

Historic Black Perspectives on Confederate Commemoration

Introduction

Monuments and memorials to Confederate soldiers and leaders began appearing in the United States shortly after the Civil War ended. The advocates and dissenters of the commemoration of Confederate monuments have remained vocal throughout history, continuing with each generation to our present day. This project focused on the early Black voices discussing these monuments. It began last year with the creation of a large collection of perspectives, news reports, images, cartoons, and advertisements from these historic newspapers.

Due to copyright issues, we could not publish our collection of newspaper articles. In order to be able to make the details of our findings public, this summer, we wrote short pieces detailing the Black coverage of specific monuments and conflicts.



Tampa Bay Times - September 3rd, 1973

Methods and Materials

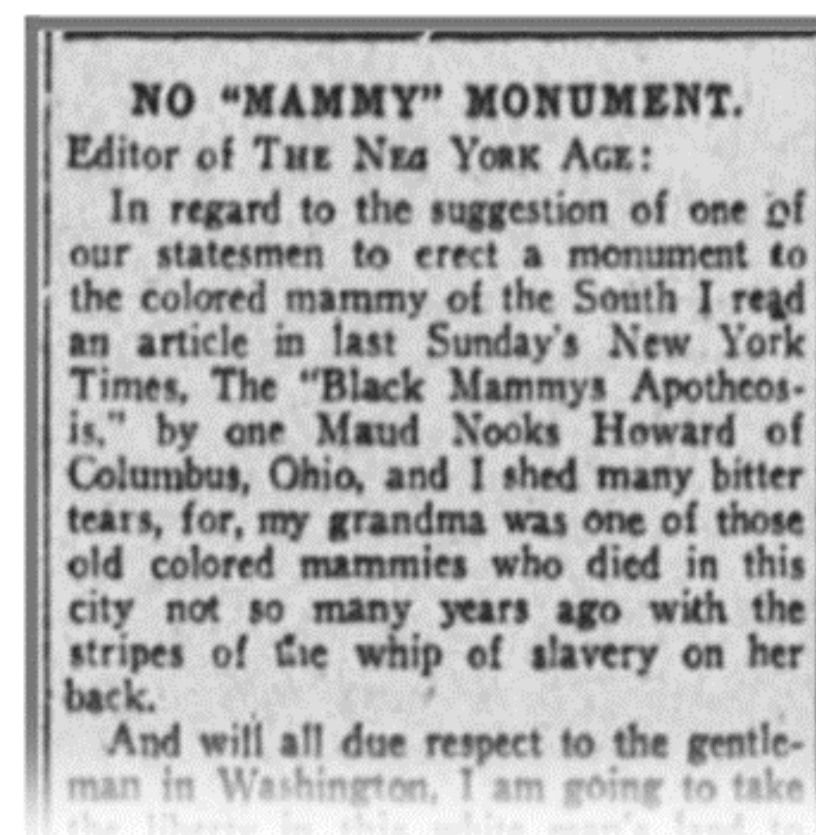
Our collection of materials was created by sifting through four different archives: The Library of Congress, ProQuest, Newspapers.com, and Digital NC. Our definition of monuments or memorials included statues, plaques, sculptures, places named after Confederates, and the appearance of the Confederate flag itself. We compiled the articles into categories of "editorials," "news," "images," "cartoons," and "other" according to the newspaper the articles came from.

Olivia and **Justin** both explored the rich content of the database to discover topics to write about. Putting ideas, themes, and topics together in their write-ups, Olivia and Justin used a narrative structure to explain the history of Confederate commemoration that Black newspapers and journalists told. They captured the relationship between Black newspapers and different news services, such as the Associated Press and the Associated Negro Press, as well as the regional "hotbeds" of persistent commentating and important journalists in the conversation.

