

THE DAYBOOK

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About The Daybook and the Museum

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

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

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

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

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Cover Illustration: When *Cumberland* returned to Boston in 1855, the Navy decided to more than the typical repairs to the frigate. Instead of the usual project, the Navy decided to *raze* *Cumberland*, whereby the ship was cut down to a sloop-of-war. The ship was also given new guns and a new way of deploying the weapons. After two years, the Navy produced one of the finest sailing ships in the world.

Taking Care of Business

The Director's Column

by Becky Poulliot

Welcome aboard to two new members of the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. First, I would like to introduce you to Susanne Greene, our public relations coordinator. A graduate of Old Dominion University, Susanne has a Master of Arts in English with a concentration in professional writing and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration with a concentration in marketing.

Her expertise will be counted on during the next few years with the prospective *Wisconsin* transfer, the step up in our military outreach, and the unveiling of our very first volunteer recruitment commercial. Susanne is young, energetic and is always looking for a new marketing venue. Any new ideas on how to promote us? Just give her a ring at (757) 322-2986.

Susanne will also be working on two major audience analyses as required for museum accreditation by the American Association of Museums, or AAM for short. In December, 2005 the AAM accepted our museum's application for accreditation. The process by which any museum receives the field's ultimate stamp of approval is a herculean, multi-year effort, which is being



Our newest staff members-Susanne Greene (left), public relations, and Julie Boucek (right), accreditation coordinator. (Photos by Marta Nelson)

ably handled by our second new staff member, Julie Boucek. Ms. Boucek is a recent arrival to Hampton Roads, a Georgian with a degree in mass communications. Julie is magnificent, a director's dream. With minimal guidance, she researches and prepares voluminous reports. The AAM reported back that ours was the most complete application received: all due to Julie.

If you get a sense of concentrated purpose here, we are meeting our operational goals set during the annual

retreat. The Hampton Roads Naval Museum is making the transition from a small to a medium size museum in all terms of its operation. To sustain this level of excellence requires stable funding and staffing. The latter is due to a large extent by the service of our 100 volunteers, to whom we all salute. Our annual awards dinner, held on March 30, was hosted by the Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation. Thanks to all those who serve,

Becky

Volunteer Service Achievements-Thank You!

Beverly Bachman 750 hours
 Walt Bankowski 1500 hours
 Fred Bariteau 1000 hours
 Lloyd Belperain 1250 hours
 A.J. Benson 1500 hours
 Ben Benzel 3500 hours
 Gene Biesecker 750 hours
 Ed Burk 3000 hours
 Michael Bushner 100 hours
 Major L Carter 500 hours
 John Cummisk 1500 hours
 Wyndham Curles 1750 hours
 Joe Curtis 1500 hours
 Anthony D'Angelo 100 hours
 Bob Fall 2000 hours
 Louis Fournery 750 hours
 William Greeves 100 hours
 Andy Grynewytsch 1250 hours

Everett Gull 100 hours
 Ira Hanna 1250 hours
 Bob Henn 750 hours
 Reginald Henry 500 hours
 Jud Hill 3000 hours
 Tom Hill 750 hours
 Mike Hodgis 500 hours
 Dave Holladay 750 hours
 Jane Homan 500 hours
 Gene Kanter 1500 hours
 Jerry Lafferty 1000 hours
 Hunt Lewis 6000 hours
 Albert McVicker 1000 hours
 Carroll Morgan 1250 hours
 Joe Mosier 1000 hours
 Jim Owens 1750 hours
 David Paige 1500 hours
 Tommie Parker 500 hours

John Peters 6000 hours
 Harry Raney 1000 hours
 Arthur Rebman 750 hours
 J J Reed 1000 hours
 Jim Reid 1750 hours
 Harry Riley 500 hours
 Gurley Ritter 3000 hours
 Robert Rode 500 hours
 Marvin Rosenthal 1000 hours
 Donald Shanks 1000 hours
 Welland Shoop 2000 hours
 John Stansell 500 hours
 Joal Stroud 500 hours
 Henry Tarrall 1750 hours
 Bob Tully 500 hours
 Bob Webb 1000 hours
 Vernon Westhouse 1000 hours
 Franklin Zurschmit 100 hours

Anchor Returns From Conservation

by Susanne Greene

One of the “newest” artifacts at the Hampton Roads Naval Museum is a seasoned anchor that is almost 200 years old. Its modern day journey began in 1993 when the USS *Kittiwake* (ASR-13), a submarine rescue ship, was on a routine operation in the Elizabeth River and discovered the anchor. For the past twelve years, it has been undergoing conservation by the Department of Maritime History and Underwater Research at East Carolina University (ECU).

The anchor’s journey is unknown. There are no markings or records to enlighten us about its past. The large iron loop at the top of the anchor goes through a smaller loop at the top of the shank. The loop is one of the design elements that dates the anchor to the early 1800s. In addition, the curvature of the anchor’s arms was also used during the early 1800s. There is a band that wraps around one of the arms of the anchor and is riveted to the bottom of the fluke. This was a common repair during the time. Although anchors were made out of wrought iron, many of them were damaged when they were lowered quickly, and their flukes broke as they hit the ocean floor.

Anchors such as the one recovered were constructed in the Royal Naval Dockyards and created with pieces of iron that were welded together. The iron was heated to a white heat and beaten with sledgehammers into the appropriate shape. The process was not without problems. When the anchors were welded, the hammering did not remove all of the air and bubbles, which created weaknesses in the anchor’s overall structure.

One feature that was not common among the anchors of the early 1800s was a gravity band. One of these bands is placed in the middle of our historic anchor’s shank. An expert from ECU believes this to be an addition at a later date, perhaps when the anchor was repaired. The anchor’s dimensions, approximately eleven feet tall with six feet between its flukes, lead the experts at ECU to believe it is a bower anchor. The name implies its place at the bow of a ship. Based on the anchor’s weight of approximately 1,200 pounds, it may have also belonged to a vessel that weighed



Ten years after the Navy recovered the anchor during dredging operations off of Naval Station Norfolk and painstaking conservation work by East Carolina University, an early 19th century anchor arrived at the museum in early February. The anchor will be on display outside the museum. (Photo by Marta Nelson)

between 150 and 200 tons. Unfortunately, this is when evidence of the anchor’s past ends.

Regarding its care, Dr. Brad Rodgers of ECU completed the construction of a preservation tank in November 1993. His team built the tank by digging a hole, lining it with cinder blocks and then pouring concrete to create the tanks walls. An I-beam superstructure held the anchor over a 4,000 gallon, sixty-three cubic foot tank of water.


Dr. Rodgers chose to use electrolysis as the preservation treatment for the anchor because it was the safest and most economical method. Throughout the process, the conservation tank was filled with either distilled or rain water. Sodium carbonate was added to the water that the anchor was submerged in, and steel anodes were placed over the shank and arms of the anchor. The anodes did not make contact with the anchor, but formed a tent-like structure over it instead. An electrical current then ran through the anodes. The next step was to remove the deposits on the upper shank of the anchor in order to expose bare metal. Conservators used a hammer to strike the upper shank at a 90-degree angle, and then used a wire brush to expose the metal.

The anchor’s metal was then wrapped with an exposed wire. The battery charger’s negative terminal was connected to the wire

around the anchor and the positive terminal was connected to the anodes. This procedure allowed the corrosion on the anchor to change from its original state into magnetite or hematite, which reduced the thickness of the corrosion and allowed chlorides to rinse out.

The tank was emptied halfway and refilled with fresh rain or distilled water several times throughout the process and it was continued until all of the salt was removed from the anchor. Dr. Rodgers estimated that five percent of the anchor’s weight, or sixty pounds, was salt. After the anchor was preserved, it was painted with several protective coatings.

Throughout the process Dr. Rodgers worked with thirty people. The preservation takes four to six years, but due to a number of hurricanes the process was delayed. In 1999, Floyd’s rains contaminated the tank with mud and other debris. After the hurricane, Dr. Rodgers and his team decontaminated the tank and started from the beginning. It was not until December 2005 that the anchor’s preservation was complete.

It will be ready for display as soon as a stand is constructed to hold the giant artifact. Come see this 19th century wonder at its new home in Forecastle Gallery outside the Hampton Roads Naval Museum. Both are located on the second level of Nauticus, The National Maritime Center. 

The Battle of Jamestown

by Gordon Calhoun

Many observers have correctly described the modern day Army National Guard as “Americans at their best.” At the 1907 Jamestown Exposition, the National Guard had every intention of showing that exact same theme to the American public. Several units from across the country came to Norfolk to show off the pride of their particular state. They opened up their camps for public inspection, marched up and down Lee’s Parade for review, and conducted military drills to awe-inspired visitors. Unfortunately, one incident on July 3 showed that Guardsmen could easily be Americans at their worst.

During late June, three of the National Guard units arrived at the Exposition: the First Infantry of the Kentucky National Guard; the Second Infantry of the South Carolina National Guard; and the First Infantry of the West Virginia National Guard. They all had a full schedule of parades and demonstrations over the next two weeks,

At the 1907 Fair The Jamestown Exposition One Hundred Years Later

including a major parade for Independence Day. The first parade was set for June 28, “South Carolina Day,” and the South Carolina Guardsmen were commended for their military professionalism. The day was one of a series of days specially designated for states participating in the Expo. On June 30, the Kentucky Guardsmen fought a mock battle against West Virginia Guardsmen as a demonstration for Exposition patrons. A few days later, the Guardsmen joined up with regular U.S. Army soldiers from the Twenty-Third Infantry and two battalions of U.S. Sailors and Marines and paraded in front of many VIPs for “West Virginia Day.”

The Guardsmen were given July 3 off, and events took a turn for the worse. Some of the South Carolina and Kentucky Guardsmen began drinking heavily while resting in their camps. Late in the evening, several hundred of the Guardsmen decided



Several hundred patrons pack the Warpath section of the Jamestown Exposition. Among the more popular places at the fair, the Warpath presented patrons with a series of fun and entertaining sideshows. It was also the location of one of the Exposition’s darkest moments. (HRNM photo from the Official Blue Book of the Ter-Centennial Jamestown Exposition)

in their inebriated state to visit the Warpath section of the Exposition. The Warpath was among the most popular sections of the fair and was populated with exhibits meant to entertain visitors in an amusement park-like atmosphere. For each one of the Warpath displays, the Exposition allowed the exhibitors to charge patrons a separate fee on top of the standard Exposition admission price to defray costs.

