

# The CHARLES READ HOME PAGE

<http://www.fortunecity.com/meltingpot/cavendish/779/>

This page is dedicated to the memory of Charles Read, Lieutenant of the navy of the Confederate States of America and later Captain in the British Merchant Marine.



The original work was done as a research paper during a Masters degree course with the American Military University. It has subsequently been reproduced in "Crossfire", the magazine of the American Civil war Round Table (UK). The main text that follows is an emended version.

The picture above was kindly supplied to me by Mrs. E. Maynard, a descendant of Capt. Read, and is the original version of the line drawing that I have used elsewhere on the site.

This research is now being made available on the web to establish a place where further information about the life and career of Charles Read can be collected and made available to all who are interested. It is hoped to expand, or if necessary, to correct the

text as more information becomes available.

Please send any comments, suggestions, or further information to me and I will include it in the site. A Guest book is available for further comments, and a notice board for questions and answers is under construction.

Tony Brown

## Charles "Savez" Read, C.S.N.: The Man Who Knew It All

The Confederate Navy began without ships, men, or its own tradition. With iron ships, mines, torpedoes, submarines, etc., it altered naval warfare with legendary courage and ingenuity. Most of the officers responsible for this achievement were products of United States Navy training and experience. Of six hundred Southern Naval Officers in 1860, three hundred went South, and although many served in the Confederate Army - believing that a short war would allow little hope of promotion in naval service, enough stayed to build the force and lead it in battle.<sup>(1)</sup> One outstanding officer, an Annapolis graduate, was Lieutenant Charles W. Read, C.S.N.

During the war, Read served in coastal defence, fought in the fleet engagement at New Orleans, saw action with Mississippi gunboats, commanded a battery on the ironclad *Arkansas*, survived Federal captivity, led a commando type attack on Grant's communications in 1864,

and finally tried to run the blockade in an armed warship. But his most outstanding achievement was as a commerce raider off the New England coast. With a succession of slow and almost unarmed vessels, he and a small crew created havoc even as the Gettysburg campaign drew to a close. Yet although well remembered by contemporaries, his exploits are little recalled today. The major contemporary sources are the entries about him in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion (ONR) - where almost eighty pages are devoted to his raid, an error strewn essay in James Morgan's Prince and Boatswain, and an article Read wrote himself about his early career in Southern Historical Society Papers (May 1886). There are occasional mentions of him in the writings of other Union and Confederate Naval Officers. The best modern accounts are either incomplete<sup>(2)</sup> or reflect previous errors,<sup>(3)</sup> so it is now possible to consider Read's career by drawing on overlooked contemporary sources.

Read was born in Yazoo County, Miss. on 12 May, 1840, probably of a poor family,<sup>(4)</sup> although he was the nephew of a wealthy Arkansas planter, Josephus Dotson.<sup>(5)</sup> James Morgan, a former shipmate states that he was educated at a "Free School" until fourteen, and worked as a printer for two years. At the age of sixteen he entered Annapolis, sponsored by Jefferson Davis, who was on corresponding terms with Dotson. Rear "early developed a taste for the sea and a desire to seek fame onboard of the warships of his country"<sup>(6)</sup>, but did badly at the Academy. He waged a "bitter duel . . . for last place" with

E, G. Read, and "won", being anchorman of the class of 1860. Learning one word of French - "Savez", he ended most sentences with it, gaining a nickname, "Savez" Read. Fellow students were geo. Dewey. W. T. Sampson, and classmate Admiral Schley who is quoted as saying of him:

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 . . . that underlies success in every calling . . . . He had sublime courage, he had conspicuous dash, he had great originality. and was aggressive in all that he did . . . . . . . . generous and loyal in character, firm in his friendships, and decided in his opinions<sup>(7)</sup>

Read was a slightly built man, five foot six or seven in height, with a fair complexion, and brown, sandy, hair; he had a deferential and gentle manner and a "Somewhat effeminate" voice.<sup>(8)</sup> An appointment to *U.S.S. Pawnee* in May 1860 led him to ask his Uncle Josephus Dotson to petition Secretary at War Jefferson Davis to arrange a transfer for Read and his classmates to the more desirable *U.S.S. Richmond*. He also wrote to Davis himself, who passed the matter to Naval Secretary Toucey. The request was refused<sup>(9)</sup>; *Richmond* would haunt Read's later career.

