

Missouri Woman Believed to Be Last Civil War Widow Dies

A Missouri woman who was believed to be the last remaining widow of a Civil War soldier has died.

By Associated Press, Wire Service
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Helen Viola Jackson is shown this April 2017 photo. Jackson was believed to be the last surviving widow of a Civil War soldier when she died Dec. 16, 2020 in Marshfield, Mo. She was 101. In 1936, she was 17 when she married 93-year-old former Union soldier James Bolin. She had been his caregiver and he wanted to marry her so she would receive his soldier's pension. But after he died in 1939, Jackson never applied for the pension. (Photo courtesy Nicholas Inman via AP

BY JIM SALTER, Associated Press

O'FALLON, Mo. (AP) — Helen Viola Jackson's 1936 marriage to James Bolin was unusual to say the least: He was 93 and in declining health, and she was a 17-year-old schoolgirl.

Bolin was also a Civil War veteran who fought for the Union in the border state of [Missouri](#). Jackson was almost certainly the last remaining widow of a Civil War soldier when she died Dec. 16 at a nursing home in Marshfield, Missouri. She was 101.

Several Civil War heritage organizations have recognized Jackson's quiet role in history, one that she hid for all but the final three years of her life, said Nicholas Inman, her pastor and longtime friend. Yet in those final years, Inman said, Jackson embraced the recognition that included a spot on the Missouri Walk of Fame and countless cards and letters from well-wishers.

“It was sort of a healing process for Helen: that something she thought would be kind of a scarlet letter would be celebrated in her later years,” Inman said.

Jackson grew up one of 10 children in the tiny southwestern Missouri town of Niangua, near Marshfield. Bolin, a widower who had served as a private in the 14th Missouri Cavalry during the Civil War seven decades earlier, lived nearby.

Jackson's father volunteered his teenage daughter to stop by Bolin's home each day to provide care and help with chores. To pay back her kindness, Bolin offered to marry Jackson, which would allow her to receive his soldier's pension after his death, a compelling offer in the context of the Great Depression.

Jackson agreed in large part because “she felt her daily care was prolonging his life,” Inman said.

They wed on Sept. 4, 1936, at his home. Throughout their three years of marriage there was no intimacy and she never lived with him. She never told her parents, her

siblings or anyone else about the wedding. She never remarried, spending decades “harboring this secret that had to be eating her alive,” Inman said.

After Bolin’s death in 1939, she did not seek his pension.

She also realized the stigma and potential scandal of a teenager wedding a man in his 90s, regardless of her reason. In an oral history recording in 2018, Jackson said she never spoke of the wedding to protect Bolin's reputation as well as her own.

“I had great respect for Mr. Bolin, and I did not want him to be hurt by the scorn of wagging tongues,” she said.

Inman and Jackson were longtime friends. She was a charter member of the Methodist church where he serves as pastor. One day in December 2017, she told Inman about her secret marriage to a much older man. She mentioned in passing that he fought in the Civil War.

“I said, ‘What? Back up about that. What do you mean he was in the Civil War?’” Inman said.

Inman checked into her story and found that everything she told him was “spot on.” Officials at Wilson’s Creek National Battlefield sent him copies of Bolin’s service information. She identified where he was buried, in Niangua.

She also kept a Bible that he gave her — in which he wrote about their marriage. Those written words were good enough for the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and other heritage organizations to recognize Jackson’s place in history.

After a lifetime of avoiding her past, Jackson embraced it in her final years, Inman said. She spoke to schoolchildren and had a Facebook page dedicated to her. She enjoyed getting cards and letters.

She also found new peace. A stoic nature that kept her from shedding tears at her own siblings' funerals seemed to evaporate.

After Bolin’s relatives found out about Jackson's role in his life, they went to the nursing home and presented her with a framed photo of him.

“She broke down and cried,” Inman recalled. “She kept touching the frame and said, ‘This is the only man who ever loved me.’”

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‘Bloody Ravine’ 29 Acres at the Heart of Williamsburg’s Civil War Battlefield, Protected for Posterity

American Battlefield Trust’s acquisition of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation tract was made possible by federal and state matching grants and private contributions

Mary Koik December 22, 2020

(Williamsburg, Va.) – Although the city is synonymous with the colonial era, Williamsburg’s significance to American history extends well beyond the 18th century. Thanks to a partnership between the American Battlefield Trust and The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, supported by the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program and the Commonwealth of Virginia, 29 acres that played a critical role in the Civil War will be protected forever.



*A colorful scene at the Williamsburg Battlefield in Williamsburg, Virginia.
Brian M. Callan*

“Sometimes the stars align, and that certainly felt like the case with this project,” said American Battlefield Trust President David Duncan. “Zoned for commercial uses and in a sought-after location, the fair-market value of this land was eye-popping. But The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation is a partner that shares our vision for creating places where American history is alive and tangible. Together, we were able to create a scenario, supported by government partners who recognized the extraordinary significance of this land, that will preserve this historic ground forever.”

Acknowledging the Foundation’s important role, Colonial Williamsburg President and CEO Cliff Fleet said, “The story of America is dynamic, and Greater Williamsburg is rich with places that figure prominently in that story. It was our honor to ensure that this historic landscape is safeguarded by an organization uniquely situated to interpret it. The work of the American Battlefield Trust to preserve this important piece of Civil War history adds to the diversity of offerings for visitors interested in a more complete understanding of the Battle of Williamsburg and provides an economic boost to local businesses.”

When the Trust announced the project in May 2020, it emphasized the extraordinary investment that the opportunity represented. Between a donation of value being made on the part of the seller and anticipated grants from the federal and state governments, each dollar donated by Trust members would be matched \$220-to-\$1. Also notable, the land represented a pristine pocket of battlefield in a highly developed area. It provides an opportunity to honor seven American soldiers who earned the Medal of Honor for their valor at Williamsburg: Cpl. Robert Boody (40th New York), Sgt. Martin Conboy (37th New York), Sgt. John Nicholas Coyne (70th New York), Pvt. Michael Dillon (2nd New Hampshire), Pvt. Thomas Timothy Fallon (37th New York), Sgt. John Haight (72nd New York) and Capt. George Washington Mindil (61st Pennsylvania).

