**Road Trip to Civil War Monuments and Memorials**

**Senior Project in American Studies 2011**

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**Welcome** **(Teresa Goddu, Director of American Studies)**

**Introduction to the Tour** **(Katie Des Prez)**

Hi, I’m Katie Des Prez, and I’m part of Professor Goddu’s class for the senior American Studies majors (along with my lovely classmates). Our class is actually only a small part of a much larger group of classes and events about this anniversary.

We have some small bits of information to pass out to you so that you can see what our planned stops are and have a neat souvenir to take back with you. If at any point you have questions, please ask one of us. (Hand out the handouts here … since that’s what you normally do with handouts. Hand them out. Now proceed …).

On this road trip we’d like to give you all an introduction to how the Civil War is remembered in Tennessee, specifically by looking at monuments related to the Civil War throughout Nashville. We’ve been using different theoretical frameworks as well as our personal experiences with monuments and memorials to explore how Americans, particularly Nashvillians and people at Vanderbilt, remember the Civil War.

To understand how Americans remember and commemorate the Civil War, we focused on a few key concepts: the national narrative, the built environment, memories and their relationship to national identity, and how these memories get turned into memorials and monuments — or are erased when they are not represented as memorials or monuments. I’ll spend some time talking about our understanding of these ideas so that we can all be on the same “theoretical page” as we make our way through the tour.

By the national narrative, we mean the story or stories that guide the way we think about our national identity — or who we are as Americans. There are lots of national narratives in the U.S. relating mostly to major turning points in our national history — particularly national traumas such as wars. For example, the national narrative about WWII is that the United States was a liberator and a defender of human dignity against the Nazis, even though there were Japanese internment camps within our own borders. There can be different narratives relating to the same event, too, but usually we think of the national narrative as the most popular (and usually most favorable to the U.S., or, in the case of the Civil War, to the victors). The national narrative about the Civil War focuses on postbellum reconciliation between the North and the South, and is the most dominant of three narratives that we’ll come back to in a little bit. These narratives get inscribed in our landscape through monuments and memorials.

Lots of people confuse monuments and memorials as being the same thing, but they aren’t necessarily. While all monuments are memorials, not all memorials are monuments. Monuments are the physical structures that serve as commemorations: parks, historical markers, statues, or buildings. Some famous national examples are the Washington Monument, the Lincoln Memorial, and Mt. Rushmore. Memorials, on the other hand, don’t have to be built structures. Flags, re-enactments, and commemorative holidays such as Memorial Day can all be considered memorials. Monuments and memorials can embody everything from grief to praise to anger, and even though both memorials in general and monuments specifically are important, today we’ll focus more on physical monuments.

As I said earlier, monuments and memorials are the way that our national narrative becomes physically present in the environment around us. This is the “built environment,” the structures that tell us about our national stories. The stories that become part of our built environment are necessarily privileged over the ones that don’t, since they gain a permanent physical presence that reinforces their importance. Because of this privilege, monuments and memorials are never politically neutral, even if the artists behind them claims that they are. Each monument is a representation not only of an event or a person, but of a particular interpretation of that event or person. If a memorial or monument to something is absent from our physical landscape, the message may be that a certain political moment or agenda is not worth bringing forward, and should be or will be allowed to fade into the background of our national memory.

The Civil War is a really interesting case when thinking about memorials and monuments. The Civil War was a major national trauma with lots of competing interests at stake: slavery as a political and economic question, the nature of our national government, and gender and race relationships within and outside of the slaveholding system are just a few examples. Because the Civil War was so devastating to both the North and the South, and because of the multitude of political interests at stake both during and after the war, the Civil War sparked a flurry of monuments and memorials, each with its own story to tell.

There are three main types of stories that are told about the Civil War and that are present in our national and state monuments and memorials to the war, and these three narrative strains are the guiding frame for our road trip today. We relied on David Blight, whom some of you might have seen when he was on campus in March, to help us learn how to understand monuments and the stories they tell us about the Civil War. Blight talks about the three narratives in his book Race and Reunion. I’ll mention each of them briefly and then explain them in a little more detail.

The Reconciliationist Narrative, meaning the narrative that smooths over the deep-seated racial conflict at the heart of the Civil War in favor of a narrative about shared experience, shared trauma, and re-establishing peace between North and South.

The White Supremacist Narrative, which manifests itself most tamely as the Lost Cause narrative, or a narrative that paints an idyllic picture of Southern “lifestyle” before the Civil War and negates slavery’s role in a more direct way than the Reconciliationist narrative though these two can be hard to parse out sometimes because both of them were promoted by the WHITE interests that guided the national narratives about the Civil War. More violently, the White Supremacist Narrative manifests itself as the KKK, lynchings, and legalized segregation.

The Emancipationist Narrative, which is the narrative of the continued gains of African Americans in their rights from the moment of Emancipation through and beyond Civil Rights.

The Reconciliationist Narrative, promoting the idea that the Civil War was a traumatic national fracture in an otherwise whole nation, increasingly dominated our national memory and is the most prominent narrative today. Both the North and the South held a stake in promoting this narrative, and it was practically and ideologically easier for white Northerners and Southerners to focus on re-instating peace rather than tackling the difficult question of what to do with emancipated slaves. The narrative served the North because of the North’s political and economic interests in maintaining ties to the South, and downplayed the idea of the North as a national aggressor. It also downplayed the role of slavery in the war, focusing on re-integrating the secessionists instead of successfully integrating the newly freed slaves into their citizenship. This way, even the North didn’t have to face the complicated questions of race as part of its “recovery” from the Civil War.

The White Supremacist Narrative is the one that is these days mostly considered a “fringe” narrative, but that in reality still has political sway. When we talk about the White Supremacist Narrative, we don’t necessarily mean the KKK and neo-Nazis that are the “crazy” part of White Supremacy, although these are surely elements of this Narrative. What we really mean is the sometimes toned-down, politicized version of white supremacy that allowed, for example, the continued underrepresentation of blacks in voting and other rights of citizenship and the continuation of legalized segregation until the 1960s. Some people would argue that White Supremacist narrative is manifested now in the Tea Party, which could be thought of as a push-back to Barack Obama’s presidency.

The Emancipation Narrative draws a trajectory for the freed slaves to full rights of citizenship, education, leadership, and political representation. It is a politically easy idea to handle that Civil Rights and later Barack Obama’s presidency were the culmination of the Emancipationist Narrative, but to our class, it seems that the Emancipationist Narrative really has all but been erased, mostly in favor of the Reconciliationist Narrative. There is the claim that we now live in a post-racial society where the Emancipationist Narrative wouldn’t be relevant anymore, but the physical landscape where we live and the continued racial disparities in our country both negate that idea. As we’ll see throughout the tour, the black story about the Civil War and its meaning get seriously downplayed, and slavery as the cause of the war is hardly openly acknowledged; at best, it is depicted as one of many factors that were present in causing Civil War. One thing that we do want to emphasize is that slavery was the cause of the Civil War, even if it was a cause in a larger national context. We want to point the Emancipationist Narrative as one that deserves a lot more attention than it currently receives in our national narrative and in our built environment. Part of the goal of this road trip is to show what physical markers of the Emancipationist Narrative in Tennessee are present, and part of the overall goal at the end of our class will be to make our own contribution to that narrative not only by exploring and acknowledging the problem of its absence, but also by coming up with our own (theoretical) designs for a counter-memorial to Confederate Memorial Hall, which Sara will discuss later.

Thank you all for coming. Again, please don’t hesitate to ask questions of any of us throughout the trip, and we hope that you enjoy the afternoon.

**Stop 1: The Bicentennial Mall (Katie Des Prez)**

*At Bicentennial Mall, but before letting everybody loose:*

With the idea of national narrative in mind, our first stop is the Bicentennial Mall at the State Capitol. I’ll give you a little bit of background about the monument before we leave the bus.

The Bicentennial Mall was built in 1996, during the administration of Gov. Ned McWherter, in order to preserve the view of the Tennessee State Capitol from the north. The Mall’s website says that it was modeled after the Mall in Washington, D.C. Most of the literature about the Mall emphasizes the Bicentennial Mall’s relationship to the National Mall in D.C. Even though the Mall is a celebration of Tennessee’s statehood, it’s clear that the Bicentennial Mall was not only supposed to be reflective of Tennessee’s individual history, but also of Tennessee’s place in the nation as a whole.

Tennessee was a very active site for battles in the Civil War, second only to Virginia in the number of battles, even though it was the last Southern state to secede and the first to re-join the Union. Some of the most famous battles that took place in Tennessee are: Shiloh, Stones River (in Murfreesboro), the Battle of Nashville, and the Battle of Franklin. The last two were instrumental in the Union’s eventual victory. Shiloh was a famously disastrous defeat for the Confederate army, although there were heavy casualties on both sides (totaling over 13,000 for the Union and over 10,000 for the Confederacy) and it was the bloodiest battle in American history up to that point. Stones River was even bloodier, with almost 29,000 combined casualties, and there were the highest percentage of casualties of any major Civil War Battle.

