



Leave MY Roots Alone!

From the Files of the Musings of a Windmill Joustler

By Dick Culver

Disclaimer and explanation for "Leave MY Roots Alone"

Best you read the following "Musing" and draw the wrong conclusions I would like to make the following statements:

- 1) First and foremost, I am NOT a racist. I feel that all people should be judged on their individual merits, not on the color of their skin, ethnic origin, or personal religious bent. I am also absolutely against Big Brother getting his (their?) hands in the equation. I am against the use of any sort of hiring or educational quotas or any other such BS. Either you have what it takes to succeed or you don't. No person has anything automatically coming to them except equal treatment under the law...
- 2) I do not care for any "power group" demanding exceptional treatment because of their race, gender, or sexual preference. Constitutional Amendments guaranteeing special treatment for any specific group are unneeded and uncalled for. The Constitution does a marvelous job of covering everyone's rights without any additional "tweaking"! If you desire to follow alternate lifestyles, sexual perversion or any such, by all means be my guest... But don't expect me to condone such conduct to my children. I don't want perversion taught in the schools, or being passed off as acceptable behavior. If you are of the same sex (as myself), don't put your hand on my knee figuring that I won't knock you on your "keester"; because you'll be sorely disappointed! If you are a lady and expect me to consider that God may in fact be a woman, I ain't buying that one either. The "politically correct" Bible would be hilarious if there weren't those who take it seriously. One of God's better ideas was to make Men and Women different. Don't take it into your hands to correct this obvious "oversight". Maybe we should undertake to make roses blue or violets pink? Things are what they are...
- 3) The Civil War was NOT primarily about slavery regardless of what the "historical revisionists" would have you believe. The late war was really about States Rights, and that unfortunate war would have eventually been fought even if there had been no slaves. Slavery simply brought the States Rights question into focus earlier than would have been the case without it. The tariff on cotton might well have been enough to have eventually sparked things into action. Certainly anything that encroached on the rights of the individual Southern States and favored the North due to their greater representation in Congress would have been capable of raising the specter of secession. Left to its own

devices, slavery was a doomed institution from the inception of our entry onto the International Scene as a free and independent nation. Without the economic pressure brought on by the North due to the cotton prices, slavery would have eventually gone the way of the Do-Do Bird all by itself. Slavery was a very inefficient institution. Economics would have caused it to ring its own death knell, as it has in virtually every country in the world. In truth, the issue of "freeing the slaves" didn't become a rallying cry in the North until the violent draft riots resulted in essential chaos in New York City. Volunteers for the Northern Army had dwindled to the point that the casualties caused by the many Northern defeats could not be replaced by a simple "flocking to the Colors" by volunteers. Lincoln turned to the draft as a way of filling the ranks, and the proverbial "stuff hit the fan". The Northern citizens had had enough of fighting a war they didn't really understand. They bowed their backs at the thought of being forced to fight a war that had no real (personal) focus and did not involve or inconvenience him as an individual. As a matter of political expediency, the U.S. Government decided that perhaps they could turn things around by making the abolition of slavery a "holy cause" ...and it worked! Prior to this "lack of volunteers," the abolitionist movement had been a relatively small (if somewhat vocal) minority. If you will check your history books carefully, you will find that Lincoln never freed a single slave in the North prior to the cessation of hostilities. His famous Emancipation Proclamation freed only the slaves in the Confederate States of America... Decreeing that all the slaves in the Southern States were now free, would be roughly the equivalent of the United States freeing all the political prisoners in Russia by proclamation. Russia is a sovereign nation (as was/were the Confederate States of America). While we as a country, may desire that Russia free all of their political prisoners, taking it on ourselves to free them by decree is laughable, much as it was in the late War. The much vaunted Emancipation Proclamation was strictly a piece of political propaganda... but it was undeniably a brilliant piece of propaganda! While there were other considerations muddying the waters, "The War of Northern Aggression" was essentially a war to determine the sovereign status and prerogatives of each individual state and its citizens.

