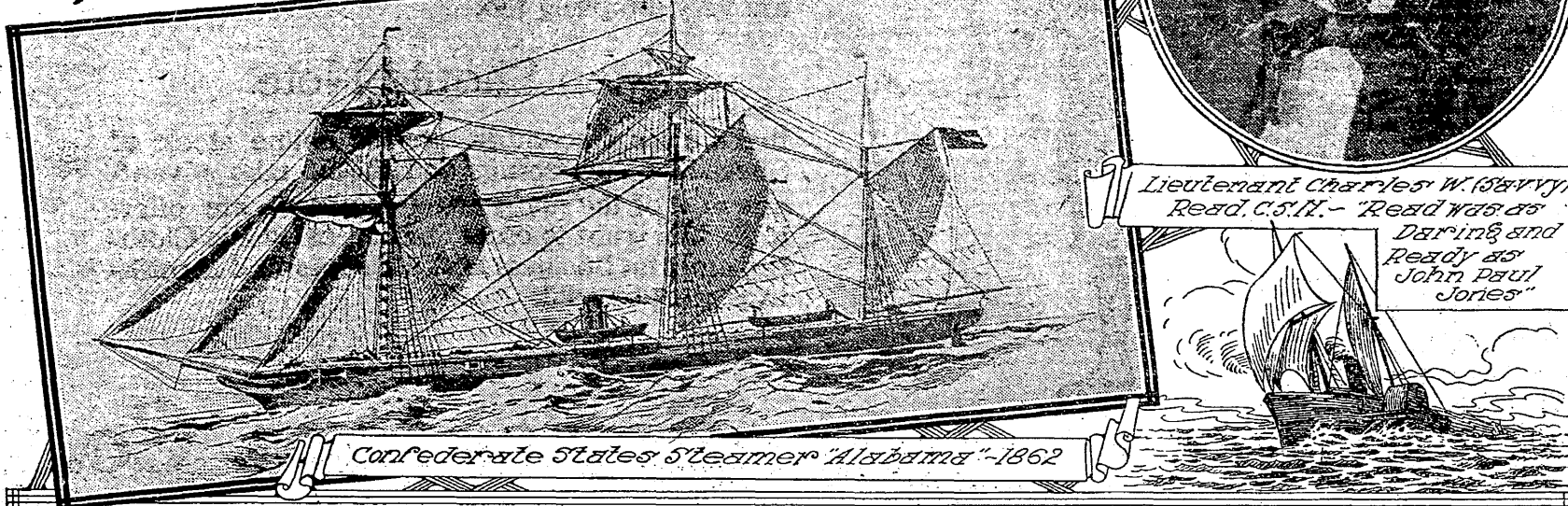


The Blockade and Cruisers of the CONFEDERACY

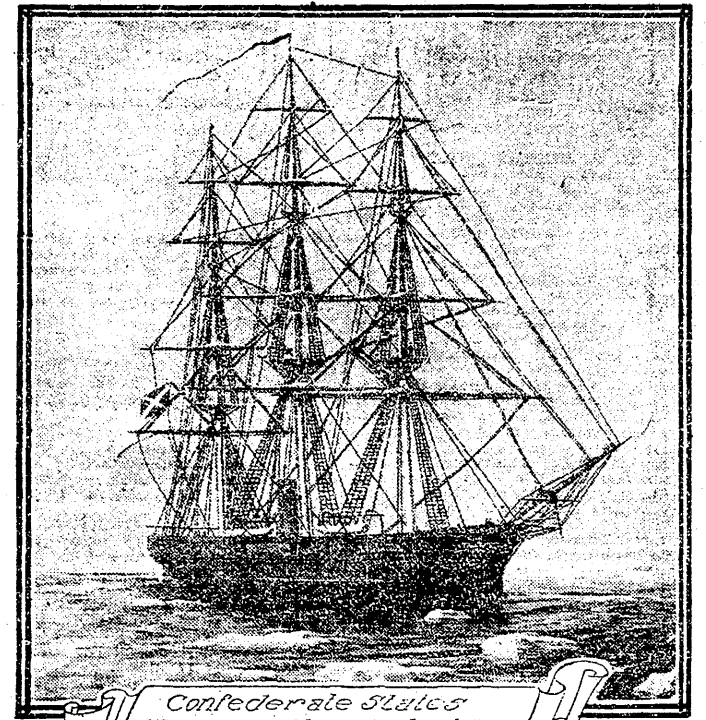
by Charles W. Stewart, Superintendent of Naval Records of the Navy Department



