COMMON MEN IN UNCOMMON TIMES:

ANALYZING THE DAILY LIVES OF AMERICAN CIVIL WAR SAILORS USING PERSONAL NARRATIVES

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

The American Civil War was a tumultuous period for the United States, forcing brother against brother in a battle over the secession of the Confederate States. To study the Civil War sailor, a wealth of archival information exists in the form of personal narratives. Like their ships, naval crews were very much a reflection of where they were built and supplied. The purpose of this thesis is to provide scholars with a collection of narratives relevant to the study of shipboard life and to annotate this list with pertinent details drawn from those sources. There is a wealth of information concerning shipboard life during the American Civil War in the form of personal narratives and primary sources, and the following collection extracts evidence for shipboard life and seeks to contextualize the daily lives of sailors within their societal framework. The primary accounts predictably reflect a standardized lifestyle, but was there any variation between Confederate and United States shipboard conditions? The American Civil War has always been a period of exceptional historical interest, especially to families whose ancestry can be traced back to that cataclysmic event. This annotated collection is meant to be a valuable resource, not just for archaeologists or historians, but for all of those interested in finding the past through the eyes and voices of those who knew it best – the sailors themselves.

"We talked the matter over and could have settled the war in thirty minutes had it been left to us."

- Unknown Confederate soldier after meeting a Union soldier

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INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War was a tumultuous period for the United States, forcing brother against brother in a battle over the secession of the Confederate States, individual states' rights, and the nationally enforced abolition of slavery. From 1861 to 1865, both sides equipped their armies and navies for war utilizing whatever resources they had available. In the case of the Confederacy, this meant seeking assistance from sympathizers in Europe who favored a destabilized and divided American federal government (Dougherty 2013:12). Naval blockades and alternatively, blockade running and commerce raiding played a significant role in the American Civil War – a successful Union blockade meant reducing the flow to the Confederacy of vital weapons, munitions, food, medical supplies, and communications (Symonds 2008:38). Wars have been won and lost on the ability to sustain troops on a long term basis, making blockades crucial to a successful military strategy. Ultimately, the blockade or "Scott's Great Snake," named for General Winfield Scott who proposed this strategy, contributed to the Confederacy's "slow strangulation" in spite of the efforts of blockade runners supplying goods to Southern ports (Catton 1960:73). The Civil War blockade prompted a rapid response in weaponry development, including advances in the strength and abilities of warships.

Maritime warfare was undergoing three technological revolutions during the time of the American Civil War: the transition from sail to steam, the introduction of shell-

firing guns, and the transition from wooden ships to ironclads (Symonds 2012:5,13). The inauguration of steam-powered and armor-plated warships ushered in a new era of warfare, swiftly rendering existing fleets obsolescent or even obsolete (Merli 2004:5). When the American Civil War began, the Confederacy had neither ships nor a navy, while the United States had a navy adapted for ordinary combat but ill-suited for the blockade that their offensive strategy required (Symonds 2012:16, Catton 1960:70). The U.S. government had approximately 90 warships – half were obsolete sailing vessels and the rest were steamships, most of which were decommissioned and in need of repair (Dougherty 2013:6; Symonds 2008:49-50; Catton 1960:70). This left fewer than 20 vessels to handle the task of blockading more than 3,500 miles (5633 km) of Confederate coastline, controlling the rivers and sounds, as well as making offensive strikes on Southern seaports (Symonds 2012:42, Catton 1960:70). Improvisation and innovation became vital for both the Confederate and United States navies. Eventually, the Union blockade would involve 500 ships, a combined total greater than all warships employed in America's previous wars (Symonds 2008:38).

The Confederacy's limited access to the resources required to build and equip warships necessitated a defensive strategy, relying on costal fortifications and sporadic attacks on the North's privately owned merchant shipping (Symonds 2012:41,75). When President Abraham Lincoln declared a blockade on all Southern ports, he essentially recognized the existence of the Confederacy States' status as a belligerent power, thus allowing European sympathizers to politically recognize the Confederacy's rights (Symonds 2008:39). Foreign nations were not required to respect a blockade unless the

United States Navy made it dangerous for them to do so, and the United States hurriedly converted and built enough ships to enforce the blockade (Symonds 2012:42, Catton 1960:72). The U.S. Navy was "one of the most heterogeneous fleets ever seen on the waters of the globe. Anything that could float and carry a gun or two would serve"; the U.S. Navy modified vessels of every kind for service, including ferryboats, excursion steamers, whalers, tugs, fishing schooners, and clippers (Symonds 2008:57; Catton 1960:72-73). These expedients bought enough time for the United States to build and commission 24 500-ton steam-powered gunboats (Dougherty 2013:6; Catton 1960:73). The Confederacy had neither many private shipping companies nor a population suited to seafaring; therefore, they had to rely on foreign assistance for support (Dougherty 2013:6). Most of the high-quality commerce raiding ships were supplied under secret contract by British shipyards (Catton 1960:82). Their ingenuity in spite of lacking resources is not to be ignored, however, as they were able to raise the abandoned hulk of U.S. *Merrimack* and refit the ship into a formidable ironclad (Catton 1960:77).

Historians and archaeologists are well acquainted with the variability in the modification and design of these warships and their ordnance; it is easy to focus on the big picture when it comes to the Civil War, highlighting the major battles and the large-scale social, economic, technological, and political patterns that shaped the American nation for years to come (see Symonds 2012). History deals primarily with social units and only concerns individuals in how they affect the relevant society (Hinchman & Hinchman 1997:18). But the Civil War was fought by men and women, and reducing them to a singular troop or crew dehumanizes their efforts. We can honor the sacrifices

made by these sailors by not erasing them from history, but by discovering their individual voices through the study of their daily lives aboard naval vessels. Sociologists consider daily life to be the routine or habitual way in which a human acts, thinks and feels; it is affected by where we live, our profession, gender and age, and economic standing (Felski 1999:15-17). Sailors, in particular, construct their own identity and subculture that is distinct from the rest of society, a result of their physical isolation and adherence to maritime law. A ship in international waters becomes its own nation with specialized rules, duties, social hierarchy, and language; a sailor's daily life is a reflection of this subculture. The United States' initial fleet, primarily commercial ships refitted to suit battle needs, and the Confederacy's acquired vessels were very much a reflection of where they were built and supplied. This extends to the crews, for which both sides in the war depended on volunteers to fill the enlisted ranks (Figure 1). These men came from all walks of life and were not representative of a standard and highly-regimented navy. A thorough examination of their shipboard lives provides the opportunity to study the resourcefulness and ingenuity employed by the sailors of both the United and Confederate States' navies.

More often than not, the war is studied from a historical viewpoint that emphasizes the soldiers and terrestrial conflicts, thus ignoring the contributions made offshore. When sailors are considered, it is in the context of major naval battles and not the day-to-day aspects of shipboard living. There are some publications the focus exclusively on the Civil War navies; though most of them do not explore shipboard life, these sources provide valuable background information for the formation, strategy, and

administration of the navies. Historian Craig L. Symonds' book, *Lincoln and his Admirals* concerns the administration of the Union Navy by the president's leading admirals and advisors, rather than with the enlisted men who formed the majority of the naval force. Symonds' second book, *The Civil War at Sea,* covers the operational history

Figure 1. Powder monkey on USS *New Hampshire* off Charleston, South Carolina. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

Figure 2. The war on the Mississippi River – night expedition to island no. 10, from a sketch by Mr. Henri Lovie. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

of the Civil War navies on both sides, particularly the impact of changing technology, the establishment of the blockade, and operations combined with land forces. James M. McPherson's account *War on the Waters: the Union & Confederate Navies (1861-65)* outlines the naval campaigns led by military leaders, especially the most important strategic victories that enabled a Union victory. Finally, *Mr. Lincoln's Brown Water Navy: the Mississippi Squadron* is a valuable resource covering the formation and operation of the ships devoted to battling Confederate ships at the mouth of the Mississippi River (Figure 2).

The dearth of naval study is recognized by historian and author of *Union Jacks: Yankee Sailors in the Civil War*, Michael J. Bennett, who contends that the American Civil War is unequivocally remembered as a 'soldiers' war,' despite the fact that sailors were instrumental in the United States' victory (Bennett 2004:ix). Arguably, the United States could have won the war without its naval forces, but the contributions of ships and sailors affected the war's trajectory and length (Symonds 2008:48). With much of the naval warfare taking place out of the public's eye and away from the journalists on the front lines, it was easy for society to focus their attention on the soldiers. The Union's enlisted sailors tended to come from the poor and working classes of Northern cities and lacked many of the social and professional connections of Yankee soldiers (Dougherty 2013:9; Bennett 2004:x). Bennett does not discuss the Confederate sailors, but presumably they were coming from similar, albeit more rural, socio-economic backgrounds.

Bennett's book provides the only published scholarly work that focuses on aspects of daily life in the Union Navy. He draws from a wide variety of sources, primary and secondary, including the extensive collection of surviving governmental records. Bennett groups his analysis thematically, called the categorical-content approach, under the broad categories of: reasons for men enlisting, their experiences on the blockade and in the Mississippi squadron, conditions during battle, maritime culture, religion, and shipboard relations between white and black sailors (Liebich et al 1998:13). His analysis successfully achieves four main objectives: examining the everyday life of sailors, uncovering the social origins of Union sailors, recreating shipboard life for a

"landlubber," and finally, investigating the social and cultural problems that were unique to the American Civil War to contextualize the experiences of sailors within a broader framework (Bennett 2004:xi). Bennett's aims coincide strongly with the purpose of this study – to explore more fully this unique maritime subculture and position it within the rest of American society. His synthesis of primary and secondary sources to examine Union sailors provides an unparalleled chronicle of naval history as it pertains to the shipboard life. He creates a "composite portrait" of Union sailors that is easily understood by the reader – an essential first step for research into a previously unexplored topic (Bennett 2004:xi). *The Confederate Navy: the Ships, the Men and Organization (1861-65),* edited by William N. Still Jr., provides a similar analysis of shipboard life in the Confederacy, relying on personal narratives and government records to study naval regulations and shipboard life. Four chapters pertain to the officers, enlisted crew, and the marine corps (Still 1997:112-192).

Unfortunately, despite its value in discerning broad patterns and similarities within the Union Navy, this synthesis of evidence into broad themes is a reductive approach that discounts the individual variation that existed. If not clearly stated, readers are forced to assume when several narratives are grouped into a similar category that everyone in the group agrees or means the same thing (Riessman 2005:3). Bennett notes that he uses personal narratives to avoid presenting a homogenized picture of these men. But classifying and studying the Union and Confederate navies as a unit, rather than on a ship-by-ship or sailor-by-sailor basis loses the humanistic aspect that is characteristic of anthropology. Individuals shape and are shaped by their respective society. Humans are

variable and unpredictable; analyzing and presenting personal narratives as individual entities allows each author to retain his distinctive voice and preserves the tremendous diversity in experiences and daily life. This method should be seen as complementary to Bennett's synthetic approach, as each benefits the analysis of shipboard life in its own way. There exists an embarrassment of riches when it comes to scholarly resources for the Civil War; the immense availability of primary source material, especially personal narratives, affords anthropologists and historians a unique opportunity to fully reconstruct the lifeways of sailors during the Civil War, rather than being compelled to treat them as a collective entity. It is for this reason that the personal narratives included here will be analyzed and presented individually.

Personal narratives, written by sailors during the war or sometime after to commemorate their time served in the U.S. or Confederate navies, provide the most productive way to study the individualism reflected in the daily lives of Civil War sailors. The journals and memoirs from these sailors demonstrate the assimilation of common men into this particular socio-cultural identity and the adaptation of rapidly changing technology to traditional maritime warfare. The significance of narrative analysis can be understood through the following sentiment: though one's societal biases often make it difficult to fully comprehend the specific thought patterns of another culture, researchers can usually understand a story coming from another culture. Narrative can be described as a "meta-code," a universal in the human experience that is capable of transmitting transcultural messages about reality (White 1990:1). Anthropologists and historians have been drawing upon personal narratives to

reconstruct past lifeways since the disciplines were first created. Each life story contains factual data that can be verified (Bertaux 1995:2). The narratives of daily life share the cultural values and personal experiences that are most relevant to the author and in doing so, can express social conditions and power dynamics in everyday life (Coffey & Atkinson 1996:76). This is particularly true in narratives from sailors, in which every aspect of their life dictated, or was influenced by, their rank in the social and professional hierarchy. Sailors construct their own unique and culturally distinct identity, which is reflected in their journals, memoirs, and correspondence.

Catherine Kohler Riessman has emerged as an expert on narrative analysis, because she was one of the first scholars to recognize that *how* these narratives were written or recorded can reveal incredible nuance and subtext – the structural properties of narratives are related to their social function and allow us to infer meaning from the social action (Coffey & Atkinson 1996:57). According to Riessman, the troubles that are represented in narratives tell us a great deal about the social and historical processes that shaped these events (Riessman 2013:170, Coffey & Atkinson 1996:68). The analysis of personal narratives can illuminate individual and collection action, the processes by which human relationships are made and changed, cultural norms, and provide access to people's identity and personality, allowing for the critical examination of cultural conventions and social norms (Riessman 2013:170, Lieblich et al 1998:7, Coffey & Atkinson 1996:67-68,80). Riessman primarily draws upon interviews, rather than historical accounts, when discussing personal narratives. But her call for critically analyzing narratives is even more imperative when considering these types of primary

sources – they provide the last remaining connection to a unique maritime culture, formed in response to rapidly changing technology and at a crossroads in American history (Symonds 2012:4). In the same way that shipwrecks are considered time capsules to a specific point in the past, these narratives offer a window to view an individual and his surrounding society.

But sociologists and anthropologists recognize a difference between narrative truth and historical truth, and each story is affected by the motivation and intent for writing, as well as the nature of the audience (Lieblich et al 1998:8). Narratives "cannot be divorced from their social milieu," meaning that they must be interpreted accordingly; it requires critical analysis to determine these biases and to avoid interpreting the source in a way that is affected by your own cultural lens (Riessman 2013:171, Coffey & Atkinson 1996:80). However, this characteristic is exactly what makes personal narratives so valuable in the reconstruction of past lifeways – narratives refract, rather than mirror the past (Riessman 2005:6). How the authors interpret their surroundings and events is a direct reflection of the society and culture in which he or she is interacting. The subjectivity inherent to narratives – their "rootedness" in time, place, and personal experience – provides an individual perspective that is lost in collective histories (Riessman 1993:5). The trustworthiness of these accounts can't be evaluated using the traditional criteria for primary sources; their analysis requires both an attention to subtlety and an understanding of the historical context (Riessman 2013:184).

The applications of these narratives go beyond history and delve into archaeology: the authors explain the function of tools commonly found in shipwreck

sites; they provide information about the ship's rigging, the elements of which are frequently lost during the ship's wrecking; they name the ports of call which helps explain foreign or exotic materials; and they juxtapose certain types or brands of personal effects with the various classes of hierarchy on board, allowing archaeologists to examine the spatial relationships of recovered artifacts. The American Civil War occurred recently in the relative span of human history, and therefore the sheer amount of information available allows archaeologists and historians to make strides in recreating and contextualizing the lifestyles of these men and women. Despite living in the digital age, information from written sources is still lost over time and our ability to culturally connect and interpret the lives of these sailors will become increasingly difficult.

With the exception of Bennett, scholars have yet to even attempt to contextualize the daily lives of Union and Confederate sailors within their societal framework and determine to what extent these subcultures were a manifestation of sailors' lives ashore. Specifically, to what degree did a sailor's shipboard life reflect the society that produced the ship and crew? Or, did shipboard life represent an entirely separate, socio-culturally constructed entity? During the Civil War, both sides saw an influx of non-military personnel into the Federal and Confederate navies that may be echoed in personal narratives. Was there any variation between Confederate and Union shipboard conditions or patterns of behavior across both navies, or was variation largely a reflection of a sailor's rank? The lives of Civil War sailors cannot be summarized by their rank or reduced to the few moments in which they engaged in battle. The story of

their service is distinctly their own and a wealth of information exists to aid in the reconstruction of their lives in the form of personal narratives, which can be sub-divided into four main categories: logs and journals; memoirs; correspondence; and government records.

Of the four groups, logs and journals may be considered the most helpful in the reconstruction of shipboard life, because they were written contemporaneously with the events they are recording, by the men who saw them firsthand. As such, they are most likely to accurately depict the proceedings on the ship. Logs are official records kept by the captain, which have the sole purpose of reflecting all matters aboard the vessel: the number and ranks of crew members, ports visited, and an inventory of the items on board. They provide valuable and reliable details that can be used to reconstruct the crew's diet, the proliferation of disease, and presumably, any aberrations from the day-to-day operations of the ship. The main disadvantage regarding these records is their abbreviated and variable nature – log entries are meant to briefly list dates and occurrences and not elaborate further, and what is logged is at the discretion of the author. Journals are valuable because unlike ships' logs, the sailors writing them have the freedom to express additional information, like the crew's reaction to their diet, their daily responsibilities, social interactions, ceremonial procedures for higher-ranked officers, and how the crew spent its leisure time. This anecdotal evidence can be extremely useful for reconstructing shipboard life, because it highlights the more humble daily pursuits of the average Civil War sailor. As with any first-person source, there is

potential for bias and inaccuracy, but the evidence gleaned from these journals still has great value.

Memoirs, also very valuable firsthand accounts, are likely to cover several of the same topics as journals but were written later in the sailors' lives. Accordingly, some pertinent details may be forgotten, exaggerated, or misremembered, and therefore these sources must be analyzed with discretion. These narratives also tend to gloss over the more mundane daily activities in favor of adventurous pursuits and battles, which contribute less to the reconstruction of shipboard life. Certain memoirs are particularly valuable because they chronicle the lives of men who spent decades serving in the Navy. These have the potential to reveal transitions in shipboard life from the mid- to late 19th century. Some of the authors were Southerners who spent years in the U.S. Navy before transferring to the Confederate Navy at the onset of the Civil War. These narratives are especially valuable because they are more likely to include details regarding the differences between Union and Confederate shipboard life.

The classification 'correspondence' refers to letters and messages, and therefore maintains the same advantage as the logs and journals – they were written contemporaneously with the war and therefore reflect an immediacy and, in certain respects, more accuracy. Though some may have been written for the public, such correspondence is useful because their writers intended the letters for private eyes and did not expect them to be published, so there might be less exaggeration. They reveal a true opinion of the events of the war, rather than a governmentally censored version. Conversely, the opposite could be true – men writing home might wish to convey a

sense of heroism and grandeur to friends or console anxious mothers and loved ones by painting a less harrowing picture of life at sea. Nonetheless, correspondence provides considerable evidence regarding shipboard life during the Civil War because it is comparable to journals; it gives a first-person viewpoint of the daily activities of sailors and therefore provides valuable insight.

Government records include several types of sources – official statements by officers, transcribed communications between the Secretary of the Navy and naval officers, committee proceedings, court martial records, and meeting agendas. Even though these sources avoid the personal bias seen in personal narratives, they are much less helpful to the reconstruction of shipboard life because their purpose is to succinctly record events relevant to the military, not chronicle the lives of the sailors. However, these records still provide very important contextual information, serving to corroborate the accounts and events described in the narratives. Details like these can be used to verify the information in personal narratives and extrapolate certain aspects of shipboard life, such as the wages of officers and common sailors, approximate amount of living space and leisure time (based on crew and ship size), and potential inter-ship variation. Certain sources, such as the *Statistical pocket manual, of the Army, Navy, and the census of the United States of America: together with statistics of all foreign navies*, provide a standard against which the narratives can be compared, allowing us to determine the extent of regulation in naval practice in the North. Unfortunately, a comparable manual for the Confederacy was most likely never written or published in mass quantities.

It is evident in reading these narratives that each has a distinctive voice and purpose, especially depending on the naval rank of the author. Officers and enlisted crew had radically different experiences while on board, and these perspectives manifest in their writing, most notably in which content they choose to include and their motivation for documenting their experiences. Bennett remarks that he views the observations of officers skeptically, as they tended to view all sailors through a stereotypical lens (2004:xiii). A senior officer may be writing to exhibit his prestige in command and therefore includes more details pertaining to significant naval battles, but a lower-ranking officer or enlisted sailor concerned simply with documenting his time on board is more likely to account for diet, leisure activities, ship maintenance, and inter-personal relations (especially with regards to the senior officers). With different access to foods, leisure opportunities, and even parts of the ship, seamen aboard the same ship expressed drastically unique accounts of shipboard life due to these differences in rank and social position. It is also necessary to consider the author's prior experience in the navy; young midshipmen and newly enlisted sailors are more prone to comment on the details of shipboard life than older, more experienced officers simply because everything is new and exciting. These generalized examples certainly do not hold true for each source, but explain two important tenets of analyzing personal narratives: 1) knowing the author's rank and social position is vital to understanding his purpose for writing and the biases of his perspective, and 2) seamen aboard the same ship can express drastically unique accounts of shipboard life due to these differences in rank and social position.

Similarly, the type of naval service of each author is reflected in his narrative; the monotony of service during blockade duty radically differs from that of a crewmember on board a commerce raider, ironclad, or blockade runner (Symonds 2008, Dougherty 2013). The sailors assigned to gunboats and cruisers on blockade duty had one objective – to not let any ships pass. With easy access to the coast and consistent resupply by the U.S. government, blockade duty is most representative of a regulated military lifestyle. Invariably keeping watch was dreaded by sailors as monotonous and tedious – far from the adventure promised to many of the new recruits (Symonds 2012:56). However, sailors filled their off-duty time with inventive communal activities that result in a fascinating and unique maritime culture that comes to life when reading their narratives. Contrastingly, the stories from men serving aboard commerce raiders were full of exploration and distant travel, and each ship represents a distinct experience that was unlike that of any other crew. These ships were primarily operated by the Confederacy because they had the most to gain by attacking the North's privately owned merchant ships – they not only acquired valuable cargo items, but they dealt an economic blow to the Union in the process (Symonds 2008:40-41,61).

Blockade runners were precisely what they sound like – fast ships that could skirt the Union blockade to deliver goods to the Confederacy and in the process, make a hefty profit (Symonds 2012:40-41). Narratives from time served aboard these ships present an interesting topic for study because the crews weren't comprised of traditional naval sailors, but rather commercial or privately owned crews, whose owners assumed the risk of running the blockade in order to achieve high profits (Catton 1960:82-83). Their

narratives offer an outsider's perspective of the Union blockading ships and Confederate ports. Lastly, personal narratives from sailors aboard ironclads provide insight into a completely novel and unprecedented type of naval service. The Confederate system of inland forts and gunboats, in addition to the Union's Mississippi Squadron, is one of the least studied aspects of the Civil War but provides examples for some of the most improvised vessels in the war (Joiner 2007:xi). Riverine service, or the 'Brown Water Navy,' was unlike anything seen in saltwater navies. Ironclads were a huge technological achievement for their time, paving the way for modern technological developments in naval warships.