- 4) All that having been said, you will find out if you read carefully, that I am glad that things eventually turned out as they did. I do not however, intend to allow the "historical revisionists" rob me of my history. Political correctness has gone too far! You cannot make things so by saying that they were. Facts are facts. If we're gonna' teach history, let's teach it as it happened, not how we would have liked for it to have happened. Taken back to those far off days, I would have to have cast my lot with the Army of Northern Virginia, even knowing the eventual outcome... It would simply have been a matter of honor. I still get something sticking in my craw when the Federal Government starts pushing its weight around. As I have always understood it, the United States of America is my country, its Government is my Government, and the elected and appointed officials work for me... not the other way around! I am a citizen, not a subject, and I will not be treated as one! If forced to fight for the side of my choice in 1861, I would have fought for the right of each citizen to determine his own destiny. The question of slavery would have complicated things for me a bit of course, for I do not believe in slavery. Unfortunately, war and politics sometimes make strange bedfellows. For instance, while I think that on the whole, the ACLU is composed of a bunch of roaring socialist idiots, I occasionally welcome their presence on my side in a fight. I will sort our respective politics out later! Never forget, when you're up to your posterior in alligators, that the original task was to drain the swamp. Take care of the task at hand and sort out the "nickel-dime" details

later... I would not have fought to maintain slavery of course, any more than my ancestors did. All of the Culvers were anti-slavery even prior to the Civil War. They fought the war to defend their homeland from those they perceived to be invaders of their sovereign soil. That's what the war meant to them!... Study history for what it was, learn from the mistakes and resolve not to repeat them. ...But don't assume that those who fought did not do so with honor...

And now, on to the "Musing"...

I have just about had it! I think what finally broke the string was the announcement on TV a couple of weeks ago proclaiming that the State of Virginia was going to retire *"Carry Me Back to Old Virginia"* as the State Song! It seems that there is some mention of "darkies" in the lyrics that offend the black members of the community! Well, "intercourse me to tears"! So what? There are a lot of things in this life that offend me, but I learn to live with them. Here these clowns are ripping down historical traditions to no good purpose. After this they can go home, pat themselves on the back and tell themselves how much they have just done for "their" people. **"Their people?"** I thought this was one nation, and we were all one people! Isn't that what it's supposed to be? Well if you want a "people divided", so be it. Go back to your roots if you must, but leave MY roots alone! This is just the final straw in a long string of outrages that have left me feeling that I have become something of a second class citizen! Why do I have a problem with something so seemingly harmless as changing the State Song of Virginia? Well, let me give you a little background on myself and why I have about come to the end of my patience...

First of all, my Daddy was born and raised in the Sovereign State of Alabama. My mother was born in upper New York State but when she was six she moved with my Grandparents to the State of Virginia. She was raised in the gentle environs of "ol' Virginnie" and became more of a Southerner than my Dad. On my Daddy's side, both of my Great Granddaddies fought for the South in the 59th Alabama Infantry during the "Late War of Northern Aggression". While I moved around considerably while growing up (my Dad was either a Marine or worked for the Federal Bureau of Prisons), I wound up going to high school and college in Virginia. I spent four years attending the Virginia Military Institute and was steeped in the legends of Stonewall Jackson and his "foot cavalry" during the Valley Campaigns. That fine old gentleman "Marse Robert" was one of my boyhood heroes. If I had to claim any state as a native state, I suppose it'd have to be Virginia. Quite frankly, I'm proud of my Southern Heritage!