Having a sizable portion of the battlefield protected also offers the opportunity to tell important stories of often overlooked African American involvement in the Civil War. The outcome of the Battle of Williamsburg was greatly influenced when enslaved persons offered the Union army intelligence about unoccupied Confederate fortifications, enabling them to gain a protected foothold on their opponent’s flank. Slave labor had been used to construct these fortifications, and some of the same men who built them clandestinely led soldiers through the woods to exploit them. As the war progressed, enslaved persons in the region pursued self-emancipation by journeying to Fort Monroe, where they might be declared contraband and under Union protection. Subsequently, many Black men from the Williamsburg region enlisted in the United States Colored Troops as the war progressed.



Battle of Williamsburg. Gen. Hancock's charge, May 5, 1862. Library of Congress, Kurz & Allison.

Although the Trust is typically able to generate matches that double or triple the impact of private gifts, the massive multiplication factor drew immediate attention and the Trust swiftly raised the amount necessary to secure the property. With the fundraising completed and state and federal grants awarded this autumn, the transaction was completed this week.

The newly protected land will provide both environmental and economic benefits to the local community, noted Drew Gruber, interim president of the Williamsburg Battlefield Association. "Conservation of this green space will not only ensure the quality of life for regional residents but will help our economy by diversifying our tourism profile. Adding a Civil War amenity will attract that large audience which literally drives past Williamsburg each year in search of these sites and stories."

The Battle of Williamsburg was fought on May 5, 1862, and marked the largest engagement fought in Virginia up to that time, after First Manassas the previous July. Departing from Fort Monroe, the Union Army moved up the Virginia Peninsula, hoping to threaten Richmond. The two forces had settled into a weeks-long siege at

Yorktown, another site more often associated with the Revolutionary War. When the Confederates withdrew from their entrenchments, Union Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan was slow to mount a pursuit but made contact with Confederate Gen. Joseph E. Johnston's rearguard brigades four miles southeast of Williamsburg on the rainy morning of May 5.

One of the key geographic features of the morning fighting came to be known as the "Bloody Ravine," as the forces occupied opposite sides of the divide and hand-to-hand combat was recorded between the lines. Later in the day, Union Brig. Gen. Joseph Hooker assaulted Fort Magruder, an earthen fortification alongside the Williamsburg Road, but was repulsed. Confederate counterattacks, directed by Maj. Gen. James Longstreet, almost overwhelmed Hooker's men, but reinforcements stabilized the Federal left. It was in this fighting that Brig. Gen. Winfield S. Hancock earned his nickname "Hancock the Superb."

That evening, Johnston continued his withdrawal up the peninsula. McClellan claimed the battle at Williamsburg was a "brilliant victory" over superior forces, but neither commander had committed his entire army to the fight; nearly 41,000 Federals and 32,000 Confederates slugged it out, inflicting a total of 3,800 casualties on both sides.

The American Battlefield Trust is dedicated to preserving America's hallowed battlegrounds and educating the public about what happened there and why it matters today. The nonprofit, nonpartisan organization has protected more than 53,000 acres associated with the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, and Civil War. Learn more at www.battlefields.org.

American Battlefield Trust Launches Five – Year Push to Protect the Heart of Two Major Battlefields

Mary Koik, December 17, 2020

(Richmond, Va.) – For decades, preservationists and historians have held a near-consensus view: A square-mile of the Richmond suburbs was the most historically significant but unprotected Civil War landscape in America. Not only was this land central to the Battle of Gaines’ Mill in June 1862, but two years later played a major role in the Battle of Cold Harbor. Even as other important battlegrounds around the former Confederate capital were protected and brought into Richmond National Battlefield Park through public-private partnerships, it remained pristine but vulnerable to the forces of development. But at the conclusion of a five-year campaign, launched today by the American Battlefield Trust, it will be protected forever.



Fog rolls over the historic landscape at the Gaines' Mill Battlefield in Mechanicsville, Virginia.

Matthew Huntley

“For the entirety of my nearly 21 years at the Trust, this land has stood at the pinnacle of our preservation hopes,” said organization President David Duncan. “This twice-hallowed ground will stand forever as a

testament to the power of historic landscapes to inform our understanding and appreciation of the past.”

The full initiative involves several tracts to be announced in phases over the course of five years. Although confidentiality agreements prevent us from disclosing the campaign’s ultimate price from the outset, this massive project will be among the most ambitious ever undertaken by the Trust. While the entire effort is known as the “Gaines’ Mill – Cold Harbor Saved Forever Campaign,” the first stage is summarized as “Pickett’s Charge, Five Times as Large.” It includes a large, 96-acre parcel, plus 12 additional acres nearby — all of it land across which, between the two battles, some 70,000 soldiers charged. The total cost to preserve the 108 acres is \$1,411,000. But, thanks to early gifts from major donors and a significant grant from the Lee-Jackson Educational Foundation, \$511,000 remains to be raised. This is in addition to a separate project nearby, where the Trust is seeking \$201,000 to protect 36 acres at Cold Harbor, including the site of the original Cold Harbor Tavern that lent its name to the fighting, and Trevilian Station, Va.

Protection of important battlefield landscapes around Richmond has always been driven by public-private partnerships. Initial efforts in the 1920s were led by Richmond newspaperman and Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Douglas Southall Freeman, whose Battlefield Markers Association erected 59 large interpretive tablets, many of which can still be seen around the region. Later, the Richmond Battlefield Parks Corporation acquired 572 acres that were deeded to the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1932 and became the first state park. Following considerable work by the Civilian Conservation Corps to connect the disparate sites from 1933–1941, Richmond National

Battlefield Park was officially established in 1944.



*The sun rises over the Cold Harbor battlefield near Mechanicsville, Virginia.
Matthew Huntley*

As the decades passed, the city of Richmond grew swiftly, and the threat of development loomed ever larger. This resulted in the loss of important battlefields, such as Seven Pines, much of which is the site of the Richmond International Airport. Eventually, the Gaines' Mill – Cold Harbor battlefield became one of the largest undeveloped areas in desirable Hanover County. However so great was the land's historical significance that during a 2005 Trust Board Meeting, legendary historian Ed Bearss declared: "Even if you have to sell every other piece of battlefield land the Trust has ever saved in order to preserve this land, you should do it." Trust officials were able to convey to Bearss that, after another 15 years of cultivation and negotiation, an agreement had been reached shortly before his passing in September at the age of 97.

