,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) November 15, 1884.

¹⁵⁴ Ladies Calhoun Memorial Association, *A History of the Calhoun Monument at Charleston South Carolina*, (Charleston: Lucas Richardson, 1888), 36.

that Charleston was not a space for interracial harmony: Black Charlestonians would always be subordinate to white Charlestonians.

Second, the Green was home to the Citadel, the state-sponsored military academy founded in response to the Denmark Vesey conspiracy.¹⁵⁵ The Citadel was an arsenal that also trained cadets to monitor the behavior of enslaved people with the intent to prevent future slave conspiracies or insurrections. The LCMA intended Calhoun's watchful presence to serve as an example to Citadel cadets, and hoped that when gazing upon him, the cadets might want to "emulate the virtues of the great statesmen."¹⁵⁶ The monument's presence on the Citadel Green put Calhoun and his legacy in visual conversation with the mission of the Citadel and "reinforced this extension of racial authority," making it very clear to the African American residents of the Neck that the space they occupied was not theirs to control.¹⁵⁷

The LCMA's proposed monument was elaborately composed, and consisted of a bronze statue of Calhoun, standing in front of his Senate chair. His long cloak flowed behind him, and pooled on his chair. His right arm was outstretched, with the index finger of that hand pointed up in a gesture that was intended to indicate that he was about to begin speaking.¹⁵⁸ Surrounding the granite base would be four allegorical bronze statues, representing Justice, History, Truth, and the Constitution in female form. Their proposed monument would artistically honor Calhoun's

¹⁵⁵ Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 101.

¹⁵⁶ Ladies Calhoun Memorial Association, *A History of the Calhoun Monument at Charleston South Carolina*, (Charleston: Lucas Richardson, 1888), 37.

¹⁵⁷ Blain Roberts and Ethan J. Kytte. "Looking the Thing in the Face: Slavery, Race, and the Commemorative Landscape in Charleston, South Carolina, 1865–2010." *The Journal of Southern History* 78, no. 3 (2012): 644.

¹⁵⁸ Roberts and Kytte, "Looking the Thing in the Face," 657.

legacy, the LCMA believed, and would demonstrate the taste and erudition of the city that erected it.

Though the monument celebrated Calhoun's defense of Justice and the Constitution, it made no mention of his forceful defense of slavery.¹⁵⁹ Calhoun's fiery defense of the Constitution and states' rights during the Nullification Crisis of 1832 was a defense of slavery in all but name. Calhoun recognized that the agricultural economy and the institution of slavery were so all-encompassing that they left little room for the development of manufacturing; as such they rendered submission to the protective tariffs proposed in 1832 ideologically and economically impossible. Since Southern economic interests were so closely tied to the institution of slavery, which regulated nearly every aspect of Southern society, an attack on the Southern economy was an attack on the Southern way of life.

The allegorical figure of History indicated that Calhoun represented white Charlestonians' pride in their antebellum past. A potent combination of insecurity with their place in the post-war landscape and with the lasting sociopolitical implications of emancipation, and discomfort with a rapidly industrializing economy made white Charlestonians nostalgic for their hyper-romanticized lost society. Calhoun was therefore appreciated as a symbolic embodiment of that racially and economically hierarchical past. However, by 1887, the institution of slavery was almost universally acknowledged as wrong, so white Charlestonians had to cagily celebrate their history without mentioning the coerced labor that supported nearly every aspect of antebellum Southern society.

¹⁵⁹ McInnis, *Politics of Taste in Antebellum Charleston*, 152.

Even Calhoun's defiant standing pose in front of his Senate chair signaled a defense of slavery in all but name. Calhoun was represented in his most famous pose as "the South's iconic figure of defiance... standing up, both literally and figuratively, for his region's interests on the Senate floor."¹⁶⁰ His recalcitrant stance, cast permanently in bronze and displayed for public viewing, represented Charleston's firm attachment to the radicalized ideology of the antebellum South.¹⁶¹ Ethan Kytile and Blain Roberts argue that in representing Calhoun in this manner, the LCMA was making a more pointed pro-slavery statement than most other Confederate monuments, including those in Charleston.¹⁶²

However, despite the LCMA's lofty intentions and their decades of planning, it was clear from the beginning that very little would go as planned. Only one allegorical figure, Justice, was actually installed around the granite pedestal, ruining the balance of the monument's composition. The LCMA was unable to fund their installation, and when they could not find a buyer for the individual statues, they sold them as scrap metal. In addition, many white Charlestonians were deeply unhappy with the representation of Calhoun. Cotton broker Henry S. Holmes declared it to be "a monstrosity."¹⁶³ "Great was the disappointment when the hideous bronze figure was disrobed," he wrote in 1895 "and ever since it has been a frightful sight to

¹⁶⁰ Kytile and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 102.

¹⁶¹ Thomas J. Brown, *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford Books, 2004), 5.

¹⁶² Kytile and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 102.

¹⁶³ Kytile and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 107.

citizens.”¹⁶⁴ Few viewers, white or Black, understood the intention behind the lone allegorical figure of Justice. “The impression prevails generally among the non-reading colored population that the statue of Justice is that of Mrs. Calhoun,” reported the *News and Courier* in June of 1887, less than two months after the statue’s grand unveiling.¹⁶⁵ While the paper likely exaggerated the degree of confusion among Black Charlestonians, it is clear that the statue was incredibly unpopular.

Black Charlestonians certainly understood the pro-slavery message loud and clear. Mamie Garvin Fields, a Black activist born in Charleston in 1888, grew up looking at the Calhoun statue as a message to African Americans in the city. “I believe white people were talking to us about Jim Crow through that statue,” she recalled at the end of her life.¹⁶⁶ Like Fields, African Americans in Charleston were unafraid to voice their distaste for the massive monument to one of slavery’s most ardent defenders. In February of 1888, the *News and Courier* reported that the figure of Justice was found looking as though “it had been on a spree,” with “a tin kettle in her hand and a cigar in her mouth.”¹⁶⁷ A few years later, in 1894, a young African American boy was arrested for accidentally shooting a white boy in the head in Marion Square. The *Courier* reported that the African American boy declared in his own defense that “I nebber

¹⁶⁴ “Calhoun Unveiled,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) April 27, 1887; “A Tribute to Calhoun,” *New York Times*, April 27, 1887.

¹⁶⁵ “In the City,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) June 2, 1887.

¹⁶⁶ Mamie Garvin Fields, *Lemon Swamp and Other Places: A Carolina Memoir*, (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 57.

¹⁶⁷ “All About Town,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC), February 12, 1888.

shoot the chile, I shoot at Mr. Calhoun wife, and when I hit 'um he sound like gong.”¹⁶⁸ Mamie Garvin Fields remembered that “we used to carry something... if we knew we would be passing that way, in order to deface the statue- scratch up the coat, break the watch chain, try to knock off the coat.”¹⁶⁹ As Thomas Brown notes, “vandalism often recognizes the sanctity of a challenged symbol,” but that the exceedingly public ridicule was “devastating to the LCMA’s assertion of dignity.”¹⁷⁰ By de-sacralizing the symbolic Calhoun through acts of outright disdain, Charleston’s Black population asserted their own agency in the face of ideological and political suppression.

The combination of disapproval from Charleston’s white population and outright ridicule from Charleston’s Black population ensured that the Calhoun statue could not last. Such blatant disrespect completely undermined the LCMA’s intentions; it rendered the statue a useless moral example to Citadel cadets and an impotent supervisor over the African American population of the Neck. In 1894, the LCMA created a group tasked with designing a new monument, and by 1895, “Mr. Calhoun Number 1” was removed.¹⁷¹ Mr. Calhoun Number 2 was unveiled quietly, without an official dedication ceremony, and was mounted upon a significantly taller pedestal that stood eighty-four feet high.¹⁷²



*Removal of the Second John C. Calhoun Monument,
June 2020
"As Shot" Charleston News and Courier (Charleston, SC),
Marion Square
Charleston, SC*

Photo by Author

alled Down," The Charleston Evening Post (Charleston,

¹⁷² Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 86.

Just like the first, the second monument ostensibly ignored slavery, though it eschewed allegory entirely. Around the base of the pedestal, bronze panels were installed that consisted of Calhoun's birth and death dates and the phrase "Truth, Justice, and the Constitution." The second monument took all of the subtly pro-slavery rhetorical emphasis of the first Mr. Calhoun, but downgraded artistic composition. Despite the absence of laudatory text, the fact that the LCMA was willing to replace Mr. Calhoun Number 1 with a second, even larger, monument demonstrated their wholesale dedication to the radicalized ideology he represented. They were dedicated to the idea of Calhoun, even if they began to tire of the actual person they honored, because he symbolized the historical roots of the reigning white supremacist ideology that allowed the white Charleston establishment to retain their sociopolitical authority within the city.

Through the memorial landscape established by the Simms, Timrod, and Calhoun monuments, Charlestonians legitimized a coherent pro-slavery-sans-slavery narrative of Southern historical memory. The Simms and Timrod monuments represented a celebration of a romanticized antebellum culture as expressed through poetry, and John C. Calhoun monument represented the celebration of slavery's most vehement political defender. The combination of these monuments legitimized and normalized this memorial narrative that celebrated the antebellum past without acknowledging the institution of slavery in the minds of Charlestonians; but in the early twentieth century, native Charlestonians were not the only ones who occupied the city. A growing number of outside visitors and tourists ventured to Charleston every year, and Charlestonians increasingly recognized that they needed to legitimize their ideological cause in

the minds of visitors to the city. To do so, they erected a monument to the Defenders of Fort Sumter on the Charleston Battery in 1932.

Defenders of Fort Sumter Monument, Charleston Battery

Charlestonians may have wished to firmly connect themselves to their own past, but they were forced to face modernity very quickly with the onset of the First World War. More than 1,900 South Carolinians were killed over the course of the war, including 88 from Charleston itself. In order to get Southerners to serve, the UDC appealed to their Confederate heritage by calling for “Dixie Volunteers.”¹⁷³ Their emphasis on the valor and wartime contributions of Southerners aided their mission of vindication of the Confederate Cause. Through military service in WWI, Southerners were truly Americans again without having to compromise their Confederate ideology. Southern patriotism was by extension American patriotism when the whole nation was at war. However, the sectional unification garnered by the war ensured that the old manner of memorialization in which the Northern states were portrayed as the definitive aggressor was no longer en vogue.¹⁷⁴ In the modern age, Confederate apologists could no longer safely portray the Cause as specifically a fight to protect the rights of the South against the aggression of the North. For it to survive, the Confederate Cause had to represent universally sympathetic ideas of patriotism and military strength.

¹⁷³ “The Dixie Volunteers”, words and music by Edgar Leslie and Harry Ruby. Waterson, Berlin, & Snyder, New York: 1917.

¹⁷⁴ David Currey. “The Virtuous Soldier: Constructing a Usable Confederate Past in Franklin, Tennessee”. In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, Ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003) 137.

Erected in 1932, the “Confederate Defenders of Charleston” monument on the southernmost point of the Charleston Battery embodies this almost incongruous combination of sectional reconciliation and Confederate memorialization. The monument was unveiled by the Fort Sumter Memorial Commission in 1932, seventy-one years after the Civil War began. Andrew Buist Murray, the adopted son of a wealthy rice planter, made a bequest of \$100,000 (almost \$2 million in today’s money) to the Memorial Commission to fund the statue’s creation.¹⁷⁵ The reputable and popular sculptor Hermon A. MacNeil was hired to design and build the monument, which consists of a round concrete column about twelve feet in height topped with a bronze statue grouping of an archetypal female representation of Charleston and a nude youth armed for battle.¹⁷⁶



*Defenders of Fort Sumter Monument
Charleston Battery
Charleston, SC*

Photo by Author

¹⁷⁵ Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 175.

¹⁷⁶ Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 174.

The inscription, wound around the entire base, reads “count them happy who for their faith and their courage enjoyed a great fight.” These words tie the monument to both the Confederate Cause and also to modern post-war themes of sectional unity. The inscription makes no mention of common Lost Cause quotations like the inscriptions of the Timrod monument. Rather it is a broadly generalized statement honoring the valor of the soldiers; the statue itself succeeds in conveying the necessary Lost Cause themes without the need for dramatic inscriptions.

Notably, the City of Charleston donated the land on which the monument was built and contributed funds to its construction. Lending their name and support to the Confederate Defenders Monument was a strategic choice. Just as with the placement of the Washington Square monuments, the city’s endorsement of the monument enhanced its legitimacy.¹⁷⁷ In turn, the style and composition of the monument gave legitimacy to Charleston’s mission to promote its own culture. The statue’s classical inspirations were intended as a sign of the city’s growing culture and sophistication, and its subject reminded visitors and locals alike of Charleston’s reputation as the birthplace of the Confederacy. The specific focus of the monument, Fort Sumter, also represented the city’s rapidly developing emphasis on the preservation and promotion of historic sites, especially Civil War sites. In the 1930s the state of South Carolina was only beginning to cultivate its tourism industry, but the flashy new monument on the Battery served to highlight to visitors the city’s renewed focus on its past.

¹⁷⁷ David Lowenthal. “Adorning Damnable Cities: Pro Urbis Amore and Damnatio Memoriae” In *Commemoration in America: Essays on Monuments, Memorialization, and Memory*, ed. David Gobel and Daves Rossell. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013) 295.

In his keynote speech at the monument's dedication, Charleston mayor Burnet R. Maybank also attempted to modernize and Americanize the older ideas projected by the Defenders Monument. He declared that "those who fought for the Confederacy fought for the principles of true Americanism, namely the right to preserve their state's rights and personal liberties... and to throw off the shackles of fanatical oppression."¹⁷⁸ The "true Americanism" that Maybank alludes to had been articulated on the global stage not fifteen years earlier when the United States entered the First World War in order to make the world safe for democracy; the War was recent memory for all present at the dedication.

In this manner, Maybank strove to fundamentally link the First World War's defense of democracy to the Confederate Cause, thus rendering the Confederate Cause just by association. Along with the use of heroic nudity more reminiscent of new WW1 memorials than previous Confederate monuments, MacNeil's inscription remembering the "faith and courage" of those who participated in "the great fight" invokes both Confederate and American valor and declares the righteousness of both causes.¹⁷⁹ The monument symbolically links two generations through a common fight, thus enabling the Confederate legacy to further endure and remain accessible through modern physical memorialization.

Vindicating the Confederate Military on the Memorial Landscape

The United Confederate Veterans Reunion of 1899 and the Confederate Navy Monument

The final year of the nineteenth century saw the largest Confederate military memorial event in Charleston's history to date. In May of 1899, the United Confederate Veterans (UCV)

¹⁷⁸ Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 174.

¹⁷⁹ Brown, *Civil War Canon*, 175.

converged upon the city for their annual reunion. The UCV was a national group composed of men who had served the Confederacy in some military capacity, and was the nationalized successor to local survivors' groups that had appeared all over the South immediately following the war. Their purpose was mainly a social one; the UCV had a fraction of the organizing and fundraising power of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC).

Aside from local meetings and their annual reunion, the UCV's greatest cultural contribution was their newsletter, the *Confederate Veteran*. The paper was popular among veterans living at soldiers' homes, and also attracted a wide non-veteran readership across the South. Some articles featured were little more than fond reminiscences, while others were perspectives on current affairs. This model was clearly effective; the *Confederate Veteran's* editor, Sumner Archibald Cunningham, estimated that the one edition of the paper could reach more than 50,000 people. The paper's popularity was so widely known that various memorial groups, including the UDC, used it to marshal support and raise funds for monuments across the South. With the backing of the UCV, the *Confederate Veteran* effectively served as a mouthpiece for the Lost Cause for more than four decades.¹⁸⁰

While the *Confederate Veteran* attracted a wide regional readership, the UCV's annual reunions drew massive crowds to whichever Southern city was designated as host that year. Charleston prepared for the reunion for more than a year. An auditorium, intended mainly to serve the needs of the convention, was constructed along Rutledge Street at Cannon Park.¹⁸¹ City

¹⁸⁰ Josephine King Evans, "Nostalgia for a Nickel: The 'Confederate Veteran,'" *Tennessee Historical Quarterly* 48, no. 4 (1989): 238.

¹⁸¹ Kytly and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 114-115.

officials planned elaborate parades for nearly every day of the reunion week, and organized other tributes that demonstrated the city's dedication to its Confederate past.

In addition, Charleston's recently established chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy took advantage of the visiting crowds of Confederate sympathizers, and dedicated a new monument to Confederate soldiers who died serving on torpedo boats. The Ladies' Memorial Association had already succeeded in repatriating the soldiers' remains, and the LMAC ensured that they were buried with great ceremony in Magnolia Cemetery.¹⁸² However, discussion continued about whether their reburial was a large enough tribute. The LMAC proposed a tablet at City Hall, which was rejected and countered with a proposed tablet on the side of St. Michael's Church across the street. The LMAC suggested a tablet on another part of City Hall, but all proposed tablets were rejected as too small a tribute to the memory of the Confederacy's torpedo men. Finally, Mrs. Louisa McCord Smythe of the UDC suggested "a monument that would be a handsome tribute and at the same time be of service to the community."¹⁸³ Smythe worked with a local marble company to design a large marble tablet doubled as a drinking fountain "[supplying] fresh water for all those who wish to use it," and the UDC selected a spot within White Point Gardens "at the foot of Meeting Street."¹⁸⁴ These proposed locations, all very prominent locations in Charleston's oldest section, demonstrated the extent to which Confederate memorialization had become mainstream practice rather than a semi-rebellious act.

¹⁸² Ladies' Memorial Association Records (typewritten)

¹⁸³ "Long Neglected Heroes," *The Charleston News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 9, 1899.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

As was the custom, the UDC and the LMAC raised funds through a subscription list organized months before the planned dedication. In 1899, the UDC was only a few years old, but already they had earned a reputation as the most effective fundraisers in the South. Southern women's voluntary organizations, like the UDC, were frequently more effective than their male counterparts, like the survivor's guilds. This was owed in part to the fact that they were polite but unabashedly aggressive about soliciting and securing donations. In addition, the women of the UDC were frequently the wealthy wives of community leaders, which gave them both indirect political power and social clout. They appealed to the political values of their husbands and other male leaders, while simultaneously appealing to the sentimental patriotic dedication of their female contemporaries.¹⁸⁵ Moreover, these women had experience with making impassioned and calculated pleas. Antebellum women's voluntary organizations had made similar pleas on behalf of charitable groups, and had experience uniting behind the banner of a righteous cause. Upper middle class and elite white women had grown comfortable with asserting themselves as semi-public figures on behalf of a higher purpose.¹⁸⁶ As such, post-war memorial associations frequently reached beyond state lines to raise funds for larger projects. They took advantage of existing female social and philanthropic networks to call on their fellow memorial groups to help

¹⁸⁵ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "'Woman's Hand and Heart and Deathless Love': White Women and the Commemorative Impulse in the New South," In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, 2nd ed. (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2019), 73.

¹⁸⁶ Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past*, 61.

the common cause of vindicating the memory of Confederate soldiers.¹⁸⁷ These women were also unafraid to shame former soldiers and Democratic politicians, both publicly and privately, for their apparent lack of dedication to the Confederate memorial cause. It was through the repeated demonstration of the success of their potent combination of political acumen, organizational savvy, and gentle cajoling that the UDC gained their reputation as the most effective fundraisers in the South.

Their success was demonstrated once again with the Charleston Confederate Navy Monument. The *News and Courier* reported proudly that “donations were rendered so freely and so pleasantly that more than what was wanted for the work was offered.”¹⁸⁸ In addition, the *Courier* noted in amazement that “practically the entire amount... was raised within the city of Charleston.” They attributed this “most extraordinary condition” to the city’s dedication to and appreciation for the “purposes” of the monument, but it is also indicative of the UDC’s great organizational competence.



Charleston Confederate Navy Monument

ed since the end of the war. In the early stages of memorial effort because of the financial and social ruin of the *Courier* published a notice from the Confederate Memorialburg ladies appealed to “the women of the south” for ry. The notice in the *Tri-Weekly Courier* included a notice suggesting their reliance on a kind of patriotic insularity. The “Southern States” for assistance in their “holy work”, implying not only a regionally patriotic act, an act on behalf of a higher ss the South, and many memorials (especially larger ones like d only because of out-of-town financial support. *From*: “An *ier* (Charleston, SC), April 10, 1869, https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/GT3004670799/NCNP?u=viva_wm&sid=zotero&xid=bed56d6c.

¹⁸⁸ “Long Neglected Heroes,” *The Charleston News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 9, 1899.

*Charleston Battery**Photo by Author*

When it was finally dedicated on May 8, 1899, in the opening days of the Reunion, the monument was hailed as an attractive and modern tribute to “those young Confederates who lost their lives for their country.”¹⁸⁹ Its inscription mentioned each fallen soldier by name, including Horace L. Hunley, who died in 1863 when the submarine he designed and funded sunk for the third time. In addition, the eight-foot-tall marble slab included a memorial quotation that celebrated “the lofty faith that with them died.” On either end, the stone was fitted with elaborate brass fountainheads in the shape of fish that poured water into a carved granite pool just below the stone slab. Even today, it is the only functioning water fountain on the Battery. Finally, the UDC and the LMAC included a dedication to their own labor, carved in letters larger than any words on the soldiers’ side, on the reverse side of the slab.

