Book Reviews for *Northern Mariner* and *International Mariner*

By John Townley

Titles:
(reviews in order below)

C.S.S.Alabama: Anatomy of a Confederate Raider, by Andrew Bowcock. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 2002.

Chesapeake Waters: Four Centuries of Controversy, Concern, And Legislation, by Seven G. Davison, Jay G. Merwin, Jr., John Capper, Garrett Power, and Frank R. Shivers, Jr. Tidewater Publishers, Second Edition, 1997.

Confederate Raider In The North Pacific: The Saga of the C.S.S. Shenandoah, 1864-65, by Murray Morgan, WSU Press reprint and update, 1995. (originally published, 1948)

Hoisting Their Colors: Cape Cod's Civil War Navy Officers, by Stauffer Miller, XLibris 2008.

The CSS H.L. Hunley: Confederate Submarine, by R. Thomas Campbell, Burd Street Press, Shippensburg, PA, 2000.

Lincoln's Navy: The Ships, Men and Organization, 1861-65 by Donald L. Canney, Naval Institute Press, 1998.

Lincoln's Spymaster: Thomas Haines Dudley and the Liverpool Network, by David Hepburn Milton, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg,

Matthew Calbraith Perry: Antebellum Sailor and Diplomat, by John H. Schroeder, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 2001.
PA, 2003.

Pensacola During The Civil War: A Thorn In The Side Of The Confederacy. George F. Pearce, University Press Of Florida, 2000.

Rough Medicine: Surgeons At Sea In The Age Of Sail, by Joan Druett. Routledge, New York, 2000.

The Officers Of The C.S.S. Shenandoah, by Angus Curry, University Press of Florida, 2006

Showing The Flag: The Civil War Naval Diary of Moses Safford, U.S.S. Constellation, Lawrence J. Bopp, Stephen R. Bockmiller

The H.L. Hunley: The Secret Hope of the Confederacy, by Tom Chaffin. Hill and Wang, New York, 2008, The History Press, Charleston, SC, 2004.

Th*e Last Shot: The Incredible Story of the CSS Shenandoah and the True Conclusion of the American Civil War* by Lynn Schooler, Harper Collins, New York, 2005.

Yellow Flag: The Civil War Journal of Surgeon's Steward C. Marion Dodson. Edited by Charles Albert Earp. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 2002.

C.S.S.Alabama: Anatomy of a Confederate Raider, by Andrew Bowcock. Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 2002.

There is no ship in the Confederate Navy more written about than the raider C.S.S. *Alabama*, whose record of commerce depredation is still unmatched, even by the 20th century German raiders which were self-consciously formed in her image. She was an incredibly versatile ship built to outgun all those she could not outrun (familiar phrase?) and she did just that during her two-year career (1862-1864) capturing and/or sinking sixty-five merchant ships without loss of life on either side, as well as sinking a Union warship of equal armament (the U.S.S. Hatteras) in a scant thirteen minutes in the dead of night. She finally met her match at the hands of the U.S.S. *Kearsarge* off Cherbourg in a somewhat unequal fight in which she suffered from faulty, aging munitions facing a foe whose hull was laced with chain armament. Nevertheless, she remains a maritime legend, whose career has been described in multiple books by a variety of her officers and many more by subsequent historians and enthusiasts.

Until this date, however, the ship herself has been rather neglected in favor of the exploits and intrigues of those who built her, sailed upon her, and opposed her. What it took, in detail, to build such a remarkable vessel has heretofore gone largely unresearched. This book makes up for all of that, and more. In fact, if you wanted to build the C.S.S. *Alabama* again from scratch, this will tell you how to do it, insofar as any possible scrap of historical research can provide. Andrew Bowcock has assembled the plans, drawings, contracts, and explanations of every detail known (many not known until his research uncovered them) about how each part of the ship was constructed, from the hull design right down to the individual bolts in her boilers. Details of every fitting and fitting out are included, from the ship's hardware (anchors, capstans, anchors, sails, rigging, ammunition, storage containers) to the crew's necessities (plates, toilets, spirits, galley equipment) - all with original suppliers, prices, and delivery schedules, right down to the total man-hours required to fulfil each contract and sub-contract to carpenters, machinists, riggers, wholesalers, you name it. You wouldn't believe the expense and complexity of constructing a ship in the 1860s and how well-oiled the machinery of accomplishing it was in the British shipbuilding industry of the time. It was a monumental achievement, but well-practiced, to put together a top-of-the-line vessel on a fast-track construction

schedule.

As the author acknowledges, Bowcock's portrait of the *Alabama* is truly a picture of the ship herself, with the contemporary players in her drama used mainly as background evidence to explain her construction and performance. You can go elsewhere to read of her accomplishments and the derring-do of her officers and crew, but here you will find the ship herself, down to the DNA, so to speak. Every picture, painting, or drawing known of her is included, all analyzed to reveal greater detail of her construction - including documentation from period newspaper articles and Union spy reports which have previously been hard to find at best and are now all available in one place.

If one wonders why anyone went to such efforts to uncover details ordinarily only of use to those about to actually build a ship, it may be because much of this research was conducted in just such an interest - there were full-blown plans in Birkenhead over a decade ago to build a replica of the *Alabama* as an historical tourist attraction. Unfortunately, local politics and later the demise of British shipbuilding giant Cammell-Laird (the corporate descendant of the Alabama's original builder) caused the project to be scotched, but the research remains, much of it the underpinnings of this remarkable book.

Although there may be too much detail here for some, still even in the details there remain mysteries, as there are some missing documents and unexplained marvels that one would like to see light shed upon, were history kinder in providing the information. For instance, although the mechanism for raising the ship's detachable propeller in its well is detailed down to the way it was locked onto its frame and hoisted, how it was actually disconnected from the shaft is left to the imagination - and this is one of the main design features that made this ship and others of its kind just coming on the scene at the time so flexible. It would be nice to know.

But considering all the rest that is included in this wonderful piece of documentation, the reader comes away believing that herein, as far as the C.S.S.*Alabama* is concerned, is all you know and all you need to know.

Chesapeake Waters: Four Centuries of Controversy, Concern, And Legislation, by Seven G. Davison, Jay G. Merwin, Jr., John Capper, Garrett Power, and Frank R. Shivers, Jr. Tidewater Publishers, Second Edition, 1997.

The Chesapeake Bay is an amorphous entity, as hard to define as it has been hard to regulate and protect over the last 400 years since Europeans arrived on the scene. Physically, it can be considered a bay, a giant estuary, a concatenation of estuaries, a giant multiple river delta, or the world's largest tidal pool. Its depths and boundaries shift radically with erosion, changing water levels, and mutating weather patterns, making it a cartographer's nightmare - indeed, this work points out that there is even today no accepted definition as to its overall length, where it begins and ends.

