

# “...FEMALE VIRTUE, MALE HONOR AND GOD’S FAVOR”

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## **A Shattered Nation**

**The Rise & Fall of the Confederacy, 1861–1868**

Anne Sarah Rubin

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*Reviewed by Michael W. Masters*

*The people of the United States will find that, under the pretense of ‘saving the life of the nation, and upholding the old flag’ they have surrendered their own liberties into the hands of that worst of all tyrants, a body of senseless fanatics.*

— Jubal Early, General, CSA

One hundred forty years after its final military act, the War for Southern Independence still holds a powerful grip on American thought. Could the Confederacy have won its independence if this or that battle had gone differently? Did Lincoln really free the slaves? Was the South “right”? Even today, these questions recur and continue to be debated. Books are still written on the battles and leaders of the war; on the causes of the “irrepressible conflict,” whether slavery or states’ rights; on slavery and resistance to it; on the Constitutional issues of secession; on the disrupted lives of civilians caught up in military violence and the ensuing degradation of Reconstruction; and, lately (and thankfully) on the dubious character of Abraham Lincoln — whose war on behalf of Northern mercantile interests and the by-then-defunct Whig Party killed 620,000 Americans, as many as all other American conflicts combined.

Given the realities of today’s mass immigration and compulsory multiculturalism, perhaps the most important question of all is whether the Lost Cause was, in fact, legitimate: Was the South a true nation and Southerners a distinct people, deserving of nationhood on the basis of ethnic identity and self-determination? Realizing the incompatibility of a white ethnic basis for

Confederate identity with the tenets of the radical egalitarianism and multiculturalism needed to sustain their neo-proletariat of racial minorities, feminists, homosexuals, and other disaffected groups, the elites who govern what is acceptable in American life and thought have begun a campaign to demonize the Confederacy. Attacks against the South and against Southerners abound in the controlled organs of the press, the halls of government, the board rooms of major corporations, and the ivied towers of academe.

Even the National Park Service has gotten into the act; its Republican-appointed leadership has decreed that battlefield parks shall henceforth focus on the evils of slavery rather than the strategy, heroism, and tragedy of the men who fought and died on the blood-soaked earth therein. As an illuminating example of the kind of fanaticism Confederate General Jubal Early spoke of so pointedly, these new abolitionists claim that in the past, by describing the maneuver of troops and the clash of arms in a neutral manner rather than according to their particular presumption as to the cause of the war (slavery), our national parks have long been prejudiced *against* the Union side of the conflict and in favor of the Confederate side! In a mind-boggling display of “double-think” straight out of George Orwell’s *1984*, even-handed focus on the objective *facts* of history becomes prejudice, whereas gross bias and subjective interpretation become revealed truth.

This ideologically motivated assault on the culture and identity of the South and its people needs to be subjected to rational scrutiny. Were Southerners (the Southerners of 1861, not the diluted population of Southern states today, following 140 years of immigration by Yankees and other undesirables) a nation within a nation, a “distinct society,” as Canadian *Québécois* – supporters of Quebec independence or autonomy – claim for themselves? And were they really determined to win their independence or were they destined to lose the war because deep down they didn’t really *want* to be a separate nation? A surprising affirmation of Confederate nationality has entered the literature, penned by a Jewish woman named Anne Sarah Rubin and entitled *A Shattered Nation: The Rise and Fall of the Confederacy, 1861–1868*. The words of the title of this review, quoted from *A Shattered Nation*, succinctly capture many of the cultural currents that comprised the Southern national persona as it struggled to escape the abolitionist, mercantilist, and consolidationist proclivities of the Yankee anaconda.

### THE SOUTH AS NATION

The thesis of Rubin’s book is that, contrary to the Orwellian Memory Hole to which liberal culture assassins have consigned Confederate nationalism, Southerners were able to forge a national identity in a remarkably short time, indeed almost instantaneously upon the secession of the eleven states of the Confederacy and the invasion of their new nation by Lincoln’s blue-clad arsonists – an identity that, in fact, outlasted by many decades the surrender

of Robert E. Lee at Appomattox, of Joseph Johnston following the battle at Bentonville, N.C., and the capture of CSA President Jefferson Davis in Georgia and his subsequent imprisonment.