As is often the case, the circumstances surrounding the monument’s dedication spoke more to contemporary politics than they did to Confederate military history. The *News and Courier* reported that the UDC and the LMAC began planning the monument “four or five months” before the dedication in May of 1899. Therefore, the planning for a monument to

¹⁸⁹ “Long Neglected Heroes,” *The Charleston News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 9, 1899.

Confederates who died fighting in the Navy on torpedo boats or submarines began less than a month after the end of the Spanish American War. At first glance, these events seem disconnected. However, the public coverage of the monument's dedication reveals a deeper connection between the two. In the introduction to their coverage of the dedication, the *News and Courier* provided a contextualization of the monument in an effort to explain why Confederate torpedo men had been neglected. They began with the Confederate army, remarking that no one would question how well the "thin grey line" of the Army of Northern Virginia kept the "invader at bay." Then, in a seamless transition, the *Courier* wrote that "nor is it so hard to understand how, with the finest modern war ships... [and] with well-trained gunners and splendid officers, the fleets of Scheley and Dewey won the extraordinary victories of Santiago and Manilla in the war with Spain."¹⁹⁰ In other words, the Army of Northern Virginia had demonstrated that heroism and bravery was ingrained in the Confederate soldier, and the actions of U.S. Admiral Dewey's fleets at Manilla demonstrated the heroic valor of naval warfare. Therefore, the *Courier* wondered, how had Charleston's Confederate naval heroes been forgotten?

The *Courier's* seemingly natural connection between the U.S. Navy's victories in the Spanish American War suggest that those who organized the monument may have been inspired by contemporary politics. Eviatar Zerubavel's "time map" concept, imposing a continuous narrative of success and heroism over entirely disconnected events, is applicable here.¹⁹¹ The *Courier* drew a straight line between the Army of Northern Virginia, the U.S. Navy's fleet at Manilla Bay, and Charleston's Confederate torpedo men, despite the fact that the events

¹⁹⁰ "Long Neglected Heroes," *The Charleston News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 9, 1899.

¹⁹¹ Zerubavel, *Time Maps*, 40.

themselves were not chronologically contiguous. Rather, they were thematically contiguous, and *Courier's* rhetorical connection with well-known contemporary examples of naval valor rendered the deaths of Charleston's torpedo men more historically and culturally significant.

The seamless rhetorical connection in which the *Courier* simultaneously celebrated Confederate naval victories against the United States and the United States' naval victories against Spain demonstrated the extent to which reconciliation had been achieved. Confederate patriotism was no longer fundamentally opposed to American patriotism. An event a few days later during the Reunion illustrated the same theoretically incongruous connection. While covering a mock regatta in which "Union" and "Confederate" boats fought on Colonial Lake, the *Evening Post* proudly noted that the formation used by the Confederate boats used was "similar to that used by Admiral Dewey at Manila" to great success.¹⁹² The Confederate veterans participating in the regatta saw nothing illogical in using American naval tactics against "Union gunboats"; in fact, they celebrated both the tactics and the American victory that resulted from their use.

Coverage of events like the mock regatta and the monument dedication filled the pages of local newspapers completely for the week of the Reunion. The content of Charleston's various newspapers reveal the way in which the event totally dominated local society. For every day the reunion lasted, the majority of the Charleston *Evening Post* and *News and Courier* was devoted to coverage of the festivities. Reprinted speeches from notable veterans competed for space with lavish descriptions of each day's proceedings. The *News and Courier* reported enthusiastically that reporters from Atlanta, New Orleans, and Chattanooga were coming to cover the event. In

¹⁹² "A Naval Engagement," *The Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, SC) May 11, 1899.

addition to their own reporting, each Charleston paper proudly reprinted laudatory coverage from outside newspapers; the *News and Courier* in particular reveled in the regional approbation.

Local businesses used the newspapers to hawk mementoes like Confederate regimental buttons, “gold Confederate flag scarf pins,” “a handsome gilt badge engraved with a picture of Fort Sumter,” and “a small Palmetto Tree [badge], beautifully worked out of real Palmetto leaves.”¹⁹³ Other businesses took advantage of the presence of out-of-town travelers by offering sales, discounts, and credit to veterans and other interested visitors. It had been many years since Charleston had seen a financial opportunity like the one the reunion offered, and local business owners leaped at the chance to profit from it.

During the week following the reunion, the *Evening Post* reported that “the material results of the Reunion were as satisfactory to Charleston as the sentimental returns.”¹⁹⁴ The *Post* interviewed a dozen business owners about the financial impact, and though a few complained about the “thousands of strangers” who descended on their city, the reviews were overwhelmingly positive. E.J. Connor, manager of Kerrison Dry Goods Company, stated plainly that “all shopping was done by the visitors” and that he “would like to see another large gathering of people” who “help the city.” J.W. Brandt, another local business owner, agreed, stating that his business was “very much in excess of ordinary times, and a large per cent of the buying was done by the visitors.” He noted that “the city folk stood aside, giving way to them.”¹⁹⁵ Altogether, the *Evening Post* concluded that “the visitors dispensed their money quite as freely as they did their

¹⁹³“Profits from the Reunion: Much Money Dispensed,” *The Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, SC) May 16, 1899.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

praise, and the merchants are smiling as they balance up their books for last week.”¹⁹⁶ These business owners’ praise of out-of-town visitors’ financial contributions to the city would likely sound very familiar to modern Charlestonians, who know their city as a globally renowned tourist destination and who still frequently “stand aside to give way” to the thousands of seasonal tourists.

As impactful as the material gains of the reunion were, the sentimental returns were perhaps most important to white Southerners. As the final reunion of the nineteenth century, the 1899 UCV convention held a special significance in the eyes of many veterans. They saw it as a crowning achievement in their struggle to vindicate their cause in the eyes of the nation, and praised it accordingly. However, the *Evening Post* published an opposing concern raised by a North Carolina veteran. The soldier, who published his piece in the *Charlotte Observer* anonymously, wondered whether the reunion in Charleston should be the last. He even suggested that if the matter were put to a vote, the majority of his fellow veterans would agree with him.¹⁹⁷ He vehemently opposed the grand opulence of the Charleston reunion, which included such festivities as a mock regatta with miniature Union and Confederate “gunboats” on Colonial Lake and a lavish ball to celebrate the end of a successful week.¹⁹⁸ He wrote that “the proper life of the Reunion is seriously threatened by grand parasitic growths which are assuming hazardous proportions”, which make the “average Confederate... feel out of place in the gala parades of the new generation.” The North Carolinian continued, commenting that said parades made the

¹⁹⁶ “Profits from the Reunion: Much Money Dispensed,” *The Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, SC) May 16, 1899.

¹⁹⁷ “The Last of the Reunions?” *The Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, SC) May 11, 1899.

¹⁹⁸ “A Naval Engagement,” *The Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, SC) May 11, 1899.

average veteran feel like the South was looking “upon him with commiseration and patronizing indulgence rather than the noble sentiment inspired by the memories of the struggle.”

This observation was correct, to some extent. With the death of cult heroes like Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis, and the advent of nationally distributed societies like the UDC, the Lost Cause was drifting away from a celebration of the personal struggle. Rather, it was becoming a kind of cultural movement, defined more as a sociopolitical ideology than a personal memorial endeavor. As the wartime generation aged and died off, they were replaced by their children and grandchildren, who were enthralled by their parents’ stories of an idyllic pre-war South. These new Confederate defenders had no personal memories of the society their parents clung to, and as such, could only zealously defend the ideology of the Cause in the abstract. To them, the ideology of the Lost Cause was an effective political tool or a means by which to enforce an agenda of white supremacy, rather than a personal struggle. In many cases, membership in the UDC was a status symbol more so than it was indicative of any personal loyalties. As the North Carolina veteran astutely noted, it would be impossible for a veteran not to feel “solitary” when “he is allowed no comradeship other than to see his achievements used simply to lift unknown names into social distinction.”¹⁹⁹

In addition to cultural conflicts, veterans faced another concern. The North Carolina soldier wrote that “we have accomplished the end proposed, the vindication of our fallen comrades.” He continued, noting that “the sacred duty committed to us has been conscientiously performed, and we can rejoice together that we have lived to see the day of deliverance from the

¹⁹⁹ “The Last of the Reunions?” *The Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, SC) May 11, 1899.

odium which has been fixed to their memory.”²⁰⁰ In other words, the UCV, the UDC, and other memorial groups had succeeded in modifying cultural memory to the extent that Confederate soldiers were no longer the villains of history. To this particular soldier, that meant that these groups should end their quest on a high note, and quit while they were ahead. He suggested that Charleston, the city in which the Confederacy was born, would be an appropriate place to end the long struggle for vindication and reconciliation. “In the sight of Sumter” and “amid a people sympathetic and appreciative” would be the perfect place to “issue a farewell address,” and celebrate a “cause not Lost, but now bravely won.”²⁰¹

Evidently, the veteran’s sentiment was not shared by the majority of his comrades, as he claimed in his letter. The editor of the *Evening Post*, for instance, vehemently opposed the veteran’s suggestion. He politely acknowledged the veteran’s concern about excessively opulent ceremonies detracting from the meaning of the Confederate Cause, but rhetorically shuddered at the idea of ending pro-Confederate celebrations. He wrote that the idea of ending Confederate reunions was an idea “too pathetic for contemplation.” The struggle for vindication and remembrance needed to be continued until “taps has been sounded over the last man who wore the grey” and perhaps even after that day. He suggested that the Cause now “bravely won” should be a reason for celebration, not for another surrender.²⁰²

The editor’s sentiments were the more pervasive. In fact, the first three decades of the twentieth century proved to be one of the most active periods of memorial-building in

²⁰⁰ “The Last of the Reunions?” *The Charleston Evening Post* (Charleston, SC) May 11, 1899.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

Charleston's history. Between 1900 and 1932, four major monuments were erected in downtown Charleston. Three of those four were erected in honor of military groups or famous soldiers; the one outlier was the Henry Timrod monument in Washington Square (dedicated in 1902), which honored post-Reconstruction conceptions of Antebellum Southern culture.

The Washington Light Infantry Monument, Washington Square

On an unseasonably cold February day in 1891, a crowd of Charlestonians braved the wind to watch as the cornerstone of a monument to the Washington Light Infantry was laid. The monument association had chosen Washington's birthday as the day for their ceremony, and the weather was raw enough that the Confederate veterans present recalled "the icy winds of Virginia whistling... through [their] thin, half-clad ranks."²⁰³ Surprisingly, perhaps "wherever the eye rested there was seen the Stars and Stripes." Despite the fact that regiments of former Confederates marched in the streets, singing along as the band played "Dixie," the local paper declared the American flag to be "the motif of the glittering pageant."²⁰⁴ The Washington Light Infantry monument's cornerstone dedication ceremony was an indication that though Charlestonians professed to be united again under "one common Flag," it was a reconciliation on their own terms.

The Washington Light Infantry, founded in 1807, is an old and well-established Charleston regiment. It was initially founded in response to fears arising from the Chesapeake-Leopard affair, an event which precipitated the War of 1812. Despite their preparations, the company never saw action during the war. In 1822, however, they were called upon to defend the

²⁰³ "First in War! First In Peace!" *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) February 24, 1891

²⁰⁴ "Boys in Blue and Grey" *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) February 24, 1891

city in response to the Denmark Vesey conspiracy. They remained the city's appointed guard, maintained at the expense of the state. The Washington Light Infantry occupied the arsenal on the Citadel Green until the Military College of South Carolina (Citadel) was founded on George Washington's birthday in 1842. The Light Infantry remained in contact with the Citadel until the college was firmly established.²⁰⁵

Though the Washington Light Infantry saw action during the Seminole Wars, Mexican American War, World War I, and World War II, they remain most famous for their service to the Confederate Army. During the Civil War, the Infantry split into three companies, one of which was integrated into the Hampton Legion. More than four hundred members of the Washington Light Infantry served in the Civil War, one hundred and fourteen of whom were killed in action.²⁰⁶ The monument for which the cornerstone was laid in 1891 honored only those hundred and fourteen killed during the Civil War, and made no mention of any of the company's earlier service.

In honor of the company's role in their founding, the Citadel corps of cadets "assembled in dress parade formation," marched down Meeting Street from the Citadel Green to the Washington Light Infantry building, where they paused to salute the assembled Confederate veterans. The veterans joined the military parade, and the combined group marched the remaining half mile down Meeting Street to Washington Square where the ceremony was to be held. Once the two groups were appropriately assembled beside City Hall, the cornerstone

²⁰⁵ Today, the Citadel corps of cadets still participates in the annual Washington Light Infantry parade. Schreadley, R. L., *Valor and Virtue: The Washington Light Infantry In Peace and In War*. (Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1997).

²⁰⁶ Schreadley, R. L., *Valor and Virtue: The Washington Light Infantry In Peace and In War*. (Spartanburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1997).

ceremony began with the raising of the South Carolina state flag and the American flag. They flew level to one another at opposite ends of the square “representing fealty to the State and to the Union.” The presence of the state flag, hung in apparent equality with the American flag, was a visual representation of the conditional national unity that existed in the minds of Charlestonians. They were willing to remain peacefully reconciled with the rest of the nation, but they were not willing to submit entirely to national interest or give up their autonomy.

The day’s speaker, Major R.C. Gilchrist, put the new monument in extended historical context. He described with pride how the Washington Light Infantry had the honor of dedicating “the first monument to be erected in the South to the dead of the War Between the States” in Magnolia Cemetery, and how the company had the distinction of hosting, “the first meeting of ex-Confederate soldiers” after the war. After he finished rattling off the company’s accolades, Gilchrist’s tone turned melancholy. “Alas!” he declared, “the monument [in Magnolia Cemetery] erected by pious hands has not accomplished the end for which [it was] designed.” The Tennessee stone had slowly disintegrated in the humid and marsh-like environment of Magnolia Cemetery. Therefore, Gilchrist announced, the Washington Light Infantry veterans had called for a new monument to their fallen comrades. Though the memorial was largely a soldiers’ project, Gilchrist noted tersely that “ever generous and patriotic women rendered effective assistance” as well. Gilchrist then presided over the lowering of “cornerstone boxes,” which included important papers and artifacts relating to the history of the Washington Light Infantry and that of the Confederacy, before the cornerstone itself was finally laid to the tune of “Dixie.”²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷ “First in War! First In Peace!” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) February 24, 1891

In many ways, the Washington Light Infantry Monument is a traditional Confederate military monument, and one that does not differ all that much in essential design from the Charleston Light Dragoons Memorial at Magnolia Cemetery. Both are tall, slender stone obelisks with a raised stone base. Both are engraved with at least one significant quotation celebrating the valor of the soldiers it honors, and both are also engraved with the names of soldiers who died in service to the company. However, on a more symbolic level, the fundamental differences between them are indicative of a deeper societal change.²⁰⁸ Comparing the two reveals that their distinct roles on Charleston's memorial landscape reflect two distinct sociopolitical environments, and indeed two different Charlestons.

The Charleston Light Dragoons memorial, as discussed in Chapter Two, was dedicated to a South Carolina regiment that had fought for the Confederacy in the Civil War. The memorial obelisk was unveiled in June of 1879, and at the time, its dedication ceremonies revealed stirrings of political change. The Dragoons dedication contained more of the male military element in its ceremonies than other memorials, indicating that Republican political control over state politics was on its way out. Veterans spoke at the dedication, unlike previous memorial days led by "apolitical" ladies' memorial groups. The veterans' speeches indicated a desire to move towards a political order that bore some resemblance to the racial and gendered hierarchies that ruled Southern society before the war, but the men were nevertheless limited in what they could realistically achieve. The ceremony was still confined to the ostensibly apolitical Magnolia Cemetery, and women's memorial associations still played a starring role in the day's events. Neither the Confederate battle flag nor the American flag was visible; the veterans were not in

²⁰⁸ Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, 187.

the political position to wave the Stars and Bars, and were too conscious of old injuries to wave the Stars and Stripes.



*Washington Light Infantry Monument
Washington Square Park
Charleston, SC*

Photo by Author

The Washington Light Infantry cornerstone

ceremony, however, was opened by a military march that stretched for a mile down one of Charleston's main streets. Public schools were let out for the occasion, and children were encouraged to witness the Confederate veterans in their former military glory. There was no doubt that the ceremonies were sanctioned by local government and state government officials, as the cadets of the South Carolina Military Academy formed the honor guard that escorted the Light Infantry veterans to the ceremony. In addition, the ceremony occurred directly beside City Hall at the intersection of two of Charleston's oldest and most prominent streets. The financial and organizational support of the "apolitical" women's groups was acknowledged briefly, but on the whole, the day was devoted to celebrating men who actively took up arms against the United

States. Nevertheless, there was “the liberal mingling of the Blue and Gray in respect of the uniforms,” and the American flag was supposedly the most prominent motif of the day.²⁰⁹

By 1891, Charlestonians were evidently distant enough from the events of the Civil War that waving the American flag did not summon immediate memories of personal grievances, and they were confident enough in their political position that they could celebrate Confederate veterans in an open, unfettered manner. Their monument was not hidden away in a cemetery five miles from the center of town, but rather stood ten yards from City Hall. Veterans could unabashedly wear their colors, rather than being restricted by regulations issued by occupying officers. In addition, there were no unhappy, resentful comments made by the day’s speakers about the “present situation,” like there were at the Charleston Light Dragoons dedication.²¹⁰ By 1891, former Confederates were no longer resentful of federal authority; they remained wary but were comfortable in their own status within the reconstructed union. They no longer needed to bitterly remember days gone by, but rather they could comfortably remember a hyper-romanticized version of antebellum society while enacting discriminatory legislation that effectively revived the pre-war racial hierarchies in all but name. The past was no longer something to mourn. It had become a rallying cry: a concept of an idealized society from which

²⁰⁹ “First in War! First In Peace!” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) February 24, 1891.; the N&C notes that blue was only present because the United States government paid to outfit state militias with regulation American military uniforms. Hence, the *Courier* states, the mixing of colors. They observe that this was a logical choice by the SC militias, as it would have taken them years to raise the funds for proper uniforms of their own design.

²¹⁰ M.C. Butler., and B.H. Rutledge. *Proceedings at the Unveiling of the Monument to the Charleston Light Dragoons*. (Charleston: Walker, Evans, & Cogswell, 1889) 4.

to guide the future.²¹¹ Confederate memory had been completely normalized and ingrained in the most important parts of Charleston society.

As with Charleston's earlier Confederate monuments like the Defenders monument at Magnolia Cemetery, every step of the Washington Light Infantry monument's construction was marked with commemorative ceremonies. Following the cornerstone ceremony in 1891, the company held another ceremony in 1894 to unveil the completed monument. The day's events celebrated the final steps of construction, and culminated with the reveal of the bronze plaques affixed to the side of the stone obelisk in Washington Square.²¹²

The final Washington Light Infantry monument celebration took place in late June, and as such observers noted that the weather was significantly warmer on this day than on the day of the 1891 celebration. As with earlier Confederate memorial ceremonies, the event's organizers chose a day of special significance for their events; the plaque ceremony took place on Carolina Day, which commemorated Colonel William Moultrie's successful defense of the Charleston Harbor during the Revolutionary War.²¹³ Carolina Day celebrated South Carolina's resilience and defiance as they fought for their independence during the Revolution, and organizers no doubt sought to draw parallels between that struggle and the events of the Civil War.

²¹¹ Domby, *The False Cause*, 7.

²¹² "Heroes of a 'Lost Cause'," *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) June 29, 1894.

²¹³ Ivy McIntyre, "Happy Carolina Day!," South Carolina Historical Society (blog), June 28, 2018, <https://schistory.org/happy-carolina-day/>. Moultrie famously used Palmetto logs to build his fort on Sullivan's Island. The logs were reportedly so spongy that the British cannonballs could not penetrate the fort's walls, and the attack was repelled. The South Carolina state flag, designed by Colonel Moultrie after the battle, bears a Palmetto tree and a half moon in honor of his famous victory. Also: see recent op ed about the Secessionist implications of the flag: Ruth Miller, "Commentary: The Little-Known Secessionist History of the SC State Flag," *Post and Courier*, accessed April 8, 2021, https://www.postandcourier.com/opinion/commentary/commentary-the-little-known-secessionist-history-of-the-sc-state-flag/article_710c3578-4ea8-11eb-b01b-cfd3bb054ffb.html.

Notably, the 1894 ceremony included significantly more women than the 1891 affair. In 1891, the Washington Light Infantry veterans were celebrated with an extended military parade and the day's officiator only briefly acknowledged the involvement of women in the monument's construction. The 1894 event relied much more on the involvement of women in the day's rituals, though their physical presence was largely symbolic. The *News and Courier* reporter covering the unveiling of the plaques noted that there was "a true *pathos* in the furled banners of the Confederacy in the hands of the beautiful daughters of the Confederacy... seated on the base of the monument."²¹⁴ These young women symbolized the Confederacy itself, which was frequently depicted in popular literature and imagery as a feminine figure protected by the hyper-masculine Southern soldier.²¹⁵ They also symbolized the fertile memory of the Lost Cause, which, through these women, would be passed on to the next generation of white Southern men and women.²¹⁶ Though the flag in their hands was furled and thus representative of the Confederacy's surrender and defeat, these young women nevertheless still carried it as they sat on the monument; it was a physical reminder of the permanence of the memory of "the cause that is Lost."²¹⁷ In making

²¹⁴ "Heroes of a 'Lost Cause'," *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) June 29, 1894. Note that the *Courier* is not talking about women belonging to the United Daughters of the Confederacy organization, which was founded in Nashville in 1894. The paper instead refers to young women from the Confederate Home and College on Broad Street, who were the daughters of Confederate soldiers.

