


SHOULD CONFEDERATE STATUES BE REMOVED?

CONFEDERATE STATUES: HISTORY OR HATE?



"I don't think they should be taken down, and that's just because they are a part of history, and you shouldn't take down history, unless you want it to repeat itself."




Ben Hakim
Freshman

"No, they are part of our history and the men that sacrificed their lives. We are not proud of all of our history, but we can't ignore it or re-write it"



Gigi Yoste
Sophomore

"I believe that there is a difference between a statue, such as General Lee, who led an army that fought for slavery, and a statue commemorating those who died fighting in a war that they might not have even had a choice but to get in to. So for that reason, only certain statues should be removed."



Elias Addy
Junior

"I don't think we should get rid of the statues simply because the statues don't represent Mississippi, or an ideology like other people would think of that. I think that they just represent part of the history, not that anyone has to agree or disagree with it."



Akshaya Vijayasankar
Senior

Statues are historical displays of racism, should be remembered inside museums

By Livvy Cohen
editor-in-chief

Following the Civil War, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC), there have been a total of 1,503 symbols of the Confederacy placed across the Southeast, ranging from statues and schools to cities and holidays. They have ignited countless debates regarding their morality and history, sometimes leading to violence.

Some say that it all represents heritage and history, while others argue that it is purely a symbol of racism and white supremacy. In reality, these symbols stand for a reason—to pay respect to men who fought for division and racism within our nation.

The entirety of the Civil War was fueled by one main conflict—slavery. The Union fought to both preserve the Union and emancipate slaves, while the Confederacy fought to uphold the enslavement of over 4 million African Americans within the South. Monuments have been placed to remember our history, yes, but when these monuments represent bigotry and racism against an entire community within our nation, they need to be removed.

According to the SPLC, the majority of them were constructed within the same time frame that the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) foundation in 1909, the Ku Klux Klan's resurgence as the "Invisible Empire" in 1915 and the "Red Summer" Race Riots in 1919. Many statues, schools and other sights were erected preceding

the 1950s and 60s, following the Civil War and Reconstruction, when racial tension was at a high, with these monuments and symbols representing events and people of which were completely racially motivated.

Flash forward to current day, and racial tensions are yet again at a high following President Trump's election. These monuments give no relief to the issue. On Aug. 12, white supremacists took to the streets of Charlottesville, VA in reaction to the city's verdict to take down a statue of Robert E. Lee. Armed with tiki torches, they marched through Charlottesville to "Unite the Right," chanting hateful and offensive slogans such as "Jews will not replace us" and "blood and soil," an actual Nazi rallying cry from Hitler's Germany. They were met by Black Lives Matter counter-protestors, and the weekend quickly faced turmoil and violence. Following the weekend, three died, including one counter-protester and two state troopers, and at least 35 people were injured due to the protests and violence regarding the removal of a Confederate statue.

As Senator Bernie Sanders said the day of the protests, the actions of these white supremacists were "a reprehensible display of racism and hatred that has no place in our society." If Confederate statues ignite such rampant violence and hatred, why should we allow our society to walk past them every single day? While

there are over 60 percent of Americans that support honoring and remembering the Confederacy and Civil War by keeping these monuments standing, according to a poll done by NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist, we cannot ignore what the Confederacy truly fought for: the bigotry, hatred, terror and deaths which came with the enslavement that was so prevalent before and during the Civil War.

We, as a nation, cannot gloss over the trials others have faced and remember specific aspects of America's history. In order to grow and progress as a country, we need to educate ourselves on not only the good, but also the bad that people have faced due to our actions. The educational value of these statues should not be placed in the center of public, but rather in a museum. Instead, we should educate by using these monuments to represent the best qualities of our country. These statues display ignorance and racism that we cannot stand for anymore, and for this reason we should not pay respect to people that stood for it in our history through monuments that we face every day.

United States has come far, Confederate statues do not represent American beliefs

By Grant Daniels
sports editor

Across the southeastern part of the United States, monuments and memorials of Confederate soldiers and generals are spread across the region. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center report done in 2016, there are 718 Confederate monuments and statues in the United States. Those statues should continue to stand in America.

Tensions have flared over the past couple of years surrounding Confederate statues in America. Just days after the 150th anniversary of the Civil War, a white man opened fire in a black church in Charleston, S.C. in 2015, killing nine people. Recently in Charlottesville, Va., a white nationalist rally turned violent as three people were killed and 34 others were injured.

These terrible acts by disturbed, ill-minded individuals and groups have divided our country racially, giving America some of its toughest times since the turn of the century. While there needs to be an answer to these issues, those answers should not be to tear down part of history in America.

While I believe that Confederate statues should continue to stand in America, I feel differently

about the idea of having the Confederate flag in some of our state flags, like Mississippi. The Confederate flag was created as a separate battle flag for the Confederacy and the flag is still flown today by the Ku Klux Klan and other white supremacist groups.

A state flag should represent the state in present day, not historically like the statues. We should not be represented today by having the Confederate flag in part of our flag.

By no means is the history represented by these statues, proud history, but we are not doing any good for ourselves by simply trying to erase history. Whether the statues are there or not, those events still happened. The Civil War still happened. The civil rights movement still happened.

Former President George W. Bush made a statement in 2016 at the grand opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NHAHHC) saying, "a great nation does not hide its history, it faces its flaws and corrects them."

Those words spoken by Bush are true. We should remember this history as a reminder of how we did it once, in a very incorrect manner. As a reminder of how much our country has changed for the better and how good we have it here in the United States.

It is remarkable to know that African Americans have come from fighting to end slavery in the 1860s, to fighting for their equal rights in the 1960s, to under 50 years later having the first African American President of the United States being elected in Barack Obama.

Our current president Donald Trump has come out strongly in opposition to removing Confederate statues around the country. The majority of America sides with him. According to an Economist/YouGov survey done in August of 2017, 54% see statues of Confederate war heroes as a sign of southern pride, 26% see the statues as a sign of racism, and 20% are not sure.

In a Marist University poll conducted in August of 2017, 62% of Americans believe the statues should remain as "a historical symbol" with 44% of African American respondents agreeing.

Tearing down the historic Confederate statues would not advance us any further in the problems we face today. What good will tearing down old pieces of bronze and stone do? We have to come to realization that this country is divided and as Americans, we have to physically put forth an effort to come united as Americans.

If we are trying to erase the history of slavery in America, does this mean we should try to erase the history of our first 15 presidents that never took action against slavery?

Whether you are for or against letting Confederate statues stand in the United States, let it be a reminder of just how far we've come as a country.

Who won this debate?

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