

Chapter 2



THE SOUTH AND SOUTHERNERS WE LOVE

How are Southerners different from other folks? Let me count the ways . . .

As I mentioned in the last chapter, most of us have been here a lot longer than folks up North. And our idea of extended family—“our people”—can get pretty extended, to the point that we all seem to be related to each other. (Talk about a brotherhood of men!)

But it goes beyond that. Here are some of our defining characteristics.

Southerners act different

Southerners will do just about anything on a dare from their buddies, but they will also do anything to save their friends from danger. They will also do anything for someone they respect, including walking into the jaws of death.

It is no accident that the Army of Northern Virginia fought against overwhelming odds in every battle, winning massive victories at Seven Days, Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness, and Cold Harbor. It is no wonder its men were willing to fight their way out of a surrounded position at Appomattox Court House in April 1865 if only their commander had given the word.

Guess what?

- ❖ The South’s storied barbecue tradition goes back to pre-colonial times.
- ❖ Race relations today are much better in the South than in the North.
- ❖ Southerners might speak slowly, but they are usually impulsive in action.

It was no accident that Chuck Yeager of Hamlin, West Virginia, became the first person in the world to break the sound barrier. After high school graduation, before the start of World War II, Yeager joined the Army Air Corps. Forced first into a mechanic's role, he pushed to be allowed to fly. He became a flying ace and after the war he volunteered to see what would happen when an airplane went faster than the speed of sound. No one knew if the airplane would disintegrate from some unforeseen forces, or what would happen to the pilot who flew at such speeds. Yeager, the adventurous Southerner, volunteered to find out.

It was no accident that Audie Murphy, a teenager from Kingston, Texas, who had dropped out of school after the eighth grade, jumped at the chance to join the military after fulfilling his dying mother's last wish to ensure the care of his younger brothers and sisters. Rejected by several military recruiters because he was too young, too skinny, and too short, he was finally accepted by the U.S. Army. Murphy would become the most highly decorated soldier in World War II, winning a Bronze Star, two Silver Stars, and the Congressional Medal of Honor for fighting the Germans. He put himself into many tight spots because he wanted to save the men under his command.

It's true that we Southerners might speak slowly and always make time for good manners, but in action we are usually fast and impulsive. This trait is not always a good thing. Rather than wait for the Yankees to fire the first shot at Fort Sumter, which would have proved that they were the true aggressors in the war, an impatient Jefferson Davis ordered the firing of the first shot. It's also why the prototypical last words of a good ol' boy cut off in his prime are, "Y'all watch this!"

Southerners talk different

Southerners have a way with words, and there are many variations on the celebrated Southern drawl. Some phrases used by Southerners are

famous and famously misused by Northerners. The contraction of “you all” to “y’all” is, as every Southerner knows, never used to refer to fewer than two people. A sure sign that someone is a native Yankee trying to talk Southern is when they ask something like “When will y’all come over?” of a single person.

Southerners also instinctively know time limits when expressed in words. When a Southerner explains that he is “fixin’ to go to town,” it is obvious that the actual act of going to town is still an undetermined length of time in the near, but not immediate future. On the other hand, when a Southerner says, “I’m going directly,” that means passengers should yell “Shotgun!” and scramble for the door.

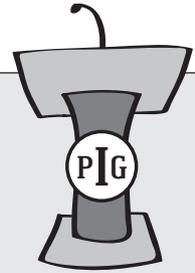
Southerners know distances can be expressed in simple words. “Over yonder” means a pretty fair piece, perhaps across the ridgeline. That is much farther away than “hollering distance,” up to several hundred yards away, which is the distance that a big-throated holler could be heard. And Southerners know the difference between “holler” and “hollow” even though they are pronounced the same. Most Yankees have never used either word in a sentence like, “I hollered up the hollow for Jeb, but it was such a fair piece, he didn’t hear me. I reckon he must have been way over yonder.”

