

AN ANALYSIS OF T.C. WILLIAMS, HIS TIMES AND THE ANTI-INTELLECTUAL COWARDICE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

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T. C. Williams, my great-great grandfather was born in 1831. He matriculated from the University of Richmond in 1848. He was man of tremendous Christian faith. It is my understanding that early in life he had a religious epiphany and left the Episcopal Church and became a Baptist and this led him to be educated at the University of Richmond. He was a stupendously successful business man with interests in insurance, banking, railroads and of course the tobacco industry. Although he joined the Confederate Army, the Confederacy needed his business acumen and abilities for the war effort. He was sent to Danville to manufacture goods essential to the Confederacy. At his death in 1889, he was an extremely wealthy man. Two subsequent generations of my family were stewards of his legacy, being full time philanthropists, giving away all of his wealth to charities and helping others. Indeed, 132 years later, his legacy still exists. My family continues to make charitable gifts from one remaining trust.

Most of these gifts in all generations were made anonymously. No one in my family has ever talked publicly about his generosity, that we were even related to him or that we were still administering charitable donations from his legacy. The family has made substantial gifts to the University of Richmond. T.C. Williams served as a trustee of the university from 1881 to 1889 and his two sons T.C. Williams, Jr. and Adolph D. Williams attended the University of Richmond and were also trustees. It makes me uncomfortable to talk about my family's generosity, but recent actions by the board of trustees at the University of Richmond has necessitated disclosing some (not all) of these gifts to protect his honor. These gifts today are worth several billion dollars. Besides the University of Richmond, substantial gifts were made to the Medical College of Virginia and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. My family also gave Agecroft Hall to the City of Richmond. There were many other similar gifts.

The University of Richmond named its law school after T.C. Williams in 1920 in recognition of a gift made at his death that supposedly saved the law school from closing. T.C. Williams has been dead for 132 years. My family's service and donations to the University began as early as 1881, but likely well before that. On September 23, 2022, the University announced that it was "de-naming" the law school, removing T.C. Williams' name due to his "connection with slavery." No one on the Board of Trustees knew T.C. Williams or the subsequent generations of his family or their character.

ECONOMIC SERVITUDE

In agrarian, non-industrial societies, there were practically no roads, no electricity, clean water, books, stable currency, cars, etc. Mostly, there was just an intense anxiety to have enough food to eat, not freeze to death and not be hacked to death by hostile militants that at any moment could come over the next hillside. The 80-20 rule was alive then as it is now. Those that had greater intelligence and industry were leaders, the rest gave their service to the elite few who had

the means and cognitive resources to take care of and protect the less able in return for their labor. That's the way the world worked, and in many ways, it still works this way today.

In 1651, Thomas Hobbes famously stated that without government, life for most was brutish, nasty and short. What he meant was without some sort of structure and order, people would starve, steal and even kill each other. Order arose to prevent chaos. Feudalism and all of its many forms were effectively a form of government.

Africans brought to the United States in bondage were already slaves in Africa, sold by their own people to slave traders. They came from a culture of virtually no intellectual development. No written language, no wheel, no navigation, no metallurgy, engineering or anything approaching advanced agriculture. While this might be difficult for some to discuss, it is nevertheless true, and certainly contributed to attitudes concerning slavery and emancipation.

Imagine an Englishman in the mid-17th Century who has acquired land along the Rappahannock. He needs labor to participate in the very lucrative tobacco trade. A Rhode Island slave ship appears with sick, malnourished and underweight African slaves for sale. Slavery and forms of servitude are the universally accepted practice all over the world. There was no currency in circulation, no reliable transportation, no place to even spend money should one have it. Imagine you are this Englishman. What would you have done? Immediately, you can give this man, likely on the verge of dying from disease a much better standard of living than he or anyone in his home country had ever had: a roof over his head, three square meals/day, the opportunity to grow his own food, medical care and other means of support. Equally important to practically all at the time, the Englishman could introduce this man to Christianity and feel comfort in perhaps saving his soul.