The study of personal narratives and other primary sources has the potential to illustrate the day-to-day activities of the average Civil War sailor by gleaning pertinent information that frequently goes unnoticed. Rather than drawing conclusions solely from accounts or artifacts deemed high in value, archaeologists can combine material evidence with these narratives to form a more complete picture of shipboard life. Shipboard life is a topic seldom studied, but has the potential to generate interest among a wide audience. The American Civil War has always been a period of exceptional historical interest, especially to families whose ancestry can be traced back that far. This annotated collection is meant to be a valuable resource, not just for archaeologists or historians, but for all of those interested in reimagining the Civil War's naval struggle through the eyes and voices of those who knew it best – the sailors themselves.

CHAPTER II

LOGS AND JOURNALS

The Duel between the Alabama *and the* Kearsarge, by John M. Browne

This personal narrative was written after the Civil War ended by John M. Browne, the surgeon aboard USS *Kearsarge* during the battle with CSS *Alabama* outside the harbor at Cherbourg, France.[1] As a member of the crew, Browne presented a first-hand account of the battle, which lends credibility to his version of the events. Browne joined the Union Navy as a surgeon in 1853 and offers a different perspective of shipboard life than the traditional enlisted sailor. Browne mentioned that Semmes, captain of *Alabama* had to officially accept the challenge of battle, which he did via messenger, even asking for a few extra days to prepare. He highlighted the preparations made by the crew of *Alabama* based on information from French spies, which included what Browne considered "unusual arrangements" – the hurried landing of coal; the transfer of valuable articles to shore, such as captured chronometers, specie, and the bills of ransomed vessels; and the sharpening of swords, cutlasses, and boarding-pikes. According to Browne, the crew aboard *Kearsarge* also prepared; the decks had been holy-stoned, the bright work cleaned, and the guns polished. As it was a Sunday and many days after the original challenge, the crew of *Kearsarge* were dressed in Sunday suits. They were inspected at quarters and dismissed to attend divine service, which was customary.

[1] This source was an online excerpt, so there are no associated page numbers.

When the crew of *Kearsarge* spotted *Alabama* steaming out of the harbor, the drum beat to communicate that the crew should move to general quarters. Throughout the battle the crew was subjected to an incessant storm of shot and shell, but their discipline and training allowed them to keep their stations and obey instructions. When the battle had clearly turned in favor of the Federal ship, "nothing could restrain the enthusiasm of our men. Cheer succeeded cheer; caps were thrown in the air or overboard; jackets were discarded." Browne discussed the various duties on board that had been decided upon well before the battle in the event of an emergency; when a shell exploded in the hammock-netting and set the ship on fire, the alarm calling for fire-quarters was sounded, and men who had been detailed for such an emergency put out the fire. After *Alabama* started to sink, the wounded and the boys who could not swim, were sent away in the quarter-boats, which indicated that in the 19th century it was common for men to join the navy who could not swim. Interestingly, Captain Semmes dropped his sword into the sea and jumped overboard with the remaining officers and men. This was a contentious gesture by a captain who refused to surrender his sword to the enemy captain, which was the expected ceremonial procedure for a captain losing his ship. While this source is limited in its scope, it still provides relevant information and corroborates some of the details mentioned regarding shipboard life from other sources.

***Four Years of Fighting: a volume of personal observation with the army and navy, from the first battle of Bull Run to the fall of Richmond,* by Charles Coffin**

This extensive volume of nearly 600 pages written by Charles Coffin recorded his personal observations and experiences during the American Civil War. Coffin was an American journalist and considered one of the best-known newspaper correspondents of the Civil War. He had the privilege to accompany the Federal Army to many battles, including the well-known actions at Bull Run, Antietam, and Fort Sumter (1). As a journalist rather than a sailor, his perspective is devoid of some of the nuance that accompanies the struggles of battle; however, as his role in the war was largely non-participatory, Coffin would have a front-row seat when it came to recording wartime actions. Since Coffin's viewpoint was etic and he was unfamiliar with daily aspects of military life, he may have been more likely to record more mundane details about the soldiers and sailors than they would have included in their own personal narratives. However, with journalism bias nearly always follows, especially regarding political allegiance – it is therefore expected that the author might tailor his narrative to put the United States in a fairer light compared to the Confederacy. The narrative was published in 1866 right after the culmination of the Civil War and is based entirely on personal notes; therefore it is being considered alongside the logs and journals.

Coffin's narrative is quite detailed but almost extensively deals with the Army, rather than the Navy. However, he does dedicate one chapter to naval affairs, specifically the ironclads' attack on Fort Sumter on 7 April 1863, entitled "The Ironclads in Action." It is on this chapter that the analysis is focused, though readers interested in

terrestrial battles should certainly consider Coffin's narrative as a potential source. The author was at anchor in a nearby United States gunboat, well within range to record the events of the battle, which employed nine Union ironclads, including the famous *New Ironsides*. While narrow in scope, his narrative provides fascinating insight into a new paradigm in naval warfare.

Coffin's narrative starts out with a description of the battle between *Montauk*, a Union monitor, and the Confederate *Nashville*, an infamous blockade-runner that had been causing grief for American blockade ships. Here Coffin presented an idea of the average day of a blockade gunboat - the look-out took his position to watch for Confederate vessels and the sentinels passed back and forth on deck, with all hands on watch searching the darkness and listening for the sound of oars or paddle-wheels (248). It is during this tense moment that Coffin remarked upon his excitement: "How charming the trip! exhilarating, and sufficiently exciting, under the expectation of falling in with a hostile gunboat, to bring every nerve into action" (248). Whether the sailors around him considered the trip to be "charming" is not known, but Coffin did highlight the extraordinary anxiety that accompanied these encounters, which nearly always took place under the cover of night to favor the blockade-runners' getaway. After spotting the blockade-runner, *Montauk* managed to hit *Nashville* with one of its guns and the shell exploded inside the steamer, catching the cotton on fire and then exploding the magazine. The crew fled to the marshes but irrevocable damage had already been done to the valuable cargo (249). Coffin noted some of the weaknesses of monitors which greatly impacted their operation in battle and daily activities: monitors had to move with

the tide, thus inhibiting their ability to chase down prey; and while they could withstand the heaviest guns, even within a half-mile (805 m) range, they returned fire very slowly, which affected their strategy in battle (249).

Coffin moved on to his narrative concerning the attack on Fort Sumter by a force of nine ironclads – *Weehawken*, *Passaic*, *Montauk*, *Patapsco*, *Ironsides*, *Catskill*, *Nantucket*, *Nahant*, and *Keokuk* (250) (Figure 3) . Here he described preparations made by the crew before the battle.

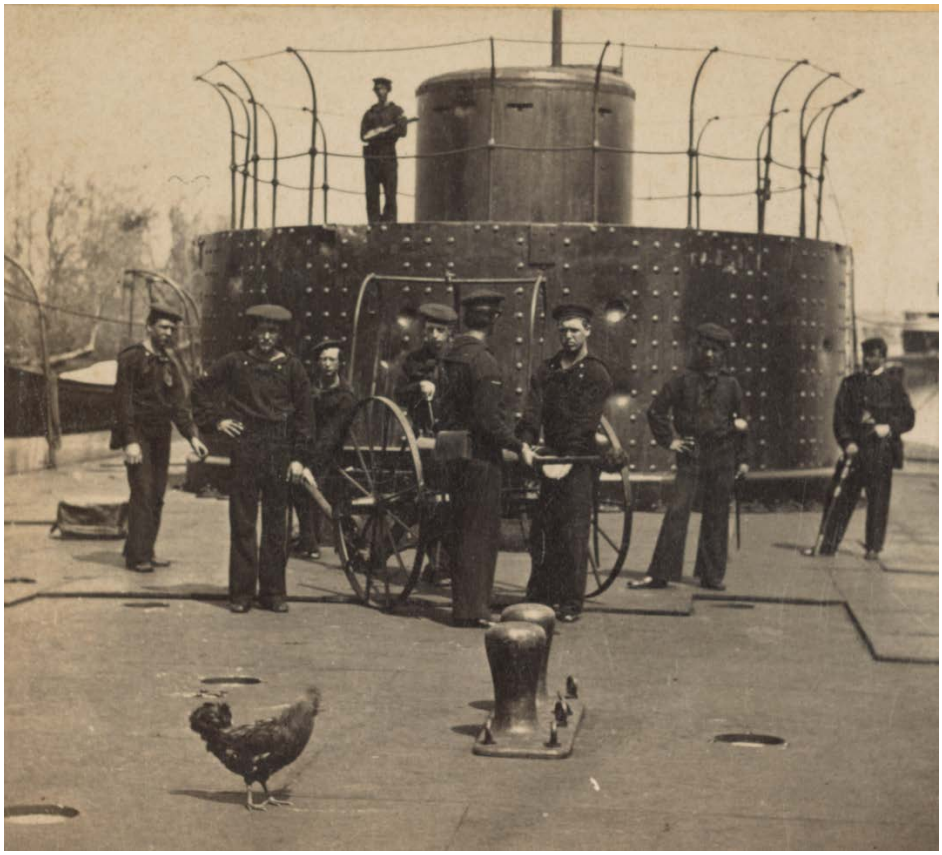

Figure 3. Sailors in front of the turret on USS *Lehigh*.
(Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

The crew had to hoist shot and shells from the hold to the deck, which was bedded with sand-bags, to facilitate the firing process. The pilot house was wrapped with cable for reasons not mentioned, but undoubtedly to improve its resistance to grape, canister, and musket shot. The crew stowed all the light materials to streamline their workspace and slushed the iron plating with grease, possibly in a bid to increase the deflective nature of the armored hull (251). Coffin made a poignant remark about the shift in naval warfare with the introduction of ironclads – "In this battle of ironclads there are no clouds of canvas, no beautiful models of marine architecture, none of the stateliness and majesty which have marked hundreds of great naval engagements. There are no human beings in sight, – no propelling power is visible. There are simply eight black specks and one oblong block gliding along the water, like so many bugs" (251).

He observed the extremely loud nature of the battle, calling it a "screaming in the air, a buzzing and humming never before so loud," leaving the reader to wonder whether the armored hulls of the ironclads amplified the noise for the sailors inside (252). The smoke was so thick in the air that rebel gunners had to wait for the breeze to clear away the cloud of gun smoke so they could see the ironclads to aim and continue shooting (252). Coffin estimated the firing of 70 guns per minute between lapses of reloading (253). The ironclads were forced to retreat after doing substantial damage to the walls of Fort Sumter, and the damage to the ironclads was assessed. *Keokuk,* a more vulnerable ironclad design, had been hit 94 times, causing considerable above-the-waterline damage to the vessel, but only three of her crew were wounded (256). Interestingly, 11 crew members on board *Nahant* received contusions from flying bolt-heads in the turret,

revealing an important vulnerability in the vessel's design that was dangerous to gunners in that confined space (256). In the end, the ironclads proved remarkably safe, as there were only 15 injuries despite the monitors being struck about 350 times (257).

***Never Caught: Personal Adventures Connected with Twelve Successful Trips in Blockade-Running during the American Civil War, 1863-64,* by Captain Roberts (Augustus Charles Hobart-Hampden)**

This journal was written by Augustus Hobart-Hampden under the pseudonym Captain Roberts, in which he describes a brief account of his adventures in blockade-running. His choice to use a pseudonym is unexplained in the text, though Hobart-Hampden started the narrative by justifying the legality of blockade-running so he may have excluded his real name to evade persecution for what some decried as war-profiteering. Its publication date in 1867, only shortly after the culmination of the war, further supports this conclusion – many Americans may have been offended by his stories of duping the Union blockade line. He claimed to have written this account with the purpose of revealing just how inefficient blockades are as a naval strategy, especially when heavy forts guard the entrances to the blockaded harbors (3). Indeed, his twelve successful trips do seem to indicate that the American blockade ships were incapable of stopping blockade-runners from moving goods between Southern and British ports. Hobart-Hampden operated two ships during two terms of service as a blockade-runner during the American Civil War – a double-screw steamer (6) and a new and very fast paddle-wheel vessel (49). The shipboard life did not vary much between the two vessels,

so the evidence from his narrative will be presented thematically, under the following categories: the nature of blockade-running, crew, duties, payment, food, technology, and health. As an English sailor, Hobart-Hampden's narrative provides a wealth of information regarding shipboard life from a commercial standpoint during the Civil War, rather than from a military perspective. He gives fascinating insight into a group of people who put their lives on the line to facilitate trade between the Confederacy and Great Britain, and by doing so, were able to profit greatly from the conflict. The enterprising business of blockade running exemplified the old adage, "fortune favors the brave."

Hobart-Hampden went into great detail describing the business of blockade running as it occurred during the American Civil War, and subsequently, its effect on United States blockade ships. He observed that the blockade ships faced "harassing, wearying work," as the Confederate forts distracted the blockade fleets with fire-ships, torpedoes, and all manner of annoyances to help runners sneak past (3). Being a blockade runner during such a dangerous time required a cool head, strong nerve and determination of character (6). According to the author, of the 66 blockade runners employed during the war, more than 40 were captured or destroyed by their own crews, but most of them made several runs beforehand and therefore still paid for themselves (35). The accuracy of this account is called into question; although the secret nature of blockade running made it difficult to determine the total number of ships used for such transport during the war, it was certainly more than 66, with estimates ranging from 300 to 1500. Blockade runner crews took their safety very seriously, for along with it was

coupled the promise of great profit upon returning to port. In fact, no chickens were allowed on board because they were too loud and could reveal the ship's position (7).

In order to remain unseen by the blockade fleets, the ships' pilots hugged the shore as closely as possible, in the shallows where large ships could not patrol. Often, vessels had to wait for high tide to make it over the sandbars outside the river entrance (19). If a ship became stranded on a sandbar where it could be spotted by blockade ships, the crew escaped to the shore and set fire to the ship, so that the United States could not profit from the valuable cargo (13). Interestingly, the cargo was always stowed by an outside party, hired by the owner or his agent, probably to assure maximum profitability per trip. The cotton to be taken to Nassau in the Bahamas was stowed by expert stevedores, and it was very tightly packed. A tier of cotton bales was put fore and aft in every available spot on the deck, leaving openings for entering the cabins, engine room, and forecastle, with another thinner tier on top of that (17). There was so much weight forward that Hobart-Hampden had to move cotton aft just to correct the trim and be able to fully immerse the screws (20). A smoking apparatus was employed by the garrisons stationed at the forts to search for people fleeing to Nassau hidden among the tightly spaced cargo (18). The author does not explain what kind of stowaways the Confederates were looking for, but slaves and army deserters are two possibilities. In two instances, men hid in Hobart-Hampden's cargo without his knowledge; one was discovered before leaving Wilmington, but another was discovered 24 hours into the voyage, having been nearly squashed to death by the cargo (33). Blockade-running being a risky and anxious business, the crew celebrated safely passing the blockade by lighting

all the lights that had to be extinguished to remain unseen and serving supper and grog plentifully to the crew members (12).

Hobart-Hampden only briefly touched on the crew, which consisted of a captain, three officers, three engineers, 10 seamen and 18 firemen, all of whom were Englishmen (6). As they were not actual citizens of the Confederacy, according to Hobart-Hampden, captured crewmen were not treated too severely by U.S. Navy sailors; some actually complimented their courage and pluck, unless the prisoners had caused additional damage to their ship or destroyed the valuable compasses and chronometers after the surrender of the blockade runner (47). Captured crewmen were subjected to prison and a trial in Admiralty Court, but were only kept for 10 days; many returned to blockade running soon afterwards (48). Hobart-Hampden did remark upon one enduring sailor trait, and that is their superstitious nature; he said this was made even worse when, upon one voyage, several sharks circled the vessel (56).

Blockade running was a very different enterprise from typical naval service, and the duties of the crew and the strategies for maneuvering the ship varied quite substantially from those discussed in other narratives. Most noticeably, there was a lookout stationed around the clock. A small crow's nest on the foremast was used as a lookout place; the need for a lookout was mentioned several times, as the crew needed to be constantly aware of the location of the blockade fleets in order to safely navigate their course (6). To do this, the runner stayed as close to the shore as possible, and when close to a river entrance, flashed a light on the vessel's inshore side, which was answered by Confederate soldiers with a small light on the beach close to the water's edge and

another further inland (9, 12). Without lights or landmarks as a guide, it was very perilous to find the entrances to rivers at night (12). It was necessary to move at night when the boats were less visible to patrolling blockade ships. At one point, the author's ship ran aground and was sighted by United States gunboats; the captain gave everyone on board the option to leave the ship but the entire crew chose to stay. They eventually managed to free the ship from the sandbar when all hands ran from one end of the vessel to the other, altering the trim and allowing the ship to slip into deeper water (39).

Hobart-Hampden remarked that he and the crew received very high wages. In fact, the Royal Navy had a hard time dealing with desertion of their sailors due to the temptation of potential profits from blockade running (6). The captain, officers, and crew all received a "handsome bounty," which was given to them before leaving port, in case they were captured or injured (7). To make additional money on the side, the captain could take special requests for trade items to bring back personally (15). In one instance, Hobart-Hampden traded with local merchants and brought in a very large profit – a nearly 1100 percent return value on flower corsages he purchased in Nassau (15). He also heard of merchants selling items farther inside the Confederacy's interior at seven times their cost because there was such high demand for material items that the South could not manufacture on its own (17). Captains were highly paid because they had the most responsibility; Hobart-Hampden boasted that the captain of a blockade runner could earn a governor's annual salary in just one month (24). The bounty was paid for a round trip, but half was always paid in advance in the event of a capture or loss. For a round trip, captains received £1000; chief officers received £250; the second and third

officers received £150; chief engineers, responsible for maintaining the steam engines, received £500; crew and firemen received about £50; and the pilot received £750. Pilots were highly paid because of the risk and responsibility that accompanied their position, and because the American authorities were especially severe with them if they were captured (25, 43). Once the bounty was paid, no one could leave the ship and they soon left port, so the crew could not desert with their advance (25).

Hobart-Hampden only touches on some of the food items consumed while on board or at port. He mentioned the consumption of champagne cocktails, made with champagne, bitters, and pounded ice while celebrating in port on one occasion (14). He frequently discussed brandy, which seemed to be a common daily drink for the captain (15). Once, his cargo consisted of several food items that he took to troops in a Confederate fort, including sardines, bologna sausages, and a drink composed of claret, brandy, soda water, and ice (50). Lastly, Hobart-Hampden claimed that a three-day heavy gale of wind hit the ship, which prevented them from cooking because the sea put out the galley-fire; he does not say what the crew subsisted on during these three days (43).

The crews of blockade-runners spent a considerable amount of time ashore while their ship's cargo was packed or unpacked, during which time they stayed in hotels or boarding houses (14). Celebrating captains and crews of blockade-runners in Nassau took advantage of the liberal amounts of entertainment provided by the ship owner's agent (24-25). Based on the activities and merriment revealed in Nassau, it seems they suffered few negative effects during the war; according to Hobart-Hampden, blockade

runners always lived well, kept a famous table and drank the best of wine (37). Their high profits enabled a grand lifestyle when it came to food, drink, and entertainment ashore.

Hobart-Hampden's narrative presented evidence of technology employed during this time, especially concerning the act of signaling. Already mentioned was the implementation of a light signaling system for navigating the entrances of rivers, but Hobart-Hampden also mentioned that rockets were used as signals (34). He noted that blockade ships used a signaling system which rapidly flashed different colored lights from the paddle boxes but he was never able to discern the system to use it to his advantage (38). After the fierce storm that knocked out their galley-fire, they drifted many miles and used meridian observations to determine their latitude but had no way to tell their longitude, suggesting their chronometers were no longer functional (44). They relied on visual observation extensively to make their way from port to port, and being English, were at a distinct disadvantage for navigating the waterways of the southeastern coast of America.

Lastly, Hobart-Hampden's narrative provides evidence regarding the general health of the crew during these voyages. He mentioned that, without any kind of surgeon on board, the chief officer provided medical treatment. Because the officer often prescribed croton oil (an oil made from the seeds of the Purging Croton tree (*Croton tiglium*) that induced diarrhea) for ailments (which was apparently very unpleasant to consume), none of the crew came back twice for treatment and there were consequently few complaints of sickness on board (45-46). However, an outbreak of yellow fever

started in the Bahama and the spread of yellow fever increased in Bermuda due to the drunkenness and dirty habits of the blockade-running crews as well as the poor drainage systems in St. George. Despite every attempt to avoid the sickness, eventually members of his crew succumbed to it. Captain Hobart-Hampden pulled to shore to drop off the sick men, but the yellow fever kept spreading throughout the crew. Consequently, two crewmen died and their bodies were wrapped in rough shrouds, a prayer service was held and the dead were dropped into the sea (56). The captain, despite the dangers of the patrolling blockade fleet made a point of upholding funeral rites.

The American Civil War generated a need for specialized blockade-running ships with a minimal profile that could avoid discovery by the United States, and in doing so, spawned a type of shipboard service that was previously reserved for less gentlemanly pursuits. It is obvious based on Hobart-Hampden's account that shipboard life for these sailors was quite different from a military regimen or standard, commercially-oriented lifestyle to which they were accustomed. Sailors on these vessels were subject to shorter, albeit stressful voyages, and enjoyed ample food, drink, payment, and generally good health – not the case for many ordinary naval seamen during the Civil War. That being said, narratives about blockade-running are hardly representative of shipboard life for Union and Confederate sailors and therefore no additional blockade-running narratives will be included in this collection. However, scholars interested in studying the topic more extensively should consider the following narratives: *Running the Blockade: A Personal Narrative of Adventures, Risks, and Escapes during the American Civil War*, by Thomas E. Taylor; *Tales of the Cape Fear Blockade, Being a Turn of the Century*

Account of Blockade Running, by James Sprunt; *The Adventures of a Blockade Runner; or, Trade in Time of War*, by William Watson; and *The Narrative of a Blockade-Runner*, by John Wilkin.

CHAPTER III

MEMOIRS AND RECOLLECTIONS

Personal Narratives of Events in the War of the Rebellion, by William H. Badlam

William Badlam was a sailor aboard USS *Kearsarge*, a ship most famous for sinking the notorious Confederate commerce raider CSS *Alabama*. The following analysis examines one chapter in the series of personal narratives, the only one pertaining to naval affairs (specifically discussing the famous battle at sea between the Union and Confederate ships just outside the French port of Cherbourg). CSS *Alabama* was world-renowned, having cost the English government 15.5 million dollars in reparations (since it was British shipbuilders who proffered and outfitted the ship). Nearly every United States sailor was anxious to be part of the crew that finally defeated the scourge of U.S. maritime commerce (24). Given the notoriety of this Confederate ship and the battle that brought about its demise, this source, though limited, still holds historical value.

Badlam provided detail about the officer corps on board USS *Kearsarge*; he considered life aboard the ship to be monotonous, as officers and crew all had routine duties when at sea and at port. At sea, the deck officers and engineers had four hours on duty and eight hours off, except in very severe storms when all hands were on duty until the bad weather abated. When the ship was at anchor, there was an anchor watch of only a few men at a time. The officers had “day’s duty” from 8 am to 8 pm every third day and one watch of four hours each night (35). He made no mention of the crew’s

schedule, but it was presumably under the same watch system as stated for the officers. Badlam recalled that the entire crew was eager at the prospect of fighting *Alabama*; there were three cheers from the crew and the men's eyes glistened with excitement (25). Directly before the battle, church services were held as they were every Sunday for all hands on the quarter deck (26). During the battle, one of *Alabama*'s shot broke the stop that held the U.S. flag in place, letting the flag flap loosely in the breeze which was considered a very good omen by the "old salts," perpetuating the idea that most sailors subscribed to varying degrees of superstitious beliefs (32).

