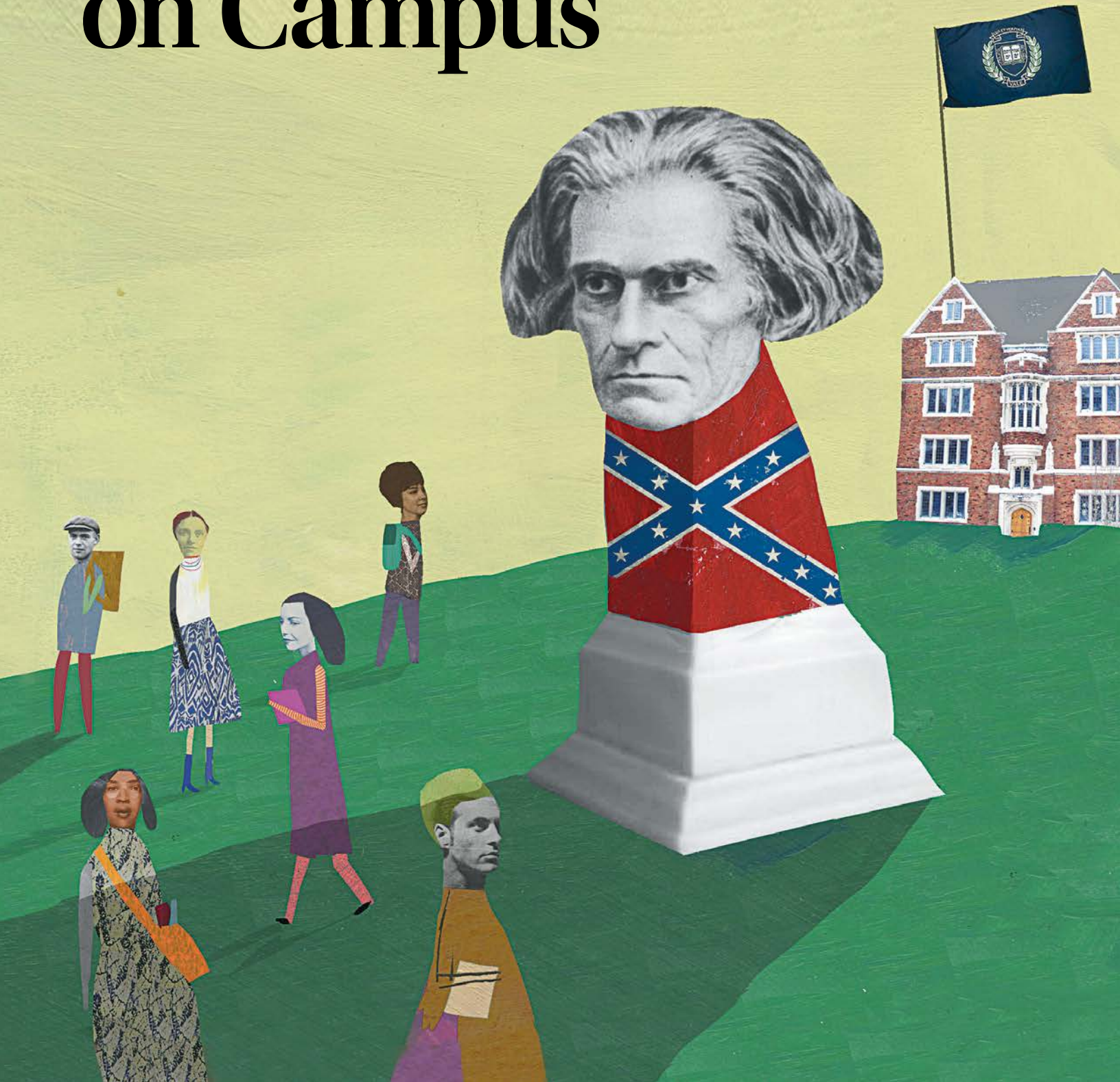


Focus

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Confronting History on Campus



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WOODROW WILSON at Princeton, John Calhoun at Yale, Jefferson Davis at the University of Texas at Austin: Students, campus officials, and historians are all asking the question, What's in a name? And what is a university's responsibility when the name on a statue, building, or program on campus is a painful reminder of harm to a specific racial group? Universities have been grappling anew with those questions, and trying different approaches to resolve them.

4 **Colleges Struggle Over Context for Confederate Symbols**
The University of Mississippi adds a plaque to a soldier's statue to explain its place there.

7 **Removing Confederate Symbols Is a Step, but Changing a Campus Culture Can Take Years**
Statues, symbols, and relics of the past can have an enduring impact on a college's racial climate.

10 **How Colleges Are Turning Their Racist Pasts Into Teaching Opportunities**
Campuses bring their racially fraught histories into the classroom.

12 **Removing Racist Symbols Isn't a Denial of History**
Memorials are as much about universities' current values as they are about remembrance.

15 **Why Removing the Jefferson Davis Statue Is a Big Mistake**
In taking down the symbol, the University of Texas at Austin failed to own up to its own history.

17 **Yale Committee Could Prompt More Talk About Racist Names on Campuses**
The panel will set guidelines for when and how building names should be changed.

19 **10 Questions for Yale's President**
An academic asks Yale's chief what he knows about John Calhoun's role in history.

23 **In Sticking With Woodrow Wilson, Princeton Seeks to Contextualize His Legacy**
The university is looking for ways to diversify campus art to honor champions of inclusiveness.

25 **We're Having the Wrong Debate About Woodrow Wilson**
Any decision to tear Wilson's name off the walls is not just about the past, but the present.

27 **How Names Get Tangled With Money**
On two campuses, rejection of buildings' names comes at a high cost.

Cover illustration by Katherine Streeter for *The Chronicle*



A statue of a Confederate soldier at the U. of Mississippi will get an explanatory plaque that seeks to place the monument in historical context. Many universities are undertaking such efforts, a task that presents difficult choices.

Colleges Struggle Over Context for Confederate Symbols

By CORINNE RUFF

IN A PROMINENT SPOT on the University of Mississippi campus stands a statue of a nameless Confederate soldier. Erected in 1906, it was one of many unveiled across the South as a generation of Confederate veterans reached old age, says Andrew P. Mullins Jr., an associate professor of education and former chief of staff to the chancellor.

Mr. Mullins, who has worked at the university for decades, has spent a lot of time thinking about the history of the statue over the past several months. In 2014 several racist incidents at the university — including the appearance of a noose on a statue of the institution's first black student, James Meredith — prompted the creation of a committee to analyze Confederate symbols on the campus. In the fall, as renewed cries from students surfaced to demand such symbols' removal, the committee, which includes Mr. Mullins and several others, began drafting language to put the Confederate statue in historical context.

Across the country, and the South especially, colleges and universities are coming to terms with their historical ties to the Confederacy, and how those ties are honored through monuments, statues, and building names. In fielding students' calls to remove such symbols, many colleges have promised to add much-needed context — to turn what protesters see as a celebration of white supremacy into an honest historical snapshot.

"We believe in maintaining that history in its historical context, in its place," Mr. Mullins says. For Mississippi's Confederate statue, that means installing an informational plaque. Its exact language was released earlier this month.

The plaque, which will be placed directly in front of the statue, describes when the statue was built and by whom, as well as its role in a historical event in 1962, when a mob rallied there to prevent Mr. Meredith (whose statue now stands just across from the Confederate soldier) from entering the campus. The plaque concludes: "This historic structure is a reminder of the university's past and of its current and ongoing commitment to open its hallowed halls to all who seek truth and knowledge and wisdom."

But not everyone agrees with those words. Students in the university's chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People will present a counternarrative to administrators on Thursday, part of which will read, "While the current university creed advocates respect for and the dignity of all persons, this historic structure is a reminder of the central role of white supremacy in the history of the University of Mississippi and the state of Mississippi."

Mr. Mullins admits that there is a lot more the committee could have put on the plaque, but "we had to make a decision," he says. Among other things, he has been asked why there was no mention of slavery, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, or the University Grays (Mississippi's 11th Infantry Regiment in the Confederate army).

So how did the committee come up with the language it chose? For several months, Mr. Mullins and the other historians and administrators on the committee researched the memorial, listed what they felt should be included, and critiqued one another's suggestions.

Mr. Mullins says he would have liked to include

more detail on the “Lost Cause” — a campaign of Confederate glorification at the turn of the 20th century that occurred alongside the political oppression of African-Americans in the South, and that fueled the construction of statues like the one at Ole Miss. But he was overruled, he says, by other members who said it was better to explain the era as one in which Confederate veterans were dying out.

“My point is, you can’t put everything,” Mr. Mullins says. “And you finally have to compromise and move on.”

AN ‘HONEST RECKONING’

For many colleges, this is a time of “honest reckoning” with how they got where they are today, says Edward L. Ayers, president emeritus of the University of Richmond and a historian of the South, who was brought in by Ole Miss to consult on sensitive spaces on the campus.