Tennessee is an interesting case to think about when remembering the Civil War not only because it was such a “hot” place for battles, but because of its own internal division, which to a certain extent reflected the overall division of the country. “A house divided” applied as much to Tennessee as it did to the U.S. as a whole, although the state’s official position was in favor of the Confederacy. Even though Tennessee did secede, there were lots of pro-Union sympathizers in Tennessee, especially in East Tennessee. Both the Union and the Confederacy had key strategic locations throughout Tennessee — Ft. Negley was a Union garrison, for example. Since Tennessee was both strategically and ideologically a key point of intersection in the Civil War, memorials and monuments are really scattered through the whole state.

Tennessee also provided many of the black troops for the Union and Confederate armies, but their story tends to get underplayed in the built “landscape of memory” throughout our state. Even Ft. Negley, which in large part is supposed to tell the story of Tennessee’s Colored Troops, only dedicates a portion of its information to telling us about the black soldiers and slaves involved in building and fighting at Ft. Negley. It focuses more on the story of white Union and Confederate soldiers than it does on the black troops and slaves/indentured servants who built the fort. During the road trip we’d particularly like to draw your attention to how the African American memory of the Civil War is underrepresented in the group of monuments we will visit, even though slavery was the central point of conflict that sparked the Civil War. We had to work quite a bit to find a way to incorporate the African American experience into this road trip, for example, which is indicative of a larger national tendency to bury that very experience.

This is the first indication that the main narrative that we’ll see at the Bicentennial Mall is the Reconciliationist Narrative, which is also the main narrative nationally. This monument is all about integration, re-integration, and continuity, which we will see when we take a look at the spot along the wall dedicated to the Civil War.

*At the Bicentennial Mall*

First of all let’s look at the layout of the Bicentennial mall. The entire park is designed to give visitors a view of the capitol at the top of the hill, so Tennessee’s statehood is the central focus of the monument, which makes sense since the mall was erected to celebrate 200 years of statehood. The focal point that counters the capitol building itself is the “Court of Three Stars,” another emblem of Tennessee’s statehood that has the image in the center of the TN state flag on the ground. The idea of statehood starts and ends the monument, then, and if you look at the map you can see how the pathways along the middle of the park move inward toward the Court of Three Stars, almost like the focus that you would see from light on a mirror — the capitol building and the court of three stars physically “reflect” one another. This is similar to the Washington Mall, where the capitol building and the Lincoln Memorial — two symbols of national government and national unity — frame the other tributes to national history

Another thing that is important to notice in this monument is the parallel drawn between natural and political history. Even though the capitol is the main focus of the mall, the first thing that you run into when you come to the mall from the capitol is the map of Tennessee and the fountains representing its rivers. The stone seems to flow down from the capitol steps, as if the capitol building and the rivers of Tennessee were somehow naturally related. The stone continues around the whole of the park in a more or less unbroken “stream” — with one key break in this spot, which I’ll talk about in more detail in just a few minutes.

This framework sets up the more general theme of continuity throughout the monument. Right now we are along the “Pathway of History,” which happens between the two major symbols of statehood. The pathway of history begins several billion years ago and continues to the 90s, looking to the future. Since this whole trajectory takes place within the confines of the physical frame of statehood (the capitol and the Court of Three Stars) we get the idea that history — both natural and political — is part of Tennessee’s statehood, as if Tennessee has always existed as a state (not just as a tract of land).

The only place where this continuity is broken is at the spot in the Pathway of History where we are now, the spot that represents the Civil War. The pylon at the middle of the site is a very literal interpretation of the division between NORTH and SOUTH, that also defined the divisions in Tennessee. If you look at the map, you can see that other memorial spaces, like the Statehood, Centennial, and WWII memorials, are circular and unbroken, maintaining continuity with the rest of the wall. At this spot, however, there is a fracture in this continuity. This is a physical representation of the trauma that the Civil War represented.

The Civil War is presented as a threat not to Tennessee as an individual state, but as a threat to national unity. Even though Tennessee’s individual position in the war is the focus, there is an emphasis on how the internal division in Tennessee, with some factions supporting the North and others supporting slavery and secession, looked like the country at large. The quote about the Civil War says that it: “Pitted the nation against itself,” suggesting not two separate entities at war, but two parts of a whole temporarily separate.

At the end of the Civil War, the wall once again becomes continuous and goes on along its “natural,” stream-like pathway. This shows us most clearly how the Bicentennial Mall presents us with the most popular national story about the Civil War, the Reconciliationist Narrative. National events such as WWII and Civil Rights take center stage, once again emphasizing Tennessee’s place in the nation as a whole. We literally see that Tennessee’s is reintegrated into national history after the break that was the Civil War. This message clearly takes the Reconciliationist tract.

Another way that this monument shows us the Reconciliationist Narrative is by downplaying slavery as the main cause of the way. The Pathway of History does mention slavery, but it also makes a point to mention that a small minority of Tennesseans were slaveholders, and that those who were supposedly worked alongside their slaves. The idea of wanting to maintain a brutal and abusive economic system is not the main focus when the monument mentions slavery, which is also true of the Reconciliationist Narrative on a national level, which instead focuses on rejoining the North and South rather than fully granting the rights and privileges of citizenship to the newly freed slaves or investigating why slavery could survive for so long in our country.

One more thing to think about: The last thing on the Pathway of History is a quote from Governor McWherter that says, “Tennessee’s first two hundred years represent a proud past we can all learn from and the beginning of a future without limit,” which again emphasizes the continuity central to the Reconciliationist Narrative. From the break in the Civil War forward, Tennessee reaches back to those several billion years ago and looks forward, as a state fully reconciled with the nation.

**Stop Two: Hermitage/Tulip Grove Slave Memorial (Shemsi Frezel)**

*On the bus: Emancipation Narrative*

As Katie mentioned earlier, the Emancipationist narrative focuses on the role of slavery as the cause of the Civil War. Through this narrative the Civil War becomes solely the war to end slavery and emancipate the slaves. It is easy to understand why this way of looking at the Civil War is the least favorable of all three narratives because it puts the shameful institution of slavery and issues of race at the center of the war. The emancipationist narrative is especially hard to deal with in the Southern landscape because African Americans seeking to celebrate and exert their newfound freedom often served as another reminder to the white South of the loss of a way of life that hinged upon slavery. Ultimately emancipation and the era of Reconstruction that followed the war failed to undo the ills of slavery and integrate black people into American society. The link between the Civil War and race gets repressed and the focus of the emancipation narrative disappears in favor of the Civil Rights Movement. A century after the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation and the end of the Civil War, African Americans were finally able to enjoy the fruits of citizenship through the Civil Rights struggle. The Civil Rights Movement becomes the actualization of the promises of emancipation. Due to its success the Civil Rights movement replaces emancipation as the dominant African American narrative in this country.

Of the three Civil War narratives the Emancipation narrative is the most underrepresented in monuments and memorials to the war. Our class struggled with selecting local monuments/memorials for this tour that would speak to the emancipation narrative. Through numerous class discussions and a close reading of excerpts of Erika Doss’s *Memorial Mania* we came to the conclusion that slavery is so hard to memorialize because of the shame tied to it. Doss explains that memorials to slavery become “sites of shame” and as a country we prefer memorials that progress our national narrative forward and tell stories of success. The shame of slavery effects both black and white people. For black people there is shame in the stripping of humanity of slaves and the more contemporary white shame that this country allowed slavery to happen at all. Memorials are meant to play on memory and provide closure to whatever is being memorialized. The trouble with slavery is that it’s not something we want to remember and its not something that has been left squarely in the past like other events that are memorialized**.** In many ways slavery continues to haunt our larger national narrative.

Ultimately, the most important aspect of the emancipation narrative is the fact that it takes on race directly and for that reason is the least dominant. Not only is the denial of this narrative apparent in the lack of memorials and monuments but even in our current moment. The 150th anniversary of the Civil War is happening during the administration of this country’s first black president. Although the slave memorial we’re going to see makes mention of our current African American president the Emancipationist Narrative still is not gaining much attention during the sesquicentennial even though it seems Obama’s presence would spark an interest in this narrative.

*History of the Memorial*

The memorial that we’re going to see is a slave burial on the Hermitage grounds at Tulip Grove. The Hermitage is the home and plantation of president Andrew Jackson. Tulip Grove was the home of one of Rachel Jackson’s nephews and was annexed into the Hermitage grounds in 1963. While recently the Hermitage has been trying to shed light on its role as a Southern plantation through archeological excavations of slave quarters on the grounds, the dominant slave narrative told at the Hermitage is that of the happy, faithful slave. I’m not sure how many of you all have visited the Hermitage before if you have you should be familiar with the story of Alfred Jackson. Alfred Jackson was one of the slaves at the Hermitage who chose to remain on the plantation even after emancipation when most other slaves left. At the time of his death, Alfred requested to be buried near Andrew Jackson because he wanted to be close to him in death as he was in life. This is sort of a classic example of a faithful slave.

