

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS AS MATERIAL CULTURE

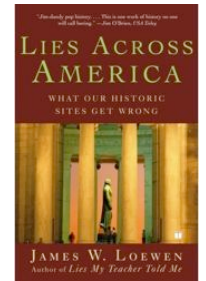
Feb. 3, 2009

www.public.iastate.edu/~soc.134

© David Schweingruber 2009

MATERIAL CULTURE

- Culture: language, values, beliefs, rules, behaviors, and artifacts that characterize a society (p. 32)
- Material culture: artifacts of a society, which represent adaptations to the social and physical environment (p.193)
- Includes clothing, buildings, inventions, food, artwork, writings, music, etc.
- Material culture both reflects and shapes nonmaterial culture (e.g., norms, values, ideology)
- James Loewen's *Lies Across America* (1999): a study of monuments as material culture
- Loewen distinguishes between "past" (things that happened) and "history" (what we say about them)



© David Schweingruber 2009



STORY OF THE LEMON TREE

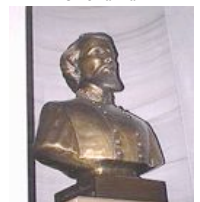
© David Schweingruber 2009

REMEMBERING NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST

- Nathan Bedford Forrest was a confederate cavalry leader
- Forrest has more statues in Tennessee than any other state has honoring a single person
- Historic sites are always the tales of two eras
 - Era of person or event honored
 - Era when monument was erected
- Forrest monuments erected between Reconstruction and Civil Rights movement
- Forrest is symbol of white supremacy
 - First national leader of KKK
 - Slave trader before war, hired black convict labor after war
 - Led massacres of black soldiers during war



Forrest Equestrian Statue at Forrest Memorial Park

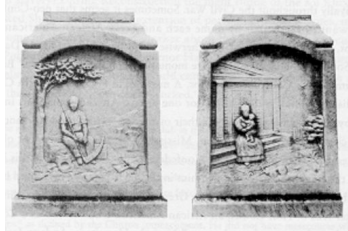


Bronze bust of Forrest in Tennessee State Capitol

© David Schweingruber 2009

FAITHFUL SLAVES OF FORT MILL, S.C.

- Monuments throughout the South honor slaves who were loyal to the Confederacy
- In fact, most slaves stopped working, fled, joined the Union Army and/or engaged in espionage
- No monuments in South honor local blacks in Union Army
- Intent of monuments is to present slavery as benign institution that had support of slaves



© David Schweingruber 2009

INDIAN STATUE IN MUSCATINE, IOWA

- Although presented in 1926 by “Muscutine Tribe” and dedicated to “Mascoutin Indians,” no such tribe existed in Muscatine then
- Actually built by “Improved Order of Red Men,” white fraternal organization
- White-built monuments to Indians tend to justify conquering Indians by:
 - Honoring Indians who helped whites
 - Honoring Indian tribes who are no longer there
 - Honoring Indians as “vanishing race” (as by Red Men)



© David Schweingruber 2009

MASSACRE MONUMENT IN ALMO, IDAHO

- Monuments are usually proposed by local organizations and present favorable picture of community
 - Often leave out unpleasant history
 - May commemorate things that never happened
- Almo, Idaho, monument commemorates Indian massacre of 296 whites that never happened
- Another example: Pittsburg, Tx, has monument to airplane inventor Rev. Burrell Cannon
- Target for snowplow revisionism?



© David Schweingruber 2009

CATT HALL IN AMES, IOWA

- Loewen gives as example of case where “reasonable people” disagree
- Carrie Chapman Catt was national leader in women’s suffrage movement
- Claimed “white supremacy will be strengthened, not weakened, by woman suffrage”
- Opponents (Sept. 29 [1995] Movement) argued her racist statements made her an inappropriate person to name a building after
- Proponents argued she was “product of her times”
- Jaime Schultz argues that the decision to name our stadium after Jack Trice in 1997 was a response to Catt Hall controversy
- Trice was largely forgotten from his death in 1923 until 1973



- Beginning in 1973 the Trice story was retold as a story of racism and a student movement (resisted by the administration) began to name the stadium after Trice
- Schultz believes that naming the stadium after Trice was an attempt to tell a more positive story about race at ISU

© David Schweingruber 2009