Covering the period from 1861 to 1868, by which time the worst of Reconstruction legislation had been enacted by a Radical Republican-controlled Congress, the book alternates between discussion of the issues of the day as viewed through the utterances and actions of Confederate leaders and a rather extensive chronicling of the thoughts of ordinary Southerners as set forth in letters, diaries, newspaper and magazine articles, speeches, and memoirs. In the author's words, "The men, women and children who considered themselves Confederates during the 1860s *created a nation*, believed in it, saw that nation disappear, and re-allied themselves with the United States. *The identity that they created as Confederates outlasted the Confederacy itself.* [Emphasis added.] She continues,

This book explores the myriad strands of ideology and identity that made up the Confederacy and shows the complexity and texture of people's attachment to their nation as an ideal, a state and a memory. It is concerned with the experiences and ideas of those Southern whites who supported the Confederacy. Therefore, it excludes Unionists and African Americans from an analysis of nationalism and identity. While I have made an effort to be as specific as possible, the word "Southerner" should be taken to mean "white Southerner who supported the Confederacy." *This population dominated the discourse over nationalism and identity during the 1860s.* [Emphasis added.]

In supporting her case, Rubin cites other historians who have defied the recent orthodoxy of cultural eradication. "David Potter's 1960 essay, 'The Historian's Use of Nationalism and Vice Versa' has inspired a voluminous literature on Confederate nationalism...The primary question seems to be whether the Confederates were able to imagine themselves as different enough from the United States to endure as a nation." She cites as influence on her thesis that the Confederacy was indeed a nation works such as George Rable's *The Confederate Republic*. "He examines the myriad ways in which the government, especially President Davis, worked to define a 'sacred center.'" She concludes, "As far as nationalism is concerned, Rable seems implicitly to argue that the Confederacy passed Potter's institutional tests, that it was viable and self-sustaining."

### THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Among the methods of creating a sense of nationhood was close Southern identification with the Revolutionary era and the struggles of the Founding Fathers, many of whom were Southerners. "As Confederates went about the work of nation-building, they self-consciously drew on a ready-made myth of national origin, rejecting the recent American history of sectionalism and

centralization and instead seizing on the American Revolution as the defining moment of their past." Elsewhere, she writes, "Even before the shots were fired at Fort Sumter, Confederates were christening their struggle the 'Second American Revolution'..." A motion to name the new nation the Republic of Washington failed. But the Great Seal of the Confederacy, bearing the likeness of General Washington riding a horse, incorporated the great Revolutionary War hero into the formal symbolism of the new nation.

In the beginning, Southern rhetoric invoked the right of secession inherent in the concept of self-determination – and made explicit in Virginia's ratification of the Constitution. This, in itself, constitutes a declaration of a separate national identity – and one grounded in the formalisms of legality. "Constitutional legitimacy was crucial to the Confederates' sense of themselves. By fighting for their rights and the rule of law, and by emphasizing their Revolutionary antecedents, Confederate theorists gave their people a rich reservoir of national symbols upon which to draw..." Southerners also believed that they were a distinct people, more cultured and civilized than the "dregs of the earth" north of the Mason-Dixon Line. "Southern soldiers were 'honorable, honest, moral and virtuous,' their Northern counterparts, 'desperadoes and dangerous men.'"

