

THE DAYBOOK

VOLUME 11 ISSUE 2

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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 gordon.b.calhoun@navy.mil, or write *The Daybook*, Hampton Roads Naval Museum, One Waterside Drive, Suite 248, Norfolk, VA 23510-1607. The museum can be found on the World Wide Web at <http://www.hrnm.navy.mil>.

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Thomas Selfridge's Doomed Squadron

Cover Illustration: In this hand colored lithograph, USS *Cumberland* (on right side) is with a U.S. Navy squadron for an assault on the Confederate fortifications on Cape Hatteras in 1861. To her left is the paddle steamer USS *Susquehanna* and the paddle steamer USRS *Harriet Lane*. The assault was one of many actions the sloop-of-war engaged in during the early stages of the Civil War. Originally drawn by *Cumberland* seaman Francis Garland, the full picture can be seen on page 9.

Meet the Interns!

The Director's Column

by Becky Poulliot

Our fabulous summer intern program is up and running again with a group of top-rated individuals. Team leader **Lauren Healey** is currently pursuing a Masters degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Delaware and a certificate in Museums Studies. Delaware has one of the oldest—and best—museum studies programs in the nation (as spoken by a fellow alumni—I graduated from there too many years ago to say here.) Lauren couldn't be in a better place this summer, as she wants to make a career of museum education. She finds her work in the museum exciting, as she is able to interact with adults and children simultaneously.

Matthew Eng will begin graduate school this fall at Old Dominion University in the History Department. He is a recent graduate of James Madison University with a B.A. in History. His area of concentration is public history, and he enjoys historic archaeology and the Civil War Navy. He is absorbing the history of the Navy in Hampton Roads “like a sponge” and “loves” working with the kids on board the battleship.

Both **Lindsey Sigafos** and **Iana Simmons** are returning this summer. Actually both of these educators have stayed on throughout last fall and winter,



Jennifer Hurst is taking over as special events coordinator and educator for the summer. (Photo by Marta Nelson)

working special events. Lindsey is preparing to enter Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond as a Junior in the Mass Communications program with an emphasis in creative advertising. Lindsey has learned



Meet the Interns! Pictured from left to right are Lindsey Sigafos, Matthew Eng, Iana Simmons, and Lauren Healey. The museum's interns are giving education programs, running the education room on the battleship Wisconsin, and assisting with interpretation of the ship. (Photo by Marta Nelson)

a lot of naval history during her stint at the museum; she finds the summer education work rewarding, because she is able to satisfy people on vacation and give children an activity-based experience on the ship. Iana is a recent graduate of Old Dominion University in the History Department. Iana is very energetic in her presentations and enjoys doing research to add to the programs.

The museum's summer activities allow our staff to interact directly with the public. Whether it is through tying a knot, creating a ribbon board, or making a card to send to a Sailor at sea, visitors are given a better understanding of what the Navy is all about. Visitors can board the *Wisconsin*, go into our educational room and interact with our interns, learning about Navy jobs and tradition in a fun way. Take an opportunity to experience this yourself first-hand this summer.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the addition of our new full-time educator **Jennifer Hurst**. Jennifer is assuming Kathryn Shaffner's duties while she is away on an internship in Bratislava. Jennifer has

hit the deck running. She is coordinating the “Cumberland Club,” an underwater archaeology pilot program for 7th graders. Funded by the **Lockheed Martin Corporation** and the **Hampton Roads Naval Historical Foundation**, the one week program takes the students out to the site of the wreck of the sloop-of-war *Cumberland*, teaches them about the discipline of underwater archaeology, and even has them participate in choosing artifacts for conservation. Jennifer is also preparing to host two teacher workshops later this summer, one on the Cold War and the second on the Jamestown Exposition of 1907. Jennifer comes to us with an M.A. in Museum Education from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

I am honored to work with the summer crew. Their creativity and knowledge are impressive, and the enthusiasm they bring to their work is infectious. I feel the future of the Museum field is in good hands.

Becky



The Exposition got off to a huge start when President Theodore Roosevelt spoke at Lee's Parade on the fair's opening day. It was one of several speeches the Republican President gave at the fair. (HRNM photo from the Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition)

The World's Biggest Soapbox

Politicians and Personalities on Parade at the Jamestown Exposition

by Gordon Calhoun

If there is one consistent trend about Americans throughout history it is that we can not get enough of our celebrities. Whether it is thousands of people turning out to see George Washington as he returned home to Mount Vernon from New York or the purchase of one of the many fine magazines at the grocery store to catch up on the latest gossip or interview, we want to know, see, and hear all about the famous.

At the 1907 Fair The Jamestown Exposition One Hundred Years Later

Planners of the 1907 Jamestown Exposition were well aware of this obsession and invited several national and international personalities to the fair. For all its flaws, the Jamestown Exposition was the place to be seen in 1907.

The Exposition got off to a roaring start when President Teddy Roosevelt came to give a speech to open the Exposition on April 26, 1907. Officially, Harry St. George Tucker, president of the Jamestown Exposition Company, kicked off the Exposition with a very long-winded speech that traced the entire history of the English speaking people from William the Conqueror

to the Jamestown colony. As he was only supposed to introduce President Roosevelt, Tucker was soundly criticized by onlookers.

As for Roosevelt, the President attempted to set the tone of the Exposition by expressing the belief that while the 1607 Jamestown Colony itself was founded by Englishmen and the United States was a nation built on English institutions, America thrived because of its ethnic diversity. Additionally, he stated that the American system of government should and did treat every citizen with equality, regardless of class status. The President concluded his speech with the grand and memorial statement, "For if we believe that

if the average of character in the individual is sufficiently high...there is literally no height of triumph unattainable in this vast experiment of government by, of, and for a free people."

Wall Street bankers and corporate executives, however, were less interested in a civics lesson than Roosevelt's views on Big Business. Days before the fair, rumors had been floating around Wall Street that Roosevelt was going to make his specific views known in Norfolk. Unfortunately for the businessmen, he gave a mixed, even vague, stand on the issue. "It is our business," he stated, "to put a stop to abuses and to prevent their recurrence,

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In what was a sign of the changing international scene, Field Marshal Baron Kuroki (center) reviews the troops at Lee's Parade on "Jamestown Day." Kuroki was one of the main architects of the Japanese victory in the 1904 Russo-Japanese War. American war heroes Arthur MacArthur and Winfield Scott Schley also came. (HRNM photo from the Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Ter-Centennial Exposition)

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without showing a spirit of mere vindictiveness.” Some like the *Wall Street Journal* interpreted this as a sign that Roosevelt was going to leave Big Business alone, so long as it played by the rules already in place. But others like the *Springfield Republican* in Missouri remarked, “If speculative railroad management and predatory wealth can find any comfort in this address, they are welcome to it.”

Arriving about the same time as Roosevelt were humorist and author Samuel Clemens, a.k.a. Mark Twain, and his friend Henry H. Rogers, a founding member of the Standard Oil Trust and the Virginian Railroad (now a major section of the Norfolk Southern system.) The two gentlemen arrived in Hampton Roads on Rogers’ yacht *Kanawha* and the public desperately crowded pleasure ships to catch a glimpse of the celebrated author. Clemens downplayed his presence and told people that the only reason Rogers brought him along was to help “pay the freight.”

Towards the end of May, William Jennings Bryan, nationally known orator and perennial candidate for President, came to the Exposition to be the keynote speaker



Perennial Presidential candidate and nationally known populist and orator William Jennings Bryan photographed while having lunch with Tennessee Confederate war veterans at the Exposition. (HRNM photo from the Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Exposition Ter-Centennial)

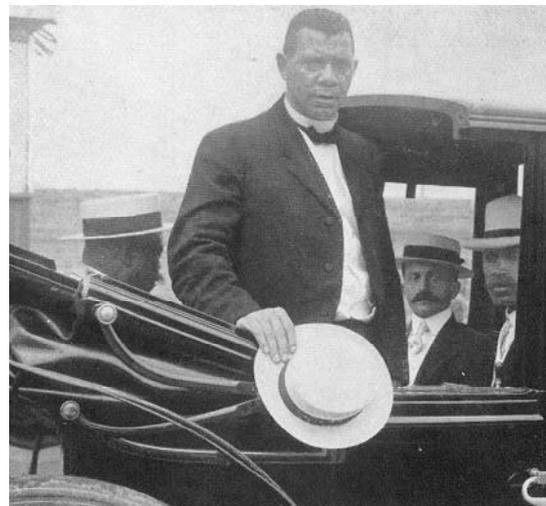
for “Patrick Henry Day.” No doubt warming up for the 1908 Presidential election, Bryan turned his trip to Norfolk into a campaign swing, making speeches at every stop. At

the Exposition, he praised Patrick Henry’s defense of liberty, demanded the end of the American occupation of the Philippines, denounced railroad trusts, and spoke in favor of tax reform (specifically the enactment of a national income tax.) At the end of his speech, he and the Exposition president Harry Tucker held up the original copy of Patrick Henry’s “No Taxation Without Representation” speech to the crowd. The crowd went wild with excitement.

Bryan went on to face Secretary of War Howard Taft in the 1908 election, though he almost blew his chances when he accidentally made an indirect endorsement for Virginia’s U.S. Senator John Warwick Daniel during his Exposition speech. Regardless, Bryan lost for the fourth and final time.

