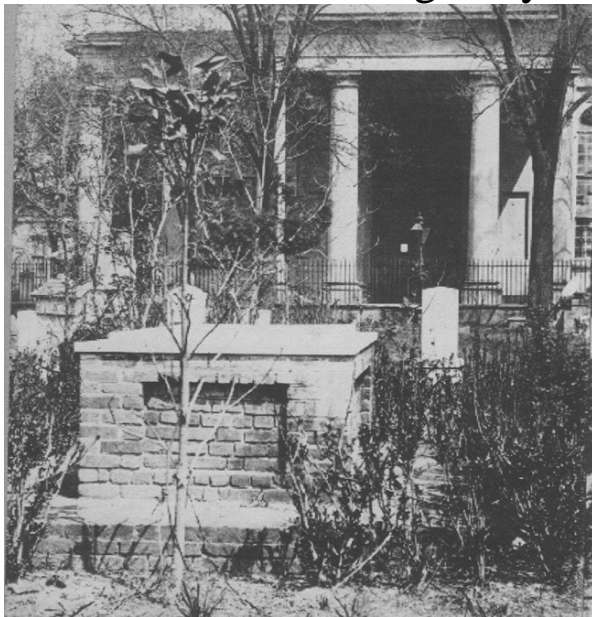




The Last North American Issue

The years 2011 to 2015 mark the 150th anniversary of the American Civil War. Several participants in the war with the name Calhoun and sept names of Colquhoun played significant parts in this conflict. One man with a notable name actually died eleven years before the war started. However **John C. Calhoun** was still blamed for contributing to the South seceding from the North. When Sherman's Federal troops marched into Charleston, SC where Calhoun is buried a guard was posted at his grave. Townspeople had already moved Calhoun's body to a secret location in the graveyard to prevent possible defilement.

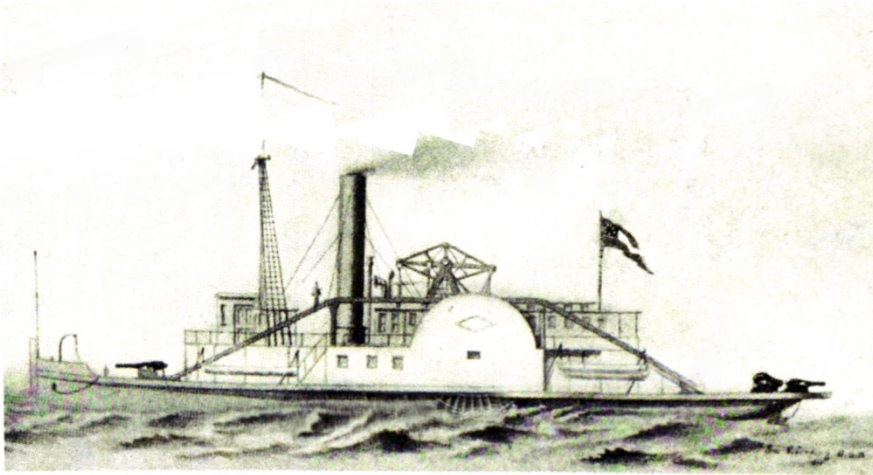


Calhoun's tomb as it appeared in 1865.



The tomb today in Saint Philips Episcopal Church graveyard in Charleston, SC

There was a blockade runner named after John C. Calhoun that operated in the Gulf of Mexico. The CSS (Confederate States Steamer) *Calhoun* was originally owned by George McGregor of New Orleans. The ship had been originally used as a tow boat to bring sailing vessels up to the city wharves. The current of the Mississippi was too strong for a sailing ship to safely approach the pier by itself. The *Calhoun* was commissioned as the first privateer of the war on May 15, 1861. Privateers were pirate ships made legal by a government's proclamation. They had permission to raid ships of an opposing government or country. For instance, Sir Frances Drake captained a privateer for Elizabeth I. The crew shared what was captured by their ship. The Federal Navy set up rows of their own ships to try and prevent the Rebel Navy from entering and leaving their ports. These rows of ships were blockades, and the privateers became blockade runners.



