

COUNTERING THE LOST CAUSE:
EXAMINING CIVIL WAR COMMEMORATION IN MURFREESBORO,
TENNESSEE

By Alissa Kane

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Thesis Committee:

Dr. Martha Norkunas, Chair

Dr. Andrew Fialka

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ABSTRACT

The history of the Civil War has been a point of contention across the nation and in academia, regarding how it is remembered as well as who controlled this memory in years past. This thesis utilizes frameworks from regionalized studies of Civil War commemoration and applies it to a local scope, specifically Murfreesboro, Tennessee. How was Murfreesboro affected by the Civil War, and how might this have informed the way it was remembered on the landscape? How did Confederate groups affect Civil War memory and commemoration in Murfreesboro? Finally, how has the physical manifestation of this memory affected southern communities? The final chapter of this thesis focuses on African American commemoration in Murfreesboro, and how the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County (AAHSRC) has worked to balance the narrative on the landscape. This thesis also explores a public history project with the AAHSRC which explores representing unmarked African American stories in digital form.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE LOST CAUSE IN CIVIL WAR MEMORY

Murfreesboro, Tennessee, like many southern locales, is enamored with its Civil War Heritage. Tourists who examine historic markers and monuments learn a particular history of the Civil War as well as some of the men who fought in it. The heavy Civil War concentration is to be expected, as a major battle in addition to two skirmishes occurred in the city and on the outskirts of the town. The people of Murfreesboro were deeply affected by the war, as the Union fought to wrest control of vital supply lines from the Confederacy in December 1862 during the Battle of Stones River. However, making the Civil War the focal point of commemoration offers only a limited view of the vast extent of history in Murfreesboro.

The Battle of Stones River was significant for a myriad of reasons. Taking control of vital supply lines in Middle Tennessee was imperative. Lincoln pushed Union General William S. Rosecrans to achieve victory in Murfreesboro because the Emancipation Proclamation was to go into effect on January 1, 1863. This proclamation would free slaves in the Confederacy, thus allowing them to escape and join the Union army. Many did, and after the war the 111th USCT were responsible for establishing the National Cemetery in Murfreesboro, built to honor Union soldiers lost during the war. According to Miranda Fraley, the establishment of the cemetery formed a split in Civil War memory and commemoration in the city. She argued that the National Cemetery (established in 1865) and later the National Battlefield (established in 1927) was the center of Union

commemoration in the city.¹ Women's memorial associations and auxiliaries such as Ladies Memorial Associations (LMA), the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and veteran associations such as the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) worked quickly to establish separate Confederate memorial services, a Confederate cemetery and began to fundraise and dedicate Confederate memorials in the city.² These groups saw the National Cemetery and Battlefield as an intrusion by the federal government which offered a one-sided Union interpretation of the war.³

To combat this, groups such as the UDC and SCV created separate celebrations and remembrances by focusing their interpretation on the righteousness of the Confederacy. Across the entirety of the South, these groups set to work commemorating the Civil War in a way that placed the Confederacy in the best light possible, an effort widely known as the "Lost Cause."⁴ Specifically, the Lost Cause vindicated the Confederate men who fought against the Union through narratives that placed them in the role of the victim, situating the North as the aggressor and downplaying the role slavery

¹ Miranda Fraley, 2004. "The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee." PhD diss. Indiana University.

² The discussion of Confederate monuments and memory will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

³ Miranda Fraley, 2004. "The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee." PhD diss. Indiana University.

⁴ C. Vann Woodward refers to the Lost Cause as a "cult" in *Origins of the New South*. Other historians have called the Lost Cause a religion, mythology, or tradition depending on their position on its impact; C. Vann Woodward, *Origins of the New South 1877-1913* (Louisiana State University Press: 1951).

took in the causation of the war.⁵ This propaganda was perpetuated in the dedication of monuments to the Confederacy and incorporated into southern textbooks, ensuring that future generations would learn the “true” history of the South. Successful commemorations and indoctrination efforts ensured slavery’s history remains nearly nonexistent in public spaces (in monument form), even today. Likewise, the Lost Cause’s tenets remain entrenched in America’s broader memory of the Civil War. Historians who study the Civil War have reckoned with the Lost Cause’s effects on southern remembrance of the war but their focus rests on regional and national trends. What is necessary now is for historians to put these broader studies to the test on the local level.

What motivated the funding and erection of existing monuments on Murfreesboro’s commemorative landscape? Examining the history of individual monuments and possible trends in sponsors’ motivations could be an avenue to explore this question. Through my course of study, I have developed a database and online Curatescape site which details the individual histories of key monuments and historic markers in Murfreesboro.⁶ In addition to these projects, today there are local groups that are dedicated to the preservation and retelling of Murfreesboro’s history. New historic markers are being put up by individuals and groups like the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County (AAHSRC) representing more diverse histories. Surveying

⁵ Karen Cox in *Dixie’s Daughters* indicates that one of the UDC’s main goals was to achieve a level of “vindication” for veterans of the South through their objectives which included memorial work and educational work, instilling the Lost Cause into future generations and achieving sectional reconciliation, that is, convincing the North of the Lost Cause’s legitimacy.

⁶ This digital project will be further detailed in Chapter 4.

the history of Murfreesboro's commemorative landscape offers a new perspective into the city's history. It also offers a glimpse of local power dynamics during surges in commemorative efforts, and how activities on the local level compare to trends in commemoration nationally.

Murfreesboro is so invested in the memory of the Civil War, that the study of the monument landscape is also tied to the memory of the war. In addition to studying the war's memory, this thesis will be examining how groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy, set on bolstering the Lost Cause, and African American Commemorative groups, specifically the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County (AAHSRC) affected and contributed to Murfreesboro's commemorative landscape. Public space, and what is placed in this space, is controlled by those in power. Historians who study Civil War memory agree that postwar, the white elite took control of public space by building monuments, thus controlling the collective memory of the war and vindicating their Confederate ancestors. As a result, more diverse stories rarely exist on the southern landscape.⁷

In more recent years as Confederate monument debates have become heated, new solutions are being proposed on a community by community basis to help balance the narrative between white Confederate histories and more diverse histories. Communities throughout the nation need to examine their own individual histories, interrogate "whose

⁷ Catherine Bishir, in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity*, ed. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

history is missing” and try to fill the gaps through diligent research, oral histories, and forming partnerships with diverse groups in their respective communities. These decisions can be made by those within each individual community as there is no set solution that will work for everyone.⁸ This thesis serves as a local examination of groups who have affected and contributed to the commemorative landscape at various times in Murfreesboro’s history, and how this landscape is shifting to include more diverse histories.

For the purpose of this study, the structures I am considering “monuments” are free standing stone/metal structures, in addition to bronze plaques commemorating certain events in the city’s history. This includes Tennessee Historical Commission historic markers. I am excluding headstones, but do focus on some monuments built to commemorate soldiers within cemeteries in Murfreesboro, specifically Evergreen Cemetery and Stones River National Cemetery. Spaces excluded from this study include Middle Tennessee State University.⁹

My quest to discover and document the commemorative landscape of Murfreesboro began in one of my first classes: The Seminar in Public History, which serves as the introductory graduate course in Public History at MTSU. We were given free rein to study a subject of our own choosing. As someone who is not originally from

⁸ This thesis serves as one possible outline for a solution, which will be detailed further in chapter four.

⁹ Excluding cemeteries and MTSU was a way to focus my project on Murfreesboro itself, aside from the culture, history and life at the university.

the South, I immediately became fascinated by Murfreesboro's history and the way it is interpreted. In particular, I was drawn to commemoration in the city. One of the first things I noticed when initially exploring the city was the expanse of historic markers and monuments dotting the landscape. So, for my first paper in my first graduate seminar I wrote a history of the commemorative landscape in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Since the monuments and historic markers in the city are not formally documented in one place, much of my time that semester was spent driving through the city and discovering these for myself. As I found each monument/ marker, I entered them into an excel spreadsheet, along with any information I found on them, including dedication information, sponsorship (who funded the monument) as well as listing the inscription, location and making brief note of what each monument was commemorating. Creating this spreadsheet smoothed the research process, and made it easier to track trends on the landscape. With each new monument/ marker I came across, I recorded this information.¹⁰

In order to start tracking trends, I looked through the Tennessee Historical Commission's files. The THC has folders for each individual historic marker that is dedicated in the state of Tennessee. I went through each folder within Rutherford County, and found many of the dedication dates and sponsors. I then went through the *Daily News Journal*, a newspaper that has been actively publishing in Murfreesboro since the early 1900s, and found articles outlining some of the dedications. This process aided me in

¹⁰ See appendix A.

finding more information in identifying when these were dedicated, who they were funded by, and where they were located.

As I began to compile a database of historic markers and monuments in Murfreesboro, I noticed something almost immediately. First, the public square which is host to the county courthouse (and as such serves as the symbolic center of power in the county) had the most monuments and historic markers. It is at the seat of this power, that those who hold power make statements about what is historically significant enough to mark the landscape. Groups such as the UDC dedicated a few of these, but even those that did not focus explicitly on the Confederacy are connected to the heroic deeds of white men who fought in wars past.

Historians who study the Civil War and its memory have focused on the themes of power and public space. They have studied the role of women and gender in the formation of the Lost Cause early postwar and the connections between power, collective memory, race, and how these ideas intersect in public space. Scholars are now examining the intersectionality of these ideas.

Such broad, historiographic trends on Civil War memory began in 1987, when Gaines Foster's *Ghosts of the Confederacy* argued that the Lost Cause's goal was to maintain the South's antebellum social order and bolster southern male honor.¹¹ Foster credited Confederate veterans, specifically a group called the United Confederate

¹¹ Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 2.

Veterans (UCV) formed in the 1880s, with achieving this goal before the start of the twentieth century. Foster downplayed the role of the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), and therefore the role of women in taking control of the movement. Foster also made mention of the limits of the Confederate celebration, saying it had only “subtly influenced the development of the new South.”¹² In addition to this, he stressed the fact that the leaders of the Confederate celebration/ Lost Cause movement “did not foster a revival of rabid sectionalism,” but “preached and practiced sectional reconciliation.”¹³

LeeAnn Whites wrote another pivotal work in 1995, focusing on gender within the context of the Civil War. *Civil War as a Crisis in Gender* was among the first to examine the Civil War and its memory through the lense of gender. Contrary to Foster’s work, Whites highlights the southern woman’s role in early memorial efforts postwar. In other words, groups such as the UCV were not sole proprietors of the Lost Cause. Whites

¹² Ibid., 194.

¹³ Ibid., 6. For further discussion of reunion and reconciliation, see Timothy B. Smith, *A Chickamauga Memorial: The Establishment of America’s First Civil War National Military Park* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2009). Sectional reconciliation was part of the movement toward southern vindication. Starting around the 1880s-1890s, veterans began organizing reunions at Civil War battlefields. They stressed the importance of reunion and reconciliation at these events, respecting the bravery of soldiers on both sides. In addition to these efforts, monuments began to be put up at battlefields and in public squares across the south. A key aspect of these reunions and memorial activities was the facet of ignoring the causes of the war. The focus was on the bravery and might of white soldiers. Black soldiers and African American memory of the war were largely ignored or silenced at these events, as these soldiers were often not invited.

contends that women were influential leaders in the formation and fostering of the Lost Cause.¹⁴

In his 1997 book *Standing Soldiers Kneeling Slaves*, Kirk Savage focused on the establishment of Confederate memory, and argued that monuments played a role in the public's beliefs surrounding the war and race.¹⁵ He added a unique perspective to Civil War Memory historiography because he is an American sculpture historian studying southern monuments in public spaces, and how this affected (and still affects) American's perceptions of race and the history of the South. He specifically cited Gaines Foster and *Ghosts of the Confederacy* often.¹⁶ I would argue that due to Savage's statement of the Civil War's lasting impact, he would not entirely agree with Foster about the limited effects of the Lost Cause on the New South.¹⁷

Soon after Kirk Savage's work, Tony Horwitz published *Confederates in the Attic* in 1998. In this narrative style work Horwitz traversed the South, followed the path of the

¹⁴ In this book Whites argues that southern white elite manhood and womanhood were dramatically affected during the course of the Civil War and after the war. During and after the war, women took a vastly more public role, whether it was becoming the head of house for their families or stepping into the public sphere to advocate for southern veterans. In taking this public role, Whites contends that women were attempting to vindicate or reconstruct white southern manhood.

¹⁵ Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1997).

¹⁶ Savage makes no mention of whether he agrees with Foster's work, but he uses Foster's research as reference in regards to the Lee monument campaign in Richmond as well as his examination of the shift of monument form in varying public spaces such as public squares and cemeteries.

¹⁷ Ibid ; Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 6.

Civil War, and interviewed “everyday” southerners he met throughout his journey. These interviews offer the reader concrete examples of the effects of the Lost Cause today.¹⁸ For example, Horwitz makes note of reconciliatory attitudes at Civil War reenactments and the exclusion of African Americans from the scenes and stories being recreated. In the towns he visited, he encountered men and women with openly white supremacist sentiments, often bolstering the Lost Cause and the Confederacy in these interactions. Horwitz’s work on the lasting effects of the Confederate tradition almost directly contradicted Foster’s statement that the Lost Cause had limited effects on the memory of the South or formation of the New South. Horwitz also touched on the issue of monuments, and the differences between white and black remembrance of the war.¹⁹

In 2000, Fitzhugh Brundage’s edited collection *Where These Memories Grow* studied southern memory with social history methodologies.²⁰ Brundage stressed that memory, and collective memory is not objective, but *subjective* to a person’s (or group’s) background, often being controlled by factors such as race. He cites the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) in the

¹⁸ Tony Horwitz, *Confederates in the Attic: Dispatches from the Unfinished Civil War* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1998).

¹⁹ In chapter three, Horwitz attends a Sons of Confederate Veterans meeting, and then attends an African American celebration of Martin Luther King Jr. the next day. He interviews members of the church and asks their perspective on Confederate monuments. Some black members of the church outwardly expressed discomfort/ anger at the sight of Confederate monuments.

