

Sons of Confederate Veterans Heritage Defense



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Southern American Symbolism

In 1860 and 1861 the United States split in two when a group of Southern states declared their independence and formed a new government. The remaining states refused to accept the declaration and sent invasion troops south to stop the independence movement. This led to the most damaging war in American history and the deaths of nearly a million people, both military and civilian.

While the causes of this independence movement have been the subject of great debate ever since, one thing is clear. After its end, one of the most important rapprochements in history took hold as the veterans from both sides came together to put the country back together again. There was no breakdown as is seen in so many parts of the world. In fact, by 1898, the veterans came back together to fight in the Spanish war, including two prominent Southern generals. All wars since that time have been fought by men from both sections of the country.

The veterans of the War for Southern Independence from both sides put together a coalition based upon mutual respect. They held joint reunions and marched under the flags of one another. In subsequent wars, Southerners always carried the flag of their ancestors as a matter of Southern pride. The US officers allowed this as a symbol of a reunited people. Even today, the descendant organizations, Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) and Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) enjoy good relations and still respect the symbols and flags of the respective organizations.

In the last three decades, a considerable controversy has developed concerning the history, memory and symbols of the Southern nation of the nineteenth century. It is causing hatred and violence throughout America, however, few are aware of the origin of this strife.

The popular media has portrayed the controversy over Southern symbolism as a disagreement between descendants of those who established the Southern nation in the 19th century and black Americans, most of whom descend from indentured blacks of the 19th century. The media persistently associates the entire Southern independence movement of the 1860s as one to perpetuate slavery because most Southern states allowed slavery and most Northern states did not. While there were, in fact, more slaves in the Southern states at the independence declaration, those in the media and some in academia greatly oversimplify a complex situation and stridently try to make it a contest to preserve slavery against those trying to eradicate the practice. In fact, all northeastern states except one originally had slavery, then one by one outlawed the practice; however, these Northern slaves were not emancipated but rather sold to Southerners in order for the recovery of their great value.

The fact is the controversy over Southern symbolism began in the late 1980s, not the late 1880s, for until the late 1980s there simply was no controversy. During the entirety of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and 1970s, led by the southern organization Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and its President Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., not a single complaint was made concerning Southern symbols. On the contrary, King himself said many times he prayed that one day the descendants of slaves and the descendants of slave owners would accept one another and live in mutual respect. It would have been completely contrary to his beliefs to attack and offend descendants of slave owners. His chief lieutenant, former Atlanta Mayor and Ambassador to the United Nations, Andrew Young said then and now that people should not attack those of Confederate heritage because it only causes more division and strife. On July 10, 2015, Young was quoted on Atlanta's WAGA TV as saying, "The problems we have, don't have anything to do with a flag. I wouldn't trade a single job for the flag. The challenge for us is not to wipe out our past but learn to live together in the future." This sentiment is in harmony with the philosophy of Dr. King during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

So, if there was not a controversy between the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and those who, coincidentally, were celebrating the centennial of the War for Southern Independence at the same time, just how and when did the controversy begin? After all, until the mid 1980s, a local group of the Sons of Confederate Veterans marched in the Veterans Day parade through the middle of Atlanta with reenactors in Confederate uniforms, singing *Dixie*, all to the thunderous cheering of the largely Black parade viewers. What could have turned that around?

Though the "why" is debatable, what happened next is clear. A northern organization, founded, according to their own web site, by "several white liberals," The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), launched a campaign to energize their membership by campaigning for the eradication of all vestiges of the old South. This national organization, well funded by donations, sent word to all of its local chapters to commence action. Thus began a national effort to divide the populations of the South and cause strife.

There is debate concerning just why such a divisive action would be taken. It had long been an effort of the SCLC for people to accept one another. Now, after the passage of numerous civil rights laws, the NAACP was stepping forth to commence actions to cause dissension and hatred. Some speculated it was because of recent financial scandals at the time within the NAACP leadership leading to a considerable drop in enrollment, and this was an effort to energize their membership. Others felt it was an attempt by Marxists to sow dissension amongst Southerners who were beginning to accept one another. It cannot be determined for sure. More research is needed.

