DIrreconcilable Differences? A Reckoning with *Confederado* History in Brazil

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Confederados are descendants of U.S. southerners who emigrated to southern Brazil and the Amazon region after the Civil War, where slavery was still legal. The Brazilian government covered their transportation costs and provided subsides and land grants in exchange for developing "empty" land. Much of the material written about *Confederados* is by descendants where discussions of slavery, slave ownership (prior to emigration or in Brazil), or the "draw" to Brazil receives little or no mention. This article threads the troubled history of *Confederados* in Santarém, Pará, to a global context demanding a reckoning with systemic and institutionalized racism and police violence through protests, petitions, and demands of removal of symbols of slavery, racism, and oppression and of reparations. I examine the debates and tensions concerning collective and public memory about slavery, settler colonialism and the display of the Confederate flag.
Keywords: Brazil, Confederados, Santarém, Heritage.

Diferenças inconciliáveis? Um acerto de contas com a história *Confederada* no Brasil

Confederados são descendentes de sulistas estadunidenses que emigraram para o Sul do Brasil e a região amazônica após a Guerra Civil, onde a escravidão ainda era legal. O governo cobria seus custos de transporte, fornecia subsídios e doava terras em troca do desenvolvimento de terras "vazias". Grande parte do material escrito sobre os *Confederados* é de descendentes, onde as discussões sobre escravidão, posse de escravos (antes da emigração ou no Brasil) ou o que os "impulsionou" a emigrar para o Brasil recebem pouca ou nenhuma menção. Este artigo traça a conturbada história dos *Confederados* em Santarém, Pará, num contexto global que exige um ajuste de contas com o racismo sistêmico e institucionalizado e a violência policial por meio de protestos, petições e pedidos de remoção de símbolos de escravidão, racismo e opressão e também de reparação. Examino os debates e as tensões em torno da memória coletiva e pública sobre a escravidão, o colonialismo e a ostentação da bandeira confederada.
Palavras-chave: Brasil, *Confederados*, Santarém, patrimônio.

Irreconcilable Differences? A Reckoning with *Confederado* History in Brazil

Mary Lorena Kenny*

Fleeing the defeat of the Confederacy after the Civil War (1861-1865), the nightmare of federal control, and apprehension about the loss of racial, political, economic, and cultural power during the Reconstruction (1865-1877), approximately 8-20,000 Confederates migrated to Central and South America, one of the largest out-migration streams from the United States in the nineteenth century.[1] Slavery was legal in Brazil until 1888. Consequently, for these Confederates (called *Confederados* in Brazil), Brazil offered economic opportunity, adventure, cheap or enslaved labor, and religious freedom.[2] Between 3,000 and 10,000 Confederates emigrated to the southeastern region in the present-day state

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1 Célio Antonio Alcantara Silva, "Confederates and Yankees under the Southern Cross", *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 34, no. 3 (2015): 371, https://doi.org/10.1111/blar.12202; Lawrence F. Hill, *The Confederate Exodus to Latin America* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1936). Harter estimates that 20,000 confederates headed to Mexico, Cuba, Jamaica and other locations in South America (Argentina, Honduras). Eugene C. Harter, *The Lost Colony of the Confederacy* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1985). Estimates to Brazil vary with the source, with estimates from 4-30,000. Alan P. Marcus, *Confederate Exodus: Social and Environmental Forces in the Migration of U.S. Southerners to Brazil* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2021), 11.

2 Maria Clara Sales Carneiro Sampaio, "A Amazônia no olhar imperialista: a história ainda pouco explorada do projeto do norte-americano Matthew Fontaine Maury para a Amazônia na década dos 1850", *Revista Canoa do Tempo* 11, no. 1 (2019): 4-24, https://doi.org/10.38047/rct.v11i01.5947; Edwin McDowell, "Confederate Outpost in Brazil", *Wall Street Journal*, August 22, 1975, 11.

of São Paulo, where they formed small agricultural colonies. In 1867, 200 *Confederados* also migrated to the city of Santarém, Pará, in the Amazon region.

Emperor Dom Pedro II of Brazil offered generous resettlement assistance in the form of land grants and subsidies to *Confederados* (also referred to as exiles and refugees), in exchange for developing "empty" public lands, introducing innovative agricultural techniques, and integrating into (whitening) Brazilian society.[3] For most *Confederados*, however, visions of a Brazilian El Dorado and reversing the outcome of Civil War clashed with reality, and their settlements failed. Many *Confederados* lacked the capital to buy slaves.[4] They found life in the tropics unbearable.[5] They also failed to learn Portuguese and were repelled by the social proximity of Brazilian free Blacks, lack of Black subservience, and widespread miscegenation. Except for a few notable plantation (and slave) owners, elite Brazilians viewed the *Confederados* as *mal educados* (badly behaved) dregs of antebellum society and a shiftless group of adventurers.[6] Most of them ended up living in destitution and returning to the United States.[7]

Two long-lasting *Confederado* settlements were in Americana and Santa Bárbara d'Oeste, both in São Paulo. Since 1980, the Fraternity of American Descendants (Fraternidade Descendência Americana) hosts a very popular annual cultural heritage festival which draws up

3 Luciana da Cruz Brito, "Um paraíso escravagista na América do Sul: raça e escravidão sob o olhar de imigrantes Confederados no Brasil oitocentista", *Revista de História Comparada* 9, no. 1 (2015): 145-73, https://revistas.ufrj.br/index.php/RevistaHistoriaComparada/article/view/2354/1982; Denise Ferreira da Silva, *Toward a Global Idea of Race* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2007).

4 Alessandra F. Zorzetto, "Propostas imigrantistas em meados da década de 1860: a organização de associações de apoio à imigração de pequenos proprietários norte-americanos – análise de uma colônia" (Master's thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2000), 21-23, and 35; Marcus, *Confederate Exodus*, 129.

5 Sarah Bellona Smith Ferguson, "The American Colonies Emigrating to Brazil", *Times of Brazil*, December 18, 1936, 18-41.

6 Nelson Papavero *et al.*, "The Travels of Joseph Beal Steere in Brazil, Peru and Ecuador (1870-1873)", *Arquivos de Zoologia* 39, no. 2 (2008): 137, https://doi.org/10.11606/issn.2176-7793.v39i2p87-269; *História Mundi*, "Os Confederados na Amazônia", January 9, 2016, https://histormundi.blogspot.com/2016/01/os-confederados-na-amazonia.html.

7Ana Maria Costa de Oliveira, *O destino (não) manifesto: os imigrantes norte-americanos no Brasil* (São Paulo: União Cultural Brasil-Estados Unidos, 1995), 120.

to 2,000 participants.[8] The festival celebrates a selective version of the antebellum south that includes dressing in antebellum clothing (hoop skirts), picnicking on traditional southern U.S. cuisine, and hoisting the Confederate flag, while the soundtrack from *Gone with the Wind* plays in the background. The Confederate flag is also emblazoned on trinkets sold at the festival such as hats, mouse pads, coffee cups, and T-shirts, and displayed on jackets and cars at other motorcycle and beer festivals.[9] Other markers of *Confederado* history on the landscape include a chapel with a portrait of Robert E. Lee, and the Cemitério do Campo (Field Cemetery), where 430 Protestant Confederates are buried, as by the time they died, they were prohibited from being buried in the public cemetery.[10] Overall, the festival and other representations of *Confederado* history honor the trials, tribulations, and successes of *Confederados.*

In 2019, Afro-Brazilian activists of UNEGRO (Union of Black People for Equality) and their allies staged protests at the *Confederado* heritage festival, receiving widespread media coverage.[11] Their protests centered on the display of the Confederate flag, a symbol used by those who fought to maintain slavery and segregation in the United States, which after the end of the war continued to be embraced by White nationalist White supremacist groups. In 2021, protests also took place over 3,000 miles from Santa Bárbara and Americana, in Santarém, Pará, nestled between the Tapajós and Amazon rivers. These protests opposed the public honoring of *Confederados* and their descendants, as well as the display of

8 Jordan Brasher, "Brazil's Long, Strange Love Affair with the Confederacy Ignites Racial Tension", *The Conversation*, May 6, 2019, https://theconversation.com/brazils-long-strange-love-affair-with-the-confederacy-ignites-racial-tension-115548; John Cowart Dawsey, "O espelho americano: americanos para brasileiro ver e Brazilians for american to see", *Revista de Antropologia,* 37 (1994): 228.