For Democrats, the charismatic Bryan was the past and present hope of the party. Their future also arrived at the Exposition. In contrast to the populist crusader style of Bryan, Virginia-native Dr. Woodrow Wilson brought a calming intellectual voice to the Exposition. At the time, Wilson was president of Princeton University. The future New Jersey governor and Democratic Presidential candidate spoke at the Pennsylvania Building on Independence Day for a ceremony celebrating the descendants of the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Though his speech was less dramatic than Bryan’s, it had the same theme. Wilson denounced Big Business and the weak laws enacted against it. He commented, “If surely there are no lawyers who can find the guilty parties, surely there can be no descendants of the signers of the Declaration of Independence.”

Not to be outdone by their arch-rivals, the Republicans trotted out one of their rising stars as well for an Independence Day speech at the Pennsylvania Building. Charles Hughes was at the time governor of New York and like Wilson was an extremely intelligent and well educated person. He made a simple statement about the importance of education to preserving American liberties and the relevance of the Declaration for it reminded the Federal Government not to abuse its people. The



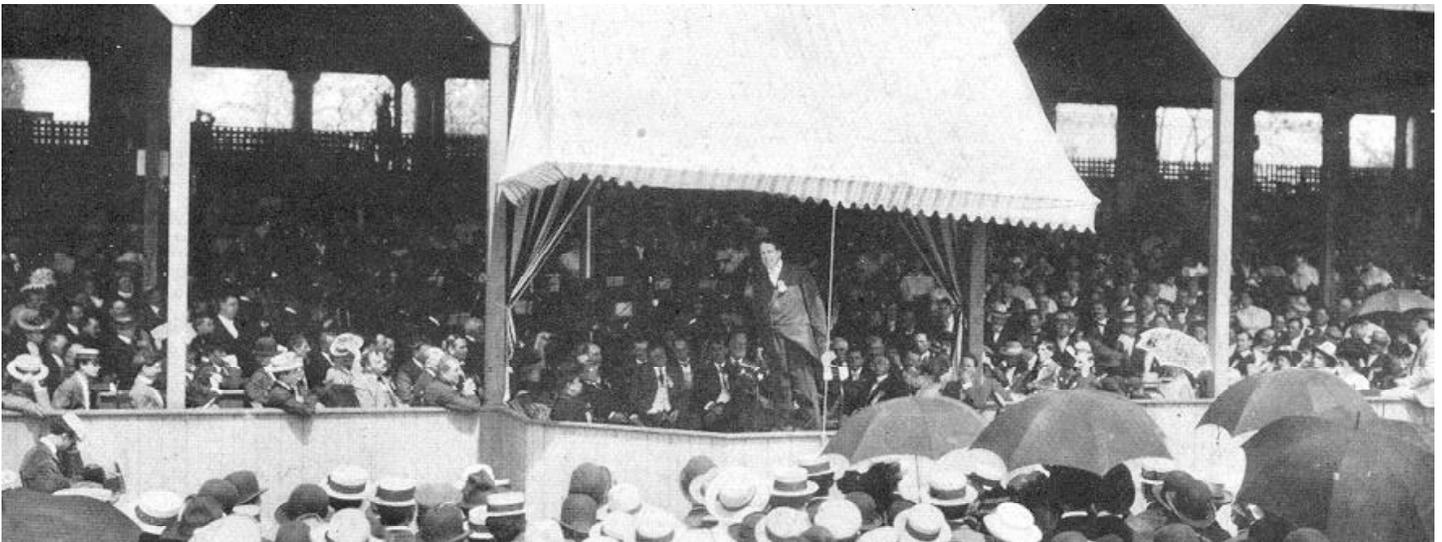
African-American educator Booker T. Washington came and spoke during “Negro Day.” His speech summed up his belief that African-Americans would only advance in American society through education. (HRNM photo from the Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Exposition Ter-Centennial)

speech was straight forward and nonpartisan, but it turned into a Republican rally. Wilson ironically sparked the rally when he asked the crowd, “What shall we do with Governor Hughes?” To this, someone shouted, “MAKE HIM PRESIDENT!,” and the crowd went wild with excitement. Both gentlemen got their shot at the White House when they faced each other in the 1916 election.

Renowned African-American educator Booker T. Washington came to speak on “Negro Day.” After reviewing a parade of students from Hampton Institute (now Hampton University) with Harry Tucker and Hampton’s president, Washington delivered a speech at Lee’s Parade. The mostly black audience heard Washington’s signature words about the need for blacks to spend time and energy on education and not on rebelling against a racially oppressive society. “No battle was ever won by an army standing still or sulking in its tents... we have in this country as a whole an opportunity which we should highly value,” he stated.

Roosevelt returned to the Exposition for “Georgia Day” in June. The President’s mother was from Georgia and the State of Georgia’s Exposition house was modeled after the President’s family home. The speech was mostly a series of accolades on the amount of progress Georgia and the rest of the South had made. But in the middle of the speech, the President switched over into a discussion about wages and Civil Service reform.

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Newspaper king William Randolph Hearst is shown here speaking at Lee's Parade during "Labor Day." He was followed by the founder of the American Federation of Labor and legendary union organizer Samuel Gompers. (HRNM photo from the Official Blue of the Jamestown Ter-centennial Exposition)

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In the first weekend of September, labor organizers across the country celebrated "Labor Day" (not yet an official holiday). At the fair, Exposition planners successfully booked two nationally known orators known for their pro-labor positions to celebrate the event locally. The first was newspaper king William Randolph Hearst and the second was Samuel Gompers, founder and leader of the American Federation of Labor. Though Hearst had made millions in the newspaper business, he attempted to come across as a friend to the working class. In his speech before a

large crowd at Lee's Parade, Hearst called for peace between labor and business. "Capital," he stated, "is but the accumulation of wealth which employer and employee create together. Prosperity for the producing class means prosperity for the commercial class."

Gompers came after Hearst and wasted no time denouncing anti-labor tactics, such as court injunctions forcing striking workers to return to work, used by big business and government agencies. He sought to reassure the public that labor unions were "evolutionary movement, not a revolutionary movement."

Clemens returned to the Exposition in September with another rich friend, Cornelius Vanderbilt. Clemens was to be a speaker for Robert Fulton Day, the day set aside to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Fulton's invention of the steamboat. Upon entering the Exposition's auditorium, the crowd gave the writer a five-minute standing ovation. Clemens was supposed to be introducing Rear Admiral Purnell Harrington, but his speech easily stole the show. One of the many one liners that brought laughter and more ovations from the crowd was: "The tonnage of a boat means the amount of displacement; displacement means the amount of water a vessel can shove in a day. The tonnage of a man is estimated by the amount of whiskey he can displace in a day."

War heroes, both foreign and American, also came, though many did not deliver public speeches. Particularly bold of Exposition planners was the invitation they extended to Japanese leaders, given the ever

increasing tensions between Japan and the United States. Most prominent among the Japanese officials was Field Marshal Baron Kuroki, a national hero in Japan for his victories over Russian ground forces in the 1904 Russo-Japanese War. He made no public speeches and simply reviewed a gathering of soldiers and sailors from various nations at Lee's Parade.

As for American heroes, General Arthur MacArthur (father of Douglas) came, but only to review the troops. However, Spanish-American War Naval hero Admiral Winfield Scott Schley did speak on "Army and Navy Day." The one time commanding officer of the Norfolk-based "Flying Squadron" gave what many described to be the definitive speech of the whole fair. "I admit that my patriotism is refreshed by contact with the spirit influencing the object of this great Exposition upon the grounds so hallowed and historic, and it would be well for all of us who come to this vicinity, if we catch a little of the spirit," Schley stated.

Schley was the last of the famous personalities to come to the Exposition and the whole operation closed for good later in the week. The personalities by all accounts all seemed to have enjoyed coming to Hampton Roads. Upon arriving back in New York City, Clemens gave probably one of the best descriptions of the Exposition that anyone has ever written. In a letter to Rogers, Clemens wrote that the Exposition "was the completest [*sic.*] and perfectest [*sic.*] fiasco in history, and worth going a thousand miles to see." 



Humorist and author Samuel Clemens came and spoke at the fair to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Robert Fulton's invention of the first steam powered ship. (Photo from the Official Blue Book of the Jamestown Exposition Ter-Centennial)

Sailing for the Union

USS *Cumberland*'s Opening Operations in the American Civil War

by Gordon Calhoun

When USS *Cumberland* returned from duties as flagship of the Africa Squadron in mid-1859, she entered the Portsmouth Navy Yard where workers began a one year repair project. The only major change was the removal of the aft X-inch Dahlgren pivot gun. Once the repairs were completed, the Navy assigned *Cumberland* to be flagship of the Home Squadron with Commodore Garrett Pendergrast as squadron commodore and Captain John Marston as the ship's ninth commanding officer.

Despite the domestic crisis looming in the United States, the Navy still had responsibilities on foreign stations. For the Home Squadron, its responsibility was to monitor political turmoil in Mexico. A civil war had broken out between one faction representing more conservative elements of Mexican society, such as the military and the clergy, and a liberal faction that was attempting social changes such as land equity and clergy reforms. The United States maintained its neutrality in this conflict, but also wanted to ensure that European nations also maintained their neutrality.

