

# RADICAL TEACHER

A SOCIALIST, FEMINIST, AND ANTI-RACIST JOURNAL ON THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF TEACHING

## After #Charlottesville: Interrogating our Racist Past in the Trump Era

by Travis Boyce



HUNDREDS OF WHITE NATIONALISTS RALLY AT THE THOMAS JEFFERSON STATUE ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA (AUGUST 11, 2017). PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE KEITH OF THE DAILY MAIL

## Introduction

In 2017, this nation's discussion about the Confederate flag, monuments, and other racist structures reached a deadly but pivotal moment. On the weekend of August 11th to the 12th, 2017, far right and hate groups held a rally ("Unite the Right") in Charlottesville, Virginia to protest the city council's ruling to remove the Robert E. Lee monument located at Emancipation Park. Carrying tiki torches, on Friday evening, hundreds of neo-Nazis and White nationalists marched through the city as well as the campus of University of Virginia chanting racist and nationalistic slogans (See Image 1).



**IMAGE 1.** HUNDREDS OF WHITE NATIONALISTS RALLY AT THE THOMAS JEFFERSON STATUE ON THE CAMPUS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA (FRIDAY AUGUST 11, 2017). PHOTO COURTESY OF STEPHANIE KEITH OF THE DAILY MAIL.

The following day, the rally turned violent and deadly with the murder of local anti-racist activist Heather Heyer by James Alex Fields, Jr., an alleged member or associate of the White nationalist group Vanguard America. President Donald Trump used the Charlottesville rally as an opportunity to stir division, stating there were "very fine people on both sides" (Gray, 2017) and later tweeting his support for the preservation of Confederate monuments (see Image 2).



Sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments. You.....

6:07 AM - 17 Aug 2017



...can't change history, but you can learn from it. Robert E Lee, Stonewall Jackson - who's next, Washington, Jefferson? So foolish! Also...

6:15 AM - 17 Aug 2017



...the beauty that is being taken out of our cities, towns and parks will be greatly missed and never able to be comparably replaced!

6:21 AM - 17 Aug 2017

**IMAGE 2.** PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP SENT TWEETS IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESERVATION OF CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS

To Trump (as noted in his tweets), such monuments enhance the beauty of parks and public spaces, and his opinion was an obvious dog whistle to White supremacists. But to those who oppose these monuments, Confederate statues and monuments represent the preservation of White supremacy. The statues are a reminder of the "Lost Cause" ideology in U.S. institutions and policies (a revisionist narrative that puts our country's slave history and the Confederacy in a positive light).

David Duke, a White nationalist politician and a former Grand Wizard of the Ku Klux Klan who attended the rally, referenced the importance of the event. He stated,

This represents a turning point for the people of this country. We are determined to take our country back. We are going to fulfill the promises of Donald Trump. That's what we believed in, that's why we voted for Donald Trump. Because he said he's going to take our country back. That's what we gotta do. (Hanson, 2017)

Duke heard Trump's message loud and clear. Trump's rhetoric and policies had emboldened David Duke, Richard Spencer, neo-Nazis, and other White nationalists to rally in Charlottesville. During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump ran on a platform that included racist, sexist, xenophobic, and nationalistic rhetoric and policies. Most notably, he emerged on the campaign scene vilifying Mexican immigrants and promising to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexican border. Upon winning the presidency and taking office, he pushed for immigration reform that solely benefited White European immigrants. He spoke disparagingly about Muslims and African Americans (particularly Black Lives Matter protestors and African American activists athletes, such as Colin Kaepernick). He issued a travel ban to the United States (in the form of an executive order) for six predominately Muslim countries. Later he referred to the predominantly Black nation Haiti as well as African countries as "shitholes." In his first year, he railed against violent or terrorist attacks committed by Muslims or people of color while usually ignoring those acts committed by Whites. Furthermore, in a July, 2017 speech to members of law enforcement in Long Island, he encouraged the use of excessive force, an ongoing and serious issue among communities of color.

