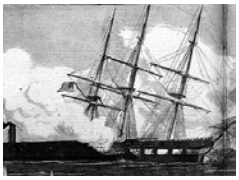
THE DAYBOOK

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 3

In This Issue...

All the Ships at Sea: The World Shows Off Its Naval Hardware at the Exposition.....3



Death With Honor: *Cumberland* Is Sunk by the Ironclad *Virginia*.....6

HAMPTON ROADS NAVAL MUSEUM

Local History. World Events.

About The Daybook *and the Museum*

The Daybook is an authorized publication of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum (HRNM). Its contents do not necessarily reflect the official view of the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Navy, or the U.S. Marine Corps and do not imply endorsement thereof. Book reviews are solely the opinion of the reviewer.

The HRNM reports to the Naval Historical Center's Museums Division. The museum is dedicated to the study of 225 years of naval history in the Hampton Roads region. It is also responsible for the historic interpretation of the battleship *Wisconsin*.

Call for information on the museum's and *Wisconsin*'s hours of operations. Admission to the museum and *Wisconsin* is free. *The Daybook*'s purpose is to educate and inform readers on historical topics and museum related events. It is written by the staff and volunteers of the museum.

Questions or comments can be directed to the Hampton Roads Naval Museum editor. *The Daybook* can be reached at 757-322-2993, by fax at 757-445-1867, e-mail at gordon.b.calhoun@navy.mil, or write *The Daybook*, Hampton Roads Naval Museum, One Waterside Drive, Suite 248, Norfolk, VA 23510-1607. The museum can be found on the World Wide Web at http://www.hrnm.navy.mil.

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Features

The Director's Column.....2

We Are Family

Book Reviews.....10

Benedict Arnold's Navy by James L. Nelson. Reviewed by Joe Judge

Stephen Decatur: American Naval Hero, 1779-1820 by Robert J. Allison Reviewed by Joe Mosier

The Museum Sage..12

Steam vs. Sail: *Virginia*'s Real Advantage over *Cumberland*

Cover Illustration: In this March 22, 1862 *Harper's Weekly* engraving, the ironclad CSS *Virginia* strikes USS *Cumberland* on the first day of the Battle of Hampton Roads. The ramming sunk the sloop-of-war and marked the end of the ship's long career with the U.S. Navy. Despite *Cumberland*'s obsolescence, she did more damage to *Virginia* than any other U.S. Naval ship, including the USS *Monitor*.

We Are Family

The Director's Column

by Becky Poulliot

I am writing this column on the eve of the single biggest change in the Hampton Roads Naval Museum's 25-plus years of existence. Effective Sunday October 1, 2006 we will join 10 other official museums (and one in waiting) to become the Museums Division of the Naval Historical Center (NHC). Our new boss is CDR Jeremy Gillespie, Head of the Division. The Naval Historical Center's director is Admiral Paul Tobin (Ret.). On this auspicious occasion, I thought it appropriate to provide a short synopsis of what the Center is all about.

The Naval Historical Center traces its lineage to the year 1800 when President John Adams directed Benjamin Stoddert, our country's first Secretary of the Navy, to provide a catalog of professional naval works. With each subsequent war, books and records grew. The *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of Rebellion,* the *History of United States Naval Operations in World War II,* and the *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships* are three of our nation's indispensable Naval works produced by this organization.

One hundred and seventy one years after Stoddert's first catalog, the Naval Historical Center acquired its current name. In 1982, the Center brought together most of its activities in a complex inside the Washington Naval Yard. Today's Center is comprised of many branches. Traditional history encompasses the Senior Historian, Early History, Operational Archives, Contemporary History, Naval Aviation withi its publication *Naval Aviation News,* and Ship's History. Material culture is represented by the Curator Branch, the Navy Department Library, the National Museum of the U.S. Navy, the Navy Art Collection, the Navy Photographic Section, Underwater Archaeology (to include a conservation lab), and Information Management.

I encourage all *Daybook* subscribers to go on-line at www.history.navy.mil and visit the Naval Historical Center's website. And anyone on their way to D.C., let me know, and I'll call ahead to ensure a special tour of the Navy Museum. After all, we are family.

Becky

Museum Inaugurates The Cumberland Club

The Hampton Roads Naval Museum's education department highlighted a successful summer of programs with the inauguration of the "Cumberland Club." This program introduced middle school students to the field of underwater archeology. Between June 26-30, museum staff taught students from Norfolk's Blair Middle School about this multi-disciplinary field.

Underwritten in part by the Lockheed Martin Corporation, the program gets its name from the 19th century sloop-of-war USS *Cumberland*. The museum is the official repository for the ship's artifacts.

Using the Battle of Hampton Roads as its historical backdrop, the program covered many dimensions of underwater archeology. It took students to the Mariners' Museum to see artifact conservation in action, a boat trip on the *Victory Rover* to learn about the history of the Battle of Hampton Roads, and held several in-class discussions where students learned how to handle and interpret artifacts. The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration assisted the museum by allowing students on board the survey vessel *Thomas Jefferson*. The vessel is equipped with sonar and other devices used to survey the ocean floor.

Students were allowed to chose one artifact out of the museum's *Cumberland* collection to be professionally conserved by the staff at the Mariners' Museum. They chose a sailor's shoe.

The museum plans to expand the program next year to provide greater opportunities to all Norfolk public school students. The program will take place again in the summer.

Under the guidance of museum preservation officer Michael Taylor and museum educator Jennifer Hurst, students from Norfolk's Blair Middle School participate in the museum's first "Cumberland Club" education program. The museum plans to expand the program in 2007 to students from all Norfolk public schools. (Photo by Marta Nelson)

All the Ships At Sea

The World Shows Off Its Naval Hardware at the Exposition

by Gordon Calhoun

As a true disciple of the writings of Alfred Thayer Mahan, Roosevelt embarked upon a major expansion and a major shift in fleet doctrine during his tenure. The President, however, had to convince a skeptical Congress and public that their money was well spent. One creative way to build support was to showcase the fleet through naval reviews.

Naval reviews were not a novel concept to the newly built Navy. Hampton Roads hosted a review in 1893 and Roosevelt himself hosted one near his Long Island home in 1906. Thus, when the Federal Government agreed to pay for a large part of the Jamestown Exposition, it demanded

At the 1907 Fair
The Jamestown Exposition One Hundred Years Later

that a large showing of U.S. Naval warships be a part of the festivities. To add an international aspect to the event, all the major naval powers of the world were invited to send ships. For foreign navies, reviews were a way showing diplomatic goodwill to the host nation by honoring the host nation's celebration. It was also a way to intimidate rivals by showing off one's military hardware.

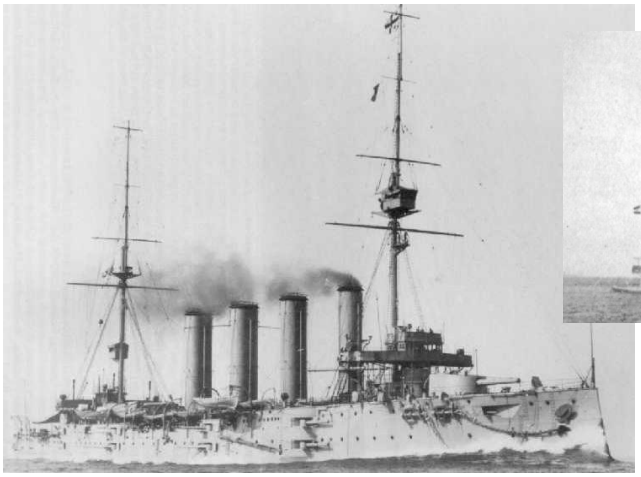
After a year of planning, the U.S. Navy organized most of the Atlantic Fleet to participate in the Review. This included all of the Navy's sixteen battleships, ten torpedo boat destroyers, two armored cruisers, three protected cruisers, two support ships, and the three permanent "station ships" including the Spanish-American War veteran USS *Brooklyn* (ACR-3.) As an added bonus to the grand showing of the Atlantic Fleet, the Navy budgeted $10,000 to pull its last floating ironclad, the Civil War-era monitor *Canonicus,* out of mothballs for one last cruise before she was to be scrapped.

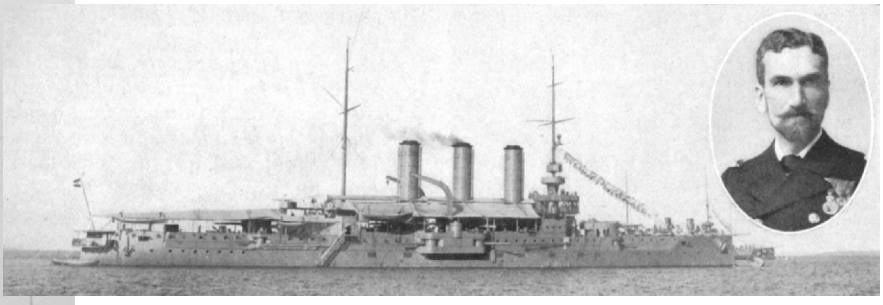
One of the primary motivations for the U.S. Government giving millions of dollars to the Jamestown Exposition was to show off the U.S. Navy. In addition, the United States extended an invitation to other nations to bring their ships. Some objected to the large military showing at the fair. Others objected to the exploitation of the military for commercial gain. In the end, the military demonstration was a grand success and it paved the way for a major naval base in Norfolk.

Invitations to other nations went out in the latter part of 1906. By early 1907, most had agreed to send ships, but had yet to finalize their contingent or arrival date. The *Washington Post*, for example, had reported that the British were considering sending seven ships including the brand new battleship HMS *Dreadnought*.

