

How the Confederacy Survived the Civil War

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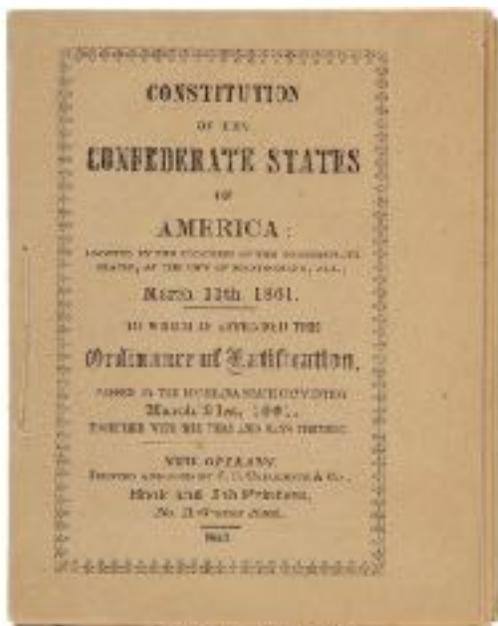
All right.

Let's talk about how the Confederacy survived the Civil War, was absorbed into our culture, laws, and politics, and remains an everpresent threat we must destroy.

I didn't know any of this until I started researching my book, "American Rule".

First things first, the Confederacy is hardly dealt with in our history or curricula. There's a reason the Civil War is reduced to a history of battles and military maneuvers.

To look any deeper would mean an actual reckoning with white supremacy and power in America.



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The truth is that the Confederacy considered itself the true ancestor of America and that the North had betrayed America's founding and purpose as a white supremacist state.

It wasn't a different country. It was America interpreted as a white supremacist nation.

There's a reason why George Washington is all over Confederate iconography. Why Jefferson Davis was inaugurated in the shadow of a Washington statue.

The Confederacy was battling over the United States of America, not creating a separate nation.



And for all of the lies about it being about state's rights, it was explicitly about white supremacy, which Confederate vice-president Alexander Stephens made clear in so many words.

Stephens, by the way, still has a statue in the Capitol.

Another reason we don't talk about the Confederacy is because it was a twisted version of America, with its blatant white supremacy and its basis in white-identity Christianity.

As the South lost battles, its leaders demanded humiliation, days of prayer, reckoning with God.



As I've mentioned before, Confederate preachers told Southerners that the Christian God was white supremacist, that he demanded white supremacy as the law of the land.

The Confederacy saw itself as the real America and God's chosen nation.

In addition to not understanding what the Confederacy was, the myth that it simply went away when it surrendered militarily has done massive damage.

America re-absorbed the Confederacy and ingested its blatant white supremacy and continued its customs and laws.





To get into this properly and deal with our history, we must reckon with our myths, including the messiah-ization of Abraham Lincoln, who had troubling views on race and even tried to sell freed slaves to other countries to remove them from America.

There is a possibility Lincoln could have continued evolving had he not been assassinated, but we'll never know.



That murder, however, created a scenario wherein America could make its post-Civil War reality into a mythologized moment of redemption.



Instantly, Lincoln was turned into a martyr, his death a moment of redemption and a chance for spilled blood to scrub America's sins clean.

It was a Christianized myth that served to hide our history and the reality of race in America.

In this twisted marriage of national and Christian myth, Washington became the Father, Lincoln the Messiah Son, and Americanism the Holy Spirit.

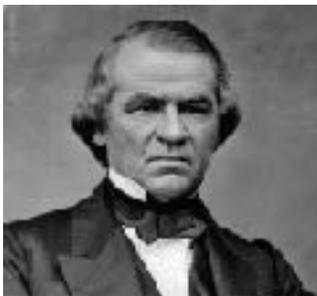
The narrative was that Lincoln had saved us from white supremacy and that America was now ready for an equal future.





