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Program on Healing Historical Memory
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The Civil War at 150 Years: Deep Wounds Yet to Heal

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Introduction

The substance of this paper was presented at the annual symposium of John Hope Franklin Center for Reconciliation, "The Politics of Reconciliation," on June 1, 2012, in Tulsa. It has been revised with new information and made to reflect the outcome of President Barack Obama's reelection on November 6, 2012.

The impetus for the paper was the widely shared concern about the paralysis of the federal government under our first African American president. A minority of Americans had through the instrumentality of the Republican Party in Congress devoted itself to making President Obama's administration a failure at apparently any cost. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) had said in *The National Journal* on November 4, 2010, "The single most important thing we want to achieve is for President Obama to be a one-term president."

The unprecedented use—or abuse—of the filibuster by the Senate Republicans to achieve McConnell's goal meant that the Democratic majority had to have sixty votes for any bill of substance. Common Cause president Bob Edgar announced on May 15 that the organization had gone to federal court to challenge the constitutionality of the Senate's filibuster rules. "Once used to extend debate," Edgar said, "the filibuster has become a partisan weapon that now is routinely used to block action—and even debate—on hundreds of bills and nominations." The Republican majority in the House of Representatives had voted thirty-three times in what might be called a compulsive legislative tantrum to repeal President Obama's Affordable Health Care Act.

That same majority voted in the spring to hold the country's first black chief law enforcement officer, Attorney General Eric Holder, in Contempt of Congress on at best a flimsy complaint.

The Brookings Institution's Thomas Mann and the American Enterprise Institute's Norman Ornstein, arguably the two most respected scholars of the Congress in the country and scrupulously non-partisan, said in their new book, *It's Even Worse Than it Looks: How the American Constitutional System Collided With the New Politics of Extremism*, "The GOP has become an insurgent outlier in American politics. It is ideologically extreme; scornful of compromise; unmoved by conventional understanding of facts, evidence, and science, and dismissive of the legitimacy of its political opposition."

This goal of this paper is to try to uncover the historical basis for the intensity of red state antagonism toward President Obama particularly in some southern and border states of the former Confederacy. The analytical approach is political-psychological and is meant to lay out a number of questions that call for answers. It is not meant to be an indictment of the historical actors to be discussed. Rather, it aims to describe some of political, economic, and psychological environments rooted in the pre-Civil War, the War itself, Reconstruction and post-Reconstruction eras that may shed some light on the sources of destructive behaviors and also historical wounds unhealed to this day that have contributed to the near paralysis of the federal government's ability to function. At the end the paper also examines the phenomenon of unacknowledged moral debts to the white South and African slaves of Northern slave-holders, particularly of New England. The hope is that acknowledgement of the harm inflicted by Northern and Southern whites on each other and on black slaves and freedmen and honest expressions of contrition could accelerate a reconciliation process in America that could truly heal our country from Massachusetts to Mississippi to Arizona to California.

(I am grateful to Dr. Peggy Brooks-Bertram for her extensive advice and whose scholarship on the efforts of Drusilla Dunjee Houston, a fighter for African-American civil rights and dignity, has been inspiring.)

Unhealed Historical Memory

We start with a proposition that suggests a direct link between political deadlock in Washington with the enduring impact of the losses in the South from the Civil War and the consequences of Reconstruction and what was called post-Reconstruction—i.e. the end of the federal occupation of the Southern states. We examine the Southern white effort to put back into "their place" the freed slaves and the mechanisms of Jim Crow laws and the terror of lynching to achieve the structural and psychological re-enslavement of the African-American population.

On September 9, 2010, President Obama addressed a joint session of Congress on his proposed health care legislation. He had just stated that the bill would not provide health care for illegal immigrants. Then suddenly, Rep. Joe Wilson, a Republican from South

Carolina shouted out to the president, “You lie !” shocking all present and presumably most everyone watching on television. Wilson later apologized for letting his “emotions get the better of me.” But he also sent out a self-congratulatory fund-raising letter to his supporters shortly after the event.

My proposition is this. While Mr. Wilson said he disagreed with the president’s health care proposal, his unprecedented outburst in a joint session of Congress while the President was speaking was truly meant to say, “I cannot bear to sit here being lectured to by a black man.” One can only speculate how much Mr. Wilson’s outburst reflects an earlier expression of rage by another South Carolina member of Congress, Senator “Pitchfork” Ben Tillman, reacting to the news that President Theodore Roosevelt and his wife had entertained Booker T. Washington at dinner in the White House on October 16, 1901. Tillman said, “The action of President Roosevelt in entertaining that n...er will necessitate our killing a thousand n...ers in the South before they will learn their place again.”

Let’s take a walk through history to see what support there may be for the idea that African Americans in high office remains highly offensive to a significant proportion to our country’s white population particularly in the South and West Virginia.

