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Shae Adams

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Cultural Distortion: The Dedication of the Thomas “Stonewall” Jackson Monument at Manassas National Battlefield Park

Abstract

The Stonewall Jackson monument on Henry Hill at the Manassas National Battlefield Park stands as a testament to the propensity of Americans to manipulate history in order to fit current circumstances. The monument reflects not the views and ideologies of the veterans of the Civil War, but rather the hopes and fears of those who spent the prime years of their lives immersed in the Great Depression. Those of the latter generation searched in vain for heroes among the corrupted businessmen on Wall Street who ran the economic affairs of the country, and who, in the eyes of the public, plunged the nation into insurmountable debt. Historian Lawrence Levine observed that fear served as a motivator for 1930s Americans as they struggled to feed their children during the Great Depression. One reflection of this overwhelming fear appeared in President Franklin Roosevelt's 1933 inaugural address as he insisted “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” In order to cope with this stress, Americans turned to a plethora of heroes as guiding lights for the dark days of the Great Depression. Some turned to gangster heroes like Bonnie and Clyde who undermined the financial and legal systems by lashing out against the institutions. Others devoured the serialized adventures of Superman, a new kind of hero created by the sons of Jewish immigrants in 1938. Still others turned to literature that reminisced about other crises in American history, namely Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, a bestseller in 1938. It was in this cultural setting that the Virginia State Legislature conceived and financed the idea for a Stonewall Jackson monument.

Keywords

Civil War, Stonewall Jackson monument, Manassas National Battlefield Park, Civil War memory

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The Stonewall Jackson monument on Henry Hill at the Manassas National Battlefield Park stands as a testament to the propensity of Americans to manipulate history in order to fit current circumstances. The monument reflects not the views and ideologies of the veterans of the Civil War, but rather the hopes and fears of those who spent the prime years of their lives immersed in the Great Depression. Those of the latter generation searched in vain for heroes among the corrupted businessmen on Wall Street who ran the economic affairs of the country, and who, in the eyes of the public, plunged the nation into insurmountable debt. Historian Lawrence Levine observed that fear served as a motivator for 1930s Americans as they struggled to feed their children during the Great Depression. One reflection of this overwhelming fear appeared in President Franklin Roosevelt’s 1933 inaugural address as he insisted “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”¹ In order to cope with this stress, Americans turned to a plethora of heroes as guiding lights for the dark days of the Great Depression. Some turned to gangster heroes like Bonnie and Clyde who undermined the financial and legal systems by lashing out against the institutions. Others devoured the serialized adventures of Superman, a new kind of hero created by the sons of Jewish immigrants in 1938.² Still others turned to literature that reminisced about other crises in American history, namely

¹ Lawrence Levine, “American Culture and the Great Depression,” *Yale Review*, no. 74 (1984-85): 200, 208. As mentioned in Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 10.

² Bradford W. Wright, *Comic Book Nation: The Transformation of Youth Culture in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 1, 7.

Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind*, a bestseller in 1938.³ It was in this cultural setting that the Virginia State Legislature conceived and financed the idea for a Stonewall Jackson monument.

During the 1938 legislative session, the state of Virginia appropriated \$25,000 for the construction of a monument to General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson on Henry Hill at the newly created Manassas National Battlefield Park. As of March 19, 1938, the day the federal government took over the deed to the land, the property was bare of even a visitor center that would not be constructed until two years after the erection of the monument.^{4 5} The legislature charged the Virginia Fine Arts Commission with finding a suitable monument for the location. In response, the Commission sent out a call for models for the Jackson monument. For the most part, the Commission left the details of the sculpture to the artist, naming only a handful of guidelines. One guideline stipulated that the sculpture would include both Jackson and his horse, Little Sorrell, cast in bronze. The other demanded that "[t]he nature, quality, and significance of Stonewall Jackson must be considered and expressed in the design of the Monument."⁶ After reviewing eighty entries, the Virginia Fine Arts Commission announced the winner of the contest on March 4, 1939. New York sculptor Joseph Pollia came with the experience of sculpting Civil War era figures; he had

³ Levine, 223.