THE FIRST CONFEDERATE PRIVATEER AT SEA, THE CALHOUN
OF NEW ORLEANS

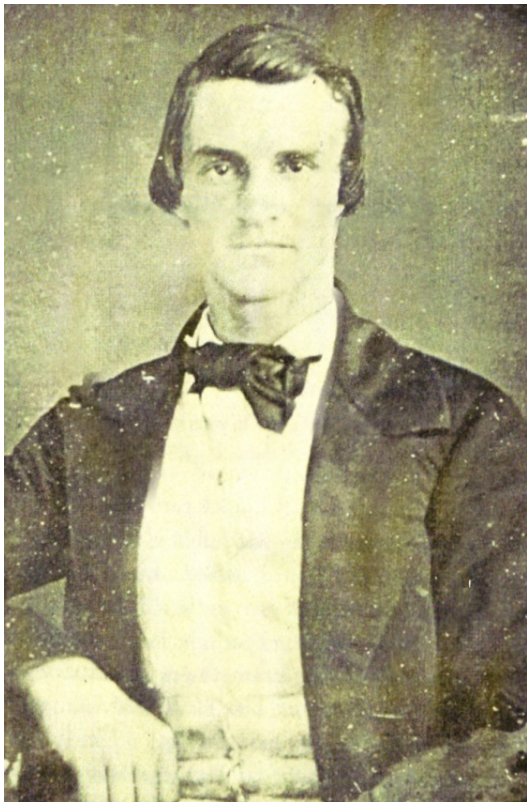
From an old photograph.

From The Confederate Privateers by William M. Robinson, Jr. (1928)

The *Calhoun* was refitted with an armament of six cannons. The crew of 85 men was commanded by Captain John Wilson. She was not a small ship. In 1865 Captain S. L. Woodward wrote the *Calhoun* had a capacity for “about 90 horses”. On the first day of her commission the *Calhoun* captured the bark *Ocean Eagle*. The first privateer prize of the war was 3,144 barrels of Thomaston lime. For the rest of 1861 the *Calhoun* took many more prizes. Some of those prizes included 1,500 sacks of salt being used as ballast on a ship out of Liverpool, tropical fruits on a ship out of Mexico bound for Pensacola, and 160 barrels of whale oil from the schooner *John Adams*. From May 15th until January 23, 1862 she operated as a blockade runner until run aground by the Federal schooner *Samuel Rotan*. The crew and passengers set fire to the *Calhoun* rather than have it fall into enemy hands, but the Federal sailors rushed aboard and extinguished the fire. Only then did the Federals discover her

latest prize: 50,000 pounds of gunpowder! After the *Calhoun's* capture she was sold at prize court and used by the Federal Navy as a chartered man-of-war. In February 1864 she served as flagship for Admiral David Glasgow Farragut. She went back into the cargo service after the war. The *Calhoun* suffered the fate of most wooden ships disappearing from history in the 1880's. Naval warfare was changed forever all over the world with the advent of ironclad ships.

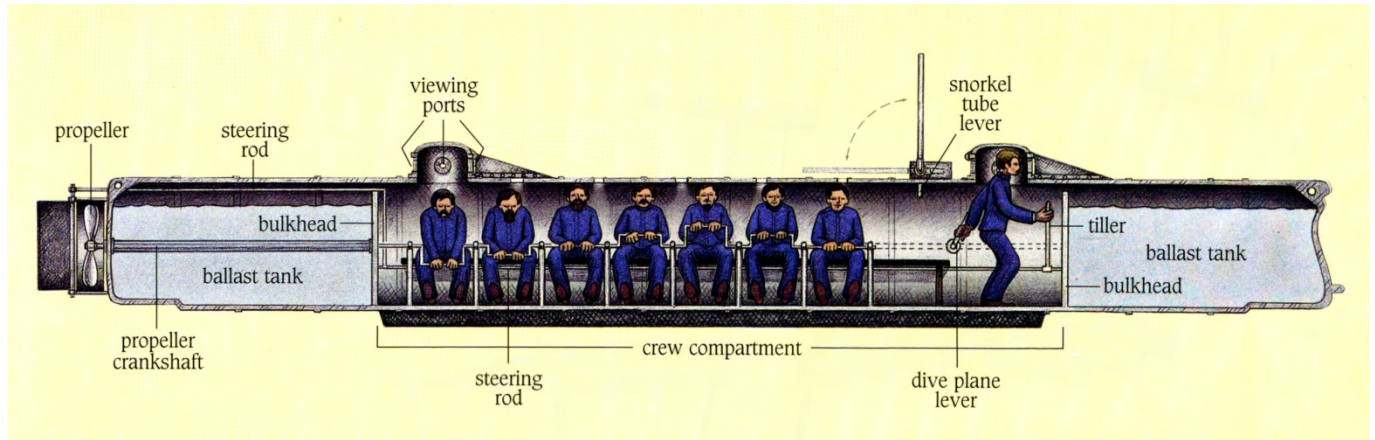
Horace Hunley was a wealthy, patriotic privateer from New Orleans. A chance meeting with a creative machine shop owner in town led to the development of the first successful attack submarine. The designer of the *CSS Hunley*, **James McClintock**, was originally from Cincinnati, Ohio.



