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Re-creating Mount Vernon

The Virginia Building at the 1893 Chicago World's Columbian Exposition

Lydia Mattice Brandt

The Virginia Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, Illinois, was understood as a complete replica of George Washington's Mount Vernon. The replica's elite, white creators simultaneously posited Mount Vernon as a paragon of the Southern plantation system defended by the Confederacy and as a symbol of a shared, national history that indicated the South's willingness to reconcile with the Union. Through the similarly conservative and retrospective strategies of the Lost Cause and the colonial revival, the Virginia Building simulated an ideal world that reflected the attitudes of its proponents on race, gender, and the state's national role.

ON A WARM AUGUST DAY in 1893, hundreds gathered on the grounds of Chicago's World's Columbian Exposition to celebrate the fair's Virginia Day. A band played "Dixie," the crowd's rebel yell indicated that "a large proportion of the audience was Southern," and a series of Virginia's political personalities retold the history of the state from Jamestown to the present day, with an emphasis on "Liberty, Peace, Fraternity and Union."¹ After the public ceremonies concluded, the group that had planned and financed the state's exhibits in Chicago retired to a private dinner held in the Virginia Building, a full-scale replica of George Washington's Mount Vernon

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¹ "The Old Dominion: Virginia Day Celebrated at Chicago," *Richmond Times*, August 10, 1893, 1–2.

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(figs. 1–2).² This assembly represented the full range of white, elite Virginians who had supported the state's participation in the fair: distinguished former Confederate military personalities, members of the defunct planter class, and supporters of a "New South." Surrounded by objects evoking figures significant to Virginia history from Washington and Thomas Jefferson to Confederate President Jefferson Davis and General Robert E. Lee, the Mount Vernon replica created for the visitor an impression of the uninterrupted evolution of the state's grace from the colonial plantation on the Potomac, through the Confederacy's heroism in the Civil War, and into the prosperous future, where Virginia would surely "come into port at last!"³

Regional and national histories were inseparable in the Virginia Building. The fidelity of its replication of Mount Vernon was meant to both absolve its supporters of their participation in the Confederacy and position them as productive, progressive members of a national culture and economy. This dual narrative was consciously constructed in

² The chinoiserie railing/balustrade above the portico was not included on the 1893 Virginia Building as documented in photographs, although it does appear in some prints and line drawings of the building. This decorative feature disappeared and reappeared on the original Mount Vernon throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and on replicas from 1893 until the 1930s.

³ Rev. Beverly D. Tucker, quoted in "The Old Dominion," *Richmond Times*, August 10, 1893.



Fig. 1. Edgerton Stewart Rogers, architect, portico elevation, Virginia Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893. From *The Vanished City: The Columbian Exposition in Pen and Picture* (Chicago: Werner, 1893). (University of Virginia Library.)

order to fuel New South progressivism and national reconciliation while allowing for the defeated ex-Confederates to retain pride for their lost social preeminence through the cultural movement dubbed the Lost Cause. The New South Creed was the strategy white Southerners embraced by the 1880s to rebuild the region's economy and participate in national success (especially in terms of industrial development) without letting go of the social, racial, and political ideals that had defined them as an antebellum and Confederate coalition.⁴ Many simultaneously supported the Lost Cause, a fabricated vision of the prewar South, in order both to codify Southern pride in the culture defended by the Confederacy and to prepare a palatable national memory of the Old South fit for reconciliation with

⁴ Paul M. Gaston, *The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking* (New York: Knopf, 1970). See also Edward L. Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life after Reconstruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

the North.⁵ The Virginians promoting both the state's economic potential and its cultural importance at the massive and international World's Columbian Exposition chose the man who was at once the nation's most universally revered icon and the South's most famous plantation master—George Washington—to embody these dual concepts.

The image of the first president's house at the World's Columbian Exposition, therefore, represented two seemingly distinct memories: Mount Vernon was at once a paragon of the Southern plantation system so vigorously defended by the Confederacy and a symbol of a shared national colonial history. The crafted memory presented

⁵ Gaines M. Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy: Defeat, the Lost Cause, and the Emergence of the New South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). See also Catherine W. Bishir, "Landmarks of Power: Building a Southern Past, 1885–1915," *Southern Cultures* 1 (1993): 5–45; Fitzhugh Brundage, ed., *Where These Memories Grow: History, Memory, and Southern Identity* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); and Cynthia Mills and Pamela Simpson, eds., *Monuments to the Lost Cause: Women, Art and the Landscapes of Southern Memory* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2003).



Fig. 2. Portico (east) elevation of Mount Vernon, Virginia, 1758–86, photo ca. 1899. From Harrison Howell Dodge, *An Illustrated Handbook of Mount Vernon, the Home of Washington* (L. Windsor House, 1899). (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.)

in the Virginia Building established Washington and Mount Vernon as steadfast symbols in an uninterrupted progression that began with union making, led to inevitable union breaking, and ended with a union reconciling. This version of reconciliation, however, attempted to maintain the state's Southern distinctiveness while insisting that Virginia—and the South—had always been and would always be an integral part of the Union. The once-defeated South was going forward into the future, but only through the valley of the past.

The Virginia Building straddled these seemingly contradictory (but never mutually exclusive) visions of Mount Vernon by utilizing the approaches of the national colonial revival and the regional Lost Cause movements to facilitate the presentation of a highly crafted memory.⁶ The promoters

of the Virginia Building longed for how they imagined that life in the Old South had been and wished to proclaim the heroism of the Confederacy, yet the Lost Cause was still forming in the early 1890s; the nascent movement lacked an appropriate model for how the Virginia Building should exhibit its ideology. The colonial revival, however, could show the way. A similarly conservative attitude toward the American past, it had been solidified in American popular culture and historic preservation by 1893.⁷ It not only offered a national

America: Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, trans. Francis J. Ditter Jr. and Vida Yazdi Ditter (New York: Harper & Row, 1980); Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, eds., *Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Michael Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture* (New York: Knopf, 1981).

⁶ Architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson defines the colonial revival as an “attitude” toward the American past. Richard Guy Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House* (New York: Abrams, 2004),

⁶ The methodology for my interpretation of the ways in which the Virginia Building exhibited an invented memory of the past is dependent upon the following sources: John Bodnar, *Remaking*

narrative for the Virginia Building's memory of Washington and his home but also presented a series of strategies for fundraising, presentation, and organization that had already proven successful in such projects as the preservation of Mount Vernon by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union (MVL). In this way, the colonial revival helped the Virginia Building give shape to the burgeoning Lost Cause ideology: to embody both post-Confederate pride and an agreeable vision of a new South for a national audience.

A “State Building That Should Accurately Represent Mount Vernon”

In every visible way, the Virginia Building at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition seemed an accurate replica of George Washington's Mount Vernon as it stood in Virginia. In his published account of the World's Columbian Exposition, Virginian R. Beverly Eggleston exclaimed: “How delighted was a Virginian to have his eye fall upon *Mount Vernon* exactly reproduced.”⁸ Eggleston's pleasure in seeing a perfect reproduction of the symbol of “old Virginny” was repeated time and time again by reporters, visitors, and especially Virginian guests. Mount Vernon's portico with its eight square columns and its banquet hall with neoclassical moldings and Palladian window, cupola, various dormers, faux-stone finish, and distinctive asymmetrical fenestration pattern were, in fact, all reproduced to scale. In addition, the two service flankers (a kitchen and guests' quarters during the president's lifetime) were also reproduced, complete with the connecting arcaded walkways (fig. 3). The replica imitated the floor plan of the original as well as the interior elevations, reproducing such spaces as the entrance hall, the banquet hall (used as the reception room), the library, the bedroom in which Washington died, and the attic chamber to which Martha Washington retired after her husband's passing.⁹

6–11, and “What Is the Colonial Revival?” in *Re-creating the American Past: Essays on the Colonial Revival*, ed. Shaun Eyring, Kenny Marotta, and Richard Guy Wilson (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), 1–10. See also Alan Axelrod, ed., *The Colonial Revival in America* (New York: Norton, 1985); Karal Ann Marling, *George Washington Slept Here: Colonial Revivals and American Culture, 1876–1986* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988); and William B. Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival* (New York: Garland, 1977).

⁸ R. Beverly Eggleston, *Four Days at Chicago: Descriptive and Historical* (Richmond, VA: Whittet & Shepperson, 1901), 24.

⁹ See Moses P. Handy, ed., *The Official Directory of the World's Columbian Exposition, May 1st to October 30th, 1893* (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1893), 100.

The Board of World's Fair Managers of Virginia strived to ensure that the Virginia Building would look just as Mount Vernon did in the year 1893. They had begun discussing the possibility of procuring a model of Mount Vernon and borrowing Washington-related objects for the Virginia Building from the MVL in early 1892, even before the Board of World's Fair Managers of Virginia had chosen an architect.¹⁰ By June of the same year, the MVL had agreed to provide a model so that the Virginia Building could be faithfully copied.¹¹ The Virginia Building's Richmond-based architect, Edgerton Stewart Rogers (1860–1901), presumably made measured drawings of the building during multiple trips to inspect Mount Vernon's architecture.¹² Rogers published two of the replica's interior elevations in the *Inland Architect and News Record* shortly before the exposition opened, using the titles of “Mount Vernon” and “Virginia Building” interchangeably (fig. 4).¹³ The drawings conflated Mount Vernon with its replica in Chicago, encouraging the idea that differences between the two were indistinguishable down to the last detail. A historian of the fair described the extent of the fidelity to the original in the Virginia Building's interiors: “The carved mantels and wood trimmings were exact facsimiles, as well as the windows, with small panes and sashes fastened with wooden buttons.”¹⁴

The Virginia Building's hostess, Lucy Preston Beale (1848–1928), also made multiple visits to Mount Vernon in the early 1890s to ensure that the interiors of the replica would imitate the MVL's contemporary interpretations of the various domestic spaces as closely as possible (fig. 5). Beale examined “details of the Mansion and the arrangement of its furniture” to ensure that a visitor to Mount Vernon in 1893 could walk into her version of Washington's home in Chicago and find little to no discernible difference between the two

¹⁰ MVL, 1892 *Minutes of the Council of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union*, June 1892 (New Haven, CT: Tuttle, Morehouse, & Taylor, 1892), 52; “The World's Fair,” *Richmond Times*, July 29, 1892, 3.

¹¹ MVL, 1892 *Minutes*, 52.

¹² MVL, 1893 *Minutes of the Council of Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union*, May 1893 (New Haven, CT: Tuttle, Morehouse, & Taylor, 1893), 37.

¹³ “Details: Sketches by Edgerton S. Rogers, archt.,” *Inland Architect and News Record* 21 (April 1893): 42. The two titles were often used interchangeably in official or publicity literature as well; often, the Virginia Building was called “The Mount Vernon Building.”

¹⁴ Rossiter Johnson, ed., *A History of the World's Columbian Exposition* (New York: Appleton, 1897), 485.



Fig. 3. Land (west) elevation of Mount Vernon, Virginia, 1758–86, photo ca. 1890. (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.)

buildings.¹⁵ According to a list published after the fair, the furniture and other objects arranged in the Virginia Building to reflect Beale's observations of Mount Vernon were not always from the colonial period; some simply looked old. Many objects had belonged to the Virginia-born founding fathers or Washington himself, further connecting the exhibit in Chicago with the real thing in Virginia. Objects linked directly to Washington included a cloak presented to him by a European head of state, Martha Washington's tea caddy, a "specimen" of his handwriting, a handbell from Mount Vernon, and multiple chairs that he had once owned (and in which

¹⁵ MVLA, 1893 Minutes, 37.

he had presumably sat).¹⁶ A reproduction of the bed and bedclothes in which Washington died completed the simulation of his bedroom; the real set remained back in Virginia, as the MVLA deemed it and other objects too precious to loan.¹⁷

Beale and the others who planned the Virginia Building wanted to ensure that visitors also acknowledged Virginia's history beyond Washington. They included, therefore, objects relating to other founding

¹⁶ The list was published as part of the state's final report on its participation in the fair. Virginia State Legislature, Board of World's Fair Managers of Virginia, "Communication from the Governor Inclosing the Report of the World's Fair Commissioner," November 1893, S. Doc. 16, 10–28.

¹⁷ MVLA, 1892 Minutes, 52.

