

# Georgetown

## Town Council Meeting Agenda

Meeting Date: Tuesday, May 26, 2026

Location: 39 The Circle, Georgetown, DE 19947

Time: 7:00 PM Regular Meeting

Posted: 5/19/26 @ 4:00pm



**Live Stream Can be Found at the Following Link:**  
**Website:** <https://www.georgetowndel.com/live-stream>

**Zoom Information Necessary for Participation:**  
**zoom.us/join**  
**Zoom Meeting ID: 841 1339 1556**

The Town of Georgetown strives to make our public meetings widely available through Zoom and YouTube broadcasts. While the Town is committed to continuing this access, technological problems that prevent or limit access do not affect the validity of these meetings, nor the validity of any action taken in these meetings.

### 1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

### 2. INVOCATION

### 3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

### 4. APPROVAL OF MAY 11, 2026 TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

- 3 - 6 A. May 11, 2026 Minutes  
[May 11 2026 TC Minutes](#)

### 5. COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENTS

### 6. RECOGNITION OF OUTGOING OFFICIALS

### 7. OATH OF OFFICE

- A. Mayor  
B. Ward 3  
C. Ward 4

### 8. ORGANIZATION OF COUNCIL

- A. Vice-Mayor  
B. Secretary  
C. Affirmation of Code of Ethics

### 9. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

- 7 - A. Town Manager - Gene Dvornick  
22 [Town Manager Report - 2026-05-26 \(Updated\)](#)

[Delaware General Assembly Legislative Report \(153 GA - 2nd Session\) - \(2026-05-26\)](#)

- 23 - B. Chief of Police - Ralph Holm
- 29 [GPD Overview May 2026 \(002\) - Read-Only](#)

**10. PUBLIC COMMENT**

- 30 - A. Submitted Correspondence
- 69 [Peterson, Jon \(2026-05-18\)](#)
- [Peterson, Jon \(2026-05-26\)](#)

**11. ADJOURNMENT**

The agenda items as listed may not be considered in sequence. This agenda is subject to change, at or before the meeting, to include the addition or deletion of items, including executive sessions. Persons requiring special accommodations to attend this meeting should contact the Town Office in writing 72 hours in advance of the meeting, stating their needs in order to have them addressed under the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA).

**TOWN OF GEORGETOWN  
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES**

**Meeting Date:** Monday, May 11, 2026  
**Location:** 39 The Circle, Georgetown, DE 19947

Live Stream Can be Found at the Following Link:  
Website: <https://www.georgetowndel.com/live-stream.htm>

Zoom.us/join  
Zoom Meeting ID: 849 1050 4758

**Time:** 7:00 PM Regular Meeting

**TOWN COUNCIL PRESENT:**

Bill West, Mayor  
Christina Diaz-Malone, Ward One  
Tony Neal, Ward Two  
Penuel Barrett, Ward Four

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Eugene Dvornick, Town Manager  
Stephani Ballard, Town Solicitor  
Kristen Dabrowski, Finance

**ABSENT:**

Eric Evans, Ward Three

**7:00 PM REGULAR MEETING**

**1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Town Manager Dvornick led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**2. INVOCATION**

Councilman Neal led the Invocation.

**3. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

Motion by Councilman Barrett, seconded by Councilwoman Diaz-Malone to adopt the agenda as presented. **Motion Carried (unanimous)**

**4. APPROVAL OF APRIL 27, 2026 TOWN COUCNIL MINUTES**

Motion by Councilwoman Diaz-Malone, seconded by Councilman Neal to approve the April 27, 2026 Minutes as presented. **Motion Carried (unanimous)**

**5. COUNCILMEMBERS COMMENTS**

Councilwoman Diaz-Malone, Ward One

- Good to see everyone tonight

Councilman Neal, Ward Two

- Thank you for coming out tonight

Councilman Barrett, Ward Four

- Thank you to Bill West for his time as Mayor

Mayor West

- Commented on a few accomplishments during his time as Mayor

**6. SUPPORTIVE HOUSING ISSUES COMMITTEE PROGRESS REPORT**

Linda Dennis presented the progress report for the Supportive Housing Issues Committee.

- Questions/Comments posed from the audience

**7. 2<sup>ND</sup> READING & ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE**

**A. ORDINANCE #2026-03 FEES**

Motion by Councilman Barrett, seconded by Councilwoman Diaz-Malone to adopt Ordinance #2026-03 Fees as presented. Motion Carried (unanimous)

**8. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

**A. TOWN MANAGER – GENE DVORNICK**

**Project Updates**

- Police and Public Works Facility
  - Site Grading continues
  - Pipe stakeout – May 13
  - Footers – May 18
- Parson Lane Trailhead & Parking Area
  - Stormwater detention complete
  - Sidewalk installed

**Funding Opportunities**

- FY 2026 GREAT Fund
  - Balance available for distribution - \$115,000
  - Press Release sent out on May 5
  - Application deadline is Friday, May 29 at 4:30 PM
- FY 2027 Community Reinvestment Fund
  - Applications submitted for 3 projects
    - Parson Lane Trailhead and Parking Lot - \$85,000
    - Layton Avenue (sidewalk & lighting) - \$27,000
    - Pump Station Equipment and Control Panel Cabinets - \$264,000
  - Notice of Award in early July (included in Bond Bill)

**General Items**

- Upcoming Events
  - Delaware Local Government Day: Thursday, May 14, 11:30 AM, Dover
  - Hometown Heroes Ceremony: Friday, May 15, 6:30 PM, The Circle
  - America 250 Committee: Monday, May 18, 10:30 AM, Town Hall
  - Planning Commission: Wednesday, May 20, 6:00 PM, Town Hall
  - Georgetown Memorial Day Service: Sunday, May 24, 1:30 PM, The Circle

- Town Offices Closed: Monday, May 25 in observation of Memorial Day
- Legislative Update
  - Bill Tracking

## 9. PUBLIC COMMENT

Itzel Hernandez

- Congratulations to all the winners from the election.
- Eager to attend more meetings and learn more about Georgetown

Jon Peterson, 304 North Bedford Street

- Provided information on the confederate flag.

Sunny Gyani

- Commented on workforce housing
- Thank you to Bill West and Eric Evans for their service

Andrea Whaley, 124 Burton Street

- Commented on the growth on her street over the years
- Thanked Bill West for his time serving as Mayor

Jane Hovington, 204 South Railroad Avenue

- Congratulations to the winners of the election
- Expressed concern with the “Make Georgetown Great Again” Facebook Group

Clayton Townsend, 20293 Ennis Road

- Commented on racism and how to bring the community together

Maria Hammond, 507 North Bedford Street

- New Council will need to be held accountable

Linda Dennis, 4 Huckleberry Drive

- Encouraged everyone to get involved in the community

Adam Buczkowski, 200 South Bedford Street

- Thanked Bill West for his time serving as Mayor
- Disappointed in the voter turnout
- Encouraged everyone to get involved in the community

Shelly Wise, 21502 Old Park Avenue

- Shared her experience with addressing the homeless situation in Town

Tammy Hardy-Kessler, 300 James Street

- Provided statistics on the population of African Americans in Georgetown
- Commented on the confederate flag

Lisa Rohlfing, 22 Sweetgum Court

- Commented on the newly renovated homes in Town

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

Motion by Councilman Barrett, seconded by Councilman Neal to adjourn at 7:57pm.

**Motion Carried (unanimous)**

APPROVED:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Anthony Neal, Secretary

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Eugene S. Dvornick Jr., Town Manager

*\*These minutes are a summary of the meeting. Complete audio and visual recordings are available upon request\**

DRAFT

# TOWN MANAGER REPORT



TOWN OF  
GEORGETOWN

## PROJECT UPDATES

- Parson Lane Trailhead & Parking Area
  - Black top installed
  - Coconut mat placed (erosion control)



## PROJECT UPDATES

- Police and Public Works Facility
  - Pipe stakeout complete
  - Utilities: Sewer, stormwater, water
  - Column locations this week



# STREET PROJECTS

Location	Estimate
East North Street: North Railroad Avenue to Kimmey Street	\$39,084.00
Clover Drive: South Bedford Street to Meadow Run	\$110,293.00
East Laurel Street: North Race Street to Layton Avenue	\$138,070.00
Lee Avenue: West North Street to Alfred Street	\$61,835.00
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$349,282.00</b>



## PROJECT UPDATES

- North Bedford Street
  - Streetlight installation at The Circle
- Sidewalk Art
  - America 250 Recognition
- FY 2026 GREAT Fund
  - Application deadline is Friday, May 29 at 4:30 PM



## GENERAL ITEMS

### ■ Upcoming Events

- Supportive Housing Issues Committee: Wednesday, May 27, 4:00 PM, Town Hall
- Delaware League of Local Governments: Thursday, May 28, 5:30 PM, Cheswold
- America 250 Committee: Monday, June 1, 10:00 AM, Town Hall
- Sussex County Association of Towns: Wednesday, June 3, 6:00 PM, Hosted by Millville
- Sussex County Association of Towns Steering Committee: Friday, June 5, 9:00 AM, First State Community Action Agency

### ■ Legislative Update

- Bill Tracking



**Town of Georgetown**  
**Second Session, 153<sup>rd</sup> Delaware General Assembly**  
**Legislative Report**

Prepared by:  
 Eugene S. Dvornick, Jr., Town Manager  
 May 26, 2026

Bill	Description	Position	Status	
HB 133 w/ HA 4	Fines and Fees	Neutral	PASSED (03/24/26)	Judiciary (03/24/26)
HB 135 w/ HA 1	Protections for Delawareans Experiencing Homelessness (04/30/26)	Oppose	Housing Committee Hearing (04/21/26) Not Released from Committee (05/06/26)	
<del>HB 252</del>	<del>Personal Use Consumption – Civil Violation</del>	<del>Neutral</del>	<del>Health &amp; Human Development Out of Committee (01/28/26)</del>	
HS 1 for HB 252	Personal Use Consumption – Civil Violation	Neutral	Health & Human Development Out of Committee (01/28/26) Substituted (03/10/26)	
HB 270	Mini-Bond	Support	Signed by Governor (01/30/26)	

**Updated May 26, 2026**

HB 275	Bond Bill (Governor's Recommended)	Under Review	Capital Infrastructure (01/29/26)	
HB 286	Realty Transfer Tax (State Portion)	Under Review	Revenue & Finance (01/29/26)	
HB 294 w/ HA 1	Parking Spaces for Pregnant Persons (State buildings and facilities) (04/21/26)	Neutral	PASSED (05/07/26)	Elections & Government Affairs Out of Committee (05/20/26)
HB 295 w/ HA 1	Parking Spaces for Veterans (State buildings and facilities) (04/21/26)	Neutral	PASSED (05/07/26)	Elections & Government Affairs Out of Committee (05/20/26)
HB 306 w/ HA 1, HA 3	Chat Bot Notification (05/05/26)	Oppose	PASSED (05/05/26)	Banking, Business, Insurance & Technology (05/05/26)
HB 310	Large Energy Use Facilities (Tax credit exclusion)	Neutral	PASSED (05/05/26)	Banking, Business, Insurance & Technology (05/05/26)
HB 363	20 MPH Residential Speed Limit	Under Review	Public Safety & Homeland Security Tabled in Committee (05/05/26)	
HB 339	Virtual Meeting Anchor	Neutral	PASSED (05/12/26)	Executive Out of Committee (05/21/26)

