

# 'Dixie' and Confederate Flag Stirring Angry Responses From Negroes in South as Integration Spreads

By ANTHONY RIPLEY Special to The New York Times

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## 'Dixie' and Confederate Flag Stirring Angry Responses From Negroes in South as Integration Spreads

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ATLANTA, Feb. 25 — White students stood erect when the Lebanon, Tenn., high school band struck up "Dixie" at a pep rally, but the song was too much for a Negro in the band.

Charles Caldwell, 14 years old, tucked his trumpet under his arm and walked out, explaining later that he regarded the strains of "Dixie" as offensive to his race.

Reaction was swift. Young Caldwell was suspended from the band for walking out. When his mother, the school's only Negro teacher's aide, complained, she was dismissed. Since then the family has received many threatening phone calls.

The Caldwells' situation points to a growing problem in the South, where two guaranteed rousers, "Dixie" and the Confederate flag, are no longer heard and watched by whites alone.

As school desegregation accelerates in the South, the song and the flag are running head-on into black consciousness at high schools and universities. Cries of "black power" can now be heard from students in Afro haircuts among the camellias and magnolia trees.

At the University of South Carolina, in Columbia, white radical and black militant students burned Confederate flags and objected to "Dixie." Brett Bursey, 24, state traveler for the Southern Student Organizing Committee, was arrested Feb. 17 and charged with desecrating a Confederate flag, in violation of state law.

In Atlanta, State Representative Janet S. Merritt, a white Democrat from Americus, submitted a bill to the State Legislature to restore the design

of the old Georgia state flag. It had been changed to include the rebel stars and bars following the 1954 school desegregation decision of the United States Supreme Court.

Mrs. Merritt said the Confederate flag had a "tragic" history.

When "Dixie" was played at a game of the Atlanta Falcons professional football team last fall, the white cheerleaders danced and sang. A Negro cheerleader stood still and silent.

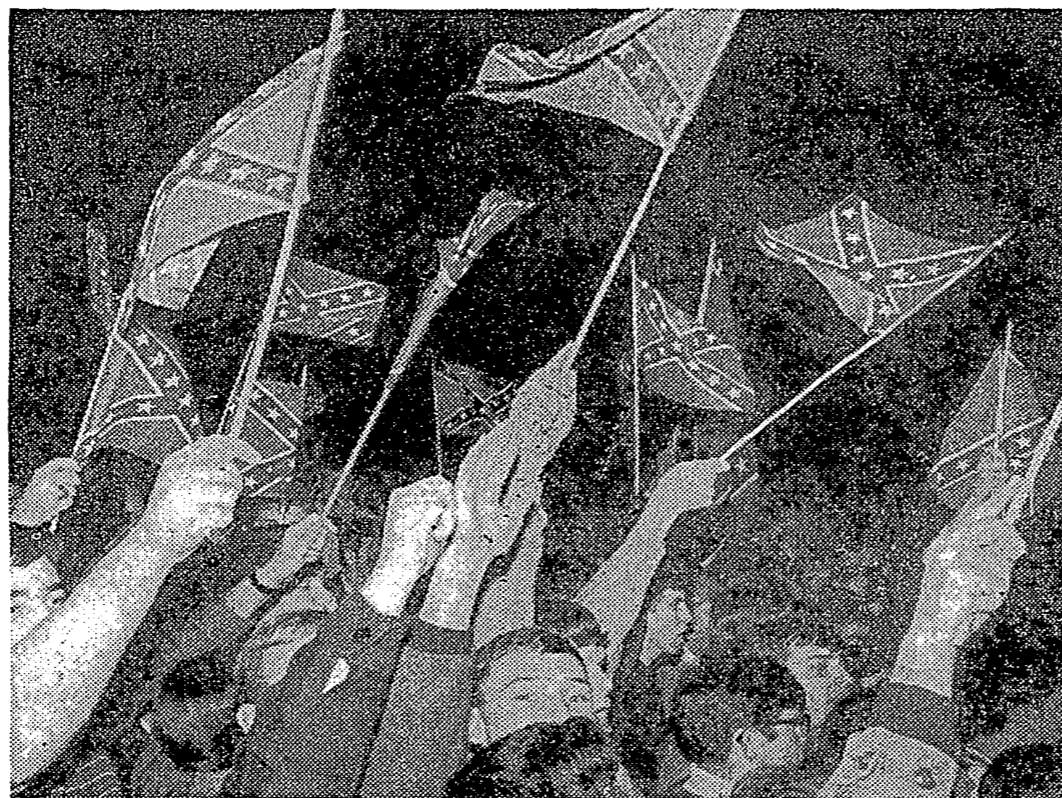
For whites, the song and the flag are traditions not lightly abandoned. Charles Caldwell's case shows the depth of feeling that they bring out.