All of these are spoken with the famous Dixie Drawl. The Southern drawl has many variations, but all are authentic Dixie. Stretch out words, add pauses, drop an occasional “g” from “-ing,” and sprinkle your speech with Southern phrases such as “Looks like something the cat drug in,” “Like a chicken with its head cut off,” “Like a bat out of hell,” “Like a duck on a June bug,” “As mean as a snake,” or “As naked as a jaybird.”

Darn Tootin’

“In the South, as in no other American region, people use language as it was surely meant to be employed; a lush, personal, emphatic, treasure of coins to be spent slowly and for value.”

Time magazine, September 1976.





We're Southern, Mon

On the sea islands east of Beaufort, South Carolina, visitors encounter the last vestiges of the Gullah culture and language, which sounds vaguely Jamaican to visitors' ears. In reality the singsong dialect is left over from the slaves who were brought to the region from Angola and the Congo to grow the highly prized sea island cotton. Until recently the sea islands were remote. Now Yankee-based developers are making the former plantations into resorts.

Soft drinks in the South are never, ever called "pop." They are known as Cokes (even Pepsis can be called Cokes), dopes, cold drinks, belly-washes, and soda waters. One time that a brand name is used is when an expatriate Southerner in some God-for-saken land like New York City develops a hankering for an "RC and a Moon Pie." An RC is a Royal Crown Cola. A Moon Pie is two round pieces of chocolate-coated graham cracker with a marshmallow filling.

Sometimes Southerners say things just to irritate any Yankees in hearing distance. Few things give a Southerner more pleasure than to politely step into the back of an elevator, then ask the Yankee by the buttons to "Mash the fourth floor, please."

Southerners eat different

An obvious difference between Northerners and Southerners is what they see fit to eat. And there is no more broad dividing line than grits and sweet tea.

It is a lucky Southerner who can find grits at all in a Northern restaurant, and an even luckier one if the restaurant knows how to make them from scratch rather than dumping a packet of instant grits into a bowl. Southerners have always found it puzzling and disgusting that Northerners, if faced with grits, will inevitably put sugar on them. Every Southerner knows that the thing to be done with a mound of grits is to form a depression in the center of the mound, drop in two pats of butter so the heat of the grits melts them, liberally add salt and pepper, and then mix

in the butter. Southerners also know that cheese and grits is a match made in Southern heaven.

Sweet tea is another aggravation for Southern visitors to the North. For reasons that are unfathomable, Northerners just do not seem to know how to brew tea. It is not difficult to boil water and drop in tea bags and sugar, but that skill eludes most Yankee restaurateurs. Most Yankee tea is instant, that tinny-tasting concoction that was almost certainly invented by someone north of the Mason-Dixon Line. Making good sweet tea (often expressed as one word, “sweettea”) is just not that difficult an art form that it cannot be mastered by Northerners. They should work on it as a gesture of goodwill to their neighbors in the South.

It is impossible to find boiled peanuts in the North, and impossible not to drive more than ten miles on a rural road in the South without encountering a roadside stand with a big pot of them steaming away. There are tricks to boiling peanuts; the water has to have just the right amount of salt and the peanuts have to stay in the water just long enough so the nut can be sucked from the open shell with little effort.

Southerners like to fry stuff. There is nothing to rival the taste of a thin steak coated with a little flour then pan-fried in a black skillet that has been frying stuff for years. Likewise, pan-fried cornbread (with tiny chips of onions and red pepper inside) made in that same skillet tastes better than anything a fancy Northern restaurant could dress up and put on a plate. As for deep-frying, if it can be coated in batter, Southerners will eat it. That is why some places in the South offer alligator and rattlesnake. No one knows how to sauté those Southern natives, but a goodly number of good ol’ boys will tell you how to deep fry them and that they taste like chicken.

***“If God made a finer meal than this,
then He must have kept it for Himself.”***

The late Georgia humorist Lewis Grizzard hit Southerners’ love of barbecue right on the head with that one. Note that I said “love *of* barbecue”

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Grits in New York?