Taking the high road, Robert E. Lee, who refused Lincoln's offer of command of the Union Army, wrote of his decision to cast his lot with the South, "I shall return to Virginia and share the fortune of my people." For Lee, the people of Virginia and of the South were self-evidently a distinct familial group commanding his loyalty.<sup>1</sup> Gustave Breaux, Confederate colonel in charge of Lafayette, Louisiana, succinctly identified the issues at stake for the South. "[I]n successful rebellion is to [be] found our social and political safety." Both terms, "social" and "political," imply a community of interest – i.e., a people and a nation. Nor did the end of war quench the Southern sense of identity, a sure sign that it was real and not an artifact of conflict. Rubin writes,

Confederates, particularly those far away from Virginia, had scarcely been able to comprehend the loss of Richmond when the news of Lee's surrender at Appomattox arrived. Shock, horror, and disbelief greeted the news. The sheer emotionalism of Confederates' response to the end of the war gives the lie to the notion that Confederates had lost their sense of national allegiance.

Rubin continues, "The end of the war did not mark a profound break in the ways in which Southerners imagined themselves but rather marked a shift in emphasis. Southerners might no longer have their independence, but they could maintain their sense of themselves as a culturally, *indeed ethnically*, distinct people." [emphasis added] And, "Many people split their identity after the war: politically, they could become Americans, but emotionally, in their 'true hearts,' they continued to *remain apart*, protecting their memories." [emphasis added] Many white Southerners saw the necessity of taking the

oath of loyalty to the U.S. government in order to have a voice in the rebuilding of their shattered homeland, but “one could take the oath and still hate Yankees.” And many did – some to this day.

### THE LAST FULL MEASURE

Perhaps the most pernicious aspect of the campaign of identity eradication – an ethnic cleansing that authors Ronald and Donald Kennedy called *cultural genocide* in their book, *The South Was Right* – is the claim that the South failed in its bid for independence because the Southern people were never serious about withdrawing from the Union. In this rewrite of history, the myth of the Lost Cause was just that – a myth. Southerners never had any identity other than as Americans and inevitably lost because they did not support the war wholeheartedly. As evidence, critics of Southern resolve cite, for example, opposition to secession in certain localities such as the mountain counties of East Tennessee and western North Carolina, or the fact that Southern leaders did not resort to guerrilla warfare after Appomattox.

Ignored, of course, is the fact that every seceded state took its leave from the union following the lopsided vote of delegates to a convention called expressly to consider that question – even Tennessee and North Carolina. Ignored also is the exemplary character of Robert E. Lee, who, understanding the devastation and carnage of war perhaps better than anyone alive, sternly vetoed just the suggestion of guerrilla war as both dishonorable and futile – a continuation of a bloodbath that had already claimed too many lives – a decision rendered even as Union armies closed in on Confederate forces during April 1865.

This thesis is absurd on the face of it. If sacrifice is any measure of support, no other group or generation of Americans has ever supported *anything* so devotedly as Southerners supported their war for independence. The devastation suffered by the South in property loss and economic impact was staggering; it took a hundred years for the region to recover, a period lengthened by anti-Southern laws that institutionalized unfair economic disparities – low rail shipping rates into vs. high rates out of the South, for instance. Military losses were equally staggering. One quarter of the South’s (white) men of military age, a total of 260,000, were dead at the end of the war. The ratio of those in military service to population size is the highest of any American war. The ratios of killed in action, total deaths (including disease), and total casualties to numbers in service are all the highest in U.S. history, far higher than the comparable ratios for Union forces.<sup>2</sup>

No other group of Americans has ever had to endure such sacrifices. It is absurd to claim that the South would have done so without supreme dedication to its chosen Cause. The claim that the Southern population did not pursue the war wholeheartedly is not only a damnable lie, but a demonstrably damnable one at that. Even the name, Civil War – chosen by the winners for their own propaganda purposes – belies the true nature of the war. It was a

War for Southern Independence, fought to the last full measure by a people who gave all they had to give, surrendering only when smothered beneath overwhelming numbers and industry.

