

STATUES

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Confederate monuments were built by the children and grandchildren of Confederate soldiers, to honor them and their terrible sacrifice. Those who built them also built and sustained Jim Crow, born with the Supreme Court's 1896 Plessy vs. Ferguson decision legalizing racial segregation. Jim Crow meant the disenfranchisement of African-Americans. It meant state sanctioned oppression, including lynching, enforced by a powerful Ku Klux Klan. It was responsible for a lot more lynchings than rebel monuments.

Jim Crow died with the Supreme Court's 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education ruling outlawing racial segregation, followed by non-violent civil rights protests led by the Rev. Martin Luther King. Jim Crow's death knell was the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act a little more than 50 years ago.

The Confederate officers in their monuments and the rebel troopers in front of courthouses looked out over a changing South, one where African Americans could vote and win elective office, where integration was the law of the land, and where lynchings came to an end.

The statues became sentimental symbols of the past to many who were born less than 50 years ago. To others they are unpleasant reminders of injustices past and present. Those who loathe them have demonstrated to demand their removal. Those who revere them demonstrate to preserve them; among

them Neo Nazis who have joined their KKK brethren. The monuments have come alive.

Ironies abound. The current champions of the Confederacy all seem to have been born Yankees. In North Carolina, a recent law let the state seize control of all public Confederate monuments and hand it to the State Historical Commission, ripping it out of the hands of local elected officials. It was made law by the most powerful politician in North Carolina, State Senator Phil Berger (R), born in New Jersey, and signed into law by then-Governor Pat McCrory (R), born in Ohio. Silent Sam seems to be staying put.

It gets weirder. Maine Governor Paul LePage (R) went so far as to compare Confederate memorials to 9/11 memorials. Maine is the state that produced the 20th Maine Volunteer Infantry Regiment and one Col. Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, hero of Gettysburg and winner of the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Then there is New York, New Yorker President Donald Trump, whose fondness for rebel monuments is matched by his fondness for his rebel flag waving followers. President Trump is Commander in Chief of what once was called The Grand Army of the Republic, which crushed the Confederacy and freed the slaves. Isn't Trump supposed to love winners?

Republicans have switched sides from the days of Honest Abe. And hush my mouth, but they seem to want to bring back Jim Crow. Racism never really went away.

Tea Party Republicans who came to power after the 2010 election decided to make it as difficult as possible for certain groups of likely Democratic voters to vote, particularly African Americans and young people.

Crying "voter fraud!" they limited early voting, banned same-day registration and demanded a government-issued photo ID to be able to vote.

In North Carolina they threatened college students with loss of tax deductions if they voted near their university rather than at home. Armed with the 2010 census, they redrew districts to favor Republicans, diluting the vote of African Americans. With gerrymandered districts, they won veto-proof control the State Legislature and the congressional delegation. They are the contemporary edition of the Southern Democrats of the Jim Crow era 100 years ago, when the Confederate monuments went up.

Federal courts have put a halt to many of their shenanigans, ordering new voting maps for districts gerrymandered by race and overturning other restrictive voting laws. But the Republicans keep trying, and they have the votes.

Meanwhile, statues come tumbling down, as they did in Durham and Kansas City in acts of vandalism; or get hauled away, stealthily in the dead of night, as happened in New Orleans, Baltimore, and most recently Duke Chapel. What are they going to do when the dust settles?

The worst kind of thing they can do is what they did at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill with Saunders Hall. It was built and commemorated in 1922 to the service of William L. Saunders, who died in 1891. Saunders edited the ten-volume Colonial Records of North Carolina, was a member and secretary-treasurer of the Board of Trustees at UNC, his alma mater, and served as North Carolina

Secretary of State for the last 12 years of his life. He also served as a colonel in the Confederate Army and as head of the Ku Klux Klan in North Carolina.

The name drew protests from the start of the millennium. Many wanted it renamed for Zora Neale Hurston, an African-American writer, folklorist and figure of the Harlem Renaissance, with no apparent connection to North Carolina or UNC. A better choice might have been George Moses Horton, an enslaved man in Chatham County who taught himself to read and write, wrote and published a book of poetry and tutored students at UNC, long before his emancipation in 1865.

