

John Rogers The Confederate flag is not a symbol of slavery.

I am writing in response to Ike Bailey's recent editorial, "How important is the Confederate flag?" In that editorial, Mr. Bailey writes that the Confederate flag "reminds an entire race of people of ... the worst stage in their history ..." and that the flying of the Confederate flag over South Carolina "shows an utter lack of respect for an entire community [i.e. the black community]." Mr. Bailey's feelings are understandable in light of the mythical history that he—and most Americans—have about the War Between the States. That mythical history posits that the War occurred when eleven Southern states seceded from the Union in a base attempt to preserve slavery and that the loyal North fought the South to free the slaves and restore the Union. Given this understanding of history, it is no wonder that Mr. Bailey and so many other Americans, black and white, loathe the Confederate flag. But this "history" is simply false.

In his editorial, Mr. Bailey noted that those who support the Confederate flag base their support on the argument that the Civil War occurred over economic or

various other issues. However, Mr. Bailey states that he, "and the majority of the African-American race, have yet to be convinced that slavery was not the central issue [of the War]." In this limited space I cannot dispute the many ahistorical assumptions underlying Mr. Bailey's editorial. Instead,

slaves, there were sectional animosities. As Commander of the Continental Army, George Washington found it necessary to issue an order promising punishment to any man who incited "the existing sectional feeling" (McGuire, *Confederate Cause and Conduct*). Later, when the states were con-

tention, this fear soon proved well-founded, as Virginia, the two Carolinas, and Georgia came to pay 75% of the cost of supporting the federal government (Bledsoe, *Is Davis a Traitor?*).

The manufacturing and industrial Northern economy was founded on the profits of Northern

trade were invested in industry. North demanded a high protective tariff to protect those industries. The federal government used federally-funded internal improvements to facilitate its industrial trade, and a national bank to facilitate monetary exchange. The South opposed the North in all of the issues, deeming a high protective tariff baneful to its economy, and federally-funded internal improvements and a national bank unconstitutional usurpations of power never granted to the federal government. The North was industrious, and sought a means to achieve its will against Southern opposition. They found that means was slavery.

Around 1844, an intimate friend of a Northern congressman asked the congressman why he and other Northerners were agitating for abolition. The Northern Congressman replied, "The real reason is that the South will not let us have a tariff, and we touch them where they will feel it [i.e. slavery]" (Kennedy).

While the North, outnumbering the South in the House

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To decry the Confederate flag as racist because the dregs of society have associated it with their hateful cause is to display an appalling disregard for history.

I would like to focus on the central fallacy of his article, namely, that slavery was the central issue of the Civil War.

The conflict between North and South existed long before the Civil War. Indeed, the Civil War was but the culmination of the struggle between the two regions. During the American Revolution, when both North and South held

considering adoption of the Constitution, one of the chief Southern complaints against it was that it would allow the North, which would be numerically superior in Congress, to regulate trade. The Southern states knew this was dangerous, as the Northern and Southern economies were considerably different and often had opposing interests. With the ratification of the Consti-

slave trade. Northern ports brought in tremendous income from trading slaves to South American countries (Kennedy, *The South Was Right!*). At the Constitutional Convention, Massachusetts and New Hampshire voted against immediately ending the slave trade because of the windfall profits they enjoyed from that trade (Bledsoe). When the profits from the slave

A Different Perspective: Ike Bailey

African-Americans are inherently successful.

Have you ever wondered why African-Americans seem so set on talking about racial issues? Why they seem to be so uncomfortable in a society which is built on the theory that all men are created equal? Why they seem to harp on every little thing? Why can't they just grow up and work as hard as white folks?

It's probably because there just seem to be too many coincidences that say something is wrong. Common sense would tell you who would benefit the most if racial issues and racial problems would happen to disappear: African-Americans. So, it must also be logical to say that there has to be some validity behind their complaints.

We are constantly questioning if we truly belong here. Do we belong in a country which fights for its own freedom and simultaneously takes away ours? Should

we love a country which says all men are created equal, then treats us like animals? Should we respect a country which teaches us self-hate and hate us for not loving it?

We are called a "violent" people, even though it is obvious that nothing can get more violent than slavery. But doesn't the fact that African-Americans make up about half of the prison population prove just how violent they are? How logical is it to assume that a group that makes up only 17% of the population can be responsible for half of the crimes? Is it their violent nature, or an extremely biased justice system?

We are often thought of as being lazy and unambitious. The African-American unemployment rate constantly hovers in double figures, and as far as percentages go, we are more likely than anyone else to live in poverty. Can an

entire group of people really be that lazy, or is there some other force not being recognized?

Of course, we all know how unintelligent African-Americans are. But by whose definition? We can look across the board and see how white students score higher on "intelligence" tests than do African-Americans. What we neglect to see is the fact that when culturally biased questions are removed, that the scores are much more similar. So, what does that say about our definition of intelligence—are we only intelligent if we think and act as white Americans?

Haven't you ever wondered why the only real things we learn in school about African-Americans all seem to be centered around slavery and civil rights? Why weren't we taught that Africans

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Walt Barron

Pro sports are as important as the weather.

the news so that those not athletically inclined don't have to watch. Also, I don't think that five minutes of the audience's time constitutes a "good chunk of the news." There is a lot about the news that I don't like either, but it is not the sports coverage. Sports fans want to see highlights, scores, and upcoming games. That is all; no nonsense. Just five minutes of catching us up on all of the info we sports fans missed.

What I really do not want to see on the news is how to make a Western omelette or how to turn a newspaper into a neat little angel for a Christmas decoration. And as for your weather report, why do I have to sit through five minutes of worthless radar screens, record highs and lows, barometric pres-

sure, and a report from a guy named Bob up in Yahoo county who says he recorded .56 inches instead of .58 that the station recorded just to find out that it will be cold and rainy tomorrow?

I don't know if you were playing little league baseball or city league soccer when you were growing up or not, Chad, but obviously you never had a pro sports idol. Maybe you were playing *Dungeons and Dragons* or *Zelda* with your friends, so maybe your hero is Bill Gates or Conan the Barbarian, or maybe it is Willard Scott, which is OK. I don't care who your idol is or what you want to watch, but please don't criticize others for what they want to watch.

When I was growing up, my heroes were people like Dale

Murphy and Mike Schmidt (who are former major league baseball players), and I have continued to idolize these types of athletes because I respected their ability to do something I love to do: play baseball. Professional athletes are the best at what they do, just like professional musicians and artists are the best at what they do. For you to criticize the popularity of my idols is the same as criticizing someone for idolizing Jimi Hendrix, Jerry Garcia, or Pablo Picasso. They make, or made, much more than professional athletes, so you should criticize the nation for feeding those machines as well.

I'm glad that you made the point that professional sports are really an entertainment industry. Of course they are. All sports are

forms of entertainment, just as music and painting. But they are all also forms of art. Just as a sculptor or musician uses skills in creating a song or statue, a quarterback uses his skill acquired through experience to lead his team to victory. People are entertained when they watch these athletes, or artists, creating something beautiful to them. Why criticize people for supporting the arts, Chad?

I wish you hadn't been so caustic in your article, because if you could see the beauty in a Jerry Rice reception or a Magic Johnson no-look pass, then you would pay money so that you could see their talents displayed over and over. If I don't want to have to sit through the weather to see the sports, I'll just turn on ESPN. If you don't want to have to hear about sports to see the weather, then there is always The Weather Channel.

CHAOS by Brian Shuster



As he read the headline in horror, Larry knew that now he'd HAVE to take Bertha to the prom.

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