⁴ Memo to the Director, "*Information Concerning Unveiling of the Statue of Stonewall Jackson*," 12 July 1940, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian Files, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

⁵ Joan M. Zenzen, *Battling for Manassas: The Fifty-Year Preservation Struggle at Manassas National Battlefield Park* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 31.

⁶ Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, Virginia, "*Prospectus—The Stonewall Jackson Monument Sculpture Competition and Exhibition*," 29 October 1938, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian Files, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

created a monument to John Brown in North Elba and General Philip Sheridan in New York, in 1935 and 1936, respectively.⁷ The nature of the statue reflected not the General Jackson of the Civil War, but rather the General Stonewall as seen through the cultural eyes of the 1930s.

In Pollia's rendition, a Herculean Jackson sits tall upon an equally muscular horse as he gazes out across Henry Hill. He wears a cape that appears to be lifted by a dramatic wind, lending itself to his heroic stance. The large lettering on the base of the monument boldly declares, "There Stands Jackson Like a Stone Wall," referencing the words purportedly spoken by General Barnard Bee at the Battle of First Manassas, immortalizing Jackson with his nickname. One of the largest monuments on Henry Hill, it commands the attention of any visitor to the battlefield.⁸ The Commission proudly presented the model to the public on March 4, 1939, after awarding Pollia the job.

However, they did not expect the virulent attacks from Confederate organizations and the few remaining Confederate veterans. These attacks began only a few days after the announcement of Pollia's design. One veteran, Colonel John Wesley Blizzard, grumbled that the statue made the famed General appear to be sixty years old, despite the fact that Jackson had died as a young man.⁹ Another veteran, claiming to be the only remaining living veteran to see Jackson and Lee at their last meeting on May 2, 1863, was appalled at the depiction of Jackson's steed, Little Sorrell. "That model makes the horse seem three times as big in front as behind," he remarked in disgust, "It looks more like a buffalo."¹⁰ Still other veterans complained that the depiction

⁷ "Joseph P. Pollia." *New York Times* (1923-Current file), December 14, 1954.

⁸ As observed by the author on a visit to the park on November 10, 2010.

⁹ AP, "Last Vet in Virginia's Confederate Soldiers' Home, Sgt. Jack, Is Dead," *Miami News* (Miami, FL), Jan. 28, 1941.

¹⁰ "Confederate Vets Don't Like Model of Jackson Statue." *Free Lance-Star* (Fredericksburg, VA), Mar. 23, 1939.

resembled General Grant rather than the Jackson.¹¹ Veterans were not alone in voicing their concern. Confederate groups like the Sons of Confederate Veterans and United Daughters of the Confederacy united to protest what they considered a monstrosity and an insult to the memory of Jackson. These groups petitioned that the Arts Commission instead favor sculptor F. William Sievers' model that depicted a humanly proportioned Jackson astride a rather dejected but realistic Little Sorrell. The cape, so despised by these Southern organizations, was conspicuously missing in Sievers model.¹² The Commission refused to change its decision, although in the hailstorm of protests, Pollia offered to make any changes to his model the Commission deemed necessary.¹³

The choice of Pollia by the Arts Commission reflected the mindset of 1930s Americans. Confederate groups accused the Commission of selecting a "distorted conception" of Jackson.¹⁴ In this instance, the Commission was guilty of such accusations. Those on the panel chose a distorted image of Jackson because they themselves had created a distorted image of the American past in order to provide cultural succor and guidance during the difficult years of the Great Depression. Over the previous decade, Americans had created a hollow mould for an idealized hero that desperately needed filling; to the Arts Commission, the sentimentalized Jackson of the Civil War could fill that mould. In the era when no heroes seemed to exist, Americans looked to the past for inspiration.¹⁵ The Civil War provided ample romantic figures to ease this burden, despite the distortion of those figures. On the one hand, Jackson symbolized the "spiritual strength" many felt they had lost during the Depression.¹⁶ On the other, he represented a rebel akin to the outlaw heroes Bonnie and

¹¹ Virginius Dabney, "Statue Plans Irk Virginia," *New York Times*, Apr. 9, 1939.