Lebanon, a city of 16,500, is 30 miles east of Nashville in an area that has gone from farming to light industry. A Confederate monument stands in the town square but many of the buildings around it have been flattened by urban renewal.

Charles, the son of the Rev. and Mrs. Marcus Caldwell, is a quiet B-average student, one of 89 Negroes in the student body of 1,245 at Lebanon High. He lives in a public housing project.

His first brush with trouble in the band came Nov. 8 when a white girl remarked in the band instrument room that it was too dark to see because there was a "dirty nigger" present.

School Superintendent Erwin



Gary Ludwick

Confederate flags being waved by students on campus of University of South Carolina, at Columbia. Whites rallied the day after Negroes and some whites there burned a Confederate flag while protesting display of the banner and the playing of "Dixie" at events.

"Both admitted using slang language," Wilson County

Reed reported to his board. He added:

"The conversation soon led to an exchange of bodily blows

with fists, instruments and feet. Both admitted participation in this. Mr. Donald Craighead, the band instructor, then suspended both the students from the band for one day, gave them a talk about band unity and warned that any future racial incident by them involving the band would result in their immediate dismissal from the band."

A month later, the band struck up "Dixie" and Charles walked out but nothing happened. When he did it a second time at a pep rally on Jan. 3, he was suspended for the rest of the year.

Mrs. Caldwell, who had been earning \$200 a month under Title I of the Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, said she was dismissed from her job on Jan. 31 without hearing or notice.

When the case was appealed to the school board, Mr. Reed reported she had been disruptive, incompetent and disloyal to the school, and he asserted that she lacked "a professional attitude."

The American Civil Liberties Union entered the case after Ralph McGill, the late publisher of The Atlanta Constitution, mentioned the case in his column. Mrs. Caldwell had written him of her troubles.

A.C.L.U. plans to file suit in Federal Court in Nashville, asking reinstatement for Mrs. Caldwell and her son and asking that Negroes not be re-

quired to play a song they consider derogatory to their race.

"Playing 'Dixie,' to a Negro and in the South, is like singing the 'Horst Wessel' song in a Kosher delicatessen," said Charles Morgan Jr., Southern regional director of A.C.L.U.

"Folks got a constitutional right to play 'Dixie' but they've got no constitutional right to make Negroes do it," he added.

Charles Caldwell, sitting on a sofa at his home in Lebanon, said of the song:

"It was written by this man named Emmett for 'minstrel shows.

"He used to blacken his face and wear these silly clothes. I wouldn't want to do anything to make my race look stupid."

At school, Charles said, white students yell "Dixie" at him or whistle the tune as they pass.

Mrs. Caldwell said the family had received a number of obscene and threatening phone calls. A caller reminded her, she said, that you "have only one life."

"All we asked was to let him be excused when 'Dixie' was being played," she said.

Of her own dismissal, she added, "They resent the fact that a black person will ask questions and won't be satisfied.

"It's a very pathetic situation," she continued. "They cannot understand that there are some black people who are not illiterate."

Wilson County, which traditionally votes 70 per cent Democratic, went heavily for George C. Wallace for President last year.

And at the Holiday Inn on the outskirts of Lebanon, the organ player reports that since the furor started, requests to play "Dixie" have risen to two or three a night.