

Guide to Confederate Issues, Heroes and Sites of Alabama

By the Alabama Division
Sons of Confederate Veterans



MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

Resolution

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF APRIL
AS
"CONFEDERATE HISTORY AND HERITAGE MONTH"

WHEREAS, April is the month in which the Confederate States of America was founded in Montgomery, Alabama; and

WHEREAS, Confederate Memorial Day is a time in which Alabamians honor those from all walks of life who served the Confederate States of America; and

WHEREAS, Alabama has long recognized her Confederate history and the leaders who made sacrifices, including the more than 40,000 Alabamians who did not return from battle; and

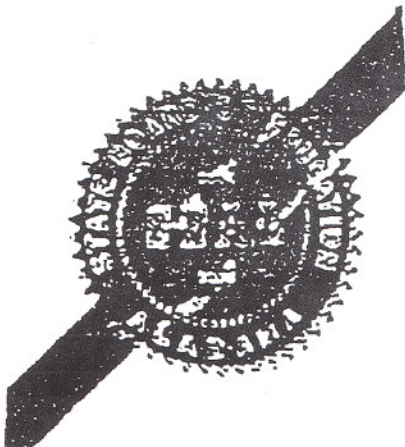
WHEREAS, it is important for all Alabamians to reflect upon our state's history as an integral part of our nation's history; and

WHEREAS, the Alabama Legislature has designated the month of April as "Confederate History and Heritage Month" in Alabama:

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the members of the Alabama State Board of Education do hereby designate the month of April as "Confederate History and Heritage Month" in Alabama and encourage our schools and citizens to join in efforts to become more knowledgeable of the role that the Confederate States of America played in the history of our country.

~~~~~

ADOPTED BY THE ALABAMA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
AT ITS MEETING ON APRIL 13, 1995



Thomas E. Ingram, Jr.  
Secretary and Executive Officer

## A Brief Message from the Alabama Division Sons of Confederate Veterans

On behalf of our members statewide, the Alabama Division is pleased to offer this *Guide to Confederate Issues, Heroes and Sites in Alabama*, a look at current and historical issues related to the Confederate period of our state history.

During recent years, numerous issues about our shared Confederate heritage have been debated, although most debates have been characterized by false and unbalanced information about this period of history. Whether errors were false statements about “the Confederate flag” — which is usually not even identified correctly — or misunderstandings about the relationship between states and the central government in the early 19th century, false information has been the rule, not the exception.

Regretfully, we share part of the blame for this sorry state of affairs. As descendants of the men who answered the call of duty, our responsibility is to defend our soldiers’ good name and guard their history. Because our organization consists of those who pursue history and genealogy, we have been reluctant to become involved in many of these public debates.

This guide is one attempt to meet our responsibility. It is not designed as a public policy manifesto, but as an educational look at questions we often receive. It is published for anyone who has an interest in our history and the deep sacrifice thousands of Alabama citizens made defending their homes and native land.

We thank you for your interest and hope you will find this guide interesting and helpful.

*Portions of this publication were copied with the permission of the Florida and Kentucky divisions, Sons of Confederate Veterans.*

## About the Cover

**Pictured with the Confederate Monument on the grounds of the State Capitol in Montgomery are Alabama Confederate heroes, top to bottom: Gen. Robert E. Rodes, Phillip Dale Roddey, Col. William C. Oates and John Hunt Morgan.**



*Confederate Veterans Reunions were huge events in Birmingham’s early days, drawing tens of thousands of visitors. National Confederate Veteran Reunions were held in Birmingham in 1894, 1908 (pictured), 1916 and 1926.*

## ***Guide to Confederate Issues, Heroes and Sites in Alabama***

### **About the Confederate Flag and the War Between the States**

|                                                                                                                        |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| What is the Confederate Flag?.....                                                                                     | 2 |
| Isn’t the Confederate Flag a symbol of oppression, since it flew over slavery? .....                                   | 3 |
| Isn’t the Confederate Flag a symbol of bigotry and racism, since it has been displayed by hate groups?.....            | 3 |
| Isn’t the Confederate Flag a symbol of treason, since it was used by troops trying to destroy the United States? ..... | 3 |

### **Alabama and the War Between the States**

|                                                                |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Wasn’t the War Between the States fought to end slavery? ..... | 4 |
| What was Alabama’s role in the War Between the States? .....   | 5 |

### **About Honoring Our Confederate Veterans**

|                                                          |   |
|----------------------------------------------------------|---|
| Why is it important to honor Confederate veterans? ..... | 7 |
| How does Alabama remember its Confederate Veterans?..... | 7 |

### **About the Sons of Confederate Veterans**

|                                                        |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|---|
| What is the Sons of Confederate Veterans?.....         | 8 |
| What kind of civic projects does the SCV perform?..... | 9 |
| Does the SCV admit minority members? .....             | 9 |

### **Remembering Our Confederate Heritage**

|                                                           |    |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| The Library and Museum at Confederate Memorial Park ..... | 10 |
| The Civil War Trail in Alabama .....                      | 11 |

# About the Confederate Flag and the War Between the States

## What is the Confederate Flag?

Perhaps more than anything else, recent debates about “the Confederate flag” demonstrate the public misunderstands historic Confederate flags and how they were used.

The first flag widely associated with the Confederacy, the Bonnie Blue Flag, was never adopted as a national flag but was flown in support of secession in some states and flew over the Confederacy’s provisional government in Montgomery prior to March, 1861.

The first Confederate national flag, not recognized by most people today, is correctly known as the “Stars and Bars.” Adopted by the Provisional Confederate Congress in March, 1861, the flag was designed by Nicola Marschall, a Prussian artist who lived in Marion, Ala. (There is some controversy over who designed this flag, with Orren Randolph Smith of North Carolina also claiming to have designed it, but the best evidence supports Marschall).

The similarity of design between the “Stars and Bars” and the “Stars and Stripes” shows the close ties Southerners felt to their old country and constitution.

