

"MYTHS OF AMERICAN SLAVERY"

By Hon. Donald Kennedy

A Keynote Address to the 108th Reunion of the Mississippi Division

Sons of Confederate Veterans

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Transcribed from cassette tape by Jim Huffman, Adj./Ed., Gainesville Vols, SCV Camp 373, Pearl River County, MS. I have spoken to SCV Divisions from Pennsylvania to Colorado, but Mississippi holds a special place in my heart. God Bless Mississippi. 'Stand Fast Mississippians,' -- Walter D. (Donnie) Kennedy." Mr. Kennedy asked if I would kindly edit these live remarks for clarity, which I have.

If this microphone gets in the way, I'm going to chunk it out into the audience, because I can really get on a stump and holler if I have to! [Laughter] First things first. I just want to thank all of you folks from Mississippi for inviting an old Louisiana boy like me to speak to you. I'm a good old Louisiana boy who was born and raised in Copiah County, Mississippi. It could be worse -- I could be from Lincoln County. [Laughter] Y'all remember the story about how come Wesson, Mississippi, is in Copiah County, and not Lincoln County, don't you? Oh? They've heard the story? Then I won't go into it.

[Donnie shared the story with me. When Lincoln County was created from parts of several other counties, town founder Col. James Madison Wesson, of the Wesson Artillery of Choctaw County, refused to allow his namesake town to be made part of Lincoln County, threatening to take his valuable cotton mills out of the State if Wesson became part of Lincoln County! His threat worked. Look at a map of Copiah County, and you'll see a tiny rectangle hanging down into Lincoln County! That little rectangle is the City of Wesson!]

When I was raised in Mississippi, I always hated the thought of living in Lincoln County! It gagged me. "I'm not going to live in that damn Yankee county -- Lincoln County!" I am so proud to be from Copiah County. I went to Copiah-Lincoln High School. Of course, that was bad enough. Then, lo and behold, in '67 I leave Mississippi and ended up in Monroe, Louisiana. Married a girl in Louisiana. All my children are from Louisiana. My grandchildren -- most of them -- are Louisianians. And, of all places -- I'm embarrassed to tell you -- I live in Lincoln Parish, Louisiana! [Laughter] God has a strange sense of humor. But, I'm getting out of Lincoln Parish. I've bought land, and, in about another two and a half years, I'm moving just a little bit east and a little bit closer to Mississippi -- to Union Parish! [Laughter] But, as my fellow Louisianians would tell you, Union Parish, Louisiana, was created in 1840, and it was in honor of the great Union that existed in a free Republic that was once known as these United States of America.

Our job, folks, it to make those folks up there in the North embarrassed about what they did to the real Union and not for us to be ashamed of our Union -- the Confederacy -- that was our birthright as Americans.

As I told you, I'm from Copiah County. I grew up there. I was born and raised there. My family came from the Carolinas and Georgia. They landed in Savannah and Charleston sometime in the 1740's. Around 1820-1828, the Kennedys left the Carolinas and Georgia and moved to Mississippi, and my family has been there ever since.

If you'll go to Copiah County, down to a little cemetery close to the Pearl River, down close to Oma, down in Rockport, you'll find a cemetery -- Lowe Cemetery -- and there you'll find a grave, the tombstone of John Wesley Kennedy, Co. F ["Johnston Avengers," raised in Copiah County, Mississippi], 38th Regiment, Mississippi Volunteer Infantry Mounted, Confederate States of America. Next to him is buried his son, my grandfather. Next to him -- one row down -- is buried my father. And, right next to them, is a site where -- when the Lord returns me to His Bosom -- I will repose also.

Mississippi is in my blood and in my body. When I defend the South, I think of you people, because you are home, you are my family. I am a citizen of the sovereign State of Louisiana, and, as long as Louisiana is part of this Union, I will be your fellow American. But, at one time, I was a Mississippian. Mississippi is my birthplace, and I am proud to be here! You just do not know the honor that you have done me by inviting this old Mississippi boy back home again!

Which reminds me of a story. You know, we Mississippians -- and you folks especially -- have a reputation to live down. Y'all are a bunch of cantankerous folks. Ever since that [State] Flag issue, the world knows how cantankerous you are. I remember a story from a long time ago about an old Mississippi boy. He was a son of a Confederate Soldier. And he was from somewhere down around Sullivan's Hollow. You know -- people like Carl Ford are from there! Crazy people live down there! [Laughter] And, anyway, he was just a cantankerous old fellow. He was raised on the milk of Yankee hatred because his father just detested those old Yankees and the way they treated Mississippi and the South. And, as the man got older, he got more cranky. Well, of course, Jones County came into the modern part of the world, and they wanted to get rid of this guy. So, they decided that the thing to do was to take this guy that hates the Yankees and send him to the Mecca of American culture and learning. "We'll send him to Boston, Massachusetts, on vacation! We'll cure this man!"

So, they pack him up and send him off to Boston. He got up there to Boston. He walked around up there and started to interact with those people, and he was totally confused. Every time he wanted to eat dinner, they tried to eat lunch, and every time he wanted supper, they wanted dinner. He was confused. About the second day up there, he was rudely informed that they "don't grow grits up here." [Laughter] People were barking at him, and he said they talked faster than he even cared to think. "There's something wrong with them!" [Laughter]

After a couple of days of pulling his hair out, trying to deal with these Yankees, he finally decided to go back into a little dark alley in Boston, looking around, and he saw a curio shop, an antique shop, and it was run by a Chinaman. He said, "Thank God! There ain't a Yankee in there!" [Laughter] He goes into this little antique shop and looks around. He didn't find anything very interesting to him, but, all of a sudden, right before he left, he saw this big, pretty, brass rat. He looked at that brass rat, and said, "You know, I need a memento of my trip to Yankeeland, and this brass rat is the sure thing. I will always

remember Yankees when I see this brass rat!"