So beginning in the 1980s, we find one long litany of attacks on all things Southern, songs, flags, monuments, street names; even a small cotton patch on the courthouse

grounds in Baldwin County, Georgia commemorating the old cotton kingdom had to go because it represented the old South. Nothing was too absurd.

Today we have much strife and controversy, created at a point in time by an organization seeking to oppress and censor another constituency. Periodically, we have politicians selling out the history of their state, county or city to curry support from the attackers of Southern heritage. A governor of Georgia removed a Southern symbol in his state flag; a governor in South Carolina removed a commemorative flag from a monument on the capitol grounds. Mayors, commissioners and councilmen in many places are doing the same. Claiming they are trying to care for the feelings of a constituency while at the same time seriously harming the feelings of another. Were both sides to follow the teachings of the original SCLC and Ambassador Andrew Young, we would have no strife and the constituencies would finally learn to live together in harmony. The question for those promoting strife is why?

Waiting on an answer to that question, the Sons of Confederate Veterans has had to deal with an unrelenting series of attacks all over America. These attacks come in all manners and are everywhere. The purpose of this narrative is to educate the reader concerning the issues, and to show how to resist attempts to censor and oppress the culture of the old South.

The Role of the SCV

There are numerous organizations which support the South and Southern heritage. Some advocate a new secession and a renewed effort toward independence. Others do political work. Still others are purely educational, trying to show people the true facts. Many people are in several organizations.

The SCV is unique in this effort. First, the SCV is the true legacy of the Confederate States of America. The SCV are not only the actual descendants of the original Confederates, but the SCV was created by them in 1896 and, later, in 1927, the surviving veterans voted to give all records, materials, flags, symbols and remnants of the Confederate States of America to the SCV as their legitimate heirs. The SCV today is the only legitimate organization to interpret the efforts of their ancestors and the symbols they created. That fact is clearly recognized and supported by the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW).

Because of this role, the SCV frequently finds itself in the public eye and particularly in the media. It is vital that SCV members understand they represent their ancestors and have a duty to relate history as related by their ancestors. In his book, *A Southern View of the Invasion of the Southern States and the War of 1861 - 1865*, Captain Sam Ashe of North Carolina, succinctly lays out the *Southern side* of the conflict. All who defend Confederate Veterans should have a reprint of his book. He was the official spokesman for the United Confederate Veterans Association (UCV).

Causes of the Declaration of Independence of 1860-1861 and the Ensuing War

When asked for the cause of the war, a member should first address the mythology. Those who are bigoted against the South feverishly try to lead the public to believe the war was “over slavery.” You must first dispel that wording. To say it was “over” slavery implies the people of the Northern states sent their children to the South to die for the freedom of the slaves. Nothing could be further from the truth. The references to this are so numerous that no historian could argue that the leaders of the US were constantly exclaiming that they were not fighting the cause of the Abolitionists. Lincoln himself said so in his inaugural address. In fact, many large Northern states banned blacks from coming into their state, free or slave. The truth is that most Americans North and South were ardently white supremacist in 1861. These quotes from Abraham Lincoln are good examples but by no means rare:

Lincoln comment from his Sept. 15, 1858, debate with Douglas
(*The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Roy Basler
(ed.), vol. 3, 1953, page 145-46):

"I will say then that I am not, nor ever have been in favor of bringing about in any way the social and political equality of the white and black races; that I am not nor ever have been in favor of making voters or jurors of Negroes, nor of qualifying them to hold office, nor to intermarry with white people; and I will say in addition to this that there is a physical difference between the white and black races which I believe will for ever forbid the two races from living together on terms of social and political equality. And inasmuch as they cannot so live, while they do remain together there must be the position of superior and inferior, and I as much as any other man am in favor of having the superior position assigned to the white race."