Unfortunately, the similarity of the two flags caused great confusion on the battlefield. Amid the smoke and chaos of battle it was not easy to distinguish them apart. For that reason, Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston ordered that a new flag be designed for use by troops on the battlefield. The result was the Confederate Battle Flag.

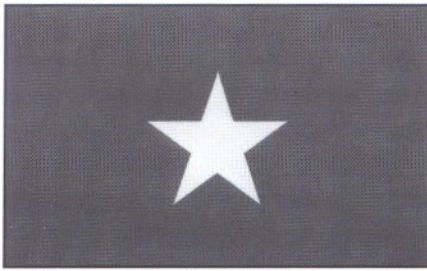
Incorrectly called the “Stars and Bars” by many today, the square Battle Flag incorporated the Cross of St. Andrew, a Celtic Christian symbol, along with the stars and colors used in the national flag.

A rectangular form of the Battle Flag, commonly flown today, was adopted in 1863 as the Naval Jack and in 1864 it was officially made the battle flag for the Army of Tennessee (the main army of the Western theater which included many Alabama regiments).

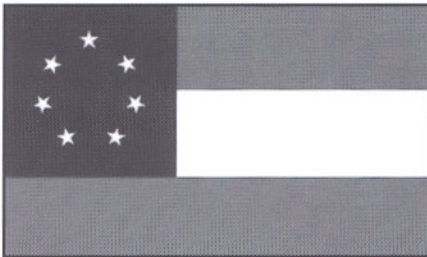
Because of the popularity of the Battle Flag, the confusion caused by the national flag and a feeling of less endearment to the old Union after two years of brutal war, the Confederate Congress adopted a second national flag in 1863.

Known as the Stainless Banner, it was a white flag with the square Battle Flag in the canton (upper left). This design created another problem, though, as it could be mistaken for a surrender flag on the battlefield, especially if there was no wind to extend the flag enough to show the canton.

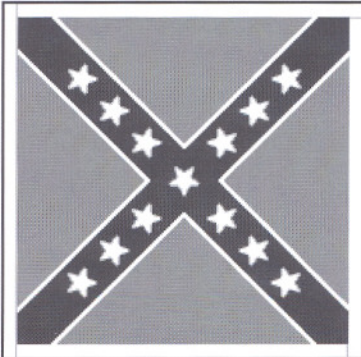
To solve this problem, the Confederate Congress added a red vertical bar to the end of the national flag in March of 1865, creating the Third National Flag of the Confederacy.



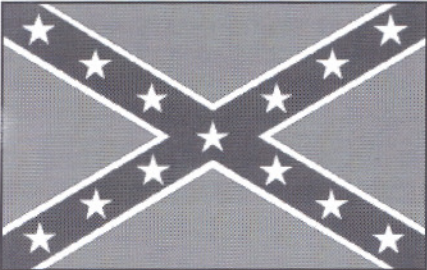
BONNIE BLUE FLAG



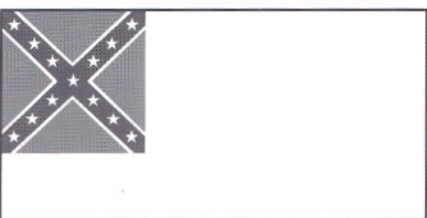
1ST NATIONAL FLAG (STARS AND BARS)



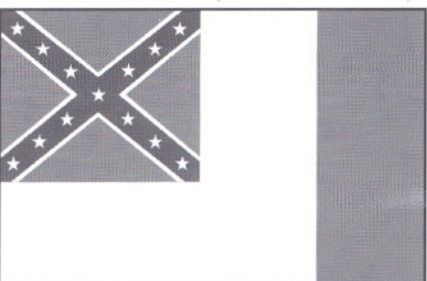
BATTLE FLAG (ARMY OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA)



ARMY OF TENNESSEE BATTLE FLAG



2ND NATIONAL FLAG (STAINLESS BANNER)



3RD NATIONAL FLAG

## **Isn't the Confederate flag a symbol of oppression, since it flew over slavery?**

Neither the rectangular nor the square Battle Flags were ever national flags of the Confederacy. They were military symbols, used on the field of battle.

As a military symbol, the Battle Flag never “flew over slavery” as it is sometimes accused of today by various people and organizations with political agendas.

If critics argue that *any* Confederate flag is a symbol of oppression, because it flew over a nation in which slavery was legal, then they must also be prepared to pull the Stars and Stripes off of every flag pole in the nation. The Confederacy, while making further importation of slaves unconstitutional, tolerated domestic slavery for just over four years. The Stars and Stripes flew on slave ships and over a nation tolerating slavery from the inception of the United States until *after* the War Between the States ended (with the passage of the 13th Amendment in December of 1865).

## **Isn't the Confederate flag a symbol of bigotry and racism since hate groups have displayed it?**

As a soldier's flag, the flag represents the honor and valor of those who answered the call of duty. The misguided groups that misuse honorable symbols cannot change this history. The Sons of Confederate Veterans, consisting of descendants of those who carried the flags in battle, oppose any misuse of the flag and has actively and publicly opposed the use of Confederate symbols by any hate group. If the standard for determining whether a flag is “racist” or not is its use by a hate group, then the Stars and Stripes and the Christian flag, which have both been displayed traditionally and prominently by hate groups, are equally tainted. People of good faith recognize that all these symbols are being misused when racist groups incorporate them and dismiss the abusers' attempts to distort their meanings.

## **Isn't the Confederate flag a symbol of treason, since it was used by troops trying to destroy the United States?**

This presumes the War Between the States was actually a *civil war* and that the Southern states were trying to take over the Federal government. Though commonly referred to as the “Civil War,” it clearly was not a civil war by any common definition. Webster defines civil war as a war between different sections or factions of the same nation struggling for control of the government. This is not what occurred from 1861 to 1865. The North and South were two separate nations. The South sought only its independence. The South did not seek the overthrow of the government in Washington, D.C. Just as the colonies sought independence from England during the Revolutionary War, so did the Southern states seek their independence during the War Between the States. The Southern states legally developed and passed ordinances of secession to leave the United States and later legally affiliated themselves to form a confederation of sovereign states. There was a strong legal basis for secession, which is why its opponents did not attempt to settle its legality in court until after the War had made the issue moot. To commit treason against the United States, one must be a citizen of the United States, and the soldiers and sailors of the Confederate States of America were not.