Badlam was vague about health and diet; other than a brief mention about the crew harpooning fish, during which he failed to mention whether this was a necessary supplement to the shipboard diet or a recreational activity, Badlam did not address ship rations for crew or officers (7). To stay clean, the men bathed overboard, usually 50 or 60 at a time (7). Unfortunately, this did not contribute favorably to every man's health; a young sailor named Tibbetts was killed by a shark that attacked the men while bathing (8). After the battle between *Alabama* and *Kearsarge*, the wounded of both vessels were sent to an unnamed Marine Hospital, but no further information is provided regarding their care (30). Badlam discussed some of the daily duties as well as special preparations made before battle. Efforts were made to protect the engines and boilers with spare chain cables (10). They hid the cables with a new wood covering they painted, resulting in an armored hull that was virtually indistinguishable from a typical wooden hull, even at short distance (10). Most importantly, the officers and crew sharpened swords and

cutlasses, drilled at the guns and checked to make sure every part of the ship was in working order for the pending battle (26).

Despite the majority of the narrative revolving around the battle, Badlam also mentioned some of the leisure activities undertaken by the officers. While cruising off the shores of Spain, several officers went to San Roque to see a bull fight (6). In another instance, the captain and four other officers enjoyed a day of relaxation when they hired donkeys with drivers and traveled to the interior of a small, unnamed island to take hot sulfur baths in the springs of St. Michael (possibly Sao Miguel Island in Portugal's Azores in the Central North Atlantic) (11). In the evenings, the officers received invitations from dignitaries on shore to receptions, balls, dinners, theater performances, and bull fights. Then they returned the favor by hosting entertainment onboard the ship, usually with dinners, dances, or minstrel shows. The officers also went on shore, often for a week or more at a time, to get away from the constraints of shipboard life (36).

While fairly limited in scope, William Badlam's brief narrative provides details about the special circumstance of battle preparations. This narrative is but one example of the fairly extensive collection of memoirs and journals from Civil War soldiers and sailors collected by the Rhode Island Soldiers and Sailors Historical Society, many of which were never published as distinct narratives. Even though most of the contributions are from soldiers rather than sailors, this seven-series collection of approximately 70 sources is an extremely valuable source to any Civil War scholar.

***Memoirs of Service with John Yates Beall, C.S.N.*, by William Baker**

This narrative was written by William Baker, who had written several articles after the war based on his experiences that were published with his permission, after many interviews, by editor Douglas Freeman (3). Baker tells the story of his time spent as a commissioned officer in the Confederate Navy under the command of John Yates Beall and their privateering exploits on the Potomac River, Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay. His narrative is of historical importance as it chronicles the naval pursuits of Beall – a Southern military hero, called both "dear to the Southern people" and a "terror to the Federals" (3-5). According to the editor, little had been written at that time about Beall or his raids in the Chesapeake, so Baker's account provides an insider's view of the events (6). However, a secondary source, *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, includes an entry on Mr. Beall (Moseley 2006:417-418). Though Beall was commissioned as an acting master in the Confederate Navy, no ships were available and he was given orders to capture his own from the Union. Beall and his crew are famous for their capture of a Federal gunboat in the Chesapeake with only a handful of men (5). Baker wrote the articles initially to protest Union efforts to label Beall and his men as pirates, so there is a possible source of bias in this narrative; perhaps more than most naval chroniclers, Baker did not wish to cast his actions in a negative light. Baker's account revealed a limited amount of information about shipboard life, but presented intriguing evidence about the fate of captured raiders, who were in fact treated as pirates by the United States government. He went into great detail describing the time spent by the crew imprisoned in Fort McHenry. Baker remarked a few times that he has forgotten

some details which makes the credibility of his account questionable (31). However, he included footnotes with official government records that substantiate his stories, which lends reliability to sections of his narrative.

Regarding the crew, Baker tells very little, but he does name several members: Captain Beall and Lieutenant McGuire, sailing masters George C. Stedman, McFarland, Edmondson, and Privates Willie Beall, Robert Annan, E. Mell Stratton, Fitzgerald, Severn Churn, Thomas, Grouch, Etter, Rankin, supplemented by three other expert sailors whose names he had forgotten (16). Overall, the crew consisted of 18 men and was initially divided in half to fit into the two small boats in which they started their voyage. Both ships were fitted with masts, sails and a full supply of oars (17). Captain Beall and his crew captured a few gunboats in the Chesapeake, eventually gaining a formidable reputation until the United States thought the 18-member crew consisted of as many as 100 men (18). Baker does remark that one member of the crew had once served as an Indian scout, which came into great use later in their travels, when avoiding Yankee soldiers after attending a dinner on shore (26). Before the crew set out, Captain Beall arranged for a number of citizens to entertain his command while they waited for ships, during which Baker said they were treated like family members (17).

As their initial function was to secure a gunboat for their passage to the China Seas, most of the shipboard duties described the capture of vessels. They primarily operated at night, so they would rest during the day (17-18). When it came time to board a vessel, the crew was organized into boarding parties – the captain boarded on the port side and Lieutenant McGuire boarded on the starboard side (18). After boarding the ship,

Captain Beall directed McGuire and his sailors to tackle the forecastle, and Captain Beall, with his crew, went aft to the cabins (19). Upon their capture of the merchant schooner *Alliance*, a guard was left on board (20). Captain Beall agreed to allow the captured crew to sail them out into the Atlantic where they could capture another vessel, but he vowed to shoot the captain if he ran the vessel aground (20).

Baker discussed the demeanor of his captain, calling him "so kind and gentle in his manner to each of us" (20). He remarked that Captain Beall would frequently take their places at the oars and cook when crew members were tired, thus the crew was very loyal to him. However, they quickly found out how stern he could be when his orders were disobeyed (22). After capturing a vessel, the captain ordered the crew not to disturb the cargo, which consisted of several cases of Havana cigars. Several crew members, including the author, ignored this order and when the captain discovered this, he directed that the men be lined up against the rail of the vessel and searched (22). He intended to shoot the man upon whom the missing cargo was found and the crewmen, crowded against the rail and as close together as possible and with their hands behind them, emptied the stolen goods from their pockets into the sea (22).

Baker only briefly touched on the food consumed during his time of service. After they captured the Yankee sloop *Mary Anne* they were a little "fish hungry," and Captain Beall allowed the crew members to take as much fishing tackle as they desired, and the crew spent the day fishing in the sand shoals. Baker recalled enjoying the most elaborate fish suppers he ever had (18). On another occasion, Captain Beall accepted an invitation extended to the whole party by Miss Lizzie Smith to partake in supper, of

which he only mentioned the sweet potatoes because they tasted so bad (25-26). Lastly, while imprisoned, a sympathetic friend sent him a large willow basket, which contained all kinds of fruits, cakes, jellies and tobacco, both chewing and smoking. Baker split the contents with his whole party and compared the event to a royal feast (34).

As they captured vessels, the crew members were allowed to help themselves to parts of the cargo with the permission of the captain. After their first capture, the captain ordered samples of everything to be brought on deck, and the entire crew enjoyed a feast. Baker also noted the variety of items to smoke and wear, of which the crew also partook (20). On a second occasion, the crew was allowed to take any food or personal items they desired from the cargo (22). When imprisoned, a friend of Baker's requested that his sister send Baker about 30 dollars and a new suit of clothing (42). However, the soldier in charge of transferring these items to Baker's possession only gave him 10 dollars and none of the expected clothing (42).

Baker made no mention of the payment given to each of the crew member, but he implied that they were entitled to some of the prize money obtained from captured vessels. Taken from *Alliance*, bound from Philadelphia to Port Royal, S.C., was a cargo with a value of $18,000 in gold (19). The crew stripped other captured vessels of all valuables, particularly their nautical instruments, which the Confederacy badly needed (20).

Baker went into great detail regarding his time spent imprisoned by the United States, which strays from the topic of shipboard life but certainly gives valuable insight regarding the experience of sailors as prisoners. Upon being captured, the crew was told

they were regarded as pirates and thus were poorly treated (31). There were moments of sympathy displayed by the United States soldiers; when Baker, famished, saw a small boat moored by the side of the gunboat, he was given permission to stop for oysters (31). Captain Beall hatched a plan to escape from the gunboat, in which at a certain signal, the crew was to jump on the two sentinels at the door, but the crew refused to join him; at this point, the captain was enraged and called them a "set of dastardly cowards" (32). However, upon finding out the soldiers had expected an escape and set a trap, the captain forgave his crew members (32). When Baker and his crew arrived at Fort McHenry, they were placed in irons and solitary confinement (34). Baker and two others were wearing heavy boots and no shackles could be found that were large enough to lock over their boots; subsequently Baker was informed he would be attached to a ball and chain (35). He was given a sixty-pound cannon ball to which a two-foot chain was attached, but he slipped it under the work bench; he discreetly found one that weighed only about twenty-five pounds attached to a 6-foot chain and grabbed that one instead (35).

Baker was placed in a room with ten Union deserters, with two sentinels placed at the one door leading out (35). One of his crew members learned from the other prisoners that he could fashion a wooden key to unlock the shackles, and it was not long before all who were in shackles could take them off at night, and the next morning, before the sergeant came in to inspect the prisoners, had them on again. However, Baker, who had his chains riveted, could not remove his shackles (36). One of his crewmates was able to escape by jumping out of the window to the ground while the guards were entertaining themselves singing and dancing (37). He immediately reported to the

Confederate Navy Department that his party were held in irons in Fort McHenry and were being subjected to poor treatment (38). After realizing a prisoner escaped, the soldiers gagged and punished those who wouldn't provide information about him (39). The Confederacy demanded better treatment for Baker and the rest of his crew, and they were promptly moved to another facility in which they received much more sympathy. The soldiers felt sorry for the prisoners and supplied them with "an abundance of the best food" (39). After each man had eaten his full, they would put the remainders in the stove and burn them because they were worried the soldiers would curtail their rations in the future if they saw leftovers (39).

At this point, Baker and his crew had been in irons for about forty days (40). They were marched to Baltimore and placed on board a Norfolk steamer, and landed at Fortress Monroe, VA, which was then under command of Union General B. F. Butler (41). Baker was confined for a few days in the cell on the right side of the main entrance (41). Again Captain Beall created an escape plan, in which a signal was to be given by dropping a handkerchief, and Baker was to seize the guard next to him by the arms from behind, and Annan was supposed to take his musket (42). However, an officer from Fort McHenry, expecting a coup, had placed a spy in the fort with them and their plot was foiled (42). Baker decided to try to get out of the fort along with a group of sick men being shipped out (43). During those two months he was chained to the cannon ball, he couldn't remove his boot and had developed a very severe sore on his ankle (43). He rubbed this sore and spread the blood all over his leg so the wound appeared even worse, rolled up his pants and rushed to the surgeon examining the sick men (43). Although the

surgeon told him his wound was not severe enough for him to leave, Baker took a place in line with the sick men and maneuvered his way toward the front of the line to the boat, ultimately escaping and heading home (43). Eventually Captain Beall was released and started organizing a crew for another mission; Baker attempted to join them but could not get to the meeting point in time before the ship set sail. Captain Beall captured the steamers *Philo Parsons* and *Island Queen*, with the intention of liberating Confederate prisoners on Johnson's Island, Ohio. Captain Beall failed and was captured and taken to New York. He was tried by court-martial, convicted as a spy, and hanged on Governor's Island, NY (49).

This is hardly a typical example of a sailor's narrative during the American Civil War. Even so, Baker provides insight into the sailor perspective as a prisoner of war and his daily treatment while imprisoned by the United States.

***Reminiscences of Two Years in the United States Navy,* by John M. Batten**

John Batten served as an assistant surgeon aboard USS *Valley City*, a steamer that patrolled the shores of Albemarle Sound, North Carolina. Written from the perspective of someone who had not previously spent any time at sea, Batten's account focused upon many aspects of shipboard life and revealed details, such as lists of crewmembers, their positions, and the various shore expeditions undertaken by the crew (34). Since Batten lacked experience concerning standard shipboard and military life, he recorded daily operations that more experienced sailors may have considered uninteresting.

In terms of ceremonial procedures, Batten mentioned the traditional firing of a large gun at sunrise, which shook the vessel "till it creaked" (10). He also described the traditional 21-gun salute presented to a visiting captain when he was received on board the flagship (45). It was the officer's duty to salute the quarter deck when arriving aboard his or another vessel by taking off his hat and anyone on deck would return the gesture (91). An officer arriving for the first time on board his assigned vessel must report to the captain as follows 'Captain, I report myself aboard, sir,' to which the captain would reply 'Aye, aye, sir' (91). Batten touched on the hierarchy of positions aboard – as an assistant surgeon, he was granted privileges that the average sailor would not have received, like sharing a room with the captain and paymaster (41).

In terms of duties, messenger boys were used to carry food from the galley to the ward room, where the officers congregated for meals and coffee (72). The man responsible for guiding the small boats was known as the coxswain; each boat was manned by seven to 15 men (92). Batten remarked upon the beauty of seeing a boat rowed by fourteen trained men, all dressed similarly (92). Batten described at length one of most disliked duties that took place for a patrolling steamer – the dredging of rivers for torpedoes by six boats' crews, paired and rowed 20 feet apart (67). The crew considered this to be very unsafe and "often went into the boats with many forebodings" (68).

Batten only briefly described his experience with the following topics, which are included below: communication, time ashore, diet, disease, and clothing/personal effects. Regarding communication on board, Batten described the system between the

pilot house to the engine room used by *Valley City*, which consisted of a bell and wire, with one bell meaning to start, two bells to go ahead slowly, four bells to go ahead quickly, and one bell to stop when the ship was already in motion (90). Bells were also used to denote the time of day: one bell – 12:30 pm, two bells – 1:00 pm, three bells – 1:30 pm, etc. (91). The bells marked the progression of watch duty; each watch remained on duty four hours until relieved by the next watch (91).

Armed parties were sent ashore for a variety of reasons, including foraging (21), presumably to supplement the sailors' diet of hardtack (72). Batten stated the crew also supplemented their diet by trading with war refugees; in one instance, a man with bacon, beef, and fowls was taken aboard. In certain rivers, they were able to catch shad and herring with a large seine (107). According to Batten, sailors had leisure hours when they weren't on watch, during which it was common to read the Bible (22). The men would lounge and rest on the berth deck (72).

The spread of disease appeared to have been an issue aboard – Batten mentioned an epidemic of yellow fever and a man who died of typhoid fever (29). It seemed common for the Union vessels to take refugees aboard (23), which included black men that stayed in a passageway outside the ward room (74). Batten mentioned an overcoat and shoes that were removed before jumping into the water from a sinking ship (47) and the blouse and soft felt hat worn by a pilot on board (73).

All in all, Batten's narrative is fairly limited in its evidence for shipboard life because it is largely anecdotal, broadly referencing a wide variety of topics but without in-depth explanations or descriptions. Though it provides interesting insight into the

Union Navy by an outsider from the medical field, rather than a career seaman, this account is not particularly useful for reconstructing the daily life and routine of the average Union sailor.

Recollections of a Sailor Boy, or the Cruise of the Gunboat Louisiana, by Stephen F. Blanding

This narrative, written by Stephen F. Blanding, a young enlisted sailor in the United States Navy, is a fantastic source regarding the daily interactions of the average sailor because he details many aspects of shipboard life. The account begins with Blanding enlisting in the navy and then spending a considerable amount of time on the "receiving ship" or "Guardo," *North Carolina*, where men were kept until they could be assigned to an active ship or other duties. Upon his arrival, there were 800 men and boys walking about the spar deck (28) and he was subjected to a second examination by two physicians (28). The sick bay was approximately 15 feet (4.57 meters) square, where the sick were put into hammocks; most notably, the physician checked his molars to see if any were loose (35). On several occasions, Blanding mentioned the food available on *North Carolina* - hardtack, salt beef, pine-apple cheese [*sic*], and cold water were the staple foods; according to the ship's boys, it was common for worms to be inside the hardtack (30). Breakfast consisted of rationed coffee and hardtack (42). Blanding stated that grog was served out twice a day, in the morning before breakfast and at night before supper; those who did not drink their ration were paid its value in cash, ten cents per day (60). Congress abolished grog on board U.S. Navy ships in 1862, to the dismay of many

of the crews (60). He described the cheese as hard as flint (66) and the duff (flour boiled in bags in water) so hard it could be thrown across the deck without it breaking; to ease its consumption, it was served with molasses (67). The meals were highly regulated - there was a pea soup day, bean day, a hardtack-and-cheese day, and vegetable soup day (67).

In terms of personal belongings, each man was equipped with a black bag in which to put his clothes, one pair of white duck pants, one white shirt with a blue collar, one pair of blue pants, one blue shirt with a wide collar and a white star on each corner, two pairs of woolen stockings, undershirts and drawers, one canvas hammock, two single blankets or one double blanket. Each man owed three months' pay for these items, to be taken out of his pay at the end of his term of service. This meant that sailors had to work for 3 or 4 months before being able to draw cash or go on shore (36). Hammocks were stored on the main deck and had to be moved each night below decks, which resulted in a race for the men to find a good "swinging place" (39). Many of Blanding's mates were in a state of uncleanliness; there were seldom opportunities to keep clean – only Wednesdays were designated for washing so the men had to diligently examine their clothes to assure they would pass inspection (57).

Duties included washing the decks with holy-stones three times a week, whitewashing the lower deck spaces, drying the berth deck after washing (50), mending clothes, and filling tanks with water (59). Holy-stones were coarse stones 12 by 16 inches and 8 inches thick (30.5 by 40.6 and 20.3 centimeters) with strong ropes attached to them; they were used to grind the deack surfaces clean. Canvas and sand were

sometimes used in the absence of holy-stones (58). A variety of punishments were described by Blanding: sending the men to sit at the mast head for three hours, making the sailors hang from the inboard side of the ratlines for two hours, or if a man was caught spitting on the deck, forcing him to carry a spittoon around his neck for the rest of the crew to spit into (61-62). There was also a brig, where prisoners and deserters were confined (49).

Blanding devoted much of his narrative to anecdotes about his personal experiences – this included playing pranks on officers (53), the banalities of shipboard living, expeditions ashore, sneaking off the boat to attend a dance with young ladies on shore (266) and one sailor's allegedly successful attempt at training a cockroach (57). Blanding also mentions leisure activities undertaken by the men. Wednesday was visiting day on the receiving ships (62), undoubtedly aligned with "washing day" on purpose. Additionally, one of the men in Blanding's company possessed a violin, and it was common to dance quadrilles and contra dances through the night (68).

Blanding's narrative continued through his appointment to the gunboat *Louisiana*, which required passages on the gunboats *Delaware* and gunboat *Hetzel*. He described several aspects of shipboard life, many of which were similar to his experiences on *North Carolina* and therefore not repeated here. Common duties included washing down and coiling the ropes about the guns (88), removing obstructions in the river (113), sewing their own shirts from blue flannel (118), and polishing all the brass fixtures before meeting up with the flagship of the fleet (263). Blanding listed the various stations on board, specifically the different roles of the men working the guns

(nine men per gun). He also said the officers drilled the crew constantly on how to deal with fires aboard the ship and the use of small arms (117). Disorderly conduct was punished with twenty days in the brig on bread and water (86), which was a considerable punishment, as food consisted of canned meats, souse, potatoes and hardtack served up together with butter, and good quality hot coffee (88). The men supplemented their diet by trading with locals for eggs and poultry in exchange for tobacco and blue flannel shirts (109). Blanding reiterated what Batten said about using bells to count time on board the ship and to distinguish the watches (88).

In terms of shipboard living conditions, Blanding revealed several distinct details especially concerning recreational activities. The men often sat up late in the evening, smoking and telling yarns (90). He described lull periods where the men and boys sat together on the deck, mended their clothes, and gossiped (211). The officers' clothing consisted of blue uniforms and gold lace, while the enlisted crew wore white duck pants (263). Some of the men were more religiously inclined; they carried prayer books and held prayer meetings in the chain lockers twice a week (302-303). Every sailor had a small box to keep their personal belongings, usually made by the carpenter's mate, called a "ditty box" (259) and Blanding used melted tallow to adhere candles to his mess chest so he could have light while writing letters home; the sailors received mail on a fairly regular basis, more often than one would expect during wartime while out at sea (285). Mice were plentiful on board, which were generally ignored until they started nibbling on the bread and hardtack, and the men amusingly "vowed vengeance against the whole race" (284). Once, while on shore, Blanding mentioned smelling tar and noted

that the smell of tar was considered medicinal and was sometimes used in fumigating hospitals (113). Blanding related several naval incidents while ashore, including the siege of Little Washington by the Confederates (246). This personal narrative provides valuable insight to the average sailor's experiences in the navy, which are often overlooked in the favor of the officers' or captain's experiences. Blanding included snippets of conversations that he remembered and illustrated his recollection of naval service through his interactions with everyone he encountered during the war.

***A Sailor's Log: Recollections of Forty Years of Naval Life,* by Robley D. Evans**

This memoir chronicles a lifetime of naval service by an officer of the United States Navy, Robley Evans, which began in 1860 when he passed the entrance examination to the Naval Academy and reported as an acting midshipman to the frigate *Constitution* (Figure 4). Evans claimed that the examination was "nothing like the elaborate and trying affair of to-day;" the candidate had to simply be physically sound and possess an educational foundation (35). Evans was the only member of his class from Utah, and the first officer candidate ever appointed from that territory to either the navy or army (36). When the South seceded from the Union, Evans' mother was severely upset that he chose not to fight for the Confederacy. It is evident throughout his narrative that Evans remained conflicted during the war, and his Southern affiliations caused problems for him in the Union Navy. For example, he claimed that many of his letters were opened by post office officials throughout the war owing to a home address outside of the Northeast (47).

Figure 4. On board USS *Constitution.*
(Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

Evans' narrative and its subtext illuminate the unique nature of the American Civil War, where there were no major cultural distinctions or ethnic differences between the two sides. Evans was literally fighting his brother, who served the Confederate army, and many other men found themselves in similar predicaments, having to choose between family and country. Evans recounted that he once saw his brother at a restaurant on shore and let him escape before reporting him; as a result, Evans was arrested twice and brought before the provost marshal on suspicion of holding intercourse with rebels

(51-52). His narrative documents a very action-packed naval service, with some fantastic elements that suggest its credibility could be called into question. Whether he was attempting to exaggerate his efforts or not, Evans' account described the training of midshipmen directly before the war and his transition into service as a commissioned officer. It should be noted that Evans' narrative continued for several decades after the Civil War, including his time as a senior leader in the Spanish American War (1898).