An address by Abraham Lincoln at Springfield, Illinois, on June 26, 1857
[*Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, Vol II, pp 408-9, Basler, ed.]:

"A separation of the races is the only perfect preventive of amalgamation, but as immediate separation is impossible the next best thing is to keep them apart where they are not already together. Such separation, if ever effected at all, must be effected by colonization. The enterprise is a difficult one, but 'where there is a will there is a way:' and what colonization needs now is a hearty will. Will springs from the two elements of moral and self-interest. Let us be brought to believe it is morally right, and at the same time, favorable to, or at least not against our interest, to transfer the African to his native clime, and we shall find a way to do it, however great the task may be."

The prevailing belief at the time was that the slaves should be sent back to Africa. A plan was instituted and the country of Liberia established. The “Lincoln Plan,” until the day he died was to send the slaves back to Africa, even those who had been born in America. The only question was how to do away with the institution without destroying the capital infrastructure of the South and America.

The cause of the war was the declaration of Southern independence in 1860-1861 and the effort by the remaining states to invade and destroy the new nation. Had there been no declaration of Southern independence, there would have been no war. Today, the propriety of putting such questions to the arbiter of war is a stinging question which can never be answered. That it was, in fact, put to the arbiter of war is beyond doubt. Both sides accepted it.

Why Did the South Declare its Independence?

Those debating the war period today will frequently focus on the issues causing the South to declare its independence. Some say it was to “protect slavery,” thus justifying their position that the war was “over” slavery. This is patently untrue. Many of the largest slave owners did not support independence. Slavery was both legal and constitutional. To have changed that status would have taken constitutional amendments which could have never passed with all states in the union. The Southern view, as related by UCV spokesman Captain Sam Ashe, was quite simple. It was caused by anger and fear.

Anger

The anger in 1860 concerned the recently passed Morrill Tax, which took money from the South at a greatly disproportionate rate. This was patently unfair but was passed by a majority in the US House which had become weighted in favor of the Northern, industrial states. This anger was primarily felt by the rich, who paid most of the tariffs, but was felt to a lesser degree all over the agriculture belt, primarily the South. The Robert E. Lee Camp 1640, SCV, posted a video to Facebook which succinctly explains the tariff.

www.facebook.com/149308815083112/videos/1208207915859858/?fref=nf

Fear

Fear, on the other hand, was felt by everyone and slavery was squarely the reason. In fact, it was the precipitating reason for the independence movement. It is also the issue left from most American history books because it makes reasonable a declaration of independence.

During the decades prior to the war, a group called “Abolitionists” grew in the New England area. The group wanted slavery abolished, unequivocally and immediately. They were religious in nature and radical in their efforts. They rejected the purchase of freedom for the slaves, as Britain had done, and demanded immediate

emancipation. This ran contrary to the feelings of most Northern politicians, as previously mentioned, who favored sending the slaves back to Africa. It was also infeasible in the South for purely economic reasons. In 1860, in middle Georgia, if a farmer owned two thousand acres of land and two slaves, the slaves were valued at twice the value of the land. Slave owners had enormous capital invested in the slaves and to simply free them, would devastate the capital infrastructure.

Into this tension came a book, *The Impending Crisis*, by Hinton Helper. This book hit the US capital like a “bombshell.” It was written by an Abolitionist and was being printed and smuggled to slaves across the South. It seemed to be calling for the slaves to rise up and begin a revolution. Since only about nine percent of Southern adults owned slaves, that left 91 percent who had nothing to do with it but who would be targeted in such an uprising.

Recent history at the time is what caused the immediate fear. During the 1790s, the slaves on the western part of the island of Santo Domingo rose up and slaughtered nearly every white person in the former French colony. (The slaves formed a country now called Haiti.)

Again in 1831, a slave revolt in Virginia, led by Nat Turner, caused hundreds of deaths of men, women and children. That uprising had to be stopped by the military. People remembered the carnage of that revolt. The very idea that millions of slaves might be brought to slaughter millions of Southerners, the vast majority of whom had no slaves, was frightening and enraging. The period from 1855 to 1859 was a cauldron of agitation and hatred for this specific reason.