Further proving the legality of secession is the fact that Confederate President Jefferson Davis was imprisoned without charge for two years after the war in anticipation that he would be tried for treason. Even though there was a great desire by some to see this trial through, the likelihood that Davis would prove in court that secession was legal — and therefore no act of treason was committed — forced even the diehard supporters of the treason charge to abandon the idea.



*A Confederate Naval reenactor pays tribute to the H.L. Hunley as the submarine is brought into Charleston Harbor after recovery in 2000. The H.L. Hunley was constructed in Mobile.*



**Josiah Gorgas (1818-1883)**, a career army officer and chief of the Confederate Bureau of Ordnance, was born in Pennsylvania, but married the daughter of a former Alabama governor and followed his wife into secession.

Gorgas had served in arsenals in several cities in the North, but when the war broke out he joined the Confederate Army in February, 1861 and within two months became chief of the Confederate Bureau of Ordnance. Gorgas's prior army career had not been very distinguished but in his new role his success was phenomenal, building a system that by 1864 produced vast quantities of war material despite the enormous handicaps of an inferior rail system and self-interested governors who hoarded supplies in their own states.

Gorgas established armories and foundries, found alternative sources for saltpeter and created a huge gunpowder mill in Georgia. Thanks to his efforts, the Southern armies never lacked weapons.

Over the course of the war, he rose in rank to brigadier general and was widely regarded as the most able administrator in the Confederate government.

After the war, he was elected president of the University of Alabama and served for nearly a year until he suffered a massive stroke. He resigned from the presidency in July 1879 and the trustees gave him a house on campus and created the post of university librarian. His health worsened and he died on May 15, 1883. His wife, Amelia Gayle Gorgas, took over his role as librarian and the main library on campus is named in her honor. He was buried in Tuscaloosa's Evergreen Cemetery.

## Alabama and the War Between the States

### Wasn't the War Between the States fought to end slavery?

While slavery was a significant issue before and during the war, the war was not fought in order to preserve or to end that institution. Slavery was legal in the United States and the states that formed the Confederacy did not have to leave the U.S. to keep it legal by virtue of their power in the Senate. Abolishing slavery required a Constitutional amendment and the Southern states had more than enough votes to block ratification of such an amendment. *If the only goal of the Southern states were to preserve slavery, they would have stayed in the United States and simply blocked any contrary amendment proposed.*

U.S. President Abraham Lincoln, who provoked the conflict by refusing to consider any political solutions to the secession crisis, frequently and clearly made this point also. He repeatedly claimed that he would gladly protect the legal institution of slavery if it would preserve the Union.

In a letter written before the war began, Lincoln told journalist and politician Horace Greeley: *"My paramount object in this struggle is to save the Union, and is not either to save or to destroy slavery. If I could save the Union without freeing any slave, I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing all the slaves, I would do it; and if I could do it by freeing some and leaving others alone, I would do that."*

The popular myth the war was fought to free slaves probably found its roots in 1863 when Lincoln sought to turn the tide of war in his favor and to discourage foreign intervention on behalf of the Confederate States. Despite having far more men and material at his disposal than did the fledgling Confederate government, Southern troops had fought the North to a stalemate and two European powers, England and France, were poised to enter the war on the Confederate side.

Lincoln's decision was to shift the rationale for the war in mid-stream, from preserving the Union to freeing the slaves, believing the public relations makeover would convince Europe to remain on the sidelines.

To accomplish this shift, Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, a document that carried no legal authority and actually freed no slaves (not even slaves in Union states and Union-held territory), but turned out to be the public relations success he sought. (Even to this day).

The fact that Lincoln introduced slavery as a rationale for the war long after the conflict was under way demonstrates that it was not the prime reason he started the war. Until that point, as with any significant political conflict, there were numerous complicated causes, some leading back to the very formation of the country. Some of the causes were:

1. A punitive Northern tariff, which essentially forced Southerners to pay higher prices on goods to support the federal government, which invested funds to subsidize Northern industry and build Northern infrastructure.

2. Disputes about the constitutional nature of the Union, particularly as federal laws increasingly threatened the state sovereignty guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

3. Lincoln's desire to preserve the Union by force rather than persuasion; for if persuasion failed, he preferred a Union kept together by the might of the sword rather than have two nations coexisting in peace (thus avoided going down in history as the president who presided over the division of the country).

4. The entire issue of slavery, not just as a moral issue, but also as an economic and political issue. (The 1850 Missouri Compromise, engineered by Henry Clay, demonstrated the issues regarding the political balance of power between free and slave states could not be ignored). Even in the South, opinions were divided. Not all Southerners who wanted to protect the practice of slavery called for secession. Yet many Southerners calling for an end to slavery supported secession because of economic and cultural issues. Unfortunately, the United States had not found a reasonable way of ending the practice of slavery (unlike England, where the government reimbursed slave owners as part of ending the practice of slavery). In addition, the United States was forcing the South to pay more than its "fair share" through unreasonably high tariffs (taxes). Consequently, the Southern states felt threatened politically as well as economically and bound together for self-protection.

5. Lincoln's call for troops to invade states that had seceded early. Lincoln's call for states to supply troops for the purpose of invading and subduing the Southern states that had already seceded did more to begin the war than any other cause. States like Kentucky, Virginia and North Carolina — while unhappy with the political situation they found themselves in — had decided to stay with the Union. Virginia and North Carolina had voted down ordinances of secession but then reversed themselves immediately after Lincoln's call for an army of invasion to use against the South.