So, he grabbed the rat and ran and placed it on the counter. And the Chinaman said, "Ah, so! You want brass rat! You want brass rat!" "Yes, I'd like to buy the rat. How much is it?" "Oh, the rat! The rat! The rat is ten dollar. The rat is ten dollar. The story about the rat is a hundred dollar!" [Laughter]

"The story about the rat? Naw, naw. I might be from Mississippi, but I'm not stupid! Here's your ten dollars. I bought the rat. You keep the story." And he takes off down the street.

He's walking down the street with the brass rat under his arm. It's a pretty old thing. All of sudden, he hears a noise behind him. He looks around behind him, and there's a bunch of rats following him! [Laughter] Well, how about that? So, he goes a little faster, and, all of a sudden he looks down there and there's more rats following him! He goes, "Oh, my God! Where are all these rats going?" He takes off, just kinda getting into a jog, you know, just to get away from these rats. And he looked down and there were thousands of rats following him and that brass rat under his arm!

He said, "There ain't but one thing to do! I'm going to head over here to where those Yankees threw that tea into the harbor during the Boston Tea Party, and I'm gonna get rid of these rats!"

So, he runs down to the edge of the pier, with all these rats behind him, and he takes that brass rat and flings it out into the middle of the harbor. Every rat followed that brass rat right into the ocean and they all drowned. He looked at that, looked at all those dead rats, looked back at Boston, and started smiling.

He went back to the curio shop. He got in the door and the Chinaman said, "Ah, you want story! You want story!" The ol' Mississippi boy said, "Man, I don't want no damn story! I was just wondering. Do you happen to have a brass Yankee?" [Much laughter and applause]

I tell you, folks, when I started doing work on "The South Was Right," I was wanting a brass Yankee! When I started doing work on this book, "Myths of American Slavery," I knew we needed to have us a big old brass Yankee!

There are a lot of myths that our enemies love to throw out at us to put us on the defensive, and I'm sure that, in the fight for the Mississippi State Flag, you heard all this mythology being thrown at you. I call it "mythology," but I'm being polite; it's damn lies is what it is! [Laughter] But, you know, you can't put that on a book! "Damn Lies of American Slavery" won't sell! [Laughter] I had enough trouble getting them to put "Myths of American Slavery" on the bookshelf. [Laughter]

But, nevertheless, there are a lot of mythologies about the institution of slavery. There's no way we can cover all these myths tonight, and I don't intend to bore you with all the myths, but I would like to give a few comments about slavery that might help give you some ammunition to use against your opponents. Maybe you've thought of other things that I haven't even thought about in our struggle for our Heritage and, simply, our rights.

Now, I believe that it was Jefferson Davis who said, quote, "No subject" (speaking of slavery) "has been more generally misunderstood or more persistently misrepresented than the history of slavery." And, of

course, he 's right! He's absolutely right! It is a prevalent myth. As a matter of fact, the myth that the Confederate Flag is the flag of slavery is one of those things that we hear quite often.

I do a lot of radio interviews and I really like those, because I can sit in my home and do all these radio interviews all around the nation. And, when you're talking to people in New York and Chicago and San Francisco, one of the things that they will always come back to is that "that flag is a flag of slavery. Why don't we just get rid of it?" And, I'm sure, in your fight to preserve the Mississippi State Flag, you've heard the same thing.

Listen to what Devereaux Cannon has to say about the Confederate Flag. If you don't know Bro. Devereaux, you need to meet him. He's a fellow Compatriot from Tennessee, and he's written an excellent book, "The Flags of the Confederacy." Devereaux says this about the Confederate Flag: "The Flags of the Confederacy represent the aspirations of a brave and resourceful people. Their desire to live under a government based upon the consent of the governed should be respected." Now, unfortunately, Devereaux's opinion of the Confederate Flag and our opinion of the Confederate Flag and the opinion of the world in general, beyond this room and beyond this Confederation, are two different things.

[Please see www.confederateflags.org, Devereaux Cannon's most excellent resource for Confederate Flag information! It's the best site on the internet for CS Flag info!]

There are several prevalent myths about slavery. One of them is that slavery is a White versus Black institution. Al Sharpton, Lewis Farakan, Jesse Jackson, and Jesse Jackson, Jr., all love to play on this thing -- let's pit one group against the other. And they like to play like all Southern White people owned slaves and, therefore, they were evil people and, since you are descendants of those evil people, and their people were mishandled by these Southern people, much reparations are due them. Now, you have to put on historical blinders when you start advocating or advancing the theory that slavery is a White versus Black type of institution. You have to overlook all of recorded history, from the dawning of time. Before history was recorded, slavery existed. There is not a person in this room, regardless of what your nationality is, that could look at me and say that, honestly, that no one in my ethnic background ever owned a slave or ever was a slave. We all have been slaves, and, certainly, the Scottish and Irish have been slaves. We've all been a part of this institution of slavery. So, it is not race-based at all.

But, you also have to overlook some very interesting side histories about the institution of slavery to hold this racist view. In Louisiana, for example, there's an area called the Cane River. Now, if y'all had ever been to the Cane River area of Louisiana, I'm sure you'd have noticed, around Natchitoches, Louisiana, that there are a lot of beautiful antebellum homes there, beautiful plantations. Can you guess who owned those plantations? The Free People of Color of the Cane River area! As a matter of fact, these Free People of Color had some of the last Confederate troops that surrendered when the Trans-Mississippi surrendered. Yes, there were Black troops in arms in the Louisiana services in defense of the Confederacy and their homes when the last army was surrendered in Louisiana in the Trans-Mississippi Department.