However, before even one nation sent ships to Norfolk, the Review was loudly criticized . In January 1907, eleven members of the Exposition Advisory Board, signed a letter entitled "Protest Against the Diversion of the Jamestown Exposition to the Service of Militarism" objecting to the heavy emphasis on military themes. The objectors pointed out that of the thirty-eight reasons to come to the Exposition, as listed by Exposition management, eighteen were of a military nature. "In this slight upon commerce, it seems to be forgotten that it was precisely as a step in English commercial expansion that the Jamestown settlement was conceived and has significance," they wrote. Other critics, including several

Review continued on page 4





Over the course of the Exposition, twenty-two foreign warships such as the Austro-Hungarian armored cruiser SMS Sankt Georg *(top) and the British armored cruiser HMS* Good Hope *(left) arrived in Hampton Roads.* Sankt Georg*'s commanding officer Captain Ritter Von Hoehnel is pictured in the circle. Most of the ships saw action in World War I. Seven of them were lost in combat or accident during the war. (Photos from the* Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition*)*

Review continued from page 3

Episcopal bishops, wrote separate but similar objections. One very cynical newspaper editorial wrote, "the Jamestown Exposition is harking back to the spirit of bygone savagery."

In answer to their critics, a former Norfolk mayor, and a senior member of the Exposition's management team, Barton Myers wrote a letter to the newspapers on behalf of the Jamestown Exposition Company. Myers first pointed out that only eleven of the Advisory Board's one hundred members had signed the letter and that most "church people" did not agree with the bishops. Secondly, he argued that the assembly of the world's soldiers and sailors "will join in a fraternal gathering to celebrate the tercentennial of the first Anglo-Saxon colony…calculated to promote good feeling and reciprocal courtesies."

Sailors march in parade past Discovery Landing (also called John Smith Landing) on opening day at the Expo. Note the incomplete buildings including the towers for Raleigh Square. (Photo from The Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition*)*

Rear Admiral Purnell Harrington, former commandant of the Norfolk Naval Shipyard and naval consultant to the Exposition, also weighed in with his views. He wrote to peace activists in San Francisco that "the intentions and hope for this exposition is not based on marching and countermarching of ships and men with proud banners, but is found better on plans of friendly intercourse with and among our visitors of all nations toward the end that our relations of peace and good will may be heartily confirmed."

The objections were brushed aside and the military exhibition, particularly the maritime element, went forward. In mid-April 1907, the international fleet began to assemble. The foreign contingent was smaller than originally expected and not all invited nations showed up for the Review itself.

Nonetheless, Exposition visitors were treated to a grand display of naval power. By opening day, April 26, thirty-three American ships, two German armored cruisers, two Austro-Hungarian cruisers, four British cruisers, three Brazilian ships, one cruiser from Chile, and a cruiser from Argentina assembled in Hampton Roads. HMS *Dreadnought* did not make the journey, possibly due to the fact that the state-of-the-art warship was still undergoing sea trials.

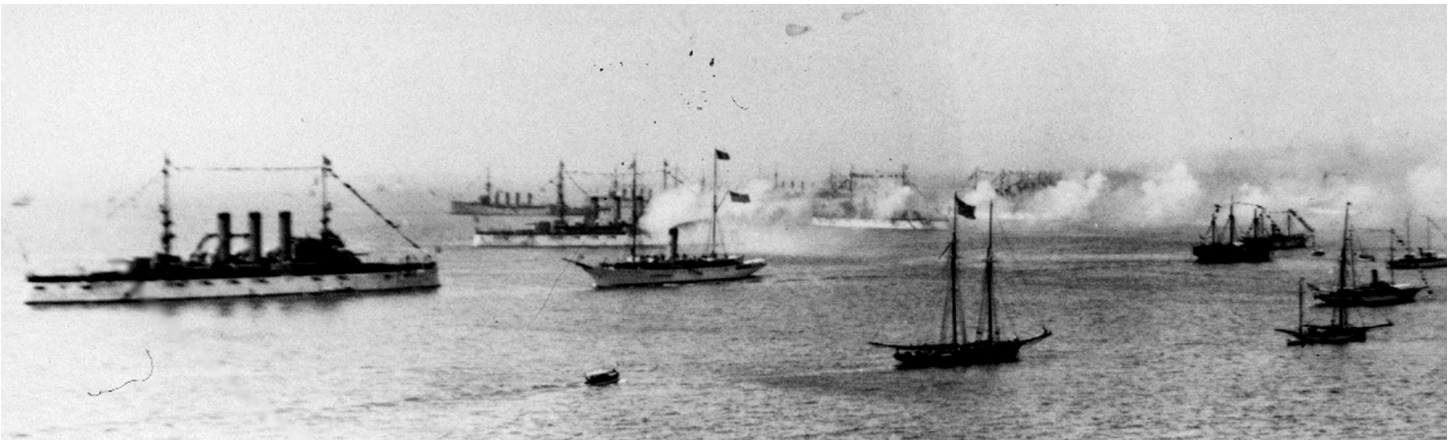
The Navy and the U.S. Hydrographic Office set aside three areas south and west of the fleet for civilian yachts and small craft to anchor and observe the fleet. They were careful not to allow any civilian ships to anchor in front of the Exposition grounds and block the view of visitors on shore.

President Roosevelt arrived in Hampton Roads at 8 a.m. on opening day aboard his yacht *Mayflower* and gunners at Fort Monroe announced the President's arrival with a gun salute. The President was greeted by what the papers called "a bombardment of welcome." The forty-six ship fleet individually fired a twenty-one gun salute to the American President as his vessel passed by. Once Roosevelt was done parading around the fleet, senior officers from both the American and foreign ships sent launches over to *Mayflower* to render more personal honors. The commander of the British squadron, Admiral Sir George Neville, in turn hosted a reception for all the flag officers and their staffs a few days later.

Over the next few days, other nations' ships arrived and departed. The German contingent departed on May 3. It was replaced by two Italian warships, the cruisers *Varese* and *Etruia* who arrived on May 4, and a Japanese squadron consisting of the cruisers *Tsukuba* and the brand new armored cruiser *Chitose* on May 6.

Exposition visitors were treated to a series of friendly competitions between ships' companies for the first two weeks of May. The competitions included yacht and service cutter racing and a "Naval Band Contest." The Europeans, particularly the Italians, did very well in small boat contests. The band from the old ship-of-the-line *Franklin*, which was serving as the receiving ship for the Norfolk Navy Yard, talked its way into the band contest. It defeated bands with more established ship companies and tied for first with the band from the battleship USS *Ohio* (BB-12.)

Review continued on page 5

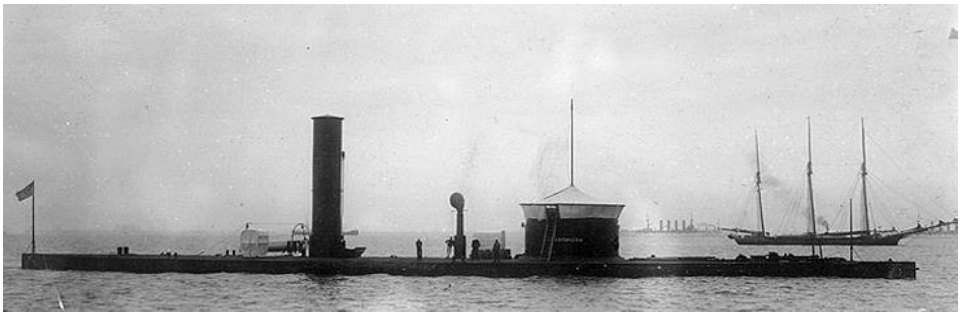


From his yacht Mayflower*, President Teddy Roosevelt reviewed the international fleet on the morning of April 26, 1907. Thirty-three American and thirteen foreign warships lined up in four lines, stretching halfway across Hampton Roads. After the Presidential review, officers of each nation's squadron exchanged formal courtesies. Throughout the Exposition, ships of other nations arrived bringing with them dignitaries from their respective nations. (HRNM photo)*

Review continued from page 4

A large parade of American and foreign sailors came ashore for a large military parade for Jamestown Day. The Japanese company heading up the parade was well received by Exposition visitors. That night, all the warships lit up the harbor with strings of lights. Admiral Robley "Fighting Bob" Evans' flagship of the Atlantic Fleet, USS *Connecticut* (BB-18), made a particular impression with red, white, and blue light bulbs.

Notably missing from the parade were the British sailors. The British squadron left suddenly a week after the Review. Some investigating by reporters discovered that Admiral Evans had ordered that no sailor from any ship, American or foreign, was allowed liberty on opening day. Exposition managers were to have been "horrified at the prospect of having no sailors ashore" and immediately contacted Secretary of the Navy Paul Morton to overturn the order. While they were successful, the British were so insulted that a non-British flag officer issued such an order, that they left several days ahead of schedule.



Among the modern ships of steel is an old ship of iron. The Civil War era monitor Canonicus*, the U.S. Navy's last floating ironclad, arrived in Hampton Roads for the Exposition. The U.S. Navy's armored cruisers* Tennessee *(ACR-10) and* Washington *(ACR-11) are in the far background. (Photo from the* Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition*)*

Evans' somewhat bullish behavior was commended in a ironic criticism of the Fair. While some people objected to the military nature of the Exposition instead of the originally planned commercially centered fair, some military officers condemned the Exposition for using the fleet "as an advertising scheme to exploit a gang of greedy money makers. At the opening there was nothing ready. Had it not been for the energetic protest of Admiral Evans, the foreign officers would have been subjected to insult."

The fleet made one more grand "bombardment of welcome" when Roosevelt returned to the Exposition for his "Georgia Day" speech on June 10. Unfortunately, the celebration was overshadowed by a serious tragedy at sea. Six midshipmen and five enlisted sailors from the battleship USS *Minnesota* (BB-22) drowned when their launch overturned in heavy winds. Their boat and bodies were discovered near Fort Wool. A later investigation concluded that the winds masked the noise of a tug pulling a barge and the Navy launch got caught in between the two.

Most of the ships departed the area by mid-June. The Norwegian battleship *Harald Haarfagre* and Swedish light cruiser *Fylgia* arrived in August carrying Prince Wilhelm, the second in line to the Swedish crown. A squadron of U.S. ships remained at anchor at all times throughout the Exposition to establish a permanent American naval presence. The entire fleet reassembled towards the end of the Exposition in preparation for what was later dubbed "The Great White Fleet."