But the memorial that we’re going to is a bit different. Tulip Grove occupies an interesting space because it is technically apart of the Hermitage but separate in terms of space. The first time I came to the Hermitage for this class I had no idea that this memorial existed because its not featured in the official tourist information about the Hermitage and it is most certainly off the beaten path. If you don’t know that the memorial exists then its very unlikely that you’ll see it on a visit to the Hermitage. It seems a bit odd that a plantation that is trying to reintroduce slavery to its history would marginalize its memorial to slavery the way the Hermitage has but its also pretty fitting with how elements of the emancipation narrative are dealt with.

There are 60 slaves buried at the memorial that were found in 2006 during the construction of a subdivision nearby. Its unclear whether or not these were slaves who worked on the Hermitage or not but the Hermitage was chosen as their “final resting place” anyway. In 2009 a memorial designed by Lee Benson, an art professor at Union University, was chosen by the Hermitage to mark the burial site. Benson’s memorial to the sixty slaves is called “Our Peace, Follow the Drinking Gourd.” A reference to the song associated with the Underground Railroad sung as a way to guide slaves to freedom. The drinking gourd is code for the Big Dipper Constellation which contains the North Star that escaping slaves would follow to freedom. There is a sense of sad irony because the slaves buried at the site never reached freedom. With all of this in mind I want us to listen to the song as we drive up to the burial site.

*At the site: Reading of the Memorial*

As you all heard the song encourages escaping slaves to follow the drinking gourd to freedom. Even though the slaves that are buried here were technically never able to follow the drinking gourd, perhaps Benson’s intention with the title of the memorial “Our Peace, Follow the Drinking Gourd” implies that death and a proper burial provide an escape from slavery and some sense of peace and freedom. Since slavery is still so connected to trauma and shame creating a memorial to slavery is problematic. One way of getting around the trauma and shame of slavery in memorial making is to focus on freedom rather than enslavement. Benson’s memorial focuses on freedom in two ways. There is a direct reference to freedom in one part of the title “follow the drinking gourd” and then there is this idea that there is a sense of freedom through death which is where the “our peace” part of the memorial title comes into play. However, this reading of the title of the memorial is totally up for discussion and if any of you have any other ideas you would like to share feel free.

Benson set out to create an apolitical memorial to slavery which means that he didn’t want to focus on issues of politics in making the memorial. I think instead of focusing on all of the issues swirling around slavery in a large context he wanted to draw attention to the humanity of these specific slaves in this particular context.

He uses the mediums of stone and trees because of their lasting qualities. There are seven trees in the shape of the Little Dipper enclosed by 30 stone boulders. The trees evoke the idea that freedom was achieved through the natural landscape. The wall of stone that marks the burial is also meant to symbolize the division that the Civil War caused in our country’s narrative much like the break we saw at the Bicentennial Mall. Although Benson set out to make this memorial one that takes into account the humanity of the slaves its interesting that he memorializes them through natural means, the trees and boulders. Art historian Kirk Savage’s book *Standing Soldier Kneeling Slave* really made clear for our class just how hard it is to memorialize the black body of this era. Slaves **can’t** be shown as too strong or powerful because that can be threatening **to whites** and to show a subordinated slave at this point in our history would be offensive. Even today Benson side steps this issues through his use of nature through the stones to represent that which can’t be represented in marble or bronze like some of the other monuments we’ll see later on.

What I find most powerful about this site is the way in which it speaks to the emancipation narrative as something hidden in plain sight. Once I found this memorial I wondered how many people drive down Lebanon Pike, past this burial, without the slightest idea that it exists. The entire setting in addition the memorial itself all work to infuse the memorial with meaning perhaps beyond what even Benson intended. For me being here reminded me of the William Faulkner quote “the past isn’t dead and buried. In fact it isn’t past.” Which in many ways sums up the south. As you all can see there’s a highway right past this memorial and the fact that these bodies were found during the construction of a subdivision speak to the idea that the past is still very much apart of the present and reflect the collision of old and new south.

You may have also noticed the Confederate Memorial right next to the slave memorial but the two don’t seem to communicate with each other visually. Here again we see the separation of the Civil War narratives and the separation of race and slavery from the war. Over and over we see the cause of the war, slavery, overlooked in the memorializing of the war.

*Back on the Bus: Larger Context*

This idea of slave memorials as burials is not unique to the Hermitage’s memorial. The burial or physical absence of the slave’s body becomes the memorial, how they are remembered. This has to do with the problem of representing the black body in sculpted form. At Mt. Vernon, the home of George Washington their slave memorial uses text rather than a physical representation to memorialize the slaves who worked there. Although the Mt. Vernon slave memorial was built in 1929, it was largely ignored by visitors until 1983 because of its location away from the popular attractions of Mt. Vernon much like the memorial here.

Another example of a burial ground serving as a memorial for slavery is the monument in Lower Manhattan in honor of 400 slaves who were found in 1991 during the construction of a federal building. The monument that now marks the site as sacred was not erected until 2003. This burial site has several components all made of stones from both Africa and America. There is an Ancestral Liberation court which is a sunken space with symbols of the African Diaspora around it like the sankofa, an Ancestoral Chamber that is meant to mimic the interior of a slave ship and the Wall of Remembrance which reads “For all those who were lost, For all those who were stolen, For all those who were left behind, For all of those who were not forgotten.” Here again the black body is not represented but alluded to through symbols and text much like the Mt. Vernon and Hermitage memorials.

There is a common thread of these types of memorials being these semi-forgotten, depersonalized mass burials. These types of slave memorials are different from other types of mass burials like cemeteries because there is no sense of the individual here rather all slaves are thought of as similar and memorialized in a similar way. Yet I think all of those elements make them even more powerful in their ability to convey the life condition of slaves in a permanent way. Personally, I think that the absence of personalized slave memorials in this country that are not burial grounds, speak to the fact that slavery is still so much apart of our country and painful to confront. Perhaps in a similar way that the issue of slavery forced many Americans to take sides during the Civil War, a memorial or monument to slavery would divide rather than unify its viewing public.

**Stop Three: Mt. Olivet Cemetery (Jill Vaum)**

*Before arriving at the cemetery*

I’d like to begin with a quote that many of you might have seen in one of the most famous expressions of the Lost Cause narrative, a concept we will be discussing at the next stop, Mt. Olivet Cemetery and Confederate Circle. “There was a land of Cavaliers and Cotton Fields called the Old South… Here in this pretty world Gallantry took its last bow… Here was the last ever to be seen of Knights and their Ladies Fair, of Master and of Slave… Look for it only in books, for it is no more than a dream remembered. A Civilization gone with the wind…” The introduction to the film adaptation of Margaret Mitchell’s *Gone with the Wind* presents the romanticized mentality and tone exemplified in our next stop.

At the beginning of the tour, Katie provided an overview of the three manners of dealing with the war and one’s role in it. One of these was White Supremacy. The Lost Cause narrative, though its own, unique portrayal of Civil War history, remained closely aligned with the White Supremacy narrative. After Emancipation, white people in the North and South felt threatened by and unsure of the integration of African Americans into society during Reconstruction. Thus to maintain some level of control, white people needed to tell a story of the war that was not based on race but on something else. In soliciting sympathy they needed to highlight the individual valor and heroism of their men and the devastating destruction. This is why the nationwide mentality of white superiority linked Northerners and Southerners behind the Lost Cause—a story of history that allowed Yankees with both abolitionist sentiments and racist opinions to back their slave-holdings enemies. Also, because of slavery, white men held the most powerful roles in society, allowing them to perpetuate a self-pitying view of the war. After Reconstruction failed, the South quickly returned to an economic system that exploited cheap black labor to fill the pockets of wealthy white landholders. Because few things changed and the reign of Jim Crow began shortly thereafter, white supremacy could blossom. We just saw an example of a funerary memorial to slaves, yet it was only built a few years ago and utilizes a mass burial style. A vast number of lavish cemeteries honoring white soldiers all over the country like Mt. Olivet, but no comparable site existed for African Americans until long after the war. This fact of our built landscape reveals just how powerful the Lost Cause mentality was in the postbellum period.

Our next stop, Mt. Olivet Cemetery, sets the stage for a discussion of the “Lost Cause” narrative, or the story created by the Confederate states. It is important to realize Southerners needed to defend their role the war, especially after the massive loss of life and vast property damage that would leave the South crippled for the next century. Memorials, as built memories of this period, needed to highlight a reason for this tragedy and the honorable duty felt by those men to defend it. Also, the fact that the South did endure incredible loss is irrefutable, and they needed to honor that death and destruction in some way. The criticism of Mt. Olivet focuses on its encapsulating a falsified history of the war and not its appropriate need to commemorate the massive loss of life that afflicted both sides. With a combined Union and Confederate death toll of around 620,000, the damage was extensive. Memorials are a way of coming to terms with the past in order to move on, which can certainly be seen here. Thus, the ‘Lost Cause’ stood as a mentality of Southerners and it referred to the loss of the surely worthwhile reason for which the South went to war. Many ‘Lost Cause’ monuments glaze over the reason for fighting the war and focused on the honor of the men who died to defend it and the tragedy of their death. The reason war was fought is rarely if ever mentioned, removing all focus from any possible hypocrisy.