EMANCIPATION DIFFICULTIES

It is easy to picture how slavery migrated from the rest of the world to Virginia, but ending it was a much more complicated matter. A large majority of the white population in the North and the South considered the bulk (not all) of black Americans to be intellectually inferior, more prone to crime and not equipped for immediate citizenship. While it might be uncomfortable for academics to discuss this issue, it nevertheless was the almost universal prevailing thought of both Northern and Southern whites, as well as other diverse nationalities around the world. Having this opinion does not mean that all white people hated and were cruel to blacks, the narrative that most of academia preaches. However, it did complicate the slavery issue. The woke mob cannot divorce its hatred from any issue, but in a Christian world view, one can love others and wish them the best, but not think of others as exactly equal in abilities to themselves. In fact, the idea that there are absolutely no differences between ethnicities, nationalities and cultures is absurd on its face. The economist Thomas Sowell has written extensively about this issue. The very foundation of Marxist doctrine is everyone should have "equality of result." Thus, the lie that everyone is "exactly the same" has to be propagated. If people and groups of people are judged on their merit and accomplishment, then the Left cannot fulfill its Marxist agenda.

Universal emancipation was a tricky business. The over-riding problem, and one professed by those who cared and loved their black neighbors is the tragedy that would likely befall significant numbers of blacks if they were emancipated in mass. How would they take care of themselves? While it seems that the University of Richmond has a simplistic view of this issue, this was the central issue on the mind of Northerners and Southerners who wanted to end slavery. There were four million black slaves in the South, almost all illiterate and unskilled, all of whom came from an undeveloped culture and most all of whom had always been taken care of by their owners. Indeed, to fully understand this issue, one must be aware of the social construct of slavery in Virginia. In return for the slave's labor, the slave got housing, plenty of food, clothing, medical attention, the opportunity to grow their own food, wide latitude to practice their faith and ability to own personal property. Slaves had the ability to avail themselves of the local court system to address grievances. Many managed other slaves.

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCT OF SLAVERY, ECONOMICS AND THE GRADUAL DISMANTLING OF SLAVERY

The system in Virginia was very much more of a "caste" system than what popular culture depicts: white slave owners whipping their slaves and working them to death. As illustrated in Fithian's Diary, white slave holders and their slaves' lives were interwoven together in a social construct that few today could possibly understand. Their black slaves likely had the highest standard of living of any black people on earth. Many had higher standards of living than people in Europe. There of course were instances of great cruelty and abhorrent behavior under Southern slavery, but there is another narrative supported by thousands of memoirs and first person accounts that indicates a much more humane system. Those of us of my generation whose families had black help believe we probably witnessed an insight into what this social construct was like in 1860 Virginia. We witnessed warm relations and love between white and black families. Most of the white families I knew felt an obligation to always try and help their black neighbors. I came of age in the late 1960s. The standard of living today and societal wealth are astronomically higher than when I was a child. I am amazed at the transformation I have seen, knowing very poor white and black families, and now seeing where these families are today and their accomplishments. It is the creation of wealth and the opportunities that the supply of capital creates that have lifted these families into an almost unfathomable level of comfort from just a generation ago.

Various Russian authors have stated that no one can really understand the Russian language or the Russian mindset but native-born Russians. The same is true of the many self-righteous virtue signalers born outside the South. They simply don't and likely will never truly understand the South. Modern academia is not interested in truth. It has a hard-left agenda; therefore, there can only be one monolithic narrative about the South and slavery. The Left and its sycophants in academia are about hatred and division. It cannot acknowledge anything good or truthful about the South because to do so would threaten its mission to use hate and jealousy to obtain absolute power. Ironically, and as history has proven many times over, when the Left obtains power, slavery returns, and it is a much more brutal and virulent form of slavery than ever existed in the South.

All original 13 colonies allowed slavery. At the time that hostilities began between the Confederacy and the Union, there were 8 slave states in the union and just 7 in the budding Confederacy. After the original 7 southern states seceded, the United States Congress passed the Corwin Amendment which would have made slavery permanent and beyond the legislative control of the Federal government. Lincoln supported the Amendment. The South paid over 80% of the revenue to the federal government with just a fraction of its population. The South favored a free trade economic system. If the South were allowed to secede, with its \$0 tariffs and more accessible warm water ports, there would be no tax revenue for the United States government. Special privileges given to Northern commercial interests would also cease. Make no mistake about it, the war started because the North needed the South's money and wanted to keep it a vassal state. It had nothing to do with slavery, as Lincoln stated himself. Indeed, at the time of Appomattox, there were 5 slave states in the Union. It was, like most wars, all about money.