### RACE AND REALITY

It is difficult to write a book about the War for Southern Independence without dealing with the question of slavery. And while Rubin takes occasional rhetorical shots at the South in this area, she does a creditable job of realistically incorporating white Southern attitudes about slavery and black Africans into the discussion of Southern nationhood. The result will not be comforting to those thoroughly reconstructed Southerners who swoon at the vision of legions of black Confederates stemming the blue tide in battle – and who have recently begun looking for “Hispanic” and Chinese Confederates to drool over. Rubin’s thesis, for which there is ample historical support, was that Southern nationhood was in not insubstantial measure grounded on the belief that blacks, whether slave or freedman, should never be in a position to achieve social and political equality. In fact, many state ordinances of secession said as much in the unambiguous language of the day.<sup>3</sup>

Rubin finds ample examples of Southern attitudes about race for the simple reason that the historical record is replete with them. “These new Confederates created a national culture in large part by drawing on the usable American past. But they also added a potent mix of fear and rage to it. The fear was the end of slavery, couched often in the language of so-called black rule or race-mixing...” She quotes Charleston’s fire-eating magazine, the *Mercury*, concerning the issue of enrolling blacks in the dwindling ranks of the Confederate army. “But the brave soldier who is fighting for the supremacy of his race will have none of it – no none of it. He wants no Hayti here – no St. Domingo – no mongrels here – no miscegenation with his blood.” Rubin adds, “This is the same kind of apocalyptic language used four years earlier to inspire secession – emancipate any slaves, and chaos and racial mixing will follow.”

Perhaps Rubin’s most telling argument in favor of the validity of Southern self-perception as a separate nation is the reaction of Southerners when the issue of winning the war, and with it their political independence, came in conflict with the institution of slavery that they were supposedly fighting to preserve. When white manpower began to be exhausted in the grueling conflict, the question of arming blacks in return for emancipation raised itself and would not go away. Initially, the reaction was strongly negative, as the above quote from the *Mercury* illustrates, but by 1865 it had become a reality, in no small measure because military commanders, Robert E. Lee among them, called for it. Writes Rubin,

If the Confederacy was supposed to have died from failures of will and nationalism, on which side of the argument does this turn of events fall?  
I believe that the willingness of Confederates to arm their slaves, thus

bringing into life their greatest fear, shows the depth of their attachment to their nation. Born in slavery, the Confederacy had become about more than that for many people. It had become a viable alternative to life within the United States, one in which slavery was no longer the only marker of differentiation.

Rubin leaves hanging in the air the unstated but understood implication that Southern fears of racial chaos were unfounded, the consequences they feared unrealized – and perhaps also that Southerners were to be condemned for ever having entertained such un-multicultural beliefs. For instance, at one point she refers to Southern governance's exclusion of blacks as "herrenvolk democracy," a not-so-veiled attempt to smear the South with the odium of the Third Reich. (This has become an increasingly popular tactic on the part of the cultural genocide oligarchy.) Perhaps in adopting the orthodox view of the day, Rubin has given too short a brief to reality. Observing the accelerating balkanization and decline of multicultural America and the rising number of mixed race alliances, one may find new regard for the prescience of our Southern forebears – and a growing appreciation for their willingness to risk all in order to insulate their descendants from this fate.

The pursuit of racial exclusivity did not end with the cessation of hostilities in April and May 1865. With the question of a separate national existence extinguished by conquest from without, Southerners continued to pursue those questions of continued distinct cultural identity and ethnic existence they considered vital – but now limited to the narrow confines of an oppressive and degrading military occupation and political reconstruction that was an outrageous affront to men and women who had sacrificed nearly everything in defense of their way of life. Rubin gives an interpretation that cuts to the heart of the matter.

Former Confederates wanted a return to the political status quo – whites on top, blacks on the bottom. The willingness of so many people to return to the bosom of the Union need not be seen as evidence of weak Confederate (or white Southern) nationalism; rather, it appears as a self-conscious attempt to manipulate Northerners. What Southern whites wanted after the war was over was local control – how they got that control mattered less.

