The rise of higher education in the Americas: “the American campus stood as a silent monument to slavery”; its fate “had been intertwined from its beginning with the social project of dispossessing Indian people”; and that “American science evolved with American slavery.”

Slavery and racism are, without doubt, our nation’s original sins. It is still valuable for all of us to learn about or be reminded of the degree to which all of our institutions, including colleges and universities, were intertwined with and dependent upon compulsory labor, the dispossession of land, and the profits that resulted from them. Though Wilder could have provided a deeper and more contextualized understanding of the complexities of the past and the beliefs and behavior of Colonial and antebellum Americans, “Ebony & Ivy” does force us to confront some uncomfortable truths.

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