

Rewriting Clemson History – Again

The origin and history of Clemson University is so closely intertwined with the history of South Carolina and the nation, encompassing the good, the bad, and the ugly. That is the nature of true history; an accurate record of the way it was, not the way we wish it had been. Unfortunately, over the past four to five decades, staff or faculty or both of the University have attempted to “tailor” the history of the University to harmonize with politically correct positions of times and situations. Historical references to slavery or the Confederacy have been removed. Mention of black employees of the earlier days of the college have been minimized, and traditions of the school and its corps of cadets have been banned from the campus. The college marching band has been banned from playing Dixie and the cadet corps are no longer allowed to display historical images including former state flags.

Clemson is not alone when it comes to the suppression of history with regard to the history of its institution. For instance, founders of Furman University were leaders in the Confederate Army and organized the student body into a military unit that served the Confederacy with distinction.

Now, a daily newspaper has reported that a black Clemson faculty member is engaged in taking “a new look at the university’s history.”

Professor Rhondda Thomas told the newspaper that she was surprised when told by a tour guide at the Calhoun Mansion and Fort Hill Plantation that slavery and black workers were not mentioned because it was too controversial.

Fortunately these Universities have not destroyed the historical documents that acknowledge their true history, but they have hidden them from public view.

Unless it has been destroyed in the past decade, the beautiful hand painted flag of the Furman Confederate military unit still exists in a “dungeon” beneath one of the university buildings. I learned of its existence and location and, accompanied by a Furman alumni friend and University official, saw the flag and books of photographs and documentation stored away from public view.

It is interesting and tragic that white-guilt liberals have tried so hard to “protect” the descendants of slaves from “the truth” because of it being “too controversial,” and the descendants of slaves are having to dig up the factual history that has been hidden from them, for “their” protection.

With the outcome of the most recent presidential election, maybe the political correctness and dishonesty based on race will be given a rest and truth will once again become fashionable.

Hopefully Professor Thomas and her colleagues will be objective and honest in presenting history as it truly was. She should not forget that part of the history is the act of concealing the full story of the involvement of African-American former slaves being hidden from public view because academia considered it “too controversial” to discuss in public.