This multi-year effort will contribute toward the protection of a critical mass at both battlefields — allowing visitors 200 years from now to understand how the action unfolded on that landscape. Such an achievement will be largely due to the

Trust's efforts — as recently as 2012, the National Park Service owned only 65 acres at Gaines' Mill, a figure that quintupled with a single Trust transaction that year. More broadly, between 1995 and 2013, Richmond National Battlefield Park more than tripled in size, a feat made possible through the Trust's efforts to protect these hallowed grounds and, when possible, transfer privately protected lands into the park. These efforts have been regularly supported by land acquisition funding from the National Park Service and matching grants from the American Battlefield Protection Program and Virginia Battlefield Preservation Fund, leveraged with donations from private citizens around the country.

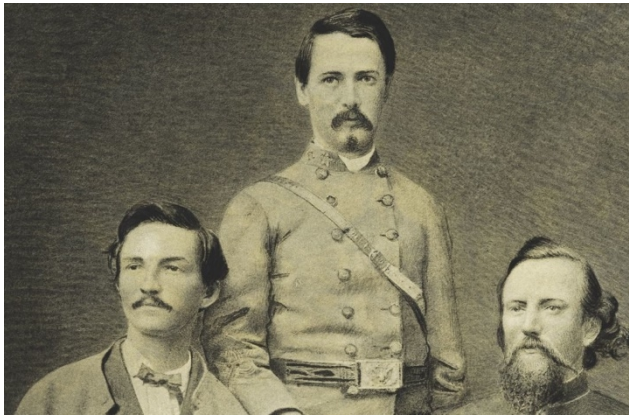
As the capital of the Confederacy, Richmond's capture was a chief war aim of Union armies during the Civil War. In the spring of 1862, Federal troops embarked from Fortress Monroe on the tip of the Virginia Peninsula and traveled northwest toward their goal. Maj. Gen. George McClellan's troops made it practically to the gates of Richmond before stern resistance from Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee, newly appointed to lead the Army of Northern Virginia, stymied the advance. On June 27, 1862, the armies clashed at the Battle of Gaines' Mill – the third of the Seven Days' Battles; the day's final and successful assault remains the largest attack ever made on American soil. Two years later, the armies returned to the same spot for the final engagement of the Overland Campaign, the Battle of Cold Harbor. Union Lt. Gen. Ulysses Grant also launched one of the larger attacks of the Civil War across this ground on June 3, 1864. Regretful of the resulting bloody repulse and unable to capture Richmond, Grant turned to besiege the vital rail hub at Petersburg, preventing supplies from reaching Richmond.

Learn more about the Gaines' Mill – Cold Harbor Saved Forever Campaign at www.battlefields.org/GMCH2020.

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Head of Class



Thomas Henry Hines (left) and unidentified fellow raiders (possible George Eastin and John Hunt Morgan) taught their Union foes some tough lessons with their guerilla tactics and moxie above the Mason/Dixon Line. University of Kentucky

*Ron Soodalter HISTORYNET
January 2021*

Former schoolteacher finds a fitting home as one of John Hunt Morgan's vaunted Cavalry raiders

Thomas Henry Hines' war began in 1861, when he left his Kentucky home

to fight for the South. He rose swiftly from lieutenant in a local Kentucky cavalry unit to captain under Confederate raider John Hunt Morgan, the fabled "Thunderbolt of the Confederacy." He also became a hunted and highly placed special agent, and a major provocateur for President Jefferson Davis. During his service, Hines staged the most sensational prison break of the war and endeavored—in the end, unsuccessfully—to establish a powerful Confederate Second Front in the heart of the Union itself.

Hines was a slim, handsome young man, bearing an uncanny resemblance to [John Wilkes Booth](#). To fellow Confederate agent John Headley, he was "modest and unassuming...endowed with varied talents and unflinching courage....His exploits...in Morgan's Cavalry are too numerous to be recorded here." Hines' superior officer, Major John B. Castleman, added that, with but one exception, he had never known "a man so resourceful and so composed in all difficulties." It was these qualities that made Hines an ideal member of Morgan's guerrilla band.

At the beginning of hostilities, 22-year-old Thomas Hines was earning his living as a schoolteacher. He soon left his position to lead a homegrown volunteer cavalry company calling itself the Buckner Guides, named for Brig. Gen. Simon Bolivar Buckner, a fellow Kentuckian. After the Guides disbanded in May 1862, Hines—having lost his lieutenant's rank in the now-defunct unit—enlisted as a private in the 9th Kentucky Cavalry, Morgan's command.

Hines found he was well-suited to Morgan's Cavalry, which one chronicler described as "the most celebrated and flamboyant detachment in the Confederate Army." Morgan discovered a kindred spirit in Hines, and he soon commissioned the young man a captain. For months, Hines led guerrilla raids from Tennessee into Kentucky, destroying Union trains and depots, "liberating" livestock, and earning a reputation for boldness and daring. He also acted as secret liaison between Morgan and the state's Southern sympathizers, keeping clandestine meetings dressed in civilian attire and risking capture and death.



Citizens of Old Washington, Ohio, scatter as Morgan's Raiders—so-called Freebooters—swarm through town during Morgan's devastating raid of June-July 1863. (North Swind Picture Archives/Alamy Stock Photo)

By that time, the "High Tide of the Confederacy" was ebbing and the lightning raids of men such as Hines and Morgan not only diverted the Union Army's attention, they boosted Southern morale. When Hines led his men into South Union Depot, Ky.,

burning the Yankee station and destroying a steamboat full of provisions, the news quickly spread throughout the Confederacy.

