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Presenting America's Most Un-American History

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From the arguments about the display of the Confederate flag over the state house dome in Columbia, South Carolina, to the dispute over Thomas Jefferson's fathering children by his slave, Sally Hemmings, to heated discussions about the causes of the Civil War and the ever more strident calls for reparations, slavery has become one of the most contentious historical events in America's memory. I will briefly discuss many of these issues as they complicate the work of public historians seeking to educate visitors to national historic sights, museums, public exhibitions and other places where American history is made available to those seeking to understand our nation and its most difficult historical memories.