The drunk Guardsmen, however, did not feel the need to pay the extra fees. At first no one thought there was a problem. The Guardsmen marched in perfect military order from the camp near Pine Beach into the Warpath. When they reached the exhibits, the company wildly broke formation and stormed the exhibits. A series of arguments between the Guardsmen and the exhibitors erupted. Upon seeing the argument, the authorities moved in to make peace.

In charge of Exposition security was the Powhatan Guard. Led by Captain H.W. Carpenter, an active duty Marine officer on loan to the Exposition, the Powhatan Guard was composed of about 100 to 200 men armed with clubs and sabers, and some mounted on horseback. Originally, the Jamestown Exhibition Company planned on a force of over 400, but had to cut back due to expenses.

When the Guardsmen marched in, they went right by Carpenter who initially did not give them a second look. That changed when fifteen members of the

Powhatan Guards began ejecting the Guardsmen out of the exhibits. The commotion caught the attention of more drunken Guardsmen and a physical fight ensued. Over 300 Guardsmen attacked the outnumbered Powhatan detachment, sending civilian patrons fleeing for their lives in all directions. The Powhatans arrested the ringleaders of the Guardsmen, one C.C. Hastings of the Kentucky Guard and J. Tompkins of the South Carolina Guard, in an attempt to quell the violence.

But the situation became worse as 200 additional Guardsmen joined their brother soldiers in the assault. Determined to get in and stay in the Warpath exhibits and to free the ringleaders, the Guardsmen continued their attack. A full-scale riot ensued and the rioters attacked several of the exhibits. The security detail drew their sabers and literally slashed their way through the rioting soldiers until they could reach their headquarters.

Captain Carpenter soon arrived at headquarters with reinforcements. The Guardsmen turned their full attention to freeing Hastings and Tompkins from the Powhatan jail. Led by a third ringleader Joe Brasher of the Kentucky regiment, the rioters picked up stones and began hurling them at the jailers, one of which struck Carpenter in the chest and knocked him out. The Powhatan Guards counter-attacked with their sabers and succeeded in stabbing several of the rioters. One Powhatan was so infuriated

Battle of Jamestown continued on page 5

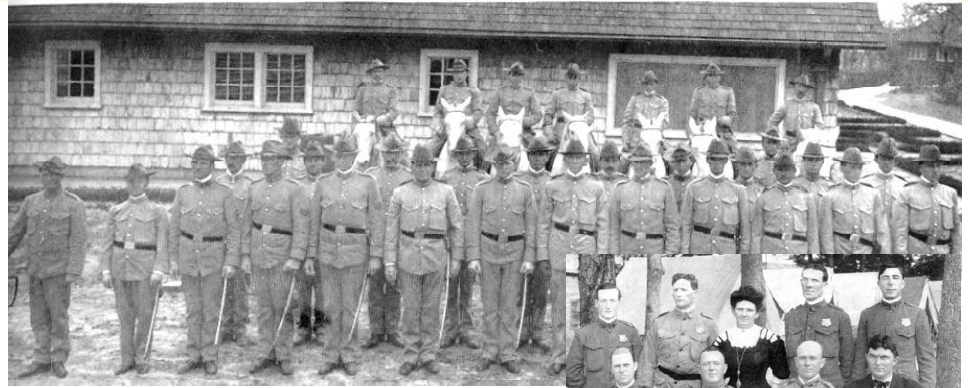
Battle of Jamestown continued from page 4

by his captain's injury, that he personally threw himself into the crowd of rioters and attempted to arrest Brasher. The rioters attacked the avenging security guard. They broke two of his fingers and punched him in the face.

Despite the Powhatan's best efforts, the rioters overwhelmed them, broke down the security fence, and freed all three ringleaders. As the ring leaders escaped, Brasher was struck across the back of the head with a nightstick, fracturing his skull.

It was not until sober soldiers arrived from the military encampment that the situation was brought fully under control. For all the fighting, casualties were surprisingly light. Only four Powhatans and a few rioters were seriously injured. Brasher was taken immediately via a wheelchair to the Exposition's hospital. Emotions were still running high as Guardsmen continued to taunt the Powhatans and threatened further violence if Brasher died from his injuries.

As for the Warpath, the riot left it




In charge of security at the Jamestown Exposition was the Powhatan Guards. Led by Captain H.W. Carpenter, an active duty Marine officer on loan to the Expo, the force of about 150 men did its best to keep the peace despite being underfunded. Carpenter is shown at right holding his Jack Russell Terrier. (HRNM photos from the Official Blue Book of the Ter-Centennial Jamestown Exposition)

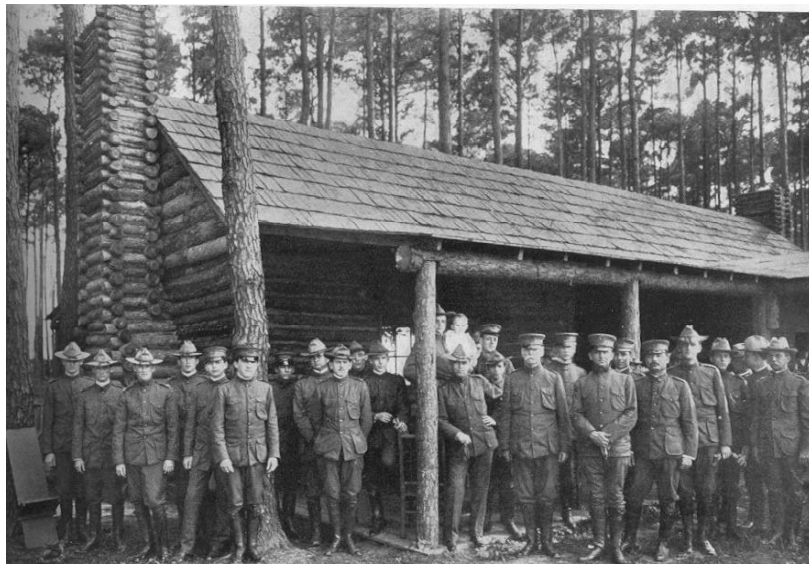
glowing account of his men's actions. As for the Kentucky and South Carolina units, the riot was a huge embarrassment. Colonel Haldemen of the Kentucky detachment personally apologized to Carpenter and expressed "regret." He assured the Marine captain that the ringleaders would be punished. An investigation into the riot

The paper also expressed a warning to its readers that Northern newspapers would use the incident to harp "upon lawlessness in the South."

Several big city newspapers such as the *Washington Post*, *Atlanta Constitution*, and the *New York Times* had reporters at the Warpath at the time of the riot and were less kind. With headlines such as "Battle on the Warpath" and "Militiamen in Riot at Jamestown Fair," the news was not the kind of publicity the Exposition needed at such an early stage of the fair. As a testament to new communications technology, news of the riot reached far away places such as Bismarck, North Dakota within two days.

As for judgmental Northerners, the *Atlanta Constitution* was the most infuriated by the event. It published a very sarcastic article and even a poem to describe the event, labeling Brasher "Commander Brasher" and the Guardsmen as "dispensarians" and "juleppians." "No Cuban campaign fought on revolutionary soil can equal its brilliance," the *Constitution* quipped. One line of their poem went, "The glory of the julep state, likewise Palmetto spunk, must suffer, till they find out why, the soldier boys got drunk."

The military showing at the Exposition continued throughout the year and no further incidents occurred. The official line of the riot from the *Blue Book*, the official history of the fair, simply wrote, "Strict discipline of a regular camp was not enforced" and left it at that. The "Battle of Jamestown" was soon forgotten about and the Exposition's grander moments were yet to come. 



Members of the 1st Infantry, Kentucky National Guard pose in front of "Fort Boonesboro," the privately-funded building that represented Kentucky at the Jamestown Exposition. Guardsmen from Kentucky and South Carolina were largely responsible for the riot. (HRNM photo from the Official Blue Book of the Ter-Centennial of the Jamestown Exposition)

looking more like a war zone than an amusement park. Caston Akoun and his brother Ferdinand had invested heavily in the Warpath and suffered greatly from the riot. Several of their exhibits, specifically "Akoun's Beautiful Orient," the "Streets of Cairo" and the "Temple of Mirth" had to shut down while they conducted repairs.

Carpenter reported to officials that the riot was "nipped in the bud" and gave a

found that many of the Guardsmen were pressured by the ringleaders to follow them into battle.

Both the local and national press were outraged by the riot, though to varying degrees. The *Virginian-Pilot*, among the Exposition's biggest public supporters, labeled it "That Exposition Disturbance" and simply asked its readers not to over judge South Carolina and Kentucky as a whole.

Rebuilding a Classic

USS *Cumberland*'s Conversion to a Sloop-of-War
by Gordon Calhoun

When *Cumberland* returned to Boston from her third Mediterranean cruise in 1855, the ship went into the Navy Yard for the vessel's usual repairs. The Navy decided that instead of the usual repairs, *Cumberland* would be changed and re-rated from a frigate to a sloop-of-war. Called by the French word *razee*, all of the world's navies practiced the technique to varying degrees for many years.

At its most fundamental level, a *razee* warship had its upper most deck and all the equipment associated with that deck removed. It saved the fleet money in the short run by cutting down on the number of guns and men needed to operate the ship. In the long run, the Navy saved money by not having to dispose of an old warship and build a new warship in its place. The ship-of-the-line *Independence* and frigate *Macedonian* had both gone through the process and turned out to be excellent sailing ships after their conversion.

The move to *razee* *Cumberland* was influenced by a decision by the Department to go small. The Department soon learned why the Navy did not build large 74-gun ships-of-the-line earlier. The battleships built in the aftermath of the War of 1812 were found to be expensive to build and even more expensive to operate. The new plan called for them to be mothballed, with the newer steam ships to have a few guns only.

When one evaluates the state of the fleet in the mid 1850s, it is of some wonder why *Cumberland* was not broken up. After all, this decade was when all branches of the U.S. Government finally agreed that the Navy needed the steam driven warships. Congress funded the construction of twenty-five of them, including six 48-gun frigates.

