

# AP Language Essay: Confederate Monuments

## Directions

The following prompt is based on the accompanying sources. In this response, your task is to synthesize a variety of sources into a coherent, well-written essay. When you synthesize sources, make sure to summarize and/or quote them accurately in support of your argument. Avoid merely summarizing the sources.

A study by the Southern Poverty Law Center in 2017 found that there were at least 1,500 monuments and memorials to the Confederacy in the United States. In the past few months, the United States has witnessed an intense debate about the future of these monuments to the past.

Even Helena was embroiled in this national conflict over the issues of monuments and memorials dedicated to the Confederacy and those who fought in its military services. Following the violence in Charlottesville and discussion about our monument two years ago, the Helena City Commission decided to remove a fountain commemorating Confederate dead from Hill Park. The monument, which was dedicated in Helena in 1916, was the donation of a group called the Daughters of the Confederacy and dedicated as a “loving tribute to our Confederate soldiers.”

Synthesize **at least five of the sources** into a well-developed argument that defends, qualifies or refutes the claim that the Helena City Commission was correct to remove the monument. Your essay should **focus on your perspective and not just summarize the sources**.

You should write at least 900 words and no more than 1500 in your response. Please review the Synthesis Essay handout before beginning your work.

## Citations and Evidence

- Make sure to cite any words or ideas you take from the sources, but limit your outside research to this material.
- Do not include more than 15% quoted material in your response. No direct quote should be longer than 7 words. We'll talk about why later.

## Naysayers

- Include two naysayers in your response.
- The notes and samples for naysayers are available on my web site.

You may refer to the sources by their titles (Source A, Source B, etc.) or by the description in parenthesis.

Source A: Independent Record

Source B: Richardson

Source C: Southern Poverty Law Center

Source D: American Indian Caucus

Source E: Helena Independent

Source F: USA Today

Source G: Mother Jones

Source H: National Review

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## Source A: Those Who've Studied Confederate Fountain's History Weigh In *Helena Independent Record, Aug 18, 2007*

Some who have researched the history of the century-old Confederate monument prominently displayed in a Helena city park say local leaders are making a mistake by removing it.

"I don't think it's a good idea to remove the monument," Bruce Whittenberg, director of the Montana Historical Society, said the day after the Helena City Commission directed the city manager to remove the granite fountain from Hill Park as soon as possible. "I'm sad to see it happen, and it makes me wonder what's next."

City commissioners decided to remove the monument during an administrative meeting Wednesday, after a woman was killed at a white nationalist rally over the weekend in Charlottesville, Virginia. As tempers flare over the presence of Confederate monuments nationwide, several commissioners said they now see the fountain as a safety concern.

However, Helena/Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation Officer Pam Attardo said she believes Helena's monument is different than those being removed from other cities.

"Some of these monuments are clearly offensive. I could not defend a battle flag, even if it is historic. It's just such an incendiary and hate-mongering symbol," she said. "In my opinion, the fountain isn't. I don't see it as a symbol of hatred itself."

Whittenberg agreed that the fountain should remain as a teaching tool.

"Rather than just destroy it and pretend like it never existed, we should use it as a teachable moment," he said. "Kids should understand those things that we find so objectionable now, and the sins of the Civil War. ... I don't know how you do that without something to point to."

Annie Hanshew, a historian born and raised in Helena who has studied objects as historical documents, spoke Wednesday night and said she believes the fountain should be removed and placed in a museum.

Hanshew, in a letter to the IR on Thursday, said a sign could have provided context, but "it's been two years since the commission asked for a sign, and we now live in a different era."

While the fountain may not hold "dark associations" for those who defend it, Hanshew wrote, "it is worth considering (and listening to) how our non-white neighbors feel. There is significant evidence that victims of slavery and genocide passed their trauma down to their descendants. This transgenerational trauma can even become encoded in descendants' DNA. So to some, 1916 might feel like the distant past, but to others, it is not so distant. I'd rather remove a fountain than have any of my neighbors experience anxiety or fear."

Helena Mayor Jim Smith said Wednesday evening that city officials have not yet decided what to do with the monument after it has been removed, and Whittenberg said he hopes the Montana Historical Society will be included in that discussion.