Similarly, its ecosystem is equally hard to define and changes catastrophically (in the mathematical sense) with sometimes seemingly small changes in water salinity, invasion of predatory creatures from major to microscopic, and even momentary weather changes. Its shifting sands and fluid contours drive an equally elusive biology, which often defies even the most astute scientific analysis.

Throw in an invasion of millions of people, with competing and conflicting interests, who use the Bay for a transportation network, a sewer, a major food source, and a recreational playground, among other things, and you've got the makings of sheer chaos. Then go ask someone to administrate all of this. Want the job?

For the last four centuries, a lot of people have taken on that job, singly, in committee, and in sweeping administrations, with varying degrees of success, and that is the ambitious subject of this book. Despite my fourteen years living on the shore of the Northern Neck, smack in the middle of the Bay, and much hands-on contact with it both above and below water, the authors gave me some refreshing new ways of looking at it both physically and historically. Anyone sailing the Bay, for instance, knows it is shallow, but perhaps not how phenomenally shallow it is, compared to its breadth. It's really not much more than a giant puddle, and that profoundly effects the nature of all its interactions with man and nature, accounting for its alternating fragility and robustness.

On the historical side, one begins to wonder why anyone ever settled here, considering the unavailability of good fresh water and the suitability of the environment for harboring plagues of cholera, yellow fever, and malaria the moment sizeable settlements were established. People will do a lot for tobacco, fishing, and commerce. Throughout, Bay-dwellers have alternately sunk into their own mire and then pulled themselves out by hard-fought political and scientific battles designed to bring the life-giving waters back to stability and relative natural purity.

Given this context, the much-taunted final miracle of the "Save The Bay" movement of the 1960s and '70's (the book was written in 1983, but the positive trends established then have continued) seems just another great heave upward to once again snatch temporary sanctuary out of the jaws of ever-looming decay. By an evolving set of political struggles and societal growth, the regulations to keep the Bay viable have grown from ad hoc local ordinances to bureaucratic federal legislation - with oyster wars, border disputes, unconscionable pollution, hurricanes, economic booms and disasters, plagues both over and under the water, greedy corporate villains and courageous ecological crusaders as mileposts along the way.

It's been an adventure, and considering its extremities, it's a miracle the Bay is still viable. It may never again have the wondrous variety of fish and wildlife that John Smith described, nor the pristine waters the pre-European inhabitants respected, but only four years ago, when I saw porpoises sporting under my bow at the mouth of the Rappahannock River, and a shoal of skates scudding off to starboard, I knew that all is not lost. Not lost at all. For the moment, the balance between the human inhabitants and the rest of life on the Bay has been salvaged. This book does an admirable job of chronicling

this noble endeavor.

Confederate Raider In The North Pacific: The Saga of the C.S.S. Shenandoah, 1864-65, by Murray Morgan, WSU Press reprint and update, 1995. (originally published, 1948)

There could be a variety of approaches for critiquing this excellent all-around tale of the last of the Confederate raiders, none of which would do it justice. I could say, from a popular point of view, that the facts get in the way of a lively sea tale, making it a little overlong and slowing down the action. Or, from a scholarly point of view, it might be lamented that there is not more documentation -- a list of ships and dates captured, more background on the individual officers and other players and what became of them.

But, in fact, what struck me most about this reprint is that it keeps an even balance between well-researched facts and a sense of the adventure and destiny of this vessel and its crew that makes it both informative and exciting reading at the same time -- an even-handed mix that I think achieves better all-around success than many more recent books on the Confederate Navy. Yes, it marginally annoys me to have an author put words or thoughts into a character which, although they may be entirely appropriate, have no documentation except the writerÕs imagination. But he chooses his moments well to do so: storm scenes, below-decks conversations, and other moments that add color and excitement to what might be just a collection of journals and reports.

What ties it all together most of all, for me, is the attention to personal life aboard the *Shenandoah*, the feeling for what it was like to live through the trip for a variety of individuals among her officers and crew -- the elation of victory, the boredom of endless days upon the Pacific wastes, the bleak depression of a long and dangerous voyage home in defeat. Each individual journal, letter, or press story, most of which have been published in greater detail elsewhere, gives a partial view, but here all are spun together to give an overview of the totality of the experience, along with the intoxicating feeling of what it was like to be at sea in the period.

For CSN fans, there are nice touches such as poor Lt. Chew's difficulties as a deep-water officer. His greatest talent, actually, was probably as a fiddle player -- on one occasion the crew "danced their clothes off" to his tunes, and on an earlier one, going downriver aboard the Palmetto State, he was involved in a minstrel show. Neither incident is specifically mentioned here, but his social troubles most certainly are -- and they were probably more memorable to him!

The socio-politics of the War and its economic aftermaths, so often lingered upon by other authors, are blessedly absent here. There are plenty of admirable books where you may find all of that. This is more of an inside tale, similar in feel to Sinclair's personal account of the cruise of the Alabama. The larger implications of what Shenandoah was involved in are left behind in the headiness and drama of just being aboard.

Morgan's style is engaging and eminently readable, whether for a CSN buff or just a lover of sea stories. I came away feeling I had been there, had personally known the crew, and would sail on her again.

Hoisting Their Colors: Cape Cod's Civil War Navy Officers, by Stauffer Miller, XLibris 2008.

One of the biggest differences between the Confederate and Union navies was in size alone. The Union outnumbered the Confederate by a ratio of about ten to one, reflecting not only the differing population size of the combatant nations but also their naval strategies born of geography, economics, and social makeup. Partially because of its small size, one fascinating thing about the Confederate Navy is the overlap between its members. Although there are no doubt still-unpublished letters and diaries from this unlikely band of brothers, what there are reveal an almost family-like air to the corps, certainly among the officers. If they weren't already related before the war began, they quickly got to know each other as they scurried from one desperate effort to another to hold off a vastly superior foe.

No such homogeneity seems to arise in Union Navy accounts, not that the Union Navy was lacking in esprit de corps (though it often was), but it was a much bigger, more impersonal undertaking that by its very nature was more bureaucratic and distancing than its adversary. But, surely some of the participants must have known each other, perhaps coming from the same town or county and might have found continuing bonds in naval service. That's what one would hope to find in such a book as this, which consists of brief naval biographies of no less than 178 separate Union Navy officers just from the Cape Cod area alone. You'd expect neighborly tales and crossovers all over the place from such a small and intensely maritime culture, but it seems strikingly absent here. Perhaps in Yankeeland, good fences really do make good neighbors, whereas down South everyone is hanging over the back fence.