**Updated May 26, 2026**

HB 407	Brownfields Grant Funding	Support	Natural Resources & Energy (05/07/26) Out of Committee (05/13/26) Appropriations (05/14/26)	
HB 413	Expands Green Light Use	Support	Public Safety & Homeland Security (05/12/26) Out of Committee (05/19/26)	
HB 416	Realty Transfer Tax (reduction by ¼ of a percent - State)	Under Review	Revenue & Finance (05/12/26)	
HB 426	Electronic Submission of State Aid to Municipalities for Streets	Neutral	Revenue & Finance (05/19/26)	
HB 428	Constitutional Amendment - Crossover Day (First Leg)	Support	Administration (05/19/26)	
HB 450	Reforming Opportunities and Accelerated Development for Delaware (ROAD-DE Act)	Under Review	Economic Development/Banking/Insurance & Commerce (05/21/26)	
HJR 11	Housing Opportunity and Poverty Elimination (HOPE) Court Working Group	Under Review	Judiciary (05/12/26) Out of Committee (05/20/26)	
SB 23	Housing Supply and Housing Affordability	Oppose		Housing & Land Use (04/21/26)

**Updated May 26, 2026**

SS 1 for SB 23	Housing Supply and Housing Affordability	Oppose		Housing & Land Use (05/11/26) Out of Committee (05/13/26)
SS 1 for SB 161	Behavioral Health Treatment Oversight (04/30/26)	Under Review		PASSED (05/21/26)
SB 222	Constitutional Amendment – Term Limits (First Leg)	Neutral		Executive (01/13/26)
SB 225	FY 2027 Appropriations Bill (Governor’s Recommended)	Under Review		Finance (01/29/26)
SB 233 w/ SA 1	Removal of Ice and Snow (Vehicles)	Support	Public Safety & Homeland Security Out of Committee (05/19/26)	PASSED (05/12/26)
SB 241	Project Labor Agreements – Public Works Projects > \$5 Million	Oppose		Labor Out of Committee (03/11/26) Finance (03/12/26)
SB 247	Deposit of Funds	Support	Signed by Governor (05/19/26)	
SB 249	Substance Use Harm Reduction	Under Review	Health & Human Development (05/19/26)	PASSED (05/14/26)
SB 310 w/ SA 1	Establishment of a Disaster Recovery Fund	Under Review		Elections & Government Affairs Out of Committee (05/20/26)

**Updated May 26, 2026**

SB 322	Repeals of School District Ability to Increase Tax Rates 10%	Neutral		Education Out of Committee (05/20/26)
	Watch list: Affordable Housing Energy policy FOIA Zoning Reform			

**Updated May 26, 2026**



## Town of Georgetown Second Session, 153<sup>rd</sup> Delaware General Assembly Legislative Report

Prepared by:  
Eugene S. Dvornick, Jr., Town Manager  
May 26, 2026

Bill	Description	Position	Status	
HB 133 w/ HA 4	Fines and Fees	Neutral	PASSED (03/24/26)	Judiciary (03/24/26)
HB 135 w/ HA 1	Protections for Delawareans Experiencing Homelessness (04/30/26)	Oppose	Housing Committee Hearing (04/21/26) Not Released from Committee (05/06/26)	
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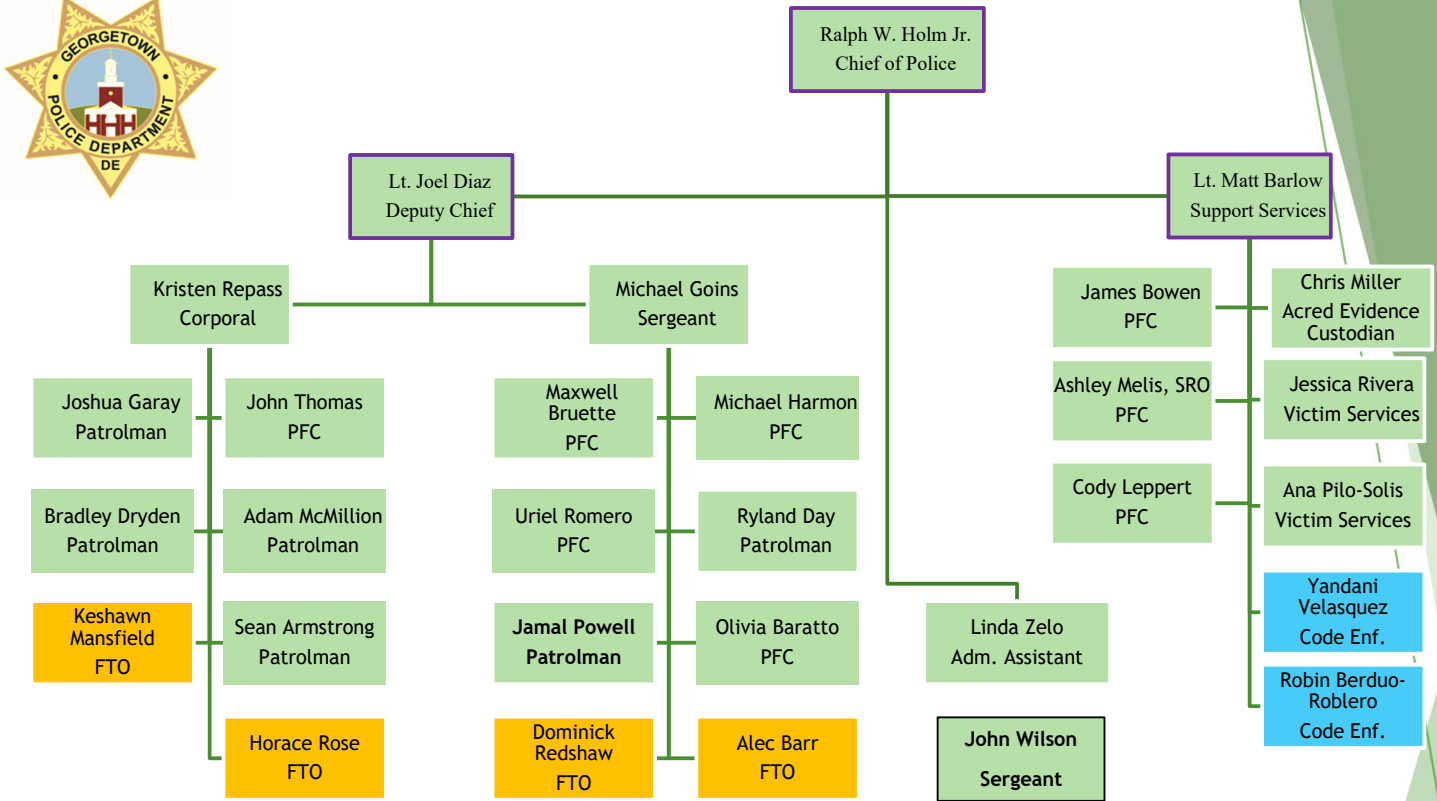
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SB 322	Repeals of School District Ability to Increase Tax Rates 10%	Neutral		Education Out of Committee (05/20/26)
	Watch list: Affordable Housing Energy policy FOIA Zoning Reform			



**In Service  
To Our  
Community**

**MARCH 16, 2026 –  
MAY 25, 2026**



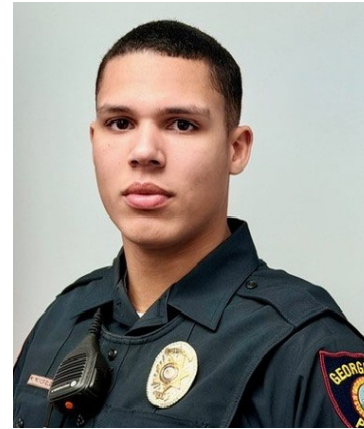
**DSP Academy – March 15**  
**John Briddell**

Approved Sworn Personnel	- 25
Current	- 24
Civilian	- 6
Academy	- 1

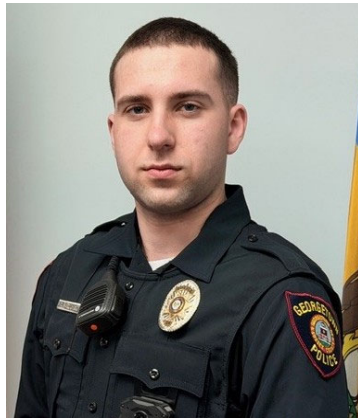
# New Georgetown Officers 2026



Barr



Mansfield



Redshaw



Rose

# *Georgetown Activity*

March 16, 2026 – May 25, 2026

- ▶ Incidents – 1,633
- ▶ Robberies 0 (No Arrest)
- ▶ Assaults 142 (50 Arrests – 45\*)
- ▶ Burglaries 13 (3 Arrests)
- ▶ Fugitives Apprehended - 79

March 16, 2025 – May 25, 2025

- ▶ Incidents – 1,615
- ▶ Robberies 2 (1 Arrest)
- ▶ Assaults 101 (37 Arrests – 48\*)
- ▶ Burglaries 33 (10 arrests)
- ▶ Fugitives Apprehended - 80



# *Georgetown Activity*

## Crash Data

March 16, 2026 – May 25, 2026

- 117 crashes
- 55 E-Tickets issued
- 47% summons issued
- 18 PI
- 99 PD or Non-reportable
- 0 Fatalites
- 27 Hit & Runs
- DUI's - 22

## Crash Data

March 16, 2025 – May 25, 2025

- 148 crashes
- 63 E-Tickets issued
- 43% summons issued
- 14 PI
- 133 PD or Non-Reportable
- 1 Fatalities
- 29 Hit & Runs
- DUI's - 32



# *Georgetown Activity*

**Calls for Service**

**March 16, 2026 – May 25, 2026**

**1,933**

**Calls for Service**

**March 16, 2025 – May 25, 2025**

**2,434**





Questions?

