

## A CONFEDERATE RAID

Being a Faithful Historical Narrative, Derived from Original Sources

(Drawings by Warren Sheppard)

Winfield M. Thompson

(Copyright 1905 by Winfield M. Thompson, Boston Mass.)

(Concluded)

IN the stream lay the revenue cutter Caleb Cushing, a topsail schooner, with an armament consisting of a 32-pounder mounted on a pivot amidships, and a brass 12-pounder Dahlgren forward. Though the adventurers on the Archer did not know it, the captain of the cutter had that day died of heart disease, and the vessel was in charge of a young lieutenant, with a short crew, 14 men being ashore on detail or leave.

As Lieutenant Read lounged in apparently careless attitude on the deck of the Archer, scanning with his keen brown eyes the water front, the town rising in graceful outline against the flushed Western sky, and the calm harbor, guarded by heavy masonry forts, some of them still in process of construction, he turned rapidly over in his mind his plan of campaign. The supreme moment had come. Here he was in an enemy's port, unsuspected. The town he had dreamed of destroying lay before him;

weapons with which he had hoped to strike. He did not blame Mr. Brown, but resigned the idea of cutting out either of the steamers, and with characteristic initiative, fell to debating other plans. The night was so calm and still he doubted if a boat could approach the gunboats without detection by the watchmen who guarded them, while fireballs thrown on board would in the absence of wind do small damage. Giving over this project also, Lieutenant Read now turned his attention to the cutter, and formulated a plan of action. The Cushing swung to one anchor, and the chain probably could be slipped. Her bulwarks were not so high but a boarding party could go over them from boats at a single bound. It was apparent there was but one man on watch. Boats passing to and fro were not challenged. It would be easy to board the cutter, and it should be done.

After the plan was settled, and the men had been



Portland from Lower Harbor

the shipping he hoped to cut out or burn was at hand, and his men were at that moment, most of them, below decks engaged in making balls of oakum, and saturating them with turpentine, against the hour when they could be pitched burning aboard the gunboats at the wharves.

The hours of that peaceful June evening were anxious ones to the young commander, for all his daring and sangfroid. With Brown, on whom he depended as a right bower, he held an anxious consultation with regard to attempting to cut out the New York steamer, or, in the morning, on her arrival, the Boston steamer Forest City. Steam was not up on the Chesapeake, and Brown doubted if he could start her engines alone, or even those of the Boston steamer. Had there been another engineer in the party, such things might be done; but the task seemed beyond the powers of the third assistant engineer of the Florida. This took from Read one of the chief

given their instructions, time hung heavily on the hands of the adventurers on the Archer. There was a young moon, that spread a gentle radiance over the harbor and the city. It would set about midnight, and until it went down nothing could be done. Another check was a small steamer plying back and forth between the city and Cushing's Island, where a party was in progress at the Ottawa House. As the steamer passed on one of her trips the sound of laughter and women's voices came across the water to the silent watchers on the fishing schooner's deck, and carried them back to their homes, their mothers, sisters, sweethearts or wives. It had been long since they had listened to the sound of a gentle woman's voice, and this, of all moments, was the last in which they cared to hear it. Such reminders of the softer side of existence are not the sort of thing to stimulate a man to acts that perhaps will cost him his life.



Channel out of Portland Harbor

Thus reflecting, doubtless, and watching the dying moon, the men of the South waited, on the deck of the Archer, until after midnight, when the harbor lay in darkness. Then the word was passed in a whisper to carry out the commander's instructions for boarding the cutter. The two boats were brought alongside and silently manned. Each man took off his shoes. Care was taken to avoid stepping on the oars, as the smallest sound carried far over the glassy water. With twelve men in each, including one of the prisoners for a pilot, the boats shoved off. Their tholepins had been muffled with rags and marlin, and the men rowed the short distance between the schooner and the cutter without making a splash as they carefully dipped their blades. Going slowly, they came up to the cutter from astern. The watch was forward, and by the time he hailed, the boats were close aboard. Hailing again, and getting no answer, the man ran aft, took a look at the approaching boats, and rushed down into the cabin to arouse the commanding officer, Lieutenant Dudley Davenport. The lieutenant, his eyes heavy with sleep, reached the deck to find himself confronted by four men who pointed pistols at him, and demanded his surrender. One of them was Lieutenant Read.