When Mississippi seceded, Read was at Vera Cruz, a midshipman on *U.S.S. Powhattan*. Resigning on 1st, February, he left ship at New York on 13th,

March. At Montgomery, he met Jefferson Davis, who told him to join the army, and Stephen Mallory, who said that his services were needed for the navy.<sup>(10)</sup> On Lincoln's call for volunteers, Read did NOT join the army, as "The South had but few sailors and would need them all on the water." On May 1st., at Mallory's orders, Read went to New Orleans as Sailing Master of *C.S.S. McRae*, nicknamed for some reason the "Widow Mickey,"<sup>(11)</sup> then being fitted as a cruiser with the *C.S.S. Sumpter*. Both were Mexican ships taken from rebels by *U.S.S. Saratoga* in 1860, and ruled fair prize as belonging to "An unrecognized revolutionary government and . . . was a pirate on the high seas."<sup>(12)</sup> *McRae*, formerly *Marqués de la Habana*, was a screw sloop of 830 tons, mounting six thirty-two-pounder guns, a six-pounder,<sup>(13)</sup> and commanded by Lt. T. B. Huger - brother-in-law of George G. Meade, who later became a Federal Major General.<sup>(14)</sup> Often flagship for Flag-Officer George N. Hollins gunboat flotilla,<sup>(15)</sup> *McRae* never cruised, being slow, with bad engines. Read "Fussed and fumed" while port bound - told that a channel was too shallow, he denied it, saying the bottom was "Soft and oozy."<sup>(16)</sup>

In June 1861, Federal boats raided the Louisiana shore, and two steamers, *Oregon* and *Swain*, manned from *McRae*, went in pursuit. Finding no enemies, the expedition commander decided to re-occupy Ship Island. A party, led by Lt. Alexander F. Warley, and including Read landed on 7th. July, with "One thirty-two-pounder, one eight inch gun, and two howitzers. When these were emplaced the steamers left. At sunset *U.S.S.*

*Massachusetts* anchored off shore. At dawn Warley ordered Read to open fire with two guns; after a brief duel the Federal withdrew.<sup>(17)</sup> Federal Captain Melancton Smith reported that the shore party was between 400 and 800 men, armed with "1 rifled cannon, 2 guns of heavy caliber, and one 12-pounder"<sup>(18)</sup> Smith's Executive Officer, George Dewey, made no mention of THIS incident in his autobiography! The sailors were relieved by troops, and heavy artillery landed; William Mervine, commander of the Gulf Blockading Squadron, was relieved by Flag-Officer McKean as a result. The island was evacuated in September.<sup>(19)</sup> In October the Flotilla was routed by a Federal fleet at Head of Passes - "Pope-s Run." Chances to destroy *U.S.S. Vincennes* and *U.S.S. Richmond* were missed, but *McRae* fought *Richmond* at long range. Read's coolness under fire was noted.<sup>(20)</sup> When Lt. Warley, backed by *McRae's* guns commandeered the Ram *C.S.S. Manassas*<sup>(21)</sup> Read became Executive Officer of *McRae*, and tamed an unruly crew by driving them into the rigging and keeping them aloft all night at gunpoint.<sup>(22)</sup> *McRae* was visited by Morgan's attractive sister Sarah, who long remembered "Jimmy's friend."<sup>(28)</sup> Vague plans were made to put *McRae* at the disposal of Confederate purchasing agents in Europe to facilitate the shipment of munitions, but engine trouble foiled an attempt to run the blockade.<sup>(24)</sup>

With top-hamper removed, *McRae* went up-river to help defend Island No. Ten, carving a slice out of the bank at the Davis Plantation en route. In Huger's absence, Read had command. Skirmishes with Union batteries led

