

ISSUES FORUM JACKSONVILLE



A REPORT ON DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUE FORUMS

*How Should We Convey the History of Jacksonville?
Monuments, Parks & People*



Between January and March 2018, sixteen deliberative dialogue forums which included more than 200 citizens were hosted by Baptist Health, UNF Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Rotaract, St. John's Cathedral, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund, and Leadership Jacksonville to consider the placement of Confederate monuments and the broader issue of how to tell the history of Jacksonville.



How Should We Convey the History of Jacksonville? Monuments, Parks, & People

Background

During first quarter 2018, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund and Leadership Jacksonville collaborated on a civil discourse project for the purpose of engaging citizens in dialogue entitled *How Should We Convey the History of Jacksonville? Monuments, Parks, & People*.

Their work together included a series of public forums on a difficult local topic, the placement of monuments in the public square that commemorate the Confederacy.

Prior to the forums, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund engaged a University of Florida doctoral candidate to write a brief history of Confederate monuments in Jacksonville. Subsequently, the Jessie Ball duPont Fund worked with a Charles F. Kettering Foundation research associate to prepare a deliberative dialogue issue paper based on the brief history and train people to moderate the public forums. Staff members from Baptist Health, The Community Foundation for Northeast Florida, Jessie Ball duPont Fund, Leadership Jacksonville, and the Ritz Theater and Museum assisted in preparing the issue paper, and community members served as moderators.

It is not unusual for people living in Southern communities to discuss the placement of Confederate monuments in the public square. Indeed, conversations regarding such monuments have taken place in cities across the country including New Orleans, Richmond, Baltimore, and Orlando.¹ Leadership Jacksonville and the duPont Fund opted to develop a process to include citizens in civil discourse forums and share a final report with the Jacksonville City Council.

Notably, local forums took place within the broader context of significant contemporary projects related to Jacksonville history. Several higher education institutions and nonprofit organizations are engaged in local history projects, from the preservation and repurposing of historic buildings in downtown Jacksonville to museum exhibits featuring African-American history and recordings of new immigrant stories. (Appendix 3)

Process

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund received permission from the Charles F. Kettering Foundation to adapt its National Issues Forum to the local community, branding the work *Issues Forum Jacksonville*. The forum process includes a **written issue guide** participants are asked to read in advance, small group conversations moderated by people trained to not express an opinion on the topics discussed, and options for reaching a decision on difficult topics. The conversation is designed to help participants discover what they have in common.

¹ “Confederate Monuments Are Coming Down Across the United States. Here’s a List.” *New York Times*, August 28, 2018 <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/08/16/us/confederate-monuments-removed.html>

Small group participants discuss three distinctive action-oriented options, complete with trade offs and drawbacks, outlined in the issue guide. They are asked to speak “from the heart,” explaining why they care about the issue and what they hold dear. The aim of the dialogue is to identify common values, consider the benefits and drawbacks of different actions, and identify areas of common ground and issues that still need to be worked through.

How Should We Convey the History of Jacksonville outlined three options, reflecting a range of perspectives, from keeping the Confederate monuments in place but adding context about the history of the monuments themselves; to keeping the monuments but adding other markers that explain the history of other people’s, especially that of African-Americans; to removing the monuments from the public square. Forum participants identified areas of agreement and recommended future actions the city might take. Each participant completed a post-forum survey, moderators completed reports summarizing the conversations, and recorders captured discussion issues, agreements, tensions, and disagreements. A final document entitled “Common Ground” listed areas of agreement.

The Three Issue Guide Options

Option #1 Value Jacksonville History with Monuments and Plaques

This option would retain the monuments in their current places, but add historical narrative and install new historical markers that reflect the city’s entire history.

Option #2 Change Public Space

This option would remove the monuments from their current locations.

Option #3 Leave the Monuments Where They Are. Recognize Jacksonville’s African American History

This option would leave the monuments where they are currently located but invest significant effort into recognizing the rich history of the city’s African-American citizens.