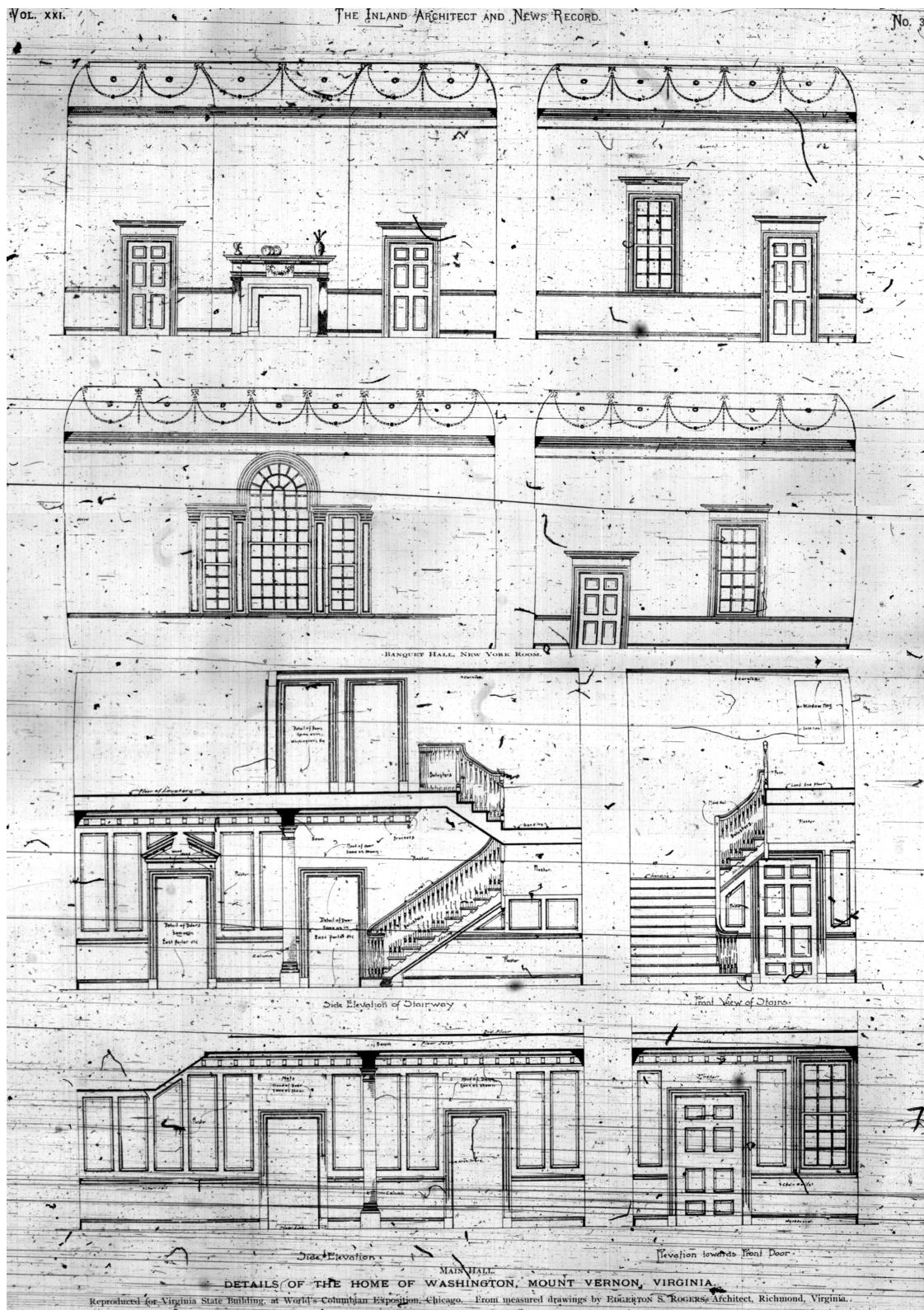


Fig. 4. Edgerton Stewart Rogers, "Details of the Home of Washington, Mount Vernon, Virginia, Reproduced for Virginia State Building, at World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893." Interior elevations from Edgerton S. Rogers, "Details: Sketches by Edgerton S. Rogers, archt," *Inland Architect and News Record* 21 (April 1893): 42. (University of Virginia Library.)



Fig. 5. Lucy Preston Beale, 1848–1928. From “Lucy Preston Beale, ex-'64,” *Hollins Alumnae Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (July 1928): 19. (University Archives, Robertson Library, Hollins University.)

fathers in order to emphasize the breadth of the state’s contributions to the nation. They displayed articles related to Thomas Jefferson, including a prayer book, watch, pair of buckles, and a pair of “silver spectacles.” The third president’s own plantation house, Monticello, was represented via a series of photographs.¹⁸ The Virginia Building also featured a piano that once belonged to Dolley Madison.¹⁹

Although the promoters of the Virginia Building were primarily concerned with the state’s colonial history in the selection of objects for exhibition, they also celebrated their more recent, Confederate past. In the same rooms where objects related to Washington and Jefferson held court were exhibited a miscellany of artifacts related to the heroes of the Confederacy: whiskey flasks and a mahogany table owned by the president of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis; a photograph of the Robert E. Lee tomb by Richmond sculptor Edward V. Valentine; a bust of Confederate Commodore Matthew F.

¹⁸ Board of World’s Fair Managers of Virginia, “Communication,” 10–16. These objects were loaned by either Carolina Ramsey Randolph (1828–1902), Jefferson’s great-granddaughter, or Cary Ruffin Randolph (1857–1910), Jefferson’s great-great-grandson. Monticello curator Elizabeth Chew, pers. comm., February 22, 2008.

¹⁹ Board of World’s Fair Managers of Virginia, “Communication,” 15.

Maury, also by Valentine; photographs of Confederate money; and a photograph of Confederate General Stonewall Jackson.²⁰ The display of objects pertaining to the Confederate States of America alongside those of the colonial period confirmed the seamless historical narrative that many white Virginians carried into the twentieth century. The very presence of the Confederate heroes’ objects inside a version of Washington’s sacred shrine and their proximity to his artifacts affirmed the defeated soldiers’ honor.

The Virginia Building’s fidelity to its historical model in scale, architecture, and interiors was unique among the other state buildings at the World’s Columbian Exposition, although multiple state buildings at the fair were based on colonial precedents. In fact, World’s Columbian Exposition master architect Daniel Burnham had advised states to build colonial revival structures and suggested that they replicate a significant historic building whenever possible.²¹ Massachusetts followed suit, basing its building loosely on the Hancock House in Boston, demolished in 1863 (figs. 6–7). Unlike the Virginia Building’s close relationship with its model, however, the Hancock House was adapted freely in order for the Massachusetts Building to appear more “civic” and substantial so as to better adapt to the prevailing architectural styles and scale of the fair.²² The interiors of the other state buildings were also contrary to the Mount Vernon replica. The Pennsylvania Building, for example, offered both museumlike exhibits housed in cases, and spaces dedicated to the relaxation or convenience of fair visitors, such as a smoking room, ladies’ parlor, post office and information room, and private bedchambers where the governor and state commissioners stayed during their visits to the fair (fig. 8).²³ According to all reports, the only concessions that the Virginia Building made to the practical needs of its guests were a reading room in which visitors could peruse books by both contemporary and historic Virginia authors and what was most likely a counter for sending postcards and telegrams. Following the fidelity of the architecture, the list of the

²⁰ Board of World’s Fair Managers of Virginia, “Communication.”

²¹ Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival*, 126. This was also cited as one of the hallmarks of the best state buildings of the fair in contemporary criticism. See Montgomery Schuyler, “State Buildings at the Fair,” *Architectural Record* 3 (July–September 1893): 56–58.

²² Rhoads, *The Colonial Revival*, 127.

²³ Board of World’s Fair Managers of Pennsylvania, *Catalogue of the Exhibits of the State of Pennsylvania and of Pennsylvanians at the World’s Columbian Exposition* (Philadelphia: Clarence M. Busch, 1893), 14.



Fig. 6. Peabody and Stearns, architects, Massachusetts Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893. From *The Columbian Exposition Album: Containing Views of the Grounds, Main and State Buildings, Statuary, Architectural Details, Midway Plaisance Scenes, and Other Interesting Objects Which Had Place at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893* (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1893). (University of Virginia Library.)

furniture in the building suggests that even these areas of the Virginia Building were outfitted not with modern furniture but rather antiques or “old” articles.

Creating a complete facsimile of Mount Vernon was clearly a conscious choice for the state’s organizers; the building was meant to be an exhibit in itself. Rather than adjust Mount Vernon to serve a public function, the Virginia Building’s organizers maintained its arrangement and identity as a private residence. By ensuring that the Virginia Building was understood as a home rather than a mere way station or exhibit hall, the palpable connection to the original was only further reinforced. The organizers had ample time to consider strategies other than exact replication for their building; because the Virginia General Assembly did not grant funding for the building until March of 1892, the construction of the Mount Vernon replica was delayed

until long after Pennsylvania and Massachusetts had already begun their own state buildings.²⁴ The objective of the state’s Board of World’s Fair Managers that Virginia be represented by a “state building which should accurately represent Mount Vernon” was achieved; George Washington’s home in Virginia was seemingly indistinguishable from the copy in Chicago.²⁵

“Washington Belonged Not Alone to the South!”

The ambiguity of Washington’s iconography and the range of ways in which various groups had

²⁴ “The Law-Makers’ Work,” *Richmond Times*, March 6, 1892, 5.

²⁵ World’s Fair Board of Managers of Virginia, *Proceedings of Meeting Held at Roanoke, Virginia, May 10, 11, and 12, 1892* (Richmond, VA: Andrews, Baptist, & Marquess, 1892), 2.



Fig. 7. Hancock House, Boston, demolished 1863. From Samuel Adams Drake, *Our Colonial Homes* (Boston: Lee & Shepard, 1894), frontispiece. (University of Virginia Library.)

readjusted his mythology in order to serve contemporary needs in the years preceding 1893 made possible and supported the Virginia Building's constructed memory of Mount Vernon.²⁶ Art historian

Kirk Savage identifies Washington's iconic status as the very thing that has made it difficult for Americans to pinpoint one meaning for his role in the nation's history. The fundamental beliefs of a republic made such unwavering religious reverence for a single leader unrealistic in the late eighteenth

²⁶ Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, esp. 1–8.

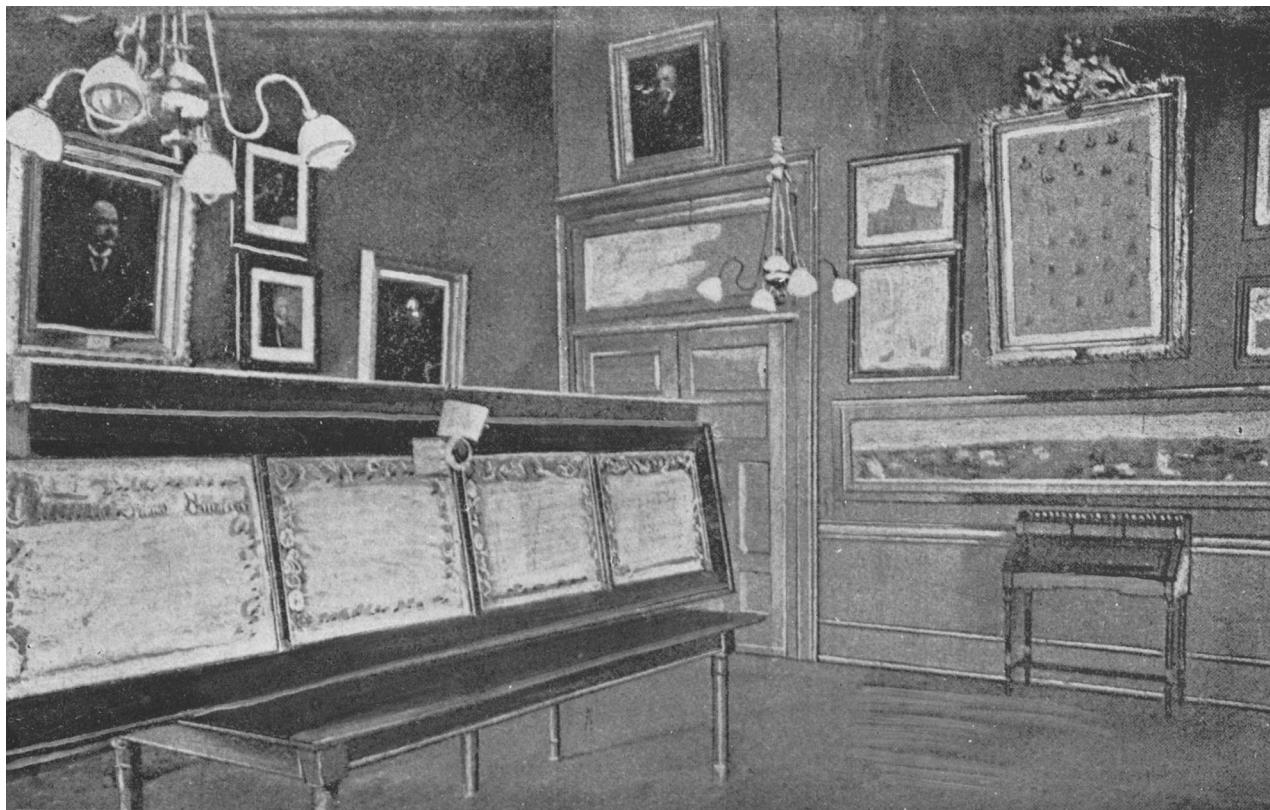


Fig. 8. Thomas P. Lonsdale, architect, and John J. Boyle, sculptor, interior exhibit hall, Pennsylvania Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893. From Anne Hollingsworth Wharton, "Colonial and Revolutionary Objects," in *Report of the Committee on Awards of the World's Columbian Commission: Special Reports upon Special Subjects or Groups*, vol. 1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1901). (Western Washington University Library.)

and early nineteenth centuries, yet Americans of the era also sought a national canon of symbols. Hence, Washington became both an emblem of untouchable greatness and an example for the common man. This multivalence explains the concurrent and contradictory Federal and Confederate adoption of his image during the Civil War.²⁷ The Virginia Building's narrative took advantage of this legacy of ambiguity by simultaneously harking back to the Confederacy's interpretation of the first president as a "proto-Confederate" and the North's rhetoric of Washington and Mount Vernon as symbols of union.

The Mount Vernon of 1893—and the Lost Cause itself—was a legacy of the memory of George Washington established by the Confederate and proslavery movements in the years preceding the Civil War. White, proslavery Southerners had reminded the nation that Washington and his image belonged to them in the antebellum period, sug-

gesting that he would have sided with the Southern states had he still been alive. The Confederacy went so far as to claim to be the second coming of the American Revolution; it argued that Confederates were fully realizing the founding fathers' vision after the government had gone astray by denying states' rights.²⁸

The adherence to Washington as a symbol of a sectionalist political ideology was memorialized in the public sphere. In 1849, a competition for the first equestrian statue of Washington was announced, and the work was erected in what would become the capital of the Confederacy: Richmond, Virginia (fig. 9). While other cities had already created monuments to George Washington, it was particularly important for Virginia and the South to

²⁷ Kirk Savage, "The Self-Made Monument: George Washington and the Fight to Erect a National Memorial," *Winterthur Portfolio* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 225–42.

²⁸ Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the Civil War South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1988). For a discussion of how this played out in art, see Maurie D. McInnis, "The Most Famous Plantation of All: The Politics of Painting Mount Vernon," in *Landscape of Slavery: The Plantation in American Art*, ed. Angela D. Mack and Stephen G. Hoffius (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2008), 86–114.



Fig. 9. "Unveiling of the statue of George Washington by Thomas Crawford in Richmond, Virginia, Feb. 22, 1852." Virginia Washington Monument (unfinished), Thomas Crawford and Randolph Rogers, sculptors, 1850-58. (LC-USZ62-20438, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.)

claim the image of the first commander in chief in the years preceding the Civil War.²⁹ By harnessing Washington as a martial symbol during an era of heightened sectional conflict, proto-Confederates boasted their own potential for military might. As historian Richard Bonner has observed, the monument “presented latent challenges to the image of Washington the conservative savior of national Union.”³⁰ Accordingly, the unfinished monument served as the site of Jefferson Davis’s swearing in as president of the Confederacy, and its depiction was placed at the center of the seal of the newly seceded nation (fig. 10). The connection between the Confederacy and Washington was reinforced by the choice of February 22, Washington’s birthday, as the day of both the laying of the statue’s cornerstone in 1850 and Jefferson Davis’s 1862 inauguration at its base.

