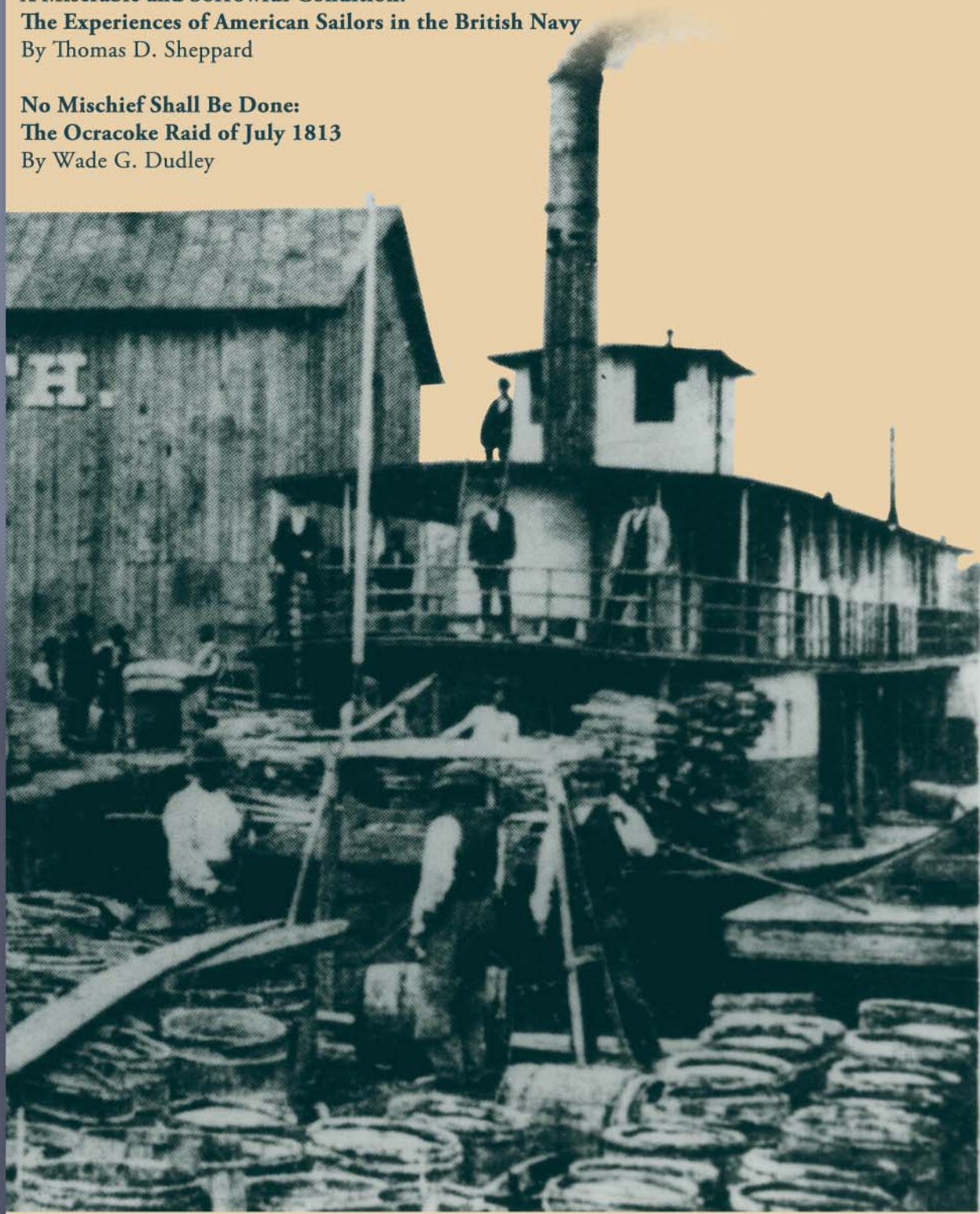
Tributaries

A Case Study: *Lisbon*, A 'Model" Steamboat
Paul E. Fontenoy

A Miserable and Sorrowful Condition:
The Experiences of American Sailors in the British Navy
By Thomas D. Sheppard

No Mischief Shall Be Done:
The Ocracoke Raid of July 1813
By Wade G. Dudley



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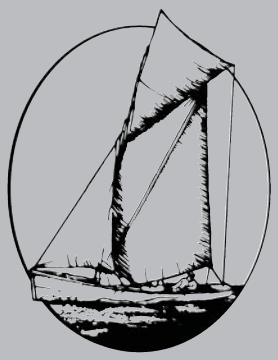

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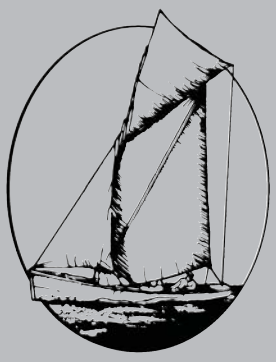

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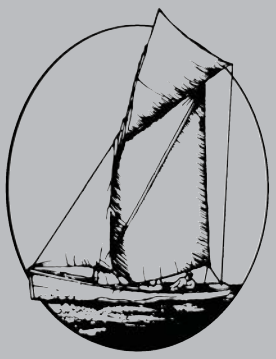

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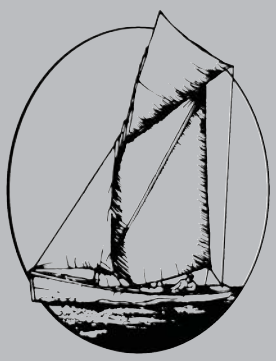

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About

The Maritime History Council

What is North Carolina's maritime history? It's dugout canoes, pirate ships, southern ironclads, and British blockade runners. Ships of exploration, vessels for victory, and countless craft of every description tie the Tar Heel State to the world's waterways.

The North Carolina Maritime History Council brings together all the elements that comprise our nautical heritage. It is a rich heritage, one that tells tales of high drama and unfortunate tragedy. Often one finds the state's economic and social development to be synonymous with its relation to the creeks, rivers, and sea. The production of tar, pitch, and turpentine, for instance, kept fleets afloat while providing a livelihood for innumerable North Carolinians for almost two hundred years. It is, in fact, why we are called Tar Heels.

The passion for maritime history motivated a group of like-minded individuals to form the North Carolina Maritime History Council in 1988. They incorporated the Council as a non-profit entity in 1990. The Council's bylaws state the mission as "to identify and encourage historical and educational projects that have as their purpose the enhancement and preservation of the state's maritime history and culture, and that create public awareness of that heritage." The Council can already claim many accomplishments, including:

- The purchase of the Edwin Champney drawings—a collection of fifty-nine sketches of coastal scenes from the Civil War period that were obtained using funds donated by the Frank Stick Trust and other nonprofit groups.
- Serving as the principal grant recipient for the *Queen Anne's Revenge* archaeological project.
- Publishing *Tributaries* since 1991, North Carolina's only maritime history journal.
- Conducting an annual conference on North Carolina maritime heritage. Creating a register of North Carolina historic vessels.

Council membership is open to individuals and institutions interested in maritime history. We encourage this membership to seek ways to pool resources, share information, and discuss issues to benefit the dissemination of our mutual maritime heritage.
This issue of *Tributaries* contains a variety of topics that demonstrate North Carolina's multi-faceted maritime history. The Council feels privileged to publish work by such well-qualified contributors.

Harry S. Warren,
Chair

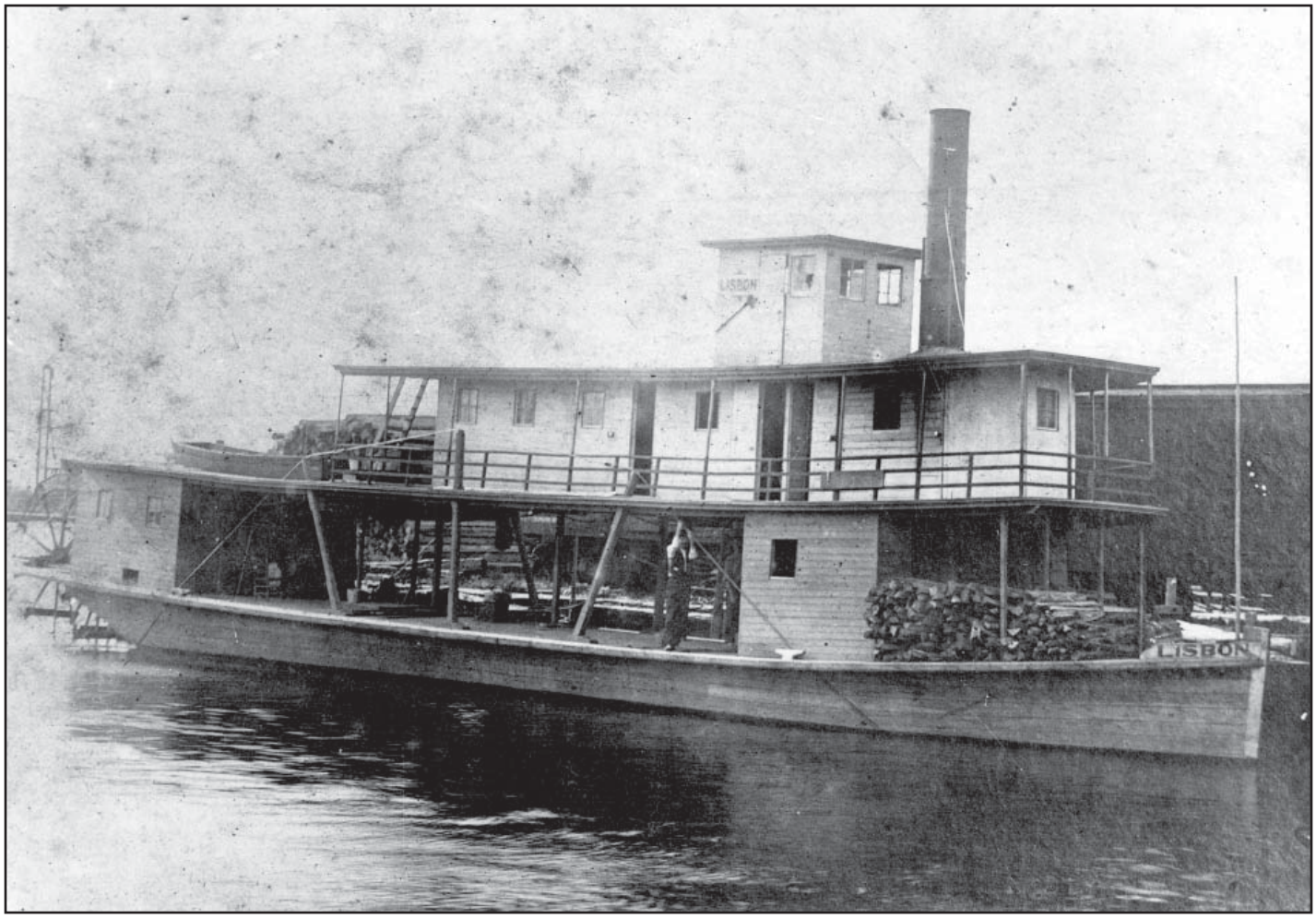

Figure 1.
Steamboat *Lisbon*
All images courtesy of North Carolina Maritime Museum unless otherwise indicated.

Figure 2.
Steamboat *Frank Sessoms*

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A Case Study: *Lisbon*, A 'Model" Steamboat

by Paul E. Fontenoy

Project Background

The North Carolina Maritime Museum's model of a "late nineteenth-century steamboat typical of those operating on the sounds and rivers of eastern North Carolina" is part of its exhibit, "Working Watercraft of North Carolina." Taking our lead from well-established professional museum procedures around the world we first had decided that the vessel should be a flat-bottomed sternwheel steamboat, and then set out to conduct the research required both to construct an accurate detailed model and to validate our choice of subject. In our innocence we never imagined the range of topics we would be forced to consider in the process.

Two factors played a crucial role in broadening the range of our inquiries. We decided, very early in our discussions, to attempt to construct a model of a specific vessel, rather than a generic North Carolina sternwheeler, which required an exhaustive search for detailed information on the physical appearance of these craft in an effort to produce a definitive recreation. We also built the model in the museum's own John S. MacCormack Ship Model Shop, in the public gaze, which involved research into every aspect of the history of steamboating in North Carolina, from technical through economic to social aspects, as well as the its interaction with other contemporary forms of transportation (particularly railroads) so that we could explain the significance and context of the model to interested inquirers.

Lisbon Appearance

The initial plan for constructing this model was to start from a set of existing drawings by John L. Fryant for a sternwheel steamboat from Florida, *Thomas A. Edison*, and adapt them to conform to the norms apparently prevalent in similar North Carolina vessels. Photographs in the museum's collection indicated that matching the characteristic features of North Carolina boats would involve reversing the location of the stack and the pilot house, substituting an iron stern wheel for *Edison*'s wooden structure, and virtually eliminating all decoration. The Still-Stephenson register of NC vessels showed that *Edison* was well within the range of sizes for corresponding North Carolina boats and photographs highlighted its generally similar appearance.

The search for illustrations quickly turned up a fine photograph of the sternwheel steamboat *Lisbon*. The posing and general clarity of this shot prompted the decision to select *Lisbon* itself as the subject of the exhibit model and to construct as detailed a recreation of this particular steamboat as possible. Other photographs, particularly one of the steamboat *Frank Sessoms*, which was built for the same owner in 1894, and another of McEachern's Wharf at Wilmington, and limited data from archaeological surveys would provide additional information where the *Lisbon* illustration was lacking.