General Findings

Participants shared their views and experiences regarding historical artifacts and public spaces in Jacksonville, and grappled with the tensions between what people deeply value about their respective histories and what they understand as needed in the community to inspire unity and to achieve fairness and equitable treatment. They found the tension between keeping Confederate monuments in their current locations and moving and/or replacing them challenging. Indeed, the dialogues uncovered a variety of perspectives.

Nonetheless, participants reached **common ground on the following recommendations:**

- Make public parks welcoming for *all* people.
- Prepare a comprehensive Jacksonville history and provide educational curricula.
- Promote collaborative museum endeavors.
- Continue to hold deliberative dialogue and civil discourse events.

Detailed Findings

Forum discussions were wide-ranging, and included not simply a focus on the Confederate monument in Hemming Park and the monument to Confederate women located in Confederate Park, but also Jacksonville's larger history, the public school curriculum, the city's history with race relations, the need for a local Truth and Reconciliation effort, and a range of possibilities for telling a more inclusive story in the public square.

The description of the findings includes quantitative data from the post-forum surveys as well as qualitative information from moderators' reports and record keepers' notes. The latter were used in each forum group to ascertain areas of agreement. Recorders captured what people valued regarding the future of the parks and monuments as well as the broader issue of how to convey Jacksonville's history. The findings are not listed in order of importance; rather, each reflects strong support for what people held in common relative to moving forward.

Survey results are included in their entirety in the Appendix 1.

Make Public Parks Welcoming for All

Forum participants clearly see the value of public parks as spaces that ideally welcome all and have the capacity to reflect the city's character and culture. Strong support was expressed for making some significant changes in the way Jacksonville identifies its public parks and tells its story.

Hemming Park

Forum participants recognize that Hemming Park is located at the center of downtown, and serves as something of a "front porch" to City Hall, the Jacksonville Main Public Library, and the Museum of Contemporary Art. Employees of corporations, small businesses, city and state offices, citizens, and tourists all spend time in the park. The lone Confederate Soldier Monument was erected in 1898, three decades after the end of the Civil War and at the beginning of the Jim Crow era, and thus reflects only a portion of the city's history.

Many forum participants discussed the absence of other historic periods or influential leaders in Hemming Park. At the same time, participants respected the heritage associated with the Confederate monuments and would like to see a setting for commemorative historical artifacts that incorporate nearly 200 years of Jacksonville history. Some suggested that land be set aside for an outdoor heritage trail or history park, and some suggested that Confederate Park be repurposed into a history park but with a new name. Others mentioned that city-owned property Snyder Memorial Methodist Church, which borders Hemming Park, be used for an indoor monument space.

Jacksonville's Rich Larger History

Significant forum discussion focused on and recognized Jacksonville's rich history. Many participants admitted to not knowing much about Jacksonville's first one hundred years, with

several youth participants saying they “*want to know our local history.*” Scholarly and avocational historians shared information not only about the Civil War monuments but also about the city’s African-American history. Nearly 70% of participants said they talked about “aspects of the issue – Jacksonville history and Confederate monuments - (they) had not considered before.” For example, the dialogue issue guide explained that throughout Jacksonville’s first century the population was 50% African-American and 50% White, a fact most participants did not know. Following the Civil War, both whites and blacks were part of the city’s cultural, economic and leadership communities. Many white forum participants did not know that African-Americans consider the former LaVilla neighborhood the “Harlem of the South.”

Public School Curriculum and Local History

Forum members, especially Jacksonville natives, discussed their schooling experiences. While many talked about Social Studies lessons and projects related to the Civil War, Jim Crow laws, and the Civil Rights Movement, many agreed that they had learned very little about the history of Jacksonville. One of the Florida Department of Education Social Studies standards is “Examine key events and key people in Florida history as they relate to United States history.”² The youngest forum participants were among the most vocal in recommending that Social Studies lessons include Jacksonville history content.

Several collaborative history projects are currently underway in Jacksonville and Northeast Florida (Appendix 4), but not all forum participants were aware of these activities. In light of the significant concern for conveying Jacksonville’s history expressed during forum discussions, people brainstormed ideas about what more can be done to convey Jacksonville’s history, especially in the downtown core.