Cumberland arrived off the coast of Vera Cruz in late Fall 1860 and headed up a



Commodore Garrett Pendergrast used *Cumberland* as his flagship while in command of the Home Squadron from 1860 to 1861. The Kentucky native was married to Virginia Barron, daughter of Commodore James Barron.

squadron that included the steam sloops *Powhatan* and *Pocahontas*. The ship anchored at Sacrificios Isla, a small island a few miles south of Vera Cruz. Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge, who was in charge of *Cumberland*'s forward X-inch pivot gun crew, recorded in his memoir that the cruise was quite uneventful. The most exciting events were the seasonal "norther" storms that had damaged many American ships during the 1848 Mexican-American War.

One of the master's mates, a New Yorker named John Van Duzer, provided further evidence of the boredom of the cruise. In a letter to his mother, the young warrant officer simply commented, "I have lost some flesh" in the Mexican sun, but otherwise was holding up well in the heat.

One relief from the boredom was Van Duzer's duties as wardroom's caterer. For this job, he and a group of sailors were allowed to travel to markets in Vera Cruz at 4 o'clock every morning to buy supplies. In one purchase, he bought sixteen chickens, potatoes, pumpkins, onions, turnips, and the usual salted beef and pork.

After a few months at anchor, the sail sloop-of-war *Macedonian* arrived from New York with sealed orders from Secretary of the Navy Isaac Toucey for Pendergrast. The orders stated that the squadron had been recalled due to the secession of seven Southern states. The Department specifically ordered *Cumberland* to sail for Hampton Roads to monitor the situation, and to continue on to Washington, D.C. if all was well in Virginia.

Before leaving Mexican waters the entire squadron celebrated George Washington's birthday with a huge patriotic display. A staunch Unionist, Van Duzer had hoped the patriotic display would discourage anyone in the squadron from renouncing his loyalty to the United States and joining the budding rebellion.

In company with *Powhatan* and *Pocahontas* (*Macedonian* stayed on station), *Cumberland* left anchorage on February 24, 1861 and the ship headed for Norfolk. The two steamers later parted ways

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

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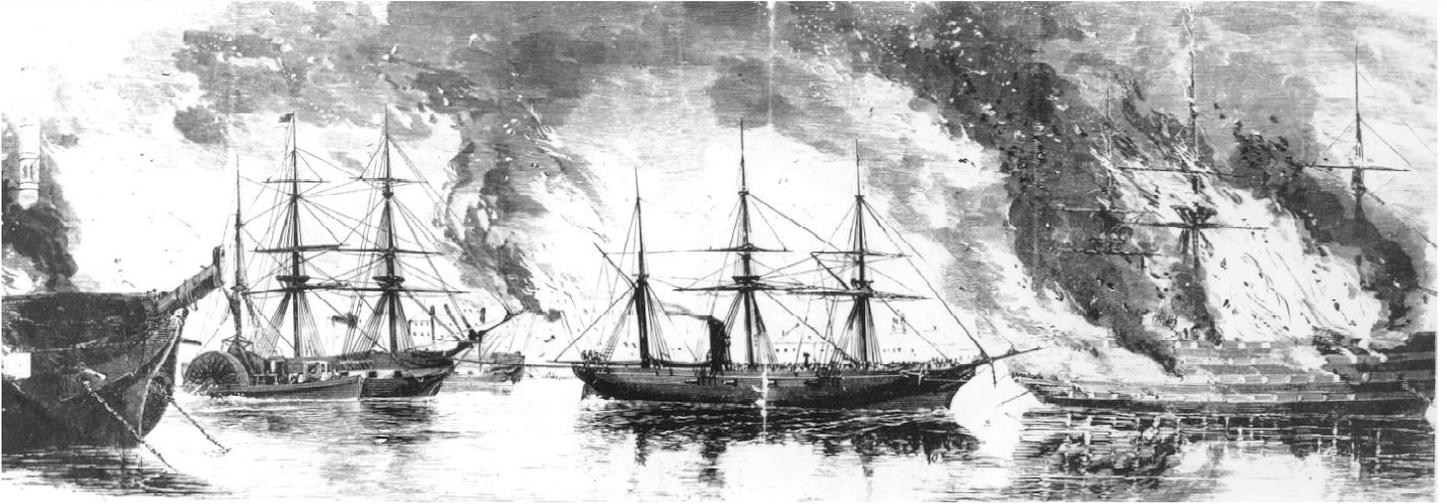
Part 9-The Flagship at Rest (Rediscovery and Recovery)

with the sloop-of-the-war. After experiencing the usual gale force winds off Cape Hatteras, the ship arrived in Hampton Roads in mid-March. While the ship had been sent to Hampton Roads on a possible war mission, one of Van Duzer's letters indicates that the situation in the early days of the war was quite relaxed. Specifically, he made several references to shore liberty to Fort Monroe and even downtown Norfolk and Portsmouth.

Cumberland proceeded down the Elizabeth River a couple of weeks later to the "Naval anchorage" along side the Naval Hospital and near the Gosport Navy Yard. Once there, Pendergrast established contact with the new Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles and Commodore William McCauley, commandant of the Gosport Navy Yard. Pendergrast reported to Welles that *Cumberland* needed some small repairs from the norther storms and needed to be resupplied.

Despite the continued rumors of a coming domestic conflict, the relaxed

***Cumberland* continued on page 7**



After a month of relaxation and repairs in Hampton Roads, Cumberland's ship's company got a reality check when word reached the area that Fort Sumter had surrendered. While several ships and the Gosport Navy Yard burned, Cumberland was towed out by the steam tug Yankee and accompanied by the steam gunboat USS Pawnee early on the morning of April 20, 1861. Locals had put obstructions in the Elizabeth River to block any ships from leaving. Cumberland passed over them causing some damage to the hull. (May 22, 1861 Harper's Weekly engraving)

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atmosphere continued while workers repaired the ship. Van Duzer commented to his mother that he enjoyed great quantities of roast beef and several hours smoking his pipe as there was "no excitement around here."

To pass the time, the warrant officer made several more trips to downtown Norfolk. *Cumberland's* enlisted company passed the time by setting up an amateur theater company. Pendergrast and Martson were sufficiently impressed by the performances to invite Norfolk families on board to watch them. After the performance, a dance was held with many eligible Norfolk ladies in attendance. Van Duzer, himself, fell for one of the women and visited her several times over the next week. However, his motivations for wanting her were not entirely pure. Under the impression that she came from a wealthy family, Van Duzer wrote, "If she's got \$100,000, she can have me."

By mid-April, the peace and harmony that everyone had been enjoying came to an abrupt end. Events began to move quickly over the next few weeks, particularly when word reached the area that Fort Sumter had surrendered. Soon after the fort's surrender, Virginia seceded from the Union and there were reports that the local population was in the process of moving against U.S. Naval units and property. On more than one occasion, *Cumberland's* officers sounded quarters and the company loaded the guns, only to stand down. Lookouts on *Cumberland* observed fortifications being built on the

opposite side of the river from the Navy Yard. Other observers reported obstructions being sunk upstream in the Elizabeth River and state troops arriving from out of town by train. In the case of the fortifications, Selfridge took his own initiative to ensure *Cumberland's* and Gosport's safety. Under a flag of truce, the very self-confident lieutenant (his memoir is full of acts of courage, both real and imagined) landed in Norfolk and, in front of a hostile crowd, met with local authorities about the fortifications. The discussion was continued in front of McCauley with vague assurance from the local officials that no harm would come to the ship or Yard. It was incidents such as these that led Welles to order Pendergrast to remain at Gosport once repairs were completed. Despite the coming war, Welles' original plans for *Cumberland* called for the ship to return to Vera Cruz.

The first real conflict between *Cumberland* and hostile locals was a rather lighthearted incident. River steamers traveled between Norfolk and the Great Dismal Swamp canal and frequently passed by Gosport and *Cumberland*. The crews of the steamers often lobbed curse words at the ship's company. Selfridge decided to put a stop to the "blackguarding" (as he called it), but

not with gunfire. Instead, the lieutenant suggested to Martson that he take one of *Cumberland's* mooring lines and tie it across the Elizabeth River at dusk so the line would be difficult to see. As the steamer approached ready to throw more foul mouthed words at the sloop-of-war, the mooring line swept the steamer's crew off their ship and took out the steamer's smoke stack. *Cumberland's* ship's company cheered and the verbal harassment stopped.