That's merely an observation, not in the least a criticism of this remarkable book, which covers a huge amount of ground and contains fascinating vignettes from all theaters of the naval war, including some very non-naval activities like ad hoc cowpunching and tales of treachery and murder in the ranks as yet unsolved. It's a fascinating and informing read, a labor of local love that was years in the making, a treasure trove for Cape Codders. Yet, across the board, you feel an almost dispassionate involvement by the participants, as though they were fighting a terrible distraction that had interrupted commerce and not a war of cultures and convictions that would change the world for better or for worse. But perhaps that's just what it was after a fashion, in the heart of Yankee culture that was itself not directly threatened with death or extinction. Plus, the naval war itself had that kind of feel to it, simply by the tactics and strategy involved. Most of the giant Union Navy's time was spent on endless, boring blockade duty, involving the occasional run-in with an unarmed blockade runner, whereas the Confederate Navy rarely left dock without

running into a fierce and bloody fight, usually in their own home waters.

There is further reason for this dichotomy, in that the Cape Codders covered here were mostly merchant officers pulled into naval service through necessity (their commerce was utterly disrupted by the onset of the war) and who left it as soon as they could, it being neither as prestigious or profitable as private sector maritime endeavors in America's most busy maritime location. Those that gave their lives in the process were more likely to be felled by fever or accident than shot and shell, so naval service had a wholly separate, and separating, ring to it. They also seem to have formed a distinct class that didn't mingle that much with career navy officers, though there is ample evidence they were impressed by the reputation of the likes of Porter, Dahlgren, and others when they had opportunity to run into them. But that may also be a cultural artifact, as although they all lived virtually next door to each other, there isn't much reference to that in the specifics here. It seems to have been pretty much every man for himself, without even as much local camaraderie as there is on the Cape today.

Of course, there could have been many more connections than surface here in these on-average two-page naval biographies. Indeed, many of them make you wish you could find a lot more about the individual tales only touched on in their brief entries. It's certainly a wonderful starting point for a host of future explorations into Civil War naval history.

The CSS H.L. Hunley: Confederate Submarine, by R. Thomas Campbell, Burd Street Press, Shippensburg, PA, 2000.

In its scarcely four-year existence, from the firing on Ft. Sumter in April 1861 to the surrender of the raider *Shenandoah* in Liverpool in November 1865, the navy of the Confederate States of America contributed more to naval history than perhaps any other navy, ever, at least as compared to its brief lifespan.

Too many remember the CSN for the first battle of ironclads at Hampton Roads, but that was hardly its most original or enduring legacy, as ironclads were already to be had bigger and better in Europe and the unseaworthy behemoths both North and South produced were destined for the scrapheap shortly after their creation, if not sunk first. Far more notable were three contributions made by the CSN that all permanently affected naval strategy and tactics: the deployment of the naval (as opposed to private) commerce raider, the use of the underwater mine as a strategic defense methodology, and the invention of the first submarine to actually sink a capital ship. All three were, regretfully, most enthusiastically taken up by the German navy after the War Between the States, and it was said that Bismarck himself required all naval officers of captain's rank and above to read Raphael Semmes's Service Afloat. German raiders, mines, and submarines were to become a devastating legacy to be used against the conquerers of the CSN less than half a century later.

All three have lately become a part of recovered history -- first the bathtub in Richmond,

VA where Matthew Fontaine Maury invented the electric mine, second the discovery and recovery of artifacts from the raider CSS *Alabama* off Cherbourg, France, and finally the discovery of the submarine CSS *H.L. Hunley* in the harbor of Charleston, SC. Writings abound on the first two subjects, but R. Thomas Campbell's narrative about the amazing, pedal-powered sub that sunk the capital ship USS Housatonic in February 1864 is the first book to provide a stem-to-stern history of that subject, including both the story of its inception, creation, and demise and its subsequent discovery in May of 1995. It is both informative and entertaining, as well as well-researched and documented.

The *Hunley*, the ad hoc creation of its namesake inventor, was made of transformed boilers and powered by a crew of twelve peddling like underwater madmen to the light of a single candle to deliver a spar torpedo that destroyed both ships involved. It followed in the footsteps of the melonesque Revolutionary War submarine Turtle, that failed in its mission against the British nearly a century before - and indeed, the idea of a submarine as a tool of naval warfare goes back to DaVinci and perhaps Archimedes, but the *Hunley* was the first one to actually close with an enemy and establish the concept as viable. Hunley, who died with his ship in its final hour of glory, could hardly have imagined his invention would so quickly evolve through a foreign "wolf pack" into the number one delivery system of weapons capable of destroying the world.

Campbell's book includes everything from the complexities of creating a whole-cloth concept in a charged and fluid Southern wartime economy to the politics of what to do with the artifact once it was discovered by - who else? - Clive Cussler. Where the Confederate Navy is concerned, the man is everywhere.

At what is hoped is the end of her journey, the CSS *H.L. Hunley* can now be seen at the Charleston Museum, and Campbell's book, replete with pictures, documents, and engaging writing style, is a must-read before you go to see it.

Lincoln's Navy: The Ships, Men and Organization, 1861-65 by Donald L. Canney, Naval Institute Press, 1998.

This nicely rounded tome on the Union Navy finds its author having to fight two major difficulties. One, unusual for Naval Institute Press, is an annoying type face and remarkably poor copy editing, resulting in some confusion and obvious errors, especially where dates are concerned. The other, not so unusual to students of this war, is the subject itself - a navy with lots of bureaucracy and precious little style and panache, especially compared with its more colorful and often outrageous rival, the Confederate Navy.

By 1861, the American Navy that had once faced down Algerian pirates and European superpowers had sunk into an underbudgeted morass of bureaucracy that favored neither skill nor ingenuity. It had no enemies to fight and no money to fight them with. Then, with

secession, it lost many of its best and brightest "gone South" and was faced with rebuilding a navy utterly unlike what had gone before in either purpose or content. Unlike the oceangoing, deepwater navies of most other countries of the period, designed to protect against foreign depredation or to commit depredation themselves, what the Union required was more of a shallow-water police force to suppress its own people, or those segments of the population that desired independence.

The task was a daunting one, and what arose was a navy of massive size and limited efficiency (25% of its ships were in for repairs at all times). What it lacked in originality or effectiveness, it made up for in sheer numbers. Fully ten times the size of the Confederate Navy, for every Confederate ship afloat the Union Navy had a whole class of comparable ships. It is sometimes hard to imagine why it took them four years to beat their undersized and underfunded rivals.

Despite a handful of spectacular battles by sometimes brilliant and noble ships and commanders, the daily reality of the Union Navy was a tedious grind, whether on blockade station in the Atlantic or Gulf Of Mexico or on patrol in countless rivers and bays where running aground was often more of a hazard than an elusive enemy. Canney gives a good feeling of this throughout the book, especially in excellent segments about life on board ship and the long and complex processes involved in such a large endeavor of shipbuilding, logistics, and supplies.