## Town of Georgetown — Administrative Record Transmittal

Jon Peterson  
304 North Bedford Street  
Georgetown, Delaware 19947

May 18, 2026

Mayor Angela Townsend  
Town of Georgetown  
37 The Circle  
Georgetown, Delaware 19947

**CC:** Councilperson Christina Diaz Malone, Councilperson Tony Neal, Councilperson Michael Briggs, Councilperson Penuel Barrett, Town Solicitor Stephanie Ballard, Esq., Town Manager Eugene Dvornick, [File](#)

**RE: Transmittal of Research Paper — Confederate Symbolism and Civic Identity: The Dixiecrat Battle Flag in the Context of Sussex County, Delaware's History of Resistance to Civil Rights**

Dear Mayor Townsend and Members of the Georgetown Town Council:

The paper establishes, through documented historical sources, that the rectangular banner commonly called the “Confederate flag” is not a Civil War artifact. It is a political emblem adopted in 1948 by the States’ Rights Democratic Party to oppose federal civil rights enforcement — a distinction that carries particular significance given Sussex County’s documented history of dual school systems, denial of bus service to Black students, and eight-year delay in complying with *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The paper advocates no particular policy outcome. It is submitted solely so that any present or future municipal decisions touching on Confederate symbolism may be made with full awareness of the documented historical record. I am pleased to discuss the research at the Mayor’s and Council’s convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

Jon Peterson

Enclosures:

- Research Paper — Confederate Symbolism and Civic Identity: The Dixiecrat Battle Flag in the Context of Sussex County, Delaware’s History of Resistance to Civil Rights (Jon Peterson, May 2026)
- Flags of the Confederacy: A Vexillological Reference Chart — Comparative table of all six Confederate and Confederate-associated flags, including date of adoption, official status, physical description, purpose, and reason for replacement or discontinuation (Appendix D to the Research Paper)

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# Confederate Symbolism and Civic Identity: The Dixiecrat Battle Flag in the Context of Sussex County, Delaware's History of Resistance to Civil Rights

*A Research Paper Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of Historical and Civic Analysis*

Jon Peterson · 304 North Bedford Street · Georgetown, Delaware 19947

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## Abstract

The rectangular flag commonly displayed as the "Confederate flag" is not, as a matter of vexillological and historical record, a wartime emblem of the Confederate States of America. It is, rather, a political symbol introduced at the 1948 States' Rights Democratic Party convention — the so-called Dixiecrat convention — expressly to oppose President Harry S. Truman's federal civil rights program. Its adoption as a mass political emblem occurred not in 1861 but eighty-seven years later, in a specific context of organized resistance to federal enforcement of racial equality. This paper argues that the flag's appearance in civic contexts in Georgetown, Delaware, carries particular institutional significance given Sussex County's documented record of maintaining constitutionally mandated dual school systems, denying Black students equal access to public transportation, tolerating chronically substandard school facilities for Black children, and delaying compliance with federal desegregation orders for eight years following the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954). Drawing on vexillological analysis, legal history, and documentary evidence from Delaware's civil rights record, this paper situates the flag's symbolic meaning within that specific local history. It argues that the presence of the Dixiecrat battle flag in municipal or institutionally adjacent settings in Georgetown raises foreseeable and avoidable questions about institutional awareness and civic judgment that administrative prudence — not ideology — recommends be addressed.

**Keywords:** *Confederate flag, Dixiecrats, Sussex County, Delaware, school segregation, Brown v. Board of Education, Gebhart v. Belton, William C. Jason High School, civil rights resistance, vexillology, civic symbolism*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

When the rectangular banner commonly called the "Confederate flag" is raised over a public building, displayed beside a civic monument, or incorporated into institutional space, a question of historical precision arises before any question of political opinion: what flag is actually being displayed? The answer, as this paper will demonstrate, is neither simple nor neutral. The rectangular saltire flag — a blue diagonal cross edged in white, bearing thirteen stars, set on a red field — was never adopted by the Confederate Congress as a national flag, never served as the official civil emblem of the Confederate States of America, and was not widely recognized as a popular Confederate symbol during or immediately after the Civil War. It emerged into broad public consciousness seventy to eighty years after Appomattox, carried not by veterans or their direct descendants but by a specific mid-twentieth-century political movement organized to resist federal civil rights enforcement.

This paper introduces that vexillological question not as an abstraction but as the foundation of a specific local argument. Georgetown is the county seat of Sussex County, Delaware. It is home to

the Georgetown Historical Society, which operates the Marvel Carriage Museum at the corner of South Bedford Street — a civic institution that, as of 2022, continued to fly the Confederate battle flag on its grounds, with municipal funding. This paper argues that the specific flag being flown is not the battle flag of any Confederate army unit; it is the flag introduced in Birmingham, Alabama, on July 17, 1948, by the States' Rights Democratic Party — the Dixiecrats — as a political emblem of organized resistance to President Harry S. Truman's civil rights program.

That history is the second pillar of this paper's argument. Delaware was one of only seventeen states with school segregation written into its state constitution, an unusual position for a border state that never seceded from the Union. Sussex County, Delaware's southernmost and most rural county, maintained a constitutionally mandated dual school system from the post-Reconstruction period through 1962 — eight years after the Supreme Court's decision in *Brown v. Board of Education*. During that period, Black students in Sussex County were denied access to publicly funded school bus transportation available to white students, denied access to local secondary education for the first half of the twentieth century, and confined to chronically underfunded school facilities that the state's own surveys had found to be among the worst in the nation. The county's most substantial connection to the national civil rights legal record is *Gebhart v. Belton* (Del. Ch. 1952), one of the five cases consolidated into *Brown v. Board of Education* — a case that arose directly from Sussex County's refusal to provide Black students with the same publicly funded school bus service provided to white students.

The thesis of this paper is straightforward: a flag invented in 1948 to oppose federal civil rights enforcement, displayed in an institutionally adjacent civic space in a county that resisted federal civil rights enforcement for eight years following a Supreme Court mandate, is not a neutral historical artifact. Its presence raises foreseeable institutional questions about civic judgment that are amenable to administrative resolution without recourse to ideology.

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## II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper employs documentary and historical analysis as its primary methodology. The inquiry proceeds in two parallel tracks — vexillological and civil rights historical — which are brought into interpretive conjunction in the Discussion section. No new empirical data are presented. The paper synthesizes existing documentary, legal, and historical records.

Primary sources consulted include the records of the Confederate Provisional Congress regarding flag adoption and amendment; the proceedings and photographic record of the 1948 States' Rights Democratic Party convention in Birmingham, Alabama; Delaware state constitutional and statutory provisions governing school segregation; the published opinions in *Bulah v. Gebhart* and *Gebhart v. Belton*; the consolidated *Brown v. Board of Education* decision; Delaware school board records and correspondence from the period 1950–1967; and contemporaneous newspaper accounts of the 1954 Milford crisis and subsequent resistance to desegregation in Sussex County.

Secondary sources include John M. Coski's *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem* (Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), the most comprehensive scholarly history of the flag's design and deployment; Brett Gadsden's *Between North and South: Delaware, Desegregation, and the Myth of American Sectionalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); and June Shagaloff's contemporaneous account of Delaware school desegregation published in *With All Deliberate Speed* (NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, 1969). Additional secondary sources include University of Delaware historical surveys of DuPont "colored" schools in Delaware, Delaware Public Archives historical markers, and WHYY investigative reporting on the 2022 Georgetown municipal funding controversy.

The paper's geographic and temporal scope is Sussex County, Delaware, from the post-Reconstruction period through 1967, with particular attention to the critical period from 1948 — the year of the Dixiecrat flag's political adoption — through 1962, when Sussex County schools were formally desegregated.

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### III. RESULTS

#### **The Six Flags: What the Confederacy Actually Used**

A persistent confusion underlies public discourse about the Confederate flag: the assumption that the rectangular banner now commonly displayed was the flag of the Confederate States of America. It was not. The Confederacy used six distinct flags during its existence, and the modern popular flag was none of them. The following subsections address each flag in turn.

#### **The First National Flag (Stars and Bars, March 1861)**

The Confederate Provisional Congress adopted the first national flag on March 4, 1861. Known as the Stars and Bars, it consisted of three horizontal bars — red, white, and red — with a blue canton in the upper left bearing a circle of white stars, one for each state. It bore a deliberate resemblance to the United States flag, reflecting Confederate claims to constitutional legitimacy, but the resemblance created battlefield identification problems so severe that a new flag was needed almost immediately.

#### **The Square Battle Flag of the Army of Northern Virginia (1861)**

The flag that resulted from Beauregard's initiative — designed by his aide-de-camp and Confederate congressman William Porcher Miles — was the square battle flag of the Army of Northern Virginia, introduced in autumn 1861. It featured a red field with a blue diagonal cross (saltire) edged in white bearing thirteen stars. The key fact about this flag for the present analysis is that it was square — approximately 36 to 48 inches per side — and was authorized for military battlefield use only. It was never adopted by the Confederate Congress and was never a civil or governmental emblem.

The Second National Flag (Stainless Banner, May 1863)

The Confederate Congress adopted a second national flag in May 1863, known as the Stainless Banner. It consisted of the Army of Northern Virginia battle flag canton placed in the upper-left corner of an entirely white field. The Stainless Banner was adopted to give the battle flag design a governmental standing it had never officially possessed, but the predominantly white field created a new problem: it was indistinguishable from a truce flag in calm conditions.

#### **The Third National Flag (March 1865)**

To address the Stainless Banner's truce-flag problem, the Confederate Congress in March 1865 added a broad vertical red bar to the fly end of the white field, producing the third national flag. This design was adopted on March 4, 1865 — thirty-six days before Lee's surrender at Appomattox on April 9, 1865 — and saw virtually no practical use before the war ended.

#### **The Army of Tennessee's Rectangular Battle Flag (1863–1865)**

The most important ancestor of the modern popular flag is the battle flag issued to regiments of the Army of Tennessee beginning in late 1863, manufactured by the Augusta Clothing Depot on orders from General Joseph E. Johnston. This flag used the same saltire design as the Army of Northern Virginia flag but in rectangular rather than square proportions — dimensions that match those of the modern popular "Confederate flag." It was a purely military artifact, limited to one army in one theater, and never adopted as a national or governmental flag.

#### **The Modern Rectangular "Confederate Flag" and Its 1948 Dixiecrat Career**

The modern rectangular Confederate flag — the emblem displayed in contemporary civic and political contexts — was not adopted by the Confederate Congress, was not flown as the Confederate national flag, and was not widely used as a popular Confederate symbol in the decades following the Civil War. Its entry into mass public consciousness occurred at the States' Rights Democratic Party convention held in Birmingham, Alabama, on July 17, 1948. Delegates to that convention, organized to oppose President Harry S. Truman's civil rights program — which included anti-lynching legislation, anti-poll-tax legislation, and the desegregation of federal employment — carried the rectangular saltire flag as a political emblem. This was not a spontaneous folk appropriation of a lost-cause symbol; it was a deliberate political choice to associate opposition to federal civil rights enforcement with Confederate military imagery. The flag's subsequent career — its adoption by the Ku Klux Klan in the 1950s, its appearance at anti-integration protests, its incorporation into state flags (South Carolina raising it over the statehouse in 1962, Georgia incorporating it into the state flag in 1956), and its continued use in contexts of opposition to civil rights — is inseparable from the political meaning it was given in 1948.

#### **The Dual School System in Sussex County**

Delaware's commitment to school segregation was constitutional, not merely statutory. Article X of the Delaware Constitution, in the language operative prior to the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling, simultaneously declared that "there shall be no distinction made on account of race or color" in the provision of public benefits while mandating the maintenance of "separate schools for white and colored children." This constitutional contradiction — a formal commitment to non-discrimination combined with an explicit mandate for racial separation — accurately captures the ambiguity of Delaware's border-state position and the specific character of its civil rights resistance: formal and

legal rather than extralegal, administered through institutional channels rather than through vigilante action.