### DRIVING OLD DIXIE DOWN

Those who have not studied the horrors of Reconstruction may not understand Southern attitudes toward the North. There is a strong basis in fact for Southern anger and resentment. Economically, the South was invaded and systematically looted by a locust-like army of unscrupulous, devouring thieves, called carpetbaggers. Northern Radical Republicans did their best to disenfranchise white Southerners in favor of newly freed blacks, whom they regarded as a means to secure perpetual political control for the Republican Party. Much of today's poor race relations are often blamed on the attitudes

of white Southerners toward blacks. But largely ignored is the effect on black attitudes of Radical Republicans' inflaming racial hatred among newly freed Africans against white Southerners – who naturally reacted with fear for their safety and survival.

From the distance of history, Rubin and others may castigate Southern fears of racial violence. But for those living through the nightmare of Reconstruction, the examples of the black massacre of every white soul on Haiti, including 12,000 veteran French soldiers sent to restore order, as well as homegrown racial uprisings such as the Nat Turner Rebellion, were vivid and indelible reminders of how bad things could be. North Carolina lawyer David Schenck wrote of inflammatory Radical Republican racial policies,

[T]he effect of this will be to create a deadly feud between the races, and give rise to scenes of violence and disorder which will make society miserable: for the white race will not suffer this outrage without bloody resentments and if it cannot be done by force it will be done by assassinations and secret means of revenge.

While we, in less overtly unsettled times, may express shock and condemnation of such language and the acts it portended, one must understand that many white Southerners felt that their very existence was at stake. When pushed to the wall, people will take whatever action they must to ensure survival. On the eve of the outbreak of war, President James Buchanan spoke to Congress, warning of the consequences of failure to adopt a tone of moderation and compromise in dealings with the South. "Self-preservation is the first law of nature, and therefore any state of society in which the sword is all the time suspended over the heads of the people must at last become intolerable." Rightly or wrongly, Southerners felt compelled to act.

In the end, Southern determination carried the day – at least for another hundred years, before the federal government again invaded the South in the 1950s and 1960s. The strategy Southerners employed to recover control of their own destiny was, in Rubin's view, a twofold attack. First was the high road. "White Southerners reacted to this insult [reconstruction] not by threatening secession but by protesting the loss of their rights as Americans." Having charged the Radicals with crimes against the Constitution, Southerners also "turned (as Schenck had predicted) to extralegal racial violence in order to reassert control." Employing this carrot and stick approach "would ultimately allow Southern whites to win the peace, to achieve political reunification with the rights and privileges of American citizenship while still holding on to a separate and quasi-ethnic social and cultural identity."

### ORDINARY PEOPLE

We have skipped over much of the volume of the book – the many pages that deal with the attitudes of ordinary Southerners and the vicissitudes that marked their lives during war and military occupation – in order to focus on

weightier questions. This is an unfortunate omission; many of these segments are both powerful and revealing – alternately poignant, sad, bitter, desperate, or inspiring – especially to those who are still thoroughly Southern in outlook and loyalty.

And a few are quite funny in a sly sort of way – among them the postwar columns of a lady satirist who took the pen name Florence Fay for her writings in the periodical, *Field and Fireside*. Her “Arrows” column delighted in skewering the motives and the conduct of Union forces. Caustically employing the word “Patriotism” as a stand-in for federal soldiers, one column slams the hated bluecoats in understated but biting sarcasm. Rubin summarizes and quotes from the column thus:

[S]he [Fay] described patriotism as calling at your house, asking if you have a husband in the “rebel” army. “You feed it, and it goes off without paying, and you look at Patriotism’s back as it goes over the sill, and hope that it may always keep its toes in the present direction. Then you turn the bolts in the locks of your doors, and open your upper windows and when Patriotism makes you another call, there’s nobody home but your poodle, whose little but loud mouth tells the news to Patriotism through the keyhole.”

