

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Helping You Put Virginia's Historic Resources to Work



DHR and the Role of the Registers in the Recordation of Confederate Memorials and Monuments in Virginia

Report prepared by the
Virginia Department of
Historic Resources,
Division of Survey and
Register

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The Virginia War Memorial, Richmond. Construction was completed 1955. The property has been determined eligible for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

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General Turner Ashby Memorial, Harrisonburg

DHR has recorded 378
Confederate monuments on
public and private lands in the
Commonwealth.*

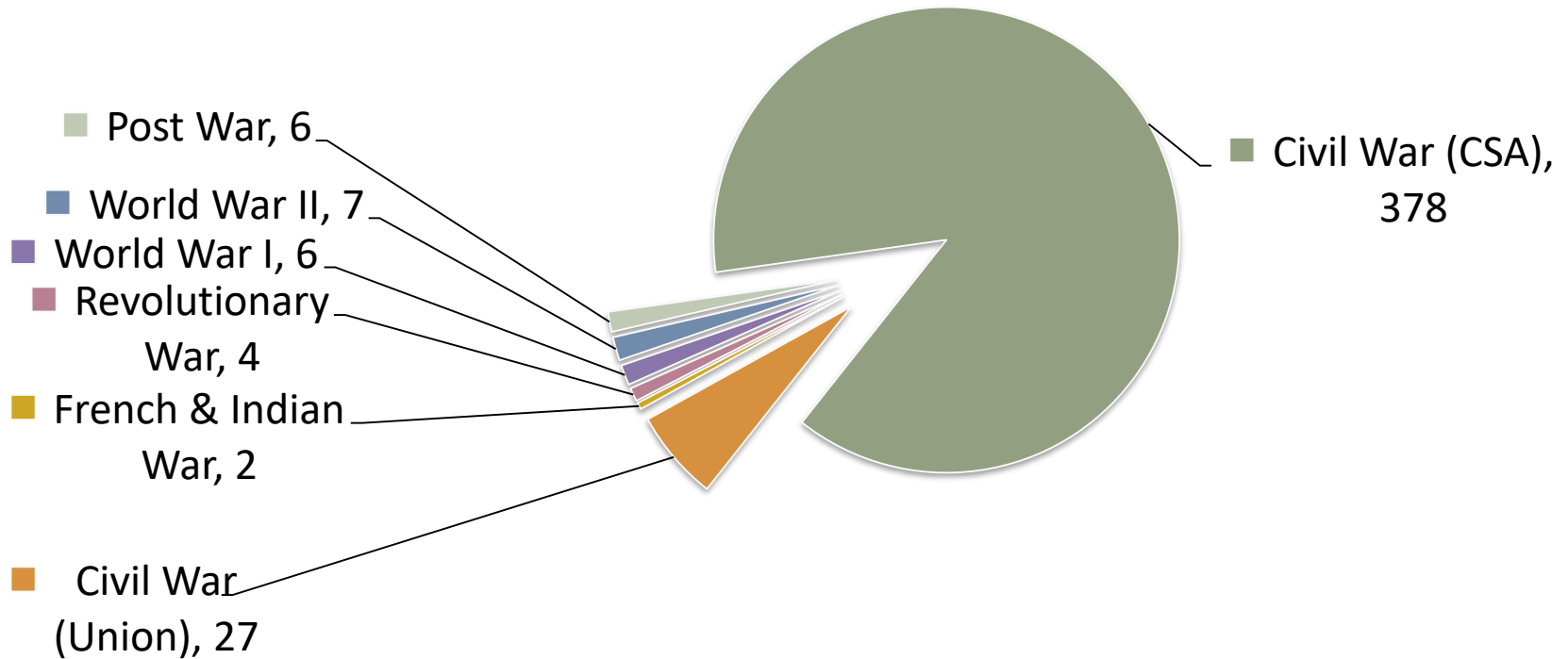
*See also Timothy Sedore, *An Illustrated
Guide to Virginia's Confederate
Monuments.*

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Excluding those at Arlington National Cemetery, 429 war memorials are currently recorded in the Virginia Cultural Resource Information System (VCRIS) maintained by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR). Of this total, 88 percent commemorate Confederate participants in the American Civil War.





