

The Unveiling **Our Little known History**



Part 2: Southern Baptist Theological Seminary is not alone with its dark ties to racism and slavery

Our last Unveiling revealed the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary's known ties to racism, slavery, and convict leasing as presented in its self-published 2018 report. We ended with the question: now that the seminary has this information, "what is the next logical, loving step?"

In his 2018 cover letter publicizing the very candid, and frankly, damning, report, Reverend Al Mohler, Jr. said: "we cannot repent for the dead...We must, however, offer full lament for a legacy we inherit." He

made clear, "There will be no shattering of images" of the slave-holding founders. He says, "In light of the burdens of history, some schools hasten to remove names, announce plans, and declare moral superiority. That is not what I intend to do." *In 2020, though, SBTS did "vacate" the Chair of the donor, Joseph E. Brown, who made much of his fortune in convict leasing. So there was a subtle shattering of one reprehensible image.

To be fair, **Mohler and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary are not alone with this "inconvenient truth."** In the past two decades, numerous universities have researched their ties to slavery and found dreadful results. **Emory** was built with slave labor as was the **University of Virginia, Alabama, North Carolina at Chapel Hill**, etc. Not surprising from southern universities. *But the north was not innocent.* **Rutgers** used slaves to build the campus and to serve students and faculty. In fact, Rutgers' first president, Jacob Hardenbergh, once owned Sojourner Truth, the anti-slavery and women's rights activist, who famously proclaimed "Ain't I A Woman?" At **Brown U**, materials and labor for some of its buildings came from slaveholding firms and owners lending out their slaves. Much of their involvement, though, according to their own report, was in financial ties to the transatlantic slave trade, which provided for the sugar colonies of the Caribbean and South America, where "massive mortality of enslaved workers

necessitated a constant infusion of laborers.” The Jesuit priests who ran **Georgetown** saved the college from bankruptcy in 1838 with the sale of 272 slaves to Louisiana. Yale, Princeton, and Harvard? Also guilty. **Yale** trustees owned slaves, and the university, which promotes itself as a center of the abolitionist movement, prevented the city of New Haven from building a Negro College there and through the 1930’s-1960’s named many of its buildings after pro-slavers, including its Calhoun College. **Princeton’s** first nine Presidents all owned slaves, a slave sale took place on campus in 1766, and enslaved people lived at the President’s House until at least 1822. At **Harvard**, Isaac Royall, who inherited slaves in Antigua, sold a number of them to establish Harvard Law, the first law school in the United States.

So yes, many of our colleges and universities were born and blossomed from the horrific institution of slavery.

And what are they doing about it?

--**Georgetown:** was probably most widely publicized in beginning to make amends. They apologized then offered to treat the descendants of those sold as they treat the descendants of university alumni--with preferential acceptance policies. Many saw this offer as tone-deaf, including students, who recognized that descendants may not

wish to go to Georgetown, a place of horror to their ancestors. Georgetown’s Student Government Association passed a resolution to add \$27.20 to their own student fees for a reparations fund earmarked for the descendants of the 272.

--**North Carolina at Chapel Hill:** In August, 2018, after being ignored by the administration through decades of protest, the 8 foot tall commemorative statue of a Confederate soldier, a “Silent Sam,” was suddenly yanked off its nine-foot-high pedestal by protesters. And in January 2019, the campus’s chancellor, Carol L. Folt, removed the statue’s pedestal and other remnants, and then resigned.

--**Yale:** At least from the 1970’s, students have protested the name of Calhoun College and in 2017, under pressure, the college was renamed for a famous female alumna, Grace Murray Hopper, a trailblazing computer scientist.

--**Harvard:** Responding to a student campaign, “Royall Must Fall,” an administration appointed committee recommended the removal of the Royall family crest, and within a few months, most representations of the crest were gone.

--**Rutgers**: Renamed buildings on campus and erected new student housing named "Sojourner Truth Apartments."

--*******Vanderbilt**: Paid \$1.2 M to our old friends, **the United Daughters of the Confederacy**, in 2016 for the right to remove the word "Confederate" from its Confederate Memorial Hall, now simply naming it Memorial Hall.

And so, though it comes in awkward fits and bumps, redress is possible--and widely recognized as necessary.

More to come in our next Unveiling...