Read to suggest grounding before one and slugging it out with canister as Federals could retreat but not rebels! He also proposed storming a battery. As New Madrid fell Read had to cower mutinous soldiers with his temper and a drawn sword. The flotilla then went to New Orleans to face the powerful Federal Fleet of Flag Officer David Farragut.<sup>(25)</sup> Read and other officers long believed that they could have defeated *Carondelet*, A Union gunboat that ran batteries at Island No. ten to cover a Federal river crossing, but as *U. S. S. Pittsburg* was near, this is unlikely.<sup>(26)</sup>

Mixed naval forces defended New Orleans. Confederate Navy ships were commanded by John K. Mitchell; the "River Defence Fleet" by Captain James E. Montgomery; other vessels were independent. There was no overall commander. On 23rd. April, 1862 Read saw the Union Fleet ready to attack, and put *McRae* on alert. She and *Manassas* were first into battle as Farragut ran the forts. Under Huger *McRae* fought hard.<sup>(27)</sup> Morgan wrote that her deck was a shambles and "Her sides were riddled and the heavy projectiles knocked her guns off the carriages and rolled them along the deck crunching the dead and wounded."<sup>(28)</sup> Huger was wounded; Read relieved him to the words "Mr. Read, don't surrender my little ship. I have always promised myself that I would fight her until she was underwater."<sup>(28)</sup> Read, who had been fighting fire below decks heard that a ship with a No. 6 on its funnel had fatally wounded the commander he loved.<sup>(30)</sup> The River Defence Force fled, and *McRae* was saved by *Manassas*



when engaged with four gunboats.<sup>(31)</sup>

At dawn, with tiller ropes shot away, *McRae* grounded. When she refloated Read reported to Mitchell, and asked for an abandoned River Defence vessel to go raiding. But as Mitchell pondered the Federals destroyed it and *McRae* was sent under flag of truce to New Orleans with wounded. She was taking water and her crew needed help from the Fire-Department. The task became hopeless, so Read ran her into shallow water and cut her sea pipes.<sup>(32)</sup> Farragut, who had disapproved of the whole business when it was agreed to by Melancton Smith, felt that this was deliberate scuttling to avoid surrender and was dishonourable,<sup>(33)</sup> but Read's dilemma was acute. Read and his crew later got the Thanks of the Confederate Congress, and Brigadier General J. K. Duncan, Commander of Fort St. Phillip, wrote:

*McRae* behaved admirably and fought gallantly. For the rest done by the Navy and river fleet, the less said the better.<sup>(35)</sup>

Like others, Read held that, properly used, Confederate naval forces could have won.<sup>(36)</sup>

When the forts surrendered Read reported for duty at Jackson, and learnt the fate of the ironclad *C.S.S. Mississippi*, which disgusted him. Sent up-river to the despised Pinkney gunboats (named after Commander Robert F. Pinkney who had succeeded Hollins ) Read nearly joined the army but finally took over a battery below Randolph.<sup>(37)</sup> In his post war book Morgan states that Read

went to Port Hudson and fired a gun that wrecked *U.S.S. Mississippi*. This is impossible, as Read was on *C.S.S. Florida* when that action occurred.<sup>(38)</sup> As Fort Pillow fell Pinkeye deserted his ships, but the captains of *Polk* and *Livingstone* got their vessels to Yazoo City.<sup>(39)</sup> Nearby Lt. Isaac Brown was building an ironclad and Read was sent to help.<sup>(40)</sup> When Memphis fell the unfinished ironclad *Arkansas* was towed to Yazoo City and neglected. Lt. Brown came and by "stringent measures" finished her "under peculiar circumstances of haste and incompetency which so frequently characterized our Confederate navy."<sup>(41)</sup> Her "trial" was to save the gunboats *Polk* and *Livingstone* from a Federal steamer, but Pinkney did "his cowardly work too well"<sup>(42)</sup> burning them and the Ram *Van Dorn*. Lt. Brown sent Read to Vicksburg to confer with Major General Earl Van Dorn and to observe the Union fleets. The Yazoo was falling, and threatened to trap *Arkansas*.<sup>(43)</sup> Against Lt. Brown's advice Van Dorn called her to Vicksburg.<sup>(44)</sup> In the Yazoo she met three federal vessels in "the first and *only* square, *equal* stand-up knock down fight between the two navies in which the Confederates came out first best."<sup>(45)</sup> At first "Read chafed in silence at his rifles"<sup>(46)</sup> but in the end he may have fired the shots that forced *Carondelet* to surrender.<sup>(47)</sup> The passage of *Arkansas*, through Union fleets with more firepower than Nelson had at Trafalgar, was an epic; Lt. George Gift recalled:

The first vessel which stood out to engage us was "No. 6" (*Kineo*), against which we had a particular grudge, inspired by Read, who desired us to handle roughly any sea-going

vessel we should see with "No. 6" on her smoke stack, as that vessel was engaging the *McRae* . . . when Lieutenant Commander Huger was killed. Read devotedly attached to him, saw the "No. 6" by the flashes of the guns and had ever since treasured the hope of getting alongside that fellow some day. This "No. 6" came out like a game cock . . . I sent my powder boy to Read with a message to come forward, as his friend was in sight. he came leisurely and carelessly, swinging a primer lanyard, and I think I have never looked at a person displaying such remarkable coolness and self-possession. On observing the numbers ahead his eye was as bright and his smile as genuine as if he had been about to join a company of friends instead of enemies.<sup>(48)</sup>

He also remembered that "It was only necessary to load the guns and fire and we hit."<sup>(49)</sup>

A battered *Arkansas* reached Vicksburg unfit to fight a mortar fleet below; "Read cast many longing glances down river, and I think would have been perfectly willing to undertake the task, broken down as we were."<sup>(50)</sup>

After desperate engagements the Union fleets retreated. *Arkansas'* crew was depleted by death, wounds, and malaria. Among the sick were Lt. Brown and Chief Engineer George City. Second Engineer Eugene Brown took charge below.

A young man of pluck and gallantry and possessed of a great will and determination to make the engines work, yet he was unequal to the task. He had never anything to do with a screw vessel or short-stroke engines, and, being

zealous for the good repute of his department, drove the machinery beyond its powers of endurance.<sup>(51)</sup>

When Brigadier General John C. Breckinridge assaulted Baton Rouge Major General Van Dorn, "persistent beyond all reason," sent acting commander Stevens with *Arkansas* to help, overruling Lt. Brown to do so. Overdriven engines failed: attacked by enemies the ship was fired and abandoned. Read and Stevens were among the last to leave.<sup>(53)</sup> The end was watched by many spectators, including James Morgan's sisters. One of them, Sarah, recorded the kindness and encouragement shown to the survivors, and how she met Read again:

I hardly recognised the gentleman I was introduced to on the *McRae* in the one who now stood before me in rough sailor pants, a pair of boots, and a very thin and slazy lisle undershirt. That was all he had on, except an old straw hat, and - yes he held a primer. I did not think it would be embarrassing to him to meet me under such circumstances; I only thought of Jimmy's friend as escaping from a sad fate; so I rushed down a levee twenty feet high, saying "O Mr. Read! You won't recognise me, but I am Jimmy's sister!" He blushed modestly, shook my hand, and assured me he remembered me, etc. . . . and then we went to the top of the levee and watched the poor *Arkansas* burn . . . .

. . . Mr. Read more than once blushing remarked that they were prepared to fight, and hardly expected to meet us; but we pretended to think there was nothing unusual in his dress. I can understand, though, that he should feel rather awkward: I would not like to meet *him*, if I were in the

same costume.