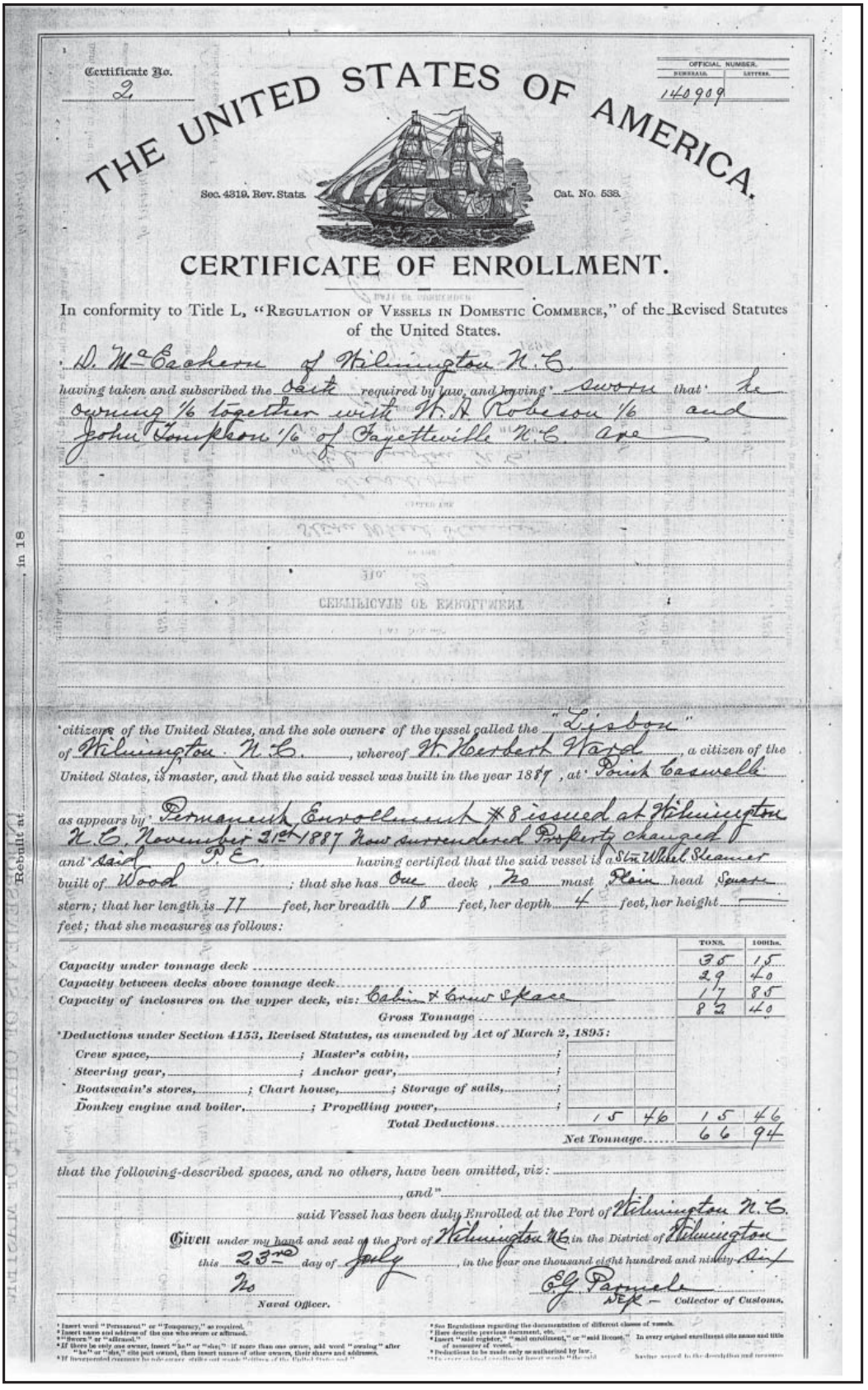
It proved possible to employ the

photograph of *Lisbon* to generate sketch broadside and deck plans using a reverse perspective projection. Deck beams seemed to be regularly spaced, so it was possible to lay out their positions and use this information to check the projection on the assumption that the carpenters building the superstructure would have set up bulkheads corresponding to the beams rather than erecting them in between. The stanchions supporting the pilot house deck obviously had to connect deck beams and their positions served as further checks. A few minor changes had to be made during the course of constructing the model but, overall, the initial layout stood up well when compared to the original photograph.

Lisbon's hull was 77 feet long, 18 feet 6 inches broad, and had a depth of hold amidships of 4 feet. It incorporated considerable sheer at main deck level but the bottom was completely flat over most of its length except right aft where it rose almost to deck level to improve the flow of water to the stern wheel and around the rudders. Hull sides were almost vertical, exhibiting only slight flare at bow and stern.

The main deck was some three feet broader than the hull itself and was surrounded by a heavy rub rail which seems to have taken considerable punishment by the time the photograph was taken in 1890, some three years after *Lisbon* was completed. A short foredeck forward supported a manually operated capstan. Moving aft, the cylindrical wood-fired boiler was enclosed in a house whose forward face could be left largely

Figure 3.
Steamboat *Frank Sessoms*



Certificate No. 2

OFFICIAL NUMBER. 140909

THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Sec. 4319, Rev. Stats. Cat. No. 538.

CERTIFICATE OF ENROLLMENT.

In conformity to Title L, "Regulation of Vessels in Domestic Commerce," of the Revised Statutes of the United States.

D. McEachern of Wilmington N. C.

having taken and subscribed the oath required by law, and having sworn that he owning 1/6 together with W. A. Robeson 1/6 and John Tompkins 1/6 of Fayetteville N. C. are

citizens of the United States, and the sole owners of the vessel called the "Lisbon" of Wilmington N. C., whereof W. Herbert Ward, a citizen of the United States, is master, and that the said vessel was built in the year 1887, at Point Caswell

as appears by Permanent Enrollment #8 issued at Wilmington N. C. November 31st 1887 Now surrendered Property changed and said P. C. having certified that the said vessel is a Stw Wheel Steamer built of Wood; that she has One deck, No mast, Plain head, Square stern; that her length is 77 feet, her breadth 18 feet, her depth 4 feet, her height — feet; that she measures as follows:

	TONS.	100ths.
Capacity under tonnage deck	35	15
Capacity between decks above tonnage deck	29	40
Capacity of inclosures on the upper deck, viz: Cabin & Crew Space	17	85
Gross Tonnage	82	40
*Deductions under Section 4153, Revised Statutes, as amended by Act of March 2, 1895:		
Crew space, ; Master's cabin, ;		
Steering gear, ; Anchor gear, ;		
Boatswain's stores, ; Chart house, ; Storage of sails, ;		
Donkey engine and boiler, ; Propelling power, ;		
Total Deductions	15 46	15 46
Net Tonnage		66 94

that the following-described spaces, and no others, have been omitted, viz: , and"

said Vessel has been duly Enrolled at the Port of Wilmington N. C.

Given under my hand and seal of the Port of Wilmington NC in the District of Wilmington this 23rd day of July, in the year one thousand eight hundred and ninety-six

No Naval Officer.

E. J. Parmele Collector of Customs.

Rebuilt at , in 18

Figure 4.
1896 Certificate of Enrollment for the steamboat *Lisbon*.

open. The long open main deck seems to have incorporated no hatch access to the hull and served as the principal cargo hold. Right aft, at main deck level, was the engine house which enclosed the two-cylinder engine.

A cabin deck the same width as the main deck covered almost the full length of the steamboat. It was supported by the two houses and additional

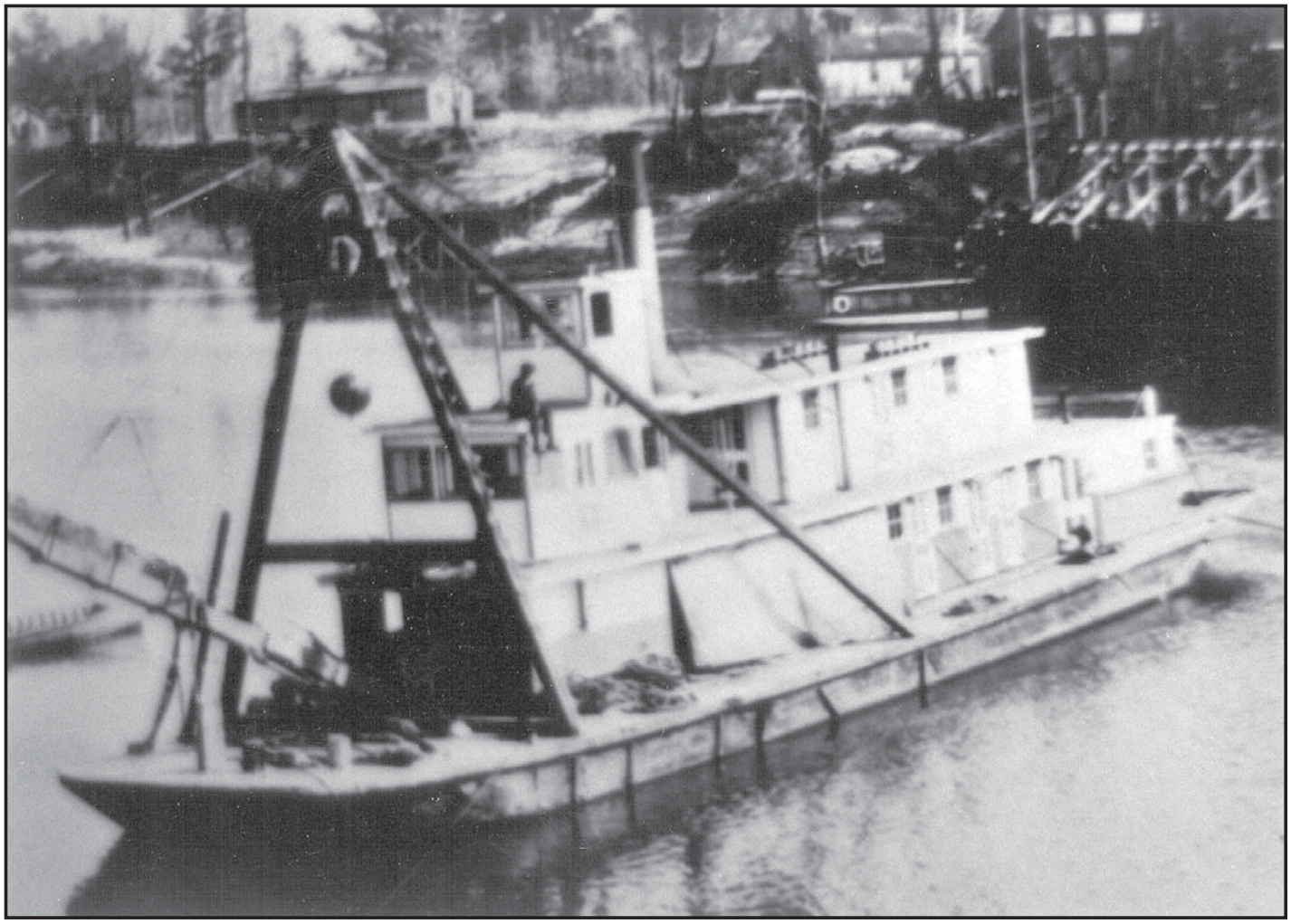


Figure 5.
Snagboat *General H. G. Wright*

stanchions forward and in the hold area amidships. Access to this deck from below was via what appears to be a builder's ladder leading to a hatchway aft. The cabin occupied about half the length of the deck. It incorporated passage ways from side to side and, almost certainly, longitudinal passages closed with sliding doors giving access to individual cabins. The forward section was probably used as crew accommodation.

Over the cabin was a pilot deck, considerably narrower than the decks below, with its overhang supported by stanchions. Access to this deck was by means of an open ladderway at its aft end. The deck supported a small, extensively-glazed pilot house which contained little more than a bench seat, the five-foot diameter wheel, and pull signals for engine control and the whistle. The boiler stack rose through the deck ahead of the pilot house and was stayed diagonally. The owners of the *Lisbon* also provided a scow-like punt, stowed on the pilot deck, as a service craft for the steamboat.

The most important structural feature of *Lisbon* and all similar shallow-draft steamboats was the hog. The hog was essential to the structural integrity of these vessels since the hull itself was too shallow to provide an adequate girder. Design requirements imposed by the sternwheel layout exacerbated this problem. The engine had to be located at the extreme stern so, for considerations of weight disposition, the boiler had to be located forward. However, this located the heaviest weights in the vessel at the points where the hull's displacement was the least, thus enhancing the tendency for the vessel to hog, to fold up amidships and down at the ends. The hog was formed using three massive timbers on

Figure 6.
McEachern's Wharf,
Wilmington, NC.

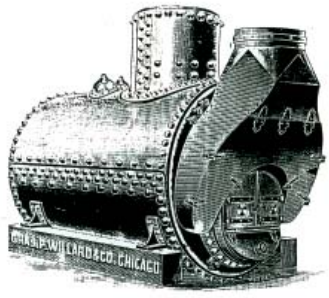


Figure 7.
Steamboat boiler

each side of the vessel, one vertical and the others angled fore and aft, supporting a truss rod, of one-inch diameter iron, which ran from plates bolted to the hull sides at bow and stern. Two turnbuckles per side allowed for adjustment to compensate for sagging as the vessel worked in service.

The sternwheel was supported by two massive beams. These were actually the extensions of the inboard components of paired beams which ran from the forward face of the engine house called cylinder timbers. The engine's two cylinders were each bolted to a pair of cylinder timbers so that their pistons ran between the beams and connected to the pittman rods which drove the cylinder cranks. The drive mechanism, thus, was essentially self-aligned. Diagonal iron tie-rods provided additional support for the outboard ends of the cylinder timbers.

