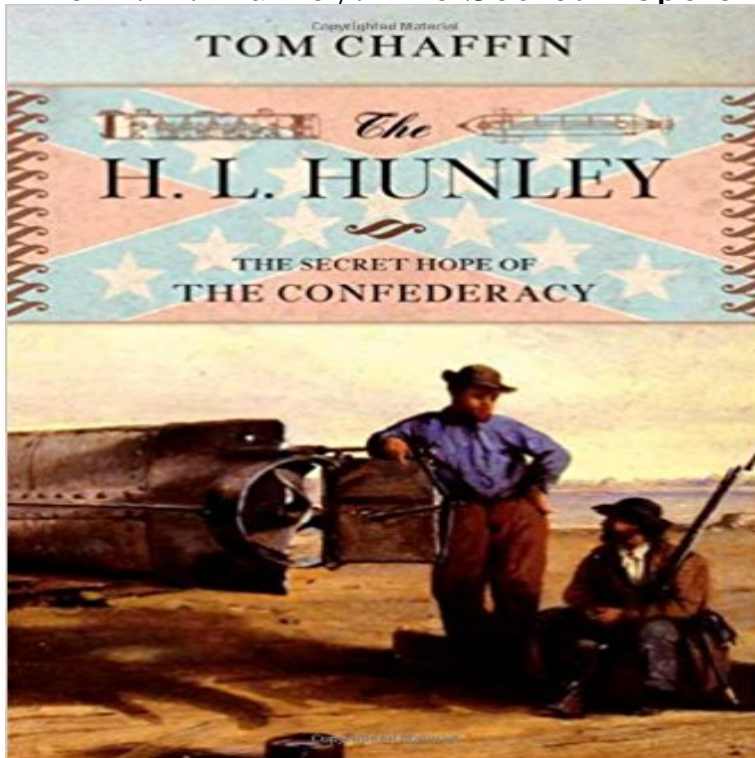


The H. L. Hunley: The Secret Hope of the Confederacy



On the evening of February 17, 1864, the Confederacy's H. L. Hunley sank the USS Housatonic and became the first submarine in world history to sink an enemy ship. Not until World War I half a century later would a submarine again accomplish such a feat. But also perishing that moonlit night, vanishing beneath the cold Atlantic waters off Charleston, South Carolina, was the Hunley and her entire crew of eight. For generations, searchers prowled Charleston's harbor, looking for the Hunley. And as they hunted, the legends surrounding the boat and its demise continued to grow. Even after the submarine was definitively located in 1995 and recovered five years later, those legends and those barnacles of misinformation have only multiplied. Now, in a tour de force of document-sleuthing and insights gleaned from the excavation of this remarkable vessel, distinguished Civil War era historian Tom Chaffin presents the most thorough telling of the Hunley's story possible. Of panoramic breadth, this Civil War saga begins long before the submarine was even assembled and follows the tale into the boat's final hours and through its recovery in 2000. Beyond his thorough survey of period documents relating to the submarine, Chaffin also conducted extensive interviews with Maria Jacobsen, senior archaeologist at Clemson University's Warren Lasch Conservation Center, where the Hunley is now being excavated, to complete his portrait of this technological wonder. What emerges is a narrative that casts compelling doubts on many long-held assumptions, particularly those concerning the boat's final hours. Thoroughly engaging and utterly new, *The H. L. Hunley* provides the definitive account of a storied craft.

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