

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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