

My Favorite World #31



That's Lt. Derrick Gamble of the South Carolina Highway Patrol Honor Guard carrying the Confederate Battle Flag that, as of Friday morning, no longer flies above the SC statehouse. There's something pretty damned delicious in seeing a black man carry that rag away once and for all.

The crowd chants of "USA! USA!" as the flag was coming down struck me as just right. The United States won that damned war, and if it took yet another Confederacy surrender to drive that point home, so be it. <fn>That it happened in what Pierce calls the "the home office of American sedition" just adds to its sweet piquancy.</fn> A pal suggested that an artillery bombardment from Fort Sumter would have made for a fitting coda, but I imagine the liability insurance would have been too dear. And apparently my idea of just taking a chainsaw to the pole with the flag still aloft lacked the dignity that the organizers were looking for.

I'll be the first to admit that the crowd's taking up the "na na hey hey goodbye" chant was something of an over-the-top end zone dance, but I can't fault anyone for wanting to rub Johnny Reb's nose in the dirt. <fn>It's been a long time coming.</fn> The shift to singing "We Shall Overcome" was perfect, and as tired as that song can get, there are times when nothing else will do.

Now that flag is on its way to something called the SC *Confederate Relic Room*, a perfect resting place for a tired piece of history.<fn>I had thought to refer to this

destination as a *relicary*, but it appears that is not a word. On the other hand, *reliquary* is defined as “container for holy relics”, and the battle rag definitely does not qualify. So let’s just call it a tomb and be done with it.</fn>

Caveats...

I should note that a drive through South Georgia last weekend demonstrated that the “Fergit Hell!” crowd is still clinging to its tattered banner, with one especially impressive roadside vendor display dozens of varieties of the rag for sale, with an impressive number of shoppers ready to show their pride via commercial transaction.

A hundred yards past this pageant we spotted a hand-painted sign – something you’d expect to see at a tent revival, complete with misspellings and a backward letter or three – touting the candidacy of Donald Trump, who is apparently the only man capable of taking our nation back from both the bankers and the *dinasties* (sic) of the Bush and Clinton clans.

And about 30 minutes later, we passed a string of signs a la Burma Shave that warned about how Agenda 21 is here and it’s REAL! and so forth.

Then, on Thursday evening in Gainesville, I came across this gaggle of geniuses protesting “Southern Cultural Genocide” on the courthouse lawn.



By the time I had parked and got a picture, the bulk of the yahoo contingent had fled, having been pretty quickly outnumbered by counter-demonstrators. It was all pretty peaceful, but damn and howdy, why is this argument still going on<fn>Answer: a sad failure to teach accurate history in favor of pleasing fairy tales. This failure plagues all facets of US History, alas, from the Revolution to the Native American genocide to labor history &c. We will forever have to swim upstream until we fix this problem.</fn>

So while the flag and its companion statuary is coming down – all over, it seems – knuckle dragging pig ignorance is still flying high. Still, this week counts as another small victory, and critics can deride it as *merely symbolic* all they want...symbols matter, and after a long stretch in which the symbolic victories all seemed to tilt the other way, I'll take it.

My. Favorite. World. Even with the inevitable caveats.