¹² " 'Battle of Manassas' Rages Again in Dixie," *Miami News*, Apr. 23, 1939.

¹³ Dabney.

¹⁴ "Confederate Vets Don't Like Model of Jackson Statue."

¹⁵ Wright, 10.

¹⁶ Dabney.

Clyde. Just like Bonnie and Clyde, Jackson had fought to undermine a government institution he found corrupt and against his state's prosperity. However, while Bonnie and Clyde worked only for themselves, Jackson's memory stood exalted on a pillar of self-sacrifice to country and freedom.

Interestingly, the statue itself bore several similarities to the newly created and popularized Superman comic book character. Jackson's abdominal muscles are comparable to those of the Superman that appeared in Action Comic #1 in 1939. In addition, the heroic looking capes of both men appear oddly similar in cut and dramatics.¹⁷ These similarities point to the need of Americans to see heroes of almost superhuman status within their own past in order to create a cultural mythos that could carry them through the weary drudgery of unemployment and near starvation. Superman did not represent the only embodiment of the physical exaggeration conveying heroic status. Sculptures across the country, including others created by Pollia, reflected the tendency of Americans in the 1930s to idolize the physical strength of cultural icons as the manifestation of moral heroism. For this reason, Pollia may have seemed a socially relevant sculptor for the Jackson monument. In the mid-1930s, Pollia sculpted a number of monuments dedicated to American heroes, each one exaggerating the physical muscularity of the depicted figure. His 1935 statue of John Brown at North Elba, New York creates the image of a figure whose physical robustness reflects his spiritual strength.¹⁸ Two years later, Pollia erected a monument to Admiral Robert E. Peary in Cresson, Pennsylvania, depicting a well-defined explorer, his physical

¹⁷ Wright, 8.

¹⁸ West Virginia Archives and History, "His Soul Goes Marching On: The Life and Legacy of John Brown: John Brown in Print, Stage, Film, and Art," West Virginia Division of Culture and History, <http://www.wvculture.org/history/jbexhibit/playsandbooks.html> (accessed December 8, 2010).

pro prowess matching his courage in facing the arctic unknown.¹⁹ Pollia's monuments represented a trend paralleling other movements in American popular culture during the 1930s. Through the art and literature of this decade, the reshaping of the American hero is apparent. Societies create heroes in order to provide themselves with direction and meaning; some cultures enshrine these heroes in stories for children, while others create works of art to immortalize such individuals. In the case of Virginia, they built a statue to a man whose image they had distorted to give their tribulations meaning and hope.

Once the Commission decided upon the Pollia model, the Park Service went to work planning the logistics that accompanied its placement and dedication. Before the land became a National Battlefield Park, the Henry Hill farm area belonged to the Sons of Confederate Veterans. After the United Daughters of the Confederacy, under the leadership of Mrs. Westwood Hutchinson, gained an option to buy the property at \$25,000, the Sons of Confederate Veterans worked out a deal with the Virginia state government that helped the Sons purchase the land.²⁰ The understanding between the two entities was that after the purchase the Sons of Confederate Veterans would pay for the upkeep of the park.²¹ The original purpose of the purchase was the creation of a Confederate memorial park on the grounds. Once the land was purchased in 1923, it was named the Manassas Battlefield Confederate Park and those involved determined that it would be used for educational purposes concerning the history and memory of all Confederate soldiers.²² However, the organization soon found itself in financial straits that hindered the organization

¹⁹ As observed by Gettysburg Semester student, Dawn Winkler-Pembridge in Cresson, Pennsylvania at Admiral Peary Monument Park on November 28, 2010.

²⁰ "Confederate News," *Confederate Veteran*, no. 28, (October 1920): 397, as noted in Joan M. Zenzen, *Battling for Manassas: The Fifty-Year Preservation Struggle at Manassas National Battlefield Park* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 217.

²¹ Zenzen, 15-6.