Why Hasn't DHR's VCRIS Count Been the Authoritative Source?

Because that really isn't what DHR is about.



Demonstration in August, 1962, prior to the destruction of Penn Station, New York, NY - a pivotal event in the history of historic preservation in the U.S.

DHR is a regulatory agency

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) requires that federal agencies take historic properties *into consideration* when planning projects.

VCRIS records are created as such planning projects are conducted; i.e. to-date VCRIS has only recorded monuments that were identified through a planning process, or because they have been included in National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register nominations.



Monuments, Memorials and Other Commemorative Properties

Ordinarily commemorative properties such as monuments, memorials or grave markers are not eligible for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.



For example, the Arthur Ashe Statue in Richmond on Monument Avenue does not meet established criteria for listing in the registers because it has not been in existence for more than fifty years.

It would need to be demonstrated that it possesses exceptional significance based on established criteria established by the National Park Service in order to be listed in the registers before then.



Monuments, Memorials and Other Commemorative Properties



Once it is 50 years old, however, it still may not be eligible for listing in the registers.

One would need to determine that it has qualities of design, age, tradition, or symbolic value that have invested it with its own high level significance.

Future generations may determine that it does possess such qualities.

Based solely on the 'Fifty Year Rule', however, the monument will not become eligible for listing until 2046.



How is Historic Significance Determined for Monuments?



*Through the application of
established criteria for evaluation*

Criterion A: Concerns properties associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion C: Concerns properties that embody distinctive characteristics of a type, a period, or a method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose individual components may lack distinction.

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Example: Monument Avenue Historic District, Richmond.

Monument Avenue Historic District is nationally significant in the areas of architecture and community planning.

A building or monument along the avenue, grand though it may be, is not necessarily significant.

However, when the components are considered as a group, the entire district achieves a high level of significance.



Monuments, Memorials and Other Commemorative Properties



Commemorative properties *can qualify* if they are integral parts of districts that do meet one or more of the established criteria or, ***if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested them with their own exceptional significance:***

Example One: The Robert E. Lee Monument, Richmond

The monument was evaluated as being significant to the Commonwealth under **Criterion A** for its close association with major historical developments in the region and the nation in the three decades following the American Civil War.



Monuments, Memorials and Other Commemorative Properties



The monument is also significant under **Criterion C** by reason of its outstanding artistic quality and design. It is a masterpiece of the internationally renowned French academic sculptor Marius-Jean-Antonin Mercié.

In addition, the monument meets **Criterion A** for its association with an important historical event—the unveiling and dedication of the Robert E. Lee Monument on May 29, 1890. The event marked the largest gathering in Virginia's state capital since the inauguration of Jefferson Davis and represented *“one of the greatest celebrations ever accorded a work of public sculpture.”*



Monuments, Memorials and Other Commemorative Properties

Example Two: Jefferson Davis Highway Markers

These modest markers meet standards established by Criterion A in several respects:

- 1) Erected by the United Daughters of the Confederacy along Route 1 from the 1920s to 1940s, the stone markers are associated with Lost Cause commemorative programs led by women during the early twentieth century.
- 2) As a group the markers have statewide significance in the area of transportation because of their association with early highway development and promotion.
- 3) They also have statewide significance in the area of social history because of the effort undertaken by women of the United Daughters of the Confederacy to memorialize Jefferson Davis through the highway's markers and educational material.





Monuments, Memorials and Other Commemorative Properties



Example Three: Portsmouth's Confederate Monument

This is one of Virginia's more ambitious Confederate memorials. Unlike most monuments, the statues are not generic figures but were modeled after specific local residents.

The assemblage is one of only three monuments honoring the Confederate sailor. The figure of the sailor faces east toward the route taken by the CSS Virginia for her engagement with the USS Monitor.

Its design and symbolic value, therefore, are considered to have invested the monument with its own historical significance.