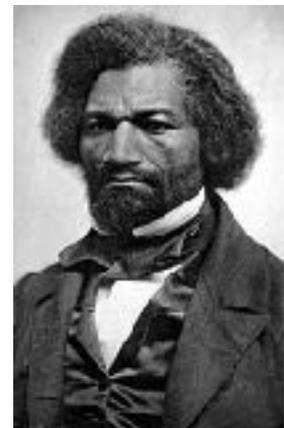
What we don't discuss much is Andrew Johnson, who took over following Lincoln's death. Johnson was a toxic white supremacist who fought against Reconstruction and denied dignity and rights for freed slaves.

This is what happened.



Johnson told black luminaries like Frederick Douglass that equal rights were an abomination and that blacks had conspired with Southern slave owners against poor whites.

Johnson was disgusting and hindered the project of equality from the beginning.





Johnson installed white supremacists as governors in the south, including Florida's William Marvin, who told freed slaves to still call their masters "master" and that they were not equal to white people and to never believe otherwise.

Meanwhile, white supremacists worked behind the scenes to create laws that could keep freed slaves as close "to the condition of slavery" as possible. The developing laws were meant to hide the insidiousness of blatant white supremacy behind laws and government.

As this was done, paramilitary groups like the KKK performed domestic terrorism, attacking African Americans using their new freedom, as well as the white allies who helped them.

In this way, the Confederacy became an invisible empire enforced by law and violence.

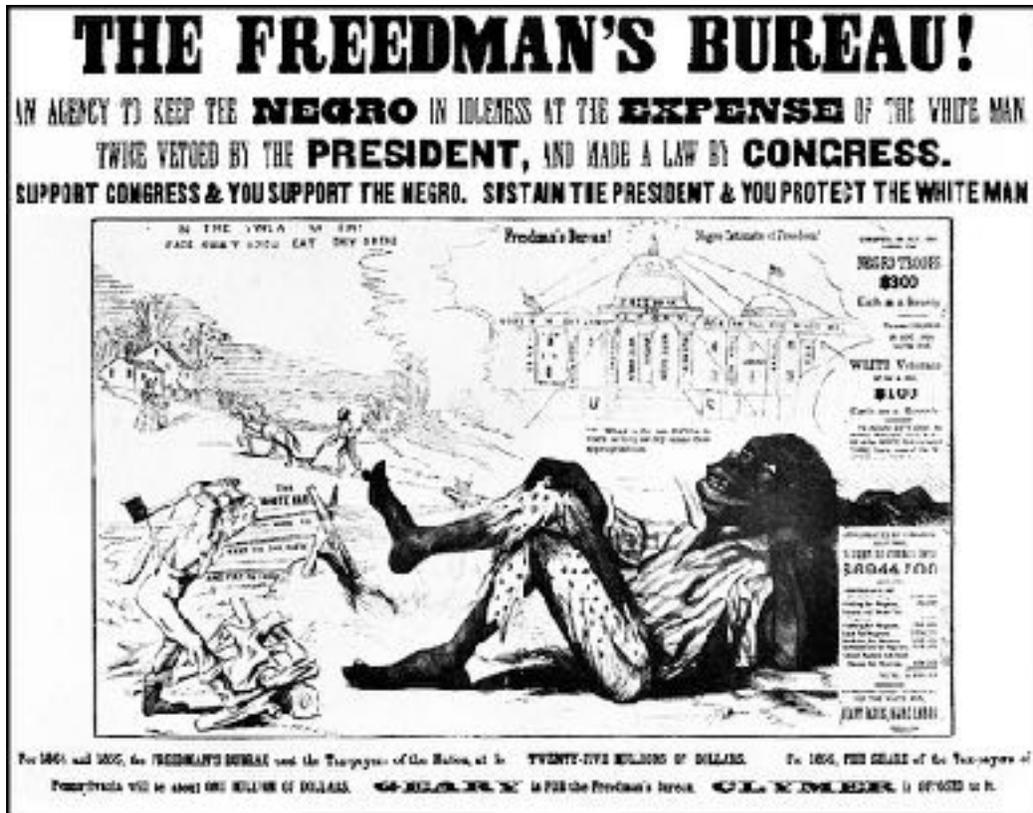


Ulysses S. Grant, as president, fought against this continued Confederacy, empowering organizations and waging war on the KKK. But white voters grew tired of their taxes and his means of waging that war.

