



Original Research Article

THE RISE AND EFFECT OF THE MYTHOLOGY OF THE LOST CAUSE

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Abstract

This paper explores the historiography and development of the Lost Cause after the conclusion of the U.S. Civil War, focusing on the fundamental tenets of the movement, such as the deification of Confederate General Robert E. Lee, vilification of Confederate Lieutenant General James Longstreet, and the subsequent effect the Lost Cause movement has had on Civil War history and the historical memory.

Key words: U.S. Civil War, Military History, U.S. History, Lost Cause

On January 19, 1872 former Confederate Lieutenant General Jubal Early, an unrepentant rebel, self-proclaimed "Yankee-hater," and white supremacist, presented an address at a birthday memorial service for Robert E. Lee held at the chapel of Washington and Lee University.² This address would later be published as *The Campaigns of Robert E. Lee: An Address*.³ In his address Early concocted a new version of the events of the Civil War. In Early's version Robert E. Lee and his faithful lieutenant Stonewall Jackson were the leaders of the Army of Northern Virginia and the great hope of the Confederacy. Lee's second-in-command and "old war horse" Lieutenant General James Longstreet was marginalized and reduced to a level of unimportance. Early argued that even after Jackson's tragic death, Lee was still the unbeatable military genius who would have won the Battle of

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² Allen W. Monger, "Letters to General Lee After the War." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. 64, no. 1 (Jan. 1956): 32, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4246194> (accessed June 30, 2012).

³ Jubal A. Early, *The Campaigns of Robert E. Lee: An Address* (Baltimore: John Murphy & Co., 1872).



Gettysburg, if not for the actions of his disloyal subordinate Longstreet. Early submitted that it was Longstreet who delayed the Confederate attack on July 2nd, 1863 and caused the loss at Gettysburg, and as a result, the loss of the entire war.

Early's address can be regarded as one of the first major salvos in the propaganda war of the Lost Cause, a movement that created a romanticized mythology of the Confederacy that has distorted the historical record for more than a century. The purpose of this paper will be to explore the rise and effect of the Lost Cause movement, the underlying validity of their claims, and the historiographical effect of the Lost Cause on the history and collective memory of the U.S. Civil War.

Early was not the first to acclaim the Lost Cause concept, but he arguably became its most successful proponent. However, the Lost Cause apologists predated Early's work and began immediately after the end of the war. W. Stuart Towns describes the beginning of the Lost Cause movement in the following manner:

The guns had hardly cooled after Appomattox when in 1866 Edward A. Pollard published a 700-page apologia for the Confederacy, *The Lost Cause: A New Southern History of the War of the Confederacy*. Pollard wrote, "It would be immeasurably the worst consequence of defeat in this war that the South should lose its moral and intellectual distinctiveness as a people, and cease to assert its well-known superiority in civilization, in political scholarship, and in all the standards of individual character over the people of the North."⁴

Pollard's work laid the foundation for the mythology of the Lost Cause, but it was the efforts of men like Jubal Early, William Pendleton, Reverend J. William Jones and the "Virginia Cult," working primarily through the *Southern Historical Society*, who intentionally created the principles of the Lost Cause and began to champion them.⁵

The *Southern Historical Society* was founded on May 1, 1869 and dedicated itself to preserving the Confederate perspective of the war.⁶ Despite their claim that they were dedicated to preserving the organization was political, not historical in its nature.⁷ As Richard Starnes explains:

The Society was uninterested in academic history, with its emphasis on objective evaluation of facts, sources, and interpretations. Rather, the organization dedicated itself to the creation of a Confederate historical memory. Historical memory is an

⁴ W. Stuart Towns, "Haunting the South for a Century and More: Lost Cause Rhetoric and Ritual," *North & South: The Official Magazine of The Civil War Society* 14, no. 1 (May 2012): 40.

⁵ Alan T. Nolan, "The Anatomy of the Myth," in *The Myth of the Lost Cause and Civil War History*, eds. Gary A. Gallagher and Alan T. Nolan, (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2010), 14.