These people were descendants and relatives of the rich Black plantation owners. These Black plantation owners didn't work their plantations with John Deere tractors, folks! [Laughter] They worked then with

slaves. Now, this surprises a lot of people. A lot of people just couldn't imagine it. "Black people owned Black people?" I do a lot of radio interviews, and the first thing you hear is some smart-aleck, uppity Yankee, saying, "Well, yes, that happened, but they only owned their family members so evil White people wouldn't own them."

Well, that's a bunch of bunk! Absolutely not! And I'll give you an example of that. Andrew Durnford, from down around Plaquemines Parish in Louisiana, was a Black man who owned a big sugar plantation. About then years before the war, he made a trip from New Orleans all the way to Philadelphia, then down to Richmond to buy slaves. And, the reason he was buying slaves in Richmond, Virginia, was because slaves in New Orleans were getting too high, and he was hoping to take advantage of the market in the Richmond area.

Now, it's interesting. Here we have a Free Man of Color, a planter from Louisiana, who owns a very, very big plantation, and is well-heeled in the business. He goes from Louisiana to Pennsylvania and down to Virginia and buys slaves. And, one of the things he complains about is that "the cost of people is getting higher and higher every day." [Laughter] He complained about how much they cost! He was not going to Virginia to buy his relatives. Ninety-nine point nine percent of Black people who owned slaves owned slaves for the very same reason that their White neighbors owned slaves -- to make an economic profit.

Slavery existed for economic reasons. It existed in Yankeedom just as it did in the South. It existed up there for the very same reasons. They needed slavery for back and muscle and the labor force to make a living.

Oh, by the way, since we're near Natchez. Have y'all ever heard of William Johnson? William Johnson was a Free Man of Color of Natchez, Mississippi, who was a slave-holder. He was a very prosperous businessman in Natchez, Mississippi. It's a cute little ol' story; I've just got to tell you this.

This happened to me about four years ago. I was at one book store there in Natchez, doing a book-signing, and I met one of the carriage drivers. This was during one of the pilgrimages, the height of the tourist season, and he and I got to be pretty good friends. He's a rabid Southerner and a bookreader. He liked my book. After the book-signing, my wife and I made the walking tour of Natchez and we went by the William Johnson House. The Federal Government had just put that house on the Federal Register, and the National Parks Service was rebuilding it and was going to give information about the house. They had a nice little plaque there, describing William Johnson as a Free Man of Color, prosperous in town, and on and on and on.

And, about the time that I read the whole thing and noticed something missing on that plaque, the gentleman that I was speaking of -- the carriage driver -- was driving up a buggy load of New York Yankees. [Laughter] You know, I think he went around and found those Yankees! He was going to have some fun! [Laughter]

"Whoa!" He pulled to a stop and says, "Hey, Mr. Kennedy! How you doing?" "Doing fine, sir. How are y'all doing?" (You know, in our best Southern accents. You know, putting on a little show for the

Yankees. [Laughter] Make 'em turn loose of that money, by God! You know, we'll get it back one way of the other! [Laughter]

Anyway, we was sitting there talking about William Johnston and, of course, he'd already mentioned my book to these Yankees. "Oh, yeah. This is the author of the book 'The South Was Right.' It's a very famous book -- doing real well down South! We really like his books, you know." And these Yankees are rolling their eyes back -- "What does that cracker know?"

Anyway, he says, "Have you read that sign about William Johnson?" I said, "Yes, I did." He says, "Did you notice something missing from that sign, Mr. Kennedy?" I said, "Well, you know, they didn't say anything about this Free Man of Color -- this Black man -- owning slaves."

He said, "Well, you know, the Federal Government made a mistake. You know they wouldn't be trying to fool people into thinking that only White people in the South owned slaves now, would you?" [Laughter]

"Oh, no! Not our Federal Government! Our Federal Government loves us! They love us so much they were willing to sacrifice so many men and so much blood just to keep us in their beautiful Union! Thank God for 'em, Sir!" [Laughter]

"Thank you, Mr. Kennedy!" Boom! And those Yankees' eyes got to looking up! [Laughter] I don't know where he took them to, but I never saw them after that! [Laughter] I had a good time!

Another myth that we hear about slavery is that slavery is a Christian institution. Now, during the craze of the Black militants and the Malcolm X fad, you'll notice a lot of Black people started taking Arabic names and embracing the Muslim religion. One of the reasons was because of the theory or the mythology that Christianity was responsible for slavery. Again, you have to put on your historical blinders if that's what you believe, because, after all, the Christian nations of Europe were only engaged in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade from about the early 1500's to about 1880. So, it wasn't going on very long. But, five-hundred to eight-hundred years prior to that time, the Arab Muslims were engaged in the Trans-Sahara slave trade.

Now, all these people who want to take Muslim names and take up the Muslim religion because it's free of all this Christian connotation of slavery, they just don't know much, do they? Because the Arabs were the ones who were first involved in the African slave trade. And, interestingly enough, slavery in Africa has not ended today. There's slavery going on in Mauritania, Sudan, and different parts of Africa. You can buy a young girl in the Sudan for less than ninety dollars right now, depending on how old she is. So, slavery exists right now, and it's Muslims in the north of Sudan who are enslaving the Christians of the southern part of Sudan. So, slavery is going on right now, as we speak.