At the beginning of the War, America had a merchant fleet second only to Britain and a naval fleet hardly worthy of the name. At the end of the War, America had lost virtually its entire merchant fleet to foreign flags, thanks to the Confederate raiders, and had built a world-sized naval fleet most of which, unfortunately, could not safely go more than a few miles from shore. The legacy of the shallow-water ironclads has been greatly overrated they paled by comparison to the likes of Britain's Warrior or France's *Gloire* or the generation of seagoing ironclads like the Confederacy's *Stonewall*, which arrived too late to do battle.

What is most rewarding about this book is its thoroughness - it covers every aspect of what it took to build, deploy, and maintain this naval behemoth - and its pictures, which do truly speak more than words about what naval existence at that time was like. In a word, depressing, but doubtless eminently better than being slaughtered on land in what is still America's costliest war in terms of wholesale suffering and loss of life.

In the end, the best word for the Union Navy may be...serviceable. It did the job, and a very specialized one at that, and when that job was done it was, mostly, scrapped, as it had little application in a world where global sea power was the lynchpin of what a navy was about. It would take America another thirty years to begin to join that elite company of naval powers.

Lincoln's Spymaster: Thomas Haines Dudley and the Liverpool Network, by David Hepburn Milton, Stackpole Books, Mechanicsburg, PA, 2003.

Some naval conflicts are won or lost before the ships involved ever put to sea or, indeed, are ever even launched. Such may be said of the American Civil War where a decidedly lopsided naval balance in favor of the Northern Union (it had ten ships for every one of the Southern Confederacy) should have made for no contest at all. Yet, the difference of just a few extra ships on the Confederate side could have tipped the whole balance of the war. That's because the war was being fought not just at home but on the world stage, with potential allies and supporters far more powerful than either American participant waiting to pick sides or remain neutral.

With the great powers of Europe, primarily Great Britain and France, the South had the initial advantage, especially in England where Southern cotton was an economic staple and the ruling aristocracy distinctly favored the more refined and culturally British South over the more rough-and-tumble polyglot North. At the outset of the War, the South, having almost no navy at all and lacking the shipyards and the technological industry to build a competitive force, set about using British favoritism to help them build a crack navy abroad. British (and French) had the best naval architects and shipbuilders in the world and Southern cotton could be used to employ them. Even just a few raiders and oceangoing ironclads superior to the North's fleet might be used to lift the Northern blockade, devastate Northern ports, and demonstrate the South's independence and thus bring in the European powers in her support, effectively splitting the United States into two separate sovereign countries. Lacking that, the South could look forward to being strangled to death by the Northern blockade, losing all her availability and appeal to potential foreign supporters.

Thus, from the very outset of the war, it became critical for the North to use all means, diplomatic and otherwise, to prevent a Confederate navy being built abroad, primarily in Liverpool shipyards. The responsibility for this wound up primarily in the hands of Northern consul to Liverpool Thomas Haines Dudley, and his remarkable career is the subject of this book. Although the undercover world of spies and diplomacy at this time has been mentioned in many works on the Civil War, and thoroughly dealt with by its Southern protagonist James Dunwoody Bulloch in his own contemporary autobiographical volumes, this is the first book to describe it fully and exclusively from the Northern side. Author David Hepburn Milton had full access to Dudley's personal papers, which gives this work insight and authority, and his other period research on the man reveals many other specifics sure to surprise and enlighten.

A Quaker Republican from New Jersey, Dudley was highly instrumental in procuring the Republican presidential nomination for Abraham Lincoln -- without his efforts the less-appealing William Seward likely would have secured the nomination and subsequently lost to the more secession-tolerating Democrats, and subsequently there might never have been a Civil War. Moreover, Dudley nearly drowned in the wreck of the ferry *New Jersey* on March 15, 1856, but was miraculously brought back from the dead on shore - had he not been, there might have been no President Lincoln, and no Civil War. It’s one of those

small pivotal events with which this narrative abounds.

As U.S. consul to Liverpool, Dudley very quickly put together a large network of spies to root out Confederate naval projects in England and try to get them prevented or condemned by the government through England's Foreign Enlistment Act, which prohibited arming either side of a conflict in which England was officially neutral. Despite the escape of successful raiders like the *Alabama* (who actually sailed with a Dudley spy as assistant paymaster) and the *Florida*, he eventually succeeded in shutting down Confederate Navy shipbuilding efforts, especially major ironclad projects, as the Northern military efforts at home made England and France less inclined to support the South and repeated threats of war and an invasion of Canada, voiced by Northern Secretary of State Seward, held England at bay.

The details of just how Dudley managed to set up his undercover shipyard spy network and how he deployed it is what this book is all about, and it makes a fascinating read, interrupted only perhaps by the author's counter-revisionist historical opinions which sometimes detract from the narrative. Milton is not just writing about Dudley, he's rooting for him, and against the South. Aside from that distraction, this book is a wonderful window on the dawn of organized American covert naval intelligence.

Matthew Calbraith Perry: Antebellum Sailor and Diplomat, by John H. Schroeder, Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, Maryland, 2001.

We usually think of naval heroes as sailors or officers who immortalized themselves in combat, tempered their steel in the bloody waters of war, defending honor and country, protecting the peace with their bodies and lives.

Of course, it would be a far better thing if the peace did not need to be protected or defended at sea, just simply maintained - which is, of course, what most navies spend most of the time successfully achieving. It is perhaps regretful that those who lead peacetime navies, and thus tend to save lives with out taking them, hardly ever loom large in the public memory. One notable example is Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, whose career service profoundly affected American naval policy and readiness while rarely firing a shot in anger. He served in one of those rare and wonderful periods of extended peace at sea for America, coming on board as a midshipman in the War of 1812, in which his older brother Oliver Hazard Perry covered himself in glory at the Battle of Lake Erie. He saw command during the Mexican War, but that conflict was primarily fought on land, with sea power used for landings and support only. And, he died in 1857, before the Civil War revolutionized naval warfare and thrust many of his fellow officers into the naval warfare hall of fame.

Yet Perry's influence was profound, and it is still felt today. He is most known for opening up Japan to American intercourse (not, in fact, trade, which happened later as a result),

when he became the father of American gunboat diplomacy - which, in his case, was full-fledged diplomacy sans diplomats, with his fleet only a critically necessary backdrop. That was his crowning glory, but it was only the final, full flowering of a long and dedicated evolution as a peacetime naval officer, which Schroeder's narrative elegantly outlines.

There is not space here to run through the wonderfully productive career of this very determined, if somewhat overbearing personality (his officers called him "Old Bruin" and claimed that he was unfamiliar with a smile, though occasionally wept). Suffice it to say that Perry threw himself into peacetime service with the vigor of a warrior, beginning with patrolling for slavers in disease-ridden African waters while supporting and defending settlers in the new reverse Afro-American colonies (like Liberia) and establishing naval stations in that inclement clime. He was a techno-visionary early on, promoting steam when steam was reviled by the naval establishment, and forming a system to train upcoming naval recruits in handling the new technology. On the private side, his support for naval appropriations for commercial American steam packets kept America abreast of Britain's fast-advancing steam juggernaut.