⁶ Richard D. Starnes, "Forever Faithful: The Southern Historical Society and the Confederate Historical Memory," *Southern Cultures* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1996): 177.

⁷ Adam Fairclough, "Scalawags," Southern Honor, and the Lost Cause: Explaining the Fatal Encounter of James H. Cosgrove and Edward L. Pierson," *Journal Of Southern History* 77, no. 4 (November 2011): 799-826, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 6, 2012); Kevin M. Levin, "William Mahone, the Lost Cause, and Civil War History," *Virginia Magazine Of History & Biography* 113, no. 4 (September 2005): 378-412, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 6, 2012).

individual's or a group's recollection of past events. Historical memories do not represent the past as it occurred, but rather the past as it is perceived.⁸

The *Southern Historical Society* had no true desire to record actual history, rather it, and associated organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy, which was formed in 1894, the United Confederate Veterans, formed in 1889, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans, formed in 1896, sought to create a historical memory that would rationalize and glorify the antebellum South and the Confederate cause.⁹ The Lost Cause movement rationalized the war in a way that was sympathetic to the former Confederacy and attempted to do so by the control and manipulation of the historical record.

This mission was greatly enhanced by the *Southern Historical Society Papers (SHSP)*, the publication arm of the *Southern Historical Society*. The *SHSP* began publication in 1876 and continued in print in some form until 1959. The sheer longevity of the *SHSP* magnified its effect on the fight for the historical memory of the Civil War. The *SHSP* is second only to the *War of Rebellion* records as the largest collection of battle accounts, unit rosters, and primary source material about the Confederate army. However, it is a collection with a historical agenda, and, as such, presents a possible trap to legitimate historians. As Starnes explains, "The articles that appeared in the *Papers* were carefully selected by the Society's editors to achieve one overriding goal: The acceptance by white southerners of the Lost Cause as the explanation of southern defeat."¹⁰

A number of basic tenets were foundational to the Lost Cause mythology. These included the denial or marginalization of slavery as a cause of the war and a romanticized version of slavery in the antebellum South; the denial of any true defeat of Confederate military forces; the deification of certain Confederate leaders, most importantly General Robert E. Lee and Lieutenant General Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson; and the vilification of other Confederate leaders, specifically Lieutenant General James Longstreet. This romanticized and mythological version of the war was very comforting to many in the post-war South. As Peter S. Carmichael points out, "Shortly after Appomattox, many white southerners found intellectual and psychological comfort in the Lost Cause's depiction of a cavalier South, valiantly losing a war over states' rights, republicanism, and Christianity to the industrial might of Yankeedom."¹¹

A basic premise of the Lost Cause apologists was the denial and trivialization of slavery as the cause of the war. They argued that the war was caused by other things, such as tariff disputes, investment banking control, cultural differences, and conflict between industrial and agricultural societies. As James L. Roark notes, "postwar Southerners manifested 'a nearly universal desire to escape the ignominy attached to slavery.'"¹² When slavery is mentioned by the Lost Cause apologists, it is a version of slavery so sanitized as to

⁸ Starnes, 177-8.

⁹Fred Arthur Bailey, "Free Speech and the 'Lost Cause' in Texas: A Study of Social Control in the New South," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* vol. 97, no. 3 (January 1994):452-3; Adam Wesley Dean, "Who Controls the Past Controls the Future," *Virginia Magazine Of History & Biography* 117, no. 4 (September 2009): 319-355, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 6, 2012).

¹⁰ Starnes, 179.

¹¹ Peter S. Carmichael, "Truth is Mighty and Will Eventually Prevail: Political Correctness, Neo-Confederates, and Robert E. Lee," *Southern Cultures* 17, no. 3: 9, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 5, 2012).