But sail-powered ships still had their use, as there were simply not enough steam powered ships to meet ever increasing demands upon the fleet. The decision to *razee* some of them was an effective way to give new life to some of the old warriors. As late as 1860, Secretary of the Navy Issac Toucey asked Congress for money to *razee*

several of *Cumberland*'s sister ships.

Assisting the move towards smaller warships was the revolution in naval artillery. The Navy's leading ordnance expert John Dahlgren, the Navy's leading expert on ordnance introduced his famous line of smoothbore cannons. His weapons were bigger and more powerful while using the same number of sailors to operate as the older guns.

William Doughty, *Cumberland*'s designer, created the warship's original armament scheme. He had designed *Cumberland* as a 54-gun warship using his "double banked" doctrine, which called for a fully armed spar deck. The doctrine gave American frigates a major advantage in firepower over their European counterparts as European frigates typically only had one deck armed.

In the case of *Cumberland*, when she first set sail in 1847, she carried four 8-inch shell guns, ten 42-pounder carronades, and forty 32-pounder long guns. When she arrived home in 1855, the Navy had since removed all the carronades and placed six more 8-inch shells guns in their place. The 50-gun arrangement took about 360 sailors to operate.

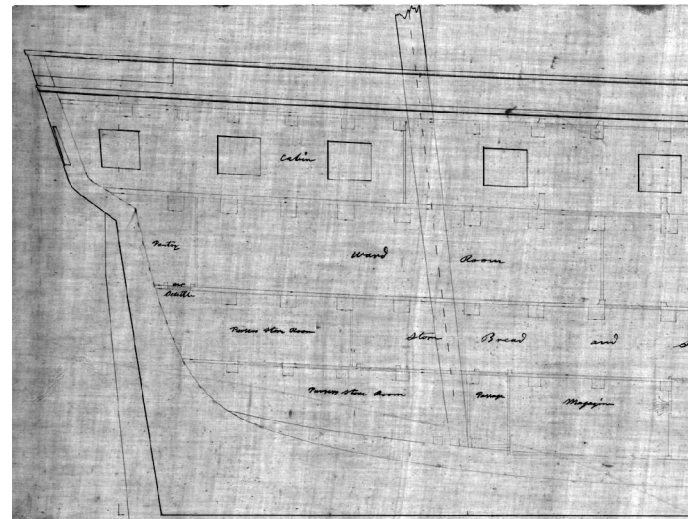
Under Dahlgren's new arrangement, Doughty's double banked doctrine was scrapped. Dahlgren's scheme called for all fifty guns to be replaced. The ten guns on the spar deck were replaced with two of Dahlgren's X-inch smoothbore guns. These monster guns weighed 12,000 pounds each and fired a 100-pound shell. The forty broadside guns were to be replaced with twenty-two of Dahlgren's IX-inch smoothbore guns. At 9,000 pounds, they were considerably lighter than their X-inch brothers, but still packed a punch for their size. Each gun could fire a 51-pound shell or a 64-pound solid shot.

In strict broadside weight terms (i.e. the total amount of shot from one full broadside), the new arrangement had a

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

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- Part 5-Flagship of the Africa Squadron (Slave Trade Suppression Patrols)
- Part 6-Rebuilding a Classic (Conversion to the Sloop-of-War)**
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- Part 9-The Flagship at Rest (Rediscovery and Recovery)



broadside weight of 774 pounds compared to 1,012 pounds under the old plan. However, Spencer Tucker correctly pointed out in *Arming the Fleet*, that this kind of comparison was not exactly fair, since Dahlgren's guns had far greater range and more power per shot than the old guns. More important to Navy bureaucrats and

Sloop-of-war continued on page 7

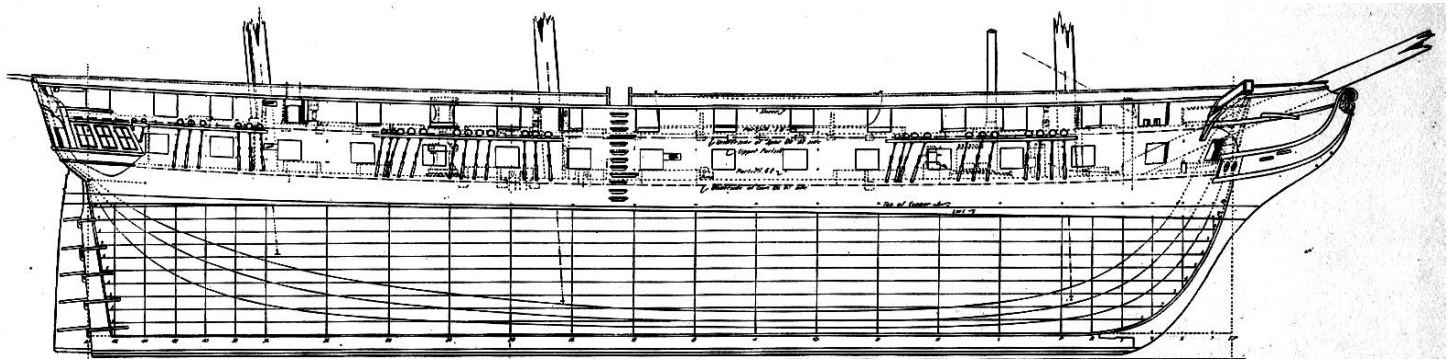


Image #1-Cumberland as a frigate, before conversion work. As a frigate, Cumberland had a full armed spar deck with bulwarks and a fancy quarter gallery for the officers.

Sloop-of-war continued from page 6

Congress, the manpower requirement for the guns was cut almost in half. The new weapons' arrangement only needed 227 sailors to operate, resulting in a considerable savings in money.

With the *raze* project, the Navy not only gave new life to the ship, but also made the vessel lighter and sleeker, and thus a faster sail-powered warship. The change in weapons saved about three tons of weight (114 tons vs. 111). However, the designers' vision envisioned further weight reductions beyond the gross weight of the guns.

The quarter galleries, the fancy glass window structure that stuck out from the wardroom area towards the aft section and usually the fanciest part of any Age of Sail warship, was removed. It was replaced with a simple continuation of the main hull with gun portals pierced, giving the ship a sleek, modern look. In what seems like compensation for no longer having the luxury of the quarter gallery, the officers section of the ship was enlarged including the wardroom, staterooms, and the captain's quarters. This included the areas reserved exclusively for the captain and a flag officer,

if present, such as the "facilities." On Age of Sail ships, the captain and flag officer typically had their own private heads as a part of the quarter gallery. With the quarter gallery completely removed, workers installed new ones connected directly to the senior officers' staterooms on the berth deck (see image #3.)

As workers took out all of the spar deck guns, the heavy wooden panels that made up the bulwarks that lined the spar deck were completely removed. The hammock rails on top of the bulwarks were also

Sloop-of-war continued on page 8

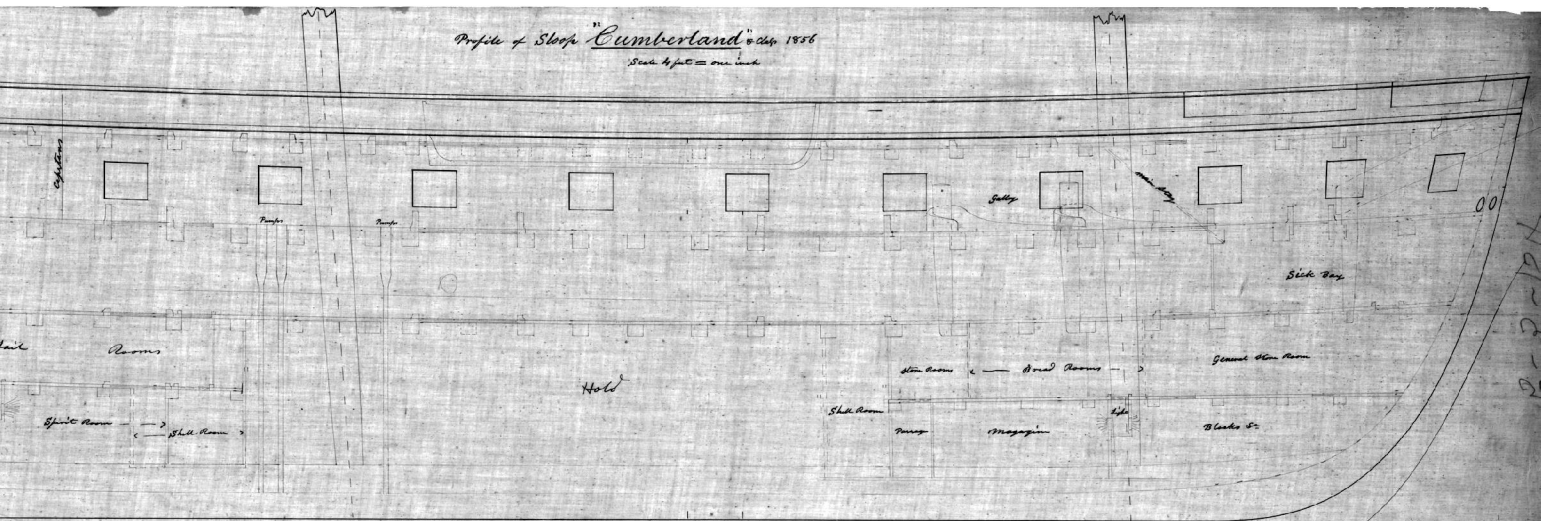


Image #2-Initial drawing of the conversion. The major outward change was the removal of the spar deck and the gun portals associated with the spar deck. Notice also that the sheer, or curvature of the hull, is now more apparent.

Sloop of War continued from page 7

removed. Hammock storage area was moved to the berth deck.

The extra space was needed for Dahlgren's X-inch guns, which were placed on pivots that had a 90-degree firing arc. One gun was placed fore and aft and the firing arc allowed the gun to fire on either side of the ship or any angle in between.

To make additional room for the guns, the small boats were removed from the aft section, where they normally hung over the side of the ship. Workers cut out a shallow hole in the deck and placed the cutters amidships.

For all the changes and weight reduction, *Cumberland's* three sail masts with full sails remained the same. Noted U.S. Naval Age of Sail historian Howard Chapelle also commented that the removal of the bulwarks and other equipment made the ship a more efficient user of the winds as it lessened the amount of air friction.