The effects of immigration north and south can be seen in the sales of some foods. According to one source, more grits are sold in New York City to descendants of blacks who moved north during the Depression than are sold in Atlanta to the transplanted Yankees who are still frightened to taste them.

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A Barbecue Primer

Here's the quick lowdown on Southern regional barbecue styles:

Alabama: There are more barbecue joints in Bama than in any other state. Dreamland Bar-Be-Que in Tuscaloosa serves up what people have called the world's best ribs. And you'll find only ribs—no sides, utensils, or plates, just ribs, bread, and spicy tomato-based sauce.

Georgia: Georgians like their barbecue slow-cooked over oak and/or hickory chips, and their preferred sauce is a mix of ketchup, molasses, bourbon, garlic, and cayenne pepper. As in North Carolina, the farther east you go, the more vinegary the sauce gets. Brunswick stew, a thick concoction of corn, lima beans, tomatoes, and onions named for the town of Brunswick, almost always accompanies the meat.

Kentucky: Kentucky differs from the rest of the South in that mutton is often used in barbecue, especially in the western part of the state. The sauce is vinegar- and tomato-based, and is not always used in the cooking process.

Tennessee: Memphis-style barbecue is the most common in Tennessee. This features ribs two ways: wet ribs with a mild, sweet sauce basted during the smoking, and dry-rub ribs. Tennesseans also love their pork, served with tomato-based sauce.

Mississippi: Pork is king in Mississippi. Most barbecue joints serve only pulled pork, with a purely vinegar sauce—many places actually pride themselves on the complete absence of tomatoes in their sauces.

North Carolina: North Carolina barbecue varies within the state. Eastern dwellers like their sauce thin, spicy, and vinegary while those in the west (around Lexington, a barbecue hub), like theirs thick and sweet. Both sides use oak and hickory chips to smoke the meat before pulling it off the bone.

South Carolina: South Carolinians are unique among Southerners in that they have *four* types of barbecue to call their own. While it's all pork, the sauces vary from vinegar-pepper (Pee Dee and the Low Country) to mustard (Midlands and Columbia) to fruit juice (Orangeberg) to tomato (Rock Hill).

Texas: True to their heritage, Texans like to do barbecue their own way. Brisket is seen as often as pork, and chopped beef is also often on the menu. Whatever the meat, it often stands alone, without sauce—Texans believe that sauce masks the quality and flavor of the well-prepared barbecue. Texas barbecue often has a pink tinge caused by the meat's reaction to the smoke. Oak, mesquite, and pecan are all used in Texas.

rather than “love *to* barbecue.” Because most everyone outside the South thinks of barbecue as a verb—what you do *to* your food, not what it *is*. This is not just an issue of semantics. When Southerners talk about barbecue, they’re talking about a tradition going back to pre-colonial times; the word *barbecue* is thought to be derived from *barabicu*, which was used by the Taino people of the Bahamas and Hispaniola to mean “sacred fire pit.” The word and the technique of slow-cooking an animal carcass over a hole in the ground migrated to America with the European explorers. Over time, different groups throughout the South developed distinctly different styles of barbecue, which remain today as some of the best indicators of where in the heck you are. Any Southerner worth his sauce knows that East Carolina style is thin but full of pepper and vinegar, and that the closer you get to the Appalachians, the sweeter and thicker it gets. And, of course, there’s the famous Brunswick stew, which no Georgia hostess would be caught dead without.

Before the War of Northern Aggression, Southerners ate around five pounds of pork for every one pound of beef they consumed, and today most barbecue is still made from pork. But you can find Southern devotees of other meats. Texans sure love their beef brisket and Kentuckians have perfected the art of the mutton barbecue.