²¹⁵ See: Nina Silber and Stephanie McCurry, who both discuss gendered notions of nation and military valor. Additionally, see: Ross Brooks and Alice Fahs, who discuss gendered imagery in Confederate material culture. (Fahs, Alice. "The Feminized Civil War: Gender, Northern Popular Literature, and the Memory of the War, 1861-1900." *The Journal of American History* 85, no. 4 (1999): 1461-494.) See also: Thomas J. Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, 208-209.

²¹⁶ Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 61-65, for the symbolic role of women and children in monument dedications across the South.

²¹⁷ "Heroes of a 'Lost Cause'," *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) June 29, 1894.

physical contact with the monument, too, they imbued it with added memorial legitimacy through their role as physical representations of the Confederacy.

Lost Cause memory of the war dominated the day. Though the monument was ostensibly a simple military monument, composed of a stone obelisk affixed with bronze plaques engraved with names of the dead, its creators nevertheless took the opportunity to assert their own vision of the war and its causes. One plaque bore the words “Pro Patria,” “for country” in Latin; this fit with the “War of Northern Aggression” narrative perpetuated by the former Confederate states. If the war was “for country,” and not for the continuation of slavery, it was a noble cause with a timeless motive. Slavery was a dead institution that connoted oppression and suffering, while country was an eternally valid and patriotic reason for war. Patriotism was a motive with which Northerners could be sympathetic. In asserting this narrative, former Confederates could find common ground with Northerners, who, by accepting this motive for war, accepted the Lost Cause myth that the Civil War was not fought over the institution of slavery. In inscribing the monument with the words “Pro Patria,” therefore, former Confederates distorted historical truth to serve a modern political agenda of reconciliation on Southern terms.

The P.G.T. Beauregard Monument, Washington Square

Just a few feet away, from the Washington Light Infantry monument, another military monument was erected in 1905 in honor of Pierre Gustave Toutant Beauregard, the Confederate general known for leading the attack on Fort Sumter in 1861 that began the Civil War.²¹⁸ The local Camp Sumter chapter of the United Confederate Veterans, which had been calling for a

²¹⁸ “P. G. T. Beauregard,” American Battlefield Trust, accessed April 20, 2021, <https://www.battlefields.org/learn/biographies/p-g-t-beauregard>.

monument to Beauregard for years, finally agreed upon and commissioned a design in May of 1904.²¹⁹ The chapter described the design as an “arch of dignified and beautiful proportions,” with an inscription “suitable... to recall the name to people of South Carolina.”²²⁰ Moreover, the UCV proudly announced that “the memorial to Beauregard will be in sight of the great throngs that will pass through to the city and country offices and to the business houses of Broad Street every day.” Not only was the monument physically attractive, but its location in Washington Square would constantly remind locals of the man who was well known for defending their city.

However, it was not just “Home Folks” that the UCV wanted to instruct.²²¹ They also noted that the Beauregard monument would also “interest those visitors who might pause and seek information” about Charleston history from the memorial arch.²²² These visitors, presumably, would treat the arch as historical fact, and would have that impression further corroborated if they entered City Hall. Within City Hall was a “life size, full length picture of Beauregard” and “near the portrait, in a handsome glass and bronze case” was Beauregard’s sword. These objects were intentionally placed near a large window that overlooked the site of the planned memorial, and helped to create the impression that tourists were visiting a quasi-museum. In context with Beauregard’s portrait and his sword, which was “the gift of the women

²¹⁹ “Monument to Beauregard,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 28, 1904.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*

²²¹ “Home Folks” was a popular term for “locals” adopted by local papers in the early 20th century. See several articles and advertisements in the *Evening Post* (Charleston, SC) May 6, 1924 (Tourism Edition).

²²² “Monument to Beauregard,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 28, 1904.

of New Orleans, bequeathed to Beauregard by the City of Charleston,” the monument appeared to be yet another artifact from the past rather than a modern interpretation of historical events.²²³

The monument itself is inscribed with a deceptively simple message: “P.G.T. Beauregard. General. Commanding Confederate Forces, Charleston, South Carolina. Held this City and Harbor INVIOLETE Against Combined Attacks by Land and Water. 1863, 1864, 1865. This Monument Is Erected by a Grateful People. A.D. 1904.”²²⁴ On the surface, this appears to give only the barest facts: Beauregard commanded Confederate forces in Charleston during a three-year span. Fifty years later, Charleston’s “grateful people” erected a monument in his honor.²²⁵ However, the inscription’s choice both hides and reveals elements about its design and creation process; interrogating these hidden details gives the monument additional and necessary context.

The most important contextual detail is perhaps the UCV’s choice of the word “inviolete” to describe Beauregard’s defense of the Charleston Harbor. Charleston has been frequently personified as feminine, and even takes a feminine form in the city’s motto.²²⁶ Inviolete, therefore, is a gendered word that implies that Beauregard’s defense was somehow chivalric.²²⁷ By defending Charleston’s virgin and inviolete walls from the Northern attack, Beauregard

²²³ “Monument to Beauregard,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 28, 1904.

²²⁴ The UCV’s original planned phrase was “In honor of P.G.T. Beauregard, general, Confederate States army, who kept inviolete the gates of Charleston from 1861-1865.”

²²⁵ The first public mention of the present inscription is in, “The Beauregard Arch,” *Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) February 2, 1905.

²²⁶ Charleston’s Motto: *Ædes Mores Juraque Curat* (Commonly translated as: She Guards Her Buildings, Customs, and Laws). See: Walter J. Fraser, *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1989).

²²⁷ A similar inscription can be found on a bronze plaque affixed to the Defenders of Charleston memorial in Magnolia Cemetery, which celebrates Charleston’s defenders who kept the city “virgin and invincible.” See Chapter Two.

becomes the prototypical Southern gentleman motivated not by bloodlust or martial ambitions, but rather in defense of feminine virtue. As with the “pro patria” defense inscribed on the Washington Light Infantry, the concept of holding Charleston “inviolable” distorts the historical record to achieve modern political aims. Beauregard was not protecting Charleston’s virgin honor, he was actively leading an armed rebellion against an American fort in the harbor of an American city. By casting Beauregard as a defender of a feminine entity, the monument played into the growing conception of the historical South as a land full of magnolias, moonlight, and happy enslaved people working in rolling cotton fields.²²⁸ Romanticized descriptions of Charleston in the travel literature of the day frequently personified Charleston as “a delightful old chatelaine... fragile and delicate, infinitely tender and most rarely sweet.”²²⁹ Every aspect of the anthropomorphized Charleston was “a dream of the romantic past.”²³⁰ Therefore, to a visitor to Charleston in 1905 expecting to see a city that was “wistful, serene... extraordinarily proud,” and decidedly feminine. They would understand the Beauregard monument simply as historic fact. It was designed to play into their expectations, and simply added another layer of material proof to their expectations of “that unique little world of aristocrats.”²³¹ It created a sympathetic South,

²²⁸ McIntyre, *Souvenirs of the Old South*, 103 and 143.

²²⁹ Mildred Cram, *Old Seaport Towns of the South*. (New York: Dodd, Mead, & Company, 1917) 5 ; 125-127.

²³⁰ Cram, *Old Seaport Towns of the South*, 125-127.

²³¹ Cram, *Old Seaport Towns of the South*, 125.



*P.G.T. Beauregard Monument,
Washington Square Park
Charleston, SC*

Photo by Author

rather than the scheming aggressor that had emerged in the Northern consciousness immediately after the War.²³²

In essence, the defense of feminine virtue implied by “inviolable” partially absolves Beauregard of responsibility for his actions during the war. By putting him on the defensive, it plays into the false narrative that the Northern army was the aggressor. In addition, the inclusion of the defense of honor concept serves as a partial explanation for why an American city would erect a monument to a man who began an armed rebellion against the American government just fifty years prior.

Moreover, though the monument was erected as a result of planning by two small groups of former Confederate officers and elite local Democratic government officials, the inscription asserts that it was the product of the whole city’s gratitude. Such a statement ignores the fact that

²³² Caroline E. Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2013) 19-24.

funds for the monument were raised almost exclusively by former Confederate officers who served on Beauregard's staff, and turns it into a display of democratic gratitude. The monument was not a spontaneous display of support by a large group of grateful citizens; rather it was the product of careful planning by a small group of elite white men and women.²³³ The monument, rather like the Confederacy itself, was the antithesis of a democratic display.

Therefore, while the monument's inscription was intended to appear to out-of-town visitors as a recitation of basic historical fact, in truth, it was close to the opposite of what the monument displayed. The monument perpetuated a Lost Cause narrative that asserted that the Civil War was the result of a rational Southern defense against Northern aggression, which disguised the fact that the Civil War actually began following an armed attack on the American Fort Sumter led by Beauregard and his rebel troops. It turned the war into a fight for honor, rather than a fight to maintain the institution of slavery.²³⁴ In addition, the inscription asserted that the monument was the product of a democratic outpouring of gratitude from Charleston's citizens. In reality, it was the product of careful planning by a small group of elite white men and women, who used the monument to support their contemporary political agendas.

The Wade Hampton Monument, Marion Square

The final monument to a specific Confederate hero erected in Charleston was dedicated to Wade Hampton III. It takes the form of a simple white stone obelisk, about fifteen feet tall,

²³³ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "'Woman's Hand and Heart and Deathless Love': White Women and the Commemorative Impulse in the New South," In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, Ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003) 67.

²³⁴ Domby, *The False Cause*, 35.

mounted on a base composed of a set of raised stone steps. On each side of the base, Hampton's various accomplishments are listed along with his dates and a line acknowledging the United Daughters of the Confederacy's role in the monument's creation. The monument is simple in style, and its inscriptions are just as plain. This simplicity indicates that the UDC believed that anyone viewing the monument would have already heard of Hampton and learned about his contributions to the South. However, its simplicity also ensures that the Hampton monument is frequently left out of conversations about Charleston's memorial landscape in the present. Monuments nearby have been the sites of protest for racial equality, but the vague simplicity of Hampton's monument and his relative obscurity in modern cultural memory means that the obelisk is often ignored.

Located on the edge of Marion Square, the obelisk stands less than one hundred yards from the old Citadel building. There is a direct line of sight from the Hampton monument to the John C. Calhoun monument on the opposite end of Marion Square. By 1912 when the monument was unveiled, Marion Square (the former Citadel Green) was no longer situated on the far edges of town.²³⁵ As the city expanded northward, Marion Square became the new center of town.²³⁶ By placing a monument to Hampton at the city's center, Charleston signaled its continued allegiance to the ideology of the Confederacy and that white supremacy was central to its politics.

²³⁵ "Hampton Monument Unveiled," *The Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) March 29, 1912.

²³⁶ Kytte and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 100.



*Wade Hampton Monument,
Marion Square
Charleston, SC*

Photo by Author

Moreover, Hampton's service in the Confederate army was just one of several accolades listed on the base of his obelisk. One side listed his military service, including his rank as Lieutenant General of the Cavalry of the Army of Northern Virginia in 1865. In addition to his wartime military service, he was acknowledged as the leader of the Hampton Legion of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) that assembled after the war's conclusion.²³⁷ The opposite side of

²³⁷ This side, perhaps consciously, faces the Old Citadel Building.

the monument, facing Calhoun Street, listed the highlights of his political career including his term as Governor of South Carolina and his multiple terms in the United States Senate. By including both his political and military service in positions of spatial equality, the monument signaled that they were of equal importance to his legacy. Most white South Carolina Democrats viewed his term as Governor as the high-water mark of his political career, since it brought a violent and coerced end to Reconstruction in South Carolina. It signaled the beginning of an era of Democratic control in the state; this was an era that was marked by white supremacist policies, including legislation disenfranchising African Americans designed ensure the continuation of Democratic leadership. Hampton's monument, therefore, celebrated not just his military victories during the Civil War, but also his supporters' victory over Reconstruction.

At the obelisk's dedication in March of 1912, the United Daughters of the Confederacy made their intentions clear regarding the Hampton monument's symbolic significance. Rain surprised the assembled crowd, and forced them to move inside the nearby Citadel Chapel to complete the day's ceremonies. However, the move only enhanced the significance of the unveiling; by conducting the commemorative rituals in a worship space, the Lost Cause and the veritable cult of Hampton became a quasi-religion. The majority of the assembled came from military companies: the German Artillery, the German Fusiliers, the Washington Light Infantry, and the Irish Volunteers all joined together in formal exercises to honor Hampton's memory. The *News and Courier* noted that a dozen or so Confederate veterans were also in attendance. They "gathered in full force" to celebrate "one whose name they knew of old during the bloody Virginia campaigns."²³⁸ In addition to the UDC representatives, a contingent of young women

²³⁸ "Hampton Monument Unveiled," *The Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) March 29, 1912.

from the Confederate Home and College joined the ceremonies and stood in a “pleasing” formation to the north of the monument.

Wade Hampton’s granddaughters, Corinne and Eloise Hampton, pulled off the decorative drapery at the appointed moment.²³⁹ Their involvement, along with that of the Confederate Home’s young women, signaled to the assembled audience that an appreciation for the Lost Cause had been passed on to the youngest generation.²⁴⁰ After pulling the ceremonial cord, the women laid wreaths and flower arrangements on the grave, continuing the longtime tradition of ceremonial grave decoration at unveiling ceremonies.²⁴¹ Martha Washington, president of the UDC’s Charleston chapter, and Mrs. John Randolph Tucker, Wade Hampton’s daughter, also laid memorial wreaths. The *Courier* reported that as soon as the women placed their flowers, the skies opened up. One onlooker reportedly called it “a blessing” because moving to the chapel allowed the assembled audience to more clearly hear the day’s speeches, which celebrated the “Confederate hero [as] truly typical of the Social Order from which he came.”²⁴²

S.C. Mitchell, president of the University of South Carolina, gave the keynote speech. He proclaimed Hampton to be superior by birth and genetics, as “in his blood flowed the blood of Virginia and South Carolina, the two distinctive Commonwealths of the South.” Mitchell continued with this thought, proclaiming that “the ancestors of Gen. Wade Hampton were in an

²³⁹ See: Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 62 and 65, for information on descendants’ involvement in monument dedications.

²⁴⁰ Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters*, 69.

²⁴¹ See a discussion of similar rituals in the immediate postwar years in Chapter Two.

²⁴² “Hampton Monument Unveiled,” *The Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) March 29, 1912.

illustrious way identified with the advance of Anglo-Saxon civilization upon this continent.”²⁴³ In the early twentieth century, Anglo-Saxonism was a popular framework for explaining the advances of society. Advocates of the concept believed that Anglo-Saxon people were genetically superior to other races. They defined race as an innate characteristic that defined one’s behavior, and believed that by virtue of their race, Anglo-Saxon people were destined to be superior in every way. This philosophy was often manifested in the memorial landscape, as Confederate monuments became “avatars of whiteness.”²⁴⁴

Despite this apparent superiority, or perhaps because of it, Mitchell labeled the Hampton family as typical of Old South planters. He described their large land holdings in South Carolina, Mississippi, and Louisiana, all of which were “tilled by African slaves.”²⁴⁵ Mitchell felt the need to defend the Hampton’s behavior, arguing that enslaved people on the Hamptons’ properties were “trained in manual arts, taught habits of obedience and work, grounded in the elements of civilization,” and above all, they were “treated withal kindly.” Mitchell declared that a plantation like the one belonging to the Hamptons was “something of a miniature kingdom, calling for the high executive ability of the planter, and enabling him to reveal in his home and personality all of the grace, charm, and sweetness that marked the manhood of the South.” Mitchell likened the

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Thomas J. Brown, *Civil War Monuments and the Militarization of America*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2019) 120. At another monument dedication in West Virginia in 1908, roughly contemporaneous with the Hampton dedication, the keynote speaker declared that the Confederate army, “constituted the most homogenous organization that ever bore the Anglo-Saxon name.” Of course, as Chapter Two of this thesis attests, the Confederate ranks were far from homogenous, and the early memorial landscape reflected that complexity by including monuments to German and Irish regiments alongside those of elite native Charlestonian regiments. By the early twentieth century, however, Confederate monuments needed to honor a more idealized white personage, “of pure Southern type.” (Brown 120-121). *See Also*: Domby, *The False Cause*, 49.

²⁴⁵“Hampton Monument Unveiled,” *The Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) March 29, 1912.

Southern planter class to great men of ancient Greece and renaissance Italy, who supposedly brought their civilizing influence to the “halls of the legislature” in order to shape the character of the society around them and bring about its advancement. Mitchell painted the Old South as a haven free of the troubles that “plague modern society,” and a memorial respite to which one could flee if they felt overwhelmed by contemporary life.

Mitchell then launched into a laudatory passage about Hampton’s wartime service, during which Hampton apparently “shone resplendently in all the true greatness of his manhood.” The Confederacy’s ultimate surrender was only briefly acknowledged; to Mitchell, it is a “great thing to achieve victory,” but a “far greater thing to turn defeat into victory.” Hampton’s real genius was not in his military service, but in how he “restored [South Carolina] to something of its original prestige” by rescuing it “from the carpetbagger, the scalawag, and the befooled black politician.”²⁴⁶

In the minds of its narrators, the Old South’s story no longer ended with the surrender at Appomattox, and it was no longer a story of grief and defeat. Hampton’s gubernatorial campaign in 1876 had put South Carolina on the path to redemption, and eventually vindication. By 1912, political vindication was definite: Democratic control over the state was secured. Hampton’s men, who had led an aggressive campaign of voter suppression and racial violence were known as the “patriots of 1876,” and their leader was lauded as the man who restored the state to “its former efficiency in government and prestige in the national councils.” By erecting a victory monument to Hampton, whose only real “victory” had come ten years after the Civil War, Charleston did not celebrate military success. Rather, the city celebrated the success of white

²⁴⁶ “Hampton Monument Unveiled,” *The Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) March 29, 1912.

supremacist policies in restoring strict social and racial hierarchies that allowed the antebellum planter class and their descendants to retain control over local and state politics. Standing in the city's largest public square, the Wade Hampton monument served as a very pointed reminder that the space and the city it occupied belonged exclusively to white men and women.

Though he spoke with confidence about the "true character" of antebellum South Carolina, Samuel Chiles Mitchell was born in 1864 in Mississippi.²⁴⁷ Mitchell was barely a year old when the Civil War ended, and only twelve years old when Wade Hampton became Governor of South Carolina. Unlike General James Connor speaking at the dedication of the Defenders of Charleston monument at Magnolia Cemetery or Wade Hampton himself speaking at the dedication of the German Confederate monument at Bethany cemetery, Samuel Mitchell had no personal memory of life before the Civil War. He had to rely on his parents' and friends' stories of life in the Old South, which were no doubt tinged with Lost Cause mythology. Mitchell, therefore, grew up believing in a hyper-romanticized, artificial conception of life in the Old South. In school, he learned from books that taught the "true history" that had been carefully curated by pro-Confederate organizations like the UDC, or ones that had been written by Lost Cause writers like William Gilmore Simms and Henry Timrod.²⁴⁸ In other words, Mitchell's whole worldview was dominated by Lost Cause propaganda that turned the Old South into a glorious but lost civilization, and that turned slavery into a benevolently civilizing institution.

²⁴⁷ Daniel W. Hollis, "Samuel Chiles Mitchell, Social Reformer in Blease's South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* 70, no. 1 (1969): 20–37.

²⁴⁸ Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 118-140, for a discussion of the UDC and their crusade to embed Lost Cause rhetoric in Southern educational curriculums. *See also*: K. Stephen Prince *Stories of the South: Race and the Reconstruction of Southern Identity, 1865-1915*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2014) 145-152, for an analysis of the cultural and memorial contributions of other Southern writers like Thomas Nelson Page, *and* Doby, *The False Cause*, 37.

Nevertheless, he unselfconsciously recited this artificially constructed worldview as objective fact at the Wade Hampton dedication.

Conclusion

Comparing the first Confederate Decoration Days at Magnolia Cemetery to Wade Hampton monument dedication in 1912 reveals a tremendous transformation in Charleston society and Charleston's memory of the Civil War. In less than fifty years, white Charlestonians had gone from mourning personal and societal losses at the end of the Civil War to simply treating the surrender at Appomattox as a setback in the larger glorious arc of Southern history. Memorials that remembered personal losses gave way to monuments that celebrated the pro-slavery ideology of the Confederacy in all but name. Four decades earlier, elite white Charlestonians remembered their dead quietly in a large rural cemetery located five miles outside of town, and hid their discontent with Reconstruction politics under widows' veils. By the early twentieth century, eight monuments to Lost Cause ideology and Confederate military heroes had been erected in the oldest and most prominent public squares in downtown Charleston. Lost Cause counter-memory of the Civil War had been entirely institutionalized and legitimized through Charleston's memorial landscape, to the extent that Mitchell treated carefully constructed Lost Cause memory as historical fact.