9 The Fraternidade Descendência Americana (FDA) website sells Confederate paraphernalia www.confederados.com.br; Jordan Brasher, "The Crisis of Confederate Memory in the Interior of São Paulo, Brazil", *Memory Studies* 14, no. 6 (2021): 1315, https://doi.org/10.1177/17506980211054336; Leonardo Libando, "Uso de bandeira dos Estados Confederados em evento cervejeiro causa polêmica em Petrópolis, no RJ", *g1*, February 13, 2022, https://g1.globo.com/rj/regiao-serrana/noticia/2022/02/13/uso-de-bandeira-dos-estados-confederados-em-evento-cervejeiro-causa-polemica-em-petropolis-no-rj.ghtml.

10 Marcus, *Confederate Exodus*, xi.

11 Portal Geledés, "Mais de 100 entidades protestam contra bandeira racista em festa de Santa Bárbara d'Oeste", May 3, 2019, https://www.geledes.org.br/mais-de-100-entidades-protestam-contra-bandeira-racista-em-festa-de-santa-barbara-doeste.

the Confederate flag. These actions are emblematic of the transnational social justice and anti-racist movements that seek to reckon with systemic and institutionalized racism and police violence through protests and petitions demanding the removal of symbols of slavery, racism, and oppression, and sometimes reparations for past atrocities.[12]

This article focuses on the tensions over *Confederado* public memory in Santarém, Pará. This focus is justified because Santarém received fewer Confederates after the Civil War and there has been less media and critical scholarly attention than *Confederados* in southern Brazil. As a case study, this article provides a snapshot of the efforts by local, grassroots social justice movements to challenge public memory or officially acknowledged histories. To explore this topic, I carried out ethnographic research in Santarém between January and June 2022. I spoke with *Confederado* descendants, people aligned with the Brazilian Black movement, other researchers, journalists, lawyers, educators, students, and landowners. Moreover, I visited sites associated with *Confederados*, including cemeteries, museums, private homes, and historical landmarks in and around Santarém. I also draw from the historiography of *Confederados,* memoirs, reports by anthropologists submitted to the Ministério Público Federal (Public Prosecutor Office) for *quilombolas*, federally recognized traditional Black communities seeking land titles, maps, art, private libraries and archives, as well as social media pages and websites, such as Facebook.

I apply a "critical heritage studies" (CHS) approach to this data. CHS examines how personal, cultural and collective memories reinforce, shape and recreate a sense of identity and cultural affinity that is communicated through heritage (public memory). CHS views all heritage, including material heritage, as continually created and recreated, contested and negotiated, as people reassess the meaning of the past through the social, cultural, and political needs of the present. Rather than a static form of cultural expression, heritage is viewed as a dynamic process of cultural production that gives attention to the socio-political world of remembering.[13]

12 Mano Brown, *Mano Brown recebe Sueli Carneiro*, em Mano a Mano, Spotify podcast, 2022, audio 2:19:06; Sueli Carneiro, *Racismo, sexismo e desigualdade no Brasil* (São Paulo: Selo Negro, 2011).

13 CHS view all heritage as a culturally produced process of understanding the past and the present. Its meaning is contingent upon the lived experiences and the shifting ideological, polit-

Confederado descendant memoirs are important sources for understanding the contours of *Confederados* shared values, ideals, memories, and identities. Collective memories highlight sacrifice, grit and resilience, the difficulties of migration and assimilation, and innovative ways in adapting to a new country.[14] References and images abound of *Confederados* as robust and courageous pioneers, and as refugees from a war-torn nation seeking freedom. There is disagreement among scholars concerning the legality of slavery as "push" factor for emigrants, but the evidence seems to point to its potency in decision-making for emigrants[15]. *Confederado* Frank McMullen, in a letter to the *New Orleans Times,* made it clear that emigrates would have to prove their "southernness" and "give satisfactory references that they are Southern in feeling, and pro-slavery in sentiment."[16] McMullen convinced over 150 people to relocate to Brazil, with the intension of creating a "New South where the principles of the one just lost might be continued, where slavery was still a vital institution, where agriculture was the principal industry, and where land was cheap."[17] Many *Confederados* intermarried, and continue to be linked by kinship, economic relationships, and intergenerational land ownership. *Confederados* also assert that the

ical, racial and discursive interests and needs of the present. Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (London: Routledge, 2006), 83. "Memory studies" is a discipline unto itself, and beyond the scope of this paper. In *Slavery in the Age of Memory: Engaging the Past* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), historian Ana Lucia Araujo unpacks the social, cultural, and political uses of different types of memory (official, personal and cultural, collective and public).

14 Julia Louisa Hentz Keyes, *Our Life in Brazil* (Montgomery, Alabama: The University of Alabama Libraries Special Collections, 1874); Laura Jarnagin, *A Confluence of Transatlantic Networks: Elites, Capitalism and Confederate Immigration to Brazil* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2008); Harter, *The Lost Colony;* William Clark Griggs, *The Elusive Eden: Frank McMullan's Confederate Colony in Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987); C. B. Dawsey and J. M. Dawsey, eds. *The Confederados: Old South Immigrants in Brazil* (Tuscaloosa, University of Alabama Press, 1998); Frank P. Goldman, *Os pioneiros americanos no Brasil* (Philadelphia: King and Bird, 1972): Oliveira, *O destino (não) manifesto.* On the experiences of those marginalized in these memoirs see Gerald Horne, *The Deepest South: The United States, Brazil, and the African Slave Trade* (New York: New York University Press, 2007); Hill, *The Confederate Exodus.*

15 Samantha Payne, "'A General Insurrection in the Countries with Slaves': The US Civil War and the Origins of an Atlantic Revolution, 1861–1866", *Past & Present* (2021): 1-33.

16 Frank McMullen, "Brazil Still Alive!" *New Orleans Times*, 1867. Cited from Justin Horton, "The Second Lost Cause: Post-national Confederate Imperialism in the Americas" (Master's thesis, East Tennessee State University, 2007), 43.

17 Griggs, "The Elusive Eden", 13-14. Six months after arriving, McMullen died from tuberculosis and the settlement fell apart.

Confederate flag flown in Brazil has been disassociated from the racist meaning it holds in the United States. Rather, it has become "Brazilianized" and embraces family, and cultural and racial unity. Yet, this argument is flawed, as many individuals who display the Confederate flag in the United States also claim that they are just celebrating their heritage, by not necessarily affirming themselves as White supremacists.

This article begins by revisiting the history of Confederate emigration to Brazil, followed by an analysis of the polarized interpretations of *Confederado* history. I argue that although social justice and anti-racist actions have not toppled the pillars of *Confederado* public memory, they are generating a new story by grappling with the gaps in how *Confederado* memory is represented. I argue that closing the gaps can only occur by acknowledging the historical and contemporary terror associated with the Confederate flag and other symbols of Confederate ideology and by linking the legacies of the ideological, racial, economic, and political agenda of *Confederados* with contemporary *non-Confederados* in the region. In the conclusion, I summarize the implications of unsettling *Confederado* public memory. I suggest that, although these efforts do not eliminate the root causes of injustice, they are important social, cultural and political starting points for rescripting or recalibrating dominant renderings of the past.

Figure 1. Map of Santarém, Pará. Source: Encyclopedia Britannica, "Santarém". https://www.britannica.com/place/Santarem-Brazil.

Confederados in Santarém

Santarém (see Figure 1) and its environs, nestled between the Tapajós and Amazon rivers, is a vibrant, multicultural mosaic of overlapping historical, cultural, and geographical processes.[18] Indigenous groups have been warding off or have been enslaved by missionaries and European colonizers since the sixteenth century. People in the region today express varied identities in relation to their labor and the land they occupy, intertwined with national, regional, and international policies and social movements. It is home to vast Indigenous reserves, *seringueiros* (rubber tappers), *ribeirinhos* (river people), as well as illegal *garimpeiros* (gold miners), large soy and cattle ranches, loggers and *grileiros,* who falsify documents to claim land ownership. Its 300,000 inhabitants share overlapping identities as Indigenous, *caboclo(a)*, *quilombolas* and peasants.[19] More recent residents have relocated from the states of São Paulo and Mato Grosso and are involved in the lucrative, expansive and expanding soy and cattle ranching industries.

Extensive commercial and political circuits were forged with Brazil prior to and during the "theatre of operation of the American Civil War," which paved the way for *Confederado* settlements.[20] The Amazon region was long viewed by U.S. politicians and slaveowners as a blank slate for commercial exploitation using enslaved or cheap labor, as well as a destination for the "deportation of free Black people."[21] In 1866, Reverend Ballard Smith Dunn, an episcopal preacher from New Orleans,

18 Oscar de la Torre, *The People of the River: Nature and Identity in Black Amazonia, 1835–1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

19 *Caboclo(a)* identity in Santarém draws from a mixture of Indigenous, African and riverine/forest identity. Pará also has the highest percentage of people who identify as Black and brown (*pardo*) of any Brazilian state.

20 Isadora Moura Mota, "On the Imminence of Emancipation: Black Geopolitical Literacy and Anglo-American Abolitionism in Nineteenth-Century Brazil" (PhD dissertation, Brown University, 2017), 91.

