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Chapter VII

THE POLITICS OF MEMORY: BLACK EMANCIPATION AND THE CIVIL WAR MONUMENT

KIRK SAVAGE

IN MAY 1866 William Dean Howells, back in America after his Civil War exile in Venice, surveyed the vast possibilities for commemorating the late war in an essay entitled "Question of Monuments," and there issued a challenge to the "plastic arts" to prove that "they have suffered the change which has come upon races, ethics, and ideas in this new world."¹ Like many other Americans Howells felt that his nation was at a turning point, propelled almost despite itself by the trauma of the war and the war's most unexpected result: the emancipation of four million slaves of African descent. The question of chattel slavery, which had precipitated the war, was in turn settled by it, but the question of what this nation had become without slavery remained, and still remains, unsettled.

Even as Howells's essay appeared, Northern politicians were embracing an increasingly rigorous program of political equality and civil rights, a movement that soon resulted in the two great legal monuments of Reconstruction, the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments to the Constitution.² These astonishing initiatives, which would have been inconceivable even two or three years earlier, make sense only when understood as a project of commemoration, an effort to fix the meaning and purpose of the war in an enduring form. The conquering nation sought in the means of law to construct some tangible proofs that the war had achieved a moral reformation justifying its cataclysmic violence.

Howells in his essay attempted to bring this commemorative project to bear on the more familiar monuments of plastic art. For him the "question" was not which heroes or which victories ought to be celebrated, but what *ideas* deserved representation. Ideas of warfare itself—organized violence and destruction—were unfit for representation; Howells was not proposing to close the conventional distance between those subjects considered suitable for bronze and stone and those considered suitable for battle painting or, for that matter, photographs. It was the idea of the cause that interested Howells, the end that justified and thus buried the means. But simply raising an occasional allegorical figure of the cause—a figure

standing for liberty or emancipation—was not the answer he had in mind, because he found this formal language dry and effete. So impoverished were the traditional types of sculpture that he could point to only one possible monument that seemed to communicate an important idea: the sculptor John Quincy Adams Ward's statue *The Freedman* (1863) (fig. 1). This superb male nude—his torso pressed forward like the ancient and ennobling prototype the *Torso Belvedere*, his arms and legs locked in one easy circuit of force as they push down against the stump which has metaphorically held him—Ward executed in the form of a small bronze statuette. Howells saw in this figure “the full expression of one idea that should be commemorated,” and he believed that it would “better celebrate the great deeds of our soldiers” than either military representations or suggestively undressed allegories.³

Yet Howells's idea remained merely an idea. Although it received critical praise, *The Freedman* was never commissioned at full scale and nothing like it was ever erected in public, the one possible exception being Thomas Ball's freed slave crouching like Mary Magdalene at the feet of the American Christ, Abraham Lincoln (fig. 2)—a work that will be discussed later.

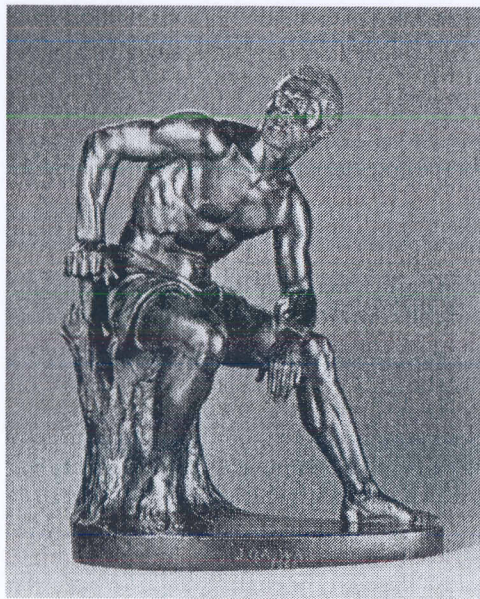


Fig. 1. John Quincy Adams Ward, *The Freedman*. 1863. Bronze. (Photo: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of Charles Anthony Lamb, 1979)



Fig. 2. Thomas Ball, *Freedman's Memorial* (Washington, D.C.). 1876. Bronze and granite. (Photo: Library of Congress)

Civil War monuments did proliferate in the American landscape, but they were precisely the kind of military monument Howells despised. At the local level, a sort of vernacular monument type emerged—the stone or metal soldier standing intact and ready on a simple pedestal or column (fig. 3)—which foundries and cemetery-monument companies could supply cheaply by catalog to towns in both the North and the South. So far were the two sides from representing the ideas of their cause in plastic form that their monuments became indistinguishable, except in their inscriptions and (if they could afford it) in the arcane details of the uniform.⁴

One basic commemorative impulse unites the local monuments of the North and the South. This impulse, according to local sponsors, was to “perpetuate” the memory of the men who had fought and died. Precisely what perpetuation meant is less clear. The rhetoric used to justify erecting monuments offered various answers, occasionally advancing the argument that people are forgetful and need their social memory bolstered by powerful mnemonic aids; sometimes arguing instead that memory is safe in the present but monuments are needed to transmit it across generations; yet frequently invoking a startling counterargument—that the memory of



Fig. 3. Samuel E. White, *Confederate Monument* (Fort Mill, S.C.). 1891. Granite. (Photo: author)

heroism is undying and will outlast even monuments, which are therefore built simply as proof of memory's reality and strength.⁵ Whether anxious or celebratory, all the rhetoric sprang from a common assumption that shared memory, inhering within "the people," was vital to that people's strength and independence. Nevertheless, the fact remains that public monuments perpetuated memory in *external* deposits, located not within the people but within its shared public space. The increasing tendency in the nineteenth century to construct memory in physical monuments—to inscribe it on the landscape itself—seems symptomatic of an increasing anxiety about memory left to its own unseen devices. Monuments served to anchor collective remembering, a process dispersed, ever changing, and ultimately intangible, in highly condensed, fixed, and tangible sites. Monuments embodied and legitimated the very notion of a common memory, and by extension the notion of the people who possessed and rallied

around such a memory.⁶ In the case of local Civil War memorials, this embodiment manifests itself in a literal sense in the figure of the common soldier, who is always erect and unwounded—an image of bodily continuity that seeks to displace or overcome the memory of bodies violated and destroyed, even though such violence to the body is the defining premise of warfare. That the common soldier is also always white and Anglo-Saxon in physiognomy suggests that the memorials offer up not a neutral individual body but a collective body conceived with certain boundaries and allegiances.