Evans began his memoir with his training at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, and revealed extensive information about life as a midshipman in the early 1860s, directly before the onset of the war. English studies occupied a considerable amount of the midshipmen's time, along with practical seamanship and gunnery (36). Every Saturday, the midshipmen went out in ships and each man took charge of the deck for different evolutions. For this work, the crew was made up entirely of midshipmen and they were responsible for working every position on board (44-45). As part of his training, Evans was ordered to *Marion* as a watch officer. The midshipmen did all the work usually done by sailors, even scrubbing the decks and cleaning the ship (55). During the first cruise, each new midshipman had to rely on himself to remember the orders and perform them properly, but there was an officer standing by to watch and correct them (56). Evans performed the duties of executive officer, navigator, and watch officer, as well as drilling the men for two hours every day and standing all the night watches (58). Discipline was expected among the midshipmen while on board (37); in one instance Evans was part of a brawl on deck and was punished by being locked in a dark room in the wardroom for three days' confinement (38, 53-54).

Despite this transgression, Evans was commissioned as an acting ensign and after ten days' leave, reported as a watch officer on the U.S. steamer *Powhatan* for service in the West Indies (60). Evans remarked that the only law on board was the captain's will, unless there was an admiral on board; officers could be kept on board for months without ever being allowed on shore by captain's orders (61). For the officers, insubordination or disrespect brought the severest punishment, generally a "tongue-lashing the recipient remembered all his life. To a naturally fluent tongue the admiral added a vocabulary of oaths so fine that it was musical…" (61). Though he seemed to be complaining about his position in the hierarchy, he noted after a trip to visit the Union's Army of the Potomac that the comforts of the army did not compare to the navy, nor did their ability to achieve results (52).

Evans was made midshipman of the foretop, and spent a fair bit of time aloft instructing the "green men" of the crew in bending and unbending the sails. Every time crewmen were sent aloft, Evans followed (60). Drills were constant, usually three times per day (60), including sail and spar drills. He stated that there were several officers on board *Powhatan*, but that he and the two other midshipmen were kept in three watches because the captain did not trust the volunteer officers to take the deck (60). While at port, the officer who had the first watch at night had to be ready for duty at 4:00 am the next morning. As soon as the men had their coffee, he left the ship with two boats and the fishing seine and was expected to be back by 8:00 am with enough fish for the whole crew, and then went on duty for four hours. Evans wrote "we were young and strong, and could stand almost anything" (67). Unfortunately, not all of the crewmen agreed

with this sentiment; one sailor concluded that Evans was too small and young to enforce discipline and decided to test him. Evans responded by jumping on top of him from the deck above, then hitting him with a heavy brass trumpet. After bandaging the wounded crewman's head, Evans tied him up and locked him in a coal bunker (58). He must have proven his point, because he never mentioned another disciplinary incident for the rest of the cruise.

Evans' description of his diet was largely incidental, including a visit to a shoreside oyster house one evening (51), receiving French chocolate as a gift (53), and acquiring fine cheap cigars and good meat during a stopover in Havana (69). The only issue rations he mentioned was a bottle of wine served to the officer of the deck every night during mid-watch (58-59) and a breakfast of coffee and hardtack during battle (80). Pork was mentioned, not in terms of its consumption, but in the practice of adding pork fat to the furnaces to maximize speed (64). The sailors on *Powhatan* had to rely on shipboard food supplies, because they rarely were permitted to go ashore. According to Evans, the men were kept on board so long and so steadily under steam that they became irritable and fights were a near-daily occurrence. Several men lost their lives until the Admiral finally went to St. Thomas to give the crew shore liberty. The men ended up rioting with English sailors, using whatever weapons they could find, and the crew was not allowed shore leave until the ship returned to the United States (65-66). Perhaps if the crew had a pet, they may have been more amenable to spending long cruises on the ship; Evans described his visit to the U.S. ship *Wabash* which kept a bear onboard as its pet. The bear stood on its hind legs and saluted the officers as they came aboard.

Apparently, the bear was fond of alcohol and slept in the bunks with the other crew members. Shortly after Evans' visit, the bear was sent ashore after it was awakened while half-drunk and bit the quartermaster so badly that he lost one of his legs (49). This section of Evans' account has yet to be verified, but certainly suggests that bears may not make the best shipboard pets.

Evans briefly touched on the health of the crew and the naval protocol and superstition surrounding death on board. There was a bout of yellow fever among the crew; to get rid of it, they steamed out into the trade winds, stopped the engines, put the ship under sail, and slowly cruised with the wind abeam until the sickness went away (63-64). Presumably, the fresh air helped prevent the sickness from spreading and gave the crew time to heal. In one instance, a crewman missed his footing in the foretopmast rigging and fell to his death. The ship was quarantined at the time (cause not stated) and could not bury the body on shore, nor could they buy screws for his coffin. Consequently, the coffin had to be nailed together. After the captain pronounced a few words of the burial service, there was a loud squeak and the lid of the coffin raised several inches (due to the gases forming in the body which caused it to swell), startling the crew. When the crew employed a small to tow the coffin out to the sea, it stood upright in the water, a "nerve-shattering sight." Evans remarked that, while his crew showed great spirit during battle, "just a touch of the supernatural… and they were ready to hide their heads in the bottom of the boat" (69). Evans commented that he found premonitions men have before going into battle to be very curious, especially when they come true. Evans was given charge of a box of trinkets by his fellow crewman

Flannigan, who was sure he was going to die in battle the following day. Evans protested, but sure enough, Flannigan was the first man to die while charging a fort (86).

The final section of Evans' narrative that pertained to the American Civil War described, in great detail, an attack on Fort Fisher, which guarded the Confederacy's last remaining Atlantic port in Wilmington, North Carolina (Figure 5). Volunteers were called for a naval brigade to assist the army in the assault; so many volunteered, despite the dangerous job at hand, that not every man could go. Evans was chosen and placed in charge of a commodore's barge carrying 35 to 40 men to be landed on shore (85).

Figure 5. The bombardment and capture of Fort Fisher, North Carolina, January 15 1865. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

Armed with a cutlass (89) and revolver (94), Evans' first task was to have his sailors cut the wires that led to the underwater mines or "torpedoes" in the river that prevented Union gunboats from getting close to the fort (90). When a signal torch was placed on the fort's parapet to indicate it had been taken by the Federals, rockets and blue lights burst and guns roared with saluting charges as the fleet rejoiced in its victory (98). By the end of the land assault on Fort Fisher (90-97), Evans had received three bullet wounds in his legs. Regarding his medical treatment at the Fort, Evans stated that the extent of care and comfort for the wounded consisted of a warming fire of cracker boxes and driftwood, a supply of very bad whiskey, and a number of able and intelligent medical officers. Evans, after being examined, was given a stiff glass of grog (98). The officers of the *Nereus* supplied good whiskey and a pitcher of morphine and water, and the wounded were given plenty of both (98).

Evans was less complimentary of the care he received upon reaching the Naval Hospital in Norfolk, Virginia. He was placed in the Executive Officer's room on *Santiago de Cuba* during his transportation to the hospital. He was given warm water from the ship's freshwater distillers mixed with whiskey (100-101). At the Naval Hospital, Evans was given a comfortable bed in a large, clean-looking ward, where he slept with his revolver under his pillow (101). The surgeon and his principal assistant wanted to remove his legs, but Evans, only 18 years old at the time, "preferred to die with [his] legs on" and felt he should have a say about his treatment. When the surgeon disagreed, Evans pulled out his revolver and threatened to shoot anyone that entered "with anything that looked like a case of instruments" (101-102). If it were not for the

wife of the surgeon and her daughter, Evans claimed he would have undoubtedly died. He stated that "it would be difficult to make any one believe to-day [*sic*] the conditions that existed in the Norfolk Hospital." The tools were bad and the hospital fare consisted of nothing more than standard shipboard rations. There was a wide quantity and variety of vermin; Evans claimed, "I have lived my whole life in hopes that it would burn down and that I might be there to see the slaughter!" (103). Evans came down with a fever and was placed in a room with two other officers, one of whom kept the men amused with stories, and read or wrote letters for them when they were unable to do it for themselves (103). Erysipelas (an acute infection of the skin usually caused by streptococcus bacteria) developed in his right leg from the use of a dirty sponge, and an abscess developed in his right knee. His misery was exacerbated by bedsores and emaciation; he asserted that the bones on his right side came right to the skin (103). Evans began to heal and he described his daily activities while in the hospital. The nurse went to Norfolk to buy sugar, coffee, and whiskey for the officers and at 5:00 am every morning, he made a pot of coffee and each patient drank a cup with whiskey. Then they would smoke a cigar or two before their meager breakfasts (103-104). Evans amused himself by sketching a branch that grew outside his window (104). He came to learn that all of the officers from his ship *Powhatan* had been wounded in the Fort Fisher assault, and out of the 62 men in his company, 54 had been killed or wounded (104) (Figure 6). Remarkably, Evans' wounds healed and he made up his mind to get away from the hospital, so he arranged for a stretcher and passage aboard a Bay Line steamer for Baltimore. He eventually

made it to his home, learned how to walk again, and returned to duty at the Philadelphia Navy Yard before receiving orders at the Washington Yard (104-106).

Figure 6. Interior view of Fort Fisher, North Carolina, after the bombardment. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

Though parts of Evans' account seem less credible than others, it is possible that his naval service was as eventful as he implied. Regardless, it provides a thorough description of his training at the Naval Academy, which was common to all officers being trained in the early 1860s. There is some interesting nuance about the life of a boy from a family of Confederate sympathizers in the Union Navy, and the internal conflict he felt throughout the war. Many Southern officers remained loyal to the United States and probably endured similar turmoil about fighting against his friends, family, and

neighbors. Evans' account reminds us of the humanistic aspect of the American Civil War, and that during a time division in the country many men felt ties to both sides.

***Memories of a Rear-Admiral Who has Served for More than Half a Century in the Navy of the United States,* by Samuel Rhodes Franklin**

Samuel Franklin had an illustrious naval career; in his nearly sixty years of service, he served as Commander in Chief of the European Station, Superintendent of the Naval Observatory, Chief of Staff to commanding officers, President of the International Marine Conference, member of the International Meridian Conference, and served in two wars (v). His memoir includes a brief history of his family and begins chronicling his naval career upon his appointment as acting midshipman in 1841, as well as covering chapters pertinent to the Civil War. A comparative history of shipboard life spanning the mid- to late-19th century, this narrative provides bountiful information about the changes in protocol for midshipmen, especially at the Naval Academy. Franklin, writing his memoirs near the end of his life in 1898, openly expresses his opinions about changes made during his naval tenure and their effects on the officer corps, though his accounts of daily life are narrow in scope. Nonetheless, as one might expect, he patriotically defends the United States and its Navy and his stories of life onboard several navy ships are valuable for those interested in the experiences of officers.

During the Civil War, Franklin served as an officer aboard several ships. He was initially ordered to the frigate *Macedonian*, which was to join a squadron off Pensacola

to observe the activities of the rebels, as the war had not yet started (167). In 1862 he was ordered to be the first lieutenant of *Dacotah* (176, 180). At this time, *Dacotah* was stationed at Hampton Roads, Virginia, to protect U.S. ships from the devastating attacks of the Confederate ironclad *Merrimack* (CSS *Virginia*). Fears about the Confederate menace ran high, and the ship's officers were ordered to ram the ironclad at full speed should *Merrimack* appear, regardless of the certain destruction of *Dacotah* (181). Luckily for Franklin, his ship was never forced to carry out this deadly order. Shortly after, Franklin was promoted to be commanding officer of the gunboat *Aroostook*, which patrolled between Harrison's Landing and Fort Monroe on Virginia's James River (186) (Figure 7). He temporarily commanded *Oneida* but the ship was of a rating that belonged to the next higher rank, so he was eventually relieved by Captain Percival Drayton (see the analysis of his personal narrative in chapter 4) (193).

Franklin briefly discussed the other officers on board his ships. He also compared the lives of officers who served during the Civil War and those who served at the end of the 19th century; he claimed that 1860s naval officers had no advantages such as War Colleges, Torpedo Schools, or a Bureau of Intelligence (164). He also observed that, when he was a midshipman, the older officers should have shown more interest in the improvement of their subordinates (165). He discussed the officer positions on board *Macedonian* (executive officer, lieutenants, navigator, marine officer, and medical officers (168), and *Dacotah* (captain, navigator, surgeon, paymaster, and volunteer officers from the merchant marine (180)). Franklin provided few stories about the crews from both ships, choosing to focus mainly on his battle exploits. In one instance, the

crew from *Macedonian* was ordered to sea from Boston on Christmas Day and the Navy Yard was closed, so it was impossible to get candles or any other necessary articles (168).

Figure 7. Sailors relaxing on USS *Monitor* on the James River.
(Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

Franklin casually remarked upon some of the daily duties undertaken by the officers and crew. Before serving on *Macedonian*, he was assigned to ordnance duty which he considered boring – the only problem he worked on involved testing the tensile

strength of iron (164). During his service aboard *Macedonian*, the captain ran the ship aground several times, but apparently didn't mind because it was good practice for the crew to get the ship off (169). Both officers and crewmen were subjected to drills every day to keep the men ready for battle (170). A frequent duty aboard steamships was to refill the coal stores; according to Franklin, St. Thomas, the Danish West Indian Island, was a convenient port of call during the war. Here, the ships were coaled by local women who formed a procession from the coal-pile, each carrying a basket on her head (173). Later, while serving on *Dacotah*, it was important to keep constant watch for the Confederate ironclad CSS *Virginia* and to this end, Admiral Louis M. Goldsborough frequently walked around the quarter-deck during night watch in his long night shirt (183). Franklin also mentioned some of the more tedious shipboard duties, including holy-stoning the decks. In this case, probably due to the limited tools and materials available during times of war, the crew used pieces of marble headstones obtained from the Jamestown graveyard (188). When chasing blockade runners, the crew would signal the rest of the blockading fleet by firing a rocket in the enemy vessel's direction (192). Franklin's crew was also responsible for the dangerous job of clearing a nearby river of torpedoes using a net dragged behind the ships' boats (200).

Unlike many other narratives, this author did not once mention the variety of food available to him. He did, however, recall drinking champagne and eating dinner at a table set under the wind-sail (a term not defined by the author, but a canvas device that acts as a temporary air duct to provide the lower decks with a cool breeze) because the weather was so hot (187). Another common libation among the crew was grog;

according to Franklin, the officers once had to organize a police force to restore order amongst a crowd of drunken sailors (168). Beyond this, Franklin discusses three occasions in which he dined with other officers: with a Flag Officer from another ship (181); with the commander of *Colorado* (191), and with Admiral David D. Porter (194).

Franklin went into detail about several instances of ceremonial protocol among the crew. In one instance, a crewmate died and the captain decided to keep the body on board to give him a "decent burial on shore." However, the superstitious men attributed their subsequent ill-luck in making progress towards a port to the presence of a body on board, so the corpse was promptly taken to the gangway and, in the presence of his messmates by the light of a solitary lantern, launched into the sea (174). Dead crewmen were sewn up in their hammocks before being dumped overboard (196). As an example of a ceremonial military procedure, Franklin was given instructions to proceed to Mobile and receive the surrender of the city by its civil authorities, which was done with certain formalities. It reminded the author of "scenes in olden times, when the heralds would blow their horns and demand that the keys of the gates of the City should be delivered up to the conquerors" (200-201). Even insiders were in awe of the pomp and circumstance of military protocol.

To maintain his health, Franklin exercised on shore, but makes no other mention of his leisurely pursuits (188). Throughout the war, he retained good health, with the exception of a slight attack of "James-River fever" from constant work and close confinement on board ship (190). Similarly, Franklin claimed that blockade service was trying work but there was a respite every six weeks when the ship had to go to

Pensacola, Florida, to fill up on coal. During those few nights, the crew could "sleep with both eyes closed" whereas on the blockade, they slept with "one eye open" (191).

Franklin's narrative provides fewer details on shipboard life than others, but spending nearly sixty years in the Navy granted him the ability to contextualize his Civil War experience. His memoirs are an important historical source for anyone wishing to study how the U.S. Navy changed over the second half of the 19th century. Franklin makes one particularly profound statement regarding the overall impact of the Civil War in America, regarding post-conflict relationships between friends on opposing sides of the war: "although we had been for several years past trying to cut each other's throats, yet we met at this time on the same friendly terms that had existed between us before the Civil War" (201). His narrative was one of the few to discuss the social impact of such an uncommon time in American history, where the men on the other side were not faceless enemies, but former compatriots.

***Twenty Years at Sea, or Leaves from my Old Log-Books*, by Frederic Stanhope Hill**

Frederic Hill spent his early career as a civilian officer on a cargo ship before retiring to take up a business on shore. After 17 years of almost continuous sea service, Hill had never been on shore more than two months at any time (137). At the onset of the Civil War, he volunteered to serve as a Union naval officer after he read about the great number of resignations of Southern naval officers who had dominated that branch of service (139). After having several ship owners write letters of recommendation confirming his years of experience commanding merchant vessels, he reported to

Washington, D.C., and was appointed Acting Master in the United States Navy, with orders to serve aboard the steamer *Richmond* (140-141), a second-class steam sloop-of-war with a complement of nearly 400 officers and men (143-144). Shortly afterwards, he was promoted to Acting Lieutenant and ordered to *W.G. Anderson*, a clipper ship built to join the blockading fleet off the coast of Texas (191). Hill then temporarily moved inland to the Navy Yard at Mound City, Illinois, as an executive officer (242) before being ordered to take command of the Mississippi River ironclad *Benton* (243-244) and then the steamer *Tyler* (255). Hill discussed his entire career at sea covering a span of two decades, and therefore only sections relevant to the Civil War were included in this analysis. The scope of this source is limited mostly to battles and war escapades because Hill spent so many years in the merchant service before the Civil War and therefore did not remark on the banalities of shipboard life. He did, however, provide details about the distinction of naval service, particularly concerning his duties as an officer.

Upon his appointment to the U.S. Navy, he purchased from the tailor a naval cap, a blue navy flannel blouse with 'straps' denoting his grade (presumably his epaulets) attached to the shoulders, and trousers to match his coat (141). He remarked upon the hammocks he slept in (173) and the sword he carried during battles (154). Hill did not state whether or not it was a common arrangement or specific to his ship, but fugitive slaves offered to work as wardroom servants without pay. One in particular, Jacob, became Hill's special servant and was rated as a captain's steward (187). While he was stationed in the blockade fleet in Aransas Bay, Texas, there were frequent attempts at blockade running by commercial ships, usually English in origin, which offered the

prospect of prize money to the captains and crewmen of Union ships (192). Hill and his crew captured a cargo of cotton worth $20,000 to $25,000 (233). After the sale of a captured blockade runner and its cargo for nearly $60,000 the government received half and the other half was divided among the officers and crew. As commanding officer, Hill received one-tenth of the prize money (204). He was granted two months' leave of absence after being moved to the West Gulf Squadron – his first leave of absence for more than three years (240-241).

Hill discussed several options available to the officers to supplement their diet. The officers frequently visited a "half-fisherman, half-pirate" who lived on shore to purchase fish for their messes, or to accept offerings of coffee or tobacco (151). The crew also hunted for bullocks (209-211) until Confederate snipers made it too dangerous to hunt for fresh beef, when even the officers were limited to their salt-beef ration (220). When they could, the officers went ashore to arrange for the supply of provisions, including fresh fruits, vegetables, and fresh water to fill the tanks (224). When Hill's ship missed the passing supply steamer, which carried sorely needed letters and provisions, the ward room was down to its last can of tomatoes for dinner, accompanied by salt beef and plum duff (207). There were several cases of crew members afflicted with an illness of a scorbutic character (relating to scurvy), resulting from the lack of fresh vegetables in the messes and being neglected by the supply steamers for a while (220). The crew finally received an abundance of fresh provisions and mess stores after capturing a blockade runner (228). Shipboard protocol called for the 18 officers to take their morning and evening meals together in the wardroom (173, 179), but on the nights

before battle, there was none of the merry jesting that usually marked their meals, and after the table was cleared every officer went to his respective stateroom (174).

Hill only briefly addressed military protocol in his narrative. One comical example came from a leisurely trip to shore after a battle had taken place, during which Confederate officers, assuming Hill was a person of authority sent as a Union liaison, handed over their side arms in token of their surrender (182). Hill quickly realized the misunderstanding and attempted to exert as much authority to the proceedings as possible. In another instance, Hill was charged with the task of arresting a Union captain for treachery. Out of respect for the man's rank, he spared the captain the indignity of wearing irons (249).

Hill spoke extensively about his duties as a naval officer, especially concerning non-traditional activities. For example, his crew was responsible for constructing an earthwork battery near Fort Pickens in Pensacola, Florida using sand-bags, pickaxes, and entrenching tools carried on the ship (150). Between battles, the crew worked to devise methods of strengthening the ship's defensive capabilities. At the suggestion of the first assistant engineer, the boilers were protected against shot by hanging spare chain cables as improvised armor (172-173). While stationed outside a rebel fort, the Confederate forces sent fire-rafts with burning pitch and turpentine down the Savannah River, but the Union crews were prepared with an organized naval fire brigade, thus neutralizing the potential threat (167). Hill employed an unusual tactic with the help of his merchant experience: while sneaking up on a blockade runner, Hill exchanged his uniform coat and cap for a white linen jacket and a straw hat to disguise himself as a merchant with a

cigar in his mouth (226-227). This strategy enabled his crew to capture the blockade runner before it could retreat into protected waters.

Hill also discussed conventional shipboard duties and tools: the crew whitewashed the decks so they could see loose objects more easily through the smoke of battle (173). He cited the monotonous and wearying routine of blockade duty for nearly a year (147), in which a lookout was kept at each masthead from daylight until dark. These efforts were rewarded with a prize of $25 offered to any man sighting a vessel that could be captured (192). Although he later called blockade duty "pleasant and profitable," (244) he also noted the wearying work of patrolling the river day and night – "a tired watch officer whose responsibilities have been turned over to his relief does not usually lose much time in reflecting upon possibilities; and I was soon sleeping the sleep of the just" (153). When all hands were called to battle, Hill's division of men were at their stations and stripped for work, some without shirts, with their monkey-jackets knotted by the sleeves and hanging loosely around their shoulders (174). A rattle was used to signal all hands to quarters at night (154) and the executive officer used a speaking trumpet for calls on deck (197,209).

In terms of leisure and shipboard entertainment, Hill recalled the free and easy habits of sea life (138). The deadly monotony of the blockade was relieved by after-dinner exercise on the poop and songs from the forecastle (221). Hill often sat aft on the berth deck smoking a cigar and once, headed to shore to place a 'long post-poned call' (244). Hill presumably meant a social call, as in a visit to a friend or an acquaintance.

An interesting detail not mentioned in other narratives presented itself when Hill discussed the end of the Civil War following Lee's surrender. The Union government printed copies of the terms of capitulation and gave them out freely (271). After the war, all of the Union volunteer officers were allowed to resign from service with an honorable discharge, an offer that Hill gladly accepted (272). He made a poignant comment about the nature of the American Civil War that should be remembered when analyzing its events: "We were not to meet Indians nor Chinese; our battle was to be set against men whom we respected as foes, and who were quite as fertile in plans for defense as we possibly could be in our scheme of attack" (166). Overall, Hill's perspective provides an outsider's look into the ways of the Union Navy during a period of improvisation and rapid technological evolution.