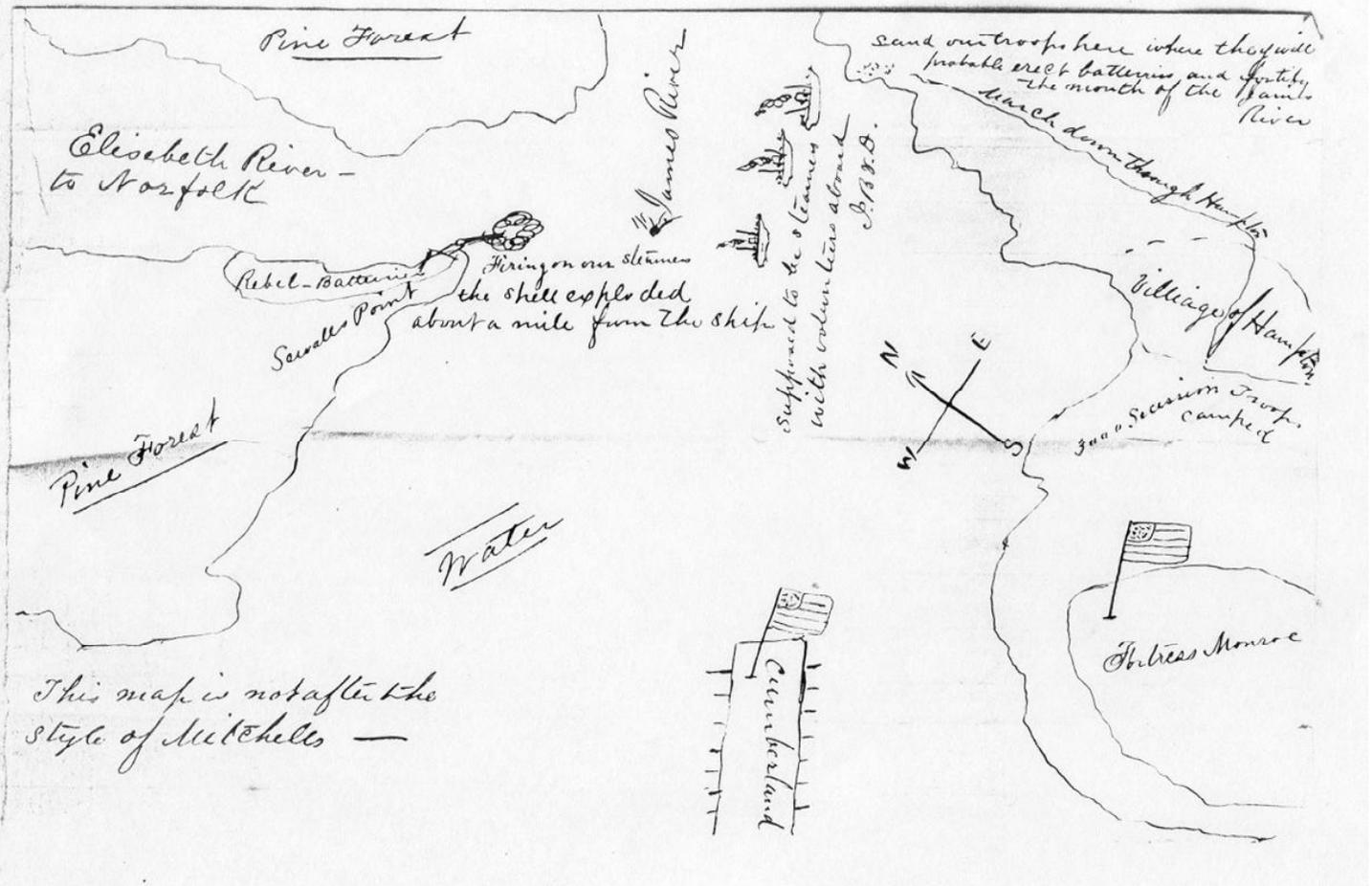
The ship and its company got back to the serious business of war when Commander James Alden arrived from Washington on April 19 and met with Pendergrast, Marston, and McCauley. Alden carried with him specific orders to get the steam frigate *Merrimack* out of



Sailors from *Cumberland* and *Pawnee* rush to escape the inferno at the Gosport Navy Yard. One hundred *Cumberland* sailors were given the impossible task of spiking 3,000 guns in Gosport's arsenal in just one hour.

Hampton Roads. Alden was of the opinion that *Merrimack* could be moved and that any obstructions in the river could be

Cumberland continued on page 8



This very crude and almost grade school-like map was drawn by Master John Van Duzer, a young New Yorker who served on Cumberland from 1860 to the end of 1861. The map is supposed to illustrate one of many small actions between Confederate shore batteries at Sewalls Point and U.S. Navy gunboats. Cumberland is shown quite oversized at the bottom center of the map next to Fortress Monore. (Van Duzer papers/New York Historical Society)

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bypassed. McCauley balked at the suggestion, but still asked Pendergrast and Marston for their advice. Both of Cumberland's senior officers agreed with Alden. As there were no sailors at the Yard to assist Alden in moving the frigate, he asked Martson for thirty volunteers and an officer from Cumberland. Martson agreed and departed to round up the men from his ship. An officer was found as Lieutenant Alexander Murray, son of the U.S. Navy Age of Sail captain of the same name, volunteered to leave his post on Cumberland to assist Alden in moving Merrimack. Alden assigned him to find a reliable harbor pilot. Upon finding one, Murray offered \$1,000 to one pilot just to move Merrimack and \$2,000 and a lifetime appointment in the Navy if he also got the sloop Germantown out.

But all the efforts were for naught. For whatever reason, whether someone panicked or honestly thought the Yard was about to be taken, McCauley ordered

Merrimack to be scuttled on April 20. On the same night that Merrimack was scuttled, the steam gunboat USS Pawnee arrived on the scene with Commodore Hiram Paulding, Captain Charles Wilkes, and soldiers from the 3rd Massachusetts on board to assume control of the situation.

Paulding came with orders to torch the Yard and any decommissioned ships. A detachment of 100 sailors from Cumberland were given the nearly impossible assignment of destroying the Yard's 3,000 guns in one hour. Many of the guns were spiked but none of them enough to permanently disable them. The sailors found that simple sledgehammers were not enough to break the trunnions and they only put a spike in the bore of each gun. While that was going on, other sailors hauled aboard Cumberland a portion of Gosport's vast arsenal of small arms. The Yard had over 2,700 pistols, revolvers, muskets, and carbines in its inventory. The

Cumberland continued on page 9



The day Lt. George Morris checked on board Cumberland to serve as the ship's executive officer, Van Duzer remarked that Morris looked a man thirty years older than his true age due to the amount of alcohol the lieutenant drank. (Naval Historical Center photo)



Cumberland (fourth ship from left) participated in the first real offensive action by the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron when it joined the assault on Fort Clark and Fort Hatteras on August 27, 1861. The ship's X-inch Dahlgren was instrumental in forcing the already outgunned Confederate forts to surrender. The fact that the forts were critically short of ammunition had much to do with their surrender as well. This illustration is based on a drawing by *Cumberland* seaman Francis Garland that was later colorized by a Boston print shop. (Lithograph by J.H. Bufford based on a drawing by Francis Garland)

***Cumberland* continued from page 8**

sailors took only the serviceable weapons and threw the rest into the river. One history mentions that sailors also hauled the gold holdings from the new customs house in Norfolk onto *Cumberland*, though none of the official letters verify this.

By 1:45 a.m. on April 21, the signal was made to return to the ship. Fifty sailors from the giant ship-of-the-line/receiving ship *Pennsylvania* departed their doomed vessel and loaded up on *Cumberland* along with the Navy Yard's Marine detachment. A very emotional McCauley had to be practically dragged onto the ship as the commodore refused to leave his post. Using *Cumberland* and *Pawnee*'s small boats, parties of officers and sailors lit the fuel and set fire to the Yard. All the ships in the Yard were torched with the exception of the old frigate *United States*, which was considered too unfit for service to waste turpentine on it.

Towed out by the steam tug *Yankee*, *Cumberland*, along with *Pawnee*, proceeded up river at 4 a.m., past the great walls of fire that had engulfed the Yard. Selfridge later wrote that angry mobs on

both sides of the river denounced the squadron for destroying the Yard. About ten miles upstream, the squadron encountered obstructions in the river. With additional help from the steam tug *Keystone State*, "the obstructions were crushed by the weight of the ship being dragged over them," Selfridge wrote in his memoir. The obstructions may have been crushed, but upon further inspection, *Cumberland*'s hull had been damaged. Specifically, some of the copper sheeting had been ripped away, exposing the wood to the water.

Cumberland was taken over to an anchorage next to Fortress Monroe. From here, Pendergrast caught up on several administrative matters. Most important among them, he officially received notice of President Abraham Lincoln's blockade proclamation and in turn announced it to local authorities in Hampton Roads. His squadron received several ships to aid him in enforcing the blockade including the steam gunboats USS *Quaker City* and *Monticello* and the revenue cutter steamer *Harriet Lane*. He also had his first and only resignation from *Cumberland*'s officer

corps. He reported to Welles that the paymaster, one Mr. De Bree, left the ship while at anchorage in Norfolk. It would not have been a major concern except that the safe was full of the ship's money and De Bree took the only key with him.

Also around this time, Lieutenant George Morris checked on board to serve as the ship's executive officer. Although he does not mention Morris by name, Van Duzer wrote to his mother about the first time he saw the ship's "new lieutenant" arrive. "The physical condition of a new lieutenant is about 25 or 26 years old...by drinking rum he looks and moves around like a man of 45 to 50. He is a perfect wreck of a young man," the warrant office wrote. Van Duzer was like a growing number of officers who abstained from all alcohol.