James McClintock

McClintock apparently didn't harbor enough patriotic feelings for the Union to go back to Ohio when the war started. James McClintock was interested in science and making money. He had currently been using his machine shop to make bullets to sell to the Confederate army when he met Hunley. Before the war James McClintock had been one of the youngest steamboat captains on the Mississippi. He had gone into business making ship steam gauges in New Orleans. In 1861 Hunley approached McClintock with a proposition to develop a "fish boat" to attack the Federal ships blockading Southern ports. Their first submarine, the *Pioneer*, was made out of a boiler. The *Pioneer* was scuttled when the Union Navy took New Orleans in 1862. McClintock then moved the submarine operation to Mobile, Alabama. The second prototype, the *American Diver*, was lost in the Gulf of Mexico while being towed. Each time the meticulous McClintock made a new submarine; he learned from past mistakes and continually made improvements to the next one. What was to become the *CSS Hunley* was built from the keel up to be a submarine instead of using a boiler. McClintock decided on a crew to hand crank the *Hunley's* propeller after briefly considering other forms of propulsion. A pole like spar was fixed to the front of the *Hunley*. An explosive device called a "torpedo" was fixed to the end of a metal spar. In order to blow up an enemy vessel, the torpedo was rammed into the hull of a wooden ship. The submarine reversed leaving the torpedo fixed into the other ships hull. The *Hunley's* captain then pulled a line to ignite the torpedo when the submarine was a safe distance away. When the *Hunley* was ready it was taken by a special train to Charleston where it sank the *USS Housatonic* on February 17, 1864. The remarkable story of this submarine, the people concerned, and the equally remarkable story of its recovery on

August 8, 2000 can be read in *Raising the Hunley* by Brian Hicks and Schuyler Kropf. Also see *Secrets of a Civil War Submarine* by **Sally M. Walker**.



“When Sherman took the town the houses and stores were standing there pretty as you please. And he quartered his men in them.’