*The monument of Raphael Semmes stands at the end of Government Street in downtown Mobile, the place where Semmes practiced law after the war with Mexico.*

*In April, 1861 he joined the Confederate navy but earned his greatest fame from August 1862 to June 1864 as captain of the C.S.S. Alabama. His operations carried him from the Atlantic to the East Indies as he captured 69 U.S. merchantmen and destroyed one U. S. warship, the U.S.S. Hatteras.*

*The Alabama returned to the Atlantic and made port in Cherbourg, France, where she was blockaded by the U.S.S. Kearsarge. Semmes took the Alabama out on June 19, 1864 and met the Kearsarge in one of the most famous naval engagements of the war, resulting in the sinking of the Alabama.*

*Semmes made his way back to the Confederacy, where he was promoted to rear admiral in February 1865. With the fall of Richmond in April, Semmes supervised the destruction of all the squadron's warships and was then appointed a brigadier general in the army.*

*After the war, the citizens of Mobile presented Semmes with what became known as the Raphael Semmes House in 1871 and it remained his residence until his death. He died in 1877 and was interred in Mobile's Old Catholic Cemetery.*

## **What was Alabama's role in the War Between the States?**

Following the election of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States, the Alabama Legislature on December 6, 1860, passed a resolution calling for the election of delegates to a convention to consider the issue of secession. On December 24, Governor A.B. Moore issued a proclamation ordering the election. On January 7, 1861, the convention delegates met in the hall of representatives at the Alabama Statehouse to consider the question of secession. After four days of debate, the convention voted 61 to 39 to withdraw from the union:

**"Be it declared and ordained by the people of the State of Alabama in convention assembled, That the State of Alabama now withdraws, and is hereby withdrawn from the Union known as 'the United State of America,' and henceforth ceases to be one of said United States, and is, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and independent State."**



**John Pelham** fought with such valor and dedication for the Confederacy, finally giving his life in that cause, that he has become symbolic of Alabama fighting men in all wars who have offered themselves to defend the state, the nation and the principles in which they believed.

Pelham resigned from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in 1861, just a few weeks before he would have graduated, in order to return to Alabama and enter the Confederate Army.

Pelham's well-drilled and disciplined artillery battery caught the eye of Gen. J.E.B. Stuart, who provided horses for the men and transformed the battery into "horse artillery," more mobile than conventional artillery.

Pelham was involved in every major military engagement of Stuart's cavalry from the First Battle of Manassas to Kelly's Ford, more than 60 encounters. He distinguished himself in battles at Sharpsburg and Fredericksburg.

At Sharpsburg, Pelham's guns repeatedly harassed the flanks of oncoming Union lines, breaking up battle formations. "It is really extraordinary to find such nerve and genius in a mere boy," Lt. Gen. Stonewall Jackson said in his battle report. "With a Pelham on each flank I believe I could whip the world."

At Fredericksburg, Pelham's guns, positioned well in advance of the main Confederate lines, held up the entire flank of the Army of the Potomac for several hours, confusing an army of 120,000 men with a brilliant one-gun barrage while under direct fire from multiple batteries. He refused several orders to withdraw and finally did only when he ran out of ammunition. Gen. Robert E. Lee praised "the gallant Pelham" in his report.

At Kelly's Ford on March 17, 1863, Pelham participated in a cavalry charge, his artillery not being engaged. He was struck in the head by a fragment of an exploding Union artillery shell and died the next morning.

While the secession convention met, Alabama invited representatives of other seceding states to meet in Montgomery to discuss the creation of a confederation of states. A congress of six states (South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Florida, Louisiana and Alabama) convened in the Alabama senate chambers on February 4, 1861, to begin the work of creating a provisional Confederate government. Delegates from Texas joined them later.

On February 8, the Provisional Constitution of the Confederate States of America was unanimously adopted; the following day Jefferson Davis of Mississippi was elected President of the new Southern nation. On February 18, the inauguration of President Davis was greeted with cheering, fireworks, the playing of "Dixie" and a salute from a hundred guns. Alabama had become the "Cradle of the Confederacy." On March 4, the Stars and Bars flew for the first time when it was hoisted above the Alabama capitol dome.

Although Southerners hoped to avoid war with the North, the Confederate government began making preparations in case it proved necessary to defend the new nation. Governor Moore began accepting regiments of volunteer soldiers into the Alabama Volunteer Corps. Provoked into action by the Lincoln government (which sent an armed fleet to resupply the Federal garrison at Fort Sumter in Charleston Harbor), the Confederate government reluctantly accepted the war forced upon it by the Lincoln government and four years of bloody conflict to determine the fate of the new Confederacy ensued.

By October, 1861, Alabama had enrolled 27,000 men in twenty-eight infantry regiments and one cavalry regiment. As the war continued, the number of regiments would grow. It is estimated that by the war's end more than 120,000 Alabamians had fought for the Confederacy, giving Alabama the highest number of soldiers per capita than any other state in the Confederacy.

Many thousands of these men sacrificed their lives to preserve their state, their homes and their families, as well as their honor.

Many Alabamians served in leadership roles in the Confederate military. Among the general officers from Alabama were Edmund W. Pettus, Pinkney D. Bowles, Phillip D. Roddey, Charles M. Shelley and Edward A. O'Neal.

Among Alabama's Confederate heroes were two young officers who gave their lives in defense of their state. Brig. Gen. John Herbert Kelly, "Alabama's Boy General," led a division of cavalry and was only 24 years old when he was killed in action in 1864. John Pelham, "the Gallant Pelham," who won the admiration of Gen. Robert E. Lee for his courage under fire, was a major in command of Gen. J.E.B. Stuart's horse artillery. Pelham was also only 24 years of age when he was killed in battle in 1863.

One of Alabama's most famous Confederates was Admiral Raphael Semmes of Mobile, captain of the famed sea raider *C.S.S. Alabama*, which ranged the oceans terrorizing Union shipping.

While most of the major battles of the war were fought on the soil of other Southern states, certain Alabama cities were targets for Yankee military action late in the war. Mobile was a major port upon which the South depended to receive weapons and supplies from overseas. The *H.L. Hunley*, the world's first submarine to successfully attack and sink an enemy vessel was constructed in the city of Mobile.