"Keep quiet, and we will not harm you. Make a noise and you are a dead man! You are a prisoner to the Confederate States of America."\*

Lieutenant Davenport heard these words as two men seized his hands and put irons on them. He was powerless, for his vessel was already in the hands of the Confederate crew. They had found the main hatch open on reaching the cutter's deck, and springing down it to where the crew lay asleep in their hammocks, in the dim light of a bulkhead lantern they had covered the men with pistols, and made them prisoners. To put them in irons and gag them was the work of but a few minutes. Lieutenant Davenport was confined in his room.

In five minutes after their arrival alongside the cutter the Confederates were in undisputed possession of the vessel, fore and aft. So silently and expeditiously had their work been done that not a sound made on board had carried across the water to the forts or the docks, or to any of the other vessels in port.

As soon as their prisoners were confined, the men from the Archer began getting the cutter underway. An attempt to slip the chain proving a failure, as a link could not be cut, and no shackle was in sight, there was nothing to do but heave up the anchor. This took half an hour, the clink of the windless sounding ominously loud to the anxious Confederates as the anchor came to

\* Statement of Lieutenant Dudley Davenport—*Portland Advertiser*.

the bow. In half an hour it was up, and with two boats ahead, for there was not a breath of air, the cutter was slowly towed toward Hussey's Sound, a Northern outlet of the harbor not much used, by which the forts could be avoided.

Before the short June night had given way to the first pale pink of dawn, a soft land breeze from Northwest sprang up, as one may always be expected to do in the morning in that latitude in summer, and setting her sails, the cutter made gentle way, aided after daylight by the first of the ebb tide. At six o'clock she was about four miles off the harbor islands, and increasing her offing slowly. The land breeze grew fainter and fainter as the morning advanced, and about eight o'clock, after an interval of calm, a very light air from Southeast was met.

At eight o'clock that morning the Collector of Customs for Portland, Jedediah Jewett, was at breakfast, scanning the columns of his morning paper, when an excited messenger knocked at his front door. He brought the intelligence that the cutter Caleb Cushing had put to sea in the night, and could then be seen, from the observatory on Munjoy hill, standing to the Eastward. Lieutenant J. H. Merryman, of the revenue cutter service, had arrived that morning on the Boston boat, to take command of the Cushing, and had seen the cutter at 4 A. M. standing out.

Collector Jewett at once jumped to the conclusion that Lieutenant Davenport, who was of Southern birth, had improved the opportunity afforded by the death of the Cushing's commander, to run away with the cutter, to turn her over to the Confederates.

Collector Jewett hastened to the custom house, and began an active campaign for the recovery of the cutter. Word was sent to the agents of the Boston and New York steamers, requesting that the boats be chartered to the government for the chase of the Caleb Cushing. Messengers were sent to Port Preble, asking for a detachment of troops, and some guns to be put on the steamers. Another messenger went to a militia camp outside the city with a similar request. By this time the news had spread that an expedition was being formed to recapture the cutter, and citizens armed with various kinds of weapons, from swords to fowling pieces, came running to the docks to volunteer their services. The mayor of the city, Captain Jacob McClellan, requisitioned from the state armory certain pieces of ordnance, and assisted in the embarkation. As steam had to be got up on the Chesapeake, and bales of cotton arranged along her sides to protect her engines and boilers, she was not ready as soon as the Forest City. The tide was low, and as this delayed the latter in taking on a detachment of the 17th U. S. infantry at Fort Preble, it was nearly



Jacob McClellan  
Mayor of Portland in 1863

11 o'clock before the steamer got out of the harbor. The Chesapeake was about half an hour later in getting away.\* Two small tugs, the Tiger and Uncle Sam, also went out.

While this flotilla was taking the sea the Cushing, in the light Southeasterly wind, was standing offshore on the port tack, making perhaps two knots an hour through the water. Lieutenant Read was below. He had breakfasted with Mr. Brown, and Lieutenant Davenport had been their guest. At breakfast Lieutenant Read, knowing Lieutenant Davenport to be a Southern man, had said:

"I am sorry, Lieutenant, to meet you under these circumstances, but this is one of the fortunes of war. You, being a Southern man, ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Lieutenant Davenport replied:

"You have acted humanely, sir, and in case we are taken I'll represent you favorably to the United States authorities."†

All the morning the Confederates had been searching the Cushing fore and aft for ammunition to serve the guns in case of pursuit. The final throw of the dice

\* The Forest City carried 28 men of the 17th U. S. Infantry, Captain N. Prime, with one 6-pounder field piece, one 12-pounder, and ammunition. Muskets were furnished from Fort Preble to about 40 citizens on this steamer, which carried about 200 men in all.