The net result was a valuable increase in speed. The sail rigging, however, led to many people to incorrectly refer to the ship, right up to her destruction on March 8, 1862, as a frigate and not a sloop-of-war (sometimes correctly referred to by the European term "corvette.")

The most ready way to tell the "old" *Cumberland* from the "new" one is the

Sloop-of-war continued on page 13

Image #3- New berth (top) and gun deck (bottom) as planned for the sloop of war. The biggest change was significantly less fancy quarters for the ship's captain and squadron flag officer. However, the overall space for officers was increased.

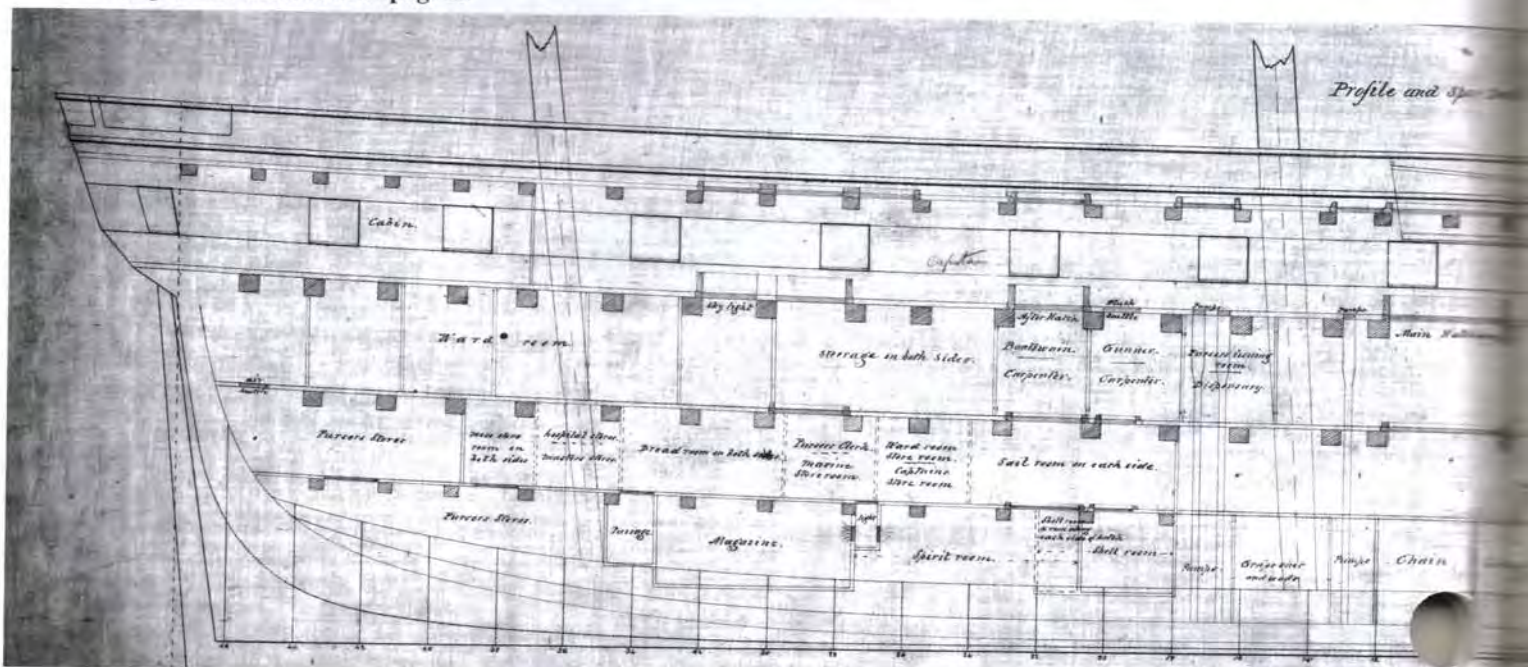
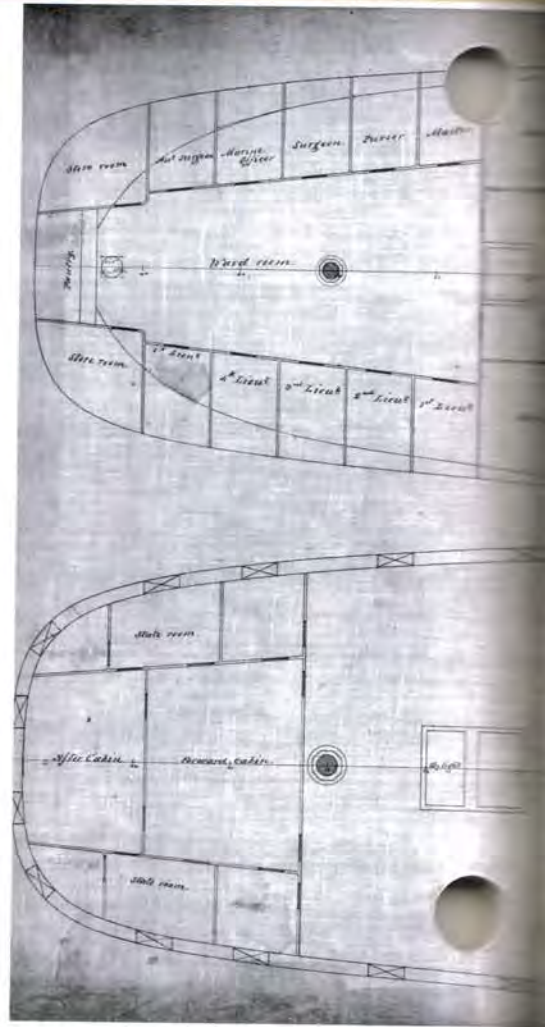
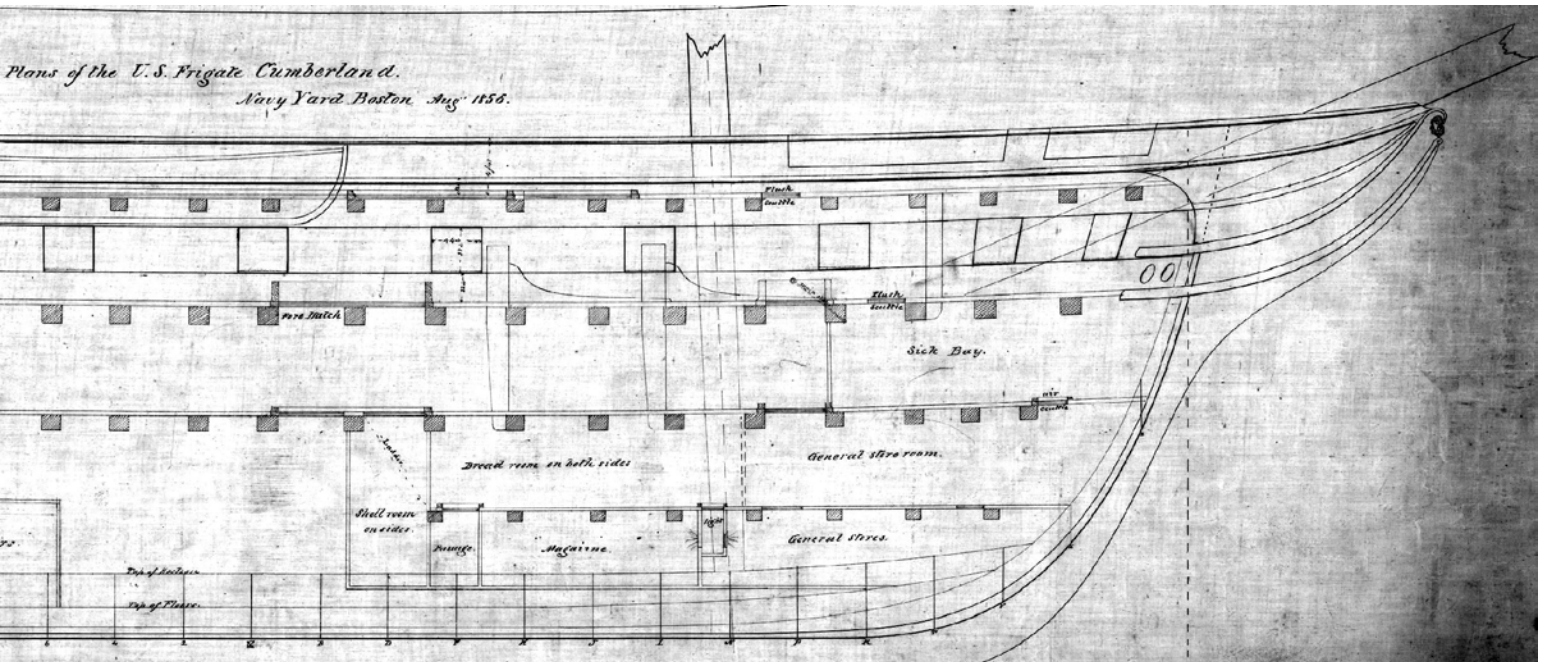
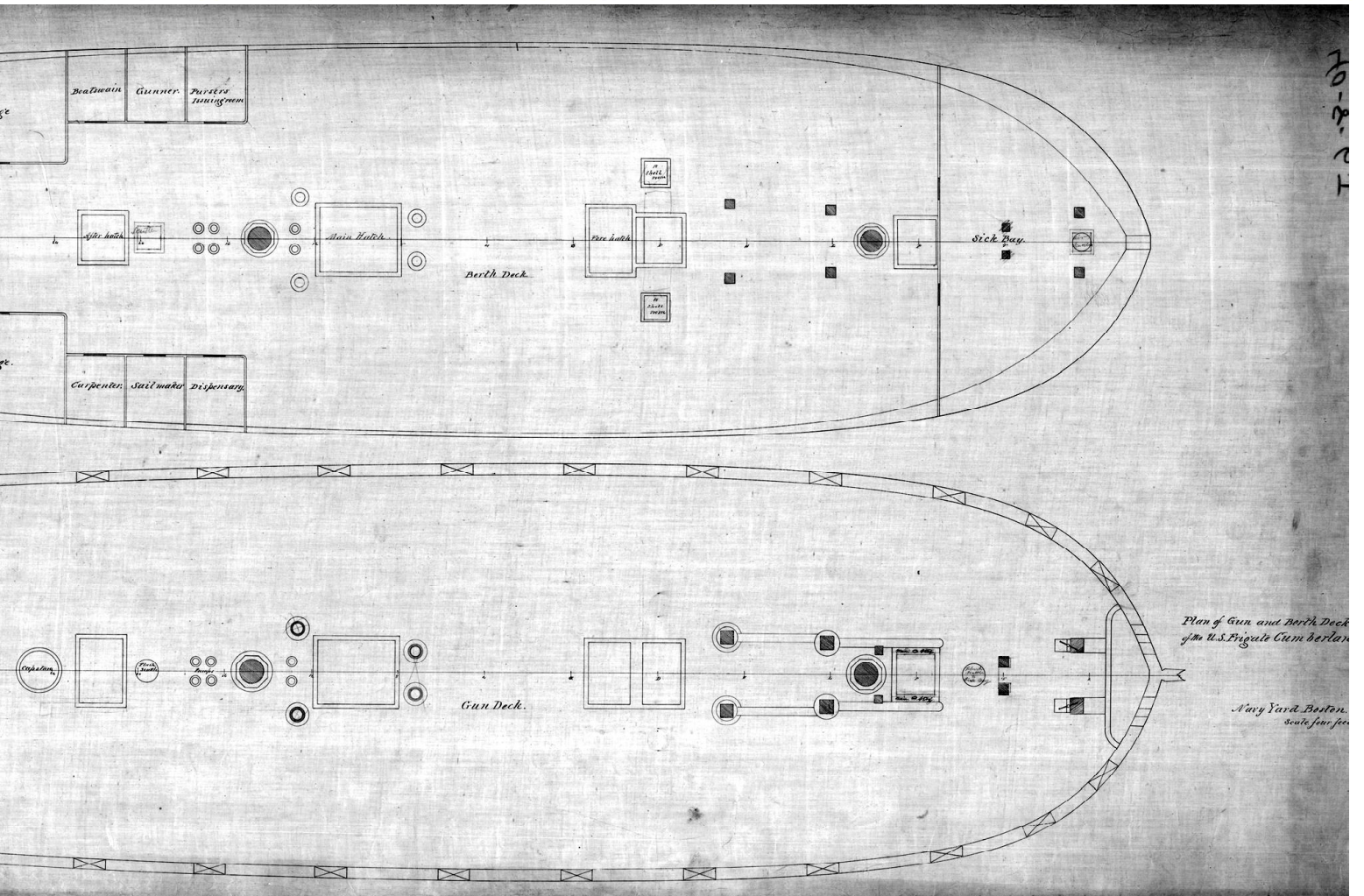