Mississippi’s statue is far from the only symbol causing a stir at colleges. A statue of Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy, was recently moved from a central location at the University of Texas at Austin to a local museum of American history. There, a task force of 12 members, made up of students, historians, and faculty members, came up with five options for the university’s president to consider.

In conversations among committee members, Gregory J. Vincent, Austin’s vice president for diversity and community engagement, recalls input from students: to avoid “whitewashing” history, to ensure that history is portrayed accurately, and to consider whether the panel’s options would allow the university to foster a learning environment.

Daina R. Berry, an associate professor of history and African and African-diaspora studies at the university, sat on the committee that drafted the options, but she kept her personal feelings about the statue to herself. As an African-American who teaches the history of slavery, she says, she is used to separating her work from personal views. “As a historian,” she says, “you want to write history

in the purest form so you can let the reader come up with their own judgments and opinions. I was trying to do an unbiased job on a report I felt was very important.”

Although the statue of Davis was removed, statues of other Confederate leaders remain. University administrators are considering whether to erect a plaque to provide historical context for the remaining symbols.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has a statue of a Confederate soldier that closely resembles the one at Ole Miss. Known as “Silent Sam,” the Chapel Hill statue stands at a prominent entrance to the campus.

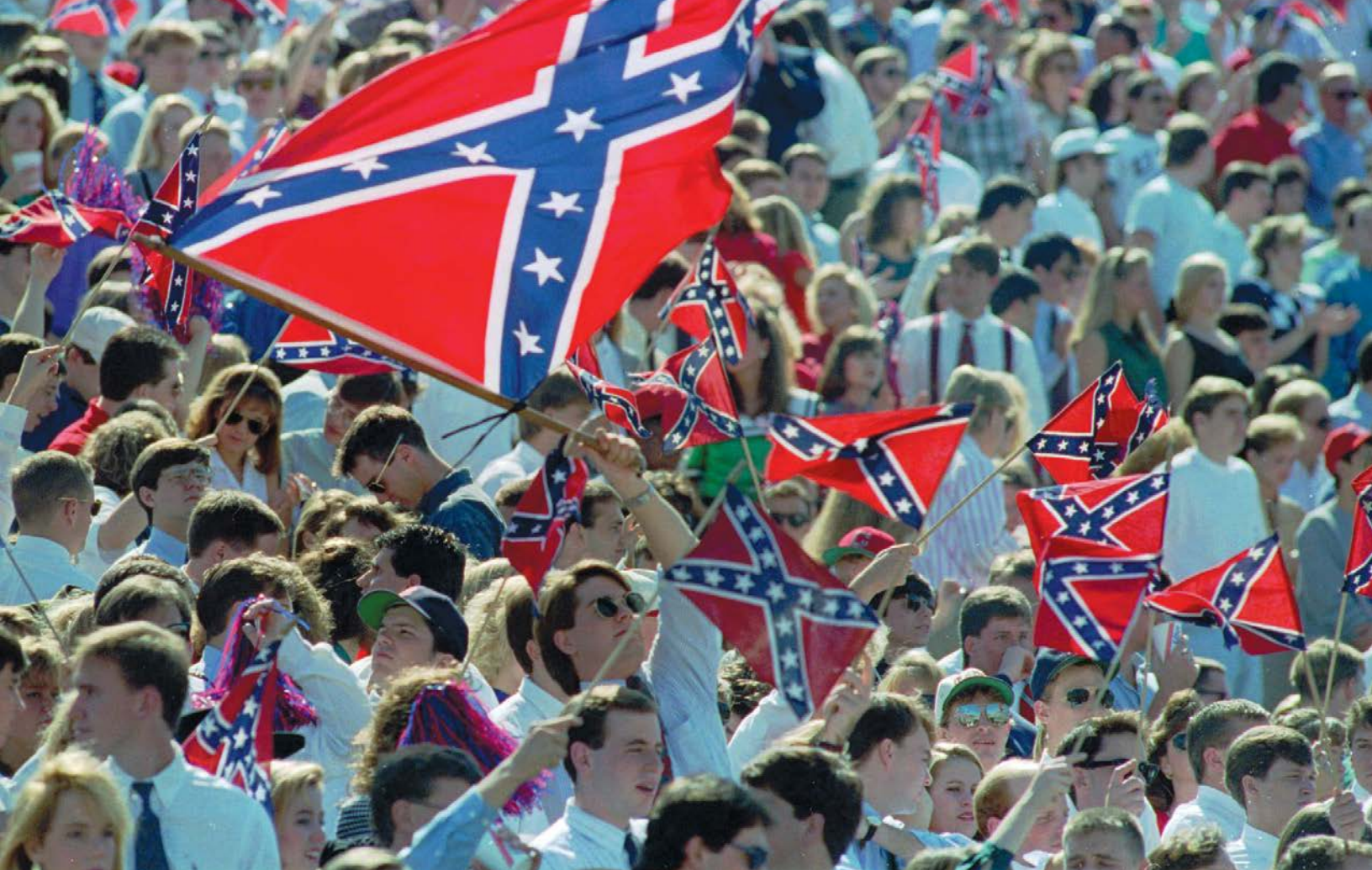
W. Fitzhugh Brundage, a professor at the university who studies Southern history, says there has been a cycling of demands to remove the statue that crests every few years, until students graduate and the issue quiets down again. Last year opposition to the monument took the form of repeated vandalism — so frequent that the university put it under surveillance.

The continued presence of the statue is offensive to many students. What makes it more so, Mr. Brundage says, is its outright association with racial oppression. For instance, at its ceremonial dedication, a speaker bragged about having whipped a black woman in public. “Not every Confederate monument has such an explicit link drawn between it and white supremacy,” Mr. Brundage says.

Supporters of the monument argue it is a symbol of regional heritage, not hate. But, he says, “that’s not how the people who put it up saw it.”

The university has begun taking steps to deal with such controversies. Last year it renamed a building and formed a task force that is studying the campus’s history and planning markers for sites associated with racism in the past, including the quad where Silent Sam is located. The group will also consider options for an orientation program or course that will “communicate a complete history” of the university to incoming students and others new to the campus.

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AP PHOTO/TANNEN MAURY

The U. of Mississippi has been striving to shift from its Confederate past, shedding traditions like waving the rebel flag at football games (as seen at a game in 1995) while taking steps to improve and celebrate its diversity. The institution's successes and occasional setbacks highlight the difficulty of the task.

Removing Confederate Symbols Is a Step, but Changing a Campus Culture Can Take Years

By KATHERINE MANGAN

IT'S HARD for Charles K. Ross to shake his first image of the University of Mississippi. He was watching a televised football game, and the Ole Miss stadium was a sea of Confederate-flag-waving fans.

Mr. Ross, who was completing a doctorate on African-Americans in sports at Ohio State University, was appalled.

"To see that many flags waving — it felt like very hostile territory," he recalls.

That was in 1994, two years before he took a job at the university, where he is now an associate professor of history and director of the program in African-American studies.

Today, when he walks across the campus, the signs he sees are far more welcoming.

The statue of a Confederate soldier still stands at a prominent circle, but now, nearby, there's also a bronze likeness of James H. Meredith, the university's first black student. Mr. Meredith was admitted by federal order amid rioting that left two people dead.

Waving the Confederate flag has died off at football games, and the Colonel Reb mascot, the white-haired old man who bore a striking resemblance to a plantation owner, has been retired. Confederate Drive is now Chapel Lane, and another street was renamed for a beloved black football player who was paralyzed in a game and later died.

Mr. Ross's email address, with its @olemiss.edu tag, still stings because of its ties to the antebellum past, but over all, he believes, the symbols and signs that have become flashpoints in a national conversation today are starting to point in a more positive direction on his campus.

Distancing itself from its Confederate past has been a long, painful, and continuing struggle for Ole Miss.

Perceptions of the historic campus, in Oxford, Miss., before and after the changes provide a glimpse at how statues, symbols, and relics of the past can affect a college's racial climate. The setbacks the university has experienced along the way — like the noose that appeared one day on the statue of Mr. Meredith — illustrate the limits of what can be accomplished by erecting a new monument or banning a tradition.

It's a debate that gained greater urgency on many Southern campuses with last week's murders of nine people in a historic black church in Charleston, S.C.

Photographs of the alleged killer posing with Confederate flags have helped persuade politicians across the Deep South, including South Carolina's governor, Nikki R. Haley, to call for the flags' removal from state grounds.

In Mississippi the university's acting chancellor, Morris H. Stocks, added his voice on Tuesday to those calling for removing the Confederate emblem from the state flag. The university long ago

decided that that image didn't reflect the institution's values, he said.

THE POWER OF SYMBOLS

In 1996, when enrollment was suffering, the university's chancellor at the time, Robert C. Khayat, commissioned a study of public perceptions about the university, including the Confederate flag and other symbols of the Old South. He found that the racially divisive symbols were hurting the university's efforts to recruit and retain minority students and were harming its national reputation.

The following year, the university banned the longstanding tradition of waving Confederate flags during football games. Angry alumni and students accused the university of caving in to political correctness, and Mr. Khayat received death threats, which he said came from outside the state. Still, he doesn't regret the decision.

