

“He who controls the past controls the future.
He who controls the present controls the past.”-George Orwell

American history has often been weaponized as a form of propaganda throughout the centuries, especially in recent decades. The past has continually been rewritten by the media, politicians, and hordes of supposed intellectuals to fit an ever-changing set of values and beliefs, relying upon obfuscation, distortions, and a lack of knowledge among the general population to get away with their historical fabrications and misrepresentations. This phenomenon is best observed regarding the legacy of the American Civil War and our cultural understanding of the men and women who risked, and often gave, both life and limb, in the defense of their homes and values.

In the struggle against historical fabrications and the cultural genocide of the Southern people, it has been the mission of the Sons of Confederate Veterans for over a century to provide and promote an accurate understanding of the Confederacy and the sacred cause that our ancestors fought for, regardless of the lies told by those who malign our noble and God-fearing ancestors.

The root causes of the South's secession from the Union could easily fill multiple volumes, with discussions over tariff policies and intricate political debates, but the primary reasons that moved millions of Southerners to engage in a national divorce can be firmly established as the principles of religion, States' rights, societal differences from other regions of the country, and the protection of ethnic identity.

In our modern American society, we currently live under a system that is far beyond the worst nightmares of the Anti-Federalist Founding Fathers. Unelected judges and government bureaucrats have more control over our lives than our ancestors ever could have imagined. Governor George Wallace spoke of this reality, something that has only gotten worse in the three generations since he gave this speech, that:

“It’s certainly a sad commentary on supposedly one of the most civilized nations on the face of the earth, for a citizen not to be able to walk in safety, to ride in safety because these permissive federal courts and judges pay more attention to those who shoot and rob you than they do to those who are shot and robbed... if the judges paid as much attention to those who needed a shave who are in the cemetery as those who need to shave in prison, we wouldn’t have as many in the cemeteries as a result of these thugs and criminals in this country...

Can the middle class in the United States survive? Can the businessman, small businessman, and woman, can the farmer, can the working man and woman survive

inflation and unemployment and high regressive taxes in this country if they do not exist, and they do not continue to exist?... I don't like some federal judge appointed for life running my union, my business, my farm, and now running my children and my home—it's not the way to be, and it never has been.”[1]

The people of the South saw the encroachment of federal authorities against the civil rights of Americans and the growing leviathan of federal authority that sought to strip away the Constitutional protections of local self-governance and of freedom. A mere cursory glance at modern American society demonstrates that the Anti-Federalists, and then the Confederacy, were correct in viewing the direction of where centralized power would go. Instead of being a republic of free citizens, we are all no more than residents of an empire that, in nearly all of its policies, seeks to replace us, our values, and our God from the land that our forefathers fought and died for.

We know now that our ancestors were correct, that if we did not break free from the power of bankers and bureaucrats, one day our children would grow up homeless, economically, politically, and socially, on the land that was bequeathed to them by previous generations. Beyond all of the noise and misrepresentations said about secession and the Confederacy in the modern era by anti-White ethnic activists and liberal pseudo-intellectuals, we know and proudly declare that the soldiers of the Confederate States of America fought for freedom and liberty, not only for themselves, but also to prevent the globalist nightmare that now occupies our sacred soil.

With these principles understood, the Indiana Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans has an important role in not only serving the descendants of Confederate soldiers who came to Indiana after the devastation of the war, but also in promoting a better understanding of the history of the Hoosier state to our friends, neighbors, and fellow community members.

Unlike what many would assume, given Indiana's place above the Mason-Dixon line, Indiana had a complex place within politics between 1861 and 1865. Indiana never fit cleanly between the cultures of either the Deep South or the progressive North. For example, while the 1816 Indiana Constitution banned slavery in the state, the 1851 Indiana Constitution banned free Black immigration to Indiana and levied financial penalties on White citizens who did business with Black residents. Hoosiers rejected both slavery and progressive egalitarianism in the belief that the state should be organized along the principles of Thomas Jefferson's dream of a 'Yeoman Republic' and the empowering doctrines brought forth by Jacksonian Democracy. Indiana was intended, by its founders, to be a free, White, and independent state that neither yielded to the planter class nor the bankers and oligarchs of New York, Philadelphia, or Washington.

During the Civil War, Hoosiers were found in every part of the political spectrum. There were die-hard Unionists who believed in preserving the integrity of the United States. Many other Hoosiers believed in the right of secession and the principles of independence that were championed by the Confederacy and therefore either directly joined the Confederate war effort or, in some cases, sought secession for Indiana to join the South. Many other Hoosiers fell into the 'Copperhead' camp, being pro-peace Democrats who were not secessionists but also believed in the Constitutional right of a state to leave the Union if they so desired.

Following the changing of the purpose of the North's war effort from merely preserving the Union to seeking to abolish slavery with Abraham Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation, soldiers from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio deserted Union forces in the tens of thousands, feeling that they had been duped as to the reason why they had been fighting.

"Many of them had been encouraged to desert by family, friends, and neighbors at home – the region had a high population of Southern sympathizers and antiwar Democrats – who, in a concerted letter-writing campaign directed at soldiers, lashed out at President Lincoln's recent Emancipation Proclamation and other administration measures to conquer the rebel states. Writers vowed to protect deserters from arrest, adding that they were organized, armed, and ready to defend them." [2]

Following the creation of the Enrollment Act, a draft law enacting conscription throughout the North, which allowed for those with money, specifically three hundred dollars, to buy themselves out of service, caused tremendous resentment among the people of Indiana. Organized bands of Hoosiers, especially in southern Indiana, went so far as to not only hide deserters, but to use force against Union conscription officers and their property to stop their brothers, fathers, and friends from being kidnapped at gunpoint to be clad in blue and sent into the meatgrinder of the battlefield.

Additionally, White workers increasingly feared for their livelihoods if potentially millions of freed slaves could move outside of the plantations of the Deep South and compete for limited jobs and opportunities. Indiana was intended to be a land of free soil, free labor, and free men, but the threat of emancipation and eventual Black migration into the state was a direct threat to the livelihoods of many Hoosiers. Indiana cities like New Albany erupted in racial conflict only a week after similar riots in Cincinnati, specifically over the conviction that Blacks were being "turned loose amongst us to compete with and cheapen the labor of white men and women." [3]

Throughout the war, Hoosiers were denied a political voice in their own state, in violation of the Constitution of Indiana and of the United States of America. Governor Oliver P. Morton actively ignored and then suppressed the state legislature, because the majority of elected state

officials were supportive of the pro-peace Democrats. Governor Morton used armed troops to break up peaceful political events of those who did not follow his party line, including the deployment of soldiers to the Democratic state convention in Indianapolis. Pro-peace candidate, General George McClellan, won nearly half of Indiana's vote in the election of 1864. One of Indiana's senators, Jesse D. Bright, was expelled from the Senate due to his political views, demonstrating how the federal government was also all too willing to suppress the political voice of Hoosiers during the conflict.

Beyond the link of politics, Indiana imprisoned thousands of Confederate Prisoners of War at Camp Morton throughout the conflict. Held in poor conditions, 1,616 of these prisoners died over the course of the war. Inadequate food, medical care, and cramped conditions caused hundreds of preventable deaths, in violation of the rules of war.

Following the end of the conflict and the political suppression that had been done against much of the population by the Republican Party, Hoosiers demonstrated where Indiana stood politically by becoming the first state after the Civil War to elect a Democratic governor. Over the coming decades, in addition to our native-born Hoosiers, thousands of Southern transplants came to make Indiana home, bringing their values, ideals, and culture to the state.

It is therefore the goal of the Indiana Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans to honorably commemorate the memory of those who fought for freedom and self-determination in the Confederate military. The descendants of Hoosiers who went off to fight, and Southerners who live here now, are called to unite together to protect the legacy of our ancestors. Those who do not have Confederate ancestors but who support our mission are also called to join us to help keep a true history alive.

We in the Indiana Sons of Confederate Veterans also aim to honor the memory of those brave Hoosier men and women who often suffered great personal hardship for their actions in attempting to stop the war against the South. While they are not Confederate veterans, these Hoosiers serve as an enduring symbol of our people being willing to always take a stand for what is right.

Footnotes

1. George Wallace, "Speech at Serb Hall (26 March 1976)," Voices of Democracy: The U.S. Oratory Project, <https://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/george-wallace-speech-at-serb-hall-milwaukee-wisconsin-26-march-1976/>.
2. <https://archive.nytimes.com/opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2013/03/13/the-war-comes-home-to-indiana/>
3. William H. English, "Letter to the Editor," *New Albany Weekly Ledger*, July 2, 1862.