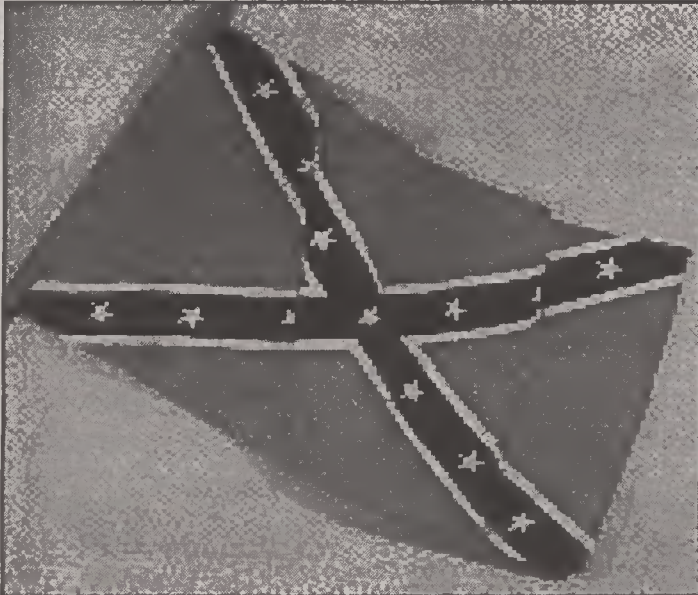


The Confederate Flag: Pride vs. Prejudice



With a very colorful history the Confederate Flag raises many eyebrows.

DEREK PAYLOR

The Confederate flag has been a hot topic in the news lately. The Civil War ended almost 150 years ago; however, the legacy of the Confederacy has reappeared in the midst of a new resurgence, reinforced by all the media attention the flag has been receiving. With Democratic 2004 presidential hopeful Howard Dean making such controversial statements as "I still want to be the candidate for guys with Confederate flags in their pickup trucks," it appears as though the Confederate flag is experiencing newfound popularity and confronting the South with the burning question: Why are people still so touchy about the Confederate flag?

Most North

Carolinians have seen the starry crossbars at many locations outside the boundaries of our history books: gracing the fronts of homes in the back woods, invoking awe on the bumpers of beat-up pickup trucks, adding that certain touch to midnight taverns out in the Boondocks. A few students here, especially those from rural areas, are more accustomed to the controversial image than others, some even setting fashion trends by sporting a pair of "Dixie Girl" hairclips or even the emblem on a large brass belt buckle. Stereotypes aside, the tension surrounding the flag is as fierce as ever, and even though the mighty South fell long ago, people still argue about the flag's true meaning. Is the flag a representation of heritage, a

symbol of intolerance, or has one originated from the other?

If we take a close look at our society today, we see a culture based on symbols, and our society interprets them in unique ways. Some things that we all consider fine and dandy in one moment can be perverted and misinterpreted the next. The Christian cross, when inverted, makes a drastic metamorphosis to a symbol of satanic worship. The same sort of transformation can occur with the pentagram, a harmonious symbol, and its drastic change into a devil with horns upon inversion. The swastika is a backwards symbol of Buddhism; the sheets that the Ku Klux Klan wear during midnight rallies are similar to those of a sect of Catholics in Spain. In one time and place, these symbols mean great positive things, but in the other, the original meaning becomes lost in new negative connotations.

Has the Confederate flag met the same fate? Some argue that the flag was never a positive symbol. Kweisi Mfume, current president of the NAACP, feels that the flag lacks positive virtues. Citing the Confederacy's notorious support of slavery to sustain their agricultural economy, many African-Americans still believe the flag to be a symbol of hatred, and their attitude is justified by the racist organizations that use the emblem as one of their symbols. The Ku

Klux Klan, a group of terrorists stationed right here in the US, incorporates the flag into their secret meetings and malicious late-night rendezvous. Some argue the Confederacy cannot be grouped with Nazis, in disagreement to Mr. Mfume, saying such a thing would be going to the extreme. However, most people have heard of the atrocities against blacks, immigrants, Catholics, Jews, gays, and interracial families in the name of groups who perpetuate the legacy of the Confederate flag.