²⁰ Fitzhugh Brundage, introduction to *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity*, ed. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

formation of white collective remembering in the South relating to the Civil War. He also stressed the fact that throughout the South's history there has been black resistance to this narrative and portrayal of the Civil War. History and memory, therefore, is an ongoing and unresolved process.²¹

While there are many important essays in this collected work, Catherine Bishir's essay, "Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past in Raleigh and Wilmington, North Carolina", argued that those in power control the collective memory of the past on the community level. Specifically she stated that "the creation of symbolic sculpture and architecture by members of the North Carolina elite functioned as part of their reclamation of regional and national power."²² An interesting facet of her research was the establishment of white public memory, regardless of the subject matter. For example, in her study Confederate memory was related to the patriotic tradition and history of the nation. In other words, there was a direct relationship between the southern cause and revolutionary cause.²³ Specifically, Bishir detailed the dedication of a Confederate monument, the date of dedication (May 20, 1895) being the same date that "the men of Mecklenburg" declared independence from British tyranny (May 20 1775).²⁴ This date was chosen specifically to "affirm the link between the two declarations of

²¹ Ibid.

²² Catherine Bishir, in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity*, ed. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000) 140.

²³ Ibid., 144.

²⁴ Ibid.

independence.”²⁵ She concludes her essay by arguing that these power dynamics are still present today, and their effects still hold weight in public memory and how the South’s history is remembered.

Bishir’s and Brundage’s definitive conclusions on the Lost Cause’s ongoing effects in society today counter Foster’s assertion of the Lost Cause’s limited effects (although neither go into great detail on the role of women). Furthermore, Bishir echoes Savage’s emphasis that public sculptures and monuments greatly affect collective identity and memory of the South.²⁶

In his 2001 book, *Race and Reunion*, David Blight explained that race is the central problem in how Americans forget and remember the war. This added another important component to the historiography by taking seriously the role of race in forming that memory.²⁷ This book is primarily a history of Civil War memory covering 1865-1915. He acknowledged that this is an incredibly broad topic, and that much more work needs to be done on the subject.²⁸ In the introduction he laid out three separate visions of Civil War memory: reconciliationist (focusing on unity while ignoring race), white

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Catherine Bishir, in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity*, ed. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

²⁷ Ibid, 3.

²⁸ In the introduction, Blight states that he intended the book to be an overview of Civil War memory within his scope. He does not touch on issues of monuments, presidential politics or gender in the Lost Cause as much, since his intention is to explore the role of race in the formation of public memory. David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 2.

supremacist (white-focused narrative, Lost Cause heavy), and emancipationist (focus on connection to slavery and African American freedom).²⁹ According to Blight, the reconciliationist vision ultimately overpowers the emancipationist vision. In other words, issues of race in American memory were largely put aside in favor of issues of reunion, or reconciliation. Blight explains that “sectional reunion was seen as a triumph, but it could not have been done without the subjugation of many of those people who had been freed from bondage.”³⁰

Blight discussed African American historical memory and how it has been silenced throughout American history. For example, at veterans’ reunions black soldiers were often left out, as white men focused on reconciliation which often coincided with forgetting the role of African Americans in the war as well as the war’s causation. In the epilogue Blight pointedly suggested that “monuments and reunions had always combined remembrance with healing, therefore, with forgetting.”³¹ Blight disagreed with the notion that the Lost Cause had little to no long-term impact on the New South. Blight did not examine gender or the issue of Confederate monuments in great detail, as he concedes in his introduction. However, within *Race and Reunion* Blight also discussed the idea of the collective victory narrative, which relates to Fitzhugh Brundage’s concept of collective remembering being a non-objective act in building the concept of the Lost Cause.

²⁹ Ibid, 2.

³⁰ Ibid, 3.

³¹ Ibid., 389.

In 2003 Karen Cox published her landmark book *Dixie's Daughters*, which argued that elite white women, not men, played a pivotal role in the formation of the Lost Cause. This directly contradicted what many prior historians argued about women's role in the formation of the Lost Cause.³² Specifically, Cox articulated that the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) cultivated this movement.³³ Cox denied the sentiment that southerners "preached and practiced sectional reconciliation" by illustrating that the women who initially took the mantle of the UDC were very wary of the idea of the New South and of unity with the North.³⁴ To call postwar society the "New South" was to spit on what the Old South stood for, which was exemplified in the idea of the Lost Cause. To say that Lost Cause leaders fully embraced the ideals of reconciliation is an oversight according to Cox.

In addition to historians who oversimplified the role of women in this period, Cox mentioned those who laid the foundations for this type of study to be accomplished. Specifically, Cox mentioned LeeAnn Whites, a scholar among the first to study gender in

³² Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003) 2.

³³ Her argument directly contradicts Gaines Foster, who said that the Confederate Veterans were the sole keepers of these origins. Cox also points out that in his research Foster pays little to no attention to the activities of women's groups in the South, which is why he downplays their role to such a great degree; Ibid., 165, Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988) 6.

³⁴ Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003) 141.

the context of the Civil War.³⁵ In terms of long term impacts of the Lost Cause, Karen Cox would agree with the idea of the collective victory narrative, which concisely describes the effects of the Lost Cause, and in relation to this the efforts of UDC women, on race relations and reconciliation.³⁶

Next, in 2005 Fitzhugh Brundage published *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory*, which tied together historiographical trends such as race, collective memory, and power through examining the effects of white memory being portrayed in public spaces. Brundage's argument centered on the concept of collective memory, and additionally examined black resistance to white memory in public spaces. Power is a thread that runs through the entire work. According to Brundage, there is power in who controls representation in public spaces.³⁷ This book impacted Civil War memory historiography because it offered a new analysis of how black and white American memory clash, and how public memory is established and created. Brundage also offered an interesting perspective on how history is used to control narratives, and how this equates to suppression of other histories. In other words, history can be used to dominate,

³⁵ Whites studied white manhood and womanhood during and after the war, but she also stressed the role that women played in the fostering of the Lost Cause.

³⁶ Catherine Bishir, in *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory and Southern Identity*, ed. Fitzhugh Brundage (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

³⁷ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005); For more foundational scholarship on power in the public sphere see Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1991).

and power ultimately shapes what is remembered.³⁸ Brundage built on what many historians of Civil War memory had established in the past. For example, he discussed the role of white women in the creation of the dominant white memory in public spaces. Brundage also looked at the important role African American scholars played in creating an alternative black memory of the past, especially in the creation of The Association for the Study of African American Life and History.

Next, Caroline Janney's discussion of Ladies Memorial Associations (LMA) in her book *Burying the Dead* argues that The Lost Cause was conceived immediately postwar, when Ladies Memorial Associations (LMA) were initially formed.³⁹ This argument transcends what prior historians had written on the origins of the Lost Cause, directly refuting assertions that Lost Cause was established in the 1880s- 1890s with the formation of groups like the UCV and UDC. In prior studies, Ladies Memorial Associations were depicted as solely focusing on landscapes of mourning, and not the tenets of the Lost Cause. Janney asserted that LMA's did indeed focus on these landscapes. The memorial celebrations hosted by LMAs and Confederate Veterans fostered the Lost Cause very early on. Janney's work is significant because it offered a precise origin to the Lost Cause unexplored by historians prior to this.

³⁸ Michel-Rolf Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History* (Boston: Beacon Press Books, 1995).

³⁹ Caroline E. Janney, *Burying the Dead But Not the Past: Ladies Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012) 2.

In regard to previous historiography on the subject, Janney followed the idea that women were instrumental in the formation of the Lost Cause. However, Janney did not agree with every assertion made by these historians. For example, Janney believed that Cox missed the political significance of the LMAs by stating that they were puppets to the wills of men postwar.⁴⁰ In addition to this she goes further than Cox by saying that the Lost Cause was not cultivated through the UDC but was born much earlier. Janney agrees that the UDC was much more effective at mobilizing their efforts, because they were a national organization. However, she insisted that the LMAs, while limited in scope, were still influential in their respective regions. The foundations laid down by the LMA's were carried on by the UDC, they were not established by the UDC. Janney also argued that historians who discredit or forego the LMA's significance ultimately are missing the true origins of the formation of the Confederate tradition and its memory.⁴¹

Lastly, in 2019 Kevin Levin published *Searching for Black Confederates*, which debunked myths put forth by the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) that black soldiers freely fought for the Confederacy.⁴² This was untrue, as it did not become legal to enlist slaves in the Confederate Army until the end of the war in 1865. Photographs of black Union soldiers have been either manipulated or misunderstood to be black Confederate soldiers. Levin explained that these photographs and pension records are the main

⁴⁰ Ibid., 140.

⁴¹ Gaines Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South, 1865-1913* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); Ibid., 197.

⁴² Kevin Levin, *Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil War's Most Persistent Myth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019) 3.

“proof” that black Confederate soldiers existed. Additionally, the pension records clearly state that they were never classified as soldiers but were always listed as servants or slaves. This myth was a modern effect of the Lost Cause. Levin argued that this myth did not become prevalent until the 1970s, as the Civil Rights movement was occurring and new scholarship focused more heavily on slavery and the true causation of the war.⁴³ Those who lived through the Civil War would have been perplexed to hear about black soldiers fighting for the Confederacy.

From Gaines Foster to now, Levin’s work is relevant to many of these past works. Similar to many of the historians who have written about the Lost Cause, Levin would also disagree with Foster’s point of the limited effects of the Lost Cause. His motivation for writing this book speaks to the needed historical research and conversation on slavery and the Civil War today. Levin would also agree with Savage and Brundage in their assessment of power being representative of collective memory in public spaces. Levin, when discussing the growth of the black confederate myth, makes mention of a term put forth by David Blight in *Race and Reunion*. He stated that the myth came into being as the SCV felt they needed to “defend Confederate honor in the face of a growing emancipationist narrative.”⁴⁴ This emancipationist narrative was a result of more history being done on the effects of slavery in the context of current issues.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 8; In *Race and Reunion*, Blight discusses the tension between the reconciliationist narrative and the emancipationist narrative. In the 50 years after the war, the reconciliationist narrative gains more power. However, Levin argues that as the Civil Rights movement came into being the emancipationist narrative started to become more

For Levin to publish a book on this topic in 2019 speaks to the modern-day effects of the Lost Cause. He connected the black confederate myth to current events which are tied up in the memory of the Civil War. For example, when debate occurred over the Confederate flag flying over state capitol buildings in the South, and whether the flag represents white supremacy, Levin recounted how pro-flag arguments exhibited that black confederates fought bravely for the Confederacy. These debates are still happening today, as Confederate monuments are torn down, moved from public spaces, or additional interpretation is added to give people a fuller context of their history. These symbols have long lasting effects on the memory of the Civil War. Ultimately, Levin states that “the ongoing debate about Confederate monuments at a time of increased racial tension points to the need for an honest national conversation about the history and legacy of slavery.”⁴⁵ In regards to next steps, Levin says first there needs to be an “understanding of how these myths evolved and were perpetuated over time.”⁴⁶

This thesis will be implementing ideas from the broader historiography and testing it on the local level. The next chapter will offer an overview of the historic markers and monuments present on Murfreesboro’s landscape, draw possible trends from this data and offer an overview of Murfreesboro history during the Civil War, drawing on the memoirs of two Confederate loyalists. Chapter three will focus on Murfreesboro’s

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

⁴⁵ Kevin Levin, *Searching for Black Confederates: The Civil War’s Most Persistent Myth* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2019) 11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

UDC chapters, how they took control of the collective memory and public space through the building of monuments and historic markers, and ultimately testing Cox's assertion that the UDC held no real power after 1915. Chapter four focuses on a growing partnership between myself and the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County (AAHSRC), and our effort to help balance the narrative through working on constructing a digital tour that outlines significant points of African American history in Murfreesboro. This is but one avenue or solution that communities throughout the South could consider while examining their own individual histories in relation to the Lost Cause's presence throughout the region.

CHAPTER TWO: CIVIL WAR MEMORY IN MURFREESBORO

Every day, locals and tourists drive or walk around Murfreesboro's public square. At the center of the square sits the county courthouse, completed just before the start of the Civil War. Its architectural grandeur sends a message of power. In and around the courthouse lawn there are multiple physical markers of the city's past, erected at different time periods. These structures are visible reminders of Murfreesboro's history and its values. There are plaques attached to the courthouse that commemorate Confederate soldiers and men who fought in the First World War. There are stone monuments in the lawn there to recall people such as General Griffith Rutherford, the namesake of the county and a general during the American Revolution, as well as an obelisk commemorating Murfreesboro's status as the state capital of Tennessee prior to Nashville's designation as such. In this general vicinity sits a war memorial with the names of Murfreesboro men (and a few women) who died serving in the military in World War One, World War Two, Korea, Vietnam as well as more recent wars. Some of the historic markers were sponsored by the Tennessee Historical Commission, and one was funded by the local garden club.

The public square in Murfreesboro has a total of fifteen monuments and historic markers surrounding the courthouse. All but four of these are monuments to war. The remaining four are dedicated to Murfreesboro's state capital status, memorials to Murfreesboro police and firefighters, and a local figure, Birch Bryant who was an ad salesman, "friend of downtown" and a "member of Uncle Dave Macon days," a local

festival.¹ One of the more prominent monuments on the public square is a Confederate monument dedicated to the men who fought for the Confederacy during the Battle of Stones River, also known as the Battle of Murfreesboro. This monument's presence on the landscape alongside war memorials and monuments to American men who fought in other wars implies that Confederate men were doing something patriotic, something worth honoring. It is important to understand Murfreesboro's connection to the Civil War in order to fully comprehend the city's Civil War monuments and markers and the memory of the past they represent.

