

Commander :

Joey Smithson

1st Lieutenant Cdr:

David Allen

2nd Lieutenant Cdr:

Robert Beams

Adjutant :

Frank Delbridge

Color Sergeant :

Jarrold Farley

Chaplain :

Dr. Wiley Hales

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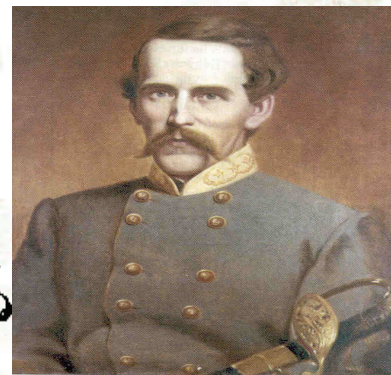
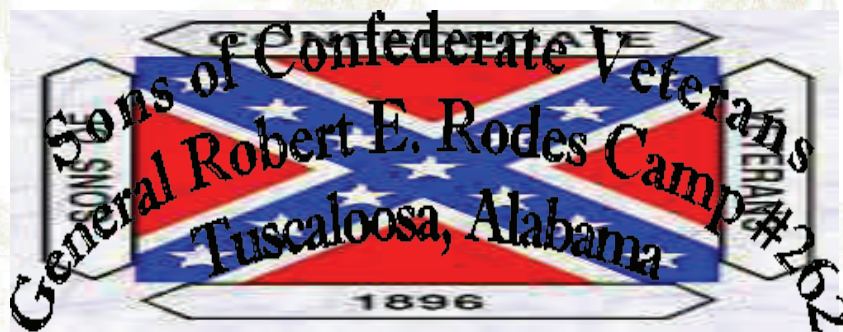
NAACP and 13-

NASCAR 14

SCV intends to 15

March

Parade Cancelled 16



June 2009



I salute the Confederate Flag with Affection, Reverence, and undying Devotion to the Cause for which it stands.

Notes From The Adjutant

We will meet at 7 PM June 11th, 2009, at the Tuscaloosa Public Library. Our speaker will be David Allen, who will be giving a talk about the book "Defending our Honor". Many feel this book should be required reading in our schools. Our next meeting will be July 9th, and we will be standing down for the summer in August, so no August meeting. Be thinking about electing Camp officers for the 2009-2010 year.

Confederate Ancestors

Pvt John P. Hagler Co D, Jeff Davis Cavalry, Mississippi June 27, 1844 Joe Bell's GGrandfather

Cpl James M Norris Co G, Jeff Davis Cavalry, Mississippi June 27, 1844 Joe Bell's GGrandfather

Upcoming Events

11 June - Camp Meeting

12 November - Camp Meeting

9 July - Camp Meeting "Show and Tell"
TBD

10 December - Camp Meeting

2010

August - **Summer Stand Down and Bivouac**

14 January - Camp Meeting

18 January - Lee-Jackson Dinner - TBD

10 September-Camp Meeting

11 February - Camp Meeting

15 October- Camp Meeting

25 Thisldu - TBD

The *Rodes Brigade Report* is a monthly publication by the Robert E. Rodes SCV Camp #262 to preserve the history and legacy of the citizen-soldiers who, in fighting for the Confederacy, personified the best qualities of America. The preservation of liberty and freedom was the motivating factor in the South's decision to fight the *Second American Revolution*. The tenacity with which Confederate soldiers fought underscored their belief in the rights guaranteed by the Constitution. These attributes are the underpinning of our democratic society and represent the foundation on which this nation was built.

The SCV is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans, and the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers. Organized at Richmond, Virginia in 1896, the SCV continues to serve as a historical, patriotic, and non-political organization dedicated to ensuring that a true history of the 1861-1865 period is preserved. Edited by James B. Simms; non-member subscriptions are available for \$15. Please send information, comments, or inquiries to Robert E. Rodes Sons of Confederate Veterans Camp #262, PO Box 1417, Tuscaloosa, AL 34501 or jbsimms@comcast.net.

General Robert Emmet Rodes (1829-1864)

The Robert E. Rodes Camp #262 is named in memory of Robert Emmet Rodes. General Rodes was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, on March 30, 1829; the son of General David Rodes and Martha Yancey. Attending Virginia Military Institute, he graduated in July 1848, standing 10th in a class of 24 graduates; Assistant Professor (Physical Science, Chemistry, Tactics) at VMI, 1848-1850. He married Virginia Hortense Woodruff (1833-1907), of Tuscaloosa, Alabama in September 1857. They had 2 children: Robert Emmet Rodes, Jr. (1863-1925) and a daughter, Bell Yancey Rodes (1865-1931).

He taught at VMI as an assistant professor until 1851. He left when a promotion he wanted to full professor was given instead to Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson, a future Confederate general and commander of his. Rodes used his civil engineering skills to become chief engineer for the Alabama & Chattanooga Railroad in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. He held this position until the start of the Civil War. Although born a Virginian, he chose to serve his adopted state of Alabama.

He started his Confederate service as a Colonel in command of the 5th Alabama Infantry regiment, in the brigade commanded by Major General Richard S. Ewell, with which he first saw combat at the 1st Bull Run. He was promoted to Brigadier General on October 21, 1861, and commanded a brigade under Major General Daniel H. Hill. In the Peninsula Campaign, Rodes was wounded in the arm at Seven Pines and was assigned to light duty in the defenses of Richmond, Virginia while he recuperated.

He recovered in time for General Robert E. Lee's first invasion of the north in September, 1862, fighting at South Mountain and Sharpsburg. At Sharpsburg, he commanded one of two brigades that held out so long against the Union assault on the sunken road, or "Bloody Lane", at the center of the Confederate line, suffering heavy casualties. Rodes was lightly wounded by shell fragments.

At Chancellorsville, Rodes was a division commander in Stonewall Jackson's corps. He was the only division-level commander in Lee's army who had not graduated from West Point. He was temporarily placed in command of the corps on May 2, 1863, when Jackson was mortally wounded and Lieutenant General A.P. Hill was also wounded, but Lee quickly replaced him with the more experienced Major General J.E.B. Stuart. Jackson on his deathbed recommended that Rodes be promoted to major general and this promotion was back-dated to be effective May 2nd.

When Lee reorganized the Army of Northern Virginia to compensate for the loss of Jackson, Rodes joined the II Corps under Ewell. At Gettysburg, on July 1, Rodes led the assault south from Oak Hill against the right flank of the Union I Corps. Although he successfully routed the division of Major Gen. John C. Robinson and drove it back through the town, the attack was not as well coordinated or pursued as aggressively as his reputation would have implied. His division sat mostly idle for the remaining two days of the battle. After performing poorly at Gettysburg, and recovered his reputation somewhat by performing better at Spotsylvania Court House.

Rodes continued to fight with Ewell's corps through the Overland Campaign of Gen. Ulysses S. Grant. Ewell was replaced by Major General Jubal A. Early and his corps was sent by Lee to the Shenandoah Valley to draw Union forces away from the Siege of Petersburg, in the Valley Campaign. They conducted a long and successful raid down the Valley, into Maryland, and reached the outskirts of Washington, D.C., before turning back. Major Gen. Philip Sheridan was sent by Grant to drive Early from the Valley.

