

The Lost Souls Public Memorial Project:
A Living Memorial to Lives Lived

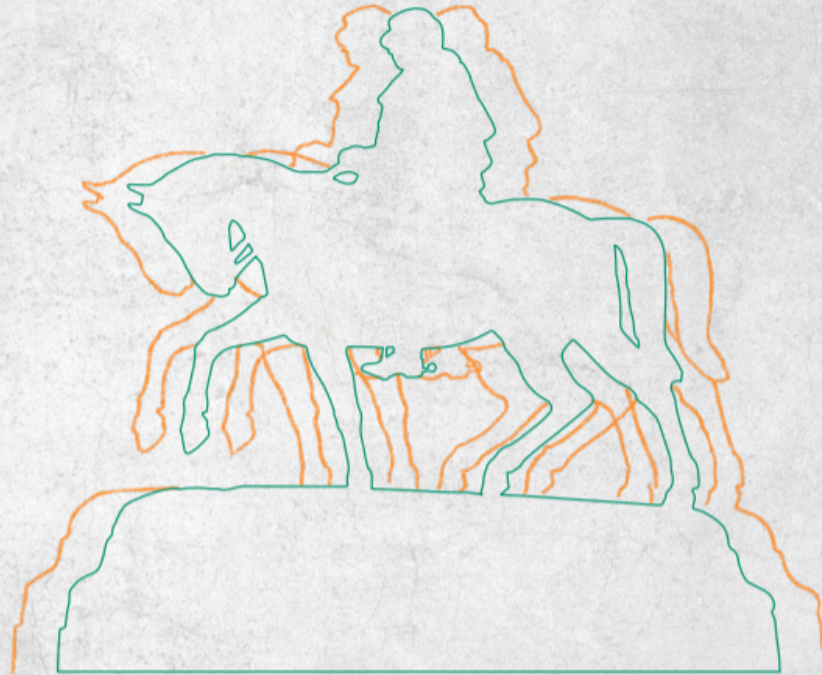
Photo of the defaced statue of Robert E. Lee during the Black Lives Matter protests of the summer of 2020. This photograph has been subtly altered so that the word "pigs" has been changed to "pugs" in deference to the Guardian's US audience. The unacknowledged alteration of a photograph – what we usually consider to be a document of truth – shows us how easy it can be to erase history.