Southerners are less race conscious than folks up North

Southerners do not like being asked, “Is the Klan still active around here?” The appropriate answer is “Klan? What Klan?” The Klan in the South has been dead for at least thirty years, and it had been in decline for the hundred years before that, after its initial postwar founding. The only people who ever think about the Ku Klux Klan in the twenty-first century are a handful of race hustlers who dangle the Klan in front of the public whenever they want to boost their donations. Every once in a while the letters KKK will appear on a wall somewhere and the local



Southern Food We Love

Southern fried chicken, cornbread, buttermilk biscuits, pecan pie, sweet potato pie, iced tea, okra, Tabasco, Texas Pete, pepper sauce, grits, Smithfield ham, fried green tomatoes, red beans and rice, barbecue, jambalaya, po-boys, chicory coffee, beignets, shrimp remoulade, gumbo, crawfish étouffée, she-crab soup, shrimp and grits, Low Country boil, Brunswick stew, fried catfish, Vidalia onions, Moon Pies, GooGoo Clusters, Elmer's candy, beef jerky, Coca-Cola, RC Cola, Barq's Root Beer, boiled peanuts

media will do a story on it. Police will invariably discover that the graffiti was written by bored teenagers hoping to see their work on television. In the late 1990s, the local head of the KKK in one North Carolina county called up the sheriff and turned in his robes. He was the only member of his “klavern.” He said it seemed stupid to belong to a club of one.

For most Southerners, the postwar Klan might have had a purpose—to redress the wrongs of Reconstruction. But after that short period, the Klan was the South's dirty laundry. The only people who don't know the Klan and its history are the news media and transplanted Yankees who fear straw men.

A corollary to the Klan question that angers Southerners is the equally ridiculous

“How are your race relations in today's South?” Southerners who are not too shocked to reply might say, “Much better than you have up North.” While segregation after Reconstruction was an ugly chapter in Southern history, it does not exist today and has not for at least forty years. And because previous Southern history was of blacks and whites living together, of black nannies considered members of the family, and black children being considered suitable playmates for whites, such “segregation” as exists is no worse than—in fact, it seems better than—what you'll find in New York City and Hollywood.

Here's an example of how Southerners treat race, family, and history compared to the North. Dotted the Southern landscape are former slave

graveyards. Many are surrounded by white picket fences and tended by the usually white owners of the private property in which they rest.

Contrast such reverential treatment with the African Burial Ground just east of New York City's city hall in lower Manhattan. A tiny plot of earth has been maintained of the remnant of a graveyard that once contained the bodies of upwards of 25,000 slaves who were literally worked to death in the eighteenth century. The vast majority of the slave dead are not in the cemetery; they're under high-rise buildings. Old times—and old family—may be tread on and forgotten in New York, but they are not forgotten in Dixie.

Southerners aren't elitists

If Yankees' stupid questions don't rile Southerners, superior attitudes will. Southerners have no pretenses about themselves. Southerners don't "put on airs" and don't "get above our raisings."

Restaurants are a good place for expatriate Yankees to experience this equality among natives. A shack that sells barbecue sandwiches dripping with sauce and grease handed out the back door by a man in an even greasier apron will attract bankers and lawyers eating side by side with bricklayers and ditch diggers. The attraction of the Southern restaurant is the barbecue, not the ambiance, the wine list, or the chance to be seen in this month's trendy bar.

The whole issue of moonshine and the South is instructive. Making moon in the South is a cultural tradition dating back to



South vs. North

"New England likes to think it has a civilization based on character. The South likes to think it has a character based on civilization. A big difference."

Henry Allen, "The Character of Summer,"
Washington Post Magazine

when the first Scots brought whiskey-making to the mountains in the early eighteenth century. It was perfectly acceptable to transform low-profit corn into high-profit corn whiskey, until the federal government realized that Southern entrepreneurs were not paying taxes.

That was—and is—the primary issue of moonshiners versus the feds. The feds never really cared much about the occasional moonshiner who made bad batches of shine that blinded people. The issue was always the unpaid taxes on the sale of the liquor. Southerners have never paid too much attention to laws that they don't like—such as banning a man from transforming his stock of corn and sugar into corn squeezins'. While making moonshine is a dying art, true-blue Southerners are unlikely to turn in their neighbors when they smell that sour mash in the air on the ridgeline.