People recognized that the Ritz Theater and Museum located on North Davis Street is technically considered as a downtown location though noted that it is located twelve or more blocks from Hemming Park and the Jacksonville Main Library. The Snyder Memorial Methodist Church was mentioned as a suitable site for historical exhibits given its central location adjacent to Hemming Park. Some forum participants were aware of the Jacksonville Visitor Center locations but were not familiar with the centers’ spaces. People raised questions and survey respondents indicated an interest in a downtown, walk-in visitor center that tells Jacksonville’s history.

Truth and Reconciliation and Jacksonville’s Past Racial History

Forum members mentioned seminal events that have impacted race relations in Jacksonville. Ax Handle Saturday in 1960 is remembered by many citizens. Interstate highway construction in the 1950s and 60s, the Duval County school integration after the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education*

² CPALMS, Florida State Department of Education Learning Standards, <http://www.cpalms.org/Public/Search/CriteriaSearch?search=Standards&subjectId=32&gradeId=14>

Supreme Court Ruling,³ and the 1967 city-county consolidation, among other influences had consequences for city neighborhoods and residents.

Some people mentioned local efforts to bridge racial divides, particularly the Jacksonville Human Rights Commission Study Circles which brought diverse groups of people together to discuss the quality of race relations in Jacksonville. Similar to the deliberative dialogue process, trained facilitators guided those conversations. Still others mentioned University of North Florida OneJax, an interfaith organization committed to achieving civility, understanding, and respect for all through education, dialogue, and community building.

Participants also recognized that South Africa is known for addressing apartheid history of racial segregation and discrimination with a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The TRC sought to bring people of all races together for dialogue that led to reconciliation and the writing of a common history that truthfully reflected the experience of all citizens.⁴ The forums simply raised the question, “Would there be value in establishing a Jacksonville TRC?”

Conclusion

There is strong support for making changes in the public spaces where Confederate monuments are located and conveying a more comprehensive and inclusive Jacksonville history. In light of efforts to tell Jacksonville’s story, concern for the development of the city, and citizens who express the desire for healthy relationships among people of all races and ethnicities, this might be a suitable time to consider the future of public spaces and commemorative monuments.

³ *The Desegregation of a Historically Black High School in Jacksonville, Florida*, Bockel Poppell, Judith, University of North Florida, 1998. Retrieved April 11, 2018: <https://digitalcommons.unf.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=https://www.google.com/&httpsredir=1&article=1073&context=etd>

⁴ In North America, Canada created a TRC in 2009 to address injustices suffered by “First Nation” residents. Greensboro, NC established a TRC commission in 2004 to address a violent event resulting in loss of life in November 1979. Both of these efforts brought inclusive groups of people together with the hope of seeking healing and justice.

Appendix 1

Statement Responses

This data is based on post-forum surveys completed by 70% of those who attended the forums (117 people). An analysis of photographs of 100% of the participants in each forum group corresponded to the race and ethnicity percentages below.

Forum members reflected a diversity of interests. There were individuals who came with a commitment to history and public art. Still others spoke from the perspective of desiring justice and racial harmony. Several of Jacksonville's nonprofit organizations and civic groups spoke to how public spaces and history help define the city's character and future aspirations.

Participants

Each dialogue forum included 6-12 people. More than 200 participants attended 17 deliberative forums in 2018. Host organizations convened the participants by sending invitations to lists of members and citizens. Attendees ranged from age 16 to 65 and older.

Age

- Under 17 10.3%
- 18-30 19.8%
- 31-45 13.7%
- 46-64 30.1%
- 65+ 25.8%

Race

- 57% White
- 32% African American
- 11% Hispanic and Asian American.