What should students understand about the Lost Cause movement? College instructors might want to examine the building of Confederate monuments, why these statues are controversial today, and their impact on college campuses. For example, prior to the start of the 2017 fall semester, I revised my course syllabus AFS 310—African Americans and U.S. Education. During the first five weeks of the

semester, we examined the aftermath of Charlottesville, including the political discourse surrounding it. We looked at this nation's Confederate legacy (monuments, emblems, mascots, and the like) on college campuses. This article will explore the unit I taught, "The Lost Cause and the Collegiate Idea," including a discussion of the readings and other materials used. The unit includes a student assessment and outcomes upon completion of the unit.

## Why Teach the Lost Cause?

The fall semester began just over a week after the deadly Unite the Right rally. I knew that this tragedy would be a major topic of discussion both on campus and in my classes. The climate on my campus, the University of Northern Colorado and especially in the community during the election season reflected the sentiments of those who sought to preserve Confederate monuments. UNC, which was originally the state's normal school founded in 1889, is now a public baccalaureate and graduate research university. The campus is located in Greeley, Colorado (Weld County), a historically conservative, rural, White community located approximately sixty miles north of Denver. According to the institution's fall 2017 census data, Black/African American students made up approximately 4.2% of a student body comprised of 13,087 students (this includes 3,076 graduate students). Weld County has a 1% Black/African American population, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. During the 2016 presidential campaign cycle, Trump held a rally on my campus that resulted in high tension among the students. Prior to the start of the rally, a group mostly of African American male university students were racially profiled, confronted by law enforcement and security at the rally, and subsequently ejected from the arena (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aMZsKq99hdk>, Right Side Broadcasting Network, 2016; see 6:45–13:50). Trump won Weld County by 57% of the votes cast on Election Day.

Although I have had a relatively positive experience at this institution and in the community at large, there has been a long troubled history both on campus and in the community in which people of color (particularly Black/African American people) have been racially profiled and/or harassed. In the last fifteen years, there were incidents where UNC faculty, staff, and students of color have had death threats or threats of violence leveled at them, a case of workplace harassment, and/or the nonrenewal of administrative assistant's contract (George, 2007). Most recently, a then-UNC graduate student suffered a broken arm during an arrest after a party by Greeley police. The arresting officers charged the student with second-degree assault (a felony) when she apparently slipped on ice during the arrest, accidentally elbowing the officer (Simmons, 2017). Furthermore, flyers promoting Identity Evropa have circulated around campus and a campus chapter of the right-wing student organization Turning Point USA has been established at my home institution.

As an African American from South Carolina who protested for the removal of the Confederate flag on the statehouse dome in college approximately 18 years ago, I

am aware 1) that Confederate monuments, flags, mascots, etc. are not obscure symbols but are connected to a larger system designed to maintain White supremacy (in many ways), and 2) these Confederate symbols, monuments, and mascots are not bound by a region.

Even though Colorado was not even a state during the years of the Civil War, there are symbols throughout the state as well as Weld County, Colorado that reflect the preservation of White supremacy, the genocide of indigenous peoples, and the Confederate legacy. Colorado has a Confederate legacy with active chapters of the Sons of the Confederate Veterans. During the height of the Gold Rush during the 1850s, southerners migrated to southern Colorado for economic opportunities. When the Civil War commenced in 1861, many stayed and organized Confederate partisan companies participating in armed conflicts throughout the war in the territory and region. Furthermore, in wake of the battle of Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina in 1861 the stars and bars flag – the first national flag – flew over the Wallingford & Murphy store in Denver (Colton, 1959).

In concert with the monument building campaigns across the country during the turn of the century, a Confederate monument was erected in Greenwood Cemetery in Canon City Colorado in 1899. Most recently, the Sons of the Confederate veterans installed a memorial at Riverside Cemetery in Denver in 2003 (see Image 3).