On September 19, 1864, Sheridan attacked the Confederates at Opequon/3rd Winchester. Several wives of Confederate officers were chased from town during the attack and Rodes managed to save Major Gen. John B. Gordon's wife from capture. Rodes and Gordon prepared to attack Sheridan's forces when Rodes was struck in the back of his head by a Union shell fragment. He died on the field outside Winchester.

Rodes was a modest but inspiring leader. He was mourned by the Confederacy as a promising, brave, and aggressive officer killed before he could achieve greatness. Lee and other high-ranking officers wrote sympathetic statements. He was buried at Spring Hill Cemetery in Lynchburg, Virginia next to his brother, Virginius Hudson Rodes; and his parents. His wife Virginia Hortense is buried in Alabama, her home state.

His Major Commands included Rode's Brigade/D.H. Hill's Division and Rodes Division/II Corps.

Historical Markers of Tuscaloosa County

Home Guard Defended Covered Bridge Side One

3 April 1865 – Brig Gen John T. Croxton's Cavalry Brigade departed camp at Johnson's Ferry (Old Lock 17 area) to the Watermelon Road ending in Northport. As the Union troops entered Northport, the Methodist Church bell was rung as a prearranged warning alarm. Armed with 7-shot carbines, 150 troopers of the 2nd Michigan Cav Regt rushed the covered bridge which was defended by about a dozen old men and young boys led by 53-year-old Capt Benjamin F. Eddins. This Home Guard removed 30 feet of the bridge's flooring in a delaying action as they retreated, returning fire with their single-shot weapons. Capt Eddins was seriously wounded and died a week later; 15-year-old John Carson was crippled for life by a bullet. Union casualties of the 2nd Mich Cav Regt numbered 23.

4 April – Croxton's raiders skirmished with the Alabama Corps of Cadets near Greensboro Ave and University Blvd and the brow of River Hill. After the mayor, accompanied by a Catholic priest, surrendered the town, the Union troops burned the main buildings of the State University, the foundry, factories, warehouses and over 2,000 bales of cotton. 5 April – Burning the covered bridge and destroying two captured cannon, Croxton's cavalry departed Tuscaloosa and Northport by way of the Columbus Road (old Highway 82 W).

Bridging the Black Warrior River Side Two

At this junction for all roads converging from the north, east, and west, seven bridges in succession have connected Northport and Tuscaloosa across the Black Warrior River. The first was built in 1834 by then-slave Horace King. Damaged by a tornado in 1842, it was replaced in 1852 by a second bridge – the one defended by the Tuscaloosa Home Guard before its destruction in April 1865. In 1872 a new wooden span was erected, again engineered by King, who had been freed in 1846 and who had become famous as a bridge builder in Alabama and Georgia. A 3-span iron bridge was built in 1882, then replaced in 1895 with a swing-span type to allow the passage of river traffic. A drawbridge was constructed in 1922, standing until the Hugh Thomas Bridge was built slightly downstream in 1974.

Confederate Generals Birthdays for June

General Samuel Cooper - 12 June 1798 - Hackensack, N.J.
 General John Bell Hood - 1 June 1831 - Owingsville, Ky.
 Maj. General Daniel Smith Donelson - 23 June 1801 - Sumner Co., Tenn.
 Maj. General James Lawson Kemper - 11 June 1823 - Madison Co., Va.
 Brig. General John Decatur Barry - 21 June 1839 - Wilmington, N.C.
 Brig. General Cullen Andrews Battle - 1 June 1829 - Powelton, Ga.
 Brig. General Alexander William Campbell - 4 June 1828 - Nashville, Tenn.
 Brig. General John Rogers Cooke - 9 June 1833 - Jefferson Barracks, Md.
 Brig. General Junius Daniel - 27 June 1828 - Halifax, N.C.
 Brig. General John Buchanan Floyd - 1 June 1806 - Montgomery Co., Va.
 Brig. General Brikett Davenport Fry - 24 June 1822 - Kanawha Co., Va.
 Brig. General Richard Montgomery Gano - 17 June 1830 - Bourbon Co., Ky.
 Brig. General William Montgomery Gardner - 8 June 1824 - Augusta, Ga.
 Brig. General Victor Jean Baptiste Girardey - 26 June 1837 - Lauw, France
 Brig. General Martin Edwin Green - 3 June 1815 - Fauquier Co., Va.
 Brig. General Benjamin Hardin Helm - 2 June 1831 - Bardstown, Ky.
 Brig. General Benjamin Jefferson Hill - 13 June 1825 - McMinnville, Tenn.
 Brig. General Henry Rootes Jackson - 24 June 1820 - Athens, Ga.
 Brig. General Young Marshall Moody - 23 June 1822 - Chesterfield Co., Va.
Brig. General John Hunt Morgan - 1 June 1825 - Huntsville, Ala.
 Brig. General John Tyler Morgan - 20 June 1824 - Athens, Tenn.
 Brig. General Gideon Johnson Pillow - 8 June 1806 - Williamson Co., Tenn.
 Brig. General Gabriel James Rains - 4 June 1803 - Craven Co., N.C.

(Continued Next Page)

Confederate Generals Birthdays (Continued)

Brig. General Beverly Holcombe Robertson - 5 June 1827 - Amelia Co., Va.
 Brig. General Paul Jones Semmes - 4 June 1815 - Wilkes Co., Ga.
 Brig. General James Edwin Slaughter - in June 1827 - Cedar Mountain, Va.
 Brig. General Otho French Strahl - 3 June 1831 - McConnelsville, Ohio
 Brig. General Thomas Fentress Toon - 10 June 1840 - Columbus Co., N.C.
 Brig. General William Tatum Woffard - 28 June 1824 - Habersham Co., Ga.
 Brig. General Marcus Joswph Wright - 5 June 1831 - Purdy, Tenn.

Civil War Units from Alabama **Twenty-Third Alabama Infantry Regiment**

This regiment organized at Montgomery, Nov. 19, 1861. Ordered shortly after, to Mobile, it was attached to General Gladden's brigade, and remained there till the following February. During a stay there of two months the regiment lost 82 men by disease. It then moved into east Tennessee, and was first brigaded under Gen. Leadbetter of Mobile, afterwards under Gen. Barton of Tennessee, and in June 1862 under Col. Taylor of Kentucky.

The Twenty-third performed much arduous duty in east Tennessee, and formed part of Stephenson's division, Kirby Smith's corps, in the Kentucky campaign. When the army returned to Tennessee, a brigade was formed of the Twentieth, Twenty-third, Thirtieth, Thirteenth, and Forty-sixth Alabama regiments, and placed under Gen. Tracy of Madison.

In December 1862, with Stephenson's division, the Twenty-third was moved to Vicksburg, and a few days later was present at the fight at Chicasa Bayou. It was hotly engaged at Port Gibson, where the brigade commander fell, and lost heavily there in killed and wounded, and captured. Gen. S.D. Lee then took command of the brigade. At Baker's Creek the Twenty-third was engaged, and lost a number captured. The next day it was in the fight at Big Black bridge, and when the army fell back, the regiment was left, by oversight, and for twelve hours resisted the whole federal army, without severe loss.