Before any of you jump up and say "Ah ha! You racist bastard, no wonder you are upset by the trends of Modern Society! Well, it ain't quite like that guys and gals. Even during the years preceding the late "War of Northern Aggression", the Culvers (Alabamians all) were outspoken opponents of the institution of slavery. No, my personal ancestors were not individuals fighting to perpetuate that reprehensible institution, but fought quite willingly for the right to be the shepherds of their own destiny. "States Rights" were big in that era and the average individual was much more closely associated with the destiny of his or her native state than they were in the preservation of the Union. Quaint? Probably... Different than our modern society? Definitely... Wrong? I'm not so sure... Illegal to secede from the Union? In the day and time we are speaking of, definitely not... No, in the years leading up to the Civil War, the Southern States had the law on their side! Wrong for the future of our country? Well

let's just say I'm glad that ultimately the Union was preserved. However... that doesn't mean that I think that the people of the South were on shaky legal ground.

No, boys and girls, our Constitution was originally set up in such a way that the United States was really more of a confederacy than a truly cohesive union of states... It took a number of years for all the former Colonies/States to ratify our Constitution after the cessation of hostilities following the War of Independence. Each State was extremely jealous of their individual prerogatives and did not relish having their rights "put upon" by any of the other States... sound strange? Indeed it does to a modern citizen of these United States, but 'twas not always true! The early citizen of the United States was a rugged individualist if nothing else. Their personal loyalty, closely following the loyalty to their own family, was to their native state... and it was not to be taken lightly! If you will study the drafting of our Great Constitution you will find many concessions made to each State by the group as a whole. Compromises were made to ensure that a strong central government could never work its will on an unwilling citizenry. Our citizens today could take a few lessons from our ancestors... these checks and balances made to ensure the sovereignty of each state and the freedom of its citizens resulted in the finest governmental document ever drafted and ensured equal and equitable representation to each State and its citizens!

One of the things that worried our early drafters of the Constitution was that if things didn't work out the way that everyone desired, they (the States) wanted an "escape clause"... in other words, a way to make a break from the whole. All of the 13 original States had the same early deep seated fear of falling back under a repressive form of Government... a government that was little more than an extension of the English Monarchy. They were not willing to become a part of a country that could possibly become abusive in the manner of "Mother England". In short, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention wanted assurances that the individual State(s) could "ride off into the sunset" if things turned to "doo-doo". In retrospect, our great governmental experiment went well of course, give and take a few squabbles here and there, and the question of secession lay essentially dormant until the late 1850s.

Unfortunately we inherited, with our Independence, a cancer that dug deeply into the concept of individual freedom that we had fought so hard and ardently to achieve in our War with King George. That cancer of course was slavery. Please understand that no man who loves freedom can convincingly espouse support for an institution that would deprive any man of his freedom. How and why did slavery get its hooks into our country? The question really goes somewhat beyond the scope of this "Musing", but essentially it was one of economics. The citizenry of the country that was to become "The Model for the World in Human Rights," really had its origins in the citizens of England fleeing (or being "transported") to the Colonies in the "New World". Many came simply to escape persecution (and/or prosecution) for their beliefs and/or supposed misdeeds in Mother England.

The Pilgrims of course, were seeking religious freedom. Many in Georgia were sent to the New World as inmates in a penal colony. The Quakers who settled Pennsylvania were also seeking a place to practice their religion without persecution. Many of the Southern States were populated by more affluent individuals working at the behest of organizations in England wishing to make an economic killing in the New World. Because of the moderate climate, the Southern States lent themselves more readily to the raising of the cash crops of cotton and tobacco. Large cotton plantations were located in the Carolinas and Georgia, with a

scattering of agricultural plantations located in Virginia and Maryland, including George Washington's personal plantation, the famous Mount Vernon.

One of the things that was lacking in those early days was a ready supply of manpower to work some of the larger southern land holdings (many of which had absentee landlords in England). Such a manpower gap is a bit difficult to imagine in this day and time of unemployment and welfare, but that wasn't the case in our early history. We were a sparsely populated country (or collection of colonies) before the turn of the 19th Century. Most individuals had their own (relatively small) piece of land and were not interested in working for anyone else. You have to remember that most of the colonists had been in virtual "serfdom" in England and had no interest in renewing such a relationship in the so-called "New World". Many of the English businessmen, however, had large land holdings in the Southern Colonies, and chose to fill this "labor gap" with slaves.

