

Statement from Mayor Ivy Taylor on Thursday, July 9, 2015:

"Slavery and the Civil War are part of the American legacy. For more than 200 years we've been trying to fully realize the revolutionary premise of democracy: all men are created equal. Knowing that the founding father generally credited with writing these words was a slaveholder and that some of the heroes who fought for Texas independence owned slaves is fundamental to our understanding of our own history, and our ongoing struggle to fulfill our nation's destiny and promise.

Selectively erasing pieces of our past may make it more comfortable for us today but it also makes it easier for many to ignore the historic struggles of Blacks in this country, a struggle for equality that continues today. It is offensive to use the rebel battle flag as a symbol of a city or state but it is also offensive to pretend that Texas was never a slave state or that racism has played no role in our history for the past 150 years. Instead, we need to do a better job of teaching history and a better job of discussing and understanding our complicated and multi-faceted past.

This past week in Germany, for example, we committed to an even stronger focus on protecting and interpreting San Antonio's Spanish colonial heritage through many lenses. There is not one American or Texan story, there are many, and part of our responsibility in a democracy is to recognize and honor them.

The City Manager has already directed staff to identify any monuments connected with Confederate history or symbolism and I will be receiving that report shortly, after which time the appropriate staff or Council committee can consider opportunities for expanding interpretation at these sites."