Lisbon's sternwheel was very characteristic of those seen on North Carolina sternwheelers. In most of the country, sternwheels were constructed, most laboriously, from wood. In this state, however, iron seems to have been employed in the majority of cases for which we have evidence. The enrollment papers for the sternwheeler *Driver*, registered at Wilmington in 1896, note that it had a wooden wheel, as if this were an unusual feature, although, as will be discussed later in this paper, it is probably unwise to make too much of information that was not mandatory which might be contained in such documents. Fortunately, the recovered sternwheel of the snagboat *General H. G. Wright*, completed at Fayetteville for the Corps of Engineers in 1884, provides considerable information on the construction of these iron wheels. They were built as two wheels, each with twelve floats, running together on a com-

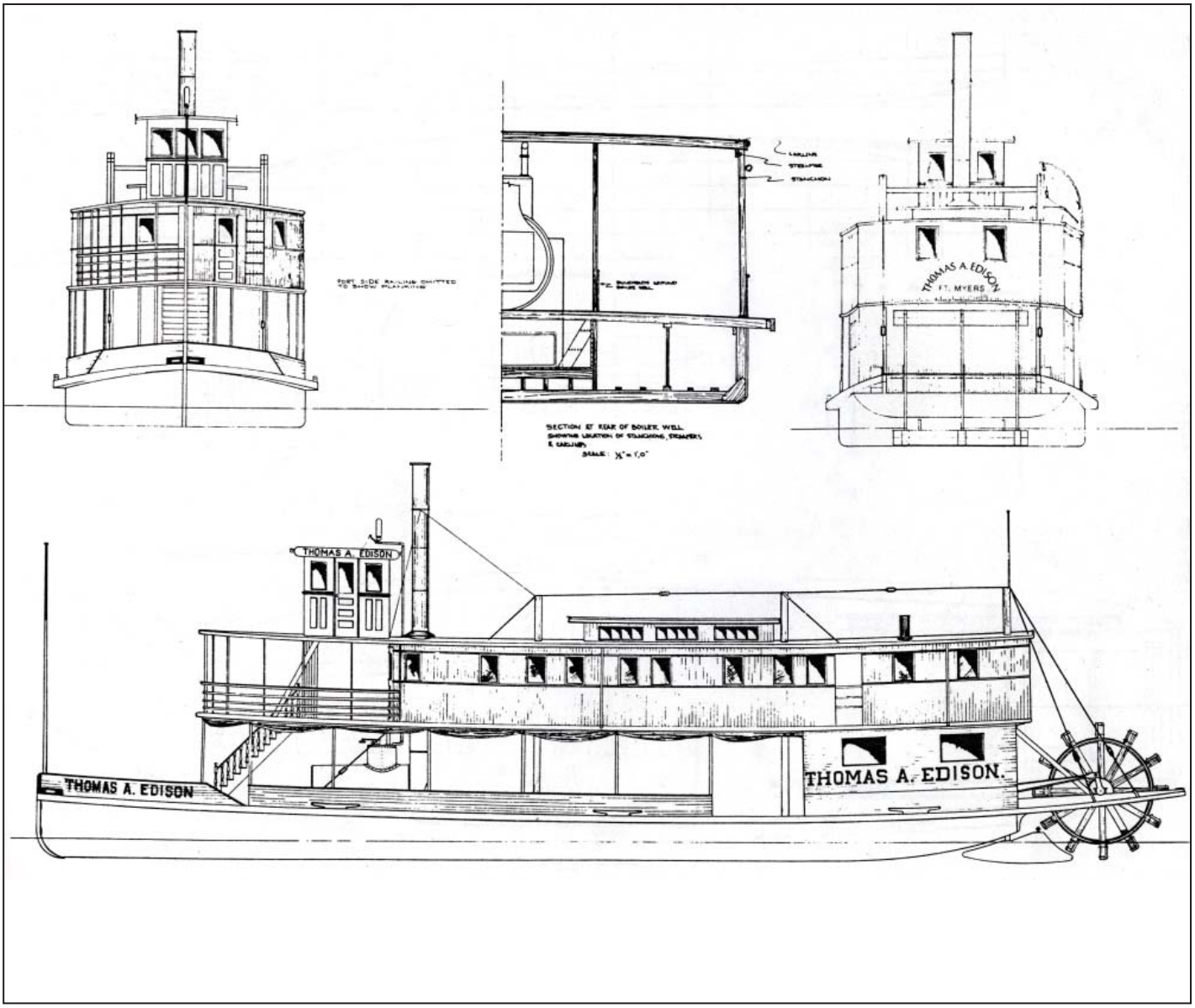


Figure 8.
General arrangement plan of the steamboat *Thomas A. Edison.* Courtesy of the Nautical Research Guild.

mon shaft, with the floats of each wheel offset by fifteen degrees from each other to improve the smooth running of the propulsion system. Strap iron was bolted together to form each wheel frame and then bolted to cast hubs. The floats were attached to the wheel arms with U-bolts. The pittman rods, too, were of the utmost simplicity, formed from iron tubing. *Wright*'s sternwheel conformed very closely to that seen in the *Lisbon* photograph and other illustrations, and seems typical for North Carolina boats.

Steering the steamboat was accomplished using three roughly triangular balanced rudders fitted ahead of the sternwheel. The center rudder had a tiller while the two outer units were slaves connected to the master by a bar. The pilot wheel was only five feet in diameter, unlike some of the huge wheels used on western rivers in particular, and connected to the tiller with chains running around sheaves.

We can glean a considerable amount of information on the construction of these steamboats through careful examination of photographs. Elsewhere in the country, we know that shipwrights built only the hulls of river steamers; their superstructures were the work of house carpenters. Photographs of North Carolina sternwheelers indicate that this division of labor also prevailed here—

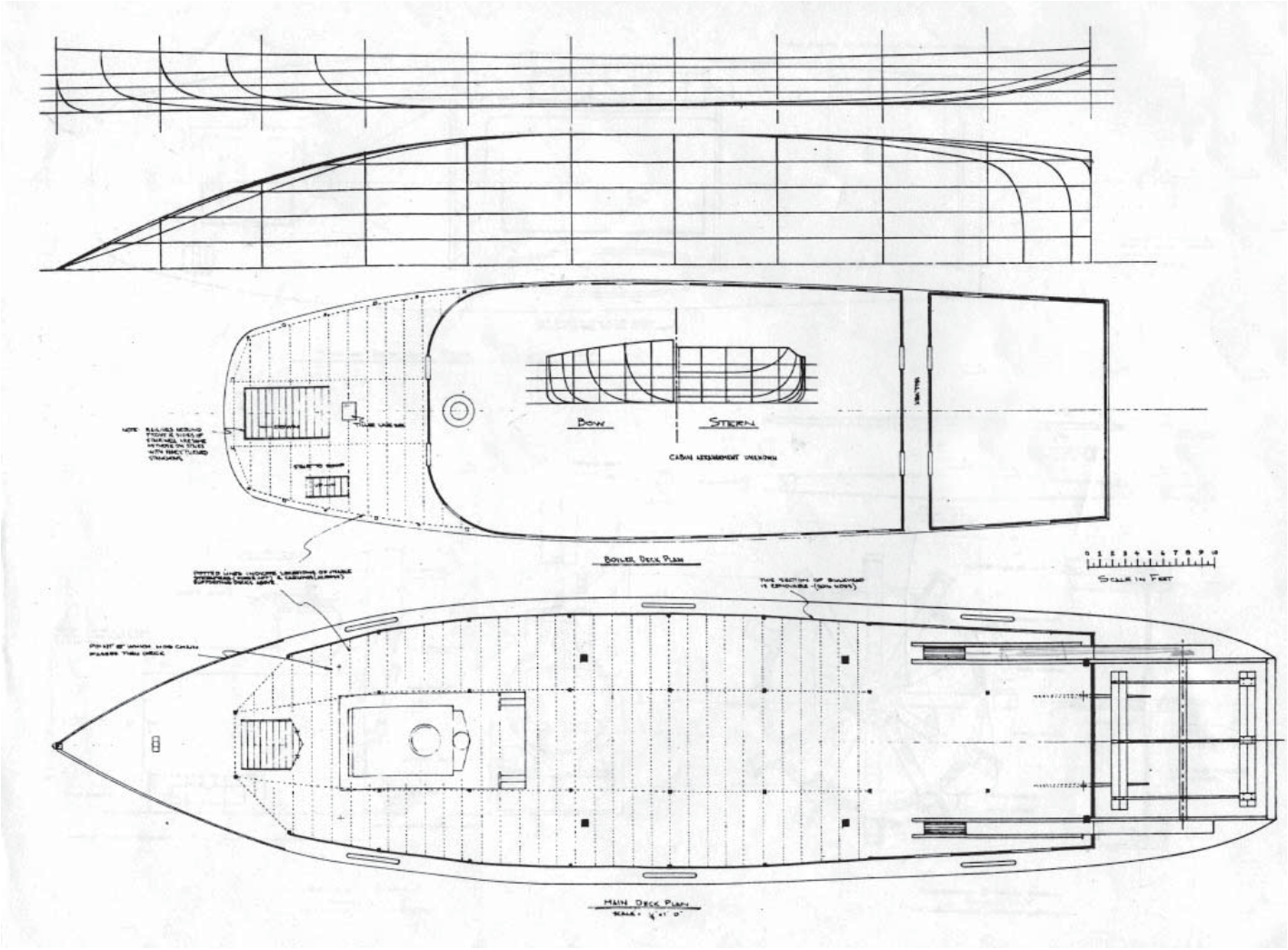


Figure 9.
Lines and deck plans for the steamboat *Thomas A. Edison*. Courtesy of the Nautical Research Guild.

some cabins even appear to be clapboarded. Most cabins seem to have been built from vertical studs covered with horizontal boards, but photographs also show that certain areas of the superstructures were constructed by a different method from the norm. These areas, which appear featureless in the *Lisbon* shot, for example, show up as planked vertically in other views. This vertical planking was generally applied to the transverse bulkheads of the boiler and engine houses and any superstructure that surrounded the stack. It appears that, for ease of access to the machinery for overhauls, there were fewer studs that ran horizontally in these areas. (It is also fascinating to note that *Lisbon*, at least, had vertically sliding windows fitted in its cabins).

We know very little about the construction of the hulls for these flat-bottomed steamboats. Newspaper articles from the 1850s described bottoms planked longitudinally on transverse floors. Heavy chines and keelsons provided longitudinal strength. Hull sides had no ribs—the planks were fastened together with long iron drifts. One article praised this construction for making the boats lighter by "doing away with much cumbersome timber."

We also do not know the rationale for the two distinctive features of North Carolina sternwheelers—the positioning of their stacks ahead of their pilot houses

and their iron wheels. Clearly, given access to cheap raw material, an iron wheel would be cheaper to construct, lighter, and less prone to rot than a wooden wheel. It is hard to accept that this was not apparent to builders and operators wherever sternwheelers served, and yet iron wheels are rare except in North Carolina—a state hardly renowned for its technological innovation during the nineteenth century. It is also difficult to demonstrate that iron prices were so drastically cheaper in the state that constructors could readily take advantage of its properties; if anything, iron prices in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys were lower than in North Carolina. In the absence of further evidence the reasons for the prevalence of iron sternwheels in the state must remain a mystery.

Absent the same type of evidence from steamboat constructors or owners, it is likely that the rationale for siting stacks ahead of pilot houses will also remain unfathomed. A stack ahead of the pilot house did not materially affect the pilot's view ahead; his wheel was so large he would have to have stood to one side to operate it. The principal obstruction to his view would have been the deck edge, which is, no doubt, why the tendency in the rest of the country was to place the pilot house as far forward as possible. Operators overcame the disadvantage of the pilot house's position through use of a steering pole, a tall staff in the bow that is often mistaken for a flag pole. There is considerable anecdotal and artifactual evidence indicating that the engines and boilers for many North Carolina boats were imported into the state from northern industrial suppliers of complete machinery packages, while the wheels and pittmans were products of local ironworkers. Most of the simple boilers used on sternwheelers throughout the country featured a firebox at the same end as the stack. Installing the boiler with the stack forward would have permitted fuel to be fed into the firebox from the foredeck, which would have conferred two advantages; the fuel could be stowed on the foredeck thus increasing the space available for cargo carriage, and sparks would be directed away from the cargo area thus reducing the fire hazard. These two considerations may have loomed large to operators whose principal cargoes were low-value combustible goods like naval stores, tobacco, and cotton. Nevertheless, such an explanation must remain purely speculative until solid evidence becomes available.

Lisbon: A Context.

Because the miniature *Lisbon* was built as a demonstration project in the museum's model shop we had to generate a coherent presentation describing the operational environment and rationale of the full-size vessel so that we could satisfy museum visitors' thirst for such information. This developed into a considerable project requiring research within a range of disciplines beyond the straightforward historical record.

Lisbon was a remarkably unremarkable vessel. This sternwheel steamboat was built at Point Caswell, near Wilmington, NC, in 1887 for D. J. Black. He enrolled the steamer as a new vessel on 14 November, with himself as master, and sold it to D. McEachern on 23 July 1896. The final enrollment document for *Lisbon* records that the vessel was abandoned on 20 June 1899. There is a single photograph of *Lisbon* at Wilmington taken in 1890 and a view of a very similar vessel exhibiting some differences, which may be attributable to repairs or renovations, taken at McEachern's Wharf between 1899 and 1902. No other documents pertaining to this vessel have come to light as yet.

