

Starting the research process for this project was challenging. The inspiration came from research that Dr. Berkley Hudson has been conducting on O.N. Pruitt, a 20<sup>th</sup> century photographer from Mississippi. That meant that my starting point was a photograph of a Civil War monument in Tupelo, Mississippi. To my knowledge, it had not been featured in any of the recent debates over the installation and endurance of Confederate monuments. A simple Google search confirmed this. What I was left with, then, was a picture and a debate that had been in the media for months.

Each day, Dr. Hudson sent me an article related to the current debate over Confederate monuments. I was able to structure a narrative based on Charlottesville, upcoming elections, and the use of social media as a tool for this debate. What I lacked, however, was historical context. The articles that Dr. Hudson sent me mentioned it in passing, but never actually dug into what it was that made Southerners so persistent in installing these monuments after the Civil War. I had proposed a 20-page paper at the start of the semester in order to earn Honors credit. I knew I would need more than news articles to produce a worthwhile and comprehensive piece of scholarship.

This is where the MU Libraries came in. I was in need of books, journals, articles – really anything that could help me to contextualize this debate that was gaining more and more traction. Previously, I had used the Discover@MU function only once to find a book my professor had recommended for an English course. All I had had to do was type in the title and click “request.” This time, I had no idea what I was searching for. I didn’t want to risk missing anything that might create a better-rounded research paper.

I quickly became familiar with the system and have since used Discover@MU for research projects in other courses. What I found particularly useful was the ability to define not only the type of document, but also whether or not it was peer-reviewed. This was an issue I had confronted

many times previously when simply using a search engine. Using the library database allowed me to culminate a more succinct and trustworthy list of sources.

From here, I created a list of search terms: “Confederate,” “Civil War,” “monuments,” “Southern pride,” “Union,” “Charlottesville,” “Robert E. Lee,” and “Confederate statues.” Having plugged these into the system in a myriad of combinations, I was left with pages of results. I did the best I could to narrow down my options, considering publication dates, abstracts, and the prominence of Confederate monuments in the descriptions. I had the following as resources:

- *Cities of the Dead: Contesting the Memory of the Civil War in the South, 1865-1914.*
- *The Public Art of Civil War Commemoration: A Brief History with Documents.*
- *Tell It with Pride: the 54th Massachusetts Regiment and Augustus Saint-Gaudens' Shaw Memorial.*
- “The Broader and Purer Purpose: Lessons from the Shenandoah Valley's Monuments and Battlefield Landscapes on Introducing Elements of Civil War Memory to General Audiences.”
- “The Confederate Monument Movement as a Policy Dilemma for Resource Managers of Parks, Cultural Sites, and Protected Places: Florida as a Case Study.”

By supplementing these documents with current stories from multiple news outlets, I was able to create a comprehensive analysis of the evolution of the debate about Confederate monuments. The resources obtained through MU Libraries helped me to contextualize modern stories. Although I kept to online resources for all journal articles, I did checkout the three books listed above. This allowed me to show them to Dr. Hudson to determine their usefulness. It also gave me the opportunity to compare them to his own collection of books on civil rights and culture in the American South, many of which are checked out from Ellis.