In many revolutions, there is one single action which precipitates the conflagration. Ours was no exception. On October 16, 1859, abolitionist John Brown of Kansas, gathered a group of Abolitionists and launched a raid into Virginia. Their purpose was to ignite and lead the slave insurrection and slaughter which had been so feared. To say this was an *earth quake* across the South would be an understatement. Militia units began to be formed and drilled; politicians began demanding independence. They began to feel there was no possibility of living in peace with the Northern states. A declaration of independence followed. The rest is well known history.

Aftermath

As the armies of the Confederate States of America began to surrender, a very important thing happened. Their leaders, one by one, instructed the soldiers to lay down their arms and go home. They were urged to become good Americans. The question of independence had been put to war and the Southern nation had been defeated. The question was settled. From that point on, Southerners did as they were urged by the likes of Robert E. Lee and Nathan Bedford Forrest. They went home and began to rebuild their lives.

This peaceful ending was stridently tested in 1898 when the United States went to war with Spain. The world was amazed to see Southerners join with the same enthusiasm as Northerners. In fact, two former Confederate generals, Fitzhugh Lee and Joseph Wheeler, volunteered to lead armies for the United States. The coming together was complete. Conflicts afterward always had large Southern participation, sometimes even higher than the Northern volunteers.

For the Sons of Confederate Veterans, actual descendants of the Confederacy, the issue of American patriotism has never been questioned. United States flags and the Pledge of Allegiance have been used for its entire history. Large numbers of United States military veterans have always been represented in the SCV. The SCV has given military service medals to its veteran members for decades. The constitution of the SCV is equally clear. The SCV is non-political and non-sectarian.

Many outside detractors of the SCV and Southern heritage are unaware of the foregoing and upon being made aware, are supportive. Others are not so supportive and no amount of conversation will convince them. For the latter group, a robust defense of Southern heritage is necessary.

Heritage Defense

It is a common understanding that the best defense is a good offense. In that, the operations of SCV heritage promotion, is the most important. Heritage promotion is our public relations effort. It is the effort to get our heritage before the public. Whether it is putting up welcoming flags across the South, participating in parades or festivals, creating art and media, the act of making our heritage familiar and for people to come away with a good feeling is paramount. It is entirely possible for the future to be one where people no longer attack or belittle Southern heritage. For every person who meets a SCV member and comes away with a friendly feeling, it is one more victory. We should always remember that principle and even where protesters might appear at an event, they should be treated kindly as Christian gentleman Robert E. Lee would have wanted. Occasionally, however, opponents mount an attack against our promotional efforts and we must defend ourselves.

Heritage defense must be generated locally. A specific attack will affect a local area the most. The removal of a statue; the change of a school name to remove a Southern hero's name; defilement of a cemetery; the banishment of the SCV from a public event; all of these might be encountered and they will affect the local camp most. It is the local camp whose members will be familiar with the power structure and personalities involved. Therefore, it is the local camp, which should commence action. Leaders of Divisions, Armies and the general SCV should be contacted and consulted for advice and support, but it is the local camp which should begin action.

Tactics and strategies will vary but a number have been shown, over time, to have succeeded. We will consider a number of areas where defensive action might be successful.

Information

Information is our strongest defense tool. Information is on our side. We are a gracious, kind, caring people and the more we can get that information out, the better it will be. Most attacks against Southern heritage are based upon false assumptions and incorrect information. The problem is there is so much information, it is difficult to get enough of it out to the public. This leads to natural tactics. Here is what we have learned:

In 1992, when the governor of Georgia ignited a firestorm against Southern heritage by declaring he would remove the Cross of Saint Andrew from the state flag, he stated that if he could get information out to the public, he would be able to convince them that his unpopular action was justified. He specifically cited, 1) that the flag had been changed to incorporate the Cross of Saint Andrew in 1956 after a Supreme Court ruling, desegregating US schools, and, 2) it was an embarrassment because America thought it was a racist symbol.

His problem was that he was incorrect on the facts. He felt he was right, though, because his information was coming from those who fervently wanted the flag symbol repressed. This mistaken assumption caused him to commence a losing strategy.