As Washington had clearly been a symbol of Confederate ideology, so had his home been used by advocates of the proslavery movement in the antebellum period.³¹ Mount Vernon was the ultimate plantation house, complete with a master that nearly all Americans agreed had been an honest and admirable man. Junius Brutus Sterns’s highly politicized 1851 painting of Washington in the fields with African American slaves and Mount Vernon in the background emphasized the first president and his house’s connection to the institution of slavery within a year of the controversial passage of the Fugitive Slave Law (fig. 11).³² This painting not only depicted Washington’s relationship to the institution of slavery as benign, but it reminded contemporary observers that Washington was a Southern slaveholder and Mount Vernon a Southern plantation.³³ Painted in order to speak to the highly charged debate over slavery in the early 1850s, images such as Stearns’s posited Mount Vernon and Washington as distinctively Southern.

The persistence of George Washington and his home as sources of pride in plantation culture continued after the Civil War. The construction of Richmond’s Monument Avenue, the premier statement of the Lost Cause of the late nineteenth cen-

²⁹ Lauretta Dimmick, “‘An Altar Erected to Heroic Virtue Itself’: Thomas Crawford and His ‘Virginia Washington Monument,’” *American Art Journal* 23, no. 2 (1991): 4–73.

³⁰ Robert E. Bonner, “Americans Apart: Nationality in the Slaveholding South” (PhD diss., Yale University, 1997), 190.

³¹ McInnis, “The Most Famous Plantation of All.”

³² Ibid.

³³ William M. S. Rasmussen and Robert S. Tilton, *George Washington: The Man Behind the Myths* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 192–93.

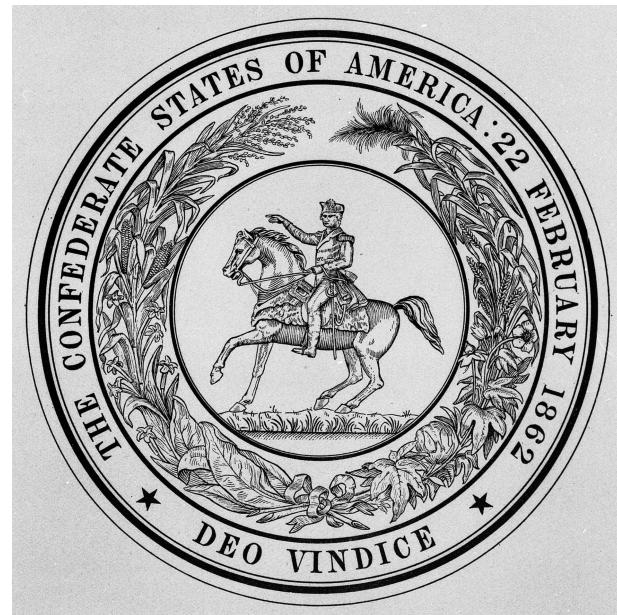


Fig. 10. Great Seal of the Confederacy. (Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond.)

tury located in the former capitol of the Confederate States of America, resurrected Confederate nationalism and its rhetorical connection to Washington (fig. 12).³⁴ A wide boulevard now bordered by imposing colonial revival mansions, Monument Avenue’s main attraction is the tree-lined median that features commanding monuments to Confederate heroes that began with the unveiling of the equestrian statue of Robert E. Lee and his trusty steed, Traveller, in 1890 and continued through 1929 with the erection of four more sculptures (fig. 13).³⁵ This series of memorials is rooted in the two statues of George Washington located in Richmond’s Capitol Square: the equestrian statue erected in the antebellum period and Jean Antoine Houdon’s statue of Washington as Cincinnatus, a commission coordinated by Thomas Jefferson for the Virginia State

³⁴ See Sarah Shields Driggs, Richard Guy Wilson, and Robert P. Winthrop, *Richmond’s Monument Avenue* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001); Richard Guy Wilson, “Monument Avenue, Richmond: A Unique American Boulevard,” in Mills and Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 100–115.

³⁵ The statues on Monument Avenue include: General Robert E. Lee Monument by Marius-Jean-Antoine Mercié, unveiled in 1890; General J. E. B. Stuart Monument by Frederick Moynihan, unveiled in 1907; Jefferson Davis Monument by William Churchill Noland (architect) and Edward V. Valentine (sculptor), unveiled in 1907; General Thomas Jonathan “Stonewall” Jackson Monument by F. William Sievers, unveiled in 1919; and the Matthew Fontaine Maury Monument by F. William Sievers, unveiled in 1929. The monument to tennis player Arthur Ashe by Paul DiPasquale was added in 1996.



Fig. 11. Junius Brutus Stearns, *Washington as a Farmer at Mount Vernon*, 1851. Oil on canvas; H. 37 1/2", W. 54". (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond, gift of Edgar William and Bernice Chrysler Garisch; photo, Katherine Wetzel, © Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.)

House in 1788.³⁶ Not only did these two iconic images of Washington provide stylistic precedents for the statues built on Monument Avenue, but they also offered an ideological link between the memories of Washington and the Confederacy as they were shaped by the Lost Cause, an association facilitated by Monument Avenue's proximity and sight line to the two statues in Capitol Square (fig. 14).³⁷ The correlation between a nationally revered icon and a series of Confederate heroes legitimized the Lost Cause project on Monument Avenue, suggesting that just as Washington was great, so too were these sons of the Confederacy. The connection also resurrected the idea that the Confederacy's mission had been squarely in line with the ideals of the founding fathers and recalled the appropriation of the Washington equestrian

statue for the seal of the Confederacy. Monument Avenue connected the first president with the mission of the Lost Cause.

The relationship between Washington and Robert E. Lee was especially strong in the Lost Cause rhetoric, and this too was reflected on Monument Avenue's streetscape. The two generals were not only related by marriage but also often revered for similar contributions to the nation: Washington had fought for union in the Revolutionary War, while Lee had peacefully advocated for reconciliation after the Civil War. In fact, Lee's image was depoliticized in the Lost Cause project with the intent of feeding the memory of the Old South to an audience beyond the former Confederacy. He was refashioned as a national hero around which all Americans could gather—much like George Washington.³⁸ The material rhetoric of Monument

³⁶ Driggs, Wilson, and Winthrop, *Richmond's Monument Avenue*, 20–25.

³⁷ Ibid., 13; Wilson, "Monument Avenue," 102.

³⁸ See Thomas L. Connelly, *The Marble Man: Robert E. Lee and His Image in American Society* (New York: Knopf, 1977); and Foster,



Fig. 12. Postcard of Monument Avenue and Lee Monument, Richmond (J. E. B. Stuart Monument in the foreground, Robert E. Lee Monument beyond), ca. 1930s. (Postcard, Lydia Mattice Brandt.)

Avenue reflects this transformation. The statue of Lee on Monument Avenue is equestrian and on a high base—similar to that of Washington in nearby Capitol Square. Whereas Washington's horse is rearing in preparation for battle, however, Lee's Traveller has all four feet firmly on the ground: the battle is over, the cause is lost, but the pride in the plantation South and its ideals remains.

The developing correspondence between George Washington and Confederate heroes continued in Richmond for the rest of the century in other cultural forms as well. Just six years after Monument Avenue's Robert E. Lee statue was erected in line with Capitol Square, the South's first museum of the Confederacy opened in the city's "White House of the Confederacy."³⁹ Its dedication on February

22, 1896, was another instance in a long line of Confederate-related inaugurations held on George Washington's birthday. Before, during, and after the Civil War, Confederate nationalists and sympathizers publicly identified with Washington as an attempt to connect their political and social agendas with a revered American symbol. By choosing a Mount Vernon replica to represent the state in 1893, the Virginia Building's organizers participated in both the Confederate and Lost Cause traditions of positing George Washington as a regional—and therefore sectionalist—figure.

In the same years that Confederates had been adopting Washington's image and insisting that they were the true successors of the founding fathers, the MVLA was establishing Mount Vernon—and consequently Washington—as a neutral symbol of union. This long-standing meaning provided a precedent for the relationship that Virginia tried to reestablish in their reconciliation with the North through the 1893 replica. First begun among Southern women, the 1850s movement to save Mount Vernon demonstrated the multivalent meanings of Washington and his home; the various interpretations were never mutually exclusive. A South Carolinian, Ann Pamela Cunningham (1816–75),

Ghosts of the Confederacy, esp. 51–53, 98–103. On the Lee statue, see Driggs, Wilson, and Winthrop, *Richmond's Monument Avenue*, 38–55.

³⁹ See Malinda W. Collier, John M. Coski, Richard C. Cote, Tucker H. Hill, and Guy R. Swanson, *White House of the Confederacy: An Illustrated History* (Richmond, VA: Cadmus Marketing, 1993); John M. Coski, "A Century of Collecting: The History of the Museum of the Confederacy," *Museum of the Confederacy Journal* 74 (1996): 2–24; John M. Coski and Amy R. Feely, "A Monument to Southern Womanhood: The Founding Generation of the Confederate Museum," in *A Woman's War: Southern Women, Civil War, and the Confederate Legacy*, ed. Edward D. C. Campbell Jr. and Kym S. Rice (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1996), 130–63; and Amy R. Feely, "Southern Lady Meets New Woman: Women of

the Confederate Memorial Literary Society and the Lost Cause in Richmond, Virginia" (master's thesis, University of Virginia, 1995).



Fig. 13. Robert E. Lee Monument, Richmond, shortly after its May 29, 1890, unveiling. Marius-Jean-Antonin Mercié, sculptor. (Cook Collection, Valentine Richmond History Center.)

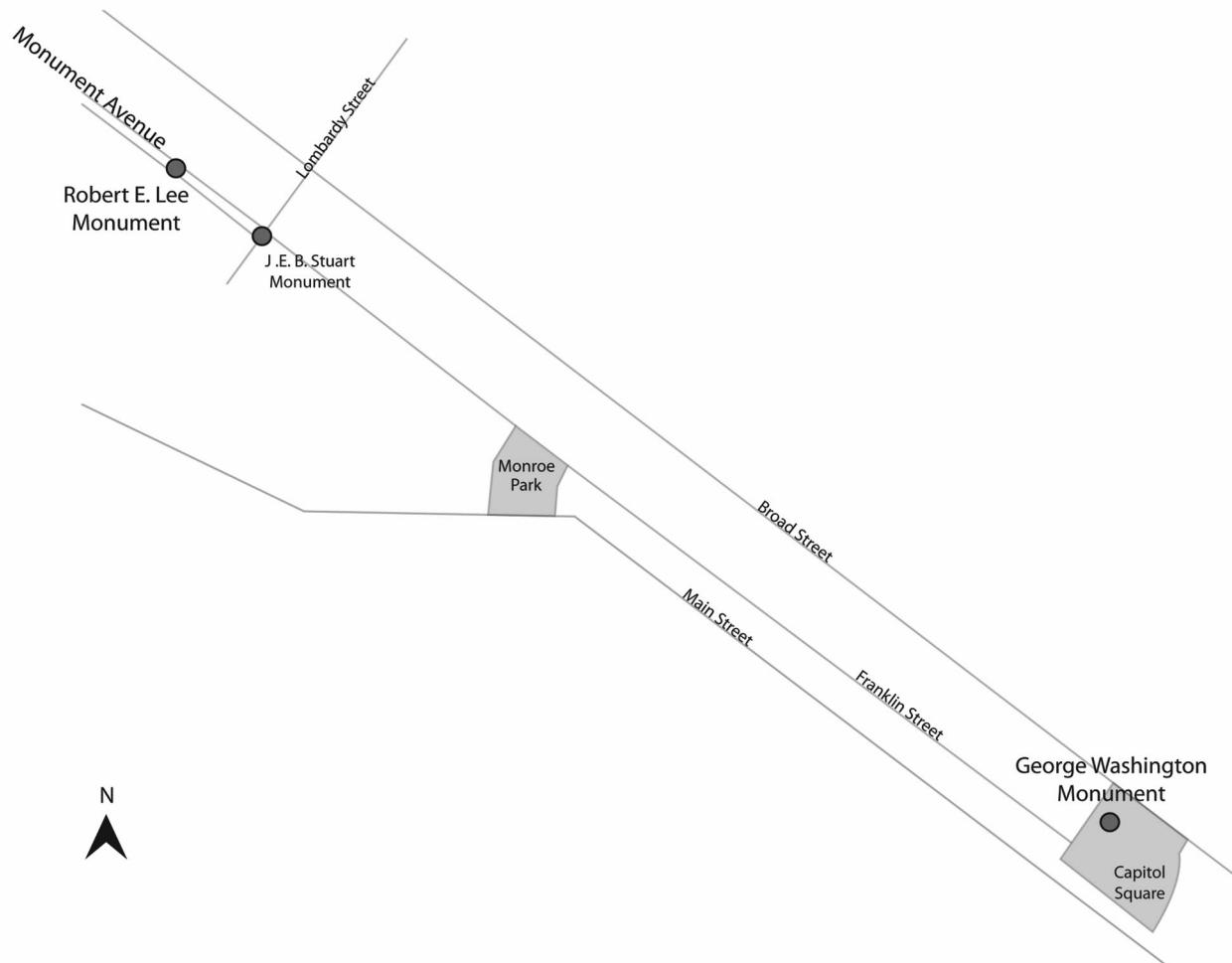


Fig. 14. Map of Richmond showing the relationship between Capitol Square and Monument Avenue. (Map, Lydia Mattice Brandt.)

founded and led the preservation of the house through the tumultuous antebellum and Civil War periods.⁴⁰ In her initial petition entitled “Appeal to the Ladies of the South,” Cunningham identified herself as “A Southern Matron” and defined the defense of Mount Vernon as both a Southern and a national cause: “A descendent of Virginia, and now a daughter of Carolina, moved by feelings of reverence for departed greatness and goodness,—by patriotism and a sense of national and, above all, of Southern honour,—ventures to appeal to you in behalf of the home and grave of Washington!”⁴¹

⁴⁰ See Grace King, *Mount Vernon on the Potomac* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), 13–14, 19; MVLA, *Historical Sketch of Ann Pamela Cunningham: “The Southern Matron,” Founder of the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association* (New York: Marion, 1903).

