

Altered Narratives:

How Women Changed History in the Post-Civil War South

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MY ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS...

Project began as an analysis of the United Daughters of the Confederacy specifically, and how they influenced modern Confederate culture/Monument controversy

Eventually...

Analysis of the origins, development, methods, and impact of various southern women's heritage organizations founded in the post-war period.

Who were these women?

How and why did they organize?

What ideas did they promote, and why?

NOTE:

For the purposes of this project, the term "southern women" refers specifically to white, upper-middle class, fairly aristocratic women who lived in former Confederate states...

The stories of various other women (i.e. black women, poorer white women, etc.) while important, are too extensive for me to cover well in this project.



Through their involvement in activities such as memorialization, education, and the promotion of supposedly true and unbiased history, white southern women were able to preserve a biased historical narrative of the antebellum south and the Civil War, as they hoped to preserve the supposed honor and glory of the Old South and her fallen sons.

GENERAL DEFINITIONS & ACRONYMS

Ladies' Memorial Associations (LMA)

Local, independent memorial organizations formed during Reconstruction, focused on creating cemeteries & memorializing fallen Confederate soldiers

Lost Cause Ideology (LCI)

Set of beliefs which attempts to combat the "vilification" of the Confederacy by the north by painting slavery, secession, and the South in a favorable light

United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC)

Heritage/Memorial organization which was largely responsible for promoting and preserving the Lost Cause (nationalized LMA's)