In June 1863, Morgan sent Hines and 25 men north into Indiana disguised as Union cavalry. His dual mission was to find the best places for Morgan to cross on a planned raid into the North, and to ascertain the presence and number of Southern sympathizers in the area. These pro-Southern citizens were disparagingly known to their fellow Northerners as "Copperheads," and Hines was to determine their willingness to support Morgan's forthcoming raid.

Hines' patrol was discovered, however, and after a desperate chase, they escaped capture only by swimming the Ohio River. His appetite whetted for clandestine operations, Hines would soon have an opportunity to play a much more significant role behind enemy lines.

Though Morgan's Raid (June 11–July 26, 1863) advanced farther into the North than any other Confederate unit the entire war, it was ill-advised. Displaying his usual boldness, Morgan led his Raiders across the Ohio River into Indiana and then Ohio. But the raid ended poorly. Morgan took heavy casualties and, ultimately, he and more than a thousand of his men were captured. Most were sent to prisoner-of-war camps, but Morgan and a handful of his officers—including Hines—were incarcerated at the Ohio State Penitentiary.

After four months in prison, the resourceful Hines discovered an air

chamber under the floor, and, using only two knives, he and his cellmates proceeded to dig a tunnel. After three weeks' labor, he, Morgan, and six others crawled under the prison, scaled the 25-foot wall, and escaped. Before entering the 18-inch-wide tunnel, Hines, in a rare act of bravado, left a note addressed to the warden, explaining in succinct, respectful detail how he had managed the breakout.

Hines had already achieved fame in the Rebel army as a guerrilla raider; now he was a legend.

By 1864, the South had had crippling defeats at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, and it was becoming apparent Confederate prospects were on the wane. As Jefferson Davis saw it, drastic action was needed, and he called for a war of attrition that would drag on long enough, and cause the North sufficient anguish, to bring the federal government to the bargaining table. It would entail a three-pronged campaign. One aspect involved what historians have labeled the Confederacy's "dirty war." Desperate plots were hatched to set ablaze the North's major cities, including New York and Chicago, while agents pursued plans to poison New York's water supply, spread yellow fever and smallpox throughout the North, and assassinate its political leaders. Writes chronicler Jane Singer: "[T]he intent of the plotters was always clear: kill, terrify, and demoralize."



Hines' dazzling November 1863 escape from captivity in Ohio. (002 Images/Alamy Stock Photo)

The second part entailed uniting the Copperheads in the North to form a "fire in the rear." A significant number of citizens living in the Northwestern states—mainly Indiana, Ohio, and Illinois—were Southern sympathizers and hostile to the Lincoln administration. Many had formed themselves into secret societies such as the Knights of the Columbian Star, Sons of Liberty, Knights of the Golden Circle, and the Order of American Knights. It was the Davis' goal to arm and unite them as a military force.

Finally, it was the Confederate president's objective to liberate the various prisoner-of-war camps

throughout the North and release tens of thousands of Confederate soldiers—presumably to join with the Copperheads—on a southward path of destruction. He was inspired by Hines' daring escape. As Hines later wrote, referring to himself in the third person, "Captain Hines had escaped with General Morgan from the Ohio penitentiary. Mr. Davis' attention was attracted to him by this circumstance, which perhaps contributed to suggest the idea of a general release of prisoners." The young captain might have been unduly modest; some accounts, in fact, insist that Hines himself brought the idea to Davis, who found the concept "highly feasible."

Davis assigned Jacob Thompson and Clement C. Clay as commissioners to direct the overall implementation of the ambitious plan and allotted \$600,000 in gold—a tremendous amount of money at the time—to the project. The Confederate president also took the precaution of establishing a base of operations outside the borders of both the Union and the Confederacy. "I hereby direct you," Davis wrote Thompson on April 27, 1864, "to proceed at once to Canada, there to carry out such instructions as you have received from me...in such manner as shall seem most likely to the furtherance of the interest of the Confederate States of America...." The reasoning was sound: Rebel agents and activists could enter the Union on their various missions, and cross back into the safety of neutral Canada. Ontario, or as it was known at the time, "Canada West," swiftly became the gathering place for veterans of Morgan's Raiders, as well as escaped Rebel prisoners,

arsonists, chemists, would-be assassins, adventurers—and Thomas Henry Hines.

Jefferson Davis and his secretary of war, James A. Seddon, placed Hines at the helm as director of military operations, with orders to cause the release of the imprisoned soldiers and organize them, as well as the members of the various Copperhead secret organizations, into a viable fighting force. He was directed, in part, to "effect any fair and appropriate enterprises of war against our enemies...." Ordered to Canada, he was responsible only to Commissioner Thompson.

Hines immediately made his way north in disguise through the United States and into Ontario, stopping at various locations to confer secretly with Southern sympathizers. He took to his new position with alacrity. In June, Hines sent a coded missive to Secretary Seddon, laying out a portion of his "Plan for a Revolutionary Movement in the West." He recommends that a diversionary "force be thrown into the state of KY," while "[t]he Confederates in Canada, together with two regiments in process of formation in Chicago, will be placed under my command to move on that place [i.e., Chicago] for the release of the five thousand prisoners at Camp Douglas. Simultaneous with this movement, the Democrats in every county of Ill. and portions of Ind. and Ohio will rally to arms. A force of three thousand Democrats...will march upon Rock Island for the release of the seven thousand prisoners. At that point, five thousand will move upon Indianapolis, where there are six thousand prisoners."



The Raiders' foray into St. Albans, Vt., in late 1864 proved mostly a nuisance. (Lebrecht Music & Arts/Alamy Stock Photo)

Hines went on to assure Seddon that "the state governments of Ind. Ohio and Ill. will be seized and their executive heads disposed of. By this means, we hope to have, in ten days after the Movement has begun[,] a force of fifty thousand men." He proposed to hold Camp Douglas with his force of freed prisoners, and if unable to do so, "to retreat through Ind. to KY." After informing Seddon that the Movement would begin "on or about the twentieth of July," Hines assured him that "the people were never so ripe for revolution." Once he had neutralized the governments of these states, replacing their executive officers with Copperheads, he would lead thousands of released prisoners on an attack on Nashville, Tenn.