Many of the ships from the Review saw combat or a significant amount of sea time during World War I. The Great War was not kind to the Exposition's foreign ships. While the great battleships remained largely in port during the war, the world's cruiser squadrons suffered heavy casualties. Three of the four British ships were sunk. Two were mined and one, HMS *Good Hope*, was lost during the Battle of Coronel off the coast of Chile. In all, seven of the twenty-two foreign ships that came to the Expo were lost.

Along with the 1893 Review and the send off of the Great White Fleet, the 1907 Review further offered evidence of Hampton Roads' ability to handle large naval operations. This evidence proved valuable for Norfolk leaders years later when the Navy considered where to build its first dedicated naval station.

Editor's note: Original motion picture footage of the Naval Review and the Great White Fleet can be found at our web site. Visit www.hrnm.navy.mil/1907exposition/index.htm and look for "Scenes from 1907."

Death With Honor

Cumberland is Sunk by the Ironclad *Virginia*

by Gordon Calhoun

This is part seven of an ongoing series about the flagship and symbol for the Hampton Roads Naval Museum, the frigate/sloop-of-war USS Cumberland. *The museum is the official repository for artifacts from the ship, which was sunk by the ironclad CSS* Virginia *on March 8, 1862.*

Series Index

Part 1-A Classic American Warship (Design and Construction)
Part 2-Flagship of the Mediterranean Squadron (First Cruise)
Part 3-Cumberland in Mexico (Operations in the Mexican War)
Part 4-The Flagship's Roman Holiday (Second Cruise to the Mediterranean)
Part 5-Flagship of the Africa Squadron (Slave Trade Suppression Patrols)
Part 6-Rebuilding a Classic (Conversion to the Sloop-of-War)
Part 7-Sailing for the Union (Opening Operations in the Civil War)
Part 8-Death with Honor (Battle of Hampton Roads)
Part 9-The Flagship at Rest (Rediscovery and Recovery)

The morning of March 8 was a "beautiful spring day, bright and clear" as *Cumberland*'s second officer Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge remembered it. The ship was still at its anchorage off Newport News, next to *Congress*. Watches were keeping a look out for any Confederate ship activity and rumors abounded for weeks on the vessel about when the Confederate vessels were going to show themselves.

Selfridge recalled that the sloop-of-war's sails had been set loose to dry and the ship calmly lay with one anchor in the water. Other accounts recalled that the day was initially treated like all other days of idle blockade duty, to the point that the ship's laundry was hanging out to dry.

At 12:30 in the afternoon, Selfridge as officer of the deck, sounded an initial alarm. He recalled that "The *Merrimac* [sic.] had just hove in sight, a long distance off in the direction of Norfolk. Owing to the mirage, her movements were so much obscured, and progress so slow that at first it seemed doubtful if she was really coming out." Upon hearing Selfridge's signal, Lieutenant George Morris called the ship to quarters. Hearing the alarm, the ship's company sprang to life.

Commander William Radford, the ship's nominal commanding officer, was away on court-martial duty. Upon being told that Confederate naval forces were approaching his vessel, he rode a horse as fast as he could to Newport News Point from the court-martial board. He arrived too late and watched the entire battle helplessly from shore.

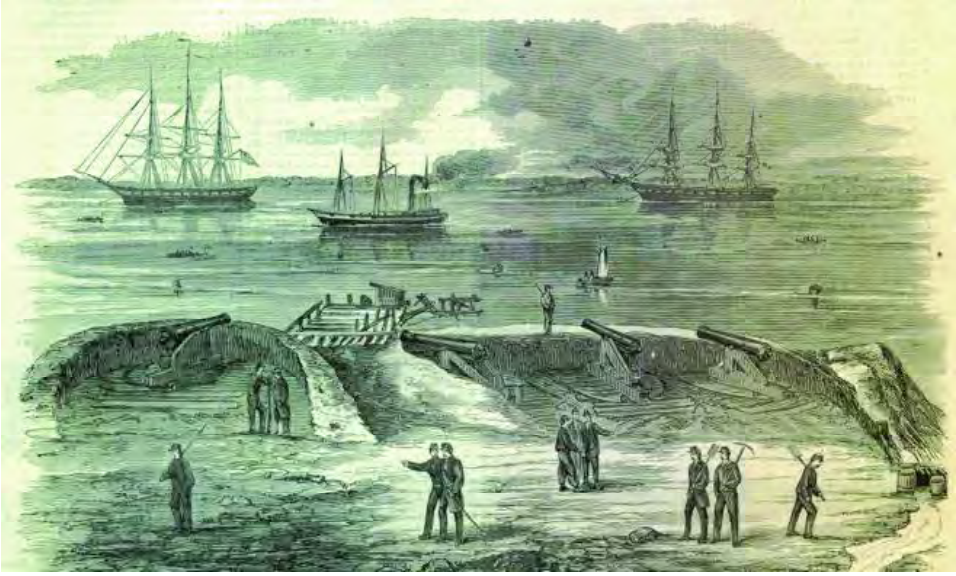
With ten modern guns, two layers of converted railroad iron, an cast iron ram, and a propulsion system that required no sails, CSS *Virginia*'s very able commander, Franklin Buchanan had a very formiable vessel. Speed, however, was not one of *Virginia*'s forte. As a result, it still was not known until two hours later what Buchanan intended to do.

Shortly after 2 p.m., it became apparent to all on *Cumberland* and *Congress* that Buchanan intended to take on the two sail warships. En route to the battle, Buchanan made the decision to go after *Cumberland* first. He decided to dispatch the sloop-of-war quickly .

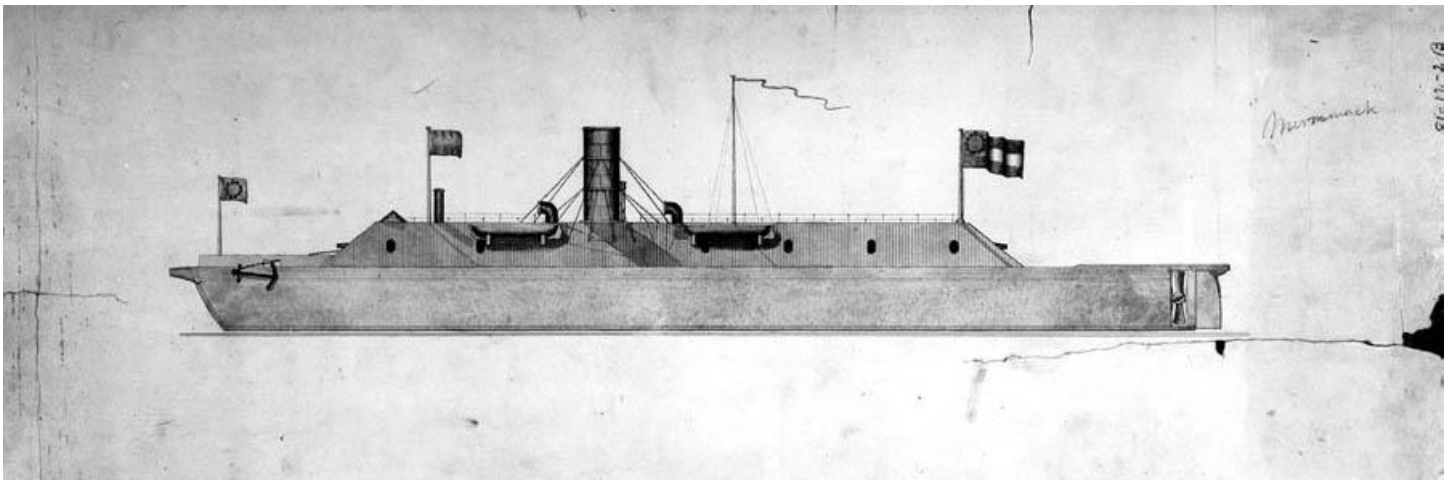
He asked his chief engineer Major H. Ashton Ramsay, "What would happen to your engines and boilers, if there should be a collision?" Ramsay replied that he believed the engineering plant could take the hit. "I am going to ram the *Cumberland*…I'm told she has the new rifled guns, the only ones in their whole fleet we have cause to fear. The moment we are out in the Roads, I'm going right for her and ram her," Buchanan is to have said.

By 2:30 p.m., *Virginia* had moved herself into position and headed for *Cumberland*. Morris and *Cumberland*'s ship's company were as ready as they could be. With a box of primers in his pocket, Selfridge took charge of the forward division of broadside guns, which consisted of five IX-inch Dahlgrens. Master M.S. Stuyvesant took charge of the aft division; Acting Master William Kennison took charge of the forward X-inch pivot gun; and Acting Master Andrew A. Randall took charge of the 70-pounder rifle, the weapon caused Buchanan so much concern. The sailmaker Henry Bruce took charge of the powder room assisted by the ship's chief gunner Eugene Mack. Among the ship's company were three U.S. Army soldiers who were just visiting the ship and

***Cumberland* continued on page 7**



This was the scene at a U.S. Army battery at Newport News on the morning of March 8, 1862 before Virginia *sortied. The sail frigate* Congress *is at left, the gunboat USS* Louisiana *steams quietly by, and the* Cumberland *sits at anchor at right. (March 22, 1862* Harper's Weekly *engraving)*



Referred by the New York Times *as a "mysterious marine monster," CSS* Virginia *(ex-USS* Merrimack*) was an advance in maritime technology. She incorporated an innovative design, particularly the sloped iron plates and an all steam powered propulsion. Not all of her equipment was high tech as demonstrated by the cast iron ram affixed to the bow. (HRNM photo)*

***Cumberland* continued from page 6**

found themselves trapped on board when the ship went to quarters. They joined one of the gun crews.

Though *Cumberland* could not move due to the lack of wind, the ship's company had tied off spring lines to the anchor that allowed it to turn the ship to port or starboard as needed. The ship's small boats were dropped into the water, to further clear *Cumberland* for action.