The rise of a more or less uniform vernacular monument at the local level indicates that towns wanted to participate in a shared and standardized program of memory; while each town fixed and deposited a permanent record of its own involvement in the war, the commemorative grammar imposed such a strong linkage between memorials that they constituted a kind of coordinated front. As local soldiers were loyal to national armies, so local memory earned credibility by its assimilation to a visible national memory. While some localities—particularly big cities—did try consciously to depart from the standard, most were content not to push the frontiers of cultural interpretation and to avoid all but the least controversial views of the war's cause and significance. Thus inscriptions that specify a "cause" generally do so in the most acceptable shorthand form: "the Union" for Northern monuments, "state sovereignty" for Southern monuments.⁷ Even the definition of the cause speaks not to moral principles contested but to the local allegiance to higher authority, be it the union or the state. Issues such as slavery were at best subsidiary in the program of local commemoration, lumped in with the stories of Christian bravery and other deeds of heroism invoked by speakers and inscriptions to give the appearance of moral logic to an otherwise unexplained loyalty.⁸

Insofar as a Southern view and a Northern view can be read in these local monuments, the two self-descriptions turn out to be quite compatible. For "union" and "state sovereignty" are not intrinsically incompatible, and after the demise of Reconstruction they were not incompatible even in practice. Slavery was the single issue that had made two distinct sectional identities seem both real and irreconcilable. But once slavery had ended and the nation decided to ignore slavery's legacy—that is, when the federal government stopped trying to enforce the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments—a consensus could be reached. This is the tragic irony of the war: the North, which did not go to war to abolish slavery, ended up using abolition to disguise its own racial contradictions and ornament its self-image; while the South, which did go to war to preserve slavery, renounced its proslavery ideology without tearing down the fundamental structure of white supremacy. With the issue of slavery displaced from the ideological center, and the war recast as a struggle between two ultimately compatible

"principles" of union and state sovereignty, the four years of the worst bloodshed in American history seem to be an inexplicable, Job-like test. And the local monuments that help recast the war in this light tell us in effect that neither side lost.⁹

For weren't the Confederates loyal and dutiful in their own way? Isn't this all the Southern monuments were trying to say? White America grappled with this question once it had abandoned the Reconstruction agenda of racial justice. While some Northerners were still offended by the Southern commemoration of its former rebels, they could no longer pinpoint a credible reason why. The Southern monuments did not defend slavery or question the blessings of abolition; instead they represented their struggle in a language and form that mimicked the North's own. Northerners looking at Southern monuments could just as easily see reconciliation as treason, and many did. As time wore on, more and more Americans perceived this kind of monument building as part of a healthy process of sectional reconciliation—a process that everyone knew but no one said was for and between whites. Commemoration and reconciliation, two social processes that were diametrically opposed in the aftermath of the Civil War, eventually converged upon a shared, if disguised, racial politics.¹⁰

Nowhere is this more apparent than in the campaign to memorialize Robert E. Lee. Lee was an ideal figure for postwar Southern commemoration. He fought for the Confederacy not out of any special interest in the system of slavery (his own views on the subject were ambivalent), but out of a sense of loyalty to his home state. In some ways he fit the classical mold of the reluctant leader, as George Washington had, and like Washington he was thought to be above politics; by representing the Confederacy, therefore, he helped dissociate the cause from the politics of slavery, in particular, and redefine it instead in terms of personal qualities like honor and Christian virtue that the white culture at large could embrace. Even his Anglo-Saxon good looks offered material for a moral lesson: Southern whites read the signs of Lee's virtue in his physical appearance. His status as exemplar of "true manhood"—combining physical beauty and moral truth—rested on a thinly disguised racism that placed the nonwhite outside the sphere of both beauty and truth.¹¹

The campaign to erect a major monument to Lee in the old Confederate capital, Richmond, Virginia, was a milestone in this cultural effort to remold Lee's image and thereby reconfigure the memory of the Confederacy. The campaign was long and divisive, beginning chaotically in 1870 with rival groups struggling for authority and ending twenty years later as a quasi-official project of Virginia's governor, backed by Richmond's business elite. Far from signifying a quaint or neurotic fixation with the past, as many have assumed, the monument ultimately became a powerful repre-

sentation of the elite culture of the New South, linking art, business, and white-defined "truth." On a literal level the monument was planned as the centerpiece of a brilliant real-estate speculation, an expensive residential subdivision laid out along a wide boulevard named Monument Avenue. Crowning this grand boulevard, and giving it an aura of gentility, was the equestrian statue of Lee himself, the moral and physical exemplar for the men who would build the mansions clustered beneath his effigy (fig. 4).¹²