The trade in slaves was a real moneymaker on both sides of the Atlantic in those long ago days. Constant tribal warfare in Africa provided a ready supply of slave labor. It worked like this. In the wake of a successful battle or raid between warring African tribes, POWs¹ made up a large portion of the "spoils of war". These POWs were highly saleable merchandise to a class of European Mariners who dealt in human misery and often put in to the African Coast for "merchandise". The tribal chiefs were overjoyed that they could sell off these "spoils of war", and the early plantation owners had solved their manpower gap... and all was well, but the seeds of a great disaster were being sown.

Most of our early citizens were not comfortable with slavery from the first. There were many who argued against slavery, and virtually no man argued for it as an institution, but... the problem was that the economy of the largely agricultural South was based on cotton (and to some extent tobacco) and manpower was hard to come by. Money was also in short supply, and the fledgling country was trying to recover financially from a fiscally devastating war. The paper money authorized by the Continental Congress had become almost worthless and the only thing the South had to rebuild their economy was cotton... and cotton was a labor-intensive crop. As we have seen above, while almost everyone wanted to found a new nation, they also wanted essential autonomy to run their own local affairs. In order to bring the colonies together under one flag, compromises were necessary... and slavery became a fact of life on the larger plantations of the South. In retrospect, better we should have taken a sharp stick in the eye.

I would like to make something very plain at this point. The average Southern citizen was not a slaveholder, nor would he have given much of a "fig" if the institution of slavery had vanished from the face of the earth. The elimination of slavery would have been a financial disaster to some of the larger plantations, but these plantations were the exception, not the rule. The problem between the North and the South was not primarily slavery (although that did figure somewhat into the equation); it was actually a question of economics. Allow me to give the "quick and dirty" explanation.

While there were farms and a certain amount of agriculture in the North, the real economy in the New England States was based on an outgrowth of the so-called Industrial Revolution. Our major port for European immigration was New York City (and would remain so for well over a century). Most of the individuals immigrating into our fledgling country during the early 1800s were also products of this same Industrial Revolution in Europe... these immigrants were not primarily people of the soil. The Northern States soon became well ensconced in the manufacturing mode, with a healthy portion of this industry being the manufacture of

textiles. The staple fabric was of course, cotton. England too, was well into the industrial revolution and needed cotton for the manufacture of fabric. The English were willing to pay more for the cotton than the traditionally frugal New Englanders, and therein lay the rub! The Southern cotton growers were (as any good businessmen would have been) interested in making a maximum amount of money for their efforts. The English paid more money; hence the Southerners sold their cotton to England... at a higher price than their Yankee Cousins were willing to pay. The Yankee "fabric barons" were incensed that their Southern Cousins would sell their cotton to the highest bidder! Hummm...

There were several attempts to pass punitive tariffs on Southern Cotton. The idea was to force the Southern Cotton Farmers to sell cotton to the New England manufacturers at a reduced price. The fact that this would cut into the Southern Cotton Farmer's profits seemed immaterial to the Northern Industrialists. While this was understandable, it was not to endear the Northern Industrialist to the South. Increasing Northern Profits at the expense of the Southern Cotton Farmer was viewed as downright unfriendly by the Southern Growers. The clouds of war began to gather slowly but surely on the horizon. The constant fiduciary squabbling began to take on many different guises. The abolition of slavery became the rallying cry to Northern Interests, not because of slavery itself, but because slavery had become intertwined with the Southern Cotton economy. The North wanted no more so-called "slave states" admitted to the Union to vote in a "power bloc" with the South.