⁴¹ Ann Pamela Cunningham in the *Charleston Mercury*, quoted in King, *Mount Vernon on the Potomac*, 19.

Southern women responded to Cunningham’s pleas, forming the MVLA in order to save the house from imagined land speculators, physical ruin, and other possibilities that would limit its accessibility.⁴² The MVLA held its first meetings in Richmond’s Metropolitan Hall in 1854, initiating the project as a Southern, and particularly a Virginian, endeavor.⁴³

It soon became clear that Southerners could not provide all of the funding necessary for the

⁴² Steven Conn, “Rescuing the Homestead of the Nation: The Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association and the Preservation of Mount Vernon,” *Nineteenth Century Studies* 11 (1997): 71–93; Charles B. Hosmer Jr., *Presence of the Past: A History of the Preservation Movement in the United States before Williamsburg* (New York: Putnam’s Sons, 1965), 41–62; Patricia West, *Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 1–37.

⁴³ Elizabeth R. Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 124.

preservation of Mount Vernon, and Cunningham expanded her appeal to include Northern women.⁴⁴ She argued in an 1858 petition: “*Washington belonged not alone to the South! . . . Washington belonged not to one State alone!* Devoted woman would be neither baffled nor conquered; but she alone triumphs when the common homestead can be procured as a common heritage, for the estranged children of a common father, the spell of whose memory will yet have the power to reunite them around his hallowed sepulchre.”⁴⁵ By appealing to American women, rather than just Southerners, Cunningham established a metaphor in which Mount Vernon and Washington were symbols of a shared American legacy, and the preservation of the house stood for the perpetuation of the Union. She later applied this concept directly in her calls for action from American women: “When the Ship of State, with no master hand at the helm, rocked to and fro on the angry waves of sectional strife and bitterness which threatened to engulf it; has stirred the heart of woman to revive, through the rescue of *sacred* ashes of the Father of his Country, that love for his memory . . . which could be made *all-powerful* in regenerating and healing influences!”⁴⁶ Cunningham’s highly publicized pleas argued for Mount Vernon as a symbol of union at the same time that the Confederates were using Washington’s image for the very opposite purpose.⁴⁷ She even convinced the nationally renowned orator and New England native Edward Everett to join the Mount Vernon preservation campaign in order to raise the profile of the project and convey its importance to Americans both above and below the Mason-Dixon line.⁴⁸

Mount Vernon’s perceived political neutrality persisted through the Civil War, when the plantation was “the only spot in all our now United States where soldiers of both armies could meet on neutral ground.”⁴⁹ Both a Northerner, Sarah C. Tracy, and a Southerner, Upton Herbert, guarded Mount Vernon throughout the war.⁵⁰ In a response to an 1861 report that Washington’s body had been removed from his Mount Vernon tomb and stolen

⁴⁴ Conn, “Rescuing the Homestead,” 86.

⁴⁵ Ann Pamela Cunningham, “An Appeal for Mount Vernon,” *Mount Vernon Record* 1, no. 1 (July 1858): 1.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ See also McInnis, “The Most Famous Plantation of All,” 101–2.

⁴⁸ See Edward Everett, *The Mount Vernon Papers* (New York: Appleton, 1860).

⁴⁹ Dramatic Publishing Company, “Restoration of Mount Vernon,” *Milwaukee Sunday Sentinel*, August 8, 1897, 1.

⁵⁰ West, *Domesticating History*, 34.

away to the mountains of Virginia by Confederates, Tracy insisted that Washington forever remained at his neutral shrine: “The public, the owners of this sole possession, need fear no molestation of this *one national spot* belonging alike to North and South. Over it there can be no dispute!”⁵¹ Thus, Washington’s homestead was also a symbol of national unity. The neutral representation of the house enforced by the MVLA and the highly charged regional symbolism coopted by the Confederacy both fed directly into the 1893 Virginia Building’s role as a symbol of reconciliation with the Union and Southern distinctiveness and post-Confederate pride.

The Lost Cause Meets the Colonial Revival in Chicago

In their pursuit of this dual memory of Washington and his home, the promoters of the Virginia Building relied on two different strategies for remembering the American past. The Lost Cause and the colonial revival employed in the replica might seem incompatible because of their respectively regional and national focuses: one was interested entirely in restructuring national memory, yet the other intended to shape perceptions of white Southern culture, its defense of slavery, and its ultimate defeat in the Civil War. In both strategies, however, self-selected groups of Americans used retrospective and conservative methods for remembering the nation’s past in order to feed particular contemporary needs. By the time of the 1893 Virginia Building, the colonial revival appealed primarily to a segment of the U.S. population very similar to the group codifying the Lost Cause in the South: white, native-born, and largely xenophobic Americans. Whether reacting to industrial development, urban growth, and the influx of immigrants into Northern cities, or regional patriotism and shifts in racial hierarchies in Southern communities, middle- and upper-class white Americans nationwide used similarly idealized—even romantic—recollections of the past as better, simpler times in their attempts to maintain social dominance.⁵²

The insistence on a particular reading of history was a central facet to the Lost Cause and colonial revival, both of which worked to define a

⁵¹ Sarah C. Tracy, April 1861, quoted in Dorothy Troth Muir, *Presence of a Lady: Mount Vernon, 1861–1868* (Washington, DC: Mount Vernon Publishing, 1946), 24.

⁵² See James M. Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993); and Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 215–23, 236–53.

"correct" history that included some and excluded others, in an effort to reassert control over an increasingly heterogeneous and socially mobile America. Various groups in the booming Northern cities of the late nineteenth century enlisted the colonial revival in their insistence that the significant history of America was that dominated by native-born whites and their political and cultural achievements. Patriotic "reeducation" began in the 1890s as waves of European immigrants threatened the social stability of many northern communities. Such efforts usually took the form of "Americanization" campaigns that emphasized the founding fathers and were conducted in colonial or colonial revival buildings.⁵³ Groups like the Sons of the American Revolution (founded in 1889) and the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR; founded in 1890) required proof of a genealogical connection to the Revolutionary heroes and at the same time engaged in projects to publicly memorialize their version of American history. Explicitly limiting the stewardship of the past to those deemed to "belong" was meant to control the character of public memory. In these narratives, elites shaped historical narratives in order to declare themselves the rightful owners of American culture, past and present.

As the Lost Cause developed later in the 1890s, it also came to rely on many of the same strategies as the colonial revival for shaping a particular public memory.⁵⁴ The efforts of the United Confederate Veterans (UCV; active 1889–1951) and the United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC; founded 1894) focused on reframing the narratives of history textbooks to shine favorably on the role of white Southerners in the nation's history and to quiet the evaluations of their secession as a "rebellion." Ultimately, such endeavors led to a campaign to rename the Civil War "The War between the States," in an attempt to codify the conflict as a dispute over states' rights, rather than slavery, both to mollify Northern detractors and to assuage whites' anxiety over contemporary race relations in the South.⁵⁵ In such histories, white slaveholders

⁵³ William B. Rhoads, "The Colonial Revival and American Nationalism," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 35, no. 4 (December 1976): 239–54. See also Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 244–48.

⁵⁴ W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "Woman's Hand and Heart and Deathless Love: White Women and the Commemorative Impulse in the New South," in Mills and Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 64–82.

⁵⁵ See David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002), 277–84; and Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 116–26.

were valiant and righteous, and African American slaves were loyal and deferential, providing examples for how many Southerners hoped race relations would continue into the twentieth century. By deemphasizing the racial causes of the Civil War and softening the realities of slavery, Lost Cause efforts touted the idea that slavery had been a benign institution and an issue upon which all white America agreed. Such narratives denied the struggle of African Americans under slavery and the importance of emancipation, simultaneously downplaying the white South's complicity in the horrors of the institution and suggesting that antebellum racial hierarchies could—and should—persist into the present. The Virginia Building enlisted both the Lost Cause and the colonial revival to reinforce readings of American history that were exclusive to Southerners (or white, native-born Americans).

The colonial revival in American architecture, as explained by architectural historian Vincent Scully, was "something of a real desire for a new simplicity, associated with an old simplicity, as well as seeking for amplitude and ease."⁵⁶ These concepts were translated directly into the Virginia Building of 1893. At the Exposition's Historical Congress, a public lecturer pointed out the importance of colonial Virginia to the nation: "From the pretty and vivid picture [drawn] of the home-life of Washington, we may learn how unpretentious the truly great can dare to be, and the simple manner of living chosen by the family of that honored son of old Virginia. . . . It is really an enjoyment to be here to witness the tranquil happiness that reigns throughout the house."⁵⁷ Nostalgia for a simpler lifestyle found in "Old Virginia" (and especially in a home of Old Virginia) was an effective foil to the dramatic technological and industrial innovations displayed at the World's Columbian Exposition. For the Virginia Building's proponents, however, this simplicity served also to soften the wounded pride of the defeated Confederates and the radical racial upheaval that was still taking place thirty years after the abolition of slavery and the social and economic systems it supported. Remembering the antebellum and Revolutionary periods as "pretty" and "tranquil" made the slavery-dependent, elite,

⁵⁶ Vincent J. Scully Jr., *The Shingle Style: Architectural Theory and Design from Richardson to the Origins of Wright* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1955), 27–28.

⁵⁷ Mary Mann Page Newton, *Colonial Virginia: A Paper Read before the Historical Congress at Chicago* (Richmond, VA: West, Johnston, 1893), 15. The Historical Congress was one of multiple gatherings of speakers on a number of subjects held at the fair.



Fig. 15. New England Kitchen exhibit, interior, International Centennial Exposition, Philadelphia, 1876. From Frank H. Norton, *Frank Leslie's Historical Register of the United States Centennial Exposition, 1876* (New York: Frank Leslie's Publishing House, 1877). (Special Collections, University of Virginia Library.)

Southern culture something worth fighting for in hindsight and emulating in the future.

Going beyond ideology, the colonial revival also provided the most likely examples of what the presentation of the Virginia Building's crafted past was supposed to look like through two models: the forms of the New England Kitchen exhibits established in the 1860s and the interiors of Mount Vernon as interpreted by the MVLA in the 1890s. The New England Kitchen exhibit had already proven itself as a successful strategy for interpreting the colonial past at large expositions and world's fairs (fig. 15).⁵⁸ That the New England Kitchens most likely served as a model for the 1893 Virginia Building is ironic, since the first such exhibits were

created to raise money for the Union army in the Sanitary Commission Fairs in Northern cities in 1863–64.⁵⁹ The New England Kitchen was met with subsequent success at the 1876 Centennial International Exposition and not far from the Virginia Building on the World's Columbian Exposition's Midway in 1893 as well. As nostalgic displays of colonial domestic life, the New England Kitchens have consistently been recognized as early expressions of the colonial revival movement.⁶⁰ Homey details; domestic objects (often associated with significant historical personages); and the sights, smells, and the opportunity to taste "old-tyme" food created an impression of a colonial home.⁶¹ The interiors

⁵⁸ No comparable examples existed in the Lost Cause lexicon by 1893. The only public exhibit in existence by the time of the World's Columbian Exposition promoting exclusively Confederate history and Lost Cause ideology was Memorial Hall in New Orleans. The local museum opened in 1891 with a small number of objects (mostly focusing on Jefferson Davis and his family) and a support system limited to the New Orleans community of Confederate veterans and sympathizers. "Louisiana Historical Association, Memorial Hall, New Orleans, Louisiana," in *History of the Confederated Memorial Associations of the South*, rev. ed., compiled by Confederated Southern Memorial Association (New Orleans: Graham, 1904), 198–201.

⁵⁹ Rodris Roth, "The New England, or 'Old Tyme,' Kitchen Exhibit at Nineteenth-Century Fairs," in Axelrod, *Colonial Revival in America*, 160–73.

⁶⁰ See ibid., 159–83; Rodris Roth, "The Colonial Revival and 'Centennial Furniture,'" *Art Quarterly* 27, no. 1 (1964): 60–62; Dianne H. Pilgrim, "Inherited from the Past: The American Period Room," *American Art Journal* 10, no. 1 (May 1978): 6; Edward N. Kaufman, "The Architectural Museum from World's Fair to Restoration Village," *Assemblage*, no. 9 (June 1989): 24–25; Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, 37.

⁶¹ See Roth, "Centennial Furniture," 60, and "The New England, or 'Old Tyme,' Kitchen Exhibit," 164–65. See also West, *Domesticating History*, 40.

of the Virginia Building were in keeping with the New England Kitchen concept: objects were arranged to create the illusion of a domestic setting. The Virginia Building also followed the New England Kitchen model by showcasing the requisite spinning wheel, possibly including a limited cafeteria serving colonial Virginia fare and featuring a number of curiosities associated with historical figures.⁶²

The Virginia Building also followed the lead of the New England Kitchens in its focus on interior space. The earliest instances of the New England Kitchen exhibits held at sanitary fairs were not housed in their own buildings; each was merely a room. Although later examples, such as the New England Kitchen built for the Centennial, were free-standing buildings meant to look vaguely like log cabins from the outside, attention and activity continued to be concentrated on the buildings' interiors.⁶³ Emphasis at the Virginia Building was similarly internally focused, a quality enhanced by the location of the replica; its rear elevation faced a steep hill and an elevated rail line at the back of the northeast corner of the fair (figs. 16–18). This Mount Vernon functioned more as a façade for a re-created interior than it did as a complete replica in the round.

Most nineteenth-century colonial revival recreations of American domestic interiors—including the Virginia Building and most likely the later New England Kitchens—were also based on the MVLA's interpretation of Mount Vernon as a home rather than as a museum.⁶⁴ As architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson has argued, the MVLA's quest to save and preserve Mount Vernon in the 1850s was a colonial revival effort in itself. The MVLA's choice to return Mount Vernon to its former glory as Washington's home was a defining moment in the development of the colonial revival before the Civil War, especially considering the subsequent influence the house had on American domestic

⁶² Board of World's Fair Managers of Virginia, "Communication," 15. See also Christopher Monkhouse, "The Spinning Wheel as Artifact, Symbol, and Source of Design," in *Victorian Furniture: Essays from a Victorian Society Autumn Symposium*, ed. Kenneth L. Ames (Philadelphia: Victorian Society in America, 1983), 154–72. There is no direct evidence that the Virginia Building acted as a cafeteria, although this was suggested in some descriptions. See "Mount Vernon at Chicago," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1892, 7.