The governor immediately called for debates, both in academic settings and in the media. Those of us in the SCV, knowing that the truth was on our side, immediately accepted. This led to a series of debates at colleges and on radio and television. The governor sent college professors, *civil rights* leaders and, finally, himself to the debates. After the last nationally televised debate, he gave up his action. He had been beaten, but why?

He was beaten because his assumption that the facts were on his side turned out to be wrong. Once his side had lost several debates, he could no longer fight. First, his assumption that the flag was changed in 1956 in response to a 1952 court order turned out wrong. It had been changed in 1956 in a package of legislation, which also created a Centennial Commission to celebrate the upcoming 100th anniversary of the struggle for Southern independence, and another bill to create a series of historical markers to take advantage of tourism for the centennial. The men who created it were still alive and verified these facts.

His second assumption that *America* thought it was a racist symbol was proven incorrect when a national poll showed that more than 60 percent of the American public thought it represented Southern heritage.

What this tells us is simple. Our heritage is a valid, American historical representation and should be preserved for the education of future generations. It also gives valuable tactical data. We learned something very important.

We Will Debate

Anytime there is a heritage attack or struggle, we should demand an open, fair, public debate, preferably on television; a *conversation*. Any local camp can make that challenge and SCV headquarters will make certain someone is sent to participate. We have many men who can represent our history in all Divisions. Anyone who feels uncomfortable with engaging in such debates can call in those who have done so repeatedly, successfully.

Our Case

Our Southern history includes an attempt to establish independence through a declaration, similar to the one all of America celebrates on July 4th each year. There is nothing wrong with such declarations of independence and declarations have been supported throughout the world by the United States. The reasons for the declaration of Southern independence have been discussed in previous sections. For a people of a region to celebrate their once independent nation through songs, symbols and memorials is entirely appropriate and is done throughout the world.

The SCV and those who commemorate Southern heritage have been doing so for a century and a half. People who, in latter decades, have decided to attack us and clamor for our oppression and censorship must demonstrate why. It is they who are offending. They must justify their offense and our position should always begin with "why?" Americans in general recoil from those who oppress others and that must be stridently presented in any public pronouncement against those who oppress us. They should be put on the defensive immediately and relentlessly. Oppressors attempting to defend themselves always end up reflecting poorly on themselves.

Never forget that we are innocently commemorating our heritage, not oppressing others or calling for secession, and it is we who are being attacked by the other side. They will continuously try and make it look as if we are harming someone or are, somehow, oppressing people. It is very easy to refute that with historical facts. Had there been such harm caused by us, there would have been some manifestation of it before the late 1980s and the hateful actions by the Northern based civil rights group.

Political Action

The SCV is listed in the Internal Revenue Code as a 501(c)3 non-profit, tax exempt, organization. This means the SCV cannot take sides in partisan politics. The SCV, as well as all divisions and camps, are prohibited from endorsing or materially supporting a candidate or political party or organization. However, there is a lot SCV members, and even camps, can do.

Personal Activity

First, any citizen has the right to get involved in politics. Participating in tax-exempt organizations is not prohibited. Candidates frequently list the organizations they are involved in, Rotary, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce, etc. They may also list heritage organizations like Sons of the American Revolution or the Sons of Confederate Veterans. In fact a local camp in Atlanta has had eight governors of Georgia as members.

We recommend SCV members run for any office for which they qualify. Being a member of a school board might help prevent the removal of the names of Southern heroes from school names in a district. Being on a county commission might prevent the removal of a statue from the courthouse lawn. These are important efforts. All should be encouraged to either run for office or support the right candidates. The SCV should not be mentioned in the effort, though an individual has a right to mention membership. It should always be made clear to any one who asks that the SCV takes no position on candidates or parties.

Camp Activity

A perfectly appropriate effort is a candidate's forum. Inviting all candidates in a particular political race to participate in a candidate's forum is well within the rights of any tax-exempt organization. After all, the League of Women Voters, which hosts many such forums, is a tax-exempt organization.