In addition to the themes above, Confederate Circle provides an example of women’s role in memorializing the war. Throughout our research of various Civil War monuments, both Union and Confederate, we found that women formed the fundraising and building committees for many of these sites, and Mt. Olivet is no exception. In 1869 the Ladies’ Memorial Society of Nashville purchased the plot of land in the cemetery with the highest vantage point, a symbol of the importance of the men to be buried there and the cause for which they fought. These women paid to have soldiers moved from other battle sites to be interred here, in what would be called Confederate Circle. Unlike the Carnton Plantation that we will be visiting next on the battlegrounds of the Battle of Franklin, Mt. Olivet saw no Civil War combat. The soldiers were moved here to be part of the larger memorial effort, making the sight as constructed as the myth behind it. 1,500 soldiers, including seven generals, were laid to rest in this plot of land. Another comparable burial site exists at Pittsburg Landing, TN—the site of the Battle of Shiloh. Unlike Mt. Olivet this land was the actual site of a major battle and the majority of the men interred there are unidentified. However, like Mt. Olivet, Shiloh buried soldiers who died in skirmishes all over the state to that spot where they could be honored. Those men lay under small tombstones labeled with numbers. Here the names are inscribed in small, flat stones in the grass, which are dwarfed by the massive statue in the middle of the circle, also funded by the women of the Memorial Society. Women, who endured the destruction of their families and the loss of their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons, may have felt the most severe pain in the wake of the war, which explains their motivation for both rationalizing the need for these men’s death and the need to honor their memory. A woman, Mary Kate Kyle, is also present in this burial ground in honor of her role as a spy during the war and as an aid to Confederate troops in the Nashville area.

*Entering the cemetery and traveling up the hill to Confederate Circle*

As we enter the cemetery and approach Confederate Circle, notice all the small plaques that dot this roadway. They provide information about the tombstones and the Confederate soldiers buried there. Imagine now the soldier there interred standing by the plaque, ready to share the story of his life and heroic death. You can experience this phenomenon once a year, as the Sons of the Confederate Veterans of Tennessee hold an annual reenactment in October to honor their ancestors at Mt. Olivet. They describe their organization and its goals in the following way: “The SCV continues to serve as an historical, patriotic and non-political organization dedicated to insuring that a true history of the 1861-1865 period is preserved for future generations.” Such an event reveals a slightly unsettling truth of an extant belief in the ‘Lost Cause’ and its perpetuation in Nashville today. It also leads to a discussion of reenactments and how they fit into war narratives. Are they a way to preserve history? Are they an excuse for racist white men to relive the glory days? Either way they illuminate Americans’ fascination with the Civil War, one of the few scrimmages fought on US soil. Countless numbers of books, films, art works, and plays have been made about the ‘War between the States’, each with an interesting story to tell. Considering reenactments begs the question of why so many people are obsessed with the Civil War. Is it because the antebellum period has been painted by some as romantic era of gentility, lost in a modern era? Is it because it was the only event in our history that literally tore the nation apart? Is it because it defined the future of both the North and South that reverberates today? Consider your own thoughts as we progress throughout the tour.

*At the circle*

As we approach the circle you’ll see the large obelisk topped with an anonymous Confederate soldier. Roark will discuss the common soldier as a prominent motif for Civil War memorials as it relates to the Battle of Franklin monument, but here he symbolizes honor and dignity of all the men buried beneath him. The larger than life size figure is draped in military regalia, holding his gun down by his side, and gazing pensively into the distance. The manner in which he holds the gun, firmly gripped and drawn close to his side, suggests his control over it and consequently the reasons for wielding it. Surely a gentleman, evoked here by the hat and cape and a confidence reflected in his stance, would only go to war with good cause. The pensive gaze also suggests a thorough consideration of the war and his duty to fight in it. The size, pose, and dress of the soldier evoke the very sense of dignified duty the ‘Lost Cause’ narrative featured. He stands prominently atop the roughly forty-foot granite obelisk, consecrated in 1889.

There are four inscriptions, one on each side of the statue. The first provides the dedicatory information: “Erected through the efforts of women of the state, in admiration of the chivalry of men who fought in defense of home and fireside, and in their fall, sealed a title to unfading affection,” and the second, reinforcing the idea of the monument serving as a memorial to all dead Confederate soldiers, says: “The muster-bull of our dauntless dead is lost, and their dust dispensed on many fields, this column sentinels each soldier grave as a shrine.” Another inscription reflects the religious and poetic undertones prevalent in the ‘Lost Cause’ to elicit sympathy and to divert any blame on the South for its succession. It reads: “This shaft honors the valor, devotion and sacrifice unto death of Confederate Soldiers of Tennessee. The winds of heaven, kissing its sides, hymn an everlasting requiem in memory of the unreturning brave.” The final side embodies the ‘Lost Cause’ mentality perfectly in saying, “In the magnanimous judgment of mankind who gives up life under a sense of duty to a public cause deemed just, is a hero.”

*Leaving the cemetery*

In visiting Confederate Circle, we have seen a visualization of the way in which the South chose to remember the war. The monument, as did the ‘Lost Cause,’ focused on the brave men who fought for a worthy cause. However the “cause” is never really mentioned and this constructed history chooses to erase slavery as the major factor in fighting the war. The semantics of slavery versus states’ rights as the cause for the South’s succession simply disappears from this history, and in dealing with the devastation the war, Southerners focused more on the morally sound men who made up the South rather than the immoral reason for the war.

While this site also paints Nashville as highly sympathetic to the Confederacy, it is worth noting that in 1867 Nashville National Cemetery was constructed and served as the resting place for thousands of Union soldiers and in the late 19th century was reported as the second largest national cemetery in the country. Like the process of forming Confederate Circle, Union soldiers were moved from surrounding battlegrounds to be buried at the National Cemetery. In light of this chronology, it is possible to view Confederate Circle as a response to Nashville National Cemetery, as a means of ensuring the presence and prevalence of the ‘Lost Cause’ mentality. This information does, however, reveal the truth about our city around the Civil War, that it was a city divided and it held ties to both the Union and the Confederacy. Though Tennessee was an ex-Confederate state, it was the last to succeed, another indication of split opinion, and for much of the war it was occupied by Union forces. Throughout the rest of the tour, pay attention to the evidence of Nashville’s dual loyalties, evidence that only a portion of the city felt like a great era was now “gone with the wind” but others were ready for the progression of the modern nation.

The Lost Cause unquestionably remains attractive today for two reasons. First, as this tour will reveal, our nation continues to struggle with a slave holding past and frequently chooses to avoid the subject rather than confront it. Second, this narrative includes a pleasant nostalgia that provides a more attractive view of history than the truth. Today, with mass city development and industrialization, the North has lost much of its visible history. The South, however, is still marked by large plantation homes and sweeping magnolias, which paint it as a more peaceful landscape. These homes as tourist attractions, much like our next stop, proves people’s infatuation with this story and time period. That modern vision of history prevails, and without built structures reminding us, people forget that those beautiful homes used to be the sight for the oppressive institution of slavery.

**Introduction to Franklin** **(Lori Murphy)**

Franklin is an important stop on our tour today because it is the site of the Battle of Franklin that took place on November 30, 1864. During this battle over 9,500 soldiers were wounded, killed, or went missing, with 7,000 of those being Confederates. The battle itself took place on one of the smallest battlefields of the Civil War measuring only 2 miles long and 1.5 miles wide and it represented one of the only night battles of the war. It is often said that this was the bloodiest five hours of the entire civil war and that the massive attack launched by the Confederate Troops against the fortified Union Army during this battle was an even larger assault than the famous Pickett’s Charge at Gettysburg, thus making Franklin’s other battle nicknamed “The Gettysburg of the West”. During the battle of Franklin there were more Confederate deaths that in the 2-day Battle of Shiloh, the 3-day Battle of Stones River, and the 7-day Campaign in Virginia for the Federal Army.

The Carton Plantation and the Carter House remain the two primary Civil War landmarks within the city of Franklin today. Although we will not have the opportunity to visit it today, you should take note that the Carter House was located at the center of the Union troop’s position during the Battle of Franklin and, like the Carton Plantation and many southern homes in that day, it became utilized as a makeshift Confederate hospital during and after the battle. You can see evidence of the gruesome battle through over 1,000 bullet holes remaining on site, including the most battle-damaged building from the Civil War.

Before we arrive at the Carton Plantation and I give you some background on it’s significance within our tour today, Roark is going to tell you a bit about a focal point in the center of historic downtown Franklin that serves as a monument to the Civil War.

**Stop 4: The Common Soldier Statue, Franklin, Tennessee** **(Roark Luskin)**

*As we drive into Franklin*

If you have ever been to Franklin, I am sure you have driven past the monument we are about to see without a second glance, but it is actually a significant type of monument in the context of the Civil War – the common soldier monument. The common solider monument in the Franklin town square was unveiled on November 30, 1899, on the 35th anniversary of the Battle of Franklin.