²² "Confederate News," as footnoted in Zenzen, 217.

from the barest upkeep of Henry Hill, let alone the erection of monuments across the property. Instead of selling the land, the Sons discussed the possibility of donating the land to the federal government. After much debate and compromise, the Sons voted to confer the land to the National Park Service, demanding that the Park Service maintain a fair interpretation of the battlefield once it passed into Federal hands. The deed for the land passed into federal hands in March 1938, and once the federal government shuffled, signed, and filed the proper paperwork, the Manassas Battlefield Confederate Park became the Manassas National Battlefield Park on May 10, 1940.²³

The land did come with the stipulation that an appropriate monument would occupy Henry Hill, and as a result, the placement of the monument became a matter for the National Park Service to decide. The Regional Director of the Park Service insisted that the placement of the monument be decided before selecting a location for the Museum-Administration building.²⁴ As a result, various Park officers held a conference on April 27, 1940, to reconnoiter Henry Hill for possible locations. They decided to erect the monument on the hill in the location believed to have been held by Jackson and his men on July 21, 1861. Those involved thereupon decided that the Museum-Administration building would be constructed “in such relation to the monument that the monument would become the focal point from the observation-terrace.”²⁵ This decision indicated a tremendous shift in the memory and interpretation of the war. In the years immediately following the war, Union veterans flatly denied the requests of Confederate veterans to erect monuments upon the fields on which they fought. At Gettysburg, for instance,

²³ Zenzen, 24.

²⁴ Memorandum for the Director, “*Attention: Branch of Plans and Design*,” 5 April 1940, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historians Files, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

²⁵ A.J. Ewald to Files, “*Report on Conference Regarding Location of Jackson Equestrian Statue*,” 27 April 1940, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian’s Files, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

the War Commission forced Confederate veterans to place their memorials at their initial line of battle rather than at the location of their military engagement with Federal troops.²⁶ That the National Park Service would allow a Confederate memorial to stand on the field, but more importantly become the focal point of the visitors center spoke to the reconciliatory trend that marked war memory in the 1930s. In addition, the use of the monument as a focal point marked its subject as the key to the interpretation of the battle. This manner of exalting Jackson by a federal body reflected the growing tendency of the nation to accept Confederate symbols as national ones. As the American people drew parallels between their own failures of the 1930s and the failures of the defeated South, figures like Jackson came to embody an American need for validation and justification.

However, the circumstances surrounding the placement of Confederate monuments on Henry Hill also revealed the selective remembrance of the 1930s. In May of 1939, a year before the slated arrival of the Jackson monument, a local chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy raised one thousand dollars for the construction of a memorial to General Barnard Bee on Henry Hill. The memorial seemed fitting, dedicated to the man who gave General Jackson his iconic moniker shortly before his own death on the Manassas field. Like any other suggestion made for the decoration of Henry Hill, the proposal caused controversy. Assistant Research Technician for the Park, Joseph Hanson, wrote to Superintendent Branch Spalding complaining about the proposed Bee monument. He argued that the location of the Bee monument, a mere one hundred feet to the south of the Jackson monument, would crowd the memorials.²⁷ Despite Hanson's irritation with the prospect of

²⁶John P. Nicholson to The Secretary of War, "Monument Location at Gettysburg," Document 73, Box 13, Collections at Gettysburg National Military Park.

²⁷Memorandum from Joseph Hanson to Coordinating Superintendent Spalding: "*Concerning Jackson Monument and Proposed Bee Monument*," 8 May 1939, Stonewall

two monuments on the hill, the United Daughters of the Confederacy presented the small obelisk dedicated to Bee on the field on July 21, 1939.²⁸ That no fanfare accompanied the presentation illustrated that while the Herculean Jackson would capture all attention with a large dedication ceremony, Bee would be effectively overshadowed by the grandeur of the man he had a hand in creating. Just as few individuals read into the possible sarcasm of Bee's famous words of "There stands Jackson like a stonewall," few would notice the smaller monument in his honor.