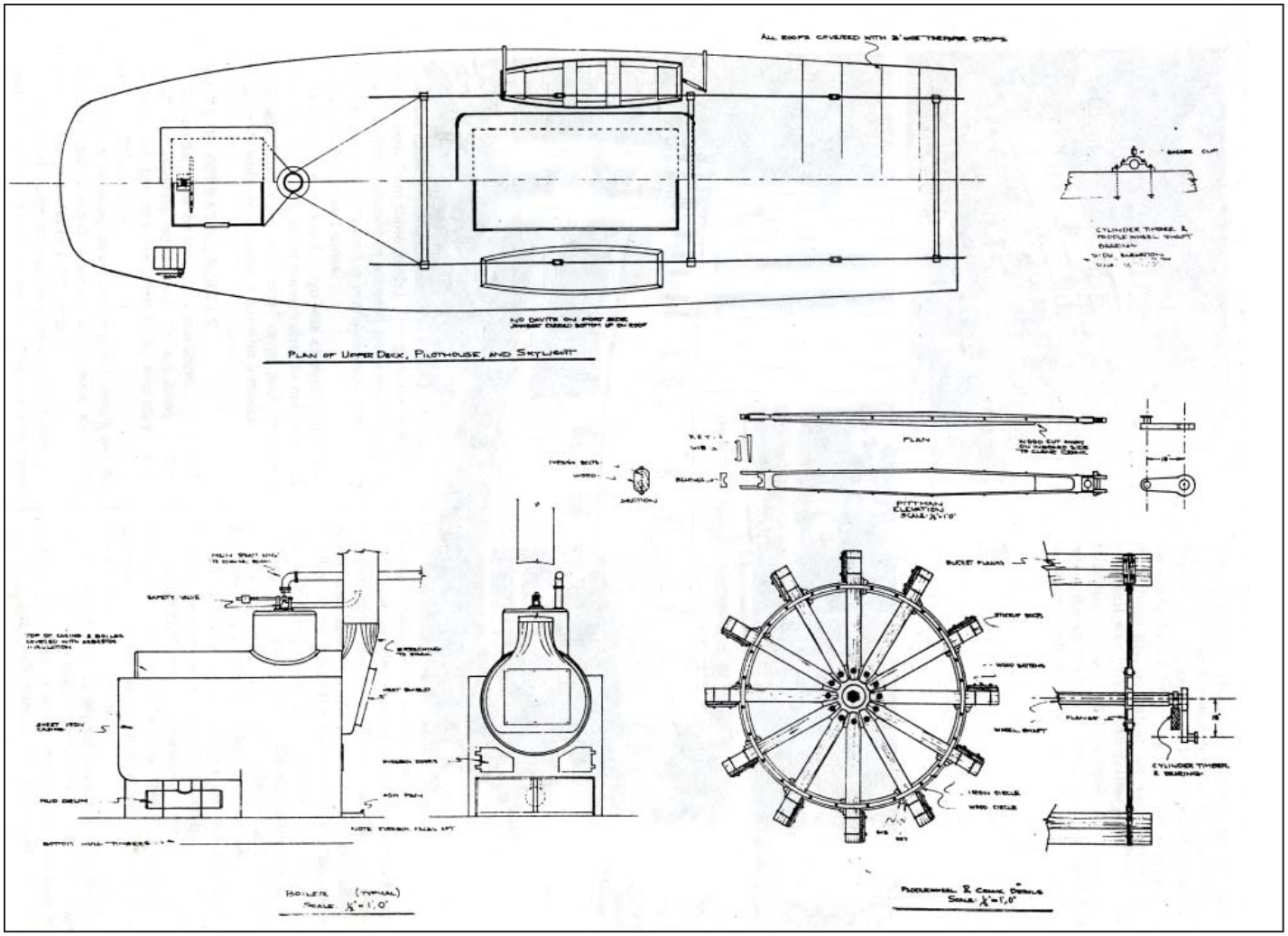


Figure 10.
Details of the steamboat *Thomas A. Edison*. Courtesy of the Nautical Research Guild.

Lisbon's historical significance, therefore, is not intrinsic but representational—the vessel serves as a focus for the exploration and exposition of the role played by steamboats and water transportation in North Carolina during the last half of the nineteenth century. This subject has suffered from a woeful lack of attention from historians. The entire literature is made up of two books by John C. Emmerson published in 1949 and 1950, whose primary topic was steamboats on Chesapeake Bay with operations on Albemarle Sound as a peripheral interest, F. Roy Johnson's *Riverboating in Lower Carolina* (1977), a Master's thesis presented to UNC by Sarah Woodall Turlington in 1933, covering the period up to 1860, and Earl White's *Carolina Riverboats and Rivers: The Old Days*, published in 2002. Clearly there is considerable scope for enterprising research into this subject!

A second problem with which we must contend in order to present a realistic assessment to the general public of the operating environment of North Carolina steamboats is the strangeness of the cultural landscape in the nineteenth century. We live in a transportation environment dominated by road traffic, with railroads as secondary carriers of bulk goods over long distances, airlines the preferred mode of long-haul passenger travel, and our waterways devoted to recreational activities. Nothing could be more different from eastern North Carolina in the 1880s.

During the later part of the nineteenth century, moving goods by wagon was by far the least attractive alternative available to shippers. Although road systems had improved considerably since the 1820s, when wagon carriage cost

ten times as much as river barge transportation and it was quicker to sail from Philadelphia to London than to travel overland to Pittsburgh, anecdotal and statistical evidence indicates that road transport was still slow, expensive, and inconvenient or uncomfortable.

While rail connections from Wilmington and Beaufort to the Piedmont and a branch line from Rocky Mount to Tarboro existed before 1860, railroads were relative rarities in eastern North Carolina until late in the century (the lines along the Tar River and in the Albemarle region were products of the 1880s and 1890s) while the same period saw a boom in railroad construction in the nation as a whole. Railroad historians tend to attribute this phenomenon to the economic reliance of easterners upon subsistence farming and the importance of water transportation in the eastern part of the state, while simultaneously decrying its significance. "The experience of North Carolina in the period before 1860 showed clearly that the solution of the transportation problem of the state could not be solved by improved water transportation…During the pre-war period the railways were merely supplemental to water transportation. The railroads were able to share in through passenger traffic, but practically all through freight was carried by water." Clearly, this explanation is inadequate.

An interdisciplinary approach to the question may well provide a more satisfactory hypothesis. Over thirty years ago the economic historians Douglass C. North and Robert W. Fogel (who jointly won a Nobel Prize in Economics for their work) undertook quantitative analyses comparing the price of transportation by railroad with other forms of carriage. They noted that the cost of rail transportation per ton-mile fell steadily from 5.5 cents in 1850 to 1.45 cents in 1880. During the same period, except during the war years, water transportation costs rarely exceeded 0.5 cents per ton-mile. They concluded that factors other than strictly economic played crucial parts in generating railroad expansion, and suggested consideration of such elements as speed of delivery, reliability, and convenience. Given that the majority of goods requiring transportation in eastern North Carolina were bulky low-value products such as naval stores, tobacco, and cotton, which generally would not benefit from a premium for prompt or reliably scheduled delivery, it is possible that those factors that were nationally conducive to railroad development offered easterners insufficient advantage to press for railway construction.

Geography also provides useful clues to explain the continued viability of water transportation and the restricted influx of the railroads. Data from the Tenth Census of 1880 show that, although that part of North Carolina east of the Piedmont was home to about forty percent of the state's citizens, only four cities, Wilmington, New Bern, Kinston, and Greenville, had populations of five thousand or more, and, of these, only Greenville was without a rail link. The east's population was too scattered to serve as a magnet to attract rail lines. Furthermore, the very maze of waterways that encouraged shipping was an expensive impediment to railroad construction.

When discussing the practicality of water transportation in eastern North Carolina during the later nineteenth century, we must also note that the conditions of the waterways were considerably different from those currently prevailing, and that vessels then employed, particularly sternwheelers, were specifically designed to suit their operating environment. Navigation companies, charged with the task of clearing and improving rivers, operated from 1816 with varying degrees of efficiency but certainly contrived to open up waterways for

transportation companies. River boats, with their ungainly high superstructures, more often than not only had to contend with head winds because most riverbanks were still extensively wooded, thus sheltering steamers from broadside winds. The sternwheelers generally drew only twelve to eighteen inches of water when fully laden, were flat-bottomed, and their rudders and wheels were never immersed more deeply than their keels, all of which ideally suited them for service on the shallow eastern rivers. Since the fixed road bridges that presently obstruct navigation on the east's rivers did not yet exist, steamboats loading eighty tons or more regularly served Tarboro on the Tar River, Kinston on the Neuse, and Weldon on the Cape Fear. Furthermore, the Outer Banks that so restricted access to the open ocean also provided a relatively sheltered operating environment for shallow-draft steamboats to provide services along the coast between Wilmington and Albemarle Sound that could not be provided by railways due to physical geographic considerations.

A further indication of the importance of water transportation in the eastern part of the state is provided by statistical analysis of vessel registrations. Some 375 steam vessels received new certificates of enrollment in North Carolina between 1830 and 1910. Over sixty percent of these certificates were issued after 1865 and over thirty-five percent were later than 1880. Although the rate of construction slowed after 1880, it is clear that operators continued to invest strongly in new vessels, particularly as later steamers tended to be larger than their precursors.

Directions for Further Research.

As a component of this research project, the author set up a database to record all steamboats enrolled in the state using certificates of enrollment as our basic source of information. Initial analysis soon revealed the limitations of the basic data—certificates of enrollment provide good sources for analyzing rates of construction and enrollment, patterns of ownership, fluctuations in the fortunes of operators, and concentrations of shipping, but their unreliability for analysis by vessel type or description is amply illustrated by the following examples. Of the 375 vessels currently entered into the database, the rig for 223 (sixty percent) was recorded simply as "steam," "steamer," "steamboat," or "boat." Only thirty-six vessels (under ten percent) were recorded as paddle wheelers, which is a patently ludicrous statistic for steam vessels built during the years from 1830 to 1910, and of these vessels only ten (less than three percent) were specifically listed as sternwheelers. Furthermore, less than ten percent of all certificates included descriptions of vessel hull form (e.g. "sharp bow, round stern"). Clearly, if this database is to become a useful tool for analyzing vessel types and hull forms we will have to unearth much additional information that went unrecorded on the certificates of enrollment.

A second major opportunity is research to uncover the physical structure of North Carolina's shallow-draft steamboats. While we can fairly positively describe the general external appearance of these vessels we know virtually nothing of their structure, particularly the form of construction used for their hulls. Since almost all of these vessels seem to have been built without the aid of formal plans, and none were subjects of surveys while intact, such information will only emerge as a result of archaeological investigation.

Research and publication on the transportation history of North Carolina is generally woefully inadequate, especially as such work relates to waterborne traffic. Basic research into company operations, patterns of commodity transportation, steamboat operational practices, and the social dimensions of traveling the waterways is necessary as is generation of

working hypotheses to synthesize the results of such investigations with cultural and physical geographic and environmental studies and the work of cultural anthropologists examining the state's maritime communities.

Research for the *Lisbon* project, completed, ongoing, and ahead, highlights the importance of a multi-disciplinary approach to comprehending and presenting a coherent picture of maritime North Carolina. Museums, the academic community, and enthusiastic amateurs need to work together in alliance and exploit their respective strengths to give our citizens a more accurate understanding of the importance of the state's maritime history and the role of its waterways and maritime communities.

Bibliographical Note

The material for this paper was derived from wide-ranging conversations and correspondence with fellow scholars and museum colleagues, whose assistance is much appreciated.

Statistical data came from vessel enrollment record abstracts collected from the National Archives, from the Tenth Census, and from various iterations of the manuscript Still-Stephenson list of North Carolina vessels initiated by William N. Still and Richard A. Stephenson at East Carolina University and subsequently expanded by countless anonymous ECU graduate students.

Robert W. Fogel and Douglass C. North first published their studies in the early 1960s, Fogel as "A Quantitative Approach to the Study of the Railroad in American Economic Growth, A Report of Some Preliminary Findings," in the *Journal of Economic History* 6 (1962), 163-197, and North as "The Role of Transportation in the Economic Development of North America," in *Les Grandes Voies Maritimes dans le Monde, Xve - XIXe Siecles* (SEVPEN, Paris 1965), 209-246.

Very little of the vast literature on railroads in eastern North Carolina ventures beyond simple documentation and description into analysis—Charles Lewis Price, in his dissertation "Railroads and Reconstruction in North Carolina, 1865-1871" (University of North Carolina, 1959), offers the contradictory analysis cited above.

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Tributaries

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A Miserable and Sorrowful Condition:

The Experiences of American Sailors in the British Navy

by Thomas D. Sheppard

Figure 1. "The Pressgang", cartoon by Thomas Rowlandson, 1780.

"I was born under the flag of Freedom and Independence…and it was a duty I owed the blood my forefathers shed, to treat with contempt any villain who dare enslave a free-born son of America."[1]
David Bunnell

James Durand was wise to fear the press gangs. An American serving aboard a Swedish merchant ship, he knew all too well that his protestations of United States citizenship would count for little to a British captain desperate for seamen. Thus, he chose to remain cramped aboard the ship while it sat in port, rather than venture with his fellow crewmen onto the English shore. The cruel irony was that this choice sealed his fate. Late on the night of August 21, 1809, a British vessel boarded and searched his ship for deserters. Roused from his sleep, he was dragged onto the frigate *Narcissus,* "with much abuse," and was not allowed to "put on or take anything except my trousers." The unfortunate tar scrambled to write a hasty appeal to the absent captain of the brig on which he had been serving, but the captain was away, and by the time he learned of Durand's fate, *Narcissus* was long gone. Durand's hopes for a speedy release evaporated. Despair seized him, and he barely ate for two weeks after being pressed, having "lost all relish for the world." Looking back on that night, he confessed that if he had known it would be another seven years before he escaped, he "would have instantly committed the horrid crime of self-murder" rather than endure such a fate.[2]

Yet he soon learned that he was not alone. A dozen fellow Americans served on *Narcissus* as well, all of them

victims of impressment. Their counsel gave the distraught Yankee little cheer. One who had refused to follow the captain's demands suffered a brutal flogging, and his countrymen advised him to give himself over to his newfound role as a British tar. Durand ruefully accepted that he had no other options. "I went to work and made myself as contented as possible," he recalled, thus beginning a long and tumultuous career in the service of another nation.[3]

Like Durand, thousands more American sailors pressed into the Royal Navy faced a difficult balancing act. Many retained a strong sense of loyalty to their native land, and even those with tenuous political devotion ached to be reunited with family and friends. But the stories of those who escaped British service quickly are few. For the vast majority, impressment meant years of service, and opportunities for resistance were starkly limited. These sailors worked to maintain and assert their personal rights and independence as best they could, but always at considerable risk. Accounts of life in the Royal Navy for pressed Americans abound with twin themes of adaptation and survival on the one hand, mingled with resistance to tyranny and a relentless quest to escape on the other.[4]