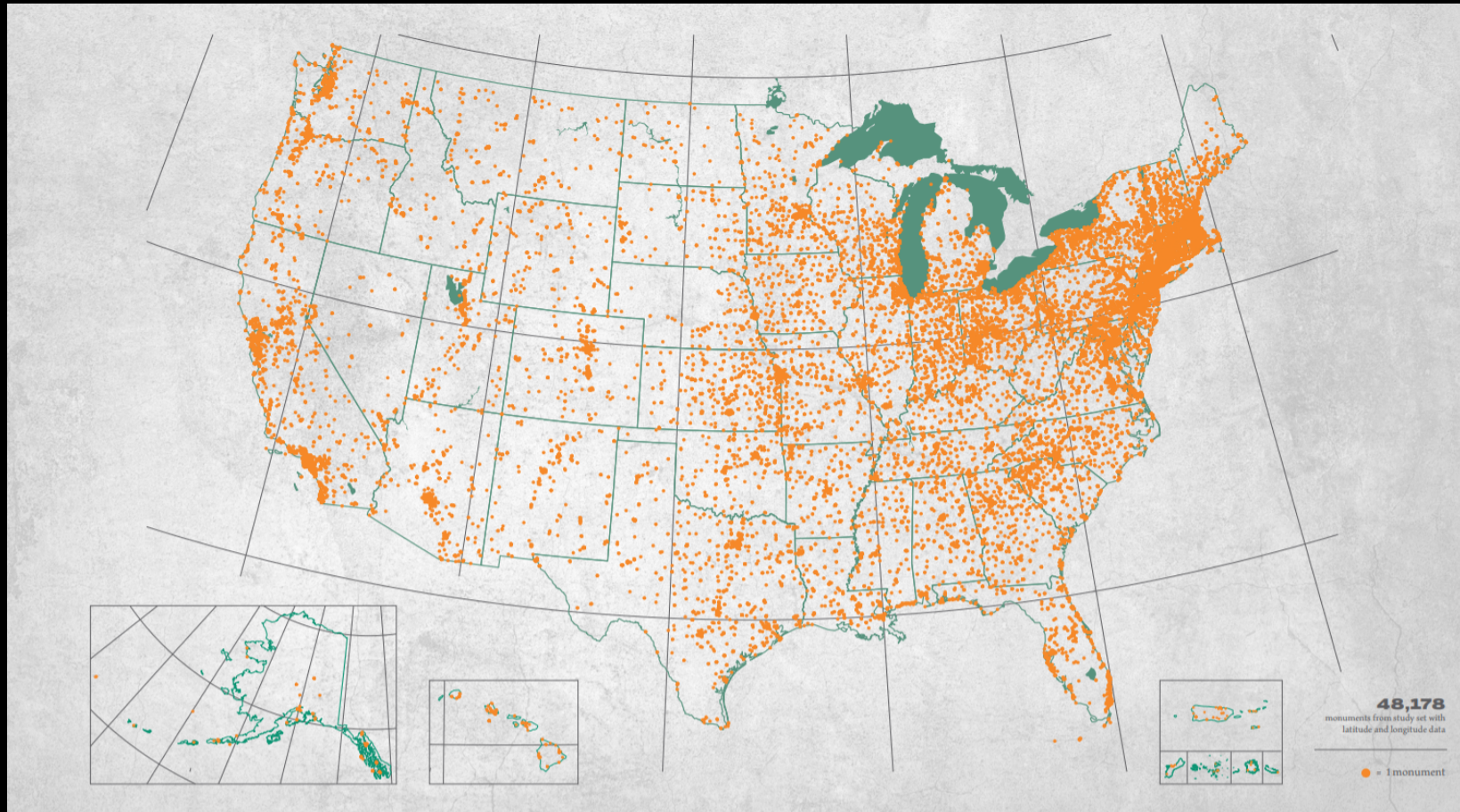
Historic photograph of Monument Avenue. While this statue was erected in the 1890, most Civil War monuments were actually built later, in the 1920s. The fundraising for the majority of Confederate monuments was done by women, specifically The Daughters of the Confederacy.



NATIONAL MONUMENT AUDIT



The National Monument Audit conducted by Monument Lab funded by the Mellon Foundation identified 48,176 public monuments in the United States.





TOP 50

Individuals Recorded in US Public Monuments

1. Abraham Lincoln (193)
2. George Washington (171)
3. Christopher Columbus (149)
4. Martin Luther King Jr. (86)
5. Saint Francis of Assisi (73)
6. Robert E. Lee (59)
7. Casimir Pulaski (51)
8. Benjamin Franklin (48)
9. John F. Kennedy (44)
10. Thomas Jefferson (36)
11. Ulysses S. Grant (35)
12. Stonewall Jackson (33)
13. Jefferson Davis (30)
14. Marquis de Lafayette (30)
15. Andrew Jackson (27)
16. Theodore Roosevelt (27)
17. William McKinley (27)
18. Joan of Arc (26)
19. Nathan Hale (24)
20. William Shakespeare (24)
21. José Martí (23)
22. Thaddeus Kosciuszko (22)
23. William Clark (22)
24. Harriet Tubman (21)
25. Tecumseh (21)
26. Alexander Hamilton (20)
27. Junípero Serra (20)
28. Sacagawea (20)
29. Frederick Douglass (19)
30. Martin Luther (19)
31. Jacques Marquette (18)
32. Dwight Eisenhower (17)
33. Franklin D. Roosevelt (17)
34. Anthony Wayne (16)
35. Merriweather Lewis (16)
36. Simón Bolívar (16)
37. Robert L. Burns (15)
38. St. Paul (15)
39. Washington Irving (14)
40. William Penn (14)
41. George Rogers Clark (13)
42. John Marshall (13)
43. John Sullivan (13)
44. Nathan Bedford Forrest (13)
45. Oliver Hazard Perry (13)
46. Sam Houston (13)
47. Daniel Boone (12)
48. David Glasgow Farragut (12)
49. James Garfield (12)
50. John Logan (12)

This list includes individuals with the most public monuments in the United States. The list was determined with ordinal ranking and based on available monument records. For a full methodology, see the Process section.