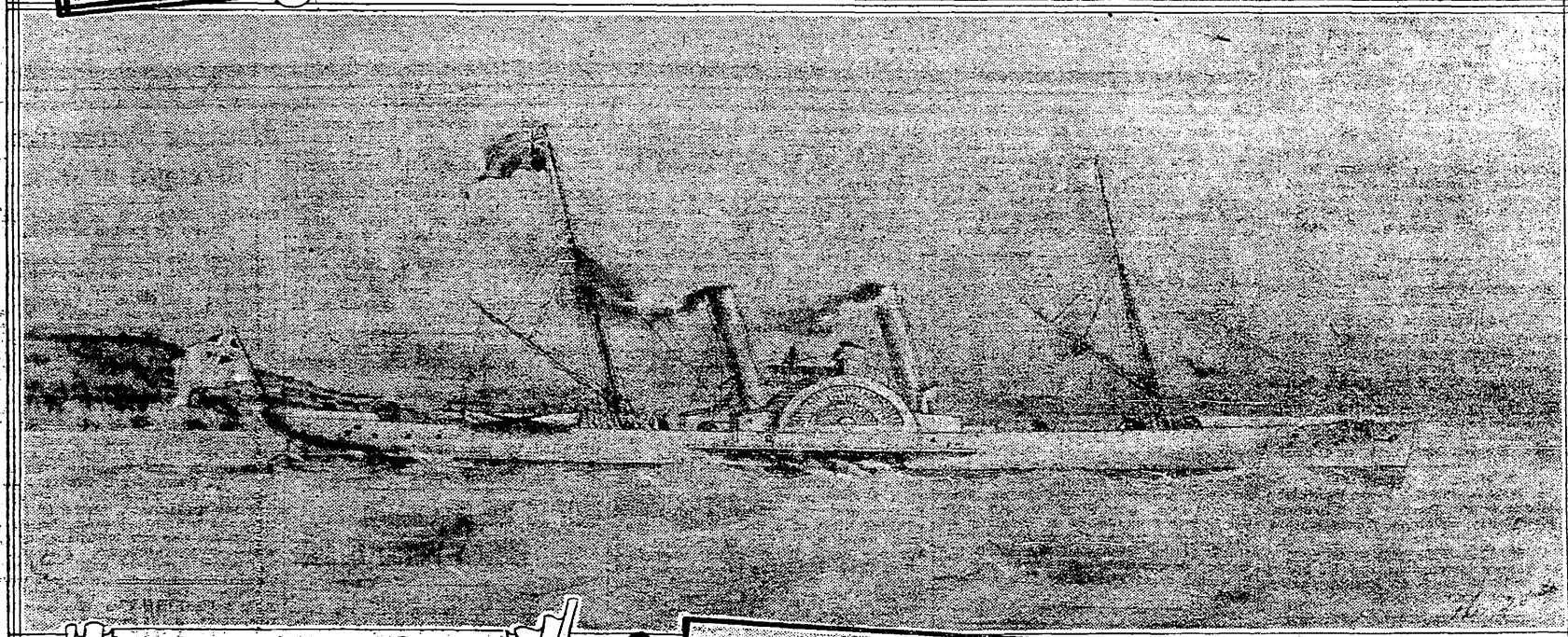
Confederate States Steamer "Alabama" - 1862



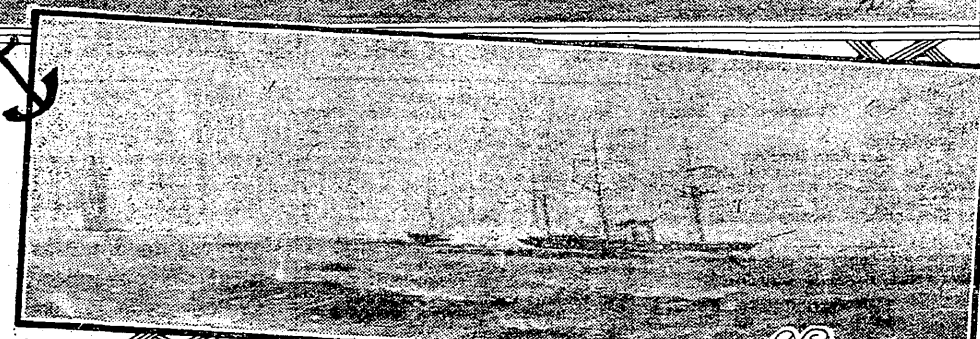
Lieutenant Charles W. Read, U.S.N. - "Read was as daring and ready as John Paul Jones"