The Southerners of course, demanded that the institution of slavery be allowed in future states admitted into the Union. A South that was much more sparsely populated wanted the additional support in the Congress. The Southerners were not crazy about a country that seemed to favor the more densely populated North and by default seemed to be bent on depriving them of what they considered to be their fair profit margin from "King Cotton". A modern day comparison might well be the Japanese Auto Industry being perceived as undermining the traditional Detroit monopoly... and our auto manufacturers screaming for higher import tariffs. The Southern Planters figured they were fighting for their economic life... and they were!

Slavery itself was not the real question, Southern economic survival was... and "States Rights" became the rallying cry. Don't forget, in the 1850s it had been less than 100 years since the United States had been formed and there were still many who had an innate fear of a strong central Government. Men who had absolutely no love of slavery as an institution, flocked to the aid of their native Southern states. In their personal opinion, the Federal Government was out of control! The ever increasing political power of the North sent chills up the spines of the Southerners... As things progressed, the break became almost inevitable. The string broke with the election of Abraham Lincoln to the office of President of the United States.

One of the most interesting things coming out of the election was that Lincoln by today's standards was a hard-core racist. While he was not an advocate of slavery per se, he made several statements that indicated that his "Holy Grail" was the preservation of the Union, not the dissolution of slavery. Paraphrased, he made a statement that if he could preserve the Union by dissolving slavery, he would do so. If he could preserve the Union by maintaining slavery, he would do so. But he made it adequately clear to all that the purpose of his presidency was the preservation of the Union at all costs! He even suggested sending of the slaves back to Africa at one point. As I said, my point *is* that slavery was not the real issue; States Rights and the preservation of the Union were. The current batch of "politically correct"

educators seem intent on rewriting history (seemingly to give a measure of pride to the black community) to indicate the South was an inherently evil place, decadent to the core, with the citizens maintaining their life style on the back of black slaves! Their rhetoric is that slavery was morally evil and the Southerners deserved to grovel at the feet of the "morally superior North". This is, of course, something of a bone of contention even today, and those who would divide us as a Nation play it for everything it's worth. For the most part, it is nothing less than a crock of unprocessed prunes. While the cause of the Civil War was not slavery, the question as to whether a State came into the Union as Slave or Free did serve as the spark plug to set an extremely unfortunate set of circumstances in motion.

It has been said many times that old men start wars and the young must fight them, and so it was with the Civil War... at least at first. As the war progressed, men of all ages on both sides served as best they could. It was not uncommon to have drummer boys as young as 13, while others served well into their 70s. At the start, the war seemed almost a "lark". Patriots on both sides flocked to the colors. Among the most capable soldiers in the U.S. Army in 1861 was a gentleman by the name of Robert Edward Lee. He was the son a Revolutionary War hero (Light Horse Harry Lee) and was himself a hero of the Mexican War and former Superintendent of West Point. Lee was offered the command of all the Union Armies by President Lincoln. After a period of soul searching and agonizing, he was forced by his personal code of honor to turn the offer down and repair to his native State of Virginia. He then offered his services to President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy (an old comrade in arms and fellow West Point graduate)... the rest is history (unless the current politically correct revisionists get their way).

The Southern lads flocked to the colors in great numbers and went out to repel the anticipated invasion by those who would come to be called the "Damn Yankees" (still thought to be one word by my 96-year old aunt). The average Southerner did not own slaves and for the most part would never have fought to keep them in bondage...They were fighting, quite simply, to keep anyone (or any government) from imposing their will on their home state. They thought of themselves as patriots, not as defenders of slavery. Quite frankly, virtually none of them would have raised a hand or certainly not volunteered to lay their life on the line for a bunch of "nigras", as they were called (in both the North and the South) in those far off days... These men were simply defenders of their homeland and families. If you know the whole story, there is simply no other explanation. The story of the War itself is too well known and recorded to retell in its entirety. The gallantry on both sides is legend and the conflict often pitting of brother against brother makes the story one of the saddest in our history. The bloodletting was horrific on both sides, and while the South started with better trained and motivated officers and men, the weight of numbers and the superior manufacturing capacity of the North made the eventual outcome inevitable.

