

## **Oak Woods Cemetery Confederate Monument: The Revelations about Pro-Confederate Commemoration of the American Civil War**

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A monument to Confederate war dead in Oak Woods Cemetery on the South Side of Chicago may create the misconception that sympathetic Northerners were responsible for its construction. This essay demonstrates that it was actually pro-Confederate organizations of Southern emigrants who provided the primary contribution for the monument's construction. Pro-Confederate organizations in the North formed in the spirit of late 19th century fraternal groups. These organizations provided a way for Southern emigrants to share their common yearning for the Southern way of life. They also worked to improve the image of the South's role in the American Civil War, even as the North emphasized its victory less as time passed after the conflict. To this end, these groups shifted the focus away from what the Confederacy represented and onto the strong moral character of the Confederate private soldier, especially those who died in terrible prison conditions, like the 6,000 soldiers buried under the monument. With this emphasis, pro-Confederate groups were the main force that led to the monument's construction and eventual dedication in 1895.

*Information about the Author:*

Paul Rubio has been interested in history, particularly that of the United States, since fifth grade. Professor Graber's American Civil War and Memory Seminar during the latter half of the second semester of his freshman year provided him with a great opportunity to do research into a period of American history. It furthermore allowed him to look into an aspect of local Chicago history, as he has been a resident of Chicagoland his whole life.

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