Throughout, because peace forced his life into a constant interface with bureaucracy and politics, he learned to negotiate his way through confrontations where belligerency was not an option. Even his support actions in the Mexican War were made with every political implication in mind. All this paid off big-time when he finally succeeded in promoting an expedition to open up Japan.

Unlike many others involved on both sides of the Pacific, he studied everything there was to know about the country and its people, its political situation, its culture, its style and its history, based on reports of earlier expeditions by Americans, Dutch, and others. He then carefully amassed a squadron and support that would see him through lengthy, clever, troublesome, and unwilling negotiations that finally accomplished most, but not all, of his mission. The narrative of this remarkable tour-de-force is hard to put down, as each time you think there is going to be a resolution, someone does something totally outrageous and another round begins. The too-familiar image of the U.S. Navy just walking in and telling Japan to open up could not be further from the truth. This was a page-turning adventure with clever, balanced adversaries in a whirlwind match between sophisticated cultures in a brand-new dance with the ultimate conclusions a century away.

The book is a well-written and insightful narrative of an enormously underappreciated man, whose focus and discipline allowed him to accomplish acts of peace as ably as more heralded heroes have accomplished acts of war. It certainly presents an historical model for peacetime navies that followed, and those yet to come.

Pensacola During The Civil War: A Thorn In The Side Of The Confederacy. George F. Pearce, University Press Of Florida, 2000.

If there was any place one would have wanted to avoid during the War Between the

States, it would certainly have been Pensacola, Florida. It was a great port, with a great navy yard, backed by an endless supply of Southern oak and pine, but totally upstaged by nearby Mobile which had better rail access and greater political pull. It was, like the rest of Florida of the period, mostly overheated sand. Alas, no one knew the potential of that product in 1861, particularly with what went with the sand was cholera, yellow fever, dysentery, malaria, and anything else that water or mosquitoes could transmit to kill you.

Pearce's book early on severely reminds you that those diseases were what caused fully 2/3 of the deaths in this war. It would have been Americas's most lethal military engagement if not a shot had been fired. And for those whose misfortune was to have lived in or been assigned to the vicinity of Pensacola, this was more than the case. Located next to a swamp between brackish rivers, with few natural resources for food or clean water (except for plentiful fish and shellfood, which particularly sailors foolishly disespoused) and without natural geological features for defense, it was a place either side should have bypassed and spent their resources elsewhere.

What they did was the worst of all possible choices -- both North and South used thousands of troops in the most trepidatious fashion to try to keep a foothold on this worthless place for four straight years, at the price of tens of thousands of lives, to no avail whatsoever.

As secessionism was budding, Floridians had the chance of taking over the forts that protected the harbor, perfectly designed for blockade runners, but for diplomatic reasons did not do so. Amazingly, the outbreak of the war was a toss of the coin between confrontations at Ft. Pickens ort Ft. Sumter, and you know which one it was. What you probably don't know is the politics of distrust on both sides at the highest levels that caused it to happen the way it did. Was this any way to run a war?

Once the war was underway, the general mutual indefensibility of the navy yard, several surrounding forts, Pensacola itself, and a multiplicity of nearby towns, made the whole area a morass of pointless delays, rapacious small-time raiding, and general destruction that in fact never led to serious battle, only wholesale dishonor and destruction in the vicinity of what had been a very promising town.

Pearce does a yeoman job of tracing the details of four years of what amounted to things about to happen but never really did, at great cost to human life. Dreadfully disappointing, however, are the lack of the kind of detailed maps that allow you to keep up with the thrill of the action, which is literally mile by mile, and often day by day. Only two very general maps are included, which leave out a number of the most critical locations involved in the action. Reference to a modern AAA road map doesn't help, of course, as many locations are no longer there or are renamed. Shame on the publisher - this would have been easy to correct, and it spoils the book.

If there is any lasting impression from this excellently-researched book on a much-neglected location in that war to continue all wars it is that everybody died in vain -- and, unlike other more notorious areas of action, nobody profited from it.

Pensacola today thrives as one of America's premier air bases (my son trained there). It is only from the few on-site remaining memorials to that most pointless of all wars that one may conclude that even in that dire clime, the only use and results of the actions in that fair town were grief and useless degradation.

Rough Medicine: Surgeons At Sea In The Age Of Sail, by Joan Druett. Routledge, New York, 2000.

Joan Druett's books on whaling and women at sea have become modern maritime classics, built on a foundation of matchless scholarship mixed with fresh, imaginative writing.With her new book on medicine at sea, mostly in the whaling trade, she has done it again - launching into uncharted waters on a steady trade wind of historical originality.

Much has been written of the perils of scurvy, the horrors of tropical diseases, and the relentless danger and physical hardship of the sailor, but most of it has been from the point of view of either sailor or landsman, but rarely from the point of view of the men responsible for fixing sailors broken by these perils, the ships' surgeons. I discovered that sixteen years ago when I embarked upon studying to become a 16th century ship's physician at the behest of Captain George Salley, who captained the recreation 1609 Jamestown settlement voyage attempted by the replica lead vessel Godspeed in 1985. Fortunately, a long background in professional astrology, both historical and modern, intricately linked with the theories of classical Greek and Roman, and later Renaissance, served me well in the venture. Indeed, a tally of what was in "Ship's Surgeon's Mate" author Dr. John Woodall's 1619 sea medicine chest would be quite familiar to the owner of a modern New Age health food/alternative medicine store, and to modern-day astrologers who frequent them. Then, as now, individual health was considered an holistic balance of inner and outer elements, subject to gentle exterior prodding when things went awry.

Not so familiar would be the contents of a 19th century whaling surgeon's kit, which drew upon the old philosophies but embraced the newer harsher, more invasive chemistries of Paracelsus and Helvetius. As 19th century medicine edged towards the discoveries that led to the science of modern medicine that has since centered on the model of patient as a broken machine to be fixed rather than an entity to be healed, the ship's surgeon's chest reflected the trend. In an appendix to the book, Druett compares the complete stores of whaling Dr. John B. King's chest with that of Woodall's some two centuries earlier, and the juxtaposition is revealing. The 19th century chest sported fewer ingredients and tools, had a longer shelf life, and was designed for the use of both ship's surgeon and, lacking a surgeon, the plug-in use by the ship's captain who, by looking up symptoms in a listing of ailments, could administer numbered pills, oils, and ointments without the slightest idea what he was doing. It was a seagoing prognosticator, first-aid kit, and apothecary, all in one.

