Good morning. My name is Cat Clark. I am a native Southerner, a citizen of Alexandria, and a member of Showing Up for Racial Justice of Northern Virginia.

On September 19, 1864, *Southern Punch* magazine, a pro-Confederate weekly published in Richmond, ridiculed the “new heresy” that **“The people of the South are *not* fighting for slavery, but for independence.”

Southerners, the magazine argued, “cannot agree to hold our great industrial institution [slavery] at so low a figure…. we should never consent to eat our words and our principles…. Our doctrine is this: WE ARE FIGHTING FOR INDEPENDENCE THAT OUR GREAT AND NECESSARY DOMESTIC INSTITUTION OF SLAVERY SHALL BE PRESERVED.”**

It is now popular to accuse people who do not celebrate the Confederacy of wanting to “erase history.”

**I am here to tell you the opposite is true.**

The history of those treasonous, blood-soaked years *absolutely must* be preserved and taught—in history textbooks, museums, documentary films, and so forth.

The war waged by the Confederacy to preserve white supremacy—to sustain the enslavement, torture, terrorization, and sexual assault of black Americans—should be remembered unto repudiation, not celebration.

It must always be remembered, but it must never be glorified, placed on a pedestal as if it is something worthy of admiration.

There was no honor in the Confederate cause and there should be none in its memory.

If we want to *celebrate* history, let us celebrate the history of *resistance* to white supremacy.

If we cannot remember that history of resistance, it is because the Confederacy takes up far too much space in our city and our imaginations. Nearly everyone has seen the Confederate memorial at Prince and Washington Streets. Can we also point to the monument celebrating the 1939 Alexandria Library sit-in, one of the first civil rights protests of its kind?

If we want to *celebrate* history, let us celebrate the history of resistance to white supremacy, a history we can all be proud of. And let us create more resistance history *right now*.

We cannot look away, we cannot back down. We must remember all of our history, but we should also celebrate, and continue to create, the history of resistance to white supremacy.

Thank you.

SURJ Northern Virginia:
www.surjnova.org
www.facebook.com/SURJNoVa