⁶³ See *The Midway: A Burlesque Entertainment Based on the Famous Midway Plaisance of the World's Columbian Exposition; Full Directions for Producing and Conducting It upon the Most Extensive Plan or on a Limited Scale* (Chicago: Dramatic, 1984), 18.

⁶⁴ Patricia West claims the New England Kitchens as part of the legacy of Mount Vernon. See West, *Domesticating History*, 40–41.

architecture.⁶⁵ Soon after the end of the war, the MVLA began reconstructing paint color schemes and collecting objects significant to Washington in order to re-create many of the building's spaces as they believed them to have been during Washington's lifetime.⁶⁶ In the early 1870s, Ann Pamela Cunningham spoke publicly of her belief that "the mansion and the grounds around it should be religiously guarded from change—should be kept as Washington left them."⁶⁷ Rather than display objects in cases as was typical of late nineteenth-century museums such as the Smithsonian, the furniture and memorabilia in Mount Vernon were most often arranged to reflect the MVLA's vision of what Washington's functioning household had been like (fig. 19).⁶⁸ These early interior restorations later came to serve as a model not only for the Virginia Building but also for America's house museums and as a precursor to the period-room movement that blossomed out of colonial revival preservation efforts in the 1910s (usually led by organizations also based on the MVLA model).⁶⁹

The Virginia Building's reliance on Mount Vernon and the New England Kitchen as models is also evident in the extensive list of domestic objects included in the exhibit, arranged to simulate colonial interiors.⁷⁰ Private individuals loaned the articles shown in the domestic re-creations, reinforcing the concept that the public memory was preserved in the private sphere.⁷¹ Private individuals controlled the vision of Washington and his home both in Chicago and at Mount Vernon in Virginia. That the Mount Vernon replica included articles significant to both the colonial and the Civil War eras was indicative not only of the way in which the two histories were intertwined in Southern memory, but also that the memory being displayed was

⁶⁵ Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 29–33.

⁶⁶ Elswyth Thane, *Mount Vernon Is Ours: The Story of Its Preservation* (New York: Duell, Sloan & Pearce, 1966), 368–89.

⁶⁷ Ann Pamela Cunningham, June 1, 1874, quoted in Thomas Nelson Page, *Mount Vernon and Its Preservation, 1858–1910* (New York: Knickerbocker, 1910), 62.

⁶⁸ For an examination of American museums and their techniques and methodologies in this period, see Steven Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life, 1876–1926* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

⁶⁹ On the history of the period room, see Wendy Kaplan, "R. T. H. Halsey: An Ideology of Collecting American Decorative Arts," *Winterthur Portfolio* 17, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 43–53; Kaufman, "The Architectural Museum," 32–34; Pilgrim, "Inherited from the Past," 4–23; and Elizabeth Stillinger, *The Antiquers* (New York: Knopf, 1980).

⁷⁰ Board of World's Fair Managers of Virginia, "Communication," 10–28.

⁷¹ Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*, 107.

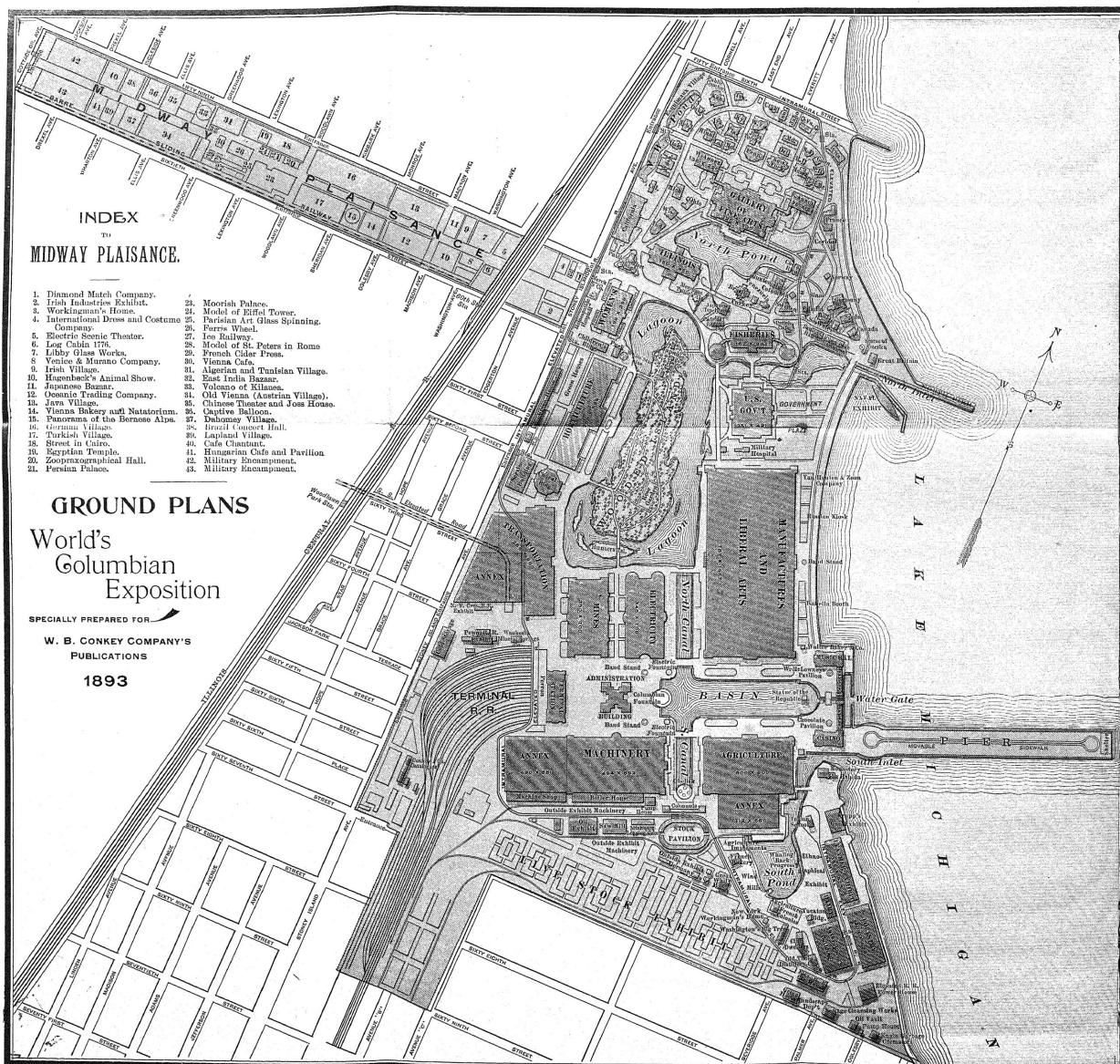


Fig. 16. Ground plans, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893. From *The Official Directory of the World's Columbian Exposition, May 1st to October 30th, 1893: A Reference Book ... and General Information concerning the Fair*, ed. Moses P. Handy (Chicago: W. B. Conkey, 1893). (Printed Book and Periodical Collection, Winterthur Library.)

specific to and under the control of those in whose hands it rested: the particular group of white elites that organized the event and contributed objects to its displays. Many of the Virginians offering objects to the 1893 replica were simultaneously participating in the gathering of objects for the burgeoning Museum of the Confederacy, in Richmond.⁷² Mary

Stuart Smith, for example, was a founding member of the museum, who also made a substantial donation of objects to the Virginia Building. Private collector and dealer of Confederate memorabilia, William F. Pumphrey, was the donor of most of the Jefferson Davis-related articles to the replica of 1893 and a member of the UCV group "R. E. Lee Camp #1," a faction that made an especially large

⁷² On the discussion among Confederate veterans for establishing a museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, see "A Confederate Westminster," *Confederate Veteran* 1 (July 1893): 207; "A National Repository of the Records and Relics of the Southern Cause, Proposed by Charles Broadway Rouss, of New York,"

Southern Historical Society Papers, January–December 1894: 387; William M. S. Rasmussen, "Planning a Temple to the Lost Cause: The Confederate 'Battle Abbey,'" in Mills and Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 163–82.

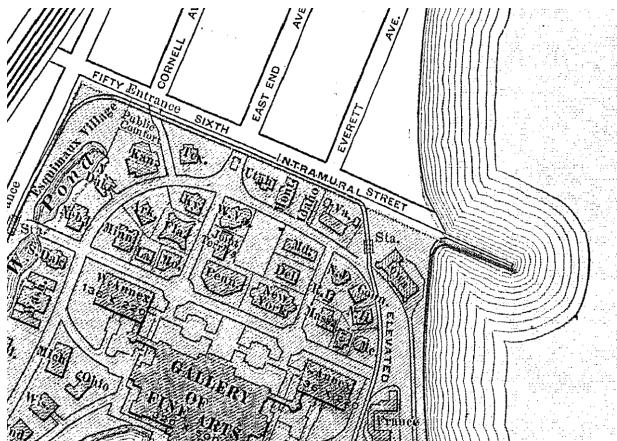


Fig. 17. Detail of fig. 16, showing Virginia Building and Intramural Elevated railway station at center right.

donation to the Museum of Confederacy in its early years.⁷³ By evaluating the differences between the types of objects and display techniques typical of the Museum of the Confederacy collection with those of the Virginia Building just a few years earlier, it becomes even clearer that the domestic arrangements of the Mount Vernon replica were consciously based on colonial revival models. The Virginia Building might have been created by the same cohort of Virginians as was behind the Museum of the Confederacy, but the participants did not use the same display methods or types of objects.

Descriptions of both the Museum of the Confederacy and the Virginia Building relied upon the term "relic" to describe objects displayed within the respective exhibits. Promoters, visitors, and reporters often used the word indiscriminately to describe not only articles with direct associations to the "martyrs" of the Confederate cause or those with connections to the almost religiously revered Washington, but also things that were simply "old." The types of relics displayed in these two venues by a similar group of Lost Cause sympathizers, however, were markedly different. Those exhibited in the Virginia Building included a number of household items or photographs related to historic personages such as Washington, Lee, Davis, and Jefferson, in addition to furniture and other articles that had no particular associational value and were present merely to complete the domestic re-creation. An official guidebook of the fair described the exhibit:

In the main hall is a large stairway four feet wide, ascending by platforms to the room above. On the first platform of the stairway there is an old Washington family clock, a very interesting historical relic. This hall

⁷³ See William E. Pumphrey, "Catalogue of Valuable and Rare Collections of Confederate Miscellany, Comprising Battle Reports, Manuscripts, Autographs, Letters of Prominent Confederate Generals and Statesmen, Confederate Bonds of Different Characters, Confederate Notes of Rare and Scarce Issues, and Many Other Valuable Papers and Documents . . .," broadside, Richmond, VA; "The Monument to General Robert E. Lee, Part IV," *Southern 17* (January–December 1889): 264; Coski, "A Century of Collecting," 7.



Fig. 18. Edgerton Stewart Rogers, architect, aerial view of rear elevation, Virginia Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893. From *Beautiful Scenes of the White City: A Portfolio of Original Copper-Plate Half-Tones of the World's Fair*, no. 14 (Chicago: Laird & Lee, 1894). (University of Virginia Library.)



Fig. 19. George Washington's bedchamber, Mount Vernon, arranged by the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, ca. 1899. From Harrison Howell Dodge, *An Illustrated Handbook of Mount Vernon, the Home of Washington* (L. Windsor House, 1899). (Mount Vernon Ladies' Association.)

is furnished with antique sofas and pictures of the last century. . . . As far as could be done the building was furnished with articles which were collected from all over the state, the heirlooms of old Virginia families, and with portraits of the same character. Whatever may be lacking in furnishing the building with articles of this character is supplied with furniture made after the same old fashion.⁷⁴

The list of furniture not associated with a famous Virginia personage included pianos, spinning wheels, washstands, and "old chairs."⁷⁵ In fact, a high-post bedstead with bedding was even donated by William B. Holtzclaw, a Chicagoan who was also the building's contractor.⁷⁶ In the case of some rooms in the replica, not enough appropriate objects could be collected, and the spaces were subsequently

closed.⁷⁷ Rather than sacrifice the illusion of fidelity, the Virginia Building's furnishings both remained sparse and included objects without associational value so that the exhibit would reflect a viable home.

The Museum of the Confederacy's collection of relics, meanwhile, consisted overwhelmingly of articles (or pieces of articles) related to specific individuals who had sacrificed their blood for the cause. Typical were "pressed flowers from the casket containing the remains of General Robert E. Lee"; "cotton, used by [Jefferson] Davis in dressing his wounded foot"; a "piece of Wedding-Gown of eldest daughter of [Jefferson] Davis"; and chains, braids, and other objects fashioned of hair from both veterans and their steeds.⁷⁸ Despite the fact that the

⁷⁴ Handy, *The Official Directory*, 100.

⁷⁵ Board of World's Fair Managers of Virginia, "Communication," 15–16.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 15; "World's Fair News Notes," *Richmond Dispatch*, March 4, 1893, 3.

⁷⁷ Marling, *George Washington Slept Here*, 91.

⁷⁸ Confederate Memorial Literary Society, *Catalogue of the Confederate Museum, of the Confederate Memorial Literary Society, Corner Twelfth and Clay Streets, Richmond, Virginia* (Richmond, VA: Ware & Duke, 1905), 16–95. See also Coski and Feely, "A Monument to Southern Womanhood," 146–47.



THIS IS THE VIRGINIA ROOM

Conspicuous in the enormous collection in this room are the Lee, Jackson and Stuart cases. In the first may be seen the military coat and boots worn by General Lee at Appomattox. The second contains memorials of General Jackson's death at Chancellorsville, and the third General Stuart's saddle, bridle, cavalry boots, haversack and carbine.

Fig. 20. "This Is the Virginia Room," Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, 1906. From Edyth Carter Beveridge, "Where Southern Memories Cluster," *Ladies' Home Journal* 23, no. 10 (September 1906): 35. (Printed Book and Periodical Collection, Winterthur Library.)