¹² Nolan, 15.

be unrecognizable. Slaves were, as Jefferson Davis described them in a message to the Confederate Congress in 1863, "peaceful and contented laborers." Slaves were portrayed as being happy with their lot in life and affectionate to their uniformly kind and indulgent masters.¹³

Of course, the argument that slavery was not the cause of the war or that slavery was a benign institution is both counterfactual and disingenuous. The weight of nineteenth century American political history illustrates the significance of slavery in terms of the sectional conflict. The Missouri Compromise of 1820, argument over the location of the transcontinental railroad, the Wilmot Proviso, the congressional gag rule regarding slavery, the Compromise of 1850, the bloody result of the Kansas-Nebraska Act, the sectional division of the Democratic party, the increase of rhetorical and physical violence prior to secession, and a host of other evidence belies any claim that the war was not predicated upon slavery.¹⁴

Additionally, the secession documents themselves proclaim slavery as the foundational cause for the Southern states leaving the Union. Confederate Vice-President Alexander Stephens, in his famous Charleston speech of 1861, characterized the "great truth" of slavery as the "foundation" and "cornerstone" of the Confederacy.¹⁵ Likewise, the contention that slavery was a benign institution and that Southern blacks were content to be slaves is unsupportable. African slavery was an inhumane system disapproved by the civilized world. Most slaves despised their status and took every opportunity, risking severe punishment or death, to escape it. When possible, huge numbers of slaves fled to the safety and freedom of Union lines and 180,000 blacks, the majority former slaves, fought for the Union.¹⁶

Another foundational tenet of the Lost Cause was the denial of any "true" Confederate military defeat by the Union. Instead, they insisted that the Confederacy had been defeated only on account of overwhelming numbers and resources and not by martial prowess or skill. Unable to accept battlefield defeat, the Lost Cause apologists conjured up the argument that they were not defeated, but merely overrun by Northern hordes.¹⁷ By focusing on the war in Virginia and generally ignoring the other theatres, the adherents of the Lost Cause submitted that the South was not defeated on the battlefield, but merely overwhelmed by massive Northern manpower and materials. As Alan Nolan points out, "This was presented with a suggestion that the North's superior resources constituted Yankee trickery and unfairness."¹⁸ Additionally the South's loss was presented as inevitable from the beginning, suggesting that since the Confederacy could not have won the war, it did not lose it.¹⁹

The fact that the North had the advantage in population and war making capacity is not denied. However, the contention that the North's victory was inevitable is not so apparent. The Confederacy had the luxury of prevailing in the war by simply presenting a successful resistance.

¹³ Ibid., 16.

¹⁴ Ibid., 19.

¹⁵ Ibid., 20.

¹⁶ Joseph Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldier and White Officers* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 61-71.

¹⁷ Thomas Connelly and Barbara Bellows, *God and General Longstreet* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 25.

¹⁸ Nolan, 17.

¹⁹ Ibid.

The Union had to conquer the South, a vast country of nine million inhabitants, while all the South had to do was to outlast their adversary without ever stepping a foot outside of its own borders. Certainly, the North's population and industrial capacity was a factor in victory, but that did not make the outcome of the war preordained. The South was able to create an industrial base and with the aid of foreign imports managed to adequately arm and equip its military forces. A recent historical study has shown that "No Confederate army lost a major engagement because of lack of arms, munitions, or other essential supplies."²⁰ The North's superior population and industrial capacity played a role in the Confederate defeat, but it is undeniable that the Confederates were, in fact, defeated on the battlefield.

