

Contextualization for the Confederate Monument on the Decatur Square

In 1908, this monument was erected at the DeKalb County Courthouse to glorify the “lost cause” of the Confederacy and the Confederate soldiers who fought for it. It was privately funded by the A. Evans Camp of Confederate Veterans and the Agnes Lee Chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Located in a prominent public space, its presence bolstered white supremacy and faulty history, suggesting that the cause for the Civil War rested on southern Honor and States Rights rhetoric—instead of its real catalyst—American slavery. This monument and similar ones also were created to intimidate African Americans and limit their full participation in social and political life of their communities. It fostered a culture of segregation by implying that public spaces and public memory belonged to Whites. Since State law prohibited local governments from removing Confederate statues, DeKalb County contextualized this monument in 2019. DeKalb County officials and citizens believe that public history can be of service when it challenges us to broaden our sense of boundaries and includes community discussions of the victories and shortcomings of our shared histories.