Shortly after the blockade proclamation, *Cumberland* scored its first capture of the war (besides the twenty eight pound striped bass hooked by one sailor), albeit a seemingly minor one at the time. Selfridge noticed that a steam tug called *Young America* was taking the schooner

***Cumberland* continued on page 13**

Book Reviews

The End of Barbary Terror: America's War Against the Pirates of North Africa

By Frederick C. Leiner

Reviewed by Joe Mosier

Following the end of the War of 1812, the United States engaged in a brief, expensive but resoundingly successful exercise in “gunboat diplomacy”. In his latest book, Frederick C. Leiner has done an admirable job in tracing the history of this expedition while providing a superbly detailed look at the politics and personalities behind the effort. For centuries the capture of European ships and the forced enslavement of their Christian crews had been the practice of the Barbary Corsairs (naval forces of the North African Islamic states bordering the Mediterranean). America already engaged in

Frederick C. Leiner. *The End of Barbary Terror: America's 1815 War Against the Pirates of North Africa*. New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2006. ISBN 0-19518-994-9. \$28.00.

one armed conflict with Tripoli in 1801-1805. Treaties flawed by the payment of tribute had bought a temporary respite, but the individual whim on the part of any Barbary ruler could erase an uneasy peace. On July 12, 1812, the Dey of Algiers declared war on the United States citing a lack of sufficient tribute.

The American brig *Edwin* was seized on August 25, 1812 and her crew taken into slavery. There was little the U.S. government could do except attempt a “back channel” approach to free the *Edwin's* sailors. The Madison administration dispatched Mordecai Noah in 1813 hoping he could use his religion to appeal to his fellow Jews who held high advisory positions to the Algerian Dey. The effort largely failed.

At the end of the War of 1812, the Madison administration decided to act with force if necessary to end the Barbary depredations. Two Navy squadrons were fitted out to sail to the Mediterranean. Commodore Stephen Decatur was given command of the first to sail. The second squadron would be under Commodore William Bainbridge. The order of their sailing was not arbitrary. Decatur accepted the assignment only after being assured his would be the first

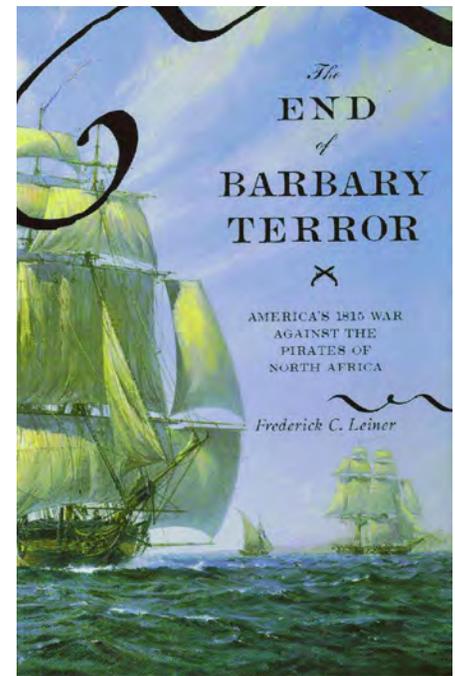
on the scene. Bainbridge was delayed in the fitting out of his flagship, the newly built 74-gun USS *Independence*. Moreover, Navy Secretary Benjamin Crowninshield seemed to have intentionally kept Bainbridge in the dark as to his plans.

On May 20, 1815, Decatur's squadron of nine vessels departed New York. After a 25-day, stormy passage, Decatur arrived at the Strait of Gibraltar. He learned that Algerine cruisers were out in search of American ships and sailed in immediate pursuit. Within four days, the U.S. force captured the two largest Algerine ships, killing the Dey's senior admiral in the process. With a significant part of the enemy's fleet now in American hands, Decatur decided to make an appearance at Algiers. He conducted brief but forceful negotiations. Within 24 hours, a U.S.-dictated peace treaty had been signed by the Dey. Building on this success, Decatur used the same tactic of overawing the remaining Barbary states Tunis and Tripoli. Both had accepted treaties favorable to the U.S. and renounced enslavement of American citizens by August 8, 1815.

William Bainbridge's squadron arrived at Cartagena, Spain on August 5 to learn that its opportunity for glory had already passed. Bainbridge's naval career was marked by failures. His lone success had been the capture of the British frigate *Java* in late 1812. It must have been a deep personal wound to once again see his thunder stolen by another officer. Especially galling was the fact that the officer was Decatur, who had gained his initial fame burning a ship Bainbridge had surrendered. Following Decatur's turnover of his squadron to the senior Bainbridge, the two men did not talk to each other for five years.

After an absence of only 187 days, Decatur's return to the United States was triumphant. He was feted up and down the American coast. Bainbridge returned to muted applause. Bainbridge's natural resentment towards Decatur appears to have been a cause for the duel that led to Decatur's death.

It is in exploring the ins and outs of such personal relationships that author Leiner is at his best. This book bears a remarkable sense of



currency for any modern reader. Leiner has revealed actions and ascribed motivations which are understandable in today's terms without imposing modern sensibilities. Why would the Madison administration, with the capital city burned and its treasury empty, send two naval squadrons essentially to rescue ten men? In part it was national moral outrage and in part an attempt to influence the upcoming 1816 presidential election. The author has also given a thorough summary of the Barbary practice of enslaving Christians. Without excusing or justifying the act, he puts it in uncomfortable historical juxtaposition with American enslavement of Africans.

Leiner writes that he was struck by the imbalance of coverage between the first Barbary Wars and the last of 1815. Three biographies of Stephen Decatur have recently appeared. These works cover the 1815 Barbary expedition in an average of 15 pages. As he researched the many aspects of the story, he became convinced the whole “could be made in a compelling narrative.” He was right. Based on exacting research, *The End of the Barbary Terror* is written in coherent and compelling language. The book is well documented with 21 pages of sources notes and an eight-page bibliography. It provides a wonderful sociological view of the small community that was the U.S. Navy officer corps in 1815. Without a doubt, this is the best naval history this reviewer has read since Christopher McKee's *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession* came out in 1991. 

The Battle For Leyte, 1944: Allied and Japanese Plans, Preparations, and Execution

By Milan Vego

Reviewed by Ira R. Hanna

During the World War II Pacific Campaign, the four naval engagements – off Cape Engano, in the Sibuyan Sea, off Samar Island near the landing on Leyte, and in the Surigao Strait – are known collectively as the Battle for Leyte Gulf. This series of naval battles fought on 24-27 October 1944 broke the back of the Imperial Japanese Navy so that it never again represented a serious threat to the U. S. Navy's control of the Western

Milian Vego. *Battle for Leyte, 1944: Allied and Japanese Plans, Preparations, and Execution.* Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2006. ISBN 1-55750-885-2. \$55.00.

Pacific.

Admirals William Halsey, Thomas Kinkaid, Chester Nimitz, and Ernest King agreed in their memoirs that the Battle for Leyte Gulf was the greatest naval battle in history. Churchill said that it was “fought less with guns than by predominance in the air, and perhaps, the most important single conclusion to be derived from study of these events is the vital need for unity of command in place of control by cooperation such as existed between MacArthur and Halsey [actually Nimitz] at this time.”

Author Milan Vego in his book *The Battle For Leyte, 1944* agrees with this assessment by using the Allied and Japanese plans, preparations, and execution to reach his conclusion. This thoroughly researched thesis is not light reading. It has seventy-two pages of reference notes, sources and bibliography; eighteen appendices of command structures, operational bases, and their functions; sixteen maps; and two tables. Vego uses 164 abbreviations to identify major commands, task forces, fleets, armies, divisions, ships and staffs. One who is not familiar with these acronyms may wear out his fingers referring back to that abbreviation list.

Vego discusses in depth the intricate web of relationships among policy, strategy, operational art, and tactics. From his analysis of these intertwining actions, he makes some conclusions and provides thirty-one operational lessons. They are mostly common sense and age-old doctrines such as success depends on accurate intelligence, adequate and timely logistical support, succinct and clear communications among commanders, effective employment of air forces in support of ground troops, protection of sea lanes, and above all, unity of command.

Despite all of the theoretical discussion, Vego is not above good old fashioned personal criticism of military commanders in all the services on both sides of the conflict for mistakes in judgment and tactics. In particular, he faults Admiral Kurita for his lack of “the necessary will power and confidence to carry out his assigned mission. He also faults Admiral Halsey for his “belief that Japanese carrier forces still represented a major threat to the U. S. Navy” and deciding to move all three U. S. carrier groups north to attack Ozawa’s carrier group, thus leaving the Leyte landing unprotected. This elicited Nimitz’s famous cable, “Where is Task Force 34, The World Wonders.”

Obviously, this book was written for a select audience, mainly career military commanders who could gain strategic as well as tactical knowledge and expertise from the author’s analysis of both the Japanese and Allied battle experiences. As Vego explains, “The Leyte operation offers a number of valuable lessons to today’s professional officers – lessons in developing tactical and operational concepts, modifying or altering doctrine and training, force planning, and designing new weapons and equipment.”

The reader should expect this kind of dialogue once the background of the author is known. Dr. Vego has been Professor of

THE BATTLE

Operations at the Naval War College since 1991 and authored the textbook *Operational Warfare*, used at the college and a number of other service colleges in the United States and overseas. *The Battle For Leyte* probably will be added to the curriculum at many of those institutions, for it includes army and air force strategy and tactics as well as naval operations.