As we have seen now at Mt Olivet, after the Civil War, Southern women took up the Lost Cause narrative, formed chapters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, and were responsible for raising money and funding the erection of Civil War memorials. The Confederate Monument in the town square in Franklin is no exception. The funds that erected this common soldier monument, $2,700, were raised through the efforts of Franklin Chapter number 14 of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

Common soldier monuments are typically a lone infantryman, standing at the top of a column holding a rifle upright. Importantly, they always show a white male figure. These common soldier monuments helped define a new white masculinity. This masculinity celebrated a white man as a rugged individual willing to be a part of a group to fight for a larger cause. This is conveyed through the physical structure of a common soldier monument. Because the monument had become so standardized, it could represent a large army. But with one man atop the column, it gave importance to the individual within the group. Thus, the women who funded this monument helped define, construct and support white masculinity at the time.

North and South alike erected these figures creating essentially a mass-market for these monuments. The figures represented in both North and South are almost exactly identical, save for minor details of uniform decoration. These ubiquitous, normative white, male statues became a symbol for reconciliation between the North and South. It made it appear that the men who lost their lives on the battlefield had few differences. The physical appearance of common soldier monuments does not illustrate any idealistic differences between the North and South, so they become a part of the reconciliation narrative, mourning the losses of the individual men. Men from both sides could bond over the shared loss and shared celebration of battles well fought.

It is interesting to note that the black soldier is virtually absent from common soldier monuments across the United States. The image of the black soldier was too tied in to slavery, and therefore became unrepresentable. In lieu of celebrating the manhood and liberation of former slaves through their military participation, the North and South chose to reconcile their differences by commemorating the while soldier, and avoiding the divisive difference that set the war in motion – slavery. It is worth noting however that the Robert Gould Shaw Memorial in Boston does celebrate the African American soldier. The monument shows Robert Gould Shaw on a horse, leading his infantry – composed of African Americans. Shaw led the first infantry of African American soldiers, the Massachusetts 54th volunteer infantry.

While the physical statue of a common soldier monument does not convey the narrative of a particular side, the inscription on the base certainly can. In this case, there is a strong Lost Cause narrative.

*Driving past it*

Notice that this monument is exactly on par with a traditional common soldier monument. A white man in his Civil War uniform atop a column with his gun. To illustrate how this is a clear Lost Cause narrative, I would like to read to you what the inscriptions read on the base of the column. On one side it just says it is erected by the ladies of the UDC – the other three sides however convey true Lost Cause rhetoric:

* "In honor and memory of our heroes, both private and chief, of the Southern Confederacy. No country ever had truer sons, no cause nobler champions, no people bolder defenders, than the brave soldiers to whose memory this stone is erected."
* "We who saw them and knew them well are witnesses to the coming ages of their valor and fidelity; tried and true, glory-crowned. 1861 - 1865"
* "Would not it be a shame for us If their memory part from our land and hearts, And a wrong them to and a shame to us. The glories they won shall not wane for us. In legend and lay, our Heroes in Grey Shall ever live over again for us."

Therefore, common soldier monuments can be used for reconciliation as well as to promote the Lost Case narrative of the South.

**Stop Five: Carnton Plantation (Lori Murphy)**

The Carnton Plantation provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the tragedies of the Battle of Franklin by serving as a memorial to fallen soldiers and a reminder of the gruesome nature and of the Civil War. However, I believe that you will see today that the war story provided by Carnton is complicated by romanticized notions of the Old South and a glaring absence of slavery within the context of the war. To help frame your understanding of Carton Plantation within the larger historical narrative of the Civil War, the two narratives you should be most familiar with as you explore the site today are the Reconciliationist Narrative and the Lost Cost Narrative. Having a basic understanding of these will be crucial to your ability to interpret the history and memorialization provided within the site.

The Reconciliationist Narrative proved the most prevailing in the post-war decades because of the need to reconcile two broken halves of the nation. The Reconciliationist Narrative does not focus on the ideological differences of the two sides, which is why you will find slavery as a causal factor absent from the story today, but instead focuses on the shared tragedy of both sides in this war. You will see that a key takeaway the museum displays is the way in which the Union armies benefitted from being federally established troops—from the quality and consistency of their uniforms to the materials of their canteens, visitors are left with the idea that the resources of each side were not comparable and that this was the major contributing factor to the Confederate army’s struggle to match up against Union forces. This narrative shed light on the way the nation as a whole suffered as a result of the Civil War and sought to bring the sides back together. This narrative prevailed and was so successful because there was an economic interdependence between the North and the South and this newly reunited nation needed some common ground for unity to last. Placing an emphasis on what united the two sides rather than divided them was central to the nation’s ability to unite in the years post-war, but also played a large part of what has kept slavery subdued within the national post-civil war narrative.

The Lost Cause narrative also reflects the desire to selectively forget in order for the South to move forward. Rather than identifying any wrongdoings of the Confederacy, it elevates the individual over the group and focuses on the suffering of the Common Soldier (linking back to the monument Roark described to us earlier). It ignores slavery as the cause of the war and focuses on issues of states rights and the North’s success because of its superior resources, even painting the South as the victim of the war. Nostalgia is central to this narrative as Southerners look backwards to a better way of life of the Old South, clinging tight to remnants of old southern culture and the elitism of the plantation days.

This plays out at Carnton Plantation today as it is a popular wedding venue for upper-class Nashvillians seeking to connect their wedding with the traditions of the Old South. With the beautiful garden set as the background to matrimony just yards away from the Confederate cemetery, this site oddly juxtaposes romance with tragedy, marriage with death. Carton boasts its beauty, history, and traditions as reasons for the up and coming to want to begin their marriage on the premise stating, “Your wedding will go down in history…From two American Presidents to socialites at soirees, Historic Carnton Plantation has been a gathering place for ladies and gentlemen over the last two centuries…make your wedding part of our tradition….[and] to treat your guests to a true back-in-time experience, we will open the 1826 McGavock family home and invite them inside for a walk-through tour and glimpse into the history of Tennessee.” This romanticized view of the plantation plays into the Lost Cause narrative as visitors are encouraged to recall a better time when life was simpler. It seems that this nostalgic view of the past undermines the real tragedy of the war and completely erases the true causes for it. Thus, people are encouraged to remember the wonderful way life was in the Old South—but of course are not intended to remember the barbaric institution of slavery that lead to the war in the first place. This dichotomy just proves another way that people are encouraged to selectively remember the history of the South.

*Now to give you a bit more background of the grounds itself*

The Carnton plantation was built by the former mayor Randal McGavock in the year 1826 and had been a site frequented during 19th century by many Southern elites and famous leaders including President Andrew Jackson. It was part a major part of the battlefield during the Battle of Franklin and because of the vast bloodshed, the home of John and Carrie McGavock at Carnton became the largest Confederate field hospital inexistence during the war. The home still shows the scars of the war with blood having permanently stained the wooden floors—serving as a reminder of the thousands of lives lost there.

In 1866 the McGavocks donated a portion of their land for this site to become a cemetery for 1,481 Confederate Soldiers who were killed during this gruesome battle. The McGavock Confederate Cemetery is the largest privately owned military cemetery in the United States and serves as a memorial to all the fallen soldiers in the Battle of Franklin.

The Carton Plantation has been made famous today through a piece of civil war fiction by Robert Hicks called *The Widow of the South.* This novel is based on the true story of Carrie McGavock, the wife of Colonel John McGavock, and her story marries the history of the battle with romanticized notions of old southern culture—both of which prevail on the site today. It is only through the dedication of Carrie McGavock that the identities of the buried soldiers were protected as not only did she tend to these men in their dying hours, she personally reburied them and had their gravesites marked with their names.

When you enter the gravesite, you can find a binder designating the numbers and locations for all the soldiers with known identities. The gravesite is organized by the state of each soldier who died, with stones commemorating the number of individuals from that state who lost their lives in the battle. With the exception of notable generals or those soldiers whose families later created larger headstones to commemorate their lives, most of the small stones for the soldiers are difficult to make out even a name or number on them.

The preservation of the Carton Plantation, battlefield, and McGavock cemetery are critical to remembering this bloody battle of the Civil War as most of the Franklin battlefield has been lost to commercial development. Although the area around Carnton was formerly the location of the Franklin Country Club golf course, it has been in the process of conversion to a city park though as you can see the remnants of tennis courts just yards away from the tombstones still remain.