Legislative Activity

It is entirely appropriate for the SCV at all levels to educate their membership and the public at large concerning specific legislation in which we have an interest. Occasionally a proposed law will be aimed at our oppression, such as in removing Confederate monuments. At other times, a proposal will be to protect our heritage. In either case, the SCV may meet with legislators and present public pronouncements concerning any matter specifically affecting the continued commemoration of Southern heritage. SCV members have provided volumes of educational material to legislators and the public in past efforts. It is the duty of local heritage defense staff to understand what legislation is pending and to meet with

key legislators to communicate our concerns. (This pending legislative action documentation is now universally online and can be managed from home.)

Legal Activity

On occasion, the SCV will choose to become a party to a legal case or donate money to litigation or legal defense concerning Southern heritage. However, there are important qualifiers to be considered.

Standing

In law, you cannot take legal action without “standing.” That means the harm must have happened to, or will happen to you. The SCV has a legal committee made up of experienced lawyers who will review the application of law in any heritage attack. It is vital that virtually all heritage violations be reviewed by the legal committee to consider court remedies. If such remedies are apparent, they will recommend action.

Friend of the Court

In some court cases, those to which the SCV is not a party, it is important to heritage defense that the SCV help the side representing the protection of Southern heritage. In such cases, the SCV can file “friend of the court” brief. Whenever a local camp or division learns of such a case, the legal committee should be accessed through the Executive Director at headquarters. If a brief to the court is indicated, it will be referred to the legal committee and action will be taken.

Working Together as One

In all heritage battles, the membership should act as a united body. You may question some advice from the leadership but all should cooperate in furthering the goals. This is especially important with legal cases. The legal committee will instruct when actions should be taken. Actions such as letter writing, news interviews and rallies can hurt or help a case. The lawyers will give guidance to the leadership in these matters.

Rallies and Public Events

The primary role of the SCV is to commemorate the memory of the Confederate States of America and those who fought for its independence. Ceremonies and commemorative services at monuments, museums and cemeteries are a common activity. However, occasionally, when a person or group takes oppressive action against such hallowed locations, a rally can be a way of showing support to the public at large.

Permits

Most jurisdictions have a permitting procedure where the organizer reserves the space for a rally. Always get a permit for a rally if the jurisdiction has such a procedure. That way, the authorities will be alerted as to the event and will provide police security. It will also afford the organizer the right to have anyone removed from the event who is causing a disruption. Those who oppose us will sometimes send people to disrupt the event by pretending to be with us and holding hateful signs or banners. They should be removed. Those who oppose us will occasionally have people enter our area to scream and yell. The police will usually remove them if the organizer states that they are not part of the event.

In some jurisdictions, there is no permit procedure. In such cases, tell the law enforcement authorities about your rally and ask for security. There is no lawful way to remove infiltrators sent to embarrass you. If some of the young participants try and remove them, they could be subject to charges. In such areas, have some of the participants bring large posters which state, "They are not with us!" with an arrow pointing to the side. Have the persons holding the signs stand beside the infiltrators so that media will see the signs.

Affirmative Rallies

An affirmative rally is one where the rally is in support of a monument, flag, museum or cemetery. People are called to the place to show their love and support. In such cases, speeches and presentations should be based upon love and affection, not attacks against an enemy. These are highly effective and show the undeniable truth that we are a love group, not a hate group. We love our cultural heritage and it is *we* who are hated.

Protest Rallies

Occasionally, a protest rally is needed. Where a monument has been slated for removal; where flags were removed; where a particularly hateful, oppressive public official is appearing; these are points to protest. In such cases, speeches and presentations again, should show that we are a love group, not a hate group. Our posture should be one of hurt and sadness that people are so hateful that they would oppress our culture. It should be made clear that the other side are the haters, and it is *our* civil rights which are being violated.

Those Who Protest our Rallies

Sometimes there will be people at our rallies who will protest us. For this reason we should be very watchful. Some form of security should always be called. Local police will come. Private security can also be hired. In any case, always have people designated to videotape the entire event, even as you leave. Evidence will be necessary should charges for disruption or violence be necessary.

As mentioned above, when infiltrators show up, have them removed immediately by the authorities. In cases without permitting procedures, have some of the participants bring large posters, which state, "They are not with us!" with an arrow pointing to the side. Have the persons holding the signs stand beside the infiltrators so that media will see the signs. Remember to have people video recording everything.