Confederate States Steamer "Shenandoah"



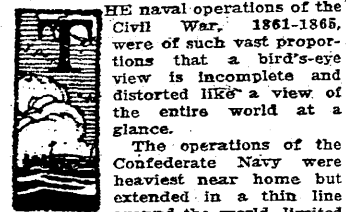
"Blockade Runner Lynx" LOANED BY MAJOR A. J. WADDELL, OF CHARLESTON, S.C.



Confederate States Steamer "Florida" Running the Blockade into Mobile Bay, Sept. 4th, 1862 - FROM PAINTING BY CAPT. R. S. FLOYD

In honor of the veterans of the Confederate States Navy assembled in Washington for the Confederate Reunion, Mr. Charles W. Stewart, Superintendent of Naval Records of the Navy Department and compiler of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies, has written a historical sketch of "The Blockade and Cruisers of the Confederacy" which appears in the June issue of Sea Power, the official organ of the Navy League of the United States.

Mr. Stewart's article is herewith reproduced with the old drawings and photographs contributed to Sea Power to illustrate this memorial to the bravery and genius of the officers and men of the Confederate States Navy.



HE naval operations of the Civil War, 1861-1865, were of such vast proportions that a bird's-eye view is incomplete and distorted. Here is a view of the entire world at a glance.

The operations of the Confederate Navy were heaviest near home but extended in a thin line around the world, limited only by the means at hand in the way of ships, guns and fuel, for there was no lack of skill, ability, courage, or enterprise.

The Union blockade of the Confederate States coast, declared in 1861, was tightened rapidly. Harbors and river mouths were seized and held as bases from which to attack by land and sea. Rivers were occupied, both as lines of Union communications and as blockading barriers between Confederate areas. Blockading squadrons swarmed about the Atlantic ports from Maine to Mexico, although the declared blockade began in Chesapeake Bay and ended at the Rio Grande, 3,600 miles of coast pierced by some two hundred inlets deep and shallow, along the shores of nine States of the realm of King Cotton.

The Confederate naval offense and defense is a brave story, never fully told, although its skeleton framework is printed in the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies. The flesh to fill out the heroic figure must come from the records, biographies and narratives of the actors. It was a battle of the weak against the strong; a contest between stripping and giant, David and Goliath.

Neutral Bases of the Blockade Runners

The neutral points of Bermuda, Nassau, Havana, and Matamoros served as bases of trade with the South.

Nassau, on the island of New Providence, was the most prominent; 180 miles from the Florida coast, 540 miles from Charleston; near 600 miles from Wilmington, about three days' run. For such short trips small coal supply was needed. Nassau had a shallow harbor, an advantage for the

light draft blockade-runners. New Providence was surrounded by a legion of small islands over which the greatest naval power of the world threw a protection as complete as that of gun-fire. Vessels from blockaded ports, when hard pressed, often found refuge among these islands, reefs and shoals, and skilful pilots brought them through in safety. Nassau, before the war, was of small importance, given chiefly to fishing and wrecking. The war brought shipping, trade, merchandise and munitions for the Confederacy, cotton for England, banks, brokers, government agents, many people and much money.

Bermuda enjoyed in smaller measure the profits and pleasures of blockade-running. It was some 700 miles from Wilmington, the chief Confederate port of the runners during the last year of the war.

Havana was of still less importance, for the Gulf blockade was alert and it was a thousand miles to Galveston or Matamoros and six hundred to Mobile.

Matamoros, Mexico, forty miles from the mouth of the Rio Grande and opposite the town of Brownsville, Texas, offered peculiar opportunities for trade, contraband and otherwise. Lighters transferred cargoes to and from the river mouth which could not be blockaded, and Matamoros, able to conduct trade across the boundary with the Confederacy, became a flourishing emporium. Several vessels bound for Matamoros were seized but most of them were released, on the ground that a neutral port could not be blockaded and there was no breach of blockade in sailing for it. In the case of the Peterhoff, seized with papers showing Matamoros as destination, only the contraband part of her cargo was condemned.