They let down African Americans in a huge way.

Reconstruction was hindered by propaganda that claimed it was a means of helping lazy and inept African Americans, a conspiracy against white southerners.

Meanwhile, the black community organized at record pace and was incredibly successful despite these setbacks.



The man who arguably killed Reconstruction before it was complete was Rutherford B. Hayes, the 19th president.



Hayes wasn't even that interested in the presidency, but promised if supported he would return the South to white supremacist southerners.

To continue the story, for years the South worked with white supremacist laws. Eventually, academics like Woodrow Wilson would use their work to wash the Confederacy clean of its white supremacy and portray it as dignified, and the war as being over state's rights.

Wilson was a disgusting racist whose work claimed Southern slave owners loved their slaves and that they were wrongly attacked.



This "Lost Cause" mythology sought to protect white supremacy and changed history completely. Unfortunately, it was incredibly successful.

Wilson's writings eventually inspired projects like Birth of a Nation, that completely revised Construction and the post-Civil War South, portraying the KKK as necessary heroes.

This affected our collective history in terrifying ways.



It was around this time that so many of the Confederate statues we're now tearing down were put in place to continue the revision of history and remind African Americans that the Confederacy survived the Civil War in our culture, laws, and politics.



Wilson used his revised history to scrub America cleans of its sins in preparation for World War I, where he used propaganda to portray this country as fair and righteous and to hide our white supremacy so we could be a world power that supposedly believed in equality.



Wilson's propaganda changed the American story, so when the Civil Rights Movement began Americans didn't believe there was any fight to be had, equality had been won.

The fight was to challenge this narrative in order to finally realize a semblance of equality. There's a

reason why the South turned to Confederate flags during desegregation and the Civil Rights Movement.

The Confederacy had survived in our laws, culture, and politics. This was a clear symbol that it had simply been hiding the entire time.



Meanwhile, open white supremacists like George Wallace made the connection crystal clear.

He supported the Confederacy and, like the CSA, believe white supremacy was under attack by a communist, anti-American conspiracy, because the CSA WAS America.

Just like we're seeing now, protestors were abused, brutalized, all because white supremacists believed it was a conspiracy.

Instead of Antifa, it was communists, anarchists, anyone who could fit the conspiratorial mold.



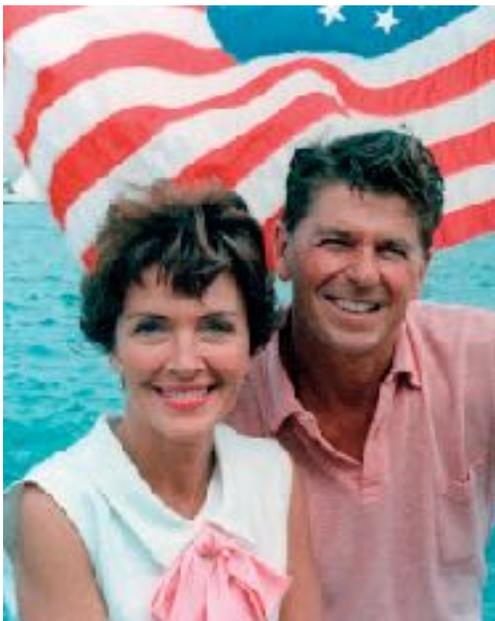


By now we're all familiar with Nixon's Southern Strategy, but it's important to note that this took the Confederacy and white supremacy, and drove it further under the veneer of rhetorical dog whistle appeals.