The Lost Cause mythology was also based upon the glorification and even deification of its leaders, most importantly the Virginians Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. After his death in 1870, the Lost Cause proponents transformed Lee from an admired general and individual and metaphorically resurrected him into a "Christlike figure of perfection and the embodiment of the Lost Cause as envisioned by his former comrades."²¹ They re-imagined Lee as a person who personally abhorred slavery, but heroically chose to defend his home state of Virginia. The Lost Cause pronounced Lee unbeatable on the battlefield and the man the Confederacy most looked to as their supreme hope and hero throughout the war.²²

In a similar fashion, the Lost Cause resurrected Jackson as the great lost hope of the Confederate cause. They presented Jackson as "a deeply religious, mystical, eccentric, and brilliant military leader of Olympian proportions."²³ Jackson became Lee's unbeatable second-in-command and chief subordinate, whose tragic death at Chancellorsville ultimately denied victory to the South. If only Jackson had been alive to fight at Gettysburg, they argued, a Confederate victory would have been assured.²⁴

Of course, both characterizations were largely at odds with the facts. Lee, while certainly an admirable man and a talented general, was hardly the flawless Christian knight-soldier the Lost Cause presents him to be. Lee was not anti-slavery, but rather a strong believer in the institution.²⁵ While he was an able and talented tactician, he pursued a strategy of offensive operations that bled the Army of Northern Virginia to death. In the first three months of his command in 1862 he lost 50,000 men. The manpower drain that resulted from Lee's generalship was inconsistent with both the Confederacy's defensive strategy and the realities of the South's manpower shortages.²⁶ Additionally Lee was soundly defeated by General Meade at Gettysburg and General Grant in the Overland and Petersburg campaigns.

²⁰ Ibid., 31.

²¹ Carmichael, *Truth is Mighty and Will Eventually Prevail*, 9.

²² Thomas L. Connelly, "The Image and the General: Robert E. Lee in American Historiography," *Civil War History* 19, no. 1 (March 1973): 52, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 6, 2012).

²³ Nolan, 18.

²⁴ Peter S. Carmichael, "Oh, For the Presence and Inspiration of Old Jack": A Lost Cause Plea for Stonewall Jackson," *Civil War History* 41, no. 2 (June 1995): 161, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 5, 2012).

²⁵ Nolan, 26.

²⁶ Thomas L. Connelly, "Robert E. Lee and the Western Confederacy: A Criticism of Lee's Strategic Ability," *Civil War History* 15, no. 2 (June 1969): 118, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 6, 2012).

We see a similar disconnect between reality and the Lost Cause claims regarding Stonewall Jackson. Jackson was a sometimes brilliant, but often inconsistent general. Jackson's victories during the Shenandoah Valley campaign were really a succession of small victories, although they assumed enormous proportions because they came at a time when the Confederates were desperate for good news from the battlefield.²⁷ Jackson's performance during the Seven Days Campaign at Mechanicsville, Gaines's Mill, and White Oak Swamp were shaky at best and can be described as tardy, lethargic, and inept.²⁸ The fact that Jackson's death came on the heels of the major battlefield triumph at Chancellorsville enhanced his reputation. However, as Gary Gallagher argues, "In short, Jackson compiled a mixed record as a general officer - though one certainly heavily weighted towards success."²⁹ Regarding how Jackson might have performed at Gettysburg, Gallagher concludes, "It is highly improbable that Jackson's presence at Gettysburg would have brought a result that altered appreciably the strategic balance of power."³⁰

A particularly vehement and ugly part of the Lost Cause agenda was the vilification and assassination of the wartime record of Lieutenant General James Longstreet. This is particularly disturbing because of Longstreet's outstanding record on the battlefield. Additionally, while it is obvious that Lee valued both Longstreet and Jackson as his corps commanders, it was Longstreet, not Jackson, who was held in higher esteem. This is illustrated by the fact that Lee purposefully promoted Longstreet to lieutenant general *before* Jackson, giving Longstreet date of rank and seniority over Jackson.³¹ As Gallagher points out, "The implication that Lee viewed Jackson rather than Longstreet as his principal lieutenant...is inaccurate" and "...the evidence makes amply clear that Lee did not consider Jackson the superior and Longstreet the inferior subordinate."³²