As you explore the site today, I want to make sure you take note of six particular areas:

1. **The Museum**
   1. Which perpetuates the Reconciliationist Narrative through the artifacts and stories of Union and Confederate soldiers and lays the groundwork for the Lost Cause narrative to be seen across the plantation
2. **The Carnton House**
   1. Which served as the largest Civil War field hospital during the war
   2. Although we will not be able to go inside today, you can peek in the windows and learn more about it’s history inside the museum
3. **The McGavock Confederate Cemetery** 
   1. Which serves as a Memorial to all the fallen soldiers of the war and where nearly 1,500 Confederate Soldiers are buried
4. **The Slave Cabin**
   1. Which serves as the only salient reference to slavery on the site but does not actually play a role in the war narratives presented here
5. **The Garden**
   1. The contemporary site of upper class weddings and a manifestation of the nostalgic Lost Cause narrative
6. **The visitor’s center gift shop**
   1. Where you can see the culmination of the various narratives embodied at Carnton through the artifacts and books sold from *Five Tragic Hours—The Battle of Franklin,* a detailed historical account of the slaughter of this battle, juxtaposed with *View From the Porch Cookbook* offering the best recipes of the McGavock family and friends

Take your time wandering through the visitor center and museum, examining McGavock cemetery, and exploring the exterior of the Carnton home and slave cabin during our tour today and try to identify the ways that each of these narratives, themes, and contradiction plays out during your tour. With your knowledge of the Civil War and what you have learned today, do you believe the Carnton Plantation does justice to memorializing the tragic Battle of Franklin? Or, do you feel that omission, romanticism, and nostalgia cause a critical part of this story to be lost?

We will have a half hour on the grounds today so make the most of your time here.

Please be sure to meet back at the bus no later than ­­­\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Stop Six: Nathan Bedford Forrest Monument (Adam Weinstein)**

In just a little bit we'll be passing by another instance of the white supremacist narrative. We'll only get to take a quick glimpse of it but, really, that might be the best way to view the Nathan Bedford Forrest Statue.

For those of you unfamiliar with the name, Nathan Bedford Forrest was a famous and well-renowned general for the confederacy during the Civil War. What he's probably best known for, however, is founding the Klu Klux Klan after the war had been fought and lost by the South. The Klan, founded in 1865 in Pulaski, Tennessee, as you might know, formed as a terrorist group looking to restore white supremacy by threats, violence, and the murder of blacks and white Republicans.

Despite, or perhaps even because of his association with white racism, NB Forrest has played a central role in the commemoration/celebration of the Civil War in TN. He's always been somewhat of a venerated figure in Tennessee and throughout the south. We've already been to the Mt. Olivet cemetery today, and, of course, there are a lot of tributes to him and his confederate service there. You might have also noticed that, at the Bicentennial Mall, that Forrest was quoted as a role model for southern civility on the big stone timeline. The founding of the KKK, which follows shortly after his quote at the end of the civil war period, is in much smaller lettering, and mentions nothing of Forrest's involvement in it.

Forrest was even MTSU's official mascot until the 1970s (and there's still a Nathan Bedford Forrest hall at MTSU, but Sara will talk about that later). There's a Nathan Bedford Forrest park in Memphis. And right now, as we push through the spring of 2011, they're also big fans of Forrest down in Mississippi. There the Sons of the Confederacy are currently petitioning to put him on license plates to commemorate the sesquicentennial of the Civil War. While GOP governor Haley Barbour just recently announced that he would veto such an action, Barbour had, in the past, stated that he would not denounce Forrest, saying, "I don't denounce individual people whether they've been dead 100 years or not.” There's been speculation that his recent opposition to the NB Forrest plates stems from fears in his camp that giving them support could hurt his perception for a possible presidential campaign.

As of 2007, Tennessee had 32 dedicated historical markers linked to Nathan Bedford Forrest, more than are dedicated to the three former Presidents associated with the state: Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and Andrew Johnson. The Tennessee legislature has also established July 13 as "Nathan Bedford Forrest Day." From all of this, we can surmise that, while they may not be the majority, supporters of the White Supremacist narrative are still a part of the American population today, and they're even in positions of power within our government.

The NBF statue they we are about to see is part of this larger history of celebrating NBF and with him a white supremacist narrative. It was built quite recently—in 1998 ...so this tribute to the founder of the KKK is just 13 years old. It's built on private property, I haven't been able to find out exactly whose, but unlike most of the other monuments that we're checking out today, it didn't have to go through the same process of getting majority approval for public funding.

That being said, it's hard to argue that this statue exists just because one wingnut wanted it here. Given all of the other shows of support for NB Forrest, this statue is definitely part of a white supremacist narrative that's still being celebrated today. You'll notice that the statue is surrounded by the flags of the confederacy, making its place in the White Supremacist narrative even more clear. Think about it: NB Forrest literally stands in the middle of the Confederate side which fought to keep slavery.

Also keep in mind, as we pass by the statue, that it's located on one of the main thoroughfares into Nashville. In a lot of ways, the statue provides visitors a rather unfriendly welcome to the city; one that goes beyond the Lost Cause narrative, and into a more violent and racist White Supremacist narrative. In a sense, it really frames the New South and Nashville in terms of the Old South's worst narrative.

Now, honestly, the first time I saw the statue we're about to see, I thought it was more of a satire of the white supremacist narrative than anything else. I say that because, as we pass it by, you might be surprised by the statue's appearance, since it's not exactly the most... I don't know, let's say “elegant” of arrangements. So, when you see how absurd it looks, just keep in mind that the statue was made unironically. Someone actually intended to sincerely honor NB Forrest with this statue.

So you might find yourself asking now, who, in this day and age, would want to create a monument for the founder of the Klan? Well the “masterful artist” behind this work is a man by the name of Jack Kershaw. For those of you unfamiliar with *that* name, Jack Kershaw is most famous for challenging the official account of the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. He was the defense lawyer for James Earl Ray, and claimed that Ray was innocent and had been set up by mystery man named Raul who masterminded the conspiracy to kill the civil rights leader.

Something tells me that Kershaw probably wasn't looking to poke fun at Forrest or the confederacy- not intentionally, anyway. By the way, for those of you who are wondering, the expression on Forrest's face there—well, according to Kershaw, “He's crying, 'follow me!'” Yeah... his words, not mine. People still look at this guy as a hero- people who might not be the most talented artists- but people, nonetheless. People who make big statues out of fiberglass, and gaudy colors, and hilarious facial expressions- but, you know... people. People who have no sense of scale... alright, I'll stop now... You'll see what I mean in a second, here.

Okay, we're going to pass by it pretty quickly on the right in a moment here, so make sure you get a good look...

Obviously, I'm not a big fan of the people who support the White Supremacist narrative, or their intent. However, while they may be certifiably insane people, it's important that we understand the narrative they're trying to propagate with their monuments. That does not mean, however, that we need to appreciate them. In fact, let me give you all a reading of the NB Forrest statue, because if we're going to say that this statue fails, we should at least understand why and in what ways it fails so hard.

First of all, there's the horse—it's no accident that the statue depicts NB Forrest on it. According to Kirk Savage, “the equestrian image was the standard formula for the representation of military heroes, precisely because it did encode the idea of command in the apparently natural dominance of man over animal.” Apparently, Mr. Kershaw never got the memo that in order to show dominance of man over animal, the figure on the horse should actually look to be in control of it. The fact that the horse seems to be rearing out of control, and the fact that it's so big compared to Forrest, make it even harder, somehow, to take this monument seriously. So, while the equestrian statue was probably made with the intent to show Forrest's dominance and leadership, it instead makes him appear diminutive and insignificant.

You may have noticed that a lot of the statues that you've seen in your lifetimes have been made from marble, or granite, or limestone, or maybe even bronze. There's a reason for that. Sure, they might not be the most colorful materials, but rarely do they ever look tacky, gaudy, or cheaply made. That being said, the gold and silver colored fiberglass that the NB Forrest statue is made out of may have been intended to make Forrest appear regal. Instead the result of the execution is that it looks tacky, gaudy, and cheaply made. Who knew, no one would be willing to be put down the scratch to make a solid gold and silver NB Forrest statue.

The location of the statue also informs how we read it. I've already mentioned how the statue sits along one of the major entrances to the greater Nashville area. However, its location along the highway, as we just saw, doesn't really give anyone a chance to do much more than take a glimpse at it. While, I'm sure the placement statue was intended to put the image of NB Forrest in the minds of as many people as possible, the fact that no one can actually stop to see it further trivializes it, because it cannot represent more than a passing thought. The exception, I suppose, is if you're stuck in a traffic jam—in which case, you're probably not going to be in the right frame of mind to appreciate such a statue, let alone one to NB Forrest. This actually brings me to my next point...

You see, shockingly, not everyone is a fan of Nathan Bedford Forrest. As you might have read in our brochure, the statue has been shot on several occasions and repaired each time. I haven't been able to get much detail on the shootings, but who knows... maybe someone was running late on their way into the city and decided enough was enough. Whatever happened, a fence now stands around the statue to prevent further assaults on it, and it's apparently under constant surveillance. Forrest once claimed that he had 40 horses shot dead from underneath him during the war—so, I guess you could say the owner wants to prevent the public from BEATING A DEAD HORSE!!! AAAAAAAAAAAAAAH! SO FUNNY!