Museum of the Confederacy would come to be housed in an actual residence once it opened in 1896 (the "White House" of the Confederacy, the home of Jefferson Davis and his family during the Civil War) and followed the MVLA's practice of assigning each room in the museum to a different state's set of representatives, it did not attempt to re-create any domestic spaces as did the real Mount Vernon or its replica. It was instead arranged according to the prevailing anthropological principles that dominated Victorian museum display.⁷⁹ Cases were crammed with these often dirty or blood-stained articles, and photographs, paintings, and torn battle flags covered the walls (fig. 20). It is interesting to note that the only items included in the Virginia Building that come close to the highly charged and fragmented articles typical of the Mu-

seum of Confederacy were "quilt pieces, made from Mrs. Washington's dress," and an old medicine chest "made from a plank taken from Washington's first coffin."⁸⁰ Although both articles might have begun their lives as disjointed, association-driven relics, they ultimately became more practical objects that blended in with the domestic nature of the Mount Vernon exhibit, their genealogy enhancing their authenticity.

Through this comparison of historical objects collected by similarly minded individuals, it becomes clear that the "curators" of the Virginia Building made a conscious decision to simulate a house—and more specifically, the real Mount Vernon—in the choice and arrangement of objects. This brought the replica closer to its model, Mount Vernon, and aligned the project with colonial revival efforts that

⁷⁹ See Conn, *Museums and American Intellectual Life*.

⁸⁰ Board of World's Fair Managers of Virginia, "Communication," 12.

had already been proven successful. By opting to avoid war-torn and bloodstained Confederate relics in the exhibit, the sponsors of the Virginia Building further ensured a palatable and successful presentation of their particular memory of Virginia's history. Perhaps the completely domestic quality of the replica also sent the message that home was something that all Americans had—or aspired to have—in common. The "old-tyme" interiors of the Virginia Building created a familiar realm in which its promoters' crafted and complicated memory was normalized.

The "Women of Virginia" Replicate Mount Vernon

Women largely planned, created, and operated the Virginia Building, furthering its domestic orientation. This situates the replica within the period's proliferation of organizations of white women aimed at crafting public memory and championing historic preservation: from the colonial revival-oriented New England Kitchens or MVLA, to the Lost Cause–driven founders of the Museum of the Confederacy and other local groups that had formed in the South by the mid- and late 1890s as a strategy to support the cultural authority of white elites.⁸¹ The popular understanding that historical stewardship began in the home allowed women to lead these campaigns without explicitly entering the masculine world of politics.⁸² Hence, the Virginia legislature handed over the fundraising and publicity campaigns for the Mount Vernon replica to "the women of Virginia" as early as 1891.⁸³ After the

⁸¹ Women dominated historic preservation efforts from the late nineteenth century through the first decades of the twentieth century. See Daniel Bluestone, "Academics in Tennis Shoes: Historic Preservation and the Academy," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 58 (September 1999): 300–307; and Mike Wallace, "Preserving the Past: A History of Historic Preservation in the United States," in his *Mickey Mouse History* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1996), 177–222. See also Martha Strayer, *The D.A.R.: An Informal History* (Washington, DC: Public Affairs Press, 1958); Karen Lynne Cox, "Women, the Lost Cause, and the New South: The UDC and the Transmission of Confederate Culture, 1894–1919" (PhD diss., University of Southern Mississippi, 1998); Campbell and Rice, *A Woman's War*; W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory in the New South, 1880–1920," in *Jumpin' Jim Crow: Southern Politics from Civil War to Civil Rights*, ed. Jane Daily, Glenda Elizabeth Gilmore, and Bryant Simon (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000); and W. Fitzhugh Brundage, "A Duty Peculiarly Fitting to Women," in his *The Southern Past: A Clash of Race and Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 12–54.

⁸² Brundage, "A Duty Peculiarly Fitting to Women," 48.

⁸³ "The Columbian Exposition," *Richmond Times*, July 16, 1891, 2.

General Assembly agreed to appropriate \$25,000 to the project in the spring of 1892, it was resolved that the women of Virginia were to "render every assistance to this laudable undertaking" of raising additional funds and be "delegated the patriotic duty of raising a fund to duplicate at Chicago, Mount Vernon, the home of Washington, as the Virginia Building."⁸⁴ As was often the case in the nineteenth century, politicians delegated the task of memorializing the past to women.⁸⁵

The 1893 Virginia Building and the women promoting it were also associated with the largest and most active female group behind many colonial revival efforts to craft public memory: the Daughters of the American Revolution. The very proposition to include a replica of Mount Vernon in the 1893 Exposition at all was first publicized by the DAR. In January of 1892, a nationwide committee of the DAR announced that it was planning on exhibiting "the manners, customs, and domestic life of the revolutionary or colonial period" in a house that would "probably be Mount Vernon, but its furnishings will be entirely from the contributions of the descendants of the Revolutionary heroes, or those persons having historic furniture."⁸⁶ A year earlier, the DAR contacted the MVLA to suggest that the two groups collaborate in their contribution to the Women's Building's "Retrospective Department," although it is unclear if they ever approached the MVLA formally about the intended replica.⁸⁷ In the end, the DAR did not have a separate building at the fair but only an exhibit in the Women's Building that included information about their accomplishments in preservation, finding the lost graves of American patriots, genealogical research, and relic collecting.⁸⁸

It seems likely that the Virginia Building's female proponents who were also members of the DAR adopted the idea of the Mount Vernon replica. The Virginia Building's hostess and the Lady

⁸⁴ "The Law-Makers' Work," *Richmond Times*, March 6, 1892, 5. See also "Virginia Legislature," *Richmond Times*, November 29, 1891, 6; World's Fair Board of Managers of Virginia, *Organization, By-laws, Plan of Work, Local and General of the Board of World's Fair Managers of Virginia Including an Official Directory of the Board of Managers, Officers of the Board and Auxiliary Board, and of the Officers of the Columbian Exposition at Chicago*, booklet, May 11, 1892, meeting in Roanoke, VA, printed in Richmond, VA, 1892.

⁸⁵ Brundage, "A Duty Peculiarly Fitting to Women," 18.

⁸⁶ "Grand Colonial Ball," *Washington Post*, January 10, 1892, 9.

⁸⁷ MVLA, 1891 *Minutes of the Council of the Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union*, May 1891 (New Haven: Tuttle, Morehouse, & Taylor, 1891), 70.

⁸⁸ See Jeanne Madeline Weiman, *The Fair Women: The Story of the Women's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago 1893* (Chicago: Academy Chicago, 1981), 504.

Assistant to the World's Fair Board of Managers of Virginia, Lucy Preston Beale, was a prominent member of the DAR; she would be elected as an honorary vice president for life by the organization in 1896.⁸⁹ Clearly, the replica and Beale's involvement with it were deemed of interest to the national DAR membership; one of Beale's trips to Mount Vernon to inspect the MVLA's interpretation was reported in the DAR's official magazine in the same month that the fair opened.⁹⁰ Another woman who was both closely connected to the public image of the Virginia Building and a member of the DAR was Sara Rice Pryor (1830–1912). Pryor donated objects shown in the replica, hosted a ball at White Sulphur Springs to raise money for the endeavor, and participated in other aspects of the project's planning.⁹¹

By codifying one version of the historical (and especially political) contributions of white men such as George Washington, the women involved in the Virginia Building and similar efforts to shape public memory simultaneously sought to solidify their own role in largely male-dominated narratives as wives and mothers.⁹² Like Martha Washington before them, Virginia women such as Beale and Pryor intended to be models of American domestic morality to inspire patriotism not only in their own republican sons but also across the entire nation. By emphasizing the contribution of Virginia's women in the domestic realm, Beale and her compatriots tried to ensure their place in both state and national histories. Beale wrote to Virginia women in a promotional pamphlet for the Virginia Building: "We see that in other States, statistics are being gathered illustrative of woman's help in the moral and intellectual progress of the State, as well as her more material interests. Have Virginia women been idle in these noble fields? . . . Is there nothing in the way of the garden, the dairy, the orchard, or of domestic ordering that has received special impress at her hand?"⁹³ Beale clearly saw the World's Columbian Exposition as an opportunity to promote the role of Virginia women in the state's progress to date.

⁸⁹ "Loud Calls for a Man," *Washington Post*, February 20, 1896, 3.

⁹⁰ J. A. G., "Mount Vernon and the Mount Vernon Association," *American Monthly Magazine* 2, no. 5 (May 1893): 530–33.

⁹¹ "At White Sulphur Springs," *Washington Post*, July 24, 1892, 13.

⁹² Brundage, "White Women and the Politics of Historical Memory," 119–28.

⁹³ Lucy Preston Beale, "An Address to the Women of Virginia," broadside (from Buchanan Standard Steam Print, 1891–93?), Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia (emphasis added).

In another broadside, Beale spoke directly to the ways in which the state's female population would ensure that the Virginia Building would lead the state into the future: "Poor though we be, let the women of Virginia, with a patriotic pride that may brook humiliation, tax themselves to signalize this anniversary of the New World's birth . . . let us now feel, and demonstrate to others, that to the beloved 'old land' life has indeed come again."⁹⁴ Beale's declarations raised awareness of not only the Mount Vernon replica as a domestic endeavor but also the work of Virginia's women.

In stark contrast to women touting suffrage rights and new roles for women elsewhere at the World's Columbian Exposition, the female-led campaign for the Virginia Building, its re-creations of colonial interiors, and Lucy Preston Beale's emphasis on women's achievements in the traditional domestic realm served as reminders that both in the Old South and in the New, Virginia's white women excelled in the home and that, in that space, gender roles were as they had been in Washington's time.⁹⁵ The Virginia Building and its re-creations of colonial interiors represented the state, and especially its women, as examples of tried, true, and uncontroversial domestic values. Beale and her counterparts continued to tout this claim in the Virginia exhibit two years later at the 1895 Atlanta Cotton States Exposition, a venture devoted entirely to showcasing the New South. In a special edition of *The Virginian* released for the Atlanta Exposition and edited by Beale, the simultaneous pronouncement of the power of Virginian women and of the reassurance of traditional gender roles is clear: "In contrast with other women of our own country . . . the repose—the poise of manner—claimed as the Virginia Woman's peculiar characteristic . . . the Virginia Woman is Queen in the 'Old Dominion.' *Home* is her Kingdom."⁹⁶

⁹⁴ Lucy Preston Beale, quoted in M. Sheffey-Peters, "Mrs. Lucy Preston Beale: A Lady of Charming Manners and Diplomatic Address," broadside (from the *Charlottesville Daily Progress*, January 14, 1893), Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia.

⁹⁵ For the range of contemporary roles for women discussed at the World's Columbian Exposition, see Mary Kavanaugh Oldham Eagle, ed., *The Congress of Women Held in the Woman's Building, World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, U.S.A., 1893* (Chicago: International Publishing Co., 1894); Virginia Grant Darney, "Women and World's Fairs: American International Expositions, 1876–1904" (PhD diss., Emory University, 1892), 65–124; and Weiman, *The Fair Women*.

⁹⁶ Callaway Spottiswood Moore, *Virginian*, Woman's Edition (November 28, 1895): 9–10. On the Cotton States Exposition, see Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions, 1876–1916* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 73–104.

The Virginia Building's Lost Cause Proponents

The elite women and men who created the Virginia Building might have relied on colonial revival models for their domestically focused demonstration of Washington's memory, but they also were and had been firmly entrenched in various sectionalist memorial efforts throughout the nineteenth century, from the construction of Confederate nationalism to the public displays of the Lost Cause. They donated objects to the Virginia Building, designed its architecture, crafted its narrative, and hosted its guests in Chicago, all while leading Confederate veteran organizations, building monuments to its generals and fallen soldiers, and publicly expressing their fears for the fate of their fellow white Southerners in the decades after Reconstruction back in Virginia. In the Virginia Building, they together created a nationally palatable version of the same narrative they memorialized on a regional level and often for local audiences. An examination of the biographies of some of the Virginia Building's major promoters suggests that their simultaneous leadership in the Lost Cause and their care in presenting a depoliticized vision of the past to the nation are indicative of the ways in which the ideologies of Southern distinctiveness and national reconciliation were entwined in the replica of 1893.

Like many of the Virginia Building's proponents, Edgerton Stewart Rogers—the building's architect—was a member of a long-standing, well-known Richmond family (fig. 21).⁹⁷ Rogers's professional obituary in the *Inland Architect and News Record* cites his mother, Miss Rosa Gibson, a famous beauty and belle of the 1850s, as one of the catalysts behind his success.⁹⁸ Her family connected Rogers to the pinnacles of antebellum Richmond society. Rogers's father, sculptor Randolph Rogers, meanwhile, introduced him to the city's artistic community.⁹⁹ Randolph Rogers completed the figures located around the base of Richmond's equestrian statue of George Washington (the very center of Confederate imagery) after sculptor Thomas Crawford's

⁹⁷ See "Capt. Edgerton S. Rogers," *Inland Architect and News Record* 38, no. 4 (November 1901): 32; "Capt. Edgerton Rogers Dead," *Richmond Times*, August 20, 1901; Andrew Morrison, ed., *The City on the James: Richmond, Virginia, the Chamber of Commerce Book* (Richmond, VA: George W. Engelhardt, 1893), 57; and Andrew Morrison, *Richmond, Virginia, and the New South* (Richmond, VA: George W. Engelhardt, 1889), 27.

⁹⁸ "Capt. Edgerton S. Rogers," 32.

⁹⁹ Rogers was born in Rome, Italy, in 1860 while his father was working and studying sculpture. He received his own training in Europe and returned to Richmond, his mother's hometown, by 1887 or 1888.



