

The Washington Post

Democracy Dies in Darkness

Robert E. Lee statue and Daughters of Confederacy building attacked by Richmond protesters

Confederate monuments across the South were vandalized during George Floyd demonstrations

By **Lynda Robinson**

May 31, 2020 at 8:05 p.m. EDT

On a night of violence in the former capital of the Confederacy, protesters targeted Richmond's fraught history as they decried the killing of George Floyd — a scene repeated in Charleston, S.C., Raleigh, N.C. and other Southern cities.

The statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, which towers over Monument Avenue in Richmond, was covered with graffiti, including the phrases “No More White Supremacy,” “Blood On Your Hands” and “Black Lives Matter.” The Stonewall Jackson, JEB Stuart and Jefferson Davis memorials were also defaced. A

We are deeply grateful to our subscribers who make our work possible.

The journalistic resources necessary are immense and growing, and we could not do our work without subscriber support. Subscribe today.

Get one year for \$29

Send me this offer

Already a subscriber? **Sign in**



A photograph of the George Washington statue on the Washington Monument in D.C. The statue is silhouetted against a cloudy sky. The base of the monument is heavily covered in graffiti, including 'BLM', 'FUCK', 'ACAB', and 'OGELO'.

2,107 people are talking about this



<https://www.washingtonpost.com/history/2020/05/31/confederate-statues-vandalized-protesters-george-floyd/>

around confederate statue.



4,156 7:19 AM - May 31, 2020

[1,568 people are talking about this](#)

In Charleston, protesters spray-painted the Confederate Defenders statue with the words “BLM” and “traitors,” the Associated Press reported. At the University of Mississippi, the phrase “spiritual genocide” and blood-red handprints were scrawled on the sides of a Confederate monument on the campus, the Oxford Eagle reported. A Confederate monument at the State Capitol in Raleigh was vandalized, too.

Richmond has been grappling with its Confederate history for years, especially after a 2017 gathering of white supremacists in Charlottesville ended in violence. Mayor Levar Stoney (D) formed a commission to consider removing the city’s Civil War monuments. Last year, it recommended taking some down, especially the statue of Davis, putting up new ones and adding more historical context to those that remain.

None of the Confederate memorials have been removed, but in December, a new statue, “Rumors of War” by artist Kehinde Wiley, was unveiled by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. The soaring bronze figure of a 21st-century African American man in dreadlocks atop a horse sits not far from the now-charred headquarters of the United Daughters of the Confederacy.

AD

And by early Sunday evening, the protesters had returned to the Lee statue to scrawl more graffiti on its base.

Correction: An earlier version of this story suggested the Kehinde Wiley statue was commissioned by the city of Richmond. It was commissioned by the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and sits beside the museum, not far from the United Daughters of the Confederacy headquarters.

Read more Retropolis:

The day white Virginia stopped admiring Gen. Robert E. Lee and started worshipping him

Jefferson Davis: The Confederacy's first, worst and only president

How statues of Robert E. Lee and other Confederates got into the U.S. Capitol