The monument committee eschewed popular local sculptors and chose instead a fashionable French sculptor, Antonin Mercié, who could give immediate artistic credibility to the image of Lee supreme. Mercié delivered the goods, distilling the equestrian format to its classic basis as an allegory of power, a study in human mastery over the subservient animal (fig. 5). The monument committee insisted to Mercié that the horse be shown calm, with all four feet on the ground; the idea was to avoid an overt show of Lee's force and to suggest instead his latent power—power so complete and so benign that it required only the slightest tug on the reins. It seems hardly coincidental that this representation parallels literary representations of the good master—faithful slave relationship.¹³ In any event Mercié's sculpture succeeds as an image of pregnant repose: seen from any side, its lines form a stable pyramid that culminates in the commander's head and slopes down through the legs of the horse to the edges of the



Fig. 4. Monument Avenue at Lee Circle, Richmond, Va., ca. 1907. (Photo: Cook Collection, Valentine Museum)



Fig. 5. Antonin Mercie and Paul Pujol, *Lee Monument* (Richmond, Va.). 1890. Bronze and granite. (Photo: Eleanor S. Brockenbrough Library, The Museum of the Confederacy)

pedestal, which in turn spreads gracefully to the ground below. The implicit claims this image made for the prerogative of Southern white manhood were not lost on many people, least of all on the local black population. "The Southern white folks is on top," an elderly black man said when the statue was dedicated in 1890, "the Southern white folks is on top!"¹⁴ Black laborers unpacked and hoisted the statue (we see them in figure 6 keeping a respectful distance), prompting John Mitchell, editor of the local black newspaper, to write defiantly, "The Negro put up the Lee Monument, and should the time come, will be there to take it down."¹⁵

The reaction of the Northern press was much less defiant and in fact largely favorable; many people accepted the Southern argument that Lee was now an American hero.¹⁶ The legitimization of Lee in national memory helped erase his status as traitor, as "other," leaving otherness to reside in the emancipated slaves and their descendants, who could not possibly accept Lee as their hero. The commemoration of Lee rested on a suppres-

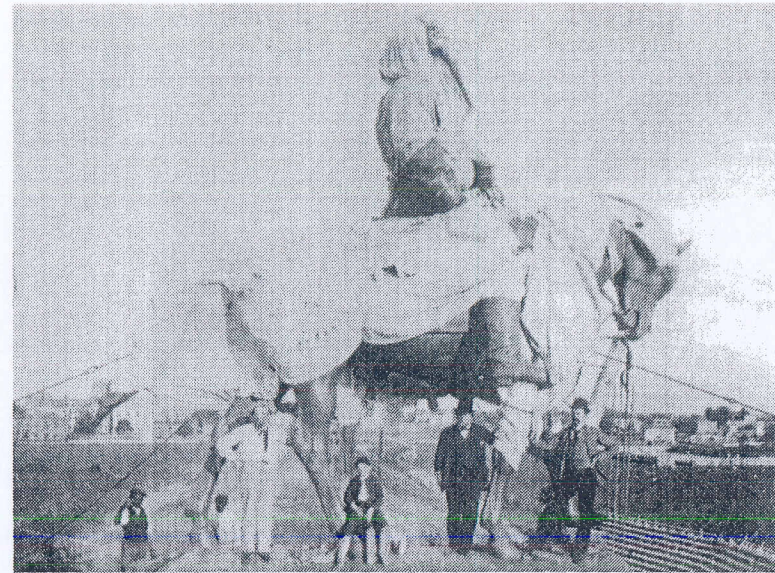


Fig. 6. Hoisting of the Lee statue, 1890. (Photo: Virginia State Library)

sion of black memory, black truth. Thus when Charles Francis Adams argued in 1902 for a statue of Lee in Washington, he ended his speech with precisely the claim that Virginia's business leaders had made for their statue—that it would symbolize the South's postwar progress, its "patient upbuilding of a people under new conditions by constitutional means"—this at the very time the Southern states were completing, by constitutional means, the wholesale disfranchisement of black voters. While the point of his talk ostensibly was to depoliticize Lee and the Confederacy, in the end Adams could not justify a monument to Lee without denying the postwar reality of racial injustice and its congruence with the Confederate cause. "Sectional reconciliation" of this kind was founded on the nonconciliation of African-Americans, and on their exclusion from the legitimate arenas of cultural representation.¹⁷

Black Americans did not have their own monuments, despite the critical role they had played in swinging the balance of power—both moral and military—to the North. This fact is rarely if ever mentioned in discussions of Civil War monuments. Public monuments do not arise as if by natural law to celebrate the deserving; they are built by people with sufficient power to marshal (or impose) public consent for their erection. In this respect, as I have suggested with Lee's memorial, the public monument

represents a kind of collective recognition—in short, legitimacy—for the memory deposited there. Although they proposed monuments to black soldiers from time to time, blacks simply did not have the cultural privilege to seek this form of legitimacy, and whites did not care to give it to them.¹⁸ The standing soldier of Anglo-Saxon feature that appeared on local monuments throughout the North and South did not represent the black soldier and was not meant to. When the black scholar Freeman Murray surveyed American monuments in his unique and unjustly neglected study of 1916, *Emancipation and the Freed in American Sculpture*, he counted a total of three Civil War monuments that represented black soldiers.¹⁹ Two of them show a single black participant in multifigure combat groups. The third and most celebrated, the so-called Shaw memorial in Boston by Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Charles McKim (1897), carries the heaviest representational burden: this monument to a local white hero is the closest the country came to erecting a national tribute to the black soldier and the black cause.²⁰