*Cruise and Combats of the "*Alabama*," by John McIntosh Kell; taken from Battles and Leaders of the Civil War Vol. IV*

This narrative was written by First Lieutenant John McIntosh Kell, Executive Officer of *Alabama*, the infamous Confederate commerce raider eventually sunk by the United States vessel *Kearsarge* after the end of the Civil War.[2] Kell spent a decade in the United States Navy before his home state of Georgia seceded from the Union and he subsequently joined the Confederate Navy. Therefore he has a diverse perspective, having spent both training and service time in both navies. While he focuses mostly on the ship's final battle, he does provide information about the crew and shipboard life,

[2] This source was an online excerpt, so there are no associated page numbers.

especially concerning the positions and duties of the officers and crew. Since the final battle was famous throughout the world, Kell's account is worth comparing to a number of existing narratives from *Alabama*, as no two accounts are identical, even from officers in the same battle.

Kell starts out indicating that he will only briefly describe the crew of the *Alabama.* The ship was built and supplied by Great Britain, and thus the crew was a conglomerate of all the seafaring nations of the globe, including what Kell refers to as "a large sprinkling of Yankee tars" whom he considers to be the best sailors. These men were supplemented with a group of Southern pilots and seamen from the ports of Savannah, Charleston, and New Orleans. On board *Alabama*, the pilots were given the positions of petty officers and were additionally responsible for aiding in the discipline of the crew. Kell rightly calls the ship's voyage peculiar, since they could not be officially sanctioned or recognized by Great Britain and could not risk entering any Confederate ports for fear of the blockade. This being the case, the officers and crew were commanded by Captain Raphael Semmes to observe the strictest discipline, especially during their time on shore. Based on his descriptions of the battle and its preparations, it can be ascertained that there also existed a steward to Captain Semmes, who could not swim and therefore perished with the vessel. There were midshipmen present, named John N. Maffitt and Anderson, both of whom he labeled as "young." Kell also mentions Dr. Galt, the surgeon in charge of the magazine and shell-room division, as well as Assistant-Surgeon Llewellyn. The only evidence concerning shipboard life presented before the final battle came when Kell described a cyclone that

overtook their ship on its voyage. The ship lost its main yard and he cited the crew as being "considerably shaken up" at which point they decided to head south into the Caribbean Sea, a "milder latitude."

Kell's account reveals that as the executive officer he was consulted by the captain in some of the major decisions, for Semmes asked his opinion before seeking battle with USS *Kearsarge*. This is interesting because contemporary accounts tend to emphasize the totalitarian rule of a ship's captain, on especially warships. Captain Semmes trusted his officers to make certain decisions, and the crew clearly loyally responded to his leadership; after the battle, the surviving crew who managed to escape pleaded with Captain Semmes to command another vessel, promising to serve under him once more. Kell's description of the final battle reveals information about the crew's duties during the action. Before it started, crew members were neatly dressed, and the officers in full uniform, suggesting a certain amount of decorum in the proceedings. Captain Semmes took his position on the weather horse-block above the ship's rail, allowing him to obtain a clear field of vision and determine the effect *Alabama*'s shot was having on the enemy. Once the two ships engaged, *Kearsarge's* 11-inch shells inflicted incredible damage to *Alabama*'s quarter-deck. The first shot bounced off the front part of the stern's 8-inch pivot gun, the second shot killed one man and wounded several other crew members, and the third shot ricocheted off the gun carriage and spun around the deck until one man picked it up and threw it overboard.

Kell remarked that the port side of the quarter-deck became so crowded with the "mangled trunks of the dead" that he had them thrown overboard in order to use the after

pivot-gun. He transferred men from the aftermost 32 pounder to fill up the vacancies at the pivot-gun under control of Midshipman Anderson, of whom Kell remarked, he "filled his place like a veteran." *Alabama*, in the face of a superior battery and *Kearsarge*'s chain-armored hull, was forced to surrender. After *Kearsarge* stopped firing, Captain Semmes ordered Kell to send an officer to the enemy ship to ask for them to send boats to save the wounded, a task which Kell assigned to Master's mate Fullam. Kell then gave the order for the crew to jump overboard to save themselves. It should be noted that Kell provides a well-written narrative of the events of the battle, which should be viewed alongside the memoirs of First Lieutenant Arthur Sinclair and Captain Semmes.

***Recollections of a Naval Life, Including the Cruises of the Confederate States Steamers* Sumter *and* Alabama, by John McIntosh Kell**

John McIntosh Kell was a midshipman in the United States Navy and a First Lieutenant in the Confederate Navy (for more biographical information, see the previous entry: *Cruise and Combats of the* "Alabama," by John McIntosh Kell; taken from *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* Vol. IV). Published in 1900, this memoir is much more expansive than his narration of the final battle between *Alabama* and *Kearsarge*; he splits his narrative into two sections, the first describing the beginning of his training with the U.S. Navy and the second recounting his time after returning to the South upon its secession, when he served aboard the Confederate raiders *Sumter* and *Alabama*, both captained by Raphael Semmes. Kell intersperses his narrative with excerpts from his

letters to his wife and mother, suggesting there is a heightened level of accuracy in his account because he is supplementing his memory with words written during the war. The following analysis is separated according to Kell's sections, by his time spent shortly before the war with the U.S. Navy and during the war with the Confederate Navy.

Kell's first orders were to join the sloop of war *Falmouth*, which was being fitted out at the Brooklyn Navy Yard (9). He provided himself a midshipman uniform with the appropriate insignia from the Naval Academy (39), bedding, and his other "necessary articles" and took up quarters with his messmates (10). They set sail for Pensacola and then the port of Lima, Peru, where he transferred to the schooner *Shark*, under the command of Lieutenant Neil M. Howison (17). Upon the death of Commodore Dallas, the crew of *Shark* remained in service with the Pacific Squadron, and Kell wrote that it was a privilege to serve aboard as he was placed in charge of a watch despite only being a midshipman (17). His duties in the Pacific Squadron required him to travel to California, delivering soldiers and seamen to Monterey (the capital of California at that time) to hold possession of the city and build a blockhouse capable of guarding against assault from attack by a large force (28-29).

While aboard the schooner and sailing around the Pacific, the ship stopped at several ports and obtained supplies from the natives, including a sufficient store of water to last the voyage, fruit, vegetables, and poultry (18). They supplemented their diets with beef from California in the form of ribs roasted around a campfire (32) and hunting wild geese (34). As an officer, Kell enjoyed the privilege of visiting shore while off-duty,

going for a horseback ride (21), hunting (27) or some other pastime. When visiting Hawaii, Kell had the opportunity to visit in an official capacity King Kamimaha [*sic*] the Third, the reigning monarch (26). Kell also related the protocol for greeting state officials on the ship; when Henry A. Wise, U.S. Minister to Brazil, visited, the crew manned the yards and saluted him with 17 guns (35).

It was clear that Kell believed strongly in the idea of hierarchy, and that his duties should be reflective of his rank as a midshipman. He described a discord or "want of harmony" between the lieutenants and midshipmen that surfaced when the lieutenants ordered the midshipmen to perform duties like calling the watch or lighting candles for the lieutenant on duty. Kell declined the order considering it to be a menial service, stating that the duty belonged to the quartermasters. Continuing to refuse the order, Kell was reported and summoned by Captain Victor M. Randolph, who threatened to have Kell court martialed and dismissed from service. Kell and three other midshipmen that refused to obey the order were suspended for their "mutinous insubordination." The cruise continued to San Domingo and Cuba, but the suspended midshipmen were not allowed to leave the ship to visit port. This punishment continued for three months until the ship's surgeon, Dr. Spotswood, insisted that the confinement was affecting the boys' health and insisted they be allowed to visit the shore for exercise, which was granted. Upon arriving in Pensacola, a court martial was ordered for their trial, resulting in their dismissal from service for willful disobedience of orders. However, some members of the trial approved of Kell's objection to participating in menial duty; the boys were

given a “handsome reception” during which Kell’s friends could meet with him before he departed for home (39-41).

Using the influence of a letter of support from his distinguished relative, Hon. Thos. Spalding, who was a friend to lawyer and Georgia senator Hon. J. McPherson Berrien, Kell set out to be reinstated into the Navy to his former rank and position. Senator Berrien was able to reinstate Kell and the other midshipmen, provided they did not seek payment for their time spent out of the service. Kell applied for orders and was instructed to travel to Philadelphia to join the crew of the frigate *Susquehanna* in 1851 (45). Kell spoke favorably of his shipboard life during the remainder of his time in the U.S. Navy, commenting on several aspects of diet, entertainment, and protocol.

As an officer, Kell ate with the rest of the officers in their messroom. Once, when in proximity to a nearby army, the Major (unidentified) sent his decanter of wine with an invitation to Kell to join him for a glass of wine, accompanied by nuts, raisins, olives, and cigars (46). He described the typical sailor’s menu as salt beef and pork and hardtack, with which the ship was consistently supplied (106). When the ship was at Portsmouth Point (location unidentified, but possibly Portsmouth, Virginia) for an extended period, the officers enjoyed the privilege of finding temporary lodging with their families; Kell, without a wife or children, took up lodging at a boarding house until the ship was ready to go to sea, enjoying a very social life with his fellow officers (46). The only issue pertaining to health that was included in Kell’s narrative related to yellow fever, which was picked up by the crew in an infected port. Interestingly, the illness became more serious when the ship reached the “pure air” of the Atlantic, which Kell

claimed to be characteristic of yellow fever. Fortunately, none of the cases were fatal and the crew was soon back to usual health (107).

In 1856, Kell procured a leave of absence to marry Miss Julia Blanche Munroe, and his fellow officers insisted upon a party onboard *Hetzel* to celebrate. The decks were cleared for dancing and were decorated with flags of different nations, lit with chandeliers constructed of bayonets. Many of the "old Navy families" were in attendance, including the Sinclairs, the son of which Kell would eventually serve alongside on CSS *Alabama* (105-106). Kell mentioned various other forms of entertainment at port, including the invitation to attend religious services with the French Minister (114). While on board and off duty, Kell did a lot of reading, usually choosing between the popular new book by Charles Dickens, *Pickwick Papers*, or by James Finlay Weir Johnston, *Chemistry of Common Life* (115).

One of Kell's most fascinating additions was his description of the traditional maritime initiation rite for sailors first crossing the equatorial line, a celebration that has endured to the present-day U.S. Navy. Kell describes its purpose as "christening all young sailors who are for the first time passing from one hemisphere to the other, after which initiation they are ever thereafter entitled to roam old ocean [*sic*] as one of Neptune's own" (109). If permission was granted by the captain, the entire crew would partake in a performance, in which Neptune was portrayed by one of the oldest sailors, "a veritable 'Jack Tar' of the olden time" with a curly wig, a rope yarn beard, and a trident in his hand. He was carried to the deck in a gun-carriage and, after saluting the officer of the deck, asked permission to examine the crew for any men on board to be

christened. His attendants, who already knew which of the men had yet to cross the equator, sought out their victims. The men were brought before Neptune and "shaved" using tar as lather, scraping the face with a large wooden razor. The men were plunged into a boat filled with salt water and saluted by all hands, after which general merriment occurred (109-110).

The second section of Kell's narrative chronicles his service with the Confederate Navy after Georgia, his home state, seceded from the Union in 1861 (139-140). To avoid redundancy with the very detailed account of shipboard life on *Alabama* by Arthur Sinclair, only the time aboard *Sumter* is included in this analysis. Kell received confidential orders to report to Captain Raphael Semmes in New Orleans, where he joined the crew of the commerce raider *Sumter* as its First Lieutenant (144). Kell stated that the 92 men chosen for the crew were able sailors but not "men-of-war's men;" 20 of them were marines and they all required drilling to become proficient with the guns (147). Kell listed the officers of the ship, including the lieutenants, surgeon, paymaster, captain's clerk, lieutenant of marines, midshipmen, engineers, boatswain, gunner, sailmaker, and carpenter (147). The ship was fitted out in New Orleans, but gunboats of the U.S. Navy had already assembled to blockade the mouth of the Mississippi River. While USS *Brooklyn* was occupied chasing another vessel, *Sumter* took its opportunity to run the blockade (148). Kell noted that the men had been tormented by the heat, mosquitoes, and consequently, the loss of sleep in the river and wished to fight *Brooklyn*. *Brooklyn*, having given up the previous chase, was now

pursuing *Sumter*, but after 40 miles (64.4 km) was forced to return to the blockade (148-149).

Kell's account primarily recorded the capture of prize merchant ships from the United States, but he interspersed his narrative with vignettes of shipboard life aboard a commerce raider. Forbidden to enter in any U.S. ports and unable to safely run the blockade to the Southern ports, the crew of *Sumter* relied upon provisions acquired from foreign ports or taken from captured prize vessels. This led to a non-standard shipboard diet that included tropical fruits and vegetables (152), beef, pork, canned vegetables and fruits, crackers and breads, and livestock like pigs, sheep, and geese (159-160), fresh water (164), and figs, raisins, oranges, and other fresh fruit from a ship that had recently stopped in Sicily (170). The worldwide infrastructure for supplying ships with coal was limited, so the crew took coal from prize vessels when they could, but when *Sumter* ran out they were forced to revert to sailing (151). Christmas Day found the men in the middle of the Atlantic (region unspecified), so the only gifts given to the enlisted men were an extra serving of grog, known to the men as "splicing the main brace," and a day off from muster or inspection (166).

Their frequent stops in foreign ports for coal provided an abundance of entertainment for the crew (154). While in Curacoa (presumably Curacao), the water in the port was so clear that one of the amusements of the men involved throwing small silver coins in the water for the local boys to dive after (152). In Paramaribo, the capital city of Dutch (now French) Guiana, a ball was given in the officers' honor, well attended by the local gentleman and ladies (156). During a visit to Brazil, the men were given

liberty days and officers were hospitably received at the city clubs (175), and while in Gibraltar, the officers were invited to join in a fox chase (174). Though the men serving on Confederate commerce raiders were considered to be pirates by the U.S. government, they were to be generally well received abroad.

Kell offered up an interesting account of their near capture by U.S. steam sloop-of-war *Iroquois* in Martinique, which provided evidence for the protocol of foreign captures during this time. The arrival of *Iroquois* in search of *Sumter* caused a "fiery spirit of resistance" among *Sumter's* men, who immediately armed themselves with their side arms and short Roman swords used for boarding (162). The captain of *Iroquois* was informed by port officials that if the ship anchored, it would have to remain in port for 24 hours after the departure of *Sumter* to preserve port neutrality in accordance with international law, so the ship remained anchored just outside the harbor. It took nine days for Captain Semmes to formulate his plan and for the night sky to be dark enough to make their escape. *Sumter* steamed south until Semmes was sure that *Iroquois* was aware of their trajectory, and then, under the shadow of a prominent coastal boulder, stopped the engines and changed course northward (163-164). *Iroquois* was duped and *Sumter* had put several miles between the ships before the U.S. ship discovered its error. The Confederate crew wasn't always so lucky though; the ship's paymaster and his friend, a former U.S. consul at Cadiz, were sent to acquire coal for the ship, but were captured in Tangier and imprisoned at the American Consulate. Semmes attempted to have them released, but the men were transferred to an American merchant ship, where they were "treated with the greatest insult and indignity." Their heads were shaved and

the men were heavily ironed and kept below the hatches until they reached Boston, where they were finally released on parole (175).

Sumter was not built to endure the mileage to which the ship had been subjected; in need of repairs and new boilers and unable to run the blockade back into a Southern port, Semmes decided to retire the ship, pay his crew, and instruct them to return to the South for further orders (176-177). Kell eventually transferred to the crew of *Alabama* to continue the assault on Northern merchant ships. The scope of his narrative is limited; when he does include aspects of shipboard life, it is almost exclusively in relation to the officers rather than the enlisted crew, or 'Jack.' However, he recorded the various captures of prize vessel in great detail, and his account is a great resource for those interested in the history of commerce raiding during the American Civil War.

***Recollections of a Rebel Reefer*, by James Morris Morgan**

This memoir describes the naval service of James Morgan, who enlisted in the Confederate Navy at the outset of the Civil War. What makes his account so valuable is revealed, in part, by a quote that Morgan includes in his preface: "Its novelty is another excuse for this volume. The shelves of libraries are filled with 'Recollections,' 'Reminiscences,' and 'Services Afloat,' written by admirals, but who ever before saw the memoirs of a 'Reefer…I make no apology for its many faults and shortcomings, for were it told in a scholarly manner and in the rounded periods and faultless language of a Macaulay, it would not be the story of a midshipman who had few opportunities of acquiring an education…" (vii-viii). An abundance of narratives from naval officers

exist from the Civil War, but relatively few accounts were written by the lower ranking sailors. Morgan presents, in uncensored form, his trials and tribulations in joining the navy as a landsman and the career that followed. For the purposes of this analysis, only accounts pertaining to his wartime service are included, but those interested in humorous anecdotes and fascinatingly descriptive narrative are encouraged to read the volume in its entirety. Morgan served aboard several vessels throughout his naval service, including a man-of-war, an ironclad, and a blockade runner; since the type of service greatly impacted Morgan's shipboard experiences, his narrative is separated by vessel rather than thematically.

The beginning of Morgan's narrative was similar in many ways to that of Robley Evans (see *A Sailor's Log: Recollections of Forty Years of Naval Life* in this thesis). The two accounts diverge in one important way: in that Evans decided to remain with the Union Navy but Morgan joined the Confederate Navy after the secession of Louisiana. Both men were trained together as midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy at Annapolis, Maryland, and onboard *Constitution*, which was fitted out as a school-ship (21). Morgan found a number of other boys who were as 'green' to the Navy as he was (21). They enjoyed learning from the boatswain mates and the older sailors, who taught them how to set up their hammocks and tie knots (21,25). He described the shipboard routine: reveille, dress, lash and stow the hammocks, breakfast, recitation, drill at the guns, recitation, infantry drill, recitation, cutlass exercises, recitation, dinner, recitation, boat and sail drills, supper, then study hours. After their hammocks were slung for the night, the boys were allowed thirty minutes of roughhouse play, until taps sounded and

silence was demanded (22-23). The crew went on land for infantry drills – the older military officer who was in charge stood in front of them holding a sword and told them to charge. He was planning on halting them when they got close, but instead he wavered and was run over as the crew charged straight into the water (32).

Morgan's time at the U.S. Naval Academy was hardly all work – he found plenty of time for leisure activities on shore and aboard *Constitution*. A common pastime for the boys was chewing tobacco with other officers. The ship was frequented by visitors, many of whom were wives of the officers (24). On Saturday nights, there were dances, or "hops," on board the frigate, and many of the local young ladies attended. The berth deck was decorated with flags and music was provided by the Academy band (27). Once, the Severn River froze over and the boys sought permission to go skating. Morgan had never seen such a large amount of ice, and with some trepidation, procured a pair of skates. He quickly fell and crashed through the ice into the frigid water, weighed down by his heavy regulation overcoat, but he was an accomplished swimmer and managed to pull himself to safety. Morgan was reprimanded by the officer in charge for going on the ice without informing anyone that he didn't know how to skate (28-29).

Morgan described the first examination set to the class of midshipmen; 40 students "bilged," meaning they were found deficient in their studies, and received letters from the Secretary of the Navy offering to accept their resignation. These acceptance letters were given to the boys before any arrangements had been made for their departure, and the result was the presence of 40 civilian boys, "freed from the yoke of naval discipline," detained on board a man-of-war. When night came and two bells (9

o'clock) were struck and the boys had set up their hammocks, the usual rough play turned into a near-riot. The "bilged" students were directed to sling their hammocks in a separate part of the deck. When taps was sounded, the "bilged" students (called 'goats' by the author) had somehow rigged a device that caused many of the students' hammocks to crash down, creating mass confusion (30). When order had been restored, the goats let loose their next trap – a series of 32 pound round shot rigged to crash down the inclined deck towards a lieutenant. The lieutenant called the boys to the main deck and forced them to "toe a seam" and stand at attention until the troublemakers came forward (31).

When Morgan resigned from the U.S. Navy to join the Confederacy, he received 12 dollars (34). He was sad to leave his companions, many of whom he had developed friendships with (33). Dressed in his uniform, but with all of the markings removed, Morgan was able to get passage back to Mobile on a transport ship but had to sleep on the deck (39). He was running low on money, and without the adoption of a common Confederate currency, Morgan found that money from one county wasn't accepted at others (39). When he returned home to Louisiana, he noted his displeasure with the Confederate soldiers – they were poor, didn't know their guns, called their commanding officers by the first name, and had terrible uniforms (44). Soldiers elected their own officers, and many aristocrats turned down the position so that other men could receive the money earned from these posts (44). Shortly afterwards, Morgan received orders to New Orleans, Louisiana, where two steamers were being fitted out for the Confederate Navy, *Sumter* and *McRae* (49). Morgan joined the crew of the latter, and was assigned

his watch and station (52-53). He observed that the Confederate naval officers initially wore the same uniform as the North because they kept them after leaving the U.S. Navy; eventually they had to switch to gray uniforms, which they were unhappy about (53). The ship spent weeks moving between the Confederate forts at the mouth of the Mississippi River, waiting for an opportunity to run the blockade (53). Morgan attended balls and dinners hosted by local families, and the ship was constantly filled with visitors (54). He also described a common punishment for young midshipmen who misbehaved called 'mastheading,' in which they had to stand on the cap of the foretopmast and hold onto the stays to keep from falling off. Apparently Morgan was a frequent recipient of this punishment; he stated that he spent much of his leisure time aloft (54).

McRae became the flagship for Commodore Hollins, to whom Morgan was appointed 'aide-de-camp,' an assistant to a senior officer (61). The ship's crew was given orders to prevent the Federal fleet of newly built ironclads from coming down the Ohio River and entering the Mississippi River (61). By the time *McRae* arrived, it was decided that the ship would better serve in the defense of New Madrid, and Morgan spent the winter of 1861 in the monotony of this protective duty (62). His primary responsibility was to deliver communications to and from the commodore (64,71-73). Morgan was eventually sent to Richmond, Virginia, where he noted that the locals were hostile when he asked for directions because he wore his blue navy uniform – the gray Confederate uniform had not yet arrived before his travels (79). He promptly went to the paymaster, got an advance on his salary, and purchased a gray uniform (79). While here, Morgan received leave to see his brother George, who was an Army captain and acting

quartermaster (83). They stayed at the Spotswood Hotel for several days; Morgan remarked that the bedroom doors were kept open and it seemed like a game of poker was going on in every room (84). He also saw many officers with their arms in slings; Morgan explained that snipers could easily identify them based on the indicators of rank on their sleeves. Consequently, by the end of the war, even generals only wore three small stars on their coats (84).

Morgan was assigned as one of two officers commanding the eight-man crew of the gunboat *Beaufort* (86). His brother visited the ship, at which time a crewman named Jurgenson returned to the ship drunk. As the ship's commanding officer, Morgan ordered him to be put in double-irons and gagged. He explained that he wasn't being cruel, but that it was important in the navy to follow any indiscretion with the required punishment, and that Jurgenson would have lost respect for Morgan had the punishments not been carried out (88). Morgan's health suffered in Richmond; he developed chills and chronic dysentery and requested his transfer to a different station. Though he asked to be sent to Port Hudson, Louisiana, since he had family nearby, Morgan was sent to Charleston, South Carolina because the commodore didn't believe in "having young officers tied to their mothers' apron strings" (89). He was assigned to the ironclad *Chicora*, but the ship was not complete so Morgan was forced to find quarters on shore. The cheapest hotel he could find was $45 per month, but his shore pay was only $40. The hotel owner allowed him to stay, providing Morgan give him the remaining $5 if his friends or family sent him money (90). At this point, a yellow fever epidemic broke out, killing his brother George (92). After the funeral, Morgan moved to the house of Mr.