"For years, we were burdened by the Confederate flag," Mr. Khayat said in an interview this week. "It was much loved by many people and much despised by many people, and we spent a lot of years trying to condition people to understand that it was a thing of the past and it was harmful to Ole Miss and the state."

A flurry of changes since then have made the campus a more welcoming and inclusive place, he said.

From 2008 to 2014, the number of freshman applications to the Oxford campus doubled, to 16,101. The number of black students doubled from 2001 to 2014, to 2,880, increasing from 12.5 percent to 14.3 percent of the enrollment.

Changing a university's culture takes years, even generations, said Marvin P. King Jr., an associate professor of political science and African-American studies at Ole Miss.

But at the same time, "cultures and attitudes rally around symbols," he said, and when those symbols are inclusive, rather than exclusive, the university benefits.

As that shift has occurred in Mississippi, Mr. King said, "the university has become a bigger and better school."

Even after the university banned Confederate flags at football games and ditched its longtime mascot, outbreaks of racism erupted.

Last year vandals hung a noose and an old version of a Georgia flag adorned with the Confederate emblem on the statue of Mr. Meredith.

Three members of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity were expelled from the campus chapter, and this month a former student pleaded guilty to a misdemeanor charge of threatening force to intimidate African-American students and employees at the university.

The incident illustrates that, "despite all of our progress, some people are going to resist or remain

ignorant, and we still have work to do,” said Mr. Ross.

‘A WELCOMING ENVIRONMENT’

In August, six months after the noose incident, the then chancellor, Daniel W. Jones, released an action plan for racial healing that drew on the work of a Sensitivity and Respect Committee. It also included recommendations of outside consultants, including Edward L. Ayers, a Civil War historian who is stepping down this month as president of the University of Richmond.

The consultants recommended placing plaques on racially sensitive symbols, like the Confederate statue, rather than removing them. The plaques would provide historical context.

Last fall the university opened a Center for Inclusion and Cross Cultural Engagement to provide programs and services that bring people together.

“We strive to provide a welcoming environment, and if we have symbols that are exclusive, we have a responsibility to change them,” said the center’s director, Shawnboda Mead.

Other campuses are struggling to come up with their own solutions as the pressure to remove Confederate symbols intensifies.

The University of Texas at Austin was already debating a proposal to move a statue of Jefferson Davis, who was president of the Confederacy, from its prominent place on a central mall to a museum when the Charleston massacre occurred.

Several days later the statues of three Confederate leaders were spray-painted with the words “Black Lives Matter” as a petition circulated by the student government was gathering more than 2,800 signatures of people calling for the statues’ removal.

The university’s new president, Gregory L.

Fenves, has appointed a task force to consider options. It will be headed by Gregory J. Vincent, the Austin campus’s vice president for diversity and community engagement.

Mr. Vincent was a consultant to the University of Mississippi when it was scrutinizing its Confederate imagery as part of its effort to improve race relations. Although he was focusing on the university’s administrative structure, he saw how racially divisive symbols were hurting the university’s prestige.

“The symbols were a very tragic and candidly racist part of the history, and in order for the university to move forward it had to move away from that,” Mr. Vincent said in an interview on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the Board of Visitors of the Citadel, a public military college in Charleston, voted 9 to 3 this week to move a Confederate naval flag that hangs in a chapel to another location on the campus. Moving the flag would require the approval of the state’s Legislature but was the right thing to do, the institution’s president explained.

Other colleges that have struggled with their past include Washington and Lee University, in Lexington, Va., where protests by black law students helped persuade the university to move Confederate flag replicas from a campus chapel to a museum, and Sewanee: the University of the South. In the mid-1990s, Sewanee took down flags from Southern states, some of which had Confederate imagery.

Removing such images is “a step in the right direction,” said Justavian Tillman, president of the University of Mississippi’s Black Student Union.

“It will definitely take more than the removal of mere symbolism,” he added. The inevitable backlash that occurs “serves as a great learning opportunity on how doing what is right is not always popular, and it certainly won’t always be easy.”

Originally published on June 25, 2015

How Colleges Are Turning Their Racist Pasts Into Teaching Opportunities

By CORINNE RUFF

IN DECIDING to keep John C. Calhoun's name on a residential college, Yale University's president, Peter Salovey, said he hoped to turn the story of the 19th-century statesman who defended slavery into a teaching moment.

"Changing the name 'Calhoun' would result in less confrontation with what Calhoun represented," Mr. Salovey said on Wednesday night, "and less discussion of who he was and why the building was named for him."

That rationale is unlikely to resonate with student activists who have long called for the removal of Calhoun's name. And the university has not yet provided many concrete examples of how it will teach about the slaveholder, who led a coalition in support of slavery in the U.S. Senate.

But other campuses have grappled with similar questions, and brought their racially fraught histories into the classroom. Here are three examples:



CLEMSON U.

At a groundbreaking for new plaques that describe the history of the campus of Clemson U., a temporary sign marked where slaves once lived.

CLEMSON UNIVERSITY

Calhoun's Fort Hill plantation, where he lived while serving as vice president to John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson, became home to Clemson's campus. Calhoun's son-in-law, Thomas G. Clemson, inherited the property and bequeathed it for the establishment of an educational institution in the late 19th century.

Rhondda R. Thomas, an associate professor of English at Clemson, says not many people are aware of Calhoun's fierce promotion of slavery or the impact his plantation had on the campus — something she is trying to change by blending that history into her classes.

Ms. Thomas teaches 19th-century African-American culture and literature, and routinely asks her students to read Calhoun's

speeches. She says even those who were born and raised in South Carolina are often surprised to

learn about his oppressive ideology.

“Because the university is located on the plantation where he lived and worked and enslaved African-Americans,” she says, “we have a responsibility to ensure students can study his life and how his beliefs and ideologies impacted America and affected African-Americans for generations.”

Even less known, Ms. Thomas says, is that the first university buildings were constructed by convict laborers leased by the State of South Carolina. When Ms. Thomas came to the university, she heard many rumors about the laborers, she says, but no one seemed to know the facts. It took her two years to collect enough records and data to offer a yearlong creative-inquiry course, in which about 15 students helped her dig through records to put together a clearer picture of who those prisoners were.

“How is it that a predominantly African-American group of male convicts ends up building a school for white cadets that they couldn’t attend because of Jim Crow in the South?” she asks, pinpointing the question her students are researching. Ms. Thomas and her team have discovered the names of more than 700 convicts. (While poring over records, one student came across her own last name, and discovered that the convict was in fact a distant relative.)

As for Calhoun’s legacy, Ms. Thomas says few in the community know the whole story, but the university is taking steps to change that. Clemson recently installed three plaques to explain the history of slaves on the campus, the location of a convict stockade, and the American Indians who originally lived on the land.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

Kirt von Daacke is one of 18 instructors who together teach a course at the University of Virginia — which was founded by Thomas Jefferson, another well-known slaveholder — called “Slavery and Its Legacies.” On Tuesday he gave a lecture about the memorialization of enslaved people, asking students to think about the implications of a hypothetical memorial for enslaved people at UVa.

Other professors across various disciplines have lectured on eugenics, in which Jefferson believed; Jeffersonian architecture; and the sociological factors of inequality. The professors all teach about various aspects of race and slavery, giving students a taste of where they can look for courses on the same themes.

Mr. von Daacke, an assistant dean and an associate professor of history, is also chair of the UVa president’s commission on slavery, which organized the creation of the course, as well as other

educational programs that explain the campus’s historical ties to slavery. The course is new this semester and capped at 45 students, although interest was much greater, he says.

“The students really have a palpable desire to connect on an emotional level with people who suffered here,” he says, adding that as many as 100 enslaved people lived on the campus at any one time. Mr. von Daacke is also working on a map that will allow visitors and students to follow a heritage trail to see where enslaved people lived and worked on the campus.

“We’re using the university itself and its history as a laboratory,” he says. “This allows us to dig deeply.”

COLLEGE OF WILLIAM & MARY

The Lemon Project at the College of William & Mary blends the Virginia university’s history into its curriculum. Jody L. Allen, managing director of the project and a visiting associate professor of history, says the project is named for a man who was enslaved on the campus in the early 19th century.

Ms. Allen teaches Lemon Project courses about slavery, the Jim Crow period, integration at William & Mary, and women in civil rights.

“The idea is that we have the unpleasant part of the college’s history, but it is part of the history, and there is no reason to hide it,” she says, adding that she incorporates a section of local history into all of those courses. In one, she teaches students about the Jim Crow era through the lens of Henry Billups, an African-American who worked as a janitor, bell-ringer, and food worker at William & Mary during that time.

Upper-level students pursuing capstone projects take her seminars. The campus has no memorial to recognize the enslaved labor that helped construct it, says Ms. Allen, though she hopes to propose one. But beyond markers, she says, embedding the history into courses is essential.

“It’s a way to have lengthy discussions over a significant period of time,” she says, adding that effective education on this history all comes down to communication. “One of the major issues is the reluctance to talk about the serious issues across the country.”