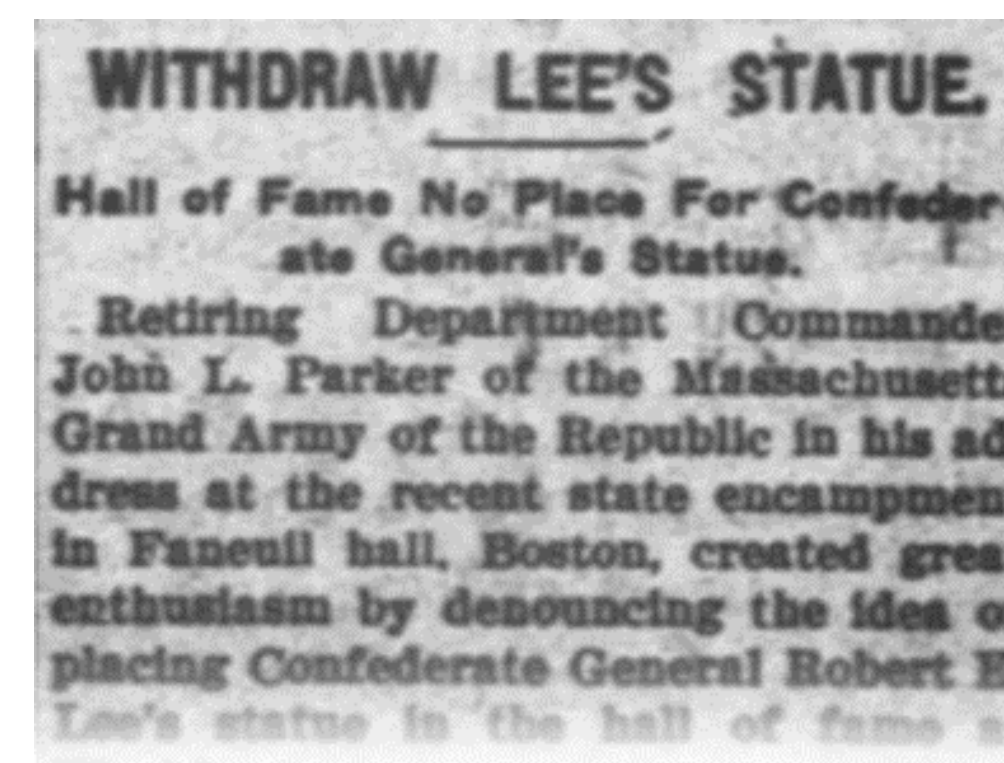
Liv focused on organizing all of the images, cartoons, and advertisements that were accumulated during the research process. Supporting Olivia and Justin in their writing, Liv created a series of sub-folders dedicated to depicting the visual elements of specific monuments, ranging from those on Monument Avenue in Richmond, VA, to New Orleans, LA, and beyond.



"Scrutinizer" in The Chicago Defender - October 14th, 1916



The Chicago Defender - May 30th, 1914



Mattie Fagan in the New York Age - February 3rd, 1923

Results

We wrote 34 articles in total this summer, ranging from topics such as the proposal to build a "Mammy" monument in Washington D.C. to Klan rallies at the Stone Mountain monument in Georgia. We plan to publish the articles on a website involving an interactive map in the future.

Articles

- Civil Rights Activists Speak Out Against Stephens' Statue
- Confederate Flag Controversy at Ole Miss
- DJ Feud of 1956
- Georgia State Flag Controversy
- Harper's Ferry Monument to "Loyal Negroes"
- Jefferson Davis Highway
- Killing of a Kentucky Teen Flying the Confederate Flag (1995)
- Monuments to "Mammies" and "Uncle Toms"
- Removal of the Confederate Flag from the S.C. Statehouse
- Singing "Dixie"
- Spotsylvania Auto-Tags
- Stars and Bars vs Stars and Stripes
- The NAACP Boycott of South Carolina
- Winston-Salem Monument to Confederate Dead
- Silent Sam
- Arthur Ashe on Monument Ave
- Black Journalists Note the Klan's Hatred for Other Groups on Stone Mountain
- New Orleans Cross-Burning
- No Churches for Judas and Pilate: Richard B. Martin on the Jefferson Davis Postage Stamp Proposal
- The Weakness of Human Judgement: The Jefferson Davis Monument in Kentucky
- Fiery Crosses Symbolize a Revival on Stone Mountain
- Head-to-Head with the Klan
- Klan Claims to be a Local Organization
- Grasping at Will-o'-Wisp at West Point
- "Forging Heavier Chains with Which to Be Bound": The Lee Statue on Monument Avenue
- "The Foremost Apostle of Slavery" – J.A. Rogers on the 1937 Lee Stamps
- Let Stone Mountain Alone
- "Fear God, Tell Truth, and Make Money" – A Lack of Journalistic Interest in the Davis Monument on Monument Avenue
- The Influence of Roscoe Simmons
- God Preserve Our Nation! (Jefferson Davis at the Capitol)
- "Glorifying Our Worst Enemies": The Lee Statue in the Capitol
- The Birthplace of the Klan
- Black Journalism in the Twin Cities on Confederate Commemoration

Contact

Justin Seward, CAS '25 - juseward@sas.upenn.edu
Liv McClary CAS '24 - omclary@sas.upenn.edu
Olivia Haynie, CAS '24 - ohaynie@sas.upenn.edu

Faculty Mentor

Donovan Schaefer
Associate Professor of Religious Studies

Funding Provided by

- Center for the Study of Race, Ethnicity and Immigration
- Price Digital Humanities Lab