Disposition of Confederate Monuments in the U.S.



Confederate Memorial Fountain erected in Hill Park, Helena, Montana in 1916. The fountain was removed on August 18, 2017.

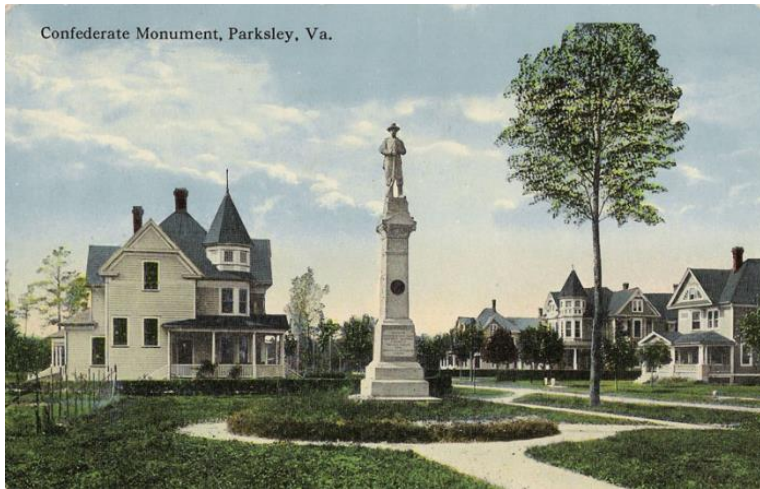
Memorials associated with the American Civil War abound in the United States.

Memorials to Confederate soldiers exist in the eleven Confederate states, as well as in a number of Union states.

They are also found in places that had not achieved statehood by the time of the conflict.



Disposition of Virginia's Confederate Monuments According to VCRIS



Parksley Confederate Monument ,
Accomack County

Of the 127 jurisdictions of the Commonwealth, 98 have Confederate monuments (77%)

- 65 are located in Registered Historic Districts
- 15 are in Cemeteries
- 5 are along byways/highways
- 3 are in Church Yards
- 3 in Parks, and
- 1 is in Capitol Square Park



Disposition of Virginia's Confederate Monuments

The first monument to be placed in the Commonwealth was most likely the Confederate Obelisk at King George County Courthouse which was erected in 1867.

Because it is a contributing resource to the King George County Courthouse Historic District, it is listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places.