† On the Chesapeake was a detachment of 27 men from Co. G., 7th Maine volunteers. Captain Henry Warren, two brass 6-pounders from the State Arsenal, and about 50 armed citizens, including several old men-of-warsmen, and even a fighting parson, for, according to a local paper, "Rev. Mr. Waldron, of the Park Street Church, rendered valuable service in helping to make cartridges."

‡ Journal of one of Lieutenant Read's men—*Portland Advertiser*.

would be made when a chase began, and its success depended on supporting it with shot from the cutter's battery. They found 400 pounds of powder, but only five shot. The first of these was discovered in a potato locker, and others in various out-of-the-way places, showing that they were not part of the regular supply of the ship. Demands had been made on Lieutenant Davenport and the crew to reveal the location of the shot locker, but they had resolutely refused to do so, to a man. All hands declared the cutter had the day before received orders to join in the pursuit of the Tacony, and had taken on her powder, but not her shot and shell. This story the Confederates believed, while passing over in their excited search a locker containing more than 90 solid shot for the cutter's 32-pounder.

Events following the search for ammunition are very well told in the paper by Robert Hunt, already mentioned. He says:

"Our little breeze died away, and Read ordered all hands below to get what rest they could. While I was looking astern I saw what looked to be a steamer coming out, and, as I thought, heading for us. I called Read, who came on deck, and, after looking at her awhile, said he guessed it was the Boston steamer bound out. He went below again, telling me to keep an eye on her. I shortly discovered another steamer astern of her, also coming out, and, on looking through the glasses, saw a crowd of soldiers on the upper deck. I immediately called our commander. On his reaching the deck, after one glance at the steamer, he called all hands to clear for action. The 32-pounder was loaded (it was located amidships), and the order given to put the helm hard down, the gunner and crew in the meantime training the gun to get a range on the nearest steamer. The cutter would not mind her helm.



Jedediah Jewett  
Collector of Customs, Portland, 1863



Southport, Maine



Anchorage of Archer, Portland

"Hard down!" shouted Read, jumping toward the helm.

"Hard down it is," I answered.

"Oh, for a six-knot breeze and a few shot or shell!" cried Read, "we would show them some fun!"

"The steamers were directly in our wake, and when Read saw we could not get an effective shot at them he said: 'We will give them a scare, anyhow!'"

"The gun was trained as far aft as possible, and the order given to fire. When the smoke cleared away both steamers were broadside to, as if turning back, and we gave a yell, and shouted, 'load her up again!' But we had nothing to load her with. Read at once gave orders to set fire to the cutter and abandon her.

"The prisoners were brought on deck, put in two boats, given the key to their irons, and turned adrift. I jumped down into the cabin and proceeded to break up the furniture and collect the bedding to set on fire. When the order was given to set fire, I struck a match, and in an instant the whole cabin seemed on fire. I rushed for the companionway, and when I reached the deck I was pretty badly scorched—eyebrows, lashes and mustache singed, and face and hands pretty well blistered. At this time all hands were in the boats, with the exception of the gunner and myself. He had gathered up a lot of scrap iron, nails, spikes, etc., with which he had loaded the gun for a parting shot. Although the steamers were dead astern and not within three or four points of the range of the gun, they both stopped when the last shot was fired.

"We pulled away from the cutter and lay on our oars, knowing that it would be useless to try to get away. Read ordered us to throw our arms overboard, and every man stood up in the boats, unbuckled his belt, to which were attached his revolver and cutlass, and dropped it over the side. Read then produced a shot-bag of specie which he divided among us. Our next act was to tie a white handkerchief to our boat hook and await our fate.

The first steamer had been steering directly for us from the time we abandoned the cutter. The other stopped to pick up the crew of the cutter. We noticed that when the first steamer got near us, a detachment of soldiers on the upper deck had their muskets aimed directly at us, as if about to fire, but an officer sprang in front of them with a drawn sword and they at once came to shoulder.

"We were ordered alongside, a rope was thrown to us, and we were taken on board. One man at a time was allowed to come over the side. He was searched, and then his arms tied behind his back with a piece of rattling stuff, and he was placed under guard before another was taken on board."