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## Source B: I'm a black daughter of the Confederacy

*Lisa Richardson, Los Angeles Times, August 27, 2017*

As monuments to the Confederacy are swept away from public spaces, white supremacists, neo-Nazis and the president of the United States have been fretting over the so-called attack on history, presumably their history. Their white history.

Attack, assault, erasure, destruction — well, truth and justice in the face of denial and dissembling can certainly feel like that. But there is no such thing as whites-only history, there never was, not even with regard to the Confederacy.

Like millions of African Americans, I am the descendant of a Confederate soldier. True, we are most likely descendants through coerced sex and rape, but we are descendants all the same. According to Ancestry.com, the DNA of the average African American is 29% European. These bronzed southern soldiers are literally our forefathers too.

Yet the monuments debate isn't really about the past. It's about a present-day assertion of white supremacy and whether our nation is going to stop making excuses and stare it down. Most of the statues, as has been widely discussed, were erected long after Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox. They were hoisted into view to assert white dominance at specific points in time when African Americans gained a measure of political influence — during Reconstruction and the civil rights era. With the bronzes came domestic terrorism, lynchings, bombings and cross burnings. The current uptick in neo-Nazi and white supremacist activity was entirely predictable. With clockwork precision it surged at the time of the nation's first African American president.

So why do some people treat modern icons as if they were ancient relics, like marbles from the Parthenon?

Fear. History isn't being erased, but it is being corrected. Relocating a Confederate statue to, say, a museum, is an acknowledgment that we see the naked emperor; we see through the contorted logic that it is possible to separate the Confederacy from the institution of slavery, that it's a whites-only story and slavery is blacks-only, and that treason is the same as patriotism.

The president has asked, "Where will it end?" Will the removal of General Lees lead to upheaval for Thomas Jefferson? Trigger the end for George Washington?

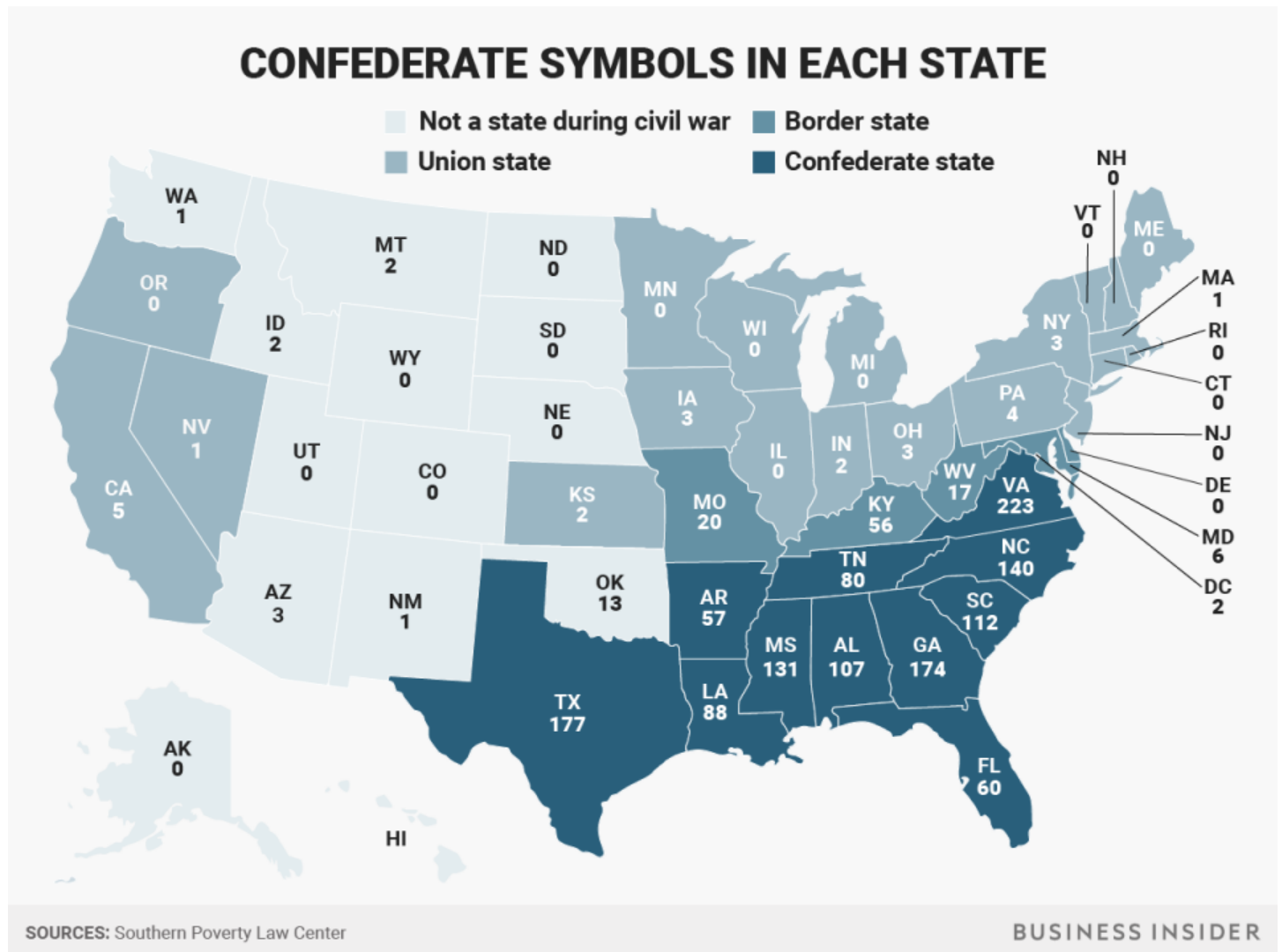
I would ask, How could a patriot be confused with a traitor? How can leading a war to bring forth a new country be confused with leading a rebellion to tear it in two?