Sometimes, Fay’s “Arrows” found their mark in prose neither elliptical nor ladylike:

Blue Devils are brave dogs, and “die in the last ditch” with the Prince of Orange, when battling an inferior force; but pusillanimous puppies in combat with equal numbers, and wheel suddenly and run rapidly from a bold and well-panoplied adversary, with delicately dropped oars and slender narrative modestly dangling between their posterior propellers.” [I.e., flee ignominiously with tails tucked between their legs.]

### NOTHING NEW UNDER THE SUN

All in all – and despite its careful skirting of the boundaries of political correctness – *A Shattered Nation* is a welcome addition to the literature of Southern nationalism and identity, and from a surprising source, a Jewish woman; Jews have typically not been kind to the Confederacy.<sup>4</sup> Given that fact, Anne Sarah Rubin’s affirmation of Southern ethnic and cultural identity is to be welcomed despite its occasional lapses and omissions. But welcome as it may be, the key question is, is her thesis correct? Are Southerners really a distinct people, a nation within a nation? And as a corollary, were Southern fears of the long-term consequences of racial parity with Africans justified?

Southern racial concerns long preceded the creation of the Confederacy. In his remarkable book, *Founding Brothers: The Revolutionary Generation*, Joseph J. Ellis elaborates four illuminating episodes of the Founding era. The fourth and final is the debate over a Quaker petition to Congress of February 11, 1790, calling for immediate cessation of the slave trade. This petition flew in the face

of one of the key compromises that had secured ratification of the Constitution in 1787: a twenty year grandfathering of the slave trade, after which it would, in fact, be constitutionally prohibited. A follow-on proposal, submitted the next day by the Pennsylvania Abolition Society, with the blessing of none other than Benjamin Franklin, went much further. It called for the immediate emancipation of all African slaves – and the Constitution be damned.<sup>5</sup>

Southern representatives were livid that such a proposal should even be considered by Congress. James Jackson of Georgia and William Loughton Smith of South Carolina led the vocal Southern opposition. For the prescient Jackson, the very debate itself sounded like the “trumpets of civil war,” declaring as it did that the Constitution was to be considered a malleable document a mere three years after its ratification, subject to the whims and interpretations of the day. (For those who believe that the Constitution-as-living-document is a recent invention, careful attention should be paid to American political life from the very beginning; there truly is very little new under the sun.)

Southern Congressmen raised many objections to these petitions in the debate that ensued. In addition to the Constitutional issues involved, the economic impact on the South was advanced. Jackson also argued that the Bible did not condemn slavery as such (as was the opinion of Southern clergy), but instead bid that the bondsman give faithful service to his master. Southern lawmakers pointed out that Africans came to be slaves through the conduct of tribal conflicts in Africa, not because the white man sent expeditions into the interior jungle to capture them. And then there was the question of what to do with seven hundred thousand freed Africans. Were they to be deported – and if so, to what destination and at what cost? And to be paid by whom? Or, pray tell, did the Quakers propose to make them citizens?

But when pressed, Southern arguments quickly reached the bottom line – fear of racial conflict. During the debate, Deep South delegates quoted frequently from Thomas Jefferson’s *Notes on the State of Virginia*: The two races could not live together on equal terms because of “the real distinctions that nature has made, and many other circumstances which divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which would never end but with the *extermination of one or the other race.*” (emphasis added) Elsewhere in the same work, Jefferson penned words that were, in the twentieth century, severely bowdlerized before being etched into the marble of the Jefferson Memorial. Everything after the first semicolon in the quote below was discarded, leaving a politically correct residue that is the exact opposite of what Jefferson actually said.

Nothing is more certainly written in the book of fate, than that these people [the African slaves] are to be free; [Jefferson Memorial quote ends here] nor is it less certain that the two races, equally free, cannot live in the same government. Nature, habit, opinion have drawn indelible lines of distinction between them. . . . If, on the contrary, it is left to force itself on, human nature must shudder at the prospect held up.