Disposition of Virginia's Confederate Monuments

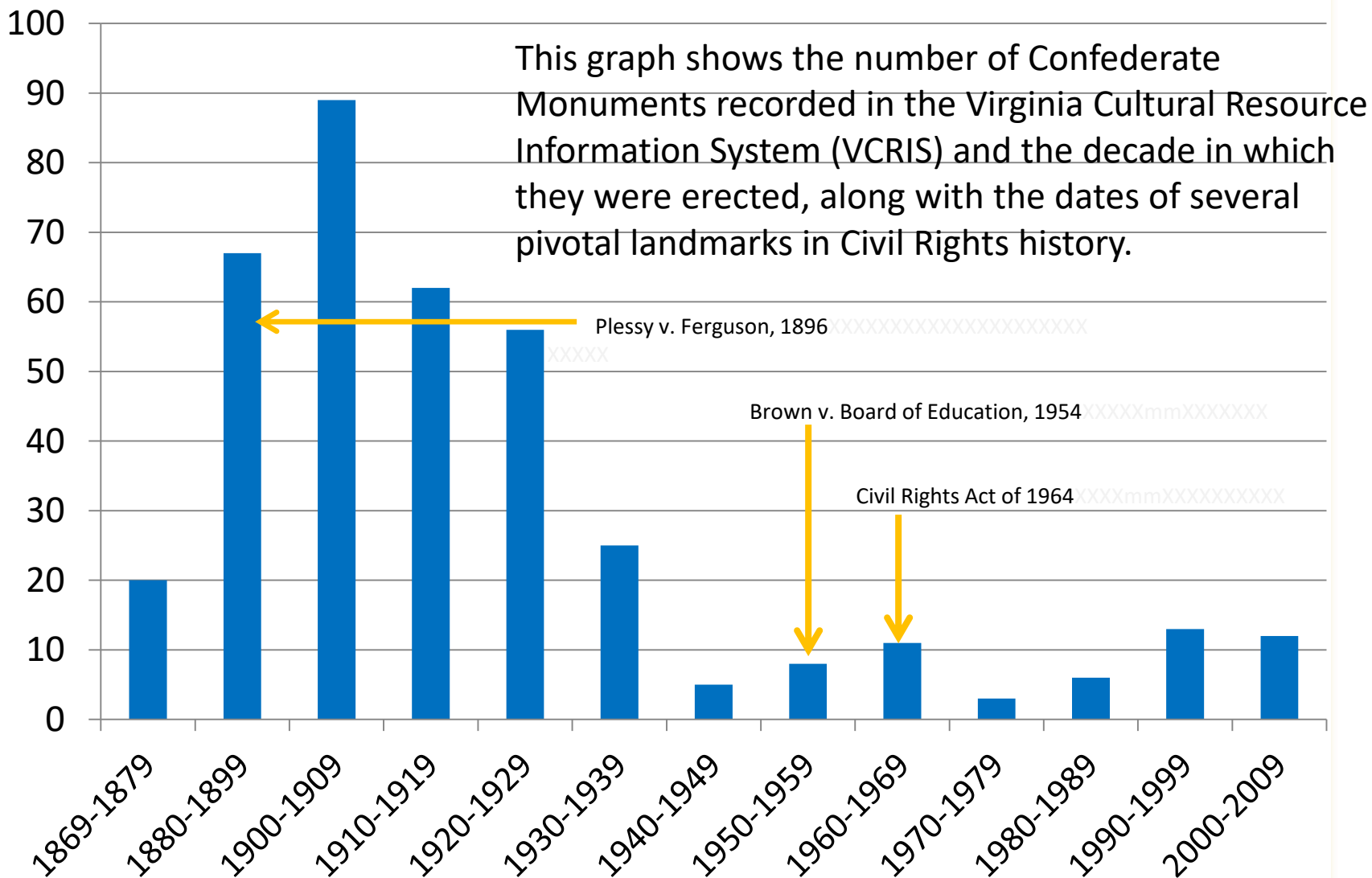


The most recently erected monument was placed on the grounds of the Sutherlin House (Danville Museum of Fine Arts and History and also known as the Last Capitol of the Confederacy) in 1995.

Since this photo was taken, the monument has been modified so that it no longer serves the dual purpose of being a flag pole.

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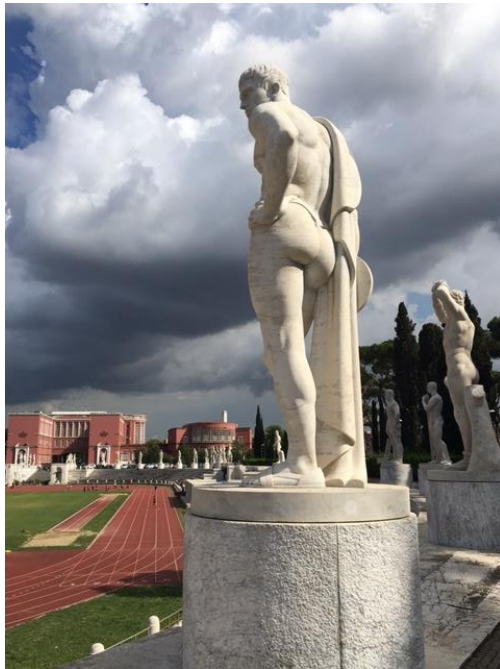
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ITALY

Foro Italico, Rome
(formerly *Foro Mussolini*)
1928-1938, Enrico Del Debbio
and Luigi Moretti, architects



The Issue:

Still a vibrant sports center, the complex continues to attract athletes and tourists as well as both pro- and anti-fascist demonstrations. To many, however, the statuary and architecture exemplify just one more of the many cultural and political movements in Rome's long and influential history.