The two kinds of monuments do, however, have something in common. The memorialized men serve as avatars, as conduits for the values they espoused. Revolutionary-era monuments lead us to contemplate and revere Revolutionary-era values. Confederate monuments do the same for Confederate ideals. The men of both ages were flawed, but the values of one age bind and sustain us as a nation. The values of the other do not.

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## Source C: Confederate Symbols in Each State

*Southern Poverty Law Center, reprinted in Business Insider Aug 20, 2017*



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## Source D: It's Time To Remove the Confederate Monument

*Letter to the Helena City Commission from the American Indian Caucus of MT Legislature, Aug 2017*

As members of the American Indian Caucus of the Montana Legislature, we extend our condolences to the family of Heather Heyer, who lost her life protesting hate and bigotry in Charlottesville, Va. Our hearts also go out to the families of Lt. H. Jay Cullen and Trooper Berke M.M. Bates of the Virginia State Police, who lost their lives while monitoring the rally. Our thoughts and prayers are with Charlottesville and those across this great country who have been hurt physically and emotionally by the despicable actions exhibited by white nationalists.

White nationalists, neo-Nazis, alt-right, and any other groups that propagate hate, discrimination, violence and bigotry, have no place in our country. These groups dishonor the basic principles of equality on which this nation exists. Advocating hate through violence is terrorism and shouldn't be labeled as anything less. Generations of soldiers and civilians have given their lives fighting for equality. We are grateful to our veterans, our active military members, and those who lost their lives serving and defending our Constitution and country.

Our ancestors fought and our family members still fight for our right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Thousands of American Indian soldiers fought for the Union Army to end slavery, and thousands more fought fascism and genocide in World War II. American Indians will continue the fight against those who are misguided enough to perpetuate those beliefs.

Today, we must recognize the fact that the Confederacy and its symbolism has stood for segregation, secession, and slavery. The Confederate flag was even used by the Dixiecrats, a segregationist political party of the 1940s. The flag continues to serve as an emblem for racism and racial inequality for domestic terrorist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, neo-Nazis, and other white nationalist organizations.

White nationalists reportedly planning a rally in Lexington to oppose removal of statues

That is why we call upon the Helena City Commission and all of our statewide officials to step up and remove the Confederate Memorial Fountain from Helena, Montana, our capital city. The fountain was commissioned by the United Daughters of the Confederacy, an organization that openly supported the white supremacist views and mission of the early Ku Klux Klan. This is the only Confederate monument in the northwestern United States.

It is especially troubling that although the Commission voted more than two years ago to add a sign explaining the history of the monument and its roots in a racist movement, city staff has not yet been able to complete this task.

We ask that you all recognize the harmful message that this fountain sends to Indians, minorities, and all Montanans of this great state. Please take a stand and recognize that this fountain is a divisive symbol in Montana and represents a history that our country and citizens have repeatedly fought against.

Public property in Montana should not be used to promote Nazism, fascism, totalitarianism, separatism, or racism. Please send a message that there is no hate in our state by removing this divisive memorabilia from the capital city.

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## Source E: Handsome Fountain Given To Helena With Fitting Ceremony

*Helena Daily Independent. September 6, 1916*

With fitting ceremony, the beautiful fountain recently placed in Hill park was presented to the city of Helena last evening by the Daughters of the Confederacy in Montana. City Attorney Edward Horsky, acting for Mayor R. R. Purcell, who was unavoidably absent, accepted the gift after an address of presentation by Miss Georgia C. Young. The emblem is a splendid contribution to the beautification of the park given to the city some years ago by the later James J. Hill.

A gathering of a couple of hundred Helenaites joined about the new structure to listen to the evening's program. Several Confederate veterans were present in places of honor. A short program, with a few necessary formalities, was applauded by the patriotic crowd. When the impressive monument was unveiled a long demonstration followed, giving the fountain a most hearty welcome as one more means of beautifying the city park.

The Evening's Program. Judge R. Lee Word presided over the program. Prior to the unveiling ceremony the Helena drum corps gave several selections. Mrs. Will Aiken pulled the cord which released the flag covering the new fountain. The water was turned into the huge bowl by Mrs. F. F. Read. These women with Miss Young, who followed with the presentation speech, are the only charter members now in the city.

Miss Young, in formally presenting the splendid memorial to the city, told of the history of the gift; how the Confederate Daughters seeing the need of more means of beautifying Hill park, set about on a campaign to secure funds for the work. She explained the motives of the order in planning such a gift, telling how the Confederate Daughters, desirous of making some presentation to their new residence after leaving the south, had decided upon the fountain as a fitting memorial.

The speaker lauded the present-day American spirit, a spirit of union with no feeling between the old north and south, which caused such bitterness and sorrow years ago. Both sides are now engaged in building up a better country to live in, making their homes more comfortable, their cities more beautiful. She closed:

"On behalf of the daughters of the Confederacy, I present this fountain to the city of Helena as a token of our esteem toward our new home."

"The city of Helena is pleased and honored to accept this substantial and beautiful donation from the Daughters of the Confederacy. On behalf of the city I accept most heartily this splendid token" Thus spoke Attorney Edward Horsky, in place of Mayor Purcell.

The city attorney, in accepting the gift, delved into the history of the city and the park, on which the monument was built. He lauded the spirit of the Confederate Daughters in making such a fitting gift. "The efforts of the Daughters of the Confederacy in planning such a gift are worthy of the highest praise," said Mr. Horsky. "We have several pretty parks, though they lack such fitting and substantial markings as this, it is a beautiful memorial that will long keep bright the memory of the organization that donated it."

Of Native Granite. The fountain is carved from native Montana granite. It towers eight feet high and in the top a large electric globe is placed. Four streams of water pour forth into a large bowl which overflows into a basin six feet square. The structure is ornamented with pretty carvings. It was designed by Architect George H. Carsley and erected at a cost of \$2,000. It was placed on the highest point in Hill park.

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## Source F: Tearing down history equates to hiding inconvenient truths

*Ken Robison, Author and Historian. USA Today, August 16, 2017*

Some 101 years ago, the Daughters of the Confederacy dedicated a Memorial Fountain in Helena, “A Longing Tribute to Our Confederate Soldiers.” In reality, this memorial was a tribute to “The Lost Cause,” a concerted effort by Southerners to convince the nation that the Civil War had been a noble and just cause.

Four years ago, as part of my Civil War Heritage series in the Tribune, I wrote the story of this Confederate memorial, dedicated in 1916 at a time when race relations in the country were at the nadir with segregation and lynching reaching their peak. Regrettably, Montana shared these decades of racial discrimination, after all our state was the “exile of choice” for thousands of former Confederates and their families during and after the Civil War.

My purpose at that time was to provide the historical background of that “strange” monument in Montana.

Today, there are those who would tear down the Helena fountain.

Several years ago, when this proposal first gained attention in Helena, I applauded the decision of the City Commission to have the Lewis and Clark County Historic Preservation Commission write an appropriate interpretive sign to place beside the fountain to denounce slavery and give context to time and place that caused its erection.

