

## The Confederate Flag

The Colorado Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) would like to respond to some of the comments made by Rosemary Harris Lytle of the Colorado Springs Chapter of the NAACP in the May 24th, 2011 Steamboat Today article titled "Veterans to Post Confederate Flag at Steamboat Cemetery" and the May 25th article "Confederate Flag Causing Controversy At Cemetery" in the May 25th Denver Channel 7 News post. She stated that the Confederate Flag is a symbol of the past that stood for racism, segregation and separatism. This is simply not the case. The Confederate Battle Flag was just that, a battle flag used to signal troops in battle, so that commanders could see where their troops and units were located on the battlefield. It was never a national flag nor did it represent racism, segregation or separatism as Ms. Lytle claims. It was simply a battle flag, used in battle, nothing more and nothing less.

Unfortunately, several hate groups have co-opted the Confederate Battle Flag for disgraceful and unseemly purposes. The SCV abhors these actions as well as these organizations. The SCV neither embraces, nor espouses acts or ideologies of racial and religious bigotry, and further, condemns the misuse of its symbols and flags in the conduct of same. It is a strictly patriotic, historical, educational, fraternal, benevolent, non-political, non-racial and non-sectarian organization, as stated in the SCV Constitution.



Certainly Ms. Lytle knows our country's true history and therefore must be aware that the commercial slave trade began in New England and was indeed a national institution and not a regional one. Some of the richest and most prominent northeastern families in America made their fortunes in the slave trade.

It was the United States Flag that flew over a slave nation for over 85 years, not the Confederate Battle Flag. It was the United States Flag that was flown on all northern slave trading ships, not a Confederate Battle Flag. None of the flags of the Confederacy ever flew over a single slave ship. Nor

did the South own or operate any slave ships. The North tolerated slavery and acknowledged it as a Division of Labor. It made countless fortunes on the delivery of slaves as well as the products made from raw materials such as cotton and tobacco in the South.

Ms. Lytle must surely also be aware that although Northerners and Westerners were anti-slavery, they were more significantly, virulently anti-black. All Northern and Western States and Territories passed extremely harsh Black Exclusionary Laws/Black Codes in order to keep free blacks confined to the South during and after the war. As a result, 90% of all blacks lived in the South up until the eve of World War I. Even though the North had tiny black populations accounting for one to two percent of the total, blacks were not allowed to vote and were relegated overwhelmingly to poverty, separate communities, condescension, and overt discrimination. Anti-black sentiment in New York City erupted during the Draft Riots of 1863. Whites rampaged through the streets, lynched blacks and burned the Colored Orphan Asylum on Fifth Avenue. These are the cold hard historical facts.

So the real question for Ms. Lytle is what flag really represented racism, segregation, and separatism during the Civil War era of our nation's history? We will leave that for her to ponder.

*Scott D. Myers*

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*Sons of Confederate Veterans*

*Jefferson Davis Camp 175 Commander*

*CO Division Lt Commander*