I had a good friend, Mr. Chenault, from Ruston, Louisiana, who, in 1958, worked in the oil fields of Saudi Arabia, and he told me, "Look, I worked side by side with Black slaves in Saudi Arabia." Which is true. Saudi Arabia did not end slavery until 1963. Now, they'll condemn the Confederate Flag because of its "association with slavery" -- and the Confederacy is dead and gone for one-hundred and forty

years! But look at Saudi Arabia! We send military people, troops over there, we buy, we have all kinds of commercial relationships with them. And, yet, they had slavery up until 1963. Why don't they get condemned? Why is it that the flag of a dead nation and a defeated people always gets trampled on? You know, you have to stop and think, "What's going on here?"

Another way to look at this is that Christianity and the Biblical world-view are responsible for doing away with the evils of slavery and pointing the way to the end of slavery altogether. After all, it was Christianity and the Biblical world-view and the Old Testament and the New Testament that taught us that God owns the man. You can only own a man's labor. Therefore, you cannot be cruel to a man, you cannot kill a man, you cannot harm a man. As a matter of fact, under Biblical law, if you knocked out your slave's tooth, you had to pay compensation to him, even to the point of freeing him. Because God owned that man; you only owned his labor.

Under the pagan system of slavery, you could be destroyed, you could be pulled apart, you could be thrown to wild animals, you could be made a gladiator, you could be sacrificed to pagan gods.

Christianity attenuated the harsher forms of slavery and, eventually, pointed toward the end of slavery itself. Those who would worship at the foot of Allah and think that Allah has the answer for the slave problem -- they know very little.

"Slavery is a Southern institution." The South is evil, and the North is good. How many times have we heard that in our lifetimes? To believe that the South is solely responsible and has to carry the burden of all the guilt for slavery is absolutely ridiculous! Do we have a US Flag here somewhere? We can pretend we have one. You know the one I'm talking about? [Laughter] Oh, it's behind me here.

If you'll look at the US Flag -- how many stripes do we have on the US Flag? Thirteen. Except, a different US Flag had fifteen. There's a little story behind that. There are thirteen stripes on that flag, representing the thirteen original Colonies that struck for independence from Great Britain. Every one of those colonies in 1776 had slaves and slavery was protected by the laws of that Colony. Those Colonies and, later, States, that had the fewest number of slaves were the most heavily involved in the African slave trade! So, why do we all of a sudden say that slavery is a Southern institution?

You know, Massachusetts did not end slavery all at once. It was the first State that started with a system of gradual emancipation. It started in 1780. Massachusetts and the people of New England never freed their slaves 'right now' and gave them full equality. They never gave them forty acres and a mule and a vote. They didn't do it! They freed their slaves in a handy little way so that they could get rid of their slaves by selling them prior to their becoming eligible for emancipation and then pocket the money in the process. So, don't blame the South. Don't allow people to put the full guilt of the institution of slavery on the South.

In "The South Was Right," Ron and I talked about this. The first Colony in this country that legalized slavery and protected the master's rights in his slavery -- it wasn't Virginia or Georgia or South Carolina. It was Massachusetts! Massachusetts! The last time I looked, I thought those damnable Yankees up there were supposed to be high and mighty and noble and pure and just the epitome of all that's great and

wonderful in this country. It was Massachusetts. The first slave ship that was built in this country was the "Desire," and it was built by and for the people of Massachusetts!

It's just ridiculous. The history of slavery in Massachusetts would astound most people. And I'll give you an example of the shock that I went through. When I was doing research for "The South Was Right," I ran across a book. R.L. Dabney mentions the book in his little work, "A Defense of Virginia and the South." It's called "Notes on the History of Slavery in Massachusetts." It's by George W. Moore. I wanted to get that book, because Dabney kept referring to it, so I wanted to get the original source. I didn't want to cite Dabney; I wanted to cite the original source.

So, I started the process of looking for this book. I looked high and low and could not find a copy of this book anywhere. Finally, in desperation, I called somewhere in Boston and found an archive or museum or library or somebody up in the Mecca of culture and intelligence that was supposed to know. Some little lady got on the phone, and I told her that I was looking for a book, that it was a very hard book to find, and that it concerned the history of Massachusetts.

She said, "Oh, yes, sir! I will be glad to help you on that, because it's Massachusetts!" And she knew everything about Massachusetts! So, I said, "Well, the name of the book is 'Notes on the History of Slavery in Massachusetts'" There was a pregnant pause on the other end. [Laughter] "Oh, no, sir! You made a mistake. You need to talk to the people in Mississippi!" [Laughter]

I swear that's what she said! [Laughter] You don't want to know what I said, but I told her in no uncertain words that I knew what I was looking for, and, if she knew her history a little better, she'd know that Massachusetts was fully involved in the history of slavery. And, if she wasn't such a damned, arrogant Yankee, she'd listen to somebody who knew what they were talking about! Good evening! [Laughter and applause]

Of all things, I found the book on Massachusetts slavery in the Tulane Library. Those Greenies know something I don't know! [Laughter]

As long as slavery was necessary, slavery existed in the North. Those people who tell you, "Oh, we're so noble," -- Yankees, Northerners -- "We freed our slaves because we understood how horrible it was." Bunk! They freed their slaves for one reason, and John Adams, of all people, of the influential New England Adams family, John Adams clearly stated why the Yankees freed their slaves. John Adams said that feelings and sympathy for the slave had nothing to do with the liberation of the slaves in Massachusetts. He said, the only reason they freed the slaves in Massachusetts was because the free White people refused to compete against slave and free Black labor. And, John Adams said, that, not only that, if we had not freed them, the White people would have killed both the slave and the slave-master. Now, does that sound like a man who has the milk of human kindness pumping in his heart?