Once the placement of the monument was decided, the park embarked on the selective task of sending invitations to those who would take part in the dedication ceremonies. The Park designated a committee to organize the ceremonies and all aspects related to the dedication. This committee made the decisions concerning who would and would not merit an invitation. While the dedication itself was open to the general public, the committee awarded special groups throughout the community individual invitations as a sign of respect. For instance, the United Daughters of the Confederacy received a private invitation to the unveiling ceremonies. The organization of Confederate Veterans received an invitation as well.²⁹ In addition, several individual Confederate veterans were invited as guests of honor: John Shaw, the oldest Virginian Confederate veteran who had served as J.E.B. Stuart's runner during the war; John B. Cushing; J.A. Spicer; and Colonel John W. Blizzard, who had served as General

Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian Files,
Manassas National Battlefield Park.

²⁸ Observed by the author on visit to the park on November 10, 2010.

²⁹ Letter from Judge Walter L. Hopkins of Sons of Confederate Veterans to Brach Spalding, Superintendent of Battle Field Parks of Virginia, Fredericksburg, Virginia, "Lack of Dedication Invitation," 26 August 1940, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian Files, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

Jackson's runner during the war.³⁰ Blizzard's invitation was of particular interest, as he had criticized the statue shortly after the Commission awarded Pollia the contract for the memorial.³¹ The committee seemingly wanted to make peace with the veterans who had expressed a dislike of the monument while simultaneously honoring them for their service. That the monument barely resembled the General under whom the men had fought did not seem to concern the committee. Their presence would symbolically provide the connection to the past so desperately sought by Americans of the Great Depression era. In a way, the presence of Confederate veterans would validate the distortion of history embodied in the Jackson statue. The choice of invitations reflected the psychological needs of the committee and the community as they sought to assure themselves of the parallels between their own desperate economic situations and the failed, but purportedly righteous, Confederacy.

On the other hand, organizations that did not receive dedication invitations present an equally insightful look into the values of the committee and the national mindset. Only five days before the ceremony on August 31, 1940, Superintendent Spalding received a terse letter from Judge Walter L. Hopkins of the Sons of Confederate Veterans demanding to know why the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Confederate Veterans organizations received invitations to the dedication while the Sons received nothing. Hopkins sharply reminded Spalding that the Sons had bought and donated the Henry Hill property to the United States government, while the United Daughters had not "given one cent" to the purchase of the property.³² Spalding replied, assuring Hopkins the lack of invitation indicated a mere

³⁰ "2,000 See Jackson Statue Unveiled at Manassas Park," *Richmond Times Dispatch*, Sunday, September 1, 1940, as contained in the Stonewall Jackson Folder, Historian's Files, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

³¹ *Miami News*.

³² Letter from Judge Walter L. Hopkins Hopkins of Sons of Confederate Veterans to Brach Spalding, Superintendent of Battle Field Parks of Virginia, Fredericksburg, Virginia.

oversight on the part of the committee. This alleged oversight points to the tendency of Americans to forget the precise events of the past while boldly forging a new future. By forgetting to invite the very organization that provided the funds for the land upon which the monument would stand, the arrangement committee acted out the process of American forgetfulness that in some ways created the very monument being dedicated. The distortion of the Jackson image also represented a forgetfulness of the details surrounding the new national hero.

Other arrangements for the dedication included the types of decorations allowed at the ceremony. Most importantly, the committee requested permission to use the Confederate flag as a drapery on the base of the statue during the unveiling ceremonies. They argued that in other instances the flag was employed as a decorative device and would be appropriate at the Jackson monument dedication. Without hesitation, the Park granted its permission.³³ This assent led to the wide use of the Confederate flag throughout the ceremonies. Not only did the flag drape the statue's base, but also the front of the speaker's podium. Multiple Confederate flags decorated the rest of the stage, while two small American flags waved atop the stage's portico.³⁴ This blatant use of the Confederate flag in a federally sponsored dedication ceremony reflects the approval of Confederate symbolism within 1930s society. The federal demand that all Confederate symbolism, from regimental flags to buttons on uniforms, be relinquished or blackened in the years immediately following the war faded to be replaced by a societal acceptance of the symbols. Not only were the symbols accepted, they were embraced in the fervor to create meaningful and tangible connections to the past. In 1865, a *New York Times* headline cried "The