The ambiguity of this burden is immediately apparent in the inscriptions. Is the work a monument to Robert Gould Shaw, the white commander, or to his regiment, the first black troops mustered in the North? The answer is Shaw if we read the front of the monument, the regiment if we read the back of the monument. It was the task of Saint-Gaudens's sculpture to synthesize these competing descriptions and distribute the commemorative focus in one coherent image (fig. 7). Originally the sculptor wanted a more conventional, hierarchical treatment like Mercie's Lee—a freestanding equestrian statue of Shaw raised on a pedestal that could be decorated with low-relief panels of soldiers. Shaw's family vetoed this idea. Eventually Saint-Gaudens devised an ingenious synthesis of statue and pedestal in one huge panel in high relief showing the commander on horseback marching next to his troops on foot, all arranged rigorously parallel to the relief plane and therefore seen in profile. The figure of Shaw retains the formal preeminence Saint-Gaudens wanted, positioned at the center and in highest relief, without leading the march or guiding the narrative. The exceptional and much-observed rhythm of the march—created formally by organizing a jumble of overlapping packs, canteens, guns, legs, and faces into legible repeating patterns that nevertheless defy geometric regularity—manages to control the scene to such an extent that it begins to overcome the formal interruption of the horse and rider. The equestrian neither overpowers nor collapses into the file of troops behind. There is a tension between the foreground and the background that is never quite resolved, a tension that inevitably takes on a racial charge because it springs from the competing claims to memory of the officer and the troops.²¹

Thus the monument facilitates opposing readings of its commemorative



Fig. 7. Augustus Saint-Gaudens and Charles McKim, *Shaw Memorial* (Boston, Mass.). 1897. Bronze and granite. (Photo: Library of Congress)

intent. Freeman Murray, whose father served in Shaw's regiment, looked at the compelling portrayal of the black "rank and file" and felt a sense of validation made all the more powerful because it was otherwise missing in monumental sculpture. "It seems strangely providential," he wrote, "that this greatest of American military memorials should have been inspired primarily by the valor and devotion of Negro-American soldiery."²² But this same soldiery could easily be demoted by means of a counter criticism: the art critic Charles Caffin, for instance, saw in the sculpture a parable of racial difference, in which the "doglike trustfulness" of the black troops "contrasted with the serene elevation of their white leader." While this contrast is hardly apparent in the faces, the literal elevation of Shaw's figure may be enough to trigger the reading; certainly the undisguised racism of the reading tallies with Saint-Gaudens's own written descriptions of his "darkey" models with their "imaginative, though simple, minds."²³ One cannot forget that the monument was sponsored and designed by the white elite, and—Murray notwithstanding—without Shaw the monument would have been unthinkable.

Given that white society fashioned the nation's monuments, there was still one commemorative subject that seemed bound to engage more di-

rectly the issues raised by emancipation, namely, the subject of Abraham Lincoln. In the first years after Lincoln's death the ramifications of slavery and freedom did indeed loom large as several different groups, all going by the name of the National Lincoln Monument Association, competed to stake their claim on the national memory.²⁴ One of the groups was a black organization that planned to make its monument an educational institute open to all: "a Monument not of marble or brass merely, but a Monument of Education." The association was proposing not just to lend Lincoln's name to a project sorely needed in the black community but to appropriate Lincoln's memory as well, to align the memory of his achievement and ambition with the fate of the slaves; our dreams are his dreams, the project in effect claimed. But after a well-publicized start, the organization soon disappeared.²⁵ The most elaborate proposal for a monument came from a semiofficial group of nationally prominent white Republicans, who received a congressional charter for their project in March 1867. Conceived at the height of Reconstruction, their monument was intended to be "an eternal Sentinel, guarding the *era* of emancipation—an immortal Herald proclaiming to all races of men, the nation's great civil and moral reforms—slavery blotted out from all her codes, and *equal civil rights* imbedded in her Constitution."²⁶

The aim of the monument was nothing less than to reconstruct Lincoln himself, to establish him in official memory as the founder of a new era in American history dedicated to the specific principle of racial equality. The design the sponsors adopted, a mammoth proposal by Clark Mills (fig. 8) modeled loosely on Christian Rauch's monument to Frederick the Great in Berlin, featured a colossal seated Lincoln in the act of signing the Emancipation Proclamation, surmounting what was essentially a vast sculptural scaffold that held six equestrians of Union generals at the base, twenty-one pedestrian portraits of Lincoln's colleagues in the top story, three bas-reliefs, and two allegorical groupings including in the middle a three-part cycle showing the progress of the slave from abject confinement to liberation. While the stated program of the monument was sharply focused, driven by Reconstruction policy, the design was from the start characterized by multiplicity and fragmentation which lent itself to never-ending revision, as the sponsors added and subtracted elements in hopes of finding the right mix of "representative" figures who could attract donations from different constituencies. Most significantly, the sponsors eventually ordered the three-part allegory of the slave's progress to be abandoned and replaced by three separate figures—one of Frederick Douglass, one of a white soldier, one of a woman nurse—hoping thereby to get contributions from three constituencies where previously only one had been represented.²⁷ While one could argue that the substitution of Douglass enhanced the dignity of the African-American representation even as it re-



Fig. 8. Clark Mills, plaster model of National Lincoln Monument, ca. 1867 (now lost). (Photo: Library of Congress)

duced its presence, nevertheless the elimination of the racial allegory effectively undid any substantial representation of a common moral purpose unifying the vast cross-section of heroes Mills had assembled. The pedestal, which was already almost unreadable, thus collapsed into a representational hodgepodge of disparate and dispensable elements, which not even the figure of Lincoln on top, quill in hand, could rescue. This most ambitious proposal for a monument to Lincoln was dedicated to a new order that it did not understand and it could not visualize; ultimately the vast sums needed never materialized, and the project succumbed to its own contradictions.