Yet, we, the people of the South, we're the evil man; we're the boogey-man in America! We're the field-hand that gets flogged in America, because we're Southerners! Any time something goes wrong and those people want to feel good about themselves, they just puff themselves up and, pointing a finger, say, "Oh, you evil old racist Southerners! You wicked people! It's a good thing for virtuous Yankees!

What would this world be without us!" [Laughter] And, that's their attitude! So, anyway, they got rid of slavery for one simple reason -- because they didn't want to compete with the slaves.

Now, interestingly enough, the South, by 1830, two-thirds of all the Abolitionist societies and three-quarters of the members of those societies lived south of the Mason-Dixon Line. This is another fact that people don't realize. Some of the first Abolition societies in this country were formed by Southern plantation owners! Southern slave-holders! George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry, John Randolph of Roanoke (probably the greatest Southern Nationalist that ever existed prior to John C. Calhoun). All these people said, yes, they owned slaves, yet they understood their obligation to take care of these people. They wanted to provide a means to get rid of the institution of slavery and, at the same time, do good by the slaves. It was Jefferson Davis himself who said that the slaves should be educated so that they would be fit for freedom and unfit for slavery. And, you'll notice, after the war, Jefferson Davis' slaves fared far better than the average slave that was freed because his slaves had been prepared. He and his brother worked very hard in preparing their slaves for gradual emancipation and eventual freedom. They were very well-prepared for freedom. Unfortunately, because the Yankees freed the slaves by warfare, that preparation for freedom did not happen for many slaves. And, we're paying the price today because of it. Isn't that nice of our Yankee brothers?

There are several other myths about slavery, but, since we're in Mississippi tonight, since you had such a wonderful Flag fight, I thought it would only be appropriate to talk a little bit about the Confederate Flag as the flag of slavery. I've heard this so many times that I began to wonder several years ago, is there an American flag that we can really say is a flag of slavery? Why is this thing so common? You and I intuitively know that it's the politically correct media that seems to always push and support one point or one agenda.

Your typical example -- I saw this in North Carolina about ten years ago. There was some racial conflict. I think it was in Raleigh, North Carolina, and, of course, the "Knights of the White Sheets" decided that they were going to get out and protest. They had a gigantic Klan demonstration in Raleigh. I think they had twelve people there. [Laughter] And the media! You 'd have thought that, the way the media played it up, that they had hundreds of people there! They had a little reporter-ette [Laughter] who was there to report the incident, and here she is with her camera crew. You see in her aired report these racist Klansmen come marching down the street. On the right, you have one in his uniform or suit -- this ridiculous outfit -- carrying the United States Flag, and, then, to his left, which is the inferior position, is a Klansman carrying the Confederate Flag. For about two seconds, you see these two. For the minute and a half that's left in her aired report, they focus away from the guy carrying the Yankee Flag, and all you see is the guy carrying the Confederate Flag. Now, I'm sure that was not intentional, don't y'all agree? [Laughter] I'm conspiracy-oriented. [Laughter] Maybe UFO's flew by and they sucked the other guy carrying the US Flag up in the air. So they had to focus in on this one guy carrying the Confederate Flag! You see, this is what the media will do to you, and they have done it to us quite often. They will focus in on the guy carrying the Confederate Flag anytime something bad goes on, because, subconsciously, it tells the people viewing this -- especially our Black friends -- that this evil, the KKK, is associated with the Confederate Flag. If they pulled the camera back and showed both flagbearers, then the TV guys who went and shot it would go, "Whoa! These guys carry both of these flags. Something else must be going on here!"

Actually, the media have established a straw man that they like to destroy -- and you and I are part of that straw. We're the South. We're Southerners. Anytime they want to destroy somebody, they bring us out, they whip us out, and they say, "Look how horrible you people are!" We serve a useful purpose to them in that sense.

Thank God for people like yourselves! The Sons of Confederate Veterans, the UDC, the Order of the Confederate Rose, and other Confederate-related organizations -- we've done a really good job. I think that, on the local level, in the local media, we are at least getting some good, positive coverage now.

When I first got into this fight back in the early Eighties, you hardly ever got any coverage at all. Now, thanks to men like the groups who reburied the Black US soldiers at Grand Gulf, we get positive reaction that even shows up in the Monroe, Louisiana, paper. Used to be, you'd never see anything like that! The Mississippi State Flag issue over here got a lot of positive coverage over in Louisiana. Positive feedback helps us.

Our job, as members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, is to promote the correct view not only of slavery, but every issue that our Confederate Fathers dealt with. And, of course, as I've told you before, slavery is the one big stick that the anti-Southerners like to beat you over the head with. When they argue with us on Constitutional issues, we can just blow them out of the water! We can just quote verse and chapter. If we're discussing the issue of secession and State's Rights, there's no way that they can say that the South was wrong or the North was right.

The best they can say is, "Oh, but we had to save the Union, you know!" So, you save the Union by destroying all the rights and liberties that it was created to protect! That doesn't make sense!

But, when you come to the issue of slavery, it's such an emotional issue that people automatically back away from it. I think it was Devereaux Cannon, about ten years ago at the Louisiana Convention, who told us, "We're backing away from the slavery issue, but sooner or later we're going to have to address it. We can't run from it forever."