When the advantages of a neutral destination were fully understood the blockade-runners from Europe so cleared and waited for a chance to run to their real destination. The U. S. Courts, after a time, held, in accordance with the old principle of the British prize courts known as the "doctrine of continuous voyage" that the mere touching at an intermediate

port of a vessel engaged in an illegal voyage could not legalize such voyage. Therefore, a vessel cleared from Barcelona with the intention of touching at Matamoros and proceeding to Galveston was, if such intention could be proved, subject to capture and condemnation on the ground that the two voyages were, in fact, one and the same voyage.

The blockade-runners met this difficulty by transshipping. At Nassau freight was unloaded and piled on the docks. Cargoes between Nassau and Europe were carried in the heavy freighters; those between Nassau and blockaded ports were taken in light-draft steamers of high speed and low visibility, almost noiseless machinery, and handled by skilful pilots and masters. The wages for a single round trip, Nassau to Wilmington and back in 1864, were \$13,000 of which the captain received \$5,000, the pilot \$2,750, the chief engineer \$2,500 and the chief officer \$1,250.

As cargoes from Liverpool to Nassau were then made liable to capture, the plan was tried for a time, of shipping by regular lines from Liverpool to New York, thence to Nassau, on the supposition that the United States would not interfere with commerce between her own ports and those of a neutral. As soon as it was discovered that trade from New York to Bermuda and Nassau was assuming large proportions, the Collectors of U. S. Ports, under instructions, refused clearance on suspicion, or required ample security that such cargoes should not fall into enemy's hands, and the trade resumed its usual course from Europe via Bermuda, Nassau and Havana. These details are mentioned in explanation of the difficulties of the blockading squadron and as having a bearing on more recent conditions.

The blockade-runners were often commanded by British as well as Confederate naval officers, and the tricks of the trade of blockade-running

employed by them make reading that is more fascinating than fiction. There was 100 per cent. profit on each voyage, if successful; otherwise, if captured, it was 100 per cent. loss. There were brought in during the war 1,150 prizes, 210 of them steamers. Three hundred and fifty-five vessels were burned, destroyed or driven ashore; 1,505 prize vessels in all, whose value is estimated at near fifty millions of dollars. There were great dangers as well as large profits in blockade-running. Maffit, Wilkinson, Goyle, Bier and other C. S. Navy officers conducted blockade-runners with great skill while "A. Roberts" (afterwards Hobart Pasha), Admirals Murray-Aynsley and Hewett, and Captain Hugh Burgoynes, of the Royal Navy, and Captain Tom Taylor (who wrote Running the Blockade) could point with pride to their dare-devil exploits that supplied the Confederate States in spite of the Union blockade.

The Cruisers—Union.

The regular cruisers of the U. S. Navy and some two dozen chartered vessels were employed in searching for Confederate cruisers and privateers. The Union list is long. They scoured the seas, mainly the North Atlantic Ocean, but visited all other oceans except the Antarctic.

The Cruisers—Confederate.

The Confederate Cruisers include the Alabama, Chickamauga, Florida, Georgia, Nashville, Olustee, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, Stonewall, Sumter and Tallahassee. The most famous three of these are, in order, the Alabama, Shenandoah and Florida, under Semmes, Waddell and Maffit, of the C. S. Navy, formerly of the U. S. Navy.

The Sumter, under Commander Raphael Semmes, C. S. Navy, was the first deep-sea cruiser. She escaped to the broad ocean June 30, 1861, through the blockade at the Passes below New Orleans; cruised for six months in the West Indies

and Atlantic, was blockaded in Gibraltar; was there sold, and later became a blockade-runner.

She made seventeen prizes, of which two were ransomed, seven were released in Cuban ports, two were captured and six were burned with their cargoes.

C. S. S. Alabama, formerly 230 and Erica, commissioned and christened Alabama August 24, 1862, off Ferocera, the Azores, was the glory of the Confederate Navy cruisers. Under Semmes she roamed the seas, North Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Indian Oceans. She captured the bark Conrad and commissioned her as the tender Tuscaloosa. Her cruises and deeds are forever recorded in the minds of men and the "Alabama Claims." One of her dashing fights was the sinking of the U. S. S. Hatteras of the blockading squadron off Galveston, January 11, 1863, after thirteen minutes of firing. The prisoners were landed in Jamaica, without delay.

