



Rebel Underground

Sons of Confederate Veterans
Major John C. Hutto Camp #443
Jasper, Alabama

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**John H. Bankhead in Uniform
16th Alabama Reg. Co. K**

**Join the Major John C. Hutto Camp
at Victoria's Restaurant
Friday, December 14, 2018, 6:00 pm
for the December Camp meeting and
Christmas Party**

**Past Alabama Division Commander
Gary Carlyle speaking on
"The Alabama Boys"
None fought any better**



Why Confederate Monuments Matter **By Samuel W. Mitcham**

First of all, I wish to state that I teach history. I do not try to erase it, and I do not desecrate graves, like the “politically correct” did in Memphis and elsewhere.

I understand why corrupt political

nonentities like the mayors of Memphis and New Orleans would want Confederate statues removed. They want to divert the voters’ attention from their demonstrated incompetency and the abject failure of their administrations, especially in the area of crime control, and who better to attack than men long since dead?

In Memphis, it also provided a fine smoke-screen. The mayor transferred a whole city block worth millions to one of his political cronies for \$1,000. The fact that they probably broke every Sunshine law and public bidding law ever written is, to them, incidental.

As a historian, my motto is “Seek the Truth.” What we are experiencing in the removal of the Confederate monuments is part of a movement which is nothing

less than cultural nihilism. (Nihilism is the viewpoint that traditional values and beliefs are unfounded and their existence is useless and immoral; thereafter, their destruction is desirable.)

Other than Black Lies Matter, the only group actively engaged in destroying monuments (at least until President Trump recently put a stop to it) is ISIS, but there have been others in history: the Jacobins in France, who destroyed the most beautiful stained glass in the world; the Nazis, who destroyed Jewish cemeteries and the monuments to the Jewish composers and intellectuals throughout Europe; the Red Guard, who destroyed thirty centuries of priceless art because it did not fit in with the Little Red Book of Chairman Mao; and other cultural nihilists.

In this purging of history, the Confederate monuments are just the start. Monuments and graves of non-Confederates have come under attack or been defaced. One prominent member of the civil rights industry has launched a personal crusade against the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Carried to its logical conclusion, we had better get ready to rip down a lot of monuments and change the names of a lot of places.

New York, for example, was named after James Stuart, the Duke of York. He also directed the Royal African Company, which transported more than 100,000 slaves from Africa to the New World. He was a slave trader in a monumental way!

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John Hollis Bankhead

In addition to serving as a soldier, state legislator, and prison warden, John Hollis Bankhead (1842-1920) was a member of the U.S. Congress for 33 years, first in the House of Representatives and

later in the Senate. Bankhead was also a farmer, a businessman, and the patriarch of a family that spawned many other famous Alabamians, including sons and fellow politicians John H. Bankhead II and William B. Bankhead; daughter and state archivist Marie Bankhead Owen; grandson and politician and businessman Walter William Bankhead; and granddaughter Tallulah Bankhead, a star of the stage and screen.



**Tallulah James Brockman,
wife of John Hollis Bankhead.**

John Hollis Bankhead was born on the family plantation near old Moscow in present-day Lamar County (formerly within Marion County), on September 13, 1842. Today, his birthplace lies within the town of Sulligent.

His parents, James Greer Bankhead and Susan Hollis, originally hailed from South Carolina.



Walker County Home of John H. Bankhead

The future senator attended local schools and at age 19 joined the Confederate Army as a private in Alabama's Sixteenth Infantry Regiment, Company K. He fought in many well-known battles, including Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and Perryville, Kentucky, was wounded several times, and rose to the rank of captain.

After the War for Southern Independence,

Bankhead turned to farming and politics. On November 13, 1866, he married Tallulah Brockman of Greenville, South Carolina, and together they raised five children: John, William, Louise, Marie, and Henry. Bankhead served three terms in the state legislature, representing Marion County in the state House of Representatives from 1865 to 1867, the Twelfth Senatorial District in the state Senate from 1876 to 1877, and returned to the House to represent Lamar County from 1880 to 1881.

As a young ambitious politician and future coal operator, Bankhead certainly identified with the state's industrial leaders, but the letters that he wrote as warden also illustrate a paternalistic concern for the wellbeing of the prisoners and the belief that humane treatment was essential for the reform of individual convicts. He began his tenure by negotiating new contracts with the state's industrialists, causing one contractor, John W. Comer, to sue for breach of contract.

Bankhead continued the existing practice of housing convicts at the contractor's location, but he advocated reform of this system. He wanted all prisoners to be housed at the penitentiary so that the warden could supervise their labor and living conditions.

In February 1885, the General Assembly re-organized the penitentiary system and abolished the office of warden. Bankhead moved to Fayette, where he resumed farming and went into business with a local merchant.

In 1886, Bankhead defeated one-term Democratic incumbent John Mason Martin to represent Alabama's Sixth District—which encompassed Fayette, Greene, Jefferson, Lamar, Marion, Pickens, Sumter, Tuscaloosa, Walker, and Winston Counties—in the U.S. House of Representatives and would serve for 20 years. He sat on the Rivers and Harbors Committee and on the Public Buildings and Grounds Committee, which he later chaired.

These assignments enabled him to procure funding for the state for buildings and waterways.

In 1906, he lost the Democratic primary to Richmond Pearson Hobson, a Spanish American War hero from Hale County. Later in 1906, Alabama held a Democratic primary for alternate senator. At that time, state legislatures still appointed federal senators. Alabama's legislature met only every four years, and both of the state's senators were

aging. Bankhead won the primary, and in June 1907. In 1910, Bankhead moved to Jasper and built a large home, which he named Sunset.



John H. Bankhead with Tallulah and Eugenia, 1917



Good Roads Movement

Although Bankhead opposed federal regulation of suffrage, he favored federal funding for transportation, especially for building roads and developing waterways. He supported improving roadways in order to facilitate mail delivery in rural areas and to help southern farmers transport goods to market. Bankhead also believed that federal

and state cooperation was necessary to build and maintain good roads. In 1916, he sponsored federal legislation creating a fund of \$200 million that would provide states with matching funds for highway construction. Alabama responded by passing a \$25 million highway bond necessary to secure federal funds in 1921, and thus Bankhead's bill began a tradition of federal and state cooperation to fund roadways.

Bankhead also served as president of the United States Good Roads Association and spoke at good roads conferences across the nation. These efforts earned him the nickname "Father of Good Roads."

Among his congressional achievements in Alabama, he procured funding to construct a dam on the Coosa River to facilitate navigation and water-power generation. He encouraged the construction of a nitrate plant in Muscle Shoals during World War I to manufacture explosives and fertilizer. This



project also laid a foundation for the later development of the Tennessee Valley Authority. He also provided Alabama's coal regions with a water route to international markets through Mobile by securing federal appropriations to develop Mobile Bay and to construct a series of locks and dams on the Warrior River.



On March 1, 1920, Bankhead died in Washington, D.C. His body was transported to Jasper and interred at Oak Hill Cemetery. Bankhead's legacy lies in his commitments to improving waterways and roads.

Alabama commemorated these efforts with the Bankhead Bridge, dedicated in April 1930 in Talladega County, which traverses the Coosa River and with the Bankhead Tunnel, opened to traffic in February 1941, which passes under the Mobile River.

The nation dedicated the Bankhead National Highway in honor of his efforts on behalf of good roads. Today, travelers can still drive from Washington, D.C., through Bankhead's hometown of Jasper, and on to San Diego, California, on the highway that bears his name.

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