

NATIONAL BRIEFS



Controversial soldiers

Controversy surrounds research on black Confederate fighters' lives, legacies

BY RACHEL ZOLL
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — Past the rack of pistols at the Tennessee Civil War Museum and the video on firing a cannon is a grainy 1861 photo of Andrew and Silas Chandler. Both wear Confederate gray. Both hold swords in their right hands and guns in their left. Both are about to go into battle. But this is no ordinary picture of Southern loyalists. Silas is black and Andrew is his white master. The photo is part of a display — maybe the only one of its kind in a museum nationwide — stating at least 35,000 blacks fought in the 1.2 million man Confederate army. It's a politically loaded claim that many historians say is inaccurate. "The numbers are vastly overinflated," said William Blair, director of the Civil War Era Center at Pennsylvania State University. "There are people who want to distance slavery as the cause of the war. This feeds nicely into that whole view."

Craig Hadley, who designed the privately-owned Chattanooga museum which opened last year, believes critics are trying to bury a sensitive topic. "Nobody wants to acknowledge these people because they fought on the wrong side," said Hadley, a Southern Adventist University professor. Historians agree that some blacks enlisted as Confederates, even though the South banned them from the army until the desperate few months before the war ended. No one knows for sure why they joined up. Some may have thought of themselves as Southerners first or believed they would be given money, land or even their freedom in exchange for fighting, said historian Ervin Jordan, author of "Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia."

Some may have felt loyal to their owners or pretended to be loyal to join the troops and plot their escape, he said. Others may have been influenced by talk of undisciplined Union soldiers mistreating blacks on their march. And free blacks who owned land may have wanted to protect their property. The Louisiana Native Guards, a group of relatively prosperous free blacks in New Orleans, volunteered in 1861 to fight for the Confederacy. But after the North took control of the city a year later, the regiments reversed course, volunteering for the Union.

"The bottom line is most white Southerners did not trust black Southerners but they were willing to consider the use of blacks in the military to save the Confederacy from defeat," Jordan said. The research gets murkier when historians try to count the number of black Confederates. Estimates range from a few hundred to more than 50,000.

Thousands of free men and slaves served the Southern army as laborers, cooks and musicians and may have been armed. Many were so-called body servants — slaves like Silas Chandler who traveled with their owners as personal attendants and often carried guns for protection.

John McGlone, president of Southern Heritage Press and an editor of the journal "Black Southerners in Gray," is among those who believe such laborers should be counted as soldiers, even if their masters forced them into the war.

"When you do get a battle commencing it all becomes a big blur," said McGlone, a history lecturer at Motlow State Community College in Tullahoma. "Often, they got involved in battles even though their normal role was support."

But many historians find this approach illegitimate, saying armed forces always make a distinction between soldiers and support crew.

"I would say that while the distinction was blurred around the edges, it was still a distinction," said Civil War historian James McPherson, author of the Pulitzer Prize-winning book "Battle Cry of Freedom."

Adding to the confusion are sparse war records in which some soldiers are identified by nothing more than their initials. There are eyewitness accounts of black sharpshooters and combatants. But newspaper reports often were biased, written by journalists who never saw battles and took their information from bragging soldiers as they returned to camp, McPherson said.

Documents from burial details also were unreliable, as crews often reported finding "negro corpses" when the bodies simply had turned black after hours in the sun, McPherson said.

Jordan traced the origin of one well-known account of Southern troops at Gettysburg with a "colored flag bearer" and discovered the eyewitness actually had written of a "flag bearer bearing the colors."

Records of pensions awarded to hundreds of black Confederate veterans raise more questions. Blacks applied as laborers, but Jordan said he came across documents where blacks had crossed out "soldier" since they officially had been banned from combat and written "body servant."

See Confederates on A9

Correction

In last week's edition, credit wasn't given for the photograph of Dr. Larry Hopkins that appeared in the Community Focus section. The photo of Hopkins was taken by Tanisha Bailey.

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This Week In Black History...

Oct. 28, 1914 — Omega Psi Phi Fraternity is incorporated.
Oct. 30, 1954 — Six years after President Harry Truman issued an order to desegregate the military, the Defense Department announces that all units in the armed forces are desegregated.
Nov. 1, 1945 — The first issue of Ebony magazine is published.
Nov. 2, 1983 — President Ronald Reagan signs a bill to establish a federal holiday in honor of slain civil rights leader Rev. Martin Luther King's birthday.

Third dragging death defendant heads to trial

BY C. BRYSON HULL
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

JASPER, Texas — Jury selection began today in the trial of the last of three white men charged with the horrific slaying of James Byrd Jr., a black East Texas man who was chained and dragged to his death behind a pickup truck more than 16 months ago.

Shawn Allen Berry, 24, whose family roots are three generations deep in Jasper, hoped a jury of his peers would be more sympathetic than they were to either of his co-defendants.

Jurors will be asked to choose which is the real Berry — a hometown boy who was in the wrong place with the wrong people, or a thrill-seeking killer who got caught up in a frenzy of racist rage.

Berry's two co-defendants and roommates, John William King and Lawrence Russell Brewer, were convicted of Byrd's murder and sent to death row.

The three white men — who have suspected ties to the Ku Klux Klan — were accused of chaining Byrd, 49, to the bumper of Berry's pickup truck and dragging him over three miles of bumpy country road on June 7, 1998. Byrd's head, neck and right arm were torn off.

Five hundred jurors were initially called up, and some 170 crammed into Judge Joe Bob Golden's court today. Attorneys must cull a panel of 14 from the group — 12 jurors and two alternates.