The Confederate ironclad was assisted by other smaller ships including

Franklin Buchanan served as CSS Virginia*'s first commanding officer. He stated it was his intention from the beginning of the March 8, 1862 sortie to go after* Cumberland *and use* Virginia*'s ram against the sloop-of-war. (Naval Historical Center photo)*

the ten gun steamer CSS *Patrick Henry* and the two gun CSS *Jamestown*. As *Virginia* approached *Cumberland*, the ironclad came across *Congress*' broadside. The frigate opened fire with its older 32-pounder guns. The shots had no effect, specifically they "merely rattled from the sloping armor like hail upon a roof," Selfridge recalled. *Virginia* came across *Cumberland*'s bow and continued on course to ram the sloop-of-war. Selfridge recalled that due to the tides, the spring lines were useless as the tide had caused the lines to be in line with the keel of the ship. As a result of their ship now being completely immobile, *Cumberland*'s IX-inch gun crews changed stations no less than three times, trying to find one gun that could be fired at the Confederate ironclad.

Eventually, enough of *Virginia* was in front of *Cumberland*'s starboard broadside for a few of *Cumberland*'s IX-inch guns and the 70-pounder pivot rifle to fire. *Virginia* replied with its first shot from its powerful 7-inch Brooke Rifle, mounted in front. The shot hit the starboard hammock netting, killing and wounding nine of *Cumberland*'s Marines including the detachment's commanding officer. A second shot from the rifle killed the entire gun crew, except the powder boy of *Cumberland*'s Number 1 IX-inch gun. Selfridge recalled that its gun captain had both arms taken off at the shoulder.

Virginia's position continued to be an issue, as few of *Cumberland*'s guns could be brought to bear on the ironclad. Deck sailors kept pulling on the spring line to bring *Cumberland*'s broadside into a better firing position, but the force of the tide continued to prevent them from doing so.

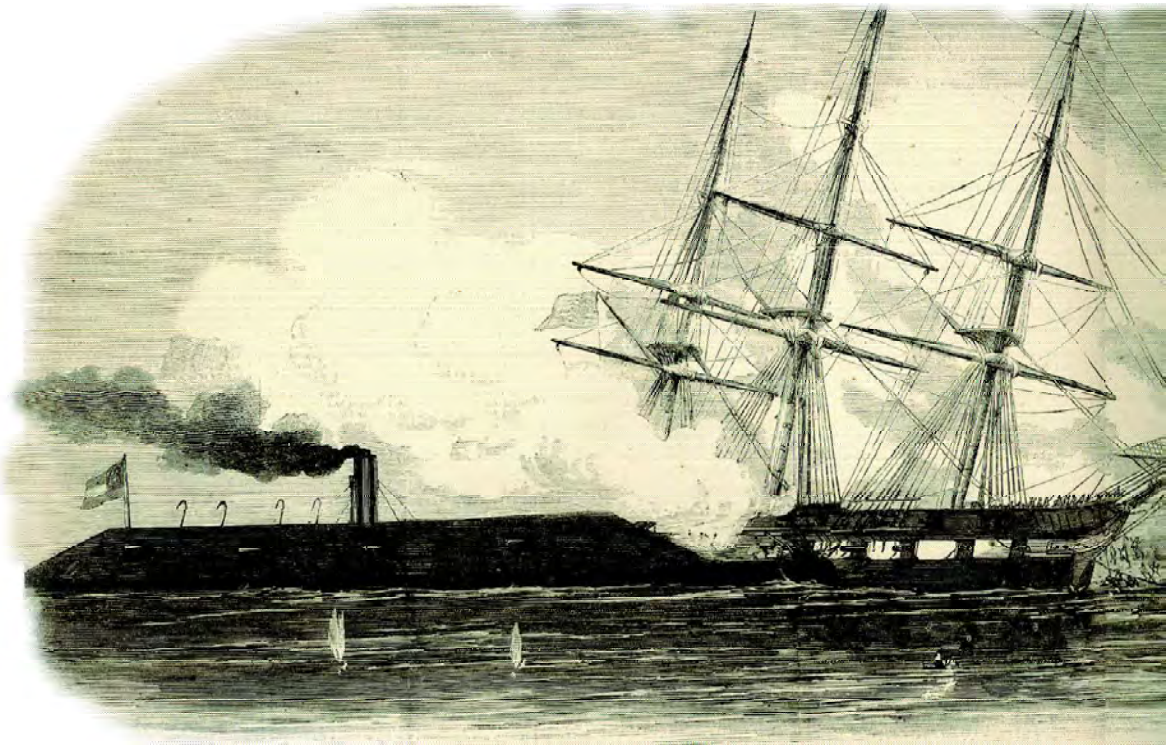
Selfridge somewhat confusingly noted in his memoir that at this point in the battle, *Virginia* "continued to lay about 300 yards sharp on the starboard bow, raking the Cumberland with her every shot from her broadsides." However, he then noted that that a "second shell from [*Virginia*'s] murderous 7-inch file burst among crew as they were running [Number 1 gun] out." Unfortunately this is somewhat contradictory as the 7-inch rifles were only mounted at the bow and stern and not on the broadside.

A.B. Smith, *Cumberland*'s civilian pilot, provided even more confusion to historians in his memoir shortly after the war. He claimed that *Cumberland* did indeed successfully move the ship and had "sprung across the channel." He stated that *Cumberland* had her entire broadside facing *Virginia* and even got "six or eight broadsides" off. Smith, however, is not the most credible person. During the battle, he stated to *Cumberland*'s officers that *Virginia* had missed the channel and that he did not believe the water was deep enough for the ironclad to get close.

Either way, Buchanan and *Virginia* continued their mission to sink *Cumberland* by ramming and not by a gun duel. The ironclad pressed home her attack. She brushed aside spars that *Cumberland*'s company had laid in the water to ward off floating torpedoes. She then struck *Cumberland* on the starboard bow, piercing through to the berth deck. Water rushed in and *Cumberland* began to sink. Despite what one Confederate officer characterized as "a hole big enough to drive a horse and cart through," the sloop-of-war sank rather slowly.

The two ships were stuck together for

***Cumberland* continued on page 8**



Harper's Weekly *published this engraving in its March 22, 1862 issue of CSS* Virginia *ramming* Cumberland *right after the ironclad fired its 7-inch rifle.* Virginia *attacke Confederate gunboats at the far right.* Cumberland *went down with 121 casaulaties, but not before causing more damage to* Virginia *than any other ship, including* Monit

***Cumberland* continued from page 7**

a few minutes. Selfridge, in hindsight, believed that one of the ship's officers should have dropped the anchor on to *Virginia*. He believe that with the anchor on *Virginia*'s deck, the two ships would have been permanently stuck together.

Ramsey described the ramming from his point of view in *Virginia*'s engineering spaces like this: "Two gongs, the signal to stop, were quickly followed by three, the signal to reverse. There was an ominous pause, then a crash, shaking us all off our feet. The engines labored. The vessel was shaken in every fiber. Our bow was visibly depressed. We seemed to be bearing down with a weight on our prow."

Buchanan ordered *Virginia* to reverse. As *Virginia* backed out, its ram broke off inside of *Cumberland*'s hull. He then had *Virginia* swing around again to allow the broadside guns to fire at *Cumberland.*

Although their ship was sinking, *Cumberland*'s gun crews had their best opportunity to do damage. At a range of 100 yards, the remaining gun crews fired off three broadsides with orders to aim at *Virginia*'s gun ports. Two of *Virginia*'s IX-inch guns had their muzzles blown off and the smoke stack had been riddle with holes. Two of *Virginia*'s sailors had been cut in two when they stuck their bodies outside of the gun ports. Several more had been injured from being too close to the side of the ship when *Cumberland*'s shots hit the ironclad's armor.

Though *Virginia*'s armor held and the ironclad was in no real danger, *Virginia*'s iron ram was going down with her victim. Ramsay later wrote, "We had left our cast-iron beak in the side of *Cumberland*. Like the wasp we could sting but once, leaving the sting in the wound."

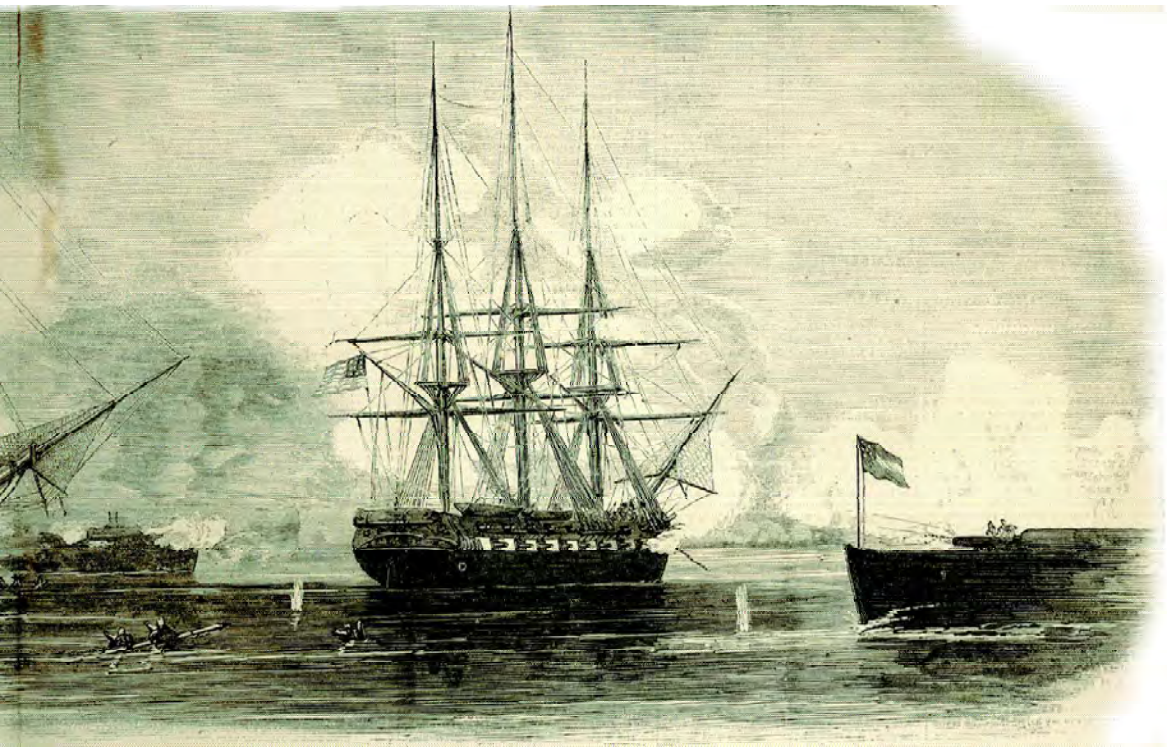
Someone on *Virginia*, Ramsay believed it was Buchanan, asked Morris if *Cumberland* would surrender. When Buchanan actually made the demand is in dispute. Some sources say it was before *Cumberland* was rammed and some, such as Selfridge, say it was after.