The first part of the book is built on establishing a history of medicine from classical times until the Renaissance, by which time religion and class conflict had separated the functions of doctor, barber/surgeon, physician, and druggist nearly to the extinction of what passed for medicine on land. The necessities of sea life, however, could not abide all that, and Woodall's creation of the sea surgeon's chest was a big step toward getting them all back together in the same single set of hands. Just the medical aspects of this book are an education and a pleasure to read.

Druett, however, is as much interested in the life of the surgeons and those around them, principally aboard several different whalers where extensive journals were kept, and what springs from it is a set of often unlikely adventure tales of the sea from the keen observation of the trained surgeon, who often doubled as sailor, harpooner, accountant, secretary, purser, and occasionally even first officer and quarterdeck commander.

Druett's surgeons were an intelligent, resourceful, and often adventurous lot - one of whom was stranded amongst warlike Marquesans, who made a hero of him, albeit at the price of tatooing him from neck to ankle, and finally returned to land to make two highly popular books out of his adventures at sea. Others fared less famously, but all gave incisive accounts of what life on board a whaler was like along with the ins and outs of stitching together sick and wounded crews through a combination of trusty, still reliable methods of surgery and ad hoc craziness that would horrify a modern doctor or patient. The thread running through the experiences of all, however, was a combination of genuine compassion and astute observation.

This book is literally a page-turner - I couldn't put it down - filled with new windows on history, technology, and personal experience. Good job, Joan, as usual. Highly recommended.

The Officers Of The C.S.S. Shenandoah, by Angus Curry, University Press of Florida, 2006

Most American Civil War enthusiasts know the basic histories of the Confederacy's three most famous commerce raiders, the *Alabama*, the *Florida*, and the *Shenandoah*. Many books have been written about them, from direct journals of the participants to socio-psychological analysis of the contexts of the period. This Australian-born effort numbers among the latter, inspired by the visit of the Shenandoah to that continent on the way to her most important efforts. It's especially interesting because it focuses on a cultural and psychological profiling of her Southern officers and their motives and concerns which impacted the voyage and its outcome. In the process, a lot more detail of everyday life is included than in previously available volumes on the subject, drawing on unpublished journals, such as that of Lt. Francis Chew, although some of it may be a bit over-

psychoanalyzed in the process.

The *Shenandoah* was the last of the Confederate raiders to attack Union shipping and actually continued her depredation of the Yankee whaling fleet in the North Pacific several months after the war was over, for lack of information of its end. She then made the round-Cape-Horn voyage all the way back to Liverpool, the only Confederate vessel to circumnavigate the world. The thesis of the book is that the cultural upbringing of the Southern officers aboard called the shots of her sometimes wavering but ultimately successful (in naval terms) operation. The book is full of personal insight about the officers' upbringings, the mindset of Southerners of the period in general, and much more, including speculation about the officers' "group cohesion" and other sociological concepts, from conflicts born of background racial and scientific biases (about everything from evolution to weather) to cultural concepts of honor, self-expectations, and fundamental ambition. Much is perhaps over-attributed to the "Southernness" of the officers, however, when in fact they shared many of the same foibles and frustrations that a similar set of naval personnel of any nation at the time would have under the circumstances, including the non-Southern participants aboard the same vessel. That includes a great many shared racial and cultural stereotypes typical of the time not only in America but around the world.

As in other accounts of the voyage, the crux of all the problematic issues aboard the vessel reduces to how the captain, Lt. James Waddell, applied his controversial and equivocating style to manage the ship. No firebrand John Newland Maffitt or elegantly self-assured Raphael Semmes, he was an often-vacillating group negotiator who uncomfortably turned the officer ranks from a reliable hierarchy into a political committee which ran the ship at times simply by majority consent. This was compounded by the failing fortunes of the Confederacy which made indecision ever more the option of the participants. Waddell from the beginning made it clear he did not trust his officers, but kept changing his stance, both publicly and privately, which made for chaos aboard. Ultimately, his was probably the wiser judgment at almost every critical moment, but that was not much appreciated by his fellow officers, partly because the overall effect was to increase mutual disagreements and disaffection between everyone on board.

In the long run, the tale of the *Shenadoah's* officers and crew is about what to do next in life as their world along with the Civil War was ending, so it is ultimately a view of a transition rather than a conflict, far different from and more difficult and complex than the careers of her predecessors. That is the focus of the book, and it's well-treated at length, including how the participants personal and official views of themselves changed as post-war history developed. What's perhaps too-briefly noted is the context of essential authority on board any ship, which Waddell periodically and skillfully tapped -- despite the temporary Confederate Navy overlay -- which was already there, ensconced in standing naval and merchant marine tradition. Whether an operational Confederate warship or later simply a fugitive from a finished conflict, the vessel herself and her crew had a unifying sociological affect upon the entire operation that the author touches on but does not sufficiently address. The unspoken loyalty of officers and crew to the deck that supported them may have ultimately, as so often happens, called the shots, regardless of political and

social affiliations.

Showing The Flag: The Civil War Naval Diary of Moses Safford, U.S.S. Constellation, Lawrence J. Bopp, Stephen R. Bockmiller, The History Press, Charleston, SC, 2004.

When one thinks about naval operations during the American Civil War, frigate sloops from two generations earlier, like the *U.S.S. Constellation*, sister ship of the *U.S.S. Constitution* ("Old Ironsides"), don't really come to mind. Without steam power, armor, or rifled swivel guns, these beautiful warships were by that time literally dinosaurs. Without ability to maneuver ship or direct fire in a contrary wind, even Confederate cruisers not designed for flat-out naval confrontation like the *Alabama* or *Florida* could have made short work of such vessels.

But combat isn't everything, and the Union navy decided to send the *Constellation* to the Mediterranean to serve out the period of the Civil War showing the flag and generally filling in diplomatic, non-combat support roles for which newer, battle-ready steamers could ill be spared. From early 1862 to early 1865, she circled the Med from Barcelona to Beirut, from Gibraltar to Jaffa, weaving in and out of the same harbors repeatedly, resupplying and shifting stores, and hosting elaborate entertainments and balls for representatives of the great powers of Europe who were all jostling for power in a turbulent political sea.

Here the tale is told meticulously through the eyes of a Down East sailor-turned-lawyer turned sailor again for the war's duration. Although fit for command in the merchant marine (his father was a captain), he signed on as yeoman in a personal favor to a naval family friend, Capt. Henry K. Thatcher, which put him in a position of intimacy with both officers and men, being the store room manager and accountant, while offering him no future in the navy as such whatsoever. He was truly a participating bystander with no reason to tell any story but his own, as personal witness, before returning to practice law in his native Maine.

Most naval journals (those in print, anyway) are long on military action and short on period life details – some are even edited to eliminate long passages about the banalities of daily life aboard ship or visiting shore. In this case, since there is no military action whatsoever, there is nothing else to relate, which means a golden window onto life on board ship and visiting ashore.