Gender

- Women 66%
- Men 34%

- Statement 1a: The Confederate monuments should remain in their current locations with no additional historical information.
 - **93.1% Disagreed with this statement**
 - 78.45% Strongly Disagreed
 - 14.6% Somewhat Disagreed
 - 2.95% Somewhat Agreed
 - 2.97% Strongly Agreed

- Statement 1 b: The public would benefit if the monuments included more historical context on plaques.
 - **81.9% Agreed with this statement**
 - 43.9% Strongly Agreed
 - 37.9% Somewhat Agreed
 - 7.76% Somewhat Disagreed
 - 7.76% Strongly Disagreed
- Statement 1c: Additional markers or statues that reflect other periods of Jacksonville history should be installed and located in Hemming Park.
 - **79.3% Agreed with this statement**
 - 45.69% Strongly Agreed
 - 33.60% Somewhat Agreed
 - 7.76% Somewhat Disagreed
 - 7.76% Strongly Disagreed
- Statement 1e: The city should identify land for a “history park” for statues, monuments, art, and historical markers.
 - **67.2% Agreed with this statement**
 - 40.69% Strongly Agreed
 - 26.72% Somewhat Agreed
 - 10.34% Somewhat Disagreed
 - 5.52% Strongly Disagreed
- Statement 1f: The city should rename Confederate Park.
 - **78.45% Agreed with this statement**
 - 64.66% Strongly Agreed
 - 13.79% Somewhat Agreed
 - 4.31% Somewhat Disagreed
 - 7.76% Strongly Disagreed

Prepare a Comprehensive Jacksonville History and Provide Educational Curricula

- Statement 1h: K-12 teachers and students should teach and learn Jacksonville history.
 - **94.93% Agreed with this statement**
 - 83.62% Strongly Agreed
 - 11.21% Somewhat Agreed
 - 3.45% Somewhat Disagreed
 - 0.86% Strongly Disagreed

Promote Collaborative Museum Endeavors

- Statement 1d: Jacksonville would benefit by having a walk-in, downtown Visitor Center with historical artifacts, photography, and a video documentary.
 - **79.1% Agreed with this statement**
 - 45.69% Strongly Agreed
 - 33.62% Somewhat Agreed
 - 2.59% Somewhat Disagreed

- 1.72% Strongly Disagreed
- Statement 1g: An African American museum in the city-center would be an attraction for residents and visitors.
 - **78.45 Agreed** with this statement
 - 64.66% Strongly Agreed
 - 13.79% Somewhat Agreed
 - 8.62% Somewhat Disagreed
 - 3.45% Strongly Disagreed

Continue to Hold Civil Discourse Events

- Statement 1i: The City Council should establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to pursue understanding and healing among citizens who share the city's culture.
 - **78.45% Agreed with this statement**
 - 50.86% Strongly Agreed
 - 27.59% Somewhat Agreed
 - 3.45% Somewhat Disagreed
 - 3.45% Strongly Disagreed

Appendix 2 List of Moderators

Dr. Jenni Lieberman, University of North Florida

Dr. Leslie Kaplan, University of North Florida

Dr. Laura Lane, Mental Health America

Carol Barbour, Palms Presbyterian Church

Maria Hane, Museum of Science and History

Joe O'Shields, Rogers Towers Attorneys at Law

Jana Ertrachter, Ertrachter Group

Faith Hill, Leadership Jacksonville

Mary Pat Corrigan, Leadership Jacksonville

Jason Spencer, Wells Fargo

Steven Garcia, University of North Florida

Lynn Sherman, Baptist Health

Kate Sanchez, Delores Barr Weaver Policy Center

R. Gregg Kaufman, The Deliberative Voice

Appendix 3

Jacksonville History Forums Data

Date	Venue	# Forums	# People	# Mods.	Total	# Surveys	Total
1-30-18	LJ Moderator Training	4	21		21	9	9
2-7-18	UNF OLLI	1	11	1	12	9	18
2-12-18	Baptist Health	3	49	7	56	31	49
3-14-18	Rotaract	1	14	1	15	13	52
3-27-18	DuPont Center	8	72	19 + 11 staff & security	102	55	117
Total		16	167	39	206	117 70%	

