

# We are in a Political Fight ...

## ... and not a history debate

By Gene Kizer, Jr.

Since the 1960s, the interpretation of Southern history and the War Between the States put forth by most of the news media and academia is largely a fraud. It is driven by the racist identity politics of the Democrat Party and not historical truth.

If Southern history was interpreted objectively as it was before 1960, instead of with liberal political hate as it is today, nobody would dare remove a monument to soldiers in a war in which 800,000 were killed and more than a million wounded,<sup>1</sup> half of which were Confederate soldiers who were always hungry, ragged, outnumbered and outgunned, but exhibited valor such as the world had never seen.

Drew Gilpin Faust in her excellent book, *This Republic of Suffering, Death and the American Civil War*, uses the earlier statistics of 620,000 total deaths compiled by William F. Fox, and she writes those deaths were "approximately equal to the total American fatalities in the Revolution, the War of 1812, the Mexican War, the Spanish-American War, World War I, World War II, and the Korean War combined."<sup>2</sup> If you use Hacker's statistics, you'd have to add Vietnam, both Gulf Wars, Afghanistan and the war on terror; in other words, deaths in the War Between the States were higher than all other American wars combined, with room to spare.

Faust says the rate of death "in comparison with the size of the American population, was six

times that of World War II. A similar rate, about two percent, in the United States today would mean six million fatalities."<sup>3</sup>

Confederate soldiers "died at a rate three times that of their Yankee counterparts; one in five white Southern men of military age did not survive the War."<sup>4</sup>

She quotes James McPherson who writes "the overall mortality rate for the South exceeded that of any country in World War I and that of all but the region between the Rhine and the Volga in World War II."<sup>5</sup>

To personalize some of those statistics, Confederate Colonel George E. Purvis was quoted in *Confederate Veteran* magazine, March, 1897, from an article he had written about Union General Henry Van Ness Boynton and the Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park. General Boynton, with great respect for the courage of the Confederates he faced, wanted to make it a sacred memorial, not just to Union valor, but American valor.

Colonel Purvis writes that General Boynton and a friend had visited the Chickamauga battlefield on a quiet Sunday morning in the summer of 1888 and heard singing in a church nearby. The general's thoughts went from those sweet sounds to the hellish and "fearful horrors of that other Sunday, when the very demons of hell seemed abroad, armed and equipped for the annihilation of mankind" almost a quarter of a century earlier.<sup>6</sup>





*Cannonball monument remembering the work of Confederate General Simon Boliver Buckner and his troops at the Chickamauga portion of the Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park.*

They saw again the charging squadrons, like great waves of the sea, dashed and broken in pieces against lines and positions that would not yield to their assaults. They saw again Baird's, Johnson's, Palmer's, and Reynolds's immovable lines around the Kelley farm, and Wood on the spurs of Snodgrass Hill; Brannan, Grosvenor, Steedman, and Granger on the now famous Horseshoe; once more was brought back to their minds' eye, "the unequaled fighting of that thin and contracted line of heroes and the magnificent Confederate assaults," which swept in again and again ceaselessly as that stormy service of all the gods of battle was prolonged through those other Sunday hours.

Their eyes traveled over the ground again where Forrest's and Walker's men had dashed into the smoke of the Union musketry and the very flame of the Federal batteries, and saw their ranks melt as snowflakes dissolve and disappear in the heat of conflagration.

They stood on Baird's line, where Helms's Brigade went to pieces, but not until three men out of four — mark that, ye coming heroes! — Not until three men out of every four were either wounded or dead, eclipsing the historic charge at Balaklava and the bloody losses in the great battles of modern times.

They saw Longstreet's men sweep over the difficult and almost inaccessible slopes of the Horseshoe,

"dash wildly, and break there, like angry waves, and recede, only to sweep on again and again with almost the regularity of ocean surges, ever marking a higher tide."

They looked down again on those slopes, slippery with blood and strewn thick as leaves with all the horrible wreck of battle, over which and in spite of repeated failures these assaulting Confederate columns still formed and reformed, charging again and again with undaunted and undying courage.