North Carolina's politically correct powers-that-be chose none of the above. They didn't rename it for a person who meets contemporary criteria for virtue or worthiness. They didn't leave Saunders name intact, adding an honest account of what he actually did during his life. Instead they renamed it Carolina Hall, unoriginal, uninventive, insipid and meaningless. Rather than recording and acknowledging history, they chiseled it away and glossed over it. A real whitewash.

One final irony: the monuments they despise have amplified protesters' voices and their messages. After the monuments have moved, they'll fall silent again — even Silent Sam. All this as Jim Crow makes a comeback.

George Santayana's words, "Those who cannot remember the past are doomed to repeat it," come to mind. But maybe a Southern sentiment, William Faulkner's, is apropos, "The past is never dead; it isn't even past."

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Forgotten History

With all the discussion about racism, the KKK and monuments being desecrated, entire political parties being described as fascist, racists, etc., it is appropriate that we understand what the factual history of the parties is in the U. S. As every schoolchild knows, with the appearance of the Republican Party and Abe Lincoln, slavery was outlawed – at least in states that seceded. After the Confederacy was defeated, the Federal Government established interracial reconstruction governments throughout the South. Needless to say, this did not sit well with the Democrat white power structure that had governed the South since colonial days. Not surprisingly, after the Civil War, the white power structure fought to reclaim what they felt was their rightful place and part of that fight was through the KKK.

The Democrats claim Jefferson and Jackson as cofounders of their party and, of course, both were slaveowners. Jefferson took it a step further by fathering at least, if DNA records are reliable, six children with Sally Hemmings, a slave, who was shipped overseas to him in France when she was fourteen. Jackson had his own unique part of history when he perfected the art of dispossessing Indians and making a fortune in the process, while the Indians became wards of the state on reservations. FDR leading up to World War II was being pressured to integrate the Armed Forces, since bullets do not discriminate, but alas, the Democratic power structure would not allow it, so segregated forces continued.

Two 20th century political figures illustrate the close connection of the Democrats and the KKK. The first was Woodrow Wilson. As was noted in an earlier column, Woodrow Wilson

was fond of showing the film "Birth of a Nation" in the White House. It had changed its name from "the Clansman" under which it debuted in California, in order to broaden its appeal. There was a Wilson quote used in the film, "The white men were roused by a mere instinct of preservation....until at last there had sprung into existence a great Ku Klux Klan, a veritable empire of the South, to protect the Southern country." The NAACP, weighing in on the film called it "3 miles of filth."

Lest you think this may have been a youthful indiscreet writing and not truly Wilson's thoughts as President, consider the following. Before Wilson the Federal Government had been integrated, however Wilson resegregated it. There were protests by W E B DuBois and black professionals – all to no avail. There have been some muted calls for Wilson's name to be removed from some public buildings, but also to no avail. Dinesh D'Souza while being interviewed on his new book "The Big Lie: Exposing the Nazi Roots of the American Left" opined that Wilson "almost single handedly is responsible for the revival of the Ku Klux Klan", pointing out that the Klan had effectively died, but not only was it revived in its former base, but was expanded to states outside of the South. D'Souza added "So, if anyone is going to going on pulling down statues, Woodrow Wilson is a pretty good candidate to have his statue pulled down."

Let's look at another prominent Democrat from later in the 20th century – Harry Byrd, who was a Kleagle (an official recruiter for the Klan, who was paid to sign up members). Byrd in the 1940s stated "The Klan is needed today, as never before, and I am anxious to see its rebirth here in West Virginia" and "in every state in the union." He used the term "white nixxrs" on a TV show, for which he received a mild rebuke,

but black leaders remained silent. One wonders what would have happened had a Republican been so grossly insensitive. In 2010 former President Bill Clinton at Byrd's funeral seemingly provided Byrd with cover for his KKK involvement by saying "He was a country boy from the hills and hollows of West Virginia. He was trying to get elected." There are many dozens of places named for Harry Byrd or his wife, Erma Ora Byrd, in West Virginia. What a fertile place for today's monument removers/desecraters.