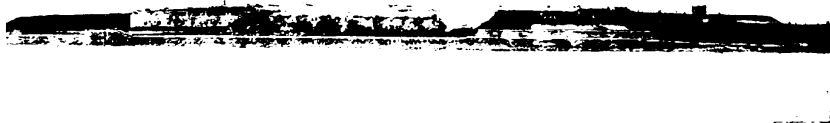
Meanwhile two boatloads of excited volunteers had started from the Forest City with the intention of boarding the cutter. The first crew expected to engage the Confederates, but on seeing the vessel in flame turned back.\* The second were bent on subduing the fire with buckets. By the time they got alongside, they gave up the job, contenting themselves with taking away a small boat half full of water that lay alongside. The man who got into the boat had no knife to cut the painter, and the time he took in untying it seemed an age to the others, who felt somewhat uncomfortable with red hot cinders and bits of burning sails and rigging falling on them, and the cutter's magazine likely to explode at any moment.\*\*

While these boats' crews were returning to their steamer the fire reached the cutter's magazine, at 1:48 o'clock.

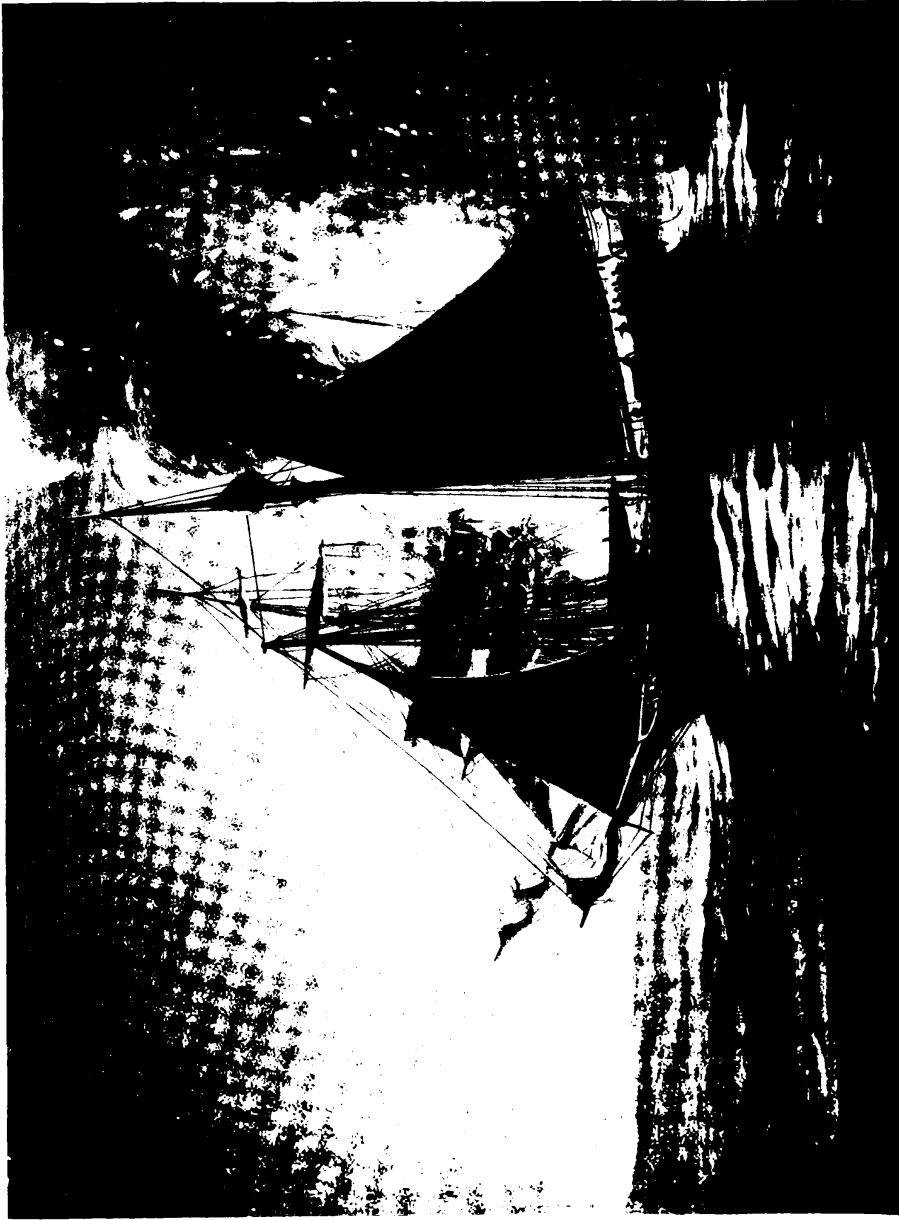
There was a terrific explosion that shook the little fleet standing by, and caused a disturbance on the surface of the sea. The whole deck of the vessel seemed to fly upward, and a burst of flame and vast column of smoke rose from her shattered hull. Fragments of iron, black-

\* Memoirs of Captain Benjamin J. Willard, Portland.