How to impress a Southerner: know cars, country music, racin', and Mayberry

There are many ways for non-native Southerners to impress each other.

Knowing how to tear down and put back together a pre-emission controls engine will win any newcomer friends. Not many Manhattan and Chicago natives can do this. But good ol' boys have a passion for automotive machinery. Another tip—always have some cold bottled beer on hand when working on the engine. It lubricates the friendships that

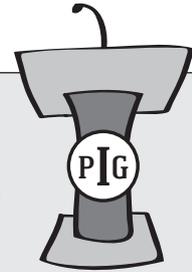
develop over passing around greasy rags.

If you're too old to slide under a car, then learn yourself some country music history. A Yankee who knows Kitty Wells's "It Wasn't God Who Made Honky Tonk Angels" will be off to a good start. Same is true if you know June Carter Cash was part of the Carter Family singers before she met Johnny. You don't need to know who was eliminated from *American*



A Book Y'all Aren't Supposed to Read

The Politically Incorrect Guide™ to English and American Literature by Elizabeth Kantor; Washington, DC: Regnery, 2006.



The Southern Mentality

“Emerson said that the ‘scholar is man thinking.’ Had Southerners of that era taken seriously the famous lecture entitled ‘The American Scholar,’ they might have replied by saying that the gentleman is man talking. The accomplished Christian gentleman of the old South was the shadow, attenuated by evangelical Calvinism, of his Renaissance spiritual ancestor, who had been the creation of the rhetorical tradition, out of Aristotle through Cicero distilled finally by Castiglione. By contrast, the New England sage, embodied in Ralph Waldo Emerson, took seriously what has come to be known since the Industrial Revolution as the life of the mind: an activity a little apart from life, and perhaps leading to the fashionable alienation of the ‘intellectual’ of our time.”

Allen Tate, “A Southern Mode of the Imagination”

Idol. But tune your radio dial to a country music station and listen to the oldies from Merle Haggard, Charlie Daniels, and (farther back) Ferlin Husky or the new stuff from Aaron Tippin, Alan Jackson, Toby Keith, and Trace Adkins. And no, the Dixie Chicks don’t count. But gospel does.

Likewise, knowing the difference between the “old” NASCAR and “new” NASCAR and debating the merits of both is a sure way for immigrants to the region to wheedle their way into the conversation of native Southerners. Even knowing what NASCAR stands for is a good start. Even though the sanctioning body has been around for more than fifty years, many Northern newspapers still spell it “Nascar”—either not knowing or not caring that it’s an acronym.

The “old” NASCAR began in 1949 and ended about 2000. Its drivers were men like Junior Johnson, Curtis Turner, the Flock brothers, Joe Weatherly, the Allison brothers (and their protégés the Alabama Gang), Leroy Yarborough, Cale Yarborough, Darrell Waltrip, David Pearson, Bobby Isaac, and “The King,” Richard Petty. The “old” NASCAR drivers usually did not have a college degree. Some, like Bobby Isaac, never even finished

What a Southerner Said



“Whenever I’m asked why Southern writers particularly have a penchant for writing about freaks, I say it is because we are still able to recognize one. To be able to recognize a freak, you have to have some conception of the whole man, and in the South the general conception of man is still, in the main, theological.”

Flannery O’Connor

junior high; Isaac dropped out to work in a textile mill. Others, like Junior Johnson (immortalized as “The Last American Hero” in an *Esquire* magazine article by Tom Wolfe) ran a little moonshine on the side to make ends meet in the days before racing started paying bigger money. These were men’s men—rough and tumble good ol’ boys who would sometimes duke it out in the pits or on the track when someone got wrecked. They pulled their own racecars to the track and did their own mechanical work, and still managed to find time to talk to fans.

The “new” NASCAR came along at the beginning of the twenty-first century when corporate sponsors virtually took command of

the sport. Stock car racing was no longer a sport as much as it was a vehicle for advertising and endorsements. Small tracks like North Wilkesboro and Rockingham in North Carolina were shut down completely, and venerable old tracks like Darlington in South Carolina were cut back to one event. Shifting the racing from the South’s old tracks to newer tracks in Northern states like New Hampshire and Illinois made NASCAR a national experience.