In her classes, students look at primary sources that can dispel myths they may have learned in nonacademic settings.

While she acknowledges that most students in Lemon Project courses are already interested in the subject matter before they enroll, she hopes they will become “ambassadors” who will be able to correct misinformation about the university’s historical ties.

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After it was defaced by protesting students at the U. of Cape Town, a statue of Cecil Rhodes, who helped create the apartheid system of South Africa, was removed from the campus.



RODGER BOSCH, AFP, GETTY IMAGES

OPINION

Removing Racist Symbols Isn't a Denial of History

By CHRISTOPHER PHELPS

ACROSS THE WORLD, campus symbols from the epoch of avowed white supremacy have come under sharp criticism from students and their allies. At the University of Cape Town, academically the highest-ranked institution in

Africa, a “Rhodes Must Fall” campaign last year compelled the removal of a monument to Cecil Rhodes, the diamond-mining baron, British imperialist, and progenitor of South Africa’s system of apartheid. Students splattered the statue with buckets of excrement and paint.

Emboldened by Cape Town, students in England — their organizers originating from formerly colonized regions of the world — have faulted Rhodes's legacy at Oxford University as well, prompting Oriel College to agree to removal of a plaque praising him for “great services rendered.” Students now are calling for removal of a Rhodes statue as well.

In the United States, a Black Lives Matter generation has entered college challenging comparable symbols. They are motivated by recent events from Ferguson, Mo., to Charleston, S.C., where the Confederate flag did not serve as a harmless relic of a long-dead past but sustained present-day racist violence.

At Yale, a campaign demands renaming one residential college for someone other than John C. Calhoun, an antebellum senator from South Carolina who supported slavery. At Princeton, a sit-in prompted the university to agree to contemplate stripping all buildings of the name of Woodrow Wilson, a former president of both that university and the United States. At Harvard Law School, the “Royall Must Fall” campaign objects to the school's crest, which is adapted from the coat of arms of the slave-owning Royall family.

Critics of these efforts have objected that protesters' logic would require colleges to scrub themselves of all traces of anyone who was a slave owner or racist — or, *reductio ad absurdum*, anyone at all with flaws. In this view, the new student activism is an exercise in “moral vanity,” a charge leveled against the Oxford campaigners by Tony Abbott, a former Australian prime minister and Rhodes Scholar.

Yet the specific historical figures under protest in these controversies are well-selected. They have engendered controversy for good reason, for they not only reflected the norms of their day but also actively shaped social mores from positions of power. Rhodes was the archetypal “white man's burden” colonialist. Wilson introduced Jim Crow segregation at the federal level. Calhoun was the slaveholding South's foremost ideologist and politician. The Royall family did not merely own slaves but traded in them.

Whatever else they did or thought, men such as Royall, Calhoun, Rhodes, and Wilson were decisive, unapologetic architects of systems premised on racial exploitation. They played substantial parts in creating the world of inequality that we have inherited.

It has been further suggested that in order to be consistent, Oxford would have to eliminate all symbols of feudal despotism. But that argument is casuistic. Unlike racism, there is no practical danger today of a revived absolutist monarchy or serfdom, which is why students aren't moved to demand such changes.

Another, much stronger argument made by

those who hesitate to eliminate symbols of the past is that history cannot be comprehended if erased. The past should not be wiped away, runs this line of thought. Leaving it intact can remind us of the need to transcend it.

This position is sophisticated in that it concedes that racial injustice is embedded in institutional histories, admirable in that it does not patronize students, and welcome in that it upholds the value of historical knowledge in a society all too obsessed with the present.

As a historian who deeply values the study of the past, and who frequently laments the amnesia of our times, I appreciate any good defense of the value of historical memory. But I am troubled by this particular invocation of history and wish to offer a dissenting viewpoint. (I should disclose that while I have no personal stake in any specific controversy over campus symbols, I do have a daughter at Yale residing in Calhoun College, and she favors its renaming.)

HISTORY is one thing, memorials another. As tributes, memorials are selective, affirmative representations. When a university names a building after someone or erects a statue to that person, it bestows honor and legitimacy. The imprimatur of an institution of higher education affords the subject respect, dignity, and authority. This makes memorials every bit as much about values, status quo, and future as about remembrance.

We intuit the value of preserving a site such as Auschwitz-Birkenau on the grounds that no one should ever forget the Holocaust, but we appreciate the Allied policy of the denazification of Germany, which included painting over swastikas and discarding innumerable portraits of Hitler. Those impulses are not contradictory.

Memorials are not, by and large, erected after long and careful study of the past. Universities do not typically make decisions about how to name sports centers, libraries, dining halls, dormitories, or classrooms in consultation with panels of historians. Let's be honest: Who has a building named after him or a statue made of him is a reflection of power and wealth.

That is why we now find ourselves discussing men of the clout of Calhoun and Wilson, or the class of Royall and Rhodes. Whether we consider a mogul's bequests to be philanthropy or white-washing, we should not take their statues or coats of arms as equivalents of biographies. There is a salient difference between a Rhodes bust placed in a museum and a marker celebrating his life displayed in the center of campus.

History is a process of cognition and revision — literally, re-seeing — of the past. From time to time, one or another circle of historians is characterized as “revisionist,” but in actuality all his-

torians are revisionists, writing from the vantage point of their own lives and times even as they aspire to objectivity.

This does not make history subjective. It must be sustained by evidence and held to the test of others' scrutiny. That is how consensus emerges about what took place and why. In that way, our understanding of history changes over time, often as dramatically as that history itself. To reconsider, to recast, is the essence of historical practice. It follows that altering how we present the past through commemorative symbols is not ahistorical. It is akin to what historians do. No historian now writes about slavery in the way historians did a century ago.

A RECONSIDERATION of memorials and symbols poses no danger to freedom. A university can uphold academic freedom and freedom of expression while at the same time seeking to avoid implicitly exclusionary or bigotry-laced signs and legacies in its official infrastructure.

It is imperative for students to confront slavery and Jim Crow in the classroom, with instructors assigning writings by proponents of those systems, as I did this past term, for example, by having my "History of American Capitalism" class read James Henry Hammond's "Cotton Is King" speech in the Senate.

Such recognition of the historical significance of white supremacy is perfectly compatible with believing that institutions should not give it credence in their memorials — precisely in order that openly white-supremacist society not be permitted to reconstitute itself.

What is erasure in one sense can in another and more important sense be an acknowledgment and validation of the past. When a building named for an arch-advocate of slavery is accorded another name, it pays respect to the lives of those whom he condemned to be owned. When the University of Illinois retired its pseudo-Indian mascot Chief Illiniwek, the decision reflected the increased awareness of such misappropriation and stereotyping born of a deeper appreciation of Native American history.

We lament the Taliban's destruction of the Buddhas of Bamiyan, but the changes that students want on campuses today do not involve entities imbued with sacred qualities. Nor are those symbols ancient. Calhoun College, for example, was named in 1933; Oxford's Rhodes statue was erect-

ed in 1911. In historical terms, the period since then is the blink of an eye.

Examples abound of demolitions widely taken as acts of liberation, not cultural boorishness. The Hungarian rebels who toppled statues of Stalin in 1956 are celebrated, not accused of desecrating history. Similarly, there has been no outcry against Ukraine's recent dismantling of more than 800 statues of Lenin, a measure taken in response to the provocations of Putin's Russia. (Most of the works were consigned to museums, it appears, although a clever artist converted one into Darth Vader.)

Just as in certain contexts erasure is a sign of memory, so can memorials be a form of forgetting. Insofar as relics of the era of overt white supremacy may represent an institution's failure to look itself in the mirror and adopt inclusive symbols so as to welcome all prospective students and academics, the symbols are indicators of an institutional blind spot. To remove them does not vitiate history; on the contrary, it represents a more thorough coming to terms with the past and its legacies, a refusal to forget.

Eliminating dubious memorials is hardly a sufficient measure in itself. Those calling for symbolic transformations also typically seek allocations of resources to end institutional racism. They know, however, that how a university defines, names, and represents itself is not immaterial, that emblems convey an essence.

The impetus to alter our symbols is compelling when they are challenged by students of color who view them as signs of an institution's failure to be sufficiently inclusive, something they can attest to in their own daily experience.

Yes, we should see history as irreducibly contradictory, bloody, and shot through with injustice — as well as with courageous resistance to oppression. Yes, we should acknowledge that we ourselves are flawed. But in no way do such insights dictate that our institutions permanently consecrate white supremacy in their architecture and traditions.

The students who call upon universities to adopt new symbols reflective of democratic values are not erasing history. They want us to grasp it.

Christopher Phelps is an associate professor of American studies at the University of Nottingham, in England, and co-author, with Howard Brick, of Radicals in America: The U.S. Left Since the Second World War (Cambridge University Press).

Originally published on January 8, 2016

Why Removing the Jefferson Davis Statue Is a Big Mistake

By AL MARTINICH and TOM PALAIMA



AP PHOTO, ERIC GAY

The statue, long a fixture at the U. of Texas at Austin, had become controversial. It will be part of an educational display elsewhere on the campus.