Retiring into Vicksburg, the regiment shared in that siege, fighting day and night, but without many casualties. Paroled immediately, the regiment was soon exchanged, and joined the Army of Tennessee just after the battle of Chicamauga, Gen. Pettus of Dallas commanding the brigade. The Twenty-third took part at Mission Ridge with light loss, and wintered at Dalton. At the beginning of the campaign, it suffered heavy loss at Resaca, but was constantly in front of Sherman all the way down the bloody path to Atlanta and Jonesboro, suffering very severely in the latter battle.

The regiment marched with Gen. Hood into Tennessee, was engaged at Columbia with considerable loss, and at Nashville, where many of the men were captured. It guarded the rear of the retreating army, and moved into the Carolinas. From Branchville to Bentonville it fought Sherman, and was consolidated with the Forty-sixth Alabama, with J.B. Bibb as colonel, Osceola Kyle of Coosa as lieutenant colonel, and J.T. Hester as major, and surrendered at Salisbury, North Carolina. Nearly 1200 names were on the rolls of the Twenty-third; it had 436 muskets at Rocky-face, and 76 surrendered at Salisbury, under Col. Bibb.

Field and Staff

Colonels - Franklin K. Beck of Wilcox; captured at Vicksburg; killed at Resaca. Joseph B. Bibb of Montgomery; wounded at Nashville.

Lieut. Colonels - Jos. B. Bibb of Montgomery; promoted.

Majors - Felix Tait of Wilcox; resigned. John J. Longmire of Monroe; resigned. F. McMurray of Macon; wounded at Mission Ridge; retired. A.C. Roberts of Marengo; killed at New Hope. J.T. Hester of Montgomery.

Adjutants - Henry Goldthwaite of Mobile; resigned. J. T. Norman of Macon; captured at Port Gibson. William Beard of Conecuh.

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Twenty-third Alabama (Continued)

Captains, and counties from Which the Companies Came.

Wilcox - J.J. Longmire; promoted. G.H. Moye; resigned. W.P. Steen; captured at Vicksburg; wounded at Atlanta.

Macon - F. McMurray; wounded and captured at Port Gibson; promoted. F. Rutherford; killed at Jonesboro.

Lieut. Carnie Leslie commanded.

Marengo - A.L. Norwood; resigned. A.C. Roberts; promoted. Robert Chapman.

Conecuh - D.K. Smith; resigned. J.T. Hester; promoted. James M. Anderson.

Monroe - G.G. Mathews; resigned. H.M. Graham; captured at Vicksburg.

Lowndes - Henry P. Reid; resigned. S. Oliver Merriwether; captured at Port Gibson.

Chocta - J.G. Yates; resigned. John Stevens; killed at Port Gibson. F. Butterfield; killed at Atlanta.

Conecuh - T.B. McCall; resigned. B.L. Selman; captured at Vicksburg; wounded at Resaca; Lieut. McDonald commanded.

Baldwin - R.Y. Rew; resigned. W.H. Miles; captured at Vicksburg.

Wilcox and Clarke - Wm. E. Powe; resigned. Greene D. McConnell; captured at Vicksburg.

ROBERT DeWITT: Claiming offense is simply an adult temper tantrum

From *The Tuscaloosa News* Published: Wednesday, May 13, 2009 at 3:30 a.m.

Thumbing through the list of Bama's Greatest Games and Crimson Classics, the replays of old Alabama football games, you won't see too many Alabama losses. Even if they produced a Crimson Classic about a loss, I wouldn't watch it. And that should explain why I haven't got any interest in reliving the Civil War.

Back in college, I hung a Confederate battle flag on my dorm room wall. I thought it was a beautiful, colorful flag and that it said something about me personally. I viewed it as an unabashed symbol of regional pride.

My roommate was a stoner military kid whose family lived in Virginia. His emblem was the big blue bong (water pipe) he sometimes carelessly left in the dorm room window where he also grew marijuana plants for all to see.

Across the hall lived a black student named Kevin who was a walk-on football player. He was an amiable, laid-back guy. The first time he came into our room, he cut his eyes toward the flag and asked if I went to Butler High School in Huntsville.

When I told him I was from Demopolis, he said, "good." Apparently Butler's sports teams were known as the Rebels and their fans waved Confederate flags. He played for rival Buckhorn. He never mentioned the flag to me again, although he popped into our room frequently.

Down the hall was a Jewish kid named Randy who loved to call me a hillbilly and a gun-toting redneck and hung on me a most unflattering nickname that I can't repeat in the newspaper. I insulted his religious heritage in return, thickening my accent every time I did it.

We were offensive and politically incorrect as hell, reveling in binge drinking and denigrating each other's ethnicity and heritage. It never hurt when my friend called me a hillbilly. He knew I harbored no disrespect for his faith. Kevin seemed oblivious to the Confederate flag. My roommate stayed stoned.

Had someone come to me and told me that my flag made Kevin and the black friends that visited him nervous, I'd have told them that Kevin needed to take a Valium and get over it. Had someone told me that my flag reminded Randy of the anti-Semitic Ku Klux Klan, I'd have told him that was too bad. If it made him feel better, he could look in my closet and see that there was no white bed sheet and hood in it.

They'd have all responded similarly had I objected to all the epithets regarding Southern whites.

Had someone ripped my flag off of my wall, there would have been a fist fight, even if it had been Kevin, who was more than a match for me. I wouldn't have fought to defend the Confederacy's honor. The flag was mine and I had the right to display it in my room or in public.

But, of course, no one did. A Jewish kid from Chicago and a black kid from the Tennessee Valley saw it for what it was and me for whom I was. More importantly, they took the time to find out who I was rather than making assumptions about me because of the battle flag on my wall.

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Robert DeWitt (Continued) I don't really know what assumptions Arthur Dowdell, the Auburn City Councilman, made when he ripped the Confederate flags off the graves of Confederate soldiers. It's a real shame someone wasn't there to knock him flat on his backside.

Assault may be a crime, but so is grave desecration and theft. He ought to be charged with both rather than being asked to apologize.

The real crime is that he didn't try to find out why the flags marked the graves or open a dialog with the people who placed the flags there. He felt entitled, because he was "offended," to take someone else's property and to desecrate a grave.

I've got news for the councilman: There's no constitutional protection against being offended. If anything, the constitution goes out of its way to protect people's rights to offend each other.

Claiming offense has become the adult version of a temper tantrum. When children don't get what they want, they lie on the floor and kick and scream, and bad parents appease them. Adults who don't like something, but can't find any law against it, claim the symbol or object is offensive and insensitive. An unprincipled society has repeatedly rewarded this behavior.

People of conscience usually give consideration to other people's feelings, but only when they're informed politely of other people's concerns. When they're screamed at or called out publicly, they stiffen their backs and lift a middle finger.