In addition, pro-Southern historical memory of the Civil War had successfully been passed on to successive generations. By 1912, the vast majority of the generations that had lived through the Civil War had died. However, before they passed away, this "Generation of the Sixties" had taught their children about the glories of the Old South.²⁴⁹ These children, who grew

²⁴⁹ Cox, *Dixie's Daughters*, 121-123.

up hearing their parents' elegiac stories about antebellum prosperity, enthusiastically took up their parents' Lost Cause banner. The founders and early leaders of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the Charleston chapter of which erected the Wade Hampton monument, were the daughters and granddaughters of the women who decorated graves and erected cemetery monuments in the years following the Civil War.²⁵⁰ By including the young granddaughters and great-nieces of Wade Hampton in the unveiling ceremony, the UDC ensured that the Confederate memorial fervor would again be passed on to successive generations, each of which would be further removed from the immediate events they celebrated.

In the almost five decades since the first Decoration Days at Magnolia Cemetery, Confederate memory in Charleston had been established and reaffirmed through aggressive physical and ideological memorialization campaigns. The next mission was to preserve the efforts of the previous generations, and turn the memorial identity of the Old South into a nationally recognized commodity. In a rapidly modernizing world, Confederate memorialization in Charleston had to change with the times. The challenge was no longer vindicating the Confederacy in the hearts and minds of Southerners. Faced with thousands of out-of-town visitors, many of whom were white Northerners attracted by the mystical glamour of the Old South, Lost Cause believers had to figure out how to vindicate the Confederacy in the minds of the descendants of those against whom it fought.

Over the next few decades in Charleston, the task of defending the memorial legacy of the Old South was transferred from Confederate memorial groups to preservation societies.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 20, where Cox writes, "Women's involvement in the Lost Cause added another dimension to the movement, as they desired to perpetuate the values of the Lost Cause for future generations." To Cox, the perpetuation of an idealized memory to later generations was one of the most essential missions of women's Confederate memorial groups, especially the UDC.

These groups, consisting mainly of elite white women, turned historic buildings and even Charleston's own streetscape into a new kind of memorial to life before the Civil War. This was a pro-slavery-sans-slavery vision that turned African American men and women into aesthetic tokens, and a vision that turned South Carolina's antebellum agrarian society into an anti-industrial haven from modern woes.²⁵¹ Preservationists in the early twentieth century transformed Charleston's built environment into a window into an artificially conceived past, thus continuing the legacy begun by Charleston's Confederate memorial groups.

Chapter Four: Commercialized Memorialization and the Development of a Tourist

Infrastructure

Introduction

²⁵¹ Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 32; and McIntyre, *Souvenirs of the Old South*, 143.

Writing in the *Charleston News and Courier* in December 1928, Alston Deas commented that “it is only a matter of time until appreciative persons will take over and restore everything of character and value that yet remains of the older city, with a corresponding rise in real estate values and general prosperity.” Soon enough, he declared, Charleston would be known to the nation as “the most wistful town in America.” As the president of the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings (SPOD), Deas spoke with assurance, and conveyed his confidence that his group would work to transform his predictions into reality. Deas’ statement, combining a sentimental affection for “the older city” with a pragmatic and ambitious desire to make the city’s assets economically profitable, perfectly epitomizes the mindset of Charleston’s preservation groups in the early twentieth century. “Modernization,” Deas declared, “involved an appreciation and recognition of all that was fine and valuable in the old.”²⁵²

In the period of after World War I, elite white men and women in Charleston sought to capitalize on the developing tourist industry in the American South while simultaneously securing a monopoly over public memory of the city’s past. Elite Charlestonians marketed the city’s past to an increasingly interested public in different ways and through different mediums, but they were united behind a desire to solidify their own sentimentalized impressions of Antebellum Charleston as historical fact in the larger public consciousness. They transformed the city’s built environment into a monument to a faux-idyllic life before the Civil War, honoring a period in which many of their ancestors lived comfortably at the top of the sociopolitical and economic hierarchy by profiting from the coerced labor of enslaved people.

²⁵² Alston Deas, “Ancient Beauty of Once Neglected Buildings in Lower City Regained,” *The Charleston News and Courier* (Charleston, SC) December 17, [1928](#).

In doing so, they built upon the legacy of groups like the Ladies' Memorial Association of Charleston (LMAC) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC). While previous generations' efforts focused on honoring and vindicating the pro-slavery cause of the Confederacy through elaborate commemorative ritual and the dedication of public monuments, their efforts transformed sentimental counter-memory into veritable historic truth proclaimed in city squares and public parks. The LMAC and UDC had been sowing the seeds of Lost Cause memory in the public consciousness for decades, and their work ensured that Charleston's early preservationists could sell a contrived romantic vision of aristocratic grandeur and racial harmony in the Old South without resistance or questioning from the general public.²⁵³

However, unlike many of the women of LMAC and UDC, the men and women who sought to sell the glamour of Old Charleston to the wider world had never personally experienced life before the Civil War. Many were born just as Wade Hampton and his Redeemer Democrats took control of the state government, and came of age at the height of an aggressive campaign of physical and ideological memorialization to solidify Lost Cause memory as fact.²⁵⁴ Like Samuel Chiles Mitchell at the dedication of the Wade Hampton Monument in 1912, they only experienced life before the Civil War through the sentimentalized memories of their parents' and grandparents' generation. Nevertheless, this generation of preservationists and memorial activists sold their memories as authentic truth. In doing so, they remade the city of Charleston into a physical manifestation of these wistful imaginings and created a veritable shrine to a

²⁵³ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past*, (Cambridge: Harvard Belknap Press, 2005) 225.

²⁵⁴ Bishir, Catherine W. "Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past in Raleigh and Wilmington, North Carolina, 1885-1915" In *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity*, Ed. W. Fitzhugh Brundage. (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2000) 142.

nostalgic Lost Cause vision of the Old South that acted as a potent contrast to the modern world of “hurry and shove.”²⁵⁵

They accomplished this primarily by cultivating the city’s built environment through historic preservation and by enlivening that veritable scaenae frons with carefully staged domestic tours that asked tourists to imagine themselves as participants in a vivid scene of aristocratic Antebellum Southern life. Though groups like the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings (SPOD) and the fledgling Board of Architectural Review (BAR) professed a desire to simply protect “a continuous record of the architectural history of our country,” decisions about what was “worthy” of saving often depended on subjective and sentimental criteria.

Preservationists in Charleston placed an overwhelming emphasis on saving the “historic monuments” from the colonial and antebellum period because they believed these structures to represent the ideals and values of Charleston’s Golden Age before “the decline of architectural taste in the [18]70s.”²⁵⁶ The more than four hundred carefully selected historic structures that made up Charleston’s Old and Historic District, therefore, were “domestic monuments to the city’s slaveholding, rice planter elite” that honored the pro-slavery Lost Cause of the South just as much as any Confederate monument.²⁵⁷

²⁵⁵ Stephanie Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory: The Making of Historic Charleston*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2005) 178.

²⁵⁶ Albert Simons to A. Lawrence Kocher, 12 April 1928, Albert Simons Papers, SCHS. and Simons and Lapham to Lippincott, 10 November 1924, as quoted in Eugene Waddell, “The Only Volume in the Octagon Library,” in James M. Hutchinson and Harlan Greene, eds., *Renaissance in Charleston: Art and Life in the Carolina Low Country, 1900-1940* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2003), 117.

²⁵⁷ Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory*, 32.

Though much of the Old and Historic District represented a sentimental notion of a “heroic” Antebellum past, protecting relics of the past did not necessarily entail a wholesale rejection of the present. Rather, Charleston preservationists elected to walk the line between conservation and development by protecting a dedicated portion of the city while encouraging the commercial development of other areas. In the eyes of the SPOD and other like-minded groups “it is not what is new, but what is incongruous that should be avoided.”²⁵⁸ Commercial development was an essential part of creating a permanent tourist infrastructure, and was critical to the financial success of the historic district. The SPOD understood the necessity of making their endeavor profitable and sustainable, and saw heritage tourism as a way of revitalizing the local economy in the interwar period.

Despite the pragmatic embrace of commercial development, perhaps contradictorily, historic Charleston was marketed as an escape from the hustle and bustle of the modern commercial world. The city’s elite white cultural stewards capitalized on their own ancestry to sell a contrived vision of aristocratic leisure, where wealthy Northerners could escape from the pressures of “real life” in the company of faded gentility. Travel narratives, popular guidebooks, and kitschy ephemera all sold a vision of “a place where the present keeps a measured pace which seems studied through the past.”²⁵⁹ These narratives worked in combination with the city’s preservation initiatives to cultivate an aura of mystique and historical fantasy.

Progress and Change: Charleston and the New South

²⁵⁸ Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory*, 26.

²⁵⁹ William Dean Howells, “In Charleston,” *Harper’s Magazine*, October 1915: 757.

In 1898, a preacher and army veteran from Kansas City visited Charleston to see the place where “the roar of [the] gun[s] woke a new America into life.”²⁶⁰ He was so impressed with what he saw that he published a gushing review in the *News & Courier*, which included many of his opinions on the ways in which progress might change the landscape that so caught his fancy. He remarked that Charleston could “never be more beautiful than she is to-day lying in her gardens of magnolia... and dreaming of her sires,” but lamented that “the New South will soon push the Old South into the sea.”²⁶¹ His fears reflected those of many Charlestonians, who had been trying for years to walk the line between progressive commercial development and conservative maintenance of long-standing values and traditions.

Though many other Southern cities had faced similar devastation after the Civil War, few remained as economically stagnant as Charleston in the decades that followed. Harriott Horry Rutledge Ravenel, a local author, wrote ruefully that “with the fall... of the Confederacy went out the... life of Charleston.”²⁶² The city stood in active resistance to many of the New South tenets and resisted the introduction of major industry. The city’s elites instead preferred to focus on smaller business ventures and Confederate memorial efforts that mourned the past without looking towards the future. John C. Hemphill, editor of the *News and Courier*, quoted Charleston author William Gilmore Simms’ lament that “after the conquest of arms came the conquest of ideas.” Hemphill contrasted Simms’ observations with optimism, predicting that “the Old South,

²⁶⁰ H.D. Jenkins, “The True Old South,” *The Charleston News & Courier* (Charleston SC) December 30, [1898](#).

²⁶¹ H.D. Jenkins, “The True Old South,” *The Charleston News & Courier* (Charleston SC) December 30, [1898](#).

²⁶² Harriet Horry Rutledge (Mrs. St. Julien) Ravenel, *Charleston, The Place and The People*, Quoted on Don H. Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South: Atlanta, Nashville, Charleston, Mobile, 1860-1910*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press), 236.

the true South, is too strong to be finally overcome” by any “New South cult.”²⁶³ He scoffed at the “sentimental young men... who had not taken part in the war and knew nothing of the feelings of those who had.”²⁶⁴ He urged Charlestonians to ignore the “fakirs and fanatics” that promoted the New South in favor of holding on to the conservative values and ideals of the Old South.

Don Doyle argues that a major factor in the continued lethargy was the potent combination of repeated commercial failures and a real apathy from Charleston’s business leaders towards any kind of lasting change.²⁶⁵ According to Hemphill, Charleston did not lack promise; it had all of the individual skill, investment capital, and natural resources to be successful. Rather, the city and its leaders lacked a collective community drive. John P. Grace, the city’s first Irish Catholic mayor, concurred. Writing decades after Hemphill, he still agreed that the “secret of our decay... is OURSELVES.”²⁶⁶ In order to break free from their slump, Charleston’s civic leaders, business leaders, and prominent citizens all needed to unite behind a common goal for their city.

It did not help that much of that leadership class was composed of former planters and their descendants, who regarded ambitious men of business with “apathy, and occasionally...

²⁶³ William C. Hemphill, “The New South Nonsense: The Opinions Of A Disinterested Observer,” *The News & Courier* (Charleston, SC), May 8, 1893.

²⁶⁴ William C. Hemphill, “The New South Nonsense: The Opinions Of A Disinterested Observer,” *The News & Courier* (Charleston, SC), May 8, 1893.

²⁶⁵ Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 159.

²⁶⁶ City of Charleston, *Yearbook XXV* (Charleston: 1923).

actual hostility.”²⁶⁷ Rather than invest in commercial enterprise of any kind, Charleston’s elites had sunk their money into land and agricultural ventures for generations. Moreover, much of the planter class’ wealth had been invested in enslaved human capital, the income from which disappeared entirely following the end of the Civil War. The city’s elites recognized these facts; one former planter had admitted in 1868 that “we... will find it hard to live... .I know that I am not prepared for the great change.”²⁶⁸ Nevertheless, enduring planter socioeconomic networks and ideologies were a tremendous limiting factor on future growth; it was difficult to advocate for progressive commercial development when those who ran the Chamber of Commerce and city council looked down on the business class and feared their influence.²⁶⁹

Tensions between the older ruling class and the younger business class were evident. Unlike the aforementioned planter class, the emerging business class had mostly grown up as the children of smaller farmers, lawyers, or merchants. German and Irish immigrants and those of German or Irish descent made up a significant portion of this emerging commercial group as well. These men had not all fought their way up from impoverished origins, but neither did they inherit a fortune. Rather, they built upon their working-class foundation through their education, business savvy, and self-confidence.²⁷⁰ Met with the resistance of the ruling planter class, many

²⁶⁷ Address by William L Trenholm, published as “The Chamber’s Centennial,” *News & Courier* (Charleston SC) February 12, 1884.

²⁶⁸ Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 296.

²⁶⁹ Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of The New South* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 64.

²⁷⁰ Ayers, *The Promise of The New South*, 64-65.

of these talented young businessmen fled to better opportunities amid developing industries in the South Carolina Upstate or deeper South in Birmingham and Atlanta.²⁷¹

However, others remained behind and made names and fortunes for themselves against the odds. Frederick W. Wagener, a German immigrant whose brother was honored with a monument by the German Artillery, rose from humble beginnings as a grocer to become one of the wealthiest men in the city. John P. Grace, of Irish descent and the son of farmers, became the president of the Cooper River Bridge Inc. and later the mayor of Charleston. Francis S. Rodgers, self-made phosphate magnate of German descent, built his Wentworth Street mansion tall enough so that he could literally “look down his nose at the South of Broad crowd.”²⁷² These men could not have been more different than the planter scions with whom they competed, who “preferred to go on foot, even under considerable discomfort... rather than patronize public conveyances” like streetcars, “that were so democratic.”²⁷³

Nevertheless, some leaders understood that there could be a compromise between the two warring positions that would unite the business class with the older conservative elite behind a common goal. That purpose ultimately became historic preservation and the development of a tourist infrastructure in the city; the inherently retrospective mindset of preservation appealed the conservatives while the development of the city’s natural resources and amenities for profit pleased the ambitious business class. The success and widespread appeal of largely female Confederate memorial groups and male survivors’ guilds in the decades following the Civil War

²⁷¹ Ayers, *The Promise of The New South*, 109.

²⁷² Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 235.

²⁷³ John Price Radford, “Culture, Economy and Urban Structure in Charleston, South Carolina, 1860-1880.” (Ph.D., United States -- Massachusetts, Clark University, 1974), 177-192.

had demonstrated Charleston's strong historical consciousness in elites and non-elites alike.²⁷⁴ However, those groups were incredibly conservative and reactionary, and responded to what they perceived as discomfiting developments in the contemporary political climate by retreating to a celebration of a white supremacist past. The movement towards a codified preservation ethos and a developed tourist infrastructure, on the other hand, required that citizen groups and city officials alike use the past for the sake of the city's future. It was therefore progressive, and separated Charleston's preservation initiatives from other deeply conservative preservation societies like the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (founded in 1889).

While this informal collaboration held distinct promise, the city did not develop into a tourist paradise overnight. The process moved slowly over the latter decades of the nineteenth century. One of the first initiatives toward an established infrastructure was a major campaign to begin construction of a hotel on the Battery in 1888. It encapsulated both the highs and lows of the unusual union between tradition and progress, and its eventual failure demonstrated the collaboration's limitations. Frederick Wagener, George Williams, and other nouveau riche businessmen excitedly sponsored the hotel's early costs, and saw it as an opportunity "to make their influence felt and to show the faith they have in the future of Charleston."²⁷⁵ However, at an early fundraising event, the crowd was quiet until a brass band in attendance played "Dixie." When it did, the crowd "applauded and rose from their chairs and waived their hats." Men and women gathered to celebrate Charleston's commercial progress cheered louder for a song that

²⁷⁴ See Chapter 2 for discussion of non-elite German and Irish soldiers' monument (Bethany Cemetery) and Chapters 2 and 3 for discussions of the contributions of elite white women's memorial groups.

²⁷⁵ Frank Dawson, "One Million Dollars," *News & Courier* (Charleston, SC), June 2, 1888.

nostalgically celebrated the virtues of the agrarian South than they did for businessmen announcing their financial pledges to the project. Given the irony of this scenario, it is probably unsurprising that the hotel venture failed within a few years. When local interest faded, Williams and Wagener had to look North for the capital required for their venture. When that pursuit failed, they gave up entirely, expressing disgust with the disinterest of local elites. Upon publishing the news of the hotel's failure, *News and Courier* mockingly suggested that such a modern hotel could more easily be built on Mars than in historic Charleston.²⁷⁶

A decade later, the 1899 United Confederate Veterans reunion proved that the union between conservative elites and progressive business interests could be successful with the right level of dedication and focus. As discussed in Chapter 2, the city of Charleston both endorsed postwar modernity and reinforced a belief in the righteousness of the past in their preparations for the convention. Charlestonians rallied to create a welcoming environment for the former soldiers by opening up their homes to visitors without lodging and by dedicating several memorials to local Confederate military groups. At the same time, city leaders also built a large new 8,000-seat event space to accommodate the needs of the convention and offered financial incentives to local businesses for promoting the event.²⁷⁷ Charleston grew and changed to support the convention, but their overwhelming endorsement of the UCV demonstrated their obsession with honoring the Lost Cause and maintaining the Antebellum status quo. The city's preparations for the convention highlighted the value Charleston placed on memorializing the

²⁷⁶ Doyle, *New Cities, New Men, New South*, 171.

²⁷⁷ See discussion of the event from a Civil War memory perspective in Chapter 3.

Lost Cause, even well into the twentieth century, while simultaneously foreshadowing the city's later emphasis on a commercialized Confederate memory.

The reunion was not only more financially successful than the Battery hotel venture, but it also elevated Charleston in the country's estimation. During the bidding at the prior year's convention in Atlanta, Charleston beat out rivals from significantly larger and more modern cities like Baltimore and Louisville; the event ultimately brought more than 30,000 visitors to a city of only 56,000.²⁷⁸ A savvy team that combined members from the Ladies' Memorial Association and the Young Men's Business League handled the logistical challenges elegantly, and the event's overwhelming success demonstrated the real value of such an alliance.

Despite the success of ventures that looked to the past for inspiration, city leaders still held lingering hopes for industrial development even after the turn of the century. The cover of an informational booklet published by the Chamber of Commerce in 1908 featured an aspirational skyline filled with large buildings, factories, and towering smokestacks. Beneath it was a large map outlining Charleston's railroad connections with major domestic cities like Chicago and New York as well as its maritime connections with international cities like Buenos Aires and Havana.²⁷⁹ The cover images set the tone for how city leaders wanted Charleston to be viewed; they aspired to make a reputation as a railroad hub and industrial center to rival Atlanta and a port to rival New Orleans.

²⁷⁸ Doyle, *New Men, New Cities, New South*, 178.

²⁷⁹ *Chamber of Commerce, Charleston, S.C.: Her Resources and Advantages* (Charleston, S.C: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, 1908). South Carolina Historical Society, Ephemera Collection, SC HF 3163 C35 C48.

The booklet's detailed list of all of Charleston's "advantages" told another story, though. While some, like an assessment of the Lowcountry's various ports and terminals, did focus on industrial advantages, the vast majority focused on the potential for a visitor-based economy that melded tradition with new enterprise. It touted the city as a historically romantic "scene of song and story" defined by simple Southern hospitality and genteel beauty. At the same time, the Chamber of Commerce proudly noted that the "large sums of money spent by these tourists" was a major factor in the commercial growth of the city. However, it is clear that Charleston's promoters were after a certain type of visitor. The booklet celebrated the "soft sea breezes that ... rejuvenate the systems of those who have undergone the rigors of northern winter," thereby demonstrating the city leaders' interest in primarily attracting the growing Northeastern middle class to the lowcountry's sunny shores. The booklet bragged about Charleston's status as a national railway hub, but its promotional images exclusively showed the city's rail connections to Northeastern and Midwestern cities.²⁸⁰

Interestingly, though the Chamber of Commerce celebrated the promise that tourism held for Charleston's commercial future, they only touted the city as a stopping point "while going to or from points further South." In 1908, promoters had not yet envisioned Charleston as a tourist *destination* rather than a side trip on a journey to the more popular resort cities along the Florida coast. Furthermore, they eschewed mention of specific historical attractions, choosing to focus on Charleston as a "sunny metropolis" with "soft and balmy temperatures" that soothed Northern tourists' ailments and anxieties alike. Just thirty years later, though, the Chamber of Commerce

²⁸⁰ *Chamber of Commerce, Charleston, S.C.: Her Resources and Advantages* (Charleston, S.C: Walker, Evans & Cogswell, 1908). South Carolina Historical Society, Ephemera Collection, SC HF 3163 C35 C48.

distributed another tourist leaflet. This time, it promoted “America’s Most Historic City” by touting it as “picturesque and distinctive with an old world atmosphere” and a “principal” Southern city.²⁸¹ “Heroic episodes of history” now defined the city in the eyes of its boosters, who devoted the entirety of the booklet to outlining destinations for a historic walking tour of the city

In those thirty years, Charleston’s city leaders transformed the city from a quiet resort town crippled by postwar economic depression and defined by natural beauty to a top Southern tourist destination defined by a rich colonial and antebellum past. Accomplishing this feat so effectively required an unusual alliance between progressive business interests and traditional conservative elites. The development of an established tourist infrastructure and historic preservation ethos fulfilled both groups’ interests, as it effectively monetized an appreciation for the past.

Though this transformation began to take root in the late nineteenth century with the attempted Battery hotel venture and the successful UCV reunion, it accelerated in the early twentieth century following the end of WW1. The chaos, grief, and tremendous social change inspired by the war prompted both locals and visitors alike to desire a simpler past. “Every aspect of the old urbanity will then possess an interest and a value far greater than any interest or value we can assign it to-day,” a correspondent for the *Chicago Dial* wrote in 1917.²⁸² Charleston’s rich colonial and antebellum history perfectly epitomized that old urbanity, and locals saw their

²⁸¹ Brochure *Tourist’s Guide of Charleston, S.C., “America’s Most Historic City,”* (Chicago, Ill: Curt Teich & Co., 1940). College of Charleston Special Collections, A Pamphlets, SC F279.C43 T68 1940 .

²⁸² Clipping from *Chicago Dial*, December 6, 1917. Found in “Letterbook and Scrapbook for *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston*,” Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers, South Carolina Historical Society 1173.00, Box: 21/52/4.

opportunity to use the national nostalgia to flatter their own ideological purposes. The elite white men and women who led the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings (SPOD) and the Chamber of Commerce worked along parallel paths to transform Charleston's very streets into a monument to an elitist, whitewashed past that celebrated the luxuries produced by slave labor without acknowledging the institution's brutality.

These men and women relied primarily on their own sentimental reflections and cultivated family histories when restoring the city's streetscapes and domestic interiors, and they marketed their visions of genteel antebellum grandeur to middle-class Northerners as a retreat from the bourgeois pressures of modern life. In doing so, they transformed their sentimental memories of Charleston's glory days into a marketable identity. Moreover, by celebrating the accomplishments of Charleston's oldest families, they reinforced the social and political control that those families' heirs held in contemporary society.

In essence, this commodified historical consciousness was a continuation of the work done by groups like the Ladies' Memorial Association and the United Daughters of the Confederacy in the late nineteenth- and early twentieth- centuries. Confederate memorialization changed forms just as the city itself did; however, its intent to perpetuate carefully orchestrated mythology venerating a strict social and racial hierarchy never wavered.

"Walled off and kept for a museum": Preservation and the Development of the "City Historic"

In 1898, the Kansas City tourist who predicted that the New South would eventually prevail in Charleston offered a solution to this fate. "Charleston ought to be walled off and kept for a museum," he suggested, paraphrasing a mocking remark he had heard from a local during his visit. With the establishment of the "Old and Historic District" in 1931, the first of its kind in

the country, Charleston did just that.²⁸³ By designating a section of the city as historically significant and by simultaneously appointing a Board of Architectural Review (BAR), city leaders were able to both protect Charleston's buildings and to control its appearance and population. Thus, they were able to consciously impose their vision of an idealized past, thereby transforming the city's preserved streetscapes into a monument to Charleston's antebellum golden age.

A correspondent writing for *Appleton's Journal* towards the end of the nineteenth century observed Charleston's aged and rundown streets and remarked "it is quite possible that the somewhat rude surface and antique color of the brick houses of Charleston would fail to please the taste of Northerners reared amid the supreme newness of our always reconstructing cities."²⁸⁴ While he admired the picturesque scenery around him, he was unsure that Charleston's faded grandeur could captivate an outside audience. Over the next several decades, however, the Northern audience in question proved him wrong. Visitors delighted that the homes and gardens had not "been swept away by the crowding population, the manufactories, the haste and bustle of the busy North."²⁸⁵ In their mind, Charleston provided a respite for those seeking "a preindustrial refuge from modern life."²⁸⁶

One promoter even declared that the Civil War was "a bit like the eruption that overwhelmed Pompeii." While it caused Charleston great destruction and hardship, it also "partly

²⁸³ Kytle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 182.

²⁸⁴ Oliver Bell Bunce, "Charleston and its Suburbs," in *Picturesque America*, ed. William Cullen Bryant (New York: Appleton, 1872), 1:199.

²⁸⁵ Constance Woolson, "Up the Ashley and Cooper," *Harper's Monthly* 52 (Dec. 1875): 2.

²⁸⁶ Kytle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 169.

preserved for us that once wicked, charming, little city... in a state of suspended animation” for visitors to admire.²⁸⁷ The artist Alice R. H. Smith agreed and remarked that much of Charleston’s charm came in the fact that “Charleston people still occupy houses built by their predecessors of many years ago,” thus making it appear to visitors that they were stepping back in time to the Old South.²⁸⁸

Yet Charleston was hardly representative of a city frozen in time. Decades of economic depression, natural disasters, and marked disinterest from the city’s elite had wrought considerable damage on many of Charleston’s streetscapes. North Carolina editor Jonathan Daniels commented that poverty was “a wonderful preservative of the past” that kept “old things as they are because it cannot afford to change them in accordance with style or preferences.”²⁸⁹ The “glamour of [a] rich past” that visitors so admired was the result of careful preservation and restoration efforts that sought to return a prosperous air to the city’s built environment.²⁹⁰

“All these whisper tales of great days that once were lived here,” remarked Herbert Ravenel Sass. “All these,” he continued, “are memorials, monuments, of that Golden Age which ended more than three score years ago but which somehow lives on.”²⁹¹ To him, and other local elites like him, preserving the city was about more than just cleaning up its streets. It was about

²⁸⁷ Historic Charleston Foundation, “Charleston’s Historic Houses Tour Brochure with Descriptive Histories by Samuel Gaillard Stoney,” 1954. South Carolina Historical Society Ephemera Collection, 506.00, Box 2, Folder 6.

²⁸⁸ Alice R.H. Smith, *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston* (Proofs), Feb 13, 1917. South Carolina Historical Society, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers 1173.00, Box 21/52, Folder 1, page 23.

²⁸⁹ Jonathan Daniels, *A Southerner Discovers the South* (New York: MacMillan, 1938) 222.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Herbert Ravenel Sass, “Essay on the Low-Country,” in *The Carolina Lowcountry*, ed. Augustine T. Smythe (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931) 4. South Carolina Historical Society, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers 1173.00, Box 21/48.

restoring “the enchantment out of the past,” a past in which Sass’ ancestors had achieved great wealth and even greater power by profiting from the labor of enslaved people. By visibly restoring the city’s historic structures to fit a romanticized image of that “Golden Age,” they reinforced their own authority in the present and asserted their control over the Charleston’s historical memory. A society’s understandings of its past are “consciously and continuously reconstructed” based on “the result of contemporary circumstances,” and elite white Charlestonians like Sass sought to impose their own vision of Charleston’s antebellum history onto Charleston’s built environment in order to mitigate their own anxieties about social change after WW1 and assert their dominance over their contemporary community.²⁹²

A union between private preservation societies and elected officials, both groups composed primarily of elite white Charlestonians from the city’s oldest families, emerged and proved to be fruitful. Though they had different focuses, two groups worked alongside each other to accomplish a mutual goal of transforming Charleston from a dilapidated coastal backwater town into one of the country’s premier tourist destinations. For them, historic preservation and economic development were not mutually exclusive; historic preservation not only helped save Charleston’s cultural heritage, but also functioned as a money-making endeavor when it drew outside visitors to the city. “[We] are not opposed to progress,” one local preservationist explained to the *News and Courier*, “we are most anxious to see industries and everything that would advance a city commercially to come to Charleston... but not at the expense of the beauty of Charleston’s distinctiveness.” After all, she argued, “this distinctiveness annually brings so

²⁹² Lydia Mattice Brandt, *First in the Homes of His Countrymen: George Washington’s Mount Vernon in the American Imagination* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2016), 3.

many visitors to our city.”²⁹³ Preservation and economic growth accelerated simultaneously, as both encouraged the other’s development.

Domestic spaces proved to be the perfect staging ground for local preservationists to demonstrate the “distinctiveness” that visitors so craved. On a spring day in 1920, a group of elite white men and women assembled in the front parlor at 20 South Battery Street at the home of Ernest H. Pringle, Jr. and his wife, Nell.²⁹⁴ They had come to hear Susan Pringle Frost, a local realtor and close relative of the hosts, make a case for the preservation of the city’s oldest homes. Frost voiced her pressing concerns about the fate of the Joseph Manigault House (350 Meeting Street), a three-story Adam style brick dwelling built in 1802. The house was slated to be demolished so that car garages might be built on that location, and Susan Frost believed that the city would never recover from the loss of an architectural treasure from “an old order of culture.”²⁹⁵ “The magnificent residences which are being... destroyed represent a certain... nobility of character and taste,” Frost argued, “which a modern commercial age can ill afford to dispense with.”²⁹⁶ By the time the almost three dozen visitors left, they resolved to band together and stop the destruction of the Manigault House. They called themselves the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings (SPOD), and chose Frost herself as their leader.²⁹⁷

²⁹³ Rosa Marks, “As To Landmarks,” *Charleston News & Courier* (Charleston, SC) May 13, 1928.

²⁹⁴ Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory*, 24.

²⁹⁵ Susan Pringle Frost, “Meeting Announcement,” May 5, 1920, SPOD Papers, Preservation Society of Charleston. Quoted on Kytle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey’s Garden*, 183, and also on Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory*, 28.

²⁹⁶ Susan Pringle Frost, April 12, 1920, as quoted on Brundage, *The Southern Past*, 205.

²⁹⁷ Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory*, 25.

They built on the legacy of both local groups like the Ladies' Memorial Association and other private interest groups like the Mount Vernon Ladies Association (MVLA) and the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA). Out of the thirty-two originally gathered at the Pringle home, twenty-nine were women. Their presence and mission continued a longstanding American "tradition of women as the custodians of society's artifacts, identity and welfare."²⁹⁸ Ernest Pringle too remembered that "since boyhood, I have been used to hearing the women of my family talk of Preservation-- of furniture, landmarks, tradition."²⁹⁹ The women of the SPOD set their sights on preserving the home, as it was best known to them as the traditional feminine sphere of influence. In doing so they "asserted the importance of historical continuity through the... lens of family and femininity" and demonstrated the importance of telling history through a lens accessible to modern visitors.

Over the next several years, the SPOD emerged as Charleston's preeminent preservation society. They outlined their vision for preservation in the city, arguing that "it is not what is new... but what is incongruous that should be avoided."³⁰⁰ They saw preservation as an asset to the city's commercial growth, not an opposition, and asserted a vision that "embraced commercial, generational, and aesthetic concerns."³⁰¹ Their flexible vision flattered their own conservative sensibilities while simultaneously appeasing city leaders' desire to develop the

²⁹⁸ Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory*, 29.

²⁹⁹ Ernest Pringle to G. Corner Fenhagen, April 16, 1932, Manigault House Papers at the Preservation Society of Charleston. Quoted on Brundage, *The Southern Past*, 205.

³⁰⁰ Alice R. Huger Smith and D.E. Huger Smith, *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1917), 375.

³⁰¹ Yuhl, *A Golden Haze of Memory*, 26.

city's economic potential. Importantly, their vision was based on sentimental memory as much as historical fact. Alston Deas, the SPOD's second president, commented that Susan Frost's vision for a restored Charleston came through "a golden haze of memory and association."³⁰² Deas emphasized that Frost "never lost sight of this personal feeling for the spirit of Charleston." This spirit and romantic zeal for historical memory was shared by many other local advocates, though rarely was it as strong as Frost's.

The SPOD's first major project was the preservation of the Joseph Manigault House. Nell and Ernest Pringle decided to purchase the house in order to save it. In Ernest's words, Nell appealed to his romantic side, imploring him to "risk something- and give something... for Charleston and its preservation." He consented to the purchase, for "what could I say, who loved both her, & Charleston?"³⁰³ Ultimately, the Pringles sunk more than \$40,000 into the house, thus bankrupting themselves irreparably. They invested everything they had into the home, even going so far as to consider moving in during the Great Depression to minimize further expenses. Their all-consuming dedication to the Manigault house defined the SPOD's personal and highly sentimental approach to preservation. In their mind, historic buildings were an integral part of the essence of Charleston and were an extension of the spirit and character of their inhabitants. Ignoring the plight of the Manigault house, or playing any part in its decline, "would be like murdering an aged gentlewoman."³⁰⁴

³⁰² Alston Deas, "They Shall See Your Good Works," *Preservation Progress* 7 (May 1962): 1.

³⁰³ Ernest H. Pringle to G. Corner Fenhagen, 16 April 1932, South Carolina Historical Society, Manigault House Papers.

³⁰⁴ Nell McColl Pringle, untitled short story, [1930], as quoted on Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 34.

Under the care of the Pringles, the Joseph Manigault house became both a repository of historical memory and a monument to Charleston's antebellum slaveholding elites. Just as the Confederate monuments in Washington Square and on the Battery set a masculine example intended to repudiate fears of modern social decline, Nell Pringle established the house as both a domestic and an ideological example for contemporary visitors and locals alike to emulate. It was the manifestation of the ideals of the antebellum planter society and the "old order of things." For visitors and locals alike, it was, "a glimpse into a past that will always be a charming remembrance," and a past that stood in direct contrast to a modern city "lulled into contentment by money in her hands, by moving pictures, jazz and motors."³⁰⁵ Its vehement protection demonstrated the lingering appreciation that elite white Charlestonians continued to have for the strict social and racial hierarchies of the pre-war South.

At the same time, though, the status of the Manigault house epitomized the real difficulties and the give-and-take of early preservation initiatives in Charleston. Donations to save the Manigault house trickled in throughout the 1920s, including a contribution to the home's mortgage from Louise DuPont Crowninshield.³⁰⁶ However, the accumulated costs proved to be more than small donations could cover. Faced with utter financial ruin, Nell and Ernest Pringle eventually sold a corner of the Manigault garden to the Standard Oil Company. Standard Oil promptly erected "a brand new and shining gasoline station in the best modernistic red, white and

³⁰⁵ Sophie Collman from Cincinnati, Ohio, Manigault House Guest Book, May 1929, South Carolina Historical Society Manigault House Papers; Nell McColl Pringle, untitled short story, [1930], as quoted on Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 34.

³⁰⁶ Letter, Alston Deas to Archer Huntington, 21 Jan 1932, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/48, Folder 12.

blue gasoline style.”³⁰⁷ In a largely meaningless consolation to the Pringle family and the SPOD, Standard Oil promised to leave the gatehouse standing so they could convert it to use as an Esso restroom.³⁰⁸ The Pringles made a difficult choice faced by many formerly elite white Charlestonians: in order to save the majority of their property, they conceded to modern business interests that represented everything their preservation initiatives fought against.

Like Susan Frost and Nell Pringle, Frances W. Emerson of Cambridge, Massachusetts found inspiration in the disrepair of the Joseph Manigault House. “It was sad,” she wrote to the young architect Albert Simons in 1928, “to see the Manigault House swarming with negroes, falling to pieces, and its lovely plaster ceiling at the top of the staircase wall already showing a large hole. I wanted to somehow protect that ceiling.”³⁰⁹ Unlike Frost or Pringle, though, Emerson had no sentimental or familial attachment to the houses she admired. Instead, she proposed removing pieces of them, like the Manigault ceiling she admired, and sending them to the Charleston Museum for display.

As with many wealthy benefactors with an eye towards preservation, Frances Emerson appreciated the value of the individual “architectural beauties of Charleston” rather than the composite building or streetscape.³¹⁰ She and her contemporaries viewed colonial and colonial

³⁰⁷ Robert Kohn, “Asks Public to Save National Shrines,” *New York Times*, April 6, 1931.

³⁰⁸ Ironically, the Rockefeller name (and by extension Standard Oil) would become synonymous with preservation following John D. Rockefeller Jr. 's restoration and reconstruction of Colonial Williamsburg, only a few years after Standard Oil put a filling station on the Manigault property.

³⁰⁹ Letter from Frances W Emerson to Albert Simons, 23 April 1928, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/32, Folder 3.

³¹⁰ Letter from Frances W Emerson to Albert Simons, 23 April 1928, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/32, Folder 3.

revival architecture as the manifestation of the “correct” and refined tastes of early America.³¹¹ Since wealthy collectors often preferred the real thing to any imitation, architectural elements reflecting America’s “proper” architectural heritage were in high demand in Northeastern households and museums.³¹² Members of the SPOD feared the loss of their treasures and worked hard to protect whole structures in order to both preserve their historical integrity and their valuable interiors. Unlike those against which they competed, the SPOD lacked the funds to buy properties or even larger architectural elements, and resorted to “bull[ying] tourists out of buying things when it cannot compete in bidding against them.”³¹³ While Emerson’s approach to preserving parts of Charleston’s beauty was well-meaning, true Charleston zealots like Nell Pringle found such an action unconscionable. To her and the SPOD, Charleston’s buildings had a sentimental value that far exceeded any financial or artistic worth. They weren’t just structures, they were “dwellings” that had played host to generations of Charleston society; they were therefore irreplaceable memorials to that fleeting past. Selling off a corner of the Manigault lot to Standard Oil was painful, despite being financially necessary.

In 1933, Henrietta Pollitzer Hartford Pignatelli purchased the Manigault house anonymously and promptly donated it in its entirety to the Charleston Museum. Princess Pignatelli’s purchase ensured the house would be preserved intact in perpetuity, and it rendered

³¹¹ The focus on Colonial Revival architecture was a regional trend that reinforced the superiority of shared Anglo-Saxon heritage in a collective rejection of the post-war social order. Richard Guy Wilson. “Monument Avenue, Richmond: A Unique American Boulevard” In *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*, Ed. Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson. (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2003) 109.

³¹² Richard Guy Wilson, “What is the Colonial Revival?” in *Recreating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival*, ed. Richard Guy Wilson, Shaun Eyring, and Kenny Marotta (Charlottesville: UVA Press, 2006), 3.

³¹³ Letter from Frances W Emerson to Albert Simons, 23 April 1928, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/32, Folder 3.

the SPOD's first official project a success. It did not, however, compensate the Pringles for the tremendous financial and personal sacrifices required to maintain the house up until that point. In a largely empty acknowledgement, the SPOD formally recognized Nell Pringle's dedication to the Manigault house, declaring that she saw "the interest of the future in the art of the past."³¹⁴ Her approach to preserving the Manigault house and opening it to public tours set a precedent for future endeavors. Acting as an antiquated hostess, Nell Pringle marketed the house as an escapist window into an elegant antebellum past that stood as a potent contrast to modern pressures. At the same time, she understood the financial necessity of commodifying that idealized past by selling house tours to visitors, and thus embraced some of the modern commercialism that she frequently decried.

At the same time, Susan Pringle Frost was engaged in a domestic preservation project of her own. In 1919, just a year before she founded the SPOD in the Pringle parlor, Susan Frost and her sister Mary negotiated the purchase of the Miles Brewton House (27 King Street).³¹⁵ With financial assistance from family members, and substantial loans from both Annie (Mrs. William K.) DuPont and Irenée DuPont, Susan and Mary Frost were able to cobble together the funds to buy the house from the estate of its previous owner. In the Frosts' hands, 27 King Street was a monument to an elite white antebellum life and the products of a planter society. It was made more palatable to a national audience because of its innocuous domestic context, but it

³¹⁴ Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 35.

³¹⁵ Susan Pringle Frost Records of Real Estate Transactions, 1919. Alston-Pringle-Frost Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, 1285.00, Box 28/637/11, Folder 1285.01(M) 01.11.

nevertheless represented a continuation of earlier Confederate memorial traditions that honored a sanitized vision of a slaveholding society.

As with the Manigault house, the Frosts sought to make the Brewton-Pringle house an exemplar of antebellum domestic life. They opened the home to guests partly to make up the property's maintenance costs, and partly to inculcate others into their vision of an idealized antebellum past. The house was transformed into a performative experience where visitors could see "a glimpse into the past"- an elite white past. Susan and Mary Frost, dressed in their approximation of colonial costume, acted as hostesses guiding their guests through the home. They elaborated on "Sheraton, Chippendale, this period and that; Louis XIV and Robert E. Lee," as one Pittsburgh columnist put it, as they recounted facts about the home's grandeur and romantic legends of life in Charleston's Golden Age.³¹⁶

The house also proved to be a staging ground for imitations of antebellum racial hierarchies in addition to the decorative arts. "You must meet Miss Mary and Old Sarah [the cook]," the Pittsburgh reporter enthused, "and then you must have the happiest of old colored mammies... make up your seventeenth-century bed."³¹⁷ For guests, the presence of African American women in stereotypical working roles enhanced the experience of staying at the Brewton-Pringle house. Described only as "happy," "goodly" and "colored," these women were reminders of the slave system that supported the elaborate lifestyles of the planters that inhabited the house, but they also allowed modern guests to inhabit those same roles. For visitors, who

³¹⁶ Clipping from *Pittsburgh Sunday Post*, April 24 1921. Miles Brewton House Account Book, 99. Alston-Pringle-Frost Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, 1285.00, Box 28/637/12, Folder 1285.01(M) 02.10.

³¹⁷ Clipping from *Pittsburgh Sunday Post*, April 24 1921. Miles Brewton House Account Book, 99. Alston-Pringle-Frost Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, 1285.00, Box 28/637/12, Folder 1285.01(M) 02.10.

were mostly middle-class Northerners, being waited on by Black women in a plantation-esque setting fulfilled a specific fantasy. According to Rebecca McIntyre, Northern tourists “wanted blacks to serve them, to entertain them, to touch their hearts with their picturesque ways,” in order to “reaffirm their notions that blacks and whites were separated by an uncrossable chasm and that blacks still wanted to play the slave for their white masters.”³¹⁸ The Frosts had created a “Dixie fantasyland” in which Black women looked like slaves and acted like slaves, but were not actually enslaved. Their presence enforced white Northern tourists’ impressions of their own regional and racial superiority.

Susan, born in 1873, and Mary, born in 1871, had no personal memory of the planter lifestyle they depicted. They nevertheless imparted “the memories and realities” of elite antebellum domestic life so well one New York tourist remarked that “they seemed our own experiences.”³¹⁹ Like many other elite white Charlestonians, the Frost sisters grew up hearing their parents’ nostalgic, sometimes bitter reminiscences about life before the Civil War and during Reconstruction. “Every Southern child felt that she had been a part of it,” recalled famed local artist Elizabeth O’Neill Verner, “we could not escape the shadow.”³²⁰ Those stories, infused with the rhetoric of the Lost Cause, worked in combination with the city’s memorial built

³¹⁸ Rebecca Cawood McIntyre, *Souvenirs of the Old South: Northern Tourism and Southern Mythology* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 2011) 133.

³¹⁹ Caroline H. Gaffields to “My dear Hostesses,” 10 January 1931, Miles Brewton House Scrapbook, South Carolina Historical Society, Alston-Pringle-Frost Papers, South Carolina Historical Society, 1285.00, Box 28/637/12, Folder 1285.01(M) 02.10.

³²⁰ Verner quoted on Marlo Pease Bussman, *Born Charlestonian: The Story of Elizabeth O’Neil Verner*, (Columbia: The State Printing Company, 1969) 24.

environment to convince the younger generations of the reality of their parents' invented past.³²¹ The Frost sisters and their contemporaries in turn sold these romantic, pro-slavery tales to their visitors as historical fact. The Brewton-Pringle house stood as a monumental backdrop for these legends. Its presence was a physical reminder of the wealth and power of the planter aristocracy, and its existence imparted a deeper truth to the Frosts' tours. The house's presentation to visitors was an elaborate display of memory theater that reframed and revalued Southern history on the Frosts' own terms.

The preservation and presentation of the Brewton-Pringle house was just one element of Susan Frost's vision for a restored historic district South of Broad. Through her real estate company, she bought properties on the historic Tradd, King, and Church Streets in order to restore them to her personal vision of correct taste before selling them to "people of refinement."³²² Her properties had wide ranging appeal; both the reputable Charleston professor Thomas della Torre and Mr. Francis A. Scratchley, "an eminent nerve specialist of New York City" purchased one of Susan Frost's restored homes. A 1921 *House Beautiful* article elevated her work to the national stage, by which point she had already transformed thirteen "fine old brick houses" from "former dilapidation to present stateliness."³²³ She decorated many of these homes with architectural elements that she purchased from other properties "to save [them] from being

³²¹ Susan Pringle Frost was a member of the Ladies' Memorial Association of Charleston, joined 1888. See: Membership Roster, "Ladies' Memorial Association Records, 1866-1916," Typewritten Manuscript, South Carolina Historical Society 34/0116.

³²² Clipping from *House Beautiful*, April 1921. South Carolina Historical Society, Alston-Pringle-Frost Papers 1285.00, Box 28/635/15, Folder 1285.01(m)01.11

³²³ Clipping from *House Beautiful*, April 1921. South Carolina Historical Society, Alston-Pringle-Frost Papers 1285.00, Box 28/635/15, Folder 1285.01(m)01.11

shipped elsewhere.” The houses played a small part in “transform[ing] the city so that it embodied a timeless elegance that was manifestly old but no longer decaying;” in other words, Frost cultivated the perception of aged grandeur, despite carefully cultivating the aesthetic of the streetscapes to fulfill her own vision of their antebellum glory. *House Beautiful* reported that Frost’s homes stood as “monument[s] to the original builder,” but after restoration, they likely reflected Frost’s aesthetic vision and colonial revival fantasy more than that of “the builders of the past.”³²⁴

At the same time as Frost was privately cultivating downtown Charleston’s historical aesthetic for the benefit of her paying customers and shepherding the SPOD, city officials began to consider the preservation and protection of larger portions of the city for the sake of safeguarding its cultural heritage. One of the most forceful advocates for large-scale initiatives was a young architect named Albert Simons. Simons was from an old Charleston family, and held degrees in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania. After serving abroad during WW1, he returned home to Charleston and brought with him a prodigious technical skill, ambitious thinking, and a wealth of connections. He established the architectural firm of Simons & Lapham with Samuel Lapham, and began lending his voice to discussions on historic preservation in Charleston.

Upon joining a city-appointed Sub-Committee for Marking Historic Places soon after his return to Charleston, Simons reached out to preservation groups in other cities for advice on how to proceed. He corresponded with members of the Bostonian Society and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), who advised him on the proper wording of

³²⁴ Ibid.

commemorative plaques and provided information about the size and materials of their own tablets.³²⁵ Simons was well aware that Charleston was not the first American city to take an interest in the preservation of its cultural heritage, and sought to build on the work of other institutions.

He also reached out to leaders of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for advice about managing his projects on a larger scale. "I think it would be most beneficial to the success of the whole project if you could be present," Simons wrote to AIA president Robert Kohn, "as this glittering superstructure of idealism must be built upon a foundation of practical and clear thinking if it is to be safe against collapse."³²⁶ With an initial \$5,000 donation from Frances Emerson, the Massachusetts benefactress who took an interest in the Manigault House, Simons and Kohn established the American Institute of Architects Committee for Safeguarding Charleston Architecture (CSCA). The group was composed of both local and national experts and aimed to call attention to Charleston's urgent preservation needs.³²⁷

After consulting with experts, Simons quickly realized that preservation could never succeed in the long term if it remained insular, privately managed, and focused on individual structures. "Characteristic of Charleston is individualism rather than discipline," he noted, which "manifests itself in multiple rather than concerted efforts to achieve the same objectives."³²⁸ In

³²⁵ Letter from Charles F Read to Mr. Sidney Rittenberg, March 1, 1918, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/31, Folder 10.

³²⁶ Letter from Albert Simons to Robert Kohn, September 29, 1930, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/31, Folder 17.

³²⁷ Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 39.

³²⁸ Albert Simons, "Notes on the Character of Preservation in Charleston," Handwritten Manuscript, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/31, Folder 16.

response, he worked to establish connections between different groups working along parallel paths like the Charleston Museum, the City Council, and the SPOD.³²⁹

One of the most successful collaborations, between all three groups, came in the purchase and preservation of the Heyward-Washington House (87 Church Street). Built in 1749, the three-story brick mansion had been the home to the slave-owning Heyward family for more than a century, and had even housed George Washington himself during his Southern tour in 1791. Its restoration represented a new type of preservation in Charleston, one that moved away from private initiatives and towards collective city-wide action. Because the house was in the heart of what would become the designated “Old and Historic District”, the Heyward-Washington project was one of the first major steps towards the total restoration of the South of Broad area and the establishment of Charleston’s reputation as “a historic shrine for the nation.”³³⁰

Simons made the first investment towards this collaborative preservation initiative with Frances Emerson’s original \$500 and a matching gift from her husband, William.³³¹ Together, Simons, Alston Deas of the SPOD, and Laura Bragg of the Charleston Museum were able to solicit more than \$13,000 from locals and outside donors alike, \$10,000 of which went towards the purchase of the house in 1929.³³² They presented their project as the ultimate patriotic rescue that would save not only American cultural heritage, but also local pride. “This beautiful building

³²⁹ The Charleston Museum and the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings, “The Heyward Washington House,” South Carolina Historical Society Ephemera Collection, 506.00, Box 2, Folder 2.

³³⁰ Charles Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*, (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1981), 245.

³³¹ Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 39.

³³² Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 40.

with its splendid historic associations,” a 1930 fundraising brochure proclaimed, “was to have been dismantled by a collector of old woodwork, and the interior shipped to a distant state.”³³³ Thus, they appealed to the many locals’ protective attitude towards their own material culture by hinting at the threat of its removal to a far-off state.

Albert Simons observed that “every Charlestonian has a certain amount of personal vanity invested in his city, and when they see something that they... cherish destroyed, it hurts their vanity.”³³⁴ At its very core, Charleston preservation tapped into that vanity and personal attachment to the city’s cultural heritage. Neither the SPOD nor Simons’ institutional coalition shied away from romantic and personal treatment of the city’s built environment, and thus shaped the landscape in the image of their own memories. They cultivated a physical landscape that reflected a flattering vision of Charleston’s history and its citizens and ignored unflattering elements. At its core, then, “America’s Most Historic City” reflected a subjective contemporary understanding of the city’s history rather than an objective re-creation.

The real turning point for Charleston preservation came in 1931 with the simultaneous designation of a twenty-three block “Old and Historic District” and establishment of a Board of Architectural Review (BAR) to approve any exterior changes to structures within the new district.³³⁵ Headed by Thomas Waring, editor of the *Charleston Evening Post*, and Albert Simons, the BAR was intended to function as a kind of “free architectural clinic” that educated

³³³ The Charleston Museum and the Society for the Preservation of Old Dwellings, “The Heyward Washington House,” South Carolina Historical Society Ephemera Collection, 506.00, Box 2, Folder 2.

³³⁴ Albert Simons as quoted in Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 242.

³³⁵ Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 43.

Charlestonians on “good taste” and how best to imitate existing local styles. Simons rejected incongruous modifications, like a proposed Long Island-style fence with “rank New England flavor” in front of Daniel Huger Jr.’s Church Street home, in favor of copying one of many Charleston-style fences.³³⁶ “It might not be an exaggeration to say that the whole historic district of Charleston emerged as a grand design from the drawing board of Albert Simons,” historian Charles Hosmer noted.³³⁷ Simons’ almost unilateral authority over BAR decisions likely contributed to the perceived natural authenticity of the historic district as it limited the personal tastes and perspectives involved in the review process.

Albert Simons and the BAR were tremendously influential in establishing an institutionalized preservation ethos in the city. Nevertheless, their decisions about the historical significance of buildings were frequently subjective and favored the homes of family and friends. Simons recognized this, though, writing later that “no Charlestonian can be expected to speak or write about his city objectively for it is so much a part of... his mind and emotions that detachment is never possible.”³³⁸ Elite white Charlestonians would later market this sentimental attachment to eager tourist audiences as Charleston’s authentic and personal charm, but this subjectivity continued to shape the city’s built environment.

In 1940, the city received a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to perform a survey of historic structures, the results of which would pave the way for an expansion of the existing Historic District. The committee was dominated by Charleston’s white elite, and included Albert

³³⁶ Ibid., 44.

³³⁷ Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 240.

³³⁸ Albert Simons quoted on Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 45.

Simons, local author Samuel G. Stoney, and the watercolor artist Alice R. H. Smith. Though the actual survey was conducted by Helen McCormick of Richmond's Valentine Museum, Alice Smith led the first tours of the historic areas and pointed out places that she remembered that were important. The whole Charleston contingent had full veto power over the ultimate selections, and were not afraid to exercise that authority. Upon reviewing the report on a Legare Street house, Stoney approved it with the comment "Valuable (I was born there)."³³⁹ Simons wrote back jokingly, "Valuable to City (in spite of nativity of SGS). Has a lovely drawing room... and an authentic ghost."³⁴⁰

While these exchanges are amusing, Charleston preservationists' personal judgements of historic value could also have more insidious effects. In 1933, a man named C.W. Porter applied to the BAR for a permit to extend the back fence at his Tradd Street home. In describing his property, he mentioned the "slave quarters" behind the main house. Albert Simons responded to Porter's request, writing that he "might be interested to know that the servants' quarters were never referred to as 'slave quarters' even in slavery times." Simons also added that "the term 'slave quarters' is a recent invention of our winter colonists," and concluded by advising Porter to avoid the term in the future.³⁴¹ In his brief comments, Simons revealed many preservationists' aim to suppress narratives that undermined their flattering portrayal of life in the Old South, and their real distrust of outside influences.

³³⁹ Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 262.

³⁴⁰ Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age*, 262.

³⁴¹ Albert Simons to J.H. Dingle, May 6, 1933, Albert Simons Papers at the South Carolina Historical Society. Quoted on Kytle and Roberts, *Denmark Vesey's Garden*, 194.

The BAR's oversight effectively returned the Historic District to an artificial antebellum ideal that reflected the best of Charleston's so-called Golden Age. Its leaders clearly favored colonial and pre-war architecture, and that preference was manifested in the composition of the Historic District. Albert Simons wrote in 1924 that Charleston offered a "continuous record of the architectural history of our country from... the first colonial settlements until the Civil War and the decline of architectural tastes in the '70s."³⁴² He disliked architectural developments that occurred during Reconstruction and Charleston's later period of economic depression, believing them to be totally inferior. "Charleston could progress far to its own advantage," one of Simons' Northern clients wrote to him, if "each citizen would cooperate in bringing out its eighteenth century beauty... [by] scraping off gingerbread ornaments, etc. from little modern houses."³⁴³ The BAR therefore ignored large sections of Charleston that had been rebuilt in the much-hated "gingerbread" fashion after fires ravaged the city in 1861 in favor of the older colonial and Early Republican streets. Accordingly, local boosters almost exclusively directed tourists to the Historic District, where they could admire its attractive buildings and carefully groomed streetscapes.

Visitors could thus be forgiven for assuming that Charleston was an American Pompeii, captured forever in its final glorious moments. The city might exist in the modern world, but the preserved landscape suggested that its real history ended in 1860. Charleston's built environment stood as a monument to Charleston's planter elite. Though it did not manifest itself as a stone

³⁴² Simons & Lapham to Lippincott, 10 November 1924, as quoted in Eugene Waddell, "The Only Volume in the Octagon Library," in James M. Hutchisson and Harlan Greene, eds., *Renaissance in Charleston: Art and Life in the Carolina Low Country, 1900-1940* (Athens: UGA Press, 2003), 117.

³⁴³ Letter from Mrs. Victor (Marjorie Mott) Morawetz to Albert Simons, 24 June 1932, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/31, Folder 17.

obelisk or bronze statue, the newly designated Old and Historic District was a celebration of the products of a slave society all the same. Moreover, its successful restoration was a further demonstration of Southern resilience in the face of the hardships imposed by the Civil War, Reconstruction, and subsequent economic depressions. By honoring many of the ideological tenets of the Lost Cause, the early historic preservation movement culminating with the designation of the Old and Historic District functioned as an extension of nineteenth- and early twentieth- century Confederate memorialization efforts.

As David Blight argues, “the Lost Cause seductively reminded white Americans that the Confederacy had stood for a civilization in which both races thrived in their natural capacities, a regime of proper racial and gender order. The slaughter of the Civil War had destroyed that order, but it could be remade and the whole nation, defined as white Anglo-Saxon, could yet be revived.”³⁴⁴ Thanks to Susan Frost’s real estate redevelopment initiatives, Albert Simons and Burnet Maybank’s re-settlement of Black communities to the Northern Neck, and the efforts of individual citizens following in their footsteps, Charleston’s Old and Historic District was (and still remains) almost exclusively white. Visitors encountered African Americans only in service capacities or in staged visitor-focused roles, and these subservient positions suggested a natural continuation of antebellum racial hierarchies. Elite white Charlestonians’ careful cultivation of the city’s built environment and its population solidified an image of genteel white supremacy unobstructed by the modern age.

³⁴⁴ David W. Blight, “Opinion | How Trumpism May Endure,” *The New York Times*, January 9, 2021, sec. Opinion, <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/01/09/opinion/trump-capitol-lost-cause.html>.

The Old and Historic District was a monument to Charleston's antebellum golden age, but it also functioned as a backdrop to the memory theater of the burgeoning heritage tourism industry. Elite white Charlestonians had created an idealized historic landscape that established the traditions of antebellum planter society as a model for correct behavior and taste of modern society. It responded to modern social pressures and provided an antidote in the form of lush gardens, shady streets, and historic structures that once housed American greats. The next step was to market that Eden-like retreat to the wider public. "We feel that Charleston is a living organism," Albert Simons wrote to Frances Emerson, "and should have a normal modern development as well as its monuments to the past."³⁴⁵ Tourism and preservation had a synergistic relationship in Charleston; visitors came because they read about the monuments to the past, thus driving the city's modern economic development. Effective marketing ensured that the relationship continued to bear fruit, and consequently created a modern local identity that was almost entirely defined by relics from its past. "A tiny tongue of land extending from Broad Street in Charleston to the beautiful bay... is all of South Carolina that has counted in the past," magazine editor Ludwig Lewisohn observed in 1922, "[but] the memories that cling to the little peninsula are all that count today."³⁴⁶

Marketing "America's Most Historic City": Mass Cultural Promotion

In order for Charleston to survive economically, preserving the city was not enough. The city's elites also had to engineer a way to market the city to the wider public, and dispel the

³⁴⁵ Letter from Albert Simons to Frances W. Emerson, 2 September 1930, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/32, Folder 3.

³⁴⁶ Ludwig Lewisohn "South Carolina: A Lingering Fragrance" *The Nation* 12 July 1922, 36.

existing image of Charleston as a city “waiting patiently for the resurrection.”³⁴⁷ In the early twentieth century, local leaders commodified the artificial identity created by elite white Charlestonians in the decades following Reconstruction in order to market the city as a retreat from encroaching modernity. In doing so, they built upon the legacy of the past four decades of Confederate memorial groups by adapting the visual and literary record to transform the memorial identity of the Old South into a nationally recognized commodity.

Tara McPherson argues that in essence, tourism is about “making place via intense and orchestrated marketing” that emphasizes the spectacular.³⁴⁸ In Charleston, that carefully orchestrated marketing strategy took two forms: promotion through high culture and promotion through mass culture. This was a calculated approach; Charleston’s promoters understood that a wide appeal was the key to making tourism a sustainable industry, but they also wished to convey an air of distinctiveness. Charleston was not just another coastal town like Myrtle Beach; rather, it was a cultured old city with “an indescribable lustre of romance.”³⁴⁹ High culture promotion, through the art and literature of the so-called “Charleston Renaissance,” ensured that the city maintained its elitist reputation as a place of old-world culture and charm. Nevertheless, both types of promotion allowed the city’s social and political leaders to advance their own ideological agendas.

³⁴⁷ George F. Durgin, “Visions and Impressions of the Southland,” *Zion’s Herald*, March 21, 1906.

³⁴⁸ Tara McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 41.

³⁴⁹ Herbert Ravenel Sass, “Essay on the Low-Country,” in *The Carolina Lowcountry*, ed. Augustine T. Smythe (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1931) 5. South Carolina Historical Society, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers 1173.00, Box 21/48.

This allowed for an extension of the earlier sectional reconciliation on Southern terms, previously seen at monument dedications like that of the Washington Light Infantry monument where participants waived American flags while singing “Dixie”. The city’s elites were able to perpetuate the Lost Cause tenets that a zeal for states’ rights was the reason for the Civil War, that slavery was a benevolent institution from which both enslaver and enslaved derived benefits, and that the War disrupted society’s natural social and racial hierarchies. At the same time, local promoters made these narratives more palatable by divorcing them from their immediate Confederate context and integrating them into colonial and Revolutionary histories. This made them appear a natural element of Charleston’s history, rather than late nineteenth century inventions intended to defend the failed Confederacy. Inserting them into mass publications transformed these ideas from local Lost Cause counter-memory into established, and commercialized, fact.

Moreover, controlling the promotional narratives allowed elite white Charlestonians to present the city in a way that celebrated their own ancestors’ contributions. In doing so, they were able to reinforce their own sociopolitical control over the city and its development. Finally, developing an economy that revolved around an unabashed celebration of the past allowed Charleston to remain resolutely conservative. The tourist infrastructure allowed for substantial economic development, but its ideological focus venerated the institutions of the past and limited social change.

Brochures and promotional pamphlets made up the body of the mass culture marketing, since they present “a comprehensive, abridged version” of a region’s past.³⁵⁰ Brochures are highly localized; they rarely advertise more than one particular site or a small range of destinations within a city or town. Their success relies on their short form, attractive images, and eye-catching slogans. Promotional brochures are an effective tool for identifying common narratives across multiple historic sites and by extension, establishing a region’s commercial cultural identity.