Meanwhile the issue of emancipation was "ghettoized" in a small monument located away from the Capitol, the aforementioned Freedman's Memorial to Lincoln of 1876—so-called because the money came from the contributions of ex-slaves, although, predictably, it was spent by white sponsors.²⁸ I use the word "ghettoized" because the monument implicitly

assigns the subject to black memory instead of national memory; the whole project is supposed to record black gratitude to the white benefactor rather than white society's sense of its own transformation. Thomas Ball's well-intentioned but rather servile figure of the slave receiving his savior's blessing (fig. 2) has annoyed blacks from its inception; at the unveiling Frederick Douglass took the extraordinary step of departing from his prepared text to criticize the statue he was ostensibly dedicating.²⁹

The national memorial to Lincoln that was finally finished in 1922 bears no relation to any of these early projects. While the Reconstruction proposal would have Lincoln stand for a specific and indeed controversial principle, the twentieth-century project was carefully structured to sidestep the question of what he stood for. A Republican elite promoted the memorial as part of the vast City Beautiful scheme for Washington known as the McMillan Plan of 1901.³⁰ Under this rubric the memorial was to be above all a grand work of civic beautification, and its site and form were to be determined by art experts rather than untrained laypeople. Thus the Lincoln Memorial Commission deferred to the Fine Arts Commission, which in turn deferred all questions of meaning and sentiment because they were outside its purview. The so-called laypeople who *were* posing these questions in editorials and letters—wondering for example whether the architecture of a slave-owning society like Greece was really appropriate for Lincoln—found their concerns completely excluded from the evasive circuit of decision-making.³¹

Like the campaign for Robert E. Lee, this memorial undertaking pretended to dissociate itself from ideology. But of course the aesthetic assumptions guiding the art experts were not ideologically empty. Their call for a "universal" work of art that would harmonize with its formal surroundings encoded a specific commemorative intent: to remove Lincoln from the trappings of historical and political time and deposit him in the timeless perfection of a classical structure, itself inscribed within the purified, anticommercial order of central Washington. Henry Bacon's superb Doric quasi temple, housing Daniel Chester French's colossal effigy (fig. 9), does the job perfectly. Here was the "real" Lincoln, stripped of his rough, misleading exterior, ex-President Taft argued; just as the monument and its surroundings argue that a real America of stability and unity lies beneath the apparent facts of racial and political strife.³² But no amount of formal rigor could suppress the contradictions that threatened this white dream of America. They surface even in the monument's official text: the main inscription (fig. 9) deliberately avoids the word "slavery" in the interest of sectional harmony, even though Lincoln's own speech carved on the right describes the war as divine retribution for slavery's offense.³³ Similarly, in the so-called emancipation mural located inside (fig. 10), the painter Jules

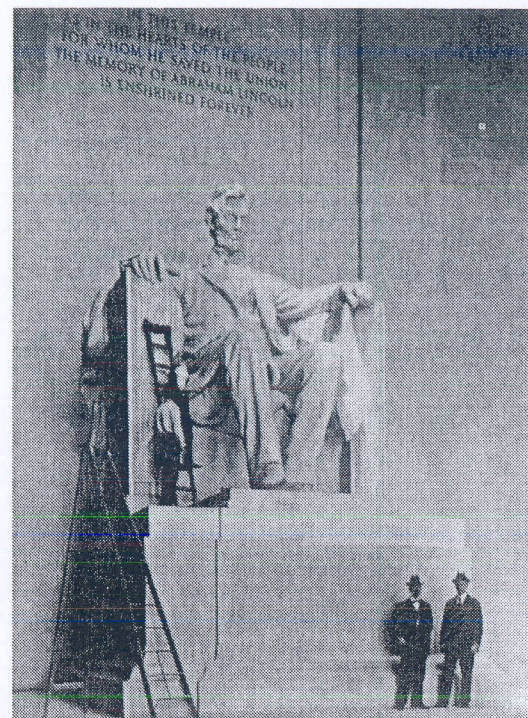


Fig. 9. Henry Bacon and Daniel Chester French, central hall, Lincoln Memorial. 1922. Marble. (Photo: Library of Congress)

Guerin included dark-skinned models but consciously chose not to portray American blacks because he considered them undecorative.³⁴ And perhaps most blatantly, in the dedication ceremony, Robert Moton, the president of Tuskegee, was invited to speak for his race, but the black citizens officially invited to hear him were forced to sit in a rear section separated by a roadway from the white audience. Here was the culminating spectacle of the long campaign to build a national Lincoln monument: a mass of white bodies occupying the approach to the sacred structure (fig. 11), at the head of which stood the lone black man allowed near his "emancipator's" effigy, there to speak "for" but not with "the Negro race" on the fruits of his supposed emancipation.³⁵ It is not too great a leap from this incongruous image to the intentionally comic racism of a *National Geographic* photo of 1947 in which black cleaners pose as lilliputian shoeshine boys to scrub the emancipator's feet (fig. 12).