The screaming and flipping off are usually counterproductive. I would just about bet that sales of Confederate paraphernalia in Lee County increased after Dowdell's act and that much of it will be more offensive than little Confederate flags.

If we acted logically, we'd avoid counterproductive behavior. Politicians like Dowdell trade in it. They perpetuate tension and anger because it translates into political power. If you believe his actions come from any kind of genuine sense of outrage or offense, I've got a hot stock tip for you — Chrysler.

I'm not picking on Auburn and forgetting the University of Alabama's Confederate incident involving the Kappa Alpha Order's Old South parade. It's a little different set of circumstances and I can understand how having a truck load of Confederates show up outside of a black sorority house during a sorority function might be annoying.

But I disagree with the sorority's call for administrators to ban the fraternity's celebration. A far better tactic would have been for the sorority's president to contact the fraternity's president and discuss the sorority's objections. The fraternity's apology indicates to me that the incident could have been worked out respectfully among peers.

Then again, why should I expect that from college students when adults so rarely engage each other in civil discourse these days? Calling on official clout should be the last resort to resolving an impasse. Instead, it's the immediate reaction.

I suppose my irritation only increases that these tensions remain over a part of our history that grows ever more distant and irrelevant. My feelings about the Civil War and the mythology that accompanies it are a lot like the way I feel about the 1973 Sugar Bowl. Alabama's 24-23 loss to Notre Dame was a great game. But I haven't got any desire to watch replays of it and relive the painful loss.

Likewise, I don't have any desire to dress up like a Confederate soldier or fly the battle flag of a long defeated army. The hard, cold truth is that the side my ancestors fought on lost. Dwelling on it has done little but engender a feeling of inferiority in Southerners.

My Confederate battle flag moved with me to several college apartments. But at some point more than 25 years ago, I folded it and stored it with other college artifacts.

I didn't do that because I was afraid of what people would think of me. I didn't do it because I didn't want to offend someone. I did it because I didn't think it said anything about me anymore.

Other people feel differently. They are free to express those feelings with Confederate symbols; that's a First Amendment right. Anybody who wastes time condemning it is either on a fool's errand or is seeking to drive up Confederate paraphernalia sales.

The very best way to keep the Confederate flag flying is to try to deny people the right to fly it. About the only time I feel like displaying it again is when one of these incidents erupt. I've suppressed my contrarian impulses so far.

Treat it like Kevin and Randy treated the flag on my wall and you take away its power. Then people will consign it to its rightful place in history, among all the other artifacts.

Robert DeWitt is a staff writer for The Tuscaloosa News., and may be reached at robert.dewitt@tuscaloosanews.com.

Old South offends more than blacks

Published: Thursday, May 21, 2009 at 2:05 p.m.

Dear Editor:

The display of Confederate costumes, flags and emblems by fraternity members was stirring up trouble at the University of Alabama when I went to school there, 30 years ago. I am astounded that the students of Kappa Alpha and other fraternities and sororities persist in dressing up like Confederates and celebrating an idealized slaveholding society. Their actions reinforce the most backward stereotypes of Alabama and her people.

There must be some reason these costumes are so important to these people, if they're willing to cause such an uproar time after time by wearing them.

What's most appalling in this situation is not the spectacle of young people choosing to perpetuate the myths of the discarded system of slavery, although that should provoke heartfelt discussion in every classroom on campus. The most offensive assumption KA makes is that we should only be offended by their costumes and their flags if we are black. Don't they know that celebrating slavery and slaveholders is offensive to everyone, black, white, brown and any other color person who has a conscience and knowledge of the shameful parts of Alabama's history? Drop the hoopskirts and the Confederate battle flags. Time to grow up and enter a new century.

Mark Childress
New York, N.Y.

Dewitt's article not Confederate enough

Published: Monday, May 18, 2009 at 3:30 a.m.

Dear Editor:

I appreciate Robert Dewitt's article about the cemetery incident in Lee County, and was delighted to see it published in The Tuscaloosa News. If I had been at the cemetery when Dowdell removed the flags, there would have, indeed, been a confrontation, and an extra 'adult tantram.'

I respectfully disagree with a few of Mr. Dewitt's points, however.

Dewitt says he'd have fought to keep the flag because it was his, 'but not to defend the honor of the Confederacy.' Although I'd fight to keep mere possessions, I'd fight much harder and longer for the honor of the Confederacy. My loyalty to the men who carried the Confederate battle flag across so many battlegrounds would keep me fighting 'til my last breath.

Dewitt says the Confederacy is 'a part of our history that grows ever more distant and irrelevant.' However, Confederates fought and died for their independence; and we honor them best by continuing to fight for ours. We've been 'under the heel' since Reconstruction, and our quest is more relevant today than ever.

Lastly, Mr. Dewitt says focusing on the Confederate battleflag 'engenders a feeling of inferiority in Southerners.' Not so. To have something in common with Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson raises my self-esteem like crazy! To hear the bagpipes as a sea of battle flags goes by is as uplifting as it gets here on this earth!

Jean Allen
Tuscaloosa

Confederate Group Not Allowed in Ironton Memorial Day Parade

<http://www.wsaz.com/home/headlines/45098022.html>

Posted: 1:06 PM May 15, 2009 Reporter: The Associated Press Email Address: news@wsaz.com

IRONTON, Ohio (AP) - A group of Confederate Army descendants is upset its members can't march in an Ohio Memorial Day parade dating back to a few years after the Civil War.

A nearby Kentucky chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans asked to march in the Ironton-Lawrence County Memorial Day Parade but has been turned down by organizers.

Chapter members say their ancestors deserve to be memorialized.

But parade grand marshal Arthur Pierson says he didn't think it was right that the group planned to carry the Confederate battle flag. Pierson says there is only one flag, and that's the U.S. flag.

Officials in Ironton in southern Ohio say the parade first held in 1868 is considered the oldest continuously held Memorial Day parade in the nation.

Obama observes Memorial Day at Arlington Cemetery



AP - President Barack Obama lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, ...

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press Writer Darlene Superville, Associated Press Writer - Mon May 25, 7:42 pm ET

WASHINGTON - President Barack Obama avoided a racial controversy on his first Memorial Day in office by sending wreaths to separate memorials for Confederate soldiers and for blacks who fought against them during the Civil War.

Last week, a group of about 60 professors petitioned the White House, asking the first black U.S. president to break tradition and not memorialize military members from the Confederacy, the group of Southern states that supported slavery.

"The Arlington Confederate Monument is a denial of the wrong committed against African-Americans by slave owners, Confederates and neo-Confederates, through the monument's denial of slavery as the cause of secession and its holding up of Confederates as heroes," the petitioners said. "This implies that the humanity of Africans and African-Americans is of no significance."

The White House ignored the request.

Obama laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington National Cemetery, a customary presidential undertaking on Memorial Day. He also had one sent to the Confederate Memorial there, a traditional practice but not well publicized. Obama also took the unprecedented step of sending a wreath to the African American Civil War Memorial in Washington's historically black U Street neighborhood.

That memorial — to the 200,000 blacks who fought for the North during the Civil War — had been mentioned as a compromise in recent days.