21Abraham Lincoln, John Nicolay and John Hay, *Abraham Lincoln: Complete Works, Comprising His Speeches, Letters, State Papers, and Miscellaneous Writings*, vol. 2 (New York: Century Company, 1907 [1894]), 274-75; Andrew N. Cleven, "Some Plans for Colonizing Liberated Negro Slaves in Hispanic America", *Journal of Negro History*, 11, no. 1 (1926): 35-49, https://doi.org/10.2307/2714022, cited in Whitfield J. Bell, "The Relation of Herndon and Gibbon's Exploration of the Amazon to North American Slavery, 1850-1855", *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 19, no. 4 (1939): 503.

Louisiana, published *Brazil, a Home for Southerners*, which outlined the possibility of creating a new Confederate nation in Brazil.[22] Confederate Matthew Fontaine Maury, a Virginian, oceanographer, inventor of the underwater telegraph, and Commander of the Confederate States Navy during the Civil War, believed that a southern empire could be created by linking southern ports in the United States to the Amazon region.[23] He advocated for the relocation of freedpeople in the United States and scoping out the conditions for relocation of southern planters and their slaves to the Amazon region.[24] The pushback, however, centered on this backdoor route to expand slavery beyond U.S. borders.[25]

Confederate emigrants to Santarém followed the encouragement of Major Lansford Warren Hastings, who promised them that their sugarcane, cotton, tobacco, watermelon, and rice would be cultivated by enslaved laborers on fertile land, and "would yield profits surpassing what they had prior to the Civil War."[26] In 1867 he wrote the *Emigrant's Guide to Brazil* after the President of the Province of Pará offered to help in relocating Confederates. In return, Hastings promised to recruit up to 400 settlers with agricultural experience to develop the area.[27] By 1868, the emerging *Confederado* colony numbered ap-

22 Dunn, Ballard Smith, *Brazil, the Home for Southerners; or, A Practical Account of What the Author, and Others, Who Visited That Country, for the Same Objects, Saw and Did while in That Empire* (New York: George S. Richardson, 1866).

23 In 2020, the monument to Maury in Richmond, Virginia was vandalized and removed due to his pro-slavery views.

24 Maria Clara Sales Carneiro Sampaio, "Não diga que não somos brancos: os projetos de colonização para Afro-Americanos do governo Lincoln na perspectiva do Caribe, América Latina e Brasil dos 1860" (PhD dissertation, University of São Paulo, 2013), 94-128; Sampaio, *A Amazônia no olhar imperialista*, 4-24; Nícia Villela Luz, *A Amazônia para os negros americanos: as origens de uma controvérsia internacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Saga, 1968); Matthew Fontaine Maury, *The Amazon and the Atlantic Slopes of South America: A Series of Letters Published in the National Intelligencer and Union Newspapers, under the Signature of "Inca"* (Washington, D.C.: F. Taylor, 1853); Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017), 394.

25 William Lewis Herdon, *Exploration of the Valley of the Amazon, 1851-1852* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1952), 379.

26 Bell, *The Relation of Herndon and Gibbon's Exploration*, 495; Silva, "Confederates and Yankees", 371; Hill, *Confederate Exodus.*

27 Initial emigrants included the Vaughan-Jennings family (also spelled as Vaughon, Wanghon, Waughan, Von), Pitts, Henry and Craig Steele, Emmett, Mendenhall and Pichowski families. The Henningtons, Rikers, Wallaces and Rhomes were not part of the original Hastings group.

proximately 192-200 people. To facilitate their relocation, the Brazilian government paid their transportation to Brazil, provided land grants south of Santarém, and provisions for six months, with the understanding that this loan would be repaid when they got on their feet and sold their first crops.[28]

Confederado collective memories, based on *Confederado* memoirs, focus on their industriousness in overcoming the difficulties of migration after a devastating war, cultural dislocation, and adapting to a new environment, language, and climate. From the outset, the emigrants in and around Santarém had difficulty with lack of provisions, exposure to disease and inexperience with agricultural labor.[29] They complained to the U.S. consul in Belém about the quality of the food and the dire housing. Few were able to establish or maintain any type of subsistence, and they passed the time drinking and roaming about town. The naturalist Herbert Smith described them as "a rabble of lazy vagabonds, offscourings of the army, and vagrants of Mobile, who looked upon the affair as an adventure."[30] For the initial settlers, their situation deteriorated substantially after Hastings passed away, which resulted in all future government financial support being cut off. Without land titles and in debt to the Brazilian government, many settlers requested assistance from the U.S. government to return to the United States.[31]

Interrogating *Confederado* heritage

Should a different *Confederado* story be told, and if so, what should it say? In 2021, 154 years after their arrival in Santarém, city councilman Carlos Silva submitted proposal no. 140 to Santarém's municipal cham-

28 Papavero, *et al.*, "The Travels of Joseph Beal Steere", 153; Célio Antonio Alcântara Silva, "Capitalismo e escravidão: a imigração Confederada para o Brasil" (PhD dissertation, Instituto de Economia, UNICAMP, 2011), 257.

29 Thomas Griffin, "Confederate Colonies along the Amazon River", *Brazil Herald*, March 28, 1981.

30 Herbert H. Smith, *Brazil: The Amazons and the Coast* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1879), 136.]

31 Silva, "Capitalismo e escravidão", 264.

ber requesting the creation of an annual special session on September 14 to honor *Confederados* and their contributions to the growth and development of the region. The proposal was unanimously approved by the chamber in August 2021.

Council member Biga Kalahare, who was not present at the time of the vote, later voiced opposition to the special session. Kalahare spoke as representative of a constituency of 15 groups in and around the area who support anti-oppression, anti-racist, and other social justice issues. The coalition included NGOs representing Black activists, quilombolas, Indigenous groups, educators, the unhoused, Black women's associations and businesses, and scholars, as well as representatives of those who are threatened with or forcibly relocated due to agro-industrial expansion. For them, *Confederado* public memory elides the voices of Afro-Brazilians and Indigenous people, while the legacies of slavery and settler colonialism linger in the spatial, class, racial, gendered, and religious ideologies of Confederates and their descendants. The Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT, Workers' Party) posted on their Facebook page:

> We, members of the Workers' Party – PT, (Santarém) oppose anyone who is racist, was slaveholding, and a White supremacist. We are against this ideology which was held by the American southerners who lost the Civil War ... are opposed to giving support to anything or anyone that supports this ideology... this group perpetuated violence both in the United States and in the places where they migrated.[32]

The coalition then sent a petition to the city council expressing their opposition to a special session for *Confederados*. They did not target specific individuals or disparage those who are engaged in humanitarian or educational endeavors. However, some did comment in

32 (1) PT - Santarém | Facebook, September 13, 2021.

conversation that the inequities initiated at the time of their arrival, such as the acquisition of large tracks of land, persist today. Benedito, one of the coalition members, shared that

> The day to honor their arrival in the city fails to acknowledge why they left the United States in the first place. They opposed abolition, or any kind of social and economic justice for the formerly enslaved. The continued public denial of this fact is what prompted those who signed the document to come together, because we have a different way of looking at their history, at their trajectory here.[33]

Following the media attention the petition received, the president of the municipal chamber, Ronan Liberal Jr., felt it best to cancel the special session "to avoid any conflict or embarrassment for descendants". In an online statement, he points to his arm and declares "I'm Black too", and that *Confederado* descendants "hold no responsibility for what their forbearers did."[34]

The reassessment of *Confederado* public memory did not end with the petition. Coalition members created an online public panel that included two historians, one anthropologist and one local activist who each spoke about the history of *Confederados* and their migration to the region. The goal of the public forum was to "strengthen a culture of democracy, peace and anti-racism" by questioning the veracity of *Confederado* history based on a singular, White narrative. "Where is the history of the enslaved or Indigenous people in their story? We, too, want to be a part of producing that history". Ciro Brito, a social justice lawyer, introduced the class by noting that "It is unfortunate that council members would want to celebrate terror, racism and...

33 Conversation with Benedito, May 2022.

34 Rogério Almeida, "Após polêmica, Câmara de Santarém cancela homenagem a Confederados, supremacistas estadunidenses que chegaram em Santarém/PA há 153 anos", *FURO*, September 13, 2021, http://rogerioalmeidafuro.blogspot.com/2021/09/apos-polemica-camara-de-Santarém .html.