10. Jules Guerin, *Emancipation Mural*. 1919. (Photo: Edward F. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial* shington: Government Printing Office, 1927)

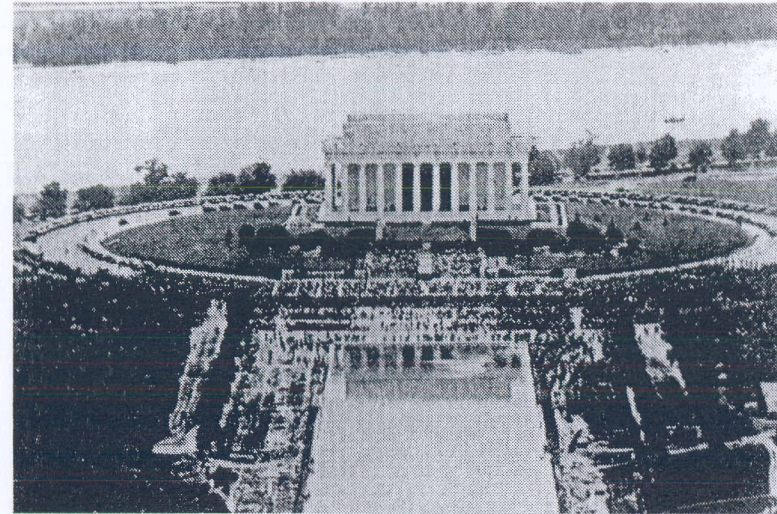


Fig. 11. Aerial view of Lincoln Memorial dedication, 1922. (Photo: Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial*)

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The commemoration of the Civil War in physical memorials is ultimately a story of systematic cultural repression, carried out in the guise of reconciliation and harmony. Mundane as they appear to be, at once ubiquitous and hardly noticed, these collective possessions constituted serious, sometimes crucial, tests of cultural authority. Public monuments are important precisely because they do in some measure work to impose a permanent memory on the very landscape within which we order our lives. Inasmuch as the monuments make credible particular collectivities, they must erase others; or more precisely, they erase the very possibility of rival collectivities. But the cultural contest that monuments seem to settle need not end once they are built and dedicated. Monuments can be reappropriated, combatted with countermonuments, or even—as Richmond’s John Mitchell envisaged—taken back down. As appalling as the Lincoln Memorial’s dedication proved to be, Martin Luther King, Jr., could make that same edifice the dramatic stage for his most celebrated speech, one of the seminal events of the Civil Rights movement. Recently the statues on Monument Avenue, as well as other Confederate monuments in black communities, have begun to provoke public debate over the content and implications of Southern heritage.³⁶ Perhaps in a distant future, as Eugene Genovese has suggested, the Confederate soldier standing on his pedestal



Fig. 12. "Seated in His Memorial, Abraham Lincoln Gets White Marble Shoes Shined." (Photo: *National Geographic* 91 [June 1947]: 703)

may come to face a statue of Nat Turner. The cultural negotiation this would require, while barely imaginable, is surely welcome.

NOTES

1. William Dean Howells, "Question of Monuments," *Atlantic Monthly* 18 (May 1866): 646–649.

2. For the best and most recent account of this movement see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution 1863–1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988).

3. Howells, "Question of Monuments," pp. 646–648. On Ward's *Freedman* see Lewis I. Sharp, *John Quincy Adams Ward: Dean of American Sculpture* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1985), pp. 153–156.

4. Evidence for this claim is necessarily anecdotal, since no full scholarly inventories of local Civil War monuments have been produced. The standing-soldier monument appeared as early as 1863 but did not become common until the 1880s

and the following several decades. Before the 1880s local war memorials were erected less frequently, often in town cemeteries rather than in public squares, and more often than not, it seems, in the form of obelisks or other nonfigurative shafts. Gaines Foster has charted this iconographic evolution on the Confederate side in his fine book *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). For more information on the origins of the standing-soldier monument and on the monument industry in general, see Michael Panhorst, "Lest We Forget: Monuments and Memorial Sculpture in National Military Parks on Civil War Battlefields, 1861–1917" (Ph.D. diss., University of Delaware, 1988), chap. 3. (Battlefield monuments constitute another zone of Civil War commemoration deliberately distinct from the local monuments erected in town squares or town cemeteries.)

The two most complete pictorial catalogs of local Confederate and Union monuments are Ralph W. Widener, Jr., *Confederate Monuments: Enduring Symbols of the South and the War Between the States* (Washington, D.C.: Andromeda, 1982); and Mildred C. Baruch and Ellen J. Beckman, *Civil War Union Monuments: A List of Union Monuments, Markers, and Memorials of the American Civil War, 1861–1865* (Washington, D.C.: Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, 1978). Two earlier compilations of Confederate monuments with interesting commentary are Confederate Southern Memorial Association, *History of the Confederate Memorial Associations of the South* (New Orleans: Graham Press, 1904); and Bettie A. C. Emerson, *Historic Southern Monuments, Representing Memorials of the Heroic Dead of the Southern Confederacy* (New York: Neale Publishing, 1911). To my knowledge there are no such glosses on Union monuments.

Generally, Confederate monuments have received more scholarly attention and cultural analysis. Interpretive overviews include Stephen Davis, "Empty Eyes, Marble Hand: The Confederate Monument and the South," *Journal of Popular Culture* 16 (Winter 1982): 2–21; John J. Winberry, "Symbols in the Landscape: The Confederate Memorial," *Pioneer America Society Transactions* 5 (1982): 9–15. The fact that there are no such overviews of Union monuments is in itself revealing; the linkages between the two traditions have not yet been explored because the ruling assumption has been that the Confederate monuments forge a unique, distinct identity. Foster's book *Ghosts of the Confederacy* offers the beginnings of a corrective view, by examining the ways in which Confederate commemoration helped facilitate the South's reentry into the national mainstream.

5. Published accounts of monument dedication ceremonies are plentiful and constitute a good source for these rhetorical arguments. See, for example, *Dedication of the Soldiers' Monument at Dorchester, September 17, 1867* (Boston: Thomas Groom, 1868); *Dedication of the Soldiers' Monument at Worcester, Massachusetts* (Worcester, 1875); John Esten Cooke, *Stonewall Jackson: A Military Biography, with an appendix containing personal reminiscences, and a full account of the ceremonies attending the unveiling of Foley's statue* (New York: D. Appleton, 1876); Thomas Astley Atkins and John Wise Oliver, *Yonkers in the Rebellion of 1861–1865* (Yonkers, N.Y.: Yonkers Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument Association, 1892); *Addresses Delivered at the Unveiling of the Monument to Confederate Soldiers at Charles City County, Virginia* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, Printers, 1901), pp. 9, 22.