Out went the older Southern drivers who had learned to race by banging around on small dirt tracks scattered throughout the region. In came the kids from California, Wisconsin, Indiana, and other Northern states who had spent a few years racing go-karts. Out went the slow-talking, Southern-accented drivers over thirty with the mustaches and barber-shop haircuts who wanted to talk about racin’. In came the smooth-faced kids under twenty-five with their razor-cut hairstyles, who would only talk racin’ after thanking a long list of sponsors once they climbed out of

the car on cue from a television producer. Out went the old drivers who sometimes posed with a Confederate flag in the victory lane. In came the young drivers who posed with rap singers in their recording studios.

The “old” NASCAR, with its colorful drivers doing colorful things, is gone forever. How long the “new” NASCAR will remain popular with its Southern base is debatable. The grumbling is growing louder that the cars already look so much alike that brand loyalty no longer means anything, the racing is too boring, and the drivers look, sound, and act too much alike. Founded as a sport where the racecars looked exactly the way street cars looked, NASCAR is now promoting the idea of creating cars that will look so much alike that there will be no physical difference between makes.

Aside from cars and music, if Southern newcomers want a primer on how to act Southern, all they need to do is watch reruns of the *Andy Griffith Show*, which took place in the fictional town of Mayberry, North Carolina, based on Griffith’s real hometown of Mt. Airy, North Carolina. The 249 episodes run continually on television stations in the South, and are even found on some Northern stations desperate to find some kind of family entertainment. True Southerners can usually recognize the plot of each episode within the first two scenes, and can repeat whole sections of dialogue between multiple characters. Mayberry was the South as it is and used to be; kind, in no hurry, family-oriented, and a desirable place to live.

Southerners have grown up with Andy’s admonition to “Act like somebody!” and have followed Barney’s advice to “Nip it in the bud!” And we all know how to react when someone goes, “Say ‘Hey!’ to Gomer.” (The proper reply is, “Gomer says ‘Hey!’”)

The Southern Mentality

“The Moon Pie is a bedrock of the country store and rural tradition. It is more than a snack. It is a cultural artifact.”

William Ferris





How to Cook Southern

The Lee Bros. Southern Cookbook: Stories and Recipes for Southerners and Would-Be Southerners by Matt Lee and Ted Lee. These Charleston-born brothers “roll up their sleeves and get elbow-deep in Southern cooking in all its sugary, fried goodness.”

The Lady & Sons Savannah Country Cookbook by Paula Deen. The “mythically Southern” Ms. Deen shares her favorite down-home recipes.

The All-New Ultimate Southern Living Cookbook. The venerable *Southern Living* magazine presents authentic, time-tested, family-pleasing recipes dear to Southern hearts.

Being Dead Is No Excuse: The Official Southern Ladies' Guide to Hosting the Perfect Funeral by Gayden Metcalfe and Charlotte Hays. These two ladies wouldn't be caught dead without tomato aspic, stuffed eggs, and congealed Jello-O salad.

Church Suppers: 722 Favorite Recipes from Our Church Communities. A charming collection of real good recipes from real churchgoing Southern families.

Southern Junior League cookbooks document regional cooking. One of the classics is *River Road Recipes: The Textbook of Louisiana Cuisine* by the Junior League of Baton Rouge. Originally published in 1959, it's in its seventy-fourth printing as of 2006. Another standout is *Charleston Receipts* by the Junior League of Charleston, South Carolina. For a compilation, try *The Southern Junior League Cookbook* by Ann Seranne.