50%

Percentage of the Top 50 who enslaved other people

10%

Percentage of the Top 50 who were Black/Indigenous

6%

Percentage of the Top 50 who were women

22:2

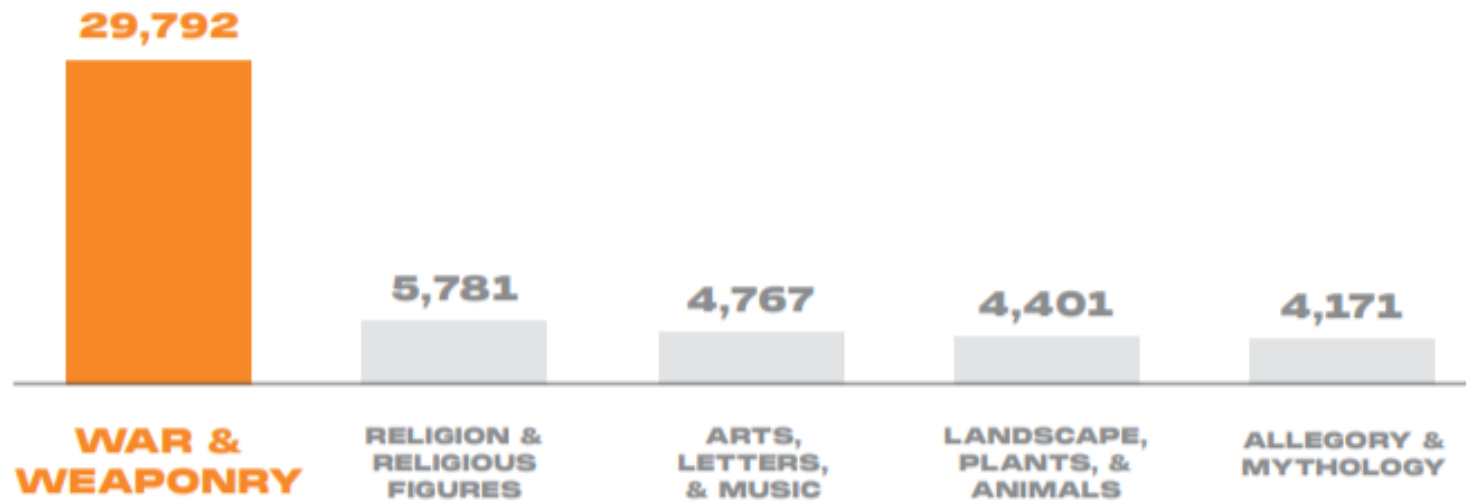
Number of recorded monuments depicting mermaids (22) compared to those depicting US Congresswomen (2)

2011

First monument to an individual person of color (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.) dedicated on the National Mall in Washington, DC

TOP 5 ATTRIBUTES

Counts of keywords drawn from monument data sources' full records¹⁰



33%

Percentage of recorded monuments that represent war

9%

Percentage of recorded monuments that mention *veterans*

45%

Monuments and markers on the National Mall in Washington, DC that commemorate war

5,917

Number of recorded monuments that mention the *Civil War*

9

Number of recorded monuments that represent post-Civil War Reconstruction

CALL TO ACTION



Build a new, deeper understanding of how monuments live and function in communities, examine the forces that drive their installation and upkeep in relation to civic power, and reflect on how and why they evolve over time.

City workers removing the statue of J. Marion Sims from Central Park, the so-called father of modern gynecology, in April 2018.