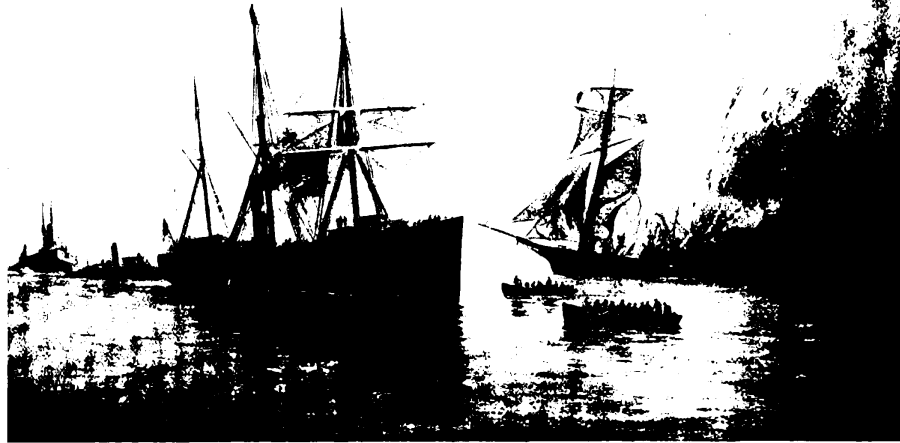
\*\* *Portland Argus*, June 29, 1863.



Fort Warren, Boston Harbor



Burning of the Tecony



Blowing up of the Cutter, Caleb Cushing

ened timbers, bits of plank and spars, and innumerable cinders flew out of them, and fell into the sea around, and, staggering as she went, the Cushing settled by the stern and disappeared. One of her spars, dislodged by the explosion, came up in the whirlpool caused by her disappearance, and after rising heel uppermost 15 or 20 feet, slowly disappeared, drawn down, doubtless by a piece of rigging attaching it to the wreck.

The Cushing sank in 33 fathoms, about 10 or 12 miles South-Southeast from the outer islands of Portland harbor.

From the fisherman Titcomb, who had been held a prisoner on the Cushing, the captors of Lieutenant Read learned that the Archer was in company, to the Eastward. She had three men on board, including the other fisherman. She was towed to Portland, and with the steamers, was received by the people with the ringing of bells, firing of guns and other demonstrations of popular joy over the downfall of the "rebel pirates."

When the Archer was searched chronometers, nautical instruments, charts, books, chests and various other things from Lieutenant Read's prizes were found on board, besides the veritable 6-pounder of the Clarence—without ammunition, all of which had been expended aboard the Tacony—about 25 muskets, and some cutlasses. Lieutenant Read's carpet bag, containing his commission, journal, the logs of his cruise, letters and other papers, was also found.

While the schooner was being searched an idler on deck picked up a musket, and accidentally discharged it, mortally wounding a man on the dock (Mr. Jacob Gould, a stevedore employed in discharging the vessel), who died

in a short time. This was the only life lost in connection with the raid of Lieutenant Read and his men, a record that speaks well for their humane manner of carrying on a kind of warfare in which men have been known to lose their regard for human life.

Thrown prisoners into the guard house at Port Preble, Lieutenant Read and his crew were transferred in a few weeks to Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, where they were exchanged about 16 months after the final events in their memorable raid.

\* \* \*

## COMMANDER MAFFITT.

John Newland Maffitt was of Irish blood, and was born at sea, February 22, 1819, his parents then being en route to America. His father, a Methodist preacher, was born in Dublin. Entering the Naval Academy in 1832, from New York, John N. Maffitt reached the rank of lieutenant in June, 1848. After seven years of active service in that grade, he was placed on the reserved list in September, 1855. He resigned from the Navy May 2, 1861. In the early part of 1862 he carried a cargo of cotton to England. Receiving an appointment to command the Florida, he took charge of her August 7, 1862, at Nassau. Hard service and the effects of yellow fever having broken his health, he was obliged to relinquish his command in September, 1863. His last years were spent in Wilmington, N. C., where he died May 15, 1886.