However, removing tributes to these liberal/progressive heroes may not be easy. To wit, a number of African American pastors have in the past requested that a bust of Margaret Sanger be removed from the "Struggle for Justice" exhibit at the Smithsonian, because of her ties to the eugenics movement which cast blacks as undesirables ("weeds"). Sanger advocated birth control/abortion, but chiefly for "undesirables", which is why they located so many of their clinics in/near the ghettos. The pastors explained that Sanger was far from a champion for their race. Their request has been denied!!

"Every record has been destroyed or falsified, every book rewritten, every picture has been repainted, every statue and street building has been renamed, every date has been altered. And the process is continuing day by day and minute by minute. History has stopped. Nothing exists except an endless present in which the Party is always right." — George Orwell 1984

As my children used to ask on long trips – "Are we there yet??" and my response was "No, but we are getting closer."

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Lifestyle and Politics

By Jeff Davidson

It happens so often, I ought to expect it. Still, I'm hoping things will be different next time. I switched to a vegan diet years ago for health reasons. My principal foods during the week are greens, beans, and berries. Occasionally, I allow myself to stray, no more than once or twice a week, and usually when I'm out and about with others.

One of my local groups, Triangle vegans, periodically holds a potluck dinner. Everyone brings some yummy dish that contains no meat, fish, eggs, or dairy. Periodically, at the start of meetings, someone will make an announcement of "community interest." Invariably such announcements are political.

PROGRESSIVE IS NOT SYNONYMOUS WITH PROGRESS

Virtually all such announcements represent the 'progressive' viewpoint, which I might or might not share. 'Progressives' believe they are on the "right side" of history, although I can discuss at length how 'progressive' policies have doomed whole subcultures within our society, have decimated the black family, have placed us on the brink of national bankruptcy, et cetera, but I'll spare you.

I've chosen to eat a vegan diet, but I do not subscribe to the mindset that only 'progressives' have the intelligence to do so.

I happen to be a registered independent.

At a dinner recently, in conversation with one of the ladies at my table, I learned that she does not believe any Republican "would choose a vegan diet." I told her, "I know several who are vegans." She was surprised, as if no Republican could muster the requisite brainpower to come to such a decision.

'Progressives' believe that anyone who does not capitulate to their point of view, by definition, must be an idiot. So, in their world, it's nearly impossible that a registered Republican could be a vegan. What's more, it's not likely that a Republican would be interested in donating his time and effort to charity.

For any social cause or community good you can site, the 'progressive' view is that Republicans don't participate in such activities. Why don't they? Apparently Republicans (and this means all of them) are too busy looking out for themselves, seeking to make obscene amounts of money, exploiting others, ravaging the environment, and suppressing women and minority groups, among countless other misdeeds.

ALL SIDES OF THE SPECTRUM

As someone who has voted on all sides of the spectrum, in the last couple decades I have leaned towards the right despite their faults and short-sidedness, because I've witnessed that the left is even worse and causes more damage. I personally participate in a variety of charitable activities. I know other registered independents as well as registered Republicans who

do the same.

I know Republicans who, whether in business for themselves or holding an executive position in a larger organization, are totally committed to the well-being of others. These people wouldn't think of making a dishonest dollar. They participate in community activities. They help others. They look out for the environment.

I have remained silent over the years when I attend functions primarily consisting of 'progressives' even when they endlessly perpetuate the same false narrative. "Everyone here must be a progressive because, after all, we know what's best, such as being vegan. How could a Republican, or someone leaning right, have any interest in this lifestyle?"

NO MORE MR. SILENT TYPE

Hereafter I will speak up. I will not seek to refute their political views however destructive I find many of them to be. I will simply state that I am here for the meal, not the politics, and the two, despite the intense wish of 'progressives' that they are inextricably linked, are not linked.

Jeff Davidson of Raleigh is a regular contributor to Chatham County Line. He is "The Work-Life Balance Expert®", the premier thought leader on work-life balance issues, Jeff is the author of 65 books, among them Breathing Space, Dial it Down, Live it Up, Simpler Living, 60 Second Innovator, and 60 Second Organizer. Visit www.BreathingSpace.com