Fig. 21. "Capt. Edgerton Rogers Dead: Well-Known Young Architect Dies after a Brief Illness." Christopher Eng[raving] Co. From "Rev. Mr. Beadles Dies on Sunday . . ." *Richmond Times*, August 20, 1901, 3. (Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers online, Library of Congress; image, Library of Virginia.)

death.¹⁰⁰ Edgerton Stewart Rogers himself went on to design a second-place entry for the 1896 competition for the Monument Avenue memorial to Jefferson Davis.¹⁰¹

Edgerton Stewart Rogers received the 1893 Virginia Building commission "from among a very large number of competitors, and by unanimous vote," most likely because of his family connections and because he often socialized with members of the state's Board of World's Fair Managers in various organizations promoting the Lost Cause.¹⁰² He was a "Captain" in the Ashby Light Horse Guard, a militia of young privileged men that regrouped

¹⁰⁰ Millard F. Rogers Jr., *Randolph Rogers: American Sculptor in Rome* (Cambridge, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 1971), 83; Anna Cora Ritchie to Henry Theodore Tuckerman, December 15, 1857, Anna Cora Ritchie Papers, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville, Virginia; "Adopt the Design," *Richmond Dispatch*, June 30, 1896, 1.

¹⁰¹ "Adopt the Design," 17; John H. Moore, "The Jefferson Davis Monument," *Virginia Cavalcade* 10, no. 4 (Spring 1961): 28–34.

¹⁰² Morrison, *The City on the James*, 58.



Fig. 22. Flag of the Westmoreland Club. From Westmoreland Club, *The Constitution, By-Laws and House Rules of the Westmoreland Club of Richmond, Va.* (Richmond, VA: Bell Book & Stationery Co., 1909), frontispiece. (University of Virginia Library.)

after Reconstruction, functioning as a social club that led dedications of the city's early Civil War memorials.¹⁰³ Rogers was also a member of the Westmoreland Club, an elite Richmond institution that claimed to have "preserved the social standards of the old South" (and whose members sat under a portrait of Jefferson Davis by William Garl Browne in the clubhouse parlor).¹⁰⁴ Recalling the relationship between the public memory of George Washington and Robert E. Lee, elucidated on Monument Avenue just a few blocks away from the organization's headquarters, the name of the club

itself referred to the Lost Cause's link between Confederate and Revolutionary history: "Westmoreland" was chosen to reference the name of the Virginia county in which both Robert E. Lee and George Washington were born.¹⁰⁵ The flag of the society also reflected its allegiances to the Lost Cause in its striking formal similarity to the flag of the Confederacy (fig. 22). The Westmoreland Club's roster included Colonel A. S. Buford, the president of the World's Fair Managers of Virginia, and Major James Dooley, owner of the grand Richmond home of Maymont, which was another of Rogers's significant commissions.

The other main agent of the Virginia Building, Lucy Preston Beale, also participated in the formation and promotion of the Lost Cause ideology. Beale's genealogy made her an impeccable choice

¹⁰³ John A. Cutchins, *A Famous Command: The Richmond Light Infantry Blues* (Richmond, VA: Garrett & Massie, 1934).

¹⁰⁴ Westmoreland Club, "Fiftieth Anniversary, January 29, 1927, Westmoreland Club, Richmond, Virginia," Library of Virginia, Richmond; Westmoreland Club, *The Constitution, By-Laws and House Rules of the Westmoreland Club of Richmond, VA* (Richmond, VA: Bell Book & Stationery Co., 1909).

¹⁰⁵ Westmoreland Club, "Fiftieth Anniversary."

as hostess for a building that bridged colonial and Confederate history: she was a direct descendant of William Preston, a member of the House of Burgesses, and James Patton Preston, a distinguished army colonel and an early nineteenth-century governor of Virginia. Her father, William Ballard Preston, served as a senator in the Confederate Congress.¹⁰⁶ Beale's family was regarded as one of the "oldest and wealthiest families" of antebellum southwestern Virginia planter society—a group of Southerners that surely had the most to gain by the reframing of the Civil War's memory and outcomes.¹⁰⁷ Beale also joined the UDC soon after the group was founded in 1894.¹⁰⁸

Other Virginians invested in the Lost Cause made contributions to the Virginia Building. John S. Wise (1846–1913), the son of antebellum Virginia governor Henry Alexander Wise, donated a significant number of relics to the Mount Vernon project. Wise had been a distinguished young Confederate soldier and claimed in his nostalgic memoir that after the war, "I was dead ... My beloved State of Virginia was dismembered, and a new State had been erected out of a part of her, against her will."¹⁰⁹ He was a member of the Westmoreland Club and also of the Light Infantry Blues, a militia that merged with Edgerton Stewart Rogers's Ashby Light Horse Guard in 1894 and contracted uniforms that replicated those worn by the battalion in the Civil War.¹¹⁰ The group's flag was christened at the 1890 unveiling of the Monument Avenue Robert E. Lee Monument.¹¹¹ Wise's wife, Evelyn Douglas Wise, was elected United States Lady Manager of the Auxiliary Board of the World's Fair Board of Managers of Virginia and served alongside Beale.

A former Confederate general himself, ex-Virginia governor and Virginia Building supporter Fitzhugh Lee (1835–1905) was also deeply entrenched in Lost Cause ideology (fig. 23).¹¹² Lee was also a member of the Westmoreland Club, where he most likely yielded considerable influence over the legislators determining the state's involvement



Fig. 23. Fitzhugh Lee. From Lyon Gardiner Tyler, *Men of Mark in Virginia: Ideals of American Life; A Collection of Biographies of the Leading Men of the State*, vol. 5 (Washington, DC: Men of Mark Publishing Co., 1909). (University of Virginia Library.)

in the World's Columbian Exposition.¹¹³ As governor of Virginia from 1886 to 1890, Lee had led the state's Democratic Party in their disenfranchisement of the state's African American population in an attempt to deny some of the civil rights gained since emancipation.¹¹⁴ He published a biography of his uncle, General Robert E. Lee, and spearheaded the Lee Monument Association that erected Monument Avenue's first memorial to the Confederate hero in 1890.¹¹⁵ Although all of the Virginia Building's chief proponents were deeply entrenched in the Lost Cause, Lee was undoubtedly the most widely known and publicly associated with the movement.

A New South Virginia Joins the Fair

While Fitzhugh Lee exemplifies the involvement of the Virginia Building's promoters in the Lost Cause, he also epitomizes the ways in which the

¹⁰⁶ Sheffey-Peters, "Mrs. Lucy Preston Beale."

¹⁰⁷ John S. Wise, *The End of an Era* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1902), 218.

¹⁰⁸ Barbara Dunn, the United Daughters of the Confederacy, pers. comm., February 22, 2006.

¹⁰⁹ Wise, *End of An Era*, 462.

¹¹⁰ Cutchins, *A Famous Command*, 179.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 187.

¹¹² See "Fitzhugh Lee," in *Men of Mark in Virginia: Ideals of American Life*, ed. Lyon G. Tyler (Washington, DC: Men of Mark Publishing Co., 1909), 258–63.

¹¹³ *Richmond Elite Directory (Blue Book)* (Richmond, VA: J. H. Hill Printing Co., 1893).

¹¹⁴ Driggs, Wilson, and Winthrop, *Richmond's Monument Avenue*, 16.

¹¹⁵ Fitzhugh Lee, *General Lee* (New York: Appleton, 1894).

replica's presentation at the World's Columbian Exposition was understood as an opportunity to promote the New South. Lee's leadership in the development of Monument Avenue firmly posited him as a promoter of a New South Richmond by 1893; he established not only the project's commemorative purpose but also its role as a real estate development that would promote the expansion and redevelopment of a ruined Richmond and the collection of city tax revenue.¹¹⁶ Monument Avenue was the new showcase of the formerly defeated and ruined Confederate capitol; it supposedly touted the city's progressivism, desire to regain its rightful place in the nation's economic life, and its successful efforts to compete with newer Southern cities and Northern urban centers.¹¹⁷ Appropriately, this effort toward reconciliation was accompanied by a less strident position in Lost Cause ideology.¹¹⁸ Gone were the fierce debates about how and why the Civil War had started and where the South had gone wrong; what emerged was a softened and forgiving attitude about the Civil War, which both facilitated North and South moving forward together and continued to ease the South's memory of their defeat.¹¹⁹ The Lost Cause of the 1890s stressed the idea that the Confederacy had been politically conservative. This was a throwback to the Confederate argument that in seceding, they had merely been following the Constitutional principles—states' rights—laid out by Washington, Jefferson, and the rest of the (notably Virginia-born) founding fathers.¹²⁰ The Virginia Building's participants and promoters continued this “conservative” mantra as part of New South progressivism. Similar to Beale's celebration of Virginia's traditional women, it was especially important for the state to appear politically conservative at the World's Columbian Exposition, where Virginia's natural, technological, and historical resources were paraded in front of national and international audiences that could potentially greatly influence the state's future. On the fair's Virginia Day, Fitzhugh Lee's speech typified the intermingling of the New South mantra with the cultural politics of the Lost Cause:

The questions of who fired the first gun in the past or who compelled the first gun to be fired in the war be-

¹¹⁶ See Driggs, Wilson, and Winthrop, *Richmond's Monument Avenue*, 29–35.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 17.

¹¹⁸ Foster, *Ghosts of the Confederacy*, 98–103.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 47–75, 112–14.

¹²⁰ Bonner, “Americans Apart,” 304–17; Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 259–61.

tween the States, sinks from sight when confronted with the living questions of to-day—Who shall be first in making nuggets of gold bound from the mountain sides and ribbons of silver unwind in the hills? . . . Who shall lead in preserving our institutions by keeping the Government anchored to the simple forms laid down by our forefathers, and who shall best guard the reserved rights of the States and support without reserve the delegated powers of the Government of the United States?¹²¹

Lee's speech urged the nation to put aside the fierce debates about how and why the Civil War started and went wrong for the South in an effort to reconcile and prosper as a nation, yet he also emphasized the need to maintain vigilance of states' rights, a subtle suggestion that the South was still somewhat autonomous. Somehow, Southern loyalty to the principles of states' rights made the former Confederacy closer to the founding fathers, justifying its decision to secede and maintenance of a specific regional culture after its defeat.

That white Virginians were willing to participate in the World's Columbian Exposition at all was indicative of the ways in which the elite white South was reconsidering its secessionist past as well as its current role in a national economy and culture. In contrast, Virginia and the rest of the South had been largely unwilling to participate in the Centennial International Exposition held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In 1876, state funds were scarce due to postwar debt and the cost of rebuilding, and the wounds of the Civil War were still too fresh, having been deepened by the humiliation of Reconstruction. While most Northern states erected freestanding buildings at the Centennial, Mississippi and Arkansas were the only Southern states that participated with officially funded and sanctioned structures. In Virginia, a very public debate made it clear that many whites were offended by the same infraction that they claimed as the reason to secede in the 1860s: the federal government's intrusion on states' rights. Virginia senators argued that to force individual state governments to fund a world's fair (an entity created by the federal government that functioned like a private corporation) was against their rights as a commonwealth.¹²² An 1876 article in the *Southern Planter and Farmer* also

¹²¹ General Fitzhugh Lee, quoted in “The Old Dominion,” *Richmond Times*, August 10, 1893.

¹²² “Virginia and the Centennial,” *New York Times*, December 22, 1875, 1; “Washington: The Centennial in the House,” *New York Times*, January 20, 1876, 1; John Randolph Tucker, *Centennial Celebration of American Independence: Speech of Hon. J. Randolph Tucker, of Virginia, in the House of Representatives, January 19, 1876* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1876).

indicated the strong racism that prevented Virginia's participation in the Centennial; it claimed that the state should have no part in a fair that aimed to "make white people out of negroes."¹²³ Many white Southerners refused to participate in a fair that presented whites and blacks as equal citizens so soon after emancipation. In the end, Virginia was recognized at the Centennial only by a small building erected by a private individual. Although Virginian A. R. Butler expressed the hope at the fair's 1873 groundbreaking ceremony that "whatever differences there may have been in the past, they now recognize no other point for their patriotism but the flag of their country," sectionalism divided the Centennial and thwarted any hopes for its use as a reconciliatory event.¹²⁴

By the time of the World's Columbian Exposition, it was clear that the Southern states had to participate in the fair in order to take advantage of the nation's cultural, industrial, and financial growth.¹²⁵ Bigger and far more international than the 1876 Centennial, the 1893 Columbian Exposition promised unparalleled exposure for the South's resources and, as the Virginia Building's promoters hoped, the public acceptance of a new, post-Reconstruction identity. Such visibility made the participation and success of such Southern exhibits imperative. The importance of Virginia's representation at the World's Columbian Exposition was central to calls for Southern participation in the fair as early as 1891. Those who insisted on Virginia's representation wanted not only to promote natural resources and financial viability but also to remind the Union of her richness in history.¹²⁶ Lieutenant Governor Major J. Hoge Tyler listed Virginia's historical contributions to the Union as one of the main reasons for participating in the event: "What would the history of our country be if the history of Virginia was left out? To have her left out of that grand gathering of the sisterhood of States would indeed be like the play of Hamlet without

¹²³ "Virginia Will Not Be at the Centennial," *Southern Planter and Farmer* 37, no. 1 (January 1876): 81.

¹²⁴ A. R. Butler, quoted in "The National Centennial," *New York Times*, July 5, 1873, 5. In contrast to a lack of participation by the Southern states, however, was the response by Northern, and especially New England, states. In fact, Connecticut erected a colonial revival building meant to provide an example of how the state's earliest residents had lived, foreshadowing the strategy adopted by Virginians when they finally participated in a world's fair in 1893. See Wilson, *The Colonial Revival House*, 39.

¹²⁵ "A Question of Enterprise and Spirit," *Washington Post*, April 21, 1891, 4.

¹²⁶ "The South and the World's Fair," *Richmond Times*, May 14, 1891, 4.

Hamlet."¹²⁷ Virginia and its Mount Vernon, so central to the history of the United States, could not be omitted from such a monumental event.