Most official and semi-official histories describe and explain the Battle for Leyte from a tactical rather than an operational perspective. There really are no books to compare with the work. It is a textbook, not a pleasurable book to read. This work may or may not be acceptable by a reader interested in action and emotion, heroes and villains. Morrison’s *Two Ocean War* is much more readable as are a number of other compendiums and autobiographies. Vego on the other hand used a more scholarly approach with primary sources such the Japanese plans uncovered in the *Nachi* documents, recovered from the Japanese heavy cruiser by the same name, and other published works and unpublished papers from the Naval Historical Center.

Without doubt, professional military officers will read this book with enthusiasm. However, for the casual reader of military histories, it will be a struggle to keep all its myriad information straight, or find it worth the effort. 

Selfridge's Doomed Squadron

Cumberland's second officer from 1860 to the ship's death on March 8, 1862 was Lieutenant Thomas O. Selfridge. A very competent officer, Selfridge had a full and adventuresome career. During the Civil War, he saw action in every possible theater and ship. During peacetime, he participated in several exploring expeditions including journeys to the Amazon River and Central America, served as an official member to the coronation of a Russian czar, and taught at the Academy. He reached flag rank by 1895 and retired in 1898 after 47 years of service.



The Museum Sage

While his service career was outstanding, there is something to be said about the fact that Selfridge was cursed/hexed sometime before the Civil War. *Cumberland* was only the first of six warships that Selfridge had some association with where the ship sank or otherwise was rendered useless. Four of the vessels met unfortunate ends while he was a part of the ship's company, and two sank after he moved on to another assignment. The list includes:

USS *Cumberland*-Sank March 8, 1862, details to be the subject of the next *Daybook*.

USS *Monitor*-After *Cumberland*'s destruction, the Navy offered Selfridge the commanding officer's position on board *Monitor*. His tenure was short as another lieutenant with more seniority assumed command. *Monitor* foundered and sank on December 31, 1862.

USS *Alligator*-Upon losing the *Monitor* position, Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus Fox offered Selfridge the command of another high tech vessel,

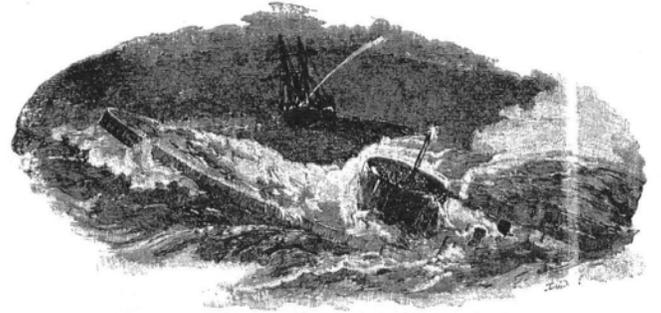
the submarine USS *Alligator*. Selfridge and an all volunteer crew took the vessel out on its maiden voyage where it began to sink rapidly into the Potomac River. The entire crew bailed out. The men had to tow the vessel back with the help of a civilian schooner. "It was sufficiently demonstrated that she was of no value," Selfridge later wrote. The vessel sank for good in April 1863 while being towed to Charleston.

USS *Cairo*-Finding no commands available in the Atlantic theater, Selfridge applied for and successfully acquired command of the ironclad USS *Cairo* on the Mississippi River. He arrived in Cairo, Illinois in August 1862 and proceeded to oversee some improvement to the ship's armor. On the gunboat's first voyage after these improvements, it struck a mine and sank twenty miles up the Yazoo River.

USS *Conestoga*-Flag officer David Dixon Porter found no fault with Selfridge and immediately gave him command of the river paddle steamer USS *Conestoga*. His command with this vessel went well enough for a little over a year. However, exactly two years to the day *Cumberland* sank, *Conestoga* was accidentally rammed by another paddle steamer USS *General Price* while both ships were serving on the Red River. Upon hearing about the incident, Porter remarked to Selfridge "well, Selfridge, you do not seem to have much luck with the top of the alphabet."

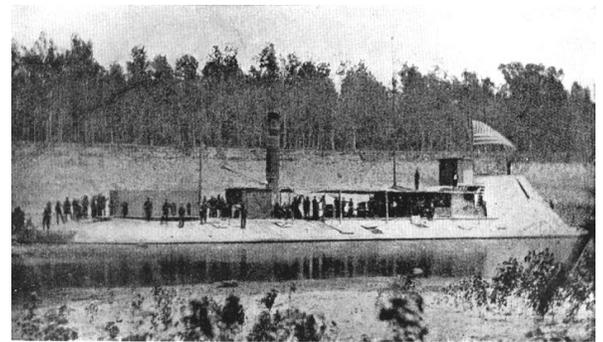
USS *Osage*-The flag officer assigned Selfridge to the river monitor USS *Osage*. After a gallant rear guard action to protect General Nathaniel Bank's retreat from the Red River campaign, *Osage* ran aground in the Mississippi due to pilot error. It remained stuck for most of 1864 and 1865 and as a result, Selfridge once again received new orders.

USS *Huron*-Even after all the ships he lost, Selfridge still retained Porter's



USS Monitor was the second of Selfridge's ships to sink. While he was only in command of the vessel for a week, it was enough to hex the vessel.

confidence. The flag officer asked him to take command of the gunboat USS *Huron*, which was to be a part of the Fort Fisher assault. During the second bombardment in January 1865, a Confederate shell fired from the fort struck *Huron* amidships. Finally, luck was with Selfridge. When the



The final victim of Selfridge's squadron of doomed ships was the river monitor USS Osage. Selfridge's command of the ship was very worthy...until it ran aground so hard that it took a year to get it free. (HRNM photo)

shell hit the gunboat, the fuse did not go off. If it had, it would have destroyed the vessel.

In addition, Selfridge happened to be at many of the not so finer moments of the U.S. Navy during the Civil War. This list includes the torching of the Gosport Navy Yard, the ill-conceived Red River campaign, and the even more ill-conceived Naval Brigade assault on Fort Fisher.

Despite Selfridge's bad luck and his propensity to be in the wrong place at the wrong time, it is worth remembering that any of these incidents could have ended his career or even his life. The fact is that not only did he survive each event but he thrived and retired as a rear admiral. This leads the Sage to conclude that Selfridge may have been the luckiest officer ever to serve in the U.S. Navy. 

Cumberland continued from page 9

George M. Smith away from the Hampton Bar. Selfridge ordered his X-inch Dahlgren on *Cumberland's* forward pivot to fire one shell at the tug at a range of 3,000 yards. The shell fell short, but ricocheted off the water and grazed the tug's deck. The shot did little damage, but it was enough for its crew to strike the colors and surrender. The schooner was found to be loaded with light artillery carriages. Sometime later, Selfridge joked about the action to Welles. The Secretary wondered if there was any prize money to be earned and asked a prize court to look into it. Finding in the Navy's favor, Selfridge's long-range shot netted the ship's company a very liberal \$7,500 in prize money of which \$125 went to Selfridge himself.

Additional captures soon followed. *Cumberland* and its small boats seized six schooners loaded with coal, wood, and cotton in one raid and turned them over to Fortress Monroe for adjudication. Before leaving Hampton Roads for repairs, *Cumberland* and its small boats captured thirteen more schooners attempting to unload their cargoes.

Pendergrast followed a very strict



American impressionist Eugene Benson recorded *Cumberland's* ship's company in action while working as a field artist for Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper. The caption in the newspaper read "Lieutenant Gordon, of the frigate *Cumberland*, rescuing the 9-inch Sawyer gun from the burning steamer *Cataline*." The caption does a small disservice to the event with its errors. For example, there was no "Lieutenant Gordon" in the Civil War Navy. (July 13, 1861 engraving from Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper)

Roads. Writing from *Cumberland*, the commodore denied a request from Hampton mayor James Barron Hope to allow women and children to evacuate Hampton and go to Norfolk. In his denial letter, Pendergrast reminded, even lectured, Hope that it was not the Navy's fault for starting the current conflict.

The discussion between Pendergrast and Hope was just one of many examples of the Civil War breaking families apart. The commodore was not just lecturing a seemingly disloyal politician, he was lecturing his nephew. Pendergrast's wife was Virginia Barron, second daughter of Commodore James Barron and James Barron Hope's aunt. According to

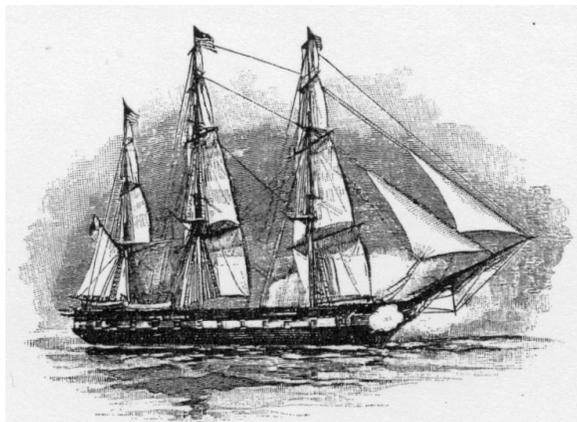
Barron's biographer, Virginia Barron remained loyal to her husband despite the fact that most of her family sided with the Confederacy.