6. Pierre Nora argues that the modern tendency to deposit collective memory in external "traces"—archives, monuments, and so forth—has displaced and depleted "real" memory, which he conceives as an inner, unmediated phenomenon: "The less memory is experienced from the inside the more it exists only through its exterior scaffolding and outward signs" (Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Memoire*," *Representations*, no. 26 [Spring 1989]: 7–25, quote on p. 13). There are at least two objections to his argument. First of all, Nora's dichotomy of external and internal memory is misleading: all shared memory requires mediating devices to sustain itself, even if those are as simple as an anecdote or a gesture. Second, the modern reliance on memory "traces" does not mean that more ephemeral and less easily documented means of remembering have been abandoned. The commemoration of the Civil War is a case in point: the proliferation of public monuments, reliquaries, and document collections coincided with equally ubiquitous ritual observances, veterans' reunions, and organizational meetings, as well as less formal activities of remembering in the home, church, or street. These various memory networks were not necessarily mutually exclusive and may in certain ways have been mutually reinforcing.

The modern need to objectify collective memory in tangible traces, which Nora is right to emphasize, does not so much indicate the death of another, more natural memory as it does the presence of a certain hierarchy of memory activities, in which "enduring" (and properly documented) testimonials take on the greatest value and cultural prestige. The great flowering of the public monument in postrevolutionary Western societies is surely linked to the rise of nationalism and the nationalist demand for tangible symbols and traditions that could make the idea of the nation credible; in this age the nation is the ruling collective, and to make collective memory real, physically rooted, is to make the collective real. See Eric Hobsbawm, "Inventing Traditions" and "Mass-Producing Traditions: Europe, 1870–1914," both in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

7. In the absence of any thorough inventories of monument inscriptions I have relied on the compilations cited above (note 4) and on my own observation.

8. For more on this point see my dissertation, "Race, Memory, and Identity: The National Monuments of the Union and the Confederacy" (University of California at Berkeley, 1990), pp. 13–15.

9. The classic book on racial politics in the postwar period is Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980). The two broadest syntheses of scholarship on the Civil War and its aftermath are James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); and Foner, *Reconstruction*. Also helpful in my thinking have been Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Imperiled Union: Essays on the Background of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); and Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988). See also David W. Blight, "'For Something beyond the Battlefield': Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War," *Journal of American History* 75 (March 1989): 1156–1178.

10. Landmarks in this process of "reconciliation" include the 1885 funeral of

Ulysses Grant in New York, where Confederate generals marched in the procession, and the 1895 dedication of a Confederate monument in Chicago (see Jno. C. Underwood, *Report of Proceedings Incidental to the Erection and Dedication of the Confederate Monument* [Chicago: Wm. Johnston Printing, 1896]). My argument here will focus instead on the conspicuously national projects to commemorate Lee and Lincoln.

11. For Lee's views on slavery see Douglas Southall Freeman, *R.E. Lee: A Biography* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1935), 1:371–373. Probably the most sophisticated account of Lee as a commemorative figure is in Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, esp. pp. 51, 101–103, 120–121. See also Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (New York: Knopf, 1977); and Alan T. Nolan, *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991). For more on the reading of Lee's physical appearance see Savage, "Race, Memory, and Identity," pp. 71–74, 82–84.

12. Savage, "Race, Memory, and Identity," pp. 92–94, 190–194.

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 86–90. Mercie's original model, which the sponsors rejected, depicted Lee on a rearing horse surrounded by the scattered bodies of dying soldiers; this Napoleonic conception could not have been further from the canonical image of Lee. For an interesting account of Lee's "true" relationship to his horse, with an explicit racial reading, see "General R.E. Lee's War-Horse," *Southern Historical Society Papers* 35 (1907): 99–101 (originally published in the *Richmond Dispatch*, August 10, 1886).

14. *Richmond Planet*, June 7, 1890, p. 2.

15. *Ibid.*

16. The *Richmond Dispatch*, June 1, 1890, p. 5, provides a useful sampling of Northern editorials. Note, for example, the rhetoric of the *New York Times*, May 30, 1890, p. 4: "His [Lee's] memory is, therefore, a possession of the American people, and the monument that recalls it is itself a national possession."

17. Charles Francis Adams, *Shall Cromwell Have a Statue?* (Boston: Charles E. Lauriat, 1902), pp. 16, 20, 44. On Frederick Douglass's understanding of this process see Blight, "'For Something beyond the Battlefield,'" p. 1169.

18. One such proposal, initiated by the historian George Washington Williams, was discussed in Congress (John Hope Franklin, *George Washington Williams: A Biography* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985], pp. 171–174). More obscure proposals appear in the *American Architect and Building News* 20 (August 21, 1886): 81, and 23 (January 7, 1888): 2.

19. Freeman Henry Morris Murray, *Emancipation and the Freed in American Sculpture: A Study in Interpretation* (Washington, D.C.: Murray Brothers, 1916; reprinted Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), p. 72.

20. Key literature on the memorial includes Homer Saint-Gaudens, ed., *Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (New York: Century Co., 1913), 1:332–335; Lois Goldreich Marcus, "The Shaw Memorial by Augustus Saint-Gaudens: A History Painting in Bronze," *Winterthur Portfolio* 14 (Spring 1979): 1–23; John H. Dryfhout, *The Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1982), pp. 222–229; Stephen J. Whitfield, "'Sacred in History and in Art': The Shaw Memorial," *New England Quarterly* 60 (March 1987): 3–

27; and most recently Albert Boime, *The Art of Exclusion: Representing Blacks in the Nineteenth Century* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1990), pp. 199–219.