True Southerners still have heroes

Southerners still love their heroes with unabashed passion. Boys are still named Robert Edward, Thomas Jonathan, and Jeb in honor of the triumvirate of Lee, Jackson, and Stuart. Prints depicting these three generals are guaranteed sell-outs for artists specializing in the War for Southern Independence. Lemons are still left on the grave of Jackson, who died in May 1863. Apples are still left on the grave of Traveller, Lee's horse, buried a few yards from his old master's tomb. Drivers still seek out the suburban

Richmond neighborhood to find the marble monument marking the spot where Stuart was mortally wounded in May 1864. They then drive to Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery to see his grave, sometimes playing him a tune on the banjo, an instrument he didn't know how to play but that he loved to listen to at headquarters parties.

Robert Edward Lee's potential as a wartime leader was so expected by General Winfield Scott that Scott persuaded incoming president Abraham Lincoln to offer Lee the job as commander of the United States Army in early April 1861. Lee paced all night in his bedroom pondering his duty. Was his loyalty to the United States Army, which he had served his whole adult life? Or was his loyalty to his home state of Virginia, his birthplace, and the birthplace and home of his wife, his children, and his ancestors? Was he willing to make war on his family's homeland?

He was not. He tendered his resignation from the U.S. Army, as was his right as an officer, once he knew Virginia had seceded from the United States. Finally given the chance to command a major force in June 1862, Lee blossomed into the leader Scott knew he was. On the battlefield, Lee proved to be bold, decisive, imaginative, and skilled in managing a force that was always outnumbered. No general on the other side, including Grant, ever matched him in tactical prowess.

After the war, Lee was asked if the war had been worth the personal losses he had suffered. Included among these were the loss of his wife's ancestral home, from which many priceless artifacts of President George Washington were stolen by occupying Union troops. Lee said, "I did only what my duty demanded. I could have taken no other course without dishonour. And if it were all to be done over again, I should act in precisely the same manner."

They're That Good

"It was not a Southern watermelon that Eve took: we know it because she repented."

Mark Twain



Duty to God, family, state, and personal integrity drove Lee to make virtually every decision. One of his beliefs was “There is a true glory and a true honor; the glory of duty done—the honor of integrity of principle.”

Lieutenant General Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson was bold, decisive, tenacious, and instinctive. A former U.S. Army lieutenant with only five years of military experience, he had been out of uniform for ten years when the war began. Jackson’s willingness to hit his enemy hard even when outnumbered and attack where he was not expected, as well as his desire to win against overwhelming odds, captured the old Scots-Irish spirit of combat. He drove his men hard. Not all of them loved him, but they respected him. He wanted to win the war. They understood that.

Major General James Ewell Brown (J. E. B.) Stuart was more than the commander of the cavalry for the Army of Northern Virginia. He was its heart, displaying a sense of humor and fun mixed with piety that naturally made his men smile and pledge to do whatever he wanted them to do. He was the image of the dashing cavalryman, with a plumed hat, a cape, a big bushy beard, and an even bigger grin of white teeth. He was brash, boastful, and brave. He was reckless, endangering his own life to stay close to his men. He flirted with every woman he saw, but remained faithful to the only woman he

ever loved, the mother of his children.

Stuart’s major fault was that he did not realize how much Lee trusted him, and only him, to gather intelligence on the Federals. In Stuart’s mind, he was Lee’s cavalry commander, independent of Lee’s staff. In Lee’s mind, Stuart was a vital part of his staff, a man whose opinion could be trusted above all others. When Stuart left the immediate vicinity of



Maybe It Makes Sense to Yankees

At Harvard University’s Memorial Hall there is a wall of honor for graduates who died in the nation’s wars. Included among the names are one Nazi, but none of the 164 Harvard alumni who died in combat for the Confederacy.

Lee's army to lead his cavalry deep into Pennsylvania, rather than staying immediately on Lee's flank, he never realized his mistake until the Battle of Gettysburg was already two-thirds over. Stuart has been blamed for leaving Lee "blind," but in reality, the two men never realized how much they meant to each other until the battle was over.

Lee's devotion to duty, Jackson's brilliant tactics, and Stuart's sense of bold action are traits that still endear these heroes to Southerners. Their characters remain unassailable. They are the men we aspire to be.

To get your copy of *The Politically Incorrect Guide™ to the South*, click here.