**IMAGE 3.** COLORADO'S SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS MEMORIAL LOCATED AT RIVERSIDE CEMETERY (DENVER, CO) IS ONE OF SIX CONFEDERATE MEMORIALS IN THE STATE OF COLORADO. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR (MAY 27, 2018).

To date there are six Confederate monuments throughout the state. Two of them sit on public land that honors both sides: Pitkin County Courthouse near Aspen and in Beulah (Kovaleski, 2017). Moreover, in Kiowah County, lies the monument of the Sand Creek Massacre. In November of 1864, close to 700 U.S. soldiers massacred and mutilated at minimum 154 Native Americans; primarily Cheyenne and Arapaho women and children (Kelman, 2015). Furthermore, approximately ten miles north from my home institution is Eaton High School, known in interscholastic sports as "The Fighting Reds." Approximately thirty-four miles south is the Confederate-themed "Rebels" sports team of Weld Central High School (See Image 4).



**IMAGE 4.** THE EATON HIGH SCHOOL "FIGHTING REDS" & THE WELD CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL "REBELS" MASCOT. NOTE: THE WELD CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL "REBEL" REBEL MASCOT REPRESENTED IN FILE ABOVE IS ALSO THE MASCOT OF WELD CENTRAL MIDDLE SCHOOL. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE GREELEY TRIBUNE.

In wake of the tragic events in Charlottesville, combined with the climate both on campus and in the community, I thought it was important to provide an intellectual space to interrogate the literature on the Lost Cause and Confederate symbols. Students would have a chance to see how this theme is embedded physically and culturally into college campuses across the country.

A class such as African Americans and U.S. Education is the ideal time to include a unit on the discussion of the Lost Cause and Confederate symbols on college campuses. In past classes, I have led brief discussions on the Lost Cause, particularly at the time the students learned about the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education decision and massive resistance movement. (For example, we covered the Little Rock School Crisis in 1957 and the desegregation of the University of Mississippi in 1962.) Thus discussing the aftermath of Charlottesville presented an opportunity to deeply explore what the Lost Cause means.

## Unit: The Lost Cause and the Collegiate Idea

African Americans and U.S. Education is a 300-level/upper-division undergraduate course housed in the Africana Studies Program at UNC. This a required course for Africana Studies majors (BA: Liberal Arts and BA: Social Studies Secondary Teaching emphasis majors) and an optional elective for Africana Studies minors. Historically, elementary education majors who tended to be White and female took this class. Most recently, students enrolled in AFS 310 were predominately students of color and were either Africana Studies majors /minors or non-majors interested in the course title. Because my course covers the history of African Americans in U.S. education, I titled this unit's theme "The Lost Cause and the Collegiate Idea" because both issues are prominent within the African

American educational experience. These issues are part of both the desegregation of schools and the White massive resistance movements.

The White nationalists and neo-Nazis who marched in Charlottesville fundamentally sought to preserve monuments, emblems, and traditions that upheld White supremacy. For this unit I was most interested in a similar issue: why do American colleges and universities seek to keep Confederate traditions that are divisive and inherently racist? Furthermore, what is the primary motivation for a sitting U.S. president or any elected official to support Confederate monuments?

## Remembering Our Racist Past

The unit in each week was organized into subthemes. In the first week of the semester, the class reviewed a history of the Lost Cause movement and a definition of the collegiate idea. My students were familiar with the Confederate flag, monuments, and symbols, but not the Lost Cause movement and certainly not how it is embedded into the culture of many of our nation's colleges and universities. I used Cynthia Mills and Pamela H. Simpson's edited volume, *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art, and the Landscapes of Southern Memory*; Sanford Levison's *Written in Stone: Public Monuments in Changing Times*; and James Loewen's *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong*, among other scholarly books as references in lecture. We screened Vice News's provocative, 2018 Peabody Award-winning documentary, *Charlottesville: Race and Terror*, which I followed by an in-class discussion. My students were horrified yet highly interested in the film. I gave them an open forum to reflect on the news story and apply the events/aftermath of Charlottesville to their daily lives. They looked at the event's effect both on national politics (in terms of Trumpism) as well as on issues they have been grappling with on campus, particularly during the 2016 election season on campus.

