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Mayor Paul Soglin's Statement and Historical Perspective of Confederate Monuments at Forest Hill Cemetery

The focus on the Confederate monuments is the history of slavery. However, the story is bigger than that. With the end of Reconstruction in 1877 came the southern effort to return to the Antebellum years and to honor the Lost Cause. It produced a legal, economic, and social legacy of oppression that was to last a century. It manifested itself in two ways. First, there was the legal framework and then there was the historical narrative.

Black Codes or Jim Crow Laws. To ensure the subjugation of blacks to retain as much of the slave economy as possible, the individual southern states began the enactment of what we referred to in the twentieth century as Jim Crow laws. Some Americans are aware of those that required social separation since they were highlighted in the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1950's and 1960's. African-Americans were required to sit in the back of the bus, use separate restroom facilities, could not dine in white restaurants, or stay in white hotels.

There were also Black Codes designed to continue the economic enslavement of blacks. They were to continue unabated through World War II and legally did not end until the U.S. Congress adopted the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Black Codes banned African-Americans from holding jobs or at least required licenses which they could not obtain.

The Jim Crow laws required the signing of annual employment contracts; if a clause was violated, no matter how late into the year, the employee forfeited all wages for the year, of course leaving the individual now indebted to the employer.

Laws were adopted making the lack of employment a crime, resulting in vagrancy convictions which lead to imprisonment and assignment to forced labor as the Black convicts were rented out to local businesses. Indebted parents were offered the opportunity to free themselves of the debt if they signed apprentice contracts for their children, putting the children into another form of slavery.

This repression and economic tyranny not only destroyed the Black family but it further fueled white racism. As this new form of Black enslavement spread and drove down the cost of labor, it resulted in lowering wages for all workers, particularly the majority of the population which was low-income whites. Struggling to find gainful employment as farm hands (sharecroppers), construction workers, or service jobs, the poor white population blamed their plight on African-Americans who were doing the work for virtually no income beyond primitive shelter and limited amounts of food.

August 21, 2017

Page 2

While the Black Codes were adopted, a new propaganda effort was initiated design to retell the story of the South. The pre Civil War economy was healthy, everyone was at peace, and the slaves were happy. Organization began to flourish after Reconstruction to portray the genteel image of the south. One such group was the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC).

The UDC raised funds and erected hundreds of monuments and statutes in the South and the North. These memorials were installed fifty, sixty years and more after the end of the Civil War, a term they refused to use. The UDC refers to the treasonous conflict as the War Between the States so as to remove the onus of sedition and rebellion.

The Southern Poverty Law Center which has tracks hate groups classifies the United Daughters of the Confederacy as neo-Confederate organization:

The neo-Confederate movement includes a number of organizations that generally share the goals of preserving Confederate monuments, honoring the Confederate battle flag and lauding what is judged to be "Southern" culture. Many have close ties to the white supremacist League of the South.

UDC articles praise an array of neo-Confederate ideologues such as Michael Andrew Grissom... a member of two racist groups,, the Council of Conservative Citizens and the League of the South... The UDC has also worked directly with these kinds of groups in erecting monuments and staging Confederate battle flag rallies. Most recently, the UDC's president, Mrs. William Wells, shared the podium with League president Michael Hill and white supremacist lawyer Kirk Lyons.

The larger monument at Madison's Forest Hill Cemetery is not a Civil War monument. It was installed over sixty years after the end of the war. It is slab of propaganda paid for by a racist organization on public property when our city was inattentive to both the new form of slavery propagated by the donors with the Black Codes and to the meaning of that despicable fixture honoring slavery, sedition, and oppression.

We will honor our history. We will respect the dead. We make sure that our legacy is to tell the truth and to remove evidence of racist historical revisionism. We will use the story of these monuments to tell the truth about a century of Jim Crow, economic oppression and those like the United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Klu Klux Klan who spread their lies far beyond the boundaries of the rebellious states.

Chronology as it Relates to Madison Wisconsin

1860-1861

Eleven Rebellious States lead by South Carolina on December 20, 1860 and followed by Mississippi, January 9, 1861 secede from the Union. The states rationalize their action as *state's rights*. The reason for succession was their fear that the presidency of Abraham Lincoln would lead to the abolition of slavery. After the war, ended, confederate sympathizers would attempt to rewrite history claiming that the reason for the rebellion was to preserve the autonomy of the states, not slavery.

April 12-13, 1861

The first battle of the Civil War took place outside Charleston South Carolina when Confederate troops attacked the Unites States of America by firing on Fort Sumter. The Unites States Army surrendered to the army of the Confederate States of America. This action of rebellion, sedition, and treason was to lead

August 21, 2017

Page 3

to the loss of 620,000 lives.

April- July 1862

Over 1000 captured traitors of the Confederate Army were moved to Camp Randall in Madison, Wisconsin in April 1862. Over the next two months, 139 prisoners died from their wounds, disease, or both. One prisoner was shot to death by a guard. All of the prisoners were buried in individual marked graves in the city's Forest Hill Cemetery.