## THE FLORIDA.

The Florida was built at Liverpool to Confederate account, and fitted out under the direction of James D. Bullock, a commander in the Confederate Navy. She cleared from Liverpool March 22, 1862, as the Oreto, merchantman, and arrived at Nassau, N. P., April 28, the voyage having been made chiefly under sail. Work of putting on her battery began at Green

Cay, August 7. The battery consisted of two 7½-inch and six 6-inch rifled guns. She entered Mobile September 4, 1862, after boldly running the blockade, flying at first, as a *raze de guerre*, the English flag and pennant. Although then armed, her guns could not be used, as they were without elevating screws, primers, or rammers. She entered Mobile, therefore, without firing a shot, although the United States ships Oneida and Winona, after discovering her character, subjected her to a heavy fire. One 11-inch shell entered her hull between wind and water, taking off one man's head, and wounding nine. Only her speed and a smooth sea saved her. More than three months were required for repairs. For his failure to stop her, Commander George H. Preble, U. S. N., senior officer on the blockade, was summarily dismissed from the navy by President Lincoln, but he was subsequently reinstated, and, in 1872, a court of inquiry exonerated him from blame.

The Florida's active career lasted until October 7, 1864, when she was captured in the harbor of Bahia, Brazil, by the United States steam sloop Wachusett, sister ship of the Kearsarge, which destroyed the Alabama. Brazil complained her neutrality was violated by the cutting out. While negotiations for the Florida's return were in progress, the ship was run into at Hampton Roads by a steam transport and sunk. After the war the United States saluted the Brazilian flag in amends for her capture. The Florida and her tenders destroyed about \$15,000,000 worth of commerce. In the Alabama claims settlement in 1872 England paid the United States \$4,616,303.93 on their account, to \$6,557,690.03 on account of the Alabama, and \$3,263,149.55 for the Shenandoah.

#### CHARLES W. READ.

In a victorious cause Charles W. Read would have won undying fame. His abilities were singularly like those of Paul Jones, and his achievements in commerce-destroying of a similar nature to those of the great Scotch rover. Unlike Jones, he was denied the glory of a successful sea fight, though his courage was such there can be no doubt he would have acquitted himself with credit. Inasmuch as the struggle in which he played an important part was between brethren of the same land, it is perhaps as well he did not achieve greatness in battle. His activities, however, in many scenes of action, entitle him to credit for tireless energy, unbounded enthusiasm and almost reckless bravery. He was forever making plans for furthering his cause, and nothing served to dampen his ardor. He was three times a prisoner to the North. He took the fortunes of war as they came, light-heartedly, and fought for his cause even after it was beyond help.

When the war began Read was a midshipman on board the U. S. frigate Powhatan, then at Vera Cruz. He resigned his commission, and on the arrival of his ship at New York hurried to Montgomery, the Confederate capital, to offer his services to the South. The Confederacy had no navy, and he was obliged to wait for an appointment. "It was hard for me to keep from volunteering in the army," he wrote, in reminiscences, after the war, "but I remembered the South had but few sailors, and needed them all on the water."

On May 1, 1861, he reported for duty as a midshipman in the Confederate navy on board the steamer *McRae*, a 600-ton bark-rigged propeller, fitted out at New Orleans as a war vessel, with a battery of six 32-pounders, one 9-inch Dahlgren, and one 24-pounder brass rifle. This vessel was intended for service as a commerce destroyer but did not succeed in getting out of the river, owing to the Federal blockade.

After a few months' service, at a time when the Confederate fleet on the river was not yet organized, Read was temporarily detached for other duty. In the fall of 1861 he assisted in building batteries on the Potomac. Later he was engaged in building batteries on the Mississippi, and in the spring of 1862 was active in furthering the construction of the ram *Arkansas*, on the Yazoo River. When the *Arkansas* ran the gauntlet of the Federal fleet at Vicksburg, through a storm of shot and shell, Read served her stern guns. Returning to the *McRae* as her executive officer, Read soon saw further hard service. In the passage of Farragut's fleet past the forts below New Orleans, he fought the guns of the *McRae* with reckless valor. When a fire was discovered in the steamer's sail room, which was separated from the magazine only by a thin partition of pine, Read jumped into the room and smothered the fire. On the *McRae*'s commander, Lieutenant T. B. Huger, falling mortally wounded, Read took command of the boat, and fought until her tiller ropes were shot away and she ran ashore. He was made a prisoner by the Federals. On being exchanged he returned to his home in Jackson, where he became ill with fever. On his recovery he was ordered to join the Florida. This assignment gave him great joy, as the ambition

to engage in cruisers against the commerce of the North had been with him from the first of the war. In the thick of the fighting below New Orleans he had made application to his commanding officer for permission to man the ram *Resolute*, which had gone ashore under fire, and "at night go down the river, ram one of the mortar fleet, and go on a raid on the New England coast." A shot from one of Farragut's vessels, well placed in the *Resolute*—which was a sea-going steamer—made unnecessary a reply to his application.

