

History Channel
Jesse James' Hidden Treasure
CHAPTER II - De-constructed

00:10:28 [Helicopter blades whirring] Narrator:RON PASTORE IS LEADING A TEAM Searching for the missingtreasures of jesse james.

00:10:38 [Gunshots] he believes finding hidden plunder would reveal an untold side to james' story -- that he was stealing not for personal gain, but as an operative in a secret brotherhood of confederate loyalists called the knights of the golden circle.

Does everything in this show have to start with "He believes"...? This is # 8.

00:10:57 Give me the bag.

00:11:00 Pastore: Wouldn't it be great if we found some material artifacts that link this storydirectly to the kgc and show that it was partof his secret mission, to support this society of the knights of the golden circle and to secret away these vast sums of money and protect it forever?

I'm disappointed. At the end of Chapter One, the show said we needed to go to what Jesse was doing in his spare time. His history said he was racing thoroughbred horses. But now the show has detoured back into Pastore's fantasy obsession. Pastore clearly would like the show to link his treasure hunting to secret societies, and throw Jesse James into the mix. Looks like that's where we're going instead.

00:11:20 Narrator: Historian ralph ganis is also investigating james' possible links to the kgc.

00:11:26 Ganis is the descendant of a james gang member buried in this cemetery and the author of definitive books on the infamous outlaw.

Looks like Ganis has decided he's related to outlaws now. Lorenzo Merriman Little is who the narrator is talking about. Ganis once stated in his book "Uncommon Man" Little was an "alleged" James gang member. Seems Ganis has changed his mind now that he's on TV. The only problem is there's no evidence of Little being in the James gang, other than the allegation of Ganis that Little participated in the Liberty Bank robbery, then went home to North Carolina and was part of the gang unexplainably from a distance. Little also is said to have lead the Corinth Robbery in Mississippi which has been attributed without fact to the James Gang. All reputable historians disagree with Ganis about Little. See a comparison chart of the robberies: <http://www.civilwarstlouis.com/History/jamesgangrobberies.htm>

The next time Little shows up is in Nashville. Little is photographed with Jesse and Frank, presumably in a photograph Ganis found - the disputed Mocker Barrel photo. This image has remained highly suspect and questionable.

00:11:36 He recently unearthed the rarely seen kgc manifesto at the library of congress and is intrigued by what it reveals.

How do you unearth something in a library. Dig up the floor? I'm sensing a wash of hyperbole.

00:11:46 Ganis THE KNIGHTS OF THE GOLDEN CIRCLE Was a secret political and military order of pro-slavery men and slaveholders.

00:11:54 And they had as a goal the creation of an empire, a slaveholding empire that encompassed Cuba, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

00:12:05 The order itself was under the scrutiny of the federal government from its conception.

00:12:11 So, you know, they had rules concerning not writing anything down, and even membership rosters were not kept.

00:12:18 You know, it was a very mysterious order.

00:12:20 It was similar to the Masonic order.

00:12:22 It had secret signs and grips, passwords and rituals, so these things tended to make the order itself very mysterious.

00:12:29 Plus its objectives were not really clearly known by people.

Too bad Ganis did all that unearthing. He could have accessed that info off most library shelves.

00:12:34 Narrator: A link to the KGC seems feasible, given what's known about James' past.

Seems feasible? Show me the evidence. Ganis wrote a whole book titled "Desperate Measures" making his claim Jesse and Frank are related to the Ku Klux Klan, and he didn't prove a thing, according to the historians who reviewed his book. Here's one review quote:

"In summary, this book makes a lot of unsupported claims and contains no new material that expands our knowledge of the James gang. This book does not present any data that supports or proves any Klan activity by any of the James gang in North Carolina and elsewhere."

I'm adding this "seems feasible..." as # 9.

00:12:40 Stiles spent four years researching and writing his groundbreaking book on the life and times of Jesse James.

And Stiles' book shows it. About as factual as a book can get. With a lot of source citations. Good, decent, history writing.

00:12:51 He was born in Clay County, Missouri, ON SEPTEMBER 5th, 1847.

00:12:56 And it was a rural community on the western edge of the settled states.

00:13:00 Narrator: Geographically positioned between north and south, Missouri was termed a neutral state, but it was one bitterly divided over slavery.

00:13:11 The James family were slave owners.

00:13:14 They owned, at the time of the Civil War, seven slaves, whereas the average number in Clay County was only two or three for slave-owning families.

00:13:22 Narrator: When the Civil War began, James was 14 and, like his family, fiercely loyal to the southern cause.

00:13:34 His brother, Frank, even joined a band of Confederate guerrilla fighters, harassing Union

troops throughout missouri.

00:13:41 The actuality of the guerrillas in missouri is that they were disunified.

00:13:48 They were broken into independent, self-organized bands.

00:13:53 Narrator: Eventually, union authorities caught wind of frank's association with these gangs.

00:13:59 In an effort to rout him out, they paid an unwelcome visit to the home where jesse lived with his mother and stepfather, dr. reuben samuel.

00:14:08 Stiles: And they strung a rope around reuben samuel's neck, they threw the rope over the limb of a tree, and they hauled him up and then let him down again, torturing him to give them information.