Presidents traditionally visit Arlington National Cemetery to personally leave a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, a marble structure holding the remains of unidentified U.S. service members who died during war. Presidents then have aides deliver wreaths to other memorials or monuments, generally including the Confederate Memorial.

Wreaths also were left Monday at memorials to the USS Maine and the Spanish American War.

In brief but solemn remarks after he laid the wreath and observed a moment of silence, Obama saluted the men and women of America's fighting forces, both living and dead, as "the best of America."

"Why in an age when so many have acted only in pursuit of narrowest self-interest have the soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines of this generation volunteered all that they have on behalf of others," he said. "Why have they been willing to bear the heaviest burden?"

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Obama (Continued): "Whatever it is, they felt some tug. They answered a call. They said 'I'll go.' That is why they are the best of America," Obama said. "That is what separates them from those who have not served in uniform, their extraordinary willingness to risk their lives for people they never met."

The president, who did not serve in the military, noted his grandfather's Army service during World War II and his status as a father of daughters ages 10 and 7. Unlike many of those in the audience, Obama said he can't know what it's like to walk into battle or lose a child.

"But I do know this. I am humbled to be the commander in chief of the finest fighting force in the history of the world," he said to applause.

Among those who signed petition is 1960s radical William Ayers. The University of Chicago education professor helped found the radical group the Weather Underground that carried out bombings at the Pentagon and the Capitol. Republicans tried to link Obama and Ayers during the presidential campaign because they lived in the same neighborhood and served on a charity board together.

Men and women in uniform saluted Obama's motorcade as it entered the hallowed burial ground that is Arlington cemetery. Some in the audience of several thousands waved American flags as Obama stepped to the microphone.

Before the ceremony, the president had a private breakfast at the White House with people who have lost loved ones in war.

Obama and his wife, Michelle, have made veterans and military families a priority. His budget proposal includes the largest, single-year funding increase in the last three decades to revamp the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Later in the day, the president headed to Fort Belvoir, Va., to play golf.

Wreaths win Obama praise from Sons of Confederate Veterans

Gestures honor black Union soldiers as well as Confederate war dead

<http://www.thestate.com/local/story/803944.html> By **WAYNE WASHINGTON** - wwashington@thestate.com

President Barack Obama, the nation's first black chief executive, will be getting a thank you note from the Sons of Confederate Veterans for continuing a tradition of honoring the Confederate dead on Memorial Day.

A group of 48 historians, including one from Coastal Carolina University, had asked Obama not to send a wreath to an Arlington National Cemetery monument honoring Confederate dead — a practice started in 1914 by Woodrow Wilson, who was born in Virginia and lived in Columbia as a young man.

Obama sent the wreath to the Confederate monument, but he also sent one to a Washington, D.C., cemetery that honors black Union soldiers.

The president's actions pleased Chuck McMichael, commander in chief of the Sons of Confederate Veterans.

"The president did very well by sending a wreath to honor American veterans of all types," McMichael said. "He upheld the tradition of the office to which he was elected. I do intend to send him a thank you letter. This is the kind of thing that transcends politics."

Orville Vernon Burton, who teaches Southern culture and history at Coastal Carolina, was among the 48 historians who signed the letter asking Obama not to send a wreath to the Confederate monument.

Burton said there is not enough appreciation for the many Southerners — black and white — who fought to keep the Union together.

On Memorial Day, presidents typically lay a wreath at Arlington's Tomb of the Unknowns, a monument to U.S. service members who have died without being identified.

Presidents also have directed that a wreath be sent to the Confederate monument.

Burton said he was concerned that Obama would be "singling out a group that wanted to split the Union" unless he also sent a wreath to a Union monument.

"People don't know how close we came to not having a Union, and what that would mean for freedom today," he said.

Burton said he learned about the historians' letter through one of its two authors, James Loewen. A sociologist, author and professor, Loewen also has argued the statue of former S.C. politician "Pitchfork" Ben Tillman Tillman on the State House grounds should be toppled because of Tillman's career-long support of white supremacy and violent black disenfranchisement.

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Wreaths (Continued): Officials at the White House did not respond Tuesday or Wednesday to questions about Obama's decision to send a wreath to the Confederate monument.

McMichael of the Sons of Confederate Veterans said he was glad the president did not address the letter. "I thought the letter was absurd and should not have been taken seriously."

Burton said he does not know of any official response to the historians' letter, which detailed the Confederate monument's history, its Latin inscriptions and the words of those who have spoken in its shadow.

"The monument was intended to legitimize secession and the principles of the Confederacy," the letter states. "It isn't just a remembrance of the dead."

In not responding to the letter, Obama steered clear of the passions that still exist regarding slavery and the Civil War.

Alexander Stephens, vice president of the Confederate States of America, said in 1861 that "African slavery" was "the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution," a verdict many present-day historians accept.

But the Web site for the Sons of Confederate Veterans, which describes itself as "the oldest hereditary organization for male descendants of Confederate soldiers," says the "citizen-soldiers who fought for the Confederacy personified the best qualities of America. The preservation of liberty and freedom was the motivating factor in the South's decision to fight the Second American Revolution."

Burton said Obama's decision also to send a wreath to a cemetery honoring black Union soldiers was "extremely diplomatic."

Not sending a wreath to the Confederate monument "would have been harder for him because he's African-American," said Burton, adding Obama would have encountered a backlash from some white Americans.

In the end, Burton said, he can accept Obama's decision to send a wreath to both Union and Confederate monuments.

"It does represent the reconciliation of North and South," he said.

Reach senior writer Wayne Washington at (803) 771-8385.

Help a Teacher Attend CWPT's 2009 Teacher Institute

Dear CWPT Supporter,

Each year the Civil War Preservation Trust conducts a Civil War Teacher Institute. This conference presents teachers with the latest methods and content on the Civil War while focusing on the preservation of battlefields for use as outdoor classrooms.

There is no doubt that the future of any successful historic preservation effort is dependent on great teachers passing on their love of history to the next generation. Teachers are our "force multipliers."

This year's Institute will be held July 24 - 26, in Spotsylvania County, Virginia, site of four of the most momentous battles of the war, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, The Wilderness and Spotsylvania Courthouse.

Due to the economic downturn most school districts are cutting back their spending. As a result many teachers are finding difficult to pull together the funds necessary to pay for their personal travel and lodging expenses for the Institute. This year we have received a whopping 53 applications for stipends, the largest number of applications we have ever seen. (CWPT pays for all other costs associated with the weekend event, not charging the teachers any fees for the venue, conference manual, meals, buses for battlefield tours, and continuing education credits).

Please, today, will you consider making a gift "for the future of preservation," by sending a contribution of any amount to help a teacher attend the Institute? Consider the impact your significant gift could make in the lives of these teachers' students.

By giving a gift to CWPT for any part of a teacher's stipend that feels right to you, you become the engine behind our "force multipliers," allowing teachers from all across the country who share our interest in history and preservation to attend this conference.

