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**George Washington Rains and
Confederate Gunpowder - I**

Lead: When it became clear that the Federal government would not permit the South to depart without a fight in 1861, one of the most pressing needs of the newly formed Confederacy was gunpowder.

Intro. : *A Moment in Time* with Dan Roberts.

Content: Despite its wealth of leadership and agricultural resources, the South in the 1860s, was ill equipped to fight a war. What ordinance it had was confiscated from

Federal arsenals in Confederate territory and was not nearly enough to prosecute the major campaigns that lay ahead. Few foundries could roll the iron that would be required. The South had provided mostly raw agricultural products to the factories of the North and the industrial mills of Europe. That it was able to field numerous armies, a credible naval effort, and a war machine that held the North at bay for the better part of three full years is a testimony to the raw talent, dedication, and energy of its leaders, the many sacrifices of its white population, and, at least at first, the vigor of its free blacks and slaves. Yet in the end, the South had been bled dry, overwhelmed by the industrial might and superior

numbers the North could bring to the conflict.

One of the seldom-told success stories of the Confederate war effort was its ability to produce gunpowder. Starting from practically nothing, the Ordinance Bureau created a steady supply of black powder to keep Confederate ships and armies competitive in the years before the sheer might of Union force crushed all hopes of southern independence. Next time: George Washington Rains and the search for saltpeter.

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