Image #4 Shown here is *Cumberland's* new profile view as planned. This plan has more powder for the guns and alcohol for the grog are stored at the lowest possible place in the



Detail on the ship's living and work spaces. Note that inflammable items such as shells and gunpowder are stored on the deck. Also note that the architect incorrectly refers to the ship as a frigate.

Book Reviews

Success is All That Was Expected: The South Atlantic Blockading Squadron During the Civil War

By Robert M. Browning

Reviewed by Howard Sandefer

“Politicians have neither the training nor the inclination for strategic thought.”
Brigadier General Jack D. Ripper in Doctor Strangelove.

For those who have been engaged in blockading a coast line from the sea, it is best described as being as exciting as watching cement dry, with occasional interruptions of activity. Books recounting blockades usually make dull

Robert M. Browning, *Success Is All That Was Expected: The South Atlantic Blockading Squadron During the Civil War*. Dulles, VA: Potomac Books, 2002. ISBN 1-57488-514-6. \$34.95.

reading as well; blockades have real strategic value in the imposition of sea power on a foe, but the sailors and officers blockading knew only long periods of boring yet dangerous station keeping with few periods of action.

The initial blockade was established and commanded by Rear Admiral Samuel F. duPont. DuPont was faced with not only maintaining the blockade, but with the added burden of doing so with new technology. DuPont solved part of the problems by establishing a forward base at Port Royal, S.C. The base there had facilities for the repair and maintenance of the ships, including the ironclad monitors, as well as coal depots and stores of food and other necessities for the squadron. DuPont made all of the initial decisions that allowed the squadron to remain deployed for the duration of the war.

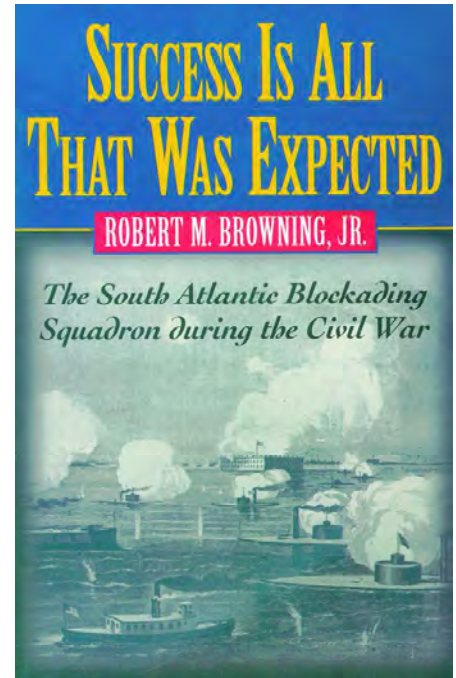
DuPont brought a background of seagoing commands to the blockade, but what he could not overcome was the lack of strategy from the national leadership. He could not convince the Department of War to cooperate in a long-term campaign to subdue the South Atlantic states. After he

orchestrated the capture of a number of ports, and limited occupation of inland areas, duPont fell victim to the “Charleston fixation” of both Navy Secretary Gideon Wells and his assistant, Gustavus Fox. All wanted to capture Charleston, but wanted to do it with naval forces alone. Lack of cooperation with and from the army hindered the efforts to subdue “Satan’s Kingdom” after initial success in other areas of the squadron’s area of operations.

DuPont was finally persuaded to attempt the capture of Charleston in April of 1863. The attack failed because the defenses were more than the ironclads could overcome, and because the local army units would not join in the attack. In any case, if success was achieved, it had to be primarily due to the Navy operation. duPont had been under fire previously for his lack of aggressiveness, and this was the final straw.


Rear Admiral John Dahlgren relieved duPont but Dahlgren did not get any additional guidance from the Navy Department, other than the restriction that he could not suffer a defeat. Such conditions prevented Dahlgren from making any determined effort, which would have been doomed anyway from lack of Army cooperation. Dahlgren was primarily a technical officer, having been engaged in ordnance work for most of his career.

New equipment and weapons were introduced during the blockade of Charleston. The author detailed some of the innovations in Union forces, such as advanced bases and the use of combined Navy-Marine landing parties. The Confederates also innovated, although the author only alludes to these ships and devices. Torpedoes, now called mines, were used in the defense of Charleston, and the torpedo boat was developed. The torpedo boat used a torpedo fixed on a spar and it caused consternation in Dahlgren’s mind, as well as the minds of the other Naval officers involved. Attacks were thwarted but



came close to success. Moored torpedoes were more dangerous and caused loss or damage of several of the blockading ships including monitors. The first successful attack by a submarine occurred when Confederate experimental submarine *Hunley* attacked and sank USS *Housatonic*. The submarine rammed the ship using a spar torpedo, causing her to go down almost immediately. *Hunley* was lost during the return to Charleston, so the attack was not repeated. The captures of Savannah and Charleston occurred only after the approach of Sherman from inland, so Dahlgren was thus denied the spectacular victory he desired.

An otherwise excellent book is marred by the lack of a table detailing the various classes and configurations of ships available to the two admirals. The controversy over the value of the monitors is mentioned, but not explored in detail. Another minor irritation is the lack of some place names of battles on the maps provided.

These reservations aside, the book offers a valuable insight to an area of the Civil War activity that is generally neglected in the more popular histories. If for no other reason than it shows the necessity of interservice cooperation in a mixed land-sea environment, it is a valuable work, and it is a well-written and enjoyable book. 

Circle of Fire: The Story of the USS Susquehanna in the War of the Rebellion

By Peter Barratt

Reviewed by Gordon Calhoun

When it comes to books about the U.S. Navy's involvement in the American Civil War, there can never be enough books published. Scholars, who tell you that the Civil War has been overwritten and there is nothing left to cover, all too often neglect and/or forget that there was a maritime side to the conflict. It is fortunate that we have people like Peter Barratt and his book *Circle of Fire: The Story of the USS Susquehanna in the War*

Peter Barratt. *Circle of Fire: The Story of the USS Susquehanna in the War of the Rebellion*. London: Columbiad Press, 2004. ISBN 0-95-486640-1. \$12.00.

of the Rebellion. With this work Barratt has produced (and self-published) a documentation on the ship's service during America's most costly war that is both entertaining and informative.

USS *Susquehanna* was a paddle-wheel steam sloop-of-war that served both in cruiser and blockade duties during the Civil War. Many of her actions during the conflict will be of interest to readers of Civil War maritime history, especially Hampton Roads naval history.

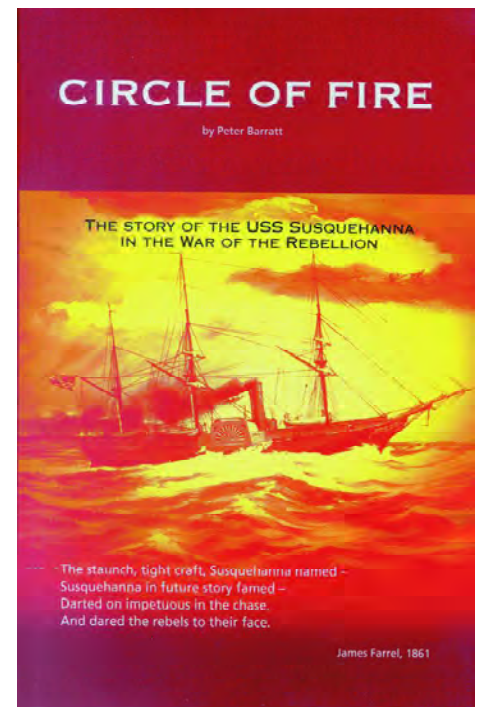
The vessel was at many different locations during the War, often right in the middle of its most critical actions. She served in the early campaigns against Fort Hatteras and Port Royal as well as Hampton Roads during operations against CSS *Virginia* and in support of the 1862 Peninsula Campaign. After being transferred to the South Atlantic Blockading Squadron, she was transferred again to the Gulf of Mexico for duties off the coast of Mobile Bay. Here she was witness to the dash to freedom by CSS *Florida*. She finished up the war by hunting for Confederate commerce raiders and served as a part of the armada that finally subdued

Fort Fisher.