In areas where you have a permit, the police will keep protesters at a distance. When such protesters appear, have young people stand as close as the police will allow with signs that say, "Haters," with arrows pointing to the side, toward the haters. When the rally is over, the leaders should go to the protesters and give them a welcome and tell them that you have no ill will toward them and that you hope they will one day have no ill will toward us. Have the video going.

Risks with Rallies

The biggest risk with a rally is that some will try and disrupt the event, occasionally even trying to goad our members into a fight. That is why security and video recording is so important. However, it is also a risk that those who oppress us will have a following rally with even larger crowds. If that happens, the media will frequently try to show that public sentiment is on the side of the oppressors. Carefully consider these risks before calling for a protest rally.

Furthermore, don't forget, if litigation is in order or planned, the attorneys should advise the propriety of a rally.

Speaking with the Media

Speaking with reporters is a very important endeavor. It is a good idea, in fact, to cater to the press by appointing a camp or division spokesman. This person can become comfortable with explaining the SCV and the commemoration of Southern heritage and the reporter can establish a contact when issues arise involving Southern heritage.

Don'ts

Don't fear the press. They might be hostile or they might have respect. You cannot know for sure where their sentiments lie so your answers should be the same either way.

Don't give information expecting them to not publish it. Sometimes a member will give background information concerning an issue. That is fine but never forget that any part of any statement might be published. Do not expect them to keep any statement confidential.

Don't allow a reporter to goad you into conflict. Some reporters will ask you to give a statement concerning opposition groups and try to lead you to recognize them by race, national origin or political bent. Resist this by consistently addressing the opposition simply as "opposition." It is not necessary to give them specific identity and, in fact, there are opponents from many groups and sectors of society.

Don't let a reporter put you on the defensive. Some reporters will try and make a point that the SCV is doing something hostile or curt, aimed at particular groups. We are not. We are simply honoring our heritage and asking to be left alone. The conflict is coming from those who have chosen to attack us, not from us. We have had our events and memorial services for a century and a half, most of that time without any opposition. The current question is why are the opponents doing this to us? These questions should be asked of them.

Don't let a reporter form the issue as simply one of the South supporting slavery in the 19th century. Slavery has been common for many centuries and is larger today than ever before. It was the Western world who finally ended it in their civilization. (Refer to the "causes" section above.) It was about independence. Period. That is the reason so many blacks supported the Confederacy.

Don't treat reporters as "the enemy." Though they may well be the enemy, treat them at face value as someone who genuinely wants to know and understand us. Respond like a gentleman.

Some camps and even divisions, have forbidden members from talking to the press. This is wrong and can harm the SCV. It may also violate constitutional rights. If a reporter comes into an event and all turn away, refusing to talk to them, or say, "I can't talk to you, contact (insert name) our spokesman." It makes the SCV look like some secret society or that we have something to hide. We do not. Our purpose is simple and easy to explain. Divisions and camps may hold seminars educating members on how to deal with the press but hiding from them is counterproductive.

Dos

Do send out press releases, simply worded, announcing events. Lengthy, doctrinaire dissertations are not helpful and might give the reporter statements to use against us. Simply proclaim the purpose and give details as to time and place.

Do be friendly and gentlemanly. Remember to address reporters like Robert E. Lee would have done. It is our highest example and we should strive to live up to it.

Do be straight forward, speak in simple sentences and elementary terms. This is the "Mister Rogers principle." Sometimes it is tempting to use figures of speech, old Southern sayings or glib invective. Avoid that. If the reporter is unfriendly, that is the statement they will extract and publish. Out of context, many such statements,

though entertaining, can be terribly misconstrued. A joke about “killing Yankees” can end up in a headline claiming we want to kill Northerners.

Do stay on topic. The greatest danger in speaking to the press is in extraneous topics. Veering into a discussion of taxes, race, political parties/candidates, legislation in other areas, even slavery is a great risk. Remain in our realm of subject matter. Tell any reporter trying to get you to comment on other topics that they should speak with other groups about that. Remember, the SCV has no political doctrine.