Exploring an unfamiliar town's commemorative landscape can be daunting work. It felt haphazard, as I was always wondering if I was missing anything and how much, but absent any comprehensive written documentation of the names and locations of the city's markers and monuments, it was a necessary step in my research process. There are historic markers being added to Murfreesboro's landscape on a fairly consistent basis. My study encompasses all monuments and markers that I identified on the landscape as of January 2020. It proved difficult to track trends in the landscape since dedication information and sponsorship/donor information was not readily available.

Even lacking this historical contextual information, I could draw some conclusions based on my findings. As I identified each new monument, I added it to an excel sheet including the subject matter, dedication dates, inscription, and who funded the project. Based on subject matter alone I was able to identify that most of the monuments

¹ Birch Bryant memorial text.

present on Murfreesboro's commemorative landscape were focused on subjects such as war, largely commemorating the efforts of men from Murfreesboro who fought in wars throughout American history. Figure one illustrates Murfreesboro's monuments to war. I have found a total of fifty-four monuments with twenty-nine dedicated to war. Twenty-two of the monuments dedicated to war are related to the Civil War.

Subject Matter	Number of Monuments/ Percentage to Total
War	29 \approx (53.7%)
Women	3 \approx (0.05%)
African Americans	2 \approx (0.037%)
Native Americans	1 \approx (0.01%)
Other (local people, landmarks, local historical sites unrelated to war)	19 \approx (35.2%)

Figure 1: Trends in Subject Matter

What I would like to explore in this chapter is why the people of Murfreesboro have focused on remembering war, specifically the Civil War. Why were people so motivated to mark the landscape with physical reminders of this conflict? How were the people of Murfreesboro specifically affected by the Civil War, and why did this lead to such a strong presence of Civil War memory on the landscape?

While researching Murfreesboro's connection to the Civil War I utilized diaries written by two Murfreesboro residents who lived through it. John C. Spence was a store owner and started the Red Cedar Bucket Factory in Murfreesboro in 1854. The

Rutherford County Historical Society came into possession of his diary and published it in 1991. He documented Murfreesboro's early history up until some years after the Civil War. His *Annals of Rutherford County* were split into two volumes: volume one covering 1799-1828, and volume two covering 1829-1870. Another portion of his diary covers the Civil War specifically. It was published separately and titled *A Diary of the Civil War*.

Kate S. Carney was a Murfreesboro native who frequently wrote in her diary during Union occupation during the Civil War. Carney was born in 1842.² Her diary covers April 1861 to July 1862. The daughter of a merchant, she was vehemently against the Union, even disowning her brother when he took an oath of allegiance to the Union. Her family owned at least one "servant" (enslaved person), and she often mentioned gathering socially with some of the wealthy families in Murfreesboro at the time, including the Maneys, Murfrees and Lyles.

Both diaries offer a limited but compelling image of what Murfreesboro was like from the perspective of wealthy white elites, and how some of the people of Murfreesboro were affected during the war. They offer at least some context to antebellum Murfreesboro's history, and by extension, Murfreesboro's commemorative landscape and Civil War memory. For the purpose of this chapter, I am using Spence's entries as a framework and timeline to illustrate the history of antebellum/ Civil War

² Kate S. Carney Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Finding aid, scope: <https://finding-aids.lib.unc.edu/00139/>

Murfreesboro. I use secondary scholarship to help fill the gaps that Spence misses in his assessment of Murfreesboro during this time period.

Leading up to the Civil War, Murfreesboro underwent many changes economically and socially. New universities were formed in the mid-19th century. Union University (formed in 1848) and Soule College (formed in 1852) were institutions of higher learning for young white men and women in the area. In addition to the formation of centers of learning, a boosted economy called for better roads and access to better modes of transport. According to Spence, white citizens often complained of the poor road conditions which prevented them from selling and effectively transporting their goods. In 1831, legislation was passed to construct the Nashville Pike, a roadway connecting Murfreesboro to Nashville. Spence noted in his diary that construction to improve the pike began in 1832.³ The pike was not fully finished until 1842.⁴ Murfreesboro natives were starting to become more mobile after this, and they were able to sell and transport goods effectively.

In his diary, Spence made note of what industries were bringing Murfreesboro the most money. In 1848, he described cotton as the “leading staple.”⁵ That same year he also mentions the sale of enslaved people, noting the rise in prices to buy enslaved people, suggesting that both agriculture and the slave markets were local sources of wealth. Other

³ John Spence, *Annals of Rutherford County* vol. 2 (The Rutherford County Historical Society, 1991) 20.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 82.

industries at the time included the sale of hogs, wheat, butter, horses, cows, and produce such as beans and corn.⁶ Spence noted that the amount sold in cotton dwarfed numbers sold in any other category. When discussing the sale and price of enslaved people Spence mentions that “the negro in his servitude was happy and contented, when he had a kind, benevolent master to look after his wants...” According to Spence “they were provided with good cabins for themselves and families, slavery and freedom, words little understood by them. They were possessed of light hearts, light minds and moderate wants in everything.”⁷ This is a striking (but perhaps unsurprising) example of the narrative of benevolence and paternalism that ran rampant throughout the antebellum South.

John Lodl explained in his thesis, “Building Viable Black Communities: the Transition from Slavery to Freedom in Murfreesboro, Tennessee,” that “due to the high rate of forced illiteracy among slaves, few blacks possessed the means to document their slave experiences.”⁸ When studying the experiences of enslaved people, historians are able to consult extensive documentary evidence based on records from slave owners, census records, slave schedules, the freedmen’s bureau, and the military, to name a few examples. Lodl’s research focused primarily on the Reconstruction period, but through analyzing census data he was able to provide some information about African Americans in Murfreesboro prior to and during the war.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid. 82-83.

⁸ John Lodl, “Building Viable Black Communities: The Transition From Slavery to Freedom in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (master’s thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2004) 2.

In 1810, there were 10,265 settlers living in Rutherford County. Of this number, 7,527 were free whites and 2,701 were enslaved African Americans. There were roughly 412 slave owners in the county at this time.⁹ By 1860, there were 14,743 whites in Rutherford County, and 12,980 enslaved African Americans belonging to 1,316 slave owners.¹⁰ This was a marked growth in the number of enslaved people and slave owners in Murfreesboro.

Bill Carey wrote about several examples of enslaved people being sold in Murfreesboro in *Runaways, Coffles and Fancy Girls: A History of Slavery in Tennessee*. In this book Carey based his analysis on newspaper ads for runaway slaves and slave auctions in addition to diaries and scholarly research about slavery. Carey pulled two examples from Murfreesboro from the memoirs of Ohio native, William Fletcher King, who wrote about witnessing a slave auction at the courthouse in 1854. In these two instances of enslaved people being auctioned off, Carey emphasizes the devastation and emotions felt by the enslaved people being sold. The first example was the sale of a boy, about twelve years old.

He was put on the wall which surrounded the courthouse grounds, a brick wall about six to eight feet high. He was barefoot and otherwise scantily clad. When they began to bid he became very nervous, and took a kind of semidancing attitude, as though he were on springs. As the bidding progressed he showed evident interest, glancing his eyes from one bidder to another with great alertness. The bidding continued for about a quarter of an hour and he was finally sold.¹¹

⁹ Ibid., 19.

¹⁰ Ibid. 20.

¹¹ Bill Carey, *Runaways, Coffles and Fancy Girls: A History of Slavery in Tennessee* (Nashville, Tennessee: Clearbook Press) 85.

The second sale that King made note of was the sale of a mother and baby, during which she and her baby are separated from the father.

The most remarkable case was that of a woman about thirty years old, who was put on a block outside the courthouse wall, with a crowd of two or three hundred men standing around, and a red-faced, burly auctioneer standing by her side. She held a young babe in her arms. The auctioneer made various comments as to her appearance and showed her off in a very unbecoming style, making her show her teeth, and in other ways treated her as though she were a horse. Coarse men came up and felt her limbs to test what kind of muscles she had. It was the most disgusting performance we had ever witnessed... The auctioneer seemed to pride himself in his rough language and unbecoming treatment of the woman. She bore the indignities with a certain air of dignity. Her husband was in the crowd near where my brother and I stood and near him was his owner. There were two bidders actively bidding for her, one the owner of her husband and the other a slave-driver who shipped slaves to cotton fields of the South. As the bidding progressed the husband of the woman pleaded with his owner in a most plaintive way to buy his wife. As we stood by we heard him say, 'I have been faithful in my serving you, and if I had my wife and children with me, you know that I could serve you even better.' His owner seemed to bid carelessly, while the slavetrader on the other side of the crowd seemed to bid with more interest. As the bidding progressed the husband kept pleading with his owner in a most touching manner to bid more. My brother and I standing together got so wrought up that we thought it prudent to step apart, lest we should utterly break down and show our sympathies and get into serious trouble. The bidding went on for a half hour, all the time the owner of the husband bidding with little interest and making only slight advances over to the other man and the other bidding with apparent purpose of securing the woman. Finally the mother and child were sold to the slave-trader.¹²

Around the same time King watched enslaved people being sold at the courthouse, in 1848 Spence mentioned the legislation approving the construction of the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad. This railway meant even more effective transport

¹² Ibid., 148.

for goods being produced and sold in Murfreesboro. The railway would mean deeper regional connections for those in Murfreesboro who took part in commercial pursuits. Specifically, this railway meant a more solid connection to the deep South. This newfound modernized transportation in addition to Murfreesboro's agricultural success would prove to be ample reasoning for the Confederate and Union armies to move into Murfreesboro at the outbreak of war.¹³

Kate Carney discussed her experiences and feelings about Union soldiers during this period of occupation. Carney and her family supported the Confederate cause, offering Confederate soldiers aid. Her mother took food and fresh clothing to imprisoned Confederate soldiers in town. Carney expressed her distaste for Union soldiers in her diary. In May of 1862 she wrote: "As I saw an officer this evening riding down the street trying to show off, I wished from the bottom of my heart, the horse would throw him & break his neck."¹⁴ Union men often did house searches, taking food, clothing, livestock and other items to feed and clothe themselves. She expressed a hatred not only for the Union soldiers, but for the people in the city who agreed to take an oath of allegiance to the Union. At one point she mentions an acquaintance, "Mrs. Wilson thinks if Dr. Black

¹³ James McDonough, *Stones River: Bloody Winter in Tennessee* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980) xi ; Peter Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die: The Battle of Stones River* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Jim Lewis, "The Battle of Stones River," *Blue and Gray Magazine* vol. xxvii no. 6 (2011-2012).

¹⁴ Kate Carney Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, May 13, 1862. Accessed online <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/carney/carney.html>

& Mr. L. Black were arrested they would take the oath before leaving their families. If I was a wife, I would say go & die before taking that vile oath.”¹⁵

Spence also mentioned the oath of allegiance and house searching in his diary. He said that “after the Gen. (Mitchell) had gotten the army settled, the next move was making regulations for the government of the army and people, intending the latter to come under subjection and feel his power.”¹⁶ One example of Mitchell demonstrating his power was the establishment of a system of military passes. In order to acquire a pass, which allowed white citizens to go about business and travel, one had to take an oath of allegiance. If a white citizen resisted or refused to take the oath, they would often be arrested. Of course, throughout the period of enslavement, the movement of enslaved Africans in Murfreesboro had been tightly controlled by their enslavers. Spence also mentioned Union soldiers conducting house searches, which were meant to collect firearms or any material that might put soldiers in danger. However, they often took other goods to the chagrin of Murfreesboro’s white residents.

By July of 1862, Murfreesboro was in its fifth month of Union occupation.¹⁷ On July 13, Confederate cavalry led by Nathan Bedford Forrest attacked three sections of Union forces in Murfreesboro, catching them off guard. Kate Carney was woken by musket fire in the morning of July 13, 1862. In her diary she described she and her

¹⁵ Ibid., June 15, 1862

¹⁶ John Spence, *Annals of Rutherford County* vol. 2 (The Rutherford County Historical Society, 1991) 159.

¹⁷ James McDonough, *Stones River: Bloody Winter in Tennessee* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980) 3.

cousins getting quickly dressed and watching Union soldiers retreating through their front yard.¹⁸ In this entry she also describes the attack on the courthouse, in which Confederate forces attempted to breach and capture it. Ultimately they were successful, and the Union was forced to surrender.¹⁹ After Forrest moved on, only four days passed until Union forces were in control of Murfreesboro once again.²⁰ According to Spence's diary, Union forces moved out for some time and Confederate forces moved in around November 1862.²¹

The next military engagement that Murfreesboro would witness was the Battle of Stones River. In December of 1862, President Lincoln appointed General William S. Rosecrans as Commander of the Army of the Cumberland. He was pushing Rosecrans to achieve a victory, and soon, because the Emancipation Proclamation was to go into effect January 1, 1863 and the Union needed a victory to support the Proclamation. Rosecrans' mission was threefold in winning a battle: boost Union morale, support the Emancipation

¹⁸ Kate Carney Diary, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, July 13, 1862, Accessed online <https://docsouth.unc.edu/imls/carney/carney.html>.

¹⁹ Kate's diary ends shortly after Forrest's raid, with a mysterious note written at the end as follows: "*1876 Have burnt the rest of my journal up, & expect some day to get courage to destroy this. I'm married now, foolishness must be laid aside. A period has been placed at the end of my old life, & a new era has begun since Feb. 3rd 1875.*"

²⁰ John Spence, *Annals of Rutherford County* vol. 2 (The Rutherford County Historical Society, 1991) 177.

²¹ This aligns with the timeline drawn out in Peter Cozzens' book. Cozzens covers the pre Battle of Stones River period in more detail than McDonough; Peter Cozzens, *No Better Place to Die: The Battle of Stones River* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991).

