

## **New Orleans Officials Destroyed \$902,771 of Charitable Donations**

The destruction of the Lee Monument in New Orleans was done without allowing the people of the State any effective input on the decision. The monument was given to the city by a charitable organization which raised slightly over \$30,000.00 to pay for the monument. The current (2019) dollar value would be almost a million dollars!<sup>1</sup> The monument was given to the city in good faith. Former General P.G.T. Beauregard, CSA, was the original president of the fund-raising group. Post-war Beauregard was an early advocate of civil rights for the newly freed slaves.<sup>2</sup> When the monument was presented to the City on February 22, 1884 former CSA President Jefferson Davis was present as well as General Lee's two daughters. Prior to the War Davis advocated the "high road to emancipation."<sup>3</sup> The benediction was pronounced by Bishop Galleher of the Episcopal Church of Louisiana.

Elected officials who destroy valuable donations are in violation of their fiduciary duty, not only to the present generation, but the duty they owe to past and future generations. They set a terrible precedent that one day will be used to destroy or distort their legacy. A copy of the December 1897 article about the Lee Circle Monument published in the *Confederate Veteran* can be found below on next page. The *Confederate Veteran* had a circulation of 161,332 in 1896. [Full page copy of the 1897 article on next page].

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.in2013dollars.com/1895-dollars-in-2019?amount=30000#buying-power> accessed 3/20/2019.

<sup>2</sup> Williams, T. Harry, *P.T.G. Beauregard-Napoleon in Gray* (LSU Press, Baton Rouge, LA: 1955), 266-7, 269-70.

<sup>3</sup> Davis, Jefferson, *Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government*, Vol. 1 (1881, William Mayes Coats, Nashville, TN: circa 1980), 30.

## LEE MONUMENT—LEE CIRCLE, NEW ORLEANS.

Lee Monument stands in Lee Circle, one of the most central points in the city of New Orleans, from which radiates several of its most beautiful avenues and streets. Along these and over the thousands of Confederate homes that line them the majestic statue of Robert E. Lee, that surmounts it, looks down upon the metropolis of the South.

The monument is a Doric column of marble 106.8 feet high, 7.2 in diameter at the base, tapering to 5.6 under the capita, with spiral stairs interiorly that lead to a compartment just beneath the statue, where apertures allow of an extended view of the city.

The pillar rests on a shelved pyramid of granite that rises from a mound sloping off around to the circumference of the circle, which is 188 feet in diameter. The statue is of bronze, fifteen feet high. It was designed by a (then) young sculptor, Alexander C. Doyle, of New York, and its plaster model was executed by him in New Orleans under the eyes of the officers and directors of the Robert E. Lee Monumental Association of New Orleans. The general design of the monument was prepared by a distinguished home architect and old Confederate soldier, Capt. John Roy.

The Robert E. Lee Monumental Association of New Orleans, under whose auspices and by whose endeavors it was undertaken and erected, "had its origin in that grand outburst of tributary grief at the death of Lee, which, while it covered his tomb with votive offerings of the good and wise of all civilized nations, prostrated the people of the Southern States of this Union in peculiar and unutterable woe." The association was organized November 16, 1870, with the following officers: William M. Perkins, President; Gen. G. T. Beauregard, First Vice President; Col. A. W. Bosworth, Second Vice President; W. S. Pike, Treasurer; Thomas J. Beck, Recording Secretary; Col. James Strawbridge, Corresponding Secretary. Twenty-one other prominent citizens composed the Board of Directors.

Those were dark days with every citizen of Louisiana, and poverty and anxiety sat by every honest hearthstone in New Orleans. Subscriptions came, but not as the hearts of the people would have given if able, and the enterprise languished. In 1876 the overthrow of radicalism and negro rule in Louisiana was about accomplished. There was a rift in the dark cloud that hung like a pall upon New Orleans, and a reorganization of the association was effected on the 18th of February of that year. Eleven members of the first board had died in the meantime, and the following

officers were then selected: Capt. Charles E. Fenner, President; Gen. G. T. Beauregard, First Vice President; M. Musson, Second Vice President; S. H. Kennedy, Treasurer; W. I. Hodgson, Recording Secretary; Col. William M. Owen, Corresponding Secretary. With these were twenty representative citizens of New Orleans as directors. Col. E. A. Palfrey was made Chairman of the Building Committee. The fund that had been accumulated by the first efforts of the founders of the association was now steadily increased in volume, and the board determined to begin the monument as the best means of assuring its completion. The contract for the foundation and mound of earth, made with Mr. John Roy, provided that his

work should progress just as fast as the means of the association would allow, stopping when the treasury was empty and proceeding when it was replenished. Thus, surely, though slowly, stone was piled upon stone, until, when the capstone was set upon the lofty pillar, the whole was paid for.

When the statue was completed the board selected the anniversary of the birth of Washington, February 22, 1884, as an appropriate occasion for the ceremonies of unveiling. The day was made a great one in the annals of the city. Among the many distinguished persons in attendance were the President of the Confederate States, Jefferson Davis, his daughters, and Misses Mary and Mildred Lee, daughters of the great soldier and patriot in whose honor the monument was erected. The Associations of the Armies of Northern Virginia and Tennessee, the militia of the State, and a large delegation from the Grand Army of the Republic honored the occasion by their presence. After delivering a magnificent address the President presented the monument to the city of New Orleans through its Mayor, Gen. W. J. Behan. Bishop Galleher, of the Episcopal Church of Louisiana, pronounced

the benediction on the work. The Battalion of Washington Artillery fired the salute of one hundred guns.

The whole work has cost over \$30,000. The city has recently appropriated some \$6,000 for repairs to the base and mound, and these will soon be carried out. The monument casts its shadow upon Memorial Hall, which rises near by, preserving in its sacred precincts over eight thousand of the most precious war relics and mementos of the South, among which are several given by the daughters of the great soldier the monument commemorates.

The circle in which the monument stands is in charge of a Board of Commissioners appointed by the city, of which board several members are old Confederate soldiers.