Heritage Defense Tactics

Monuments

When a news report states that a politician is trying to remove a monument from public or private property, the legal committee should be contacted. It will be necessary to determine who owns the monument and if it was privately built but given to a political sub-division, such as a city or county, what were the terms of that gift? These are legal matters and our legal experts should be notified immediately. If they want local research, they will contact division attorneys for help. Once they have determined these realities, a strategy will commence. It is important to follow the advice of the legal committee. Public statements, rallies and other activities of protest can have detrimental effect on legal actions.

Flags/Seals

Official flags and seals are the property of a governmental sub-division, such as a city or county. These legal entities have the power to do as they please concerning the symbolism of the jurisdiction. In these fights, having our members or supporters in elected positions is paramount. Having our people run for elective office cannot be overemphasized.

These conflicts can turn on public activity. Packing a county commission meeting with people; writing letters to political officials and news outlets; public protests, all can help, depending on the call of our supporters in the political body. If we have no supporters in the political body, it will be difficult to change minds.

Songs

Official songs, such as a state song, are under the complete control of the elective body. Again, having supporters elected is paramount. However, when a school or other entity bans, say, the playing of *Dixie*, public activity and protest can be helpful.

Mascots

Mascots for public schools are decided by school boards. Having supporters elected to these boards is very important. Having large numbers of supporters attend board meetings can also influence these members. After all, they do have to run for office again and protests give them pause as to how difficult their next election might be.

Mascots for private schools are decided by the owner of the school. These might be churches or private businesses. In any case, face to face meetings with the key entities is the best way to deal with such an issue. A polite explanation concerning the hurt our people might feel, will sometimes help. Never be rude, demanding, threatening or curt.

Editorials/Articles

When a derogatory article appears in a publication or online, sending your opinion is important. The more they get, the more they believe there are large numbers who support us. There are simple rules to maximize your effort. 1) Never be doctrinaire. Stay on our simple message. Extraneous issues can take from our message. 2) Don't be too wordy. People will read a short post or letter. A longer one will be ignored. 3) Never show affiliation to an organization or group unless you are the spokesman. Political science research has shown that a simple, short, well written letter, sent by an individual citizen, represents about five hundred who also believe the same way. When an organization is used, they merely calculate the membership of that organization in the jurisdiction and count it as that. If you say you are with a group and that group has 300 members in, say, a senatorial district, the politician will know that no matter how many letters he receives from members, it is 300 in his district. However, if there are a hundred supposedly independent letters, he calculates that there may be 50,000. This knowledge has come from our politicians and is solid advice. Don't use form letters or templates. Letters should be independent.

Crimes

All crimes should be reported to police and prosecuted. Vandalism of a cemetery or monument is the most common, however, being assaulted on the street carrying our symbols is also a crime. The police will usually take care to protect you. Make sure at every public event, you have several designated to video record the event. This can show clear evidence of a crime and be useful in any prosecution or civil suit that may arise. Our membership must be vigilant and thorough in demanding our right to be left alone.

Political Campaigns

As mentioned above, the SCV cannot endorse or support in any means of value, either a political campaign of an individual or political party. However, as a private

citizen you should make it your duty to either run for office or support someone who is running for office who will respect our cultural heritage. This is the most important effort which can be made and as a private citizen, each member can and should participate. Simply keep the SCV name and finances out of it, other than to list memberships the candidate holds in all such societies.

Summary

Every single member of the SCV worldwide has a duty to assist in heritage defense until it is no longer under attack. We all need to project the image of the polite gentleman who commands respect and who never ceases to defend his ancestry.

Men with more time can take on the challenges of camp or division heritage defense officers. Others can contribute as much time and money as possible. Everyone can do something to promote or defend our heritage. In the words of Robert E. Lee, "We can do no less."

Charge to the Sons of Confederate Veterans

"To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish."

Lt. General Stephen Dill Lee, Commander General
United Confederate Veterans
New Orleans, Louisiana, April 25, 1906