George Trenholm, the Confederate Secretary of the Treasury, whom he had never met prior to being summoned to the Trenholm residence. Morgan never explained how Mr. Trenholm came to know him, or why he offered to take care of the boy following George's death (94-96). Trenholm asked Morgan if he would like to go abroad and join a cruiser; Morgan said that he would love to, but that he didn't possess the influence necessary to choose his orders. The next morning, Morgan was handed a telegram signed by Stephen R. Mallory, Secretary of the Navy, telling him to report to Commodore Matthew Maury for duty abroad (97).

It turned out that Trenholm was the owner of several blockade runners, and Morgan joined the crew of *Herald* in Charleston Harbor as Commodore Maury's aide-de-camp (98). The ship was slow, uncharacteristic for a blockade runner, but could reach 8 knots when pushed (99). For the first time, Morgan found himself in the company of merchant sailors, rather than naval sailors, whom he believed were jealous of the latter (100). The ship arrived at St. George's Island, Bermuda, and Morgan stayed in a hotel with the commodore and other captains of blockade runners (100-101). He equated the lifestyle on the island to the orgies of pirates in the West Indies; men who had never had more than $50-75 per month were now receiving more than $10,000 after a round trip. According to Morgan, the men in Bermuda drank champagne in excess, and threw shillings at groups of local young black men just to watch them scramble. Ironically, Morgan noted that after the war none of these men had a dollar to their names (101).

Morgan accompanied Commodore Maury to Liverpool in Great Britain, where he spent time ashore fox hunting with young British officers (104), visiting the tailor to

acquire new suits courtesy of Mr. Trenholm (107), visiting various aristocratic families (108), and attending nautical school where he learned navigation, fencing, and boxing (109). In 1863, he was given the opportunity to rejoin the Confederate Navy; Morgan jumped at the chance and, with Commodore Maury, joined the crew of the man-of-war *Georgia* (116). His service on *Georgia* comprised the bulk of his narrative. During this time, they captured a Union coal transport called *Dictator*. Morgan and the second lieutenant went aboard to accept the surrender, taking the crew prisoner and procuring an assortment of provisions (118). The ship was worth $86,000, and by Confederate law, the crew received half its worth in prize money. Morgan went into further detail about how the prize money was distributed among the crew, but he also stated that had the vessel been carrying neutral cargo the crew would have received the ship's full value (119-120). Morgan claimed that they treated their prisoners kindly; they received the same rations as the crew and half were freed from their irons and able to roam the deck during the day (122). While on board *Georgia*, Morgan learned a trick from an old sailor to determine their proximity to land, based on the presence of dew on the ship which can only exist within a 30-mile (48 km) radius of land (125).

The crew seemed to be mostly well-behaved, but Morgan mentioned an instance where a few men cut a hole into the coal bunker where the grog rations were stored, stealing a considerable amount of whiskey and causing a fight among the men. Once the fighting stopped, the men responsible were put in irons and confined to the brig on a bread and water diet (163). Behavior issues were probably caused by the monotonous existence of their service aboard *Georgia* (169) and the fact that the men were cooped up

for over four months (148). Morgan described the routine as “drills, watches, and meals – meals, watches, and drills” (171). Their diet was equally as monotonous – having not entered a port to buy additional provisions, the men were stuck with ‘salt horse’ (preserved beef) and hardtack (145). Morgan, as a midshipman, was afforded a few opportunities to improve his diet. He was offered a glass of sherry and a brown bag full of cakes from various visitors to the ship (145). Provisions were taken from prize vessels, which usually included coal or luxury items like champagne or, in one instance, several bottes of eau-de-vie de Danzig with gold dust floating in it (156, 162).

There were limited opportunities to go ashore, but these trips were always highly anticipated as a source of exercise (174). While docked at Bahia, Brazil, the officers attended a ball hosted in their honor (128). Morgan was often granted permission to visit shore, as long as he was back in time to keep the mid-watch (150). Shipboard entertainment was only briefly touched upon by Morgan. The sailors once caught an albatross using a hook baited with pork fat; they freed the bird on deck where it promptly became seasick to the crew’s amusement (152). Rarely, the men received letters that had been run through the blockade and forwarded to them by Confederate agents (165). Morgan wrote that there was one hour in which discipline on the ship was suspended. After the day’s work, men gathered on the forecastle and sang songs and the officers joined to smoke cigars. During this period, crewmen could speak freely with officers (176).

Finally, Morgan’s account includes several anecdotes relating to superstition and death. When the ship passed Southern Africa’s Cape of Good Hope, Morgan noted that

ancient Portuguese mariners believed demons resided there and they were capable of pulling ships under the water (146). Either a superstition or an example of culture-clash, the British officers were terrified and appalled that Morgan carried a Colt revolver; this confused Morgan because he came from "a country where almost every man carried a weapon, and where it was considered the proper thing to resent an assault with a shot" (149). He also described two different funerals that occurred on board. During the first, smaller ceremony, the prisoners were released from their irons to attend and all hands were summoned to hear the captain read a verse from the Bible. Two white sea birds circled above them, believed by sailors to represent angels (137). When a storm killed several sailors in port, an "impressive" funeral was held the following day in the presence of 10,000 soldiers, standing at arms on either side of the road leading to the cemetery. Morgan didn't name the cemetery or location in which so many soldiers would be available to attend. Priests, a full military band, caissons drawn by horses, admirals and naval officers, and 6,000 sailors from the fleet were also present. The dead were all buried in one grave, with the exception of a young officer placed in his own grave (168). It was clear that a burial at sea was not ideal for everyone; Morgan once boarded a ship and found a coffin occupied by the ship's captain who died during the voyage. The captain's son did not want him dropped at sea, so he perforated his father's body with dozens of small cuts and filled the coffin with pickle juice to preserve the body (136).

Georgia, in need of repairs, was decommissioned in a British dock; all hands were summoned to the quarterdeck for a final time and listened to the captain read the

orders while the Confederate flag at the ship's peak, the Union Jack on the bowsprit, and the commander's pennant at the masthead were taken down (182). After spending some time in Paris, France, waiting for warships that would never materialize, Morgan received orders to report to Commander John Kell (former executive officer of *Alabama*) in Southampton, England (187). Morgan, Kell, and several other Confederate sailors took passage through the blockade to an unidentified port on the British steamer *Alpha*. In the mornings, they gathered on the poop deck, waited for the breakfast bell and followed in line behind Commander Kell, arranged in order of rank (189). Morgan described an amusing story that started with Kell's beard; Kell had decided not to shave his beard until he was reunited with his wife, so after several years of naval service his red beard reached his waist. He normally kept the beard plaited and tucked down his shirt collar, but before breakfast one day, pulled it out and combed it. Before he could finish combing it and braiding it, the breakfast gong sounded, and not wanted to hold up the rest of the sailors from eating, proceeded into the dining hall with his beard unplaited. His beard caused a fright among the passengers, one of whom had mistaken him for a pirate and screamed out that pirates had seized the ship. Men dove under the tables and women begged for mercy. Eventually the captain rushed into the dining room and the situation was rectified (190). When *Alpha* attempted to run the blockade, the ship was chased by a blockade runner-turned-blockading ship, *Lillian*. The captain stowed several big drinks of brandy internally, hoisted the Confederate flag in a spirit of braggadocio, and ordered his men to put on their uniforms; he stated that, if they were going to get captured, it would be as Confederate naval officers (191). Fortunately, they

made it safely through the blockade and Morgan travelled to Columbia, South Carolina (195, 200).

He was given orders to report to the school ship *Patrick Henry* to be examined for promotion, but Morgan, having failed to crack a schoolbook since he left the Academy, failed. He was given the opportunity to attend school again with 60 other midshipmen, aged 14 to 17 (204-205). Morgan noted that the food was revolting; for the first time in a while he was forced to suffer standard shipboard rations – fat pork, shavings of fresh meat tough as hide, hardtack, and a tin cup of hot water colored with chicory or grains of burned corn to serve as makeshift coffee (205). Lucky for Morgan, the conditions were more than enough motivation to pass his test for promotion, and he was sent to the Semmes naval battery on the James River where he served for the duration of the war (212). Interestingly, Morgan noted that Union soldiers traded coffee and sugar for Southern tobacco without the knowledge of the officers; it was generally believed that a captured Confederate soldier would fare better if he was in possession of tobacco (214). Morgan ended the war in dire straits; his once-gray uniform had turned a "green yellowish brown" due to the elements (222), he had a boot on one foot and a shoe on the other (223), and his wife died of yellow fever, leaving him a widower before turning 21 (257).

Morgan provides a fascinating account of shipboard life for a lower-ranking Confederate midshipman during the Civil War. Thoroughly detailed and full of amusing anecdotes, his narrative is a pleasurable read.

***From Reefer to Rear-Admiral; Reminiscences and Journal Jottings of Nearly Half a Century of Naval Life*, by Benjamin F. Sands**

These are the memoirs of Admiral Benjamin Sands, who chronicled his time spent in the U.S. Navy, spanning from 1827 to after the end of the American Civil War. This is a valuable source to scholars studying the changes in the U.S. Navy over four decades, but it only briefly discusses shipboard life in favor of descriptions of coast surveys, battles, and his position with the West Gulf Blockading Squadron. Because of the extended time spent in the Navy, Admiral Sands was well acquainted with all aspects of shipboard life and organization.

An anecdote described the average "Jack Tar" as hardly representative of the harsh reputation earned by previous professional man-of-war sailors: the crew temporarily housed refugees – a young couple expecting a baby and without means – and "they [the crew] quietly made up a purse in the forecastle and…the boatswain's mate, a rough old salt, came forward…handing in their name a purse of $260 to the young wife" (251). According to Sands, life aboard a blockade ship was anything but relaxing – during his three years of service, he only once was able to "undress at night for a comfortable sleep" in his bunk; the "wear and tear of this loss of rest, with the anxiety attending the responsibility upon [him], had told severely upon [his] strength and health" (269). The various blockading vessels signaled to each other at night using flashlights and colored lanterns to discern friend from foe, a system that depended heavily on crew alertness, promptness, and intelligence (251).

***Two Years on the* Alabama, by Arthur Sinclair**

Published in 1896, only three decades after the culmination of the Civil War, this is a valuable firsthand account by the ship's lieutenant that displays characteristics of both journals and memoirs. Sinclair wrote his recollections after the war, but the detailed nature of the account suggests it was based on a journal kept during the war. Sinclair outlines his exploits aboard *Alabama*, for which there exist other personal accounts – most notably, those of its captain, Raphael Semmes (Semmes 1864, 1869). However, Sinclair inadvertently explains on his first page why his journal is more reliable for the reconstruction of shipboard life than that of his captain:

"Captain Raphael Semmes's account of the service of the Alabama*, as the public probably observed, was most carefully confined within the limits of legal and professional statement. It was no part of his purpose to enter into the details of life on board, or to make any unnecessary confidences respecting himself or the officers and crew who shared his labors and successes…It will not be doubted that a cruise so unique and remarkable had its share of daily and hourly interests, and of manifestations of that human nature which is of the first consequence in all narrative"* (1).

CSS *Alabama* was perhaps the most notorious of the Confederate commerce raiders during its twenty-two months of service. The ship sailed 75,000 miles (120,700.8 km) or "thrice around the globe" from the West Indies to the Gulf of Mexico, Brazil, Cape of Good Hope, China Seas, Strait of Malacca, Arabian Gulf, Strait of Madagascar, Cape Town, and the English Channel (3-4). Needing repairs and equipped with poor quality powder and shells, it was sunk in battle by USS *Kearsarge*; Lieutenant Sinclair and 41 others were picked up by the British yacht *Deerhound* and escaped to England. Having never visited a Southern port through the duration of its global journey, or

stopped for any considerable length of time to avoid pursuit by the U.S. Navy, *Alabama* presents a unique case for shipboard life during the Civil War.

With no consistent source of supplies from the government, the crew had to rely heavily on captured goods and items bartered from native islanders – *Alabama*'s voyage was far from archetypal. After two decades in naval service, Sinclair has a privileged position from which to observe shipboard life and he promises truth in his descriptions, claiming to have "spared no pains to verify through the testimony of others what he has herein set down" (1). As an officer, however, there is an expected disconnect concerning enlisted crew perspective; Sinclair refers to the enlisted crew members collectively as "Jack" and discusses them as if they were specimens to be studied rather than his peers. It was, however, far from the typical shipboard experience, especially when compared to the tedium of blockade service; regardless, Sinclair's narrative depicts a fascinating two years at sea.

Sinclair had an insider's perspective concerning shipboard life for an officer. Many of *Alabama*'s officers descended from 'old naval families' (226) and were all American, except for one – Mr. John Low (22) – and all but two were in their twenties (226). Strict and firm discipline, watchfulness, and labor were demanded from commissioned and warrant officers, as well as a strong sentiment of duty and patriotism (5). Officers were primarily responsible for inspection of the crew (28). There were four heads of department – the boatswain, carpenter, sailmaker, and gunner (196). The carpenter was considered to be the least busy man on the ship, though he and his mates were assisted by the engineers when necessary (11). Onboard *Alabama*, their most

difficult task involved the installation of the pivot and broadside guns, stowing magazine, and the shot and shell lockers upon receiving the ship from its British builders (11).[3] The gunner was responsible for maintaining the battery, which was regularly "blacked, pumiced, and polished to a degree to put to blush a dude's patent leathers" (23, 57). The sailmaker, expectedly, looked after the ship's working and spare sails and stored them in the sailroom (11).

Sinclair also briefly outlined the duties of several other crew members. The paymaster acquired items for the crew, including clothing and Virginia smoking and chewing tobaccos (35). The master at arms was responsible for looking after the messenger boys (58) and midshipmen worked with the sailing master to measure longitude with a sextant, referred to as 'taking the sun' (24), or take time with a chronometer (225, 230). The dock-master was responsible for making sure all hull maintenance was taken care of upon arriving in port (148, 196), and the officers were responsible for handling guests and visitors to the ship, so they often were unable to visit shore like the rest of the crew (78). However, when they did go ashore, their social status usually gained them access to balls and dinner parties hosted by socialites in port (160).

According to Sinclair, "Jack" is a simple man who is restless and fond of adventure; "pipe, grog, and black-eyed Susan are his paradise; and for the rest, give him the open sea, a topsail breeze, and regular watches" (201). *Alabama's* crew initially consisted of 85 Englishmen, who forfeited protection by the English government by

[3] Built in Britain under the watchful eyes of Union naval officers, *Alabama* had to be equipped as a regular merchant ship to avoid being detected as a commerce raider contracted by the Confederacy. All of the weaponry was added to the ship upon its transfer to Captain Semmes in international waters.

enlisting with a Confederate ship (16). The crew eventually grew to 110 men and 26 officers, only 14 short of a full complement (49). Average seamen had several duties – the ship's mechanics (likely the carpenters) repaired holes in the hull and damaged rigging after a fight (77), decks had to be washed and holy-stoned (151) and older sailors were charged with teaching younger sailors skills like knot-tying (138). While in port, crew members were required to paint the ship, caulk the decks, and mend any torn sails before they could go ashore (148, 224). Upon returning from shore, the officers checked the men to assure that no liquor was smuggled aboard (85).

There were daily tasks assigned to everyone on the ship; each morning, there was a ceremony to hoist the flag (26-27) and at four bells (10:00 am), the crew had to pass inspection by the captain and officers or they didn't receive their daily allotment of grog (58). Certain seamen had specific tasks; Evans was described as a factotum, which usually refers to someone with a variety of jobs, though his primary function was to determine the nationality of an approaching ship (54). The captain's steward, A.G. Bartelli, was responsible for organizing food, champagne, and cigars for visitors (106) and was ship's barber to all of the officers (234). Young boys on board handled simple tasks like darning socks or sewing buttons (230). Men on watch looked for birds; certain species, like the cape-pigeon and albatross warned the crew of stormy weather (141). No direct contact with the captain was allowed but Sinclair asserted that the men loved Semmes, respected him, and were proud to serve under him (84).

Throughout the narrative, Sinclair brought up the notion that seamen were perpetually intoxicated while ashore and notorious for attempting to smuggle alcohol on

board. When intoxicated seamen returned to the ship, mutinous sailors were put in irons and the rest were sent to their hammocks to sleep off their drunkenness (50). This added undue stress to the officers, whose strict watch of prisoners was observed to be very wearying (74.) Sinclair equated the average seaman's sense of responsibility to that of a child (50). Besides putting seamen in irons, Sinclair did not discuss the crew punishments, with the exception of a few rare cases. Captain Semmes inspired a strong sense of discipline among his sailors, and Sinclair cited that most seamen avoided trouble-making while on board because it would reflect negatively on their corresponding officer (86). Sinclair added that sailors are better managed by their own officers than through municipal law because the sailors are reminded of their training on board (215). Presumably, he meant that the sailors responded best to their usual from of discipline and were conditioned to listen to officers rather than traditional law enforcement. In one case, there was a sparring match between two crew members holding a grudge; once the fight was broken up, both men were punished while being lashed spread eagled in the mizzen rigging (110).

According to Sinclair's account, poor health was not much of a problem for the crew of *Alabama* (193). He mentioned two other ships with sickness problems – there was an outbreak of yellow fever on *Florida*, in which sickness and mortality among the crew was so great that the ship had to return to port (2) and cholera afflicted nearly the entire crew of another unnamed ship (236). In order to stay well, boys and younger officers exercised in the rigging (247). Most of the crew dealt with long stretches of uncleanliness – soap was considered more valuable than most luxury items (132). The

officers stretched a clothesline from mast to mast for the crew's annual wash, though we can only hope Sinclair meant 'regular' and not once-per-year (101). However, *Alabama* spent a while in equatorial weather, during which time they had plenty of fresh water to wash themselves and their clothes (98). Officers and crew walked around barefoot on deck after a big rainstorm to soak their feet and the stewards and mess-boys used the fresh water to fill tubs for the luxury of a bath (96). Sinclair did remark upon the health of the captain, who had the most responsibility and often worked on very little sleep (191). Even though Captain Semmes could catch up on sleep while in port (194), his three years of active, anxious service left him a physical wreck (193, 227).

Based on Sinclair's account, *Alabama*'s ship rations are consistent with other sailing ships during the mid-19th century. Average seamen did not use many pieces of silverware; they sat on the deck and ate on a tablecloth of black painted canvas, used tinware dishes and plates, a sheathknife to cut their salt beef or pork, and hardtack as a plate. They drank coffee or tea, and mostly ate quickly to have as much time as possible for the tobacco at the end of their meal (25, 86, 94, 224). Ship's rations included "salt horse" (50, 63, 261) and rice (63, 228). The captain's quarters were more formal; his guests ate at a table with a white tablecloth and four-pronged forks (86). Sinclair mentioned a variety of other foods, usually obtained while stopping in at port; bartering with the native islanders (13, 29, 53, 104) gave them access to fish, turtles, fruit, vegetables (29, 52, 65, 83, 109, 220, 244-245). The ward-room steward Parkinson was given carte blanche to supply the table whenever possible (50). The officers' fishing and hunting parties brought back meats including beef, mutton, fish, deer, antelope,

pheasant, hare, quail, snipe, plover, curlew and turkey (67, 109, 145, 200). Boarding parties took pigs, fowls, potatoes, and onions from prize ships to feed the crew in between port stops (93). Some luxury items were also taken for the officers, including champagne, oysters, wines, brandies, sardines, cheese, fruitcake, and olives (32, 62, 85). Sinclair mentioned that the crew, on one occasion, collected sea-fowl eggs (66). Deep-sea fish, when caught, were tested for heavy metal poisons by placing a silver coin in the pan; if it turned black, the fish was not safe to eat (112).

In addition to coffee and tea, seamen received a ration of grog (24, 76, 231). "Doubling on the grog-tub" was considered a serious offense and the officers had to remain diligently observant to be sure this didn't happen (25). Liquor was not allowed among the crew while on board, and grog was only served to seamen, not officers (75); this is an interesting example of power symbolism within the crew hierarchy. Additionally, the crew members had an allocation of one gallon of fresh water per day. Some of this ration was subtracted for the cook's use and therefore little was left for drinking; consequently, strict rations were kept in case the steam freshwater condenser broke and the crew had to wait until the next port for fresh water (96).

Sinclair didn't offer much on personal effects beyond clothing items. He described the officer uniforms on British vessels as an "attractive shade of gray, with a redundancy of gold lace inappropriate to marine traditions," while the seamen wore regulation blue (14). The seamen on board *Alabama* donned blue and white uniforms (21) and were given pea-jackets for cold weather (52, 92). The messenger boys, frequently from families with means, wore silk-embroidered collars and cuffs (58). Each

crew member had a Sunday muster uniform they wore during inspection (266) and officers had summer uniforms that included white linen ducks and straw hats (196). Sinclair mentioned that officers frequently gave their uniform buttons to females on board captured vessels as mementos to calm them (61). Additionally, shoes must have been hard to come by or keep in working order, because they took calfskin shoes from a prize ship for the officers (136).

In terms of personal belongings, the crew asked for pocket-knives, pipes, and books as prizes from captured vessels (55). Each seaman had a hammock, but they would often sleep on deck when the weather was nice (55). Sinclair amusingly explained the origin of the term "Jack," in which sailors were named after the jackdaw (a type of crow) due to their propensity for stowing away anything and everything in their hammock cloths; when these items were found during an inspection, they were thrown overboard and the sailor lost a day of grog (82). Sinclair described two pets belonging to the seamen – a cat and a bird. He remarked upon the bond of affection shared by the crew for this cat, who at one point went missing, the suspect in the cat's disappearance was spread eagled in the mizzen rigging barefooted until he admitted to the cat's whereabouts (stuffed in one of the ship's cannons) (28). The bird, described as black as a raven and the size of a field lark, shared the crew's rations and was fed by the mess-cooks (94-95).

Sinclair briefly touched on how payment was distributed among the crew. The initial crew members were promised double the wages paid by the English government (paid in gold), an equivalent of one-half the value of the destroyed and bonded vessels as

prize money, grog twice a day (as in the English Navy), generous rations (superior to any other navy) and good treatment (15). The money received by each seaman as part of the prize money was proportional to their rank (68). The captain secured additional crew during the journey with similar promises: double pay in gold, generous rations, tobacco, grog twice per day, and the prospective prize money (99), but recruitment was done secretly to avoid breaking neutrality agreements (175).

To pass the time and keep the crew in good spirits, seamen participated in various forms of entertainment; young officers formed a glee club in which the officers performed on campstools, while the audience, or crew, situated themselves in the topgallant-forecastle while they smoked cigars and pipes (51-52, 84, 229, 237). Seamen and officers alike participated actively in fishing, seining, and trolling, which had the added benefit of diversifying the daily ship's rations (52, 111, 148, 178, 246). According to Sinclair, the crew frequently played checkers, but he observed that the average seamen avoided chess because it required too much thought and patience (121). The officers played chess, backgammon and other games in their ward room, but interestingly, playing cards was strictly prohibited (68, 228). Seamen spent their evening free time during supper dancing (84), participating in theatre (237), and most commonly, smoking tobacco, which was a highly social activity (113). Certain dexterous members of the crew took up embroidery to pass the time, perhaps to make gifts for family members back home (121).

