

Historians now recognize the injustices heaped upon African Americans in the name of (white) national reconciliation, but this belated recognition does not erase the legacy of a century in which white southerners were not asked to dishonor or feel ashamed of their ancestors and in which black southerners had no voice in determining the heroes and symbols of their region. During a recent dispute over the renaming of Confederate Memorial Hall at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, a black math professor asserted bluntly that "the race problems that wrack America to this day are due largely to the fact that the Confederacy was not thoroughly destroyed, its leaders and soldiers executed and their lands given to the landless free slaves."<sup>11</sup> Shocking as this statement was, it verbalized the frustration that some people feel toward the moderate settlement of America's Civil War. It also suggested what *could* have happened to the losers of this conflict but didn't. It underscored the challenges facing a society that reincorporated a defeated people, their beliefs, and their symbols.

The passage of generations has complicated the answer to the question of how America should treat self-styled Confederate Americans. For many people today, the Confederacy and the flag are part of their personal and familial heritage, effectively devoid of ideological content. Allegiance to the Confederacy and the battle flag arise from a desire to honor their ancestors and from an innate sense that "it's always been this way." Anything that forces change—even in the name of righting past wrongs—is resisted in principle. A recent survey of how Americans learn their history and what history they regard as most trustworthy reveals the importance of family history and personal heritage. By honoring their ancestors, vindicating their cause, and revering their symbols, Confederate descendants are engaging with history in the same way that other Americans do. Confederate heritage activists decry what they perceive as a double standard at work: that white southerners are the only Americans not allowed to celebrate their ancestry openly.<sup>12</sup>

If precedent and fairness suggest that Americans should allow "Confederate Americans" to retain their dual loyalty, the association of Confederate heritage and symbols with extremist political movements sug-

- www.freemississippi.org and endorsed by League of the South at [www.dixienet.org/ls-homepg/declaration.htm](http://www.dixienet.org/ls-homepg/declaration.htm); Allen G. Breed, "Gone with the Wind, Secession's Back," *RTD*, July 5, 1999.
11. James Davison Hunter, *Culture Wars: The Struggle To Define America* (New York: HarperCollins/Basic Books, 1991), employs the concepts of "orthodox" and "progressive" positions.
  12. Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 17.
  13. Jonathan David Farley, "Remnants of the Confederacy: Glorifying a Time of Tyranny," *Tennessean*, November 20, 2002. A native of Jamaica, Farley may owe to his national origin his willingness to express views that even the harshest African-American critics of the Confederacy seldom articulate.
  14. Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History to American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); John M. Coski, "The Confederate Flag and the Verdict(s) of History" (unpub. paper presented to the Southern Historical Association Annual Meeting, November 2000).
  15. Springer, "Rebel Flag," 73.
  16. James Davison Hunter, *Before the Shooting Begins: Searching for Democracy in America's Culture Wars* (New York: Free Press, 1994).
  17. Address of William P. Simpson to Chewing Junior High, September 21, 1989, copy provided by ACLU of North Carolina.
  18. Jim McElhinney, comments at "Embattled Emblem" symposium, The Museum of the Confederacy, March 18, 1994; "Loaded Symbols," *Southern Magazine* 1 (June 1987): 44-49; Charles Reagan Wilson, *Judgment and Grace in Dixie: Southern Faiths from Faulkner to Elvis* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 159-163; interview with Ed Hamlett at SSOC Thirtieth Reunion and Conference, Charlottesville, Virginia, April 7, 1994; "We'll Take Our Stand," April 4, 1964, unidentified clipping in Schomburg Center Clipping Files, NYPL, Microfiche 004-687-1 & 2; Vernon Chadwick, "Papa's Got a Brand New Flag: Confederate Symbolism and the Funky New South," *Southern Reader* 3 (November-December 1991): 27.
  19. John T. Edge, "Living (and Dining) in the Nu South," *Oxford American* (Jan-