Proclamation, and capture vital supply lines connected to the deep South (namely, the Nashville Pike and Nashville/ Chattanooga Railroad).²²

The motivations in making a stand in Murfreesboro were threefold for the commanders on both sides. Chief Ranger Jim Lewis at Stones River National Battlefield writes that for Braxton Bragg (Commander of the Army of Tennessee):

the town's position astride the Nashville & Chattanooga Railroad blocked the artery that Rosecrans needed to move against Chattanooga. The flat terrain of Middle Tennessee promised the Confederates a chance to engage and defeat their adversaries on open ground. The produce of the area's rich farmland made feeding the army through the winter a relatively easy affair.²³

On December 26, 1862 Rosecrans departed from Nashville to engage the Army of Tennessee commanded by Confederate General Braxton Bragg.²⁴ 81,000 men fought just outside of Murfreesboro, and nearly 24,000 men became casualties in three days. The people of Murfreesboro bore witness to the carnage of battle once again, as wounded soldiers were brought into town to be treated at many of the hospitals which were formerly churches, homes, and universities.

Ultimately, the battle reached its conclusion on January 2, 1863, when the Army of the Cumberland took a stand against the Army of Tennessee. Union troops held a

²² James McDonough, *Stones River: Bloody Winter in Tennessee* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980).

²³ Jim Lewis, "The Battle of Stones River," *Blue and Gray Magazine* vol. xxvii no. 6 (2011-2012)

²⁴ James McDonough, *Stones River: Bloody Winter in Tennessee* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980).

strategically important hillock at McFadden's Ford. Confederate troops led by former Vice President John Breckenridge were ordered to storm the hill. They were unsuccessful in their efforts, losing nearly 1,800 men in the course of an hour under the stress of cannon fire, and the Army of the Tennessee left Murfreesboro days after this.²⁵

Stones River National Battlefield interprets this as a Union victory, as they successfully repelled the last Confederate push which led to them vacating Murfreesboro. However, some, like John Spence, interpreted Stones River as a draw battle because neither side surrendered. In his diary, he wrote "now, it is evident, from what can be gathered on both sides of the case that it may be settled. The Battle was a drawn one, neither having much right to claim a victory."²⁶ Historian James McDonough recognized that the battle was a tactical draw, however the Confederate army retreated which allowed the Union to claim victory.²⁷

After Confederate forces moved out of Murfreesboro, General Rosecrans set to work in establishing Fortress Rosecrans, a supply depot which would aid the Union push to Chattanooga, and eventually Atlanta. The Emancipation Proclamation went into effect January 1, 1863, during the Battle of Stones River. As a result, once the battle was over, Union encampments in Murfreesboro (and across the entire South) were overwhelmed with formerly enslaved people seeking refuge and work. In 1863, Spence noted "greater

²⁵ Ibid., 196, 216.

²⁶ John Spence, *A Diary of the Civil War*, 63.

²⁷ James McDonough, *Stones River: Bloody Winter in Tennessee* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1980) xi.

numbers of (negroes) coming to town... Some days by the wagon load with plunder of every description.”²⁸

Lodl explained that “at first, the Union army was unsure how to address the issue of refugee slaves, the so called contraband of war.”²⁹ Often, families would flee together, but Union commanders, and General Rosecrans specifically, often did not want women or children within the confines of their encampments.³⁰ Rosecrans hired African American men as laborers to help construct Fortress Rosecrans, and to help repair the railroads that Confederate cavalries had destroyed.³¹ Men were also utilized as general laborers and personal servants, and when women were allowed behind the lines they were sometimes hired as laundresses or hospital workers.³² Lodl makes note that “the grand

²⁸ John Spence, *Annals of Rutherford County* vol. 2 (The Rutherford County Historical Society, 1991)199.

²⁹ John Lodl, “Building Viable Black Communities: The Transition From Slavery to Freedom in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (master’s thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2004) 35.

³⁰ Antoinette Van Zelm, “Forming a ‘Sisterhood Chain’ Women, Emancipation, and Freedom Celebrations in Tennessee” in *Tennessee Women: Their Lives and Times, Vol. 2* ed. Beverly Greene Bond and Sarah Wilkerson Freeman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015) 86; John Lodl, “Building Viable Black Communities: The Transition From Slavery to Freedom in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (master’s thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2004) 36.

³¹ John Lodl, “Building Viable Black Communities: The Transition From Slavery to Freedom in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (master’s thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2004) 23.

³² Antoinette Van Zelm, “Forming a ‘Sisterhood Chain’ Women, Emancipation, and Freedom Celebrations in Tennessee” in *Tennessee Women: Their Lives and Times, Vol. 2* ed. Beverly Greene Bond and Sarah Wilkerson Freeman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015) 86.

migration of refugees to Murfreesboro constituted a demographic metamorphosis from a majority of whites in 1860 to a majority of blacks immediately following the war.”³³

In addition to the many African American refugees, the Union establishing a fortress meant continued Union presence in the area. Around June of 1863 Rosecrans vacated Murfreesboro, taking the army of the Cumberland with him, leaving the fortification in control of a much smaller force of soldiers. Spence mentioned that the Union soldiers remaining at the fortress were nervous about possible Confederate attacks and Murfreesboro citizens that seemed to be loyal to the Confederacy. He said “Those that were left were afraid they would be ‘gobbled’ up, would frequently speak about rebel cavalry raids and would make threats. If such should be the case, they had orders to shell the town and burn it up. This was supposed to make the citizens afraid too.”³⁴ This quote from Spence’s diary is illustrative of the tension between those with Confederate sympathies in Murfreesboro and the Union soldiers.

After the war ended, and Union soldiers moved out, the effects of the war remained. In 1865 President Lincoln established the National Cemetery system. The Stones River National Cemetery was among the first to be established. The 111th United States Colored Troops (USCT) were assigned the task of traversing to nearby battlefields and burial spots to bring US soldiers back to the National cemetery to be buried. This is

³³ John Lodl, “Building Viable Black Communities: The Transition From Slavery to Freedom in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (master’s thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2004) 25.

³⁴ John Spence, *A Diary of the Civil War* (The Rutherford County Historical Society, 1991) 93.

where a rift in remembrance and commemoration of the war initially begins according to Miranda Fraley. While the USCT were busy building a cemetery to honor the Union dead, the Murfreesboro Ladies Memorial Association set to work burying and honoring the Confederate dead. The US Colored Troops who helped build the cemetery ended up settling on nearby land and formed their own community. Some additional Union troops ended up settling in Murfreesboro as well. Separate memorial activities were held at the Union and Confederate cemeteries. According to Fraley:

The Union alliance between local African Americans, white northerners, and Union soldiers and the Confederate coalition between white women and men were forming, and the seeds for political tensions within these groups were present before the war's end. When Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox in Virginia, in Rutherford County, Tennessee, the stage was already set for centuries of conflict over how to remember the Civil War.³⁵

Fraley describes the national cemetery and eventual national battlefield as the center of Union commemoration in Murfreesboro, while groups like the Ladies Memorial Association handled Confederate commemoration and remembrance. In regard to Union presence on the landscape in monument form, Stones River has very little because they were not established as a national park until 1927. Many of the larger battlefield parks were established in the 1890s, when veterans were still alive to campaign for funding and constructing monuments on battlefields. Because the national battlefield was seen as a site of Union commemoration, this may be why there are very little traces of Confederate memory in this space.

³⁵ Miranda Fraley, 2004. "The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee." PhD diss. Indiana University: 65.

Chapter three will discuss the efforts of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Sons of Confederate Veterans in commemorating the Confederacy and the conflict between the federal government's (or Union) interpretation versus Confederate legacy organizations understandings of the war.

Ultimately over the course of the war, Murfreesboro went in and out of Union control a multitude of times, during a number of movements by the Union and Confederate armies. Throughout the entire war, the people of Murfreesboro were deeply affected by Union occupation and witnessed multiple outbreaks of violence and carnage. The people of Murfreesboro were deeply affected by the war because it happened on their doorstep. They were under almost constant occupation, their schools and churches were turned into hospitals, and they saw war firsthand.

CHAPTER THREE: STORIES TOLD: THE UDC IN MURFREESBORO, TENNESSEE

On March 12, 2019, I was up late working on a class project with my boyfriend, Max. As our eyes glazed over, we decided to take a study break and scroll through various apps on our phones. Max saw a surprising post: one of our friends posted photos of the Confederate monument on Murfreesboro's public square with the phrases "Ft. Pillow," "Murderer," and "Coward" painted over it. These defiant words boldly painted on the monument were referring to a figure that has permeated Murfreesboro's collective memory of the war for quite some time. He raided Murfreesboro a few months prior to the Battle of Stones River, he was at one time MTSU's school mascot, and his name currently adorns MTSU's ROTC building and the city courthouse. This figure is Nathan Bedford Forrest, Confederate cavalryman, slave trader and former leader of the Ku Klux Klan.

For years before I moved to the South, I heard the debates surrounding Confederate monuments, but they all happened in far-off places unconnected to me or my family. For this to happen in the town where I was currently living... I had to see it for myself. Our drowsiness gone, Max and I immediately jumped into his car and drove to the square. An unexpected sight met our eyes: someone had smeared the paint before it dried so that the public could not see the bold statements written there twenty minutes prior. I later learned from someone who was on the square that night that the police had smeared the paint. The fact that these words were covered up so quickly in the time it took us to travel to the square, was illustrative of the fact that the Civil War and it's

memory is still an important and emotional topic locally. Murfreesboro is illustrative of aspects of the modern-day debates, protests and movements surrounding the history of the Civil War in the South.

During the war, Ladies Memorial Associations were active in aiding Confederate soldiers on the battlefield whether it be providing food, clothes or working in field hospitals. Immediately after the war, these same women became involved in auxiliary work, and other work to help local veterans and widows of the Confederacy. In 1865, the National Cemetery System was established to bury the Union soldiers who died fighting in the war. The Confederate dead were not included in this system, so southern women undertook the task of organizing reinternment for Confederate soldiers to be moved to city cemeteries. The main mission of the LMAs was to honor the Confederate dead by providing proper burial.¹ In addition to this, they began decorating cemeteries with monuments to Confederate soldiers. Through organized local memorial day celebrations, they began to instill a sense of nostalgia and southern pride, that historians like Caroline Janney argued are the origins of the Lost Cause.²

Despite the widespread effort of the Ladies Memorial Associations, it wasn't until 1894 that memorial and monument building peaked in the American South. In *Dixie's Daughters*, Karen Cox argued that elite white women in the United Daughters of the

¹ Janney explains that in the immediate postwar years LMA's focused on establishing Confederate cemeteries and memorial day ceremonies. Caroline Janney, *Burying the Dead but Not the Past: Ladies' Memorial Associations and the Lost Cause* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008).

² Ibid.

Confederacy (UDC) were responsible for fostering and bolstering the Lost Cause ideology in its many forms. Prior to and directly after Reconstruction, southern states passed laws that removed the political power of African American men, thus reinforcing white supremacy.³ These laws helped bolster organizations set on honoring the Confederacy in that they reinforced white supremacy and restricted black rights. White southern women in local auxiliary groups, as well as some women in LMAs began to organize under a common goal: honoring the Confederate dead, vindicating Confederate veterans and perpetuating the Lost Cause.

The first organization to call itself the “Daughters of the Confederacy” was organized in Missouri in 1890 for the purpose of raising funds for a Confederate Veterans home.⁴ More chapters of the Daughters began to form across the South. In the Spring of 1894 Caroline Meriwether Goodlet of Nashville and Anna Davenport Raines of Savannah began a correspondence that would alter the course of this organization forever. Raines had written to Goodlet about establishing a Daughters chapter in Savannah, but also expressed a desire to unite these chapters under one national organization.⁵ This resulted in a flurry of correspondence back and forth, which led to the organization of a meeting in Nashville. As a result of this meeting The National

³ Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003): 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 15.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Daughters of the Confederacy was established September 10, 1894 in Nashville, Tennessee.⁶

The organization was mostly comprised of elite white women, who wielded much power in the public sphere. In order to become a member, a woman was (and is) required to be directly related to a person who fought for the Confederacy. In addition to this, women in the progressive era, especially those who belonged to organizations like the Women's Christian Temperance Union, other public auxiliaries, and the UDC, were able to step into the public sphere because this work was "an extension of their role as moral guardians of society."⁷ Karen Cox asserted that the "reality, however, was that these 'New Women' had created a venue, thinly veiled by tradition, in which to express themselves politically."⁸ In other words, they were using their traditional role in society as an avenue to step into the public sphere, and as such it was seen as acceptable. In the case of the UDC, this traditional role was mourning the Confederate dead, as well as celebrating and vindicating the Confederate cause.

At the first national meeting of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, the organization's objectives were established: social, literary, historical, monumental and benevolent. The social element was just that: it was meant to bring white elite women together to reminisce about the Old South and discuss their Confederate lineage. The

⁶ Annie Cody, *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Cullom & Ghertner Company, 1946): 11.

⁷ Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003): 26.

⁸ Ibid.

educational element related to the future generations of women and children in the South. The UDC raised funds for scholarships for young white women who were to become educators. They also worked to honor the Confederacy and teach Lost Cause mythology in schools. One of the organization's memorial goals was to build monuments and establish memorial days commemorating the efforts of Confederate soldiers who fought in the war. The last objective, which promoted a particular historical perspective, included programs as well as the organization's interest in controlling what was written about the war.⁹

This chapter examines the United Daughters of the Confederacy and their efforts in a specific locality, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. How the Murfreesboro chapters worked to achieve the organization's objectives serves as a good case study of how specific chapters compare to national trends, or studies that have a national or regional focus. It builds on prior scholarship on Civil War monuments and celebrations on the local level. Miranda Fraley, from Indiana University, wrote her Ph.D dissertation on the history of Civil War commemoration in Rutherford County. She focused on Murfreesboro a great deal in this work, specifically the relationships between Union, African American, and Confederate memory. In addition to this, Fraley explored gendered disputes regarding Civil War memory in Rutherford County. She argued that "although women largely created and sustained Confederate commemoration in the county, men usurped their projects and positions of authority during times like the 1890s and 1960s when political

⁹ Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

and social developments menaced white supremacy.”¹⁰ This argument differs from regionally-focused works such as Cox and Janney, who argued that women always held the power, especially in the “boom” period between 1890-1915.¹¹ Men in these larger, regional works were often depicted as passive, or uninterested in commemorative efforts as reunions and thoughts of reconciliation were woven into the Lost Cause. This is but one example of how localized studies can complicate what national or regional studies have argued in the past. Fraley did much research on the UDC and United Confederate Veterans (UCV) in Murfreesboro, so her thoughts and perspectives will be weaved throughout my thesis, in addition to new information I have gathered in my own research on the topic.

I am following Fraley’s lead in regard to her perspectives on the merits of engaging in localized studies. However, there are a few points where my work diverges from hers. Fraley’s work does not extend past the Civil War Centennial. Through my survey on markers and monuments in Murfreesboro, I examine commemorative efforts that continue to present day. She does not include Murfreesboro’s second UDC chapter in her narrative. While I have discovered little documentation on their activities, I have pieced together some of their commemorative efforts through research at the Tennessee Historical Commission. Something that needs to be explored further in the future are the

¹⁰ Miranda Fraley, 2004. “The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee.” PhD diss. Indiana University: viii.

¹¹ Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

dynamics between local women's groups in Murfreesboro, including the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR).

In addition to examining the general efforts of the UDC in the context of Murfreesboro, this chapter will be examining how the UDC wielded its power locally and regionally, even after the First World War, which is when many historians have asserted the UDC stepped out of the public sphere.¹² Cox mentions the loss of power, or fading of efforts, being a result of the fact that the task set out by the founders of the UDC was complete after the First World War. Regardless of whether they had accomplished the goal of vindicating their Confederate ancestors does not make them powerless figures. Using Murfreesboro, Tennessee as an example, I show that the UDC wields a significant amount of influence in local historical affairs. Focusing on the UDC's efforts and acts of power past this point in time gives a fuller picture of the history of the commemorative landscape in Tennessee, a richer history of the UDC, and helps explain the lack of monuments and historic markers in Murfreesboro to other, more diverse topics. Something that Fraley does not examine in great detail is how the Murfreesboro UDC chapter attempted to equate Confederate ideals to patriotism to help gain power and favor with those in the community. I highlight a few examples of this during the Korean War.

Before diving into how the Murfreesboro chapters of the UDC worked to achieve the organization's wider objectives, I will provide some context of how and when these chapters were formed. Prior to the UDC chapter forming, there was a Ladies Memorial

¹² Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003): 7.

Association in the city. According to the *History of the Tennessee Division*, written by the Tennessee Division Historian Annie Cody, “for thirty years this little group carried on--ministering to sick and indigent veterans, and raising eight hundred dollars for the purpose of erecting a Confederate monument.”¹³ In this time they also organized annual memorial day events, set to mourn their dead as well as celebrate the Confederate cause.¹⁴ The Murfreesboro Chapter #91 of the UDC was formed in 1896 with “Lest We Forget” as its motto.¹⁵ Eighty-eight years later, in 1984, the Martha Ready Morgan chapter #2487 was established. The chapter’s namesake, Martha Ready was the wife of famous Confederate cavalryman John Hunt Morgan. They were married two weeks before the Battle of Stones River in Murfreesboro. Their Christmas wedding was “known as the social highlight of the Confederacy.”¹⁶ Why two separate chapters were formed in the same city almost 100 years apart is unclear, however, they were both working toward the common goal of preserving the Lost Cause.¹⁷ There is more available documentation

¹³ Annie Cody, *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Cullom & Ghertner Company, 1946): 263.

¹⁴ Miranda Fraley, 2004. “The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee.” PhD diss. Indiana University.

¹⁵ Annie Cody, *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Cullom & Ghertner Company, 1946): 263.

¹⁶ Nelma S. Crutcher, Josephine B. Hill and Nancy C. Todd. *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Volume 2: 1946-2016* (Gorham Printing: Centralia, WA, 2017): 114.

¹⁷ While researching the UDC chapters at the Tennessee State Library and Archives, I encountered a member of the UDC. She knew the women from Murfreesboro #91, and seemed to suggest that the second chapter was formed due to scheduling conflicts. One group met during the week and others on the weekend. Perhaps it is this simple, and perhaps it is not.

on Murfreesboro chapter #91 than there is on Martha Ready Morgan chapter #2487. As a result, most of my analysis will be focused on Murfreesboro chapter #91.

I spent a great deal of time sifting through chapter meeting minutes spanning 1933-1970. Every meeting had the same sort of protocol. They were almost always held at a member's home. The meeting would be opened by the president performing a ritual. After this the women would pledge allegiance to the American and Confederate flags. They would then go about their routine business, which included reports from each of the officers. The president would often be the first to offer her report, followed by the treasurer, historian, leader of the Children of the Confederacy, and any standing committees established to meet certain short-term goals. These committees would often be terminated after a goal had been accomplished. Sometimes the chapter historian would bring in a special speaker who would present on a certain topic relating to the Civil War. These meetings were always coupled with a social element. After the meeting was adjourned, a small dish or appetizer was served. The secretary would often make note of how "delightful" the company, the food and the social hour was. The decor was often commented on as well, as the assigned hostess went to great lengths to make each meeting a special occasion. These meetings were not only spaces to conduct their business, they were also occasion for socialization and networking.¹⁸

The next objectives, historical and education, were both pursued with rigor by the Murfreesboro chapter. These objectives are intermingled, that is, they impacted what

¹⁸ Murfreesboro Chapter #91 meeting minutes. Ms. 752, TSLA.

future generations learned about the history of the Civil War through education in school and out of school. The UDC influenced what was taught to children in school and what was presented to the general public about the war in museums and at historic sites. The UDC took great interest in what was being written about the war, and what was being taught about the war.¹⁹ Officers in charge of these objectives differ from chapter to chapter. In the case of Murfreesboro chapter #91, there was a chapter historian that made a report at each chapter meeting in addition to a standing education committee who handled scholarships.²⁰ In addition to officers, there were temporary committees established to accomplish certain goals.

After the establishment of Stones River National Battlefield in 1927, one of the first goals of the Murfreesboro chapter's historical chair was to affect how the battle was interpreted. For example, in the 1930s there was discussion at almost every meeting about the Cabin Committee. The Cabin Committee was established to help raise funds and to negotiate the UDC's presence at Stone River National Battlefield.²¹ Specifically, there was a cabin present on the battlefield left from the remnants of the Cemetery Community, an African American community of former USCT troops who worked on the new national cemetery. After the national battlefield was established, this community was displaced. The UDC wanted to restore this cabin, to use it as a meeting place and

¹⁹ Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

²⁰ Annie Cody, *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Cullom & Ghertner Company, 1946).

²¹ UDC Chapter #91 meeting minutes, 1933, Mf. 752, TSLA.

interpretive site for the Confederate side of the battle. In increasing their presence at the national park, the perceived center of Union commemoration in the community, the UDC hoped to insert their narratives into what was being interpreted there.²² In February 1933, the cabin committee reported that they had met with the park superintendent, consulted with a contractor to restore the cabin, and had made good headway in securing funds during the Tennessee Division Convention in October of that year.²³ In September of 1933, the Cabin Committee chair announced that the project had been completed. It was to be called the “Confederate cabin,” the government was to be responsible for its upkeep (since it was located on federal property), and it was “dedicated to the Confederate soldiers who fought at the Battle of Stones River.”²⁴ After this point, the Cabin Committee must have been dissolved, because the project was not mentioned in the minutes after that meeting. The Cabin Committee is an interesting example of where Confederate memory of the war is intermingling with Union memory on the landscape of the national battlefield.²⁵

²² Miranda Fraley, 2004. “The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee.” PhD diss. Indiana University: 172.

²³ UDC Ch. 91 meeting minutes, February 1933, Mf. 752, TSLA.

²⁴ UDC Ch. 91 meeting minutes, September 1933, Mf. 752, TSLA.

²⁵ Fraley goes into some detail on the relationships and conflicts between Union and Confederate memory at this site. Ultimately, it is seen as a site of Union Memory, and is seen as a separate entity from the community and it’s own memory of the war because it is seen as a federal entity, not a local entity under local control.

In the 1950s, the chapter was using their influence to gain space in the local public library and helped in the institution's move downtown. In a letter dated January 25, 1951, the chapter made a statement:

“We, the United Daughters of the Confederacy Murfreesboro Chapter no 91 feel that we would like to go on record as having assisted in locating the Linebaugh Library in an uptown location. We have been advised that if we could use our influence as an organization to bring this Library up town that it would not necessitate any financial aid but rather the influence of the organization as a whole.”²⁶

It is significant that they felt their influence was instrumental in the formation of the Library's new home, implying that the UDC held power in the Murfreesboro community in the 1950s. In addition to their influence in the formation of the library, they secured space in the library to house their historical documents including minutes, artifacts, and other items important to the chapter's history. They also wished for a space to be made available for their monthly meetings. Later they would host some meetings in this space, but they also met at the Women's Club as well as member's homes. The librarian at Linebaugh requested that the UDC send books on the history of the Civil War and of the organization. In February of 1952, it was reported that the Public Librarian and high school librarian displayed Confederate historical materials provided by the UDC. These are examples of the UDC spreading the Lost Cause to the public, specifically future generations of the South.²⁷

²⁶ Letter, UDC January 25, 1951. Found in microfilm collection on Murfreesboro Ch. 91, Reel 1, Mf. 752, TSLA.

²⁷ UDC Ch. 91 meeting minutes, February 28, 1952, Mf. 752, TSLA.

In the late 1950s into the 1960s, the Murfreesboro chapter was also highly involved in creating a center of Confederate memory in the form of a house museum. This house was owned by the Maney's, one of the largest slave traders in Murfreesboro. Their house was also the site of Union surrender during Nathan Bedford Forrest's raid on Murfreesboro in July of 1862. In 1957, the UDC requested that the Maney home be restored. They sent this request to the Murfreesboro Housing Authority.²⁸ At a 1957 meeting reported on in the newspaper, the UDC historian reported that the city of Murfreesboro had voted to turn that land into a park. A motion was then made during this meeting, that

“The UDC of Murfreesboro requests the Murfreesboro Housing Authority and the City of Murfreesboro to give consideration to the saving of the historical Maney residence for the purpose of a historical shrine or museum, and that, we earnestly solicit the interest of all historic and civic organizations in saving this mansion.”²⁹

This resulted in the involvement of the Tennessee Historical Commission, who set to work on recommendations in how the mansion should be restored.³⁰ The UDC was not the only group involved in trying to preserve and restore this space. According to a later article, women of thirty-six different clubs in the city appeared before the City Council to try and obtain the deed for the mansion.³¹ These women formed a collective identity: the

²⁸ “UDC Members Request Many Home Restoration,” newspaper article, Mf. 752, TSLA.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Warfield Visits Oaklands Site: Advises with ‘House’ Group,” newspaper article, Mf. 752, TSLA.

³¹ Women Ask for Manor Deed, Ready to Form Association to Restore “Oaklands,” newspaper article, Mf. 752, TSLA.

Oaklands Association. According to this article, the Council “moved to name a committee of the council to meet with the recreation commission and the group representing the clubs to make a decision on the matter.”³² Apparently this decision was a positive one, because the next article details the women’s efforts in rebuilding and restoring the mansion. They were able to raise funds for restoration through “membership contributions and donations from local clubs.”³³ These memberships were \$5 each, with the association accepting donations on a larger scale as well. The article concluded that “it can be noted here, that the time is not too far distant when the community will give them an unsolicited vote of thanks for what they are building for the community.”³⁴ The Oaklands Association is an interesting example where women, not just from the UDC, worked toward a common goal in preserving a historical site.

The Murfreesboro UDC chapter influenced future generations through education in a multitude of ways. They sponsored scholarships, encouraging college aged women to apply. Often these scholarships were awarded through an essay contest, and often these essays were centered on a topic related to the Civil War and the Lost Cause.³⁵ Giving money to young white women, specifically women going into education, was a way to ensure that the Lost Cause would be spread to future generations. Karen Cox stated that

³² Ibid.

³³ “Ladies are “doing”: Repairs, Restoration, started at Famous Old Mansion,” newspaper article, Mf. 752, TSLA.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

the UDC believed the “progress of the Anglo-Saxon race depends on educating white youth of the Lost Cause.”³⁶ The UDC wanted to make sure that the “correct” version of history was being taught to future generations. They created textbooks and education committees to help mold history to their liking. These committees often worked on establishing essay contests, placing Confederate portraits in classrooms, as well as sustaining Children of the Confederacy Chapters.³⁷ In regards to the Murfreesboro chapter, they sponsored a number of scholarships, and they also sponsored the Confederate Memorial Hall in Peabody College at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.³⁸ They affected local schools through placing books in their libraries. In the 1950s, a local high school wrote to the UDC asking for their endorsement for a driver's education program to be integrated into the school's curriculum.³⁹ This, and the letters from the school & public librarians are good examples of the Murfreesboro UDC chapter's influence on public education and the memory of the war, even in the 1950s.

The Murfreesboro UDC was also involved in a huge amount of benevolent work. In the beginning, their main focus were the Confederate veterans as well as their widows. Members of the UDC worked to fund the hospitals and homes where they were living.

³⁶ Ibid.,86

³⁷ Ibid., 120.

³⁸ UDC Chapter 91 meeting minutes; Peabody College is mentioned a multitude of times throughout the minutes because it was a major project/ accomplishment of the Tennessee Division; To read more on Peabody College see Annie Cody, *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Cullom & Ghertner Company, 1946).

³⁹ UDC chapter #91 meeting minutes, January 20, 1951, Mf. 752, TSLA.

Once veterans and their widows began to dwindle in number as the years went on, their efforts seemed to shift to more of a patriotic duty. Specifically, during war years patriotic committees were established and local chapters sent care packages, money, socks, and other items to American soldiers overseas.