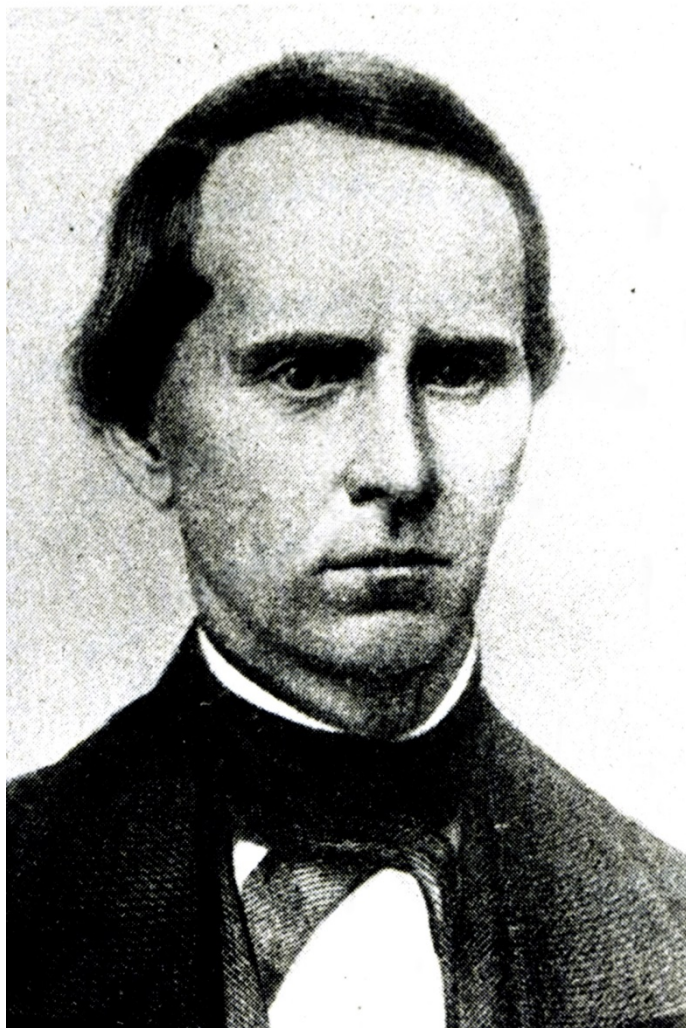
‘But what happened to the people? Did he-did he kill them?’

‘He killed some-but not with bullets,’ said the one-eyed soldier grimly. ‘Soon’s he marched into Atlanta he told **the mayor** that all the people in town would have to march out, every living soul...’”

From *Gone With The Wind* by Margaret Mitchell

That Atlanta mayor was **James Montgomery Calhoun (1811-1875)**, younger cousin of **John C. Calhoun** mentioned above. James was descended from **William (1725-1789) and Agnes (Long) Calhoun**. William came over on the ship from Ireland as a child along with John C.’s father Patrick. One of William’s sons was **William “Farmer Billy” Calhoun** (April 5, 1768-Dec 5, 1821) who married Rebecca Tonnyhill. These were James’

parents. These dates are from Orval Calhoun's *Our Calhoun Family*. James was born in the 96 District/Abbeville, South Carolina settlement. When Farmer Billy was still alive, James' older brother **Ezekiel Noble Calhoun** had married **Lucy (Nancy) Wellborn**, acquired a medical degree in Philadelphia, and set up practice in Decatur, Georgia. In 1829, after their parents had died, James turned over their farm to other family members and headed towards Decatur to live with Ezekiel.



James Montgomery Calhoun Scanned specially for us by the Kenan Research Center at the Atlanta History Center

James had only had a rudimentary education when he arrived at his brother's home. As he became more educated, citizens in Decatur recognized James' natural abilities and talents. James was soon apprenticed to a law firm. In the year 1832 James both passed the bar exam and married Emma Eliza Dabney. In 1843, Emma's sister, Elizabeth Antoinette, married **James Wallace Kirkpatrick** "...at the home of her sister, Mrs. Montgomery Calhoun (Emma Dabney) on East Court Square in Decatur..." (from *The Story Of Decatur* by Caroline Clarke).



Elizabeth Antoinette Dabney and James W. Kirkpatrick

The Kirkpatricks had a farm about a mile out of town near what is now Agnes Scott College. Nearby "Kirk Road" was the cow

path between the Kirkpatricks fields. The home they lived in still stands and is now the home of **Ann Kirkpatrick Peck**. James W. Kirkpatrick was a judge and no doubt had contact with James Calhoun through the courts as well as being his brother-in-law.

As his career grew James became known for his kindness and “sober common sense”. During the 1830s James enlisted in the militia and became an officer in the DeKalb cavalry. He saw action against the Creek and Seminole Indians who were propagating “lightning attacks” on the Decatur settlement. In 1836 James was elected Captain of the DeKalb Cavalry. His brother Ezekiel was captain of the DeKalb Light Infantry. Ironically at the same time, there was also a regular Army officer fighting the Indians in the Southeast named William T. Sherman.