While these numbers might appear fantastic, Hines and Thompson had been assured that such a force could easily be mustered and brought into Confederate service. Clement Vallandigham, famed antiwar activist

and self-appointed prophet of the pro-Southern Sons of Liberty, had assured Hines that some 175,000 members of the secret society in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio stood ready to rally to the cause.

Hines' elaborate and ambitious scheme depended almost entirely on the willingness of the Copperheads to put their lives on the line. Ominously, however, the Copperhead leaders found excuses to push back the launch date three times, into late August.

Armed and in disguise, Hines traveled with 60 men to Chicago for the August Democratic convention, confident they would set the spark of rebellion ablaze among the Copperheads. But Hines was a dedicated Southern patriot and combat veteran, whereas the myriad Copperhead malcontents had ventured nothing beyond voicing their discontent. As Bruce Catton wrote, "Thompson and Hines...made the same mistake; when they looked upon the vast body of supposedly militant Northern Copperheads; they took them seriously."

When the thousands of promised volunteers failed to materialize, Hines begged for 500 men with whom to free the prisoners from just one camp. No one stepped forward. With the reality of turning inflammatory rhetoric into a fight with real bullets, and the possibility of the gallows waiting for those who survived, the promised Copperhead army did not materialize and Hines returned to Canada.

Assured anew by Copperhead leaders that they would rise on Election Day in November, the ever-

optimistic Hines once again traveled to Chicago. This time, he was determined to free only the prisoners at Camp Douglas and required only sufficient Copperhead assistance to overcome the camp's garrison. However, two informers gave up the plot, and more than 100 men were seized, along with a large store of guns and ammunition.

Hines escaped with difficulty and made his way to Richmond, where he reported to Seddon on the "attempt, betrayal and failure" of his mission. He naively suggested that the plot was still feasible but acknowledged that the Copperhead societies in general were not to be relied upon. By now, however, it was too late for further action. Hines was ordered back to Canada, where he used the government's money to help alleviate the legal difficulties of those fellow conspirators who had been captured.

The abortive Chicago rising was not the only aspect of the Northwest Conspiracy to fail. An attempt to liberate Johnson's Island, the prisoner-of-war camp on Lake Erie, came to naught, as did the elaborate plan to set New York City aflame. The two major players in these actions were ultimately captured and hanged. A plan to blow up the White House was discovered and neutralized, as was the scheme to create a yellow fever pandemic through the distribution of infected blankets. Only the plot to rob and burn St. Albans, Vt., a small town near the Canadian border, was moderately successful. A uniformed band of former Morgan's Raiders did, in fact, make off with the local bank's cash, escaping into Canada, but they failed to burn the town.

Ultimately, the Northwest Conspiracy foundered due to a lack of support from the Copperheads, the activities of informers, double agents, and federal spies, and the fatal flaws that inevitably afflict grandiose schemes. With the South's surrender, some of its most dedicated servants were left stranded in Canada.

Given the vengeful mood now permeating the Republican-led federal government, Hines deemed it wise to remain in Canada. He was far from alone; sharing his exile were countless former Confederate agents, generals, and government officials.

Hines' hope, however, was to return home, for both sentimental and practical reasons. Six months after the surrender at Appomattox, he wrote to an influential Kentuckian: "I am very anxious to return immediately to KY.; and besides, if I decided to remain in Canada, my financial condition would not permit it." In March 1866, having taken the Oath of Loyalty, he crossed the border into the United States for the last time. "We are determined to live among our own people," he wrote, "and take their fate whatever that may be. Wellcome [*sic*] any fate if it be shared among my own people."

Ever the "unreconstructed" Rebel, Hines refused to follow the path of other former Confederate officers who chose to pursue military careers in blue uniforms. At the end of his exile, he had written in his diary, "By diligence and labor, I will be able to rise." And rise he did. He entered law school, became editor of a city newspaper, and went on to sit as a judge and, ultimately, the chief justice

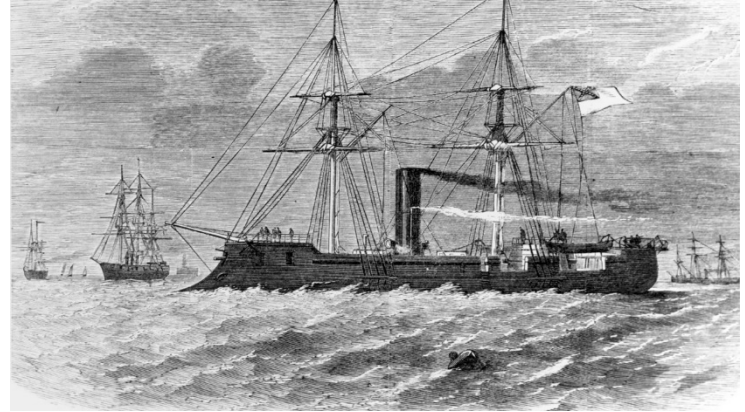
of the Kentucky Court of Appeals. He had married his sweetheart during the war, and eventually fathered six children. Long life, though, was not in the cards. A month after his wife died in 1898, Hines—not yet 60 and in increasingly poor health—followed.

In retrospect, Thomas Henry Hines was the author of impressive successes and colossal failures. While he cannot be held singly accountable for the ultimate disintegration of the South's wide-ranging clandestine war, he did, in fact, play a major part, due to both his naivete and his unrealistic expectations. As historian Edward M. Coffman states, "In the last year of the Confederacy, Southern leaders were willing to gamble on illusions which they had long cherished. As their agent, Captain Hines failed...as a master spy. Although few could match his experience in small cavalry operations, Hines' ability as a subversive agent was open to question." Ultimately, it was as a dashing officer and guerrilla fighter in Morgan's Cavalry that Hines achieved his greatest and most dramatic success.

Ron Soodalter writes from Cold Spring, N.Y.