³³ Memorandum to the Director, "Use of Confederate Flag at Dedication," 8 August 1940, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian's File, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

³⁴ Photograph of Dedication Ceremony, Photographic Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian's File, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

Confederate Flag Disappears from the Continent,” following Kirby Smith’s surrender.³⁵ Only seventy-five years later, the Stars and Bars served as the centerpiece for a federally approved memorial honoring a fallen Confederate general. That the Confederate flag flew alongside that of America adds to the understanding of 20th century American society. By the 1930s, the Lost Cause worked its way into the national memory of the war, creating a society that embraced the valor of both sides and the righteousness of both Northern and Southern convictions. The results of that societal shift converged in 1940 at the dedication of the Manassas Jackson monument as clearly seen through the simultaneous use of Confederate and American flags.

After nearly three years of planning and fundraising, the dedication ceremony took place on August 31, 1940, at two in the afternoon, boasting nearly two thousand observers.³⁶ The program for the ceremony included the unveiling of the monument by Miss Julia Preston, the great-granddaughter of General Jackson, and Miss Ann Rust, the daughter of Senator John A. Rust who sponsored the bill for the Jackson statue. In addition, the Quantico Marine Band played a rendition of “America”, while the Washington Quartet and Band provided music as well. Famed historian, Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman gave the keynote address of the day.³⁷ Each aspect of the program represented the cementation of bonds between the past and the present, and the continued distortion of Civil War history through Lost Cause memory.

The committee in charge of dedication arrangements planned to honor the Jackson family by inviting Julia Preston to unveil the statue of her great-grandfather during the ceremonies. Fifty-three year old Preston provided a link between the Confederate general and the 1930s American

³⁵ "End of the Rebellion: The Last Rebel Army Disbands," *New York Times* (1857-1922), May 29, 1865.

³⁶ "2,000 See Jackson Statue Unveiled at Manassas Park."

³⁷ Memorandum for the Coordinating Superintendent, "Program for the Dedication of the Jackson Monument," 28 August 1940, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian's Files, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

public.³⁸ Her presence symbolized a continuation of the ideals of the Confederacy. Bloodlines tracing directly to the Confederacy remained a point of pride throughout the South in the years following the war, and became a point of interest throughout the rest of the country during the Great Depression. In some ways, the physical manifestations of these bloodlines served to remind the nation that while the Confederacy may have disappeared in 1865, its values and ideologies persisted well into the 20th century. The existence of descendants like Preston indicated that the past still influenced and held meaning decades after the war.

While the role of Preston in the unveiling was self-explanatory given her relationship to Jackson, the choice of Ann Rust was slightly odd. Of course, her father, former State Senator John A. Rust ensured that the statue would receive state funding.³⁹ However, other options existed in selecting the second individual to unveil the monument. As previously noted, four Confederate veterans attended the ceremonies, one of whom served as a Jackson's runner. The participation of one of these men would have illustrated a closer connection to Jackson than Rust. Their participation would have fully forged the bonds between the actual Confederacy's past in the form of a veteran who had had with personal contact with Jackson, and the idealized future of the Confederacy in the form of Preston. By not selecting Blizzard to unveil the monument with Preston, the committee further revealed the distortion of history taking place within American society. Obviously, this was not a monument for the veterans of the war as the Commission dismissed their opinions during the creation of the statue. Similarly, the ceremony did not seek to honor the living veterans of the war. Jackson was no longer remembered as a general who had traitorously fought against the federal government; rather he was honored as a faithful soldier, dedicated to the righteousness of his cause whose character should be emulated by the current generation of American

³⁸ "Julia Preston, Stonewall Jackson Granddaughter, 104." *New York Times*, September 21, 1991.