The Battle of Mobile Bay in August, 1864, saw a Federal fleet fighting its way into Mobile Bay past Confederate defenses at Fort Morgan. The last major land battle of the war was fought at Fort Blakely near Mobile in April, 1865, as the Federal forces sought to capture the city.

The Birmingham area was a major source of iron for the Confederacy. Selma was an important industrial center that manufactured munitions for the Confederate military. Here were located the Selma Arsenal, the Confederate Niter Works and the Selma Naval Ordnance Works. The largest cavalry raid of the war, led by Gen. James H. Wilson, overwhelmed the outnumbered defenders of Selma in April, 1865, destroying the city's capacity to manufacture war material for the Confederacy.

Although it wasn't a major battle featuring large numbers of troops, one of the most thrilling episodes of the war took place in Alabama when Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest defeated the Yankee cavalry raid of Gen. Abel D. Streight In April, 1863, Streight led a cavalry force of 1,700 men into Alabama, intending to strike eastward into Georgia to destroy a vital railroad line supplying the Confederate army. Although Streight had a head start and outnumbered his Confederate pursuers three to one, he was overtaken, defeated and captured by Forrest after a week-long running battle through north central Alabama.

Teenager Emma Sansom gained fame as an Alabama heroine when she helped Forrest catch up to Streight by leading the Confederates to a hidden crossing of Black Creek near Gadsden. Without Emma Sansom's courageous assistance, the Yankees could have escaped.

It is estimated that 20,000-30,000 Alabama soldiers lost their lives defending the South during the War Between the States.

Alabama's civilian casualties, which were mainly due to Union atrocities such as the burning of Athens, were also very high. The true number of Alabama casualties, military and civilian, will never be known.

## Honoring Confederate Veterans

### Why is it important to honor Confederate veterans?

We must honor our Confederate veterans for the many reasons that we honor all American veterans — to remember and appreciate those who were willing to give their all for us, to teach our children the meaning of honor and sacrifice, and to remind ourselves that freedom is protected by diligence and its price is measured in lives.

### How does Alabama remember its Confederate veterans?

Confederate Memorial Day is a state holiday observed in Alabama on the fourth Monday in April. Memorial services are held in cemeteries and at historical sites throughout the state.

The third Monday in January is set aside as a state holiday to honor the Jan. 19 birthday of General Robert E. Lee. The first Monday in June is a state holiday in honor of the June 3 birthday of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. Observances are held throughout the state to honor the memory of these two Confederate leaders.



*The monument above marks the site where a cavalry force under Confederate Gen. Nathan Bedford Forrest captured Union Col. Abel D. Streight and his men during a raiding party into north Alabama in the spring of 1863.*

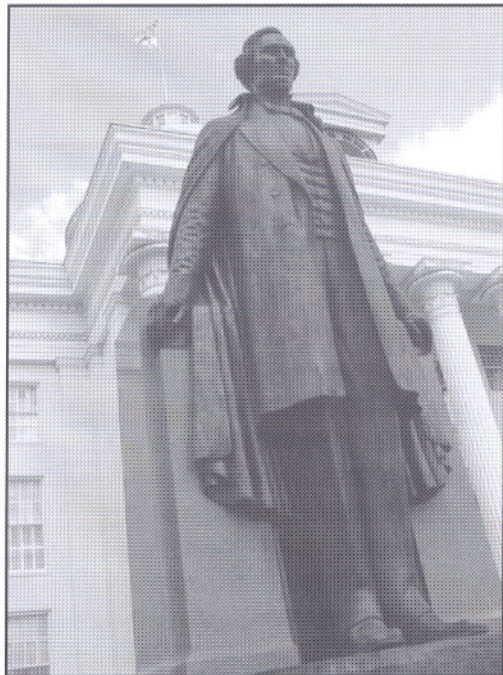
*That capture would not have been possible without the heroic assistance of 16-year-old **Emma Sansom**, who helped the Confederate force of less than 600 men capture Streight and his men near Cedar Bluff and bring an end to their raid into Alabama which had started on April 19.*

*On the afternoon of May 2, Streight and 1,600 infantry, many mounted on mules, crossed Black Creek (located three miles from Gadsden) ahead of Forrest and destroyed the only local bridge, thus impeding the Confederate pursuit. Unable to use the bridge to cross the swollen creek, Forrest rode to a nearby home to find someone knowledgeable about the local terrain and came upon Sansom.*

*According to an account published in the Jacksonville Republican one week later, Sansom volunteered to guide Forrest to a nearby ford. With Sansom's guidance, Forrest located the ford, crossed it, and caught up with the Union forces. While escorting the general, Sansom reportedly faced enemy fire that ceased after the Union soldiers discovered that they had been firing upon a teenage girl.*

*By aiding the Confederate general, Sansom risked possible retribution for herself and her family from the Union soldiers had they escaped capture and became an enduring heroine of the Confederacy for generations.*

# About the Sons of Confederate Veterans



The monument to **Jefferson Davis** on the grounds of the State Capitol in Montgomery was placed in 1940 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and honors one of the most misunderstood figures in American history.

His background included service in the Army, gallantry in the Mexican War, terms as a U.S. Representative and Senator and a stint as Secretary of War under Franklin Pierce. As the leading Southerner in Congress, he struggled to save the Union and its federal principles while fighting for the doctrine of states rights he was dedicated to preserving. Perhaps no one in his own time had greater influence on legislation than Davis.

Like many Southerners, he was torn between preserving the Union and supporting states rights when the Southern states seceded. He was a reluctant secessionist, yet the unanimous choice of the Confederate Convention for President. On Feb. 18, 1861, he was inaugurated at the Capitol in Montgomery and lived in the Capital City until May, when the Confederate government was moved to Richmond, Va.

Jefferson Davis was a President without precedent. Unlike Washington, who had assumed duties in peacetime, he formed a new nation while at war. Unlike Lincoln, who inherited a government with an estimated 100 times the industrial power of the South, Davis was in charge of a nation with few resources.