As an example, during the Korean War the Murfreesboro chapter #91 focused heavily on volunteering hours at local veterans' hospitals, donating blood or sending treats for veterans at these hospitals. They also funded care packages to be sent abroad to soldiers. They called this work "patriotic service."⁴⁰ The Murfreesboro chapter's work was not different from work being carried out across the entire Tennessee division. During war years in general, it was noted in both Tennessee Division histories that women across the entire Division (and entire organization) worked to help their veterans at home and abroad. This included time volunteering with the Red Cross, sending care packages, sponsoring hospitals abroad, as well as knitting socks for first responders after the 9/11 attacks to name a few examples.⁴¹

An interesting point of tension occurred in April of 1951. It was an exciting day for everyone in the city when General Douglas MacArthur and his wife Jean came to visit the city. The Murfreesboro chapter of the UDC was ecstatic for Jean's arrival, as she was a Murfreesboro native and longtime member of the Murfreesboro chapter. The General

⁴⁰ UDC chapter #91 meeting minutes, February 1951, Mf. 752, TSLA.

⁴¹ Annie Cody, *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Cullom & Ghertner Company, 1946); Nelma S. Crutcher, Josephine B. Hill and Nancy C. Todd. *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Volume 2: 1946-2016*. Gorham Printing: Centralia, WA, 2017.

and his wife were greeted with open arms by the city. There was a parade in their honor, and a banquet to celebrate Jean's arrival. There is some documentation of the MacArthur's visit, but it is not known whether Jean went to her home UDC chapter while visiting. The only mention of the MacArthur's visit in the meeting minutes is noted in May 1951. It was mentioned that the "matter of a Cross of Honor of the UDC could not be given to General MacArthur on account of lineage- his father on the other side."⁴² General MacArthur's father fought against Jean's grandfather in the Battle of Stones River.⁴³ After this, the only other mention of Mrs. MacArthur was that she was supposed to give a talk in Murfreesboro.⁴⁴

⁴² UDC chapter 91 meeting minutes, May 1951, Mf. 752, TSLA.

⁴³ "Jean MacArthur Day," newspaper article, Mf. 752, TSLA.

⁴⁴ If you look closely at the photo, you'll see UDC regalia near the Confederate monument.



FIGURE 2 - JEAN MACARTHUR DAY, 1951. SEE UDC REGALIA NEAR THE MONUMENT
[UDC CH. 91 MICROFILM, TSLA]

In addition to these events, work carried out by the Murfreesboro chapter soon included sending Confederate symbolism abroad. In November of 1951, a letter was read aloud at the monthly chapter meeting. The letter was from Jimmy. G. Marion of Arkansas who was fighting in Korea.

He Had seen in Life Magazine, the Murfreesboro Chapter placing a Confederate flag on the monument on MacArthur day. He asks if we would send him a Confederate flag. Mrs. Black (current president) answered his letter telling him the flag would be sent.⁴⁵

Members donated money to purchase and send a Confederate flag to Marion. In January of 1952 the chapter received more requests for flags abroad in Korea. At this meeting they read a letter from Charles R. Sanders, the grandson of Dr. W.J. Sanders in Murfreesboro.

He told us that he saw the Confederate flag that was sent to private Jimmy O. Marion, one day when he was rather despondent. He said it was such a thrill to see this flag and he immediately went to Marion to talk with him. He was even more thrilled to hear that this flag was sent from the Murfreesboro chapter, because he stated that he had often visited the Stones River battlefield and collected minie balls while visiting in Murfreesboro. He thanked us for the flag for all Southern boys.⁴⁶

Another letter was read after this from a soldier in Germany from Murfreesboro, Pvt. Wayne Mosely. He was requesting that he be sent a flag as well.⁴⁷ After reading this letter, it was voted to start a flag fund since the chapter was receiving so many requests

⁴⁵ UDC chapter 91 meeting minutes, November 1951, Mf. 752, TSLA.

⁴⁶ UDC chapter 91 meeting minutes, January 1952, Mf. 752, TSLA.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

from abroad. Sending flags to soldiers abroad was of regular mention in the meeting minutes through the Korean War. Sending Confederate symbolism abroad was seen by the chapter as a part of their patriotic duty, as they were helping out the “Southern boys” fighting for the country. It’s almost as if this was an additional avenue to spread the Lost Cause by equating Confederate symbolism to patriotism. This was not a new development: proponents of the Lost Cause had long been at work trying to equate southern rebellion to patriotism. One example is in the history of the Tennessee Division written in 1946. It states that “Southern men were foremost in opposing the tyranny of England” and that “the men of the South ruled the Nation and made its laws up to the time of the War Between the States.”⁴⁸ Ultimately, it is clear that the Murfreesboro chapter used benevolent work with veterans and soldiers as an avenue to equate the Confederate Cause with patriotism.

⁴⁸ Annie Cody, *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy* (Nashville: Cullom & Ghertner Company, 1946): 58.

FLAG HELPS MORALE OF BOTH REBS AND YANKS



The Confederate flag which these American soldiers in Korea are holding came from a private in the 48th Infantry, New York. It was sent by the U.D.C. Chapter here to Pfc Jimmy Marion, who is a private at upper right. The other soldiers were not identified.

Rebel' Flag From Here Cheers Soldiers in Korea

Captain
a
hel

FIGURE 3 - US SOLDIERS IN KOREA HOLD UP THE CONFEDERATE BATTLE FLAG, 1952.
PHOTO CREDIT: [UDC CH. 91 MICROFILM, TSLA]

Lastly, of all the objectives laid out by the UDC, the monumental/ memorial objective is the most obvious. Evidence of their work still dots the landscape today. This objective was one that was of utmost importance in the early years of the UDC. When veterans started to die from old age, there was a sense of urgency to honor them. Prior to this the local Ladies Memorial Association had been honoring the Confederate dead through their annual Memorial Day exercises. These events were continued by the local UDC chapter, with mention of them being held every June in chapter #91's minutes.⁴⁹

In her dissertation Miranda Fraley argued that focusing on localities instead of entire regions can create conclusions that differ from these broad studies. In addition to this, she argues that Confederate commemoration in Rutherford county is slightly different than the landscapes being described by historians such as Karen Cox. Cox argued that women were the primary force behind the spreading of the Lost Cause through the form of monuments. Fraley agreed with this, but when inspecting the activities of the United Confederate Veterans (UCV) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) chapters in Murfreesboro she discovered that men were also highly involved in these efforts, and actually wrested control from the women in some instances. In addition to this, she argues that Confederate commemoration is still consistent from the 1930s into the 1960s.⁵⁰ Most historians who have studied Confederate commemoration on this larger scale only focus up to the First World War. These

⁴⁹ UDC Chapter 91 meeting minutes; memorial day exercises are held every June, even today.

⁵⁰ Miranda Fraley, 2004. "The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee." PhD diss. Indiana University: 13.

historians cite the period up to the First World War “as the time when this type of commemoration remained vital to public life.”⁵¹ When studying individual communities, it becomes apparent that groups like the UDC still saw it as imperative to preserve the Lost Cause and pass it on to future generations, through whatever means possible, even after WWI.

Immediately after the Civil War, work began to reinter soldiers on both sides. Stones River National cemetery was established in 1865. With the establishment of the national cemetery system came the question of where the Confederate dead would be buried. The Murfreesboro Memorial Association set to work on finding a place to bury the Confederate dead.⁵² It is unclear when the Memorial Association was founded or when they ceased to exist, but at the very least, records indicate that this group was responsible for the first Confederate cemetery.⁵³ Each of the soldiers were buried in individual graves, marked by wood markers temporarily until stone markers could be purchased, at the cemetery plot purchased by the group. However, after the UCV chapter in Murfreesboro was established in 1888, they made it their mission to move these bodies to the Evergreen cemetery, the city cemetery.⁵⁴ Fraley notes that she believes this relocation of bodies to be an early example of men wresting commemorative control

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁵² The Murfreesboro Memorial Association was Murfreesboro’s version of a Ladies Memorial Association. Miranda Fraley found evidence of their existence through the diary of John C. Spence, published through the Rutherford County Historical Society.

⁵³ Miranda Fraley, 2004. “The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee.” PhD diss. Indiana University: 116.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 121.

away from the women who had already purchased land for a cemetery.⁵⁵ Current interpretation at Stones River National Battlefield indicates that the bodies were more than likely moved to Evergreen because the nonpermanent grave markers were washed away due to first Confederate cemetery being located in a floodplain. There is conflicting information as to whether the relocation of the Confederate dead was due to the condition of the original burial place or the dynamics between the two groups.⁵⁶

Once the bodies were moved to Evergreen cemetery, the Memorial Association set to work raising funds for a monument to be placed over the mass grave for the now unknown soldiers. The Memorial Association started raising these funds as early as 1893. They did this by asking family members of those who died in the Battle of Stones River (sometimes locally known as the Battle of Murfreesboro).⁵⁷ For some reason, the women donated the funds they raised to the UCV for the purpose of erecting a monument at Evergreen. Once the money was given to the UCV, there was miscommunication/ conflict. The women wanted their money back, but the men's group did not oblige. At a

⁵⁵ Ibid, 123.

⁵⁶ I corresponded with members of the Murfreesboro SCV and UDC. The current UDC president said it was a project undertaken by the ladies while an SCV member said it was a cooperative effort between the veterans and the ladies. I have found no records that make mention of the floodplain. Murfreesboro UCV minutes make mention of the condition of the land when they were assessing its value in 1890. They make no mention of the ground flooding in this period of time. Murfreesboro UCV Joseph Palmer Bivuoac minutes, May 31,1890.

⁵⁷ Miranda Fraley, 2004. "The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee." PhD diss. Indiana University: 133.

1898 meeting it was discussed that the location for this monument was to be changed to the public square.

Fraley indicated that the shift in location was probably due to the shift in the monument's purpose. She stated that, "This makes it seem quite probable that men from the bivouac and the SCV chapter preferred the more public and explicitly political location of the county square to the cemetery-- even though this meant the mass grave at Evergreen would remain unmarked."⁵⁸ Location matters, when ascribing a monument's meaning. Fraley later makes a statement that this monument was meant to be a symbol of mourning, not a symbol of the Lost Cause.⁵⁹ However, when examining the events of the dedication and its similarity to other presentations of Lost Cause ideology, it seems much too similar to discount their intentions when moving locations and dedicating this monument on the square. There was a groundbreaking ceremony in August of 1899. In the ceremony the veterans "broke ground" with shovels, then handed the shovels to their descendants, a gesture meant to symbolize the future of the Lost Cause and Confederate memory.⁶⁰ Monument construction seemed to be going well until the UCV ran out of funds. They contacted the Murfreesboro UDC chapter and requested that they help raise the remaining funds to finish the monument. The women delivered, and the monument was officially dedicated November 7, 1901. In the November 1901 issue of the

⁵⁸ Ibid., 136.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 142.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 137; Karen Cox, *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

Confederate Veteran, an article was written outlining the dedication. The author, not named in the article, gave most of the credit to the women of the UDC for the monument's construction.⁶¹

The Evergreen monument was finally dedicated in 1915, solely through the efforts of the UDC chapter. They were in complete control of raising the funds and dedicating the monument. However, the local veterans group did donate to the cause.⁶² After this point, the UDC coordinated all Memorial Day efforts centered around this space. Similar to the unveiling on the square, the dedication in Evergreen Cemetery included children as a symbol of the Cause's future. In 2015, there was a rededication ceremony of the monument, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the initial dedication.⁶³

A monument was erected on McFadden's Ford in 1906, the hillock which saw the end of the Battle of Stones River in 1862. On January 2, 1863, John Breckenridge (CSA) and his men stormed this hill which had Union infantry and artillery stationed at the base and the top. The artillery decimated 1,200 Confederate men within an hour and the battle was over. This land was not initially a part of the national battlefield park; it was city property for some time. This monument was not dedicated or funded by the UCV or the UDC, but it was later seen as a site of Confederate memory as the UDC was the main proponent for its upkeep and interpretation as a site of Confederate memory. The

⁶¹ Ibid., 138.

⁶² Ibid., 142.

⁶³ Nelma S. Crutcher, Josephine B. Hill and Nancy C. Todd. *History of the Tennessee Division, United Daughters of the Confederacy, Volume 2: 1946-2016*. Gorham Printing: Centralia, WA, 2017.

monument was funded by the Nashville Chattanooga Railway. It's inscription reads as follows:

On January 2, 1862 at 3:00 P.M. there were stationed on this hill, fifty-eight cannon, commanding the field across the river, and as the Confederates advanced over this field, the shot and shell from these guns resulted in a loss of eighteen hundred killed and wounded in less than an hour.⁶⁴

John W. Thomas, President of the Railway, funded construction of the monument for a number of reasons, the primary reason being he was selling Civil War sites tour packages for the railway. Tourists could jump on the "Dixie Line" and visit historic Civil War sites. It is widely believed that this monument was constructed to draw tourists to the area. The inscription, therefore, is deliberately ambiguous as to what or whom is being commemorated. Thomas was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans himself, but he knew that an ambiguous commemorative plaque would appeal to a wider audience, as many people from the North travelled to see these sites. Although it is interpreted as an ambiguous monument today, at the time this monument was perceived to be a monument to the Confederate soldiers at the Battle of Stones River.

In the 1950s, the UDC was highly active in preserving this site through cleaning the monument and appealing to the city of Murfreesboro to build a road to the site so that tourists travelling by car could easily find it and visit it.⁶⁵ The UDC's successful appeal to

⁶⁴ Inscription, Artillery Monument.

⁶⁵ Miranda Fraley, 2004. "The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee." PhD diss. Indiana University: 204-206.

the city is another example of them effectively wielding their power as a political unit. There was some conflict later with the park service, as they primarily interpreted the monument as a Union monument until the UDC insisted the park service launch an investigation into the monument's history. After further investigation of the railway, Thomas, and the monument's dedication, the park conceded that it may not be a Union monument.⁶⁶ Today, the monument is interpreted as ambiguous in meaning.