However, facts and the exemplary wartime record of Longstreet were immaterial to the purveyors of the Lost Cause. If Lee was the Christlike figure of the Confederacy, they needed a Judas to rationalize Lee's loss at Gettysburg and the war overall. Longstreet was particularly vulnerable for attack because of his perceived apostasy after the war by joining the Republican Party, calling on southerners to submit to Union reconstruction, and supporting black voting.³³ Additionally, by blaming Longstreet for the defeat at Gettysburg, Jubal Early could excuse his own poor performance during that battle.³⁴

Early and others members of the *SHSP* engaged in a series of unrelenting attacks on Longstreet replete with lies and misrepresentations. For instance, they claimed at the Battle of Gettysburg Lee had issued a "sunrise order" for Longstreet to attack on July 2nd 1863. According to Early, a disgruntled and petty Longstreet had delayed the morning attack resulting in the loss of the battle. The claim was refuted by no less than four of Lee's staff

²⁷ Gary Gallagher, *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana University Press, 1998), 110.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 111.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 109.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 113.

³¹ Gallagher, *Lee and His Generals in War and Memory*, 157.

³² Gary W. Gallagher, "Scapegoat in Victory: James Longstreet and the Battle of Second Manassas." *Civil War History* 34, no. 4 (December 1988): 302-3, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 5, 2012).

³³ Stephen W. Sears, "General Longstreet and the Lost Cause," *American Heritage* 56, no. 1: 51 (2005), *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 1, 2012).

³⁴ Glenn Tucker, *Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg* (Dayton, Ohio: Morningside, 1982), 11.

members, but the attacks on Longstreet by the *SHSP* continued with even greater ferocity and effectively ruined his wartime record in the eyes of many Southerners.³⁵ The assault on Longstreet's record did not begin until after the death of Lee, and as Longstreet sadly stated, "If the charges so vehemently urged against me after his [Lee's] death had been preferred, or even suggested, in his lifetime, I do not believe they would have needed any reply from me. General Lee would have answered them himself, and have set history right."³⁶

As the lies and misrepresentations of the Lost Cause adherents gained credibility, many individuals were highly disturbed by the attempt to hijack the historical memory of the Civil War. Frederick Douglass was one of these individuals. Douglass believed that the true historical memory of the U.S. Civil War was emancipation and the destruction of slavery. Douglass was appalled at the veneration of Lee, the resurgent racism, and the seduction into a "national forgetfulness" over the true memory of the war.³⁷ Similarly, W.E.B. Dubois was dismayed at the way the significance of slavery and the black quest for freedom was suppressed by historians and the literature on the Civil War and Reconstruction. Despite these objections the arguments of the Lost Cause advocates continued to gain credence as white supremacy flourished, sectional reunion was embraced, and Jim Crow sanctioned.³⁸

The Lost Cause version of events may have eventually been forgotten or dismissed, as the personal and politically-based propaganda that they were, if not for their treatment by the next generation of historians, most notably Douglas Southall Freeman. In 1934 Freeman published *R.E. Lee: A Biography*, - an epic four-volume work that won the Pulitzer Prize for biography. Freeman, a Virginian and Lost Cause supporter, relied heavily on the *SHSP* in his scholarship. Freeman stated that the *SHSP* "Includes more valuable, unused data than any other unofficial repository of source material on the War between the States."³⁹ Freeman's endorsement of the lies and mythology contained in the *SHSP* would be repeated and used to give credence to the Lost Cause mythology for decades.⁴⁰ Freeman particularly embraced the Lost Cause deification of Lee and Jackson and the vilification of Longstreet. Freeman describes Longstreet at Gettysburg as, "disgruntled," that he "sulked," "was of bad humor," "insubordinate," and that his "slow and stubborn mind rendered him incapable of the quick daring and loyal obedience that had characterized Jackson"⁴¹ The fact that his only sources for such an appraisal are the biased and unreliable *SHSP* seems lost on Freeman. Freeman would go on to repeat these allegations in his popular book *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command*.⁴² The effect of Freeman's work cannot be overestimated. When Freeman died in 1953 Bruce Catton wrote that students of history had lost "one of their most learned, readable

³⁵ *Southern Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 5 (1878), 54-86.