In Sussex County, this constitutional mandate was implemented through entirely separate school governance structures. There were separate school boards, separate budgets, and separate facilities for Black and white students. Black schools received systematically lower appropriations than white schools. The physical conditions of Black school buildings — before the intervention of private philanthropy in the 1920s — were documented in state surveys as among the worst in the nation.

The degree of deprivation was sufficiently severe that it prompted private philanthropic intervention. Pierre S. du Pont, the Delaware industrialist and philanthropist who served as chairman of General Motors, funded the construction of new school buildings for Black students across Delaware through the Delaware School Auxiliary Association, contributing more than two million dollars of his personal fortune between approximately 1919 and 1931. The program replaced the most decrepit structures with new buildings that, while remaining entirely within the separate-and-unequal dual system, were at least structurally sound. That the state required a private billionaire's intervention to provide Black children with buildings that would not collapse around them is itself a measure of the degree to which Delaware's public educational investment was racially stratified.

The Richard Allen School served Georgetown's Black elementary students throughout the segregation era. Like other Black schools in the county, it operated with chronic resource deficits relative to the white school — Georgetown High School — that occupied the same civic space.

The most concrete and legally consequential specific deprivation was the exclusion of Black students from publicly funded school bus transportation. The county operated a bus system that collected white students from their homes and delivered them to white schools. Black students living along the same routes — in some cases the same streets — received no equivalent service. They were required to walk to school regardless of distance, weather, or the availability of buses that passed directly by their homes serving other students.

This exclusion was the precipitating condition of *Bulah v. Gebhart* (Del. Ch. 1952). Sarah Bulah's daughter lived along an established school bus route in Hockessin; the bus that passed her home each morning transported white children to a white school. Sarah Bulah initially sought not integration but simply a bus for Black students in Hockessin. When the state refused, she contacted the NAACP and retained Louis L. Redding, Delaware's first Black attorney, who argued that the transportation exclusion was itself an equal protection violation that could only be remedied by desegregation.

### **The Absence of Secondary Education**

Perhaps the most striking single fact about Sussex County's dual education system is the simplest: until October 1950, no high school existed anywhere in Sussex County for Black students. This was not an oversight or a gap in implementation. It was the operational consequence of a dual system

that systematically underfunded Black education to the point of not providing an entire educational tier.

Black families in Sussex County who wished their children to obtain a high school diploma faced a stark and economically punishing choice. They could send their children to Howard High School in Wilmington — more than ninety miles away — or to Delaware State College's high school department in Dover, approximately forty miles away. Both options required families to pay room, board, and transportation costs entirely without public subsidy. For the majority of Sussex County's Black families, who were agricultural laborers and domestic workers, these costs were prohibitive. Generations of Black students in Sussex County were effectively denied secondary education by a system that simply refused to build a school for them.

This situation persisted through the first half of the twentieth century while successive generations of white Sussex County students attended Georgetown High School and other county high schools fully funded by the same tax base that refused to provide equivalent institutions for Black students.

William C. Jason Comprehensive High School, located in Georgetown and operated by District 192, opened in October 1950 as the first high school for Black students in Sussex County. It was named for William C. Jason, the first Black president of Delaware State College, and was funded through a combination of private philanthropic bequest and state appropriation — again reflecting the pattern of private charity substituting for public obligation. The school's opening ended the absolute exclusion of Black Sussex County students from local secondary education but did not end the dual system.

Even after Jason opened, the structural inequalities of the dual system persisted. The school operated with resources inferior to those available at Georgetown High School: older textbooks and materials, less-experienced faculty, inferior laboratory and vocational facilities. The comparison was not between adequate and excellent; it was between the baseline of a new institution built to minimum standards and an established institution with decades of accumulated public investment.

### **Delayed Desegregation**

The Supreme Court's unanimous ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*, issued on May 17, 1954, declared racially segregated public schools unconstitutional under the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Sussex County school authorities were from that date legally required to desegregate. They did not.

Sussex County schools were not desegregated until 1962 — eight years after *Brown*. The period between 1954 and 1962 was not a period of good-faith preparation for orderly transition; it was a period of organized resistance, administrative delay, and political accommodation of segregationist demands.

The speed and organization of the resistance was visible almost immediately after the ruling. In August 1954, the Milford Board of Education — Milford being a city straddling the Kent and Sussex County line — admitted eleven Black tenth-grade students to Milford High School. Bryant Bowles,

the leader of the National Association for the Advancement of White People, arrived in Sussex County and organized rallies that attracted several thousand participants. School boycotts spread through Sussex County. Several schools closed under pressure. Under this organized political pressure, the Milford Board reconvened and removed the eleven Black students. The capitulation to organized resistance set the pattern for the eight years that followed.

It was not until 1962 that Sussex County school districts formally desegregated, and even then the process was contested, partial, and subject to the kinds of informal re-segregation — through tracking, assignment to lower academic levels, and resource allocation — that courts in subsequent decades would recognize as continuation of discriminatory intent by other means.

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#### IV. DISCUSSION

The two findings developed in the Results section — the 1948 Dixiecrat origin of the modern rectangular Confederate flag, and Sussex County's documented record of civil rights resistance from the constitutional codification of dual schools through the eight-year delay in *Brown* compliance — are the premises of the argument developed in this section. The interpretive conclusion is not that everyone who displays the Dixiecrat flag endorses its 1948 political meaning, but that institutions and municipalities bear a different responsibility than individuals: the responsibility to consider what their public symbols communicate to all members of the communities they serve.

The concept of foreseeable institutional harm is relevant here. Municipalities and civic institutions bear responsibility for the interpretive environments their symbols create. When a symbol has a documented political origin in organized resistance to civil rights enforcement, and it is displayed in a civic context by an institution that receives public funding, in a county with the specific civil rights history described in this paper, the harm that follows is not random or unpredictable — it is foreseeable. The question for administrative prudence is not whether the harm is intended but whether it is avoidable.

The "heritage not hate" framing that is frequently advanced in defense of Confederate flag display deserves direct engagement, and it deserves particularly direct engagement in the Sussex County context. The question of heritage is a vexillological question before it is a political one: whose heritage is represented by the flag currently flying, and from what historical moment? The answer, as this paper has established, is that the flag represents the political heritage of the 1948 Dixiecrat convention — not the heritage of Confederate soldiers, not the heritage of the Civil War, and not even, in any technically precise sense, the heritage of the Confederate States of America, which never adopted the rectangular banner as a national flag.

The 2007 Confederate monument in Georgetown merits particular attention as an institutional artifact. It was erected not in 1865 or 1895 — not in the immediate aftermath of the war, when Confederate veterans were alive and their commemoration was a straightforward expression of grief — but in 2007, 143 years after Lee's surrender. Its erection in 2007, in a county with the specific documented civil rights history described in this paper, is an act with a different interpretive charge

than the erection of the same monument in 1895 would have had. The Sons of Confederate Veterans and the United Daughters of the Confederacy made a choice in 2007 about what message to send and what history to commemorate. The municipal and state institutions that provided the civic context for that monument — including the Governor who declared Confederate History and Heritage Week — made a parallel choice.

Civic dignity is ultimately the ground on which this argument rests. Black residents of Georgetown and Sussex County whose grandparents and parents attended the Richard Allen School in conditions of chronic underfunding, who were denied bus service that passed their homes, who could not obtain a local high school education before 1950, and who watched their county resist a Supreme Court desegregation mandate for eight years, are now residents of a municipality that provides public funding to an institution flying a flag invented in 1948 to resist the federal program that would have given them equal rights. The connection is not metaphorical. It is historical, documentary, and specific.

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## V. CONCLUSION

This paper has established two findings and drawn from them a single interpretive conclusion. The first finding is vexillological: the rectangular flag commonly displayed as the Confederate flag was not adopted by the Confederate Congress, was not used as a national flag of the Confederate States of America, and entered mass public use not in 1861 but in 1948, as a political emblem of the States' Rights Democratic Party's organized opposition to federal civil rights enforcement. The second finding is historical: Sussex County, Delaware, maintained a constitutionally mandated dual school system that denied Black students equal facilities, transportation, and secondary education, and resisted compliance with *Brown v. Board of Education* for eight years following the Supreme Court's unanimous mandate.

The interpretive conclusion that follows from placing these two findings in conjunction is that the display of the Dixiecrat battle flag in civic or institutionally adjacent contexts in Georgetown, Delaware, carries a specific and documentable institutional meaning — one that connects the flag's political origin to the county's specific civil rights history in ways that are foreseeable, avoidable, and relevant to administrative judgment about public symbols.

This paper makes no specific policy recommendation regarding the Georgetown Confederate monument or any flag currently displayed in Sussex County. That is properly a question for elected and appointed officials, civic organizations, and the communities they serve. This paper's contribution is to establish, as a matter of historical record, what flag is actually being displayed and what history it carries — so that any decision made about its continued display is made with full information rather than in the absence of it.

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## APPENDIX A

### *Sussex County's Dual School System: Separate Boards, Transportation Denial, and Substandard Resources*

The dual school system in Sussex County, Delaware, was not an informal arrangement or a set of local customs that fell short of equal treatment. It was a legally mandated, constitutionally embedded, and administratively maintained system of racial separation in public education that operated from the post-Reconstruction period through 1962.

The structural foundation of the dual system was dual governance. Sussex County maintained separate school boards for white and Black schools. These boards operated with separate budgets drawn from the same public tax base, but allocated disproportionately in favor of white schools. Separate appropriations meant that facilities, instructional materials, teacher salaries, and operational resources for Black schools were consistently lower than for white schools in the same county.

The physical condition of Black schools before the du Pont construction program of the 1920s was not merely unequal; it was, by the assessment of the state's own surveys conducted in 1918 and 1919, among the worst in the nation. State inspectors documented buildings without plumbing or adequate heating, structures that posed safety risks to occupants, and schoolrooms without adequate lighting or ventilation.

Pierre S. du Pont's intervention through the Delaware School Auxiliary Association, funded with more than two million dollars of his personal fortune, replaced the most decrepit of these structures with new brick buildings that provided basic structural soundness and hygienic facilities. Approximately 33 of the roughly 90 schools built under this program were in Sussex County. The program's necessity — the fact that a private individual had to intervene to provide Black Delaware schoolchildren with structurally sound buildings — reflects the degree of public disinvestment in Black education that the dual system institutionalized.

Resource disparities between white and Black schools persisted throughout the segregation era in forms that extended beyond physical facilities. Instructional materials in Black schools were typically older, less complete, and less current than those available in white schools. Teacher salaries in Black schools were lower, reducing the district's ability to attract and retain experienced educators. Laboratory and vocational equipment was absent or inferior.

Perhaps the most concrete and legally consequential specific deprivation was the exclusion of Black students from publicly funded school bus transportation. Sussex County operated a bus system for white students that collected children from their homes and delivered them to white schools. No equivalent service was provided for Black students. Black students were required to travel to school by their own means regardless of distance, road conditions, or weather. In some cases, Black students lived along established bus routes — the same roads traveled each morning by buses carrying white students — and received no service.

The Sarah Bulah case made this exclusion the subject of formal legal challenge. Sarah Bulah sought, initially, not the integration of schools but simply access for her daughter to the bus that passed her home in Hockessin. The state's refusal to provide even this limited accommodation — a bus for Black students on an existing route — became the factual foundation of the equal protection claim argued by Louis Redding and adjudicated by Chancellor Collins Seitz.