The result is a marvelous picture of a thoroughly mixed bag of Americans dragging themselves from port to port and trying to keep up good spirits while their nation is engaged in its bloodiest war, which it may not even survive as far as any of them knows. Some of this is predictable – lots of false rumors about victories and defeats at home that come on board through scuttlebutt or mostly Confederate-sympathizing newspaper reports, the attempt to look neat and trim on a hopelessly-outdated vessel in the same ports, the likes of the new French ironclad *Gloire*, and the expected vagaries of shoreside

supplies and infections and fevers running through the crowded ports and ships in their harbors. Some of it, however, is differently depressing, especially the quality of the all-American crew, a too-large part of which were extraordinary drunkards and thieves. Most tales of merchant ships from the period look orderly by comparison. Discipline was either astonishingly lax or utterly brutal and indiscriminate, and from top to bottom it was a situation of each man for himself if not thwarted in time. There were multiple desertions in every port, constant brawls of the most severe sort between crew members and ashore, a surprisingly disorderly situation with rather little letup, considering it was in mostly "civilized" and non-combatant areas.

Yet, Safford himself takes it all as an educational opportunity, so you get a tour of the different ports cities like you were on foot with him, dealing with pushy guides, troublesome shopkeepers, and a host of other challenges you would still meet there today. In the process, you get a picture of these sometimes idyllic coasts that are so intimately connected with antiquity in ways that only someone with a Classical education like this journal-writer would so notice and point out. Commentaries on local and national styles abound, and you even get an arduous foot-and-horseback pilgrimage to Jerusalem and surrounding holy places thrown into the mix.

All in all, it's a wonderfully thoughtful time-tour from a naval perspective which you'd never experience any other way, edited by two major lights in the *Constellation's* current preservation efforts. The physical print is a bit difficult to read, and varies in quality, but beyond that, it's a joy to dive into these newly-opened waters.

The H.L. Hunley: The Secret Hope of the Confederacy, by Tom Chaffin. Hill and Wang, New York, 2008

The discovery and subsequent recovery of the Confederate submarine *H.L. Hunley* in the 1990s was the Civil War underwater archaeology discovery of the decade, eclipsing even the recovery of the U.S.S. *Monitor's* remains. It was the subject of much contradictory speculation as conservation proceeded on the artifacts and the full story revealed itself, with a spate of books and articles written on it as investigations proceeded. Here, hopefully, is the final story, engagingly written by University of Tennessee historian Tom Chaffin, who most recently retold the also oft-repeated story of the C.S.S. *Shenandoah* for the same publisher.

For those who might be unfamiliar with the Confederate Navy, the *H.L. Hunley* was the first submarine ever to sink an enemy naval vessel, one of that tiny navy's three unique additions to naval warfare (the others being the strategic use of the mine/torpedo and the surface commerce raider), all three of which were later adopted as pillars of the German Navy's strategy in both world wars. Attempts at submersible war craft date back to the designs of Da Vinci and some were actually tried but failed (like the American Revolutionary War's doughty *Turtle*). This one, however, actually snuck up upon and sank the Union's screw sloop U.S.S. *Housatonic* as she lay on blockade duty off the

harbor of Charleston, SC, on the night of February 17-18, 1864, killing five of her crew, albeit with the loss of the *Hunley* herself and her entire eight-man crew.

Unfortunately, that wasn't the first crew to die aboard the submarine. Two earlier crews had drowned during test runs in the process of developing her, including one of her co-designers and namesake Horace Lawson Hunley, only months before her final voyage. And, two earlier submarines had been attempted before this final attempt plunged into the pages of naval history. Like so many other naval architecture stories from the Confederacy, it was a tale of inspired freelance designers with a brilliant idea scratching together funding and support from conflicting local and national authorities, including both the navy and the army, ranging across the Confederacy itself from the Gulf of Mexico to the coast of South Carolina and points in between.

Because of its late discovery, the story of the missing submarine, which was never seen again after it left on its final mission, has been encrusted with myth, speculation, and embroidered fancy where facts themselves were scarce or unavailable. Then, after it was finally located, the submarine's saga was further continually reinvented as its remains and the remains of those who died inside were exhumed, examined, and analyzed, with several books published along the way. Now that all the details are presumably in, the author has gone back to primary sources to recreate the tale of the *Hunley* and her creators, drawing on navy and army records, newspaper stories, personal letters and diaries, plus the newly-discovered artifacts themselves. This was a difficult task made more daunting by the fact that the boat's three principle designers themselves left few records of this officially highly-secret but much talked-about craft, as they dragged themselves across the Confederate landscape, raising money, finding materials and labor, and building and testing prototypes. Speculation was rife in both the North and the South about the impending underwater warship, a feat that the Union was attempting as well as the Confederacy, and much of the previous lore about the *Hunley* has come from the yarns that were spun about her rather than what actually occurred during her development. New discoveries range from an unsuspected differential gearbox in the propulsion system to DNA tracing to verify remains of the crew members. Perhaps still a mystery: was the mysterious blue light sighted by a crew member aboard her victim the last signal to Confederates ashore that her mission was accomplished, or was that just one of the many fictional stories embellished about the heroics of her martyred crew?

Shedding light on this and much more, author Chaffin has himself spun a well-crafted yarn not only about the *Hunley* and her creators but also what it took to separate the wheat from the chaff and put together all the relevant pieces into what hopefully is the definitive, as well as most entertaining, work on the subject. Those who have been following the ongoing and sometimes confusing saga of the *Hunley* since her discovery will be delighted with this work.

The *Last Shot: The Incredible Story of the CSS Shenandoah and the True Conclusion*

of the American Civil War by Lynn Schooler, Harper Collins, New York, 2005.

Of the handful of successful commerce raiders wielded by the Confederate States Navy during 1861-65, the *CSS Alabama* usually gets all the attention, after that the *Florida* and finally the *Shenandoah.* Originally built on the Clyde as the merchantman *Sea King,* she was the last cruiser bought and commissioned by the Confederacy to prey on Union shipping and after making her way to the arctic Pacific, decimating the Yankee whaling fleet there, and subsequently upon the discovery that the war was already over, she was then turned around and sailed all the way back to Liverpool, successfully evading capture by the entire world's navies in order to surrender peacefully to Great Britain. Unlike *Alabama* and *Florida*, she never saw enemy fire, so she might be considered the most successful of all, having stayed true to orders to avoid military confrontation and only board and sink civilian American commercial vessels, which she did with enormous success, especially considering that much of that commerce had already been driven from the seas by the time she sailed. Her polyglot crew varied even more than those of her sister ships, as did her ports of call, some of which had never even heard of the Confederacy or its reason for being, and the internecine social drama on her decks from the forecastle to the afterdeck certainly topped them all. At the end of more than a year of hostile seas and Byzantine politics, she survived unscathed to lower the last Confederate flag six months after Lee surrendered at Appomattox.