SOURCE MATERIAL

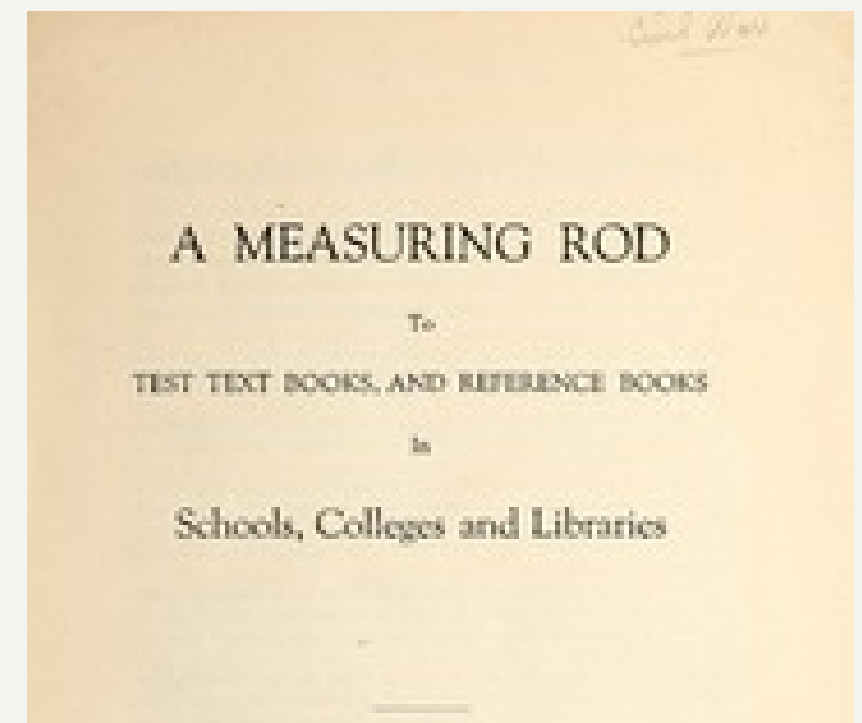
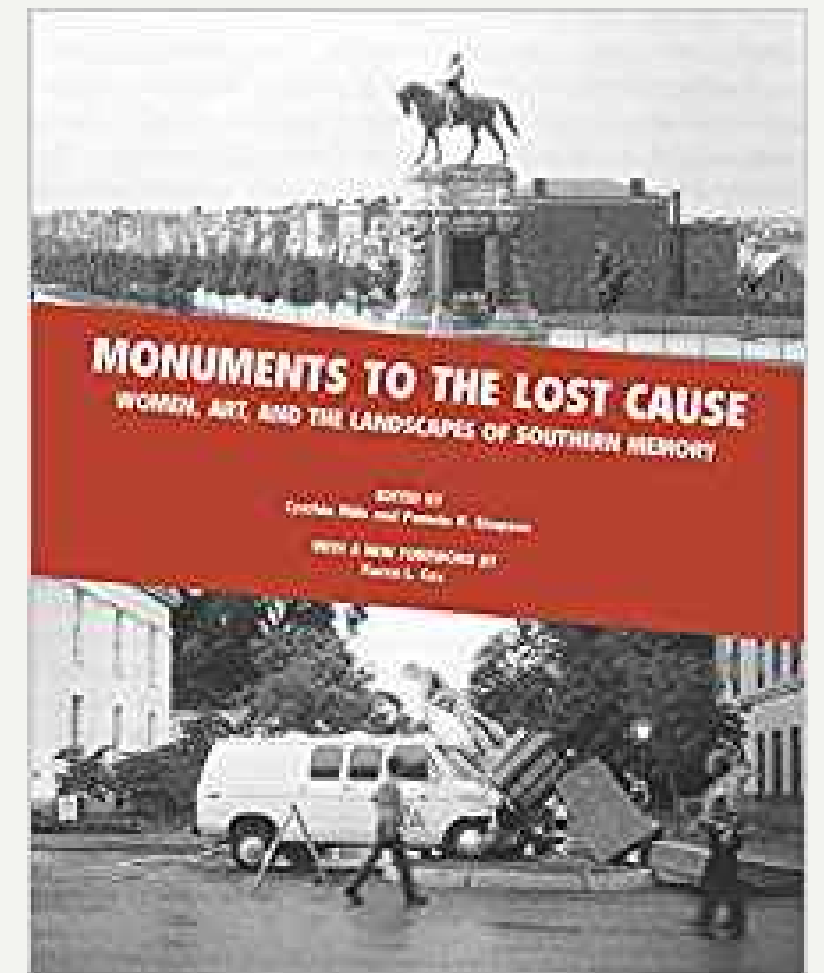
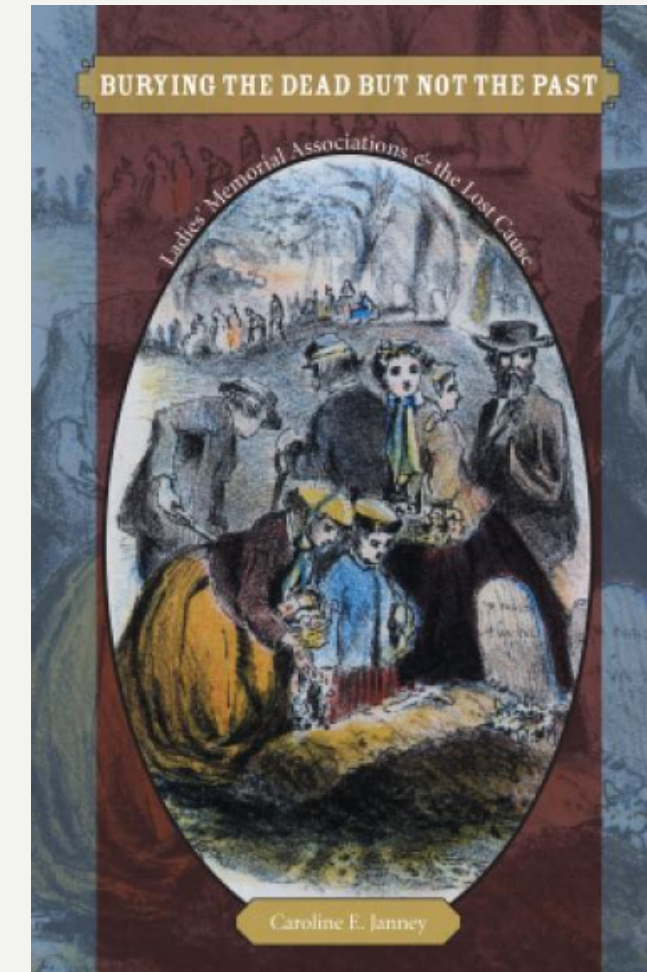
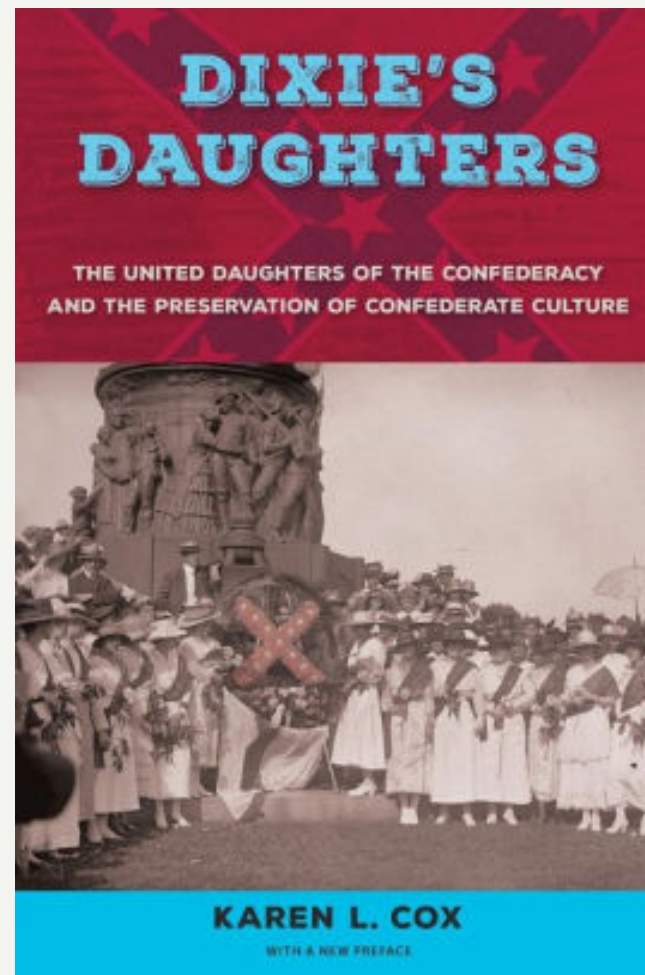
Mainly used Secondary Sources