The community's documented complaints about substandard conditions in Black schools were persistent and on the record. School board minutes, NAACP correspondence with state officials, and the testimony of Black educators and parents in the *Gebhart v. Belton* proceedings document a continuous pattern of community awareness, complaint, and administrative non-response extending across decades of the dual system's operation.

## **APPENDIX B**

### ***William C. Jason High School: Secondary Education Denied***

The absence of a Black high school in Sussex County for the first half of the twentieth century is not a footnote to the county's educational history; it is one of its most defining facts. For decades, the dual system's commitment to separate-and-unequal education extended to the provision of no secondary education whatsoever for Black students in Delaware's southernmost county.

Families who wished their children to receive a high school diploma faced a set of options that were expensive, logistically demanding, and entirely without public support. Howard High School in

Wilmington served Black students from across the state but required families in Sussex County to arrange transportation, housing, and meals — more than ninety miles away — entirely at their own expense. Delaware State College's high school department in Dover served some students but required similar arrangements over forty miles. For agricultural and domestic workers — the economic backbone of Sussex County's Black community — these costs were prohibitive.

The opening of William C. Jason Comprehensive High School in October 1950 was therefore a significant event in the educational history of Black Sussex County. The school, located in Georgetown and operated by School District 192, was the first institution to provide local secondary education to Black students in the county. It was named for William C. Jason, the first Black president of Delaware State College, whose educational leadership it was designed to honor. The school was funded through a combination of a private philanthropic bequest — again reflecting the pattern of private charity substituting for public obligation — and state appropriation.

Even so, the school operated under the structural constraints of the dual system. Its facilities, while a genuine improvement over the absence of any secondary institution, were built and equipped to standards inferior to those of Georgetown High School, the white secondary school in the same municipality. The comparison was not between excellent and adequate; it was between the baseline of a new institution built to minimum acceptable standards and an established institution with decades of accumulated public investment.

The school's alumni record nonetheless reflects the dedication of its faculty and the determination of its students. The first graduating class completed in 1951, and the school produced graduates who went on to careers in education, medicine, law, and public service. Principal James R. Webb led the school from its founding until 1962, guiding it through the complex period that followed the *Brown* decision and the beginning of the desegregation process.

William C. Jason High School closed in June 1967, when desegregation finally produced the integration of Sussex County's secondary schools. The campus became part of Delaware Technical and Community College. A Delaware state historical marker was installed at the site in 1996, acknowledging the school's significance as the first Black high school in Sussex County. The Jason Alumni Association preserves the school's history and the memory of its students and faculty.

## APPENDIX C

### *Gebhart v. Belton and Delaware's Role in Brown v. Board of Education*

Among the five cases consolidated by the Supreme Court into *Brown v. Board of Education*, Delaware's contribution is unique in a way that is insufficiently appreciated in popular historical memory. The Delaware cases — *Gebhart v. Belton* and *Bulah v. Gebhart* — were the only cases in which a lower court actually ordered the immediate admission of Black students to white schools prior to the Supreme Court's ruling. Every other lower court that heard the *Brown*-related cases ruled for the state. Delaware's Court of Chancery ruled for the plaintiffs.

Chancellor Collins Seitz of the Delaware Court of Chancery heard the consolidated Delaware cases — *Gebhart v. Belton*, involving Black high school students in Claymont who were denied admission to Claymont High School, and *Bulah v. Gebhart*, involving Sarah Bulah's daughter and the Hockessin bus exclusion — in early 1952. The cases were argued by Louis L. Redding for the plaintiffs and by the Deputy Attorney General of Delaware for the state.

Chancellor Seitz's 1952 ruling was remarkable for its directness. He found, as a factual matter, that the Black schools were materially inferior to the white schools to which the plaintiffs sought access — in facilities, in instructional resources, in qualifications of faculty. He found that this material inequality itself constituted a violation of the equal protection guarantee, and he ordered the immediate admission of the plaintiffs to the white schools. He expressly stated that he was not resting his ruling on the broader question of whether separate-but-equal education was inherently unconstitutional — he was ruling on the narrower ground that the schools were manifestly not equal. But his factual findings and the directness of his remedy made the Delaware cases distinctive among the *Brown* precursors.

The Delaware Supreme Court affirmed Chancellor Seitz's ruling in August 1952, reported at 91 A.2d 137 (Del. 1952). The United States Supreme Court granted certiorari in November 1952, 73 S. Ct. 213, and consolidated the Delaware cases with cases from Kansas, South Carolina, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. The consolidated cases were argued before the Court in December 1952 and reargued in December 1953, with the unanimous ruling issued on May 17, 1954.

Delaware's response to the ruling it had already, in a sense, been the site of previewing was not the prompt and principled compliance that the state's judicial record might have predicted. The Milford crisis of September 1954 — in which organized resistance led to the removal of eleven Black students who had been briefly admitted to Milford High School — demonstrated the gap between judicial ruling and community compliance that characterized the eight-year period of Sussex County's resistance to desegregation.

## APPENDIX D

### *Flags of the Confederacy: A Vexillological Reference*

The following is a structured reference document identifying the six flags associated with the Confederate States of America and its armies. Each entry identifies the flag's date of adoption or use, its official status, its physical description, its purpose, and the reason it was retired or replaced.

**Table 1. Confederate and Confederate-Adjacent Flags: Vexillological Summary**

Flag	Date	Official Status	Physical Description	Purpose	Retired / Replaced Because
<b>First National</b>	March 4, 1861	Adopted by Confederate Provisional	Rectangular; three horizontal bars	National civil and military flag of the CSA;	Indistinguishable from the U.S. flag in battle

Flag	Date	Official Status	Physical Description	Purpose	Retired / Replaced Because
Flag ("Stars and Bars")		Congress as national flag	(red, white, red); blue canton with circle of white stars (7 at adoption, expanding to 13)	flown over government buildings and carried in battle	conditions, especially when hanging limp; caused dangerous command confusion at First Manassas (July 1861)
Army of Northern Virginia Battle Flag ("Southern Cross")	Autumn 1861	Not adopted by Confederate Congress; authorized by General Beauregard for military use	Square (approximately 36-48 inches per side); red field; blue diagonal cross (saltire) edged in white; 13 white stars on the cross bars	Purely a battlefield signal device; designed for command-and-control visibility in combat; never a civil or governmental emblem	Not retired; used continuously by ANV units through Appomattox. Never adopted nationally. Square proportions distinguish it from all later versions.
Second National Flag ("Stainless Banner")	May 1, 1863	Adopted by Confederate Congress as second national flag	Rectangular; ANV battle flag canton in upper-left corner; remainder of field entirely white	National civil flag intended to give the battle flag design governmental standing	White field indistinguishable from a truce flag when the flag hung limp; Confederate naval officers complained of being perceived as surrendering
Third National Flag	March 4, 1865	Adopted by Confederate Congress as third and final national flag	Rectangular; Stainless Banner design with addition of a broad vertical red bar on the fly end	To address truce-flag confusion of the Second National Flag	Adopted 36 days before Lee's surrender at Appomattox (April 9, 1865); saw virtually no practical use
Army of Tennessee Battle Flag	December 1863 - April 1865	Not adopted by Confederate Congress; authorized by General Joseph E. Johnston for Army of Tennessee	Rectangular (approximately 48 x 30 inches); same saltire design as ANV flag; manufactured by the Augusta Clothing Depot. Design essentially matches naval	Combat battle flag for western theater operations; the visual ancestor of the modern popular "Confederate flag" due to rectangular proportions	War ended April 1865. Flag is a legitimate Civil War artifact but was not a national flag, was limited to one army's use, and was not in mass public use after the war.

Flag	Date	Official Status	Physical Description	Purpose	Retired / Replaced Because
			jack proportions.		
<b>Modern Rectangular "Confederate Flag" (Dixiecrat Battle Flag)</b>	1948 (mass political adoption)	Never adopted by Confederate Congress. Not an official flag of the Confederate States of America in any form.	Rectangular; same saltire design as Army of Tennessee flag; produced in standard flag proportions for commercial and political display	Introduced as a political emblem at the July 17, 1948, States' Rights Democratic Party (Dixiecrat) convention in Birmingham, Alabama, to signal opposition to President Truman's civil rights program	Not retired. Remains in wide display. Its political career post-1948 is inseparable from organized resistance to federal civil rights enforcement, the KKK's adoption of it in the 1950s, and its continued use in contexts of white supremacist and anti-civil-rights political expression.

**Vexillological Conclusion:** *The modern rectangular flag commonly displayed as the "Confederate flag" was never adopted by the Confederate Congress, never served as the national flag of the Confederate States of America, and entered mass public use not in 1861 but in 1948, as a political emblem of organized opposition to federal civil rights enforcement. Its association with the Confederacy is popular and political, not historical or vexillological.*

## APPENDIX E

### *Timeline of Civil Rights Resistance in Sussex County, Delaware, 1865–2022*

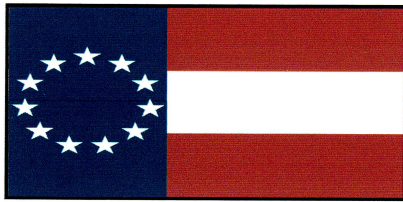
*Table 2. Timeline of Civil Rights Resistance in Sussex County, Delaware, 1865–2022*

Year / Period	Event
1865–1900	Post-Reconstruction entrenchment of racial segregation in Sussex County. Delaware, though a border state that never seceded, maintains and expands Jim Crow practices in education, public accommodations, and employment throughout the lower counties.

Year / Period	Event
1897	Delaware constitutional provision adopted requiring separate public schools for Negro and white children, writing segregation into the state's fundamental law. Article X simultaneously declares "no distinction shall be made on account of race or color" while mandating separate schools — a constitutional contradiction reflecting Delaware's ambiguous border-state identity.
1918–1919	State surveys of Delaware school facilities find those serving Black children to be among the most inadequate in the nation — dilapidated structures, insufficient heat and light, no plumbing. The surveys document what Black Sussex County families had long experienced: systematic public neglect of Black schools funded by the same tax base that supported well-maintained white schools.
1920–1931	Pierre S. du Pont funds construction of 90 "colored" schools across Delaware through the Delaware School Auxiliary Association, including approximately 33 in Sussex County. While an improvement over deplorable prior conditions, the schools remain entirely within the separate and unequal dual system.
1935	Delaware state education law formally codifies the dual school system: "The schools provided shall be of two kinds; those for white children and those for colored children." Separate appropriations, separate governance, and separate facilities are confirmed as legal requirements.
Pre-1950	No high school exists anywhere in Sussex County for Black students. Black families seeking secondary education must send children to Howard High School in Wilmington (90+ miles) or Delaware State College's high school department in Dover (~40 miles), entirely at their own expense.
October 1950	William C. Jason Comprehensive High School opens in Georgetown as the first high school for Black students in Sussex County. Named for the first Black president of Delaware State College; funded through private philanthropy and state appropriation.
1952	<i>Gebhart v. Belton</i> and <i>Bulah v. Gebhart</i> decided by Chancellor Collins Seitz. Seitz finds Black schools materially inferior and orders the immediate admission of Black students to white schools — the only lower-court desegregation order among the five cases consolidated into <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> .
May 17, 1954	Supreme Court rules unanimously in <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> , 347 U.S. 483. Sussex County school authorities are legally required to desegregate.