Regardless, in what is considered to be one of the great expressions of bravery in the face of an impossible task, Morris is to have replied "Never! We will sink with our colors flying!" Another account recalled an even more defiant Morris. The reply that Joseph Whitehurst, one of *Cumberland*'s sailors, remembered was "No! Damn You! I will never surrender! I will sink alongside!" Morris then ordered the quartermaster to raise a red pennant at the fore trunk, which was the signal from an American warship that it was not going to surrender. A third person, Daniel O'Connor, one of *Cumberland*'s Marines, recalled hearing Morris say to Buchanan "No, damn you, you coward. You have made a slaughter house of the ship. We will sink with our colors first!"

Virginia fired a broadside again. O'Connor recalled that at this point in the battle, with the ship sinking, a call went out to assemble boarders in a desperate attempt to capture *Virginia*. "Boarders were called a way," he wrote, "but it was a no go, we could not board her. You could not step on the quarter deck with out walking through blood. Mens' legs in place, arms in another, and pieces of skulls in another."

The ironclad rammed *Cumberland* a second time, though it was not necessary nor effective. *Cumberland*, despite the fact that the forward gun division was flooding, continued to fire back. A shell from *Virginia* finished off most of Selfridge's division. Seeing that there was little hope in continuing the fight, Morris passed the word to abandon ship. Around 3:15 p.m, after forty-five minutes of combat, *Cumberland*'s survivors began to jump from their doomed vessel. The wounded that could walk were taken from below and saved. By 3:35 p.m., the water had reached

***Cumberland* continued on page 9**



d Cumberland *as intelligence indicated that the sloop-of-war had the most powerful guns in the squadron. The sail frigate USS* Congress *is at right, with one of the two* or. Virginia *lost two of her guns, her ram, and suffered some internal structural damage before finishing off the sloop-of-war. (March 22, 1862* Harper's Weekly *engraving)*

***Cumberland* continued from page 8**

the main hatchway and the ship began to list to one side.

Selfridge, Dr. Charles Martin, the ship's surgeon, and Dr. Edward Kershner, a young surgeon who had only been commissioned as a Navy surgeon for less than eight weeks, were the last three off the ship. The ship's overweight drummer boy who got stuck in the wardroom's hatch ladder with his drum in hand delayed Selfridge's escape. While the drummer struggled to free himself, which he eventually did, Selfridge squeezed through a porthole on the port side and jumped into the water. *Cumberland* settled on the bottom, with her flag still flying from the highest pole. *Virginia* proceeded towards *Congress* and the rest of the U.S. Naval squadron.

All of *Cumberland*'s survivors made it to the shores of Newport News. Two companies from the 20th Indiana rushed to the waterline to assist them. Stuyvesant and fourteen of *Cumberland*'s sailors continued the fight on shore manning a howitzer to fire at *Virginia* while the ironclad was firing on *Congress*.

After *Virginia* had finished her devastating assault, Selfridge asked for volunteers to pull down the flag off of *Cumberland*. A group of sailors in a skiff sailed back to their ship and pulled it down. According to Selfridge, he hid the flag underneath a sofa in the tent of Brigadier General Phelps of a New York Zouave unit. The next day, he discovered that the flag had been stolen and has never been seen since.

Radford reported that his final causality count of the ship's company was 121. Two of the three soldiers who found themselves trapped on board were also among the dead. Some of the dead found in the water were later recovered by Confederate sailors and soldiers and given a proper burial at Portsmouth Naval Hospital.

Among the officers killed were Master's Mate Harrington and John L. Lenhart, *Cumberland*'s chaplain. Lenhart was the first U.S. Navy chaplain in the history of the Navy to be killed in action. One account of the battle presented a very surreal situation in reference to his death. The account stated "When it was seen that the Cumberland must go down all the officers in charge of the wounded were ordered to come on deck and bring with them the wounded…the Chaplain, instead of coming on deck, went into his room and shut the door when in a few minutes he met his fate, the ship going speedily down." Another version of the story stated that the door swung shut, became stuck, and trapped the Northern Methodist pastor in his room.

Cumberland's defiant death was honored by all who witnessed it or heard about it. Confederate naval, U.S. Naval, and U.S. Army officers and men all commented that they had never seen such gallantry in the face of certain death. A Virginia newspaper after the war compared *Cumberland*'s death with the defiant, last charge of Napoleon's Old Guard at Waterloo. They wrote, "What manner of men are these to laugh at death to scorn with broadsides and cheers?"

Several songwriters and poets penned pieces in honor of the fallen ship. The most famous of these *Cumberland* epic poems was penned by the quintessential 19th century American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. In "The *Cumberland*," Wadsworth wrote, " 'Strike your flag!' the rebel cries, In his arrogant old plantation strain. 'Never!' our gallant Morris replies: 'It is better to sink than to yield!' And the whole air is pealed, With the cheers of our men." See page 15 for the full text.

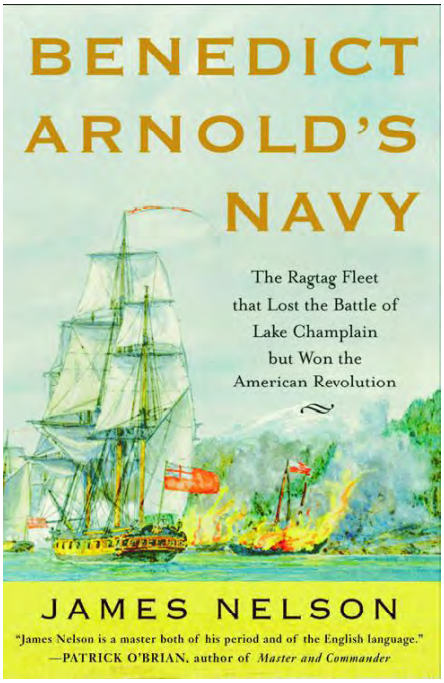
Author Nathaniel Hawthorne published his observations about the battle when the transcendentalist writer penned an article for *The Atlantic Monthly* in 1862. The essay was based on a visit to Hampton Roads shortly after the March 8-9 battle.

***Cumberland* continued on page 13**

Book Reviews

Benedict Arnold's Navy

By James L. Nelson
Reviewed by Joe Judge



History is full of illusions, delusions, enigmas and schemers. There are plenty of each of these elements in the well-written new book, *Benedict Arnold's Navy.* The author Mr. James Nelson, reveals them as he discusses the Revolutionary War campaigns of 1775 and 1776 in New England, New York and Canada.

Under the illusions category must be placed the inability of the British government's representatives to understand the nature of their rebellious colonists or to appreciate the fact that the Americans refused to accept defeat as a final political condition at any given time. Instead they enjoyed military superiority unalloyed with political success – another era would say that they never gained the hearts and minds of the colonists.

James L. Nelson. *Benedict Arnold's Navy*. New York: International Marine/ Ragged Mountain Press, 2006. ISBN 0-07146-806-4. $24.95.

The commander of British forces in Canada, Major General Guy Carleton, was embarrassed by the American Benedict Arnold, then defeated him, and finally failed to make anything of his victory. Nelson summarizes Carleton this way: "He was a good governor, astute, creative and determined. He was a solid military commander as well, but cautious, a trait that led to more than one missed opportunity, allowing the Americans to live and fight again."

As for delusions, the Americans harbored their own. Nelson wrote, "Most of America's military and political leaders felt that Canada could be taken easily, because Canadians would rise up to join Americans in throwing off the British yoke. This line of thinking was just as optimistic as the British belief that a fifth column of Loyalists would rise up to join the fight against the rebels, and it was just as wrong." This attitude prompted Arnold's invasion of Canada, an epic advance and retreat. Even today we can forget that it really is a different country.

As for enigmas and schemers, both terms can be applied to Benedict Arnold V of New Haven, Connecticut, already at his birth descended from generations of Americans and destined to become one of the wealthiest men in New England and one of the best American commanders. As a schemer, Arnold applied aggressiveness and a keen intelligence to push the Patriot cause forward in ways that lesser men could not imagine. Nelson describes Arnold this way: "Arnold would have flourished in command of a European army, where rights and concerns of the rank and file mattered not a whit. His rigid personality would become a hindrance commanding an army of republicans, who were jealous of the liberty, equality and independence for which they were fighting.

Still, for the first five years of the Revolution, Benedict Arnold would be the very image of the American citizen-soldier: brave, dedicated, and selfless, with a genius for military matters that came not from formal training, which he did not have, but from native ability." Of course the enigma is his decision to throw away his achievements for America and become a traitor. But that is not part of Nelson's book; it is only part of the aftermath.