The absolute miracle of the 19th century was the elimination of slavery by the Anglo-American world. While there was much noble sentiment to eliminate slavery, the truth is, it was mostly economics and not high ideals that allowed for slavery to disappear. In 1777, Virginia banned the importation of slaves (the "slave trade"), such an imported slave was immediately made free. By 1804, a number of northern states passed gradual emancipation laws. For example, New Jersey's law stated that all slave children born after July 4, 1804 were to be emancipated but had to labor for their owners until each female reached 21 years of age and each male 25. By 1861, there were still slaves in New Jersey and other northern states that had passed gradual emancipation laws, and of course by the time of Appomattox, there were still 5 slave states in the Union which of course had never passed emancipation laws. If one reads the legislative debates of the Virginia General Assembly of 1831 and 1832 which met to discuss the gradual abolishment of slavery, one can readily see a clear desire to emancipate, but also see the complexities associated with the process. It is widely assumed that Nat Turner's rebellion where women and children were savagely butchered changed public opinion and prevented a gradual emancipation bill from passing.

Many southerners favored a gradual emancipation as was the de jure system in several northern states. However, there was a de facto system of emancipation occurring in the South via the manumission process. It is likely that T.C. Williams, an extremely devout Christian would have been in this camp. By 1860, there was a kaleidoscope of varying factions relating to slavery. It should be noted that since slaves were counted as part of the population, those areas with high black populations, such as Tidewater Virginia had political influence in Richmond out of proportion to those in the Piedmont and mountain areas of Virginia. This was one of the many complications that made a political solution difficult. Yet, manumission was still occurring due to economics. 20% of the black population in Richmond lived free. State law had long provided a process for manumission. Many free blacks owned slaves, and there were free blacks who fought for the Confederacy. Like most ultra-liberal universities, the University of Richmond has a monolithic narrative about the South and slavery. It is unwilling to acknowledge the complexities of history because truth does not fit its predisposed narrative. While the South was struggling with emancipation issues, the North was busy passing laws prohibiting any black emigration into their states. One such state was Illinois, the "Land of Lincoln." By modern standards, the so called "Great Liberator" Abraham Lincoln was a virulent racist. As a Congressman, he advocated shipping practically all Africans to Liberia.

AMERICAN GENOCIDE: ONE MILLION BLACKS DIE DUE TO NORTHERN COMMERCIAL INTERESTS

You can read thousands of first-hand accounts of day to day life in the South where slavery existed, and you will very rarely read accounts where whites hated blacks. T.C. Williams was about Christian love, a concept that the University of Richmond may have understood before it decided to abandon its original mission. T.C. Williams may not have believed in immediate universal emancipation, but neither did Abraham Lincoln and millions of others at the time. He almost assuredly hoped for a day where the South could have emancipated its slaves in a responsible non-disruptive way that actually benefited blacks as opposed to the incredible carnage that occurred within the black community when slavery suddenly ended in late 1865. Why I am sure none of the politically correct faculty at the University of Richmond realizes is after the 13th Amendment passed, one million black people died during the “Great Emancipation.” This was truly an American genocide. This is what many in the South wanted to avoid. It is nothing but simple-minded foolishness to think that an entrenched social and economic order could end with a “flip of a switch” and not cause great disruption, hardship and death.

Why did so many blacks die? People cannot live unless their lives are directed to a means of production. In short, everyone, whether slave or free has to work productively to be able to eat. Everyone, whether employed, in servitude or independent has to be in an economic system that involves a viable means of production. Imagine if one had a 15-year-old illiterate daughter who had always been under the care of her parents. What would happen if you just threw her out on the street and said, “you are free?” The aforementioned New Jersey law allowed for slave owners to give away slave children born after July 4, 1804 to their local poor houses, but that was a fate worse than death for the child. It involved splitting families. New Jersey citizens loudly objected to this practice, not for humane reasons, but because of the costs to the taxpayers.