After the fall of the Confederacy in 1865, Davis was imprisoned at Fortress Monroe. He waited for two years to vindicate the Southern cause but the Federal Government never brought him to trial for treason as feared it would be proved that the South had a right to secede. Finally, Davis was released. He spent the remaining years of his life in retirement at Beauvoir, on the Mississippi Gulf Coast. When he died in New Orleans in 1889, he was given the greatest funeral the South has ever known.

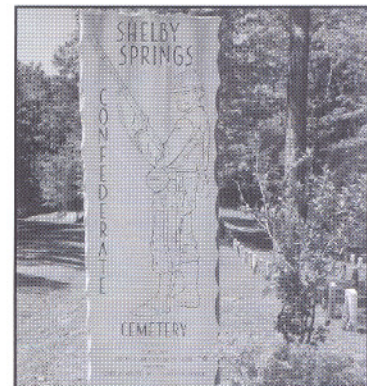
## What is the SCV?

The Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV) is a non-profit, patriotic, historical, civic and benevolent organization created to preserve the history and legacy of the Confederate soldier so future generations can understand the motives that animated the Southern cause.

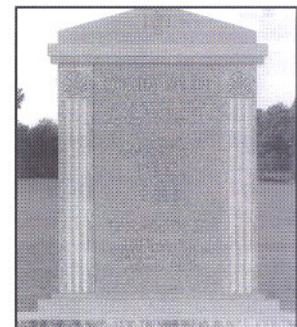
The SCV is the direct heir of the United Confederate Veterans. Organized at Richmond, Virginia, in 1896, the SCV continues to fulfill the charge given by Lt. Gen. Stephen Dill Lee, then commander-in-chief of the United Confederate Veterans:

“To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we submit the cause for which we fought; to your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier’s good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles he loved and which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations.”

Membership in the Sons of Confederate Veterans is open to all male descendants of any veteran who served honorably in the Confederate armed forces. Membership can be obtained either through direct or collateral family lines and kinship to a veteran must be documented genealogically. The minimum age for membership is 12. There are approximately 32,000 members in the Sons of Confederate Veterans in about 700 local units known as camps.



Magnolia Cemetery in Mobile, above left, and Shelby Springs Cemetery near Columbiana, above right, are two examples of historic cemeteries restored by the SCV. The organization also is instrumental in helping erect and maintain memorials such as those in Washington County, below left, or Lawrence County, below right.



## What kind of civic projects does the SCV perform?

The SCV has ongoing programs at the local, state and national levels. These programs offer members a wide range of opportunities to participate in the organization. Activities commonly undertaken by the Sons of Confederate Veterans include historical preservation work, marking Confederate soldiers' graves, historical reenactments, scholarly publications, monument erection, memorial services, academic scholarships, living history interpretations, contributions to libraries as well as state and local museums, battlefield preservation, educational school programs and regular meetings to discuss the military and political history of the War Between the States.

## Does the SCV admit minority members?

Yes, membership in the SCV is open to all male descendants of men who served in the Confederate armed forces. The official records of the War Between the States, as well as the archival records of many Southern states, indicate many minorities served in the Confederate armed forces in a variety of positions. Their direct and collateral descendants are eligible for membership in the SCV. The SCV encourages membership in the organization regardless of an individual's race or national origin.



*The Confederate monument at Janney Furnace Park in Ohatchee is the largest black granite Confederate memorial in the world. It was dedicated on June 1, 2003 by the "Tige" Anderson Camp 453 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and honors the men of Calhoun County who served in the Confederate armed forces. The panels on the left and right honor the men who served while the center panel (pictured) honors the 908 men who died while in service for the Confederate States of America. Many of the men whose names are on this monument may lie in unmarked graves on battlefields where they died, but now their names are forever engraved, not only in granite, but also in the hearts of the citizens of Calhoun County. The park, which includes a Confederate museum, is on the site of the Janney Furnace, built by Alfred Janney in 1863-64 to produce pig iron for the Confederacy.*



*Although Joe Wheeler was a Georgia native who spent much of his early life with relatives in Connecticut, he commanded Alabama troops for much of the War Between the States in the Western Theater and settled in north Alabama after the war.*

*He has the rare distinction of serving as a general for opposing forces in war time, first with the Confederate States Army and later with the United States Army in the Spanish-American War and the Philippine-American War. He is one of two Confederate generals buried in Arlington Cemetery.*

*At the start of the War Between the States, Wheeler enlisted as a first lieutenant with the Georgia state militia artillery but was promoted to colonel and placed in charge of the 19th Alabama Infantry Regiment. That unit fought with distinction in several early battles in the West, including the Battle of Shiloh, and soon after Wheeler transferred to the cavalry and commanded the 2nd Cavalry Brigade of the Left Wing of the Army of Mississippi.*

*During his career in the Confederate States Army, Wheeler was wounded three times, lost 36 staff officers to combat, and a total of 16 horses were shot from under him. Although he was criticized by some for his actions late in the war, many historians consider his cavalry efforts second only to Nathan Bedford Forrest in the West.*

*After the war, he became a planter and settled near Courtland where he married and raised a family. His home, the Wheeler Plantation, is a historic site owned by the Alabama Historical Commission. He served for nine terms in the U.S. House of Representatives and was praised both for his efforts to repair the division between the North and the South and for economic policies that helped rebuild the South.*

*He was still in Congress when the Spanish-American War broke out and he volunteered for duty in 1898 and was appointed a major general of volunteers by President William McKinley.*

# Remembering Our Confederate Heritage

## The Museum at Confederate Memorial Park

Confederate Memorial Park is the original 102-acre site of the Alabama Confederate Soldiers' Home (1902-1939). An excellent museum showcases Alabama's Confederate soldier in war, as a veteran and at the Soldiers' Home. The park includes two cemeteries, period buildings, nature trail, covered pavilions and picnic tables, and a Confederate reference library.

The park was established in 1964 during the Civil War centennial by an act of the Alabama State Legislature and was funded in perpetuity by a Confederate veterans and widows pension property tax millage which had originally funded the Alabama Home for Confederate Soldiers when the state took control of the Home in October, 1903. In 1971, the park was placed under the authority of the Alabama Historical Commission.

