

TELEVISION QUARTERLY ISSUES-PROGRAMS REPORT

Station: WFGX-TV
Location: Fort Walton Beach, FL
Quarter ending: September 30, 2017

Issue/description: 4. CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS. Following the violence at a White Supremacist Rally in Charlottesville, VA, protests against Confederate Monuments sprang up throughout the country, including Northwest Florida.

How Issue was treated (Program, PSA, etc.):

<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time/Duration</u>	<u>Program type</u>	<u>Description</u>
1. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	08/15/17	09:00PM/2.5 minutes	News	*
* The white nationalist movement is getting national attention after an attack killed a woman in Virginia over the weekend. At the center of the controversy - monuments to the South's Confederate past. There's one such monument left in Walton County. It's the oldest Confederate war memorial in the state of Florida, built just six years after the end of the war. Off the side of the DeFuniak County Courthouse, it lists the dozens of men who died fighting for the Confederate state in the Civil War. Many local citizens say that while they don't condone what was happening to African-American people, they do believe that we have come a long way since then and you still should recognize the people that died fighting for this country. Others disagree. A Facebook page called Take Down the Courthouse Confederate Flag in Walton County has almost 8,000 likes on Facebook. Louis Svelha represents Walton County. He said the county doesn't have any plans to take down the monument.				
2. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	08/16/17	09:00PM/3 minutes	News	**
** Pensacola Mayor Ashton Hayward said it's time to remove the Confederate monument in downtown Pensacola. Hayward said the city is committed to diversity. It's still to be determined if he can do this on his own or will need a majority vote from the city council. A city council ordinance adopted in 2000 and amended in 2010 does allow the city council to name, rename, alter, establish, move or remove a qualifying historical resource that is on city property. The city is exploring ways as to how to preserve history. Moving the monument to Veterans Memorial Park is a possibility. A counter petition to keep the Confederate monument standing is also being circulated online. So far close to 2,500 people have signed it. We also talked to Congressman Matt Gaetz, who opposes the move, saying we can't pretend history didn't happen.				
3. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	08/18/17	09:00PM/2 minutes	News	***

*** In a city deeply rooted in southern culture, a Confederate monument in Lee Square that overlooks downtown Pensacola is stirring up a community. Mayor Ashton Hayward proposed to relocate the Confederate statue from where it has stood since the 1800s. Many city residents are against the move, saying removing the monument means removing a part of history. Since the mayor's request, St. John's Cemetery has offered to take the monument. St. John's is a historic cemetery with the largest concentration of Civil War veterans in Northwest Florida. The city council is waiting on a legal opinion, and plan to discuss the monument removal in its next city council meeting.

Issue/description:

4. CONFEDERATE MONUMENTS

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<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Time/Duration</u>	<u>Program type</u>	<u>Description</u>
4. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	08/24/17	09:00PM/1.5 minutes	News	****

**** A rally is planned for Saturday in support of the Confederate monument in downtown Pensacola. Channel 3 talked to the organizer about why he's doing it and why he believes it will stay peaceful. For 126 years, a monument has stood in Lee Square to honor Confederate war dead. Thomas Olsen of Milton believes white supremacist groups have hijacked a cause that, to him, is just about history. He said "I don't agree with any of them, I don't agree with their actions, what they stand for. They don't stand for just keeping these monuments, they stand for oppressing other races, oppressing other people." He's making it clear he doesn't want those groups at Saturday's rally. Olsen said three family members on his father's side fought for the Confederacy. Olsen said, "This is not only our family history, this is our country's history. Taking down these monuments and destroying them isn't the right action to take." Right now about 100 people are expected at the rally. The event is planned for Saturday from 9 a.m. until 6 p.m. at Lee Square.

5. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	08/28/17	09:00PM/3 minutes	News	*****
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***** After hundreds gathered in Lee Square on Saturday over the debate to remove a Confederate statue, leaders in our area are now putting race relations on the table. As the 1970's began, the Escambia County Southern Leadership Conference and Pensacola NAACP worked together against what was considered a reminder of white supremacy. It was the use of Confederate symbols at Escambia High School that sparked a debate. Dr. Michael Butler, a Mobile native and author of *Beyond Integration*, began his research on the civil rights movement in Pensacola during his college years. "What I wrote about in 1976 is almost being relived in Pensacola in 2017," Butler said. Former Pensacola Police Chief David Alexander was an eighth grade student during Escambia High School's first race riot in 1974. "This thing dispersed from the school out into the community and there were incidents of racial violence and attacks all throughout the community," Alexander said. Alexander said when many people see a divided country, they are grateful to find some unity close to home, even when it comes to a change that people are reluctant to accept. "In places like Pensacola you need strong civic leadership to make a determination that these symbols do not project the values of a multi-racial community," Butler said. "We're really not doing our children or grandchildren any favors by continuing to debate what these symbols and these monuments mean."

6. Channel 3 News at 9PM on WFGX	09/14/17	09:00PM/1.5 minutes	News	*****
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***** For now, the monument stays. On Thursday, the Pensacola City Council discussed options for the fate of the Confederate statue in Lee Square. They voted 5-0 to instruct staff to research guidelines for putting up and taking down monuments. The people in the crowd argued for and against the monument in a public place. The debate erupted even though there was no action item on the agenda. The dispute is over whether the monument is a symbol of history or a racist display. Councilman P.C. Wu said that as a minority, he will always fight discrimination. He said that we have to get a grip on race relations, but he is not sure if taking the statue down is going to fix it. Councilwoman Sherri Myers agreed and asked staff to research guidelines when it comes to putting up and taking down historical monuments.