Ethnicity Percentage Data

Data Source	White	African American	Hispanic/Asian
Surveys	56.9%	31.9%	11.2%
Forum Photos	66.8% W/Hispanic/Asian	33.1%	

Appendix 4

Northeast Florida History Projects

Museum of Science and History

The Museum of Science and History is collaborating with partners to add African American exhibit content. In addition, several “signature exhibitions” are under development including *Mission: Jax Genius* recognizing 12 distinguished leaders, *Neighborhoods* – an exhibit to open in September 2018 – featuring the stories of African-American neighborhoods, and Jacksonville Jukebox, celebrating, local jazz, R&B/soul, rock and roll, and hip-hop artists. Traveling exhibits are also planned.

Ritz Theater and Museum

In February 2018, the Ritz Theater and Museum opened its 25th Anniversary *Through Our Eyes* exhibit with the theme, *Struggle and Resistance*. The exhibit will travel to South Africa in July 2018 and be displayed for the 100th Anniversary of Nelson Mandela’s birth. In 2019, an art exhibit from Nelson Mandela Bay, a Jacksonville sister city, will come to the Ritz.

The Melting Pot: The Diverse Cultures of Northeast Florida

“In June 2017, the Jacksonville Historical Society was awarded a state grant.... to record stories of immigrants to Northeast Florida. The project, “The Melting Pot: The Diverse Cultures of Northeast Florida,” proposed by the JHS a year ago to the Florida Division of Cultural Affairs, will receive \$11,500 in funding to record immigrant histories.... Oral histories from families who migrated here more than 100 years ago are a possible part of the project.... Although Jacksonville is not always perceived as an international city, groups from Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America are all active parts of city’s diverse population.”⁵

Jacksonville Black History Project

The University of North Florida launched a Jacksonville Black History Project and is collaborating with the Ritz Theater and Museum and the Florida Times-Union. Students are creating print stories, video stories and documentaries about some of the seminal moments and figures in black history here. All this is being accomplished with a Black History Advisory Board composed of Jacksonville historians and community members who have helped guide the students. The goal is to unveil the campaign and the products in autumn 2018.

Lynching in America: A Community Remembrance Project

904WARD began in 2015 with a small group of professionals who came together to talk openly, challenge each other, support each other, and take action together to build a more inclusive

⁵ Jacksonville Historical Society, 2017, Retrieved April 11, 2018 <http://www.jaxhistory.org/tag/the-melting-pot-the-diverse-cultures-of-northeast-florida/>

Jacksonville. This all-volunteer group is comprised of people from Jacksonville’s private, public, and nonprofit sectors committed to creating a community of inclusion for all of Jacksonville’s residents. The group is collaborating with the Equal Justice Institute of Montgomery, AL as well as several museums, universities, and colleges, to include Jacksonville in the Lynching in America Community Remembrance Project. This initiative, which seeks to shed light of racial terror lynchings in the U.S. from 1877 to 1950 – over 4,000 in 12 Southern states - includes the erection of historic site markers at lynching sites, the collection of soil samples from lynching sites and the hosting of a monument on which are inscribed the names of Duval County’s eight known lynching victims.

UNF Carpenter Library

The UNF Carpenter Library is the repository several special collections. *The Florida Heritage Collection* is an ongoing cooperative project of the State University System (SUS) of Florida to digitize and provide online access to materials broadly representing Florida's history, culture, arts, literature, sciences and social sciences. *The Civil War in Northeast Florida* is one of the special collections. Another is *African American Life in Jacksonville* that includes *Black Floridians and the Civil War: Pension Records of the 21st, 33rd, and 34th United States Colored Infantry Regiments*. The core of the collection are copies of primary documents from the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) regarding applications for Union army veteran's pensions submitted from veterans of the United States Colored Infantry regiments, their widows, and other relatives.