In the next class meeting, I made connections to the Vice News documentary by grounding the Robert E. Lee protest within the historical context of the Lost Cause movement. I covered the rise and fall of the Reconstruction era, the Redemption movement, the age of Jim Crow, and ultimately the construction of Confederate monuments by the early twentieth century. Citing Levison (1998), I noted that the construction and erection of Confederate monuments across the country was the Lost Cause movement's greatest achievement. Furthermore, citing Loewen (1999) and Mills (2003), I provided the class with a definition of the Lost Cause movement. I indicated that the Lost Cause movement was specifically grounded in a revisionist historical narrative that portrayed the

Confederacy, the White South, and the institution of slavery in a positive light. I cited Carol Emberton's *Beyond Redemption: Race, Violence, and the American South after the Civil War*, concluding that White supremacy, racial reconciliation (between White Northerners and Southerners), and patriotism was used to support the Lost Cause narrative. I noted that often times, the Lost Cause narrative relies on slogans and chants. Most notably, the motto "The South Shall Rise Again" is popularly shouted during the playing of "From Dixie with Love" by the University of Mississippi's marching band.

Next I provided a definition of the "collegiate idea" and how it is connected to the Confederate legacy. My students found this part of lecture fairly interesting because it directly applied to their collegiate experiences (convocation time, the start of the college football season, Greek Life recruitment season, and the reintroduction to college traditions). Referencing historian J. Douglas Toma (2003), I defined the collegiate idea as "the combination of community and campus culture associated with the traditional American small college" (p. 5). I cited examples of the collegiate idea such as school mascots, songs, and traditions, among others. To humor my students, I showed a YouTube clip of Auburn University students toilet-papering or "rolling" the famous oak trees at the iconic Toomer's Corner, a tradition performed after major athletic victories. Although there are positive aspects of the collegiate idea that have evolved to be inclusive to all members of the student body, there are college traditions that are deeply rooted in the Lost Cause narrative.

We examined southern colleges and universities that had embedded the Lost Cause and Confederate symbols both physically and culturally within their traditions. This list included mascots (i.e. Ole Miss Rebel—Colonel Reb), the use of the Confederate battle flag as symbol at athletic events, the support of racist and exclusive institutional policies such as racial segregation, the longing for an ethnocentric campus (and subsequently society), and exclusive racist secret/Greek-lettered societies. My students were particularly intrigued by the troubled history of Greek Life on southern campuses where the Lost Cause culture was embedded in various aspects of collegiate life. Citing Anthony James's book chapter titled "Political Parties: College Social Fraternities, Manhood, and the Defense of Southern Traditionalism, 1945-1960," I noted that it was college fraternities on Southern campuses that brought the Lost Cause collegiate ideas to their respective schools. This was primarily in concert with the rise of the Dixiecrat (Southern Democrats) movement in 1948 and massive resistance to school desegregation. These organizations memorialized the Lost Cause, donning Confederate uniforms at fraternity formals as well as at on-campus events (James, 2008). I performed a Google image search ("Kappa Alpha Order" and "Confederate") and showed my students some provocative images. While there were many vintage photos of fraternity members in Kappa Alpha Order in Confederate uniforms and posing with the Confederate flag, my students were taken aback to find contemporary photos of Kappa Alpha Order reproducing the memorializing of the Lost Cause, similar to their predecessors. One image in particular is a photo of

members of the fraternity that constructed a "Make America Great Again" wall around their fraternity house at Tulane University (see Image 5).