We've got to admit: slavery is wrong. We don't like slavery, and neither did our forefathers. Remember: Which was the first State that tried to outlaw the African slave trade? Was it the New England states? Was it Pennsylvania? No! It was South Carolina. It was Georgia. It was Virginia. Well before 1776, they'd already petitioned London and passed laws in the Colonial Legislatures to end the African slave trade. But, unfortunately, King George vetoed that. He said, "No you must take these slaves in," because he was making too good a money off this. And the Yankee slave traders were making a good deal of money, also. Remember that Thomas Jefferson wanted to condemn the King about forcing the Colonies to take slaves when they didn't want slavery. But, guess what? The people up North didn't like that, so they made Jefferson delete it from the Declaration of Independence!

Let's quickly look at the issue of slavery and how it affects the Confederate Flag. Today, in the politically correct environment, Confederate symbols are going to be declared symbols of racism, but is there such a thing as a racist flag in America? If we look at the issue of slavery -- especially the slave

trade -- there's only one flag in American history that we can really identify as a slave flag.

John Hall Spiers, in the early Twentieth Century, did an in-depth investigation of the African slave trade. He said that use of the United States Flag to protect the slave traders was appalling to him and others like him. They could not imagine that the United States Flag was the flag that was used to protect slave traders. Listen to what he had to say about this: "Finding that our US flag protected the slave ships under such circumstances, the slavers made haste to get under it. Within ten years after we had, by statute, declared the slaver a pirate, the majority of slave ships were not only built, but they were sailed to the coast of Africa under the American Flag. There is no blacker chapter in the history of our country than that which tells how our flag became and was maintained for thirty-odd years as the shield of the slaver."

Duh! You mean they didn't have Confederate Flags back in the 1820's and the 1830's and 1840's on all those slave ships? Wow! That's impressive!

Have any of y'all ever heard of the term "Captain of the Flag"? "Captain of the Flag" was an interesting situation. In between the time that the African slave trade was outlawed by the Congress in 1808 and until 1845, no European vessel could stop an American merchant vessel on the high seas. Remember, we went to war with Great Britain in 1812 because we said we were a sovereign nation, and your navy cannot stop our commerce ships. That's just simple international law. The United States had no treaty obligation with any other nation to allow any nation on earth to search its vessels on the high seas.

So, when a slave ship needed to go from Africa to the Caribbean, it might encounter Spanish, French, English, or Dutch war vessels in the area, trying to blockade slave traders. Let's say a Dutch ship, flying a Dutch flag, was carrying slaves. As the British, French, or Dutch navy approached that ship, those navies could board it, condemn it as a slaver, and hang the captain and free the slaves.

The way of getting out of that was to have an American on board -- usually a Yankee. They had a bill of sale already written up, and they had an American Flag, a United States Flag on the ship. So, as this Dutch or British or French war vessel approached, they hauled down the Dutch flag and executed the bill of sale to the American. Now, the vessel belonged to an American. Hoist up the Stars and Bars?!? No. Saint Andrew's Cross?!? No. Hoist up the Stars and Stripes, thumb your nose at the British, Dutch, or French navy, and go on your way with your cargo of human beings.

How many times, in our struggle to keep our Confederate Flag going, have you heard people talk about "Captain of the Flag" types of incidents? Yet they happened time and time again. As a matter of fact, as late as 1845, President John Tyler, from Virginia, sent an ambassador to the Caribbean to find out if this was still going on because the Southerners finally raised so much Cain that they had passed through Congress a treaty with Great Britain and France, whereby we were to have mutual searches of commerce vessels to end the slave trade. But it was a Southern President and Southern Senators and Representatives who were pushing for it! Guess who was trying to block it? Yeah, you guessed it -- the people I hate most -- Yankees! [Laughter] And don't expect me to apologize for that either! I've had to give up a lot of prejudices, but, by God, I ain't giving up that one! [Laughter and applause]

The Confederate Flag has also been accused of being the Flag of racism. A lot of times, when you start

talking about slavery issues, they say, "Well, okay, but, you know there was segregation and discrimination against People of Color. All that is an outgrowth of Southern slavery. The Confederate Flag represents that time in our history. Therefore, the Confederate Flag is a flag of racism." Now, of course, what they're basing their ideas upon is that segregation or discrimination or Jim Crowism all flow from the South and Southern institutions. Well, if you're not a very well-read or studied person, or if you're someone who is bent on hating the South and you don't really care about what the facts of the matter are, I supposed you'd be satisfied. But, I'm not satisfied with that answer.

Let's look a little bit at segregation or Jim Crowism in America. Where did this come from? Most people remember Plessey vs. Ferguson in 1898 as the case before the United States Supreme Court that established segregation by law in this country. The case originated in Louisiana. So, most people say, "Ah! It originated in Louisiana, so it's you Southerners' fault!"

Well, not so. It originated in Louisiana, but it was taken through the court system to the Supreme Court -- to the Federal Supreme Court of the United States. It didn't go to Richmond to the Confederate Supreme Court. It went to Washington to the Federal Supreme Court. Interestingly enough, when this case got to that Court, that Court decided that, yes, separate but equal -- i.e., Jim Crowism or segregation -- was legal and Constitutional in this nation. How did they come about this conclusion?

Well, the majority opinion for the Court -- and there was only one dissenting vote -- on Plessey vs. Ferguson was written by a Federal judge from Minnesota. Not Mississippi. Not Missouri. But Minnesota! He wrote the majority opinion. Here we have a Yankee Federal judge writing the majority opinion in a Federal Court. And what did he base his decision on? Back then, judges just couldn't pull stuff out of the air like they do now. He had to base it on something. [Laughter]

He based his theory on an 1845 Massachusetts law that established separate but equal schools for Black and White children in Massachusetts. Segregation, folks, is the brainchild of Yankees -- not Southerners. So, why should we have to walk around carrying the guilt for those damnable people once again? Let 'em carry their own friggin' guilt! [Laughter and applause]

There are several books out now about the issue of slavery, and I would encourage you to get a better grip on this issue. My book is out. I think Perry has a book out, with a very similar title. Get these books and get your information, get your ammunition. Ron Kennedy and I wrote all the books that we wrote not because we thought it would change the world, but because they would act as an ammunition box for information for you folks who are out there every day, fighting the good fight. So, get your information, and let's hit 'em hard!

Let's look a little bit at what our Southern ancestors' feelings were about the Flag and the Confederacy after the fall of the South.

One of the great poets of the South was Father Abram Ryan. He wrote many poems that are about the "Conquered Banner," the Confederate Flag. You probably remember that one more than any. Listen to this. In "The Land We Love" -- this is after the war, after the South was defeated, in the midst of Reconstruction -- listen to how Father Ryan talks about his love for the South. He said, "Land where the

victor's flag waves, where only the dead are free, each link of a chain that enslaves, binds us to them and to Thee."

In yet another poem, "A Land Without Ruin," Father Ryan says this: "Yes, give me a land that is blessed by the dust, and bright with the deeds of the downtrodden just! Yes, give me a land with a grave in each spot, and names on the graves that shall not be forgot! And the graves of the dead, with grass overgrown, may yet be the footstool of Liberty's throne!"

You know, that's why lots of people up North are so worried about your defense of the Confederate Flag -- that last line right there. A Yankee woman told me on the radio, "Why, you uppity Southerners! You get down off your stool of repentance and, all of a sudden start to feeling good about yourselves! How dare you people! If we let y'all go, if we don't keep y'all under control, why it's no telling what you people are liable to do. Why, you're liable to try to leave the country again!" I thought to myself, "Why, honey, you just don't know!" [Laughter] I don't know why, but Yankee women aggravate me more than anybody else! [Laughter from women and men] For one thing, they're not feminine. I think that aggravates me more than anything.

Anyway, Father Ryan has quite a few poems about the South and the love of the people for their land and their love for their people, their family. Like I told you earlier, I will be buried in dirt that's not any more further than from here to the back of the wall from John Wesley Kennedy's grave.

I'm not real ugly with Yankees -- all the time. [Laughter] Really, I divide people up as Yankees and Northerners. There are a lot of good Northerners. Week before last, I had the pleasure of talking with Dr. Thomas Woods. He's a graduate of Harvard and a graduate of Columbia University. He teaches in New York, and, on his final exam, he has his students give three good reasons why secession is right. And he tells them, you don't have to believe it, but I want three good reasons, just like you were living in the South. Give me three good reasons. I said, "Tom, that's wonderful. I don't think many Southern professors would do this." But, Tom is a Northerner; he's not a Yankee.

Up North, they're a lot of people beginning to realize that, yes, indeed, the South was right! But this overgrown, tax and spend Federal government is a product of Appomattox -- that government that cannot be controlled by we, the people, on the local level, like the Founding Fathers intended. If we don't have that type of government, we're just one step away from total dictatorship. People up North and out West are beginning to change their views. I know I say a lot of harsh things about Yankees and I don't like Yankees! But they're a lot of good Northerners who are our fellow Americans, who understand all the promise we have, and who understand, yes, we're in this fight together, and we need to struggle to bring control back to the local level. Jefferson Davis was a prime example of a States' Rights man. John C. Calhoun. All of our brave and noble Confederate leaders -- all they wanted was what you and I want: simply to be free. And, my question is, "What's wrong with that? What's wrong with that?"

Northerners are beginning to learn there is a difference between what used to be in the South and what we're pushing for right now. That is, simply, our rights as free men and free Americans.

Now, on one radio station, I was talking to a lady, and she kept going back and forth about the evil in the

South and how we don't need the Confederate Flag we shouldn't be offended." And, finally, I said, "Well, look, Ma'am. Let me ask you. How many relatives did you have in that war?" And she just kind of stopped and thought. "I didn't have any in it. My people didn't get here until the early 1900's." [Laughter] I said, "Lady, why are you talking to me? I've got relatives in cemeteries who were Confederate soldiers! Down here, we literally have people who lost everything from Yankee invasion. Why are you telling me that I should not be proud of those people? You didn't even have a dog in the race at that time!" [Laughter] She said, "Well, I hadn't thought about it like that." That's the problem -- a lot of people don't think and, unfortunately, even our own people have trouble thinking sometimes.

But, if someone wants to say that the Confederate Flag is a flag of slavery, one good way to find out is to look at the flag! How many times have you taken a Confederate Battleflag and pulled it out and read the motto on it? You know, a lot of Confederate Flags have mottos on them. If our forefathers were fighting to keep Blacks in the cotton fields picking cotton, I'm sure that, somewhere on that flag, it would say, "We're fighting to keep cotton pickers in the cotton field," or something like that!

What was in the hearts of the ladies and men who sewed these flags and carried these flags is emblazed upon those flags! I did a search of Confederate flag books, and I went to archives all over the South looking at flags. I went to Mississippi. I didn't go through the Archives in Mississippi, but I wish I had. I went through a lot of museum and books, looking at mottos. Here are just a few examples.