Included in the operational history of the ship are lengthy discussions on the commanding officers of the ship and their effect on operations. Also included are the sonnets of an enlisted Marine stationed aboard the vessel. Named Amos Burton, this Marine kept a detailed journal of his time aboard *Susquehanna*. Burton not only wrote down daily summary of his activities, but poetry that he composed in his spare time on blockade duty. The author admits that Burton's journal heavily influenced him to research and write a book on *Susquehanna*.

This book is for the casual reader of Naval history. People who spend more time studying the Civil War or the history of the U.S. Navy will have issues with the work. These issues range from minor technical issues to more substantial text problems. For starters, the author is not consistent as to determining *Susquehanna's* ship type. In some parts of the book she is a sloop-of-war and other parts she is a frigate. Granted even Donald Carney, author of the *Old Steam Navy* series, noted that *Susquehanna's* ship type is easy to confuse. She was a ship built on a frigate hull and rigging, but armed like, and correctly called, a sloop-of-war. Consistency in a book is very important and one ship type needed to be chosen.


More serious issues include a lack of focus. First, the book is supposed to be about one particular warship in the Civil War. However, often the narrative strays from the main subject to discuss other aspects of the Civil War. For example, instead of a detailed discussion on *Susquehanna's* action during the Fort Fisher campaign, we get a summary of the entire Fort Fisher campaign itself. Instead of discovering what *Susquehanna* was doing (or not doing) during CSS *Florida's* bold dash out of Mobile Bay, in which *Susquehanna* was supposed to be in charge



of preventing such an escape, we get a discussion on the other ships of the squadron and how they failed to stop *Florida*.

Secondly, there are some major gaps in the narrative such as a lack of a discussion on her engineering plant. *Susquehanna* was one of the first steam-powered warships in the U.S. Navy, which possessed one of the most hated engineering plants in the fleet. Carney noted that Commodore Perry referred to *Susquehanna* during his historic journey to Japan as a "lame duck" and believed the ship to be utterly worthless as a warship. Her engineering plant's quality was indeed bad, but there is only a small mention here and there in the book. On the positive side, after reading Barratt's work, we can safely say that Perry was wrong. The ship was not so useless, and in fact, was quite worthy.

The third point is a lack of documentation. Historical works have to have documentation to inform the reader of the author's sources if the reader wants to follow up on something. It is also critically important to ensure the accuracy of the work. This is not to say this particular work is not accurate, but by definition historians require authentication.

Having said all that, Mr. Barratt's book is worthy of anyone's time who enjoys the Civil War or the U.S. Navy. The book is relatively inexpensive and an easy and enjoyable read. 

The Most Comprehensive History Ever Written

An Appreciation of the Jamestown Exposition's *Blue Book*

Historians are always looking for new angles on a subject. The Jamestown Exposition only lasted six months in 1907, so it would seem to be difficult to find out new things about Norfolk's great world's fair. However, thanks to two men, we have a major historical source of the fair available to us. To find out the basic history of the



The Museum Sage

Jamestown Exposition, one should look no further than the *Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition*. The *Blue Book* is the official history of the fair, so the authors had access to photos and documents normally not immediately available to the public.

However, the book goes far beyond a mere official history. The editor of the *Blue Book*, Charles Russell Keiley, and its publisher, Eugene d'Avigneau, owner of the Colonial Publishing Company in Norfolk, are to be greatly praised for assembling a tome of facts, figures, and knowledge. Not only is it a comprehensive history of the fair one could argue that it is the most comprehensive history of any one subject ever written. One could pick up a copy of the *Blue Book* (you might need help, it is pretty heavy), and read it every day and discover something new about the fair.

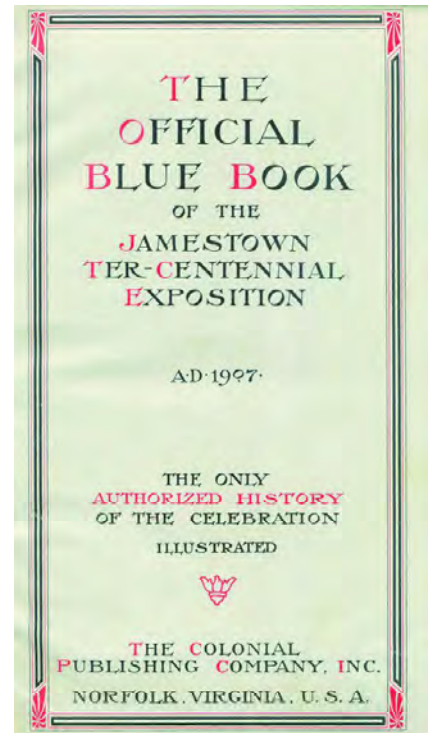
How can the Sage make such a claim? For starters, the *Blue Book* is 807 pages long and contains thousands of photographs. Most histories would only give the highlights of events that the editor/

writer deemed important. Keiley and d'Avigneau included every single event, every building assembled, every exhibit constructed, and the people responsible for the Expo. Many national celebrities came to give speeches to the fair. All the speeches are printed in the *Blue Book*, unabridged, and all the useful (and useless) facts you could ever want are all printed. Looking for a full transcript of President Theodore Roosevelt's speech for "Georgia Day?" Page 198. Looking for something about great-grandpa's participation in the Jamestown Exposition Dental Association? Page 270. Want to know how many lights were used in building the "Hellgate" attraction? Page 741.

Keiley's assurances to readers that "if anything appears in the following pages which is not an exact fact it is a misfortune due to lack of available information, and not to any desire that the truth should be hidden or distorted." There are some negative facts in the work. The Expo's financial woes, for example, are published as Keiley did place Barton Meyer's final financial statement, which clearly shows the Expo lost a boatload of money. Keiley does not, however, exactly print it in bold




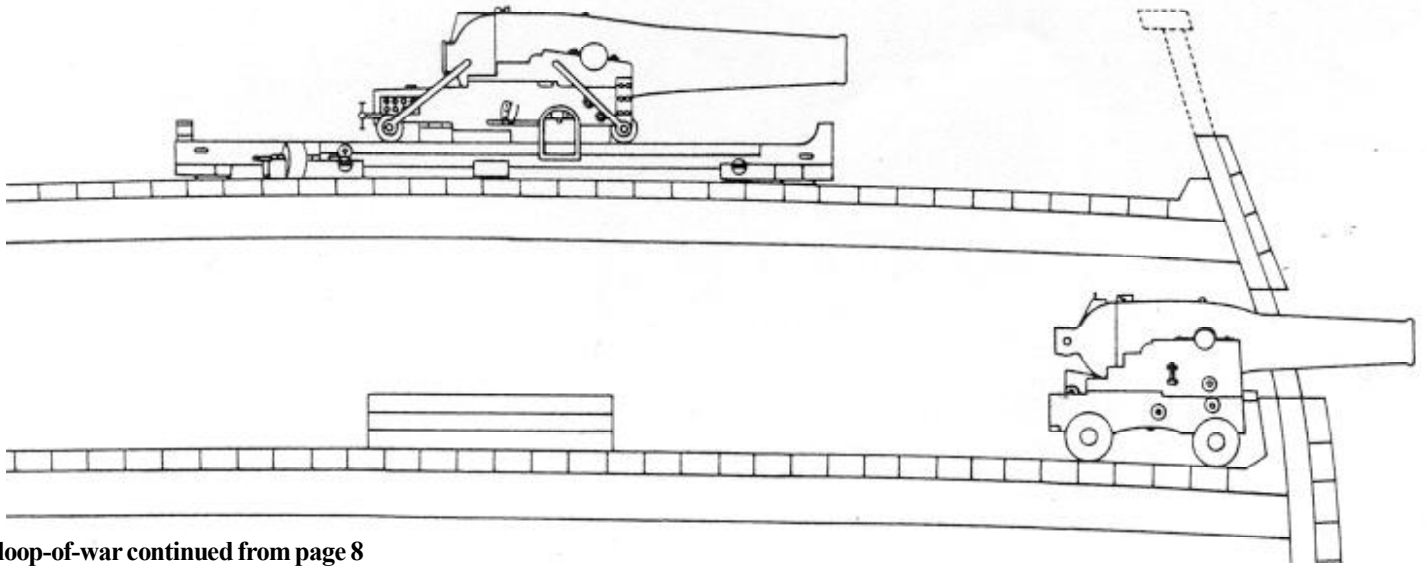
Jamestown Exposition Dental Association anyone?



letters or have a chapter heading of "Why the Expo Failed."

Despite the comprehensive appearance of the work, even the *Blue Book* has major holes in the text. The overall mood of the work is very upbeat, which is to be expected in an "official" history. The authors sheepishly acknowledge some failures, but one is left with the impression that overall the Expo was a major success. Left out of the text altogether are socially sensitive subjects such as the call for a boycott of the Expo by various civil rights organizations. Activists felt, with good reason, the Expo was not treating racial minorities with very much respect. Major negative events such as the July 3 riot, started ironically by National Guardsmen, are simply not mentioned at all in the "Diary" section.

Nonetheless, the work that did go into the *Blue Book* is to be commended. Most histories take years, if not decades to write, edit, and publish. The editors and publishers of the *Blue Book* cranked out over 800 pages of text and thousands of photos in under two years, all without typos or caption errors. It has been an invaluable starting tool for interpreting one of the great fairs in the United States and its legacy. The greatest factor working against historians is editors cutting out information in a history to make the work a certain number of pages. As a result, something gets left out. We owe a huge debt to the editors of the *Blue Book* for attempting to cover it all. 



Sloop-of-war continued from page 8

sheer, or curvatures, of the ship's hull. The curvature was always present, but with the bulwarks in place on the spar deck, the ship always had more of a flat appearance. As a sloop-of-war and with the bulwarks removed, the curvature of the hull is more readily seen.