Year / Period	Event
September 1954	The Milford Crisis. Bryant Bowles organizes rallies attracting thousands; school boycotts spread through Sussex County; the Milford Board removes eleven Black students who had briefly been admitted. First organized public resistance to <i>Brown</i> in the nation.
1954–1962	Sussex County school districts resist, delay, and minimize compliance with the <i>Brown</i> mandate for eight years. Administrative mechanisms of delay are used to defer actual integration.
1962	Sussex County schools formally desegregated, eight years after <i>Brown</i> . Informal re-segregation through tracking and assignment continues.
June 1967	William C. Jason Comprehensive High School closes following desegregation. Campus becomes part of Delaware Technical and Community College.
1996	Delaware state historical marker installed at the former William C. Jason High School site on the Delaware Technical and Community College campus in Georgetown.
May 12, 2007	Delaware Confederate Monument unveiled on grounds of Georgetown Historical Society. Twelve-foot granite monument commissioned by Sons of Confederate Veterans' Delaware Grays Camp #2068 and the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Governor Ruth Ann Minner declares a statewide Confederate History and Heritage Week.
2019	Delaware General Assembly withdraws state funding from the Georgetown Historical Society's Grant-In-Aid program due to continued flying of the Confederate battle flag. Governor John Carney supports removal.
July 2022	Georgetown Town Council approves approximately \$24,750 in funding for the Marvel Carriage Museum (operated by the Georgetown Historical Society) after nearly two hours of debate, despite the museum's continued flying of the Confederate battle flag.

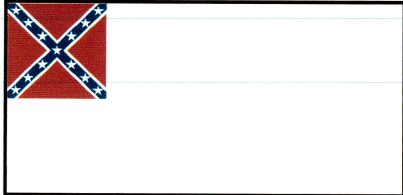
## Civil War Era Flags — Historical Reference Plate



### Stars and Bars

1861–1863

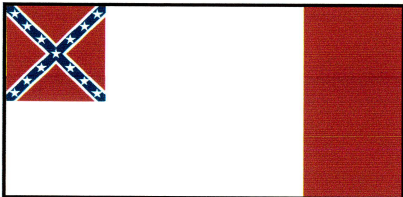
First national flag of the Confederacy, adopted March 1861. Its similarity to the U.S. Stars and Stripes caused significant battlefield confusion between Union and Confederate forces. The number of stars grew from 7 to 13 as additional states joined or were claimed by the Confederacy.



### Stainless Banner

1863–1865

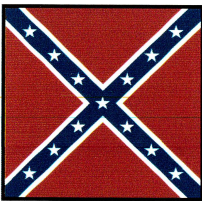
Adopted May 1863 as the second national flag of the Confederacy. The prominent white field was intended to symbolize Confederate ideological claims. Critics noted that when hanging limp on a windless day, the predominantly white flag closely resembled a flag of surrender or truce.



### Blood-Dipped Banner

1865

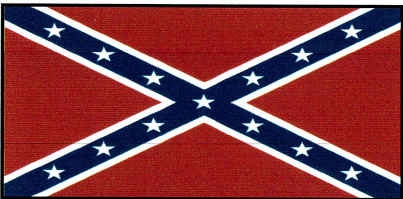
Adopted March 1865, only weeks before the collapse of the Confederacy. The vertical red bar was added to the right edge of the Stainless Banner to distinguish it from a flag of truce. It saw minimal use in practice due to the war's imminent end and difficulties of wartime manufacturing.



### Square Battle Flag (Army of Northern Virginia)

1861–1865

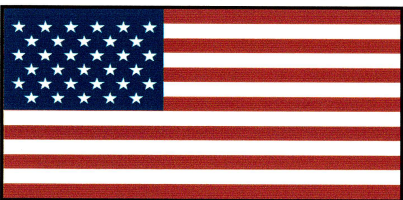
Designed after First Bull Run to reduce battlefield confusion caused by the similar national flags. Became the most iconic Confederate military symbol, carried through every major engagement in the Eastern Theater. The 13 stars represent the 11 seceding states plus Missouri and Kentucky.



### Rectangular Battle Flag (Post-War Popular Form)

Post-1865

Rectangular variant used by the Army of Tennessee and widely popularized after the war. This is the form most commonly recognized today, adopted by heritage organizations and incorporated into several state flags throughout the 19th and 20th centuries.



### 35-Star United States Flag

1863–1865

The Union national flag during the heart of the Civil War. The 35th star honored West Virginia's admission to the Union in 1863. Notably, the United States continued counting seceded states in the star total, so the number rose rather than fell during the conflict, reflecting the official position that secession was illegitimate.

*For educational use — Historical reference only*

*Made by Copilot*

## TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Mayor Angela Townsend; Councilmembers Christina Diaz-Malone, Tony Neal, Michael Briggs, and Penuel Barrett; Solicitor Stephanie Ballard; Town Manager Eugene Dvernick

**FROM:** Jon Peterson

**DATE:** 20 May 2026

**SUBJECT:** Submission of False History, Real Harm for review and placement in correspondence file

Attached for your review is a hard copy of *False History, Real Harm: Civil Rights, Economic Impact, and the Confederate Flag at 210 South Bedford Street, Georgetown, Delaware*. This memorandum and the enclosed paper are submitted for consideration by the Mayor, Town Council, Town Solicitor, and Town Manager.

It is respectfully requested that this submission be placed in the Town correspondence file and maintained as part of the public record on this matter. The enclosed paper sets forth the historical, civic, and public-policy concerns associated with the continued display of the Confederate battle flag at the Georgetown Historical Society and Marvel Carriage Museum site.

Thank you for your consideration.

cc: Correspondence File

RECEIVED

MAY 26 2026

Initial: \_\_\_\_\_

A Submission to the Georgetown Town Council

# FALSE HISTORY, REAL HARM

Civil Rights, Economic Impact, and the Confederate Flag at 210 South Bedford  
Street, Georgetown, Delaware

Monuments, Memory, and the Public Record

Prepared for public record and Council review

Submitted To

Georgetown Town Council

Prepared By

Jon Peterson, with AI Assistance

Date

May 20, 2026

Prepared for consideration regarding public funding, public memory, and historical accuracy

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### Section I — Overview

## Executive Summary

### Finding 1

The flag flying at the Georgetown monument is not a Civil War artifact. It was created on **July 17, 1948**, by the States' Rights Democratic Party (the Dixiecrats) to oppose President Truman's civil rights platform, and it did not exist as a mass civilian symbol during the Civil War.

### Finding 2

Delaware's Civil War record is overwhelmingly Unionist: more than **12,000** Delaware

men served the Union Army and Navy, compared with roughly **95** individuals with Confederate affiliations — a ratio of approximately **125 to 1**.

**Finding 3**

Sussex County defied the Supreme Court's desegregation mandate in *Brown v. Board of Education* for **eight full years** after 1954. The families who lived through that resistance are Georgetown residents today.

*The Council is asked to conduct a formal, transparent public review of the Town's funding relationship with the Georgetown Historical Society and Marvel Carriage Museum while a Confederate battle flag flies on publicly funded grounds.*

**Section II — Background**

## **Background — The Monument and the Organizations**

On **May 12, 2007**, a Confederate monument was unveiled at the Georgetown Historical Society's Marvel Carriage Museum on **South Bedford Street** in Georgetown, Delaware. The monument is a granite obelisk, approximately twelve feet tall. It bears a relief of the Confederate battle flag and inscriptions honoring individuals identified as Delaware residents who held Confederate affiliations during the Civil War era. A rectangular Confederate battle flag is also flown on the museum grounds at the monument site.

The monument was erected and is maintained by the **Sons of Confederate Veterans (SCV), Delaware Grays Camp No. 2068**. The companion Delaware organization is the **United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), Caleb Ross Chapter No. 2635**. Both organizations have a documented national history of promoting Confederate monument installations and shaping how the Civil War is taught in public contexts.

At the time of the monument's dedication, Governor Ruth Ann Minner issued a proclamation declaring Confederate History and Heritage Week in Delaware to coincide with the

ceremony. That proclamation drew criticism at the time and remains part of the public record.

In July 2022, **WHYY** — Philadelphia and Delaware's public radio and television broadcaster — reported that the Georgetown Town Council was providing municipal funding to the Georgetown Historical Society while the Confederate battle flag continued to fly at the monument site. Delaware state funding to the organization had been withdrawn in **2019** — three years before that report — when the General Assembly removed the Georgetown Historical Society from its Grant-in-Aid program. The Town of Georgetown's funding relationship with the site has not been subjected to an equivalent formal public review. This submission asks the Council to conduct one.

#### Key facts at a glance

- **Location:** 210 South Bedford Street, Georgetown, DE (Georgetown Historical Society / Marvel Carriage Museum grounds)
- **Dedicated:** May 12, 2007
- **Erected by:** SCV Delaware Grays Camp No. 2068
- **State funding withdrawn:** 2019 — Delaware General Assembly removed the GHS from its Grant-in-Aid program
- **Municipal funding status:** Under formal review by this submission

#### Section III — Finding One

## What Flag Is Actually Flying?

The flag flying at the Georgetown monument — a rectangular banner with a blue St. Andrew's cross on a red field — does have a wartime lineage. But lineage is not the same thing as meaning, and the public record requires the Council to reckon with the rest of the flag's career as well.

### Not an Official Confederate Symbol

The rectangular blue-cross flag was never an official flag of the Confederate government. The Confederate national flags were the **First National** (the Stars and Bars, March 1861), the **Second National** (the Stainless Banner, May 1863), and the **Third National** (March 1865). The blue-cross design served as a battlefield banner for specific Confederate armies — it was never formally adopted by the Confederate Congress and never represented the Confederate nation.

The version most closely associated with the Eastern Theater — the Army of Northern Virginia — was *square*, not rectangular. The rectangular version is primarily associated with the Army of Tennessee, which operated in Georgia, Tennessee, and the Carolinas. Delaware's approximately **95** Confederate-affiliated men were overwhelmingly connected to Eastern Theater units; the Army of Tennessee's flag has a remote geographic and unit connection to anyone named on the Georgetown monument.

## The Flag's Career as a Mass Symbol Began in 1948

With limited battlefield use in the 1860s, the flag did not enter widespread civilian or political use until **July 17, 1948**. On that date, the States' Rights Democratic Party — the Dixiecrats — convened in Birmingham, Alabama, and adopted it as their party emblem. Their platform had a single purpose: to oppose President Harry Truman's civil rights proposals, including federal anti-lynching legislation and the desegregation of the armed forces.

This is not a matter of interpretation. It is documented in the photographic record held at the Kenan Research Center of the Atlanta History Center, and it is the central finding of the definitive scholarly history of the flag: John M. Coski's *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem*, published by Harvard/Belknap Press in **2005**.