There were many forms and varieties of servitude in 1860 Virginia. Slavery was a dying institution simply because by 1860 it was a horrible economic model. Countless writings exist where visitors from the North and abroad would almost universally describe the slave population as “idle, “docile” and “slothful.” What was the incentive to work hard if all a slave’s basic necessities were taken care of? As the South became more industrialized, it became clear that paying a man a wage based on his productivity was far more beneficial for management and labor. As Richmond was an industrial center, by 1860 over 20% of its black population was free. Indeed by 1860, there were more blacks freed from bondage in the southern states than had ever been released in the northern states. The South was following the same pattern that had existed in England and in the northern states a few decades earlier, but at a much faster pace due to technological innovations. However, not every slave was equipped to take care of himself in the outside world or even wanted to. Integration away from the old system into a new system was totally dependent on accelerated economic growth providing for the wealth and capital that would create the opportunities to transition into a new economic order. While I have not seen the pay records of T. C. Williams’ commercial enterprises, almost certainly slave labor was being paid bonuses for production, beginning a system that would eventually free slaves and allow them to live independently.

Monday morning moralists and indoctrinated university virtue signalers may use the doctrine of “presentism” to condemn how anyone could hold another human being in servitude. Besides being the practice for all human existence, one must examine the condition of other economic forms of servitude around the world. No black slaves in the South starved. Indeed, their food consumption and security was significantly better than many of their counter-parts in Europe. Black slaves were also not conscripted into armies, unlike their European counterparts who would get slaughtered by the hundreds of thousands. All over Europe, the peasant class went through periods of starvation. The French Revolution started because of bone crushing poverty and famine. The French peasantry were locked in an almost inescapable system of feudalism. They may not have been called “slaves,” but the effect was the same. Everyone knows about the serfdom in the Slavic states, but even advanced countries such as Germany had large serf populations well into the 19th Century. England granted the most political liberties than any other European country, but even there a free-holder could be walking through his village, captured by the press gangs and be put on one of Her Majesty’s naval warships for 10 years, almost sure to die of scurvy or cannon fire. All over Europe, the peasant populations were conscripted into their nations’ armies, very much against their will, and died at alarming rates from disease and musket fire, as the Hapsburgs, French, Prussians and other powers were constantly at war with one another. The Irish had a miserable existence. During the time of American slavery, Cromwell killed 600,000 Irish civilians. The poverty of the Irish is almost unimaginable today. During the potato famine of 1845 to 1851, over one million Irish starved to death. There were British papers that cheered the famine and openly stated that the Irish were sub-human and that the famine was a good cleansing mechanism. This was the state of the world when T.C. Williams matriculated from the University of Richmond in 1848. Born into this environment, was it unreasonable for him to utilize black slavery, knowing that while an imperfect system, their standard of living and care was better than a good portion of the world? What becomes of any people if their labor is not used into a system of production?

THE CONFEDERACY

If one studies Lincoln, he was a corrupt stooge to Northern industrial interests. He wanted War. As president, he surreptitiously circumvented his command structure to violate the truce the United States had with South Carolina not to re-supply Fort Sumter, knowing it would spark a war. On April 4, 1861, Virginia’s General Assembly voted overwhelmingly (89-45) to remain in the Union. Getting the Fort Sumter result he wanted on April 12, 1861, Lincoln immediately “calls up” the Virginia militias, essentially telling Virginians they had to go kill their cousins in South Carolina and other southern states. A referendum on secession is then scheduled for May 23, 1861. In the meantime, on May 3, 1861 Lincoln invades Virginia and seizes the high ground of Arlington Heights. Aggressive actions are also taken against the port of Norfolk. On May 23rd, Virginia’s vote by a 6-1 margin to leave the Union. Lincoln’s aggression causes three other states to leave the Union as well.

I am proud of my Confederate ancestors, T.C. Williams among them. It is shameful that the University of Richmond’s academic establishment and Board of Trustees has succumbed to the forces of ignorance to discredit everything about the Confederacy. People of learning study

history to understand it and all its nuances. If a society understands why events occurred, then it can prevent “bad things” from happening. There are many lessons to be learned from the past, but the University does itself and all of academia a disservice by buying into the monolithic narrative of the Left that the North was good and the South was bad.