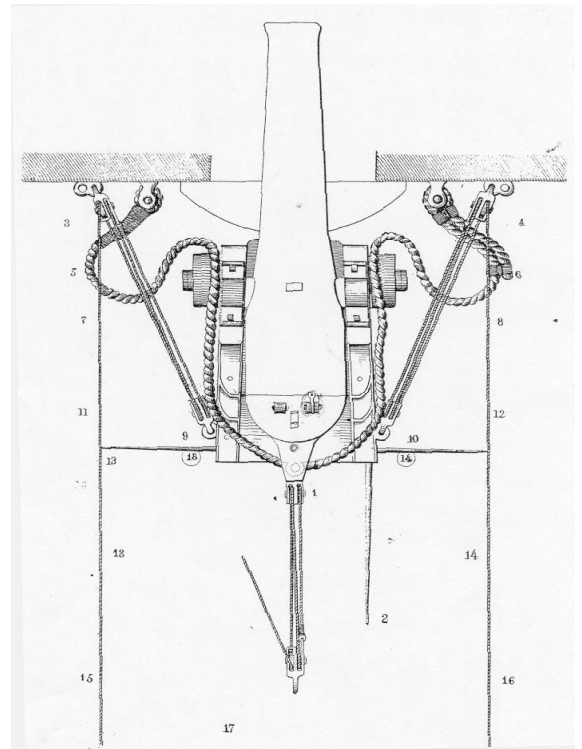
Architects took a hard look at the frigate and composed new drawings of the hull and ship spaces. Over the next several months, they redesigned the upper decks. We are fortunate in that most of the plans from the *raze* effort have been preserved by the National Archives. Historians can actually follow alongside the ship's workers as they made changes to the ship. Throughout the article, you will see the progression of the Navy Yard's work.

Work on the ship began in mid-1856 and continued through early 1857. When finished, the Washington, D.C.-based, African-American daily *National Era* was one of the few newspapers to take notice. The African-American daily possibly took

Sloop-of-war continued on page 14

Image #5-Naval ordnance expert and one time Cumberland flag lieutenant John Dahlgren offered the above weapons arrangement as a new way of deploying cannons. He proposed that two of his state-of-the-art X-inch smoothbore cannons be placed on pivot on the main deck and IX-inch smoothbore cannons be used as the new broadside weapon. The X-inch gun weighed 12,000-pounds, fired a 135 pound shell, and took twenty-five sailors to operate. The Navy adopted this arrangement for Cumberland, making the vessel one of the most powerful sailing ships in the fleet. (Image provided by Spencer Tucker)


Image #6-Dahlgren's IX-inch smoothbore was an early design in the famous series of naval artillery that bore the ordnance expert's name. The four and half-ton weapon fired either a fifty-one pound shell or a sixty-two pound iron shot. Each gun took a crew of seventeen to operate. The new Cumberland carried twenty-two of these weapons.



Sloop-of-war continued from page 13

notice because *Cumberland* was slated to take command of the Africa Squadron and its impossible mission of suppressing the slave trade. The *National Era* wrote, "The old frigate *Cumberland*, built in Charlestown, in 1842, has been cut down, and made one of the finest sloops of war afloat. She has all the capacity of a frigate, except in her armament, which is only that of an ordinary sloop of war. She is sparred as heavily and spreads as much canvas as our first-class frigates. She is soon to sail from Boston, to join the squadron on the coast of Africa as flag ship, under the command of John S. Missroon, Esq." The accolades were short-lived. The *National Era*, as has been shown in part 5 of the series, was not too happy with *Cumberland's* performance.

Nonetheless, the makeover resulted in one of the finest sailing ships ever produced for the U.S. Navy. With the upgraded weaponry, *Cumberland* was also one of the most powerfully armed sailing ships as well. As an all-sail ship, she was rapidly becoming more obsolete as the Navy ordered more steam powered ships. One way to interpret the project is by saying that the *raze* rebuild made *Cumberland* a little less obsolete.

The Navy recommissioned the fleet's newest sloop-of-war in Spring of 1857 and assigned her to be in charge of the Africa Squadron. When the Boston Navy Yard put *Cumberland* back in her native element, workers nearby were busy completing one of the new magnificently designed steam frigates-USS *Merrimack*. 

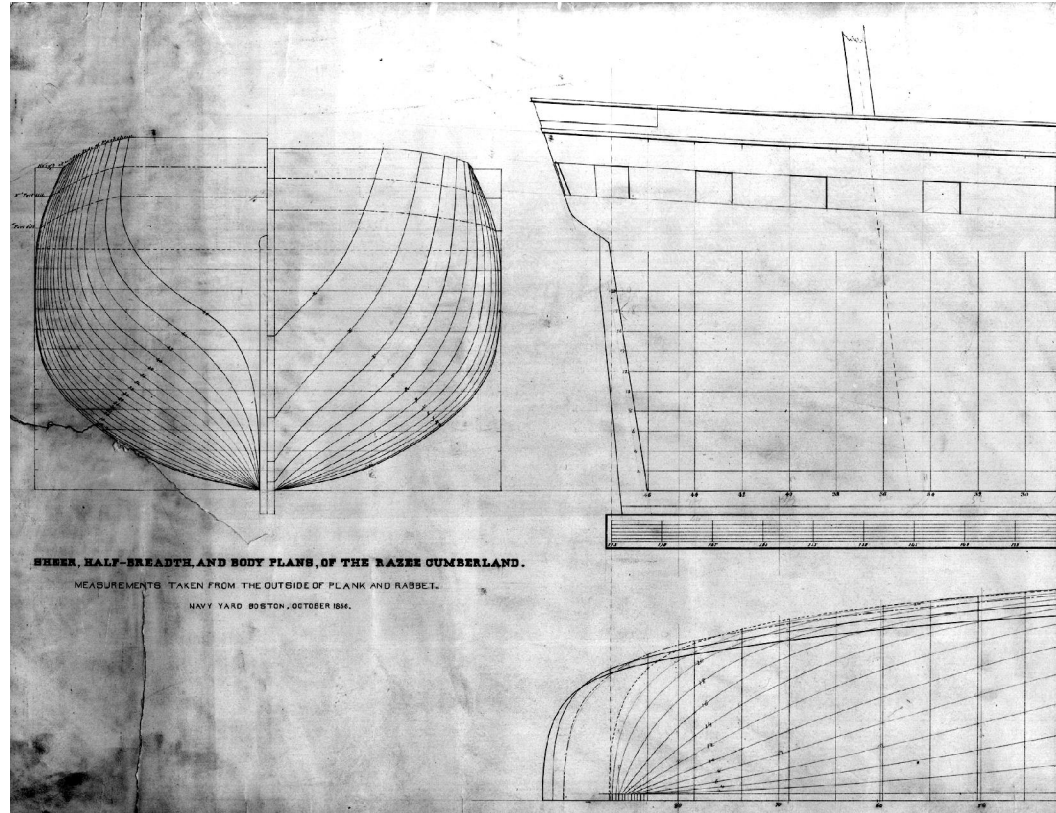
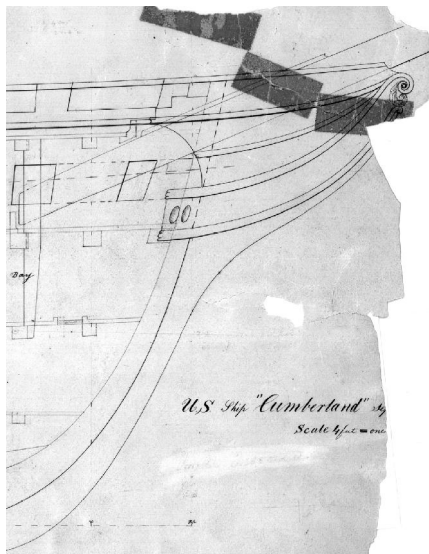
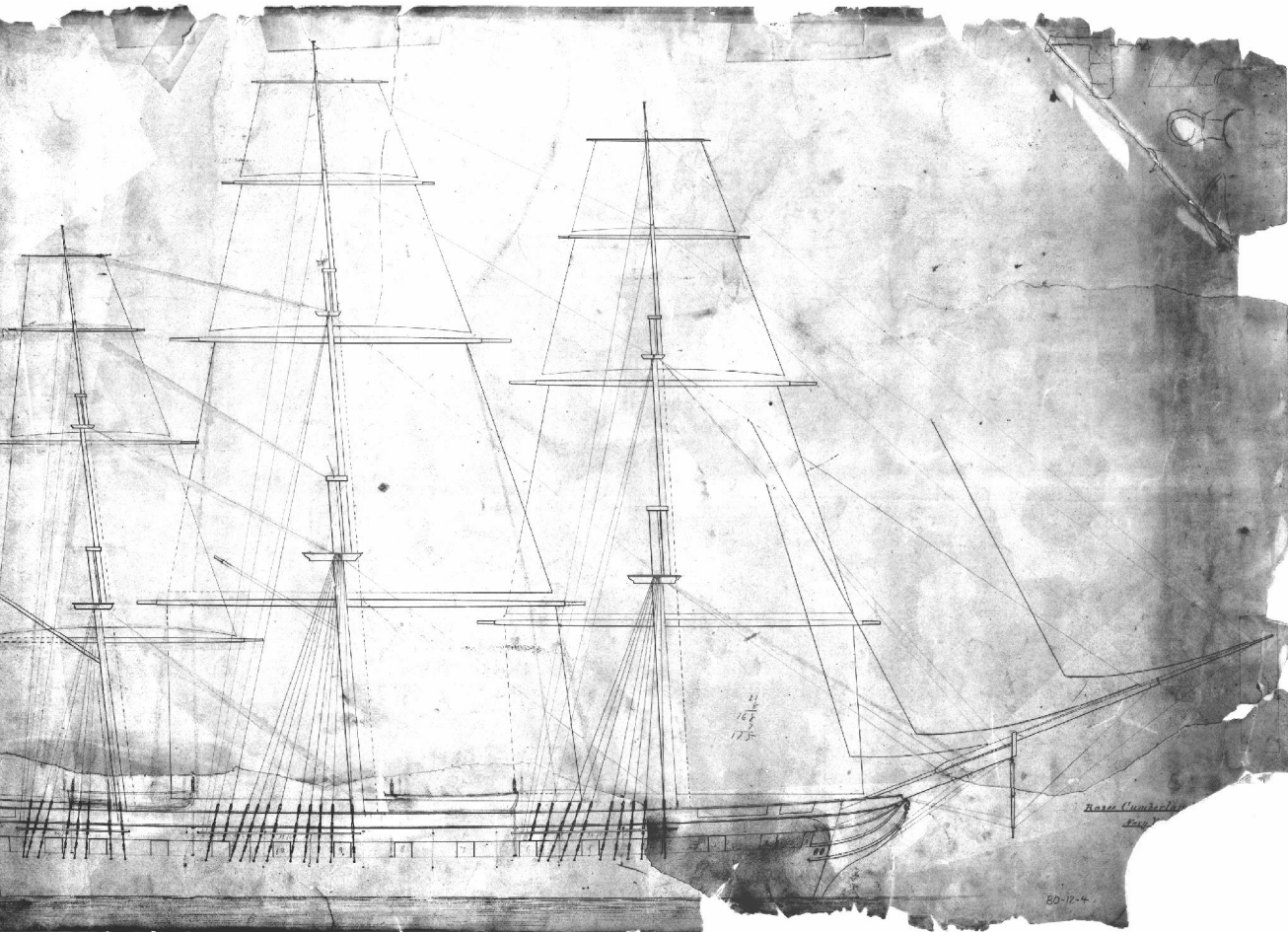
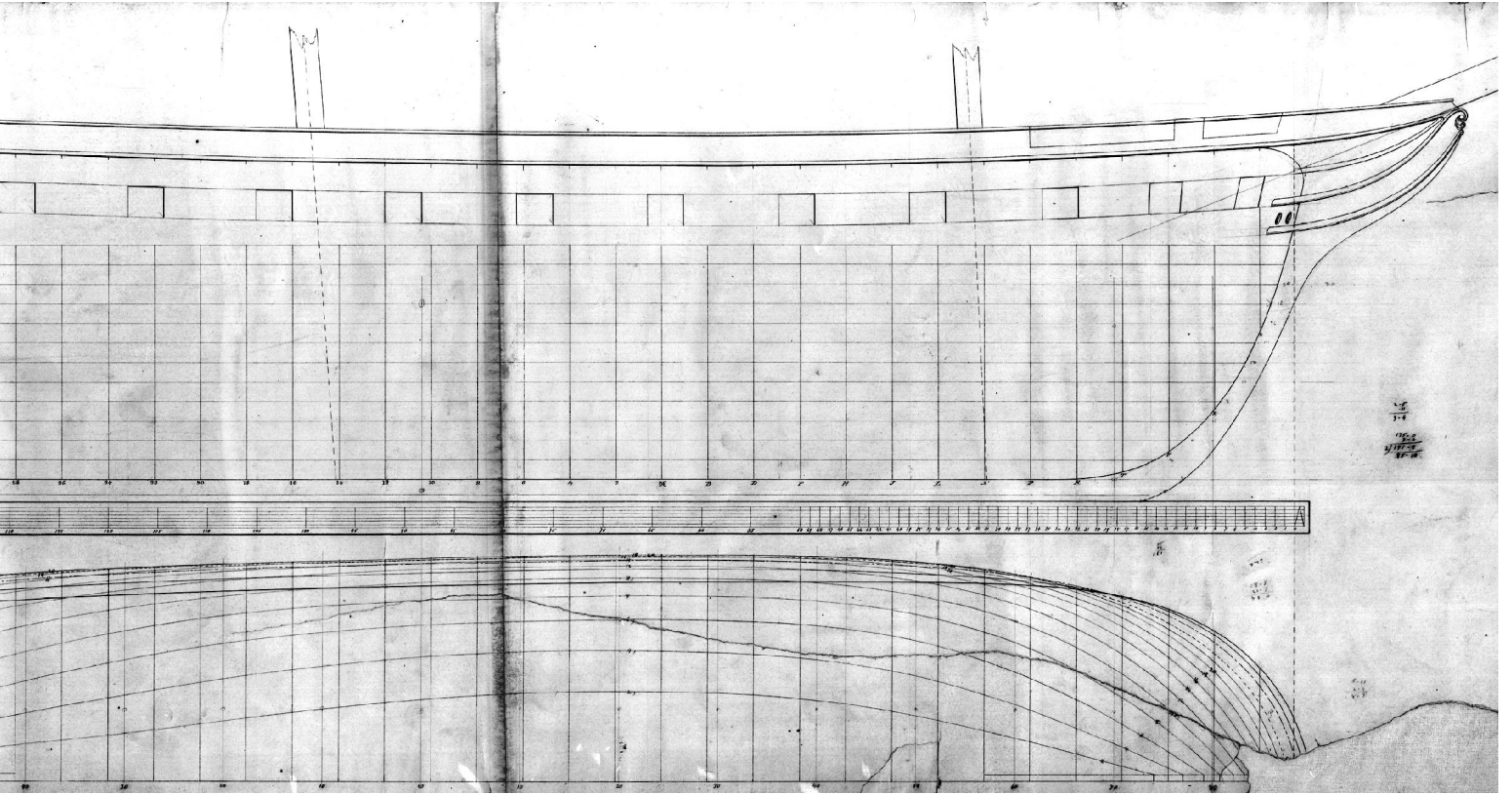