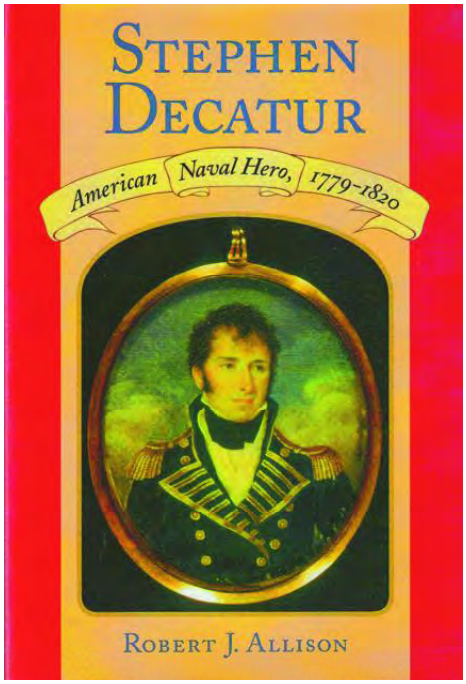
The real heart of Nelson's book are the sweeping campaigns of 1775 and 1776 stretching from Lake Champlain and Fort Ticonderoga to the woods of Maine to the St. Lawrence River with scenes of strategy in Boston, New York, Quebec, and Montreal. Residents of Hampton Roads who carry thoughts of great blue water fleets sailing from deep harbors will have to adjust to a new geography, a different type of maritime war that was vital to the Revolution.

For a start, the naval war on the lakes and rivers called for different kinds of ships like gondolas, cutters and galleys. Nelson describes two of these vessels: "A galley was about twenty feet longer than a gondola – about seventy feet on deck – but the differences between the two vessels were much greater than that. Although a gondola was decked over in places and carried a sailing rig, it was essentially an oversized rowing boat, with a flat bottom, in nearly flat sides, and the pointed bow and stern of a bateau. A galley on the other hand, … was round bottomed and square sterned with a considerable amount of tumblehome (meaning that the slides sloped toward deck level so that the boat was wider near the waterline than on deck)." Fate was not kind to these plucky little ships.

A reader of this book will be inspired to explore the geography of the northeast, a geography of inland waterways and forests. Well-known characters make interesting appearances, such as "Mad Anthony" Wayne and the Green Mountain Boys. Nelson's writing is well informed by his knowledge of the region and his love of the period. The book also provides meaningful insights into the strategic situation leading up to the great American victory at Saratoga.

Stephen Decatur: American Naval Hero, 1779-1820

By Robert J. Allison
Reviewed by Joe Mosier



Why the sudden interest in Stephen Decatur? The last full biography, Charles Lee Lewis' *The Romantic Decatur*, was published in 1937. Now three biographies have appeared in the last three years. Certainly this early star of the U. S. Navy deserves the press he is getting. Decatur served heroically in three wars and became perhaps the preeminent American hero by the time of his death. Numerous towns are named after him. He is still the youngest man ever promoted to the rank of captain in Navy history. His untimely loss in a duel with a fellow captain adds pathos to his story. But is another full-length recounting of his life called for? The latest entry into the field, *Stephen Decatur: American Naval Hero, 1779 – 1820* by Robert J. Allison, seems to answer yes.

Robert J. Allison. *Stephen Decatur: American Naval Hero, 1779-1820.* Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts Press, 2005. ISBN 1-55849-492-8. $34.95.

Professor Allison has managed to add depth and texture to many details of Decatur's career. The young naval officer was born in Maryland but grew up in Philadelphia. Despite his mother's objections, Stephen joined the Navy at the start of the Quasi-War with France in 1798. It was during this campaign that he first gained national fame with the burning of the captured American frigate *Philadelphia* in Tripoli harbor on February 16, 1804. This feat led to his early promotion to the highest Navy rank. His individual heroism was affirmed during gunboat battles the following July. By the time Decatur returned to Norfolk in November 1805, his name was well known throughout the country. Along with fame came romance as Stephen met and married Susan Wheeler, daughter of Norfolk merchant and later mayor, Luke Wheeler.

Decatur was stationed in Norfolk at the time of the *Chesapeake – Leopard* affair. Despite his own objections, he was forced to serve on both the court of inquiry for the incident and the subsequent courts martial of the American frigate's officers. In doing so, he earned the life-long enmity of the man who would eventually kill him, Captain James Barron. When the War of 1812 broke out, Decatur commanded USS *United States*. In her, he defeated HMS *Macedonian*. While it was not the first American victory at sea, Decatur was the first to return a captured Royal Navy frigate to America as a prize. After that cruise, *United States* returned to New London. A blockading British fleet kept the ship bottled up there so Decatur transferred to USS *President* at New York. The harbor pilot managed to run her aground on the Sandy Hook bar. The resultant damage to her keel slowed *President* and led to her capture by a British squadron.

Galled by what he viewed as failure, Decatur sought and received command of the first squadron to sail to the Mediterranean in an effort to re-impose peace on Algiers. He achieved favorable treaties with Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli before Commodore William Bainbridge even arrived on the scene.

Decatur returned to another round of applause and was appointed to the newly formed Board of Naval Commissioners. This board, made up of three senior captains, was responsible for providing professional advice to the Secretary of the Navy. This meant that Mr. and Mrs. Decatur would move to Washington where they became central to the social and political life of the capital. Barron had sat out the War of 1812 in Copenhagen. Upon his return in 1818, the Virginian demanded a return to active service at his old seniority. Decatur was a frequent and vocal critic of the idea. An exchange of letters between the two led eventually to the dueling ground at Bladensburg and to Decatur's death.

While all of these occurrences have been well chronicled in past biographies, Professor Allison has added significantly to our understanding of several events. His is the most thorough recounting of certain periods glossed over in past books. Decatur's time ashore in New London was marked by hostile relations with the town's inhabitants, many of whom detested the war with Britain. Allison's explanation of origin of the term "blue light Federalist" is an excellent example of his ability to weave underused sources into the story. He also goes well beyond the usual cursory description of the Board of Commissioners, adding a keen understanding of the political atmosphere in which Decatur worked during the last years of his life.

The only thing cooling the ardor of this reviewer is the all too frequent appearance of simple errors of fact in Allison's work. For example, other researchers have shown that Decatur's grandfather was not a French naval officer before he immigrated to America. The captain of *Constellation* when Decatur's brother-in-law was killed in a duel was Alexander Murray not Daniel Murray. The *President – Little Belt* encounter occurred off the Virginia Capes, not Sandy Hook. Craney Island is too far from the entrance to the Chesapeake to allow for "the defense of the entire Bay." A ship gets under way, not "under weigh." If these relatively minor mistakes had been removed by better editing, this reviewer would feel more confident in recommending the book. Still, Allison's is a useful and frequently fresh look at the life and career of an early American naval hero.

Steam vs. Sail

CSS *Virginia*'s Real Advantage Over *Cumberland*

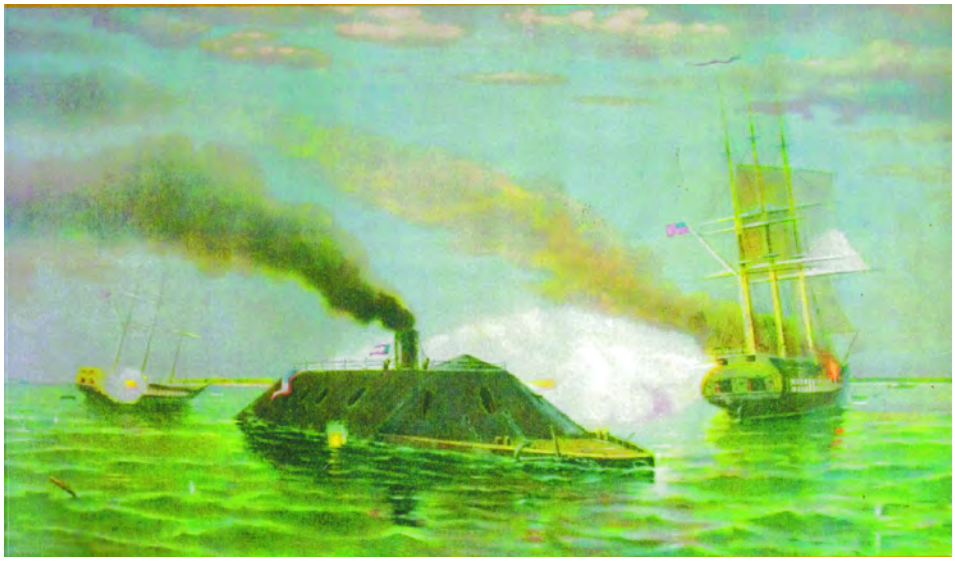
The two day Battle of Hampton Roads is without question one of the most significant historic events in maritime history. Over and over we hear that it is the first time two ironclad warships fought each other. Additionally, it shows the obsolescence of wooden hull ships.

But was the armor the real advantage *Virginia* had over *Cumberland*? Yes and no. Yes, *Virginia* was fired on by many ships with guns that were obsolete even by 1850 standards and she was relatively unharmed. But, the first day of the Battle of Hampton Roads and other naval battles in the Civil War for that matter, demonstrated that there was something else at play.

The Museum Sage

Virginia, because of her four inches of iron, went unharmed. However, it is not by any means a stretch to say that *Cumberland*, wooden construction and all, was a very tough ship in her own right. We often forget the strength of wooden hulled ships. Even after hours and hours pounding each other, rarely in the Age of Sail would a wooden warship, especially frigates and ship-of-the-lines, sink.

Need further proof? Look at the second ship *Virginia* attacked, the all-sail frigate USS *Congress*. It was not until Buchanan ordered hot shot fired on the ship did *Congress* really begin to sink. Before that, *Congress* had indeed taken a beating from *Virginia*'s guns, suffered many casualties. But at the time *Congress* struck her flag and surrendered, she was in a good enough condition that Confederates had planned to board her and capture her intact!