(In the November, 2012 presidential election, Mitt Romney received 22 million votes nation-wide. Of this total 38% came from the South and West Virginia. Of Romney’s , 206 electoral votes, 138, 24% , were from the South and West Virginia. In the Deep South, the white Democratic vote ranged from 26% in South Carolina and Texas to 14% in Louisiana, 11% in Mississippi and 10% in Alabama. Former Democratic Congressman from Alabama Artur Davis, an African-American now a Republican, said after the November election, “The Republican conservative base seems perilously close to shrinking to white southern evangelicals, senior white males, and upper income Protestants.”)

Joel Williamson, professor of history emeritus at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is considered by his peers to be one of the preeminent scholars of the South. The *New York Times Book Review* called his 1984 book, *A Crucible of Race*, “a major reinterpretation of black-white relations since the Civil War [which] has deepened our understanding of [Southern history’s] tragic dimensions and enduring legacies.”

Williamson explains that the institution of slavery had been under relentless pressure. Congress had forbidden importation of new slaves from abroad in 1808 and the effect was to concentrate slave ownership southward below the Mason-Dixon Line, isolating it and in the end causing its extinction. This did not mean that American leaders embraced black Africans as respected and respectable human beings. They in fact considered the mixing of whites and blacks as threatening the superiority of European culture. They asked themselves if America’s future might be made white through exclusion of blacks from society—recall in 1817, that the American Colonization Society supported *inter alia* by John Jay, Thomas Jefferson and James Monroe, created to send blacks back to Africa resulted in the establishment of the state of Liberia, with its capital named Monrovia. The

problem was that the vast majority of blacks refused to leave America. This was home for them.

Then an earthquake struck in black-white relations in the slave states. In 1831, in Southside Virginia, Nat Turner, a slave and Methodist lay preacher absorbed in End Times themes from the Book of Revelation, said he heard a heavenly voice tell him to slay his enemies. Turner led a group of rebellious slaves who slaughtered fifty-seven white men, women and children with axes, knives and guns, before being caught and killed themselves. The white victims were slaveholders and non-slaveholders. Their common feature is that they were all white, and the message, Williamson writes, was that when blacks rebelled all whites could be killed. It is very significant that Turner's evangelical fundamentalism seemed to be a mirror image of the white evangelical communities which later would be so prominent in the sacrificial lynching of African Americans described below.

After the Nat Turner rebellion, white Southern males were mobilized into a home guard, responsible for armed, mounted patrols constantly moving among slaves and eying free blacks. They made sure that blacks did not look them in the eye, and that they were always polite. Williamson says patrols were like juries on horseback who could summarily try, judge and punish blacks suspected of disrespect for whites or worse, possibly threatening violence. If one wonders about the enduring emotional strength of the National Rifle Association in today's America, Williamson offers one explanation: (All quotes are from his *A Rage for Order*.)

The militant South, the military South prone to shoot first and answer questions later, did and still does exist. It sprang from the necessity of controlling a potentially explosive black population. In the nineteenth century South the key to control lay in possessing all the gunsNegroes were well aware of the facts of life, and of death, and of the odds against them in an insurrection. (p. 11).

Protestant churchmen in the South played a different role in the effort to keep the black population under control in a more positive way than the patrols. Evangelicals especially worked to enroll slaves in their denominations or minister to them in their own black churches. But through theology and what then passed for science, the white ministers strengthened the argument for slavery, which was in fact racial. Simply put, black people were inferior to white people. God had made Negroes to be slaves and white Southerners fulfilled God's wishes. And in the last years of slavery, whites developed a stereotype of blacks as simple-minded, docile, children, often given the name of Sambo. (I remember as a child in the 1940's reading an illustrated book called *Little Black Sambo*.)

Williamson writes:

It was ...in the last generation of slavery that all blacks came to look alike in the eyes of Southern whites, and the person they chose to see was Sambo. The Sambo of imagination was a child adopted into the white family, an adult black body with a

white child's mind and heart, simultaneously appealing and appalling, naturally affectionate and unwittingly cruel, a social asset and a liability. Sambo had within him two terrific and opposite capacities. Improperly cared for, he became bestial, an animal in human form and all the more dangerous because of his human capabilities. Properly managed, on the other hand, he was like a white child—and dear. (p. 15).

Unsurprisingly, blacks played the Sambo role as a wary, survival defense against white potential panics over perceived Nat Turner-like threats. They kept their eyes looking down, shuffled their feet, spoke in soft, uncertain voices to convey the message that they were not a threat.

Another very important psychological fact of plantation slave society is the anxiety and indeed repressed but painful anger of Southern white women at the knowledge that their husbands, bothers and sons were sexually exploiting slave women and girls simply because they could at no legal or, it seemed, moral cost. Mulatto children were constantly appearing. The image of the virtuous white wife and mother propagated by the masters of the house and plantation served the purpose of distracting the women from the reality of the rampant rape by their men of defenseless female slaves. As Williamson writes, "The Southern woman did sometimes internalize the image of the plantation lady, and sometimes grew blind to the fact that the darkling boys and girls with whom her children played were their own brothers and sisters and a living insult to her integrity." (p. 28). We will return to this theme.