The site's state-of-the-art museum opened on April 28, 2007 and interprets the life story of the average Alabama Confederate veteran from recruit to old age, incorporating hundreds of artifacts from the war and the home. It includes six interactive media stations and numerous interpretive panels.

## The Confederate Library

The Confederate Library opened in August, 2008 after the museum moved to its new facility and the old building was restored as a learning and research center.

A number of people donated books and the library's collection has grown to approximately 1,600 books. The books are organized into topical sections to help visitors looking for information on prisons, battles or other specific topics. The most popular section is the Confederate Roster, used frequently by people trying to locate a Confederate ancestor.

While the library is popular among local genealogists and history buffs interested in the War Between the States, it also includes visitors from all over the United States as well as foreign visitors from Australia and Sweden. One recent visitor was a family from Houston, Texas whose ancestor resided at the Soldiers' Home and is buried in the nearby cemetery. Both the museum and the library are great attractions for the state, educating a new generation of students and history buffs on the War Between the States and the life of the Confederate soldier.

The park is located off state Highway 143 1 mile south of intersection U.S. 31 and 143 in Chilton County.



*The museum at Confederate Memorial Park, above, moved into its new building in April, 2007. The old museum building was converted into the Confederate Library, below, and opened in August, 2008. It houses approximately 1,600 books, including the Confederate Roster, and is popular among genealogists and casual history buffs of the War Between the States.*



## The Civil War Trail in Alabama

The “Alabama Civil War Trail” was designed by the Alabama Tourism Department to celebrate and honor the sesquicentennial of the War Between the States. While the state avoided many of the bloody conflicts of the war, it still has a rich Confederate heritage that includes historic sites, museums and cemeteries. The Sons of Confederate Veterans often provides help in maintaining or preserving the sites and cemeteries and is instrumental in the various reenactments that go on throughout the year in the state.

While many of the historical markers and money raised in support of the Confederate cause since the war came from the United Daughters of the Confederacy or other women’s groups, the Sons of Confederate Veterans has taken a more active role in recent years.

The SCV provided \$10,000 several years ago to help maintain and make improvements to “Pond Spring,” the post-war home of Confederate Gen. Joseph Wheeler near Courtland. The 50-acre site includes 13 historic buildings. The main house remains under construction as long-overdue renovations are made.

The state’s link to the War Between the States, while limited in terms of engagements between the two armies, is historic in that Alabama marked both the beginning and the end of the war.

In February, 1861, representatives from six of the seven states which had seceded from the Union met in the Senate Chamber of the Alabama State Capitol for the purpose of forming a new nation. The Confederate Convention adopted a provisional constitution in this room, just a month after the ordinance of secession was passed by a state delegation across the hall in the House Chamber.

Jefferson Davis was sworn in as the nation’s new president on the west portico of the Capitol on Feb. 18, 1861. A bronze star marks the spot.

Much of the original Confederate government buildings are gone from the city, but the Confederate Post Office remains on Washington Avenue and the White House where Davis lived until the government moved to Richmond was moved from its location to its present site on the grounds of the Archives and History Building.

On April 11, Confederate Secretary of War L.P. Walker sent a telegram from the second floor of the Southern Telegraph Office of the Winter Building on Dexter Avenue, authorizing Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard to fire on Fort Sumter. That action, on the following day, officially started the war.



*Pond Spring, the post-war home of Confederate Gen. Joseph Wheeler, is a historic site near Courtland in northwest Alabama. The Sons of Confederate Veterans donated \$10,000 several years ago to help with the renovation of the structure. The First White House of the Confederacy, below, is one of the most popular historic sites in the state and holds annual celebrations for the birthdays of Jefferson Davis and Robert E. Lee as well as Confederate Memorial Day that involve members of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy.*



Several of the state's historical sites are ironworks constructed during the war to provide material to the troops.

The Brierfield Ironworks Historical Site Park, located between Birmingham and Montgomery; the Cornwall Furnace Park, just east of Cedar Bluff; the Janney Furnace in Ohatchee; and the Tannehill Ironworks Historical State Park in McCalla are among the places that became targets of the Federal Army in 1864 and 1865.

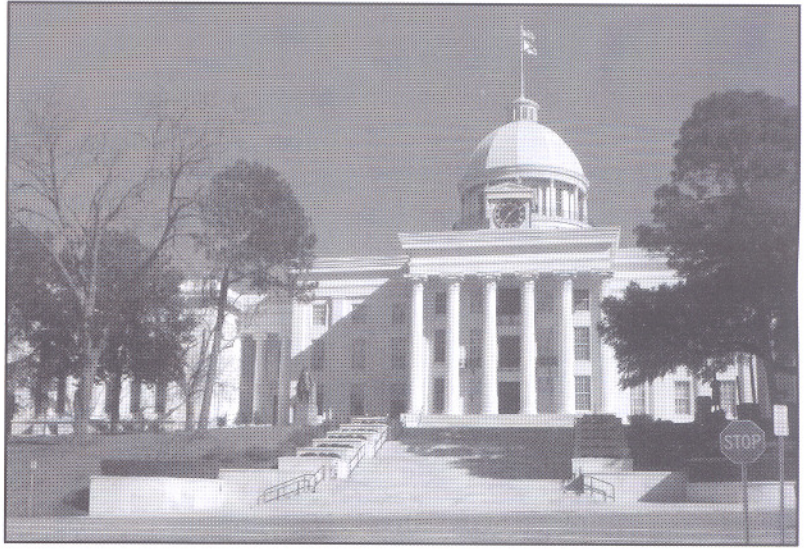
The Sons of Confederate Veterans helps with more than a dozen reenactments in the state each year and several of those, including the Battle of Ten Island in Ohatchee in April, the Battle of Selma in April and the Tannehill Skirmish on Memorial Day weekend, involve the battles between Federal forces trying to destroy the Confederate ironworks and the Confederate units there to protect them.