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Online Exclusive: Ram the Yankees, Full Speed Ahead



Harper's Weekly depicted Confederate ram Stonewall en route across the Atlantic in March 1865. The war ended before the ram could threaten U.S. vessels. (Naval History and Heritage Command)

By Mike Coppock HISTORYNET
January 5, 2021

Hoping to smash the entire Union Navy, the Confederacy tried to buy the most lethal fleet afloat

Georgia native James Dunwoody Bulloch was of average height and build, with a slightly receding hairline atop bushy sideburns. However, Bulloch walked big. At night, as he stalked the cobbled streets of Liverpool, England, during the American Civil War, Bulloch's emphatic footfalls made him sound imposing. The U.S. State Department called Bulloch the most dangerous man in Europe. Rumor had it that the Union was offering a bounty on his head—one reason he took the long way around to his flat. But Bulloch, a member by blood and marriage of aristocratic American families, also walked to get lost in thought and rev his creative energies.

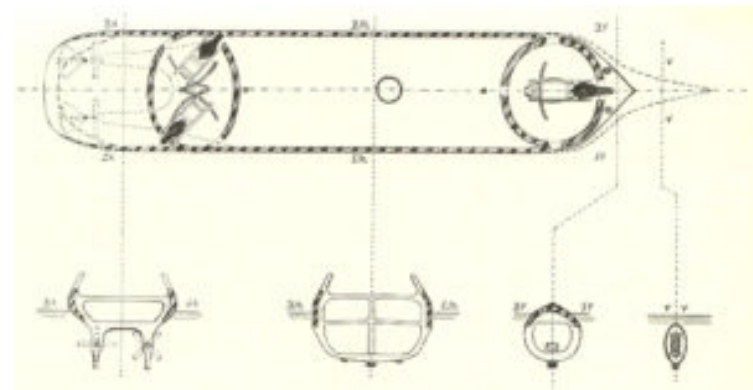


The U.S. State Department called James Dunwoody Bulloch, the Confederacy's spymaster in Britain, the most dangerous man in Europe. (Alamy Stock Photo)

As the Confederacy's European spymaster, Bulloch had a breadth of duties, including buying civilian ships and reconfiguring them into commerce raiders, like CSS *Alabama*, to prey on Union shipping. Bulloch also oversaw the smuggling of Southern cotton into England and clandestine transport of war materials in the opposite direction by blockade runners. In many respects, Bulloch was the South's sole source of hard currency.

Fifteen antebellum years serving in the U.S. Navy had conditioned Bulloch to love the sea and to keep abreast of the latest in maritime and military technology. Recent innovations in weaponry, ship design, and propulsion had set his mind racing. It was one thing to perforate and outrun Lincoln's blockade and to outgun a federal warship in ship-on-ship combat. But what if one could design a vessel so unstoppable as to be able to bring down the entire U.S. Navy?

In 1862, after one of his Liverpoolian constitutionals, Bulloch, 39, sat at a table with paper, pencil, and ruler and began drawing a warship. For weeks, he drew and re-drew, always coming back to a topside array, akin to that of the Union's *Monitor*, of two revolving gun turrets clad in 10 inches of armor. Along either side of its hull, Bulloch's imaginary vessel mounted banks of British rifled cannons protected by 4.5" of steel. Around the deck, he pictured Gatling guns able to cram enemy boarding parties into interlocking fields of fire.



The design of the CSS Stonewall included two 350-hp steam engines, revolving gun turrets, cannon, Gatling guns, and at the bow, a reinforced wrought iron battering ram. (Alamy Stock Photo)

The preliminary design showed a vessel 250 feet long with a beam of 31.5 feet. Two 350-horsepower steam engines would power the 1,358-ton behemoth to speeds exceeding ten knots. Should coal run low—the ship could carry only 90 tons—Bulloch added sails and rigging that extended the ship's range. At the bow, Bulloch sketched a reinforced wrought iron battering ram below the waterline. The ram was considered essential because naval gunnery seemed unable to pierce the armor protecting the superstructures and gun decks of ironclad

ships, but the wooden hulls were left vulnerable to a front-on strike. “I designed these ships for something more than harbor or even coastal defense,” he wrote in 1863. “I confidently believe, if ready for sea now, they could sweep away the entire blockading fleet of enemy vessels.”

If one ram had such potential, Bulloch reasoned to Confederate Navy Secretary Stephen Mallory, imagine what a fleet of the big fellows, escorted by armored wooden cruisers like the *Alabama*, could accomplish. Mallory liked the way Bulloch’s mind worked, but, on this topic, he and his spymaster sparred. Mallory wanted the rams to have a shallow draft, enabling them to patrol coastal waters and rivers, as the South’s ironclads already were doing. Shallow-draft rams would take a toll on the Union Navy—provided the Union Navy attacked. In contrast, Bulloch saw his rams as globe-ranging hunter-killers, pursuing and destroying Union warships at will, a blue-water role demanding a deeper hull suitable for ocean-going travel. Once his rams smashed the Union Navy, Bulloch posited, the seagoing beasts could invade New York, Boston, Baltimore, and other Yankee ports and lay waste their waterfronts. After a series of letters, Mallory embraced Bulloch’s vision. Soon South Carolina-based blockade runner George Trenholm was smuggling a million dollars in Confederate gold into Liverpool aboard his ships. With the gold came instructions from Mallory to build four rams on the sly. That meant spreading out the project. Bulloch contracted to have the rams *North Carolina* and *Mississippi* built by the Laird Shipyard at Birkenhead, across the harbor from Liverpool. Code-named *Cheops* and *Sphinx*, another two

rams were to be built at Bordeaux, France, by Lucien Arman, a French legislator with ties to Emperor Louis Napoleon III.

Britain and France each had neutrality acts, and each officially recognized the Confederate States of America as a belligerent with certain rights, separate from the North though not quite an independent republic. Britain had reasons for backing the South besides feeding its cotton mills; a smaller United States of America would make Canada less nervous. France, too, had cotton mills—but France also was occupying Mexico, an affront to the Monroe Doctrine. President Abraham Lincoln had made plain that once he defeated the South he would be coming for those French occupiers and their Mexican puppets. France preferred a Confederate border with Mexico to one lined by Union forces.



