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When Rebel Was Cool: Growing Up in Dixie 1950-1965

James Ronald Kennedy

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Guns and hunting have always been a natural part of living in the South. This natural ability with firearms has been acknowledged by Yankee gun experts. During the War for Southern Independence, Confederate soldiers hit their targets at a rate of two or three to one when compared to Yankee soldiers. Unfortunately, Yankees outnumbered us three or four to one! The better marksmanship of Southern soldiers was the result of our rural environment. Most Confederate soldiers came from rural areas that were still heavily wooded. They spent a great deal of time camping, hunting, and fishing. Most Yankee soldiers came from cities or well-developed rural areas where one farm ended, and another began—where there were less wooded areas and forests. Toward the last years of the War, a very large percentage of Yankee soldiers came from Irish immigrants (basically mercenaries) who were fleeing starvation in Ireland. The English Empire that then occupied Ireland made sure the Irish did not have easy access to firearms. Empires don't want their subjects to have the ability to defend themselves. Most of the Irish troops that came into the Yankee army did not have a lot of experience handling firearms. But there were many Yanks who were good with firearms, although not as good as we were. I have read accounts from Confederate soldiers who were very impressed with Yankee troops from western states, such as Iowa—states where the young men spent a lot of time on horseback, hunting, and other outdoor activities. Shortly after the War, a Yankee officer established the National Rifle Association (NRA) because he was concerned about the poor marksmanship of his Yankee troops during the War. One of my nephews told me about his first days at boot camp—where young recruits are trained to be soldiers. He said that there were young men there who grew up in cities and who had never even held a rifle!

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I recall, in the late 1950s, one of my female cousins told me about a terrible dream she had the previous night. She dreamed that the Russians had parachuted troops into our community, and we had to fight them! Even children were frightened by the specter of a Russian invasion or nuclear attack. It is hard for people today to understand the anxiety that permeated American society during the Cold War. A large part of this fear was generated by the military that claimed there was a bomber gap between the

Russians and the United States—the claim was that the Russian communists had more attack aircraft than we did. Therefore, according to the military “experts” and their allies in Congress, we needed to build more planes and other military equipment. This intentionally created national anxiety was a great windfall to what President Eisenhower called the “military industrial complex.” About a decade later, the same folks claimed that there was now a missile gap. It was another boon for the military industrial complex. At the end of the Cold War, we found out that these so called “gaps” never existed! But fear of communism was used by those in power to enrich businessmen and politicians with close connections to the military industrial complex. But the taxes used to enrich the military industrial complex were extracted from America’s middle class. We should always remember the warning that James Madison, a founding father from Virginia, left for us, “Where there is power, and will to use it, wrong will be done.” Never trust politicians to always “do the right thing!”

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Hog meat was a primary source of protein in the Southern diet. Loss of this source of protein led to the South-only disease of pellagra. Corn production before the War was 48.5 bushels per person, but 65 years later, it had fallen to 22.8 bushels per person. What had happened? Before the War, the farms in these counties were privately own—many of them being small farms individually owned by families belonging to what we call the plain folk of the old South. After the War, 71% of the farms operated under the system of sharecropping—a system that, in many respects, was worse than slavery. Donald and I go into great detail discussing the South’s intentional impoverishment in “Punished With Poverty-the Suffering South.”

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This cycle of grinding poverty is typical for people who suffer invasion, conquest, and occupation. It is the result of the cultural distortion that occurs when a people are ruled by outside forces that do not understand the local society—rulers who hold the ruled people in contempt. Cultural distortion caused by an invader is a fact of history. Northerners may ignore this sad fact of our history, but Southerners have lived it. And it is not over because today we the people of Dixie, per capita the poorest section of America, are still living it!

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Civil War: The incorrect term for the War for Southern Independence. It is incorrect because a civil war is a struggle between two factions in the same country—one trying to capture control of the country and the other trying to maintain its control of the

country. When the American Colonies seceded from the British Empire in 1776, it was not a civil war; the same holds true for when the Southern States seceded from the United States in 1861. The South was attempting to fulfill the American principle boldly declared in the Declaration of Independence that all people have an inalienable right to establish a government based upon the consent of the governed. And as a Virginia lady once declared, "There was not a darn thing civil about it!" Also, see The War.

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lines: The reins used to control a mule or horse while plowing. Most plow-lines were made of cotton rope. Leather reins could be used, but they tended to be more expensive and too heavy to manage all day long while also handling (steering) the plow. A well-trained mule requires very little "steering," while the plow must be manhandled, controlling the direction of the plow point up, down, right, or left, or else you will end up plowing up your crop or just skidding along on top of the ground. While manhandling the plow, the farmer must also calculate whether the plow is throwing too much or too little soil. These field hands are the men that secular humanists, neo-Marxists and feminists claim are/were a part of the male patriarchy, who enjoyed unearned male privilege. Privilege? Plumb:

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