As I said before, I'm glad that things turned out the way that they did. We became a stronger Nation as a result of that conflict, and the Union was preserved. Slavery was abolished as it should have been. It was and is a reprehensible institution, but slavery was not the focus of the War as far as the Southern fighting man was concerned. The South was in a solid legal position in their secession from the Union. They fought valiantly and well and they deserve an honored place in our Nation's history for their bravery and self sacrifice. I am reminded of the words of an old Southern song (to my recollection it was sung to the tune of the "Ramblin' Wreck from Georgia Tech," however there are other tunes occasionally used):

*"I fought with ol' Marse Robert for four years near about,
Got wounded in three places and starved at pint lookout...
I ketched the rumatiz from a sleepin' in the snow,
But I killed a mess of Yankees and I'd like to kill some mo..."*

The above words give a fair glimpse into the mindset of the average Southerner in the years following the Civil War. The moneyed interests and those bent on inflicting revenge on the Southern States took advantage of the assassination of Lincoln² to make the years following the cessation of hostilities a nightmare. Several generations of Southerners, who simply fought to keep their country free from those they considered to be invaders, were punished for their patriotism and devotion to their native soil. Don't forget, that was a different day and time, values were different, and honor was not taken lightly. ...Alas, that it should be so today!

Following Lincoln's assassination, the carpetbaggers came South to take advantage of the hard line politics being played by the Northern money interests. Many Southerners lost their land and possessions to unreasonable taxes that were implemented simply to strip the South of any hope of a reasonable economic recovery. Blacks, who were almost entirely unprepared for, or incapable of discharging such duties, were placed in the State Legislatures to respond to the will of the carpetbaggers and as puppets of the Northern banking interests. The South was systematically raped, looted, and brutalized to satisfy the financial will of these banking interests and as a "sop" to the abolitionist fanatics. The rest of the Country did little to protest, as they enjoyed seeing "Johnny Reb" having his nose rubbed in the "figurative doo-doo" just to make a point to the "sesesh" bastards! They made a point alright; those actions probably set back the advancement of the colored race by over a hundred years and gained the enmity of many generations of Southerners. There are some in the South, remnants of past generations, who are still hostile to the "Damn Yankees"... Just ask my (96-year old) Aunt who grew up in the shadow of Reconstruction!

In retrospect, the concept of "hard reconstruction" was a bad decision for all involved. The War Department was assigned to administer the Reconstruction Policies in most instances. In the West, these same folks were seeing to the decimation of the Buffalo Herds to starve the Plains Indians into submission. A few years earlier, the individuals administering the programs of Reconstruction and pacification of the Plains Indians, were also the same nice folks that conducted Sherman's march to the sea. A bit further North, the Union Army conducted what can only be described as a scorched earth policy in the Shenandoah Valley, burning all of the crops until (in the words of General Sherman) "even a crow had to pack a lunch to cross the place". This policy, plain and simple, was war against civilians, something we (as a country) have claimed to eschew since our founding... No, the South was treated differently than a normal enemy, and the citizens living in the wrong place simply had to bear the brunt of a vengeful North. Nice? Certainly not. Humane? Hardly. If the South had adopted policies like this, they would have been accused of war crimes... No, ladies and gentlemen, I submit that the South has gotten a bad rap in modern times. If nothing else, you could never accuse the Southerners of being anything but chivalrous in their warlike activities. Even the prisoners in Andersonville, while found in a starving condition, were fed little worse than their Confederate captors. Northern prisons were little better, and the prison guards (very seldom the cream of either side) were not noted (in either instance) for their milk of human kindness. The actual conduct of the fighting was often quite chivalrous on both sides. It has been said with some accuracy, that the very first individuals to volunteer for any war following what has come to be called "The Late War of Northern Aggression" were principally the Southerners.