Charles Francis Adams Sr., U.S. ambassador to the Court of St. James's, pressured the British government to withdraw informal support for the South, especially to stop building ships for the Confederacy. (Library of Congress)

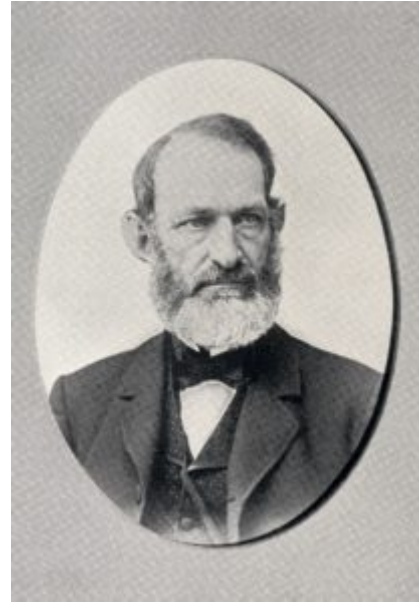
That million in gold ignited a game of dodge and feint between Bulloch and his agents and Charles Francis Adams Sr.

and Thomas Haines Dudley, U.S. envoys to Britain, and John Bigelow, U.S. envoy to France. Dudley was the one who sniffed out the rams. As U.S. consul in Liverpool, Dudley apprehended that the Laird yard was much too busy—masses of steel were coming into Birkenhead—and Bulloch in and out of Liverpool too often for a sentient man not to conclude that Confederate money was fueling a shipbuilding boom. One night Dudley's men scouted the shipyards, spotting the giant hulls. On August 30, 1862, Dudley alerted his federal masters to the rams. "The ribs of one is up," Dudley reported. "and they have commenced to put on the plates."

The revelation sent Ambassador Adams into a panic and rattled the Union government. Based on Dudley's account of what he had seen, no U.S. Navy ship could withstand the Laird rams, Adams said. He pressed Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston's subordinates on the ill-advisedness of the matter. In Washington, Secretary of State William Seward told British Ambassador Lord Richard Lyons that Lincoln was prepared, if the rams sailed, to make undeclared war on British commerce.

The latest turns in the two-year-old war between North and South had Britain and France distancing themselves from the Confederacy. Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg in July 1863 seemed to dim rebel hopes for victory. Seward ordered Adams to go public in the British press with Dudley's evidence about the rams. Coverage casting the ships as a neutrality act violation outraged Britons. Whitehall, hoping to calm Britons' ire, ordered the seizure of the *Alexandra*, being built at Liverpool

for Confederate service as a commerce raider.



Thomas Haines Dudley U.S. consul in Liverpool, played the spy game with Bulloch, reporting regularly about the obvious signs that ships being built in Britain were bound for the Southern states. (Naval History and Heritage Command)

The day after Lee lost at Gettysburg, Dudley reported that Laird had launched the rams into Liverpool harbor. Bulloch had concocted a byzantine deal to mask the ships' ownership and purpose. A Paris-based, Russian-owned firm, Bravay & Company, was the nominal purchaser. Bravay representatives told the British they were middlemen for the Pasha of Egypt, who wanted the vessels as Nile River patrol craft. The Laird rams actually were to sail to France to be sold to Bulloch. The Russians would earn a healthy commission for their part in the charade.

In September 1863, Adams presented the British with a note stating that if the Laird rams sailed from Birkenhead, "this

is war.” On October 10, 1863, armed British sailors from the HMS *Majestic* seized the British-built rams. Laird sued the Crown, which forcibly bought the rams, renaming them HMS *Scorpion* and HMS *Wyvern*. Besides neutralizing Union threats, the British may have had practical reasons for the seizure. The Royal Navy was 90 percent wooden-hulled; Britain and France had ironclads, but nothing in the rams’ league. Both nations had allowed weapons for which they had no defense to be constructed on their soil. Palmerston did not want to run the risk of France obtaining and using the Laird ships. Seizing the rams resolved part of that multipronged dilemma.

Bulloch was in France, trying to stay ahead of events, such as the apparent impending seizure of the second pair of rams. Gettysburg had forced Napoleon III to rethink his attitude toward the Confederacy; the emperor was tilting pro-Union, hoping to parley with the Lincoln administration. Napoleon seemed to know that at Arman’s yards in Nantes the politician-cum-shipwright was constructing two rams, along with corvettes ordered by the Confederacy but represented as being Swedish. A government agent showed Arman proof that the ships were not for the Swedish Navy and that he was close to violating his nation’s neutrality laws. Denmark and Prussia were at war; the pragmatic Arman arranged to sell *Cheops* to Prussia and *Sphynx* to Denmark. He was not selling the rams to the South, but he still was violating French law, so he confected fictional buyers in Sweden and the Netherlands for each ship. The French government knew Arman was breaking some law, especially when Danish naval officers began supervising changes

to *Sphynx*—but as long as the rams were not going to the Confederacy, the French did not concern themselves. After all, Arman was a legislator.

Denmark renamed *Sphynx* the *Staerkodder* and had a French crew sail the ram to Copenhagen starting on October 15, 1864. *Cheops*, renamed *Prinz Adalbert* by Prussia, got a later delivery date. But by the time the Danish ram reached Copenhagen, the Prusso-Danish war had ended. The Danes refused delivery, positioning Lucien Arman for a huge loss. He contacted Bulloch, offering to sell the Confederacy the *Sphynx* for 373,000 francs plus 80,000 francs for his agents.

Bulloch agreed to Arman’s deal. In coded telegrams ostensibly about teakwood shipments, Bulloch ordered Confederate Navy Captain Thomas Page to take command of the Danes’ ram once it was out of Danish waters. Page’s temporary crew would be the men of the captured CSS *Florida*, now being held in Europe. Blockade runner *City of Richmond* would rendezvous with the ram at Belle Isle, an island in the Bay of Biscay, bringing supplies and a permanent Confederate crew. French coaler *Expeditif* would also be at Belle Isle to fuel the ram. Page’s combat orders would come later.

Bulloch thought he was working in utmost secrecy—until, at a Paris rail station, he ran into a gaggle of young Confederate naval officers with their female companions. The sailors begged to crew on the newly active ram. “It forced me to make a partial confession in order that I might warn them to secrecy and caution,” Bulloch said later.