³⁹ Memorandum for the Coordinating Superintendent, "Program for the Dedication of the Jackson Monument."

youth. By failing to offer Confederate veterans a role in the dedication ceremony, the committee illustrated that while Americans sought vindication and strength in the memory of the Civil War's Confederate figures, they did not seek to tie themselves to the facts of the war, but rather to the distorted memory of the war. The veterans brought the crowd a little too close to history, and while the desire to maintain a connection to the past represents a key aspect of American society, so too does the desire to separate oneself from the direct implications of that history. Perhaps subconsciously, the committee planning the dedication chose to keep the Confederate veterans as mere spectators at the ceremony in order to avoid a possible collision of perceptions concerning the realities of the war.

In addition, the Quantico Marine Band played as part of the dedication ceremony.⁴⁰ The choice of this band in particular indicated an accepted connection between the federal government and the Confederate memory of the Civil War. The band, created by legislation in 1918 to participate in various events, "to improve morale, inspire, motivate, and instill in the audiences, a sense of pride and patriotism, and to re-affirm our core values, customs, and traditions, and best represent the United States Marine Corps."⁴¹ That a band dedicated to promoting patriotism and American values would play at a Confederate dedication is indicative of the meshing of American and Confederate symbolism and values during the 1930s. Their presence at the dedication revealed that honoring the memory of Confederate generals served to enforce dedication to the American nation, something the Confederacy sought to destroy in 1861. Ironically, the band played a rendition of "America," a song that proudly proclaims that America is a nation of freedom for all, a freedom Confederates staunchly denied their African

⁴⁰ Memorandum for the Coordinating Superintendent, "Program for the Dedication of the Jackson Monument."

⁴¹ Marine Corps Base Quantico, "Quantico Band," United States Marine Corps, <http://www.quantico.usmc.mil/activities/?Section=BAND>, (accessed December 4, 2010)

American slaves, a freedom granted by the North in the midst of the war, and a freedom denounced by the ex-Confederates following the war.⁴² That Jackson, a corps commander of the Confederate army, would have been in favor of this display of American patriotism seems unlikely.

The most anticipated moment of the program, aside from the unveiling of the monument itself, came in the form of historian Douglas Southall Freeman's keynote address at the end of the ceremony. Freeman, president of the Southern Historical Society, won renown as a Confederate historian in 1934 with the release of his four-volume book, *R.E. Lee*.⁴³ The historian carried a personal connection to the war. His father, Walker Freeman, fought for the Confederacy in the Piedmont Artillery and was present at Appomattox Court House on the day of Lee's surrender.⁴⁴ This connection to the war no doubt influenced Freeman's views concerning the acts of both the Confederacy and its generals. Steeped in the Lost Cause tradition, Freeman created a widely endorsed view of the war supported by scholarly research that seemed to validate the Lost Cause, and the public's connection to the Civil War South. By selecting Freeman as keynote speaker, the committee further created a ceremony that would rely on the distorted memory of the Civil War while maintaining a direct connection to the war through Freeman's relationship to a Confederate veteran.

Freeman did not disappoint. His address focused on the growing fears of impending war as the United States warily watched the increasingly ferocious fighting between the British and the Germans. He offered a call to arms, relying upon the image of Jackson as a national hero to admire and emulate within the ranks of the armed forces as they prepared for a potential war overseas. He emphasized the need for Jackson's leadership style within the army, dependant on "hard and stern discipline". He praised Jackson as "one of the

⁴² Memorandum for the Coordinating Superintendent, "Program for the Dedication of the Jackson Monument."

⁴³ David E. Johnson, *Douglas Southall Freeman* (Grena, Louisiana: Pelican Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), 166.

⁴⁴ Johnson, 21, 27.

greatest soldiers of the Anglo-Saxon race,” who fought for freedom and highly valued ideals throughout the great American Civil War.⁴⁵ Such praise of Jackson emphasizes his status not as a traitor to the United States, but rather as a hero dedicated to its traditions and highest morals.