While they frequently rely on the same tropes, imagery, and narrative hooks, it is important to distinguish between promotional material produced by outside agents like railways and bus companies, and brochures produced by internal groups like local historical societies and the Chamber of Commerce. In the case of internally produced brochures, local groups are able to choose how they want to present themselves and their city to the wider public. These local groups carefully select elements from their past and present that are resonant and attractive to the public, and representative of the commercial identity they want to sell to the world. This allows local groups to be selective in the parts of their history they want to highlight; they can promote flattering images and ignore elements that are controversial or unsympathetic to the city as a whole. On the other hand, materials produced by third parties rely on established tropes that have proven to be marketable. They flatter the city or site excessively, but not in a self-interested way. Rather, they simply choose to highlight the elements and images that will attract the most people. Their interests lie not in benefitting the city and its self-image, but in selling as many tickets as

³⁵⁰ Tara McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie: Race, Gender, and Nostalgia in the Imagined South*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 42.

possible. Therefore, while local materials reflect how a city wants to be perceived and what elements of its past it deems important, these outside promotional materials can be useful in assessing what elements of that selectively presented past actually interests tourists. Examined together, local and third party materials provide a clear picture of a city's commercial identity, and can help pinpoint how, when, and why that identity changes over time.

A brochure from 1926 produced by the Southern Railway System highlights the benefits of "historic winter resorts in the sunny South," including the cities of Charleston and Savannah.³⁵¹ It devotes a brief section to each city, more than half of which is made up of images, which highlight the health and entertainment benefits of traveling there. Charleston, it proclaims, is "certainly the most strikingly historic" city in the South and can boast both "beautiful features" and an "unrivalled environment," thereby attracting both sight-seers and those seeking the rejuvenating climate of the South.³⁵² The Southern cities are identified as "winter resorts," emphasizing their balmy weather and their relaxing, service-centered atmosphere to potential visitors. The intended audience is therefore those living in the Northeast or the Midwest who can afford to take time off to travel long distances by train.

Before addressing any of Charleston's history or attractions, the brochure first devotes a page to highlighting Charleston's "two new and modern hotels for tourists," making it once again evident that the material was produced by a third party promoter interested in selling the experience of travel. A pencil and ink sketch depicts the glamorous new Francis Marion Hotel on

³⁵¹ E. H. Suydam, *Charleston, Summerville, Savannah : Historic Winter Resorts in the Sunny South*, (Washington: Southern Railway System, 1926). College of Charleston Special Collections, A Pamphlets F279.C44 C486 1926

³⁵² E. H. Suydam, *Charleston, Summerville, Savannah : Historic Winter Resorts in the Sunny South*, (Washington: Southern Railway System, 1926). College of Charleston Special Collections, A Pamphlets F279.C44 C486 1926

the corner of King and Calhoun streets, surrounded by the *mise en scene* of daily life in Marion Square. The sketch casts the main elements of the image, including the hotel, in a warm gold hue set against a soft blue sky. Its colors are friendly and inviting, and are reminiscent of the warm weather in the “sunny South” promised throughout the pamphlet. Finally, the image has an unfinished quality that suggests it really could be an offhand sketch of life in Charleston.

Only the rough outlines of the hotel and its top-floor penthouses are fully defined, but in an odd contrast, the John C. Calhoun monument stands out as a bold, fully delineated monolith in the middle of the image. It takes much of the focus away from the hotel, and draws the eye down to the activity around it. In the square, faceless Black women dressed in bright-colored but poorly fitted dresses walk by the base of the Calhoun column. One carries a large white bundle on her head, while the other holds her parcel at her side. Palmetto Trees, also clearly sketched, flank either side of the hotel and cluster around the base of the monument. Behind it, one can see the rough outline of two different church steeples. Without context, the hotel as it is sketched could be found in any city in America.³⁵³ However, the placement of the other visual elements around it is very intentional, and clearly identifies the scene as taking place in Charleston. The promoters laid out a strategic view of the square and hotel that included a monument erected by a Confederate memorial group, Palmetto trees, stately and antiquated church architecture, and Black women engaged in stereotypical physical labor. Visual reminders of the city’s antebellum past were integral in the marketing strategy to outside visitors. By including markers of the Old South alongside ubiquitous modern features like hotels and city buses, promoters sold Charleston as something unique that transcended traditional labels.

³⁵³ Ibid.

Many of these elements are repeated on the following page of the brochure, in an image labeled “A Characteristic Vista at Charleston, S.C.” A similar ink and pencil sketch with the same soft colors and light outlines depicts a scene of upper-class leisure in the shadow of St. Philip’s Church. The visual focus is shared equally between the towering steeple of St. Philip’s and the stately facade of a traditional Charleston single home. An intricate wrought iron fence defines the groundline, and well-dressed men and women stroll through its gates. It is a subdued scene that shows well-dressed elites at home among visual trappings of selective status, like elaborate gates and large mansions. There is not a motor car in sight, which further enhances the antiquated feel. A tourist could be middle-class in their ordinary life, but should they choose to come to Charleston, they too could join this selective and gated resort world full of “historic... and unusual charm.”³⁵⁴

Rebecca McIntyre argues that it was only by selling this notion of the sunny South as a completely separate world that promoters were able to attract middle-class Northern visitors.³⁵⁵ Hard work and simple productivity had been central values for Americans in the Northeast for centuries, and had officially solidified into a culturally defining trait for the post-industrial middle class. How, then, could a group that took pride in humble diligence throw aside their work ethic in pursuit of conspicuous leisure at Southern resorts without losing their middle class status? Boosters realized that the solution was to sell the South as a “Dixie fantasyland of the past,” completely separate from the pressures of the modern working world. One brochure

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Rebecca Cawood McIntyre, *Souvenirs of the Old South: Northern Tourism and Southern Mythology* (Gainesville: The University Press of Florida, 2011) 7.

asserted that Charleston in the early twentieth-century “resemble[d] New York as it looked in about the year 1850.”³⁵⁶ The South could be a nostalgic paradise where the urban bourgeoisie could step back into a simpler, pre-industrial Antebellum world. It was not a rejection of the Northeastern hard work ethos to want to vacation in the South, but rather a natural response to the region’s innate and exotic charms.

This notion is manifested in the “Characteristic Vista” image, which is carefully constructed to convey that Charleston is a part of this picturesque, pre-industrial world. However, it does not make an effort to literally capture Charleston in its Antebellum “golden age” as some other promotion images do; the women are clearly wearing early twentieth century fashions. Rather, it suggests that while material things like fashion might change with the times, the very fabric and essence of the city still lingers in the genteel past.³⁵⁷ That essence, of course, is enhanced by the historic structures behind the figures, and demonstrates that the aesthetic of the Historic District was an integral aspect of Charleston’s charm. This appealed to many tourists’ desire to be a part of a mythical Southern aristocratic past. By visiting the city, the tourist would naturally fall into step among these well-heeled elites for a brief nostalgic journey to an antiquated and leisurely life, while simultaneously enjoying all of the modern conveniences the city could provide. “As one visits the beautiful old homes [and] strolls down the tree-shaded

³⁵⁶ Brochure *Tourist’s Guide of Charleston, S.C., “America’s Most Historic City,”* (Chicago, Ill: Curt Teich & Co., 1940). College of Charleston Special Collections, A Pamphlets, SC F279.C43 T68 1940.

³⁵⁷ McIntyre, *Souvenirs of the Old South*, 141.

streets gazing in at old gardens,” an early twentieth-century pictorial guidebook noted, “one can hardly detect the transition from Old World memories to New World dreams.”³⁵⁸

Importantly, this vision of Charleston is all-white. Tara McPherson outlines a useful theory for analyzing the complexities of these types of popular images, or what she calls a “lenticular logic of racial visibility.”³⁵⁹ A lenticular image is constructed when “two separate images are laced or combined in a special way.” The combined image can be viewed through a special lenticular lens, though only one image is visible at the same time. In this view, one image is always concealed in favor of the other, but the focus can shift to either picture at any given time. Should the viewer want to see both at the same time, however, the images lose focus and seeing either is nearly impossible.³⁶⁰ MacPherson argues that “a lenticular logic is capable of presenting both black and white,” but falls apart when trying to understand how these two perspectives are joined. The viewer sees one or the other, devoid of any context that connects them. In this way, the lenticular facilitates silences that can be easily exploited.

The all-white park scene in the shadow of St. Philip’s church uses a lenticular view that freezes permanently on the first frame, thus presenting an image that erases any Black presence in the historic resort city. This is an image of genteel white leisure time, but is devoid of any hint of the labor and support staff needed to accomplish this vision, the majority of whom were African American. Moreover, it demonstrates the extent of the selectiveness of marketing imagery. When it was appealing, Charleston could be sold as a whitewashed romantic fantasy of

³⁵⁸ “Low Country Scenes of Charleston, South Carolina: A Pictorial Guidebook,” South Carolina Historical Society Ephemera Collection, 506.00, Box 2, Folder 6.

³⁵⁹ McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie*, 7.

³⁶⁰ McPherson, *Reconstructing Dixie*, 26.

faded aristocracy, swishing skirts, and strolls through an avenue of live oaks dripping with Spanish moss. Simultaneously, caricatured portraits of enslaved men and women could be inserted into the picture to demonstrate that Charleston still lingered in an antiquated aristocratic past.

The presence of Confederate monuments and memorials in public spaces across the city continued to be a firm visual reminder to Black Charlestonians that they were not welcome to occupy those same spaces comfortably, which allowed elite whites in the city to maintain some kind of social control over the Black population while simultaneously advancing their own ideological agenda. The budding heritage tourism industry also allowed whites to maintain cultural and social hegemony over the city by strategically introducing Black men and women into the tableaux of a nostalgic past they created. These placements were never central roles, but rather ones that supported either white leisure in the present or a white vision of a blissful Antebellum aristocracy in the past. Black men and women were a welcome addition to the “Dixie fantasyland” world that white Charlestonians created, but only in carefully managed capacities that exemplified the continued racial hierarchy in the city.

A paper notice accompanied informational pamphlets given to visitors to Cypress Gardens, a tourist attraction in Berkeley County, South Carolina. There, tourists flocked to ride gondola-type boats through picturesque blackwater cypress swamps in the Gardens’ preserve; promotional material declared that “all who visit them are filled with a sense of awe, mystery, and enchantment.”³⁶¹ However, that enchantment only extended to the white passengers. Black

³⁶¹ Typed Notes in George Bliss, “Charleston Garden Tour Scrapbook,” 1941. South Carolina Historical Society, Manuscript 43/0311.

boatmen silently maneuvered tourists around the former rice plantation, catering to tourists' every whim and fulfilling their largely unspoken fantasy of being waited on by Black servants.³⁶² The short, brusque notice distributed to all white visitors requested that "visitors who encounter any discourtesy or annoyance from boatmen... take the trouble to report the matter" to the Gardens' management. It promised tourists that anyone who reported an insolent boatman would be "doing the gardens a favor," and noted that "each boatman can be identified by a number which he is required to wear conspicuously."³⁶³ The numbers simultaneously identified the boatmen individually and reduced them to a monolithic service group; they were a reminder to everyone involved that the boatmen were subordinates whose every move was dictated by the management. In essence, these numbers functioned as modern-day slave badges.³⁶⁴

However, because the notice was issued to visitors and not simply to internal parties, it is clear that the primary audience was white Northern tourists. Issuing this firm statement of control over their Black employees allowed the Gardens to enhance their nostalgic, white supremacist mythos. They created a fantasy world into which middle class white tourists could escape and be waited upon by Black men who looked like slaves but were not actually enslaved. These men were picturesque servants whom the management had carefully placed among the *mise en scene* of a former rice plantation for the enjoyment of white visitors. Visible symbols of control over Black employees fit tourists' existing expectations of race relations in the South, but

³⁶² McIntyre, *Souvenirs of the Old South*, 119.

³⁶³ Promotional clippings in George Bliss, "Charleston Garden Tour Scrapbook," 1941. South Carolina Historical Society, Manuscript 43/0311.

³⁶⁴ For more on the slave badge and slave hire system in Charleston, see: Harlan Greene, Harry S. Hutchins, Jr., and Brian E. Hutchins, *Slave Badges and the Slave-Hire System in Charleston, South Carolina, 1783-1865* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2004).

more importantly, reminded Black Charlestonians that while they were welcome across the city's public spaces and historic attractions, they had a very specific role to play.

In their locally-produced advertisements, white Charlestonians selectively acknowledged and exploited the accomplishments and images of African Americans. In doing so they claimed them as their own, sometimes literally. In an advertisement for her "Old Ironsides Tea Room" in a stately home on Church Street, Mrs. Mary Washington Rhett tells tourists to "eat our Hoppin' John," adding that "it will bring you good luck."³⁶⁵ Hoppin' John, a blend of black eyed peas and rice, is commonly served alongside a serving of collard greens on New Years' for luck. Though it was first defined in recipe books as "Hopping John" by Sarah Rutledge in *The Carolina Housewife* in 1847, Hoppin' John has firm roots in indigenous African and enslaved African-American cultural traditions.³⁶⁶ Mary Rhett, by claiming these foods as her own specialties in this advertisement, capitalizes on the implication of Black labor and identity without acknowledging its presence in word or even image. Moreover, by labeling herself as the sole "owner" of the business and its proprietary recipes, she continues to demonstrate that she is maintaining a hierarchical control over the labor and cultural products of Black employees.

In the same promotional pamphlet, an advertisement for the South Carolina Power Company features a photo of large sweetgrass baskets hanging by their handles from a makeshift wooden rack. A large bundle of grasses also leans against the rack. The advertisement declares them to be "an example of a South Carolina handicraft," and identifies the grasses as those which

³⁶⁵ *Come to Charleston and the Low Country*, (Charleston, S.C: Schindler's Antique Shop, 1950). College of Charleston Special Collections, A Pamphlets, F279 C43 C65 1950.

³⁶⁶ Karen Hess, *The Carolina Rice Kitchen: The African Connection*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1998).

“coastal Carolina negroes weave into many useful and artistic designs.”³⁶⁷ By using images of regional Black industry in their advertisements, Charleston businesses were able to assert themselves as truly local, emphasizing the “premium on difference and particularity.”³⁶⁸

Their choice of the word “useful” in addition to “artistic” makes it clear too that the baskets are more than simply a local art form. Enslaved people used sweetgrass baskets to winnow rice on local plantations; “useful” implies a continuity between the Antebellum past and the present in which Black Charlestonians still labored for the benefit of white men and women. However, instead of laboring for the benefit of their white enslavers, they produced traditional Gullah crafts aestheticized for consumption by white tourists. Moreover, the baskets’ use in a power company’s advertisement demonstrates the extent of the craft’s commodification.³⁶⁹ Devoid of their original significance, the baskets here are simply a recognizable symbol of African American culture and of Charleston’s Antebellum plantation past; providing a souvenir for tourists to demonstrate that they have “done Charleston” authentically.

If “the commodification of place is about creating distinct place-identities,” as Morley and Robins assert, then the exploitation of Black cultural forms and personages in pursuit of crafting a prosperous and genteel, yet rigidly hierarchical image of Antebellum society was crucial to crafting Charleston’s marketable place identity.³⁷⁰ While earlier public monuments like

³⁶⁷ *Come to Charleston and the Low Country*, (Charleston, S.C: Schindler’s Antique Shop, 1950). College of Charleston Special Collections, A Pamphlets, F279 C43 C65 1950.

³⁶⁸ David Morley and Kevin Robins, *Spaces of Identity: Global Media, Electronic Landscapes, and Cultural Boundaries* (London ; New York: Routledge, 1995) 119.

³⁶⁹ Sweetgrass baskets are still sold in the City Market and Historic District today. “Sweetgrass Baskets, Charleston City Market,” <https://www.thecharlestoncitymarket.com/main/sweetgrass-baskets>.

³⁷⁰ Morley and Robins, *Spaces of Identity*, 119.

those to Henry Timrod and William Gilmore Simms celebrated a pro-slavery Antebellum world at large, many early twentieth-century promotional publications and advertisements celebrated enslaved people on an individual, heavily caricatured level. Both completely ignored the brutality of slavery in favor of “remembering” a fabricated Antebellum world where relations between enslaver and enslaved was benevolent, paternalistic, and even happy. Advertisements like those for Slave Recipes, Inc. at the Old Slave Market on Chalmers Street featured an image of smiling Black servants, a turbaned Mammy figure and a butler, standing in front of a storefront labeled “Slave Recipes.”³⁷¹ The cruel irony of using the images of a Black Mammy to commercialize the building formerly known as Ryan’s Mart, where thousands of enslaved people were bought and sold over several decades, was ignored by the advertisers. Instead, the Black servants hold out their wares “featuring delicious and unusual specialties,” like Benne wafers and pralines. The advertisers promise that their products are “long tested old recipes... so characteristic of old Charleston,” and it is evident that the caricatured Black figures holding out trays of their home-cooked “slave recipes” to visitors are intended to lend the products additional authenticity.

The Fort Sumter Hotel also used a “real Charleston” image in their advertisement for local specialties sold at their newsstand. In one half of their small advertisement, a row of lofty columned buildings and a church forms a characteristically Charleston street. However, the street is completely fabricated: it places Randolph Hall (on the campus of the College of Charleston) directly beside St. Philip’s church, with only a Palmetto tree separating them. While this might be

³⁷¹*Come to Charleston and the Low Country*. (Charleston, S.C: Schindler’s Antique Shop, 1950). College of Charleston Special Collections, A Pamphlets, F279 C43 C65 1950.

picturesque, the two buildings are actually several miles away from one another, suggesting that the advertisers cared less about authenticity and more about the visual of a neoclassical building beside a lofty church. On the other side of the advertisement, in another “real Charleston” visual, two faceless Black women sit on a stoop selling flowers while two more walk side by side balancing overflowing baskets on their heads. The women with the baskets have nearly identical figures, and stand in front of a towering gate whose outline is more sharply defined than they are. An image of “Real Charleston,” then, relies on a combination of imposing neoclassical structures and token African American laborers. Together, they form a visual memorial to a white supremacist Antebellum past, packaged in an accessible form and marketed to tourists nationwide.

While local marketers relied on delicate visual implications to sell their nostalgic vision of Charleston’s “Golden Age”, they shied away from actually discussing slavery in the Historic District. Just as Albert Simons discouraged C.W. Porter from calling his dependencies “slave quarters,” a Chamber of Commerce-produced “Tourist’s Guide of Charleston, S.C.: America’s Most Historic City” featured “The Slave Market (So Called)” on a list of historic attractions.³⁷² The so-called market received the shortest blurb out of all of the attractions, with the only note relating to its status as “an interesting relic from the days of slavery.” By using such detached language, Charleston’s boosters separated themselves from the brutal realities of the slave trade. In doing so, they were able to maintain their fantasy of a benevolent and even mutually beneficial relationship between enslaver and enslaved. Because this false narrative was so

³⁷² Brochure *Tourist’s Guide of Charleston, S.C., “America’s Most Historic City,”* (Chicago, Ill: Curt Teich & Co., 1940). College of Charleston Special Collections, A Pamphlets, SC F279.C43 T68 1940.

institutionalized in Charleston's promotional literature and its built environment, tourists internalized as their own this elite white version of history, thus remembering it as historical fact rather than Lost Cause-derived fiction.

Marketing the High Life: High Cultural Promotion

Like the brochures, pamphlets, and other tools of mass promotion, elite promotion utilized visual mediums. High cultural promotion primarily took the form of art and literature, and supplemented the mass cultural promotion simultaneously. It distinguished Charleston as something more sophisticated than other tourist destinations, and it allowed elite white Charlestonians to further shape the city's cultural identity. Some local elites, like DuBose Heyward, used the fame garnered from their artistic or literary success to promote the city commercially. Heyward, famous for *Porgy and Bess*, published a piece about Charleston in *National Geographic* at the height of his popularity that advertised the relaxed lifestyle and elegant setting of his youth, still preserved despite "the assaults of mechanized civilization."³⁷³ Others used their success at selling the elite vision of Charleston's "physical beauty, historical significance, and racial hierarchy" to find a niche within local high society. Elite white Charlestonians chose a variety of ways to advertise their city personally but in all cases, they emphasized Charleston's cultural, aesthetic, and historical distinction. Ultimately, they celebrated an idealized past that was built upon the memorial legacy cultivated by the Confederate memorial groups of their parents' generation and the preservation societies of their contemporary peers. Their artistic products supplemented the mass cultural promotional materials and allowed

³⁷³ Clipping, DuBose Heyward, "Where Mellow Past and Present Meet," *National Geographic Magazine*, 1939, in George Bliss, "Charleston Garden Tour Scrapbook," 1941. South Carolina Historical Society, Manuscript 43/0311.

them to assert a narrative that flattered themselves, their ancestors, and their city on the national stage.

Out of all of Charleston's high cultural promoters, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith, who was known for her watercolors and sketches, epitomize the influence that these men and women had on Charleston's reputation and development. Smith, descended from several of the oldest families in South Carolina, capitalized on tourists' desire for something elegant that would remind them of their visit to Charleston. Moreover, her personal memories and familial connections to the Civil War and Antebellum Charleston had a profound impact on her products, in essence rendering them miniature memorials to an artificial Lost Cause past.