Enlisted crew members were literate to ranging degrees; many spent time writing and reading while straddling the topsail-yard with the mast as a backrest (67). The crew

listened to readings, lectures, or people playing instruments like the violin and guitar (68, 229). A favorite pastime of the seamen was reading the official account of each captured ship and the corresponding documented prize value, which allowed them to relive their favorite captures and contemplate the use of their share of the profits (68). When the ship pulled into port, the crew was allowed to leave the ship after performing all necessary ship maintenance and watch duties. However, they were often found later by officers in every stage of intoxication, usually socializing or dancing with women. When *Alabama* was ready to leave port, they were gathered by the officers or left as deserters (79, 215); consequently, Captain Semmes avoided ports when possible to prevent his crew from being subjected to its "demoralizing effects" (84, 215). After the officers carried out their duties, they could participate in recreational activities ashore, usually attending dinners and balls hosted by the socialites in town (124). Sport hunting was favored since it supplemented the monotonous diet; Sinclair reported hunting all sorts of exotic game, including ostrich, spring-bok (145), vampire bats, parrots, and cockatoos (200).

Religion and superstition seemed to play a minor role, as it was only briefly alluded to by Sinclair. Many seamen engaged themselves in religious discussions with other sailors after dinner or while they were off-duty (248). Every Sunday was a muster that included some type of religious ceremony and prayer, attended by all those not on duty (179). Should a sailor die at sea, the contents of his sea bag were distributed to his mess-mates, but Sinclair omitted any mention of the protocol for handling his body (176). He remarked upon the crew's fairly superstitious nature in that they specifically

didn't like to sail out from port on a Friday (237) and they believed bad luck and bad weather would fall upon those who harm albatrosses (142).

It should be stated that Sinclair included in his appendix a variety of materials that can be valuable to the reconstruction of shipboard life. These comprised a complete muster roll for *Alabama*, listing the officers and marking which individuals were part of the initial crew and which participated in the final battle against USS *Kearsarge*. He developed short biographies for many officers and seamen, which serve to humanize the story of *Alabama*. Sinclair also included a letter from a seaman to his family in America, one of the few to make it through the blockade. These materials, especially the letter, provide additional evidence about shipboard life, including the number of crew members, the hierarchy of the crew, and shipboard life from an average seaman's perspective, which is unique from Sinclair's narrative.

Because Sinclair covered shipboard life on *Alabama* so extensively, an analysis of Captain Raphael Semmes' memoirs will not be included here.[4] Those interested in the adventures of the Confederate commerce raider *Alabama* can read any of Semmes' publications: *The Cruise of the Alabama and the Sumter* (1864); *Memoirs of Service Afloat* (1869); or *Some Personal Correspondence* (1977). However, evidence for the reconstruction of daily life is more limited, as Semmes's writings mostly regard battle strategies and the injustice of being labeled a 'pirate' by the United States government.

[4] The primary goals of Semmes' memoirs while on *Alabama* were to discuss his naval strategy, to chronicle the merchant ships that he raided, and to combat the notion that his actions during the war were illegal or comparable to piracy. His narrative only briefly alludes to aspects of shipboard life.

***Three Years on the Blockade*, by Israel Everett Vail**

Three Years on the Blockade chronicles the service of Israel Everett Vail in the U.S. Navy, during which he served aboard four ships: *Massachusetts*, *Wissahickon*, *Shokokon*, and *Kensington*. Published in 1902, this memoir reveals a wide variety of evidence for shipboard life through different aspects of blockade duty – coastal service, riverine service, and transport duty. Vail was too young to join the army, and so he applied to join the Navy with the help of his neighbor, a retired naval officer (6). Having zero experience with naval or shipboard life, Vail recorded many of the mundane features of his day-to-day activities, responsibilities, and fellow crew. His narrative begins with his appointment as a Paymaster's Clerk on board the U.S. steamer *Massachusetts*.

Vail stated that the duties as a Paymaster's Clerk were largely of a 'clerical nature' except during times of battle (7, 62). He was required to furnish himself with a regulation uniform, the cap of which was decorated with gold lace and the insignia of his office (8). Vail worked immediately under the Acting Assistant Paymaster; in a regular man-of-war his low rank entitled him to join the steerage mess, but he was invited by the commissioned officers of the ward room to join their mess – probably a result of Vail being the youngest officer aboard the ship – which granted him unusual privileges for his rank (10-11). The ship was commanded by Melancthon Smith (whose rank was not stated, though the senior officer in command of any ship was accorded the title, "captain") and Lieutenant William Selden as Executive Officer; the other officers were all wartime volunteers (10). Vail wrote that there was an insufficient supply of officers

with naval experience before the war, and it became necessary to appoint many experienced officers from the volunteer corps (10). The crew was comprised largely of newly-recruited volunteers as well, whom Vail referred to as 'green hands' (12).

Massachusetts was positioned on the Gulf Coast, and only the occasional capture of vessels trying to run the blockade provided a break in the monotony of this type of service. Regarding the conditions of shipboard life, Vail mentioned two particularly oppressive factors – mosquitoes and the heat. Both made sleep impossible; one option was to take blankets and sleep out on the deck or stretched out on the bunt of the sail, which was cooler but meant leaving the sanctuary of the mosquito nets in the staterooms (63). Occasionally, heavy seas caused additional strain to the watch officers and crew, and resulted in widespread seasickness, especially for the landsmen on board (14-15,19). As a member of the officer's mess, Vail was not wanting for diversity in his diet. He described how food was acquired by the officers: as was customary for a man-of-war, a caterer for the mess was appointed from among the officers, and the duty would cycle after a given length of time. The caterer was responsible for purchasing the provisions and furnishings of the table, determining the bill of fare with the assistance of the steward (11). Regardless of the officer's pay, each man contributed equally to the cost of the provisions, which cost Vail two months of his salary advance (and may explain why he was invited to join the ward room despite his low rank) (11-12). Common stores aboard the ship included barrels of molasses (18), flour (18), vinegar (18), sugar (18), tea and coffee (18) tobacco and soap (18). The crew depended upon supply ships from the north to bring coal, personal mail (50), fresh meat and vegetables, and luxury items

every two or three weeks (50). Other supplies were purchased from passing ships, including a supply of turtle meat large enough to feed the 150 crewmembers (22) and cattle, which provided a respite from the salt beef they relied upon between the arrivals of supply ships (41, 49).

Blockade duty was largely characterized by a never-ending monotony, and even though their regular duties occupied most of their time, Vail described several forms of entertainment available to the men while onboard *Massachusetts* (31). Excursions to shore were highly anticipated; during coaling stops, the officers that could be spared were allowed to visit shore (19, 26). Vail remarked that a half-day spent at some of the establishments ashore was very demoralizing to the crew, probably referring to the enlisted seamen (22). Men who became drunk or disorderly were sent below decks in irons or "subjected to some milder form of discipline to impress them with the importance of a reasonable degree of sobriety upon future vacations" (22). Vail and his crewmates made several trips to "Ship Island," approximately ten miles (16.1 km) from their station, to stretch their legs and determine whether Confederates were occupying the island (34, 67). Vail also described the leisure activities of the men while on board. The arrival of mail via the supply ships created great excitement and delight among the officers and crew (25). The men sought amusement in simple games and pastimes, playing games from their childhood (32), cards in the wardroom (33), and musical instruments (63). Officers of an 'inactive disposition' would recline in easy chairs under awnings and smoke or read between meals (33). When all else failed, fishing provided both entertainment and a supplement to their diet (32). Occasionally, other ships would

join *Massachusetts*, allowing the crews to socialize with one another (37-38, 66). In one instance, the lookout noticed a woman aboard a passing ship, and "a general effort was noticed among all hands, to appear as attractive as possible" should the ship have come close enough for the lady to observe the men (65).

Massachusetts was sent back to port for repairs, at which point Vail left naval service to join the U.S. Army, though he immediately felt out of place, like 'a sailor on horseback' (74). Later in 1862 he was back in the navy and appointed to the U.S. gunboat *Wissahickon* at the Philadelphia Navy Yard, though the ship ultimately served at the blockade near the Mississippi River. This man-of-war was significantly smaller than *Massachusetts*. Vail frequently complained of the ship's diminutive size; the officers' quarters were cramped, and his cabin was in steerage with the master's mates, the assistant engineers, and the captain's clerk (75). It was nearly impossible to move along the deck; the ship's narrow build and heavy pivot gun on deck amplified the rolling which caused some of the engineers to be seasick (76-77). The confines of the ship were even less bearable at night, when no lights were allowed on deck, the hatches were covered with tarps, the skylights were covered, and no noise was allowed that could be heard outside the ship (110). These precautions were taken to keep blockade runners from discovering their position and skirting around the blockade.

Vail remarked upon his duties aboard *Wissahickon* and provided detailed information about battle with, and the capture of blockade runners, particularly the sinking of the Confederate *Nashville* by the USS *Montauk* when it attempted to leave the Mississippi River with its goods (102). Watch duty was a constant responsibility on the

blockade; Lieutenant-Commander John Davis, *Wissahickon*'s captain, would frequently spend the whole night on deck, anxiously watching for the slightest indications of the presence of blockade runners (110). Lookouts were posted fore and aft, and ordered to report anything and everything they saw to the officer of the deck, and they were further required to call out their posts every half-hour, so it would be known whether they were awake or asleep. Vail and his crewmates were frequently called to duty in the middle of the night upon the discovery of an inexplicable light. The steam engines were always kept ready, and the crew slept by the side of the guns, ready to commence firing whenever necessary. The officers slept with most of their clothes on, and with their side-arms within reach of their beds (111). There was a general system of silence on board the ship at night because sound carried easily across the water (118).

Though Vail's service on *Wissahickon* featured more encounters with enemy ships, there was still some leisure time afforded to the officers. They were always glad of an opportunity to visit nearby ships, islands, or Port Royal, Jamaica; Vail likened these opportunities to going to the city after being stranded in some barren desert (79, 99). The shops offered variety to the sailors' diet and the ability to purchase luxury items (80) and the sand beaches were a perfect spot to bathe (81). While on the ship, the men were provided with newspapers by supply ships from the north (81). Fishing was a regular pastime (87), and a few men had musical instruments among their personal effects, providing minstrel entertainment and amusement (92). Soon, the monotony of blockade service became unbearable to Vail, confined to the small ship (110). When the ship's

paymaster grew ill and a successor arrived with his own assistant, Vail took the opportunity to withdraw from naval service once again.

However, after just one month at shore, Vail sought another naval appointment and received orders to the U.S. gunboat *Shoshokon* (143). The primary duty of *Shoshokon* was to cruise the Appomattox River to look for torpedoes or obstructions (149) or act as a convoy for Army transports (153). *Shokokon* was a double-ended river paddleboat refitted for war purposes (Figure 8). Vail found this type of vessel confusing after serving on two ships with distinct bow and stern ends; he and his crewmembers constantly had to reorient themselves onboard to find their cabin after switching from going up-river to down-river (144). If Vail was disappointed with *Wissahickon*, he was appalled by the appearance of *Shoshokon*, which to him didn't even resemble a man-of-war (143). The ship had been a ferryboat, and the cabins, formerly used for passengers, had been reduced in size and were very cramped (144). It was clear from his narrative that he considered river service to be "too tame" and he included only brief details of shipboard life. Their permanent anchorage was near the shore, so he was allowed to visit as often as he liked, provided there was no danger of running into the enemy (145). The anchorage also coincided with an oyster-bed directly below the ship, so oysters became a principal food, and boats passed frequently, which provided fresh provisions and daily newspapers from Baltimore (146). Their anchorage was opposite a farm belonging to the Confederate Major-General George Pickett, where they "borrowed" his ice-house to indulge in the luxury of ice-water and fresh-picked vegetables (150).

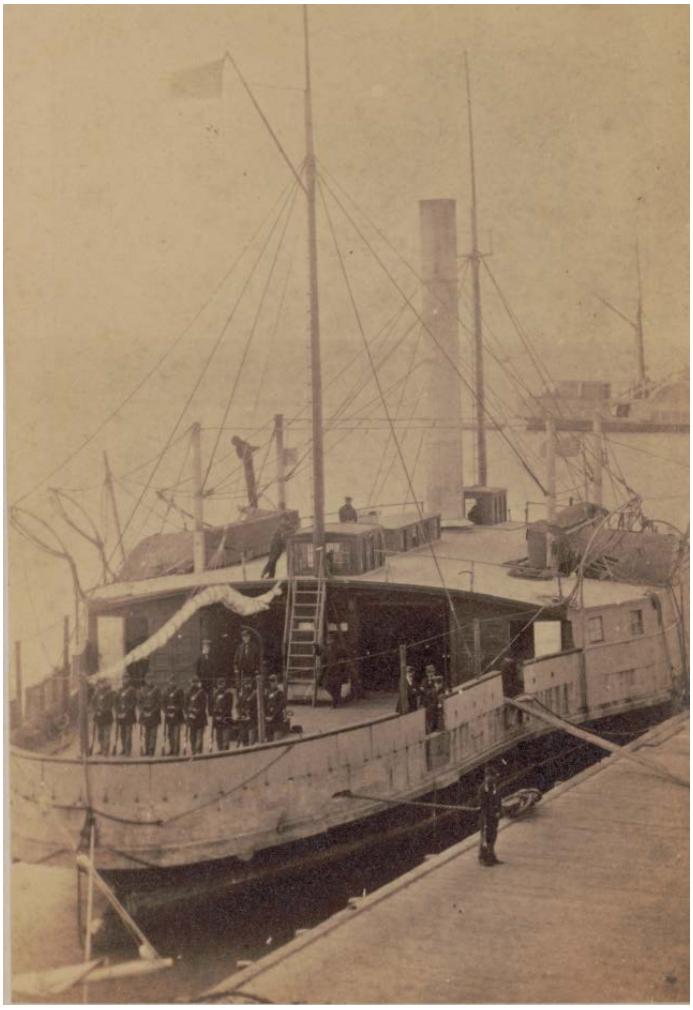

Figure 8. An unidentified double-ended ferry gunboat.
(Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

In 1864, Vail received and appointment to the U.S. steamer *Kensington*, employed as transport service to supply the several squadrons (153). He greatly anticipated this service because the ship frequently stopped in port at the navy yards and visited several squadrons, allowing him to learn about wartime progress (153-154). Again, he resided in the steerage mess but his lodgings were comfortable and his companions were pleasurable (154-155). While transporting soldiers to the South

Atlantic Squadron, the conditions became very cramped since the men were quartered on the berth-deck (154, 163). While in port, usually for one to two weeks at a time, Vail was at liberty to go to shore at almost any time to enjoy the privileges of city life (155). He spent Thanksgiving on board, and a charity society arranged the transportation of dinner to the troops, which consisted of several tons of turkeys, chickens, geese, ducks, and other game (158). Vail and the crew helped themselves to the cargo during the voyage, eating turkey three times a day or more (160).

Vail provided fewer and fewer pieces of evidence concerning shipboard life as his service continued through the war, most likely the result of his increased experience with living on ships and participating in naval duty. His narrative, though limited in the scope of enlisted sailors, offers a point of comparison among several different blockading ships during the Civil War, from the perspective of a junior officer.

CHAPTER IV

CORRESPONDENCE

Figure 9. An envelope from a letter sent during the American Civil War. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

***Letters from a Georgia Midshipman on the C.S.S.* Alabama, by Edward Anderson**

This edited collection of letters from 19-year-old midshipman Edward Maffitt Anderson to his mother and his father, Colonel (later Brigadier General) Edward Clifford discussing his time in the Confederate States Navy, mostly on board the famous commerce raider CSS *Alabama* (416). The information regarding shipboard life is fairly limited, as Anderson spent most of his letters detailing his more adventurous pursuits – giving chase to United States merchant vessels and boarding them. Anderson might

seem exaggerated in order to impress his father, but all of his prize captures can be in fact corroborated with personal accounts from other sailors onboard *Alabama* – particularly those of Captain Raphael Semmes, First Lieutenant John McIntosh Kell, and Lieutenant Arthur Sinclair. The bits of evidence that can be extracted pertain mostly to diet and leisure activities; these are usually included when Anderson is corresponding with his mother, probably to assure her of his well-being during a time when many mothers were losing their sons to war. Anderson claimed he was able to send and receive letters quite regularly because they intercepted mail vessels off the coast of New York (419).

Since the newly British-built *Alabama* had to be equipped and prepared for active duty, all hands were busy painting, setting up rigging, and caulking. Even Midshipman Anderson had his 'hands in a tar pot, rolling down the rigging'; as an officer, he was not obliged to help but he did so for his own amusement (424). When not performing his daily duties, Anderson mentioned several types of entertainment for the officers. While in Martinique, French naval officers were kind to them, giving them charts of the harbor and inviting the officers to their club rooms (421). Off Blanquilla, Captain Semmes gave the crew liberty and allowed them to take rifles to enjoy themselves, but as soon as they landed they started killing goats and donkeys and 'everything else that they came across' and therefore were forced back on board the ship (422). He needed to visit shore to buy clothes and other small articles, therefore the crews of commerce raiders were not always able to procure all necessary items from prize cargoes (425). Information about diet is even less detailed: he made note of the

officers drinking goat's milk, and that the crew went ashore at the Arcas Cays to catch turtles and fishes, including a 30-pound (13.6 kg) turtle. The birds were very plentiful, but less desirable due to their fishy taste (424).

This source provides one young man's perspective of his life as a sailor during the Civil War, in the form of correspondence with his mother and father. Presumably, he avoided including any of the more alarming or gory details from his excursions throughout the Atlantic – commerce raiding was by no means free of danger. That being said, the limited evidence he included about his diet and leisure are most likely accurate statements.

***Naval Letters from Captain Percival Drayton, 1861-1865,* by Percival Drayton**

These were a series of letters written by Captain Percival Drayton in the U.S. Navy to Alexander Hamilton and Lydig Hoyt, preserved by their daughter Miss Gertrude Hoyt. According to Miss Hoyt's introduction to the letters, Drayton was from a distinguished South Carolina family and joined the navy in 1827 as a midshipman, eventually working his way to the rank of commander by 1855. Despite his southern roots, he remained loyal to the Union cause when the war broke out. Drayton commanded several U.S. Navy ships throughout the course of the Civil War – the steamer *Pawnee*, the Ericsson-designed monitor *Passaic*, and Farragut's flagship *Hartford*. With such a variety of experience on several different types of naval craft, Drayton's correspondence imparts valuable insight regarding shipboard life from the perspective of a senior officer. In his letters, Drayton unknowingly addresses why his

correspondence is such a valuable source: “However all this that I have been telling you is not for the public, and I should be hung I supposed if half of it was published, but it is all true and you will find it so before long I am afraid” (55). Personal correspondence, not meant for public consumption, often presents a much more accurate representation of events, without exaggeration or the diplomatic correctness required of government documents.

Drayton mentioned the discomforts of shipboard life during his experiences in the Civil War, frequently citing the heat and mosquitoes (14) and the eternal dampness of his cabin when the boiler was broken and could not heat the ship (21). He discussed the toll that the continued use of artificial light (candles) took on his eyesight and consequently finished his letters earlier than intended (25). Drayton has a lot to say about the discomforts associated with ironclads and that the blame was purely that of John Ericsson, the designer (22). Drayton frequently spoke out of frustration regarding Ericsson’s decisions (19). He highly distrusted the ironclads and was unimpressed with their development thus far – “Ericsson’s invention is about as much fitted to go to sea as a pleasure boat” (24). Conversely, Drayton claimed that life aboard steamships was more than adequate, especially the steamer USS *Tennessee*, which was comfortable and had large and airy quarters (48). He also mentioned that black males were used as paid servants for officers, and were known to strike for higher wages (18).

In terms of leisure time, Drayton claimed to be busy from morning to night, especially while on blockade duty (59), waking up every morning except Sunday at half past five (6). However, he still mentioned several recreational activities undertaken

while off-duty. There was a promenade concert given by the New Orleans superintendent of banks and staff to amuse the Creoles (41), and Drayton took many rides on horseback with the Admiral (unidentified) and "general commanding" (43). Although officers remained very busy on blockade duty, Drayton suggested corresponding with a man named Jenkins, as he was a sailor on blockade duty and seemed to have "plenty of idle time" (47). Despite his demanding schedule as an officer, most men seemed capable of getting some exercise; accordingly, the officers and crew remained in good health and at one point there was not a single sick person on board (28). Drayton's standard of living was good enough that he was actually worried about growing fat, having reached a weight of 155 pounds when he never previously weighed above 152 (47). However, as time went by, many men became affected by the climate and the anxieties associated with naval life and their health deteriorated; Drayton believed his time spent at the gymnasium was responsible for keeping him healthy (33). He claimed there was a habitual problem in U.S. Navy ships in the South with deaths caused by yellow fever (41). The problem seemed most prevalent in Pensacola where men were "packed like sheep in a pen" and constantly exposed to the weather (61). Drayton goes as far to say that any man who had been South for a season required a quinine, an alkaloid with antipyretic, antimalarial, analgesic, and anti-inflammatory properties (59). Eventually blockading took a toll on Drayton's health (63): living in an unhealthy condition and subsisting solely on oatmeal and water, he lost 12 pounds (68).

Concerning food and drink aboard, Drayton mentioned that it was common for men not to drink any water, a habit he associated to the Admiral's gout (unidentified, but

most certainly David Farragut, who was known to suffer from vertigo and gout (Miller 2014:140) (40). Drayton claimed to never reach a point below "medium good health" because he frequently drank water (44). While in New Orleans, Mr. Wright, the possessor of the local horse fair, gave the officers a first class dinner, which consisted of highly seasoned sauces, shrimp soup, lobster salad, soft shell crabs, shrimp, ice cream, and strawberries (50). Drayton said that this meal was heavier than most men could consume regularly and the richness caused trouble with the Admiral, which is surprising since he claimed to eat a breakfast of wine and meat (68). While aboard *Hartford*, the only time money was used was to purchase chickens and eggs to supplement their diet (74).

Throughout his letters, Drayton reveals important insight regarding the overall status of the United States Navy and the men serving it. Although there was a general preoccupation with the effect of privateers (4), Drayton could not overemphasize the importance of having the courage to patiently wait, even in the total absence of everything that makes life pleasant and worth living and without the praise that follows feats of arms (33). He painted a stark picture of life in service of the United States Navy, and revealed a serious problem with desertion (35). In the face of relatively rapid promotion within the military hierarchy (18), Drayton wondered why the army officers seem to improve under their hardships, while the navy officers broke down and look worn and haggard (41). He theorizes that the problems was caused by Congress, which gave bounties to soldiers but not sailors, causing many sailors to join the army. Apparently, the United States Navy was infringing upon many of the contracts and

keeping men in service whose time owed had expired because it was the only way to keep the blockade functioning properly (55).