**IMAGE 5.** IN 2016 MEMBERS OF KAPPA ALPHA ORDER FRATERNITY AT TULANE UNIVERSITY (NEW ORLEANS) CONSTRUCTED "TRUMP'S WALL" ON THE FRONT PORCH OF THEIR FRATERNITY HOUSE. THIS PROVIDES AN INTERESTING JUXTAPOSITION OF KAPPA ALPHA ORDER BROTHERS AT A RALLY POSING WITH A CONFEDERATE FLAG ON THE CAMPUS OF EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY IN 1960. PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE TULANE HULLBALOO AND EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY DIGITAL COLLECTIONS.

This image, in particular, helped my students see a historical connection that also had a contemporary perspective.

I cautioned my students that although Greek Life was historically at the helm of reproducing the Lost Cause culture on their respective campuses, there were other ways that schools maintained Lost Cause narratives, such as through non-Greek lettered organizations, institutional policies, and traditions such as songs, mascots, and athletic teams. To conclude week 1, students read and discussed Sandra Knispel's 2014 National Public Radio (NPR) article, "'Ole Miss' Debates Campus Traditions with Confederate Roots." As noted in the short article, by 2014 the university was in process of making major changes to many of its traditions (such as the Rebel Mascot). Based on my students' reactions both in class and on the discussion board, it is clear that Lost Cause culture is so normalized that it can be easily overlooked and accepted as neutral. The insidious normalization of symbols of historical racism is one reason why it is so important that students learn about the Lost Cause movement and why it is relevant today, especially on college campuses. Thus in laying out a framework for this unit, I made sure that students had three things to review: a definition of the Lost Cause and the Collegiate Idea; primary and secondary sources (via

Google image search); and the screening of a relevant documentary/investigative news report. These three things set the stage for a smooth introduction of the class and the semester. Over the next three weeks, we discussed case studies and examples of how the Lost Cause is embedded in college culture.

## Normalizing the Lost Cause: "Ole Miss," and Campus Traditions

We devoted week 2 to examining the Confederate legacy of the University of Mississippi. We screened in class a documentary in ESPN's "30 for 30" series called *The Ghosts of Ole Miss*. Furthermore, as homework I required my class to watch the highly acclaimed Civil Rights documentary series *Eyes on the Prize: Fighting Back, 1957-1962*; specifically the section that covers James Meredith and the desegregation of the University of Mississippi. The footage of these films shows what it was like to be a student at the University of Mississippi during this era. Most notably, students took away from the documentary clear examples of how the Lost Cause was not only embedded in the institution's history, but also in Mississippi politics (similar to the present in national politics pertaining to the Lost Cause debate). For example, on September 29, 1962 Mississippi Governor Ross Barnett held a de facto rally at halftime of a Mississippi-Kentucky football game denouncing the Kennedy administration and the desegregation of the University of Mississippi (see Image 6).



**IMAGE 6.** MISSISSIPPI GOVERNOR ROSS BARNETT ATTENDING A MISSISSIPPI-KENTUCKY FOOTBALL GAME IN JACKSON, MS (SEPT. 1962). PHOTO COURTESY OF JIM BOURDIER/ASSOCIATED PRESS.

To conclude the week, students read and discussed (on the online discussion board) W. Ralph Eubanks's "A Black Student Confronts the Racial Legacy of Ole Miss," published in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*. One student noted on the discussion board that she realized how racism becomes institutionalized. The student explained,

At one point the article said "the culture, heritage, and traditions of the school stood as barriers..." I think that is a problem that the entire nation faces when it comes to addressing racism. It's in everything. Racism is literally built into the foundation of the country, so it is really hard to find and address. Similarly, the campus

of Ole Miss was struggling to figure out how to integrate students without giving up traditions. Predominately white establishments like Ole Miss in the South have histories that are closely connected to a deeply divided and racist past. As a result, the campus is more hostile for students of color. Things like confederate mascots and flags all contribute to a hostile environment.