After 1948, the flag's public career continued along the same trajectory. It was adopted by the Ku Klux Klan. Georgia incorporated it into its state flag in **1956** — directly in response to *Brown v. Board of Education*. South Carolina began flying it at the statehouse in **1962**. It appeared at anti-integration rallies across the South throughout the 1950s and 1960s. Its rise as a mass symbol belongs to the civil rights era, not the Civil War era.

## What This Means for the Town Council

The flag at the Georgetown monument shares a design lineage with one Confederate army's battle flag. It entered mass use as a political symbol in **1948** — 83 years after the Civil War ended — specifically to resist federal civil rights enforcement. That is not incidental context. It is the context. And it is the basis on which the Council should judge whether this symbol can be treated as a simple historical relic rather than as a public statement with a later, documented political life.

**TABLE 1: CONFEDERATE FLAG DESIGN COMPARISON**

Flag	Origin	Official Status	Used During Civil War?
Stars and Bars (First National)	March 1861	Official Confederate national flag	Yes
Army of Northern Virginia Battle Flag (square)	1861-1865	Military unit flag	Yes
<b>Rectangular "Confederate" flag at Georgetown monument</b>	Army of Tennessee battle flag (1863-65); mass civilian use began <b>July 17, 1948</b> — Dixiecrat convention, Birmingham, AL	Military unit flag (never an official Confederate national flag); adopted as Dixiecrat Party emblem in <b>1948</b>	<b>Design: Yes   Mass civilian symbol: No</b>

#### Section IV — Finding Two

## Delaware's Actual Civil War Record

Delaware never seceded. That is the fixed point. When the Confederate states left the Union in 1860 and 1861, Delaware remained — and that fact should govern any honest account of the state's Civil War identity.

Delaware contributed **more than 12,000** soldiers to the Union Army and Navy over the course of the war — men who fought under the United States flag, against the Confederacy,

in defense of the Union their state had chosen to remain part of. Their service is the dominant story of Delaware in the Civil War.

The monument on South Bedford Street names approximately **95** individuals identified as having Confederate affiliations. The ratio is approximately **125 Union soldiers for every one Confederate-affiliated Delaware individual**. Any public presentation of Delaware's Civil War identity that centers the 95 while omitting the 12,000 is not history — it is selection.

**TABLE 2: DELAWARE CIVIL WAR SERVICE — UNION VS. CONFEDERATE AFFILIATION**

Category	Approximate Number
Delaware men who served the Union (Army and Navy)	<b>More than 12,000</b>
Individuals on the Georgetown Confederate monument with Confederate affiliations	<b>~95</b>
<b>Ratio</b>	<b>~125 Union soldiers for every 1 Confederate-affiliated individual</b>

It is also worth noting that the Confederate government never recognized Delaware as a Confederate state. The men whose names appear on the monument were legal residents of a Union state who fought against the government of the state they lived in. Their inclusion in a monument framing Delaware as having a "Confederate heritage" worth commemorating is itself a historical claim — one that requires scrutiny, not assumption.

A monument sited on publicly funded grounds carries an implied endorsement of the story it tells. If that story elevates the 95 while omitting the **12,000-plus** Delawareans who fought for the Union, then the Town and the Historical Society owe visitors — including Georgetown's schoolchildren — something more complete than commemoration by omission.

#### Section V — Finding Three

## Sussex County's Civil Rights Record and Why It Matters Here

The flag and monument do not exist in a historical vacuum. They exist in a specific community with a documented civil rights history, and that history is not merely adjacent to this debate — it is essential to it. If the Council is to evaluate what the Town funds, it must do so in light of the place in which these symbols stand and the people who have lived with their consequences.

### A Segregated State with a Constitutional Mandate

Delaware was a non-seceding border state that had racial segregation written directly into its state constitution — **Article X** — before the Supreme Court's 1954 ruling. This was not informal custom. It was state law. Delaware's public school system was legally required to be separate by race, and it was.

Sussex County maintained a full dual school system for decades: separate schools, separate buses, separate budgets. Black schools in Sussex County were systematically underfunded — fewer resources, older buildings, shorter terms, and inadequate facilities. This was deliberate policy, not administrative oversight.

### No High School for Black Students in Sussex County Until 1950

For the first half of the twentieth century, there was no public high school for Black students anywhere in Sussex County. A Black child in Georgetown who sought a secondary education had no option within the county's public school system.

That changed in **October 1950**, when **William C. Jason Comprehensive High School** opened in Georgetown. Its construction required a private bequest from H. Fletcher Brown and a state appropriation — because the public school system had failed, for decades, to provide what it was legally required to provide. Jason High School is now recognized with a Delaware Public Archives historical marker. The delay it was built to remedy is part of the official record.

## The Bus Exclusion and the Road to the Supreme Court

Delaware's path to *Brown v. Board of Education* included two landmark cases: *Belton v. Gebhart*, brought by families in Claymont, and *Bulah v. Gebhart*, brought by Sarah Bulah on behalf of her daughter Shirley in Hockessin. Those cases established the statewide legal record that the U.S. Supreme Court later reviewed. Sussex County's relevance is different but no less important: it was one of the places where school segregation and resistance to desegregation remained a lived reality long after the legal breakthrough.

Chancellor Collins J. Seitz ruled for both plaintiffs, finding that Delaware's Black schools were materially inferior to white schools and ordering immediate admission of Black children to white schools. His ruling was the only lower-court decision in all five cases that became *Brown v. Board of Education* to order actual desegregation before the Supreme Court acted. Every other lower court had ruled against the Black plaintiffs.

Delaware's cases are the reason the Supreme Court's citation in *Brown v. Board of Education* (347 U.S. 483, 1954) includes Delaware. Georgetown was not outside that history; it was part of a state and county school system shaped by the same segregated laws, the same delayed remedies, and the same prolonged resistance to enforcement after *Brown*.

## Eight Years of Deliberate Resistance After Brown

The Supreme Court ruled in *Brown* in **May 1954**. Sussex County schools were not desegregated until **1962** — eight full years after the Court's ruling.

The resistance was organized and deliberate. In **September 1954**, Bryant Bowles and the National Association for the Advancement of White People organized mass rallies in Milford, Delaware. The Milford school board, under public pressure, removed eleven Black students who had enrolled in a newly integrated school. The signal sent to the rest of Sussex County was unambiguous. A Delaware Public Archives historical marker — "**Milford's Struggle for Educational Equality**" (SC-184, 2004) — commemorates this period. The state has acknowledged it as a matter of official record.

## Why This Context Is Directly Relevant to the Council

The families who lived through the denied bus service, the missing high school, and eight years of deliberate defiance of federal law are members of this community today. Their children and grandchildren attend Georgetown schools, pay Georgetown taxes, and are Georgetown residents entitled to equal standing in the civic spaces their government funds.

A flag invented in **1948** specifically to oppose civil rights enforcement, flying in a county that spent eight years resisting civil rights enforcement, is not a neutral historical artifact in that location. Its meaning in this specific place, for this specific community, is not abstract — it is personal and it is local.

The Town of Georgetown's decision to fund — even indirectly — the site where that flag flies is a policy choice with human consequences. The Council has every right to make that choice. But it should make it with full knowledge of the history it is affirming, the community it is addressing, and the message that public funding inevitably sends.

#### Section VI — Chronology

## The Public Funding Controversy: A Chronology

The historical context becomes still more consequential when placed beside the Town's own public record. The following chronology is drawn entirely from public reporting and on-the-record statements. Each entry is documented; what the sequence requires is now a matter for the formal public meeting this submission requests.

- **2019** The Delaware General Assembly removed the Georgetown Historical Society from its Grant-in-Aid program — ending state funding after more than a decade of the Confederate battle flag flying on the museum grounds. The Town of Georgetown conducted no equivalent review of its own funding relationship with the site. (*Delaware Public Media, July 25, 2022; Cape Gazette, August 5, 2022*)
- **June 21, 2022** The **Sussex County Council** unanimously approved a **\$2,000** councilmanic grant to the Georgetown Historical Society for a heating and air conditioning system. **John Rieley** made the motion for the grant. Sussex County Councilman **Mark Schaeffer** later stated he was unaware a Confederate flag was flying at the museum when the vote was taken. Upon learning of the flag, Schaeffer moved to rescind: "This display has no historical

value or intent as a museum exhibit. It is being flown in celebration of the treasonous and racist Confederate movement. It needs to come down immediately and the taxpayers' money needs to be returned." (*Cape Gazette, August 5, 2022*)

- **July 11, 2022** The Georgetown Historical Society applied to the Town's GREAT fund for **\$24,750** to cover parking lot upgrades and the replacement of windows and flooring at the Marvel Carriage Museum — while the Confederate battle flag was flying. The first council vote failed **2–2**. The council granted a rehearing. (*Delaware Public Media, July 25, 2022*)
- **July 25, 2022** After nearly two hours of public debate — with the majority of speakers opposed to the funding while the flag remained — the council voted **4–0** to approve \$24,750, with Mayor Bill West abstaining. GHS president **Jim Bowden** told the council: "We do not have the ability with the agreement with the Sons of Confederate Veterans to change that flag or lower the flag." The council attached a memorandum of understanding requiring the GHS, the community, and the SCV to form a committee to reach an agreement on the monument and flag. (*Delaware Public Media, July 25, 2022; WHY, July 27, 2022*)
- **August 2022** The Georgetown Historical Society issued a public statement affirming its support for the flag and its 2007 agreement with the SCV — it had no intention of removing the flag. The Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice notified the Town that the GHS application had been submitted after the GREAT fund's April 1 deadline, in violation of the Town's own rules. Mayor West consulted the Town Solicitor and Town Manager, both of whom advised the grant exposed the Town to legal liability. **West voided the check on August 10, 2022.** (*WMDT, August 10, 2022; WHY, August 10, 2022*)
- **Late August 2022** After Mayor West voided the check, three council members — Angela Townsend, Penuel Barrett, and Sue Barlow — met privately outside any public meeting and arranged for a new check to be reissued to the Georgetown Historical Society. At the time of the reissued check, Angela Townsend was also serving as treasurer of the Georgetown Historical Society. The Delaware Attorney General's office ruled that this constituted an illegal secret meeting in violation of Delaware's Freedom of Information Act and open meetings law. (*WHY, September 21, 2022; Delaware Attorney General Opinion No. 22-1B34, September 15, 2022*)
- **September 27, 2022** At a public meeting, the council voted **3–2** to restore the \$24,750 grant and send the money, with **Angela Townsend, Penuel Barrett, and Sue Barlow** voting yes —

despite the Attorney General's ruling that the reissuance was illegal, and despite Mayor West's warning the vote exposed the Town to a lawsuit. West stated: "The yes's win, 3-2. And I guess we'll see everybody in court." **Joe Lawson** of the Southern Delaware Alliance for Racial Justice addressed the three council members who voted yes: "Shame on you." **Coby Owens** of the Delaware NAACP stated: "You all have decided to uphold white supremacy." (*WHYY, September 27, 2022*)

- **June 2024** The organization Speak Out Against Hate convened a public forum at the Lewes Library, bringing together Mayor West, Sussex County Councilman Mark Schaeffer, attorney Tom Irvine, and community activist Jane Hovington. All called for the flag's removal. Schaeffer acknowledged the political cost: "It's not a very popular stance to take politically because of my party affiliation." The flag still flies. (*Bay to Bay News, June 10, 2024*)

The chronology leaves the Council with three questions it can no longer treat as peripheral: Has the MOU committee ever convened, and if so, what did it conclude? Does the Town's current funding relationship with the Georgetown Historical Society carry any conditions related to the flag? And if the operator of a publicly funded site has stated on the record that it cannot control what flies there — what, precisely, does the Town believe it is funding?

