

The Cause of Conflict and the Call to Arms

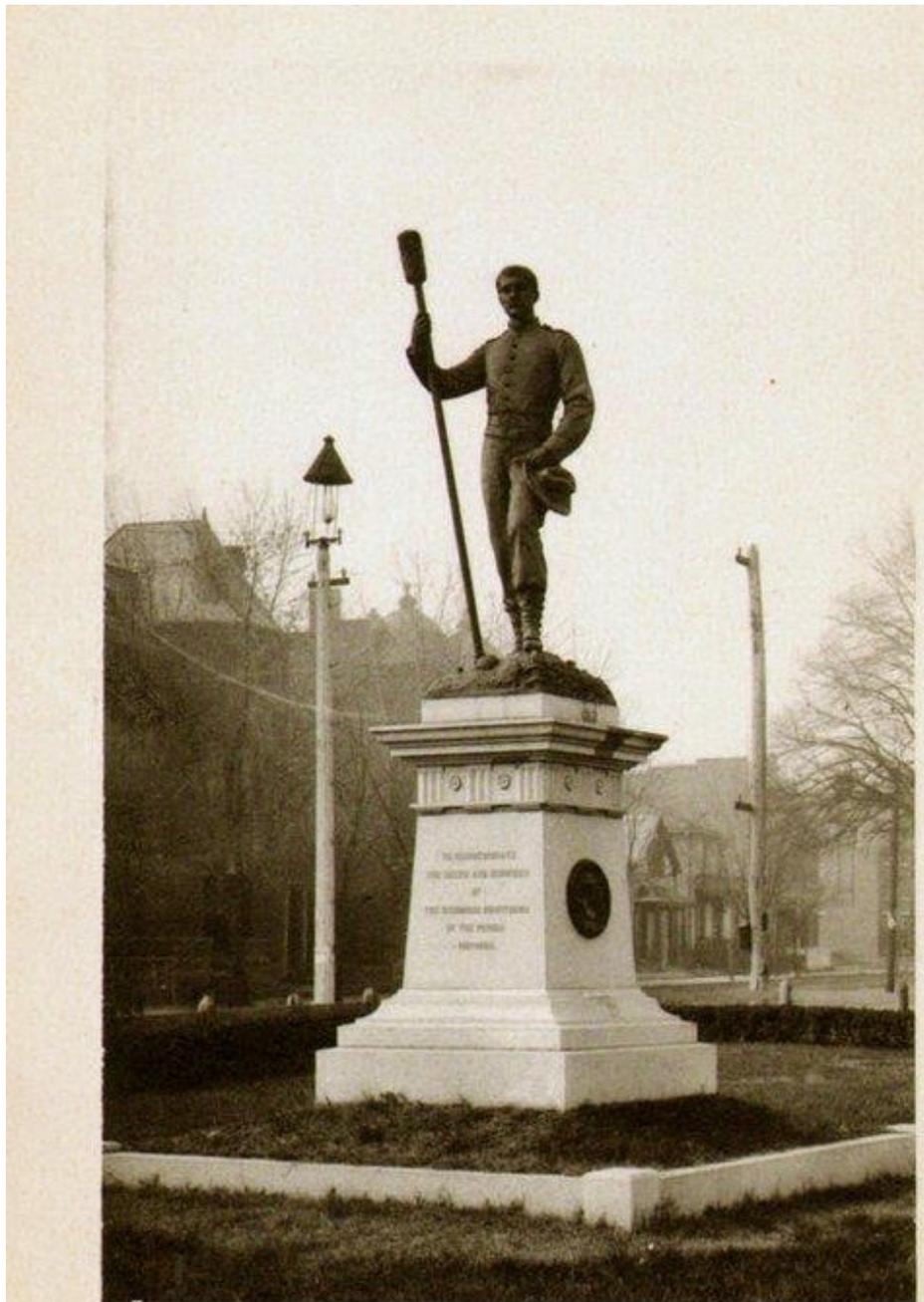
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In 1861 a ringing call came to the manhood of the South. The world knows how the men of the South answered that call. Dropping everything, they came from mountains, valleys and plains— from Maryland to Texas, they eagerly crowded to the front, and stood to arms. What for? What moved them? What was in their minds?

Shallow-minded writers have tried hard to make it appear that slavery was the cause of that war; that the Southern men fought to keep their slaves. They utterly miss the point, or purposely pervert the truth. In days gone by, the theological schoolmen held hot contention over the question as to the kind of wood the Cross of Calvary was made from. In their zeal over this trivial matter, they lost sight of the great thing that did matter; the mighty transaction, and purpose displayed upon that Cross.

In the causes of that war, slavery was only a detail and an occasion. Back of that lay an immensely greater thing; the defense of their rights—the most sacred cause given men on earth, to maintain at every cost. It is the cause of humanity. Through ages it has been, pre-eminently, the cause of the Anglo-Saxon race, for which countless heroes have died. With those men it was to defend the rights of their States to control their own affairs, without dictation from anybody outside; a right not given, but guaranteed by the Constitution, which those States accepted, most distinctly, under that condition.

It was for that these men came. This was just what they had in their minds; to uphold that Solemnly guaranteed constitutional right, distinctly binding all the parties to that compact. The South pleaded with the other parties to the Constitution to observe their guarantee; when they refused, and talked of force, then the men of the South got their guns and came to see about it. They were Anglo-Saxons. What could you expect? Their fathers had fought and died on exactly this issue—they could do no less. As their noble fathers, so their noble sons pledged their lives, and their sacred honor to uphold the same great cause—peaceably if they could; forcibly if they must.



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