Image #7-By the fall of 1856, architects assembled the final plans for the hull. Boston Navy Yard workers completed the conversion by early 1857.

*Image #8-The sail rigging on the razeed *Cumberland* was the same as the "old" *Cumberland*. The combination of less weight with the same amount sail coverage made *Cumberland* an even better and faster vessel. However, this sail plan has led many contemporary and modern writers to incorrectly label the ship a frigate.*



*Image #9-A close-up of *Cumberland's* bow as completed after the conversion.*



It's All Just a Popularity Contest

As part of a promotion for both the paper and the Jamestown Exposition, the *Washington Post* conducted the contest mentioned by the broadside shown at the right side of the page. The winners got an all expense paid trip to Hampton Roads and to the Exposition. The winners had to collect and send in the most entries attached to the ad (remember no Xerox machines in 1907). However, if you did not feel so popular, one could get bonus entries by subscribing to the *Post*. One could earn anywhere from 25 (one month of daily editions only) to 5,000 bonus entries (full year with Sundays).

100 Popular Persons to Visit Jamestown Exposition at the Expense of The Washington Post

Cash Prizes in Addition Will Be Given to the Successful Contestants

NINETY persons are to be selected in a popular voting contest from the District of Columbia, and ten from the adjacent counties in Virginia and Maryland, and sent on a ten-day tour of the Jamestown Exposition. All we ask is that you make your selections. The Washington Post stands the expenses and will take care of the 100 winners.

Open to All

This contest is open to all persons over the age of fifteen years.

Fraternals and labor organizations having hard-working members cannot show their appreciation to a greater degree than by sending such members to the Jamestown Exposition. Persons in the departmental service cannot find more pleasure than in soliciting the assistance of their friends in sending a popular employee to Jamestown.

No doubt your favorite pastor would enjoy a trip to the exposition.

Teachers should collect the help of their parents in sending their favorite teacher or schoolmate to Jamestown.

Ninety District of Columbia people are going to the Jamestown Exposition by courtesy of the Washington Post. Are you one of them?

Any person over the age of fifteen years, whether a subscriber to the Post or not, is eligible in this contest.

Address all communications and send all ballots, subscriptions, etc., concerning this tour to Jamestown to the

EXPOSITION EDITOR
WASHINGTON POST,
Washington, D. C.

From City of Washington

Ninety persons will be sent from the District of Columbia to the Jamestown Exposition by The Washington Post, and all their expenses paid for a ten-day trip.

It is your opportunity to win one of these free trips to the most historical Exposition ever held in the United States.

You are also eligible to win one of the cash prizes.

Start early and secure the assistance of your friends in this popular contest.

Outside the City of Washington

VIRGINIA

To go from Alexandria City..... 4
To go from Alexandria County..... 1
To go from Fairfax County..... 1
To go from Loudoun County..... 1

MARYLAND

To go from Montgomery County..... 1
To go from Prince George County..... 1
To go from Charles County..... 1
Total..... 10

*Any other county in Virginia or Maryland can present a candidate who can make a showing of 50,000 votes—the total given for ten yearly subscriptions to The Daily and Sunday Post.

Accommodations will be given to the successful contestants in the "Famale Inn," the Exposition's greatest hotel. Daily admission fees to the grounds will be paid. Tickets will be given to all of the principal attractions on the Exposition grounds: State room, and meals on the steamers will also be furnished going to and from Jamestown.

Contest Begins Sunday, March 24

Contest Ends Sunday, June 30

\$300 in Cash Prizes

- To the person receiving the highest number of votes . . . \$100.00
- To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . \$75.00
- To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . \$50.00
- To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . \$25.00
- To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . \$15.00
- To the person receiving the next highest number of votes . \$10.00
- To each of 5 persons receiving the next highest number of votes \$5.00

Rules Governing Contest

The contest is open to the entire and general population of the District of Columbia, and the adjacent counties in Virginia and Maryland.

Each contestant must be a resident of one of the prescribed localities, and to each person over the age of fifteen years.

Persons who are not residents of the localities prescribed in this contest are ineligible to vote.

Persons who are not citizens of the United States are ineligible to vote.

The Washington Post reserves the right to give all prizes in full and to cancel any prize which it may deem it necessary to do so.

The Washington Post reserves the right to give all prizes in full and to cancel any prize which it may deem it necessary to do so.

Value of Special Ballots

These ballots are placed only before in advance a ballot of subscribers.

Daily Only

- Paid in advance for 1 month..... 25 votes extra
- Paid in advance for 2 months..... 75 votes extra
- Paid in advance for 3 months..... 200 votes extra
- Paid in advance for 6 months..... 1,000 votes extra
- Paid in advance for 12 months..... 3,000 votes extra

Daily and Sunday

- Paid in advance for 1 month..... 50 votes extra
- Paid in advance for 2 months..... 200 votes extra
- Paid in advance for 3 months..... 750 votes extra
- Paid in advance for 6 months..... 2,000 votes extra
- Paid in advance for 12 months..... 5,000 votes extra

Sunday only, 1 year, paid in advance, 250 votes extra.

In Our Next Issue...

- Sailing for the Union: USS *Cumberland*'s Opening Operations in the American Civil War
- The World's Biggest Soapbox: Advocating at the 1907 Jamestown Exposition
- Book Reviews: *The End of the Barbary Terror* and *The Battle for Leyte, 1944*.