(Interesting to note that most if not all of the literature on LMAs and the UDC is written by female historians)

Primary source material

Textbooks, pamphlets, catechism, etc. *(published or sponsored by these women)*

Useful for analysis of the organizations' beliefs, from their own perspectives



Outline

Section I

Literature Review

Section II

Reconstruction and the birth of L.M.A.'s

Section III

Southern Women and the Origins of the Lost Cause

Section IV

Case Study: The United Daughters of the Confederacy

Section V

The UDC and the Lost Cause Narrative

Section VI

Epilogue and Modern Impact



Section I: Literature Review and Scholarly Debates



DEBATES AMONG SCHOLARS

Three major debates...

Political nature of LMAs and the UDC

UDC - actions are apolitical

Janney/Cox - UDC as highly political

Origins of the Lost Cause

Traditional historians - post-Reconstruction/male idea

Caroline Janney - origins within LMAs

UDC - reject the Lost Cause publicly, promote tenets to preserve ways of Old South (racial hierarchy)

Connections to white supremacy

Janney/Cox - No direct action taken, Confederate symbols adopted by white supremacists during Civil Rights

Modern UDC - no affiliation with hate groups

Original UDC stance - KKK as defenders of Old South (1914)

CIVIL WAR AND AFTERMATH

Civil War 1861-1865

Soldier's Aid Societies & women's relief efforts

Feminine practices (sewing, knitting, etc.)

Fundraising & creation of networks

Reconstruction policies bred resentment among southern society

LADIES' MEMORIAL ASSOCIATIONS

Women took over most aspects of the grief/memorialization process

Burying, relocating the dead, creating cemeteries & monuments (surrogate graves) & est. Decoration Days

Seen as less political, not a threat to Union occupation and control, thus given more leeway

Section II: Reconstruction and the Birth of Ladies' Memorial Associations



Section III:

Women and the Origins of the Lost Cause

ORIGINS OF THE LOST CAUSE

Traced back to Edward A. Pollard's historical analysis, published in 1866-1867

5 major tenets, three of which were perpetuated by women

Slavery as a benevolent institution

Secession as legal and a right of the State

Honor of Confederate soldiers' dedication to their cause

CONNECTIONS TO WOMEN

LMAs responsible for the preservation of this ideology

Memorialization (i.e. monuments, Decoration Day)

Later, UDC preserved elements in monuments and educational literature

Without their efforts, it is unlikely this ideology would have caught on to the extent that it did



THE UNITED DAUGHTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY

Founded in 1894, in Nashville TN

Essentially a national, unified version of Ladies'

Memorial Associations

Heritage & Relief society

Largely younger, more elite women

Myth becoming fact

UDC was the most successful and influential in terms of the perpetuation of the Lost Cause Ideology

Aimed to VINDICATE their ancestors, and preserve the ways of the Old South (societal/racial hierarchy)

How?

Monuments

Educational Literature

Children's Auxiliary organization

Section IV: The United Daughters of the Confederacy, a Case Study



Section V:

The U.D.C. and the Lost Cause Narrative



METHODS OF PERPETUATION

Monument building

Memorialization became "vindication"

Portrayed Confederates as saintly, honorable, deserving of glory

Educational Materials

Pamphlets, textbooks, catechism

Mildred Lewis Rutherford

In certain cases, these texts were used in public schools until the 1970s

Children of the Confederacy

Children's heritage organization, run by UDC members

Exposed to Confederate culture & biased history from a very young age

Catechism contests, scholarships

Section VI:

Modern Day Impact



MID-LATE 20TH CENTURY

Peak of influence, 1895 - 1920

Decline began after World War I (1914-1918)

Began decline, vindication had been achieved through the "reunification" against the external enemy

Confederate generation largely gone

RESURGENCE DURING CIVIL RIGHTS ERA

UDC's teachings influenced those who fought against Civil Rights/desegregation

21ST CENTURY LEGACIES

Greatly reduced (1895 - ~100,000 members; 2000 - ~20,000 members, many inactive)

Modern Monument controversy - brings UDC into the limelight again, but in a largely negative way

Conclusions?