In the "Balaklava" reference above, General Boynton is noting Confederate valor far in excess of the famous "Charge of the Light Brigade" of the British cavalry against Russian forces in the Battle of Balaclava, October 25, 1854, in the Crimean War.

The unfounded bigotry against the South in history today is liberal politics and not history. Every Confederate monument which has been removed, was removed from a college campus or by a liberal Democrat starting with Mitch Landrieu in New Orleans, despite widespread support for the monuments in New Orleans and nationwide (more than 60 percent of Americans in polls say to leave Confederate monuments alone). Michael Signer in Charlottesville couldn't remove his monuments so he covered them with tarps which are constantly removed by outraged citizens.

These cultural Marxists are more like ISIS when



ISIS destroyed the monuments in Palmyra, "a first-century Roman city in Syria whose classical architecture was an inspiration for the facade of the US Capitol."<sup>7</sup> Mitch Landrieu had to remove the New Orleans monuments at night with snipers in bulletproof vests standing guard.

ISIS destroys the monuments and culture of anybody who does not agree with them. Sound familiar?

There is a rot in history in this day and age. Keith Windschuttle, in *The Killing of History*, brings up a 1987 book by Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, in which Bloom argues persuasively that radical theory in academia had changed things so much that

*Humanities and social science departments within universities [where History resides] had abandoned objectivity and truth and become hopelessly politicized.*<sup>8</sup>

If you doubt academia and the news media are overwhelmingly liberal (with all that means for truth), consider that in the 2016 election, the 33 wealthiest colleges in the United States gave \$1,560,000 to Hillary Clinton. They gave Donald Trump \$3,000.<sup>9</sup>

Around 96 percent of money donated by journalists went to Hillary Clinton. In numbers of journalists giving, 50 gave to Republican Donald J. Trump, while 430 gave to Clinton. That means 10 percent of journalists donated to Republican Trump, and 90 percent to Democrat Clinton.<sup>10</sup>

Windschuttle writes: "Most young people today were taught to scorn the traditional values of Western culture — equality, freedom, democracy, human rights — as hollow rhetoric used to mask the self-interest of the wealthy and powerful. This teaching, Bloom argued, had bred a cynical, amoral, self-centered younger generation who lacked any sense of inherited wisdom from the past."

It is worse that just the politicization of history. Windschuttle points out for 2,400 years history has ranked "with philosophy and mathematics as among the most profound and enduring contributions ancient Greece made, not only to European civilization, but to the human species as a whole." History's "essence" has been to "tell the truth, to describe as best as possible what really happened."<sup>11</sup>

Unfortunately today, "these assumptions are

widely rejected."<sup>12</sup>

Many in the humanities and social sciences "assert it is impossible to tell the truth about the past" because "we can only see the past through the perspective of our own culture and, hence, what we see in history are our own interests and concerns reflected back at us." Because of this, supposedly, the entire point of history is no longer valid therefore "there is no fundamental distinction any more between history and myth" (Nietzsche had the same view more than a hundred years ago) or between "fiction and non-fiction."<sup>13</sup> In other words, nothing exists except what liberals tell us exists.

Perhaps academics are right because it is certainly fiction that slavery caused the War Between the States. As Shelby Foote said, slavery was an element in the drama but not the cause of the war. More than 94 percent of Southerners in more than 80 percent of Southern families did not own slaves according to the 1860 census. Men do not charge into "the smoke of the Union musketry and the very flame of the Federal batteries" as Colonel Purvis noted, so somebody else can own slaves; but they do so enthusiastically for independence, especially if their country is invaded, and especially because their sires were the patriots who won American independence in 1776.

Windschuttle reveals the outrageousness (almost to the point of stupidity) of the liberal academic mindset. This would be funny if it wasn't so pathetic:

One of the reasons the humanities and social sciences have been taken over so quickly by the sophistry described in this book is because too few of those who might have been expected to resist the putsch understood what its instigators were saying. The uninitiated reader who opens a typical book on postmodernism, hermeneutics, poststructuralism *et al* must think he or she has stumbled onto a new foreign language, so obscure and dense is the prose. Now, this happens to be a very effective tactic to adopt in academic circles where there is always an expectation that things are never simple and anyone who writes clearly is thereby being shallow. Obscurity is assumed to equal profundity, a quality that signals a superiority over the thinking of the uneducated herd.<sup>14</sup>



Like Big Brother said:

War is peace.  
Freedom is slavery.  
Ignorance is strength.