On December 7, 1862, she captured the mail steamer Ariel in Mona Passage, with over 700 passengers (half of them women and children). Several U. S. Navy and Marine Officers and 140 U. S. Marines. These Semmes proposed to land at Kingston, Jamaica, before burning the ship, but the prevalence of yellow fever there prevented him from carrying out the plan, and he paroled the belligerent prisoners and released the vessel under ransom bond, \$125,000 for the ship, \$123,000 for cargo.

The Alabama in her cruise, 1862-1864, overhauled near 310 vessels; burned 55 appraised by Semmes at \$4,613,914.00; ransomed 10 for \$562,250.

Alabama-Kearsage Battle.

This romance of the sea, the cruise of the Alabama, was ended by the battle with the U. S. S. Kearsage, under Captain Winslow, U. S. Navy, about seven miles off Cherbourg,

France, Sunday morning, June 19, 1864. The Alabama had 149 men and officers, one 100-pounder rifle, one VIII-inch shell gun (63 pounds), six 32-pounders, eight guns, total weight of projectiles 360 pounds. The Kearsage had 163 men and officers, two XI-inch guns, (136-pounders), four 32-pounders, one rifled 30-pounder, seven guns, total weight of projectiles 430 pounds. The fight began at 10.57 A. M. The vessels were headed in opposite directions and about 1,000 yards apart, broadside to broadside, firing rapidly and moving around in circles until seven revolutions were completed, near the close of the battle. At noon the Alabama was settling in the water, and a boat from her announced the surrender. The British yacht Deerhound at Winslow's request picked up 42 persons, including Captain Semmes, and took them to Southampton, England. Of seventy prisoners taken by the Kearsage three were dying and seventeen wounded. They were immediately paroled at Cherbourg. The engagement lasted an hour and twenty minutes; after the last shot was fired the Alabama sank in 40 fathoms of water. A shell (100-pounder) was found buried in the stern-post of the Kearsage, and Captain Semmes said that the fate of the battle was decided by the defects of a percussion cap. The post with shell is at the Washington Navy Yard.

Cruise Of The Florida.

The C. S. S. Florida, formerly Manassas and Oreto, was placed under the command of Lieutenant J. N. Maffit, C. S. Navy, at Nassau, New Providence, in August, 1862, took on her stores and battery of two VII-inch rifles and six VI-inch guns near Green Cay, suffered the ravages of yellow fever and short of officers and men, unable to fire a gun, on September 4, ran the blockade into Mobile, dashing past the blockading squadron in broad daylight. The Florida was nearly shot to pieces. After three months' repairs she sailed out under the command of Maffit January 16, 1863, through the blockading squadron, and in five months took and destroyed fourteen prizes between New York and Brazil.

The Florida was refitted at Bermuda, sailed for Brest, and was there repaired. Maffit was relieved by Commander J. N. Barney, C. S. Navy and he in turn by Lieutenant Charles Manigault Morris, C. S. Navy. The Florida sailed February 10, 1864, and in July raided the shipping along the coast of the United States, causing great excitement. While at anchor in the neutral harbor of Bahia, Brazil, she was rammed and captured October 7, 1864, by the U. S. S. Wachusett, under Commander Napoleon Collins, U. S. Navy, and with seventy prisoners, officers and men, was taken to Hampton Roads where she was sunk by a "common accident" according to the findings of a court. For this violation of the rights of a neutral power, and as an amende, a squadron of U. S. Navy vessels was sent to Brazil and at Bahia the Brazilian flag was saluted July 3, 1866. Commander Collins was tried and sentenced to dismissal, but the verdict was disapproved.

Clarence-Tacony-Archer Cruise.

On May 6, 1863, Maffit placed Lieutenant Charles W. Read, known as "Savvy Read" on board the captured brig Clarence, with a howitzer, small arms, supplies, an engineer officer and twenty men, to carry out Read's proposal: "to proceed to Hampton Roads and cut out a runboat or steamer of the enemy." Maffit advised attacks from all unexpected quarters.

Read was as daring and ready as John Paul Jones, and sailed at once on his errand.

