

Owning the Past

Nobody asked but ...

My excellent fellow writer and contributor here at EVC, Kent McManigal wrote a piece recently in which he pointed out that racism is not a permanent affliction. It is only enduring when the holder of racist views continues to stoke that fire. I believe, for instance, that the Governor of Virginia has tried to dodge the bullet instead of owning his past. It appears that he has given no evidence that he is no longer a holder of racist views. Please be aware that I know that a negative cannot be proven, but a preponderance of evidence can support a change of sentiment. So far, in my opinion, the Governor has not shouldered his burden of persuasion very well.

Kent used himself as an example, and I was inspired by it. I grew up in the middle south, in the “border state” of Kentucky. But as with every place else, human stupidity ruled the roost. A racist atmosphere blanketed daily life. Black people were ignored and separated. The only counter influence I ever had was from my mother, a native of the Boston, Massachusetts area — she was an egalitarian generally, but she was saddled with preconceptions of a Boston sort — one group of snobs may be believed as better than some other group of snobs. As for myself, the established order was set so I hardly even knew that black people existed. But my purpose today is not to recite details of my personal trip from biased state A to biased state B. As regards race, however, state B is far ahead of state A. Everybody is on a journey from biased to unbiased in any particular area. I have a bias against hominy, but I have grown to like grits, corn nuts, hoppin’ john, and pozole. I have a bias against a collective of human beings, but I have grown to like voluntaryists, individualists, anarchists, entrepreneurs, libertarians, agorists, philosophers, Austrian-school economists, objectivists, and empiricists.

— Kilgore Forelle