THE REMOVAL OF Jefferson Davis's statue from its prominent location on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin this week may appear to end the university's difficult struggle to shake off its historical embrace of racist values and practices. It does not.

Removing the statue is a serious moral and ethical mistake. Remembering our lamentable behavior in the past is an important part of helping to ensure that a similar behavior does not recur, especially if that remembering does what colleges, particularly public colleges, were created to do: produce educated citizens who can make sound ethical decisions.

"Remember the reason the statue of Jefferson

Davis was erected in the first place and what it symbolized for over eight decades" is not as pithy as "Remember the Alamo." But it is just as important. Remembering the long and inglorious success of racism in our institution and our society is as important as remembering a glorious defeat in battle.

The controversy about this and other Confederate statues on campus is nothing new. People of conscience who understood what they symbolized created enough of a stir that the university's two immediate past presidents appointed committees to study what to do with the statues. The presidents decided to do nothing.

Recent troubling events in our country gave UT-Austin and its current president, Gregory L. Fennes, a third chance to do the right thing. He

came up with a solution that is arguably worse than the original problem.

The statue controversy should not be viewed as a provincial squabble. It is an instance of the general failure of many public institutions of higher education to own up to their own histories. Remembering those histories offers moral and political lessons for our society as a whole.

For more than 80 years, Jefferson Davis and three other Confederate heroes were honored conspicuously on the campus's main mall. Fenves justified removing the Davis statue alone among them because, he said, Davis has no connection with the university. But the presence of his statue is the connection. The more than symbolic embrace of Davis's values explains why African-Americans were not admitted to UT-Austin, which was founded in 1881, until the 1950s, and why the university vigorously resisted integration during the civil-rights era.

Instead of finally speaking out against Confederate values, the three other statues of Confederate heroes — Gen. Robert E. Lee; Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, who was Lee's commanding officer before the war in charge of suppressing American Indians; and John H. Reagan, postmaster general of the Confederacy and first chairman of the Railroad Commission of Texas — will remain in place.

Fenves's reasoning contains many statements that have little force. For example, the argument that Davis has no connection with the University of Texas is true insofar as he was never a student, professor, regent, or donor there. Yet that is irrelevant, since the same is true of Lee, who was in Texas for a few years as an Army officer keeping American Indian populations in check.

Lee's more significant association is his toleration of slavery. He spent time away from Texas to settle the estate of his father-in-law, who owned hundreds of slaves. He first hired an overseer who would "make them [the slaves] do their duty." His desire to be "considerate and kind to the negroes" did not stop him from exploiting them as animate tools, whipping, jailing and selling to slave traders those who insisted on their freedom. He did not hesitate to break up families of slaves who had been together for generations.

The only connection that General Johnston and John H. Reagan have to the University of Texas is that their statues, too, stand for the values of the Old South.

Saving the face of Jefferson Davis by removing

his statue comes at an additional cost. In addition to the tens of thousands of dollars to be spent on its new housing, the statue of Woodrow Wilson that long stood opposite Davis's was also removed, because leaving it in place would have created an asymmetry that would have invited questions: "Why is nothing here?" "If something used to be here, why is it gone?"

The university's leaders do not want these questions asked. But a university should be a safe place for free and open thought, discussion, and exploration. It should invite these very questions. It also should answer them.

UT-Austin should unequivocally acknowledge its history and assert its commitment to do better. We should have retained all the statues. As it is now, we should put plaques on the remaining statues and on Davis's when it gets to its final, high-dollar place of honor. The plaques should have texts such as this: "The University of Texas at Austin regrets its long association with people who supported the system of segregation that denied equality to African-Americans and other oppressed minorities as if it were an acceptable part of civilized life."

The university's decision in the case of the Confederate statues runs counter to the core values it has long promoted. Carved in large letters prominently across the façade of the south entrance of the UT Tower are the liberating words of John 8:32: "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free." The motto on the official seal of the university reads *Disciplina Praesidium Civitatis*: "A cultivated mind is the guardian genius of democracy." The recent decision is not faithful to those values, nor is it in keeping with our university motto: "What starts here changes the world."

All human lives matter, including historical lives. For over a century, people of color in Texas were treated as unworthy of the full rights and privileges of American citizens. We should not segregate any part of our past in a moral skeleton closet. Keeping, contextualizing, and explaining the Confederate statues and their history would convert those artworks into tools of historical witness to wrongs done and too long tolerated. And they would serve as conspicuous examples of how to change moral direction within our society.

Al Martinich is a professor of philosophy and Tom Palaima is a professor of classics at the University of Texas at Austin.

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Yale Committee Could Prompt More Talk About Racist Names on Campuses

By FERNANDA ZAMUDIO-SUARÉZ



BOB CHILD, AP IMAGES

Yale isn't saying whether or not it will eventually change the name of Calhoun College, which honors a defender of slavery. But the university has announced a new panel on the larger issue of renaming.

EVEN IF Yale University doesn't rename its Calhoun College, it may have set itself up to head off further protests over racist names.

After months of debates over the college and its long-deceased honoree, John C. Calhoun, Yale isn't saying yes or no to changing the controversial name.

Instead, the president, Peter Salovey, formed the Committee to Establish Principles on Renaming, to set guidelines for when the university should change the names of its buildings and how it should be done.

Tensions on the campus ran high this year when

student protesters said the legacy of Calhoun's pro-slavery beliefs exacerbated racial strain on the campus. In June a dishwasher in the college's dining hall intentionally smashed a stained-glass window in the college depicting slaves carrying cotton bales.

Yale has rejected calls to change the college's name, but Mr. Salovey's letter announcing the formation of the committee said the decision was not final.

The new committee of Yale scholars will tackle a larger question: What justifies changing the name of a building, not just at Yale, but at any college facing racial tensions?

Comprising six faculty members, three alumni, and two students, the group's scholars have expertise in history, law, and political science.

John Witt, the committee chair and a professor of history and of law, said the panel is strengthened by faculty members who have spent their careers studying race. Instead of having to produce a recommendation on a specific building, he said, they can think about the implications of such names in broader terms.

"It's the promise of scholarly expertise and serious engagement with questions about history and questions about historical memory," he said. "We'll be in a pretty good position to be able to step back, away from the political controversy of the moment, and identify principles that might be enduring and last for the university."

Mr. Witt said he hoped that the committee would create a model for other colleges.

David W. Blight, a history professor who is a special historical adviser to the committee, said one of the challenges is understanding what principles were used originally to name the buildings.

The group will try to contextualize why and how buildings were first named, especially those with names that don't have close ties to donor dollars, he said.

"Every monument or name on a building, every memorial is always to some extent about the moment it was designated," Mr. Blight said. "This business of naming is not just wholly political or wholly emotional. It's actually based on some understanding of a historical process."

Even though it's important to understand Calhoun College's history, he said, the building doesn't have to be named after the 19th-century politician for teaching purposes. What's important is for students to understand who he was and how he shaped the country. Calhoun, a Yale alumnus, was a U.S. vice president, senator from South Carolina, and fierce defender of slavery.

"You don't need a Calhoun as some sort of example of a sort of dark past to teach about that past," Mr. Blight said. "We're already doing it. Now, it's another matter to ask about the symbolism of any given name on a building and the people who live there. That's a whole different set of questions."

SEEKING CONTEXT

Andrew P. Mullins Jr., a former chief of staff to

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the chancellor of the University of Mississippi and an associate professor of education there, worked on a similar committee to draft language to contextualize a statue of a Confederate soldier at Ole Miss.

When students had approached him to change the names of buildings, he didn't know what steps to take, he said. It's a problem many college officials face without definitive guidelines, he said.

The Board of Trustees at the University of North Carolina faced similar issues when it renamed a building that once honored a Ku Klux Klan leader. But the board then placed a 16-year moratorium on renaming buildings, signaling a distaste for engaging with the issue.

Yale's committee may help other private universities when similar controversies arise on their campuses, but it's trickier to change a name at a public university, especially if the building was funded with state money, Mr. Mullins said.

Jody L. Allen, a visiting associate professor of history at the College of William & Mary, is managing director of the Lemon Project, which blends the university's history into its curriculum. Too many colleges are caught off guard, she said, when students are concerned about the names of buildings, statues, or a racist past.

Yale's effort sends a message that the university is ready and willing to deal with these issues when they come up, Ms. Allen said.

In April, Princeton University decided to keep Woodrow Wilson's name on its residential college and public-policy school. Eric S. Yellin, an associate professor of history at the University of Richmond who had sent a letter to Princeton's committee assessing Wilson's legacy, said he hoped Yale's committee would catch on at other universities.

Princeton's decision announcing that it would keep Wilson's name, despite what many see as his racist legacy, was just "happy talk," Mr. Yellin said, and didn't sufficiently take on the historical or campus-culture issues that Wilson's name implied.

The principles that the Yale committee hopes to establish could have helped when Princeton was making its decision, Mr. Yellin said.

