



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on April 25, 2017

## New Orleans' Assault on Southern Heritage Ramps Up

“Surrender means that the history of this heroic struggle will be written by our enemy; that our youth will be trained by Northern school teachers; will learn from Northern school books their version of the War; will be impressed by all the influences of history and education to regard our gallant dead as traitors, and our maimed veterans as fit subjects for derision.”

Thus did Confederate General Patrick Cleburne lament in the last days of the Civil War, accurately predicting the Taliban-like assault on Confederate monuments we are presently enduring across the country. And nowhere was Cleburne’s prophecy more prescient than what happened in New Orleans early Monday morning, when the Big Easy awoke to the removal of the Liberty Place monument, done during the dark of night.



Mayor Mitch Landrieu justified the removal of the obelisk on the grounds of security concerns. Landrieu said the Liberty Place obelisk (shown) was an “affront” to “millions of Americans.” The Liberty Place monument was erected in 1874 to commemorate an uprising against the continued Reconstruction imposed on Louisiana by the federal government. President U.S. Grant sent in federal troops to crush the rebellion.

While the so-called Liberty Place monument has only a limited number of supporters, Landrieu told the media during a Monday morning press conference that he was going after three more Confederate monuments — statues of Generals Robert E. Lee, Louisiana native Pierre G.T. Beauregard, and Confederate President Jefferson Davis — “sooner rather than later.” These monuments have much support, as can be seen in “battles” across the country.

In February, the Charlottesville, Virginia, City Council voted 3-2 to remove the statue of Robert E. Lee from downtown Lee Park, but that action is facing litigation from the Virginia Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), which is composed of male descendants who served in some capacity in Confederate forces during the Civil War. Charlottesville and New Orleans are just two cities in the United States that have begun an attempt to drive anything positive about the late Confederacy into the Orwellian memory hole.

Landrieu launched his assault on Confederate heritage in New Orleans almost two years ago by calling for the removal of the Liberty Place obelisk and the three statues honoring Confederate heroes. He said that he was reacting to the murders of nine people in a Charleston, South Carolina, historically Black church by Dylann Roof, a self-described white supremacist. The City Council voted six months later, 6-1, that the monuments were “nuisances” that created racial problems. The action led to litigation that



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prevented the removals until recently.

The monument was removed during the cover of darkness, by workers wearing helmets, bullet-proof vests, and masks. The names of the contractors and their compensation is presently not public knowledge. Whoever they are, they were accompanied by dozens of New Orleans police officers and police dogs. Snipers were at the top of a nearby parking garage. When word began to spread of what was happening, some city residents became concerned that the statue of President Davis that is located near Canal Street was also going to be removed that night. This led dozens of protesters to gather during the night and maintain a candlelight vigil near the Davis statue.

“This city is blessed with a lot of monuments, some truly beautiful monuments done by notable sculptors,” said one of the protesters, Pierre McGraw, who founded the Monumental Task Committee. “Any other city would be proud to have these monuments.”

“These men were great leaders,” said another man, Charles Lincoln, who threatened a new lawsuit he plans to file to save the statues of Lee, Beauregard, and Davis. “They were American patriots. They believed they were doing the right thing and they were heroes.”

At one time, Robert E. Lee was revered by all Americans North and South as not only a brilliant general, but a man of exceptionally noble character. In his second inaugural address, President Abraham Lincoln advocated an effort to “bind up the nation’s wounds.” Part of that effort was to recognize southern heroes such as Lee, Beauregard, Davis, and Stonewall Jackson, alongside northern icons such as General Grant. Apparently, Landrieu prefers to rub salt into the nation’s wounds.

These attacks are not only mean-spirited, but they are also based on a misconception of the motivations of Lee and hundreds of thousands of other men who served in the Confederate Army. To illustrate this point, I recall my recent trip to New Orleans (to see my Oklahoma Sooners play in the Sugar Bowl). During our vacation, my wife and I took a tour on a double-decker bus. The tour guide noted the Lee monument during our ride, remarking that we had better get a good look at it because it would soon be removed. He then proceeded to deliver a one-minute rant about the supposed evils of Lee, charging that he was a “slave-owning dude,” who had “never done anything for the city of New Orleans.”

The most charitable thing that I could say about these comments is that they are rooted in ignorance. While Lee had at one time owned slaves that he had inherited — he had freed them before the first shots were fired in the War Between the States. The same thing could be said about the father of our country — George Washington, because though he owned slaves, he eventually freed them. Still, Washington once owned slaves, making him just another “slave-owning dude.” Under this guide’s reasoning, we should knock down the Washington Monument in Washington, D.C. And while we’re at it, perhaps we should re-name the nation’s capital city. After that, we can change the names of the 7,000 streets in America named for Washington to something that better suits modern political correctness.

Also in New Orleans, there are rumblings of discontent at the presence of an Andrew Jackson statue in Jackson Square. Our guide even proudly said they were removing the passing of Jackson Square from their tour! Residents of New Orleans should note that without Jackson’s victory over the British at the 1815 Battle of New Orleans, the city might well have remained in the possession of the Redcoats.

We should not be under any illusions that these types of removals of monuments, which are reminiscent of something that Osama bin Laden would have been proud of, are the end. Those who are now going after the monuments of Confederate heroes will soon enough (and in fact, we have seen beginnings of such despicable efforts already) turn their guns on our shared American heritage. We can expect the



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National Anthem to increasingly be found in the crosshairs of the Left, along with the U.S. flag itself.

Lee not only opposed slavery, but also the secession of Virginia. For those who think the war was simply fought to end slavery (making every Confederate soldier a man fighting just to keep humans in bondage), they should note that Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers, not to end slavery, but rather to save the Union. At the time of his call, Virginia was still part of that Union, having rejected secession, as did a majority of the states where slavery was still legal in 1861. Lincoln's decision to make war on the seven seceded states (without any authorization of Congress), precipitated the secession of four more states, including Virginia. For these states, the issue was clearly not slavery, but rather opposition to Lincoln's *de facto* declaration of war upon some sister states.

At this point, Lee had to choose. He was offered command of all U.S. military forces, but he could not bear to fight against his home state. To Lee, the issue of the war was not to keep his slaves (he had none), but rather to repel an invading force.

Regardless of whether one agrees with Lee's ultimate decision, binding up the nation's wounds after a war that took at least 600,000 lives involved honoring all the dead in that conflict, and the heroic figures of the contest. And there was no more heroic figure to emerge from that awful conflict than Robert Edward Lee.

To others, however, such as my New Orleans guide, and the city's mayor, what matters most is to insult the memory of the heroic figures such as Lee, Beauregard, and Davis. And the millions of Americans whose ancestors wore the gray in that tragic conflict.

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