Kirk Savage, *Standing Soldiers, Kneeling Slaves: Race, War, and Monument in Nineteenth-Century America* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1998)

In the late twentieth century, it is a commonplace that wars produce monuments, whether they be as acts of commemoration, penance, or gratitude. But in the nineteenth century, it was not so common to erect memorials to war dead, unless they happened to be heroic generals or some other socially significant soldiers. Not common, at least, until the American Civil War, which spawned a wave of monument-building unprecedented in modern history, and which foreshadowed an even greater commemorative explosion after the First World War. Kirk Savage, in this insightful and persuasive study, argues that the commemorative activity was driven by a need to conceptualize (or reconceptualize, depending on one's point of view) a nation which had just emerged from the greatest trial of its short history. In effect, monuments served as public expressions of the New America which was born when the bane of slavery was lifted from the land.

Ironically, the New America envisioned by most of these monuments only served to restate the same old power dynamics, albeit in slightly different hues. The tens of thousands of black soldiers went almost uncommemorated, the bronze or stone figure of the white soldier standing as representative of all common men who gave their lives on both sides. Richmond, Virginia's equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee was acclaimed in the south as much as in the north, where Lee was assumed to embody all that was virtuous about the American (as opposed to just southern) gentleman. Even in monuments which ostensibly commemorated emancipation, African Americans and slavery were marginalized and devalued. Where the black man was portrayed, it was in a position of subservience, usually in kneeling before his white deliverer, Abraham Lincoln, who came to stand more for the preservation of the Union than the emancipation of slaves. In this way, memorials to emancipation subtly stressed that blacks remained, in a socio-economic sense, unemancipated: they were still acted upon rather than acting in their own right. The ultimate irony in this regard came with the Emancipation Memorial in Washington, DC. Envisioned initially as a memorial by and for blacks, the campaign was progressively coopted by whites until it produced a monument with a white sub-text; as Savage writes, "African Americans, mostly soldiers, contributed the cash, while the white sponsors collected the money and decided how to spend it." (92)

In examining the cultural meanings of these monuments, Savage is careful to weigh the influences of competing interests involved in their erection. He rightly sees them neither as expressions of public will nor of elite opinion, but as the products of a struggle between the two. Also thrown into the mix were the monument firms, which published well-illustrated catalogues and dispatched salesmen throughout the country to lobby monument committees. Missing from the book, however, is a discussion of municipal boosterism in the process. So many communities may well have embraced the generic soldier as suitable for

their war memorial because the figure "negotiated the paradox of masculinity and in the process created a new model of the citizen-soldier for the nation." (167) Or, such monuments may be so widespread because of competition between communities, something that is evident in memorial campaigns in other countries. If Smithtown chose to erect a splendid bronze soldier, Jonesville may have felt that it had to match its neighbour, for to do anything else would have reflected poorly on the citizenry. It only took one community to erect a standing soldier for the ten surrounding communities to be convinced that they had to do the same.

In this regard, Savage mentions that the peak of monument building occurred thirty to fifty years after the war but fails to address the reasons for this time lapse. The majority of Great War monuments were raised in the decade after 1918, and it would be interesting to speculate why the Civil War was different. It might have been related to the political power of an aging but still influential veteran population, or to the cumulative effect of municipal boosterism. Given Savage's general argument, he might argue that it was connected to the problems involved in conceptualizing the nature of antebellum American society. Certainly the time lapse points to a notable lack of spontaneity in monument-building. One would expect memorials erected out of community grief to appear within a few years after the war, rather than a few decades. That so many years passed before the monuments were raised surely buttresses Savage's very cogent conclusion that many of these memorials were built with an eye, not so much to the past, but to the future.

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