Freeman went on to urge the American people to take strength in the prayer of past Americans embattled by war: “let God defend the right.”⁴⁶ The words seem out of place at a memorial service devoted to those who lost their struggle, and in the antebellum tradition, lacked the righteous cause. However, Freeman was working from within a philosophical construct resulting from the South’s loss of the Civil War. Following the war, the Lost Cause provided vindication for the South as they comforted themselves with the belief that sometimes righteous causes face defeat not because of an inherent wrong in the cause itself, but because at times God chooses to test the faithful and just through defeat. Thus, ex-Confederates warmed themselves from the biting winds of defeat by wrapping the mantle of Job around themselves and their loss. With the crash of the stock market in 1929 and the following Depression, Americans searched for a reason for the suffering of morally upstanding individuals, finding their answer preconceived in the Lost Cause ideology.⁴⁷ Freeman, aware of the shifting notions concerning the Confederacy, encouraged the direction of Civil War interpretation illustrating to Americans that Confederate ideals need not only serve in times of economic strain, but in times of war as well. Freeman promised that Americans could find fortification and succor in the examples of valor and devotion “so beautifully exemplified in the life and service of Stonewall Jackson.”⁴⁸ A few days after his address, Assisting Park Director, A.E. Demaray, wrote to Freeman praising his address as being, “replete with meaning and significance for the American

⁴⁵ “2,000 See Jackson Statue Unveiled at Manassas Park.”

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Thomas Connelly, *The Marble Man*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press 1977), 130-31.

⁴⁸ “2,000 See Jackson Statue Unveiled at Manassas Park.”

people at this time.”⁴⁹ The dedication ceremony as a whole, and specifically Freeman’s address, reflected the state of the American historical worldview as the 1940s opened.

However, not all agreed with the entirety of the monument following its dedication celebration. An editorial piece in a local journal condemned the monument for its plaque containing the names of the various politicians who sponsored the Jackson monument legislation. The writer insisted that Jackson, as a “hero of the past” deserved a memorial of his own without added political weight.⁵⁰ The incensed writer reveals more than merely his own belief in the proper memorialization of Jackson. He illustrates the emotional devotion Americans adopted toward Confederate figures throughout the course of the Great Depression. As Thomas Connelly notes in his study of the image of Robert E. Lee, Americans developed strong attachments to figures like Robert E. Lee who appeared to embody enviable dignity in the face of humiliating loss.⁵¹ While Jackson did not reach the same pinnacle of hero memorialization as Lee in the years of the Great Depression, his memory gained a new life during the decade. The erection of the Jackson monument on Henry Hill and the emotions surrounding its creation stand as a testament to that distorted revitalization of the Confederate general.

Every era looks to those that came before for guidance. As time progresses the memories of the actions of previous generations reshape to take on new meaning to fit the situational needs of the current generation. For Americans, this phenomenon holds a particular truth in the case of the Civil War. The meanings of the war changed during the war itself, and in each subsequent generation. At times the reunion of a nation seemed at stake, while at others a national identity

⁴⁹ Letter from Assisting Director, A.E. Demaray to Dr. Douglas Southall Freeman, “Request for Copy of Speech,” 3 September 1940, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian’s File, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

⁵⁰ Article Received by Superintendent Taylor, *The Manassas Journal*, Stonewall Jackson Monument Dedication Folder, Historian’s File, Manassas National Battlefield Park.

⁵¹ Connelly, 130-32.

arose from the ashes of Richmond. The 1930s heralded yet another new interpretation of the war. That generation relied on the romantic, larger than life heroism of the war memory in order to fill the nation with assurance of righteousness and brighter days ahead. The Jackson monument stands as a culmination of that reliance. Jackson himself illustrates a connection to various aspects of American cultural life, making him a relevant figure to that moment in time. His attempt to change the workings of the federal government by revolting outside of its institutions paralleled the escapades of Bonnie and Clyde; his image as a superhuman hero to rise above the common man and protect the country connected to the introduction of new superheroes like Superman; the romance of the war and men like Jackson played itself out in the popularity of *Gone with the Wind*. The monument and its dedication at Manassas provided a look not at Civil War society, but Great Depression society. Those involved in its creation and dedication illustrated their commitment to a distorted historical memory in a myriad of ways. The Jackson of Manassas stands not as a monument to the man, but to the generation that clung to his image for reassurance in times of national uncertainty.