In June, 1863, he began some lively work between the Chesapeake and Maine. By the 16th he had captured five vessels. Four were burned, and the fifth, the bark Tacony, being better suited to his purpose, Read transferred his one-gun battery and crew to the new cruiser, burned the Clarence and in two weeks made ten more prizes, the last of those, the schooner Archer of 90 tons, succeeding the Tacony burned. Two days later, June 27th, the Archer put into Portland harbor, captured the revenue cutter Calob Cushing, clapped the crew in irons and put to sea, all in broad daylight. Being overhauled by heavy vessels Read set fire to the Cushing, and tried to escape to the Archer, but was captured. This Clarence-Tacony-Archer exploit raised enough excitement to warrant sending out some

forty United States vessels to stop its wild career.

The C. S. S. Tallahassee, a twin-screw steamship (formerly the Atlanta and afterwards the C. S. S. Olustee), under Commandant John Taylor Wood, C. S. Navy, left Wilmington August 6, passed the blockaders, called at Halifax, and arrived back at Wilmington August 26, 1864. In this cruise she captured thirty-three vessels. There were burned, sixteen; scuttled, ten; boarded, five; and released, two. This cruise, following close on the heels of that of the Florida under Morris, aroused serious apprehensions; particularly as the U. S. Consul at Halifax, reported that cruisers similar to the Tallahassee were expected to leave Wilmington daily and on like errands closing his dispatch with the words: "Of this there is no doubt."

The Shenandoah.

The C. S. S. Shenandoah, under Lieutenant J. I. Waddell, C. S. Navy, was commissioned at Los Deserths near Madeira October 19, 1864, and sailed for the Pacific Ocean to destroy the New England whaling fleet. She was formerly the Sea King, a fast and staunch British steamship.

The Shenandoah cruised via Cape of Good Hope and Australia to the North Pacific and Bering Strait. By June 28, 1865, the Shenandoah had destroyed thirty-two vessels and bonded six with a total appraised value of \$1,722,253. On August 2, receiving word from the British bark Barraquita, in 16 degrees North 121 degrees West, of the overthrow of the Confederate government, the long voyage of 17,000 miles to England via Cape Horn was begun. It ended November 6, 1865, at Liverpool, in surrender to the British Government.

The Shenandoah carried eight guns: four VIII-inch two 32-pounders, and two 12-pounders. She visited in her cruise every ocean except the Antarctic. Her anchors were on her bows for eight months. The staunch ship made 58,000 miles without serious mishap, carrying the "Stars and Bars" around the world. On her journey from the Channel she saved 23,000 George's miles in 122 days without seeing land. On June 22, 1865, in the Arctic Ocean off Cape Navarin, the C. S. S. Shenandoah fired the last gun of the Confederates States Navy, and it is believed the last gun of the Civil War.

The war of 1861 is gone more than half a century. It was a comparatively civil war as conducted between four nations, South and North. Navy prisoners were generally exchanged or paroled speedily. The officers had been like brothers, many of them for a generation.

Occasionally a Navy capture—after the capture—was more like a reunion of friends than a conquest of one enemy by another.

One harsh note was the seizure of Admiral Semmes at Mobile notwithstanding the parole at Greensboro, N. C. The explanation of this procedure is printed by Naval Solicitor Bolles in a magazine article, "Why Semmes was Not Tried."

The Confederate navy, poor in resources, rich in genius, developed ironclads and fought in the great battle in Hampton Roads that revolutionized naval warfare; created the ironclad ram; created the best and most effective rifle gun of the time, the Brooke rifle; created and expanded a torpedo service, and operated the first successful submarine torpedo boat.

The descendants of the C. S. Navy officers have gained place and fame in our present U. S. Navy. Captain H. H. Marmaduke, a midshipman on the Merrimack in her battle with the Monitor, but now of the Office of Naval Records and Library, Navy Department, has charge of Confederate States Navy rolls and records that have confirmed the service of many a gallant veteran.

There is proposed a fitting memorial to the Confederate States Navy in the beautiful fraternal Vicksburg National Military Park, to be situated at the site of a Confederate Navy battery near the river and on the extreme right of the Confederate line of defense. The U. S. Navy memorial is situated at the site of Naval Battery Selkirk on the extreme right of the Union line of attack. The great roadway through the Park are Union Avenue and Confederate Avenue.

They were lusty and gallant men and officers of these American navies, that struggled on the sea, fifty years ago, and for them all there is but one sentiment today, "cheers for the living and tears for the dead."