Given the many perceived (and, we now know, scientifically demonstrable) differences between Africans and whites, the ultimate Southern fear was racial intermixing, or “amalgamation,” a fear that fixed public policy not only in the seventy-four years between the adoption of the Constitution and the secession of the Confederate states but into the 1960s, when white non-Southern senators, congressmen, and judges began to overturn Southern anti-miscegenation laws — enforcing their will with the U.S. Army and clearing the way for their own race to eventually fade out of existence. Achieving this outcome is no longer the goal of just misguided idealists; it is now relentlessly promoted by every organ of propaganda and mind control at the disposal of malignant elites determined to eliminate any body of people with the wherewithal to oppose their plan of global subjugation.<sup>6</sup>

### A DISTINCT SOCIETY

Finally, there remains the question of Southern cultural and ethnic identity. This is a difficult subject for many white Americans in a social and political climate where whiteness itself is under determined assault; unity of thought and action is an essential precursor to success in countering the gathering forces of dissolution. Just when ending the suicidal internecine warfare of whites amongst themselves is an overarching imperative, determined Southerners continue to step forward with a persistent claim of distinctiveness. Is there a real basis to this claim? And can our people survive despite it — or perhaps because of it?

To any family-conscious and genealogy-steeped Southerner, the claim of distinctiveness is self-evident; to the rest of America, perhaps less so. But a surprising body of literature exists that puts this claim on a sound basis. Though it has largely been lost from memory, the South was initially populated in large measure by Protestants from Scotland and by the Scots who were colonized into Northern Ireland’s Ulster Plantation by King James as a means of countering the power of Rome in Ireland. The Scottish and Scots-Irish contribution to America and the South was long ago chronicled in Madison Grant’s marvelous but now forgotten history of European expansion in America, *Conquest of a Continent*.

This subject has recently been resurrected. Several new books have entered the literature, renewing the search for the historical roots of the South’s population. Among them are David Hackett Fischer’s *Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America*; James G. Leyburn’s *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History*; and a volume penned by former Secretary of the Navy James Webb, *Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America*. The ethnic and cultural roots of the South and its people are at last receiving the historical study they deserve.

### A CONFEDERATION OF SHARED INTEREST

Finally, we think it vital to address the subject of Southern distinctiveness within the worldwide struggle for continued survival of European-descended

peoples. As Anne Sarah Rubin documents, Southerners generally adapted to the outcome of the war in order to begin to rebuild a region devastated by the loss of one quarter of its men of military age; the ruin of its economy by the disruption of its labor force; the destruction of its property, crops, and physical assets on an unprecedented scale; and the deprivation of its inhabitants of a historically valid sense of identity as a distinct people.

Yet despite this acquiescence, Radical Republicans (whites all) imposed military rule, confiscation of remaining Southern property, a new social order anathema to Southerners, and denial of the means to fight these actions legally by disenfranchisement of Southerners as voters. As a result, Southerners felt profoundly betrayed by the North — a pattern destined to be reprised a hundred years later. Once Reconstruction ended and home rule resumed, Southerners maintained a pattern of social and political actions designed to ensure maintenance of a distinct identity. But once again, the South's way of life was disrupted, this time by *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and the Immigration Reform Act of 1965 — and the federal troops sent to enforce them. These diktats brought Southern attempts to enforce their values, culture, and ethnic identity to a close.

Overthrow of the effort to preserve a distinct Southern identity was once again wrought by the far more numerous and politically powerful non-Southern segment of America's white population. At some point, one is tempted to say — as Texans said of the rest of the country during the 1973 Arab oil embargo — “Let the bastards freeze in the dark.” But this attitude would only hasten and make inevitable a downward slide that, already begun, will surely carry all before it if not checked. The way out of this dilemma is not clear, but it must be found nonetheless. Perhaps a start would be the recognition by non-Southerners that distinctiveness must be allowed to coexist with loyalty to the larger cause.