They had seen what could happen to a defeated people first hand, and they were determined not to let it happen again. Personal experience with such adversity is the most eloquent teacher of all. No, I'm not ashamed of my Southern Roots. The Southern Soldier was simply defending his home and his way of life. For the most part he did this with as much dignity as the situation would allow. He was certainly not in it to make the World "safe for slavery"... In fact slavery was probably the furthest thing from his conscious mind; he was simply a soldier doing his job as he saw it, usually with honor and at great sacrifice to himself. Many a Southern Soldier finished out the war barefooted and wearing rags, one of my Great Grandfathers was among them... These are not the sort of people who would fight to keep others in the bonds of slavery.

When black Cadets were first admitted to the Virginia Military Institute some years back, the newly admitted Cadets attempted to corrupt the history of that hallowed institution. Every year on the 15th of May, VMI holds a ceremony to honor the fallen Cadets who died in the Battle of New Market (Virginia). Here, for the only time during the War, the entire Corps of Cadets, under their own Cadet NCOs and Officers, marched off as a Corps to help General Breckenridge³ stop the Yankee advance into the Shenandoah Valley. As a man (or in this case I suppose, as a boy), they charged into the mouths of the Union Guns and took the Northern artillery battery. Here was an example of pure heroism by a bunch of kids barely out of high school valiantly defending their native State. Despite this being their first taste of combat, and belying their tender age, they gained the respect of both Confederate and Union troops in the battle. Even the Yankee troops spoke highly of their courage in the aftermath of the battle. The newly admitted black Cadets protested loudly that this yearly ceremony was a smear on the entire black community and demanded that the ceremony be eliminated to salve the injured feelings of a racial minority! I submit that these gentlemen had missed the entire point. This ceremony was (and is) to honor the fallen dead and the great gallantry they displayed on that hill so many years ago... It certainly had nothing to do with slavery! It is the little racial temper tantrums like this (much like the proverbial three foot high flame) that burns my posterior! If you (as a newcomer) want to avail yourself of our educational institution, fine. If you want to become mighty warriors in the mold of George Patton, Chesty Puller or George Marshall (all VMI alumni), fine! ...But be a part of it, attempt to fit in with its traditions (if you're good enough), learn from it, don't try to change the institution or its history. And above all don't attempt to dishonor the acts of the brave men and boys who have gone before. If this is not acceptable to you, go somewhere else where the traditions are more to your liking!

The modern "revisionist history types" are constantly trying to rewrite history... and they are trying to take MY roots from me in the process! If you check the latest historical "politically correct" tomes of the late War, you will now find that Harriet Tubman⁴ is touted as being infinitely more important than Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and J.E.B. Stuart. The soldiers of the South are more often than not, vilified in these texts (if mentioned at all) and the entire War on the part of the North was to free an oppressed people... Anyone who believes that Harriet Tubman (brave woman though she no doubt was) is more pertinent to the history of our country than Marse Robert or Stonewall Jackson, is full of Male Bovine Fecal Matter.

The efforts of the historical apologists for the black race, attempting to make sure that black contributions to the settlement of our disagreements over 130 years ago are aggrandized, should make sure they teach ALL of the black history. How about the rampant cannibalism prevalent in Africa a century or two ago (and still practiced to some extent on the West Coast of Africa)? Or the homosexual rites of passage still practiced even today among

some of the tribes? How about those stalwart tribal chiefs responsible for selling their own race into slavery? Roots? They are certainly welcome to theirs; personally I'll take mine... even if my ancestors did fight for the "Lost Cause"...