U.S. envoy to France John Bigelow learned that Stonewall had left Denmark and was headed for American waters. (The History Collection / Alamy Stock Photo

On January 7, 1865, the soon-to-be-former Danish ram, now christened *Olinde*, sailed from Copenhagen, listing Page as a passenger. When a gale hit Western Europe's coast, the heavyweight vessel did not ride the swells, but plunged through, "diving and coming up after the fashion of a porpoise," wrote Page. The Belle Isle rendezvous occurred as planned. Once the fresh crew replaced the men who had sailed from Denmark, Page commissioned the ram as CSS *Stonewall* and sailed south. The gale, now full force, was driving waves over *Stonewall's* decks bow to stern. Compartments were taking on water, and a leak threatened to flood the bilge. Low on coal, Page put in at A Coruna, on Spain's northwest coast, on February 2. He sent Bulloch a report on *Stonewall's* seaworthiness. Bulloch responded by dispatching an engineer to repair the ram; the man also bore orders

identifying Page's target: He was to cross the Atlantic to Nassau, evaluate the situation at Savannah, Sherman's supply port in Georgia, and, if indications were good, destroy those facilities and stores. The orders' wording suggested to Bulloch that if Sherman had burned his way to the Georgia coast, the South already had lost. The storm had so damaged the ram that Page had to limp to the shipyard at nearby El Ferrol for repairs.

John Bigelow learned from American operatives that the ram had left Copenhagen. On January 28, word reached Bigelow in Paris that the ram had been spotted bearing the name *Olinde*. Determined to find and sink the big vessel, Bigelow alerted U.S. warships across Europe. Spies watched the coast. American agents quizzed *Expeditif* crewmen. On February 4, Horatio Perry, *charge d'affaires* in at the U.S. Embassy in Madrid, reported a sighting of a Confederate ram undergoing repairs at A Coruna. The American navy dispatched the frigate USS *Niagara* from Antwerp and the sloop of war USS *Sacramento* from Cherbourg. When *Stonewall* steamed out of El Ferrol, the Americans were to sink it. *Sacramento* was the same size as *Stonewall*; *Niagara*, 100 feet longer. Both had wooden hulls. The *Stonewall's* fore turret had a rifled Armstrong cannon that fired a 300-lb. round and in its after turret two 70-pounder rifled Armstrongs. On March 24, Page took *Stonewall* into the Ferrol estuary, steaming directly at *Niagara* with both turrets' guns trained on the Union warship. From 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., *Stonewall* lay near the foe, waiting for Captain Thomas Craven of *Niagara* to fight. Craven refused to engage. To do so, Craven said later at

two courts-martial, would have been suicide. Having survived the day without a shot being fired, CSS *Stonewall* sailed for Lisbon, Portugal, to refuel. On March 28, *Stonewall* departed Lisbon, bound west. Union surveillance reported her coming into Nassau, the Bahamas, on May 6. At Nassau, Page learned that Lee had surrendered and that Union forces had captured Jefferson Davis. Broke and low on supplies, Page sailed to Havana, shadowed by the USS *Monadnock*, a double-turret monitor roughly *Stonewall*'s length but not its size. Page now captained a ship without a country. Lacking authority to sell a Confederate Navy ship, he spurned Spanish authorities' offer of \$60,000 for the vessel. However, he did need \$16,000 to pay his crew. Proffering that sum, the Spanish took control of *Stonewall*, giving Page and his men every courtesy. In July, the Spanish turned the warship over to American authorities, getting their money back.

***Stonewall* sailed to the Washington, DC, Navy Yard**, where it languished for two years. In 1868, the government decided that selling the ram to Japan's Tokugawa Shogunate would improve relations with that nation. The Shogun agreed to pay \$30,000, plus \$10,000 upon delivery. On April 2, 1868, Lieutenant George Brown sailed the former Confederate vessel into Yokohama Bay, arriving amid civil war between the forces of the Emperor and those of the shogun, leader of the Samurai military class. France and Britain were intervening in the conflict with men and supplies. The shogun's sea and land forces had retreated to Hokkaido, declaring that northernmost Japanese island the independent Ezo Republic, and the city of Hakodate there its capital.



Stonewall ended up a prize during the civil war between the Imperial Japanese Navy and the ruling Tokugawa Shogunate. The U.S. ambassador turned the ram over to the emperor in 1869 and her guns were decisive in the ultimate battle. (Photo by Buyenlarge/Getty Images)

Robert Van Valkenburgh, the U.S. minister to Japan, ordered the ram kept under American control. The emperor's representatives begged the Americans to release *Stonewall*. In February 1869, Van Valkenburgh relented. Renamed *Kotetsu* and now the Imperial Navy's flagship, the ram had American officers and crew on board to offset shogunate warships' ranks of French advisers.

On March 25, 1869, at Myako Bay, Ariel Ikunosuke sailed warship *Kaiten*, flying American colors, up to *Kotetsu*, at the last moment lowering the Stars and Stripes, raising the Ezo flag, and ramming the *Stonewall*. The *Kaiten* carried 300 elite swordsmen assigned to board and capture the ram. As the swordsmen dropped from the attacker's much higher deck onto *Stonewall*, *Kotetsu*'s crew cranked Gatling guns, slaughtering the boarding party. Ikunosuke and *Kaiten* escaped.

Now dominating Hakodate Bay, *Kotetsu* proved as unstoppable as Bulloch had envisioned, sinking *Kaiten* and a second shogunate warship, effectively destroying the Ezo fleet as the crews of a French warship and a British warship looked on. The French vessel took on the French personnel who had assisted the shogun in the Japanese power struggle and sailed away. In 1871, *Kotetsu* was renamed *Azuma*, serving until 1888 when relegated to harbor duty. An American in 1908 commented that the old leviathan was still afloat, "peacefully rusting away." The Prussians never used sister ship *Prince Adalbert*, which was broken up in 1878. Captain Page moved to Argentina, where his son and grandson saw service in the Argentine Navy, the grandson making admiral.

Excluded as a spy from the post-war amnesty accorded most former Confederates, James Bulloch lived out his life in Liverpool, now and then infiltrating the United States in disguise to visit relatives, including young nephew Theodore Roosevelt.

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