Thank You,

Civil War Preservation Trust

Sons of Confederate Veterans Raise Battle Flag

Published: June 7, 2009

http://www.tricitie.com/tri/news/local/article/sons_of_confederate_veterans_raise_battle_flag/25082/

BY CLAIRE GALOFARO
BRISTOL HERALD COURIER

The Sons of Confederate Veterans raised a confederate battle flag Saturday evening in Bristol, Tenn. The 25-by-15-foot banner was hoisted on a 70-foot pole on a hillside in clear view of Interstate 81 – to serve as a monument and memory to those who fought on behalf of the South. “You can’t get the real history from a text book,” said David Roberts, who organized Saturday’s event and spearheaded project to install the flag. “The ones that won got to write the book,” Roberts said. “But we know it’s different and that’s what we’ve got to teach our children. God bless Dixie and may this flag ever wave.”

About 200 people gathered for the ceremony, semi-circled around the pole on top of a hillside several hundred above the interstate. A dozen or so men dressed as confederate soldiers and among them was a black man named H.K. Edgerton. “The most discriminated against person in America is the Christian Southern white man,” said Edgerton, a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and a former president of the NAACP’s Asheville, N.C. branch. Edgerton also said he enjoys “whipping Yankees.”

“This place should be full of black folks,” Edgerton said. “I don’t know why [I’m the only one here]. Maybe your newspaper should have told them to come to celebrate and sing Dixie and salute our flag. It’s a shame white folks and black folks make people think this is an evil flag. This is a southern flag. You can’t attack this flag and call yourself a southerner. You can call yourself a traitor.” Edgerton delivered his comments with the conviction of a preacher, in an impromptu address to the crowd. His adoring fans reciprocated with hoots and thunderous applause.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans is an national organization dedicated to protecting the honor of their ancestors. All are great-great-somethings of a confederate soldier, and they look to the flag as a symbol of that fight. To many others the Confederate flag is America’s most contentious symbol, likened to a swastika in hateful significance. “It’s been hijacked by hate groups,” Roberts said. “We are in no way aligned with anyone who uses the flag our ancestors fought and died for, for purposes of hate or intimidation. These groups have also denigrated the U.S. flag and the Christian flag and make it very hard at times for us to honor our relatives without a negative response from the general public who have no idea about our organization.”

The pre-raising ceremony Saturday included opening remarks and many who attended exchanged certificates of appreciation. Among the presenters was Sheila Hunt, director of the Sullivan County Archives and Tourism, who offered the gratitude of the mayor of Sullivan County. Fittingly, Roberts dedicated the rebel flag to those who resent it: teachers who don’t allow children to wear it on their clothing; politicians who disassociate themselves from it; and a man who removed one from an Alabama cemetery.

Edgerton, flanked by several young boys, unveiled the giant flag, and the onlookers – five rows deep – clapped and chanted as it made its way up the pole. It hung quietly for several seconds, with audible anticipation below. Then the wind blew. “There she goes!” Digital cameras buzzed open. “Oh, isn’t it beautiful,” one woman cried. “Another great day in Dixie,” shouted a man. “Thank you Jesus,” said another. Then everyone sang Dixie and caught a ride down the hill. “I represent four and a half million black folks who’ve been beat down and would love to be here, too,” Edgerton said. “If they tell you they wouldn’t be, the first thing you ask is where they’re from. Then you tell them to go on back.”

John Harrison, the former head of the Kingsport chapter of the NAACP, does not share such enthusiasm for the Confederate flag. “I am not endeared by that flag,” Harrison said. “Sometimes people do these things to see a knee-jerk reaction. And I really wish they wouldn’t. When I see it, I ignore it the best I can. I don’t challenge, because that’s just what they want.”



The 19th Tennessee Volunteer Infantry fire a volley during Saturday’s flag dedication ceremony in Bristol, Tenn.

Zach Brake/special to the Herald Courier

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Flag Raising (Continued): A Friday call and an e-mail to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People were not returned. Saturday calls to other local chapters of the NAACP also were not immediately returned. "I don't plan to protest or write letters," Harrison said. "That just moves their agenda to the forefront, like when three or four members of the Klan march they bring a lot of attention. I'm just going to go on past it. I've got better things to do. But that's just me."

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Confederate flag in Homestead parade sparks dispute

Black leaders are mobilizing to pressure city and business leaders to stop the flag from appearing in future events. Others say flag represents their Southern heritage.

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/breaking-news/story/1056239.html>

BY TANIA VALDEMORO tvaldemoro@MiamiHerald.com



A member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans rides his bike as part of the Homestead Veterans Day parade.

ALBERT SIEGEL / PHOTO BY ALBERT SIEGEL

It started during a day of patriotism. The Sons of Confederate Veterans waved the Confederate battle flag as they marched for the first time in a Veteran's Day parade in Homestead last November.

Six months later, the Miami-Dade chapter of the NAACP has launched a multi-pronged campaign to prevent future public displays of the flag.

Black leaders met Monday night at the Covenant Missionary Baptist Church in Florida City to strategize over the simmering dispute about the flag's appearance at a parade sponsored by the Homestead/Florida City Chamber of Commerce.

Among the options they're considering: Diplomacy, protest, a possible boycott of chamber businesses and recruiting candidates to run against the Homestead mayor and council members in the November elections.

Since the Civil War, the Confederate battle flag has been a controversial symbol in American history. For some, it represents their Southern heritage and evokes a measure of pride. For others, it serves as a reminder of slavery and racism.

"Initially, we all thought this was a matter of stupidity and all it would take would be to educate people that the flag is a symbol of terrorism," said Bradford Brown, first vice president of the local chapter of the NAACP.

"Instead, it dragged on. And the city of Homestead went one step further and decided to dissolve their part of the Human Relations Board," he said.

Last month, Homestead Mayor Lynda Bell and the city council disbanded the Homestead/Florida City Human Relations Board, which was created in 2002 by the city's first black mayor, Roscoe Warren.

The advisory board took up the issue of the flag display for six months, but did not come to a resolution with the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the chamber.

Bell said the changes to the human relations board, which she suggested, stem from a desire to make it more reflective of Hispanics, who make up about 60 percent of Homestead's population. The city council will consider an ordinance governing the new Community Relations Board next month and the mayor will appoint new board members, subject to council approval.

The mayor also said the chamber of commerce's Military Affairs Committee -- not the city -- sponsored the Veteran's Day parade. City spokeswoman Lillian Delgado said Homestead contributed \$2,000 of in-kind services for the parade, as it does with other events.

Homestead did not have knowledge or control of what organizations participated in the parade, Delgado said.

Jeffrey Wander, chair of the chamber's Military Affairs Committee, said he didn't know if the Sons of Confederate Veterans would march again but the chamber could not ban them from participating in this November's parade.

He said they have the right to express themselves under the First Amendment. He also feared a lawsuit if restrictions were imposed.

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Homestead (Continued): "I wish people would ignore it. It would probably go away," Wander said. Supporters of the Confederate flag have written to The Miami Herald.

"I don't understand why, in 2008 as we are all taught to be tolerant, people cannot be tolerant of me as a white Southern man and my right to fly a Confederate flag," said David "Chili" Baglin of Cutler Bay. "The Confederate flag is not a symbol of racism to me. It is only a symbol of my Southern heritage that I am proud of."