Hilarious. I have to admit, the first time that I wrote this script, the only thing I set out to do was to make some jokes about how nuts someone would have to be to make an NB Forrest statue. I didn't want to acknowledge the narrative of the monument because I felt that, to do that, would be to grant it some sort of legitimacy. Since then, however, I've come to realize that in order for us as a group to truly understand the legacy of the Civil War, we have to come to grips with the fact that some Americans are still in favor of the White Supremacist narrative. We need to ask ourselves what it means that there are so very few monuments that acknowledge slavery and its role in the civil war, when even the most overtly racist members of the White Supremacist narrative can and have received a great deal of not just acknowledgement, but actual fame and glory.

This statue is laughable, make no doubt about that—not only does it fail to portray Forrest the way the artist probably intended to, but it actually achieves the opposite effect. There's nothing funny, though, about the prospect that future generations may remember the Civil War as the time when NB Forrest fought, and not as the time that our country took its first major step towards the equality of all of its people. Thanks for listening.

**Confederate Flags (Sara Nour)**

There are actually several versions of the Confederate flag. The design that we think of today as THE Confederate flag was actually the battle flag of the Confederacy. The first flag, which flew from 1861 to 1863, was very similar to the flag of the United States. You can see a picture of it in your handout—It had three alternating stripes of red and white, with white stars on top of a field of blue in the top left corner. This flag was so similar to the American flag that it caused a lot of confusion for soldiers on the battlefield. The battle flag was then created as a solution. This is the flag that you’re probably familiar with, and it’s the one that flies around the statue of Nathan Bedford Forrest and at the Confederate Circle at Mt. Olivet. It features a blue X, outlined in white on a red background, with thirteen white stars inside the X. Today, this flag is generally recognized as a symbol of the South due to its connection to the Confederacy. It is a tangible representation of the white supremacy narrative, because it prioritizes the memories of white Southerners at the expense of others. In this way, the flag is itself a type of memorial – a memorial to the lost cause, to the romanticized Southern way of life, and to the battles that were fought in defense of it. The Confederate battle flag is controversial today because of disagreement over what exactly it memorializes. Some associate it with racism, slavery, and discrimination, but others defend it as a symbol of southern heritage. Many schools have banned depictions of the Confederate flag on tshirts as part of their dress codes because they believe it to be a divisive symbol. However, many southern states allow license plates to incorporate pictures of the flag. And in touristy shops in downtown Nashville, you can buy the Confederate flag on shot glasses, tube tops, bathing suits, and more. Even if we got rid of all of the overtly Confederate merchandise, the flag is still ingrained in our history. The state flags of Alabama, North Carolina, and Mississippi are all inspired by the battle flag.

In 2000, the Confederate flag became even more politicized due to the controversy over the flag’s placement at the South Carolina capitol. Since 1961, the flag was flying in a position of prominence atop the tallest dome of the building. The 2000 bill moved the flag from the dome down to ground level, where it now flies in front of a memorial to fallen Confederate soldiers. South Carolina, led by Senator John C. Calhoun, was one of the strongest proponents of states’ rights during the 1800s. Their decision to remove the flag is itself an effort at reconciliation – when it was on top of the capitol dome, it symbolically linked the entire state to the lost cause narrative. Moving it by the soldiers’ memorial lessened the weight of the flag’s meaning.

With this in mind, we’d like to ask you a few questions. What do you all think the role of the flag as a memorial should be? Where have you seen the Confederate battle flag? Where do you feel it is appropriate, and where do you feel it is offensive?

**Stop Seven: Battle of Nashville Monument (Roark Luskin)**

*As we approach the monument: Markers*

All over Nashville, you may or may not have noticed, but there are roadside markers telling the story of various decisive moments in the Civil War that occurred in Nashville. One is right at the cross-walk between med center and the Commons on 21st. It reads:

“Near here, the interior defensive lines ran southwest to cross Harding Pike; the total length of these works was about 7 miles. First garrisoned by Wood’s IV Corps, it was occupied Dec. 15 by Donaldson’s Division of Quarter-master employees. Part of the breastworks can be seen on Vanderbilt campus, 300 yards west.”

Another marker is right at Green Hills mall. It is almost impossible to read these if you are maintaining safe driving techniques. So what is the point if hardly any people notice them? Well, they deal with the issue of what do you do with a consecrated space. How does one memorialize a battlefield without compromising suburban expansion? If every single battlefield in Tennessee or Virginia was sectioned off as a memorial, there would be very little space to live. It is a compromise between remembering history and moving on. They seek to preserve the history of a location in a modern time.

We are living and studying on a memorialized landscape full of markers telling us what occurred here 150 years ago. Though we are constantly surrounded by this history, we fail to see it. History has become a naturalized part of our landscape, and we don’t notice the historical markers denoting civil war battles any more than we notice the markers on Vanderbilt’s arboretum trees.

*Transition to Battle of Nashville Monument*

Try and notice these markers as we drive to our next location, which is itself a marker to the Battle of Nashville—the Battle of Nashville Monument. It is tucked into a suburban neighborhood, impossible to see unless you are specifically looking for it. In fact, when I first went to visit it for this class, we passed it and had to make a u-turn. This monument, being so hard to find, illustrates that the “New South,” or suburban expansion, has swallowed the “Old South” of tradition.

On our road trip today we are lucky to have Professor Fryd from the Art History department who has actually written a paper on the Battle of Nashville Monument. Hopefully I will do it justice.

The Battle of Nashville monument was unveiled on Armistice Day, 1927 (November 11). When we arrive at the monument, what you will see is a granite obelisk with an “Angel of Peace” on top. Below her are bronze figures of two horses, one representing the North, the other the South, divided by a “wall of antagonism.” A bronze youth (representing the younger generation of World War I) unites the horses and pulls them forward into a new generation – under a rippling banner that reads, “UNITY.”

This is clearly what Blight would call a reconciliation narrative. In the inscription on the base of the monument, it reads, “Let The Past Be Past : Let The Dead Be Dead. --Now And Forever American!”

*At the monument*

The Monument’s goal is two-fold: first, to convey a reconciliation between North and South to fight together in World War I. And second, as a monument to peace.

This monument calls itself a monument to the Battle of Nashville and World War I. To lump those two wars together is rather absurd. This monument seeks to reconcile differences by showing a new generation that is trying to push the old wounds and divisions of the Civil War aside, and look to World War I, where all Americans had to unite and fight together against an outside evil. However, by doing this, it buries history and doesn’t really say anything, as the reconciliation narrative is a vast over-simplification and a stifling of history in favor of moving on.

In terms of memorializing the Civil War, the inscriptions on the base are almost insulting. They basically say, let’s all just move on and forget why this war started and what it was about. It is unacceptable to gloss over and ignore the central issue of slavery. It is certainly easier to do so, to say let’s all just heal and forget the past, but we also need to admit a critical and embarrassing part of our history – which this monument fails to do.

In terms of a monument to peace, this is illustrated by the lack of military instruments, which is reiterated in the inscription on the base of the monument where military items are referred to as utilities, “A Monument Like This, Standing On Such Memories, Having No Reference To Utilities, Becomes A Sentiment, A Poet, A Prophet, An Orator To Every Passerby.” By not using any type of military symbol on the statue, the manly individuality of common soldier monuments as seen in the Confederate Monument in Franklin, is negated. Instead, it this monument purports values of unity, loyalty and patriotism to country. In calling this a monument to “peace,” it refuses to acknowledge the truth of the Battle of Nashville, or the Civil War. Peace is the ultimate arm of reconciliation – to seek peace over knowledge of the armed struggle.

The Battle of Nashville Monument, in name only, as it seeks to blend the Civil War with World War I, seeks both to consecrate the land that was fought on, but also to exemplify peace and to move on and heal wounds. To combine these two wars ignore history, and ignores a critical part of the story – the cause of the war.

**Stop Eight: Fisk University (Brittany Chase)**

The last stop we’ll be making before returning to Vanderbilt’s campus is Fisk University, a Historically Black College founded in 1866 just after the end of the Civil War. This university was designed for the education of recently freed slaves, and has since provided African Americans with a high level of education and promoted their leadership and success among the community. It is one of the most prominent schools that gave African Americans a sense of agency by recognizing the struggles and needs of freedmen and promoting their knowledge and progress in the community. As we pull up to the University, you’ll notice a statue near the center of campus of W.E.B. DuBois, which honors this man who worked extensively to promote the emancipationist narrative.

A graduate of Fisk University, Harvard, and the University of Berlin, DuBois was the most educated black man in America during the late 19th century, and wrote many books to share the black experience both before and after the Civil War, and spread awareness of African American life. His work *The Souls of Black Folk* is a collection of essays on racial prejudice, the economic oppression of blacks in the South, and the development of African American culture before and after emancipation, and through these essays he allows the voices of the freedmen themselves to tell the story. In exposing the painful accounts of freedmen’s daily lives, DuBois forges a narrative that countered the romance of the Lost Cause and of National reunion, and inserts the story of hardship and oppression into history. His writing is described as “breathing a heavy sigh of tragedy into America’s optimistic sense of self.” DuBois brings black experience to the center of the story.