Although impressment was a crucial factor in the outbreak of the War of 1812, the experiences of those who suffered this fate has been greatly overlooked in the historical literature. Impressment as an explosive political issue figures into virtually all histories of the War of 1812 and the early American and British navies, but as to the lived experiences of pressed sailors, historians still have much work to do. In part, this is due to the limitations of the source base; a great many of those sailors pressed were illiterate, and even among those who could write the evidence is limited. A few, however, did leave behind memoirs of their experiences. Along with Durand, men like Joshua Penny, James M'Lean, David Bunnell, and Horace Lane provide a rare glimpse into the unique struggles of pressed Americans, who endured the same dreadful conditions as their British peers, as well as the agony of separation from home and a sense of enslavement by a foreign power.[5]

This was a life experienced by a great many Americans. Historians have generally accepted that roughly 6,000 to 10,000 American citizens were forced to serve in the British Navy during the Napoleonic Wars.[6] This estimate has enjoyed widespread recognition for some time now, but has recently become a topic of debate. Joshua Wolf, a doctoral candidate at Temple University, is currently working on a groundbreaking dissertation project that thoroughly revises our understanding of the impressment of American seamen by Great Britain. Wolf argues that the number of Americans taken is actually much closer to 15,000. Of those, only about 2,500 obtained release through diplomatic channels. A roughly equal number probably perished during their time in the Royal Navy.[7]

In recounting their experiences, most Americans who had been pressed into the Brtitish Navy told of stubbornly maintaining their independence and displaying an unshakable loyalty to their native land. As Myra Glenn notes in her book on sailor narratives, *Jack Tar's Story,* memoirists wanted to emphasize their suffering and British cruelty by invoking the language of slavery in describing their mistreatment, but they risked casting themselves as lacking manly and patriotic virtues if they carried that trope too far. "Describing impressed sailors as 'enslaved' not only dramatized their sufferings," she contends, "but also risked portraying them as subjugated and therefore emasculated." Thus, memoirs tended to ignore the routine compliance with shipboard life that necessarily dominated their experience of captivity and instead focus on dramatic moments

in which they valiantly challenged their captors. Even in involuntary service, writers "repeatedly asserted (that they) were still manly, brave mariners who resisted British oppression." [8]

Such assertions are not false, but they tell an incomplete story. Many tars resigned themselves to their fate and made the best of the situation, despite later claims to the contrary. Caught in a situation where overt resistance meant almost certain death, Americans forced to join the Royal Navy found opportunities to strike back in subtle, often futile ways, usually at great cost, but spent the bulk of their time simply surviving in a hostile environment.

The choice between resistance and acquiescence presented itself immediately to the pressed American. Upon being taken into the Royal Navy, sailors had the opportunity to formally enlist in the ship's crew. This was more tempting than one might imagine. Failure to enlist accomplished little; the tar was still treated as a member of the crew, and still subject to the same naval discipline as his shipmates. Moreover, he forfeited pay and any share of prize money the ship might gain by not putting his name on the books, and lost any hope of pension or care in the event he was injured. If a maimed or dismembered sailor was not a volunteer, the Admiralty was under no obligation to care for him, and his captain could simply put him off in the nearest port and leave him to fend for himself.[9]

Despite its benefits, enlistment also made repatriation far more difficult. Once a man volunteered, even if the British Admiralty did concede that he was an American citizen, they refused to release him.[10] And, unlike the United States Navy where tars signed up for a single voyage, volunteers in the British Navy signed on for the indefinite future; once his name was on the books, a sailor remained until the Admiralty chose to release him, or until he died. British tars routinely spent over a decade in the king's service during the Napoleonic Wars, many of them never allowed to set foot on shore the entire time, for fear they would desert.[11]

Despite the risk, the pressure to formally declare oneself part of the crew was intense. Those who did not faced intense persecution. Joshua Wolf tells of a group of American sailors who were locked up in irons for two days without food to coerce their enlistment. Other sailors endured floggings for failure to accept the king's bounty, and some captains, undermining the supposed desperation for able hands that justified impressment, kept seamen confined in irons for months until they agreed to enlist.[12]

For many, it took far less than that. Although Durand claimed to readers that he had manfully refused to enter Britain's service, the truth is he was listed in *Narcissus*' muster book as a volunteer. Joshua Penny likewise wrote in his subsequent memoir that he balked at the idea of declaring himself a servant of the hated British, but he too was entered into the books as a volunteer to whom the Admiralty owed an enlistment bounty.[13] Another seaman, Samuel Dalton, who worked for years to obtain his freedom through diplomatic channels assured his family that he never officially entered the Royal Navy, yet one reason for Britain's failure to release him was the considerable pay and prize money owed him—something to which he never would have been entitled had he not volunteered.[14]

Whether or not they volunteered, pressed sailors who were not released within a few days of being taken became part of the ship's crew. Newcomers to any ship immediately became part of a "mess," a group of fellow tars, usually numbering from four to twelve, with whom they ate, slept, and worked at all times. Joshua Davis, an American who was forced to serve on board a half dozen different British ships, warned his countrymen who might find themselves in his position to

avoid becoming too close to their British shipmates. Instead, he urged them to seek out fellow Americans, as he had done, and as Durand managed to do.[15] The close proximity of fellow Americans provided some captives with companionship and support in their ordeal. One kind-hearted British captain allowed a group of almost thirty Americans extra alcohol rations to celebrate the Fourth of July together.[16] David Bunnell, after being dragged on board the brig *Grenada,* was relieved to find a fellow American named Curtiss was not only among part of the ship, but its sailing master—second only to the commander. Curtiss immediately took the unfortunate seaman under his wing, allowing him to act as his personal servant. Bunnell even took on his protector's last name, passing himself off as David Curtiss.[17]

However much their society might have idealized them as bastions of liberty, pressed sailors made no effort to export the ideals of the American Revolution into the British Navy. Far from calling for resistance at every turn and striving to imbue his British counterparts with the spirit of liberty, Davis recommended that Americans perform their duties and stay out of trouble. Make yourself an exemplary crewmember, Davis urges, "and by your so doing, my friends, you will stand a good chance of receiving favors from your officers."[18] David Bunnell, upon being pressed, "thought it best to make a virtue of necessity—and do my duty cheerfully," at least until he had the chance to escape. Although he claimed that he would "have gladly sacrificed both vessel and crew" for the chance to "grasp the standard of freedom," he nevertheless tried to perform his duties well, and soon became a favorite of his officers, enjoying special privileges and liberties.[19] Later, in an engagement with a French vessel, he was entrusted with the duty of signalman, placing him "most exposed to the enemy's fire of anyone on board." Although he emerged unscathed, he saw the lieutenant standing directly by him cut down by enemy fire.[20]

Bunnell's cool performance in combat holds part of the key to the frequency with which Americans were seized by the press. In addition to their similar language and the fact that a great many British deserters undeniably manned American vessels, it seems that Britain targeted American tars because they were excellent sailors. Even as they eagerly sought opportunities to desert, many American sailors actually thrived in the Royal Navy. Bunnell, for example, never explains why an American like Curtiss was entrusted with such authority on an English brig, but we must assume he had shown himself an exemplary seaman. Shortly after his capture, Durand showed initiative while performing his duty that his captain found laudable, and he received "better usage" thereafter.[21] Although he continually tried, without success, to free himself from the miseries of a British man-of-war, Durand also hints that he adjusted reasonably well into his newfound role, singled out by his officers as a skilled mariner.

There may have been more to Durand's performance than simply bettering his lot. In an action against a French fort, Durand's leg was seriously injured, and the surgeon placed him below decks for several days to recuperate. Far from being relieved at not having to fight another country's battles, Durand speaks of longing to return to combat, and of the surgeons having to compel him to remain below during an action against a French vessel. Although he never fully explains his feelings at that point, it seems almost certain that years of service had caused Durand to form a bond with at least some of his shipmates, despite his bitter anger towards his officers. In virtually all memoirs of pressed Americans, scorn is heaped on the British for their brutality and arrogance, but it is usually directed at those in positions of authority.

Writing in the patriotic fervor that immediately followed the War of 1812 and depicting themselves as heroically resisting their villainous British captors at every turn, memoirists could hardly speak of forming relationships with their messmates, looking out for one another in combat, and passing the tedious hours of shipboard life together. Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker contend in *The Many Headed Hydra* that national identity meant far less to seamen in the Age of Sail than their identification with fellow tars, and to a limited extent this certainly seems to be the case with pressed Americans.[22] Service in another nation's vessel would hardly have been a foreign experience to these men; tars routinely signed on, albeit voluntarily and for a single cruise, in other countries' maritime service, and America's ships were quite cosmopolitan.[23] Durand served on a French privateer and was taken from a Swedish merchant ship, and the United States' merchant service abounded in sailors from other nationalities. Indeed, American vessels, if we believe English complaints of the time, positively swarmed with Royal Navy deserters. While this was somewhat exaggerated, it is certainly true that any experienced American seaman who fell victim to the press would have been quite familiar with British tars, and could hardly have avoided bonding with some. Bunnell's frequent attempts to desert usually involved the company of fellow sailors, some of them British. Samuel Leech, a British tar, knew at least one American whom he considered "as brave a seaman as ever trod a plank."[24] Although they seldom admit it, it appears that American tars forced into British service did develop some degree of camaraderie with their shipmates, and not all numbered among their vessels' shirkers.

Figure 2.
An American seaman seized for Royal Navy service. Contemporary anonymous sketch.

That camaraderie allowed them to adapt and survive in the difficult circumstances in which they found themselves, but it almost never obliterated the longing to regain personal freedom and return to loved ones in the United States. Success in battle brought better treatment from officers and some sense of personal fulfillment, but it could seriously injure a sailor's chances of returning home. Captains were especially loath to part with capable seamen, more so with capable fighters, and any American forced into the Royal Navy faced the perilous choice of performing poorly and suffering abuse and frequent floggings, or performing well and further undermining his chances of freedom. That many chose the latter does not mean they ached for freedom any less.

But the chances of freedom were dishearteningly small. It was seven years before Durand saw his native shore again. Dalton spent eleven years either in the Royal Navy or as a prisoner of war. James M'Lean spent a staggering seventeen years separated from his family after being pressed. And for large numbers of Americans, release came only through death. In the meantime, no matter

how well an American tar went about his duty, his misery was only lessened. Life in the Royal Navy at this time was difficult and perilous, even for the most patriotic British sailor. In addition to the same trials as those of their British counterparts, Americans faced the agony of being almost entirely cut off from their homes and communities.[25]

During this time in the service of another nation, contact with family and friends back home was starkly limited. Samuel Dalton complained that in eleven years of service in the Royal Navy he saw only one letter from home, despite the fact that his family was working tirelessly all that time to secure his freedom.[26] "I am but a wanderer in the world," he lamented, each day "spent in thoughts that distract my soul to pieces." He prayed continually for "my parents' welfare," and "to once more behold my beloved Mother." "If you only knew the anguish of my mind you would pity me," he told his family. Countless other sailors echoed Dalton's lament. While popular images, then and now, might depict sailors as carefree and unattached, the truth is that many came from closely-knit families, and felt the separation keenly. Upon being pressed, and for the remainder of his time in the Royal Navy, Durand's "despair of ever seeing (his family)" again far surpassed any sense of violation at the loss of his personal liberty.[27] Another sailor wrote to the American consul lamenting the fate of his wife and children with him gone. William Hirst's wife continued writing to secure his return for years, but when letters from her husband ceased, she assumed that he was dead. Hirst's family never learned his fate.[28]

In addition to the separation from family and friends, pressed Americans also railed against their British captors' brutality. Durand's view of the British grew increasingly dim throughout his time in their service, until he considered all of them "perjured, lying sottish brutal creatures, arrogant in victory and sullen in defeat."[29] Davis considered British vessels "dens of horror, cruelty, confusion, and continual uproar."[30] Penny compared a British ship to "purgatory" and warned his fellow Americans that to be pressed was to be put aboard "a nefarious floating dungeon, freighting calamities to every part of this lower world."[31]

Under such conditions, it is no wonder that, even as pressed Americans grudgingly made the most of their circumstances, they never abandoned their own national identity, and remained ever on the alert for chances to push back against their captors. Methods of resistance were limited, but American tars sought out whatever avenues of protest were open to them. James M'Lean boldly asserted his American citizenship to anyone who asked, but few cared and his proclamations usually resulted in a flogging. Joshua Penny feigned illness to avoid disagreeable service, but in a navy where life was cheap and men treated little better than slaves, such ploys gained starkly limited results. The best hope any American had was to either prove his citizenship and be released through legal means, or join the thousands of deserters who fled the British Navy every year.