Another often overlooked historical site is the Confederate Armory in Tallassee, where the Tallassee Carbine Rifle was manufactured after the factory was moved from Richmond in 1864. The Armory is a National Historical Site and presently undergoing renovation, but the Battle of Tallassee is held each fall in late October or early November at nearby Gibson's View Plantation to reenact the fight to preserve the factory.

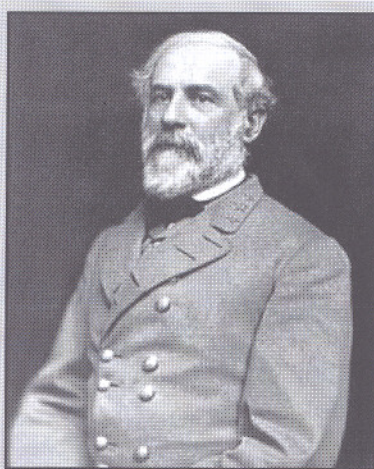
Virtually all of the actual battles or skirmishes that occurred in Alabama are reenacted each year, including Nathan Bedford Forrest's capture of Union Col. Abel Streight near Blountsville on the first weekend of May, or the siege of Fort Morgan (in the Battle of Mobile Bay) on the first weekend of August.

Perhaps fittingly, the final battle of the war also occurred in this state. Four years after the telegram to start the war originated in Montgomery, the Battle of Blakeley took place in Baldwin County. Each year in April, that confrontation is repeated by reenactors at Historic Blakeley State Park, located just north of Spanish Fort.

Many of the reenactors are also Sons of Confederate Veteran members dedicated to preserving a fair and accurate account of the War Between the States. Several of the Alabama-based reenactment groups include the 14th Alabama, Company G ([www.14thalabama.com](http://www.14thalabama.com)), 15th Alabama, Company G ([www.mainerebels.org](http://www.mainerebels.org)), 19th Alabama Infantry ([www.19thalabama.org](http://www.19thalabama.org)), 4th Alabama Cavalry, Company B ([www.freewebs.com/4thalabama\\_cavalry/](http://www.freewebs.com/4thalabama_cavalry/)) and the Alabama State Militia Artillery ([www.asma.csatroops.net](http://www.asma.csatroops.net)).



*The Alabama State Capitol is one of the most historic buildings in the nation. In the House Chamber, the state delegates passed an ordinance of secession. In the Senate Chamber, the Confederate Convention adopted a constitution. Jefferson Davis was sworn in as president of the new country on the west portico and returned years later to place the cornerstone on the Confederate Monument on the Capitol grounds. After his death, his body would lie in state in the Supreme Court Chamber.*



Now recognized as one of the greatest military leaders in history, Confederate Gen. **Robert E. Lee** (1807-70) opposed secession, granted freedom to slaves he inherited and, even after his native Virginia left the Union, was offered command of the entire Federal Army. After agonizing deliberations, Lee declined the offer from U.S. President Abraham Lincoln and resigned his commission in the United States Army, saying he could not take up arms against his state.

Many contemporary readers fail to understand that in the 1860s "national" loyalty was given to the state because each state functioned as its own nation. The Union was just that, not a nation as we now understand it, but a union of sovereign states. This constitutional understanding of the union changed as a result of the United States' victory over the Confederate States.

It would take years before Lee begrudgingly earned respect from Northern residents, but his ability to defeat much larger armies with fewer men and equipment endeared him to those in the South. In the state of Alabama, two high schools are named after him and his birthday in January is a state holiday.



## PROCLAMATION By the Governor of Alabama

*WHEREAS, the residents of the state of Alabama have a noble lineage and heritage of adamantly bearing the burdens that are thrust upon individuals throughout history to further the greater interests of their societies; and*

*WHEREAS, high among those burdens borne upon the shoulders of any citizenry is the burden of armed conflict; and*

*WHEREAS, Alabamians have admirably answered the grim call to duty when beckoned, from the era of the musket to that of the missile; and*

*WHEREAS, the ominous clouds of dissension gave birth in the city of Montgomery to the Confederate States of America; and*

*WHEREAS, Alabamians again heeded the clarion with dignity, both at home and on the field of battle; and*

*WHEREAS, upon the conclusion of the war, many of these same leaders and citizens worked tirelessly to reunite and rebuild this country and forge reconciliation; and*

*WHEREAS, our recognition of Confederate history also recognizes that slavery was one of the causes of the war, an issue in the war, was ended by the war and slavery is hereby condemned; and*

*WHEREAS, the knowledge of the role of the Confederate States of America in the history of our state and nation is vital to understanding who we are and what we are; and*

*WHEREAS, we honor our past and from it draw the courage, strength and wisdom to reconcile ourselves and go forward into the future together as Alabamians and Americans;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bob Riley, Governor of the State of Alabama, acknowledging the importance of recognizing the heritage of all Alabamians, do hereby proclaim that the month of April shall henceforth be*

### *Confederate History and Heritage Month*

*in the State of Alabama.*



*Given Under My Hand and the Great Seal of the Office of the Governor at the State Capitol in the City of Montgomery on the 17<sup>th</sup> day of March 2003.*

*Bob R. L.*  
Governor Bob Riley



The Confederate flag on Interstate 65 in Autauga County is a constant reminder that Alabama is the Heart of Dixie

# State of Alabama Legal Holidays

**Robert E. Lee's Birthday**  
*Third Monday in January*

**Confederate Memorial Day**  
*Fourth Monday in April*

**Jefferson Davis' Birthday**  
*First Monday in June*

The Sons of Confederate Veterans finds itself facing a world where Southern history is no longer taught in our schools and the prejudicial myth that Southerners and their heritage are evil is even encouraged. The SCV hopes this guide will open the eyes of those who read it to Confederate history and begins them on a journey of historical discovery that helps make our society more tolerant of Southerners as well as our history, culture and heritage.



Alabama Division  
Sons of Confederate Veterans  
1-877-4SCVALA  
<http://www.alabamascv.org>

