

Memphis exhumes body of Klan leader Nathan Bedford Forrest from city park

- **Remains of Confederate general and wife will be relocated**
- **Forrest owned enslaved people and led the Ku Klux Klan**



The statue that used to stand in a park in Memphis, Tennessee.

Associated Press in Memphis

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Workers have begun digging up the remains of a Confederate general, Nathan Bedford Forrest, and moving the former slave trader's body from a park in Memphis, Tennessee, to a museum hundreds of miles away.

Crews prepared to remove the graves of Forrest and his wife from Health Sciences Park in the busy medical district, a space which used to bear the name of Forrest, an early Ku Klux Klan leader, and a statue of the cavalryman on a horse.

Workers must dismantle the remaining pedestal before they can disinter the Forrests and move them to a Confederate museum. The process is expected to take weeks. The Sons of Confederate Veterans pressure group is overseeing the move, which a judge approved last year, ending a long legal battle.

Cities and activists have taken steps to get rid of statues and monuments to figures from Robert E Lee, a general, to Jefferson Davis, the president of the Confederacy, which fought and lost the civil war between 1861 and 1865, in defence of slavery.

Forrest sold enslaved people in Memphis and was a cavalry general. In April 1864, his troops attacked Fort Pillow in north-west Tennessee and killed between 200 and 300 Union soldiers, most of them Black. Northern newspaper reports called it an atrocity.

Historians say Forrest later became an early leader of the Ku Klux Klan. Many call him a violent racist.

The remains of Forrest and his wife were moved from a cemetery and buried under the statue in 1904. The city of Memphis took down the statue in December 2017 after selling the park to a non-profit group, circumventing a state law barring the removal of historic monuments from public areas. A judge in Nashville ruled that the city and Memphis Greenspace, the non-profit, acted legally.

The remains will be reburied and the statue placed at the National Confederate Museum at Elm Springs in Columbia, according to an affidavit from Bedford Forrest Myers, a great-great-grandson. Owned by the Sons of the Confederate Veterans, the museum opened in October. It is about 200 miles from Memphis.

The park where Forrest was buried has been the site of protests associated with the Black Lives Matter movement. The words Black Lives Matter have been painted in yellow by activists on a walkway surrounding the tomb.