And now academia says:

Clarity is shallowness.  
Obscurity is profundity.

God help us.

David Harlan points out more academic gobbledygook and liberal hate in his book, *The Degradation of American History*. He says, starting in the 1960s with the Civil Rights Movement, leftist historians began criticizing American history as elitist. They said it "focused our attention on great white men at the expense of women and minorities, that it ignored the racial and ethnic diversity of national life, that it obscured the reality of class conflict." They wanted to expose the complicity of white men "in the violence and brutality that now seemed to be the most important truth about American history." They "feel no need to say what is good in American history."<sup>15</sup>

Eugene D. Genovese, one of American's greatest historians before his death in 2012, wrote this in 1994:

*Rarely, these days, even on Southern campuses, is it possible to acknowledge the achievements of the white people of the South. The history of the Old South is now often taught at leading universities, when it is taught at all, as a prolonged guilt-trip, not to say a prologue to the history of Nazi Germany. ... To speak positively about any part of this Southern tradition is to invite charges of being a racist and an apologist for slavery and segregation. We are witnessing a cultural and political atrocity.*<sup>16</sup>

Dr. Genovese goes on to say this cultural and political atrocity is being forced on us by "the media and an academic elite."<sup>17</sup>

I could go on and on, and I do in longer works which will be out later this year, so let me wrap up this article by pointing out the monuments and memorials of both sides that went up in the early twentieth century were hugely symbolic for our reunited nation and the healing from a war which

had killed 800,000 and wounded more than a million. Drew Gilpin Faust writes:

*At war's end this shared suffering would override persisting differences about the meanings of race, citizenship, and nationhood to establish sacrifice and its memorialization as the ground on which North and South would ultimately reunite. Even in our own time this fundamental elegiac understanding of the Civil War retains a powerful hold.*"<sup>18</sup>

The original *Confederate Veteran* magazine was established and ran from 1893 to 1932. It includes the definitive account of the War Between the States and the monuments that went up to honor Southern valor and sacrifice. It was written by Confederates who participated; soldiers, generals, women and politicians. You can not find a single angry or hateful word in the entire 40-year run, nothing but the most sincere outpouring of love and respect and the memorialization of Southern — indeed American — honor, valor and sacrifice. Today's *Confederate Veteran* has the same standard of truth and excellence and has since the SCV took it over decades ago.

The portrayal of the Confederacy by the fake-news media and hateful liberal academia is overwhelmingly a fraud. The American Historical Association is a national embarrassment and should change its name to the American Ahistorical Association.

Monuments in the South were paid for by pennies from children and an impoverished region which had been destroyed 35 years earlier, but it found money, a little here and there over the years, to honor its warriors, leaders and their families, and courage such as the world had never seen before. As Union General Boynton said, he looked down again on those slopes, slippery with blood and strewn thick as leaves with all the horrible wreck of battle, over which, and in spite of repeated failures, these assaulting Confederate columns still formed and reformed, charging again and again with undaunted and undying courage.

We are in a political fight and not a history debate. We need to look at it from that standpoint and develop creative comprehensive strategies to take on and defeat our enemies. The highest priority is to develop political influence.

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# We are in a Political Fight ...

Observe how business people and politicians brand and market successfully. The NRA is a great example and they are under attack all the time as we are.

The SCV, UDC, reenactors and every historical organization should push for, or support efforts, to put laws on the books protecting monuments in every state where there is no law. This goes back to political influence. Our Heritage Act in South Carolina has been effective though it is constantly under attack.

Camps should make it a high priority to construct roadside Battle Flag memorials on private property in highly visible

places. We should put ten up for every monument that has been removed. New Orleans and Charlottesville, Baltimore, and other places should be awash with Battle Flags, then we should write, publish and speak constantly, and tell what those flags stand for.

