

# SIGNS OF THE CONFEDERACY ARE VANISHING IN THE SOUTH

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LITTLE ROCK, Ark., Dec. 24 (AP) - From renaming Confederate Boulevard in Arkansas to shrinking "Heart of Dixie" on Alabama's license plates, the South is slowly erasing reminders of its Civil War past for fear of offending tourists and scaring off business.

"Business people and tourists don't know what to think about slavery, elitism, the Civil War," said Ted Ownby of the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi. "So one way is to give them an easy out. We'll change the name of this building, this street, change this display."

Over the last few years, more and more references to the Confederacy seem to be vanishing around the South. At Vanderbilt University in Nashville last year, Confederate Memorial Hall became simply Memorial Hall. The University of Mississippi dropped "Colonel Rebel" as its on-field mascot. Georgia reduced, and then eventually removed, a Confederate symbol from its state flag.

In Little Rock, the switch from Confederate Boulevard to Springer Boulevard was made in November, just before the opening of Bill Clinton's presidential library.

John Shelton Reed, a professor at the Center for the Study of the American South at the University of North Carolina, said that the trend was clear, and that business interests coupled with concern among blacks were the catalysts.

"Businesses named Dixie this and Dixie that, there are fewer of them than there used to be," Professor Shelton said. "If you're a business person, why do you want a name that's going to raise anybody's hackles?"

Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock said the Confederate Boulevard sign was changed after city officials noted that it was often the first thing visitors saw after arriving at the Little Rock airport. With the world's eyes on the opening of the Clinton library last month, and with millions of tourism dollars at stake, the city sought a different first impression.



Ron Casteel, chief of staff for the Sons of Confederate Veterans, called the removal of rebel reminders a "disgusting trend."

"We honor everyone else's traditions and heritage: why should we discriminate against Confederate heritage?" Mr. Casteel said.

Larry Griffin, a sociology and history professor at the University of North Carolina, said that the symbols should be placed in context. "We don't want to rewrite the past so moments are silenced or hidden," Professor Griffin said. "The past needs to be observed and engaged, warts and all. There are places that would be proper sites for these kinds of symbols. It could be in a museum, in a national park or any of the Civil War battlefields."



The "Colonel Reb" mascot at the

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