21. The evolution of Saint-Gaudens's design is discussed in Marcus, "The Shaw Memorial," pp. 16–19, and can be charted in the preparatory drawings published in Dryfhout, *Work of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, pp. 224–225. Marcus's analysis, while thorough, still underestimates the critical shift involved in Saint-Gaudens's eventual decision to change from a three-quarter view to a profile view, with Shaw therefore placed beside rather than ahead of his troops.

22. Murray, *Emancipation and the Freed in American Sculpture*, pp. 168–174; quote on p. 172.

23. Charles Caffin, *American Masters of Sculpture* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1913), p. 11; *Reminiscences of Augustus Saint-Gaudens*, 1:335.

Albert Boime, while rejecting Caffin's racism, finds Caffin's reading more correct than Murray's (*Art of Exclusion*, pp. 209–211). Boime's argument hinges chiefly on the visual conflation of the soldiers' legs and the horse's legs; this compositional strategy he thinks belongs to a long racist tradition of identifying blacks with animals. I see the same strategy as a conflation of foreground and background rather than animal and black, a view I think is justified by other visual details, such as Shaw's sword, which extends and echoes the diagonals of the rifles behind. In my view there is a significant disparity between Saint-Gaudens's written representations of his black models and the more ambivalent representations of the sculpture itself.

24. Savage, "Race, Memory, and Identity," pp. 47–53.

25. National Archives, Microfilm M371 (Records of the Commissioner of Public Buildings and Grounds), reel 27, frame 331. See also *Celebration by the colored people's Educational Monument Association in memory of Abraham Lincoln on the Fourth of July, 1865 in the Presidential grounds* (Washington, D.C.: McGill & Witherow, Printers, 1865).

26. The National Lincoln Monument Association, *Organization and Design, Proceedings of the Board of Managers . . .* (Washington, D.C.: Office of the New National Era, 1870), p. 6.

27. Since the papers of the organization appear to be lost, the sponsor's actions can be pieced together only through scattered publications and archival fragments; for a more complete account see Savage, "Race, Memory, and Identity," pp. 53–65.

28. *Inaugural Ceremonies of the Freedmen's Memorial Monument to Abraham Lincoln, Washington City, April 14, 1876* (St. Louis: Levison and Blythe, 1876).

29. Douglass's impromptu remarks were reported by an eyewitness observer, John W. Cromwell, whose account is published in part in Murray, *Emancipation and the Freed in American Sculpture*, p. 199. For more on the speech see Blight, "'For Something beyond the Battlefield,'" pp. 1164–1165.

30. The McMillan Plan was published as *The Improvement of the Park System of the District of Columbia*, ed. Charles Moore (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1902).

31. For all my remarks on the Lincoln Memorial I am indebted to Christopher Thomas for sharing his knowledge and the manuscript of his dissertation, "The Lincoln Memorial and Its Architect, Henry Bacon (1866–1924)." The modus

operandi of the two commissions can best be observed in the *Lincoln Memorial Commission Report*, December 5, 1912, Senate Document No. 965, 62d Congress, 3d Session. The criticisms of the process and the design can be traced in the Ideal Scrapbooks of Henry Bacon in the Bacon Papers at Olin Library, Wesleyan University; the critique of Greece as a slaveholding society is from the *New York Independent* 72 (February 8, 1912), pp. 320–322, and 74 (February 6, 1913), pp. 280–281.

32. Taft gave this interpretation during his dedication speech at the memorial, published in Edward F. Concklin, *The Lincoln Memorial* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1927), pp. 83–86; quote on p. 84. His remarks echo the assumptions of the Fine Arts Commission as they are revealed in the reports published in *Lincoln Memorial Commission Report*, December 5, 1912.

33. Royal Cortissoz composed the inscription and wrote to Bacon, "By emphasizing his saving the union you appeal to both sections. By saying nothing about slavery you avoid the rubbing of old sores" (letter, April 6 [1919], Lincoln Memorial correspondence, Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University).

34. *New York Sun*, undated clipping in Ideal Scrapbook no. 2, Bacon Papers, Olin Library, Wesleyan University: "In choosing his models for negro types he [Jules Guerin] did not attempt to typify the central African negro races we know most familiarly in America. Anthropologically, the models who posed for his figures of 'The Black Peoples,' especially in the central group of one of the panels [emancipation mural], are a mixed lot. Decoration, rather than realism, was what the painter sought."

35. Concklin, *Lincoln Memorial*, pp. 75, 79. *Washington Tribune*, June 3, 1922, pp. 1, 8. Constance McGlaughlin Green writes that Moton himself was forced to sit in the segregated section, but this was not reported in the black press coverage; moreover, a photograph published on the front page of the *Washington Tribune*, June 3, 1922, shows Moton delivering his speech from the top step of the memorial. See Green, *The Secret City: A History of Race Relations in the Nation's Capital* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 199.

36. In Richmond proposals have recently been aired to expand (and alter) Monument Avenue's commemorative function by adding statues of black Civil Rights leaders from Virginia and a statue of Governor Wilder, the nation's first elected black governor since Reconstruction; proponents seem to be framing these counter-heritages as compatible, while opponents decry the discontinuity and disjunction with the Confederate past. See John F. Harris, "Monumental Issue Divides Old Dominion: New Statues Proposed for Richmond Boulevard," *Washington Post*, September 29, 1991, p. B3–1.