That was a reasonable solution to the problem, and the Preservation Commission developed an excellent sign. I am appalled to learn that this interpretive sign has never been put in place.

Don't tear the fountain down, but make very clear the great wrongs of slavery and that we have long passed (I hope) the reasons for it being there. The only better solution would be to erect a larger monument on the site dedicated to the Grand Army of the Republic and to the soldiers, both black and white, who fought so bravely and victoriously to save our union,

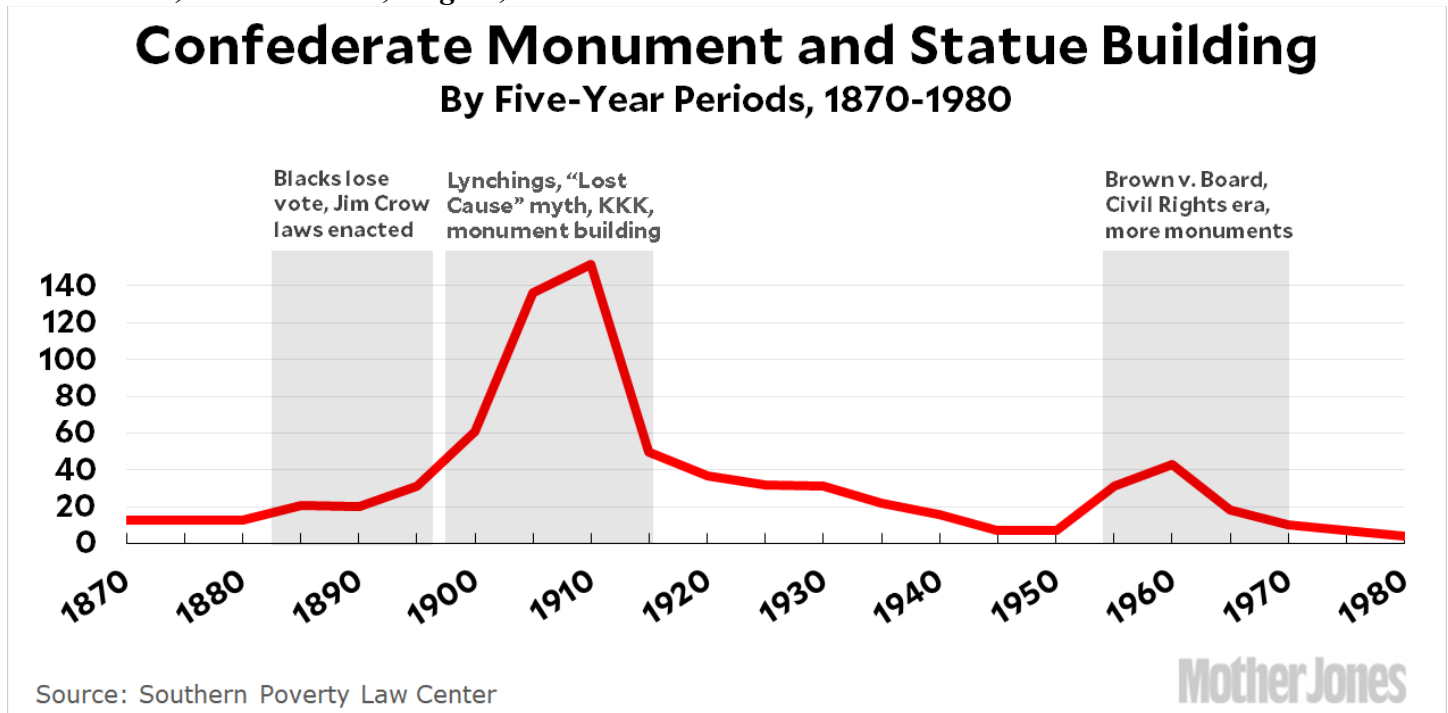
Tearing history down equates to “hiding” inconvenient truths from the past. Let it stand as a symbol to that time and place, but let it be viewed in the context of a strongly worded interpretive sign.

Beware of rushing headlong into the environment of George Orwell’s “1984.”