"I don't know whether he is a good person at all, but I know he is better than those other two. He is not a racist like the others," said



Family members of James Byrd Jr. talk to reporters after the sentencing of John William King. King was sentenced to death for the 1998 dragging death of Byrd. Jury selection began Monday in the trial of Shawn Allen Berry, 24. Investigators believe Berry's truck was used in the murder.

Betty Hamilton, a retiree who lives in Jasper.

That will make proving a racist motive difficult, prosecutors acknowledge.

"Motive in this case is either

one of two things: he lived with these Klansmen and developed their way of thinking, or he's a thrill-seeker who got caught up in the killing like he was in a pack of dogs," Jasper County District

Attorney Guy James Gray said.

Berry's co-defendants were easy to paint as racist killers. Both were ex-convicts and adorned with white-supremacist tattoos.

See Trial on A9

CompUSA to hire black ad agency after radio campaign

Joyner, Smiley use radio, TV to prove spending power of blacks

BY JANELLE CARTER
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A protest urging CompUSA to advertise with black-oriented media has ended with the nation's largest computer retailer promising to hire a black-owned advertising firm and offer store discounts to the protesters.



Joyner

"We're using urban radio, just not to the extent we should be," CompUSA chief executive Jim Halpin said Tuesday on "The Tom Joyner Morning Show," a radio program that galvanized the protest. "I got bad advice but it wasn't bad intended."

Since the protest began 10 weeks ago, the Dallas-based retailer has been inundated with calls and letters, Halpin said. Host Joyner and Black Entertainment Television commentator Tavis Smiley, a regular on the show, urged listeners to send the company cash register receipts from their purchases at CompUSA to illustrate black buyers' impact on the company's bottom line.

"A lot of your customers actually took time to send in receipts," said Halpin, who is offering a 10 percent store discount to all those who mailed receipts.

The issue of equality for blacks

is not a new one for the show which has emerged as a voice on black issues. It is broadcast by ABC Radio Network to more than 100 stations.

In the past, outcry from the show's listeners has been pivotal in prodding the award of a Congressional Gold Medal to civil rights pioneer Rosa Parks and a decision to remove slave memorabilia from a scheduled auction at Christie's in New York.

The CompUSA matter stemmed from a dispute a year ago involving the Katz Media Group,

which sells advertising time for hundreds of radio stations nationwide. Katz issued a memo advising clients to limit advertising on stations targeting black or Latino audiences because "advertisers want prospects, not suspects."

The memo galvanized a coalition of black and Latino broadcasters and activists.

As part of discussions to resolve that dispute, Katz agreed to identify companies that did not do significant business with black media. CompUSA was one of those companies cited, according

to Smiley.

The company has not given specifics on its advertising budget.

"I thought I was hitting black America. We had advertised on black stations and you showed us that's not enough," Halpin said Tuesday. "I want to sell computers to anyone who walks in the door."

While the argument between the show and CompUSA was over, there was still tension between the ABC Radio Network and the program.

"ABC did tell us they were

See CompUSA on A9

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higher loan limits,
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Since 1934 we've helped over 26 million Americans get into new homes. And starting this year, HUD can help you get a home loan for up to \$208,800. Be sure to check with your lender to find out what the FHA-insured loan limits are in your area. We can also help you with any questions you might have. Just call 1-800-HUDS-FHA and ask for our free 100 Questions and Answers brochure. It'll tell you how to get an FHA loan for as little as 3% down. How to choose the right lender. How to prepare yourself for the homebuying process. And much more. In fact, if you're looking for a home, it's all the information you need.



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BARGAIN MATINEES \$4.50
ANY SHOW BEFORE 3:30 P.M.
* NO PASSES OR DISCOUNTS *

Wynnsong 12 765-5875
1501 HANES MALL BLVD.
STADIUM SEATING
IN THESE AUDITORIUMS

THREE TO TANGO (PG-13)	1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30
THREE KINGS (R)	1:10 4:05 7:00 9:45
CRAZY IN ALABAMA (PG-13)	1:10 4:05 7:00 9:50
RANDOM HEARTS (R)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:15 9:50
STORY OF US (R)	1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30
BLUE STREAK (PG-13)	4:00 9:15
DRIVE ME CRAZY (PG-13)	1:15 7:15

Presented in D-K

AMERICAN BEAUTY (R)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:50
MUSIC OF THE HEART (PG-13)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:40
BRING PUT THE DEAD (R)	1:10 4:05 7:00 9:45
HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL (R)	1:05 3:05 5:05 7:05 9:05
THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:30
OMEGA CODE (PG-13)	1:15 3:15 5:15 7:15 9:15

Carmike 10 922-1301
3640 REYNOLDS RD.

BATS (PG-13)	1:10 3:10 5:10 7:10 9:10
STORY OF US (R)	1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30
THE SIXTH SENSE (PG-13)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
DRIVE ME CRAZY (PG-13)	1:20 3:20 5:20 7:20 9:20
LOVE OF THE GAME (PG-13)	1:30 7:30
STIGMATA (R)	4:00 9:45
DOUBLE JEOPARDY (R)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:15
RANDOM HEARTS (R)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:10
THE BEST MAN (R)	1:15 4:00 7:00 9:30

Presented in D-K

HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL (R)	1:05 3:05 5:05 7:05 9:05
MUSIC OF THE HEART (PG-13)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:40

Marketplace 6 727-1757
2005 PETERS CREEK PKWY.

BATS (PG-13)	1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:10
THE BEST MAN (R)	1:30 4:00 7:00 9:30
BLUE STREAK (PG-13)	1:00 4:00 7:00 9:05
SUPERSTAR (PG-13)	1:00 3:05 5:05 7:05 9:05
THREE KINGS (R)	1:00 4:10 7:00 9:35
BOY SHOTS (R)	1:10 3:10 5:10 7:10 9:10

GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE