



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 5, 2018

## Left's Attacks on Historical Figures Expanding

When statutes and other monuments of Civil War icons such as Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson were first targeted for erasure from parks, schools, and other public places, their defenders warned this was only the beginning of the Taliban-like purge, not the end.

Recent events indicate the truth of those predictions. In Arcata, California, a bronze statue of President William McKinley (shown) is now slated to be torn down. The statue has been located in the town square for over a century, but the eight-and-a-half-foot tall monument is now seen by leftists as racist toward indigenous people. During McKinley's presidential tenure (1897-1901), tribal lands in the western United States were annexed, and Hawaii became part of the United States.



In San Jose, the City Council recently voted to remove a statue of Christopher Columbus from the city hall's lobby. In San Francisco, the Board of Supervisors voted in January to no longer honor Columbus in October. Instead, the second Monday in October will be set aside to honor "indigenous" people who were in California before 1492.

Another statue found offensive in San Francisco was that of a conquering *vaquero* (Spanish cowboy) and a missionary standing over an American Indian man. The San Francisco Historic Preservation Commission voted unanimously to remove the sculpture, "Early Days," from its pedestal at the base of the Pioneer Monument.

Randy Burns, a member of the Northern Paiute Tribe, expressed "relief" at the news.

Commissioner Richard Johns was initially opposed to its removal, arguing, "We're a historical preservation commission. We're not a historical revision commission," but in the end, he gave in to the pressure.

Some might argue, of course, that this is in California, where such political correctness has recently run amok. But not only are we observing the geographic expansion of such protests, but also the expansion of individuals targeted for erasure from public view.

Now, in the heartland, in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the superintendent of Tulsa Public Schools, Deborah Gist, has new names in her crosshairs. She is asking the school board to consider renaming certain elementary schools. Not surprisingly, one is named Robert E. Lee, but she also sees potential problems with Christopher Columbus, Andrew Jackson, and even a French Creole trader, Jean-Pierre Chouteau.

In a letter to parents, Gist said, "If a school building is named for someone who had an integral foundational role in shaping the systems, mindsets, and practices that hold communities back from the



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promise of equal rights and access to opportunity, we believe that it is in the best interests of our students to implement a name change.”

The Tulsa Public School’s Advisory Council offered reasons that the four historic personages should be expelled from the district. “Columbus is a deeply ambiguous person at best, who opened issues of how cultures relate to each other, and at his worst, initiated a slave trade, genocide, and exploitation of natural resources.” Note the progressive prism through which such historical figures’ actions are judged; here it is used to advance a radical environmentalist agenda.

Andrew Jackson is condemned because his “legacy around slavery and as the architect of Indian removal remains deeply troubling for many.” And, of course, there is the typical rant against Robert E. Lee, arguing that his “support for the Confederacy” was “not consistent with community values.” Gist argued, “Lee’s defense of slavery as a Confederate general” was a problem.

Perhaps the oddest person targeted to become to achieve “unperson” status is Chouteau. The Advisory Council expressed concern over Chouteau’s “treatment of animals as a fur trader.”

The short response to all of these comments is that they display a fundamental ignorance of history. First of all, Lee was not fighting to save slavery. On the contrary, Lee freed his slaves, which he inherited from his father-in-law. The attack upon the Confederacy itself is based upon the mistaken notion that the war was fought to abolish slavery. If that was correct, then Lincoln would have sent troops into Union slave states, such as Kentucky, and freed slaves. He did not, and in fact, publicly said his purpose was to save the Union, not to free slaves.

Ironically, Tulsa is part of the Louisiana Territory that would have likely been transferred from America to the British Empire had Andrew Jackson lost the Battle of New Orleans. And, blaming Columbus for all the bad things that happened after his death is particularly unfair. Of course, his introduction of Christianity into the New World and what would have been considered a great thing only a few short years ago — the conversion of native peoples to the Christian faith — is now seen as a bad thing by the secular Left.

In the case of cities and school districts, one must ask if the Left really believes in “diversity.” After all, where is the respect for diversity by those who temporarily hold positions on school boards and city councils. Do they not have any responsibility to show respect for those who value the Christian history of America, or other such traditional positions?

Apparently, only their view is important.

Until and unless there is significant pushback against this political correctness run amok, these Taliban-like activists will continue to expand the targets of their efforts to bury any other viewpoint than their own.

*Photo: Statue of William McKinley in Arcata, California, by [J. Scott Shannon](#)*



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