"Last of the Wooden Navy"-CSS Virginia *may have been slow, but she was a much faster and more nimble than* Cumberland *or* Congress. *On the day of the attack, there was no wind and thus no propulsion for the all sail warships. Thus,* Virginia *had the upper hand. (1907 painting by George B. Matthews)*

There is significant circumstantial evidence to suggest that Commodore Buchanan, *Virginia*'s commanding officer, knew this. The U.S. Navy squadron in Hampton Roads on March 8, 1862 had over 240 guns. Against this, Buchanan had ten guns on *Virginia* and sixteen guns on the two gunboats accompanying him. The last thing Buchanan wanted to do was engage in a long, drawn out gun duel with *Cumberland*, because his ship just might not be able to take the punishment.

As a result, Buchanan uses *Virginia*'s other advantage: a propulsion system that used no sails. Early into the sortie, Buchannan made his intentions known to his officers that he planned to use Virginia's ram against *Cumberland.* By ramming, he could quickly take out *Cumberland* and all her advanced weaponry, and then proceed to easier targets. (As an aside, there is something quite ironic about a captain in charge of a technologically advanced warship electing to use the oldest weapon in all of maritime history.)

Virginia's mobility is often mocked and not praised. Many have remarked that it took half an hour for the ship to bring herself completely about and that she could managed five knots on a good day. However, *Virginia* was in much better shape than her first victim. *Cumberland*, being an all-sail ship, could not move at all on the morning of March 8. The wind was almost dead calm and the tide was working against her. Buchanan could not have picked a better day to attack. As a result, *Virginia* had an easy target.

Steam propulsion is certainly not as sexy as advances in armor and weapons. The Sage sees this everyday with visitors on the battleship *Wisconsin*. Everyone "ooos" and "ahhhs" over the 16-inch guns and the massive amount of armor plating on the ship. Few, however, appreciate the battleship's 212,000 horsepower power plant and its ability to carry all the equipment at 32-plus knots.

Steam still serves the Navy to this day. Whether one is using coal, oil, diesel, or U-235, the principle of steam moving shafts, which turn the propellers is the same. The Age of Iron ships in the U.S. Navy lasted from 1861 to 1881. The Age of Steam, however, goes from the 1830s until today.

The Battle of Hampton Roads has drawn as many "what if..?" scenarios as the Battle of Gettysburg. Here is another to consider: What if *Cumberland* and *Congress* were actually given the steam tugs as originally ordered by Flag Officer Goldsborough?

"Iron versus Wood-Sinking of the Cumberland by the Merrimac. In Hampton Roads, March 8, 1862." The painting is striking for its vivid colors and action sequences. It does, however, have some flaws as Virginia *is approaching* Cumberland*'s stern (*Virginia *rammed* Cumberland *towards the bow) and* Cumberland *is portrayed as an older ship with a square fantail and quarter galleries. (Naval Historical Center image of an Edward Moran painting)*

***Cumberland* continued from page 9**

Hawthrone observed the remains of *Cumberland* and wrote, "The Monitor was certainly an object of great interest, but we saw a spectacle that affected us. The masts of the Cumberland rising midway in the water, with a tattered rag of a pennant fluttering from one of them. A remnant of the dead crew still man the sunken ship, and sometimes a drowned body floats up to the surface.

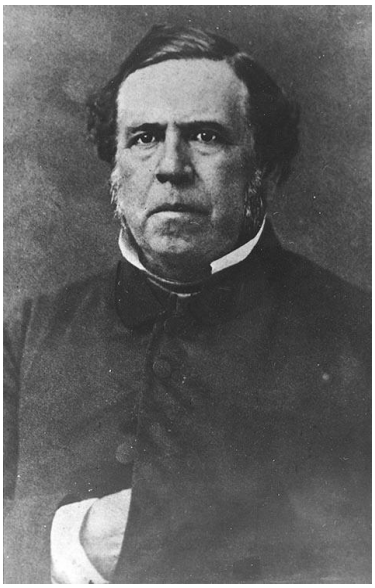
"Nor can any warrior be more certain of enduring renown than the gallant Morris, who fought so well the final battle of the old system of naval warfare, and won glory for his country and himself out of inevitable disaster and defeat.

"So long as manhood retains any part of its pristine value, no country can afford to let gallantry like that of Morris and his crew pass unhonored and unrewarded."

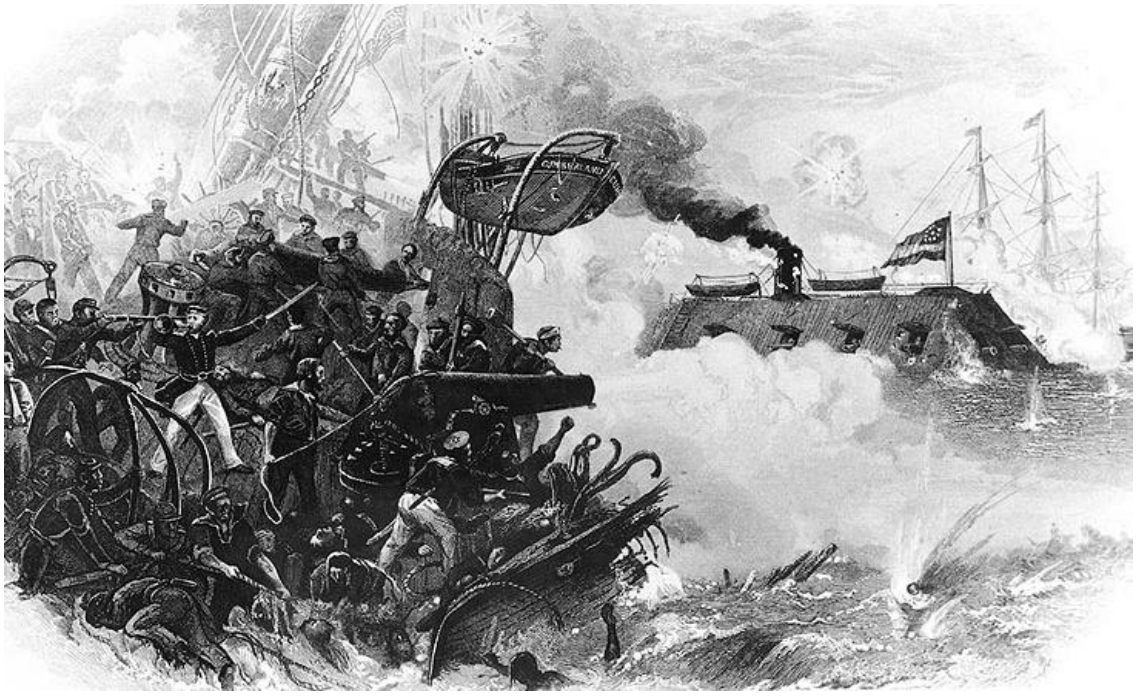
But Congress did not reward Morris or *Cumberland*'s company. Despite the universal praise for the conduct of the company, Congress slighted the achievement when it denied a $60 per person reimbursement to *Cumberland*'s survivors for lost personal items. It later denied Morris an official Congressional letter of thanks, which would have resulted in an automatic promotion. These actions were done in defiance of endorsements from both President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles. The survivors were granted one month's pay and left to their own means to find a way home.

Morris was personally insulted. When he read Hawthorne's article, he wrote to the author and thanked him for his support. Morris wrote, "Please accept my heartfelt thanks for the flattering manner in which you mentioned my having performed my duty faithfully. As you almost predicted, the Government has not promoted me; though it has Worden." The commanding officer of USS *Monitor* was allowed to skip the rank of lieutenant-commander, en route to being made a flag officer by 1868. Morris, however,

***Cumberland* continued on page 14**



Two of Cumberland*'s officers were killed during the battle. One of them was Chaplain John L. Lenhart, a Northern Methodist pastor who had served in the Navy for fifteen years before his death. He was the first and only chaplain to be killed in action until the air raid on Pearl Harbor. (Naval Historical Center photo)*



"Never! We will sink with our colors flying!" This Leslie's Weekly *engraving shows one of the most heroic events in U.S. Naval history. With the ship obviously lost,* Cumberland*'s company continued to fire its guns at* Virginia *until the last possible moment. The defiance gained the respect of all who witnessed it or heard about it. (*Leslie's Weekly *engraving)*

***Cumberland* continued from page 13**

never made flag rank or even captain even after twenty-two years of service.

The public rallied to the sailors' plight. A committee of New York City investment bankers, newspapers, and individuals such as former Secretary of the Navy George Bancroft assembled a fundraiser and rally to raise money for the men. On April 10, 1862, 150 sailors and Marines from *Cumberland* and *Congress* assembled at New York City's Academy of Music to receive a grateful public's appreciation. After several hours of speeches, songs, and cheers, the committee handed over $3,000 to the displaced sailors and Marines.

As for Morris, he did receive one piece of praise from an unlikely person a few weeks before he died in 1875. R.H. Henderson, Lieutenant of Marines aboard CSS *Patrick Henry,* ran into Morris one day in Washington, D.C. After hearing about Morris' situation, Henderson wrote a letter of endorsement to the Navy stating, "I take this occasion to say that the sight of this heroic action caused great enthusiasm aboard the Patrick Henry, whose crew loudly cheered the gallant sailors of the Cumberland."

There was a movement in Congress many years later to properly honor *Cumberland*'s contribution to the war. Many had felt that the Congressional slight in 1862 needed to be resolved. A bill was taken up in 1884 to distribute several hundred thousand dollars in prize money to the ships' companies of *Cumberland* and the ironclad *Monitor*. The reasoning went that these were the two ships that were responsible for keeping *Virginia* at bay and eventually for her destruction. Legally, this reasoning was a giant stretch as prize money was supposed to be only awarded for the direct capture or destruction of enemy vessels.

The Committee on Naval Affairs at first stated that neither ship deserved credit as *Virginia* was scuttled during the occupation of Norfolk in May 1862. However, the Committee did in the end decide to award prize money, but, somewhat surprisingly, only to *Cumberland*'s company. It recommended against any prize money for *Monitor* because "the only serious damage sustained by the [*Virginia*] was inflicted by the *Cumberland* [and *Virginia*] was destroyed by her officers and crew to prevent her falling into the hands of the Union forces."