May 9, 1865

General Robert E. Lee the commander of the traitorous troops surrenders to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox

1865-1877

The period of Reconstruction was a period when the U.S. government maintained control of the rebellious states ensuring that former black slaves had civil rights, participated in government, while southern infrastructure was slowly rebuilt.

Late 1890 – 1910

As white supremacists regained control of southern state governments Black Codes or as they came known, Jim Crow Laws are adopted. We think of them in terms of separate restrooms, dining and seating facilities but the real objective was economic subjugation. Consequently, blacks were limited in their ability to own businesses or property, lease land, sign contracts, vote, and their children could be 'apprenticed' if the parents were in debt. In addition, of course convicts were forced into labor and could be rented out. The result was a new version of slavery and a greater hatred from poor whites who found that they had to compete with this new form of slavery in the labor market. These conditions existed into the 1960's.

1894

The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) is formed.

1915

The Klu Klux Klan, outlawed after the Civil War reemerges as domestic terrorists. The growth of the KKK is accelerated by the racist film, *Birth of a Nation* released that year.

1931, approximately

The United Daughters of the Confederacy, a racist and bigoted organization as part of their national strategy of propaganda and determination to rewrite history providing a favorable interpretation of the Civil War installs a monument in Forest Hill honoring the treasonous rebels. It has been over 60 years since the end of the Civil War. The monument has no connection to the events at Camp Randall or the burial of the Confederate soldiers. It is not the first time the UDC disturbs a historic site in their effort to rewrite history

1939

The film, *Gone With the Wind* is released promulgating the revisionist history of slavery it a format known as the *Lost Cause*, a romanticized view of Antebellum South glorifying slavery, subjugating women, and depicting southern men as honorable while northern men were viscous, abusive and vile.

August 21, 2017

Page 4

1981

One hundred and sixteen years after the end of the Civil War, a new plaque honoring the rebellious soldiers buried at Forest Hill cemetery is placed at Confederate Rest with private money. As far as we know, it is only time someone has been allowed to erect a remembrance not related to a burial that was part of a funeral since or authorized by the cemetery deed of a deceased since the United Daughters of the Confederacy installed their monument in 1931.

2017

The Southern Poverty Law Center which researched and listed organizations which espouse bigotry and hate.

United Daughters of the Confederacy

Richmond, Va.

Formed in 1894 from the remnants of local memorial associations affiliated with Confederate veterans' camps, the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC) is open only to women related to Confederate veterans of what the UDC still calls the "War Between the States."

Although the UDC promotes an image of genteel Southern ladies concerned only with honoring their ancestors — and is, in fact, the least political of the neo-Confederate groups — its publications sometimes belie that benign appearance.

In a 1989 article in *UDC Magazine*, for instance, Walter W. Lee minimized the horrors of the Middle Passage by pointing out that "the sixteen inches of deck space allotted each slave is not all that smaller than the eighteen inches the Royal Navy allowed for each sailor's hammock and the slaves rapidly had more room due the much higher death rate."

Lee also argued that "the worse suffering group among those engaged in the trade" were "the crews of slave ships." Other victims of slavery Lee cites are "the purchasers of slaves" who "found themselves locked into a form of agriculture that could not compete with the new machines."

Other UDC articles praise an array of neo-Confederate ideologues such as Michael Andrew Grissom, author of *Southern by the Grace of God* (a book which portrays the original Klan favorably) and a member of two racist groups, the Council of Conservative Citizens and the League of the South.

The UDC has also worked directly with these kinds of groups in erecting monuments and staging Confederate battle flag rallies. Most recently, the UDC's president, Mrs. William Wells, shared the podium with League president Michael Hill and white supremacist lawyer Kirk Lyons.

New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu on May 23, 2017:

The historic record is clear: The Robert E. Lee, Jefferson Davis, and P.G.T. Beauregard statues were not erected just to honor these men, but as part of the movement which became known as The Cult of the Lost Cause. This "cult" had one goal—through monuments and through other means—to rewrite history to hide the truth, which is that the Confederacy was on the wrong side of humanity. First erected over 166 years after the founding of our city and 19 years after the end of the Civil War, the monuments that we took down were meant to rebrand the history of our city and the ideals of a defeated Confederacy. It is self-evident that these men did not fight for the United States of America. They fought against it. They may have been warriors, but in this cause, they were not patriots. These statues are not just stone and metal. They are not just innocent

remembrances of a benign history. These monuments purposefully celebrate a fictional, sanitized Confederacy, ignoring the death, ignoring the enslavement and the terror that it actually stood for.

We have not erased history; we are becoming part of the city's history by righting the wrong image these monuments represent and crafting a better, more complete future for all our children and for future generations. And unlike when these Confederate monuments were first erected as symbols of white supremacy, we now have a chance to create not only new symbols, but to do it together, as one people. In our blessed land we all come to the table of democracy as equals. We have to reaffirm our commitment to a future where each citizen is guaranteed the uniquely American gifts of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.