"I'm hoping that this becomes a model for realizing that these decisions can't be made solely by boards, solely by administrators who tend to have short tenures," he said, but by "people who spend their careers ... on the ground in these communities."

10 Questions for Yale's President

By JAMES W. LOEWEN

PETER SALOVEY, president of Yale University, announced in April that, despite protests, the university would continue to name a residential college after John C. Calhoun, an alumnus, senator from South Carolina, vice president, and leading proponent of slavery in the 19th century. One Yale graduate and former resident of Calhoun College, Malcolm Pearson, who describes himself as an “old Southern white,” calls this decision “almost beyond comprehension.”

Pearson is right. The decision prompted me to put 10 questions to President Salovey. I emailed them to him but have not received a response.

1. Have you ever read anything by Calhoun?

I ask because he was forthright in his white supremacy and his advocacy of disunion on its behalf. “Abolition and the Union cannot coexist,” he argued in the Senate in 1837. Slavery “cannot be subverted without drenching the country in blood, and extirpating one or the other of the races.” He claimed that African-Americans (and Africans) were so inferior that slavery was “a positive good” for them, because without it they are “low, degraded, and savage.”

2. Do you understand Calhoun's role in U.S. history? Calhoun repeatedly threatened disunion as a form of blackmail to get what he wanted. He explained his strategy to a friend in 1827: “You will see that I have made up the issue between North and South. If we flinch we are gone, but if we stand fast on it, we shall triumph either by compelling the North to yield to our terms, or declaring our independence of them.”

At that time, Calhoun had written that states' rights let Northerners distance themselves morally from slavery. “A large portion of the Northern States believes slavery to be a sin, and would con-

sider it as an obligation of conscience to abolish it if they should feel themselves in any degree responsible for its continuance.” By the 1840s, however, he opposed states' rights when those rights had anything to do with freedom, a move he knew would sow sectional discord. Also by the 1840s, Calhoun had no more use for democracy. He argued that Congress should not even receive petitions about slavery, and that sending abolitionist materials through the mail or merely receiving them should be a crime.

Calhoun took ever more extreme positions favoring the South as a region and slavery as a cause. He came to call the 1820 Missouri Compromise, which he had supported at the time, unconstitutional because it banned slavery from territories north of Arkansas. Because the Constitution protected slavery, he insisted, slave owners had the right to take their property anywhere. He placed the interests of his region, as he perceived them, ahead of the national interest, ahead even of national unity.

In the words of the Yale alumnus Malcolm Pearson, who says that he is a direct descendent of slaveholders: Calhoun was the proponent of a theory of the moral good of slavery thought ridiculous and self-serving in his own time. He was the intellectual father of nullification and secession, at whose feet we may lay the Civil War.

3. Do you think Calhoun's role at Yale is parallel to Woodrow Wilson's at Princeton? Or to Edwin DeBarr's at the University of Oklahoma? It is not. Princeton honored Wilson not because he was an arrant racist who segregated the federal government, but despite that. And Wilson at least gave lip service to democracy. Not Calhoun. Oklahoma honored DeBarr not because he was the statewide leader of the Ku Klux Klan, but because, as the plaque on what used to be DeBarr Hall

says, he “built the chemistry department from the ground up, heading it for 31 years, and was also the head of the School of Pharmacy ... the University’s first Vice President ... and the longest-serving member of the original faculty.” Calhoun did no service to or at Yale. As your own professor of history, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, put it, Calhoun’s “fame came from his guiding role in a racial regime that enslaved people, inspired secession and formed the specious legal foundation for a century of discrimination.”

The naming of Calhoun County in Alabama exemplifies Gilmore’s point. A historical marker tells how the county got its name: “Calhoun Co. originally was Benton Co., named for Col. T.H. Benton, Creek War officer, later U.S. senator from Missouri. Renamed in 1858 for John C. Calhoun, champion of South in U.S. Senate. Benton’s views by then unpopular in South.” Like Calhoun, Thomas Hart Benton was a wealthy slave owner. Like Calhoun, Benton was an important senator representing a slave state — Missouri, in Benton’s case. Both were national leaders of the Democratic Party, and both were considered for the presidency. Gradually, however, Calhoun and Benton diverged in political philosophy until they became archenemies. Calhoun came to place slavery above all other causes, while Benton pointed out that Southern Democrats had opposed secession when New England Federalists had threatened it during the War of

John C. Calhoun was the proponent of a theory of the moral good of slavery thought ridiculous and self-serving in his own time.

1812. “The leading language ... south of the Potomac was that no state had a right to withdraw from the Union,” noted Benton, “... and that any attempt to dissolve it, or to obstruct the action of constitutional laws, was treason.”

In keeping with the growing secessionist sentiment in the plantation areas of the Deep South, pro-slavery extremists in 1858 renamed Benton

County for Calhoun. They took this step precisely because Benton stood for the United States, while Calhoun did not.

4. Do you know about the era when the naming of Calhoun College took place? The period from 1890 to about 1940 is known as the nadir of race relations. During those years, the situation worsened for Native Americans, African-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and Mexican-Americans. Lynchings peaked. In the South, African-Americans lost the right to vote. The “sundown town” movement swept the North, including Connecticut, resulting in thousands of communities that kept out African-Americans (and sometimes Jewish, Chinese, Japanese, Mexican, and Native Americans). Some even posted signs at their corporate limits such as, “Nigger, Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on You in Manitowoc,” displayed in Manitowoc, Wis., north of Milwaukee, well into the 1960s.

Every historic site is a tale of two eras: what it’s about and when it was built. In this case, Calhoun College is about Calhoun (c. 1782-1850), but it tells us more about when the residential college was established (1931-33), a time when most white Americans saw nothing wrong with naming a building for someone who stood for white supremacy. Whites in Decatur, Ala., named a junior college for Calhoun in 1947.

Yale would never have named anything for Calhoun in 1880. Wager Swayne would never have let that happen.

5. Do you know who Wager Swayne was? If you have never heard of him, let me refer you to the campus of another institution in Alabama, Talladega College, which did name a building for him — indeed, its most important building. Swayne (Yale Class of 1856) became an officer in the U.S. Army during the Civil War and lost a leg in battle. During Reconstruction, he headed the Freedman’s Bureau in Alabama, became military governor of Alabama, and helped found Talladega, a black college.

After Reconstruction, Swayne became a lawyer in New York City and a vice president of the Union League Club, an elegant institution that still stands in Manhattan. Republicans had organized the club to combat pro-secessionists who dominated New York City early in the Civil War. After the Emancipation Proclamation, its members organized and equipped a regiment of black troops and sent them to the front, first marching them triumphantly through the streets of New York. During Reconstruction, the club helped start Union Leagues across the South that helped African-Americans and white Republicans organize politically. In 1880 the club still required prospective new members to “agree with the principles of

the Republican Party as hitherto expressed.”

During the nadir, Northern and Southern elites reunited under the banner of white supremacy. Plutocrats like J.P. Morgan and John D. Rockefeller joined the Union League Club for its prestige, not because of what it stood for. Soon it stood for

Every year that it retains the name Calhoun College, Yale declares that John C. Calhoun was a hero worthy of the honor.

nothing. Indeed, it began to undermine its founding ideals. Members refused to admit Jews, even though Jews had helped to found the club. In 1901 its management committee decided to fire the black servants and go to an all-white staff. Swayne intervened. He got up a “petition to bring the matter to an open vote,” and, in the words of a contemporaneous observer, “spoke in favor of the Negroes, and after several others had talked on the same side the ... decision was overthrown.”

The deepening racism of the era was not to be denied, however. After Swayne’s death, in 1902, the club allowed only blacks on the staff. Other clubs and elite restaurants adopted the practice, which was extended to Pullman sleeping cars. Most of these institutions adopted Southern etiquette as well, calling the staff members by their first names while demanding that they use courtesy titles and “sir” or “ma’am” in reply. Antiracists like Swayne were dying off. The nadir was settling in.

6. Do you understand the difference between heritage and history? Your email to the Yale community implies that you do not:

Removing Calhoun’s name obscures the legacy of slavery rather than addressing it. ... Erasing Calhoun’s name from a much-beloved residential college risks masking this past, downplaying the lasting effects of slavery, and substituting a false and misleading narrative,

albeit one that might allow us to feel complacent or, even, self-congratulatory.

Putting Calhoun’s name on the residential college in the first place was an act of heritage, not history. It told nothing about Calhoun except that he was great and we should honor him. Leaving his name on the building signifies that Yale thinks it is still appropriate to honor him. Taking his name off, on the other hand, and putting up a plaque explaining why, would teach future generations something about the history of the university, as well as about Calhoun. It would also send a message to the future about the changed racial environment of 2016.