Being connected to Norfolk social circles, however, seemed to have helped the commodore in securing the safe passage of Norfolk citizens wishing to remain loyal and leave the city. In several letters to Norfolk mayor William Lamb and General Huger of the Confederate Army, Pendergrast secured safe passage for seventy-one

civilians wishing to head north. Among the civilians were family members of Pendergrast's African-American steward John Morris. He came to Pendergrast with a request to do all he could to save his wife, their daughter, and their granddaughter. The commodore wrote a special letter to the Norfolk mayor about the family and they were also given safe passage out of town.

Commodore Silas Stringham arrived on May 13, 1861 with the steam frigate USS *Minnesota* and took over as the senior flag officer. Van Duzer commented that *Cumberland* was no longer the "Big Bug" once *Minnesota* arrived. Stringham's first official act was to establish the "U.S. Naval Blockading Squadron." Stringham's ships were to enforce the blockade from the open ocean, while *Cumberland* and Pendergrast remained in Hampton Roads. She stayed there despite a frantic note from Welles ordering *Cumberland* to proceed "with all possible dispatch" to the Naval Academy to assist the commandant with defending the school. With the creation of the new blockading squadron, the Navy deactivated the Home Squadron. In its place, it made *Cumberland* the flagship of a newly created squadron entitled the "West Indies Squadron."

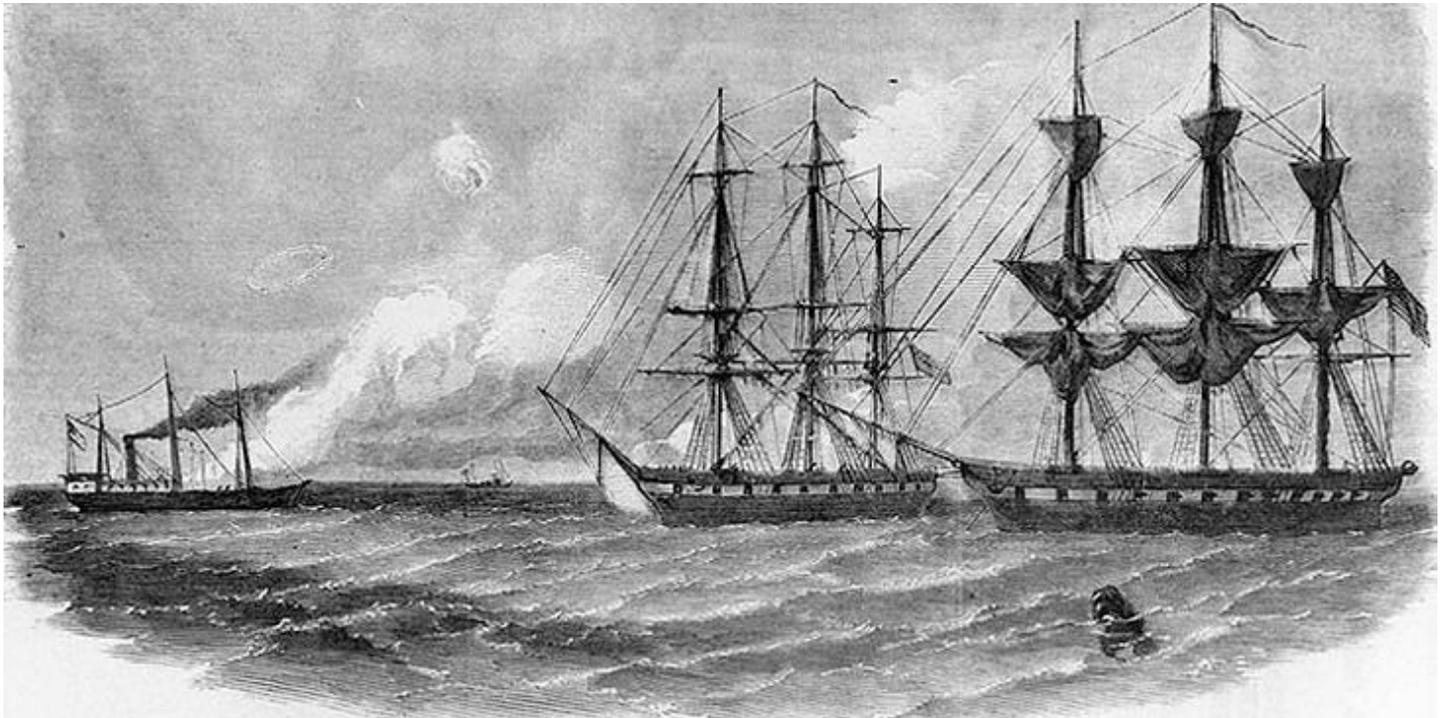
Shortly after *Minnesota's* arrival, Welles acted upon an earlier suggestion by
***Cumberland* continued on page 14**



Shown here is one of the last contemporary drawings of *Cumberland*. It shows her during the attack on Fort Hatteras when the ship came from her overnight anchorage and into battle under full sail. (Battles and Leaders of the Civil War engraving)

interpretation of the blockade proclamation as he issued receipts to all the schooners' masters, assuming that the Government would pay for the articles at a later date. Slaves captured by *Quaker City* were returned without hesitation. Pendergrast ordered them returned to their masters under a flag of truce.

Because of the blockade, Pendergrast received several letters from local Confederate authorities concerning the movement of civilians across Hampton



Eugene Benson recorded *Cumberland* in action again when he witnessed the paddle steamer *CSS Patrick Henry* fire at long range at the sloop-of-war and other U.S. Navy ships anchored in Hampton Roads on September 13, 1861. Along with the sail frigate *USS Savannah*, *Cumberland* (center) and the steam gunboat *USS Louisiana* returned fire. All shots fell short and the action ended after two hours. (Frank Lesisle's Illustrated Newspaper engraving)

***Cumberland* continued from page 13**

Pendergrast and ordered *Cumberland* to sail north to have her hull inspected and repaired. Pendergrast switched his flag over to the newly arrived steam frigate *USS Roanoke*. He took a few of his personal staff with him including his flag lieutenant Joshua Todd, his clerk and secretary, and his coxswain and boat crew. The remaining officers and sailors made sail for *Cumberland*'s homeport of Boston on July 5. Martson put in a special request to Welles that once the ship was repaired that it be allowed to return to Hampton Roads and participate in operations to take Norfolk.

Shortly before leaving for Boston, night watches spotted a ship on fire next to Fortress Monroe. The vessel in question was the *Cataline*, a paddle steam transport working under an Army contract to move soldiers from Washington and Baltimore down to Hampton Roads. *Cumberland*'s company and all the other Navy vessels went to quarters thinking that Confederate forces had attacked. A small team from *Cumberland* immediately put a small boat in the water to render assistance. According to newspaper accounts, the team was led by a Lieutenant E. Gordon and boarded *Cataline*. As all of *Cataline*'s crew had already jumped ship, the team worked quickly to save *Cataline*'s twelve-pounder

Sawyer rifled cannon by carefully lowering it down to the ship's boat. The team also threw overboard the cannon's ammunition and powder to prevent further explosions.

It was later determined that the fire was not caused by Confederate gun fire. *Frank Lesisle's Illustrated Newspaper* had a "special artist" and a reporter at Fortress Monroe who reported that *Cataline*'s boilers caught on fire and quickly engulfed the ship. The "special artist" recording the heroics was Eugene Benson. A classically trained American impressionist, Benson was also a nationally known art critic and a member of the prestigious National Academy of Design. He painted several works throughout the 19th century.

While *Cumberland*'s crew got national attention for its heroic work, the act was somewhat slighted as the reporter committed several errors in the article. Among other things, there is no listing of an "E. Gordon" on Navy rolls in 1861.

After leaving Hampton Roads, the sloop-of-war made a quick detour to the south to assist *Roanoke* in hunting for Confederate privateers, before heading north. The ship arrived in Boston two weeks later and repairs began immediately. The fifty refuge sailors from *Pennsylvania* were discharged and released. The Navy

informed Martson that his ship was to receive a new aft pivot gun, a 70-pounder rifle, currently being manufactured at the Portsmouth Navy Yard. The addition of the rifled gun was the final step in Dahlgren's recommendations to the Department for weapons arrangement for U.S. Navy warships. Dahlgren was of the opinion that since smoothbore and rifled guns each had their advantages and disadvantages, every ship should carry both.

This weapon is somewhat mysterious to historians as no source on ordnance lists a 70-pounder rifle in its inventory. However, many contemporary sources such as the letters in the *Official Records* and veterans' memoirs very specifically referred to the gun as a 70-pounder rifle. Selfridge went as far as to call it a "70-pounder Dahlgren rifle," which is not known to exist as a standard weapon. However, it is possible that it was an experimental weapon as a number of prototypes entered the Navy's inventory during the war.