Grady Howell will have a book on this by the next time we meet! [Laughter]

Anyway, here are some of the mottos from those flags. In Arkansas, the 5th Infantry: "Let justice be done, though the heavens fall." Nothing about cotton there. [Laughter] Florida, 3rd Infantry: "Any fate but submission." Hmmm. That's good! I like that! Here's one I really like. Georgia, 1st Infantry: "We yield not to our country's foes." Those Georgians were tough back then. Of course, they had a chance on voting on what they wanted back then, unlike the current Georgia Flag debate! [Laughter and applause] Louisiana, the 3rd Infantry: "Southern rights inviolate." Mississippi [Wayne Rifles, 13th MS Infantry]: "Protector and avenger." North Carolina: "In God we trust. Victory or death." Then we have Texas: "Our honor, our rights." Virginia: "God and our homes. Sic semper tyrannis."

But the one flag that literally brought tears to my eyes was a flag I found in a museum in Columbia, South Carolina. I've got a photograph of it in "Myths of American Slavery." It literally brought tears. Now, it wasn't your standard Confederate Battleflag. It was a Confederate Battleflag from the 5th Infantry, South Carolina Volunteers. It was a blue flag with a little picture on it, a Palmetto Tree pattern flag, and it said: "Like our ancestors, we will be free."

Now, that's touching, but what was really touching to me was where this flag came from. Have any of y'all ever heard of the Battle of King's Mountain during the Revolutionary War -- the War of American Independence? It was the Battle of King's Mountain where a bunch of redneck, backwoods, unwashed men with their unregistered assault weapons [Laughter] collected themselves together and defeated the British at a little place called King's Mountain, South Carolina. The important thing about this is that the South had virtually been defeated, and except for Francis Marion who was in the swamps and these guys in the hills of South Carolina, Georgia, and North Carolina, there were no Patriots left in the field that

could do anything.

The British were just about to close the South down, and then go up north and finish Washington's army off up north. But, these guys got together, word of mouth. No regular army input, no government from Philadelphia giving them instructions. They just came together as a militia, and they literally destroyed the British at King's Mountain. From King's Mountain, Lord Cornwallis withdrew to Guilford Courthouse, where he had a tactical victory and a horrible strategic defeat. He kept retreating back to a little place in Virginia you may have heard of -- unfortunately there wasn't anything there for him -- but it was Yorktown, where the final British defeat of the war occurred. That push to Yorktown started at King's Mountain. These men that on their flag inscribed "Like our ancestors, we will be free" had in their minds that, seventy-five years earlier, our forefathers fought the Redcoat British invaders for their freedom. Now, we are going to do the same.

Ladies and gentlemen, how many times must it be said that the fight in 1861 was nothing more than a reflection of what happened in 1776? [Applause] Any American -- certainly any Southerner -- who is ashamed of what our forefathers, these great men, did in 1861, is doing nothing less than spitting on the graves of the Patriots of 1776! These men were fighting for something called government by the consent of the governed. That's the most astounding thing in the world to hear, but that's what they were fighting for. They weren't fighting for anything else other than the right to be free, the right to be left alone, to have their own lives, to lead their government as they saw fit. Our forefathers, both in 1776 and in 1861, fought for a noble cause and a noble principle.

I refuse to be intimidated by a bunch of ignorant Yankees when it comes to this issue! I will continue to push harder and harder till the day I die for the Southern rights that Jefferson Davis, Forrest, Lee, Jackson, and a whole army of other men, lesser men, fought and died for.

Men like my Great-Great-grandfather, John Wesley Kennedy, who, by the way, has a child named in his honor -- Wesley Matthew Wight -- my grandson.

Southern Heritage and pride goes on, folks! It don't stop with us! It only stops with us if we sit down and refuse to take action! "Stand fast, Mississippians!" That's what Jefferson Davis told his men on the battlefield in Mexico!

You folks stood fast here a year or so ago. You inspired Southerners from one end of this country to the other. You put courage into the hearts of Southerners by standing fast for your rights. And you put fear in the hearts of our enemies. Folks, we got the "skeer" on 'em a little bit. Let's scare 'em a little more. Let's run 'em a little further! Let's run 'em till they run straight to Hell, where they belong! [Laughter and applause]

Mississippi is a great State. You have a great heritage and a great history. We're not great just because we're Mississippians. We're great because of Divine Providence. We've been blessed.

This blessing has been given to us. What will we do with it?

Remember in "Braveheart," when William Wallace said to his troops, as they were about to go to the

field of battle, "What will you do about freedom?" What will you do if future generations crawl up into your lap and ask you, "Grandpaw, why did you let this happen to us? Why can't I carry a Confederate Flag around?"

You know, it used to be I'd say, well, they won't be able to carry it to school. Well, they can't carry it to school now.

What will you do about freedom? But, more importantly, how will you answer to your grandchildren when today, by a little more action, we could once again restore to these United States of America a type of government that Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry would be proud of? That John C. Calhoun and Jefferson Davis would glory in? What's wrong with that?

You know, I have dreams, too! Martin Luther King is not the only man that can have a dream. I have dreams, and a lot of those dreams center upon you, my fellow Mississippians. We are the people who can stand fast! Don't allow them to make you tuck tail and run. You haven't in the past. Never do it in the future! Inspire your fellow Southerners and Louisianians and Virginians and Texans! Look back at them and say, "Follow me, Georgia! Let's go! Let's get 'em!" [Applause]

One day, I will occupy that spot of ground in Lowe Cemetery in Covich County, on the banks of Peggy Creek and Pearl River. Just like you, I will one day cross over the river Jordan. And, folks, when that happens, you know, we're going to get a good reception, because, through those Pearly Gates, we'll hear those Rebels yell, for all the Rebels will be in Heaven, and all the Yankees will have gone to Hell!" Thank you! [Much applause, whistling, cheers, and a standing ovation]