Many African Americans cannot shake off the hate surrounding the flag, even when confronted by individuals or groups that swear racism is not a part of their agenda. "Heritage, not Hate," a trademark statement used by those in support of the flag, is a key argument for those who want to see the flag flying high, especially in Mississippi and South Carolina where controversy surrounds the crossbars, which are part of the state flag. The Daughters of the Confederacy, for instance, insists that the flag isn't a symbol of hatred, but a dedication to the soldiers who fought valiantly for the South.

Feeling that admiration to past relatives is more important than being PC, these folks push aside sensitive race relations for relations with their ancestors. Instead of condemning their history as those of the opposition would sug-

gest, these people continue to wave the flags of defeated armies, establishing scholarships and social clubs in the legacy of warmongers and men without conscience, and declaring to those who would listen that it's neither hatred nor exclusive nationalization that keeps the fires burning, but heritage and pride.

If we can glorify Columbus for his sail across the ocean in the New World while disregarding his slaughter of America's indigenous societies upon arrival, how can we call ourselves an equal society without generating a slew of sarcastic grins about our own obvious transgressions? The Confederate flag is a controversial symbol because it represents a group of people who advocated the enslavement of an entire race of people in the name of the Almighty Dollar. Should this symbol really be displayed so explicitly, integrated on fluttering state flags, worn on the shirts of little children in public school, advocated by liberals to solicit much-needed votes? The answer divides this country along racial, political, socio-economic, geographic, and even ancestral lines, leaving one's conscience to be the only judge on the matter. For the majority, the Confederate flag carries a burden too heavy for the morals and too lofty a challenge for the mind to justify its display.

*Spectrum,
We still love you all, we
promise.
--Allyson and Bryan*

Pre-calc E and F,
Some modeling, lotsa
graphs
A logarithm or two.
Ain't precal fun?
Just like you!
-Guess who?

F.urple and Co.

**It's almost over, all of it.
Next year who knows how far
apart we'll all be. One day we
will make the movie "Divine
Secrets of the F.urple
Sisterhood." I love you kids.**

**-moo
tarrey/teef**

**To my male friends,
I still bate sports
and cultish behav-
ior, but I like to
think that you've
changed me for the
better. Jonathan, I
know you'll be a
great writer in col-
lege-use Peter from
Family Guy as a role
model. Charlie, I've
come to enjoy look-
ing at your spare
time math proofs,
as well as your
Pink Floyd and
Stanley
Kubrick col-
lections. I
never
would
have
been**

**Malvolio
without
your daily
help. Mark, oy
vey. Will, you
need to read femi-
nism and post WW2
fiction, you don't
know what you're
missing. Jake, I'm
glad there are other
cynical men here to
wade through the
sugary goo. 2W
boys, some of our
night chats were
fun, though I hon-
estly cannot remem-
ber anything we
talked about.
Ub...grunt, man no
articulate, go eat
food now. -Bryan**

**Robert Kandler,
Hey "Butt", you're an
awesome roommate
and I can't wait to
room with you next
year.**

**Wove,
Jamie**

**Bone, Jenna
I love you
Almost
As much as
Your food
Thanks,
Bye from your
flops**

**Jen Gun,
Please stop
moving tiles.
Enjoy the choco-
lates we sent to
your home, the 4th
stall.
Love,
The evil triplets**

*Katie Love,
I can't very well
spend Valentine's Day
all by me onesie, savvy?
I'll sail us to the island
if you bring the rum.
Love,
Captain Jack Sparrow*

*Jessica Thompson,
(11-02-03)
Hey baby, you are
the love of my life! SB! I love
you! Always and forever.
Love,*

Eric