In an effort to curb the seizure of its sailors, the United States began issuing "protections" to its tars. These usually consisted of little more than a piece of paper describing the individual and certifying him to be a native-born American. Fraud was rampant, and the documents carried little weight with British officials, who had few incentives to honor them and good reason to doubt their validity. Like hundreds of his fellow Americans, M'Lean watched helplessly as a British officer ignored his protection. The commander of the first British ship to impress him tossed aside the document, commenting "I could get one, if I was in America, for half a crown, as good as that," and when he showed the protection to another officer later, insisting he was an American, the captain

responded "you may be, but we cannot trust protections."[32] British officers could disregard protections on the flimsiest of excuses; Horace Lane saw his thrown out because the captain pressing him considered the physical description inaccurate.[33] But given Britannia's naval supremacy, the simple fact that they could was often reason enough to ignore a certificate.[34] When the entire crew of the merchant vessel Joshua Penny had signed on to was pressed, he produced a protection along with several others. The captain summarily dismissed them all. "Men," he proclaimed, "I will not look at your protections—my ship is in distress, and I will have men to carry me to England."[34]

If his protection failed him, a tar still had legal recourse to try and obtain release. The primary way a sailor sought to escape his captors was by writing the American consul or an American agent for pressed seamen to intervene to the British government on his behalf. Some wrote freely, though often with limited benefit, while others suffered for having the temerity to petition for freedom. Bunnell was flogged after being caught writing a letter to the American consul, and the captain threatened him with far more brutal treatment should he "ever attempt the like again."[35]

Even in cases where the British captain knew one of his men to be an American, there were always loopholes to avoid releasing a useful sailor. At one point, the American Consul wrote Dalton that the Admiralty Court rejected his application on the grounds that:

> At the time the application was made to them, there was no evidence to show that you was on board any of His Majesty's Ships. I then obtained Michael Johnson's Deposition that he saw you on board the *Namur* after your return from London, and caused another application to be made to the Court – But they would not grant the petition, because Johnson had not sworn that you requested… to obtain your liberation. I then obtained another Deposition from Johnson, stating that you… wished to obtain your discharge as soon as possible…But they would not grant the petition because Johnson had not sworn that he believed you to be an American.[36]

By this point, Johnson had sailed, and the consul obtained a seemingly complete deposition from a different sailor, but the Court rejected that as well on technicalities. The only consolation he could offer Dalton was that another American was enduring precisely the same treatment from the court.[37]

When, as was very often the case, legal methods failed, sailors turned to desertion. Although rampant in the British Navy, this still carried tremendous risk. The ultimate penalty for desertion was hanging, and the Royal Navy routinely used public executions to deter sailors from abandoning their duties. Even if he was not given an explicit death sentence, so-called "lesser" punishments still carried the risk of death. Few survived the ordeal of being flogged through the fleet. Even "routine" floggings caused hardened sailors to faint, but this fate was exponentially worse. The convicted sailors were rowed from one ship to the next, across the entire fleet, and given as many as thirty lashes on each vessel. Total lashes numbers well into the hundreds, and few survived the ordeal. In some cases, the floggings continued for several blows even after the condemned men

Figure 3. USS *Constitution* engages HMS *Guerrière*
One of a series of four paintings depicting *Constitution*'s victory over *Guerrière* by Michele Felice Cornè

had expired.[38]

Even successfully deserting carried no promise of freedom. Sailors who deserted lived in perpetual fear of recapture; the British government knew no statute of limitations on desertion, and one English-born tar who fled to the United States avoided visiting his family again even decades after the Napoleonic Wars ended for fear of execution.[39] Though not all deserters who were recaptured were executed, all *were* returned to the employ of the British Navy. Joshua Penny and David Bunnel were both pressed twice, while Horace Lane was taken three times by press gangs. Once a man deserted, he still had to find a way back across the ocean to America, and that meant moving about in ports where press gangs roamed and signing onto merchant ships that were ever-liable to be searched for deserters.

In 1812, even the most pliant of Americans could no longer stomach their duties in the Royal Navy, for the enemy ceased to be the French and became their own countrymen, sometimes their own kin and communities. When John Thayer learned that his son, who had been taken by the British over a decade before, was on one of the British ships blockading the New England coast, he appealed to Stephen Decatur for a pass to visit the enemy vessel. Decatur recounted the moving story of father and son tearfully rushing to meet one another after so long a separation, "the feelings manifested by the old man, on receiving the hand of his son," proving beyond a doubt that the younger Thayer's endless protestations of American citizenship were not fabricated.[40] Their reunion was cut short by the British captain, however, who sent the father to return to the same hometown his son was being compelled to blockade.

Occasionally, a compassionate captain would allow men who claimed to be Americans to go below decks and avoid battle with their countrymen. Others were not so sympathetic. In Stephen Decatur's famed capture of *Macedonian,* the British captain Carden forced the Americans under his command to participate in the battle. Left with no alternative, the men

complied, and at least one was killed in action.[41]

Ironically, the war finally allowed men forced to toil aboard British vessels for years the chance to leave the Navy, albeit into even worse conditions. Many Americans, upon learning of the outbreak of hostilities, went to their captains and surrendered themselves as prisoners of war—thereby forfeiting any prize money that was due them—and were immediately put in captivity. Some British officers, however, continued to ignore protestations of American citizenship even then, and refused to send perfectly good seamen to rot in prisons, regardless of the men's pleas. One captain informed an American citizen among his crew who tried to surrender himself as a prisoner of war "if we fall in with an American man-of-war, and you do not do your duty, you shall be tied to the mast and shot at like a dog."[42]

Torn between the power the Royal Navy had over their lives and loyalty to their country, a few Americans finally risked acts of outright defiance. Durand faced one of the most harrowing experiences of all when the ship he was on prepared to launch an attack on his hometown. As his ship approached Stonington, a New England coastal town in which Durand had family, he and two fellow Americans informed the captain that they would prefer hanging to fighting their own countrymen. The infuriated captain seemed prepared to oblige; he ordered three nooses made, and had the recalcitrant sailors bound and prepared for hanging. For fifteen torturous minutes the men stood with the nooses bound tightly around their throats, the captain having given them that long to choose between following orders and death. Durand and his shipmates refused to yield, and the exasperated British officer finally elected not to go through with the execution. The three men were cut down, put in irons, and given nothing but "maggoty bread," for the remainder of the attack on Stonington, which, Durand records with smug satisfaction, accomplished nothing while causing the British considerable damage and loss of life.[44]

In 1815, Britain finally vanquished Napoleon once and for all at Waterloo, and agreed to peace with the United States shortly before that, eliminating the need for a massive navy and rampant impressment; surviving American sailors were finally allowed to go home. Samuel Dalton suffered perhaps the most tragic fate of all. Finally released from British service, he briefly returned to his hometown of Salem, Massachusetts, but soon returned to the sea to pursue his livelihood. He died less than a year after gaining his freedom, when the merchant vessel he sailed on was lost at sea. Others managed to escape in time to join their own country's Navy and gain a measure of revenge against their former tormentors. David Bunnell, who finally managed to desert successfully, immediately joined the United States Navy to settle "some small accounts with John Bull, which had been longstanding, and for which I had *his note engraven on my back.*"[45] He writes proudly of his distinguished service in Commodore Perry's thrilling victory at the Battle of Lake Erie. Not all stories ended so heroically though. Joshua Penny also fought against the British in the War of 1812, ultimately suffering capture yet again, this time to be shipped to the dreaded Melville Prison, where he spent the remainder of the war.[46]

Others simply moved on with their lives, always carrying the scars of their ordeal in the British Navy. While it was possible for postwar sailors to build prosperous lives for themselves on land, the ravages of shipboard life and the accompanying alcohol abuse left many unable to rise out of destitution. Horace Lane, after serving two arduous prison terms, openly acknowledged that he wrote because he needed the money from sales of his memoir to meet basic needs.

Sadly, he met with little success, and was reduced to hawking copies of the book on street corners.[47] Joshua Penny opened his narrative with a telling lament that "poverty" had delayed him in putting his life story to paper.[48]

Loyalty and patriotism were tenuous among sailors in the early nineteenth century, and American seamen, like their brethren in other nations, felt no qualms about serving in the merchant fleets of virtually any country. Devotion to the ideal of personal liberty, however, burned within Jack Tar, and the British practice of forcing men into service against their will elicited bitter condemnation.[49] Those unlucky enough to be taken could do little but stifle their rage though, as the Royal Navy offered them scant hope of freedom and few opportunities to protest their treatment. Overt defiance was punishable by death, and even a bitter scowl directed at a midshipman might result in a brutal flogging. To survive, Americans necessarily adapted, performing their duties, bonding with some shipmates, and even occasionally being singled out for exemplary service. But they remained constantly on the lookout for opportunities to desert. Given the improbability of obtaining release through diplomatic channels, desertion offered them the best chance of returning to their homes and families. All too often, life after returning home brought its own hardships in the form of abject poverty. Years of brutal conditions at sea left men physically broken, and the life of Jack Tar did not lend itself to saving for the future. Their financial misfortune proved beneficial to future historians, however, as it drove a few to write accounts of their experiences to support themselves. Other motives drove these men to pen memoirs as well, of course. Patriotic fervor, a desire to record religious conversions, or simply seeing a memoir as a means of allowing sailor yarns to reach a wider audience. Whatever motives they had in writing, most would have agreed with James Durand's summation of his career. "It is my wish," Durand closed, "that the foregoing pages will be a sufficient admonition to all youths to avoid the snares and usages of English men-of-wars men."[50]

Notes

1. David Bunnell,
2. James Durand, *Life and Adventures,* 47-49.
3. Ibid.
4. Myra Glenn, *Jack Tars Story: The Autobiographies and Memoirs of Sailors in Antebellum America,* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 50-84 talks about the importance in sailor narratives of asserting that Americans always fought for their independence while compelled to serve in the Royal Navy.
5. These accounts form the backbone of this project. Because of its extreme rarity, I have been unable to obtain a copy of Lane's account, *The Wandering Boy,* and have had to rely on Myra Glenn's excellent microhistory based off Lane's memoirs, "Troubled Manhood in the Early Republic: The Life and Autobiography of Horace Lane," *Journal of the Early Republic* 26 no. 1 (Spring 2006), 59-93. Finally, although I also used Samuel Leech and Joshua Davis' memoirs in this paper, they are not included in this list since neither fits the central focus of this paper: American seamen pressed into the British navy in the years leading up to the War of 1812. Leech was born in Great Britain and deserted to the United States, and Davis was pressed during the American Revolution and freed at the close of

that conflict. Finally, the experiences of these memoirists can be supplemented by available records for one man who did not pen a literary account of his time in the Royal Navy. Samuel Dalton's correspondence with the American Consul in London and his family has been published in the *Essex Institute Historical Collections,* and has been an excellent resource for this project. Essex Institute, "Letters of Samuel Dalton of Salem, An Impressed American Seaman," *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 68 (1932), 321-329.

6. J. F. Zimmerman, "Impressment of American Seamen," *Studies in History, Economics, and Public Law* 262 no. 1 (New York: Columbia University, 1925), indicates that about 10,000 seems the most plausible number, though he acknowledges being dissatisfied with the available data.

7. Joshua Wolf, "Perplexity, Vexation, and Pain," Dissertation chapter in possession of the author. I extend my heartiest thanks to Mr. Wolf for generously allowing me to make use of his work for this paper. Wolf's research yields a figure of 15,317, to be precise.

8. Glenn, *Jack Tar's Story,* 63.

9. Toll, *Six Frigates,* 272-273.

10. Ibid.

11. For a more comprehensive view of life in the Royal Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, see Roy Adkins, *Jack Tar: Life in Nelson's Navy* (London: Little Brown, 2008). N.A.M. Rodger, *Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2004) also provides excellent and exhaustively researched analysis of shipboard life in the era.

12. Ibid.

13. Glenn, *Jack Tar's Story,* 65-66.

14. Dalton, 324.

15. Joshua Davis, *A Narrative of Joshua Davis: AN American Citizen, who was Pressed and Served on Board Six Ships in the Royal Navy* (Boston: B. True, 1811), 64-65.

16. Joshua Penny, *The Life and Adventures of Joshua Penny…Who was Impressed into the British Service,* in Daniel Williams, ed. *Liberty's Captives: Narratives of Confinement in Print Culture in the Early Republic* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 216.

17. David Bunnell, *The Travels and Adventures of David C. Bunnell, during Twenty-Three Years of a Sea-Faring Life…*(Palmyra, NY: E.B. Grandin and J.R. Bortles, 1831), 46. Bunnell, it should be noted, seems prone to embellishment in his account, including a rather contrived account of his romance with one British captain's niece and a somewhat melodramatic tone throughout the account. However, his descriptions of shipboard life fit with other accounts from the time, and Glenn, who scrupulously checks all accounts against the available documentary record, uses his narrative without caveat.

18. Davis, *A Narrative of Joshua Davis,* 64-65.

19. Bunnel, *The Travels and Adventures of David C. Bunnell,* 47.

20. Ibid., 99-100.

21. Ibid., 51.

22. Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the*

Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic (Boston: beacon Press, 2000).

23. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront,* 25-27.

24. Samuel Leech, *A Voice from the Maindeck: Being a Record of the Thirty Years Adventures of Samuel Leech* (London: Chatam Publishing, 1999, originally published 1857), 72. Admittedly, Leech wrote in the United States for American consumption, but the fact that his shipmate was killed in action seems to confirm that the man was no shirker.

25. Wolf, "Hell on Earth: Impressment as a Lived Experience." Dissertation chapter in possession of the author.

26. Dalton, 326.

27. Durand, *Life and Adventures,* 47-48.

28. Wolf, "Hell on Earth: Impressment as a Lived Experience." Dissertation chapter in possession of the author.

29. Durand, *Life and Adventures*, 65; 80.

30. Davis, *A Narrative of Joshua Davis,* 65.

31. Penny, *Life and Adventures,* 214.

32. James M'Lean, *Seventeen Years' History of the Life and Sufferings of James M'Lean, an Impressed American Citizen and Seaman* in Williams, *Liberty's Captives,* 164-179.

33. Myra Glenn, "Troubled Manhood in the Early Republic: The Life and Autobiography of Horace Lane," *Journal of the Early Republic* 26 no. 1 (Spring 2006), 70.

34. Toll, *Six Frigates,* 273.

35. Penny, *Life and Adventures,* 206.

36. Bunnell, *The Travels and Adventures of David C. Bunnell,* 98-99.

37. Dalton, 325-326.

38. Ibid.

39. Durand describes witnessing three sailors, one of them American, being flogged through the fleet in *Life and Adventures,* 64-65.

40. Samuel Leech, *A Voice from the Main Deck,* 159-160.

41. Toll, *Six Frigates,* 424. This episode led to Thayer finally receiving his release from the Royal Navy, who could no longer deny that they had no claim on his services, but few had the same opportunity to so dramatically display their American citizenship.

42. Leech, *A Voice from the Main Deck,* 72.

43. Toll, *Six Frigates,* 424.

44. Durand, *Life and Adventures,* 75-78.

45. Bunnell, *The Travels and Adventures of David C. Bunnell,* 106.

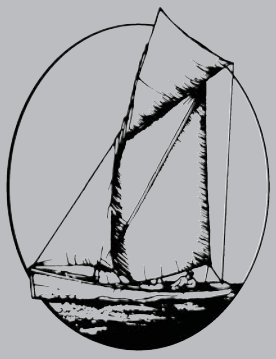
46. Penny, *Life and Adventures,* 229-237.

