

# Secession and the Confederacy were not about slavery

During the period which began during Reconstruction and has continued since under the auspices of the Lost Cause, the factors which led to the American Civil War have been claimed by apologists as being individual freedom, state's rights, and federal tyranny. These apologists deny that the Civil War was fought over the issue of slavery. They argue that the majority of southerners who fought in the war did not own slaves, ignoring the issue of slavery being an accepted way of life in their communities. To believe that slavery was not a cause of the Civil War - indeed its main cause - is to believe in a myth which emerged long after the combat ended and the Lost Cause and the romance of the antebellum South became prevalent.

On March 21, 1861, then Vice-President of the Confederate States Andrew Stephens acknowledged that the Confederacy was based on slavery and that "its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery - submission to the superior race - is his natural and normal condition". Legendary Confederate cavalryman John Singleton Mosby put it bluntly after the war saying, "The South went to war on account of slavery". Mosby was also dismissive of attempts to rewrite the causes of the war, pointing out that South Carolina had cited defense of slavery in its secession, and added, "South Carolina ought to know what was the cause of her seceding".

## 2. The myth of Robert E. Lee and Butcher Grant

During the American Civil War and the emergence of the Lost Cause in its wake the contending commanding generals, Lee and Grant, found themselves with reputations neither wholly deserved. Grant is often presented as a butcher, indifferent to casualty lists, who ground down the gallant Lee, the Confederate general being much more solicitous of his troops. The numbers do not bear this out. Throughout the war Lee's armies inflicted casualties (killed and wounded, disregarding captured or deserted) of 15.4% on his enemies, while the troops under his command suffered 20.2% casualties. Lee's casualty rate not only exceeded Grant's, but all of the other major commanders of the Confederacy as well.

By the end of the war Lee's armies suffered casualties which exceeded those of Grant by over 55,000 men - again considering only killed and wounded, desertions increase the number significantly. And while it is true that during the bloody march down the peninsula in the spring of 1864 the Army of the Potomac suffered horrendous casualties, as a percentage of his fighting strength Lee's were worse. The Confederate Army bled itself out before withdrawing into the trenches at Petersburg and Richmond, from which Lee surely knew there would be no escape. The casualties were grisly for both sides of the American Civil War, but that Grant was a butcher in comparison to Lee is a myth according to the numbers.

### .3. The Civil War ended when Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House

When Lee surrendered to Grant in April 1865, receiving generous terms for the treatment of his men from the Union commander, major combat operations of the Civil War were at an end. At least in the Eastern Theater of the war, fighting continued in several regions. General Joseph E. Johnston surrendered to William T. Sherman at the end of April, with Sherman following Grant's lead and offering generous terms to his beaten enemies. Across the South resistance continued for a few weeks, as one Southern department after another conceded defeat. The last land battle of the Civil War, other than some guerrilla raids, occurred at Palmito Ranch in Texas, a two day engagement in which John J. Williams, the last combat fatality of the war, was killed.

On May 10, 1865, Andrew Johnson declared the armed rebellion to be at an end, and Jefferson Davis was taken into Union custody the same day. Still the war was not declared to be over. The Confederate raider *CSS Shenandoah* was still at large at sea, where the vessel had captured or sunk 38 Union ships in the Atlantic, Indian, and Pacific Oceans. *Shenandoah* continued to raid Union ships until the end of June 1865, when it learned of Lee's surrender while cruising in the Pacific. *Shenandoah* then embarked on a three month cruise from the Pacific to Liverpool, England, where it surrendered to the Royal Navy on November 6, striking for the last time the flag of the Confederate Navy. The following August Andrew Johnson declared the war was officially over.

## 16. Abner Doubleday and the birth of American baseball

Baseball was a highly popular game in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including among the troops of both sides during the Civil War, and shortly after the war ended professional baseball clubs emerged, starting with the Cincinnati Red Stockings in 1869. Numerous scholars and writers covering the growing popularity of the game speculated that the sport was derived from an old English bat and ball game called rounders. As the rounders theory gained support, Albert Spalding was aghast at the idea of an American sport being in fact the distant cousin of a British game. He organized the Mills Commission, on which he served, to determine the true origins of the game. Abner Doubleday was a Union officer during the American Civil War whose men, mostly from New York, played the game of baseball extensively in their encampments. Doubleday may or may not have provided written rules for the games played by his men during the war, depending on the source one chooses to believe, but the Mills Commission decided that based on his alleged actions he was the father and inventor of the game of baseball, which thus was relieved of the taint of British parentage. Doubleday was surprised to find himself described as the inventor of the game, which was still played according to largely local ground rules when he was elevated to his new status. The invention of baseball by Abner Doubleday is an American myth.

"Confronting slavery and revealing the 'Lost Cause'". James Oliver Horton, National Park Service. Online

"Civil War Casualties in Lee's Battles and Campaigns". Article, History on the Net. Online

"Why the Civil War Actually Ended 16 Months After Lee Surrendered". Sarah Pruitt, History.com. Online