



The Confederate States of America

My ancestor was like many Confederate soldiers. He and many of his relatives joined the Confederate forces and dutifully fought for their country. Toward the end of the war, he found himself in the middle of the maelstrom of endless battles and losses. By the wars end, he had literally lost everything. His home, and those of all of his extended family, and those of his brothers and sisters families were all completely destroyed. His mother was taken from her home and watched it burn in front of her. She subsequently died during the flight from Sherman's troops. He lost many relatives and family during the war, and returned to spend the rest of his life rebuilding. Outside of his own life, he gave everything to defend his home and country.

Today, it is very popular to speculate and argue about why these people formed their own country and fought a war. Countless books and articles have been written on the subject and arguments have ensued since before the shots ceased to be fired. It is popular today to view the actions of these patriots through the values and beliefs of our times. It is much more difficult to view their actions through the values and beliefs of their times. Many people have formed opinions on these events based on writings about writings about writings about what happened 146 years ago. Any true historian knows that if you want to understand a period in history, you go back and read the words of that time and what people themselves said about their motives while they were still able to do so.

Two quotes from Confederates have always meant the most to me in this regard. During Lee's surrender meeting with Grant, they were discussing the disposition of horses and side arms. Lee made the comment to Grant, that in his country, cavalymen owned their own mounts. Years later, Grant wrote that Lees comment had always stuck with him and that at that moment, and for the first time, he suddenly realized that the Confederates truly believed themselves to be citizens of a separate and independent country.

In another instance, a Union officer was questioning some Confederate captives. When he asked them why they were fighting, He said that one of the Confederates gave him a disbelieving look and simply stated, "Because this is my home, and you are on it".

To the victors go the spoils, and amongst those spoils is the opportunity to write the history of that great struggle. Today it seems to be increasingly popular to vilify the brief existence of this nation and the soldiers that fought to defend her. But whether we view the actions of these men through the political filters of our time, or the political filters of their time, there are some inescapable truths.

This brave body of people founded a country of their own. They were citizens of the Confederate States of America, which miraculously existed as an independent nation for four years. Their country was invaded and destroyed through force of arms and their way of life changed forever. They fought to preserve their country and their freedom. They fought for their homes, their land, their families and each other. Many of them sacrificed everything they had. -- Author Unknown

