

# Is it time to take down the Whaleman Statue?

This week **ESPN removed Asian-American announcer Robert Lee** from covering University of Virginia's home opener football game "simply because of the coincidence of his name." Apparently, ESPN thinks he's a statue and needs to be taken down.

The past few weeks Confederate statues have been covered or taken down in the middle of the night by town/city officials, and the ones that aren't taken down are being vandalized. Vandals are even **burning Abe Lincoln Statues in Chicago**.

The oldest known **Christopher Columbus statue was vandalized in Baltimore** and **vandals are even destroying peace statues by mistake**.

With the urgent need to appease all those offended by history and scared by inanimate objects, is it time to erase New Bedford's whaling past? The popular Whaleman statue in New Bedford represents all the hard working whalers that helped build New Bedford, but doesn't it also represent tens of thousands of whales killed for oil? Why stop with the whaleman statue?

Just to the other side of the the downtown New Bedford library where the whaleman statue stands is a statue dedicated to Lewis Temple, the African-American man who revolutionized the whaling industry with his toggle iron. That would need to come down too.



Take a trip down William Street to the Whaling Museum and a hanging whale skeleton and museum beckons thousands of visitors each year to New Bedford. That would need to come down also.



To be clear, I'm against removing statues of any kind – especially ones dedicated to whaling. To me it will eventually lead to book burning and erasing America's past. Philosopher George Santayana once said, "Those who do not learn history are doomed to repeat it." By today's standards, the whalers

would be considered barbarians and murders, but during their time they were respected and helped build New Bedford and once lit the world with precious whale oil.

There is an argument that Confederates didn't contribute much to America, fought for enslaving millions of Americans and were responsible for a lot of American deaths during the Civil War. This is true, but then what about **the statue of Lenin that stands prominently in Seattle**? Lenin was the father of Communism which is responsible for over 100 million deaths when people like Mao and Stalin used it to liquidate populations. I despise who and what Lenin stands for, but I'm not about to take down his statue or burn books about him.

Don't we learn from Hitler's Mein Kampf? Can you show your kids a Confederate statue and explain to them that the good side won? We pour thousands of school age kids into the New Bedford Whaling Museum and teach them about New Bedford's history, while also explaining to them that whaling is no longer acceptable. We use our past, no matter how terrible, to teach future generations. Let's not remove statues, or burn books. Let's use them as teaching tools so we don't repeat the mistakes of our past.