After the War: Radical Reconstruction

For a good twenty years after the end of slavery, Southern whites worked to reestablish the black-white relationship before the Civil War. One dominant theme among white Southerners was that Reconstruction imposed by the victorious North was meant to turn social and race relationships upside down—to upset the idea of the "place" that naturally separated blacks and whites. "It was a horrendous effort...to make the social order in the South a monstrosity. In the reduction of the planter elite and in the liberation of the slave and his elevation in civil life, it was as if the conquerors had lopped off the head and sewn on a foot in its place." (p. 37).

Reconstruction was in Southern eyes a horror, negating their sense of the proper social order. They raged at the Radical state legislatures with their black members eating peanuts during sessions and betraying their ignorance of parliamentary rules of order. "The democratic faith implicit in Radical Reconstruction was almost unthinkable to Southern minds; it sat crosswise over the molds of what ought to be racially and socially. In Southern eyes, Reconstruction was, in essence, an ordinance against nature and a denial of God." (p. 37). .

South Carolina, Rep. Joe Wilson's state, was particularly distressed. Fifty-eight per cent of its population was black. Whites felt that they were losing—or had lost---control of their

future and identity. They had a vision of perpetual domination by a black majority. The eager fighters who had started the Civil War by attacking Fort Sumter in Charleston harbor in 1861, were defeated. Many of the Southern whites who had been closest to large numbers of slaves and who affected to care for them as their protected children, now began to displace the rage they might have been expected to direct to the Northern victors or Confederate leaders for the loss of the war on the freed slaves.

In Thomas Dixon's 1905 novel, *The Clansman* (more on Dixon below), a defeated white gentleman gives his view of South Carolina under Reconstruction:

Black hordes of former slaves, with the intelligence of children and the instincts of savages, armed with modern rifles, parade daily in front of their unarmed former masters. A white man has no right a negro* need respect. The children of the breed of men who speak the tongue of Burns and Shakespeare, Drake and Raleigh have been disarmed and made subject to the black spawn of an African jungle.....No people in the history of the world have ever before been so basely betrayed, so wantonly humiliated and degraded! (*Dixon refused to capitalize "Negro.")

For a Russian to rule a Pole, a Turk to rule a Greek, or an Austrian to dominate an Italian, is hard enough, but for a thick-lipped, flat-nosed, spindle-shanked negro, exuding his nauseating animal odor, to shout in derision over the hearths and homes of white men and women is an atrocity too monstrous for belief.

Post-Reconstruction and the Rise of the Radicals

With the withdrawal of federal troops from the South effectively ending the era of Reconstruction, Radicalism became prominent in the South in 1889. Its rationale was that the Negroes, no longer restrained by the controls of slavery, were regressing to their original condition of bestiality. The new, young Negro was basically a savage, and he was a particular threat in his desire to rape white women. Radicals believed that in the end blacks and whites could not live together. They would have to go—back to Africa or someplace else.

The recession of the late 1880's and depression of the 1890's had a major impact on the minds of Southern whites. Men who had prided themselves on their ability to provide for their families suffered a significant loss of self-confidence and inevitably self-respect. The less advantaged among them came to believe it was impossible to have families. They felt inadequate and incompetent. It is psychologically plausible that in the face of white men's inability to meet the material needs of their families, they could at least compensate by militancy to physically protect their women from the perceived black animal rapist. Williamson writes:

In the Radical mind, the single most significant and awful manifestation of black retrogression was an increasing frequency of sexual assaults on white women and girl children by black men. Above all else, it was this threat that thrust deeply

into the psychic core of the South, searing the white soul, marking the character of the Southern mind radically and leaving it crippled and hobbled in the matters of race long after the mark itself was lost from sight. (p. 84)

(It is remarkable how effectively the image of the black beast rapist was used in the 1988 presidential campaign consistent with the Republican Party's "Southern strategy." The late South Carolinian, Lee Atwater, used the story of Willie Horton, himself a black native of South Carolina, who was serving a life sentence without possibility of parole in a Massachusetts prison for the brutal murder—19 stab wounds—of a 17 year old gas station attendant. In his capacity as Governor of Massachusetts, Michael Dukakis, the Democratic candidate running against Republican George Herbert Walker Bush, had granted Horton a weekend furlough as part of a rehabilitation policy for prisoners. Horton did not return and ended up raping a white woman in Maryland after pistol whipping her. The Maryland judge who sentenced Horton to two life sentences plus 85 years refused to send him back to Massachusetts, the only state in the Union that granted furloughs to prisoners sentenced to life without possibility of parole. The ad was believed to have had a strong mobilizing effect in the South and no doubt parts of the rest of the country.)