The most revealing statement was the comparison he made between Union and Confederate sailors: “So far as I can see [in the U.S. Navy] there is no cohesion of parts, the officer says the soldier is subordinate, the soldier says the officer is ignorant, and both are right from what I see and hear… They [six Confederate prisoners] are enlisted for the war overflowing with zeal, talk of their officers with almost veneration, evidently think their army is invincible and are quite satisfied to be common soldiers” (35). Depending on the treatment of the year or theater of the Civil War, several historians have reached the conclusion that the Confederacy was inferior and severely outmatched, especially on the naval front. This statement by Drayton may be interpreted as contradicting that notion and suggests the opinion of the U.S. naval officers may not have been one of confidence and superiority. However, zeal only goes so far in a war that is dominated by rapidly advancing technology, and the Confederacy was unable to meet the demands in that regard.

***Letters of Captain Geo. Hamilton Perkins, U.S.N.*, edited by Susan G. Perkins**

This collection of correspondence is from U.S. naval officer George Hamilton Perkins, who wrote to his Aunt Susan G. Perkins and the rest of his family throughout his naval career. These letters were organized by his aunt; one of the more valuable features of this publication is that the letters are contextualized by Susan and organized chronologically. Most helpfully, she incorporated other contemporaneous primary

sources, mostly newspaper articles and letters to and from other family members which altogether paint a vivid story of George's naval experiences. Only letters dated to the Civil War are discussed, but the interested scholar should read this narrative in its entirety to understand shipboard life through the late 19th century as there are abundant details not included here. Perkins included battle descriptions, especially of the Battle of Mobile Bay, but also recalled several thrilling and adventurous accounts and near-death experiences. Despite the potential bias that accompanies personal letters, Perkins offered an exciting narrative of the various missions undertaken by Civil War sailors – blockade duty, life aboard an ironclad, and the dangerous escapades of sea battles.

Perkins graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1856 as an acting midshipman and served on board several ships before 1861. He must have shown a real aptitude for a career in the U.S. Navy, as he was promoted to first lieutenant at age 24 which seemed "a high position to him" (66). His first post in the Civil War was on board the steamboat *Cayuga*, where none of the officers except the captain had ever been to sea before in a man-of-war, and there were 95 "green hands among the crew to be broken in and got into some kind of discipline" (68). This statement highlights the highly improvised nature of naval activity in the American Civil War, in which many crewmembers and officers were not career military recruits as is common in the modern United States military. Perkins was kept very busy breaking in the new crew, saying his appointment as first lieutenant was "as onerous as honorary" (68).

After serving as the executive officer of the steam sloop *Pensacola*, Perkins was promoted to lieutenant commander, given command of the gunboat *Sciota* and directed

to join the blockade fleet for the next eight months. According to Perkins this appointment made him the youngest officer at that time with such a command (130). Though Perkins remained in the U.S. Navy until 1891, he ended his Civil War service as captain of a large double-turreted monitor, *Chickasaw* and took part in the Battle of Mobile Bay (137). Again, Perkins must have impressed his commanders with his abilities because *Chickasaw* was considered to be a prestigious command for his rank (138) and he was one of the youngest officers of his rank in the navy (154).

Relatively few details are provided about the nature of being a naval officer. Perkins mentioned that he was given his choice of stewards and cabin boys as he needed on *Cayuga* (104). Officers had the opportunity to earn prize money from captured blockade runners while on blockade duty; Perkins took a blockade runner loaded with cotton (133) and earned approximately $8,000 in prize money by 1864 (140). He condemned what had become the common practice of war profiteering and money made in a dishonest way by "rascally quartermasters lying back in luxury" (123). Despite earning a large amount of prize money, Perkins recalled that he had trouble receiving pay, probably a common consequence of a country stuck in a civil war (63). Perkins' aunt incorporated an article from a rebel newspaper, the *New Orleans Democrat*, which gave small details about the genealogy and family connections of the commanding officers from the Union advance on New Orleans, which included George (96). Even among the Confederates, career U.S. naval officers held a certain degree of prestige. The author remarked that the wartime volunteer officers did not conduct themselves very creditably, saying "so far as attending to their duty and behaving in any sort of a

straightforward, honorable manner, the navy officers are way ahead; at least, they do not try to make money out of the war" (116). Even fewer details were provided about the crew, except to say that while on blockade duty, all the crew kept ready for a fight at any time; they expected the rebels to be out and so they slept with their boots on and their arms ready (71).

When recalling the conditions of shipboard life, Perkins provided the most detail about his ironclad *Chickasaw* and the monotonous life inside Mobile Harbor (113). The only positive remark made about his time aboard the ironclad was the regularity of the postal service while stationed at New Orleans (121). Perkins' biggest complaint was the heat; the ironclads were noisy and his cabin was so hot that Perkins could not stay in it. When the ship was under steam, below decks could reach a temperature of 150° F and the engine room could reach 214° F (138). The crew and officers often slept on deck (140) and Perkins arranged a tent to live on deck to get fresh air (166). As if the heat were not enough to induce stress, Perkins' wartime service was marked by almost continuous fighting (160).

Regarding diet, Perkins provided several clues about the foods available specifically to officers. On *Cayuga*, Perkins was caterer of the mess and he calculated that, since leaving New York, they had run over 50,000 miles (80.4 km) and the five officers had eaten 3,000 chickens, though he did not include the duration of time for that voyage (66). He received pickles from his aunt (71) and hunting served to vary their diet and alleviate some of the dullness of blockade duty (108). Perkins said that blockading duty was not very pleasant for an impatient man; "We do not live very well, it is so hard

to get provisions; so when I think I can venture to take the risk, I go ashore hunting, just to get something to eat" (109). Even for officers, provisions and supplies on the blockade duty were limited; sometimes fresh provisions would come irregularly and only lasted three days (114). Once every three weeks a steamer came with letters and provisions – fresh meat, potatoes, and onions (132). Perkins mentioned several other instances of hunting wild cattle to supplement the diet (109, 112, 167).

Perkins was plagued with health issues from several sources throughout the war: his health initially suffered from the climate (67) and from getting hardly any sleep due to the stress of preparing the crew on *Cayuga* (72). The crew's passage from New York left many suffering from the cold during a gale from the northwest (69). Climate changes appeared to play a considerable role in crew health; Perkins was not feeling well and attributed his poor health to the hot climate and being in such small quarters on board ship, which "keeps one fretting all the time." He drank cider sent to him by his father, which was refreshing in the warm weather (106). One officer caught a fever while serving in a river fleet and died of it, while another lieutenant was in very poor health from exposure and the effects of the climate (117). Perkins was surprised that he had not gained any weight despite the monotony and limited activity during blockade duty, but though it was probably due to the limited provisions (134). The lack of fresh provisions also contributed to poor health. Once when Perkins became ill, Admiral David Farragut sent his personal surgeon with a variety of fresh foods to supplement his diet (162). In addition to the climate and limited fresh foods, the hot and uncomfortable conditions in the ironclads also made Perkins sick (163).

To alleviate the stress and monotony of shipboard life, especially while on blockade or ironclad duty, the officers had several outlets for entertainment. In one instance, Perkins visited a nearby sugar plantation (121) and in another he received an invitation to a dancing party hosted by the commodores (105). They frequently went horseback riding (62) and fishing (65, 107) and borrowed books from the captain while aboard the ship (65, 132). Another common recreational activity was hunting for a variety of game; he hunted turkeys, deer, and other sorts of birds in his spare time to supplement his diet (107). Eventually venturing on shore became too risky and his leisure activities were greatly reduced (132). Being stuck on the ship meant that many of the officers became "all-talked out;" sometimes weeks passed where the author felt as if he had not spoken a word, since there was very little variety on blockade duty (133).

One unique topic that Perkins elucidated in his narrative was the activities of spies and traitors during the Civil War. When speaking of spies, he said the worst ones were the ladies of the best families, who took an oath of allegiance to the U.S. and asked permission to pass U.S. lines for the purpose of getting a few supplies for their starving children but once through, stole everything from the army stores they could sew up in their skirts (118). One rebel quartermaster who took an oath of allegiance was caught with a list of items he intended to purchase from Union army stores and return to the Confederacy (120). Perkins had to deal with a traitor on board his own ship – a Confederate-pilot changed the ship's course and was headed towards a wreck, which would have sunk the vessel had Perkins not rushed to the pilothouse, held his pistol to the pilot's head, and threatened to shoot if the ship ran aground (139). Rare anecdotes

like these help flesh out naval records to give faces and personalities to the various shipboard experiences during the war.

CHAPTER V

OFFICAL RECORDS

The *Statistical pocket manual, of the Army, Navy, and census of the United States of America: together with statistics of all foreign navies, United States Government* is the perfect example of an official record that provides ample additional evidence for shipboard life. This source is quite different from the others discussed because it was written for the sailors, rather than by them – it is a pocket manual designed to be a reference for members of the U.S. Army and Navy. As a contemporary source, the information obtained regarding shipboard life can be considered as accurate as most other primary sources, especially since it includes the guidelines which its personnel were supposed to follow. However, we do not know the extent to which changes were made or allowed by the officers, or if there was significant inter-ship variation. Still, the standards provided in the pocket manual are a valuable reference regarding many regulated aspects of shipboard life.

While the source also discussed information for the U.S. Army, only the details relevant to the Navy have been analyzed. The manual included highly detailed annual wage information for the various members of the crew, organized by rank beginning with captain and ending with sailmaker. Captains, lieutenants, the fleet's surgeon, paymasters, chaplains, midshipmen all received wages accordingly less than the captain based on their position in the hierarchy, but the boatswains, gunners, carpenters, and sailmakers were all categorized together and received the same wage. While less

relevant to shipboard life, the manual also listed the number of heavy guns being received by the navy per a week and a comprehensive list of vessels of war in the United States navy, organized by vessel type, including the number of guns, tonnage, location of construction, the company the ship was made by, and the overall ship type. Additionally, the manual mentioned the ships purchased for the Stone Fleet, which are the ships the navy bought to sink and blockade entrance to Charleston Harbor.

The manual also revealed information for other country's navies during the same time, especially the English Royal Navy. For steam vessels, it listed vessel types, the availability of each of those vessel types, the total number of guns from those ships, the total tonnage, and the horse power of the engines. For sailing vessels, it listed the type of ship, the total number of that type of ship, and the total guns aboard the ship. While not inherently as useful as the other sources discussed regarding shipboard life during the Civil War, this pocket manual can still be used to extrapolate information. The number of men aboard the ships reveals the approximate living space when compared to the size of the ship. The number of guns shows how many guns could be handled by the corresponding size of the crew. Since there is information available for other country's navies, it can be determined how the U.S. Navy may have compared in terms of wages, hierarchy of positions, and crew size. Where sufficient evidence is present, this source is a model for the Navy's ideal organization and behavior, and therefore a useful comparative tool when analyzing the personal narratives and correspondence.

Even though these sources avoid the personal bias seen in personal narratives, they are much less helpful to the reconstruction of shipboard life because their purpose is

to succinctly summarize protocols relevant to the military, and not to chronicle the lives of sailors. However, these records still provide very important contextual information, serving to corroborate the accounts and events described in the narratives. Several other types of official documents exist for the U.S. Navy during the Civil War – in the form of secretarial reports, communication and correspondence, and records of battles, court martial proceedings, ship armament, etc.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The crew of *Manitou* had been patrolling the lower Mississippi River before they were called upon to assist soldiers under the direction of General William Tecumseh Sherman as part of the famous Vicksburg campaign to gain Union control of the river. The sailors were temporarily stationed ashore, but found they were more adrift than they had been in months, without the familiarity of their ship. Rather than adapt to terrestrial quarters, the men made a deck from a wooden plank, hung their hammocks, holy-stoned their deck each morning, and ate in their mess groups using their sheathknives as utensils (Selfridge 1924:82-83). This is just one of many poignant examples where sailors clearly carved out their own piece of society to be solely their own, not to be understood or shared by outsiders. The American Civil War brought a new age of naval history with long-lasting political, social, and economic consequences: for the United States it marked the "greatest naval mobilization in its history" that would not be matched until the attack on Pearl Harbor eight decades later (Symonds 2008:53). The Civil War is characterized as a period of incredible innovation and adaptability, not just in the acquisition of the vessels, but in the formation of the crews. For the first time, the Navy saw an influx of landsmen into this unique maritime subculture, but the officers and "Jack Tars" remained largely unaffected by their intrusion. In time most 'green hands' assimilated to traditional shipboard life, but all seamen found themselves in uncharted

waters with regards to the rapidly changing naval technology and an unprecedented type of steam-propelled blockade warfare.

It is impossible to summarize these individual accounts into one story; there are some obvious similarities among the narratives that reflect a certain degree of standardization in shipboard life, but the evidence is largely anecdotal – each man's story is uniquely his own. The synthesis of these narratives in valuable in examining the large-scale themes and patterns of behavior between the navies of the Union and the Confederacy, as well as among the different types of naval service. However, there is also an inherent value to studying and presenting personal narratives as singular entities, to preserve the individualism and humanism that should accompany any study of past human lifeways. According to Hinchman and Hinchman, history deals primarily with social units, and only incorporates the individual in how they shape the relevant society (1997:18). But anthropological analysis prevents history from reducing sailors to a composite group, returning their individual voice through the study of their daily lives and social interactions. A thorough examination of their shipboard lives provides the opportunity to study the resourcefulness and ingenuity employed by the United States and Confederate sailors. The innate variability and individuality of humans, as well as the overarching maritime subculture, are reflected in these narratives, and studying them as individual entities allows each author to retain his distinctive voice and preserves the tremendous diversity in experiences and daily life (Figure 10).

By reliving the accounts of selected Civil War sailors, we can begin to understand where they came from and why they joined the Navy over the Army. All

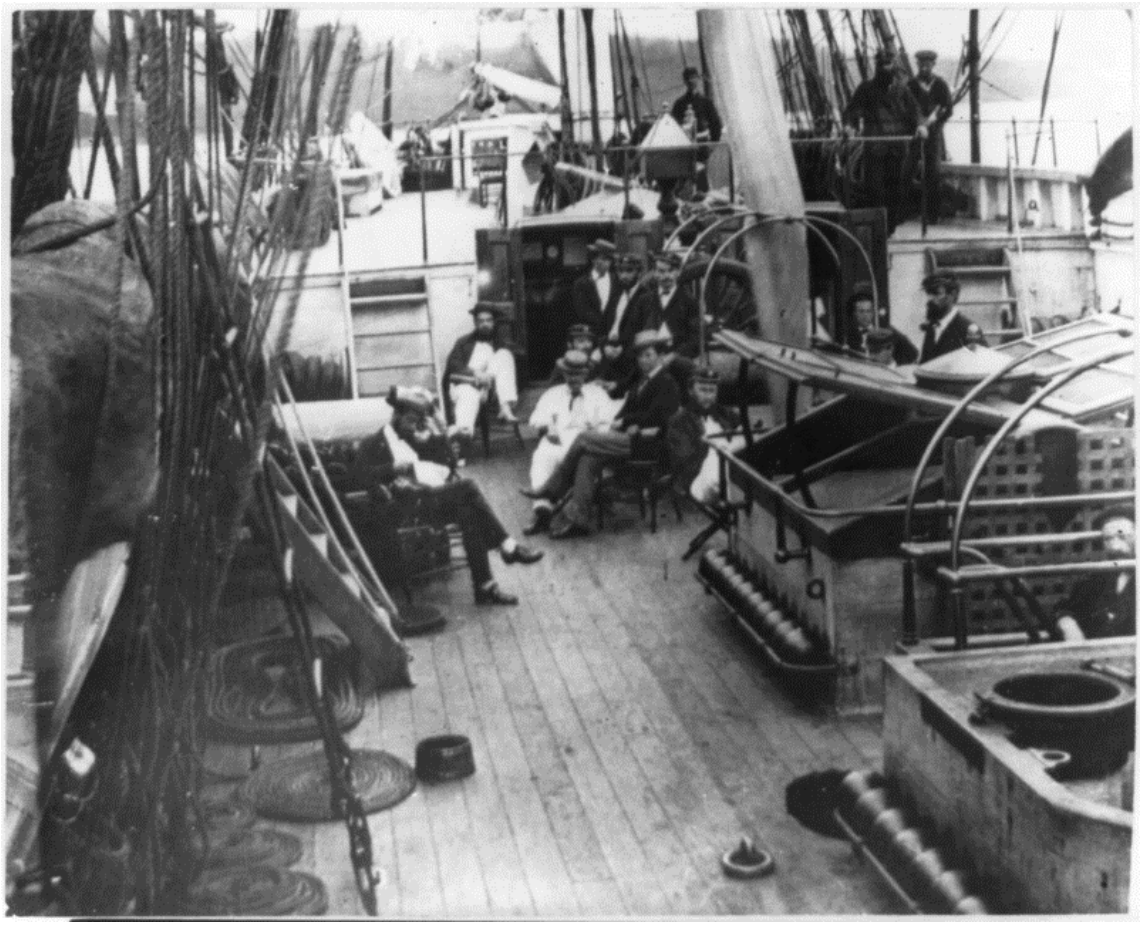

Figure 10. U.S. naval officers relaxing on deck of an unidentified ship.
(Courtesy of the Library of Congress, Washington D.C.)

seamen were required to adapt – the landsmen learned a completely novel lifestyle and career sailors encountered a new form of naval warfare. Everyone had to cooperate in order to ensure the success of the ship. Rather than finding pronounced deviations between the Union and Confederacy, the narratives tend to diverge from one another based on the type of service. The unique demands and opportunities of blockade duty, commerce raiding, and river service aboard ironclads resulted in vastly different shipboard experiences. Similarly, the rank and experiences of the sailor played a

significant role, affording the men different responsibilities and access to foods, leisure activities, and areas of the ship. Officers and enlisted crew had different motivations for documenting their shipboard life, and these are apparent in their narratives in teams of the content they choose to include and how they comment on their relationships and experiences.

Obtaining information from primary sources is a time-consuming process, as even the smallest details or offhand statements can potentially aid in the reconstruction of shipboard life during the American Civil War. Each source must be evaluated for its usefulness and scrutinized for potential bias, inconsistency, and misinformation. The subtext and structure have the potential to reveal cultural values, social conditions, and the power dynamics on board naval vessels. Currently, only a few studies exist that attempt to describe the shipboard life of Civil War sailors. It is easy to focus on the big picture when it comes to the Civil War, highlighting the impressive battles and the large-scale social, economic, and political patterns that shaped these events. In the scope of history, the individuals tend to be ignored, forgotten, or 'lost in the crowd.' The analysis of personal narratives retells the story from the perspective of the individual and brings to the forefront a wealth of minutia that cumulatively can reveal deeper insight into the daily life of these men as well as provide a more comprehensive understanding of the progression of the war. In this instance, the "other side" was not a faceless enemy, but your brother, neighbor, or friend, and therefore the fratricidal aspect of the conflict should be incorporated in any historical study of the Civil War.

This selective compilation of primary sources from American Civil War sailors, but it serves to highlight how beneficial these sources can be to the reconstruction of daily life aboard these ships. These sources were chosen to highlight the diversity in shipboard life during the American Civil War – whether it is the monotony of blockade duty, adventures of commerce raiding, gunship battles along the eastern coast and river inlets, or white-knuckle tales of running the blockade. Several sources were specifically not chosen for analysis because they were framed as authentic primary narratives but were actually biographies, secondary sources, or fictional accounts crafted from hearsay. It is important to determine the context of the narrative before citing it for evidence of shipboard life; it seems that several fictional accounts of the war were published for a captive and intrigued audience but do not necessarily depict the reality of one man's experiences as a sailor in the United States or Confederate Navies.

The American Civil War occurred recently in the relative span of human history, and therefore the sheer amount of information available to archaeologists and historians permits them to give credible accounts of the lifestyles of these men and women – an impossible feat for archaeologists studying much earlier cultures. Since so many Americans can trace their ancestry back to the Civil War, or even further back in time, the amount of public interest in the early and mid-19th century is considerable. These narratives provide the most direct connection to these sailors and their unique subculture. Personal narratives immerse scholars and the public in the past, preserving the history of the first one hundred years of the American Navy through the voices of the men who built it.

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Envelope from a letter sent during the American Civil War
1861 Civil War envelope showing American flags and eagle on shield above ship and cannons with message "Our Army and Navy forever! Three cheers for the red, white, and blue". Photograph, LOT 14043-6, no. 66, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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Interior view of Fort Fisher
1865 Fort Fisher, N.C. Interior view, with heavy gun broken by bombardment. Photograph by Timothy H. O'Sullivan, LC-B817- 7061 LOT 4202, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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1861 On board the *Constitution*. Photograph, LOT 14110-10, no. 2 (H), Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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Powder monkey on USS *New Hampshire*
1864 Powder monkey on USS *New Hampshire* off Charleston, South Carolina. Photograph, LC-B811- 4016 LOT 4182, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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Sailors in front of the turret on USS *Lehigh*
1865 Sailors in front of turret on the U.S.S. *Lehigh* Passaic-class ironclad monitor upon the James River, with chicken in the foreground. Photograph, LOT 4182, no. 216, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Sailors relaxing on USS *Monitor*
1862 James River, Va. Sailors relaxing on deck of U.S.S. *Monitor*. Photograph by James F. Gibson, LC-B811- 490 LOT 4182, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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1862 The war on the Mississippi River – night expedition to island no. 10, from a sketch by Mr. Henri Lovie. Print, AP2.L52 1862 (Case Y), Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Unidentified double-ended ferry gunboat
1861 Double-ended ferry gunboat with Union soldiers on deck. Photograph, LOT 14043-2, no. 74, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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U.S. naval officers relaxing on deck
1861 U.S. Naval officers relaxing on deck. Photograph, LOT 4182, no. 132, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

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APPENDIX

CATALOG OF PERSONAL NARRATIVES

Source	Type	Diet	Health	Duty	Protocol	Leisure	Technology	Personal Effects
Anderson, Edward 1975	Correspondence	X				X		
Badlam, William H. 1915	Memoir		X	X	X	X		
Baker, William 1910	Memoir	X	X	X				
Batten, John 1881	Memoir	X	X	X	X	X		X
Blanding, Stephen 1886	Memoir	X		X	X	X		X
Browne, John 1864	Journal			X	X	X		X
Coffin, Charles 1866	Journal			X			X	
Drayton, Percival 1906	Correspondence	X	X		X	X		
Evans, Robley 1901	Memoir	X	X	X	X	X		
Franklin, Samuel 1898	Memoir		X	X	X			

Source	Type	Diet	Health	Duty	Protocol	Leisure	Technology	Personal Effects
Hill, Frederic 1893	Memoir	X		X	X	X		X
Hobart-Hampden, Augustus 1867	Journal	X	X	X		X	X	
Kell, John 1886	Memoir			X	X		X	
Kell, John 1900	Memoir	X	X	X	X	X		X
Morgan, James 1917	Memoir	X		X	X	X		X
Perkins, George 1901	Correspondence	X	X		X		X	
Sands, Benjamin 1899	Memoir			X			X	
Sinclair, Arthur 1896	Memoir	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Vail, Israel 1902	Memoir	X	X	X	X	X		X
Pocket Manual 1862	Record			X			X	