³⁶ *Southern Historical Society Papers*, Vol. 5 (1878), 269.

³⁷ David W. Blight, "For Something Beyond the Battlefield": Frederick Douglass and the Struggle for the Memory of the Civil War," *The Journal of American History*, vol. 75, no. 4 (March 1989) 1162, 1169, and 1171, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1908634> (accessed June 30, 2012).

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 1176.

³⁹ Douglas Southall Freeman, *R.E. Lee: A Biography* (New York: Scribner, 1934), 4:554.

⁴⁰ Albert A. Rogers, "Lee as Soldier and Citizen." *The William and Mary Quarterly* Second Series, vol. 15, no. 3 (Jul., 1935): 267-270. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1923181> (accessed July 9, 2011); E.B. Long, "Southern Historical Society Papers Index," *Civil War History* 9, no. 3 (September 1963):280-282, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 5, 2012).

⁴¹ Freeman, *R.E. Lee: A Biography*, 3:149-50.

⁴² Douglas Southall Freeman, *Lee's Lieutenants: A Study in Command* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1942).

and ingratiating mentors."⁴³ Freeman was considered a legend whose works were acclaimed as classics that would last forever.⁴⁴

With the approval and recognition of prominent historians like Freeman, the Lost Cause version of the Civil War gained widespread acceptance. Historians that questioned the validity of Lost Cause claims were quickly assailed by other historians.⁴⁵ The mythology of the Lost Cause began to permeate popular culture. Fictional literature and major films like *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Gone with the Wind* (1939) helped spread the belief in the ideals of the Lost Cause into the national consciousness.

It is not until the latter half of the twentieth century that the Lost Cause began to undergo serious academic challenge. In 1958 historian Glen Tucker published *High Tide at Gettysburg: The Campaign in Pennsylvania*, a highly readable and well-researched book devoid of Lost Cause mythology.⁴⁶ Tucker further challenged the Lost Cause ten years later in his work *Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg*. Michael Shaara published his Pulitzer Prize winning historical novel *The Killer Angels* in 1974. In Shaara's novel Longstreet is portrayed sympathetically and heroically as Lee's trusted lieutenant who is burdened with the attacks of July 2nd and 3rd.⁴⁷ Historians like Gary Gallagher, Glenn LaFantasie, Stephen Sears, James Wert, and others have sought to restore Longstreet to his proper place in the pantheon of Confederate heroes.⁴⁸ Thomas Connelly's work *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* was published in 1977.⁴⁹ Connelly's work was a direct challenge to the sanitized version of Lee that the Lost Cause and Freeman presented in their earlier writings.⁵⁰

Historians now question the basic tenets of the Lost Cause. No longer can slavery be ignored as the causal issue of the Civil War.⁵¹ The myth that the Confederacy was never truly

⁴³ "Douglas Southall Freeman 1886-1953." *Military Affairs* (April 1953): 57-58. *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 5, 2011).

⁴⁴ T. Harry Williams, "Freeman, Historian of the Civil War: An Appraisal." *The Journal of Southern History*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Feb., 1955): 91-100, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2954829> (accessed July 9, 2011).

⁴⁵ Donald B. Sanger, "Was Longstreet a Scapegoat?" *Infantry Journal* Vol. VIII, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 1936): 39-45.; Kirkwood Mitchell, "Lee and the Bullet of the Civil War." *The William and Mary Quarterly* Second Series, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Jan., 1936): 26-37, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1919729> (accessed July 8, 2011).

⁴⁶ Glenn Tucker, *High Tide at Gettysburg: The Campaign in Pennsylvania* (Gettysburg, PA: Stan Clark Military Books, 1958).

⁴⁷ Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1974).