James Calhoun returned from the Creek War a local hero, personally liked, and well respected. James looked toward political ambitions. His practicalness and sense of duty pointed him towards the Whig Party. The Whigs were strict Constitutionalists who believed above all in the preservation of the bonded United States. Young Abraham Lincoln was also a Whig in his early career. To help further realize James’ ambitions, John C. Calhoun urged him to switch parties. John C. Calhoun was no stranger to doing whatever it took to further his political career which included changing sides as he felt necessary. James’ personal convictions didn’t allow him to leave the Whigs. As a result he ran and lost three times for a congressional seat in Congress. The dominant Democrat Party outnumbered Whigs two to one in his district. James M. Calhoun said “I do believe, the Whigs, have been the best

dispensers of the laws of the government both State & national, & feel very sure it has been so in Georgia.” In the years before the Civil War the Whig party started to dissolve into the Constitutional Union Party. In 1851 James won a state senate seat running with this party. In 1852 James and Ezekiel pulled up roots and moved their families a few miles west to a fast growing railroad junction soon to be named Atlanta.

By 1861 the Civil War had started. James was the best known Unionist in town but still held his great personal appeal among voters. Now fifty years old he won an election for mayor of Atlanta. Most of the younger voting population who would have voted against him was at war. His years as mayor surely were some of the most difficult faced by any mayor in the country at any time. His personal safety was at times in danger due primarily to his political beliefs against the war. Some citizens considered him a traitor to the South.

By 1864 the Union Army had made its way to the outskirts of Atlanta led by William T. Sherman. General Sherman had personal knowledge of the area from his days there during the Creek War. James’ oldest son **William Lowndes Calhoun (1837-1908)**, a Confederate officer in the 42nd Georgia, had been wounded and sent back home.



William Lowndes Calhoun later in life

William's hip had been shattered by a miniball at the Battle of Resaca. Another future mayor of Atlanta, **William L. Calhoun** would never walk without pain again. James sent his family about 65 miles south out of the way of the Federal Army. Then, true to his nature, he went about trying to save what he could of Atlanta and its citizens. Over the last year, James had to solve problems like what to do with the influx of sick and wounded refugees that poured into his city daily trying to escape the advancing Union Army.

Now on the morning of September 2, 1864, no refugees were on the streets. James had asked the last high ranking Confederate General (Samuel Ferguson) to withdraw his forces so there would be no fighting in the city among the citizens that were left.



When General Sherman came into Atlanta he summoned Mayor Calhoun to tell him to evacuate the city. James pleaded for the citizens too old, sick, wounded, pregnant, or otherwise disabled to travel not to be expelled from the city. “What has this helpless people done, that they should be driven from their homes...” he wrote General Sherman. Sherman’s response was carefully considered: “You cannot qualify war in harsher terms than I will. War is cruelty, and you cannot refine it.” This is close to Sherman’s “War is hell” quote attributed to him after the Civil War. The people that could move were dispersed south of the city and Atlanta was burned. Today Atlanta’s city flag depicts the Phoenix, rising from the ashes.



James Montgomery Calhoun has a family plot in Oakland, a Victorian cemetery in Atlanta. Among other family members buried there is his son William Lowndes who was also mayor of Atlanta after his father passed. The Calhoun plot is near Bobby Jones, the golfer of the Jazz Age, and within sight of a humorously named seafood restaurant: Six Feet Under across Memorial Drive. Also in the cemetery is Margaret Mitchell who wrote *Gone With The Wind* (she's in the Marsh family plot). On the other side of the cemetery office is the tomb of Dr. Abner Wellborn Calhoun, the first ophthalmologist in Georgia.



Dr. Abner Wellborn Calhoun

He is directly descended from Dr. Ezekiel and Lucy Wellborn Calhoun. Dr. Calhoun was instrumental in starting what is now Emory University.

For an in depth look at **James Montgomery Calhoun** refer to *The Bonfire: The Siege and Burning of Atlanta* by Marc Wortman.

Thanks to Andy Calhoun, Jr., A. Calhoun Witham, and Ann Kirkpatrick Peck for their help with this article.

Thanks also to the Kenan Research Center:

<http://www.atlantahistorycenter.com/cms/Kenan+Research+Center/185.html>