#### Section VII — Civic Impact

## The Flag at the Heart of Return Day

The controversy does not end at the museum fence line. It reaches into Georgetown's most visible civic ritual: Return Day. That matters because Return Day is not a peripheral event. It is one of Delaware's most distinctive public traditions, and the museum's role in it makes the flag on the property impossible to treat as a private matter without broader civic consequence.

In **October 2022**, the Delaware Democratic Party passed a formal resolution urging its members not to ride in the museum's carriages at that year's Return Day. The resolution was initiated by **Patricia Magee** of the 14th District Democratic Committee. Travis Williams, executive director of the Delaware Democratic Party, explained: "After an election, we all have to come together and come back to the table and get work done for each other, for

Delawareans, and the Confederate flag kind of flies in the face of that sentiment." (*WMDT, October 5, 2022; WHYY, October 17, 2022*)

On **November 10, 2022**, only three candidates rode in the museum's carriages — all Republicans, two of whom had run unopposed. U.S. Representative Lisa Blunt Rochester rode in a car. Mayor Bill West did not ride in the carriages. West told reporters: "If that flag had been taken down prior to last week, this place would have been twice as big." State Senator-elect Russ Huxtable noted the avoidance was effectively bipartisan. (*WHYY, November 10, 2022; Delaware Public Media, November 10, 2022*)

The Sons of Confederate Veterans carried a Confederate flag in the Return Day parade itself in 2022. Return Day is publicly funded, publicly organized, and rooted in a civic tradition of reconciliation. The Marvel Carriage Museum's role in supplying the carriages makes the flag on its grounds — and the Town's funding relationship with the museum — directly relevant to the character and future of that tradition.

#### Section VIII — Economic Consequences

## What the Research Says About Confederate Symbols and Economic Health

Civic symbolism is not only cultural; it is material. The Council's funding decisions carry economic consequences that research now documents. This is not a peripheral consideration. For a town concerned with investment, reputation, tourism, and public trust, it is a practical one.

A **2023** working paper from Brown University's Department of Economics (Ferlenga, 2023) examined Confederate monument construction across the South during the early twentieth century. Using a difference-in-differences methodology, the study found that counties where a Confederate monument was constructed experienced a statistically significant and sustained decline in Black population share in the following decades — driven by outmigration. The monument at **210 South Bedford Street** was erected in **2007** in a town with substantial Black and Latino populations. The Ferlenga findings are not a historical

curiosity — they document what publicly visible symbols communicate to the residents who are asked to live alongside them. (*Ferlenga, Brown University Department of Economics, Working Paper 2023-002*)

Research published in **2020** by Christian Grose and Jordan Carr Peterson at USC Dornsife found that framing Confederate symbol controversies in economic terms — rather than racial or political terms — was the single most effective tool for shifting white Southerners' opinions toward supporting removal. The economic argument is not a secondary consideration; by the evidence, it is the most persuasive one available. (*Grose & Peterson, USC Dornsife, 2020*)

The economic stakes are not theoretical for Georgetown. On **September 27, 2022**, Fleur McKendell, vice president of the Delaware State Conference of NAACP branches, addressed the Town Council directly: "I'm here today to make it very clear that the NAACP is going to continue to double down and tell individuals, business owners, folks starting to look at buying properties or land — don't do it in Georgetown. Make a call to boycott Georgetown, until Georgetown's Town Council does the right thing by its constituents and upholds the values of the people." (*Delaware Public Media, September 27, 2022*)

The Council faces a simple reality: it either funds a site that flies this flag, or it does not. The NAACP has already stated what it will tell prospective residents, business owners, and investors until that answer changes. The question before the Council, then, is whether **\$24,750** is worth the civic, reputational, and economic cost of continuing to say yes.

#### Section IX — Requested Action

## Recommendations

This submission makes four recommendations. Each is concrete. Each is within the Council's existing authority. Taken together, they would replace ambiguity with process, and assumption with an accountable public record.

- **Conduct a formal public review** of the Town's funding relationship with the Georgetown Historical Society and Marvel Carriage Museum, with explicit attention to the Confederate monument and flag on the

grounds — at an open, noticed Town Council meeting that allows public comment from all Georgetown residents, with the outcome entered into the official minutes.

- **Commission accurate interpretive signage** at the monument site as a condition of any future Town funding. That signage must: (a) correctly identify the flag as a **1948 Dixiecrat** party emblem, not a Civil War artifact; (b) present Delaware's Civil War record in full, including the **more than 12,000** Delawareans who served the Union alongside the approximately **95** individuals with Confederate affiliations; and (c) acknowledge Sussex County's civil rights history, including its documented role in the cases that became *Brown v. Board of Education*.
- **Establish a transparent community process** — with participation from Georgetown residents of color whose families have direct lived experience of Sussex County's civil rights history — before any further public funding decisions regarding the site are approved. The process must be open, noticed, and documented.
- **Answer the three questions the public record requires:** Has the MOU committee ever met, and if so, what did it conclude? Does the Town's current funding relationship with the GHS carry any conditions related to the flag? And given the GHS president's on-the-record statement that the organization cannot control the flag — what conditions, if any, govern the Town's continued funding of the site?

**Not removal. Not erasure. The ask in a single sentence:**

A formal, transparent, documented public process so that Georgetown's decisions about what it funds reflect the full community it serves — and the full history it inherits.

#### Section X — Documentation

## Sources and References

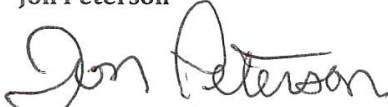
Every factual claim in this submission is grounded in the scholarly record, the public record, or both. The sources below are listed in the order in which they are most directly relevant to the arguments presented above.

- Coski, John M. *The Confederate Battle Flag: America's Most Embattled Emblem*. Harvard/Belknap Press, 2005. — The definitive scholarly history of the flag's origins and post-Civil War uses, including its 1948 Dixiecrat adoption.
- *Gebhart v. Belton* and *Bulah v. Gebhart*. Delaware Court of Chancery, 1952; affirmed by the Delaware Supreme Court, 1952. — The Delaware cases consolidated into *Brown v. Board of Education*.
- *Brown v. Board of Education*, 347 U.S. 483. U.S. Supreme Court, 1954.
- Eichmann, Mark / WHYY. "Southern Delaware Town Funds Museum That Continues to Fly a Confederate Flag." July 27, 2022. — The report that brought the Town's municipal funding relationship with the Georgetown Historical Society to public attention; state funding had already been withdrawn in 2019.
- Delaware Public Archives. William C. Jason Comprehensive High School Historical Marker (SC-80), Georgetown, Delaware. Erected 1996.
- Delaware Public Archives. "Milford's Struggle for Educational Equality" Historical Marker (SC-184). Erected 2004. — Documents organized resistance to school desegregation in Sussex County following *Brown*.
- Gadsden, Brett. *Between North and South: Delaware, Desegregation, and the Myth of American Sectionalism*. University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012. — The leading scholarly account of Delaware's civil rights era and school desegregation history.
- Southern Poverty Law Center. "Whose Heritage? Public Symbols of the Confederacy." 2019. — A national survey of Confederate monument installations and their post-Civil War origins.
- Cox, Karen L. *Dixie's Daughters: The United Daughters of the Confederacy and the Preservation of Confederate Culture*. University Press of Florida, 2003. — Scholarly history of the UDC and its role in Confederate monument campaigns.
- Blight, David W. *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*. Harvard University Press, 2001. — Pulitzer Prize-winning history of Civil War commemoration and the construction of Confederate memory.

- Ferlenga. "Confederate Monuments and Black Outmigration." Brown University Department of Economics working paper, 2023.
- Grose, Christian, and Jordan Carr Peterson. USC Dornsife research on economic framing and attitudes toward Confederate symbols, 2020.

Respectfully submitted to the Georgetown Town Council,

**Jon Peterson**



Georgetown, Delaware 19947

May 20, 2026

This document is submitted as a matter of public record. The author requests that it be entered into the official minutes of the Town Council and made available to the public in accordance with Delaware's Freedom of Information Act (**29 Del. C. § 10001 et seq.**).

*False History, Real Harm* — Submitted to the Georgetown Town Council — Jon Peterson, Georgetown, DE — May 20, 2026

#### Appendix A

## Oral Presentation Script (Approx. 220 Words)

The following script is written for a brief oral presentation delivered in a direct, factual, and measured style.

The facts are straightforward.

A Confederate battle flag is still flying at the Georgetown Historical Society and Marvel Carriage Museum site on South Bedford Street.

That flag is not just a Civil War artifact. The design has wartime roots, but its modern public use begins in **1948**, when it was adopted by the Dixiecrats in opposition to federal civil rights efforts.

The monument at that site honors roughly **95 Delawareans with Confederate affiliations.**

Delaware, however, **never seceded.** More than **12,000 Delaware men served the Union.**

So the public story presented at that site gives prominence to the 95 and leaves out the 12,000.

That is not balance. It is distortion.

This is also not abstract in Sussex County. Delaware had segregation written into state law. Sussex County resisted school desegregation for **eight years after Brown v. Board of Education.** William C. Jason High School in Georgetown did not open until **1950** because Black students in Sussex County had long been denied a public high school.

The flag is still there. The monument is still there. The historical distortion is still there.

Return Day was affected by it. Public controversy followed it. The issue has not gone away.

So the question before the Council is not complicated.

It is whether Georgetown is willing to let that version of history stand, in that form, on a publicly supported site, without a formal public response.

Thank you.

#### Appendix B

## Transmittal Memo

**To:** Mayor Angela Townsend; Councilmembers Christina Diaz-Malone, Tony Neal, Michael Briggs, and Penuel Barrett; Solicitor Stephanie Ballard; Town Manager Eugene Dvornick

**From:** Jon Peterson

**Date:** May 20, 2026

**Re:** Submission of *False History, Real Harm* for review and placement in the correspondence file

Please accept the enclosed hard copy of *False History, Real Harm: Civil Rights, Economic Impact, and the Confederate Flag at 210 South Bedford Street, Georgetown, Delaware*. I respectfully submit this memorandum and the attached paper for review by the Mayor, Town Council, Town Solicitor, and Town Manager.

I respectfully request that this submission be included in the Town's correspondence file and treated as part of the public record associated with this issue. The enclosed paper summarizes the historical, civic, and public-policy concerns raised by the continued display of the Confederate battle flag at the Georgetown Historical Society and Marvel Carriage Museum site.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

cc: Correspondence File