Thomas Dixon: The Black Rapist in Novels, On stage and Film

Joel Williamson says, "the one work nearest to codification of the [Southern white] Radical dogma came not at all in a scholarly form, but in a novel...*The Leopard's Spots*, written by Thomas A. Dixon, Jr. in 1902. (p. 96)". Dixon had seen a stage adaptation of Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, and he was outraged. Her novel is widely credited to have helped precipitate the Civil War. President Lincoln reportedly said when he met Stowe, "So this is the little lady who made this big war." One of the characters in *The Leopard's Spots* says of Simon Legree in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, "The picture of that brute with a whip in his hand beating a negro caused the most terrible war in the history of the world. Three millions of men flew at each other's throats and for four years fought like demons. A million men and six billions of dollars worth of property were destroyed." Dixon determined to write a counter novel. In his last book, *The Flaming Sword*, he wrote, "A novel is the most vivid and accurate form in which history can be written." Reality was to provide strong support for his view.

Thomas Dixon was born on January 11, 1864, in King's Mountain, North Carolina. He came from a Calvinist Presbyterian background but became a Baptist preacher, playwright, actor and novelist. He had studied at Wake Forest University and Johns Hopkins in Baltimore where, significantly, he had met fellow student Woodrow Wilson. He had lived and worked in New York and Boston before settling back home in the South. Anthony Slide wrote a valuable biography, *American Racist: The Life and Films of Thomas Dixon* (2004), and Williamson has a fascinating chapter in *A Rage for Order*, that deals quite persuasively with Dixon's psychological complexity, especially with his anger, documented in his own hand, at the fact that his mother had been forced to marry his father at age 13. As we have seen and will continue to do so, rape of "pure" white girls and women was a dominant theme in justification of lynching a blacks and white- led urban race riots.

It's important for the purposes of this paper to extract portions from *The Leopard's Spots* that conveys Dixon's sense of loss and injustice from the Civil War and Reconstruction and how he inspired millions of white Southerners to stand up and resist the depredations of the victorious federal government and to furiously and violently put the freed slaves back under white control. These texts can be seen in part as expressing some of the historical memory of the defeated and occupied white South but also a terrible record of abuse of blacks that has not been truly acknowledged and atoned for.

On defeat.

The ragged troops were straggling home from Greensboro and Appomattox ...The men were telling the story of surrender...Surrender! A new word in the vocabulary of the South. Desolation everywhere marked the end of an era....Not a cow, a sheep, a horse, a fowl...save here and there a stray dog, to be seen. Grim chimneys marked the site of once fair homes....The tramping soldiers looked worn and dispirited....They looked worse than they felt, and they felt that the end of the world had come. (p.4).

On the threat of freed slaves.

The town is swarming with vagrant negroes, bent on mischief. There are [white] camp followers...dealing out arms and ammunition to them, and ...inflaming the worst passions against their former masters, teaching insolence and training them for crime....Gradually...the towering figure of the freed negro had been growing more and more ominous, until its menace overshadowed the poverty, the hunger, the sorrows and the devastation of the South, throwing the blight of its shadow over future generations, a veritable Black Death for the land and its people. (p.33)

On resentment of Northern liberals.

Why is it that you good people of the North are sending your millions here now to help only the negroes, who feel least of all the sufferings of this war? The poor white people of the South are your own flesh and blood....They are, many of them, homeless, without clothes, sick and hungry and broken hearted. But one in ten of them ever owned a slave. They had to fight this war because your armies invaded their soil. But for their sorrows, sufferings and burdens you have no ear to hear and no heart to pity. (p.48)

On the outrage of Radical Reconstruction.

The Confederacy went to pieces in a day, not because the South could no longer fight, but because they were fighting the flag of their fathers, and they were tired of it.....They expected to lose their slaves and repudiate the dogma of Secession

Forever. But, they never dreamed of negro dominion, or negro deification, of negro equality or amalgamation, now being rammed down their throats with bayonets. (p. 136)

On the threat of race mixing.

My boy, the future American must be an Anglo-Saxon or a Mulatto! We are now deciding which it shall be. The future of the world depends on the future of this Republic. This Republic can have no future if racial lines are broken, and its proud citizenship sinks to the level of a mongrel breed of Mulattoes. The South must fight this battle to a finish. Two thousand years look down upon the struggle, and two thousand years of the future bend low to catch the message of life or death. (p.198)

More on Negro racial inferiority.

I am looking into the future. This racial instinct is the ordinance of our life. Lose it and we have no future. One drop of negro blood makes a negro. It kinks the hair, flattens the nose, thickens the lip, puts out the light on intellect, and lights the fires of brutal passions. The beginning of negro equality as a vital fact is the beginning of the end of this nation's life. There is enough negro blood here to make mulatto the whole Republic. (p.242)

On the superiority of the white South.