After his imprisonment of more than a year at Fort Warren, on the Tacony account, Read, on being exchanged, again reported for duty in the Confederate navy. He was assigned, October 27, 1864, to a naval battery on the James River. November 7 he made application for an assignment to special torpedo boat service at Charleston. In January, 1865, he was given command of the torpedo launches employed in connection with the ironclads Virginia and Richmond, in the abortive attempt to destroy the monitor *Onondaga*, in the James—the expiring effort of the Confederacy to strike the Federals afloat. Failure did not deter Read from bringing forward a fresh plan at once. It was to convey torpedo launches overland from Drewry's Bluff, below Richmond, around the Federal left at Petersburg, launch them in the James below City Point, capture a tug, and in her blow up the Federal shiners, and clear the river from Richmond to the sea for the passage of the Confederate ironclads. Read set out on this expedition February 10, 1865, with 100 sailors. Two boats were carried, each on four wheels, with torpedoes and gear inside, hauled by four mules. After three days' march, the last one in a sleet storm, the party learned that a Federal ambulance had been prepared for them at the Blackstone River ford. Abandoning the boats the party set out for Richmond. All roads being watched by the Federals, they took to the woods, and at last to the Appomattox River, in which they waded waist-deep in icy water, to throw their pursuers off their track. Of the 101 men in the expedition, 75 went into the naval hospital at Richmond for treatment on completing this march.

Read's last exploit in the war took place after the surrender of Lee. It was a dare-devil expedition, entirely characteristic.

Concealed in the Red River, to which she had retired on the fall of Vicksburg, was the armed ram *Webb*, formerly a New York tug, a side-wheeler of great power. Read, now holding the rank of commander, secured permission to fit her out and make a dash for the Gulf, there, if possible, to capture a vessel suitable for commerce-destroying. The *Webb* was prepared for service in feverish haste. Rough bulwarks were built forward, to keep out the seas, and her machinery was protected by bales of cotton. She was given a coat of gray whitewash, and pine knots were put on board for fuel. Manned with a full complement of officers, engineers and pilots, and a crew of volunteers from General E. Kirby Smith's command, the *Webb* left Shreveport, La., April 16, 1865. A strong flotilla of Federal ironclads posted at the mouth of the Red River to intercept her were passed in the night, the *Webb* drifting with a current until discovered, then crowding on all steam and escaping. Ten miles above New Orleans a boat was sent ashore to cut the telegraph wires, but not before a warning had been sent to the city of the *Webb*'s escape. The *Webb* came in view of New Orleans with the Stars and Stripes at half mast, as if on account of President Lincoln's death. Her crew lounged about decks, dressed in Federal army overcoats, smoking and talking, like soldiers. The fleet at New Orleans, expecting an ironclad ram, paid no attention to the *Webb* until a pilot on one of the ships recognized her. Fire was opened on her. The Union flag came down, the Confederate went up, and with safety valve tied down the *Webb* made a dash for safety past the city, under the batteries of vessels that could have blown her out of water had their commanders then dared to fire. But in direct range was the water front of Algiers, crowded, like the New Orleans levees, with excited throngs watching the unusual event. Rumors that Jefferson Davis was on board increased the excitement. The *Webb* passed the city with a torpedo slung on a boom ready to discharge at the first vessel approaching her. Commander Read decided to torpedo the Federal ordnance ship *Fearnought*, but on getting his torpedo into position the boom broke, letting the torpedo into the water, under the starboard wheel. With great coolness Read ordered the guy ropes cut, and the torpedo sank. As the *Fearnought* had 300 barrels of powder on board, Read would have blown himself and his command into eternity had his plan succeeded.

Keeping on down river with the Federal fleet in full cry after him, Read ran 23 miles below New Orleans, and was in a fair way to make good his escape, when he spied the masts of the sloop of war *Richmond* around the flat bend ahead. As he must pass under her broadside he counted the game up, ran the *Webb* ashore, set her on fire, and took to the swamp with his men. Finding himself in danger of capture by Federal cavalry

sent to intercept him, and preferring to become a prisoner, if at all to navy men, he returned to the Webb, now nearly consumed, and surrendered to the naval force by that time on the scene. Once more a prisoner of war, Read was carried for a second time to Fort Warren, which he reached May 10.