Simone Leigh's proposal *After Anarcha, Lucy, Betsy, Henrietta, and Anonymous*, dedicated to four named enslaved women in Montgomery Alabama, and the unknown number of unnamed enslaved women, who were experimented upon by J. Marion Sims. This proposal was selected by the jury assembled by New York's DCA but rejected by the local community.

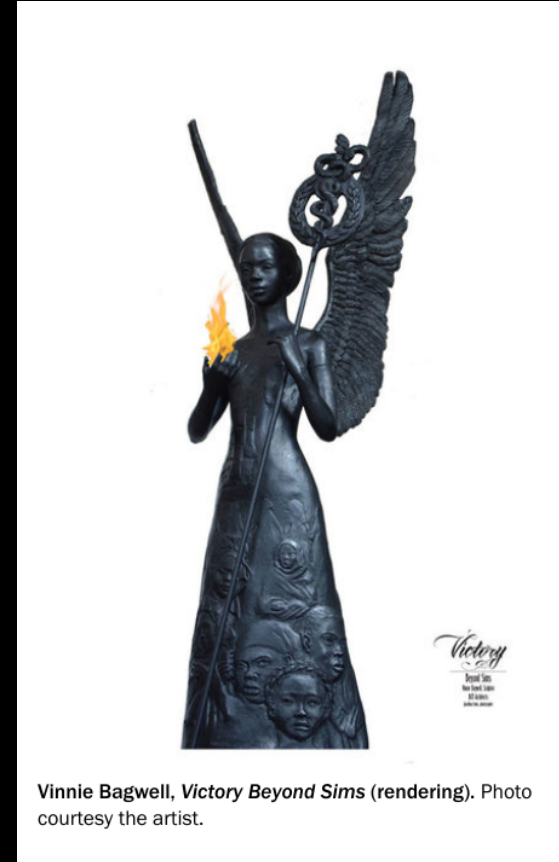


The community in East Harlem had called for the statue of Sims to be removed since 2007. The design they selected was *Victory Beyond Sims*, a rendering of the installation in Central Park and a close up of the proposed bronze statue that will serve as its focal point, by the artist Vinnie Bagwell. It acknowledges the long history of enslaved women as herbalists and healers.



A rendering of *Victory Beyond Sims*.

COURTESY VINNIE BAGWELL AND BRYCE TURNER



Vinnie Bagwell, *Victory Beyond Sims* (rendering). Photo courtesy the artist.

Questions:

Who speaks for history?

Who gets to decide?

How do we center unheard voices?

Image from Ann C. Bailey's photo-essay "They Sold Human Beings Here", published in the New York Times as part of the 1619 Project. The caption for this picture told how a corrupt Middlesex County judge Jacob van Wickle sold 100 people to southern enslavers right from his estate, which was once located in this spot.



LOST SOULS MEMORIAL PROJECT

In 1818, 137 African American souls were kidnapped into the Van Wickle Slave Ring and sent from East Brunswick, NJ to permanent slavery in the Deep South.

[LEARN MORE](#)



Peter 15 Simon, a free man Sarah 21
Margaret 29 Rachel 22 Regina 6 we
Gianna 7 months Harry 14 James 21
14 George 16 Susan Watt 35 M
Lydia 18 Betty 22 Diannah 9 Dorcas
atty 22 Bass 19 Christeen 27 Lidia
laresse 22 Harriett Jane
Rosanna Florah 2
ilvey 30 Closs Eliza 19 Son 2 da
Charles (child) Leta
rcus 16 Sam Johnson 2 Ann Jan
Rosino Margaret 21 Jenette John
Charles 1 Phyllis 2

**THE LOST SOULS PUBLIC
MEMORIAL PROJECT, INC.**

FIFTH ANNUAL RECITATION OF NAMES

**COMMEMORATING
LIVES LIVED**

SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2022
4:00PM-6:00PM

JOIN US IN PERSON AS WE HONOR THE LOST SOULS THROUGH LIVE
PERFORMANCES INCLUDING AFRICAN DRUMMING, DANCE, SPOKEN
WORD AND A SPECIAL LIBATION CEREMONY



Who were the Lost Souls?