Racism is not just part of daily human interaction, but it is also embedded in our social organizations. Concurring with that student, I reminded her, as well as the class, that it is important to not take lightly the events in Charlottesville and the current state of politics. Overall, I was pleased and excited to see my students taking ownership of this topic.

## Fuzzy Memories

During week 3, we focused specifically on college mascots. While there is a Confederate legacy in terms of collegiate mascots, I focused the lecture, film screening (*In Whose Honor*, 1997), and required class reading to broader issues such as the exploitation of Native Americans as mascots in high school, collegiate, and professional sports. I emphasized to the class that the use of Native Americans as mascots by non-Native American schools is presumptuous. I cited examples in my lecture where some collegiate teams (Stanford, St. Johns, Marquette University) have changed their Native American mascots. But other universities continue to hang on to theirs (Florida State University, University of Illinois, University of Utah). This also includes high school interscholastic sports teams throughout the country such as the local Eaton High School (Colorado) "Fighting Reds," as well as the Riverside High School (Greer, South Carolina) Warriors, whose home football stadium is insensitively named "The Reservation."

Perhaps one of the most interesting aspects of the collegiate idea is the university's identity in terms of their mascot. I cited examples of unknown or unusual collegiate team names. For instance, my home institution's original mascot was the Teachers for its identity as historically the state's normal school—and is now the Bears. In another example, there's the University of Kansas Jayhawks. That name can be traced back to the American Civil War, which led us to this week's required reading: Meagan Bever's "Fuzzy Memories: College Mascots and the Struggle to Find Appropriate Legacies of the Civil War," published in the *Journal of Sport History*. Bever (2011) examines the origins of the mascot names of the University of Kansas (Jayhawks), the University of Missouri (Tigers), and the University of Mississippi (Rebels), all connected to violence and the American Civil War. For better or for worse, my students took away from this article the importance of history in terms of location and of the collegiate idea. They were able to see the problem behind today's continued use of controversial mascots or mascot names, ones that refer to the Lost Cause and that reinforce White supremacy.

## The Invented Tradition of the South

During week 4, we focused the discussion specifically on collegiate sports and the Lost Cause. Based on documentary screenings of *The Ghosts of Ole Miss* and *Eyes on the Prize*, my students had some visual references of Confederate symbols in connection with collegiate sports. Therefore, we spent part of this week interrogating Derrick White's "Desegregation to Integration: Race, Football, and 'Dixie' at the University of Florida," published in the Florida Historical Quarterly. We also did searches on Google and YouTube seeking primary and secondary sources of Confederate symbols in relationship to college sports. Directly related to this week's reading, we successfully uncovered a YouTube clip as well as images on a Google search of the University of Florida's 1962 football team when they wore Confederate flag decals on their helmets during a bowl game (the Gator Bowl) against Pennsylvania State University in a north versus south match up. As I mentioned in week 1, the memorializing of the Lost Cause narrative was not exclusively within Greek Life culture, but found its way into various groups at the university, most notably athletics and subsequently could be embedded in various aspects society.

At the close of week 4, I noted that it had been over a month since the disastrous Unite the Right Rally in Charlottesville. While my students still found the topic interesting, it was indeed time for me to assess what they had learned and to move on to other topics in relationship to African Americans and U.S. education. The next section will briefly explore their assessment activity and its outcomes.

## From Charlottesville to Weld County: Assessment, Outcomes, and Conclusion

Since African Americans and U.S. Education is a 300-level, upper-division undergraduate course, I was more interested in assessing what my students had learned in a form of a take-home writing assignment as opposed to an in-class exam. For their assessment, students were required to review the peer-reviewed journal article, "Flag-Waving Wahoos: Confederate Symbols at the University of Virginia, 1941–51" published in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*. I purposely chose this article for two reasons. First, aspects of the Lost Cause and the collegiate idea are not solely exclusive to Deep South colleges and universities, but also affect elite, nationally ranked, selective universities such as the University of Virginia. Second, this article comes back full circle to Charlottesville, Virginia.