I love the South—the stolid, silent South, that for a generation has sneered at paper-made [federal] policies, and scorned public opinion. The South, old-fashioned, mediaeval, provincial, worshipping the dead, and raising men rather than money, family loving, home building, tradition ridden. The South, cruel and cunning when fighting a treacherous foe, with brief volcanic outbursts of wrath and vengeance. The South, eloquent, bombastic, romantic, chivalrous, lustful, proud, kind and hospitable. The South with her beautiful women and brave men. The South, generous and reckless, never knowing her own interest, but living her own life in her own way. (p.441)

The themes of *The Leopard's Spots* flowed into *The Clansman* published in 1905 which Dixon adapted as a stage play and performed sometimes himself in productions in Richmond, Raleigh, Columbia, Montgomery, Chattanooga, Knoxville, Nashville and New Orleans, And he enjoyed great popular success in Columbus, Ohio; Indianapolis and Topeka. D.W. Griffith, another Scots-Irish southerner loved *The Clansman* and determined to turn it into an epic, though silent, film, which he did in 1915. *The Birth of A Nation* which ran three hours with an intermission had all of the major Dixon themes. A defeated, impoverished South, a brutal, unbelievably corrupt federal government occupation during Reconstruction and gangs of unleashed, uncontrolled freed slaves, given the vote and armed, and most fearsomely beastly predators violating the flower of white Southern

womanhood. But the Ku Klux Klan rides to the rescue of the degraded South and restores the natural order of the races.

Thomas Dixon excited by the box office success of *The Birth of a Nation*, contacted his old Johns Hopkins school mate, the new President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, and under its first title, *The Clansman* became the first movie to be shown in the White House. Wilson was very impressed with the film and according to Anthony Slide he said, "It is like history with Lightening. And my only regret is that it is all so terribly true."

The Leopard's Spots and *The Clansman* each sold a million copies. By 1930, according to one report, 90 percent of white southerners had seen *The Birth of a Nation*. Thomas Dixon must be judged a giant in the process of using art to illustrate a tragic and violent memory of the post-Civil War South.

The Cross and the Lynching Tree

One of the most important and least discussed aspects of the black-white tragedy in the post-Reconstruction South is the role of Christianity. James H. Cone, the Arkansas-born, Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology at New York's Union Theological Seminary, has written a powerful, devastating account of the terrorizing through lynching of blacks but also challenged the proclaimed Christianity of the white Southerners who justified lynching as a God-sanctioned, indeed religiously justified method of preserving the peace and the virtue of white womanhood. In *The Cross and the Lynching Tree* (2011), and in only 164 pages of text, Cone, an African American, has produced an indispensable account of white Christendom's disgrace—North and South--in perpetrating and standing by while God's black children were systematically humiliated, degraded and murdered. He quotes a white Floridian telling a Northern critic, "The people of the South don't think any more of killing the black fellows that you would of killing a flea." A black from Mississippi is quoted saying, "Back in them days, to kill a Negro wasn't nothing. It was like killing a chicken or killing a snake." (p.6.) Whites lynched blacks in almost every state including California, New York and Minnesota.

With the restoration of their authority, whites were able to "take back" the South—a familiar phrase in 21st century political polemics and to "...to redeem it from what they called "Negro domination," through mob violence...excluding blacks from politics, arresting them for vagrancy, forcing them to work as sharecroppers, who never got out of debt, and creating a rigid, segregated society in which being black was a badge of shame with no meaningful future. A black person could be lynched for any perceived insult to whites." The lynching era is placed between 1880 to 1940. But there were many murders after that—most notably the killing of young Emmitt Till in 1955 which is seen as a major spur to the modern civil rights movement.

Cone writes that by the 1890's, lynching fever seized the South like a plague. This was also the period of a deep, painful economic depression. White communities in the South made

blacks their target for torture in an environment where they felt they had lost control – the classic scapegoat social mechanism. .

Burning the black victim slowly for hours was the chief method of torture. Lynching became a white media spectacle, in which prominent newspapers, like the *Atlanta Constitution*, announced to the public the place, date, and time of the expected hanging and burning of black victims. Often as many as ten to twenty thousand men, women, and children attended the event. It was a family affair, a ritual celebration of white supremacy, where women and children were often given the first opportunity to torture black victims—burning black flesh and cutting off genitals, fingers, toes, and ears as souvenirs. Postcards were made from the photographs taken of the black victims with white lynchers and onlookers smiling as they struck a pose for the camera. (p.9)

Cone puts special emphasis on the failure of his teacher and colleague at Union Theological Seminary, Reinhold Niebuhr's, dismaying reluctance to take a strong public stand in defense of the dignity and humanity of black Americans. Niebuhr was a gradualist, don't rock the boat white Christian, admittedly a giant among theologians. But he and most other white ministers seemed unable to be courageous on the race issue. Cone lays down a challenge to white Christians, North and South, to walk through the history of the lynching era and take retrospective account of their enormous sins of omission. It is a history that cries out for repentance. As the author writes:

They are crucifying again the Son of God. Both Jesus and blacks were 'strange fruit.' Theologically speaking, Jesus was the 'first lynchee,' who foreshadowed all the lynched bodies on American soil. He was crucified by the same principalities and powers that lynched black people in America....God transformed lynched black bodies into the re-crucified body of Christ. *Every time a white mob lynched a black person, they lynched Jesus.* The lynching tree is the cross in America. When American Christians realize that they can meet Jesus only in the crucified bodies in our midst, they will encounter the real scandal of the cross. (p.158)

And as Harvard sociologist Orlando Patterson reported in his monumental *Rituals of Blood* (1998), the mobs were often presided over by a Protestant minister of the gospel. While James Cone does not mention it, Patterson's research into eyewitness press accounts of lynchings, where black bodies were slowly burned—roasted really—suggested strongly the ancient ritual of burnt offerings to God or the gods. His research discovered lynching episodes in which small burned parts of the black victims' bodies were eaten by members of the lynch mob—like Holy Communion. There where powerful religious symbols in the lynching culture suggesting that deep down the white mobs were making sacrificial offerings to the angry God who had permitted them to be humiliated by the Northern armies and then occupied by Northern forces.

As Orlando Patterson writes in *Rituals of Blood*:

Jim Crow rose to power on, was suffused with, and had as the very center of its doctrine not just the permanent segregation and subjugation of Afro-Americans but their demonization, terrorization, and humiliation. The central ritual of this version of the Southern civil religion...was the human sacrifice of the lynch mob....The brutally sacrificed Negro was the ultimate Christ figure of the narrative of aversion--Christ the scapegoat---spat upon, mocked, spiked, tortured, and accursed. In expelling 'the Negro,' all that was most evil and sinful and black and iniquitous and transgressing would be sent away: 'for the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited' (Leviticus 16:21).

These forgoing analyses need careful, respectful, deep study of the history of the era by black and white historians and especially Christian clergy if our country is to come to grips with this aspect of the American tragedy.

Both in broadly psychological and individual emotional terms this walk through history will be extremely difficult and painful for Southern whites and African Americans. It will require a fearlessly honest examination of the barbaric, sacrificial, savagery of systematic murder by lynching of freed slaves literally by consenting communities of white Southerners including women and their children. It will especially require critical analysis by white evangelical lay leaders and clergy of the place that conservative or fundamentalist evangelical Protestantism played in justifying the sacrifice of living, breathing human beings who were by any conception of Christianity precious in the eyes of God. But there is a ray of hope.

A symbolically and psychologically very important event occurred in June, 2012, with the election of the Rev. Fred Luter, Jr. as the first black president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC was founded in 1845 because of a theological belief that the Bible supported the concept of slavery. Today it represents some 16 million Southern Baptists. Hard headed realists might say this happened because the SBC membership is declining and needs new faces even if they are not white. My personal view is that the election of President Obama in 2008 may very well have made Rev. Luter's election possible. And I also believe that a great majority of SBC members genuinely wanted to atone for the past.

One of the strongest inhibitors of this absolutely necessary task of facing history is the fact the white South has chafed and raged to this very day under the insults and disdain of the white North which has claimed from the earliest colonial times to be intellectually and morally superior to the people of the South.

A detailed walk through their own harsh and hypocritical history by Northerners with acknowledgement of the unjustified hurts inflicted by their relentless contempt for almost all things Southern is essential to the North/South-Black/White healing process in a country that in the twenty-first century remains painfully torn. Such a process of Northern self-revelation—let's say confession--will also give Southerners a respite from the pressure of centuries of Northern disrespect to do their own difficult historical self-analysis. This

paper concludes noting the beginning of a Northern process of acknowledgement of moral debt to the South.

Northern Arrogance and the Scandal of New England Slavery

Southerners had been very much aware of a Northern tradition of aggressive disrespect for their life style and culture, The Southern reaction was anger, frustration and humiliation, as Pamela Creed, a George Mason PhD, documented in a 2007 research paper, “An American Conflict of Mind: Competing Narratives and Identity.” She cites Lewis J. Simpson, a professor of American literature at Louisiana State University in his essential *Mind and the American Civil War: A Meditation on Lost Causes* (1989), on extensive evidence that well before the Civil War, there were competing perspectives on the origins, birth and future of the country among those who settled in New England, the South and the frontier.

In his *Cavalier and Yankee: The Old South and American National character* (1975), William R. Taylor wrote that in New England there was an evolving culture of great respect for literature and learning. The Southern planters were much less interested in Enlightenment innovations and more in preserving a way of life based on a slave-holding, feudal aristocracy.