- They were mothers
- They were children as young as two days old
- They were teenagers learning a trade
- They were adult men
- Some were free Blacks who were tricked into fake contracts
- Most were enslaved people or enslaved for a term
- All were from several generations of people who had put down roots in the Garden State

Project Description in the Released RFP February 2021:

The Lost Souls Public Memorial Project (LSP) seeks to create a permanent memorial to 137 African Americans who, in 1818, were stolen from New Jersey and transported to the Deep South to be sold into permanent slavery. This action took place in Middlesex County at the hands of Jacob Van Wickle, a corrupt judge who ran a notorious slave ring made up of not only Van Wickle and his relatives, but also other high placed individuals whose actions were complicit in the removal of these peoples. Van Wickle used his home in what is now East Brunswick, New Jersey to hold captive these people, including some who were already free, before they were sent to Louisiana and Mississippi by ship. What made this action even more tragic is that had the slaves stayed in New Jersey, they might have gained their freedom due to the enactment of the state's gradual emancipation laws.

The purpose of the Lost Souls Public Memorial is to ensure that these individuals – children, women, men – are never again forgotten; and that this horrific event in our local and regional history is brought to light, never to be whitewashed or erased. Further, we believe that in memorializing these Lost Souls, we can meaningfully contribute to the nation's ongoing healing from our history of slavery, as we reckon with the past and current aspects of how systemic racism is expressed.

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Revised Language for the Call for Proposals to center the Lost Souls (2022):

The Lost Souls Public Memorial Project, Inc. (LSP) seeks to build a permanent memorial to commemorate the lives of The Lost Souls. The Lost Souls were a conglomerate of freed and enslaved Blacks who'd established roots in the Garden State. Most were mothers of young children and infants as little as two days old. They were teenage boys on the cusp of manhood. Though still enslaved, they worked as apprentices, a learned skill set often used to support themselves financially or to purchase their freedom. This cohort also included freed men and women seeking employment to support themselves in freedom or perhaps provide for their families who too may have been still enslaved. Judge Jacob Van Wickle, a corrupt Middlesex County judge exploited two New Jersey state laws: the Gradual Emancipation Act of 1804 which promised eventual freedom to children born in the State that year and thereafter and the Act of 1812 which provided enslaved New Jersey Blacks some semblance of agency by consenting to removal out of the state.

For financial gain, in 1818, the judge perverted both laws created for Blacks-the law of freedom and the law on consent. The judge, his brother-in-law, Charles Morgan of Louisiana, and their politically connected allies, organized a highly sophisticated human trafficking ring between the two states which resulted in the transportation of at least 137 members of New Jersey's Black community to the Deep South. To note, on many occasions the members of the Lost Souls contested their coerced removal. From the judge's home in present day East Brunswick, while placed on the vessels, and upon their arrival to their destination. Despite their appeals, they were not freed.

The purpose of the Lost Souls Public Memorial is to shed light on this travesty and most importantly ensure that these individuals – Black women, Black children, and the Black men of New Jersey, who contested their subjugation, are ceaselessly acknowledged and remembered. In memorializing these human beings, we can meaningfully contribute to the nation's ongoing healing from our history of slavery, as we reckon with past and current manifestations of systemic racism.