Alice Ravenel Huger Smith was born in 1876 at 69 Church Street in the heart of the original Old and Historic District. "Born as I was shortly after a war of aggression and destruction had swept the south, and during the struggle for freedom from the Reconstruction government of intolerable greed and ignorance," she later wrote in her *Reminiscences*, "I realized fully what violence meant [and] I understood to the full what oppression and destitution were."³⁷⁴ Throughout her childhood, Smith totally internalized her parents' frustration with postbellum life and their wistful remembrances of the "Golden Age before the Confederate War." Though she never experienced the hardships of war or Reconstruction, she always celebrated the year of her birth as a resurrection of Southern culture, and admired the "ceaseless effort" of her parents' generation "to build from the wreckage of the past a platform for the next generation to stand

³⁷⁴ Alice Smith, "Reminiscences: Chapter VIII" First Draft, Handwritten Manuscript, 1950. South Carolina Historical Society, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers 1173.00, Box 21/53, Folder 4.

on.”³⁷⁵ “I have always been grateful that it was given me to grow up in the shadow of the shade of the great civilization that had produced the generations of the past,” she remarked.³⁷⁶

This deeply retrospective childhood had a profound impact on Smith’s life and work. Though she was primarily self-taught, she quickly became known for her “memory sketches” and made a name for herself through her contributions to family and friends’ projects. She produced a visual study of her cousin Susan Frost’s newly restored family home in what she called *Twenty Drawings of the Pringle House on King Street, Charleston S.C.*³⁷⁷ In 1917 she produced perhaps her most famous work, titled *The Dwelling Houses of Charleston*, that highlighted Charleston’s architectural treasures and advocated for their preservation. However, by the mid-1920s, Smith had moved almost entirely into the watercolor medium and marketed her paintings to both professional galleries and to tourists looking for an elegant souvenir of their time in Charleston.³⁷⁸

The synergistic relationship between Charleston’s different cultural and historical promoters is exemplified in a story from the *Christian Science Monitor*, published in 1923. The *Monitor*’s travel reporter stayed overnight in Susan Frost’s shrine to antebellum domestic life at 27 King Street before making her way to Alice Smith for a painting that would “fix and intensify

³⁷⁵ Alice Smith, Letterbook from *A Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties*, South Carolina Historical Society, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers 1173.00, Box 21/53, Folder 1.

³⁷⁶ Alice Smith, “Reminiscences: Chapter III” First Draft, Handwritten Manuscript, 1950. South Carolina Historical Society, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers 1173.00, Box 21/53, Folder 4.

³⁷⁷ Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 64.

³⁷⁸ Martha R. Severens, *Alice Ravenel Huger Smith: An Artist, a Place and a Time*. (Charleston: Carolina Art Association and the Gibbes Museum of Art, 1993).

for [her] impressions that might have been pale and fugitive.”³⁷⁹ Smith sold her a watercolor that would likely become a conversation piece and by extension a promotion for both Charleston’s historic houses and Smith’s “memory sketches.” The watercolors functioned as a way by which the reporter (or any other buyer) could remember their personal visit to Historic Charleston, but if the buyer used it as a way to begin a conversation about the city with someone else, it became a promotional tool. Smith also sold a substantial number of paintings to museums and wealthy collectors. In doing so, she established Charleston not just as a “sleepy town... with a most bedraggled look,” but as a Southern cultural center whose elegant and antiquated aesthetic could serve as a soothing antidote to modern pressures.³⁸⁰

Smith’s studio was not just a place for tourists to buy art, but it was also a place where tourists knew they could hear about Charleston’s “true history.” As the daughter of slaveholders who had grown up during Charleston’s period of memorial vindication of the Lost Cause, Smith had a nostalgic and paternalistic view of slavery and Charleston’s slave economy. She described to visitors a world where there were “such close interests between employer and the employed that the result was the happy family life so characteristic of Southern establishments.”³⁸¹ She made it clear that she saw African Americans as “uneducated exotics dependent on the noblesse

³⁷⁹ “Charm of Charleston, SC Stirs Its Visitors to Keen Appreciation: Past and Present of Southern City Comingle in an Atmosphere of Kindliness and Culture,” *Christian Science Monitor*, 12 March 1926.

³⁸⁰ Review of *Dwelling Houses of Charleston* in the *Philadelphia Enquirer* Oct 26 1917, South Carolina Historical Society, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers 1173.00, Box 21/52, Folder 3.

³⁸¹ Alice Smith, “Doorways, Gateways, and Stairways of Quaint Old Charleston,” *Art in America* 4 (August 1916), 294.

oblige of whites.”³⁸² Given her ancestry and reputation, many visitors came away from her shop believing that her narratives were the absolute truth.

Outside of the “historical clinic” of her shop, Smith also imparted this view on her published work. Her magnum opus *A Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties* consisted of thirty watercolors and an essay by her cousin, Herbert Ravenel Sass, and was published by a large national press. With complete confidence, Smith had published detailed images of a world of which she had no direct memory. Nevertheless, she intended this work to be a real historical record and called it a “laurel wreath for that great civilization of the rice-planting era in South Carolina” that would educate the nation about Charleston and the South’s antebellum past. The paintings, like the opening image *Sunday Morning at the Great House*, portrayed benevolent relationships between enslaver and enslaved amid soft, beautiful landscapes and elegant architecture.³⁸³ As she acknowledged, her book was a monument in its own right that glorified the Southern slave society in a fairly innocuous, nationalized form.

Smith’s book also served as a tool for cultural sectional reconciliation. Robert K. Shaw, a Worcester, Massachusetts librarian, wrote to Smith in 1937 with a litany of compliments about the tasteful elegance of her work and the accuracy of its history. “I am convinced,” he concluded, “that if enough of this type of book had been produced about that time, there would not have been any ‘war between the states.’”³⁸⁴ Smith was evidently so taken by Shaw’s compliment that

³⁸² Yuhl, *Golden Haze of Memory*, 69.

³⁸³ *Sunday Morning at the Great House* from the series *A Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties*, Alice R. H. Smith, watercolor on paper, 1935. Gibbes Museum of Art, 1937.009.0002.

³⁸⁴ Letter from Robert K. Shaw to Alice R.H. Smith, 16 February 1937, from the “Carolina Rice Plantation of the Fifties” Letterbook, South Carolina Historical Society, Alice Ravenel Huger Smith Papers 1173.00, Box 21/53, Folder 1.

she saved his note in her letterbook, filed among other letters from family and friends. Shaw's letter demonstrated the long term impact of works like Smith's; they were a tool of reconciliation on Southern terms.³⁸⁵ Smith's work was beautiful, collectable, and fairly innocuous.

Nevertheless, that combination of traits made it a far more pervasive narrative than one produced by a Confederate memorial association, for instance. It was less overtly divisive and pro-Confederate, and was therefore more palatable for a national audience.

Perhaps most importantly, it drew thousands of visitors to Charleston. Her scenes of verdant parks, lush plantation settings, and genteel streetscapes proved to be an extremely effective marketing tool. Collectively, Smith's work functioned as high cultural promotional material, as a modern monument to a pro-slavery Southern past, and as a tool for reconciliation on Southern terms. Smith and her elite white contemporaries built on the Lost Cause memorial narratives and legacies of their parents in order to commodify that memory for broader public consumption. Her elite cultural products supplemented the mass cultural products like brochures, advertisements, and pamphlets distributed to a tourist audience. They relied upon the backdrop of the preserved built environment, and they both promoted that physical landscape nationally and enhanced its mystique in the eyes of outside visitors.

Conclusion

³⁸⁵ K. Stephen Prince *Stories of the South: Race and the Reconstruction of Southern Identity, 1865-1915*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2014) 145-151. See also: Reiko Hillyer, *Designing Dixie: Tourism, Memory, and Urban Space in the New South* (Charlottesville: UVA Press, 2015) 26-27. Hillyer points out that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Northern writers saw tourism throughout the South as a way of civilizing or nationalizing the region. She refers to Northern travel dialogues as somewhat imperial (conquering an "exotic" land by traveling through it), and as perpetuating sectional reconciliation on Northern terms. In contrast, works like Smith's offer reconciliation on Southern terms because they invite northerners to an attractive pre-industrial haven replete with Antebellum social and racial hierarchies (presented without question). Southern writers like Smith are able to choose what narratives they include and exclude, thereby shaping the historical narratives to flatter the idealized elite past.

“Those of us who love Charleston see in it the survival of something stately yet very human,” the preservationist Albert Simons wrote in 1931, “which was once the common heritage of our old communities but has not largely disappeared elsewhere. If we can cherish and protect something of this background we will have made a notable contribution to American culture.”³⁸⁶ Simons’ words epitomize the focus of Charleston’s preservationists, promoters, and political leaders during the first half of the early twentieth century. They sought to nationalize and commercialize a version of Charleston’s colonial and antebellum history that celebrated elite white Charlestonians’ contributions and caricatured the existence of enslaved men and women.

In doing so, they built upon the legacy of the ladies’ memorial groups who constructed Charleston’s memorial built environment in the latter decades of the nineteenth century. The next generation, with a fundamental understanding of the Lost Cause as a part of their upbringing, sought to further solidify Confederate memory by preserving the remnants of the Old South. They also sought to create a physical landscape of restored and commercialized memory so that it would be accessible to outsiders. The men and women who constructed the landscape and identity of “America’s Most Historic City” transformed it into a modern monument to the social and racial hierarchies of Charleston’s antebellum past. Though not as obvious as an obelisk in the town square, this type of memorialization proved to be more pervasive and long-lasting. Even today, as local leaders question traditional Confederate memorialization, the sentimental narratives of the Old South are still displayed in historic houses and recited on carriage tours.

³⁸⁶ Albert Simons to Frances Emerson, November 2, 1931, South Carolina Historical Society, Albert Simons Papers 1253.00, Box 26/32, Folder 3.

This multifaceted memorial to the pro-slavery Lost Cause is one that endures, and one that continues to attract millions of visitors seeking a respite from modern pressures.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

“The dark times and the golden eras of her history have woven a beautiful tapestry that is Charleston,” the Greater Charleston Hotel-Motel Association declared in its 1995 attraction guide. The guide presents an elegant narrative full of stories of Charleston colonists’ bravery during the American Revolution, a semi-aristocratic level of luxury in the Antebellum period, and tragedy during the Civil War. Here, the Hotel-Motel Association fully endorses a glamorous elite-centric narrative and presents it to the public as authentic historical truth.³⁸⁷ However, as I have argued in the last three chapters, this narrative is the product of the conscious and continuous efforts of elite white men and women in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Elite white Charlestonians engaged in a concerted, decades-long effort to control the historical narrative, and have worked to shape a specific, white supremacist memory of Charleston’s colonial Antebellum, and postwar history. They celebrated regional and local distinction in the face of national reconciliation efforts, and erected large monuments in public squares that celebrated the Lost Cause of the Confederacy and victory over Reconstruction. Moreover, in the early twentieth century, this same group of white men and women carefully cultivated the city’s built environment so that it complemented the existing Confederate memorial landscape and projected a selective narrative of “grand romantic images” of the Old South. That legacy continues today. In 2019, Charleston was named one of *Conde Nast Traveller’s* Top Cities in the World; the magazine’s travel writer labeled it a “historic and

³⁸⁷ Brochure, Charleston Hotel Motel Association, “Charleston Sights and Attractions,” 1995. Author’s collection.

stately... ol' Southern belle."³⁸⁸ Here and elsewhere, Charleston's boosters continue to fall back on sanitized imagery and rhetoric of an idealized Old South cultivated by the city's elites in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Elite white Charlestonians began to cultivate history and a memory of the Antebellum period and the Civil War almost immediately after the conflict ended. Their first actions, limited by restrictions imposed by the federal government, were direct responses to the personal and social traumas that they had faced. However, even the most solemn Memorial Day ceremonies held immediately after the war were tinged with political motivations. Former Confederates retreated to the city's rural cemeteries, including Magnolia Cemetery on the North Neck of the peninsula, in order to escape the scrutiny of Union troops and other federal officials. Their ceremonies featured coded prayers encouraging former slaveholders to bide their time until the end of Northern occupation, and were shrouded in heavily choreographed ritual that allowed former Confederate soldiers to meet regularly and maintain their pre-war social organizations. In doing so, they began to craft an artificial narrative that minimized pro-slavery motivations for conflict and centered chivalric ideas of Southern honor, duty, and loyalty to an overarching Lost Cause. In all cases, this memorial activity responded to contemporary social issues while purporting to honor historical events.

The end of Reconstruction coincided with a bloody statewide Democratic takeover, led in part by the newly elected Governor Wade Hampton. The resumption of white political rule, and by extension social rule, allowed former Confederates to leave the rural cemeteries and bring

³⁸⁸ David Kauffman, "24 Hours in...Charleston," *Conde Nast Traveller*. August 15, 2019. <https://www.cntraveller.com/gallery/charleston-south-carolina-guide>.

their memorial rituals into urban public spaces. In Charleston, memorial groups dedicated monuments to both cultural leaders of the Antebellum South and military leaders of the Confederacy. This two-pronged approach created a richer memorial narrative, and allowed Southerners to honor a pro-slavery-sans-slavery version of the city's past. Honoring cultural leaders enabled elite white Charlestonians to demonstrate that the Confederacy's contributions went beyond a failed military campaign, and it allowed them to assert Southern cultural legitimacy on the national stage.

Collectively, this second phase of memorial commemoration presented a markedly different tone. While the earliest memorials mourned a traumatic past and a potent defeat, these new monuments celebrated victory. They re-imagined the Confederate military defeat as one small loss in a larger political campaign; the original cause might be lost, but the fight would continue. Accordingly, these monuments also celebrated a victory over Reconstruction and announced a states' rights focused vision of the Civil War. The brutal suppression of Reconstruction was, by extension, a vindication of the ultimate righteousness of the Confederate cause. Even while they acknowledged fallen soldiers, urban Confederate monuments unabashedly celebrated the ultimate worthiness of white Southern society.

While cemetery memorials were fairly scattered across three rural burial grounds, the urban monuments were concentrated in the city's largest parks, most prominent intersections, and near important municipal buildings. These prominent locations forced all Charlestonians to reckon with the Confederate past. In the minds of many elites, public celebration of Southern citizen soldiers set an example to the younger generation, and worked to combat modern cultural changes. Most importantly, though, they were physical reminders of who held power in the city

and in the South more broadly. They reminded white Charlestonians of their own supremacy, and they reminded Black Charlestonians that the urban public spaces were not theirs to occupy safely.

These monuments were entirely focused on shaping collective memory of the Southern past, but Charlestonians were forced to acknowledge that they could not live in the Old South forever. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Charleston's political and economic leadership was divided between the former elite and a new generation of businessmen. While other major cities like Atlanta embraced the social and economic change associated with the New South, Charleston remained resolutely conservative. As time progressed, the city's leadership recognized that they needed to make some changes in order to remain viable in the future. Rather than taking drastic actions, Charlestonians focused their attention on economic initiatives that focused on honoring the city's history. In 1899, the city hosted the United Confederate Veterans Reunion, an event which promoted progressive economic growth while conservatively focusing on Charleston's Confederate past.

The onset of World War I brought many changes to Charleston and to the South more broadly. The region saw a marked decline in Confederate memorialization, initiating a hiatus which continued until the Civil Rights era in the mid-century. However, in Charleston, locals simply shifted mediums as they continued to honor the social, political, and cultural ideals of the Old South. Beginning around the end of World War 1, elite white Charlestonians shifted their attention to historic preservation and the development of a heritage tourism industry. These initiatives satisfied conservatives' desire to preserve an elite white vision of the city's past and appeased the business interests by monetizing the city's built environment.

While they took a very different form, they nevertheless continued the ideological aims of traditional Confederate memorialization by celebrating a selective and highly cultivated memory of the Old South. This vision glorified the products of slave labor without acknowledging the brutality of the institution, and promoted a fictitious narrative of benevolent and mutually beneficial domestic relationships between planters and enslaved people. The early historic preservation movement cultivated the city's built environment to reflect a personal and highly subjective representation of the past that glorified the contributions of Charleston's elite families, thus solidifying their contemporary socio-political authority.

In the nearly eight decades following the Civil War, Charlestonians responded to the trauma of the conflict and subsequent social and political changes by turning to the past. In doing so, they created a cultural and regional identity for themselves and their city that leaned heavily on a sentimentalized Lost Cause version of historical events. The first task immediately after the war was to develop a narrative that would allow former Confederates to process the results of the conflict in a way that did not admit permanent defeat. Once they had developed a suitable narrative that spoke of ongoing Southern bravery and fortitude against all odds, their task was to convince the general public of its authenticity. Elite white men and women accomplished this secondary task through annual Memorial Day ceremonies, the elaborate dedication of Confederate monuments in prominent public spaces, and by educating their children in Lost Cause mythology. This allowed the artificially conceived narrative of Antebellum glory to pass seamlessly from one generation to the next as historical truth.

However, the ideological agenda was not complete until the nation as a whole was convinced of its veracity. Elite white Charlestonians transformed their local memory into a

commodified local identity that could be marketed and sold to interested tourists; in doing so, they established an entire industry on a foundation of Lost Cause memory that celebrated a pro-slavery, white supremacist vision of Southern society and foregrounded idealized elite histories. These narratives still form the basis of the city's commercial identity, and that complex legacy continues to this day.

In 2021, the Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA) reported that tourism was a \$9.7 Billion dollar industry. The CRDA also listed the city's "iconic" and "beautifully-preserved historic architecture, gardens & design" as some of the main attractions for tourists visiting the city.³⁸⁹ When visitors to the city park at the Charleston Visitors' Center on Meeting Street, they can look out across the parking lot at the Joseph Manigault House, preserved by the SPOD as a shrine to white femininity and elite Southern domesticity.³⁹⁰ They can look over further to the Charleston Museum, in front of which stands a scale replica of the Confederate H.L. Hunley Submarine. Just a few blocks away but well within sight sits the Aiken-Rhett House, which stands in front of some of the best preserved urban slave quarters in the country. If the visitor were to look up at the Visitors' Center itself, they would see banners featuring pictures of sweetgrass baskets beside an image of the elegant flying staircase at the Nathaniel Russell House. In other words, they would see images of the cultural products of African slavery and the architectural ornaments at a house built by a wealthy slave trader. Prior to 2020, a bronze statue of John C. Calhoun, South Carolina's most famous defender of slavery and states' rights, loomed

³⁸⁹ Michael J. Graney, "Competitive Assets - Tourism Industries in Charleston, SC," 2021. <https://www.crda.org/doing-business-here/economic-drivers/tourism/>.

³⁹⁰ Charleston Museum. "Historic Houses: The Joseph Manigault House." Accessed April 9, 2021. <https://www.charlestonmuseum.org/historic-houses/joseph-manigault-house/>.

over this entire corner of the city from his perch atop an eighty foot marble pedestal. In sum, the history of plantation slavery and the Confederacy are inextricably linked to the commercial identity of Charleston.

However, as the introduction suggests, Charleston has begun to reckon with the local legacies of slavery and racial oppression. Protestors, scholars, citizens, and community groups like the Charleston Activist Network have opened a powerful conversation about the ways in which the city of Charleston has been complicit in or responsible for the exploitation of Black men and women. These conversations problematize longtime Charleston staples like plantation weddings, carriage tours, and historic house museums. As one local writer stated, “The tourism industry is decimating African-American communities and flattening nuance and narrative.”³⁹¹ Local activists have encouraged the Charleston Visitors’ Bureau (CVB) to think critically about the legacy of slavery in Charleston’s tourist industry.³⁹² This begs many questions. How can a city whose local identity is built upon the commercialization of a romanticized plantation past market itself to a modern audience that wants to hear the complex narratives that have so far been conspicuously ignored? Can Charleston ever fully escape its “magnolias and moonlight” reputation? For a city whose commercial reputation is built upon its ability to sell sentimental stories of an Antebellum “Golden Age,” what comes next? There is no doubt that Charlestonians will continue to grapple with these questions for decades to come.

³⁹¹ Tariro Mzezewa and Kim Severson. “Charleston Tourism Is Built on Southern Charm. Locals Say It’s Time to Change.” *The New York Times*, August 12, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/08/12/travel/charleston-tourism-black-lives-matter.html>.

³⁹² Ibid.

The ability to thoughtfully re-contextualize a memorial landscape depends on a complete understanding of its complexities. In that sense, this thesis lays the groundwork for a reconsideration of Charleston's past. At its most fundamental level, my research broadens our understanding of Confederate memorialization. The construction of revisionist, romanticized, and racist narratives about the Antebellum South isn't only expressed through obelisks and bronze statues. These narratives extend to the selective preservation of historic buildings, through the creation of a historic district that focused exclusively on elite white properties, and by the creation of a commodified regional identity that relied on the exploitation of African American cultural products and the celebration of glamorous white supremacist histories.

The latter manifestations of Lost Cause memory are less obvious than a statue, and are therefore more pervasive and are more likely to remain invisible and unquestioned. Because they are shrouded in a mantle of institutionalized historicity, they are more deeply ingrained in Charleston's identity. Nevertheless, they can and should be questioned. Real change begins by acknowledging the extent of the problem. This thesis is just one of many steps in that greater process of realization.

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