Pamela Creed quotes Susan Mary Grant in her monograph *North over South* (2000), saying, “The South has always been regarded by non-Southerners as distinct and separate from the nation as a whole, and as differentiated in some mysterious and irrational way from the national experience—the national ideals.” Grant quotes Samuel Nott, a Northern writer saying, “The South is a lower civilization [solely by virtue of its] greater barbarism and poverty at the starting-point of emigration [from Great Britain].

I would recommend the brilliant *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (1985) by David Hackett Fisher as an indispensable source for understanding the strong ultimately tragic clash of identities between the middle class Puritan settlers in New England from East Anglia and the impoverished Scots-Irish induced to go to the American colonies in large numbers—about 200,000 at the beginning of the 1700's. The latter formed the backbone of the Southern indentured poor and later the cannon fodder for the Confederate armies. I also strongly suggest Senator Jim Webb's *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America* (2005) as an up-to-date portrait of this core American community that in many parts of the country still smarts from perceived Northern (liberal) indifference and disdain some 300 years after arriving in America.

Pamela Creed's insightful analysis has a very useful quotation from Susan Mary Grant that is a good introduction to the final segment of this paper. She wrote:

Although it was a fictitious construction—and a destructive one—the idea that the North and South had separate origins helped Northerners distance themselves from a society they saw as an affront to American values; it absolved them, too, of any

residual guilt on the maintenance of slavery and conveniently ignored the overt racism of Northern society.

The Little Known History of Northern Slave Trading and Ownership

At the beginning of this paper I noted that it is an exercise in healing wounded history using the tools of political psychology. One of the key beliefs in this approach is that all the parties who have hurt other people must be helped to acknowledge their misdeeds, crimes and sins. We close with what can only be a brief glimpse of Northern—specifically New England—complicity in the kidnapping and enslavement of defenseless black Africans. This does not relieve the South of the burdens of historic brutalization of slaves and freedmen which must be acknowledged and documented in detail and atoned for. But this walk through America’s tragic history must expose the moral crimes of Northern slave traders and slaveholders. And among those offenses are the intellectual arrogance and spiritual deformity of many New England leaders, clergy in particular, who neglected to mention their slave problem.

Here we draw from an eye-opening—for me astounding—expose by Francie Latour in the September 26, 2010 *Boston Globe*. The title is “New England’s hidden history.” Its subtitle is, “More than we like to think, the North was built on slavery.” The article starts with an unforgettable story quoted here in full:

In the year 1755, a black slave named Mark Codman plotted to kill his abusive master. A God-fearing man, Codman had resolved to use poison, reasoning that if he could kill without shedding blood, it would be no sin. Arsenic in hand, he and two female slaves poisoned the tea and porridge of John Codman repeatedly. The plan worked—but like so many stories of slave rebellion, this one ended in a brutal death for the slave as well. After a trial by jury, Mark Codman was hanged, tarred, and then suspended in a metal gibbet on the main road to town, where his body remained for more than 20 years.

It sounds like a classic account of Southern slavery. But Codman’s body didn’t hang in Savannah, Ga.; it hung in present-day Somerville, Mass. And the reason we know how long Mark the slave was left on view is that Paul Revere passed it on his midnight ride. In a fleeting mention from Revere’s account, the horseman described galloping past ‘Charlestown Neck, and got nearly opposite where Mark was hung in chains.’

Latour continues, “When it comes to slavery, the story that New England has long told itself goes like this: Slavery happened in the South, and it ends thanks to the North. We had a little slavery in the North but the slaves were like family. We taught them to read, let them marry. And then freed them. New England is the home of abolitionists and underground railroads. In the story of slavery—and by extension, the story of race and racism in modern day America—we’re the heroes. Aren’t we?”

Yet Latour's research uncovered more and more stories of New England slavery and what she calls "its brutality, its staying power, and its silent presence in places whose names are symbols of American freedom." As we visit Lexington and Concord or walk in Cambridge or neighboring Somerville where Harvard University spreads, we learn we are stepping on ground the slaves trod. (I was in Cambridge in May admiring the great homes clustered close together wondering today how many of them were financed through the slave trade.)

Brookline, a close suburb of Boston, is one of the most politically and morally liberal communities in the United States. Once, nearly half of the town's land was the property of slave owners.

Joanne Melish, a historian at the University of Kentucky, wrote *Disowning Slavery: Gradual Emancipation and 'Race' in New England, 1780-1860* (1998), said "The absolute amnesia about slavery here on the one hand, and the gradualness of slavery ending on the other, work together to make race a very destructive thing in New England....If you have obliterated historical memory of actual slavery—because we're the free states, right?—that makes it possible to turn around and look at a [Southern] population that is disproportionately poor and say it must be their own inferiority. That is where New England's particular brand of racism comes from."