Another noted Murfreesboro chapter #91 dedication is the plaque located on the courthouse commemorating Nathan Bedford Forrest's Raid on Murfreesboro. This plaque was dedicated on July 13, 1912. All monuments to the Confederacy on Murfreesboro's landscape prior to this plaque were solely dedicated to the Confederate dead. Forrest's memory has pervaded Murfreesboro's and Tennessee's history. He is a controversial figure due to the fact he is celebrated by those who adhere to the Lost Cause and hated by those who identify him by his white supremacist history. He was a slave trader, original leader of the KKK, and a prior school mascot at Middle Tennessee State University. Dating back to the 1960s, black students at MTSU pushed back against Confederate symbolism and Forrest's name and monument being present on campus.⁶⁷

In more recent years, the Murfreesboro UDC has not dedicated much of their time to memorial or commemorative efforts, aside from their annual Confederate Memorial

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ To find more on the waves of black protest against Confederate symbolism on MTSU's campus, see the *Forrest Hall Protest Collection* online at The Albert Gore Research Center. <https://www.mtsu.edu/gorecenter/digital-collections.php>.

celebration in June. The Martha Ready Morgan chapter was established in 1984, and while they have no available records to view I was able to piece together that they had funded construction for a few Tennessee historic markers around the city.⁶⁸ Murfreesboro chapter #91 funded a few of these historic markers as well.

On November 9, 2019 protestors gathered along Clairmont road outside of the Marriot hotel in Atlanta, anxious and ready to express their strong feelings about the actions and history of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. The protest was largely uneventful, but still caused a great deal of emotion among those present. The official website of the UDC expresses that they do not agree with white supremacists using the Confederate flag to tote their cause of hate. In a 2018 release on their homepage, they stated that “The United Daughters of the Confederacy totally denounces any individual or group that promotes racial divisiveness or white supremacy. And we call on these people to cease using Confederate symbols for their abhorrent and reprehensible purposes.”⁶⁹ However, white supremacy and Confederate symbolism have been linked since the formation of the Lost Cause.⁷⁰ These ideals have lived on as symbols of a white collective memory that excludes the history and struggle of the nation’s African American past. Across the South, Confederate monuments present in public civic spaces

⁶⁸ I found what little information I have through the Tennessee Historical Commission records, which indicated that they funded a few markers around the city commemorating Confederate history.

⁶⁹ United Daughters of the Confederacy, “Statement from the President General,” (12/01/2018), <https://hqudc.org/>.

⁷⁰ Karen Cox, *Dixie’s Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2003).

are being debated, and in some cases, they are being torn down. These protests and debates were sparked by the actions of white supremacists and their firmly embedded belief in the Lost Cause. These conversations are alive and well, and they are a result of the women who helped create and foster the Lost Cause. The last chapter will examine the history of African American commemoration in Murfreesboro followed by a discussion of modern efforts in fighting the Lost Cause in public spaces. The chapter will conclude with an explanation of a public history project that seeks to shed light on African American history in Murfreesboro

CHAPTER FOUR: UNTOLD STORIES: AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMEMORATION IN MURFREESBORO

On February 15, 2020 the African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County (AAHSRC) held an event which focused on Murfreesboro's African American past, present, and future. I attended the event with my supervisor at Stones River National Battlefield, Jim Lewis. We took our seats as the program was about to begin. A young boy walked into the room, took a seat on a couch and fell into a slumber. He was awoken by a member of the Cemetery Community. She informed him that she would be guiding him through Murfreesboro's African American past, and that he would be meeting important African American figures throughout the town's history. As she said this, a man in a Union uniform stood up and introduced himself to the boy as William Holland. One by one, people representing different aspects of Murfreesboro's African American past stood up and introduced themselves to the boy and the other attendees. These people included Mary and Robert Scales, James Patterson, Mary Ellen Vaughn and many others. Each person stressed the importance of utilizing one's voice through the power of the vote. By the end of the program, the boy had heard that many people before him had suffered and worked hard for a voice, for equality. He was the future, and he needed to fight just as hard as those before him.

This program was a celebration of Murfreesboro's African American past while also stressing the importance of their voice in the present. In addition to the play, there were moments of celebration, of singing and of reflection by those in the community who

had experienced hardship and discrimination. I felt compelled to write about this event, because it speaks to the continuity of African American commemoration, which spans back to Emancipation Day celebrations that took place immediately after the Civil War. This chapter outlines Murfreesboro's history of African American commemoration, then leads into a discussion of present-day efforts of representation on the landscape and how Murfreesboro and surrounding communities have begun to address historical silences.

There is a distinct difference between white and African American memory of the Civil War and how it manifests itself on the landscape and in communities. Murfreesboro is no exception. In *Race and Reunion*, David Blight explained that race is “the central problem in how Americans made choices to remember and forget their Civil War.”¹ As explained in the introduction, three visions of Civil War memory included reconciliationist, white supremacist, and emancipationist.² Ultimately, reconciliationist overpowered the emancipationist vision nationally. Blight explained that in the eyes of white people, building Civil War monuments and putting on reunions between Union and Confederate soldiers was a healing effort, but it was also an act of forgetting, as the causation of the war as well as African Americans who fought in the war were largely left

¹ David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 2.

² Reconciliationist vision centered on reunion between white men in the North and South postwar, Emancipationist was the narrative focusing on Union victory leading to African American freedom, and white supremacist centered on Lost Cause Ideology; David Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) 2.

out of these reconciliatory narratives. This partly explains the rift in the memory of the war between white and African American groups.

Miranda Fraley, in her study of Civil War commemoration in Rutherford County, explained that almost immediately postwar there was a split on local commemoration when the National Cemetery was formed in 1865. Union and African American commemoration was centered on the National Cemetery while Confederate commemoration was centered in the town. When the national battlefield was established in Murfreesboro in 1927, this displaced a vital component of Union memory, the Cemetery Community. White groups such as the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) and the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) were able to control the memory of the war through implementing and erecting Lost Cause imagery on the Murfreesboro landscape in the form of monuments and historic markers. African Americans in and around Murfreesboro were not able to wield this same amount of power in public spaces. Instead, they remembered Union victory through celebratory commemorations. Fraley also discussed that remembering the war was a somber affair for most southern whites, while it was a celebration for African Americans.

In *Tennessee Women: Their Lives and Times*, Antoinette Van Zelm outlined the experiences of African American women after emancipation, and how they remembered the war. Van Zelm explained that from 1863 forward, various “freedom celebrations” took place across Tennessee, with Emancipation Day (January first) and July fourth being

the most celebrated days.³ She explained that “despite threats, violence, and vigorous efforts by white southerners to assert their claim to public spaces, black freedom celebrations continued into the 20th century.”⁴ Immediately postwar, these celebrations were large affairs with parades coming through cities. They were reminiscent of political rallies, as formerly enslaved people felt that they had the opportunity to use their voices. Kathleen Clark, in *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South*, described these events as “ceremonies designed in part to establish and reinforce collective understandings of history.”⁵ These events began to wane in number and zeal around the same time that reconciliationist sentiment became prominent. Civil War reunions focused on white healing, which “rested upon the exclusion of African Americans from both history and full rights of citizenship.”⁶ In addition to this, an escalation of white on black violence led to these celebrations becoming more subdued and private affairs.

Van Zelm, Fraley and Elizabeth Goetsch reference African American celebrations that occurred in Murfreesboro. Van Zelm explained that “during and after the war, Tennessee’s former slaves frequently took to the streets to celebrate their freedom and

³ Antoinette Van Zelm, “Forming a ‘Sisterhood Chain’ Women, Emancipation, and Freedom Celebrations in Tennessee” in *Tennessee Women: Their Lives and Times, Vol. 2* ed. Beverly Greene Bond and Sarah Wilkerson Freeman (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2015) 80.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Kathleen Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South, 1863-1913* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005) 8-9.

⁶ Ibid., 10.

express their hopes and dreams for the future.”⁷ She goes on to explain the importance of these celebrations. Van Zelm said that “slaves had been forbidden from assembling in public, so the opportunity to gather in civic spaces was a clear way to distinguish freedom from slavery.”⁸ On the inauguration day of Lincoln’s second term, Goetsch describes that African Americans “flocked to Murfreesboro to celebrate.”⁹ John Spence wrote that the town was crowded “to celebrate the anniversary of their freedom.”¹⁰ Chaplain William Earnshaw, the man who supervised the construction of the national cemetery, gave a speech “contrasting the situation of the colored people with what it had been. Changing from slavery to freedom.”¹¹

In the immediate postwar years, Fraley describes the national cemetery as being a space for Union soldiers, members of the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and African Americans to celebrate and remember those Union soldiers who fought in the war. In a 1897 superintendent's report, Fraley explains that Barrett (the superintendent) was displeased with African American behavior at these events. He felt they were being too loud, drinking and gambling and celebrating when they should have been quiet,

⁷ Antoinette Van Zelm, “Hope Within a Wilderness of Suffering: the Transition from Slavery to Freedom During the Civil War and Reconstruction in Tennessee,” 8. (this is an unpublished paper, unsure of how to cite it)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Elizabeth Goetsch, “All could not Help but Feel it: A Cultural Landscape Approach to History at Stones River National Battlefield,” (master’s thesis, Middle Tennessee State University, 2011) 37.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

reflective, and mourning. He also expressed displeasure at the small number of white people in attendance. Fraley wrote that “Barrett’s statement revealed that while some white Union Veterans and their families attended the Memorial Day program, most local whites shunned the cemetery on that day due to the large numbers of African Americans present.”¹² At the same time reunionist sentiment became more commonplace and exclusionary to African Americans, Jim Crow laws disenfranchised African Americans everywhere, and lynching and other forms of violence were more frequent throughout the South. As a result, these celebrations became less attended, but they never disappeared.¹³

African American commemoration today varies by community. Just as it was immediately after the Civil War, there is a tension between Confederate symbolism on the landscape and the lack of representation of African American history on the landscape. In a January 2020 article in the *New Yorker*, titled “The Fight to Preserve African American History,” the issue of lack of representation and disregard for African American historical sites was discussed in further detail. In this article the author Casey Cep informed the reader that “of the more than ninety-five thousand entries on the National Register of Historic Places-- the list of sites deemed worthy of preservation by the federal government-- only two percent focus on the experiences of black

¹² Miranda Fraley, 2004. “The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Civil War in Rutherford County, Tennessee,” (PhD diss. Indiana University, 2004) 97-98.

¹³ Kathleen Clark, *Defining Moments: African American Commemoration and Political Culture in the South, 1863-1913* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005)

Americans.”¹⁴ Cep explains that since the signing of the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Historic Landmarks program and National Register of Historic Places has “identified nearly two million locations worthy of preservation,” however since “many biases were written into the criteria that determine how sites are selected, those benefits have gone mostly to white Americans.”¹⁵ While national organizations such as the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program neglected these areas of historical significance, local organizations of color stepped in to preserve this history.

This holds true for many communities in Tennessee that have been taking the preservation of African American history into their own hands. Jaryn Abdallah wrote about the efforts of the African American Heritage Society of Maury County in her thesis entitled “More to the Story: Historical Narratives and the African American Past in Maury County, Tennessee.” Abdallah focuses heavily on the issues of power, and specifically how a “discussion of history cannot be separated from discussions of power, and discussions of power in the United States cannot be separated from a discussion of race.”¹⁶ She focuses on ideas pulled from Trouillot, and delves into the production of

¹⁴ Casey Cep, “The Fight to Preserve African American History,” *The New Yorker*, January 27, 2020. <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2020/02/03/the-fight-to-preserve-african-american-history>.

¹⁵ Cep explains in the article that architectural significance is one criteria for preservation, which excludes more modest buildings like slave cabins, and tenement houses. Ibid; Page Putnam Miller explains that women were also left out of these sites of national significance until recently; Page Putnam Miller, *Landmarks of American Women’s History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 13.

¹⁶ Jaryn Abdallah, “More to the Story: Historical Narratives and the African American Past in Maury County, Tennessee” (master’s thesis, Middle Tennessee State University,

Maury County's historical narrative, and how African American experiences had been silenced as a result of this.¹⁷

Abdallah explains that African American experience and history has been silenced in the county archive as well as the visitor's bureau, lack of interpretation on enslaved people at local historic houses, as well as the Maury County Historical Society. The commemorative landscape is another area where African American history was being silenced in the county. A major project undertaken by the African American Heritage Society of Maury County was to engrave the names of fifty-eight black and white Union soldier casualties on the veteran's monument near the county courthouse. Before this project was undertaken, only the names of Confederate soldiers were inscribed on this monument. Maury County's downtown is similar to Murfreesboro's public square, in that monuments to white men who have served in the military are clustered in this seat of power. The African American Heritage Society was ultimately successful in adding these names to the monument. Abdallah states that "while other monuments to the USCT exist in Tennessee, this is the first time that they have been honored on an existing monument that also honors Confederate soldiers."¹⁸ Towards the end of her thesis, Abdallah also indicates that the African American Heritage Society of

2015), 10; for more on monuments and power see John Bodnar, *The "Good War" in American Memory* (John Hopkins University Press, 2010).

¹⁷ Ibid., 15.

¹⁸ Ibid., 83.

Maury county was also working towards dedicating more historic markers in the county to document the experiences of African Americans on the landscape.

There have been efforts in working towards more balanced narratives in Franklin, Tennessee as well. In October of 2019 five panels were dedicated around the Confederate monument and other parts of the square in order to balance the narrative on the landscape.¹⁹ This idea came to fruition after the riot in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017. Three men from Franklin’s community, including pastors Kevin Riggs and Chris Williamson, and the Battle of Franklin Trust Historian Eric Jacobson coordinated an effort, called the Fuller Story Project, to make a positive impact on the community in representing its African American past.²⁰ However, this project did not come without its fair share of obstacles. When the group first announced their plan to erect these panels, the local UDC chapter claimed that they owned the land on the public square around the Confederate monument, and that they would sue if they altered the landscape in any way. Ultimately, the city ruled in the favor of the Fuller Story project, as the UDC did not have proper documentation to prove their claim to the land. These panels recognize the fact that enslaved people were sold nearby, that there were United States Colored Troops who served in the Civil War from Franklin, Reconstruction, and the riot of 1867.²¹ According

¹⁹ All articles relating to the dedication call these “historic markers,” but I refer to them as interpretive panels because of their use and utility on the landscape.