00:14:23 The reason they had stormed down to the farm was that jesse's older brother, frank, had joined a guerrilla group and that they were hiding out in the woods on the farm.

00:14:32 [Gasps] so it was a very savage incident of guerrilla warfare.

00:14:37 But at the same time, it was a pursuit of frk james, who was actively fighting against union forces.

00:14:46 Narrator: Though authorities also reportedly roughed up jesse james, he never told them where frank was hiding.

00:14:52 The brutal incident solidified james' resolve.

00:14:56 At the young age of 16, he left home to join the guerrilla fighters on a campaign of ruthless vengeance against northern authorities in missouri.

00:15:04 [Men shouting war cries] Stiles: He took part essentially in what is a death squad.

00:15:10 He rode from house to house, killing unionist farmers on their doorsteps.

00:15:17 They took part in a number of ambushes of union soldiers in the area.

00:15:21 They generally created mayhem and attacked the unionist population, as well as the union authorities and soldiers in clay county.

Thank God for T. J. Stiles. At least he serves up some factual history. But what the hell is he doing slumming with these obsessed fantasy creators?

00:15:35 Narrator: During james' early days as a rebel ..

00:15:40 He fell under the influence of confederate recruiting officer calhoun thornton, a man with known ties to the kgc, according to historian ralph ganis

00:15:51 And it was colonel thornton specifically who would recruit jesse and other boys from that neighborhood into the confederate guerrilla ranks.

Yeah. Just shows you what can happen when you fall in with some bad ass company, like the Rev. John Caldwell Calhoun Thornton. This guy was a college graduate. He studied law, under his brother-in-law Alexander William "A.W." Doniphan, expecting to become an attorney. He's described in The Annals of Platte County as "delighted to wear tall boots outside his pants, with a bowie knife inside, & used the biggest, badest words he could glean from a dictionary." Physically, he was "Gawky, ungainly, long armed, and long legged, a good deal like a gorilla."

In Stiles book "Jesse James, Last Rebel of the Civil War," Stiles is clear about Thornton agitating for the KGC (p.99). But he then states Jesse abandoned Thornton (p.109). "According to historian Raph Ganis," we are lead to believe a relationship between Jesse and the KGC

advanced beyond Jesse's departure from Thornton. But once more Ganis provides no evidence. Just take his word for it.

00:16:02 Narrator: A July 24th, 1864, New York Times article ..

Read it for yourself:

http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?_r=1&res=9C07EED8143EEE34BC4C51DFB166838F679FDE

00:16:16 It seems that uprising included a secret agreement between the KGC and the confederacy that would help the guerrillas working behind enemy lines.

"It seems..." Where does it seem? Not in the New York Times article. Ok, I get it. "It seems..." is an introduction for Ganis. This is the same kind of phrasing Ganis writes in his book "Desperate Measures" where he says "It is believed...", "It is logical to assume...", "It is possible..." Yes, history might be all that, if the history is proved as source cited fact. When history is not source cited as fact, it is only someone's idea. Borrowing a line from the movie Hud: What we have here is a failure to communicate.

00:16:26 Ganis The confederacy knew that these men who were fighting behind the lines would need some way of having places to hide out, access to guns or weapons, ammunition, medical supplies, whatever they needed.

00:16:40 So what the confederacy did was make contact with the knights of the golden circle and basically had the knights create an underground movement across the state to provide these necessary support pieces for the confederate guerrillas.

00:16:54 Narrator: The guerrillas appear to have been a militant wing of the KGC.

I'm counting the previous "It seems..." and this "The guerrillas appear..." like Pastore's "He believes..." as mantra chorus #10 and #11. Instead of counting up these paraphrases, I wish I could be counting the arguments and facts that might give credibility to these false claims.

00:17:00 Ganis With an asset like the confederate guerrilla movement, you have a very lethal combination, because you have men who are going to stop at nothing to achieve their goal.

00:17:14 So this included murder, arson, assassination, and robbery to finance their operation.

Curiously, recent Civil War scholarship faults the South for its agrarian economy and lack of industrial economy, that failed to feed Southern soldiers in the conflict or arm them adequately. Maybe the fact that Ganis's KGC was so secret caused the KGC to contribute to losing the war, too. You can't win a war hiding in caves, carving your mother's name and your initials on rocks, burying stolen treasure, and hanging with your buds in your secret club. If reputable scholars and historians haven't look at this with the intensity of Ganis and Pastore, it seems there's probably nothing to it all. That's one "it seems..." for me.

00:17:22 [Fire crackling] Narrator: Did Jesse James' past make him the perfect operative TO HELP FINANCE THE KGC'S SUBVERSIVE AGENDA?

“Help finance...”? First, where’s the proof Jesse was associated with the KGC? That hasn’t been shown or proved yet. Clearly, we’re about to leave that alone, though. Next, we’re going to be taken back to the land of supposition, where nothing is factual at all.

00:17:33 [Gunshot] the answers may be buried in a kansas meadow.

No! No! We’re not in Kansas anymore. Dorothy, help us.

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