White supremacy... in the twenty-first century... in a city that was constructed by Black and Indigenous peoples". According to social justice lawyers who signed the letter, "Article 4, item VIII, of the Constitution repudiates terrorism and racism. Therefore, this proposition is considered unconstitutional, due to the history of slavery and the supremacist and consequently racist character of the 'celebrated' group."[35]

Panelists contextualized *Confederado* racial and political ideology by covering the history of U.S. imperialism in the north of Brazil, scientific racism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the 'one-drop' paradigm (to determine African ancestry), Jim Crow laws (state sanctioned segregation) as well as post-abolition labor practices in Pará. History professor Luana Bagarrão who specializes in the history of Africa and Afro-Brazilian Culture at the UFOPA (Universidade Federal do Oeste do Pará, Federal University of Western Pará), spoke about the Confederate migrants not only seeking a better life, but

> bringing their ideas and culture with them. Whether they were slaveowners or not, their attitudes were shaped by the scientific racism of the day. They attempted to reproduce their lives in other places, not only Brazil. They carried their notions of White supremacy, and of racial purity. Mixture was seen as a form of degeneration of the race. They were defeated in the war, and feared post-abolition violence, the rise of Black power, retaliation and persecution, and many opted for asylum.[36]

Panelists challenged the notion that *Confederados* were pioneers who survived against the odds questioning the narrative that White

35 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública – Confederados na Amazônia: O exílio disfarçado de progresso", *Tapajós de Fato*, September 23, 2021, https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976. All material cited from this panel in Portuguese was translated by the author.

36 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 38:00-55:00.

foreigners brought progress, development, and uplift to the region. Professor Bagarrão continued:

> This narrative continues to associate a group of people with bringing order and progress. But we have to ask, progress for whom? From whose point of view? History must be interpreted from all points of view. Principally from those on the margins, common people, who have little written in the newspapers and other historical sources, but are still there producing knowledge, working, building this local economy.[37]

They addressed the gaps in *Confederado* public memory that elides or mentions only briefly the issue of owning slaves prior to or after emigrating to Brazil[38]. *Confederado* memoirs tend to dismiss slavery as a motive for emigration, noting that slavery was waning, and emancipation was imminent in Brazil.[39] It is unclear how much of the heavy lifting *Confederados* did in clearing, cultivating, and harvesting crops, or carrying out domestic chores. Memoirs reinforce an overarching narrative of *Confederado* hard work and accomplishment and much of the scholarly research that relies on these memoirs corroborates this narrative.[40] Scholars have questioned whether the legality of slave labor in Brazil was a primary factor in their decision to migrate. Historians James Roark in *Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civ-*

37 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 38:00-55:00.

38 *Confederado* descendant Harter claims that free Black laborers migrated with their former owners. These "loyal and willing servants" included 'Aunty Silvy', who preferred service to the Cole family from Mississippi, 'Rainey' from South Carolina, who became a riverboat pilot in Brazil, and 'Steve Watson', formerly enslaved by Judge Dyer of Texas. After financial failure, the Dyers left all their property to him. Harter, "The Lost Colony", 54-55; Goldman, *Os pioneiros americanos,* 123; Alcides Fernando Gussi, "Identidades no contexto transnacional: lembranças e esquecimentos de ser Brasileiro, Norte-americano e Confederado de Santa Bárbara d´Oeste e Americana" (Masters thesis, Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 1996); Brito, "Um paraíso escravagista na América do Sul".

39 Payne, "'A General Insurrection'", 169, and 177-185.

40 Silva, "Capitalismo e escravidão", 39.

il War and Reconstruction, and Gerald Horne in *The Deepest South: The United States, Brazil, and the African Slave Trade* note that the opportunity to legally obtain slaves in Brazil was a key "push" factor in Confederate emigration.[41] Marcus counters this view by noting that only one potential migrant to Brazil (out of 75 letters of inquiry) asked about slave labor.[42] However, Mota's research shows numerous letters of inquiry (from Alabama, Texas, Kentucky) about both the price of slaves and the possibility of bringing Black freedpeople with them to Brazil.[43] Others acquired slaves as part of a package deal when they purchased plantations (*fazendas*).[44] Dr. James McFadden Gaston, a former Confederate army surgeon from South Carolina, arrived in Brazil in 1865 and noted that slaves could be purchased for half of the price in the United States.[45] Seventy-five percent of those migrated to Brazil were slaveowners in the United States and owned more than 1,000 slaves prior to emigration. Fifty-four Confederate families acquired a total of 536 slaves during the twenty-three-year period between the abolition of slavery in the U.S. and its abolition in Brazil.[46] One author describes slavery as the "glue" of the community.[47] Overall, the possibility of acquiring slaves most likely configured as one of many factors in the decision to emigrate.[48]

41 James L. Roark, *Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: Norton, 1977), 124; Horne, *The Deepest South*; Marcus, *Confederate Exodus,* 66.

42 In *Confederate Exodus: Social and Environmental Forces in the Migration of U.S. Southerners to Brazil*, geographer Alan Marcus examines the backgrounds of *confederados*, and offers reasons why, with whom, and under what conditions they emigrated, the circumstances of acquiring land, and reasons for the longevity or failure of different settlements, and provides an overview of the scholarly and biographical publications on *confederados*. See also Harter, *The Lost Colony,* 35-53. Keyes diary includes passages about the difficulty in purchasing slaves or hiring freed slaves as laborers.

43 Mota, *On the Imminence of Emancipation,* 212.

44 Steven Phillip Lownes, "Johnny 'Joãozinho' Reb: The Creation and Evolution of Confederate Identity in Brazil" (PhD dissertation, Ohio State University, 2018), 162; Horne, *The Deepest South*, 203. Harter, *The Lost Colony,* 53.

45 In 1867 he published a travelogue and resettlement guide, *Hunting a Home in Brazil: The Agricultural Resources and other Characteristics of the Country. Also, the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants* (Philadelphia: King and Baird, 1867).

46 Silva, "Confederates and Yankees", 380. Gussi reports a lower number (66). Gussi, "Identidades", 237.

47 Silva, "Confederates and Yankees", 379-380. Horne, *Deepest South*, and Brito, "Um paraíso escravagista", also discusses *confederado* slave ownership.

48 Mota, "On the Imminence of Emancipation", 212.

Historian Célio Silva research on the Santarém *Confederados* notes slave ownership prior to and after emigration to Brazil. Between 1870-1878, the Santarém immigrants (that included the Hall, Rhome, Jennings, Riker, and Emmett families) bought 33 slaves. He compares this to slave ownership in 1860, and notes that the Rhome, Riker and Jennings owned slaves in both in the United States and in Brazil.[49] Rhome had the largest number of enslaved laborers (twenty-seven), which allowed the Taperinha plantation (sixty miles east of Santarém) to become one of the most profitable settlements in the area.[50] Its fertile soil produced cacao, fruits, corn, cotton, rice, and sugarcane, distilled into high-quality and much sought-after Brazilian sugarcane brandy (*cachaça*). Their high-quality tobacco even had its own stamp: TAPERINHA. There was a sawmill and watermill, and Rhome is widely known for having built the first steamboat in the Amazon. Some visitors to Taperinha (which is now privately owned) expressed to me their uneasiness knowing that enslaved labor was the engine of Taperinha's success. At different times Taperinha had up to 80 enslaved laborers.[51] Historian Eurípedes Funes mentions 56, and provides a rich history of the local quilombos, descendants of the fugitive slaves from the Taperinha plantation, that continue to shape the cultural life of the region. On estate inventories from 1865-1872, Benedito and Manuel, Miquelina and Raimunda are listed, with ages from "recently born" to 62. Alongside their names is their "value," aligned with age and health status, with two persons listed as "old" and "without value". By 1872 Jerônimo, a carpenter, age 23, had fled, leaving behind two infant children. So had Belchior, age 29, and Maria Ignácia, age 60. An 1872 advertise-

49 Silva, "Capitalismo e escravidão", 275-82. In the United States Jennings owned eleven slaves, in Brazil one slave; Rhome owned five and in Brazil twenty-seven, Riker owned thirteen and in Brazil one, Vaughn owned forty-eight and in Brazil none.

50 The plantation was owned by Colonel Miguel Antônio Pinto Guimarães, vice-President (Governor) of the Province of Pará and future Barão de Santarém. In 1872, in an attempt to modernize the plantation, Guimarães entered into a partnership with confederado Rômulus John Rhome, from Texas, creating the firm *Pinto and Rhome*. Rhome purchased half the plantation and half the slaves, and became resident manager. Guimarães was the son-in-law of Maria Macambira, a large landowner in the Lower Amazon region, with had a reputation for extreme cruelty towards her enslaved laborers. Silva, "Capitalismo e escravidão", 283-84.

51 Reports vary about the number of slaves at Taperinha, from 30-80. See Smith, *Brazil: The Amazons and the Coast*, 171-74.

ment also notes 3-4 enslaved men (in their 20s) who fled Taperinha.[52] It is this silence or disregard concerning slavery in *Confederado* public memory that perpetuates a dishonest narrative and marginalizes the history of Afro-Brazilians in the region.