Memory, Mount Vernon, and Race

By choosing a plantation house to represent themselves at the World's Columbian Exposition, the Virginia Building's proponents would at first glance seem to be entirely dependent on the Lost Cause and its calls for the "South to rise again" in public memory. However, their choice of such a recognizable symbol of the plantation South was also part of a reconciliation-oriented strategy of selective memory. As historian David W. Blight has argued, post-Reconstruction white America pursued a narrative of reunion that focused on mutual loss and white supremacy rather than the racial motivations or results of the Civil War.¹²⁸ Elite whites throughout the nation highlighted and promoted romanticized memories of the antebellum South because race was such a socially and politically divisive issue that it threatened to prevent reunion between North and South after Reconstruction.¹²⁹ Accordingly, both Lost Cause advocates and New South boosters "shared a refurbished commitment to white supremacy" that was understood as necessary for white America to move forward together both economically and in memory.¹³⁰ Many Southern whites also espoused ideas of white supremacy in their attempts to regain political and social control after the Reconstruction-era efforts to establish an equal African American population.¹³¹ A fictional narrative of a benign slavery was believed to foster not only the idea that antebellum racial hierarchies had been positive social forces and were meant to continue, but also that slavery had not been a political issue in the years leading up to the Civil War. The Lost Cause rhetoric of the Virginia Building, therefore, was both a means to soften history for Southerners and a means to form a memory of the South around which all white Americans could unite.

¹²⁷ Lt. Governor Major J. Hoge Tyler, quoted in "The Columbian Exposition," *Richmond Times*, July 16, 1891, 2.

¹²⁸ Blight, *Race and Reunion*; David W. Blight, "A Quarrel Forgotten or a Revolution Remembered? Reunion and Race in the Memory of the Civil War, 1875–1913," in his *Beyond the Battlefield: Race, Memory, and the American Civil War* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2002), 120–52.

¹²⁹ Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 4.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 264–65.

¹³¹ Bishir, "Landmarks of Power," esp. 13–18.

One of the most common ways in which whites romanticized memories of slavery in order to shape contemporary racial issues was the idea of the faithful slave.¹³² Deriving from antebellum fantasies of faithful, happy slaves typified by the Stearns painting previously discussed and promoted by the pro-slavery movement, such images were central to the Lost Cause movement. In these fabricated visions, antebellum African Americans had not only submitted to the racial hierarchy of slavery but also relished the supposed protection and care lavished upon them by their white masters. Fictionalized slaves returned to their masters after emancipation or refused to leave the plantation at the end of the Civil War; much like children, these characters were imagined to both love and need their masters. This late nineteenth-century memory demonstrated the desire of many white Americans—and especially Southerners—for a return to clear social hierarchies. It occurred simultaneously with a rise in lynching: extreme and violent attempts by whites to control African American communities and to assert racial hierarchy through fear.¹³³ The coupling of an erasure of emancipation from the historical narrative with the idea that slaves had flourished under the institution was also simultaneous with Jim Crow laws in the South and segregation legislation throughout the nation. Such politically sanctioned racism was meant to reassert racial hierarchies through the denial of a number of the civil rights that African Americans had gained since the 1860s by essentially ignoring emancipation as a historical fact.

The fabricated memory of antebellum race relations was exemplified by the memoir of Sarah Rice Pryor, one of Lucy Preston Beale's assistants in the planning and execution of the 1893 Virginia Building. Pryor published *My Day: Reminiscences of a Long Life* in 1909 as part of a series of autobiographies of her life on a Virginia plantation and as the wife of a Confederate colonel in the Civil War.¹³⁴ Pryor's account of her interaction with an

¹³² Blight, *Race and Reunion*, 273–75; Cobb, *Away Down South*, 78–80; Micki McElya, "Commemorating the Color Line: The National Mammy Monument Controversy of the 1920s," in Mills and Simpson, *Monuments to the Lost Cause*, 203–18; and Michele (Micki) Paige McElya, "Monumental Citizenship: Reading the National Mammy Memorial Controversy of the Early Twentieth Century" (PhD diss., New York University, 2003), 13–30.

¹³³ See Stewart E. Tolnay and E. M. Beck, *A Festival of Violence: An Analysis of Southern Lynchings, 1882–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995); and W. Fitzhugh Brundage, *Lynching in the New South: Georgia and Virginia, 1880–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993).

¹³⁴ Mrs. Roger A. Pryor, *My Day: Reminiscences of a Long Life* (New York: Macmillan, 1909). See also Connelly, *The Marble Man*, 104–5.

enslaved man, John, during the war is indicative of the themes she pursued consistently throughout her books:

One day John presented himself with a heart-broken countenance and a drooping attitude of deep dejection. He had a sad story to tell. The agent of the estate to which he belonged was in town, and John had been commissioned to inform me that all the slaves belonging to the estate were to be immediately transferred to a Louisiana plantation for safety . . . The poor fellow broke down. "It will kill me," he declared. "I'll soon die on that plantation." All the affectionate, faithful service, all his hardships for our sakes, rushed upon my memory. I bade [he] put me in communication with the agent. I found that I could save the boy only by buying him! . . . Remembered to-day, this seems a wonderful act on my part.¹³⁵

Pryor's account is dependent upon the idea of the faithful slave, and her act of magnanimity—resulting in John remaining in the place he supposedly loved so much—was only possible through her participation in slave trading; the story, therefore, provides an example of how the institution could be "good" for African American slaves and a softened memory of society that the Confederacy lost so many lives to defend. By depicting slavery as a positive thing, Pryor and others like her denied the very foundation of late nineteenth-century racial tension.

The 1893 Virginia Building furthered this late nineteenth-century narrative of a benign antebellum racial hierarchy by imitating a working plantation, complete with both mistress and slaves. The simulation of not only plantation architecture but also plantation life carried the reconciliation-oriented political agenda of the building and its promoters to the experiential level and provided an example of the beautiful and peaceful life under slavery that Pryor and the Virginia Building's other promoters imagined. The prospective exhibit was described in the *Washington Post* in 1892 in terms of the olfactory experiences, human interactions, and emotional suggestions of the replica that evoked the Mount Vernon of George Washington's day: "Mount Vernon at Chicago means the house of home-life, hospitable welcome, latch string hanging out. Virginia kitchen, bacon beaten biscuit, servants in attendance, and all the other belongings of that ancient mansion, where the Father of His Country dispensed hospitality."¹³⁶ Guidebooks and histories

¹³⁵ Pryor, *My Day*, 225.

¹³⁶ "Mount Vernon at Chicago," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1892, 7.

of the fair also consistently commented on the domestic atmosphere and its human representatives, the “old Virginia negroes” that Lucy Preston Beale hired as attendants.¹³⁷

Beale greeted guests of the Virginia Building and acted as its spokesperson; in Virginia’s official report made at the fair’s conclusion, her “thoughtful and genial hospitality” was credited with “whatever social advantages, attentions and comforts Virginians have received at the Mt. Vernon.”¹³⁸ Beale loaned numerous pieces of furniture to the replica to complete its domestic simulation, including a mahogany dressing case with a looking glass, a bureau, and a washstand.¹³⁹ These objects were directly from another real plantation house, Smithfield, the Preston family seat in Blacksburg, Virginia.¹⁴⁰ Beale’s position as the mistress of this former plantation house linked her and the objects she brought with her to Chicago to a very particular planter elite version of Old Virginia and distinguished her from other state buildings’ hostesses.

The interpretation of African American actors in the Virginia Building’s simulation also furthered the racial implications of the building as a working version of Mount Vernon and, thus, as a continuance of slavery. “Sarah Washington” served as the building’s janitress. Although she is listed in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* as being the wife of Mount Vernon cook John A. Washington, recent scholarship has speculated that “Mrs. Beale’s attendant” was more likely Sarah Robinson, a contemporary employee of the MVLA who helped to maintain Mount Vernon as a tourist attraction.¹⁴¹ A newspaper reporter, assuming that Sarah’s last name must be “Washington” in order to confirm her connection to Mount Vernon, made the interpretation of a simulated slavery clear: “Sarah Washington . . . a direct descendant of the old Washington house servants, proud of her name and of the worthy ancestors who adopted it. She is grave, dignified, and courteous as becomes her place and name, and in her one may behold a typical survival of the servant

of the old school.”¹⁴² This interpretation emphasized the Virginia Building as a plantation, a domestic environment dependent on the labor of African American slaves. By eluding emancipation, the 1893 Virginia Building’s presentation of race relations disregarded the late nineteenth-century role of African Americans and the significance of the Civil War, just as Jim Crow laws denied blacks equal rights. By suggesting that Sarah was a “Washington” and thus a member of a slave family that had persisted at Mount Vernon since the antebellum period, the Virginia Building presented a real-life version of the faithful slave ideal: Sarah Washington (or her ancestors) had not fled the scene of her bondage when given the chance. She had instead remained at Mount Vernon—her home—long after emancipation, serving the whites who actually owned and controlled the plantation.

Discussions of racial hierarchies elsewhere on the grounds of the World’s Columbian Exposition further complicated the interpretation of the Virginia Building as a working plantation. There were a number of voices in the discourse on race at the 1893 fair other than the romanticized view of antebellum racial hierarchies exemplified by the Mount Vernon replica. Frederick Douglass, Ida B. Wells, and other notable African Americans used the Exposition as a platform to promote black achievements to a wide audience and speak out against racism in contemporary America, as well as to debate the African American role in society and in the Exposition itself.¹⁴³ The range of African American involvement in and reactions to the World’s Columbian Exposition contrasted with the idea of the faithful slave promoted by the interpretation of Sarah Washington. While blacks at the fair were actively engaged in political and social debates about race relations and other contemporary issues, the interpretation of Sarah’s role at the Virginia Building denied black agency. Rather than acknowledge a contemporary South in which blacks were paid employees and equal citizens, the Virginia Building implied the persistence of antebellum racial hierarchies.

The re-creation of African villages on the World Columbian Exposition’s Midway, meanwhile,

¹³⁷ Handy, *The Official Directory*, 100.

¹³⁸ Board of World’s Fair Managers of Virginia, “Communication,” 39.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ John A. Logan and Mary Simmerson Cunningham Logan, *The Part Taken by Women in American History* (Wilmington, DE: Perry-Nalle, 1892), 460.

¹⁴¹ “Tell of Early Days: Interesting Furnishings for the Fair’s Mount Vernon,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, May 14, 1893, 7; Scott Casper, *Sarah Johnson’s Mount Vernon: The Forgotten History of an American Shrine* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2008), 188–89.

¹⁴² Casper, *Sarah Johnson’s Mount Vernon*, 188; “Virginia’s Exhibit: The Mother of Civilization,” *Oshkosh Daily Northwestern* (Wisconsin), October 14, 1893.

¹⁴³ See Christopher Robert Reed, “All the World Is Here!” *The Black Presence at White City* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000); Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*, 52–55; and Ida B. Wells, *The Reason Why the Colored American Is Not in the World’s Columbian Exposition: The Afro-American’s Contribution to Columbian Literature* (Chicago: 1893).



Fig. 24. "Register of Visitors in Virginia's Mt. Vernon Building, World's Fair, Chicago, Ill., May 15–Sept. 29, 1893." (Virginia Board of World's Fair Managers, State Government Records Collection, Library of Virginia, Richmond.)

provided one of the most powerful complements to the simulated slavery of the Virginia Building. Exhibits such as the Dahomeyan Village fabricated allegedly authentic representations of African lifeways intended to reinforce ideas about the supremacy of white civilization over "savage" and "uncivilized" cultures.¹⁴⁴ In their presentation of contemporary Africa, such "Darkest Africa" exhibits encouraged a comparison to African American culture—in both the nation's past and present.¹⁴⁵ Some whites used this evaluation to strengthen the white supremacist movement to suppress the legal, social, and political rights of African Americans; supporters pro-

moted the idea that if African peoples were inherently savage, then their lesser roles in racial hierarchies were naturally determined.¹⁴⁶ In accordance with Blight's interpretation, however, the juxtaposition between the "servant[s] of the old school" at the Virginia Building and the "savages" on the Midway could also have been used as further proof for the position that slavery had been a benign institution. Returning to the antebellum arguments of the proslavery movement, the direct comparison of "savage" Africans and "civilized" slaves bolstered the idea that contact with white civilization

¹⁴⁴ Robert W. Rydell, "'Darkest Africa': African Shows at America's World's Fairs, 1893–1940," in *Africans on Stage: Studies in Ethnological Show Business*, ed. Bernth Lindfors (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1999), 135–55.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 140. See also Robert W. Rydell, "A Cultural Frankenstein? The Chicago World's Columbian Exposition of 1893," in *American Architectural History: A Contemporary Reader*, ed. Keith L. Eggener (London: Routledge, 2004), 249–66; and Gertrude M. Scott, "Village Performance: Villages at the Chicago World's Columbian Exposition 1893" (PhD diss., New York University, 1991), 283–304.

through slavery had bettered the African race. The Virginia Building's representation of the plantation culture of Mount Vernon also served the racial agenda that permeated the fair.

Conclusion

The Virginia Building's replication of Mount Vernon and dependence on a memory of George Washington might seem like obvious choices for the state's representation at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition: the building was a relatively simple one to reproduce, and Washington was the state's most beloved son. Yet the Virginia Building's promoters also saw their re-creation of Mount Vernon as an opportunity to add a widely agreed upon set of national symbols to their new Lost Cause narrative. Virginia's former Confederates' use of a nationally venerated icon allowed them both to reenter the national dialogue and to retain pride in historic Southern culture as they wished to remember it. Mount Vernon instilled pride in the hearts of many of its Virginian visitors and reminded guests from other states that the Old Dominion had been central to the nation's beginnings and would continue to lead the United States into the future. The exhibit was tremendously successful; the fair's

tram often emptied at the "Mount Vernon" stop located just behind the Virginia Building.¹⁴⁷ While glowing reviews from reporters and period historians abound in the descriptions and accounts of the replica of Mount Vernon, the most palpable surviving evidence of the success of the building and its complicated narrative is the guest register (fig. 24). An enormous, heavy volume now housed in the Library of Virginia, the Virginia Building's visitor log was entirely full of the names and hometowns of its guests months before the fair ended. After touring the cool, simulated interiors and perhaps meeting Lucy Preston Beale or Sarah "Washington," these guests left the shady porch of the mansion on the Potomac and reentered the teeming crowds wondering at technological and cultural innovation throughout Chicago's Jackson Park. The exhibit's promoters hoped that with them, these visitors carried the impression that the Virginia of today and of tomorrow was socially and politically conservative, economically and historically significant, and as steadfastly beautiful and graceful as it had been in Washington's day. The state might have been ready to reconcile with the North, but it would always be "old Virginny."

¹⁴⁷ *The Dream City: A Portfolio of Photographic Views of the World's Columbian Exposition* (St. Louis: N. D. Thompson, 1893).