The NAACP and black residents were not swayed Monday night.

They excoriated Bell and council members, saying the council condoned the rare public display of the flag.

"We're calling a press conference on June 11 at Homestead City Hall," Bishop Victor Curry, president of the Miami-Dade NAACP chapter, told an audience of nearly 200 people.

"The following Saturday, we march. All that we heard today needs to be shared with the community."

Former Homestead Mayor Warren and Miami-Dade County Commission Katy Sorenson pledged to use a softer approach -- diplomacy behind the scenes -- to work with Bell and the council to resolve the dispute.

"I'm confident we will work it out," said Warren, Homestead's first black mayor. "You don't want to elevate this [dispute] to the state and national level."

Meanwhile, Curry hinted at a possible boycott of chamber businesses at a time when most industries have been hit by the recession.

He also set his sights on the November elections. Curry pledged the NAACP would register new voters and strongly urge them to vote against Bell or any other council member if they did not ban the flag.

Councilman Melvyn McCormick, the only black member of the council, might be one of the vulnerable council members. He voted to disband the Human Relations Board, which his opponent, the Rev. Jimmie Williams, pointed out.

"Someone is going to be a casualty," Curry said.

NAACP may seek to get Confederate Flags out of Homestead

By Jay Busbee Yahoo Sports Wed May 27, 2009 12:30 pm EDT



Say what you will about the Confederate flag, it's still deeply intertwined with a goodly chunk of Southern culture. And there's a fair bit of crossover between Confederate flag fans and NASCAR fans; you'll see Confederate flags flying in the infield at almost every single race. (Like right here, for instance.)

But that doesn't sit well with the NAACP, understandably enough. The Miami-Dade branch has decided that sitting back is no longer an option, and is [considering whether to boycott the season-ending Homestead race in November](#). (Yes, yes, I know, the NAACP boycotting a NASCAR event seems similar to the idea of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir boycotting a Lil Wayne concert, but hear 'em out.) Their point, of course, is that the Confederate flag carries

with it a history of hatred and oppression, and they don't believe it should be a part of NASCAR events.

All well and good, except that as NASCAR points out, the Confederate flag hasn't been officially sanctioned for years, if not decades, and NASCAR doesn't own Homestead. And you can't go policing what people bring into the infield; that starts to veer into freedom-of-speech territory.

The ACLU, that hotbed of liberal nambypambyism, predictably weighed in and said anybody wearing a Confederate flag should be jailed. No, wait, they said the *exact opposite* of that: "If someone wants to show up with a shirt like that, there'd be no legal recourse for that," Brandon Hensler, spokesman of the Miami ACLU, [told Fox News](#). "Unless there's a specific threat, all speech is protected." (Side note: I'll bet the Fox guys were crying in frustration that the ACLU actually stood for principle rather than politics on this one.)

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Flag and NASCAR (Continued) Supporters of the flag generally rely on the "free speech" and "heritage" arguments, along with the veiled "don't start none, won't be none" hints of conflict and counter-protests. And nobody's mind ever seems to change on anything.

What it comes down to is whether the flag itself is classifiable as "hate speech." To use a tired example, could somebody fly a Nazi swastika and get away with it? Nope. But does the Confederate flag automatically equal the swastika? It's an issue of multivalent symbology, where there is no shared concept of meaning -- sorry, that was my grad school learning leaking out. Bottom line: the flag means different things to different people, and that is and always will be the sticking point, regardless of how badly one side or the other wants to believe they're right.

NAACP Branch Readies for Confederate Flag Fight

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,522203,00.html> Wednesday, May 27, 2009 By Joshua Rhett Miller



May 9, 2008: A racing fan watches qualifying for the NASCAR Nationwide Series Diamond Hill Plywood 200 auto race in Darlington, S.C.

A flag fight is brewing in southern Florida.

Members of the Miami-Dade branch of the NAACP want the Confederate flag banned from the Homestead-Miami Motor Speedway, and they will meet Thursday to decide whether to boycott a NASCAR race slated there for November.

Debra Toomer, the branch's chairwoman of press and publicity, said a planning session has been scheduled to decide on a course of action regarding the display of the flag at the Nov. 20-22 event, as well as its presence at city-sponsored events like last year's Veterans Day parade.

"The concern is there," Toomer said of Confederate flags. She declined to comment further before the meeting.

But officials at NASCAR and the raceway say there's little they can do to prevent spectators from displaying or waving the Confederate flag.

NASCAR spokesman Ramsey Poston told FOXNews.com that NASCAR's "longstanding policy" prohibits displays of the Confederate flag on its cars, uniforms, licensed merchandise or in advertisements.

"You're not going to see the flag or the symbol on any of those things," Poston said. "It's been that way for a very long time."

Poston said NASCAR has not received any communication from NAACP officials, and he stressed that NASCAR is "removed" from the controversy since it does not own or operate the Homestead-Miami Motor Speedway.

"We happen to run an event there once a year," Poston continued. "But we'd be happy to speak to [NAACP officials] and explain the situation."

Homestead-Miami Motor Speedway President Curtis Gray said spectators are not permitted to wave large flags of any sort in the stands because of safety concerns, and to prevent them from obstructing the view.

He said Confederate flag items are not sold or officially displayed throughout the 65,000-seat raceway, but there's no official ban on spectators bringing miniature flags to the track, or wearing T-shirts emblazoned with the symbol.

"... we don't regulate the lawful behavior of our fans or prohibit free speech and expression of our guests," Gray told FOXNews.com. "We can't tell people what to wear. Where do you start? Where does it end, as far as individual expression?"

Brandon Hensler, a spokesman for American Civil Liberties Union's Florida chapter, said bringing a Confederate flag to the race or any public event would be protected speech.

"If someone wants to show up with a shirt like that, there'd be no legal recourse for that," Hensler said. "Unless there's a specific threat, all speech is protected."

Gray declined to comment on the potential impact of a boycott or protest, since his office had not been contacted by NAACP officials in Florida.

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NAACP and NASCAR (Continued): Meanwhile, Rosemary Fuller, a member of the NAACP's Miami-Dade branch, said the civil rights group began drafting a letter last week to NASCAR Chairman and CEO Brian France to seek help in banning the controversial flag from the raceway.

Citing a "troubling racial discord" in Homestead, Fuller told the South Florida Times that NAACP members are ready to protest and potentially boycott the season-ending race weekend if NASCAR officials fail to support the effort. NAACP members are also reportedly prepared to contact NASCAR's sponsors if the auto racing league objects.

"Right now, we are still in the planning stages," Fuller told the South Florida Times. "But if NASCAR decides to come here under these conditions, we will meet them at the racetrack."

Brian France, CEO and chairman of NASCAR, who has called the Confederate flag a "fading image," said he's unable to control what flags spectators choose to fly at its mammoth facilities.

"It's not a flag that I look at with anything favorable, that's for sure," France told CBS in 2005. "I can't tell people what flag to fly. I can tell you the flag we get behind — it's the American flag."