I agree that we should teach the historical significance of people like John Brown, Henry Ward Beecher, and Harriet Beecher Stowe. However let's not forget to teach that John Brown was nothing short of a full-blown terrorist in our modern parlance, and history records that he massacred a number of individuals at Pottawatomie for no greater crime than having pro-slavery sentiments prior to any official hostilities breaking out. Modern historical revisionists often forget to mention that the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher not only preached fiery abolitionist speeches, but also smuggled Sharps Carbines in cases marked "Bibles"⁵ to John Brown in Kansas to perpetrate such crimes. In modern times, when we catch a nation condoning terrorism and actively supporting terrorists with weapons, we launch air strikes against their country(s)⁶. And then there was that fine lady, Harriet Beecher Stowe, who wrote a novel that helped to kick off a conflagration causing the deaths of more people than all of our wars put together prior to Vietnam. ...And she did this by writing the novel "Uncle Tom's Cabin" without ever having viewed the institution of slavery first hand. I consider this a notable contribution to mankind! Slavery was evil and should have been abolished (and it was), but that hardly qualifies this "rabble rouser" for sainthood!

When I hear that a statue of Arthur Ashe has been placed on the row with the Confederate Generals in Richmond I am a bit put out. It's not that Arthur wasn't a fine gentleman however, but being a "tennis great" hardly qualifies you (or him) to have a statue standing along side the statues of great Confederate Generals including such notables as Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson or J.E.B. Stuart! I would be just as upset if they erected a statue to Billie Jean King or John McEnroe. Who cares if they were great tennis players? While I am greatly impressed with the accomplishments of Tiger Woods in the world of golf, I would not place a statue of him next to George Patton! What malarkey! If they want to place statues of athletic greats in the various athletic halls of fame, fine! While their abilities are notable, their actions will go the way of the "passenger pigeon" much as the names of the gladiators in ancient Rome did not survive the Roman Empire... Arthur Ashe's statue? Come on guys, you've gotta' be kidding?

No, the Southern Soldier did his job honorably and well, and I will still throw him a snappy salute. He shed his blood and fought bravely for his home and family... and he did so with honor. When I see a bunch of racially bigoted idiots (and yes, there are black bigots, just like there are white bigots!) trying to remove any vestiges of the Confederacy from the Southern State Flags, I get upset! When I see the old songs of the South being suppressed because they have some reference to slavery, I get upset. When I hear of "Huckleberry Finn" being banned in our schools, I get upset. These acts are supposed to remove any lingering reminders that these folks find racially offensive. Unfortunately, these brilliant thinkers have again missed the point. History should be taught as it happened, not as they would have *liked* for it to have happened. If you want great traditions for "your people", go out create some that you can be proud of. No man is ever made greater by attempting to lessen the accomplishments and traditions of others. The War of Northern Aggression was fought as an honorable undertaking, by honorable soldiers, and I take my hat off to them. The tombstones of the Confederate Soldiers were supposed to have been fashioned in a point to prevent any "Damnyankee" from sitting on them... I understand perfectly!

All I ask gentlemen (and ladies), is for you to leave MY roots alone!

ROC

Endnotes for (Leave My Roots Alone)

¹ POWs is the abbreviation for Prisoners of War.

² There are some that maintain that Lincoln's stance on a "soft reconstruction" and his staunch resistance to the establishment of a Central Bank were his undoing! Both of these policies threatened to take money out of the pockets of a select group who hoped to financially "rape" the defeated South... and ultimately led to his assassination. It may have been the work of a lone "deranged" gunman, but then again maybe John Wilkes Booth was simply set up to do the job for someone else?

³ General Breckenridge was the former Vice President of The United States, who later became a Confederate General.

⁴ Harriet Tubman was a black lady who was active in the so-called Underground Railroad engaged in smuggling fugitive slaves out of the South.

⁵ As a result, Sharp's Carbines have since been called "Beecher's Bibles" in the gun collecting community.

⁶ An examples are our raid against Libya by Navy and Air Force Aircraft in the 1980s, the Desert Storm campaign in 1991 and our current incursion against the Iraqi Regime in 2003.