She went on that the crew were cheerful about their lost possessions, but, but "disheartened about their boat." That evening, hearing that the ships company were being sent away, she tried to reach Read with twenty dollars as he, like the rest, were destitute. Although she failed she did manage to supply five bottles of gin to crewmen.<sup>(54)</sup> Both Read and Gift later wrote of the kindness they received from local civilians after their disaster.

Read's next post was with the defence at Port Hudson on the Mississippi and he engaged the *U.S.S. Essex* as it ran his position, but after illness he was posted to *C.S.S. Florida*, a British built raider, at Mobile. Battered by Union warships she had entered port in September 1862 with her captain and crew down with Yellow Fever. The journal of her captain, John Newland Maffitt, confirms that he asked for Read.<sup>(56)</sup> Charles Dufour, having studied the original, quotes and comments on an entry:

He is slow - I doubt not that he is sure - as a "military officer of the deck, he is *not equal to many*. (Maffitt had written "by no means first rate," scratched it out and substituted the italicized words). The entry closed with the words "Time will reverse this," written in a different ink, which indicates that it was put down at a later date, after Maffitt had seen at close hand "Savez" Read<sup>(57)</sup>

Maffitt, the "Sea Devil of the Confederacy" had orders:

. . . To assail their commerce only, that the mercantile part

of the Northern community, who so earnestly sustain the war by liberal contributions, may not fatten on its progress, but feel all its misfortunes. As the *Alabama* and *Florida* are the only two cruisers we have just now, it would be a perfect absurdity to tilt against their more than three hundred, for the Federals would gladly sacrifice fifty armed ships to extinguish the two Confederates.

When a man-of-war is sacrificed 'tis a national calamity, - not individually felt, but when merchant ships are destroyed on the high seas individuality suffers, and the shoe then pinches in the right direction. All the merchants of New York and Boston who have by their splendid traders become princes in wealth and puffy with patriotic zeal for the subjugation of the South, will soon cry . . . peace, peace; we are becoming ruined and the country damned.

. . . my tarry has not been a matter of satisfaction. Everybody but the Admiral [Buchanan] is impatient; he seems to fancy the retention of the *Florida*, considering her not badly employed in keeping a large fleet to watch her.

Again Read chaffed at delays - Maffitt wrote that he was "Bilious." (58) *Florida* sortied on January 15th., 1862, and "Destroyed 14 prizes and bonded 3 more while Lieutenant Read was connected with her." One, the *Jacob Bell* was the richest prize any Confederate ship took. (59) Another, *Lapwing* was converted into an armed tender under Lt. S. W. Averett. Read was aboard her as Second-in-Command, but was recalled after one day as the

collagen prize was a poorer craft than expected.(60)

On his return from *Lapwing* a decision was made:

One night while walking the deck with Captain Maffitt he told me that he had made up his mind to go to the East Indies and China and asked me what I thought of it. I replied that I thought the confederacy(sic) needed all her guns and men at home, and that I could not see how the destruction of a few ships in a remote part of the world could in any way affect the war, and rather than go as he proposed I would resign and return to the confederacy and join the army. So after a long talk, the captain agreed that he would give me the first small vessel he captured and let me take my chances of getting on shore somewhere on the coast of the southern states.

Maffitt, himself a man of courage, did not want a reluctant officer in far waters, and used his fire-eater to spread confusion. Read's later conduct suggests that Maffitt explained raiding theory!

The following day we captured the Brig *Clarence* from Rio Janeiro for Baltimore loaded with coffee. I reminded Captain Maffitt of his promise and was highly elated when he told the first lieutenant to call all hands to muster and ask for volunteers to go away on an expedition with me . . . . The entire crew volunteered; so they had to be picked out by the executive officer and myself. I selected Billups . . . Mathewson . . . and Pride. . . . These were made mastermates and were to be my officers. Captain Maffitt asked me to take Mr. Brown [sic], an engineer, who was an

idler on board(62)

Maffitt must have required Read to put a proposal in writing - and probably "set terms," for Read's letter read:

Sir: I propose to take the brig which we have just captured, and with a crew of twenty men, to proceed to Hampton Roads and cut out a gunboat or steamer of the enemy . . . . If you think it proper to accede to my proposal, I beg that you will allow me to take Mr. [E. H.] Brown (sic) and one of the firemen with me. Mr. Brown might be spared from this ship as his health is bad, and you could obtain another engineer at Pernambuco.