7. What did you do, before the murders in June 2015 at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, S.C., to make Calhoun College a flash point of knowledge-seeking? We all know that questioning the naming of buildings after white supremacists skyrocketed after Dylann Roof’s despicable acts. Some colleges were already changing their racist names well before it became fashionable to do so. Not Yale. If you did nothing to bring to the fore Calhoun’s execrable legacy, then your inaction itself undermines your claim that you’re keeping his name so as to keep alive the critique of him. You wrote:

Yale’s motto is “light and truth,” and we cannot seek the truth by hiding it. As a University, as students and faculty, we search out knowledge and pursue discovery. We cannot inhibit this pursuit by marking the ugliest aspects of our own nature “off-limits.” We must confront even those ideas that disgust us in the search for progress and an honest understanding of the human condition. If we understand the past, and know ourselves, we can make positive change.

I suppose no one can dispute the last sentence, since it has no content. You also proposed a web-based “interactive history project” about the entire campus, but starting with Calhoun College, and “a juried competition, open to the entire Yale community, to select a work of art that will be displayed permanently on the grounds of Calhoun College,” to contextualize Calhoun. Putting material on the web, however, cannot adequately counteract the statement that “Calhoun College” makes on the landscape. Neither can a work of art to be named later.

8. Wouldn’t calling it “Nameless College” spark more continuing dialogue than leaving it “Calhoun College?” If you study the long process that Germany went through in deciding on a proper monument in Berlin to the victims of the Holo-

caust, you will find that one (serious) suggestion was: a never-ending process to decide on a proper monument to the victims of the Holocaust. Of course, that was not selected; in a sense, it could not be. The proposal was meant to be paradoxical.

Renaming Calhoun College “Nameless College,” however, would not be contradictory and would provoke discussion through the ages. “Nameless College” would also commemorate those who, in the words of Ecclesiasticus, “have no memorial; who are perished, as though they had never been; and are become as though they had never been born; and their children after them,” such as the enslaved generations in America. Countless slaves have been lost to history, even to the census, because they had no last names, or because their owners did not bother to provide names to the enumerators but merely said, for example, “male, mulatto, age about 22 ...” Even their first names were not their own. They were bestowed upon the slaves by their owners, rather than their parents, and were often deliberately chosen to be ridiculous.

Yale would, of course, install a plaque at the entrance of Nameless College explaining that it used to be named for John C. Calhoun and describing the changes at Yale and in America that led to the name’s being changed to “Nameless” in 2016.

9. How do you propose that Yale might suggest to people of color that they should feel honored to come to Yale and to live in Calhoun College? As an educator, you must know that black students have lower graduation rates at most colleges than do white students. You must know that research shows that people of color face additional hurdles: a sense of not belonging, exposure to microaggressions, lower expectations from some

professors. In this context, affirming a decision to name a building for perhaps the most unwelcoming white supremacist in our nation’s history cannot possibly be construed as sound educational practice.

10. Does Yale honor any white male for his opposition to slavery or racism? In keeping with the racism of the nadir, Yale has named no building for General Swayne or, so far as I can tell, for any other white antiracist. So Yale winds up with a landscape of white supremacists and black humanitarians (Pauli Murray), just like the University of Texas, Monument Avenue in Richmond, Va., and so many other places.

The policies, writings, and beliefs of John C. Calhoun have caused much harm in the world. Yale can’t change what its graduate did. Yale can change what it thinks and says about Calhoun’s deeds. Naming a building for Calhoun reveals Yale in 1931 to have been active in supporting white supremacy. Leaving it “Calhoun” affirms that position today.

Every year that it retains the name Calhoun College, Yale declares that John C. Calhoun was a hero worthy of the honor of having a building named for him. That declaration should insult anyone who does not believe that treason on behalf of slavery made moral or political sense then or now.

James W. Loewen is an emeritus professor of sociology at the University of Vermont and the author of Lies My Teacher Told Me (New Press, 1995) and a co-editor of The Confederate and Neo-Confederate Reader (University Press of Mississippi, 2010).

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In Sticking With Woodrow Wilson, Princeton Seeks to Contextualize His Legacy

By CORINNE RUFF

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY has decided not to strip Woodrow Wilson's name from the university's public-policy school and a residential college, defying student protesters who objected to what they called a celebration of the racist legacy of the university's 13th president.

In making the decision, announced on Monday, the university's Board of Trustees adopted a special committee's report on the issue. Along with the recommendation that Wilson's name stay on the campus, the trustees endorsed four initiatives to "achieve meaningful changes in campus climate and culture." Among them: a recommendation to install an educational marker outside the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs to elaborate on Wilson's legacy — as president of Princeton and, later, as president of the United States — and the diversification of campus art and iconography to honor "those who helped make Princeton a more inclusive place."

Before putting together the final report, the committee sought input from scholars and the public. It received 636 public comments and nine reports from scholars of American history. But after reading the final report, some of the scholars didn't find a lot to like.

Nathan D.B. Connolly, an associate professor of history at the Johns Hopkins University, said he was disappointed. The report shows "no acknowledgment of the harmful consequences of Wilson's intellectual work," he said in an interview. The

university's stress on "diversity" and "inclusion" amounted to little more than buzzwords, he said, and suggested the initiatives would not be enough to create a better cultural climate on the campus.

"There is no discussion of what Princeton's role was of shaping inequality around the world," Mr. Connolly said about the university's report, adding that Wilson's legacy wasn't discussed as much as was Wilson the man. "Recognizing his legacy is not to say he made unfortunate decisions," he said, "but that his particular brand of curricular reform and governance, his particular brand of foreign relations created a century of negative consequences for people of color."

Mr. Connolly suggested that the university install a series of monuments that acknowledge both "the good and the bad that can be done in Princeton's name." For example, he suggested there be a recognition of the American occupation of Haiti, begun in 1915 under Wilson as U.S. president, as well as the demotion or firing of African-American civil servants under his administration.

Eric S. Yellin, an associate professor of history and American studies at the University of Richmond, also sent a report to the committee. He said he wasn't surprised by the university report's vague description of how Princeton will present the legacy of Wilson and what events it will choose to acknowledge. In order to truly create an inclusive campus, he said, Princeton needs to understand the key difference between venerating and remembering.



MEL EVANS, AP IMAGES

Visitors walk through an exhibit titled “In the Nation’s Service? Woodrow Wilson Revisited” at Princeton’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs. The university announced that it would not remove the former president’s name from the school, but also acknowledged a need to describe his controversial legacy in a more balanced and historically accurate way. It will also undertake diversity initiatives to “achieve meaningful changes in campus climate and culture.”

“I hope what is in that big claim is that they will recognize to venerate Wilson is to deny history and fail to grapple with not just his complexity, but the fact that there were victims of his point of view and his power,” he said.

A ‘RACIST LEGACY’

The special committee was created in November after student protesters demanded that the president of the university, Christopher L. Eisgruber, consider the “racist legacy” of Wilson on the campus.

In an interview with *The Chronicle* in November, Destiny Crockett, a Princeton junior and member of the Black Justice League, said the group had sought public acknowledgment of that legacy. “We know changing a name doesn’t dismantle racism,” she said. “But Woodrow Wilson has been lionized on this campus, and having his name on the public-policy school isn’t OK.”

In an online statement posted on Monday, President Eisgruber called the report “thorough and perceptive.” He added: “While I continue to admire Wilson’s many genuine accomplishments, I recognize the need to describe him in a way that is more balanced, and more faithful to history, than this university and I have previously done.”

A university spokeswoman, Min Pullan, said

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trustees would monitor how the initiatives are carried out through a new committee.

The efforts, while well intentioned, are going to take time, and lots of it, said W. Fitzhugh Brundage, a history professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Mr. Brundage, whose institution is also struggling to come to terms with connections to racism in its history, said it could take decades to adequately diversify the iconography of a campus.

The Chapel Hill campus features several pieces of Confederate iconography — epitomized by a statue of a Confederate soldier known as “Silent Sam.” A stone’s throw away from that marker stands another statue, the Unsung Founders Memorial, which was erected in 2005 to honor “the men and women of color — enslaved and free — who helped build Carolina.” While the memorial wasn’t meant as a direct rebuttal to “Silent Sam,” Mr. Brundage said, that’s how many view it today.

But this is only one monument, he said. How many are enough to say a campus is inclusive? And how will the university sustain such a commitment as a priority over time?

Those questions are particularly difficult for Princeton, said Mr. Brundage, given Woodrow Wilson’s pervasive presence at the university. “He is so conspicuously incorporated into the identity of the university,” he said, “that this is a challenge.”

We're Having the Wrong Debate About Woodrow Wilson

By JEREMY ADELMAN

STUDENTS, faculty members, and alumni are rightly questioning whether Woodrow Wilson's name should represent a residential college and school of public policy at Princeton.

As a historian at the university, I'm agnostic on the naming issue, but I'm wholeheartedly for debating the matter. If we're going to discuss Wilson's legacy, however, let's do so in a comprehensive, global way.

While asking how we should gauge the man who curbed child labor but also imposed a more-systematic segregation, let's deprovincialize the debate. How also to appraise the figure who advanced internationalism, but under patronizing, racist, Western-dominated terms? If we don't widen the discussion, we will miss an opportunity to consider America's place in global affairs.