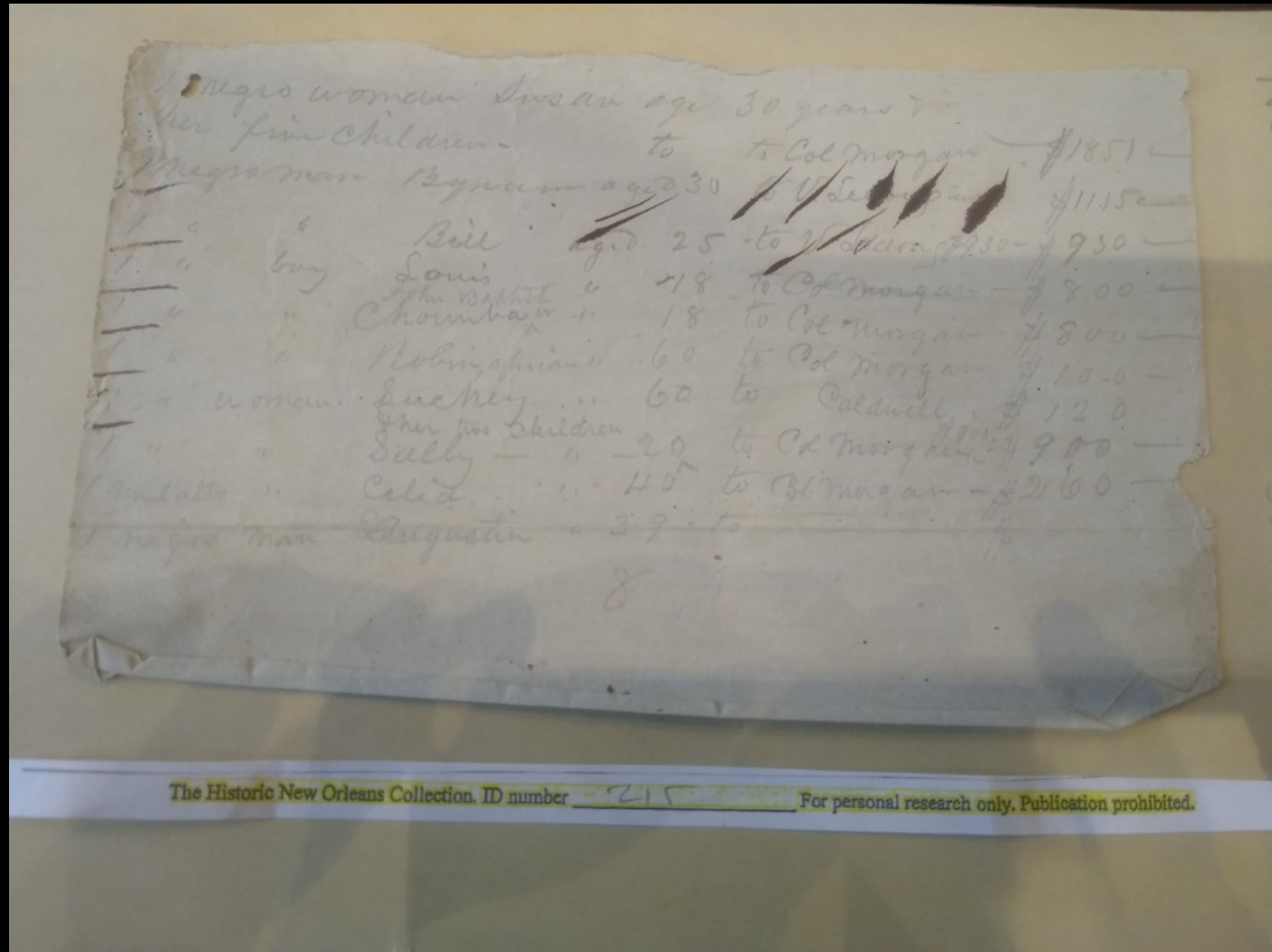
Lost Souls Public Historian Kristal Langford at a research trip in May 2022 to the Whitney Plantation Museum, Wallace, Louisiana. The Whitney Plantation Museum is the only plantation museum in the country to focus its interpretation entirely on the lives of the enslaved.



Replacing a statue of Jefferson Davis, New Orleans, Louisiana



Ongoing research into lives lived: receipt for the purchase of enslaved people by Charles Morgan, of Old Bridge, NJ, who trafficked humans from New Jersey to Louisiana and built a successful sugar plantation, Morganza, in Pointe Coupee, Louisiana.



For more information on the The Lost Souls Public Memorial Project, please contact us at:

lostsoulsmemorialnj.org