Some of the ship's survivors lived well into the 20th century and because of their service in the March 8 battle, their deaths often made national news. Dr. Kershner's death is one example. When *Cumberland*'s young surgeon died in 1916 while teaching Sunday school at his Hagerstown, MD church, the news was broadcast around the country.

The last known survivor of *Cumberland* died in 1931. Sam Collins, a 20 year old enlisted sailor who served on the ship when it went down on March 8, died at age 91 at his daughter's house in New Orleans. The newspaper account of his death wrote that while Collins was physically feeble and blind, he did not need to prove anything to anyone because he had seen "real battle" during his lifetime.

The wreck of *Cumberland* remains at the bottom of Hampton Roads to this day. The ship's legacy in the public's memory is her sinking on that fateful day. The destruction on March 8, 1862 has been the subject of several dozen drawings and paintings by some of America's best-known lithographers and artists across several different generations.

It is unfortunate, however, that the ship is only remembered for that one day. When writing naval history, any author must ask the question, "What do navies do?" *Cumberland*'s twenty years of operational service give us several examples and case studies that demonstrate what the U.S. Navy was doing in the mid-19th century to advance American interests and values. Its history is far more complex, rich, and deep than the "iron vs. wood" cliche.

Recording the Deed

Nathaniel Hawthorne asked that "poets brood upon the theme" of the battles fought by USS *Cumberland* and USS *Monitor*. Here is how some poets responded in praising *Cumberland*.

"The Cumberland"
by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

At anchor in Hampton Roads we lay,
On board of the Cumberland, sloop-of-war;
And at times from the fortress across the bay
The Alarm of drums swept past,
Or a bugle blast
From the camp on the shore.

Then far away to the south uprose
A little feather of snow-white smoke,
And we knew that the iron ship of our foes
Was steadily steering its course
To try the force
Of our ribs of Oak

Down upon us heavily runs,
Silent and sullen, the floating fort;
Then comes a puff of smoke from her guns,
And leaps the terrible death,
With fiery breath,
From each open port

We are not idle, but send her straight
Defiance back in a full broadside!
As hail rebounds from a roof of slate
Rebounds our heavier hail
From each iron scale
Of the monster's hide.

"Strike your flag!" the rebel cries,
In his arrogant old plantation strain.
"Never!" our gallant Morris replies;
"It is better to sink than to yield!"
And the whole air pealed
With the cheers of our men.

Then, like a kraken huge and black,
She crushed our ribs in her iron grasp!
Down went the Cumberland all a wrack

With a sudden shudder of death,
And the cannon's breath
For her dying gasp.

Next morn, as the sun rose over the bay,
Still floated our flag at the mainmast head.
Lord, how beautiful was Thy day!
Every waft of the air
Was a whisper of prayer
Or a dirge for the dead

Ho! brave hearts that went down in the seas!
Ye are at peace in the troubled stream;
Ho! brave land! with hearts like these,
Thy flag, that is rent in twain,
Shall be one again,
And without a seam!

"The Cumberland's Crew"
by H. De Marsan

...They fought us three hours, with stern resolution,
Till those Rebels found cannon would never avail them;
For, the Flag of Secession has no power to gall them,
Tho' the blood from heir scuppers it crimson'd the tide;
She stuck us amidst-ship, our planks she did sever;
Her sharp Iron-prong pierced our noble ship through;
And still, as they sunk on that dark rolling river,
We'll die at our guns! cried Cumberland's crew.

Columbia's sweet birth-right of Freedom's communion,
Thy Flag never floated so proudly before;
For, the spirits of those that died for the Union,
Above its broad folds now exaltingly soar!...
And when our sailors in battle assemble.
God bless our dear Banner, the Red, White and Blue!
Beneath its bright Starts, we'll cause tyran's to tremble,
Or sink at our guns, like the Cumberland's crew!

"The Good Ship Cumberland"
by A.W. Auner

...Our Captain's eye did glisten and his cheek grew white with rage,
And to the Rebel pirate in a voice of thunder said,
My men are brave and loyal, my flag shall stand stand--
Before I'll strike my colors you sink us and be d--d!

Then the ironclad monster left us some hundred yards or more,
And, with her whistle screaming, at our wooden sides she bore;
She strick us right amidships, and her ram went crashing through,
And the water came in rushing upon our gallant crew.

Then turning to his gallant crew, that bold Commander said,
I will never strike my colors while my vessel rides the wave;
I'll go down with flag a flying into a watery grave,
But you, my gallant comrades, may seek your lives to save.

They swore they'd never leave him, and manned their guns afresh,
And poured broadside after broadside, till the water reached their breasts;
And as she sank far down, far down, in the briny deep
The stars and stripes were flying from the maintop's highest peak.

"The Last Broadside"
by Elizabeth T. Porter Beach

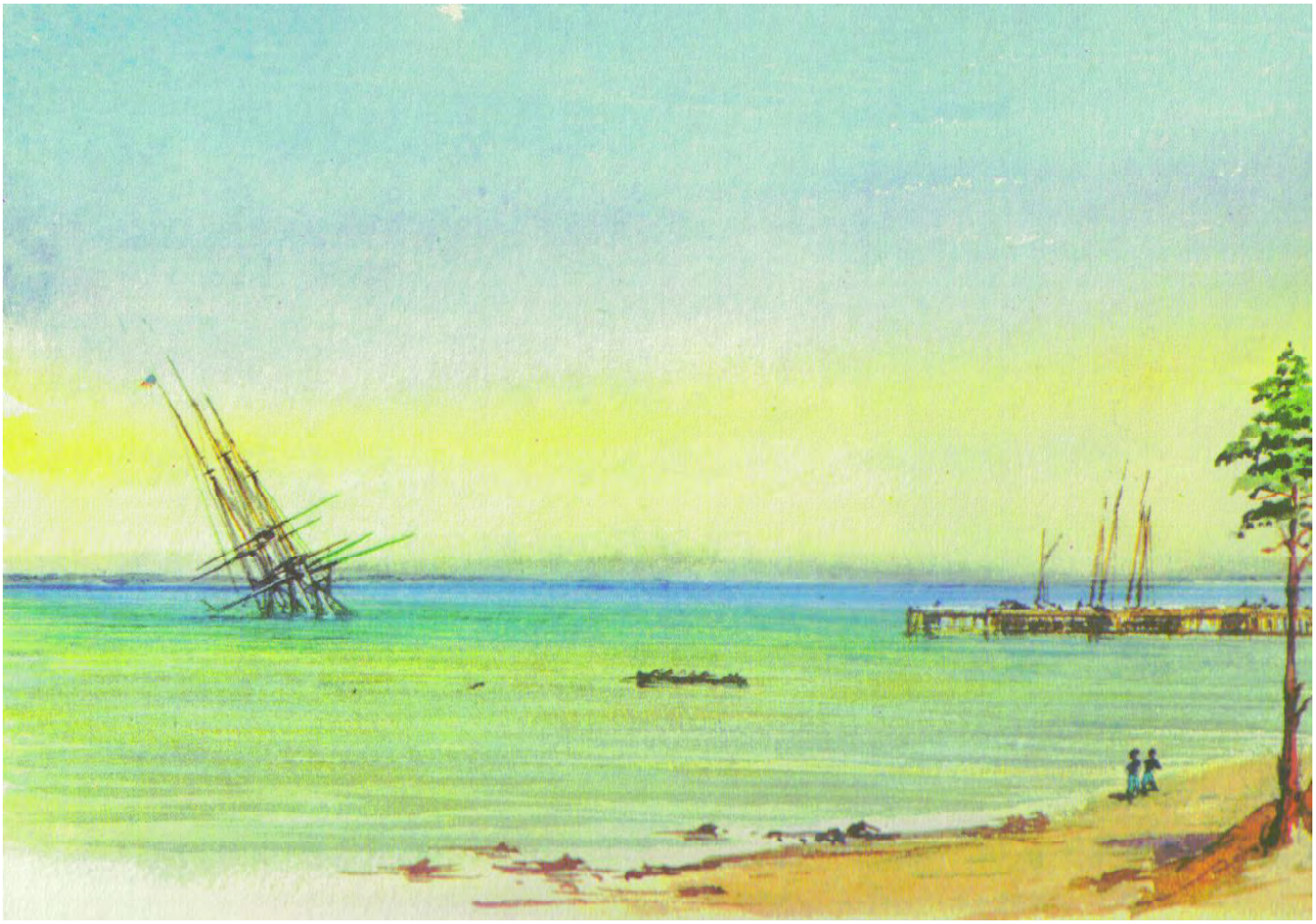
..."Haste, haste!" For amid all that battering din
Comes a gurgling sound fraught with fear
As swift flowing waters pour rushingly in
Up! up! 'till her portholes they near.
Up! up! 'till her portholes they near.

No blenching. No faltering! Still fearless all seem.
Each man firm to duty doth bide.
A flash! and a "Broadside!" A shout! A careen!
And the Cumberland sinks 'neath the tide!

The "Star Spangled Banner" still floating above
As a beacon upon the dark wave!
Our Ensign of Glory, proud streaming in love,
O'er the tomb of the Loyal and Brave!

Bold hearts! Mighty spirits! "Tried gold" of our land!
A halo of glory your meed!
All honored, the noble-souled Cumberland band!
So true in Columbia's need!

Cumberland's Final Rest



While most artists ignored Cumberland *after March 8, 1862, the Prince de Joinville painted this peaceful scene of the wreck a few days after the battle. Entitled "Prey of an Ironclad," the watercolor shows the sloop-of-war pointing northeast and listing to starboard. (1862 watercolor by the Prince de Joinville from* A Civil War Album of Paintings by the Prince de Joinville*)*

In Our Next Issue...

-Free Enterprise Forever: American Capitalism at the Jamestown Exposition

-The Flagship at Rest: Discovery and Recovery of USS *Cumberland*

-Book Reviews: *No Higher Honor: Saving the USS* Samuel B. Roberts *in the Persian Gulf* and *Oliver Hazard Perry: Honor, Courage, and Patriotism in the Early U.S. Navy.*