



# The Rebel Raiders: The Astonishing History of the Confederacy's Secret Navy

*James T. de Kay*

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During its clandestine construction in Liverpool, it was known as “Number 290.” When it was finally unleashed as the CSS *Alabama*, the Confederate gunship triggered the last great military campaign of the Civil War; a maritime adventure unparalleled in our history; an infamous example of British political treachery; and the largest retribution settlement ever negotiated by an international tribunal: \$15,500,000 in gold paid by Britain to the United States. This riveting true story of the Anglo-Confederate alliance that led to the creation of a Southern navy illuminates the dramatic and crucial global impact of the American Civil War.

Like most things in the War between the States, it started over cotton: Lincoln’s naval blockade prevented the South from exporting their prize commodity to England. In response, the Confederacy came up with a unique plan to divert the North’s vessels and open the waterways—a plan that would mean covertly building a navy in Britain, a daring strategy that involved an unforgettable cast of colorful characters.

James Bulloch—Northerner by circumstance, Southerner by birth, he risked his life to enter England and build a fleet under the very noses of Northern spies; Lord John Russell—the British foreign secretary who was suspected of subverting his own legal system to allow the secret ships; Charles Francis Adams—son and grandson of presidents, who exhausted every avenue to stop the Confederate-British collusion; Raphael Semmes—the fanatically loyal Southern captain who disabled or destroyed sixty Northern ships before meeting his match near Cherbourg, France; and The *Alabama*—a wooden gunship that took to the sea named for a Southern state to wreak havoc on the Northern cause.

With *The Rebel Raiders*, naval historian James Tertius deKay brings to dazzling life an amazing, little known piece of history that is at once an important work of Civil War scholarship and a suspenseful tale of military strategy, international espionage, and a legal crisis whose outcome still affects the world.

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