I want to read a little bit of DuBois’ work from *The* *Souls of Black Folk* so you can get a sense of his own voice and what he spoke for. In this excerpt, DuBois talks about how the Civil War is remembered:

“Some see all significance in the grim front of the destroyer, and some in the bitter sufferers of the Lost Cause. But to me neither soldier nor fugitive speaks with so deep a meaning as that dark human cloud that clung like remorse on the rear of those swift columns, swelling at times to half their size, almost engulfing and choking them. … on they trudged and writhed and surged, until they rolled into Savannah, a starved and naked horde of tens of thousands.”

With this quotation, DuBois describes the newly freedmen who were liberated, and gives them equal memory among the white soldiers of both the North and South. The slaves involved in the Civil War are just as much a part of the narrative as the soldiers who fought for the Union and Confederacy, and DuBois attempts to insert this narrative into our history through his vivid descriptions of these emancipated slaves.

*In front of the statue*

The statue itself of Du Bois showcases him in regular, middle-class clothing and he holds a stack of books with both hands. He is depicted as a common man, but the inclusion of the books frames him as an educated man who has knowledge and is driven. This contributes to the legacy of the school because it recognizes the achievement of African Americans and acknowledges their abilities, representing the importance of such a university after emancipation. During slavery, blacks were denied literacy and the opportunity to become educated. Developing this knowledge at Fisk University would be their path to freedom, and this is something that DuBois encouraged and pursued through his education and writing. As a black intellectual who became a respected author, DuBois is represented here as a man who stands for knowledge and education, which is what would ultimately lead emancipated slaves to their freedom.

Another key focal point of Fisk is Jubilee Hall, which is located on the hill of campus. This building is a memorial to the Fisk Jubilee Singers and the spirituals they sang to fund the construction of the building and of the university itself. These singers are part of an American a cappella ensemble that performs traditional Negro spirituals. Jubilee Hall and the singers themselves carry on the spiritual musical tradition and acknowledge the importance of black tradition during slavery. They do not erase the difficulties of slavery, but by memorializing these spirituals, help the narrative of slavery live on and be recognized. Jubilee Hall was Fisk’s first permanent structure, and the description outside the building states that it is “a memorial to the spirituals and the singers who sang them.” Honoring the African American spiritual preserves its tradition and historical importance in our history and demonstrates how slaves used song to record and resist slavery. Devoting a building to the significance of spirituals acknowledges the reality of slavery as well, breathing light into this narrative.

The spiritual memorializes slavery by taking the pain endured during this time and turning the black experience into song. These songs served not only as an outlet for slaves, but also as a way to communicate and orally preserve the history of this group of people. Many spirituals discuss directions to escape to the North through the Underground Railroad or were expressions of religious faith of these enslaved Africans. The song “Swing Low Sweet Chariot” was recorded first by the Fisk Jubilee Singers in 1909. This traditional spiritual is short and simple, and speaks of a “sweet chariot” to “carry me home.” These lines are representative of the feelings slaves had while enduring the labor of each day. They dreamt of a chariot to come take them away, freeing them from their enslaved lives. The song continues, stating, “a band of angels comin after me/ comin for to carry me home.” These lines suggest that slaves just hoped for the day that they could be carried to heaven by angels, and would no longer be subjected to the pain and suffering of slavery. A reference to the Jordan River is also made, and is believed to be a coded message about the Underground Railroad with directions to freedom. The lines, “If you get there before I do/ tell all my friends I’m comin too” demonstrates how these spirituals were used for communication between slaves and are a very important part of African American history. The fact that the Fisk Jubilee Singers are still present today and performing these songs the same way they were originally sung, shows how the memory of slavery is still being witnessed today.

*Get back on bus and play “Swing Low Sweet Chariot”*

We’ve been listening to a lot of songs on this trip so far- some to help set the scene and some just for fun. You may or may not have been paying attention to what you’ve been hearing or have listened closely to the words or messages, but I want to point your attention to how music can be a very strong way to reach people, and can serve as a memorial itself. When framing past events, memories, or information in the form of a song, it helps us to remember and memorialize.

It’s interesting to think about how music operates within National memory. We use music to help shape our history and set a tone for how we wish to remember events. We’ve listened to “The South Will Rise Again,” which depicts the white supremacist narrative of the Confederacy and “The Battle Cry of Freedom,” which memorializes the Union troops and Northern Cause. Now that we’ve heard “Swing Low Sweet Chariot,” which is a slave spiritual acknowledging the black struggle during slavery, we have heard the different narratives represented through music.

**Stop Nine: Confederate Memorial Hall, Vanderbilt University** **(Sara Nour)**

As we just saw, Fisk was constructed to embody the emancipation narrative. However, our own Vanderbilt University represents the reconciliationist narrative. I’m sure you’re all familiar with the statue of Cornelius Vanderbilt by Kirkland. Well, the engraving on his pedestal quotes Vanderbilt as saying: “If Vanderbilt University shall, through its influence, contribute to strengthening the ties which should exist between all sections of our common country, I shall feel that it has accomplished one of the objects that led me to take an interest in it.” Hence, Vanderbilt was intended to bring together the North and South in the years following the Civil War. However, it is also haunted by the lost cause narrative through the existence of Confederate Memorial Hall.

Confederate Memorial Hall was initially built as an embodiment of the lost cause narrative. In 1935, the United Daughters of Confederacy gave the George Peabody College for Teachers $50,000 to build this Confederate Memorial Hall, which would provide free housing for women who were descended from Confederate soldiers. In 1979, Vanderbilt acquired Peabody College, including Confederate Memorial Hall. When the building underwent renovations in 1989, its name was first raised as controversial. The administration responded by putting in a historical plaque to explain the history and origin of the name. In 2002, Chancellor Gordon Gee addressed the controversy further in a statement saying that from then on, the building would be renamed ‘Memorial Hall.’ Gee justified this move by saying it was “to ensure that the University’s facilities and symbols do not inadvertently reflect values that are inconsistent with its mission.” His theory was that Confederate Memorial Hall countered Vanderbilt’s mission to reconcile the North and the South. Even thought the official title engraved above the entrance to this building is ‘Confederate Memorial Hall,’ all of Vanderbilt’s literature and everyday conversations have been altered to refer to it just as ‘Memorial Hall.’ Dropping the word ‘confederate’ was therefore meant to create a more inclusive campus by literally erasing the negative connotations of the word. The United Daughters of Confederacy, who originally funded the building, were outraged and sued Vanderbilt for violating their contract. After several court battles, the Tennessee Court of Appeals overturned a lower court’s decision in 2005 and ruled that Vanderbilt was contractually obligated to either keep the inscription or return the money to the UDC. Vanderbilt responded by keeping the inscription on the building as it was legally obligated to do, but effectively erasing Confederate Memorial Hall from campus culture and rebranding it as simply Memorial Hall. As Vanderbilt increasingly establishes itself as a competitive 21st century global institution, it is increasingly necessary for it to separate itself from its past. This is an attempt at reconciliation through suppressing the controversial word and any negative topics associated with it.

Many other universities have dealt with complicated histories including ties to the slave trade or the Confederacy. Some choose to deal with the issue head on. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill countered the common soldier monument at the entrance to their campus by erecting a memorial feet away from it that honors the slaves who helped to build the campus. This memorial includes a table with stools around it that invite you to come contemplate the issues that it wishes to confront. Brown University is in the process of creating a memorial to offset the guilt brought about by the university’s former ties to the slave trade. There has been lots of debate over where exactly should the memorial be on Brown’s campus, because its location – whether in a high traffic area, or secluded – signals how the memorial should be interpreted. However, Vanderbilt is not the only university to attempt to purely erase this negative part of the past. Middle Tennessee State University, close by in Murfreesboro, has been struggling with the name of Forrest Hall, which was originally built to honor Nathan Bedford Forrest. The student government has passed multiple resolutions saying that the name makes students uncomfortable and asking for it to be changed. The university has argued that the name is logical, since Forrest Hall is the ROTC building and Nathan Bedford Forrest was a military general. The debate at MTSU is still ongoing.

Even if we ignore the less attractive parts of our history, they are still factors in who we are today. In the case of Vanderbilt, the word ‘confederate’ is a part of our history, so how should we as a student body deal with it? It is clearly engraved on this building – it’s not going anywhere. The solid materials that Confederate Memorial Hall is built out of imply the stability and permanence of everything that it memorializes. We can erase the ‘confederate’ from university publications, but it will always be here, a concrete representation of our history. Confederate Memorial Hall is situated in the heart of the Commons, Vanderbilt’s effort at investing in the future by creating a sense of community among first-year students. How can we bring together its roles as both a dorm and a living memorial? What larger issues does this controversy raise?

We started today’s journey at the Bicentennial mall, where we discussed national and state memory. Here, we’d like for you to think about campus memory, as it is tied to larger narratives. We are all Vanderbilt students—so how do we want to deal with this embodiment of national narratives here on our own campus?

For our final project, our class will be delving into these questions and creating counter-memorials to Confederate Memorial Hall. We invite all of you to come see the answers that we come up with on reading day, April 27th, at 4 p.m.