Panelist and history professor Luis Lourindo (UFOPA), who specializes in the history of the lower Amazon (*Baixo Amazonas)*, noted that:

> Even if they did not buy slaves here, they carried with them the intent or expectation to continue their way of life here... those who did not or could not afford to buy slaves applied the same exploitative labor conditions to those they hired: the freed slaves, the Indigenous people, or those fleeing penury, such as the Cearense... where are their voices in the stories about *Confederados*?... We have to invert the perspective about the *Confederados* bringing their entrepreneurial ways to the city, their saintliness and talk about who really built this city... to understand this story better... to include the Indigenous culture and African culture as well.[53]

Panelists also linked *Confederado* history to the entrenched, hierarchical power structure that has held their public memory in place "by those who are linked by kinship, money, political power, and land. They still benefit from what happened in the past."[54] And "they (*Confederados*) are still part of the elite class here, and behind the scenes are protecting their interests."[55] Panelists emphasized that there needs to be more trans-

52 The Barão de Santarém was the slaveowner. Estimates cited from Eurípedes Funes, "Bom Jardim, Murumurutuba, Murumuru, Tiningu, Ituqui, Saracura, Arapemã. Terras de Afro-amazônidas – 'Nós já somos a reserva, somos os filhos deles'" (1995): 4, 21. Author paper based on Eurípedes A. Funes, "Nasci nas matas nunca tive senhor: História e Memória dos Mocambos no Baixo Amazonas" (PhD dissertation, University of São Paulo, 1995).

53 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 30:00-37:07.

54 Conversation with coalition member April 2022.

55 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 16:07-16:10.

parency about the purchase of "empty" public land, and the cartography of intergenerational land concentration, dispossession of Indigenous peoples, and the precarious status of quilombos near a *Confederado* plantation. They also spoke extensively about the "new colonizers", reconstructed versions of *Confederados* that include agribusinesses, such as soy and cattle ranchers, and those engaged in illegal deforestation and mining, whose practices destroy the environment and livelihoods of local peoples.[56]

The Confederate flag was discussed by Carla Ramos Munzanzu, an Afro-Brazilian Anthropology Professor at UFOPA who specializes in African and African diaspora studies. She emphasized that the pain and trauma associated with the Confederate flag for Black people cannot be excised by superimposing the flag with a screen of family and unity. While studying in Texas she witnessed first-hand the violent backlash over the removal of the Confederate flag from public buildings, and gave a warning about the implications of "dangerous inattention." "A Confederate flag is painted on the wall of a small condominium in the center of Santarém. This is a warning sign... that communicates its meaning very well to a more attentive audience."[57] It is part of the cultural work that broadcasts a message about "who the heroes are," despite the disquiet experienced by Black and brown residents who have to pass the image daily. It should alarm people, Professor Munzanzu added, that this and other White supremacist, racist and fascist symbols are displayed by members of the former President Bolsonaro's administration and his supporters:

> The proposal to honor *Confederados* forces us to ask, what is going on here? What are they (*Confederados*) do-

56 These "new colonizers" are also tied to the harassment and murder of environmental activists who speak out against deforestation, illegal mining, and the expansion of soy and cattle farms.

57 "Vereador homenageará a chegada de supremacistas brancos em Santarém", *Tapajós de Fato*, September 13, 2021, https://www.tapajosdefato.com.br/noticia/397/vereador-homenageara-a-chegada-de-supremacistas-brancos-em-Santarém; "Partidos Políticos posicionam-se sobre a tentativa da Câmara em homenagear ex-confederados", *Tapajós de Fato*, September 15, 2021, https://www.tapajosdefato.com.br/noticia/405/partidos-politicos-posicionam-se-sobre-a-tentativa-da-camara-em-homenagear-ex-confederados.

> ing by expressing these memories, wanting a celebration at this moment? In bringing up to the surface a past that is so difficult for us, and it is still, unfortunately, connected to our daily lives. At what point did 'American settlements' become '*Confederados*'? What are we dealing with now in Santarém that we have to come together to debate this? How can we tie this or compare it to what is happening globally, to things that are happening now?[58]

The "dangerous inattention" to what is happening now points to the widespread support for Bolsonaro, whose uncensured racist, misogynist, homophobic, anti-Indigenous, anti-science, militaristic and xenophobic comments tap into these beliefs among his supporters. Impunity for police officers who murder suspected criminals and civilian gun ownership was sanctioned by the now former President, as was the violation of environmental laws, criminalization of activists and journalists, and withdrawal of financial support for minorities and universities.[59]

The Confederate flag painted on a building in the center of the city in the twenty-first century is evidence of the distorted *Confederado* historical narrative that fails to recognize the cultural trauma that blankets the quotidian world of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous peoples in the area. In order to disrupt the traditional *Confederado* narrative,

58 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 58:00-1:19:00; "Do 'white power' ao copo de leite, entenda símbolos ligados à extrema direita". *Folha de São Paulo,* March 25, 2021; https://www1.folha.uol.com.br/mundo/2021/03/do-white-power-ao-copo-de-leite-entenda-simbolos-ligados-a-extrema-direita.shtml; *A Tribuna,* "Apoiador de Jair Bolsonaro se veste de Ku Klux Klan durante manifestação", *A Tribuna,* April 23, 2021, https://www.atribuna.com.br/noticias/atualidades/apoiador-de-jair-bolsonaro-se-veste-de-ku-klux-klan-durante-manifestacao; *G1*, "Professor usa roupa semelhante à da Ku Klux Klan, grupo de supremacia branca, em escola estadual de SP; VÍDEO", December 12, 2021, https://g1.globo.com/sp/sao-paulo/noticia/2021/12/21/professor-de-escola-em-santo-andre-se-veste-com-fantasia-que-remete-a-supremacia-branca.ghtml.

59 The former president, Jair Bolsonaro, is often called the "Trump of the Tropics". See "Who Is Jair Bolsonaro? Brazil's Far-Right President in His Own Words", *The Guardian*, October 29, 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/sep/06/jair-bolsonaro-brazil-tropical-trump-who-hankers-for-days-of-dictatorship; Antônio José Bacelar da Silva, and E. R. Larkins, "The Bolsonaro Election, Antiblackness, and Changing Race Relations in Brazil", *The Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology* 24, no. 4 (2019): 900.

a "new narrative" should tie the systemic conditions that created *Confederados* to present day social justice issues:

> We know that racist and White supremacist groups use the Confederate flag as a symbol of their ideology, why don't they seem to know that? But the reckoning with *Confederado* history goes beyond whether they owned slaves, display of the flag on buildings or motorcycles or accepting that they are not racist because they married a Brazilian.[60]

In the period of questions that followed the public forum, an audience member spoke about the importance of "not being afraid to speak out... we have to speak on behalf of ourselves and not delude ourselves with these lies that are not ours." Another noted that the pushback to the special session "showed that our city is a Black and Indigenous city, that we need to tell a different story besides the one celebrating White supremacy, one that will raise awareness about the struggles of Black activists (Movimento Negro), and Indigenous activists." Audience member Araujo reiterated that we:

> have to see how this issue is connected to the present, how the racism and prejudices that they (*Confederados*) held continue to structure our daily life. Yes, they have their own memories, but we have to problematize those memories, connect them to what is happening with the current [presidential] administration, and in the same way our ancestors resisted and fought back we are going to resist this narrative through forums like this, raise our voices, against this history they want to pass along to us, the history of White people, Confederates.[61]

60 Conversation with coalition member April 2022.

61 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 1:45:00-1:46:00.

The topic of racism continued with audience member Bruno telling a story about when he was stopped by police at age sixteen because they suspected he had robbed a bank. "They put a revolver to my head and took me to the police precinct. The bank manager did not identify me as the robber, but this is the kind of racism that kills us." His story echoed other recent, brutal examples, captured on smartphones and posted on social media by witnesses, of the fatal encounters between police or *vigilantes* (private security guards), and Black youth in Brazil.[62] Although Brazil does not have death penalty, the police, *vigilantes*, and guns for hire routinely act as judge, jury, and executioner. In May 2022, Genivaldo de Jesus Santos died from asphyxiation after police officers detained him in the police car's trunk, in which the police had thrown a gas bomb. A few months earlier, Congolese refugee Moïse Kabagambea was lynched by his employer after he requested his wages to be paid. In 2020, João Alberto Silveira Freitas ("Beto") was killed by a security guard at the Carrefour department store in Porto Alegre, and five-year-old Miguel Otávio Santana da Silva, the son of a Black housekeeper, died after he fell from the ninth floor of a building while under the watch of his mother's white employer.[63] In these cases, Black comportment and behavior was criminalized in advance, judged

62 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 1:52:00-1:53:00. Of the 6,145 killed by police in 2021 in Brazil, 84% were Black. This is 9 times the rate of US law enforcement. Approximately seventeen Black youth are killed per day, which is a threefold increase since 2013. Kate Linthicum, "'The Police Come Here to Hunt': Brazilian Cops Kill at 9 Times the Rate of U.S. Law Enforcement", *Los Angeles Times*, October 1, 2022, https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-10-01/brazil-police-killings.

