

Beat: Local

## The Flags of Our Heritage Debate

### Get the facts right...

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**USPA NEWS** - When Governor Jindal claims the Battle Flag of the Confederate States of America as part of his "Heritage" something is terribly wrong. The Battle Flag, nor any other Flag of the CSA are part of my Heritage, and I was born and raised in the Heart of Dixie.

July 16, 2015- In my second Op-Ed, I am going to tackle another "hot button issue" that has been creating another firestorm across all the media channels over the past few weeks, The Confederate Battle Flag and its proponent's claim of it being their "Heritage". Let me start this off by providing a little back story for reference. I was born and raised in Alabama, the "Heart of Dixie". During my childhood, I had numerous family members that though George Wallace was the best thing that ever came out of Alabama, that is, until the band Alabama came out of Alabama. Now, I did grow up in a rather diverse city, Huntsville,

between the Marshall Space Flight Center and Redstone Arsenal a great deal of my friends in school were from other parts of the country, and world. This helped in my understanding of the differences in people from other regions and other cultures.

Now my family tree, which has been traced back to the Seventh Century, includes numerous individuals who were residents of Alabama when it succeeded from the United States of America on January 11, 1861, and one branch more than likely were slave owners (according to registered documents), my Great-Great Grandfather served in the Army of the Confederate States of America and was held as a Prisoner of War by the United States.

So with this, I do in fact have a great deal of knowledge on the "Heritage" and other rhetoric surrounding this flag which so many are now upset about. My Father had the Battle Flag hanging in his barracks at Fort Benning, Georgia in the 1960's, and then my Grandparents flew the Battle Flag on his grave directly below the United States flag until the late 1970's when gravestones were being vandalized. I can say for a fact, that there are many a racist in my tree, I have seen this first hand.

With my background and heritage, I can see a little of some of the proponents for the flag, but this is very, very little. When I click on my computer and see the Governor of Louisiana, Piyush "Bobby" Jindal, stand at a podium and declare that the Confederate Battle Flag is part of his "Heritage", all I can do is shake my head, this Battle Flag is no more a part of his heritage as it is mine or anyone else's for that matter. It was a battle flag in a war after several states committed the act of Treason against the Republic for which they all belonged, plain and simple, they, my ancestors included, were traitors to the United States of America, the Constitution, and everything associated with it. This flag and all flags associated with the Confederacy are no different than the flags of other treasonous groups around the planet, including the Nazis.

Since the Confederate States of America was only in existence from 1861 until the surrender in 1865, a mere four years, it is not a part of my "Heritage". Yes, my ancestors participated in the treasonous rebellion against the country of which they belonged, but in the end, they had to take an oath to re-pledge their allegiance to the United States of America, the Constitution, and the Republic as a whole.

My cousin posted an interesting statement of facts concerning the soldiers of the Civil War. It stated that by an Act of the United States Congress in 1958, every Confederate Soldier, Marine, or member of the CSA Navy were thereafter to be recognized as Veterans of the United States Military. This occurred the year that the last living Confederate Veteran died, a full ninety-three years after the surrender of the Confederacy at Appomattox Courthouse. My personal opinion, and again this is my opinion, is that any soldier who died in battle as an acting member of the Confederate States of America who was unable to swear their allegiance back to the United States, should not be recognized as a United States Military Veteran, but a traitor. Again, that is my opinion, but I am sure there are a few others who would agree. The Civil War, and the decades of oppression towards those deemed "unworthy" since then are the darkest days in American History. How any people, no matter their backgrounds can honestly believe that they are better than their fellow man, is beyond me. Absolutely nothing positive has come from these dark days, but just the opposite Bigotry, Racism, Oppression have been the results. And all of those items are tied, in the minds, to the symbols of the CSA, including the Battle Flag.

We sat down a week or so ago and watched the film "The Woman In Gold", about a senior Austrian Woman living in Southern

California who wanted to reclaim the art that was stolen from her family by the Nazi's after their invasion of Austria, the emotional scars suffered by this person ran deep and were still just as tender some forty years later as they were the day she had to leave her family behind because they were Jews, in a country now run by the Nazi Regime. The Nazis almost destroyed an entire race of people, and more than likely would have if the outcome of the war was different.

The same analogy holds true here, if the tables had been turned and the Confederacy had won the war, how many African Americans would still be in bondage, and what would have stopped this regime from adding to their list of "inferiors" just as the Nazis did?

I have read and heard both sides of this argument, and I respect many things that have been said on both sides. But everyone needs to understand that the Battle Flag of the Confederate States of America is from a group of states who were traitors to our nation. They fought for the oppression of a race of people, and from this movement numerous hate groups have attempted to carry on this vile tradition of oppression. I speak first hand of this, the League of the South, a listed Hate Group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, had planned a protest here in Shelbyville a few years back, and I refused their organization accommodations at my hotel, as did the other hotels in Shelbyville as is our rights under Tennessee Law.

After my refusal, I received numerous threats, including threats to my life, and my name was slandered across the internet by these racist thugs. We followed the legal channels to prevent anything from happening to me, or anyone else during their "visit" to Shelbyville. They showed up in town at the corner of North Main and Coloredo Blvd holding their signs, just as they had the day before in Murfreesboro. The rhetoric was nothing but hate and disdain. There were only a handful of them, but they were, standing in the middle of town in the twenty first century preaching the misguided values passed down the generations through the Klan and into the individuals standing in front of Walgreen's.

They had a constitutional right to gather and protest, just as every other citizen of this great country does, but be sure to understand your Heritage first, before you try to shove it down someone else's throat. If you are going to claim the Battle Flag as your heritage, then you must own up to the simple fact that it is a representation of a treasonous action against our nation, simple as that. Now as to the flags being displayed publicly, no Confederate Flag or Symbol should be displayed or be a part of any insignia, flag, or any other item for any Government Owned and publicly funded building, park, institution, or the like that receives either one cent in public monies or is granted Tax Exempt Status by the Federal Government,

this is common sense since all the citizens pay for these building and institutions, and therefore all citizens should be respected as well.

As to monuments and historical markers, yes they deserve to stay as a reminder that for four years in the 19th century a portion of this country seceded, declared war, and lost. Let the monuments stand as a symbol that this dark period happened. But do not promote them as hero's, for that is not what they were, they were oppressors, and traitors, please don't confuse their actions for heroism, for it was nothing of the kind.

And to the private individuals who are proudly driving around town in their beat up pickup trucks with 5 foot Battle Flags flying off the back, I simply say this, it is your right to fly this flag, but remember that when someone you pass gives you the finger, you pretty much deserve it".

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