Connecticut abolished slavery only in 1848. There were thousand-acre plantations there. *Hartford Courant* journalist Anne Farrow wrote, "A mentor of mine has said that New England really democratized slavery. Where in the South few people owned so many slaves, here in the North, many people owned a few. There was widespread ownership of black people."

Perhaps the most notable of the New England slave owners was John Winthrop, of "City on a Hill" fame, who was the first governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony. Winthrop had slaves at his Ten Hills Farm, and in 1641 he helped pass a law making chattel slavery legal in the American colonies. Winthrop's house was bought by the Royall family which made its fortune from slave plantations in Antigua. The Royalls helped endow the Harvard Law School whose seal today still has a portion of the Royall family crest.

The family also endowed the prestigious Royall Professorship of Law, almost always held by the Dean. When current Supreme Court Associate Justice Elena Kagan became Dean of the Harvard Law School she decided to pass on the Royall title. She reportedly didn't say why. But it may have been her contribution to the acknowledgement of an embarrassing and disgraceful heritage of slave-trade generated academic philanthropy.

In the last fifteen years or so, there have important new discoveries impacting the national consciousness of the buried history of the North's complicity in slavery.

Joanne Melish's 1998 book noted above was a key contribution. This was followed by:

--Uncovering of African Burial Ground in lower Manhattan where 15,000 to 20,000 burials of Negroes—mostly slaves--occurred in the 1700's. Establishment of a U.S. national memorial at the site in 2007.

--Descendants of Rhode Island slave traders begin to publicly examine their family history in a journey that results in Katrina Browne's PBS documentary *Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North* and Tom DeWolf's book, *Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family Confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Family in U.S. History*.

Reparations activists file lawsuits based on the role of Northern banks, insurance companies, etc,

--"Slavery in New York" exhibit at New York Historical Society sets records for attendance.

--Major *Providence Journal* series on Rhode Island's complicity in slavery.

--Major *Hartford Courant* series on Connecticut's role in slavery, later made into a book, *Complicity: How the North Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery*.

--Brown University President Ruth Simmons creates Slavery and Justice Committee to examine the role of slavery in the founding of the university and broader issues it raises for today.

--Aetna apologizes for its historic role in slavery as do Connecticut, New Jersey and several southern states.

--Many local towns, churches, and families begin to uncover their complicity (often with the help of the Tracing Center on Histories and Legacies of Slavery.)

I am indebted to James DeWolf Perry, executive director of **Tracing Center on Histories and Legacies of Slavery** (www.tracingcenter.org) in Watertown, Massachusetts, for providing a broad contextual analysis of the economic incentives in the slave trade in the American colonies.

The colonial New England economy was critically dependent on what has often been described, innocently, as the "carrying" or "provisioning" trade, or simply trade to the West Indies. This was, in reality, a trade entirely to support slave plantations in the West Indies, and the North's share of the profits from that vast operation enabled the northern colonies to take hold, flourish, and eventually to play a critical role in the rebellion from Great Britain.

Similarly, the northern economy in the antebellum era profited handsomely from the cotton trade, with much of the income from southern cotton plantations flowing north to

pay for financing, insuring, marketing, provisioning, and transportation for cotton production and the cotton trade. Clearly there is much, much more to be uncovered, learned, and taught about America's shared heritage, North and South, in our original sin of wealth creation on the backs of kidnapped and enslaved black Africans.

Conclusion

I want to close with a reminder that in enduring racial, ethnic and religious conflicts whose traumatic memories pass from generation to generation, we do not walk through history because it is merely intellectually interesting. We do it because there is cumulative experience in the broad field of psychologically sensitive conflict analysis and resolution practice that indicates that it is literally a categorical imperative.

The evidence is strong that the wounds of history can only begin to heal when they are uncovered and exposed to contemporary generations which have the moral commitment and wisdom to acknowledge the hurts inflicted on others by their forbears. And to express remorse for what their people did in the past. And finally to ask forgiveness of the victims and their descendents.

I began this paper with a tribute to an African American scholar, Peggy Brooks-Bertram whose work has inspired me to dig deep. I close with a tribute to another scholar-filmmaker, Katrina Browne, who discovered that her forbears, the DeWolf family of Bristol, Rhode Island, were the biggest slave traders in America's biggest slave-trading state.

Katrina literally took a walk through history with family members and an African American woman colleague in Bristol, and to slave forts in Ghana and the ruins of a DeWolf family plantation in Cuba. As briefly noted above, she produced a historic feature length documentary on the story called, "Traces of the Trade: A Story from the Deep North." The film was shown at the Sundance Festival in 2008 and then on PBS's premier program, Point of View (POV).

Katrina Browne is like Peggy Brooks-Bertram a teacher of mine. She has agreed to let me partner with her on a plan to do some serious North/South, Black/White healing initiatives before the 150th anniversary commemorations of the Civil War comes to an end in 2015.