47. Glenn, "Troubled Manhood in the Early Republic," 59-93.

48. Penny, *Life and Adventures,* 201.

49. Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront,* 110. See also Gilje, "Loyalty and Liberty: The Ambiguous Patriotism of Jack Tar in the American Revolution," *Pennsylvania History* 67 no. 2 (Spring 2000), 165-193.

50. Durand, *Life and Adventures,* 86.



Tributaries

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No Mischief Shall Be Done:

The Ocracoke Raid of July 1813

by Wade G. Dudley

War came to North Carolina in June of 1812—a less than popular war, with the state's denizens as split on its needfulness as their elected representatives in Washington City. Few citizens had any interest in expanding the nation's borders to include Canada and Florida. Most saw little threat from the once powerful Cherokee. Though involved in the small vessels of the coasting trade, few of the estimated 1,200 sailors from the state ever crossed the Atlantic, thus less than three dozen suffered impressment by the Royal Navy in the nine years preceding 1812. As to national sovereignty and free trade, wealthy landowners and merchants alike cared less who bought their tobacco, rice, and cotton or produced the goods they imported than that markets and trading partners continued to exist. A war with Great Britain would stop trade altogether. Nonetheless, when President James Madison called for war against perfidious Britain, the good Democratic-Republican Congressmen of North Carolina decided to lock steps. So North Carolina, reluctantly, went to war in June of 1812.

While some 1,200 or so North Carolinians marched to the guns along the Canadian border for service in the regular army, others served in militia units. Most, including detachments garrisoning decrepit Fort Johnston below Wilmington on the Cape Fear River and the poorly built Fort Hampton guarding Beaufort Inlet, never heard a shot fired in anger. To some degree, they served as reaction forces – usually reacting too late to the little British activity along the coast. The same can be said for the officers and men of the U.S. Navy's establishment along the Carolina coast.

Sailing Master Thomas N. Gautier commanded Wilmington Station in June 1812. His primary role was to defend the coastal waters of North Carolina with the six gunboats (numbers 7, 146, 147, 148, 150, and 167) in ordinary (storage) there. The gunboats, a rotting legacy of Thomas Jefferson's inane belief in the superiority of coastal defense over a blue water navy, varied in design and condition; but most were sloop rigged with a sixty-foot gundeck holding four guns (12-pounder carronades, long 6-pounders, or whatever was available) in broadside, a bow mounted long pivot gun (preferably a 24-pounder), and several swivel guns. Their extremely shallow draft made the gunboats ideal for the sheltered waters of North Carolina, but top heavy and in constant danger of broaching in rougher Atlantic waters. Flimsy timbers meant the gunboats, except under ideal conditions and (preferably) in large numbers, could not face rated ships and expect to win.

Eventually, Gautier gathered the nearly two hundred men, petty officers, and officers needed to sail the vessels. He placed one gunboat in Beaufort and two at Ocracoke, retaining three vessels for the defense of Wilmington. Gautier also recruited local surgeons at Portsmouth and Wilmington. Then, in March 1813, Gautier received orders from Secretary of the Navy William Jones to return all six vessels, plus a forty-foot launch, to ordinary. He did so, less than happily, as this left the state with no defending naval vessels. An intense letter writing campaign by North Carolinians, including Governor William Hawkins and Congressman William Rufus King, forced Jones to order the return of the

Figure 1.
Sir George Cockburn.
Mezzotint after Sir William Beechey.

gunboats to service in late June—too late to defend Ocracoke Inlet and Portsmouth from British raiders.

In early May, Captain George Cockburn (Rear Admiral Cockburn as of April) led a British squadron into the lower Chesapeake Bay. Moving rapidly, Cockburn captured numerous small vessels, including several privateers (privately owned armed vessels sailing under a Letter of Marque and Reprisal—thus under the aegis of the American government). He then raided ashore, destroying military stores and taking animals and produce to feed his squadron. If there was no resistance from the locals, Cockburn left them unharmed and even paid for the material seized to provision the British. If resistance appeared, whether militia or individuals, Cockburn responded by burning public and private buildings alike and giving his men a free run at looting; as at Havre de Grace, Maryland, in May. Cockburn's sailors may have applauded their lord and master, but Americans despised him far more than most British officers on the Atlantic coast.

Admiral John Warren, commander of the British North

Figure 2.
Ocracoke Inlet, the object of Cockburn's expedition. From the Henry Mouzon map of North and South Carolina, 1777.

American Station, joined his new rear admiral in mid-May, having stripped every possible vessel from the flimsy British blockade of the American coast. Over the summer, seizures of ships and property continued in the Chesapeake, though attacks at Norfolk aimed at the seizure of American frigate *Constellation* and destruction of the local naval station failed repeatedly. Warren continued to focus his efforts on the Chesapeake, but Cockburn, an excellent tactician and strategist, discovered another opportunity to frustrate the Americans.

The Royal Navy's assault on the Chesapeake Bay had accomplished one thing: it drove American shipping southward. Whether privateers, their prizes, or furtive merchantmen, the coast of North Carolina offered both refuge and base. Deep draft merchant vessels cautiously felt their way up the Cape Fear to Wilmington or anchored off Portsmouth, transshipping their cargoes to smaller craft of the coasting trade and bargaining for local cargoes. Privateers refitted at the local chandlers, then raided British convoys following

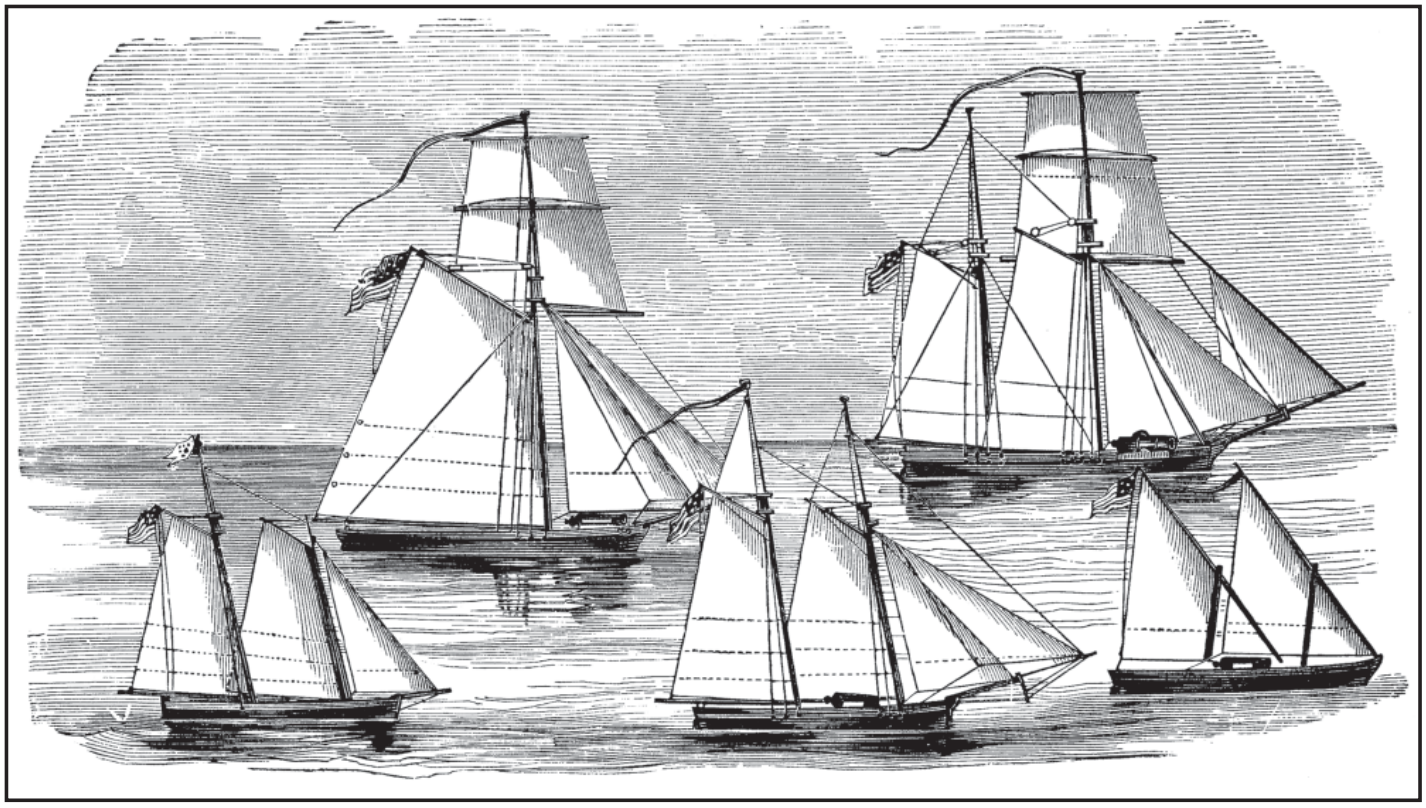


Figure 3.
"Types of gunboats authorized in 1809". From *Harper's Encyclopedia of United States History, 1912.*

the Gulf Stream northward from the rich West Indies or sailed further afield to wreak havoc on British shipping. Ships with shallower draft could find succor at Beaufort, and those of ten foot or less draft often crossed the bar at Ocracoke Inlet into the relative safety of the sounds behind North Carolina's Outer Banks. From there, coasters and privateers alike could follow the sounds northward to the Pasquatank River and the Dismal Swamp Canal, connecting directly to the Elizabeth River, Norfolk, and the Chesapeake Bay.

Realizing the importance of Ocracoke Inlet and its numerous trade connections, Cockburn requested permission to raid Portsmouth and, if feasible, into the sounds of North Carolina. On July 2, Warren detached Cockburn, two 74-gun ships-of-the-line, a frigate, a brig, a troopship (with detachments from the 102nd Artillery Regiment and 250 marines under a Lieutenant-Colonel Napier), and two schooners to raid Ocracoke Inlet. After discovering intelligence that at least two privateers sheltered off Portsmouth, Cockburn hastened his pace. His squadron arrived off that dangerous coast late on the evening of July 11. Lacking knowledge of local defenses or the dangerous coast itself, Cockburn ordered the squadron to anchor, lowered boats, and began to debark his sailors and marines.

Around 2 a.m. on July 12, British sailors bent their backs to their oars, planning to reach their targets before dawn. A division of the lightest boats, loaded with sailors and supported by several rocket boats manned by the 102nd Artillery, headed for the shipping channel and any armed vessels anchored there. The rapid seizure of these ships would reduce casualties to follow on waves. A second division, in heavier barges and flatboats, carried marines and the remainder of the artillery. This division would seize the harbor of Portsmouth and land troops to sweep the southern tip of Ocracoke Island. A third division, the brig *Conflict* with the schooners and all remaining troops, followed the second division, a floating reserve to act as required. Unfortunately for the Royal

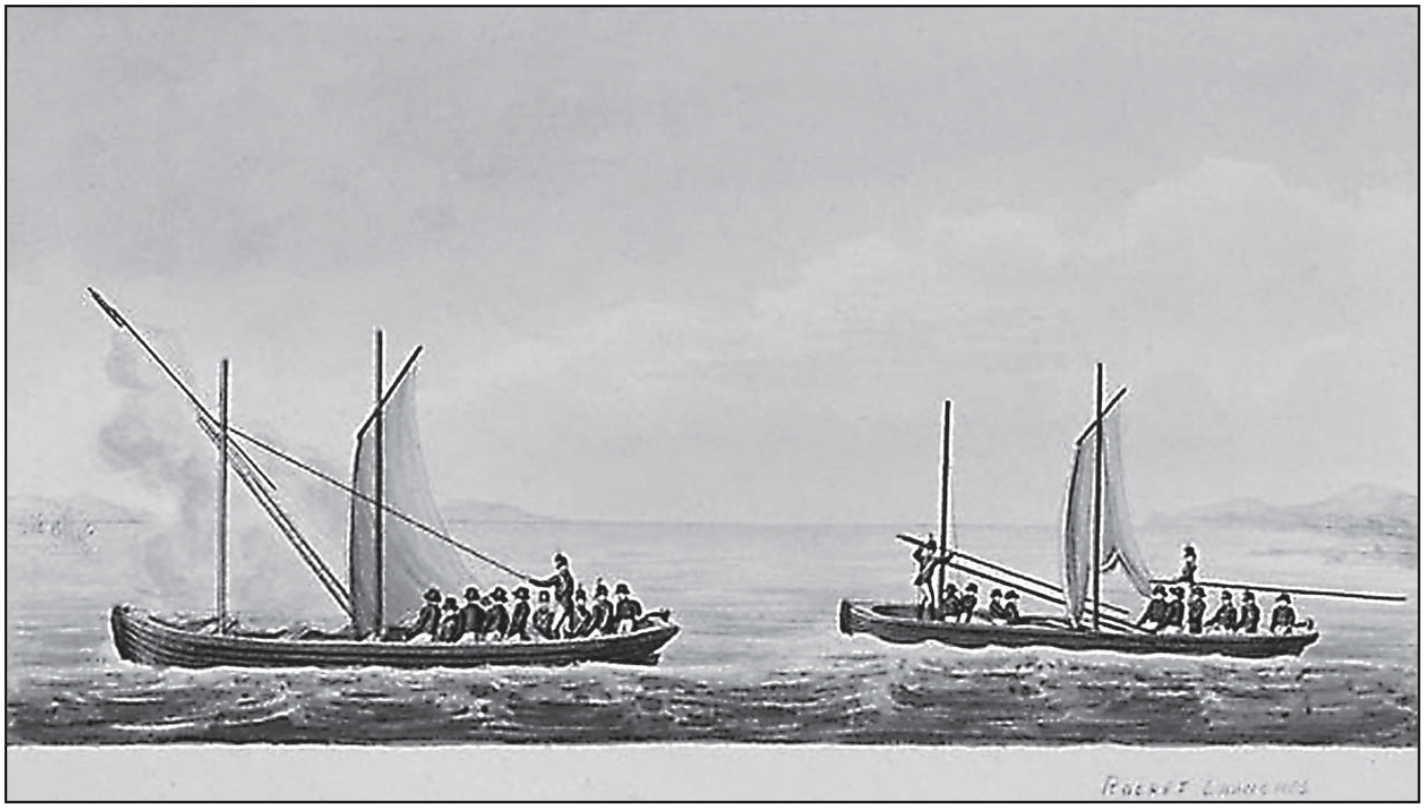


Figure 4.
Congreve Rocket boats.
Print by Col. William Congreve,
Royal Artillery.