It was about hiding the Confederacy but still embracing it.

If you haven't already, please see my work on the Cult of the Shining City and Jerry Falwell and Neo-Confederate preachers.

The hiding of the Confederate God in white-identity Christianity was yet another illusion that maintained the Confederacy while hiding it.



The attempt to continue white supremacy and the Confederacy and our politics continued with Ronald Reagan, who took it another step forward and hid it behind tax rhetoric and "colorblindness," or pushing the idea that America no longer had racial inequality.

Reagan claimed that America was finally equal and that the market and economy would determine winners and losers.

But the market and economy were made explicitly with white supremacy in mind.

It was a giant lie from the very, very beginning.



If you haven't before, look up Reagan's speech at the Neshoba County Fair in Mississippi, where white supremacist murders had taken place.

Reagan took right off with Woodrow Wilson's propaganda, prompting "state's rights" and implicitly supporting the Confederacy.

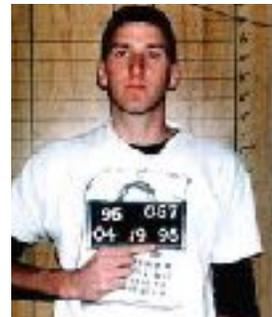
Reagan's dogwhistling and rhetorical appeals to white supremacy further legitimized white supremacy and the Confederacy, driving them further and further into American politics while giving them cover to operate without the ability to be scrutinized.



Following Reagan and HW Bush, the GOP and American Right began flirting openly with the New World Order conspiracy theory, which was a Neo-Confederate belief that white Americans were being threatened by evil outsiders and traitorous liberals.

We like to frame Timothy McVeigh as a lone nut, but he believed he was a soldier in the invisible war against the New World Order.

There's a reason he wore a shirt calling Lincoln a tyrant. This was the Confederacy declaring war, once again, on the United States.



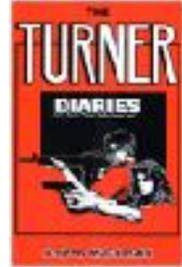
The OKC Bombing was a battle in a fictitious war against the New World Order, or the Deep State, or the cabal, whatever you want to call it.

American conspiracy theories are inherently white supremacist fantasies fueled by white supremacist paranoia and weakness.



McVeigh was inspired both by Right Wing appeals and Neo-Nazi literature that sought to return American to the Confederacy, which inspired the Third Reich in the first place.

American domestic terrorists are seeking a return to the CSA and a racist dystopia.



There's a reason Donald Trump is supported by these people. White supremacists see him as their warrior, a president who will explicitly stand up for them and continue hiding the Confederacy in culture while furthering its surviving goals.

He is a Confederate president.



You need to understand, the Confederacy wasn't limited by geography or a moment in time. It was an ideology that was felt throughout the nation.

This is why the flags are everywhere, in the North, West, every part of the country.

It is a surviving worldview.



White supremacists and fascists and Confederates would much rather hide in plain sight, behind the American flag and the veneer of American equality.

That's what they want.

But as we're seeing now, they're more than willing to show their true colors if necessary.

It's no coincidence we're having these debates now, that Trump is standing up for blatant white supremacy and the Confederacy.

The movement is making actual inroads into dealing with our white supremacy, and they'll seek comfort in the CSA just like Civil Rights opponents.

We need to relearn our history, see what actually happened, and how the Confederacy never went away. It was absorbed, hidden, empowered by its disguise.

America is riddled with the Confederacy and if we want to avoid fascism, we have to rip it out by the root.

PS/ as an educator, I have to say that any fight against white supremacy has to involve radical discussions about how to revise our curriculum to tell the honest story of America, because what we have now is propaganda designed explicitly to hide and empower white supremacy. I've taken a ton of history classes and always considered myself really informed. Until I started on the new book so much of this was completely unknown. It's all out there waiting to be discovered. It has to be discovered and it has to be told.