My ancestors’ sense of honor and duty to Virginia led them all to immediately take up arms to defend Virginia from invasion from a rapacious enemy, an enemy that declared total war on the South, burning women and children out of their homes, destroying the countryside and trying to starve the native population. It should be noted that this tyranny and absolute destruction of the South hurt black people more than it did the white population. I am sure the faculty at the university knows nothing about the war crimes committed by the Union army against the South. While there are many examples of gallant and magnanimous union officers and even brotherly love among combatants, there were also many acts of out and out “war crimes” committed by the Union against the South. But for the valor and martial spirit of the southern soldier, the University of Richmond would surely have been looted and burnt to the ground, as Union forces did with many other southern colleges. One would think that the University of Richmond would be thankful and at least have a balanced view of history. Furthermore, not one Board member has fought and put his life on the line to protect his home, family and community from an invading army. Yet, the Board feels free to disparage and dishonor those that did.

There wasn’t any serious discussion of Union forces being in the South to free slaves. The Emancipation Proclamation freed practically no slaves. It was a war measure and public relations event. Lincoln had no control over slavery in Confederate territory and it purposefully did not apply to nearly one million slaves under Northern control.

So what would have happened had Lincoln not called up troops from the state militias to invade and subdue the South? First, there would have been only 7 states in the Confederacy instead of 11. Slavery would have certainly withered away, and one million black people would not have died. The Union destroyed the South. Manpower of both blacks and whites were decimated. All capital was wiped out. There is no economic growth without the supply of capital. Thus, not only were a million black people wiped out, but those that remained lived in great poverty due to the North’s destruction of the South. With the aid of “Yankee capital,” places like Richmond and Atlanta got back on its feet, but vast stretches of the South, especially rural areas didn’t recover for over 100 years. In these areas, blacks lived much like they did before slavery ended. This was the result of the Union’s total warfare policy. Certainly, the North knew that its destruction of the South and using emancipation as a war tool would cause hundreds of thousands of black people to needlessly die. A million died, and it did not care.

Perhaps T.C. Williams was a realist, and if his vision of Christian love and gradual emancipation was allowed to occur, one million black people would not be dead and those that lived would not be in dire poverty for the next 100 years. So who was a better man, T.C. Williams or anyone of the thousands of leaders in the Union who allowed one million black people to die and three million to live in poverty for 100 years?

Using the logic of the Left, I have every reason to hate the North. Virginia was invaded by a greedy and voracious enemy. Great injustices were done to my family. But I don't hate anyone. I understand what currents navigated history and that the lesson to be learned from the past is how to prevent bad things from happening again. Enlightened people do not cancel the past. Totalitarian governments and their baaing sheep cancel the past. Such a sheep would be a more appropriate mascot for the University of Richmond than a spider.

Almost immediately after a war of terrible bloodshed and destruction, reconciliation began between former combatants. Only in a Christian nation, where love and forgiveness are central tenets of the faith could this possibly occur. Jeremiah 29:1, 4-7 must have been on the mind of many in the South. How many pictures have we all seen of reunions where Confederate and Union soldiers are hugging one another? Amazingly the country was united, and within a generation, the South is fighting the nation's wars alongside of old enemies. Now, 150 years later, the University of Richmond suddenly engages in "cancel culture" aligned with the utterly ignorant voices of the woke mob. Unmoored from its Christian past, the university rejects the reconciliation and understanding that has existed for nearly 140 years and chooses division.

The university was closed after the Civil War, but T.C. Williams' partner and kinsman gave it the money to reopen. Williams went on to serve the University of Richmond and the city he loved. His company hired thousands of blacks and women, giving people the opportunity to rise out of poverty. He left an incredible legacy of giving that continues to this day. So who does the University of Richmond align with? A very accomplished man who served the University and the City in which he lived or a small mob of hate filled activists who will never reach a fraction of the accomplishments of T. C. Williams?

I read the University's so called "equity report" on Robert Ryland. I am totally disgusted that the founder of the university, a very good man was maligned using the ignorance of "presentism." Every member of the Board should resign. It is stunning to me that the University's position is that there is just one acceptable monolithic narrative, and all those that don't agree, even people born over 200 years ago must be cancelled. Nowhere does the report discuss the merits and the pros and cons to Ryland's thinking or why he may have held the views he did. He is just erased because his opinions are incompatible with Neo- Marxist doctrine.

History and posterity will judge the University and the Board. Future generations will be shocked at its cowardice and ignorance. At our next family meeting, I propose that we use funds from the last T.C. Williams trust to erect a giant obelisk, dedicated to IGNORANCE with the name of every board member who has voted to cancel history.