

## **Important Dates in the Contextualization of the Confederate Monument at the University of Mississippi**

**Friday, March 11:** Chancellor Vitter emails the campus community to inform us that a plaque will be placed in front of the Confederate Monument on campus.

**Monday, March 14:** The UM NAACP chapter issues a statement calling for a revision to the plaque.

**Thursday, March 24:** The UM NAACP chapter meets with the contextualization committee and Chancellor Vitter to discuss the plaque.

**Tuesday, March 29:** Chancellor Vitter emails the campus community to inform us that revisions to the plaque will be considered and suggestions will be collected at [context@olemiss.edu](mailto:context@olemiss.edu). The deadline for comments is Friday, April 8.

**Monday, April 4:** The *Daily Mississippian* publishes the statement of all 33 tenured and tenure-track members of the history faculty, which calls for a revision to the plaque. This statement suggests alternate language.

**Tuesday, April 5:** The history faculty begins circulating a petition calling for a revision to the plaque. As of Friday, April 22 the petition has 959 signatures, including many prominent historians across the country, including Eric Foner, Walter Johnson, Dan Carter, Glenda Gilmore, James Cobb, Jane Censer, Brett Rushforth, Kevin Kruse, John Dittmer, Douglas Egerton, Joshua Rothman, James Sidbury, Timothy Heubner, John Merriman, Hendrik Hartog, Susan O'Donovan, Billy Smith, Daniel Usner, Jack Rakove, David Armitage, David Blackburn, and Jim Loewen.

**Thursday, April 7:** The *Daily Mississippian* publishes the statement of 45 members of the English faculty and graduate students calling for a revision to the plaque.

**Thursday, April 7:** In its online edition, the *Daily Mississippian* publishes the statement of 30 history graduate students calling for a revision to the plaque.

**Friday, April 15:** Four members of the history faculty, Joe Ward, John Neff, Jarod Roll, and Anne Twitty, meet with the contextualization committee. At this meeting, the committee presents revised language for the plaque and suggests that they are planning to present their recommendations about revisions to the plaque to Chancellor Vitter by the end of the spring 2016 semester.

**Friday, April 22:** Two members of the history faculty, John Neff and Anne Twitty, host the first forum on contextualization for faculty members and graduate students to discuss their feelings about the plaque.

**Monday, May 9:** Five members of the history faculty, Shennette Garrett-Scott, John Neff, Jarod Roll, Anne Twitty, and Joseph Ward, along with four members of the department of sociology and anthropology, meet with Chancellor Vitter to discuss the plaque.

**Friday, May 13:** Three members of the history faculty, John Neff, Jarod Roll, and Anne Twitty, host the second forum on contextualization for faculty members and graduate students to discuss their feelings about the plaque.

**Monday, May 16:** The history faculty submits the formal report authored by John Neff, Jarod Roll, and Anne Twitty, with help from Darren Grem and Jillian McClure, to the contextualization committee.

**Friday, June 10:** Chancellor Vitter emails the campus community to inform us that the plaque will be revised.

**Original language:**

As Confederate veterans were passing from the scene in increasing numbers, memorial associations built monuments in their memory all across the South. This statue was dedicated by citizens of Oxford and Lafayette County in 1906. On the evening of September 30, 1962, the statue was a rallying point where a rebellious mob gathered to prevent the admission of the University's first African American student. It was also at this statue that a local minister implored the mob to disperse and allow James Meredith to exercise his rights as an American citizen. On the morning after that long night, Meredith was admitted to the University and graduated in August 1963.

This historic structure is a reminder of the University's past and of its current and ongoing commitment to open its hallowed halls to all who seek truth and knowledge and wisdom.

**Revision suggested by history faculty on Monday, April 4:**

From the 1870s through the 1920s, memorial associations erected more than 1,000 Confederate monuments throughout the South. These monuments reaffirmed white southerners' commitment to a "Lost Cause" ideology that they created to justify Confederate defeat as a moral victory and secession as a defense of constitutional liberties. The Lost Cause insisted that slavery was not a cruel institution and – most importantly – that slavery was not a cause of the Civil War. It also conveyed a belief, widely accepted throughout the United States, in white racial supremacy. Campaigns for legally mandated "Jim Crow" segregation and for the disfranchisement of African Americans accompanied celebrations of the Lost Cause; these campaigns often sparked racial violence, including lynching.

Historians today recognize slavery as the central cause of the Civil War and freedom as its most important result. Although deadly and destructive, the Civil War freed four million enslaved southerners and led to the passage of constitutional amendments that promised national citizenship and equal protection of laws, regardless of race. This monument, created in 1906 to recognize the sacrifice of Mississippians who fought to establish the Confederacy as a slaveholding republic, must now remind us that Confederate defeat brought freedom, however imperfect, to millions of people.

**Revision suggested by contextualization committee on Friday, April 15:**

As Confederate veterans were passing from the scene in increasing numbers, memorial associations built monuments in their memory all across the South. These monuments were often used to promote a popular set of beliefs known as the "Lost Cause" which primarily denied that slavery was the principal cause of the Civil War. This statue, approved by the University, was dedicated by citizens of Oxford and Lafayette County in 1906. Although this monument was created to honor the sacrifice of local Confederate soldiers, it is a reminder that the Confederacy's defeat actually meant freedom for millions of people.

On the evening of September 30, 1962, the statue was a rallying point where a rebellious mob gathered to prevent the admission of the University's first African American student. It was also at this statue that a local minister implored the mob to disperse and allow James Meredith to exercise his rights as an American citizen. On the morning after that long night, Meredith was admitted to the University and graduated in August, 1963. This historic structure is a reminder of the University's past and its continuing commitment to open its hallowed halls to all who seek truth and knowledge and wisdom.