Lynn Schooler's book makes an attempt to cover all this, but it has some drawbacks in approach, style, and editing that naval aficionados may find troublesome and by which popular readers may be misled. One might say that any book that misspells the first name of the *Alabama's* legendary commander (no, it's not "Rafael") becomes immediately suspect. That could be an editor's oversight. So could the attempt to explain even the simplest nautical terms to the landlubber while on the other hand omitting an index. But when the author's reach for pop narrative style starts turning quoted journal observations into on-the-spot you-are-there conversations, novelistically assigning an adjectival variety of imaginary motives and attitudes to the participants, you really begin to wonder about authenticity.

Further, the selectively modern perspective misses much of the inside view of the period culture, which is contained in the original journals but here is often left out as unimportant. Much is made of the officers lusting after the local ladies, but little of the poignant memories of home. There is plenty about storms at sea, but not little about the common interim moments that suffuse the actual journals. While trying to inject dramatic flavor, it loses some of the original authentic flavor. Here's the kind of thing that's unfortunately *left out* (this, from my own reading of assistant surgeon Charles E. Lining's journal):

"Monday, May 1st, 1865, at sea lat. 33o01'20"N, 150o48'15"E....old Chew [5th Lt. Francis F. Chew] went fiddling in the evening to the captain's while Lee [3rd Lt. Sidney Smith Lee] went to work and danced all his clothes off -- I don't know when I have laughed as much as I did at it."

Later Lining observes: "Saturday, Oct. 21, 1865...At night Lee got all the dancers among the men by the main hatch and by a little whiskey set them dancing until after nine

o'clock."

Further, officer/fiddler Lt. Chew already had experience at this sort of thing. He had likely helped arrange the impromptu minstrel show aboard the ironclad *CSS Palmetto State* in late January 1863 on her way downriver to raise the blockade in Charleston harbor. This is, pervasively, the telling kind of intimate connection that's missed in the book.

Not that Schooler hasn't done a lot of footwork of his own. He traveled extensively from Australia to Paris to explore locations relevant to *Shenandoah's* cruise and its aftermath. He even provides an original research side trip into the background of one of the ship's more mysterious personages, Sgt. George P. Canning. He clearly spent much time and effort in an important personal journey to better understand what happened. In the end, however, this is a somewhat dramatized personal interpretation of the period and its events – although it contains some wry and insightful 21st-century commentary.

The author himself remarks in the acknowledgements, "When an amateur sets out to recount an event from the past, he travels on the backs of many strangers." In this book, you travel on Schooler's back, and although you get an interesting overview, it's not quite enough like having your feet on the ground.

Yellow Flag: The Civil War Journal of Surgeon's Steward C. Marion Dodson. Edited by Charles Albert Earp. Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, 2002.

If there is one thing more fearful than being trapped aboard a ship on fire at sea, it must be the experience of quarantine aboard a ship full of yellow fever. In the former, death if it comes will be quick, in the latter slow and painful. This medical journal gives a clear and unflinching picture of the disease, its circumstances, and how it was dealt with during the Civil War years, during which disease took more lives than sword, shot, and shell combined.

C. Marion Dodson certainly didn't anticipate the perils he would face or the responsibilities he would bear when he signed on with the Union Navy fresh out of his boyhood home of St. Michael's, Maryland. Headed for a career as a pharmacist in civilian life, he started off his wartime naval career as a surgeon's steward, which entailed generally helping the ship's doctor when needed and maintaining the inventory of drugs and medical supplies in the ship's pharmacy. By the end of his service, he had become virtually the only doctor available to a host of dying and almost-dying men, stranded in quarantine offshore waiting for the decision of life or death from the dreaded Yellow Jack.

The journal covers the period from March 1864 to June 1865 including service on three different ships, the height of which was during the quarantine of the *U.S.S. Arkansas,* but it also covers in detailed shoreside socializing and courting from Philadelphia to New Orleans and even the hot pursuit of the Confederate ram *William H. Webb,* commanded by Lt. Charles Reed, one of the Confederate Navy's most brash and daring officers.

After a brief time in Philadelphia enlisting and finding an assignment, Dodson began a voyage that must have changed many of his ideas, such as he may have had, about the medical profession. Aboard the *U.S.S. Pocahontas,* his superior Dr. Mann turned out to be an alcoholic and drug addict who was often more trouble than help in tending to what were fortunately routine and minimal medical complaints like broken limbs, rashes, and mild respiratory infections. Dodson rose to the occasion and took the opportunity to pore over the debilitated doctor's medical books to learn all procedures that might apply to more difficult circumstances yet to come.

Such circumstances were clearly on the horizon when during patrol off the Gulf Coast Dodson was asked by the captain of the *Pocahontas* if he would serve on board a fever-afflicted ship even "if no one of my surgeons are willing." The surgeon's steward volunteered immediately and was transferred to the *Arkansas,* on which enough sailors came down with yellow fever to immediately hoist the yellow quarantine flag and effectively strand her, often in rough seas, until the fever passed or there was no one left to man her. Further, the surgeon himself was coming down with the fever, which rendered him useless, leaving Dodson in charge of the whole operation with only the help of whatever other willing crewman he could secure to serve as makeshift nurses.

Although it made things additionally uncomfortable, the often stormy weather may have been the delivery of the vessel and its sufferers, as it probably kept off the mosquitoes that communicated the disease, albeit a fact unknown to medicine at the time. Dodson made do with an host of unguents, pills, tonics, and other medications of the time, interspersed with makeshift funerals as one patient after another produced the fatally telltale black bile, slipped into delirium and coma, and died. The total period of the quarantine aboard Arkansas was less than four weeks, but it must have seemed like an eternity.

The rest of the journey aboard the *U.S.S. Hollyhock* turned out to be far more pleasant, providing ample time for Dodson to pursue an New Orleans belle and even befriend her family and Yankee-hating father. The assignment culminated in a breakneck chase down the Mississippi following the *U.S.S. Richmond* in pursuit of the *C.S.S. William H. Webb* and her commander Lt. Charles Reed, who grounded and burned the ironclad before it could be captured. In the space of fifteen months, Dodson had changed from a green rural druggist to an acting ship's doctor in time of crisis, and much the social doctor with bedside manner immediately after. It was to form the basis of his lifelong practice as physician in Baltimore until his death in 1929, over a generation after the true causes of yellow fever were discovered.

Dodson's journal, precisely legible and clearly written, needs little comment from the editor, who tastefully fleshes out some of the other characters mentioned and gives a medical background of yellow fever. It is another wonderful snapshot of daily life during the Civil War, and a rare picture of period medicine aboard ship.