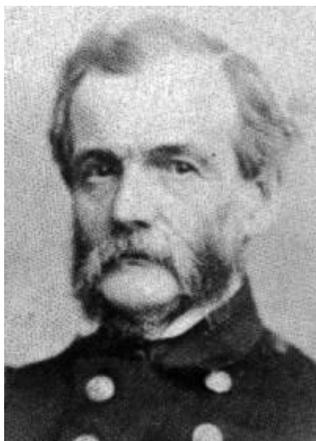
For his part, Martson only asked that the Navy provide the ship with the necessary twenty-two men required to operate the weapon. He asked the Department for an additional lieutenant, as Alexander Murray received his own

***Cumberland* continued on page 15**

Cumberland continued from page 14

command in Hampton Roads, and for any midshipmen available, as none were present on the ship. Selfridge helped his captain by recommending a young friend of the family, Charles F. O'Neil, to serve as a warrant officer. Martson agreed and made the boy an acting master's mate. O'Neil stayed in the Navy for many years. By 1898, he was in charge of the Bureau of Ordnance for the Spanish-American War as a rear admiral.

The Yard finished repairs and installed the new pivot gun by the beginning of August. The ship made sail for Hampton Roads on August 9. As the blockade on Hampton Roads and the lower Chesapeake Bay were considered secure, Stringham ordered Martson to continue sailing south. There, he was to patrol between Wilmington and Beaufort, North Carolina and work with Commander Rowan and *Pawnee* in blockading Hatteras Inlet. Together they captured three schooners and sent them



Commander William Radford became *Cumberland's* eleventh commanding officer after replacing Commander John W. Livingston on February 23, 1862. Born in the small town of Fincastle, Virginia, he went on to command *USS New Ironsides* and made rear admiral in 1869. (HRNM photo)

north for condemnation by a prize court. The two ships continued their patrols until the Department decided to launch an expedition against Forts Clark and Hatteras, two Confederate forts guarding the entrance to Hatteras Inlet.

The assault on Hatteras Inlet was to be the first of many combined U.S. Navy and Army expeditions in North Carolina waters and one of the first major offensive actions conducted by the Navy. The ultimate goal of the operation was complete control of the North Carolina sounds, which Confederate privateers and blockade runners used as a safe harbor.

A squadron of ships including the steam frigates *Wabash* and *Minnesota*, the steam paddle sloop-of-war *Susquehanna*, the steam gunboats *Monticello* and *Harriet Lane*, several chartered vessels, and a detachment of New York soldiers arrived in the area on August 26. The attack began on the morning of August 28 with *Wabash* towing *Cumberland* into firing position. The outgunned Fort Clark garrison returned fire but soon retired to Fort Hatteras after two hours of bombardment.

Fort Hatteras was a more difficult fort to attack as it was further inside the inlet. *Cumberland* stood out in the ocean overnight to avoid running aground, but returned under full sail. By the time it rejoined the squadron the next morning, the squadron and the Army had already begun its assault at 7 a.m. As *Cumberland* approached the bomblines, Selfridge stated that the ship's company "executed a simultaneous evolution of shortening and furling sail, dropping anchor, and opening fire." Many officers praised the maneuver as an excellent demonstration of seamanship.

As many of the shots were falling short, Stringham ordered only *Cumberland's* pivot guns to fire and the smaller gunboats to move closer. Fort Hatteras and its commander Flag officer Samuel Barron surrendered within a few hours. Selfridge observed the fort a few days later and noticed with great pride (he was a very boastful officer) that a X-inch shell from his gun had penetrated Fort Hatteras' bombproof. He believed that the shot led to the surrender, though the fact that the Confederate garrison ran out of ammunition had much to do with the surrender as well.

With the forts secured and the inlet closed to Confederate ships, *Cumberland* patrolled between Beaufort and Wilmington before returning to Hampton Roads for a few more days in mid-September. She arrived just in time to participate in her first ship-to-ship action against Confederate naval forces. The Confederate paddle steamer *CSS Patrick Henry* sortied into Hampton Roads on September 13, 1861 and opened fire at long range at the newly arrived sail frigate *USS Savannah*. *Savannah*, *Cumberland*, and U.S. Army shore batteries located at Newport News returned fire with all of their shots falling short. The steam gunboat *USS Louisiana* attempted to close

the range, but its shots fell equally short. *Patrick Henry* retired after a few hours and the short battle ended.

The engagement with *Patrick Henry* was the only action in what was the typical dull duty of a blockade station. *Cumberland's* former commanding officer Louis M. Goldsborough took over duties as squadron flag officer from Stringham and swapped *Savannah* with the newly arrived sail frigate *USS Congress*. *Cumberland* gave fifty sailors to *Savannah*, which in turn gave *Cumberland* fifty new landsmen. The ship also received a new commanding officer in October when Commander John W. Livingston relieved Martson and became *Cumberland's* tenth commanding officer. Otherwise, from the end of



Thomas Selfridge (shown here as a rear admiral) served as *Cumberland's* second officer from 1860 until the ship was destroyed. Selfridge was a very capable officer, but a bad omen to sailors. Six ships he worked with during the Civil War were lost due to accident or combat. (HRNM photo)

September through October the ship remained at anchor off the coast of Newport News with little to report. For example, the surrender of two oyster fishing pungies was the biggest event during the two month period. Selfridge later wrote in an article for a monthly magazine that the following 1861-62 winter made the idleness all the more unbearable. It was a particularly cold winter and no fires on the ship were allowed.

Goldsborough had received some intelligence reports in early November that the Confederates planned to attack *Cumberland* and *Congress* at their Newport News anchorage with a number of
Cumberland continued on page 16

Cumberland continued from page 15

gunboats. To be prepared for this assault, the flag officer created an *ad hoc* flotilla of *Cumberland*, *Congress*, and three gunboats under the command of *Congress*'s captain Commander William Smith.

It was also during this period of inactivity that Goldsborough received his first intelligence reports on the conversion of the hull of USS *Merrimack* into the ironclad CSS *Virginia*. In a letter to Welles, he commented that he was of the opinion that *Virginia* was to be an "exceedingly formidable" ship with shot proof sides. He also reported on his plan to defeat *Virginia*. When the Confederate ship sortied, *Cumberland* and *Congress* were to be the first line of defense, one could almost use the word bait, while Goldsborough moved the rest of the squadron in behind *Virginia*, cut off her retreat, and destroy her. The plan called for *Cumberland* and *Congress* to each have their own steam tug, specifically *Dragon* and *Zouave*, to allow the two all sail warships to maneuver.

Ironically, one of the best descriptions of *Cumberland* at its Newport News anchorage came from one of its former officers, William Sharp, who was now serving in the Confederate navy. He and other officers had been captured and were imprisoned for nine days aboard both

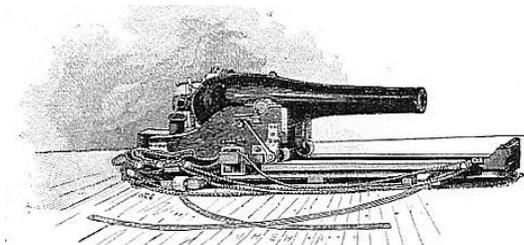
Congress and *Cumberland* in early December. They were exchanged and remembered a significant amount of details. In an intelligence report to his superiors, Sharp commented that *Cumberland*'s small boats were constantly employed and on guard for intruders. Both *Congress* and *Cumberland* had buoys and other objects around each of the ships to prevent floating objects such as torpedoes from damaging the vessels. The ships were about a half-mile from each other, and anchored near the U.S. Army's Newport News battery.

As 1862 arrived, Goldsborough had new plans for *Cumberland*. He decided to send the vessel to Port Royal, South Carolina to serve in the South Atlantic Blockade Squadron once *Savannah* returned to Hampton Roads. These orders were apparently cancelled as *Cumberland* remained in Hampton Roads throughout January and February and served as a tender to the steam gunboats.

Livingston fell ill in early February and asked his superiors to be relieved. Martson, now commanding officer of *Roanoke*, was in effect Goldsborough's second in command while the flag officer was away at the Roanoke Island expedition. He agreed to Livingston's request and

appointed Commander William Radford as *Cumberland*'s eleventh commanding officer on February 23. Besides Radford, the ship only had two other commissioned officers both of whom were quite young: Selfridge and the hard drinking Morris who served as executive officer. The rest of the command structure was filled with warrant officers and "acting" warrant officers who had been quickly commissioned for the war. Specifically, *Cumberland* had six acting master's mates. The ship had sailed from Boston to Hampton Roads with no midshipmen, despite a request for a few.

On March 7, Martson received a frantic note from Welles ordering *Cumberland*, along with *Congress* and *St. Lawrence*, to the Potomac River. "Let there be no delay," the Secretary wrote and even authorized using steam tugs to accomplish the task. Perhaps he had received intelligence of a Confederate attack on Washington or somewhere else; it is unclear why Welles was in such a panic. In a classic case of "hurry up and wait," the next day he again cancelled *Cumberland*'s move orders. The ship was instead to await the arrival of Assistant Secretary of the Navy Gustavus Fox from Baltimore, who was carrying the new orders in hand. Unfortunately, Fox arrived too late. 



In Our Next Issue...

-Death With Honor: USS *Cumberland* is Sunk

-The Review: The World's Ships Come to the Exposition

-Book Reviews: *Stephen Decatur: American Naval Hero, 1779-1820* and *Benedict Arnold's Navy*.