Navy, heavy swells, an offshore breeze, and the fact that an uncertain Cockburn had anchored too far away meant the raiding force crossed the bar and rounded the final point with the light of dawn behind them. Broadsides from two (now prepared) American privateers, the brig *Anaconda* (18 guns) and the schooner *Atlas* (10 guns), began to pepper the British boats.

As rockets soared over their heads, exhausted rowers found the strength for a last rush at the privateers. Whether frightened by the rockets, or the sheer number of attackers (Master John O. Farnum of *Anaconda* recorded a count of thirty to thirty-two barges mounting 9- and 12- pounders in their bow, carrying twenty-five to thirty-five men each, and supported by two schooners), American resistance quickly ceased. The crew of *Anaconda* cut its cable, took to their boats, and rowed like mad for the Pamlico River. *Ajax* simply struck its flag rather than face enraged British boarders. Ashore, the good citizens of Portsmouth offered no resistance, especially after an unknown marine shot Richard Casey in the chest as he tried to flee with his family in a small craft (sources differ on whether or not Casey survived). In the harbor, several neutral vessels continued at anchor, perfectly safe from the Royal Navy. Not so for the American coasting craft, busily transshipping goods to and from the neutrals. These fled for the Pamlico Sound, quickly escaping British pursuit; a pursuit soon abandoned due to unfamiliarity with local waters.

Among the escapees was the United States Revenue Cutter *Mercury*, commanded by Captain David Wallace. After spotting the approaching enemy, Wallace waited for the evacuation of Ocracoke's Customs House documents before setting every stitch of sail for New Bern. A few rounds from pursuers hurried the vessel along. Around 5 p.m., Wallace brought the first word of Cockburn's raid to the mainland. Amid great panic, the local militia (and some four hundred volunteers—unfortunately without weapons) fell in, fully expecting a thousand British regulars to storm ashore at any time. Messengers rode inland, spreading the news—and the panic. From

Elizabeth City to Wilmington, farmers abandoned their fields for their guns. Families fled to the local towns from the countryside, fearing the ghosts of Tarleton and Fanning. Governor Hawkins, with a cavalry escort, galloped for the coast. He would, somewhat belatedly, spend the next month appraising the (lack of) defenses in his state. Weeks would pass before North Carolina regained some sense of normalcy.

Not so for the British, as Cockburn ordered "that no mischief shall be done to the unoffending Inhabitants and that what is taken from them shall be strictly paid for and accounted for." Then he evaluated his options as his men gave Portsmouth a hurried looting, with a tad of vandalism added (from feather beds to books on the shelf to clothing, if American accounts can be trusted). Upon discovering that no ships worthy of capture anchored at New Bern or Washington (and perhaps influenced by the difficulties already experienced as his boats tried to navigate shallow local waters), Cockburn ordered the locals to drive their cattle and poultry to Portsmouth, whence his men began the tedious process of loading the live stores. Three days later, and after leaving $1,600 to pay for the livestock seized (not enough, if the American count of 200 cattle, 400 sheep, and 1,600 in poultry taken can be believed), Cockburn's squadron disappeared over the horizon.

Though other British ships, sailors, and their victims infrequently plagued North Carolina's shores from June 1812 to March 1815, the Ocracoke Raid solidified the importance of relying on something besides the (well deserved) fear of the Graveyard of the Atlantic as a deterrent to enemy raids—especially as maritime activity along that coast increased. Thus Fort Macon replaced Fort Hamilton, work was done on the fortifications below Wilmington, and when enemies again threatened the Carolina coast, Forts Clark and Hatteras stood ready to resist them at the Outer Banks. Similarly, the success of the Dismal Swamp Canal encouraged a spate of internal improvements in the decades following 1815, attempting to tie the distant west to eastern ports. The lessons of the War of 1812 clearly spurred the Old North State to leave its Rip Van Winkle period behind and take the first, tottering steps to enter a market-oriented world. Finally, the lesson of successful privateers remained in common memory and, in 1861, they would again sail from the sounds of Carolina and the port of Wilmington.

1. Sarah McCulloh Lemmon, *Frustrated Patriots: North Carolina and the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1973), 3-23.

2. William S. Dudley, ed., *The Naval War of 1812: A Documentary History*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992), 2: 60, 62, 151-153. Various letters.

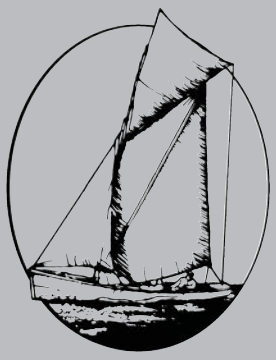
3. Wade G. Dudley, *Splintering the Wooden Wall: The British Blockade of the United States, 1812-1815* (Annapolis, MD: Naval institute Press, 2003), 90-97.

4. Account of the Ocracoke Raid taken from Dudley, *Splintering the Wooden Wall*, 97-98; Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, 2:184-187.

5. Lemmon, 133-136.

6. Dudley, *Naval War of 1812*, 2:185.

7. Lemmon, 132.



Tributaries

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Book Reviews

American Privateers in the War of 1812: The Vessels and Their Prizes as Recorded in Niles' Weekly Register
Edited by Timothy S. Good
Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2012
7" x 10", softcover, 209 pages
Appendices, notes, bibliography, index
ISBN: 9780786466955

With the upcoming bicentennial of the War of 1812 approaching, interest in the conflict is reaching a level not seen in decades. National Park Service employee Timothy S. Good uses this volume to shed light on an aspect of the War of 1812 that has not received attention equal to its contribution during the war. While much has been written about the fledgling United States Navy and its actions during the War of 1812, there has been scant work conducted on the fleet of American privateers that successfully harassed, captured and destroyed British shipping throughout the war. This book addresses that lack of information by compiling accounts of American privateers published in *The Weekly Register*, commonly referred to as *Niles' Weekly Register*.

The Weekly Register was a subscription-based newspaper founded in 1811 by Baltimore printer Hezekiah Niles. Within its pages, Niles demonstrated his unwavering support for the American cause and advocated the increased use of privateers in the conflict. Such was his support for the use of privateers that Niles provided weekly updates of privateer action and developed a comprehensive list of British ships captured by American forces. Niles did not list all captures though, as he listed only those that had a majority of the merchant's cargo removed by the privateer, the merchant vessel was burnt by the privateer, or a prize crew successfully navigated the prize into a friendly port. If the vessel was recaptured by the British, Niles did not include it in his list.

From the pages of *The Weekly Register*, Good has compiled all of the information regarding American privateers and organized them in a manner that allows for quick reference by the reader. The first dozen pages of the book introduce Hezekiah Niles, *The Weekly Register*, American privateers in general and the damage they caused on British shipping during the War of 1812. It is an informative dozen pages and appropriate in length as this is a reference book of privateer accounts and not an historical analysis of the effect American privateers had on British shipping and the American and British economies.

Good then lists all captures made by American privateers in each of the subsequent two parts of the book. Part I lists all the prizes alphabetically by the capturing vessel's name. All the information printed in *The Weekly Register* concerning each ship is printed under each entry. Part I also includes a section listing all non-privateer captures made during the war, including those by the United States Navy, civilian forces, Revenue Cutters, and the United States Army. Part II provides a comprehensive list of all captures, by both privateers and non-privateer forces, in the chronological order in which Niles published them in *The Weekly Register*.

Not written to be a historical analysis of privateer captures during the

war, the book does a commendable job of getting all the information out to the reader in a format that they can use, whether they are looking for information about a specific vessel or information regarding a certain date during the war. *American Privateers in the War of 1812: The Vessels and Their Prizes as Recorded in Niles Weekly Register* is an excellent reference to privateer captures of British shipping during the War of 1812 and should be a welcome addition to the library of many historians.

Daniel J. Bera
East Carolina University

How Britain Won the War of 1812: The Royal Navy's Blockades of the United States, 1812-1815.
By Brian Arthur
Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2011
6-1/2" x 9-1/4", hardcover, 342 pages
Illustrations, maps, appendices, notes, bibliography, index
ISBN: 978-1843836650

Brian Arthur's provocatively titled *How Britain Won the War of 1812* is a powerful new look at that complex and ill-understood conflict. Sweeping aside the folklore of frigate duels and Andrew Jackson's victory at New Orleans, his approach focuses on the economic aspects of the war. His conclusion is blunt and difficult to refute: Britain crushed the United States economically, much as it had Napoleon, and felt little or no repercussions. By the last year of the war the American government was completely bereft of funds; its maritime trade had almost entirely ceased, and with it the bulk of its tax base; federal taxes were burdensome and inciting resistance to the war effort; domestic efforts to raise loans came far short of the mark, and no foreign power was willing to make loans to the beleaguered republic. While Britain proved willing to grant a generous peace treaty, the United States had achieved none of the war goals set forth in Madison's 1812 speech in which he asked Congress to declare war. Simply put, the war was a disaster for the United States, and the American interpretation of it as a victory a singularly strange conclusion to leap to, one that took a strange twisting of fact, emerging mythology and republican ideology to concoct.

Arthur's focus is admirable: he sets forth the problem, defines it and considers alternative viewpoints, sets the background, provides analysis and a conclusion. His take is data-driven, and he generates lots of it, providing eight chapters of concise text for a total of just over two hundred pages and forty pages of valuable appendices. Chapter one gives the background to maritime blockades as a form of economic warfare. Chapter two considers the operational difficulties of operating a blockade in the age of sail. Chapter three gives the background to the War of 1812. Chapter four looks at the operations of the early years of the British blockade up until 1814, while chapter five considers blockade operations from 1814 to 1815. Chapters six and seven mirror the previous two chapters in chronology, but considers the blockades' impact on American merchants and trade and on the federal government's finances. He wraps up his arguments with a succinct conclusion and an epilogue, followed by an impressive array of tables and graphs that underscore his thesis. Readers are not only quickly convinced of the validity of Arthur's arguments, they are bludgeoned into submission by a steady stream of relentlessly well-reasoned interpretation and fact.

Arthur himself brings impeccable credentials to the fight, and brings some strapping friends, too. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of Greenwich's Maritime Institute, and conducted a great deal of research utilizing primary sources on both sides of the Atlantic. This work

was originally a doctoral dissertation, and to a certain extent retains the features of a dissertation in that it truly argues a thesis rather than attempting to charm the reader. Famed naval historian Andrew Lambert describes Arthur's book as "essential," and as usual he has gotten it right. *How Britain Won the War of 1812* not only generates an important argument, it distills the argument for the reader, reducing it to its essence which is so forcefully stated in its title. This book is a useful reinterpretation of the war aimed at scholars, and will likely stand for decades as an argument to be contended with by those writing on the subject.

Joshua M. Smith
American Merchant Marine Academy

The Civil War Naval Encyclopedia
Edited by Spencer C. Tucker
Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2011
2 volumes, 7-1/4" x 10-1/4", hardcover,
xxx + 829 pages
Illustrations, maps, chronology, glossary, bibliography, indices
ISBN: 9781598843385

The American Civil War was, in many ways, the first "modern" conflict and the last of the "horse-and-musket" era at the same time. Armies overwhelmingly relied on horse and mules, used large quantities of smoothbore weapons, and fought in close order, yet they also made extensive use of railroads, deployed vast numbers of rifled personal weapons and artillery, and practiced large-scale entrenchment.

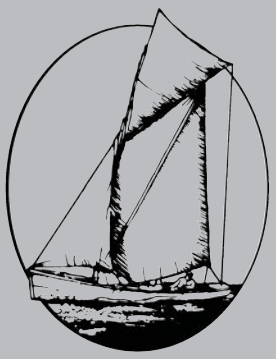
At sea, there was a similar melding of old and new. The vast majority of warships was of wooden construction, carried sails, and was armed with smoothbore weapons. on the other hand, most warships primarily relied on steam power for propulsion and their guns were often of advanced scientific design firing both shot and shell. Many carried armor protection. The most revolutionary, the monitors, brought together iron construction, steam propulsion, armor protection, and rotating turrets mounting a few very heavy guns; a combination that came to epitomize naval strength for most of the next century.

The Civil War Naval Encyclopedia addresses this naval war through a large collection of brief topical essays. These run the gamut from short biographies of prominent figures to narratives of battles and campaigns. Along the way, these essays also examine technologies, strategic and tactical doctrines and practices, naval construction facilities and programs, provisions and supplies, domestic and social developments in the navies, the careers of significant ships, and even some of the literature and historiography of the war.

The encyclopedia includes a useful summary of the naval war. Each essay concludes with suggestions for further reading on its topic and there is also a general bibliography of the Civil War at sea. Since the essays are arranged in alphabetical order, the two indices are invaluable for locating material. One indexes articles by category, while the other is a standard general index. For those less familiar with the topic, the chronology of the naval war, the collection of maps, and the glossary are very useful.

Spencer Tucker has assembled a fine array of expert contributors for this project. Given his own publication record, it is not unexpected that he himself makes a major contribution to the roster of essays. *The Civil War Naval Encyclopedia* will become an important starting place for students, researchers, and aficionados of the Civil War at sea for many years to come.

Mark Meyers
New Bern, North Carolina



Tributaries

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