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## Source G: The Real Story Behind All Those Confederate Statues

Kevin Drum, *Mother Jones*, Aug 15, 2017



This illustrates something that even a lot of liberals don't always get. Most of these monuments were not erected right after the Civil War. In fact, all the way to 1890 there were very few statues or monuments dedicated to Confederate leaders. Most of them were built much later.

**1865-1875:** Reconstruction Era (Right After Civil War)

**1875-1895:** Reconstruction Era ends. Lynchings skyrocket. Blacks are steadily disenfranchised, allowing Southern whites to enact Jim Crow laws. In 1896, Jim Crow is cemented into place when the Supreme Court rules it constitutional.

**1895-1915:** With blacks disenfranchised and Jim Crow laws safely in place, Southern whites continue their campaign of terror against blacks. This era features continued lynchings, the growing popularity of "Lost Cause" revisionist histories, a resurgence of white supremacy organizations like the KKK, and the erection of Confederate statues and monuments in large numbers.

**1915-1955:** Jim Crow reigns safely throughout the South.

**1955-1970:** The civil rights era starts after the Supreme Court rules in *Brown v. Board of Education* that Jim Crow laws are unconstitutional. Southern whites mount massive and violent resistance, and start putting up Confederate monuments again.

Yes, these monuments were put up to honor Confederate leaders and soldiers. But the timing of the monument building makes it pretty clear what the real motivation was: to physically symbolize white terror against blacks. They were mostly built during times when Southern whites were engaged in vicious campaigns of subjugation against blacks, and during those campaigns the message sent by a statue of Robert E. Lee in front of a courthouse was loud and clear.



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## Source H: Monument Madness

*John Fund, National Review Aug 27, 2017*

There's scant evidence that even a majority of African Americans favor tearing down Confederate statues.

In *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the historian Edward Gibbon notes that in its latter stages, Roman citizens were fond of vandalizing or removing monuments to an unpopular leader. Historians called the practice "damnatio memoriae," or condemnation of memory. In today's America, the tragic events in Charlottesville have led to a Roman-like effort to erase history. Just a quick overview of events in New York, where I live:

New York mayor Bill de Blasio says he will look into removing the statue of Christopher Columbus that has stood near Central Park since 1892. The City Council speaker, Melissa Mark-Viverito, already supports removal of the "invader" Columbus. Separately, Jewish groups are calling for the removal of a statue of Peter Stuyvesant, the first mayor of New York City, but an anti-Semite. Governor Andrew Cuomo has called on the U.S. Army to rename two streets at New York's Fort Hamilton that honored West Point graduates Robert E. Lee and Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson.

Cities all over the country — from Baltimore to Los Angeles — are removing statues to Confederate leaders or soldiers. But it has gone beyond the Boys in Gray. Vandals defaced a statue of Abraham Lincoln, of all people, last week in Chicago. A local Chicago pastor wants to remove George Washington's name from a park because he was a slaveholder. Ditto for Thomas Jefferson. Al Sharpton, the shakedown artist, is against the Jefferson Memorial. I understand the sentiments involved, but this is government as performance art. Before this goes any further, perhaps we should ask ourselves if the audiences calling for performing these ritual acts of historical removal are that large.

Two new polls by liberal media outlets cast doubt on just how much support for a statue culture war there is. The polling gives reason for skepticism. An NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll last week found that 62 percent of respondents thought statues honoring leaders of the Confederacy should "remain as a historical symbol." Only 27 percent of those polled wanted the statues removed. It is noteworthy that, by 44 percent to 40 percent, African Americans did not support removing Confederate statues.

Andrew Young, the former mayor of Atlanta who served President Jimmy Carter as his U.N. ambassador and was a confidant of Martin Luther King, made clear where he stood at a forum this month when asked about removing Confederate statues:

I think it is too costly to refight the Civil War. We have paid too great a price in trying to bring people together. . . . I personally feel that we made a mistake in fighting over the Confederate flag here in Georgia. Or that that was an answer to the problem of the death of nine people — to take down the Confederate flag in South Carolina. I am always interested in substance over symbols. If the truth be known, we've had as much agony — but also glory — under the United States flag. That flew over segregated America. It flew over slavery.

No one doubts the sincerity of many of the people who are calling for the removal of monuments. But in a free society, censorship and the sandblasting of history carries a price. The slope between caring for the feelings and sensibilities of some and enshrining a form of cultural authoritarianism is both slippery and sloping steeply downward.