This was the engineer who ruined the *Arkansas*. read had a senior officer he might not trust but who, by rank, was his second-in-command.(64) Maffitt supplied sixteen men and a small gun (with twenty rounds!). On 6th. May, 1863 Read "Dipped my flag to the *Florida* and steered away." With a good wind, *Clarence* seemed to make good time, but "dull" sailing qualities, due to loose copper, soon showed as possible prizes escaped. read became discouraged as his ships victuals were poor, but he soon traded coffee for stores with an English ship. While his crew made dummy "quaker" guns from spars he sailed to Hampton Roads, and on June 6th. he took and burned his first prize, *Whistling Wind*." His report mis-named this ship *Windward*, but he cited it correctly in a post war "sketch" of his career.(65)

Read was a suspicious man: on June 7th. he:

. . . Captured the schooner *Alfred H. Partridge*, from New



York to Matamoros. She was loaded with arms and clothing for the citizens in Texas. I took the captain's bond for the sum of \$5,000 for the delivery of the cargo to loyal citizens of the Confederate States.

This ship is not usually listed as a "prize."

Captured papers convinced Read that Federal security at Hampton Roads made his original plan impossible so he went north. The *Mary Alvina* burned on June 10th., and two days later he took the schooners *M. A. Schindler* (burned) and *Kate Stewart* (bonded, and later armed to hunt him) and finally the bark *Tacony*. This, "Being a fine looking vessel," encouraged Read to transfer his crew and battery. *Clarence* was burned and the raid continued in the new prize. During the next twelve days he took fifteen more prizes. Five, the most valuable, were bonded; the others were burnt.<sup>(66)</sup> Some fishing vessels were also burnt, and Read was blamed for violating the rules of war, but Federals did such things in the Carolina Sounds. Read himself wrote:

Burning farmhouses in Mississippi was alright, but it was 'piracy' to board ships of New England, and the noble editors were going to make us 'pull hemp' without any port hole, when somebody else captured us.

*Tacony* was twice hailed by warships unaware that Read had changed ships, and were sent in opposite directions! On meeting "hundreds" of fishing craft Read hoisted a rebel flag and fired a gun. The boats fled home, "Raising 'Cain' in general . . . and the price of fish." Bonded ships were used to take freed prisoners back, but their return exposed Read's presence and new

"identity."(68) On 24th. June the schooner *Archer* was taken, but now Read problems:

As there were now a number of the enemy's gunboats in search of the *Tacony*, and our howitzer ammunition being all expended, I concluded to destroy the *Tacony* and . . . proceed along the coast with the view of burning the shipping in some exposed harbour, or cutting out a steamer.(69)

He was causing consternation in New England and in the Federal Government even as Lee moved on Pennsylvania. *Tacony's* capture, and Read's identity, were known by June 13th., and Navy Secretary Gideon Welles ordered every available vessel in pursuit. The Official Records contain nearly eighty pages related to the raid. Acting Rear-Admiral Samuel P. Lee (commanding North Atlantic Blockading Squadron), Commandants Hiram Paulding (New York Navy Yard) C. K. Stribling (Philadelphia Navy Yard) and J. B. Montgomery (Boston Navy Yard) were badgered to send specific ships. But perhaps they needed it. On June 15th. Montgomery cabled Welles

Provisions for one month will be placed aboard each vessel to cruise after the *Tacony*. How long shall they continue to search for that vessel? Please answer immediately.