At one point in her narrative, Rubin expresses surprise upon observing the ubiquitous Southern pickup truck flying both a Confederate Battle Flag and the Stars and Stripes. She needn't be surprised; this is part and parcel of the compromise Southerners accepted once their war for independence was lost. Whether by egalitarian liberals or patriotic non-Southern Americans, the impulse to deny anyone (whether Southern or not, whether white or otherwise) their own inborn character — their cultural and ethnic identity, their values and beliefs, in short the innate and ineradicable differences that make each person and each group unique — is to deny them their very humanity. We are not human because we are all alike — we are human because we are simultaneously individuals and members of family groups, bound one to another by shared ties of blood, culture, and history.

What we as European-descended peoples need is a confederacy of shared interest, an agreement to cooperate when necessary and yet preserve our distinctive cultural and ethnic character without allowing our adversaries to use those differences to drive wedges between us.

Inability to act on this principle extends far beyond North vs. South. It has racked Europe with almost continuous fratricide for hundreds of years, culminating in two twentieth century bloodbaths that killed tens of millions of Europeans, most at the hands of their close cousins. Without being able to prove it, one suspects that these conflicts have sapped from the spirit of Western Man something vital to our continued existence. Whatever one may call it – whether patriotism or love of fatherland and motherland or simply the will to keep on keeping on when all seems lost – we must rekindle the ancient sense of belonging and renew our determination to take those actions needed to ensure the survival of our own if we and our children are to have a future.

What, then, of value might the rest of our nation garner from the culturally distinct and determinedly individualistic people of the South? Perhaps simply that anyone tempted to abandon the fight against the malevolent vortex of political correctness and coerced dissolution swirling around us should take to heart the unrepentantly defiant and quintessentially Southern charge set forth in “The Duty of the Hour,” appearing in Confederate General D. H. Hill’s postwar periodical, *The Land We Love*:

*We have no need, Sirs: to be ashamed of our dead. Let us see to it that they are not ashamed of us.*

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## ENDNOTES

1. Frequently, detractors of the Confederacy accuse Lee and other Confederates of being traitors. Lee’s affirmation of his loyalty to his “people” demonstrates why the definition of treason should be guarded more carefully. The very idea that one can commit treason by acting out of loyalty to and for the benefit of one’s family and blood kin (i.e., one’s “people”) is a smear that only a deceiver could perpetrate.

2. Example: Confederate percentages for KIA, total dead, and total casualties relative to those in service were 7 percent, 18.7 percent, and 31.5 percent respectively. The comparable Union figures were: 3.9 percent, 12.8 percent, and 22.6 percent. By comparison, World War II figures were 1.8 percent, 2.5 percent, and 6.6 percent. From Louisiana State University’s Civil War Center.

3. The Texas Declaration of Secession, for example, reads in part, “We hold, as undeniable truths, that the governments of the various States and of the Confederacy itself, were established exclusively by the white race, for themselves and their posterity; that the African race had no agency in their establishment; that they were rightfully held and regarded as an inferior and dependant race, and in that condition only could their existence in this country be rendered beneficial or tolerable.”

4. See, for example Tony Horowitz’s defamatory screed, *Confederates in the Attic*.

5. Ignoring the Constitution subsequently became a cornerstone of the abolitionist movement, and was ultimately adopted as a rallying cry by abolitionist agitator William Lloyd Garrison, who called the Constitution a Covenant with Hell. Inspiration for today's multicultural liberals? You decide...

6. Yet another prescient Southerner, Stonewall Jackson's chief of staff, Robert L. Dabney, saw this one coming. In his *In Defense of Virginia*, he predicted the political uses of miscegenation. "[T]he offspring of an amalgamation must be a hybrid race...incapable of the career of civilization and glory as an independent race. And this apparently is the destiny which our conquerors have in view. If indeed they can mix the blood of the heroes of Manassas with this vile stream from the fens of Africa, then they will never again have occasion to tremble before the righteous resistance of Virginia freemen; but will have a race supple and vile enough to fill that position of political subjugation, which they desire to fix on the South."