

A bit of family history...Willis Kirkley, Senior was born in South Carolina about 1802. He was first married to "Eliza" or Louisa Meador. They had three sons: Thomas L. Kirkley born in 1826 and Willis Junior Kirkley born in 1828, both born in South Carolina. Younger son George W. Kirkley was born in 1838 in Georgia. I have not been able to determine the father of Willis Senior, but most likely it is either John Kirkley or Thomas Kirkley. These Kirkleys were from Chesterfield County, South Carolina. They did not own slaves.

By 1840 Willis Senior and his brother George (born about 1805) were living in Morgan County, Georgia. This elder George remained in Georgia (Walton County) throughout his life, dying sometime before 1880. George's eldest son, Calvin was a Confederate soldier.

Willis Senior was living in Perry County, Alabama in 1850. He owned land, but did not own slaves. Sometime after 1850, Willis' first wife died and he remarried in 1858 to Nancy Mazingo, daughter of Absolom Pearce Mazingo. Nancy's three brothers, Allen, William and Jackson were Confederate soldiers. Brother William died during the war, and Allen raised his two boys.

During the War Between the States, Thomas L. Kirkley, Willis Kirkley Junior, and their younger brother George W. Kirkley enlisted in Confederate States of America. Thomas and George were in the 31<sup>st</sup> Alabama Infantry. Willis Junior was at Camp of Instruction at Talladega, Alabama. I am sure the Confederate Battle Flag was with them throughout the war.

For my ancestors, the Civil War was not about slavery. It was about protecting their land and their family. General Sherman stormed through the South, destroying property and lives. Much of our family history was destroyed when the Southern courthouses were burned by the Union army.

The Confederate Battle Flag is an integral part of the history of the South. It wasn't until many decades later that it became associated with white extremists and other "nut jobs". Many Southern families proudly named their children after Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson.

I agree that the Confederate Battle Flag should not be flown over state capitals, but I see nothing wrong with it being part of a Confederate memorial.

I remember that Michelle Obama said in 2007 that Barack would have to change our history. And sure enough, it is happening right before of our eyes. History serves as an important reminder of our past. And yes, history even serves as a reminder of mistakes we do not want to repeat.

Will removing the Confederate Battle Flag stop there? Now we are hearing that war memorials should also be removed. And then what comes next? Do we remove the World War II Memorial because some find that offensive? Do we eliminate songs

like "Battle Hymn of the Republic" or "Dixie"? Do we remove the C.S.A. gravestones marking the burial locations of Confederate soldiers? Perhaps Arlington Cemetery is "offensive" because it is on land given up by Robert E. Lee?

A few months ago, University of California Irvine removed the U.S. flag because some found it "offensive". Really?

It was very tragic what happened in Charleston, South Carolina. We were all heart broken when we heard that nine people were killed *in a church*. But just like when Sgt. Moore was killed in Coeur d'Alene, our community came together. We as a nation need to come together. And removing the Confederate Battle Flag isn't going to make that happen. Flags don't kill people. Guns don't kill people. Bad people kill our loved ones. Sometimes those bad people are white, or black, or Hispanic, or Asian, or some other ethnicity.

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P.S. Do you have any court records that would help me find the parents of Willis Kirkley, Jr. b. abt 1802 South Carolina?

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