The potential flag flap at Homestead would not be the first racial discrimination protest at the 65,000-seat raceway. A group called the National Association for Minority Race Fans reportedly held a two-hour protest prior to a race in 2004. Seeking to provide a safe and equal environment for minority motor sports fans, members of the group offered an American flag to anyone who relinquished a Confederate flag, The Miami Herald reported.

Chuck McMichael, commander in chief of Sons of the Confederate Veterans, a Tennessee-based group that promotes Confederate heritage, said the flag fight stems from last year's Veterans Day parade when some attendees objected to Confederate Army uniforms and flags displayed by participants. As a result, some Greater Homestead/Florida City residents sought to have the organization banned from future events, McMichael said.

But any attempts to block Confederate flags at Homestead-Miami Motor Speedway will be met with "some action," McMichael said, including the possibility of counter protests.

"Any time somebody starts talking about that, of course there's cause for concern," McMichael told FOX-News.com. "The bottom line is I don't think they should ban [Confederate flags] because there's nothing wrong with them. It's just people showing pride in their heritage."

Sons of Confederate Veterans intend to march in Homestead

BY TANIA VALDEMORO tvaldemoro@MiamiHerald.com

<http://www.miamiherald.com/news/miami-dade/communities/south/story/1078820.html>

The local chapter of the Sons of Confederate Veterans said it intends to march at a Veterans Day parade in November.

But organizers from the military affairs committee of the Homestead/Florida City Chamber of Commerce are debating on whether to continue the 47-year-old event.

The committee's executive board will decide Thursday whether to support the chamber's recommendation to discontinue the parade after a controversy erupted over the one-time display of the Confederate battle flag last year.

For some, the flag symbolizes their heritage. For others, it is a symbol of racism and slavery.

The Miami-Dade chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is calling for a ban of the rebel flag. It plans to protest June 13 in Homestead and has threatened to boycott businesses belonging to the chamber of commerce. But Confederate ancestors said they have a right to march with the flag and the chamber shouldn't be afraid to put on the parade. "I think it's very sad they are considering canceling the parade," said Gregory Kalof, commander of the Miami camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. "The chamber is responding to a threat of a boycott from the NAACP."

After hearing of the group's intentions to march, Mary Finlan, the executive director of the chamber, replied: "We would expect that." Last week, she said board members said they wanted to cancel the parade because they did not want veterans to be disrespected and the event to be marred by protests. Debra Toomer, a spokeswoman for the local NAACP, said she couldn't comment on the Sons of Confederates planning to march at the Homestead Veterans Day parade. "We have not heard officially that the Sons of Confederate plan to march," she said. "We can't give you a reaction."

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SCV March (Continued): In recent days, the NAACP has been tight-lipped about its plans, including a campaign to inform NASCAR and its sponsors about the flag's appearance in Homestead and a possible boycott of the NASCAR Nationwide Series Championship and Sprint Cup Series Championship at the Homestead-Miami Speedway in November. Toomer said NAACP President Bishop Victor Curry would discuss these issues at a press conference June 11 in front of Homestead City Hall.

Robert Hurst, public affairs officer for the Sons of Confederate Veterans Florida division, said there had been talk among the Confederate veterans about holding their own press conference this week. Members decided against it.

"We don't try to interfere with the NAACP," Hurst said. "They have the right to do whatever they want to do. We have a First Amendment right of free speech."

In an interview Tuesday, Brandon Hensler, spokesman for the ACLU of Florida, said no one has asked the ACLU to get involved in the dispute, although the organization is monitoring the executive board's decision and could play a role in the future.

One organization that has waded into the conflict: The U.S. Department of Justice's Community Relations Service, an impartial body whose purpose is to help communities resolve tension and conflict in matters over race, color or national origin. "We are involved and we have personnel in Homestead," said Ryan Breitenbach, legal counsel for the Community Relations Service in Washington, D.C. He declined to comment on the group's work, citing confidentiality agreements.

The Sons of Confederate Veterans is a national group that was formed in 1896. Open to male descendants of Confederate veterans, its purpose is to "preserve the legacy of these heroes, so future generations can understand the motives that animated the southern cause," according to its website. Hurst said there are 50 to 55 camps or local chapters, totaling about 1,500 people, in Florida. The Miami camp decided to march in the Homestead Veterans Day parade because a similar parade in Palm Beach County had been canceled, Kalof said. They had participated in that parade for at least four or five years without any protests or incidents, he said. "We wanted to support the troops," Kalof added. "We don't endorse slavery, segregation or white supremacy."

In February, Kalof suggested that his group would march with the Stars and Bars flag instead of the rebel flag at this year's Veterans Day parade, but members of the now-dissolved Homestead/Florida City Human Relations Board rejected that idea, he said.

At the end of April, the Sons of Confederate Veterans installed the largest Confederate battle flag in the country -- 30 feet high and 50 feet long atop a 139-foot pole on private land near the junction of Interstate 75 and Interstate 4 in Tampa.

The giant flag is part of the group's Flags Across Florida project that also includes a memorial for Confederate veterans, Kalof said. It also has erected rebel flags in Lake City and north of Tallahassee by the Georgia state line, Hurst said. The Tampa flag prompted a mixed reaction among nearby business owners in Hillsborough County, who feared a backlash from blacks, according to the St. Petersburg Times.

Kalof said there are plans to erect Confederate battle flags in South Florida; although, nothing is imminent because the costs are high and time is needed to raise money for the project.

"We are not a political organization. We are a historical group," he said.

Flag May Bring Homestead Parade To A Halt

Board Votes To Disband Annual Veterans Day Parade

John MacLauchan Reporting <http://cbs4.com/local/homestead.confederate.flag.2.1020658.html>

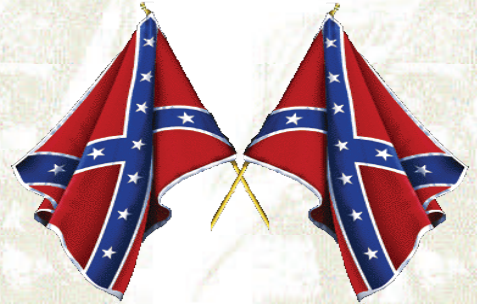
HOMESTEAD (CBS4) — A yearly Veterans Day tradition in Homestead may be canceled this year; not because of budget concerns but because of the Confederate battle flag.

Last year, the controversial flag was flown during the city's annual parade when the Sons of Confederate Veterans marched for the first time.

At a recent meeting the Homestead/Florida City Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors voted to disband the parade which has been held on Veterans Day for the last 40 years. The chamber's executive director, Mary Finlan, said there's a concern that military personnel and veterans may be heckled or mistreated if the flag is flown again.

In June, another board will decide whether or not to follow the Board of Directors' recommendation.

We Dare Defend Our Rights !



To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we submit 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 he loved and which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations. Until we meet again, let us remember our obligations to our forefathers, who gave us the undeniable birthright of our Southern Heritage and the vision, desire, and courage to see it perpetuated.

You can know a man in all his depth or shallowness by his attitude toward the Southern Banner