63 Constance Malleret, "Outrage in Brazil as Mentally Ill Black Man Dies in Police Car 'Gas Chamber'", *The Guardian*, May 26, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/26/brazil-mentally-ill-black-man-dies-gas-police-car. See also "Protests Erupt in Brazil after Black Man Dies after Being Beaten Outside Supermarket", *The Guardian*, November 21, 2020, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/nov/21/protests-erupt-in-brazil-after-black-man-dies-after-being-beaten-outside-supermarket. According to Douglas Belchior, from the Coalizão Negra por Direitos network, "Here we have a George Floyd every 23 minutes", Caio Baretto Briso and Tom Phillips, "A George Floyd every 23 Minutes': Fury at Refugee's Brutal Murder at Rio Beach", *The Guardian*, February 4, 2022, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/feb/04/brazil-congolese-refugee-murder-racism, and Terrence McCoy, "In Brazil, The Death of a Poor Black Child in the Care of Rich White Woman Brings a Racial Reckoning", *Washington Post,* June 28, 2020, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/the_americas/brazil-racism-black-lives-matter-miguel-otavio-santana/2020/06/26/236a2944-b58b-11ea-a510-55bf26485c93_story.html. June 28.

as threatening, or violating social norms, because they are Black. The young man who spoke earlier went on to say that:

> We need to see how today there are people raising the Confederate flag together in support of Bolsonaro and to honor *Confederados* as creators and innovators, you can be sure that everything they constructed relied on the sweat and suffering of Black and Indigenous people, so we have to retell the story, to stop telling the same narrative that is affixed to their story.[64]

Although *Confederado* cultural memory approaches the Confederate flag as unifying rather than divisive, it is not supported by scholarly evidence or aligned with the collective memory of African Americans. Professor Munzanzu's reference to "dangerous inattention" suggests that the display the Confederate flag in the twenty-first century is intentional, and its meaning far from benign. The flag was never a harmless symbol of southern resistance, which helps to understand why it is viewed transnationally as a symbol of oppression. Its display was meant to send a threatening message, condoned by White institutions. In the United States the flag was displayed with Black persons lynched by the Klu Klux Klan as early as 1866, and later flew at segregated locations such as bus stops, stores, movie houses, restaurants, and court houses, where Jim Crow laws eroded the social and political gains made during Reconstruction. Its use gained momentum again during the civil rights movement in the 1950s and 1960s to symbolize opposition to desegregation. More recently it is used by White supremacists and nationalists as a symbol of the political and social dominance of White people, and opposition to immigration.[65] It is also displayed by

64 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 1:58:00-2:00:00.

65 White supremacy is the notion that Whiteness is inherently superior both biologically and culturally to all other identities, which supports the notion that White people have a natural right to control non-White persons, considered inferior. It extends beyond just an attitude or

those who advocate for White ethnostates and as a battlefield symbol for a RAHOWA (racial holy war).[66] According to Professor Munzanzu, it is a statement about power, and the fact that it is still displayed in the middle of town points to who is in control of the narrative. It does not matter if it is displayed at a festival or on a building or jacket or mouse pad, or by neo-Nazi groups in Brazil.[67] Its intent is to naturalize a racist ideology.

At the conclusion of the public forum, Professor Bagarrão noted that

> As a society we are still honoring racist symbols of a slave past. Again, at what point did they stop being immigrants, and became '*Confederados*'? You cannot separate that identity as *Confederados* with White supremacy. We are not naming names. We are just saying we are not going to celebrate their past. We have to occupy these spaces, spaces of memory, spaces of resistance.[68]

In a conversation with João, a social justice lawyer who signed the petition and works on behalf of marginalized communities, he pointed to the social and material impact of *Confederado* migration in creating a "landscape of displacement." He noted:

perspective, as it relies on a system of exploitation to maintain the wealth, power and status associated with White privilege.

66 Jordan Brasher provides a summary of international locations where self-ascribed rebels, xenophobes, and freedom fighters have displayed the Confederate flag, including Ireland, the UK, and Germany, see Brasher, "The Crisis of Confederate Memory", 1327.

67 According to the late Adriana Dias, there are over 500 cells and fifty-two neo-Nazi groups in Brazil. See Lucas Vasques, "Quase 1 milhão de pessoas leram material neonazista em 2021, diz pesquisadora", *Forum*, January 18, 2022, https://revistaforum.com.br/politica/2022/1/18/quase-milho-de-pessoas-leram-material-neonazista-em-2021-diz-pesquisadora-108905.html. See also Leandro Demori, "Pesquisadora encontra carta de Bolsonaro publicada em sites neonazistas em 2004", *The Intercept Brasil,* July 28, 2021, https://theintercept.com/2021/07/28/carta-bolsonaro-neonazismo/.

68 *Tapajós de Fato*, "Aula Pública", https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=560085551965976, 2:05:00-2:08:00.

> The day to honor *Confederados* and their descendants is just what broke the camel's back. One more public acknowledgement to honor power, colonialism, and its legacies, in carving out control over the territory. A 'Confederate day' and opposition at this moment was just to expose what is already happening with this [presidential] administration, which is a form of fascism. The honoring of Confederates just seems to align with all of that. So, the response was, really? To honor people who fled where they were because they opposed the end of slavery and Black political and economic power on top of everything else? As I said, the *Confederados* or their descendants are not the real issue. I don't think most people really know or care about them; it is just what they symbolize. The arrogance, the violence. A "Confederate day" is just one more example of taking control of space, no concern for local people, which is what the original settlers did.

Tomás, another social justice lawyer who opposed the special session shared a similar perspective:

> There is this narrative that *Confederados* had this benign past and only contributed to development in the region, but that glosses over the legacies and contemporary inequities, such as the huge tracks of land they own that were given to them, that they still benefit from. The resistance to land distribution and conflicts with Indigenous and quilombola peoples today. It is not just a resistance to *Confederados* day. It is a call to shift social and economic relations they have with people here. A reckoning with the narrative. It is about making public their economic and historical relationship with this region. In the past most people would just keep quiet about it, or ignore it, but this

> time we felt that the time had come to decolonize this history, to resist a special day or session set aside for them, to highlight the power they still hold here. It is not just about our city or region. It is part of a global history of control and expansion.[69]

Zé, a local resident who did not sign the petition but opposed a special day for *Confederados* provided a stark assessment of what happens to those who challenge the local power structure, which includes upper-class *Confederados*:

> If someone gets in their way, they just hire a thug to take them out. The encroaching soy farmers are ignorant of any local concerns. Their only involvement is knowing who to talk to at the bank. They don't even know, or care, who the mayor is, or local politicians. They are irrelevant.

He then connected them to *Confederados*.

> They (*Confederados*) benefited, were given land grants. And they still are benefitting. They own huge tracks of land[70]. They are in cahoots with local politicians. They have their own association[71], and fund politicians who support agro-industrial development. They cannot see or admit that they are part of the power structure, even if they married a person of color, or hire them as a housekeeper or nan-

69 Conversation with Tomás, March, 2023.

70 There was extensive intermarriage and buying and selling of property among about a dozen families (between fifty to eighty-seven persons) in Santarem. *História Mundi*, "Os confederados na Amazônia", 2016, https://histormundi.blogspot.com/2016/01/os-confederados-na-amazonia.html; See Betty Antunes de Oliveira, *Alguns Dados Históricos da Vinda de Norte-Americanos ao Brasil no Século XIX,* Mimeo, 2012, http://bettyoliveira.com.br/historia/documentos.htm.

71 Associação dos Descendentes de Confederados Americanos na Amazônia. Associação dos Descendentes dos Confederados Americanos na Amazônia, asdecon.blogspot.com.

> ny. When you listen to the patronizing rhetoric, that when they (wealthy light-skinned Brazilians from the south) purchase land here, like *Confederados* did, and forcibly remove, displace or deny Indigenous peoples and quilombolas land, they couch it in terms of something inevitable and modern, that agro-industrial expansion will create jobs, but this is not the case. Do you know that Cargill built a plant on top of an archaeological site?[72]

Confederados in Santarém never mentioned opposition to the abolition of slavery or policies and laws to support equality for the formally enslaved peoples as a motive for emigration, or that they carry any lingering White privilege. For them, racism and prejudice are individual attitudes, excised from any structural or systemic conditions. In addition, the Confederate flag should not be interpreted as harmful or oppressive to Black people in Brazil.

The opposition and subsequent cancellation of a special day to honoring them and their ancestors was unexpected. Open discussions about this issue are thwarted by the fear (and anger) that they are being judged or condemned by the actions of their ancestors. What happened 155 years ago and has nothing to do with who they are today. Craig, a *Confederado* descendant, said:

> [He] knew my ancestors were elites in South Carolina, and here as well. But my family was not given land here, they bought it. Overall, I feel proud. They left everything behind. They lost everything. But I did not grow up hearing the term *Confederados.*[73] Whenever I asked anyone in my

72 Conversation with Zé, May 2023. The site was leased to the Cargill soy processing company. "Sítio do Porto: um local sagrado indígena destruído pela Cargill em Santarém (PA)", Terra de Direitos e Conselho Indígena Tapajós Arapiuns, August 10, 2021, https://terradedireitos.org.br/acervo/videos/sitio-do-porto-um-local-sagrado-indigena-destruido-pela-cargill-em-santarem-pa/23630.

73 They were referred to as "American settlers" or settlements. Due to the negative media attention about *Confederados* and the association with White supremacy and violence, pseud-

> family about why my ancestors left the U.S., the response was "because of the war". Otherwise, it was never spoken about at home. It was only after Norma's book was published in 1983 that it became a thing, an identity, more pronounced.[74] [After the book came out,] A journalist came here and wanted to interview me and the first thing they asked, quite aggressively, was "are you a racist"? "Are people in your family racist"? How do you respond to a question like that?

He also was adamant about distinguishing himself from *Confederados* in southern Brazil, who are invested in publicly maintaining antebellum White southern iconography as an expression of their cultural identity and heritage:

> They have their museum and cemetery and festival and carry a proud stance about being a *Confederado.* Certainly, there are historical threads, but we in Santarém are different. We are a riverine people, mixed. My heart and soul are here. I consider myself a caboclo. I married a mixed-race person. The people who migrated here after the Civil War ended up mixing with the locals. They learned the language. They intermarried. I can only describe it like the coming together of the Tapajós and Amazon rivers. On the surface it appears they do not meet. But underneath there is mixture and exchange. We are different from those who identify as *mestiço*, as that type of mixture edges towards wanting to be White or European.

onyms are used protect the privacy of those who prefer to remain anonymous. All conversations took place in Santarém between March and June 2022. These are not one-time interviews. Rather, ethnography allows for multiple encounters, conversations and meetings over time. From these conversations, patterns, themes and core issues repeat themselves, which can point to central concepts that shape identity, memory and heritage. All conversations were in Portuguese and translated by the author.

74 *Confederado* descendant Norma de Azevedo Guilhon, *Confederados em Santarém: saga Americana na Amazônia* (Rio de Janeiro: Presença, 1983).

He also distanced himself from the "new colonizers" identified by activists as being the modern version of *Confederados*, who live up in the highlands, do not mix with the locals, and disparage local residents as lazy, lacking in initiative, and an obstacle to progress. They "just keep expanding and dispossessing people from their land, even engaging in modern day slavery". He also made note that "White supremacy is not native to who we are", that it is "something the more recent arrivals have brought with them and attach to the flag."[75]

Clifford, another *Confederado* descendant and a well-respected local doctor, noted that "people in those groups don't even know us. Many of them don't even live here." Clifford "embraced by the city,", known internationally for his humane and culturally appropriate treatment of indigenous peoples, and "valuable contributions to the socially and economically development of Santarém."[76] He is one of five neurosurgeons serving more than one million people spread over an area of over 193,000 square miles and founder of the first public service of neurosurgery in the interior of the Brazilian Amazon. For over 20 years he has overcome logistical and cultural barriers and provided health care to people living in remote areas by flying his small plane into the area, and landing on make-shift airstrips in the forest. He operates on patients with neurological diseases contracted in the forest, such as hematomas caused by snake bites and TBIs caused by large, falling nuts, is fluent in Tupi-Guarani, and was appointed health coordinator of the Zo'é, an indigenous group living in the Amazon rain forest. His vocal support for the protection of Indigenous habitats has made him the target of death threats and harassment. He reiterated that:

> The story of the *Confederados* is one of acceptance, of multiculturalism, tolerance. It is a story of memory, of family. We use the Confederate flag here as a symbol of tol-

75 All conversations with Craig took place between March-May 2023.

76 "Cancelamento de homenagem a confederados: presidente da Câmara e vereadores se pronunciam sobre caso", TV Impacto, September 15, 2021.

> erance and multiculturalism, as a symbol of a new direction in life, which is totally different than the United States. There it represents everything that is awful, racism.

Like Craig, he emphasized intermarriage and integration. "I know where my ancestors came from, but their migration was not to recreate the social setting that existed in the antebellum south. That was over". He found the rejection of a *Confederado* heritage day perplexing and frustrating. As noted by other *Confederados* "they [coalition members] don't know us. Don't talk with us. We asked for a dialogue, and it was turned down. We would welcome an open, public debate about this issue."

When asked about the meaning of the Confederate flag as an expression of cultural identity, *Confederados* consistently disassociated it from its racist U.S. history and "Brazilianize" it with narratives of family, and cultural and racial unity, excised from any political movement or agenda, support for slavery, Jim Crow, or White supremacy.[77] Together with other symbols of their heritage, the flag is just a benign expression of southern iconography (White southern antebellum cultural heritage), nothing more.[78]

Despite the emphasis on distancing themselves from those in the south, this perspective aligns with Marcus' research on *Confederados*, which touches briefly on the recent protests over the display of flag at their heritage festival in Santa Bárbara. According to interviews conducted with members of the FDA (Fraternidade Descendência Americana, Fraternity of American Descent), an association representing the

77 Conversation with Craig, May 2023. See also "Interview with Dr. Erik Jennings", *Café Chic*, February 6, 2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hbvpSD7i3qo.

78 There is significant scholarship on the historical and contemporary meaning of the Confederate flag in the United States. Despite my own anti-flag biases, and political and ethical dilemmas with this topic, I withheld from judging or correcting perspectives in order to try to understand the meaning it holds for *Confederados* in the twenty-first century and how this aligns with their social world. See L. Esposito, "Confederate Flag Controversy", in *Race and Racism in the United States: An Encyclopedia of the American Mosaic,* eds. C. Gallagher and C. Lippard (Denver: Greenwood Press, 2014), 294-96, and R. E. Bonner, *Colors and Blood: Flag Passions of the Confederate South* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

Confederados, and their statements posted on social media, protesters do not understand the complex roots of *Confederado* history and are trying to impose a presentist lens from a chapter of U.S. history onto a radically different Brazilian reality. Members of the FDA dismiss protesters' grievances as trivial and their presence disruptive at what should be an entertaining event and blame external agitators aligned with the Black Lives Matter movement as instigating the conflict. They allege that by making parallels between race relations in the U.S., with its history of lynching and legal racial segregation in the form of Jim Crow laws, with conditions in Brazil, protesters are fomenting racial polarity where racial divisions are non-existent.[79] Opinion pieces in the press, on TV, and various online social media sites reflect a variety of opinions, including those who support how *Confederado* heritage is currently expressed. They note the presence of Black Brazilians at the festival as well, suggesting it has been given their stamp of approval or does not make them uncomfortable.

Geographer Jordan Brasher, who has conducted research on memory and place in Americana and Santa Bárbara and who is a Confederate descendant, provides a scathing critique of *Confederados* lack of acknowledgement of the role of slavery in the lives of Confederates, their motive for emigrating to Brazil, and the amnesia (or erasure) in their representation of their heritage. Having attended the festival, Brasher noted that the majority of Blacks in attendance were working as security guards, or as waiters serving attendees.[80] Therefore, he makes a heart-wrenching plea to recognize the implicit harm and disquiet that display of the confederate flag ignites. Yet, overall, *Confederados* believe that Black and brown Brazilians have no reason to find the Confederate flag offensive, as they were not (and are not) oppressed or victimized by what the flag symbolizes.[81]

79 Marcus, *Confederate Exodus*, 178-86.

80 Jordan Brasher, "A questão dos símbolos confederados em espaço público", personal communication, April 8, 2022.

81 Due to the extensive international negative attention the heritage festival in Santa Bárbara received over the past few years, the local municipal chamber voted to prohibit any display of the racist symbols in public, including the Confederate flag in 2022. They have also cance-

I asked John, a *Confederado* from the southeastern city of Americana who relocated to Santarém, his thoughts about the Confederate flag, and what its removal would mean in terms of changing or threatening their history, culture and identity. He responded:

> Look. Awhile back money began to take over. The festival (in Santa Bárbara) became a big extravaganza, a money-maker with lots of vendors and promoters. That's when things began to change, took on a different tone. First of all, I'm Brazilian. Period. That's my first identity. But I grew up speaking English at home and spoke English as well with my kids. I just thought that was important. Once I visited Georgia and was surprised at how at home I felt, but basically, I'm Brazilian.[82]

I returned to the issue of the flag, sensing it was a topic to be avoided, but according to him: "If there is a substitution for the flag, show it to me. The flag is about our history in coming here, not what happened after that (Reconstruction)."

Conclusion: Telling a New Story

What, then, is the story of *Confederados* in the twenty-first century? Is it possible to hold multiple viewpoints about the meaning of the confederate flag? Or are the different ways of understanding the past, and experiencing the present, irreconcilable? Although most *Confederado* settlements failed, the implications, or perhaps the baggage, of nineteenth century history persists in heritage festivals, flags, ruins, former plantations and the landscapes of former settlements. As Professor Munzanzu noted in her presentation, some may consider *Con-*

lled the festival for 2023. *Novo Momento*, "Exibição de símbolos racistas é proibida em Santa Bárbara", June 14, 2022. https://novomomento.com.br/vereadores-aprovam-retirada-de-simbolo-racista-em-bandeira/.

82 Conversation with John, April 2023.

federado history a rusty, dead issue, as Santarém and Brazil are vastly different than they were 150 years ago. But she also noted the urgency of unpacking the past, especially when past practices and policies are intertwined with contemporary issues such as structural violence, land disputes, land invasions and racialized violence. As expressions of cultural memory, they have become critical arenas for engaging in social justice and anti-racist activism in Santarém and in other locations reckoning with the legacies of slavery and settler colonialism.

A critical approach to heritage starts with an interrogation of stories, including previous untold stories. The disruption of *Confederado* public memory in Santarém was set in motion when the city council approved a proposal to create an annual commemoration to honor *Confederados.* A coalition of local, grassroots, social justice and anti-racist activists and their allies then submitted a petition opposing this measure. They further challenged the "given past" by interrogating *Confederado* history in a public forum. For them, *Confederado* heritage is incomplete because it relies on collective memories that perpetuate a "heritage that hurts," a heritage anchored and naturalized as consensual even though it obviously excludes the cultural and collective memories of Black and Indigenous peoples[83]. Speakers outlined how the "values they carried with them", were shaped by nineteenth century notions about slavery, race, White supremacy, and settler colonialism. Rather than resilient, courageous refugees from a war-torn country who brought progress and development to the region, they mapped how nineteenth century ideologies and practices were foundational to understanding systemic racism, the criminalization of Black and Indigenous peoples, and ecological devastation in the present. They noted the contradictions in the "scripts" that are used to create their heritage, ques-

83 Araujo, *Slavery in the Age of Memory;* Tania Andrade Lima, "Arqueologia como ação sociopolítica: o caso do Cais do Valongo, Rio de Janeiro, século XIX", *Vestígios – Revista Latino-Americana de Arqueologia Histórica* 7, no. 1 (2013): 179-207; Tania Andrade Lima, "Valongo: An Uncomfortable Legacy", *Current Anthropology* 61, no. 22 (2020): 317-27, https://doi.org/10.1086/709820. See also Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin: University of Texas Press,1997), 5. 'Difficult heritage' also includes cemeteries of the enslaved and residents of Indigenous boarding schools, and lynching sites in the United States.

tioning, for example, the importance of the "push" factors for migration (legal slavery in Brazil) and the alleged positive impact of *Confederados* in the region. They pointed to a lack of an honest acknowledgement about *Confederados* as slave owners, and their role in land dispossession among Indigenous and Quilombo communities. In addition, the cultural tropes used to revamp the meaning of the Confederate flag in Brazil, such as family, racial and ethnic affinity manifested in a shared Brazilian culture, and the dismissal of racially distinct experiences, was punctured by testimonies focusing on the "open wound" and historical patterns of racial and ethnic disparities, exclusion, and harassment in the region.[84] Overall, from the vantage point of Black and Indigenous persons whose perspective has for centuries been muted, *Confederado* history is deeply implicated with contemporary inequities shaped by color and race, class and land ownership and continues to be supported by transnational engines of colonization, and White supremacy, not neutral folklore.

Confederado narratives vary geographically and are multi-layered. In southern Brazil, *Confederado* public memory is reflected in festivals, cemeteries, railroad depots, historical exhibits and tours of renown *Confederados* and their homes. Notably absent or obscured in debates about *Confederado* public memory are the voices of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous peoples. The town where the annual heritage festival takes place, Santa Bárbara, does not officially recognize Black Consciousness Day (November 20), nor are Afro-Brazilians included in the local museum which focuses on immigrants to the area. There is neither recognition of Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous influence on the economy, architecture, and culture, nor markers of their ritual spaces, cemeteries, homes, and businesses.[85]

For *Confederados* in Santarém, cultural identity is shaped by narratives of sacrifice and resilience, of pioneers and their contributions.

84 Vinícius Bonifácio, "one of the biggest open wounds of racism in Brazil is denying the problem", and Vinícius Bonifácio, "Professor avalia estruturação do racismo no Brasil: "Pele alva e pele alvo", *Portal Geledés*, November 24, 2019, https://www.geledes.org.br/professor-avalia-estruturacao-do-racismo-no-brasil-pele-alva-e-pele-alvo/.

85 Brasher, "Crisis of Confederate Memory", 1321.

When asked about thoughts on the formal opposition to a day dedicated to honoring their ancestors, the response was "People in those group don't know us. Many don't even live here." Open discussions about this issue are couched in fear (and anger) that they are being judged or condemned by the actions of their ancestors, and that what happened 155 years ago and has nothing to do with who they are today. But for social justice and anti-racist activists, *Confederado* history excludes the voices, experiences, and intergenerational trauma of Black social actors who suffered at the hands of the Confederates who left the United States because they opposed abolition of slavery and held a racist ideology. The alarming socio-political climate in Brazil and its threats to lives and livelihoods also demanded an urgent response to the council's proposal. Although surprising and upsetting to *Confederados*, their memories clashed with a new generation that has come of age engaged with transnational advocacy for land rights and against police violence directed at Black youth, affirmative action, a more inclusive school curriculum that includes African, Afro-Brazilian and Indigenous history and culture, as well as images of anti-Black, anti-Indigenous violence and environment crimes shared in real time via social media platforms.[86] Rap and hip-hop music expressing the raw, quotidian reality of racism and discrimination faced by Black youth blasts from mobile phones and portable sound systems. Under these socio-political conditions, continuing to assert that a "Brazilianized" version of the Confederate flag carries a more benign, unifying, meaning than it does in the U.S. ignores, for the most part, the charged meaning that has been sutured to the flag for at least the last fifty years. If one follows the logic of a softer version of the flag, the same could be applied, for example, to the display of the swastika, or other Nazi symbols, or the dissemination of Nazi propaganda, which is a crime in Brazil.

Confederados have multiple opportunities to remember "who they were" in memoirs, festivals, in tangible artifacts that express the "southern way of life," as well as racial and class privilege. For Afro-Brazilian

86 Sueli Carneiro, *Mano Brown recebe Sueli Carneiro*, Interview by Mano Brown, Mano a Mano, Spotify podcast, 2022, audio 2:19:06; Sueli Carneiro, *Racismo, sexismo.*

and Indigenous activists and their allies, *Confederados* need to recognize and acknowledge how their history is linked to present-day conditions as they plan their annual heritage party, create museum displays, display the Confederate flag, or accept awards for their contributions to society. When *Confederados* dismiss these demands as incited by non-Brazilians, it excludes voices who are calling to action a reckoning with Brazil's history, an accounting for past atrocities, and discussion about links to present day social justice issues. These include the land concentration and displacement of Indigenous peoples and Quilombos caused by the settlement of *Confederados,* the legacies of plantations that relied on enslaved laborers, and muted (or non-existent) Black and brown memory in *Confederado* narratives.

In June 2022, the city council in Santa Bárbara voted to prohibit the public display of racist symbols, which includes the Confederate flag[87]. In Santarém, the proposal to set aside a special day to honor *Confederados* and their descendants was rescinded. However, the city of Santarém has yet to officially acknowledge or commemorate through public rituals or ceremonies the memory of the groups impacted by these practices, which perpetuates invisibility, erasure, and violence. Although protests against the display of the Confederate flag and opposition to special days honoring *Confederados* do not dismantle the historical injustices in the founding of *Confederado* settlements, they are starting points for rescripting or recalibrating dominant renderings of the past with less sentimental, more inclusive, interpretations. It remains to be seen whether this recalibration also enhances social justice.

87 *Novo Momento,* June 14, 2022, https://novomomento.com.br/vereadores-aprovam-retirada-de-simbolo-racista-em-bandeira/.

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