Based upon the evidence available, I conclude that the women involved in LMA's and the UDC were largely responsible for the survival of the Lost Cause Ideology, as they ensured its preservation for the next generations of Southerners, most effectively through their work in education and influence over young, impressionable students.





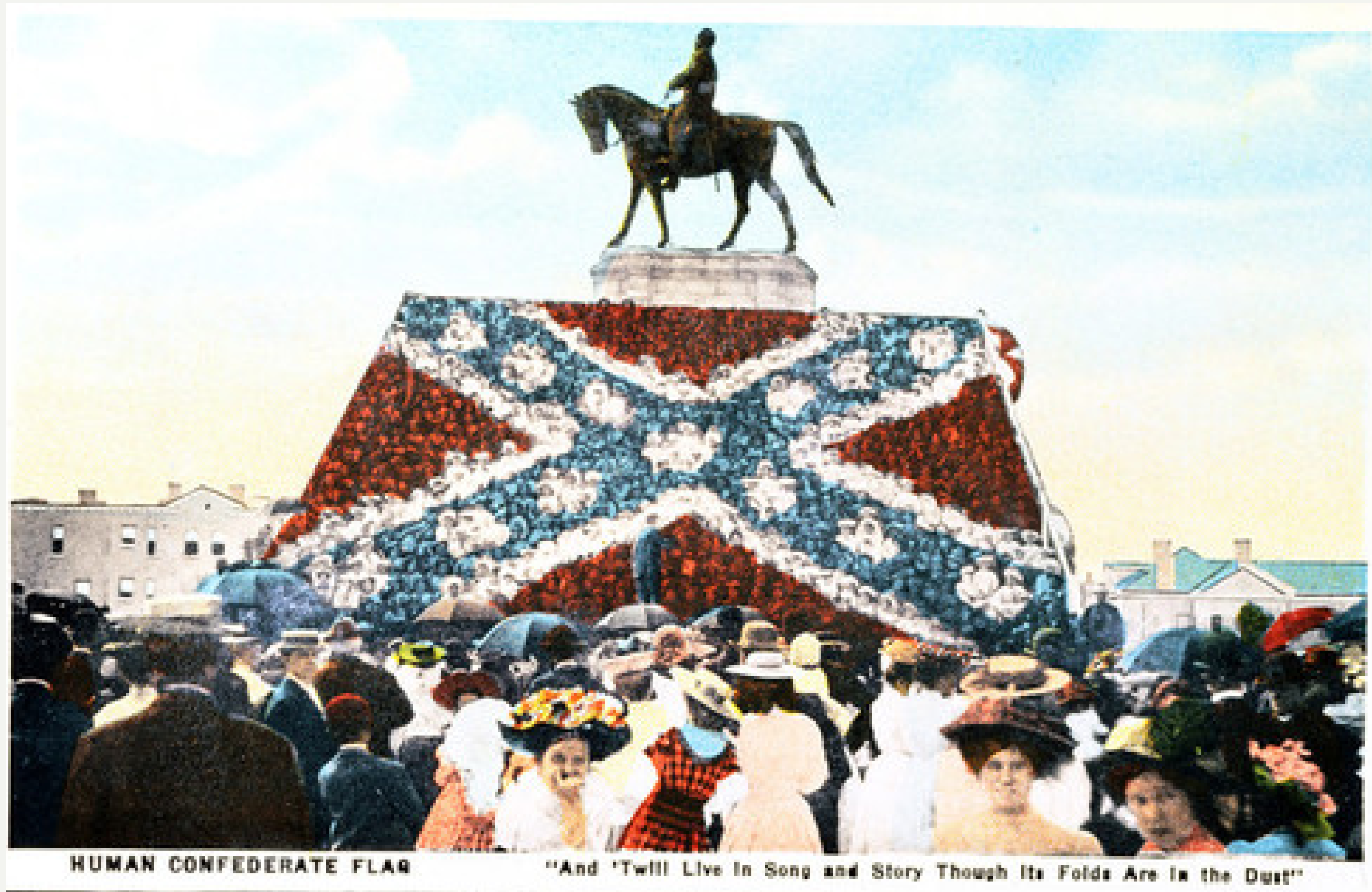
Final thoughts...



Importance of allowing your research to inform your conclusions,
not the other way around

Shocking how short a time it takes - as little as 1-2 generations- for myth
to become "fact"

Political power of education



HUMAN CONFEDERATE FLAG

"And 'Twill Live In Song and Story Though Its Folds Are In the Dust"

Thank you!
Any Questions?

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