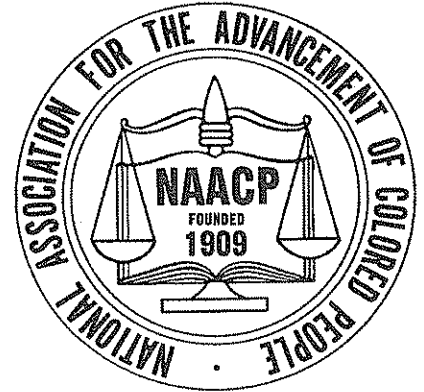


Come to Charleston for

**A PUBLIC PROTEST OF THE
SOUTH CAROLINA SECESSION GALA**

A Call for Unity: Don't Celebrate Slavery and Terrorism

**March and Mass Meeting
Monday, December 20, 2010**



4:30 PM March & Vigil Assembly Site:
Gaillard Municipal Auditorium
77 Calhoun Street
Charleston, SC

6:00 PM Mass Meeting to follow at Morris Brown AME Church
13 Morris Street, Charleston

Informational Picketing is planned at select downtown hotels from 2:30 PM until 4:30 PM. The main protest will begin with a Candlelight Vigil followed by lineup for the march to the site of the Mass Meeting. The Mass Meeting begins at 6:00 PM. Excerpts from D.W. Griffith's film The Birth of A Nation will be presented during discussion.

Churches, Community Organizations and conscientious citizens are invited to participate. We will also need volunteers to staff pickets on Monday afternoon and assist with registration. Participants are asked to arrive by 4:15 PM. Parking is available at Emanuel AME Church at 110 Calhoun Street.

These events are being coordinated by the NAACP and other progressive organizations in South Carolina. Contact the State NAACP Office at 803-754-4584 for additional information or email us at info@scaaacp.org to receive a detailed agenda.

The Flag Controversy and the Causes of the Civil War

A statement by historians

One of the most visible, and most controversial, symbolic icons of our history in South Carolina is the so-called "Confederate battle flag." It flies over the State House in Columbia, as it has done since 1962, when it went up as part of the observance for the Civil War Centennial. To some South Carolinians it is a symbol of their heritage. To other South Carolinians it is a symbol of slavery and racism. What any object "symbolizes" can be slippery. It is especially so in this case because the rectangular banner atop the State House is neither the flag commissioned by the Confederate government to serve as its official symbol nor the flag under which Confederate troops made war against the United States. It neither adorned the Confederate capitols in Montgomery or Richmond nor fluttered atop any state capitol within the Confederacy. The rectangular battle flag that flies over the State House in Columbia was never the official flag of either of the two great military arms of the Confederacy, the Army of Tennessee and the Army of Northern Virginia, under which virtually all South Carolina Confederate soldiers served.

The crux of the present controversy is not in the flag itself but in conflicting interpretations of the meaning of the Civil War. Some South Carolinians deny that the Civil War was fought over slavery, maintaining that it was fought over the rights of the states to control their own destinies. Slavery, they believe, was incidental.

But when South Carolina delegates walked out of the 1860 Democratic National Convention in Charleston as a prelude to secession, their spokesman William Preston minced no words in declaring that "Slavery is our King; slavery is our Truth; slavery is our Divine Right." And a few months later when the signers of the South Carolina Ordinance of Secession issued their Declaration of the Causes of Secession, they specifically referred to the "domestic institution" of slavery. They objected that the free states have "denounced as sinful the institution of Slavery." They charged that the free states had "encouraged and assisted thousands of our slaves to leave their homes; and those who remain have been incited by emissaries, books, and pictures, to hostile insurrection."

Moreover, in 1861, as President and Vice President of the Confederate States of America, Jefferson Davis and Alexander H. Stephens each candidly acknowledged that their new nation was created for the specific purpose of perpetuating slavery. In an address to the Confederate Congress in April of 1861, Davis declared that "a persistent and organized system of hostile measures against

the rights of the owners of slaves in the Southern States" had culminated in a political party dedicated to "annihilating in effect property worth thousands of millions of dollars." Since "the labor of African slaves was and is indispensable" to the South's production of cotton, rice, sugar, and tobacco, Davis said, "the people of the Southern States were driven by the conduct of the North to the adoption of some course of action to avert the danger with which they were openly menaced."

In a speech in Savannah, Stephens made it even clearer that the establishment of the Confederacy had "put to rest forever all the agitating questions relating to our peculiar institutions--African slavery as it exists among us--the proper status of the negro in our form of civilization. This was the immediate cause of the late rupture and present revolution." He added, that the Confederacy was "founded upon" what he called "the great truth that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition."

Running successfully for governor of South Carolina in the critical election of 1860, Francis W. Pickens left little doubt of his support for disunion and even war to perpetuate slavery. His sentiments were echoed by his old friend Edward Bryan, who declared in the campaign, "Give us slavery or give us death!" Pickens committed his state--and ours--to a ruinous course. "I would be willing to appeal to the god of battles," he defiantly declared, "if need be, cover the state with ruin, conflagration and blood rather than submit." These are not interpretations by historians; they are statements made *at the time* by Confederate leaders explaining what they were doing and why.

After the war had been lost, and the Lost Cause was in need of justification, Davis and Stephens backed away from their original statements, casting the cause of the war in the context of "states rights." Their revisionist interpretation, in which slavery became not the cause but merely the "question" resolved on the field of battle, still misleads many South Carolinians. The historical record, however, clearly shows that the cause for which the South seceded and fought a devastating war was slavery.

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