The decision to tear Wilson's name off the walls is not, after all, just a matter of what we think about the past; it's about the present. One bombastic reaction to the Paris attacks is to retreat to Fortress America, rejecting Syrian refugees. And even as President Obama seeks global cooperation on mitigating climate change, Congress concocts ways to undermine his reformist position. Clearly, whether to withdraw from or engage with the world remains a charged and present American quandary. Debating Wilson's world raises questions about American conceptions of humanitarianism and the terms of global cooperation more generally.

Consider a few examples, which I've found open undergraduates' eyes in a world-history survey

course I teach. Wilson was a professor of jurisprudence and political economy at Princeton in the 1890s. He gave an oration in 1896 on "Princeton in the Nation's Service," which, on the eve of the war against Spain in 1898, became the university's slogan. (A century later it was embellished with "in the Service of All Nations" to denote the university's own global turn.)

At the time, Wilson worried about how overseas expansion and meddling — "empire" was the word of the day — might affect the health of the republic. Washington should not turn Spanish possessions into American colonies, he said, for that would corrupt the American constitutional fabric. Instead, the liberated tropics should be prepared for self-government. That was the theory, anyway: an early version of nation-building from without. When "anti-imperialists" came under assault by the pro-war camp, Wilson was an outspoken defender of the right to dissent.

On the presidential-campaign trail, in 1912, Wilson burnished his progressive credentials by lambasting how President William Howard Taft's administration had turned international relations over to moneymen.

"Dollar diplomacy" was President Theodore Roosevelt's label, but it was Wilson who highlighted its malodorous implications. To Wilson, meddling in China and Cuba to help bankers like J.P. Morgan was an example of how the self-interest of a few could hijack public purpose. True to that thinking, one of Wilson's first moves was to withdraw government backing for American businesses operating in the Caribbean and China.

Yet Wilson also believed in a muscular Christi-



TOPICAL PRESS AGENCY, GETTY IMAGES

Woodrow Wilson
in about 1916.

anity and in Anglo-American superiority. Those attitudes were tested when he became president, even before the outbreak of the First World War, in 1914. He sent troops to pacify Cuba; and Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Nicaragua became sites of prolonged American occupations. It took years to extricate the Marines from botched nation-building. Most notoriously, Wilson got entangled in the Mexican Revolution, which led to military expeditions to favor a pro-American regime. They backfired, and Wilson's military aggression south of the border left a legacy of anti-American sentiments that remain to this day.

Some might approve of the nation-building urge; preventing atrocity or promoting stability is better than watching from the sidelines. It is liberal internationalism in a nutshell. But as Wilson soon found out, moralistic humanitarianism could create sticky problems. In 1916 he signed the Jones Act, which finally declared Washington's intent to let the Philippines go free. America would cease being an occupying power. The problem was, Filipinos had to display their readiness — by American measures — for self-government, and it would take another three decades for the “transition” to play out. (To be fair, Filipino nationalists worried that a hasty American pullout might lure Japanese expansionists, so there was foot-dragging all around.)

A year later, Puerto Rico got its own version of the Jones Act, the Jones-Shafroth Act, which gave islanders citizenship (and made them conscriptable for war). But the mentoring model also left the United States with the power to overturn any legislation and stripped Puerto Rico of control over economic, immigration, communications, and defense policies. The island has hovered in limbo ever since.

WHERE we see Wilson's legacies on display most explicitly today is in the Middle East. His was by no means the only vision to remap the Middle East after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. But the plan inscribed in Wilson's Fourteen Points — which outlined America's moral and political purpose for entering World War I and its vision for a postwar world — had profound worldwide repercussions. It projected American ideals of self-determination and the cultural conditions of citizenship onto a global canvas.

For those living under the yoke of old European empires, the document was greeted as a liberating charter. It was immediately translated into many languages and printed widely. It also framed the world's first great experiment in global government and cooperation, under the League of

Nations. For good reason, Wilson is seen as the founder of liberal internationalism.

But as the terms of the Paris Peace Conference got hammered out, in 1919, it was clear that the exalted principles of liberty would reach only those who were deemed ready and capable of exercising them. That creed was applied within the United States, which is why we focus so much on Wilson's segregationism at home. But it was spread worldwide. Under Wilson, Washington went into the business of exporting both freedom and its limits, a package deal that still inspires both global paradigms and resentments today.

For those who were not yet ready for freedom, it was best to remain colonial subjects or wards of a system of so-called Mandates created by the League of Nations. These included the former semi-autonomous provinces of the Ottoman Empire, like Palestine, Iraq, and Syria. Once hopeful that Wilson's principles of liberty applied to them, locals in Jerusalem, Baghdad, and Damascus were soon embittered that the new rights had not been extended beyond the circle of white Europeans to indigenous leaders and literati. Susan Pedersen's recent book *The Guardians: The League of Nations and the Crisis of Empire* (Oxford University Press, 2015) describes well how Mandate paternalism became a new guise for empire.

The resulting bitterness endures: That we remain entangled in a century-old dispute about peace and democracy in the Middle East is partly Wilson's doing. Those histories of hopes and disappointments need to be on the table as we debate not just Woodrow Wilson but America's place in the world.

Should Wilson's name be torn from buildings? I'm open to persuasion either way. Wilson bashers can find plenty of evidence of his wrongdoing abroad to support the prosecution. His supporters can do the same for the defense. Going global with Wilson enables us to be clearer about the fundamental question: How do we memorialize mixed legacies like Wilson's? When society's values change, should we swap out names and symbols? When yesterday's sinners are trumped by today's saints, what happens when those saints become tomorrow's sinners? And what to do with the memory of the sin if it's no longer publicly there to remind and to discuss?

Maybe we should regularly review and cleanse our emblems. Then again, they represent opportunities to acknowledge limits and ambiguity. Either way, let's not cherry-pick our history.

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How Names Get Tangled With Money

On two campuses, rejection of buildings' names comes at a high cost

U. of Michigan Board Chair Withdraws \$3-Million Gift Over Naming Concerns

The University of Michigan's board chairman has withdrawn a \$3-million pledge to fund the construction of a new building over concerns that it would not keep the name of the building it is replacing, the only structure on the Ann Arbor campus that's named for an African-American, the *Detroit Free Press* reported.

Mark Bernstein, the chairman, and his wife, Rachel Bendit, announced in April that they would help finance the \$10-million building, which is slated to open in 2018. The building would replace the Trotter Multicultural Center, which is named for William Monroe Trotter. The new building would have been named Bernstein-Bendit Hall, under the university's standard procedures.

The Trotter Multicultural Center would have kept its name when it was relocated to the new building, but that building would not have carried the Trotter name.

Students, faculty, and staff said they appreciated the gift but did not want to have the Trotter name taken off the building, the university's president, Mark S. Schlissel, said at a board meeting on Thursday, the *Free Press* reported.

The project will continue, and Mr. Bernstein said that although he and his wife had withdrawn the donation, they would look for other ways to support multiculturalism, the newspaper reported.

A new building for the Trotter Multicultural Center was one of the seven demands of the Black Student Union during campus protests in 2014.

—ARIELLE MARTINEZ

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To Remove 'Confederate,' Vanderbilt Will Return an 83-Year-Old Donation

Vanderbilt University will return an 83-year-old donation from the United Daughters of the Confederacy so it can remove a controversial inscription from one of its residence halls, the university

announced on Monday.

The original donation of \$50,000 was given to the George Peabody College for Teachers in 1933 toward the construction and naming rights of Confederate Memorial Hall. The building opened in 1935, and Vanderbilt acquired it when the university merged with George Peabody in 1979. The university has officially called the building Memorial Hall in recent years and has been seeking permission to remove the word "Confederate" from the inscription on its pediment.

Vanderbilt's chancellor, Nicholas S. Zeppos, said in a message to the university on Monday that the name had been a topic of debate for generations of Vanderbilt students, faculty, and staff. "We have asked time and again how can we have this symbol in the sky — a pediment is intended to draw a gaze upward — as part of our aspirational goals?"

In comments to a *Chronicle* reporter, he added: "After hearing from 18-year-old freshmen and people working on the campus, it became increasingly clear to me and the trustees that this pediment was inconsistent with the aspirations we have for a more inclusive, diverse campus. It is not a symbol that would welcome people into our community."

In 2002, when Vanderbilt first attempted to rename the building Memorial Hall, in honor of Americans killed in war, the United Daughters of the Confederacy sued to block the change. In 2005, a Tennessee appeals court decided that the university could remove the name, but only if it reimbursed the donation adjusted for inflation. Anonymous donors, whom the chancellor referred to as "individuals who have been deeply engaged in the university," came up with the \$1.2 million needed.

Mr. Zeppos disagrees with those who have accused the university of trying to rewrite history by removing the inscription. To emphasize that point, he said on Monday that Vanderbilt would hold an annual conference on race, reconciliation, and reunion. "We will teach history. That's what we do," he told *The Chronicle*. "I don't think this building ever taught a class." —GABRIEL SANDOVAL

Katherine Mangan contributed to this article.

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