Snyder Memorial Methodist Church Task Force

A Jacksonville task force is exploring converting Snyder memorial into a museum of the city’s Civil Rights era history.⁶ The church was used as a sanctuary for black citizens who were beaten during the Ax Handle Saturday attack during a 1960 lunch-counter demonstration. The Times-Union article reported that the task force sees the church, located near Hemming Park, as a site to “cultivate tourism” Task force members are also discussing how to make the best use of the former Stanton High School building on W. Ashley Street.

⁶ *In Long Empty Church, Activist Sees Potential for Museum of Jacksonville Civil Rights Past*, Florida Times-Union, April 22, 2018

Appendix 5

Confederate Monument Decisions in Other Cities and States

Orlando

In Orlando, the “Johnny Reb” statue in Lake Eola Park was moved to the Greenwood Cemetery in October 2017. Don Price, the cemetery sexton said, “A cemetery is an equalizer,” Price said. “We have Christian crosses, Celtic crosses, graves for doctors, murderers, Catholics, Buddhists ... it’s a non-judgmental place.”⁷

Florida Legislature

The Florida State Legislature recently voted to replace the U.S. Capitol statue of Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith, Florida’s representative historic artifact with a newly commissioned statue of Mary McLeod Bethune, the founder of Bethune-Cookman College.⁸

Florida Cities

In a September 1, 2017 article, *Confederate Statues in Florida: A Scorecard*,⁹ the Tampa Bay Times reported on Confederate monument deliberations, decisions and actions in twelve Florida cities.

Across the Nation

In the CNN article, *Here are the Confederate memorials that will be removed after Charlottesville*,¹⁰ the author describes actions taken in seventeen states where monuments were removed, considered to remove, and not removed.

⁷ ‘Johnny Reb’ Confederate Statue rebuilt in Greenwood Cemetery, Orlando Sentinel, December 6, 2017. Retrieved April 11, 2018 <http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/politics/political-pulse/os-johnny-reb-statue-rebuilt-greenwood-cemetery-20171206-story.html>

⁸ House Oks Bethune Statue for U.S. Capitol, Florida Times Union, February 21, 2018

⁹ Confederate Statues in Florida: A Scorecard, Tampa Bay Times, September 1, 2017

¹⁰ Here are the Confederate memorials that will be removed after Charlottesville, Suerth, Jessica, CNN, August 22, 2017, Retrieved April 11, 2018 <https://www.cnn.com/2017/08/15/us/confederate-memorial-removal-us-trnd/index.html>

Appendix 6

Participants' Comments About the Deliberative Dialogue Process

“I liked the fact that the event was even held in the first place. It is reassuring to know that the community's perspective and concerns are heard and considered. I like that you gave us a forum with structure and with guidance to keep us focused and on task. This allowed us to address the issue, listen to one another, be heard, and create common ground.”

“I liked the breaking-up into small groups with a facilitator and a recorder. It was well orchestrated. The event could not be improved in my opinion. It moved quickly with a lot of information exchanged. In my group, there was full participation. I can say it was one of the best “brain-storming” event that I have attended.”

“Everything was done with care and professionalism (well done) - pre-event preparation; background info; beautiful venue, accommodations, food & beverage, instructions, group divisions, leaders and scribes and overall “tone”. It was a most enjoyable experience and seemed to be a comfortable and revealing format that got people talking – openly and honestly – which is just what you were after.”

“What I liked about the gathering was that it was an interesting group of participants representing different backgrounds and views. The table talk was thoughtful and collaborative. My view actually changed as we proceeded through the discussion. My thinking was shaped by the different perspectives that people shared as we went through the series of helpful options and I will look forward to reviewing some of the conclusions. In the end, I hope it will be well received by the City when it is presented.”

“Lots of people care about the monument issue and they showed up to talk. Lots in attendance. I liked that the outcomes of the discussion will be summarized for City Council. It's not just talk. It's talk that will be developed into another step that our elected officials will learn from.”

“The discussion on ideas to alter Jacksonville's current image [one of perpetuating a lineage of bias and inequality via resolute homage to protuberant public Confederate monuments] by leveling and balancing publicly-displayed tributes to promote and energize an atmosphere and environment of multicultural inclusiveness.”