The purpose of this kind of intellectual exercise is to 1) help students critique scholarly work in an objective manner, and 2) get students in the habit of providing a unique perspective of a scholarly discussion of any given topic. The writing guidelines consisted of the following:

- At least 1,250 words in length
- Work is cited in APA citation style

- Double-spaced in a 12-point, Times New Roman font, with 1-inch margins
- Reference page provided of all works cited
- Employ the readings we have read in class to cite your work and at least one relevant source (such as films, podcasts, newspaper articles, primary documents—speeches, writings, and so forth)

Overall, my students did an extraordinary job; granted this was their first assignment for the semester and in a writing format that required them to analyze and critique rather than regurgitate. One of my students, for example, situated her review through the lens of the unspoken history of Southern colleges. Another student reviewed the article through the lens of sports and the Lost Cause, as the article talked about the University of Virginia's football team. Perhaps one of the most interesting reviews was written by a student whose theme centered on institutional racism and White male fragility. That student successfully linked UVA's confederate history to the present, particularly connecting the images of predominately White men marching with tiki torches to protest their racial superiority (who subsequently became backed by the sitting president of the United States). This student's take on White male fragility is indeed relevant to history in terms of the Lost Cause movement and White supremacy as well as reinforcement of the current political discourse of Trumpism. As historian Trent Watts (2008) notes in his edited volume, *White Masculinity in the Recent South*, White masculinity has so long been embedded as the authority of political, social, and cultural norms of the South that racism appears to be natural and "sanctioned by history or by a higher authority" (p. 8). This ideology is indeed reinforced in the common narrative that White males in recent years are losing ground in terms of power. It subsequently resulted in the 63% White male vote for Trump in the 2016 election, the spike in membership in Neo Nazi and other White supremacists groups, and finally the images of predominately White men marching in Charlottesville.

Upon the completion of this unit, an ugly racial incident allegedly occurred. On Friday, September 22, the Weld Central High School (Rebels) traveled to Denver, Colorado to play a football game against Manual High School (Thunderbolts), a predominately Black/African American school. According to witnesses (including Manual High School's principal, Nick Dawkins), fans from Weld Central wore Confederate paraphernalia, flew the Confederate battle flag, and the players from Weld Central hurled racial slurs at their opponents (Finley, 2017). While the Weld Central camp denies the allegations, it is clear that they hold the Confederate-themed Rebel persona near and dear to their hearts. They are in concert with predecessors who supported the Lost Cause during the era of Jim Crow, as well as those who marched in Charlottesville in August. Although we were done with this unit, we briefly discussed this situation in class the following week as well as related issues throughout the semester such as Richard Spencer's October 7<sup>th</sup> "flash mob" rally in in Charlottesville where approximately 50 White nationalists rallied at the Robert E.

Lee monument. In agreement with the "The Lost Cause and the Collegiate Idea," the group sang Dixie-- the unofficial anthem of the Confederate States of America and the old fight song for the University of Mississippi--performed the "rebel yell" and finally chanted "The South Shall Rise Again" and "Russia is Our Friend" – a dog whistle noting their support for Donald Trump (Svrluga, 2017). By the semester's end, we covered interesting main topics that reflected the spirit of the course and its student-learning outcomes. These topics included "The Founding and Intellectual Missions of Black Institutions," "Brown v. Board of Education and its National Impact," "Elite Black Institutions, Organizations, and Secret Societies," and "Interscholastic Sports Teams." Although students found the class helpful and interesting, they enjoyed the most our interrogation of the Lost Cause, Confederate monuments/symbols, as well as the aftermath of Charlottesville. This unit gave them a clear understanding of how something as superficial as a flag or monument can serve as reminders of the racism and White supremacy that are deeply embedded in our institutions, laws, and schools. They now have the content knowledge to challenge these historical stones, even when a sitting president supports it.

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