Learn. Read books and increase your historical knowledge. Read my book: *Slavery Was Not the Cause of the War Between the States, The Irrefutable Argument*, that's on [www.BonnieBluePublishing.com](http://www.BonnieBluePublishing.com) and Amazon. My book has 218 footnotes and 207 sources in the bibliography so it is full of documentation you can use.

Join the Abbeville Institute

and the Society of Independent Southern Historians and participate.

Update Wikipedia articles when you see historical prejudice against the South. Review local school texts and refute them when necessary. Write letters-to-the-editor of newspapers.

Do whatever you can. Give money. Speak. Write. Share information.

We are going to have to do all this ourselves, but in the age of the Internet and social media, we have enormous power at our fingertips, and it goes along nicely with historical truth.

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Gene Kizer, Jr. graduated magna cum laude from the College of Charleston in 2000 with History Departmental Honors and the Outstanding Student Award for the History Department. He is author of *Slavery Was Not the Cause of the War Between the States*, *The Irrefutable Argument*; *The Elements of Academic Success*, *How to Graduate Magna Cum Laude from College*; Charles W. Ramsdell, *Dean of Southern Historians*; *Charleston, SC Short Stories, Book One: Six Tales of Courage, Love, the War Between the States, Satire, Ghosts and Horror from the Holy City*. There are sample pages of all his books on [www.bonniebluepublishing.com](http://www.bonniebluepublishing.com).

### Endnotes

- 1 These are the widely accepted statistics of historian J. David Hacker of Binghamton University. See Rachel Coker, "Historian revises estimate of Civil War dead," published September 21, 2011, Binghamton University Research News - Insights and Innovations from Binghamton University, <http://discovere.binghamton.edu/news/civil-war-3826.html>, accessed July 7, 2014. Hacker's range is 650,000 to 850,000. He uses 750,000, but my feeling is total deaths are on the high side of his range, so I use 800,000 in my writing.
- 2 Drew Gilpin Faust, *This Republic of Suffering, Death and the American Civil War* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2008), xi.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, xii.
- 6 "American Valor at Chickamauga," *Confederate Veteran*, Vol. V, No. 3, March, 1897.
- 7 "ISIS' crimes against history," *Charleston, SC Post and Courier* op/ed, September 1, 2015.
- 8 Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History, How Literary Critics and Social Theorists Are Murdering Our Past* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 10.
- 9 "Donald Trump Campaign Lacking in Support from Academic Donors" by Carter Coudriet, August 16, 2016, [www.forbes.com/sites/cartercoudriet/2016/06/16/donald-trump-campaign-lacking-in-support-from-academic-donors](http://www.forbes.com/sites/cartercoudriet/2016/06/16/donald-trump-campaign-lacking-in-support-from-academic-donors), accessed January 25, 2017.
- 10 See David Levinthal and Michael Beckel article, October 27, 2016, "Journalists shower Hillary Clinton with campaign cash," [www.publicintegrity.org/2016/10/17/20330/journalists-shower-hillary-clinton-campaign-cash](http://www.publicintegrity.org/2016/10/17/20330/journalists-shower-hillary-clinton-campaign-cash), accessed January 25, 2017.

- clinton-campaign-cash, accessed January 25, 2017.
- 11 Keith Windschuttle, *The Killing of History, How Literary Critics and Social Theorists Are Murdering Our Past* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 1-2.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, 2, 7.
- 14 Windschuttle, *The Killing of History*, 5.
- 15 David Harlan, *The Degradation of American History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), xv. This paragraph comes verbatim from the introduction to my book, *Charles W. Ramsdell, Dean of Southern Historians, Volume One: His Best Work* (Charleston: Charleston Athenaeum Press, 2017).
- 16 Eugene D. Genovese, *The Southern Tradition, The Achievement and Limitations of an American Conservatism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), xi-xii. This is also verbatim from Ramsdell, *Dean of Southern Historians*, Introduction.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 Faust, *This Republic of Suffering*, xiii.



### Descendants of Mexican War Veterans

*"Before Manassas, there was Mexico"*

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