⁴⁸ Gary W. Gallagher, "How Lee's 'Old War-Horse' Gained a New Following," *Civil War Times* 50, no. 3 (June 2011): 21-3, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed June 30, 2012); Glenn W. LaFantasie, "Considering Longstreet's Legacy." *MHQ: Quarterly Journal of Military History* 11, no. 2 (Winter 1999): 60-69, *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 1, 2012); Sears, 46-53; and Jeffrey D. Wert, "The Best Subordinate." (cover story), *Civil War Times* 45, no. 6 (August 2006): 22-29. *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 5, 2012).

⁴⁹ Thomas Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (New York: Knopf, 1977).

⁵⁰ Joseph Glatthaar, "The 'New' Civil War History: An Overview," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* vol. 115, no. 3 (July 1991): 348, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20092630> (accessed March 6, 2012).

⁵¹ Nolan, 19-21.

"defeated" on the battlefield but merely overrun, the overestimation of Lee and Jackson's battlefield reputation, and the unfair attacks on Longstreet's record, are all being readdressed along with other Lost Cause mythology.⁵² However, attempting to right historical misconceptions is similar to trying to unring a bell. The damage and aftereffects of the Lost Cause misrepresentations still permeate the historical memory of the Civil War.

While the academic world of professional historians may have rejected, or is in the process of rejecting, many of the misrepresentations and mythology of the Lost Cause, this does not mean that the Lost Cause has disappeared from the historical memory. The landscape is littered with monuments and markers commemorating the Lost Cause. During the period of Lost Cause domination of historical thought hundreds of monuments and historical markers were erected. As James Loewen explains:

In those decades neo-Confederate organizations like the United Daughters of the Confederacy and Sons of Confederate Veterans distorted why the South seceded and made hash of Civil War history from beginning to end. To these groups, erecting monuments was a way to continue the Civil War by other means. As a result, to this day those who worked for civil rights in the nineteenth century, like ex-confederate General James Longstreet, get far less recognition on the landscape than people who worked against civil rights...⁵³

James Longstreet did not even get a statue at Gettysburg until 1998 and it is the only equestrian statue on the battlefield that does not have a pedestal.⁵⁴

Lost Cause mythology is still apparent in other areas. Throughout the early twentieth century Lost Cause adherents and neo-Confederate organizations focused their attention on elementary and high school textbooks and literature, and those effects are still felt.⁵⁵ Only in recent years have those textbooks been reevaluated and replaced and even then, it has faced significant opposition.⁵⁶ Other attempts to readdress the Lost Cause mythology and commemoration of the Confederacy have faced similar resistance. In the early 1990s, Governor Jim Folsom of Alabama ordered that the Confederate battle flag no longer be flown from the state capital, but instead only be flown from the historical site of the "Confederate White House" across the street. As a result, he was condemned for what was called a "heritage violation" to the memory of the Confederacy. Of course, it was lost on his critics that the Confederate battle flag had only flown over the state capital since April 1963 and, as such, was much more a symbol of opposition to the civil rights movement, rather than a commemoration of the Confederacy.⁵⁷

After 150 years, the field of Civil War history is still haunted by the ghosts of the Lost Cause and those phantoms still inhabit the historical memory of the Civil War. To this day anything that one reads or sees regarding the Civil War has most likely been affected by Lost Cause mythology. Any historical work or assessment must still be scrutinized for Lost Cause

⁵² Ibid., 22-24 and 26.

⁵³ James Loewen, *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong* (New York, N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 1999), 39.

⁵⁴ "Gettysburg's Worst Monuments," *Civil War Times* 50, no. 3 (June 2011): 43-47. *America: History and Life with Full Text*, EBSCOhost (accessed July 5, 2011).

⁵⁵ Bailey, 464.

⁵⁶ Dean, 319-355.

⁵⁷ Loewen, 42.

inaccuracies because they continue to impact the memory of the U.S. Civil War. The rise and effect of the Lost Cause mythology offers a cautionary lesson to historians of all generations on the need to be constantly alert for injustices and errors accepted into the historical record and mainstream historical thought.

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