On the conclusion of peace he was released, and returned to private life. He became a steamship captain, and for a number of years ran out of New Orleans in the fruit trade. In peace he was a genial and lovable man, and he had many friends. He died in 1891, at the age of 51. His wife survived him and lives at Jackson, Miss.; a son is a ship master out of New Orleans.

Having fought in a losing cause, Charles W. Read has received scant recognition from the biographer of his native land. No standard work of national biography at this date contains a line regarding him. No history of the civil war accords him even a fair degree of recognition for the brilliancy and ability he displayed in his dashing raid. While preparing the foregoing paper, the author addressed a few of Read's classmates in the naval academy, with a view to getting some personal estimate of his character. Only one reply was received, from Rear Admiral Winfield Scott Schley, U. S. N. This proved a hearty and loyal tribute, in which time turns backward and a midshipman speaks

in every line for a brave, departed friend. With Admiral Schley's permission his letter is given here. It is as follows:

1826 I St., WASHINGTON, D. C.,

NOVEMBER 28TH, 1904.

MY DEAR SIR:—I wish I was able to tell you more of the career of my classmate and friend, Charles W. Read, at the Naval Academy, from 1856 to 1860.

Read was spare in build, active in movement, generous and loyal in character, firm in his friendships, and decided in his opinions.

The place he took in his class was in no sense the measure of his intellectual worth, but arose from his lack of application to study. He possessed in high degree common sense, or ought I to say uncommon sense, as everyone does not possess it, that underlies success in every calling.

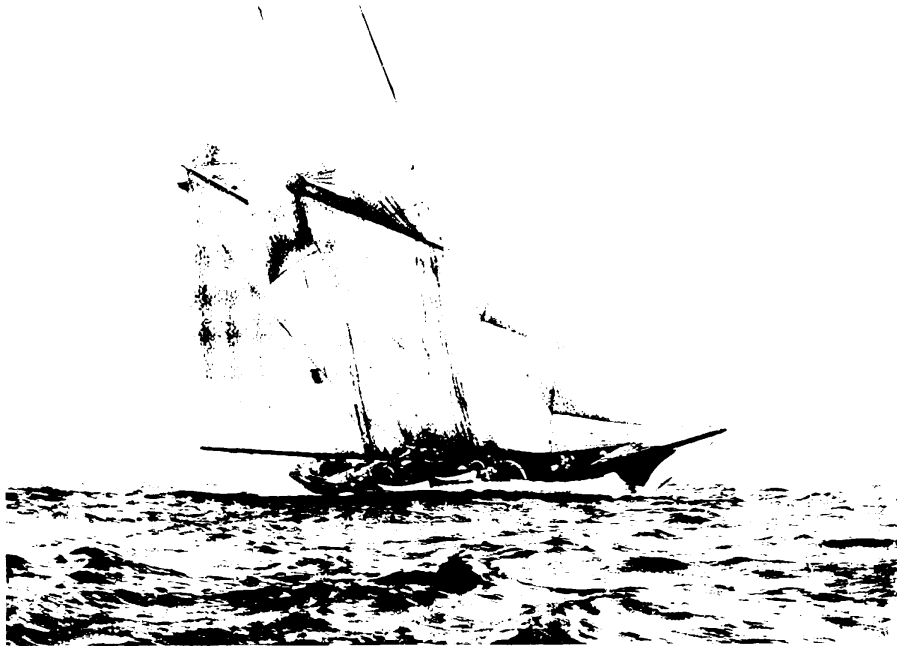
If Read had had the opportunities our navy offered at that time he would have made a grander record than was possible with the meagre chances offered by the small improvised navy of the Confederacy, although no one can doubt that Read did a number of surprisingly gallant things with the few chances he had. He had sublime courage, he had conspicuous dash, he had great originality, and was aggressive in all that he did. He won fame as have all who possessed those qualities.

I am sure you will be able to find among his friends in Mississippi abundant material for a most readable account of the interesting life of this splendid and gallant American. I wish I could help you more.

Very truly yours,

W. S. SCHLEY.

WINFIELD M. THOMPSON, ESQ.,  
Boston, Mass.



Intrepid

Photo by Burton