²⁰ Emily R. West, “National Tragedies Inspired Group to Tell History of Slavery, Civil Rights in Franklin,” *The Tennessean*, January 17, 2019, <https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/williamson/2019/01/17/franklin-tn-confederate-stature-group-shares-slavery-civil-rights-history/2536980002/>.

²¹ Emily R. West, “‘A Day of Redemption’: New Markers in Franklin’s Downtown Tell African American History,” *The Tennessean*, October 17, 2019,

to an article in *The Tennessean*, the group also plans to dedicate a USCT monument on the public square in the near future.²²

Tennessee has stringent laws about removing memorials from public spaces. The Tennessee Heritage Protection Act, created in 2013 and amended in 2016 and 2018, “prohibits the removal, relocation, or renaming of a memorial that is, or is located on, public property.”²³ This makes it difficult to actually remove Confederate symbolism, so the Fuller Story Project may have been a good solution to Tennessee’s specific problem.

The African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County (AAHSRC) is making similar efforts in Murfreesboro and surrounding communities in the county. After the AAHSRC was formed in 2014 they decided that they would focus on “cemeteries, as well as, family genealogy, people and pillars of the African American community, and the foundation of the African American community (churches, schools, so on).”²⁴ The group based their bylaws on the African American Heritage Society of Maury County’s bylaws. As a result, their focus is similar in scope. The mission of the African American

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/williamson/2019/10/17/fuller-story-markers-african-american-history-downtown-franklin-tn/3999474002/>.

²² Ibid.

²³ Tennessee Historical Commission, “Tennessee Heritage Protection Act,” accessed 03/02/ 2020, <https://www.tn.gov/environment/about-tdec/tennessee-historical-commission/redirect---tennessee-historical-commission/tennessee-heritage-protection-act.html>.

²⁴ African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County, Tennessee, Annual Report, June 24, 2019.

Heritage Society of Rutherford County is to “discover, preserve, teach, and share the heritage and history of African Americans in Rutherford County, Tennessee.”²⁵

My relationship with the group began in the fall semester of 2019. I came to one of their meetings to discuss the merits of a digital project I was working on, called “Monuments in Murfreesboro.” This is a Curatescape site which documents individual “stories” centered on monuments and historic markers in the city.²⁶ These stories would outline and answer three key questions about each monument: *when* was it erected, and *who* sponsored (funded) it and *why* the monument was erected. Answers to the first two questions would provide information about the third question. The group seemed very excited about the prospect of the city’s history being shared on an accessible digital platform.

Some time later, after consulting with peers and pondering the possibilities of this relationship, an idea came to me. At my first meeting with the group, I got the sense that they had a deep passion for balancing the commemorative landscape of Murfreesboro. There is very little African American history represented on the landscape currently, but the AAHSRC has been working hard to put in applications for historic markers. In fact, in August 2019 the group dedicated a historic marker in Murfreesboro to Holloway High School, an African American school, raising the number of markers to African American history from one to two. I admired the group’s continuing effort to represent African

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Curatescape is a plug-in of Omeka.

American history that had long been silenced on the landscape. I thought, in the meantime, why not represent this history in other forms? This is where the digital project comes into play.



FIGURE 4 - AFRICAN AMERICAN HERITAGE SOCIETY OF RUTHERFORD COUNTY (AAHSRC) AT THE HOLLOWAY HIGH SCHOOL HISTORIC MARKER DEDICATION, 2019. PHOTO CREDIT:[AAHSRC FACEBOOK PAGE]

The Curatescape site has a function to create tours, weaving individual stories into a narrative of the city’s past. My idea was to reimagine the purpose of the site to fit the stories of unmarked portions of the landscape. In doing this, the African American past of Murfreesboro can be incorporated into the site, and their stories can be shared with the public. I have created a separate tour on the site designated to the African American Heritage Society, titled “Untold Stories.” Members of the group were responsible for

writing stories on individual unmarked locations on Murfreesboro's landscape that are important to Murfreesboro's African American history. I pitched the idea to the group at a November meeting in 2019, and they seemed excited to participate in the project. Specifically, they were interested in taking this project into the community, allowing more people to participate in writing stories. To start off, the members of the executive board wished to write stories and post them to the site.

My specific instructions for each story included writing story text that reached between three hundred to five hundred words in length. I also asked that they provide secondary and primary sources to show where they got their information, GPS coordinates, and photos of the location in question. Mary Watkins, the President of the AAHSRC, gave the members of the executive board their story assignments, and we parted ways again until the workshop in January.

The date for the workshop came, and I met with the group at the Technology Engagement Center in Murfreesboro. Some of the group members were unsure of how to go about writing their stories and what I was looking for. During our two hours at the center, I spent time with each member discussing their stories and how to write them. I had help from one of my fellow students Max Farley, and my supervisor from the Gore Center, Donna Baker. This was my first time hosting a workshop relating to local history, so I expected some challenges along the way. After I met with each person, they seemed to be clearer about what I expected for their individual stories for the site.

So far, I have received two stories for the tour. One details the slave trade in Murfreesboro while the other tells the story of the Green book and one of its locations in

the city which still stands. For this first phase of the project, I was expecting about six stories total. I hope I will receive these stories in time, as I continue to work on the project. Digital projects such as Untold Stories offer an additional avenue of interpretation that is cost effective and removes roadblocks in fundraising for monuments or receiving approval through city and state government.

During a 2017 roundtable in Dallas, Texas, prominent historians of Civil War memory and commemoration came together to discuss the current debates and issues surrounding Confederate monuments. This took place only months after the events in Charlottesville, when a woman was killed during a counter protest to a white supremacist rally centered on the removal of Confederate monuments. The participants in this panel included Catherine Clinton, W. Fitzhugh Brundage, Karen Cox, and Nell Irvin Painter. Specifically, the goal of this roundtable was to discuss “how advocates of heritage might clash with best practices in history, how the role of public history shapes current historical sensibilities, and what scholars can do to respond to contemporary topics.”²⁷

Unsurprisingly, these prominent historians were not able to reach consensus on what was the best way to address these monuments. For example, Cox argued that it should be left to the individual communities to deal with their history as they see it, but that they have a responsibility to consider removal.²⁸ Gallagher chimed in, saying that it

²⁷ “Roundtable on Confederate Statues and Memorialization” in *Confederate Statues and Memorialization*, ed. Catherine Bishir (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2019), 13-70.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 42.

should be a process and that it should not be a rash tearing down of the statue. Brundage countered with the point that the commemorative landscape is a recent creation and should not be seen as an untouchable entity. Specifically, he argued that “if it doesn’t reflect our current society’s ideals we should have no qualms about altering this landscape.”²⁹ Brundage also conceded that it should be left up to the individual community, however as historians, we should “encourage them to interpret the monument broadly, fully, with complexity.”³⁰

Some ways to help counter white supremacy is to balance the narrative by telling more diverse stories on the landscape, whether it be through interpretive panels, digital projects, or by tearing monuments down. The memory of the Civil War is something that the American public is having to reckon with by deciding the fate of these monuments. As public historians we need to help communities in assessing their options.

²⁹ Ibid., 44-45.

³⁰ Ibid., 46.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: MONUMENTS

Note: Blank spaces indicate information I was not able to find. Exact coordinates for monuments on this list can be found at <https://murfreesboro-monuments.mtsu.edu/>. THC stands for “Tennessee Historical Commission.”

Number	Name/Purpose	Subject	Sponsor	Dedication Date	Location
1	War Memorial	War	Post 4575 Veterans of Foreign Wars	November 11, 1948	Public Square
2	War Memorial addition	War	Bob Brown Post 16 American Legion	May 31, 1977	Public Square
3 THC number: 3A84	Forrest’s Murfreesboro Raid historic marker	Civil War			Public Square
4	Forrest Bronze Plaque	Civil War	UDC Ch. 91	July 13, 1912	Public Square, Courthouse
5	World War One Bronze plaque	War	UDC Ch. 91		Public Square, Courthouse
6	Birch Bryant Memorial	Local History			Public Square, Courthouse lawn
7	Confederate Monument	Civil War	Murfreesboro SCV Camp no. 33	May 2011	Public Square
8	Confederate Monument	Civil War	UDC Ch. 91, SCV Camp no. 33	November 7, 1901	Public Square
9	General Griffith Rutherford	War			Public Square

10	Police Memorial	Local History	Hendon-McClanahan Lodge 54 Fraternal order of Police	May 17, 2000	Public Square
11	Rutherford County Fallen Firefighter Memorial	Local History		January 20, 2011	Public Square
12	Blue Star Memorial	War	Stones River Garden Club in cooperation with Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs, and Rutherford County, TN		Public Square
13	Tablet, Murfreesboro State Capital	Local History	Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)	1921	Public Square, Courthouse
14	Stone Tablet, courthouse. Building Committee	Local History	Stones River Garden Club in cooperation with Tennessee Federation of Garden Clubs, and Rutherford County, TN	1908	Public Square, Courthouse
15	Murfreesboro Capital of TN	Local History	Authorized by the 76th general assembly		Public Square

16 THC number: 3A73	Bradley Academy	Education Local history	UDC		SE Broad St.
17 THC number: 3A92	Oaklands Mansion	Civil War		June 3, 1965	SE Broad St.
18 THC number: 3A212	James Daniel Richardson marker	Civil War, Local History	James R. Roberts	2008	Intersection of E. Main St. and S. Academy St.
19	Tennessee Baptist Convention	Local History			Intersection of E. Main St. and S. Spring St.
20 THC number: 3A62	Morgan's Wedding Marker	Civil War	UDC	Dec. 1955, rededicated Dec. 1985	E. Main St. near the Public Square
21 THC number: 3A114	Joseph Palmer marker	Civil War	UDC Ch. 2487, 91. SCV camp no. 33	October 29, 1988	E. Main St.
22 THC number: 3A72	Union University marker	Local history, Civil War	UDC		E. Main St.

23 THC number: 3A110	Tennessee College for Women marker	Education, Women Local History			E. Main St.
24 THC number: 3A134	Old Bradley Academy marker	African American History, Education	The Bradley Academy Association, Inc.	May 25, 1991	S. Academy St.
25 THC number: 3A60	Soule College marker	Women, Education, Civil War	UDC		N. Maple St.
26 THC number: 3A86	Forrest's Murfreesboro Raid marker	Civil War			N. Maney Ave.
27 THC number: 3A63	Grantland Rice marker	Local History		November 22, 1955	E. College St.
28	Jesse Messick Memorial	Local History			Cannonsburgh Village
29	W.H. Westbrooks Memorial	Local History		1976	Cannonsburgh Village
30 THC number: 3A165	Rio Mill marker	Local History	Kelly Ray, Leeman House: Cannonsburgh village	1995	Cannonsburgh Village

31	Geographic Center of Tennessee obelisk	Local History	Rutherford County Historical Society		Old Lascassas Rd.
32 THC number: 3A161	Donelson's Brigade at Murfreesboro marker	Civil War	Rutherford County Historical Society	November 1995	Old Nashville Hwy
33 THC number: 3A160	Chalmer's Brigade at Murfreesboro marker	Civil War	Rutherford County Historical Society	November 1995	Old Nashville Hwy
34	Headquarters, the Army of the Cumberland	Civil War			Old Nashville Hwy
35	Headquarters, the Army of Tennessee	Civil War			Off W. College St. near General Bragg Trailhead
36	Hazen Brigade Monument	Civil War	Army of the Cumberland	1863	Old Nashville Hwy
37	Artillery Monument	Civil War	Nashville, Chattanooga and St. Louis Railway	1906	Van Cleve Ln.
38 THC number: 3A219	Hardy Murfree, Revolutionary War hero marker	War	Matt B. Murfree III		W. Vine St.

39 THC number: 3A59	Charles Egbert Craddock marker	Women, Local History	UDC		Corner of NW Broad and Medical Center Pkwy
40 THC number: 3A48	William Lytle marker	War, Local History	Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR)	April 14, 1954	NW Broad St.
41 THC number: 3A239	Robert Smith Sanders marker	Local History	Rutherford County Medical Society	September 19, 2018	Corner of N. Maple St. and W. Burton St.
42 THC number: 3A240	Bethel marker	Religion, Local History	Robert Bates	December 09, 2018	Sulphur Springs Rd.
43 THC number: 3A207	Middle Tennessee State Teachers College Training School marker	Education, Local History	Middle Tennessee State University	2003	E. Burton St.
44 THC number: 3A162	Black Fox Camp Spring marker	Native American history, Local History	Rutherford County Historical Society	June 18, 1995	US 41 and Red Mile Rd.
45 THC number: 3A45	Battle of Murfreesboro marker	Civil War			US 41
46	Geographic Center of	Local History			Greenland Dr.

3A166	Tennessee marker				
47	Regulars Monument	Civil War	Surviving men of the Regular brigade	1882	Stones River National Cemetery
48	Michigan Civil War Centennial marker	Civil War	State of Michigan	July 1, 1966	Stones River National Battlefield, tour stop 2
49	Ohio/Wisconsin monument	Civil War			Stones River National Cemetery
50 THC number: 3A67	Rutherford County/Murfreesboro marker	Local History			Lasseter Dr.
51 THC number: 3A58	George Smith Patton Jr. marker	War, Local History			S. Church St.
52 THC number: 3A221	Rutherford Hospital/Middle Tennessee Medical Center marker	Local History, Medicine			Corner of E. Bell St. and N. University St.
53 THC number: 3A244	Holloway High School marker	African American History, Education	African American Heritage Society of Rutherford County	August 24, 2019	Highland Ave.

54	Evergreen Cemetery monument	Civil War	UDC Ch. 91	May 1915	Evergreen Cemetery, Greenland Dr.
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