Welles replied, immediately:

A fortnight's cruise is sufficient. if she is not found in that time, she has probably left the coast.(70)

To Commodore J. B. Montgomery at the Boston Navy

yard Welles sent orders:

Charter more steamers and send them after the *Tacony*; all that can be sent in forty-eight hours.(71)

Rear-Admiral Paulding at New York sent:

*United States* came in this morning. Has been purchased. Will sail as soon as coaled tomorrow, without change of crew. A sail ship will also leave in the morning. We are in want of men.(72)  
to which Welles replied:

If you can charter the steamer *Ericsson* and get her off in forty-eight hours, filled with coal, do so, as she can stay at sea a month full of coal.

*Ericsson* was the only hunter to have "success" - she met *Florida* but was saved by fog! Few of *Tacony's* hunters would have stood a chance against *Florida* - it is significant that the strike against *Ericsson* was the only aggressive action against a U. S. warship that Maffitt undertook.(73)

Abraham Lincoln, despite the invasion crisis took time to order Treasury Secretary Salmon P. Chase to use Revenue Cutters in the hunt.(74) "Captains" were as mixed as the ships. Acting Ensign F. W. Strong had to be told:

Be careful to reach port before the entire consumption of your coal.(75)

Of sixty vessels in pursuit most were lost to the blockade. Official records show that Welles was not so cool as he seems in his diary. A sign of panic was the

credence he later placed in the tale of an artful member of Read's crew, A. L. Drayton, who claimed to know the recognition signals of *Florida*. Instead of going to prison he travelled on a U.S. warship for some months, being well looked after! There is no record of his ever having been punished.(76)

The uncoordinated hunt concentrated on areas Read had left(77) - a U.S. naval operational Commander-in-chief was lacking. Welles and his advisers always operated on out-of-date news, and could not distinguish fact from nonsense. Admiral David Porter is quoted as saying :

A single Federal gunboat, under an intelligent captain, would have nipped Read's scheme in the bud.

But Porter's own record in capturing raiders was not impressive.(78) Civilian panic was extreme, and placed great strain on the Navy Department. Shipping firms wanted protection, the right to arm pursuit vessels, and the Federal Government to put a price on Read.(79) A convoy system to Europe and Brazil was demanded. Senator Edwin D. Morgan of New York cabled Welles insisting that the ironclad *Roanoke* be kept to defend New York.(80) The "New York Harbor and Defence Committee" "authorized" the Senator to take steps he deemed necessary on invasion, and wanted naval officers to help.(81) Governor John A. Andrew of Massachusetts, Major George Opdyke of New York, and Major General John E. Wool, all demanded ironclad protection from Rebel Raiders.(82)

Read destroyed *Tacony* sadly, and sailed toward Portland, Maine. Two captured fishermen, Albert T. Bibber and Elbridge Titcombe, told him of a revenue cutter, *Caleb Cushing*, and a steamer there.<sup>(83)</sup> He decided to "cut out" the *Caleb Cushing* and use it to intercept a steamer from Ireland, and then take both back to Wilmington. *Archer* entered Portland late on June 26th., 1863, and anchored unsuspected. When the harbour quietened down late that night a rebel party took the *Caleb Cushing*. Read had briefly considered taking a nearby steamer, *Chesapeake* but was dissuaded by Engineer Browne on the grounds that it was too late to start the engines. Although the wind had fallen Read took the cutter, and, after leading his crew in prayer, had it towed out to sea by rowing boats.<sup>(84)</sup> Although she cleared the harbour safely, the *Caleb Cushing* was still in sight at dawn.<sup>(85)</sup> A steamer from Boston docked early, and a passenger aboard was Lt. James H. Merryman, the *Caleb Cushing's* designated captain. He immediately raised the alarm when he saw his vessel was missing. Customs Collector Jedediah Jewett, without authority, immediately chartered two steamers and a tug and sent to Fort Preble and Fort Lincoln for guns and men. When troops arrived they boarded the steamers which set off in pursuit.<sup>(86)</sup>

In light airs the *Caleb Cushing* was overtaken. Read found five rounds for the cutter's gun, and when these were used, tried shrapnel, including, says Browne, a large cheese.<sup>(87)</sup> Federal versions by men not on board say that Read could not find a shot locker with ninety rounds, and that Lt. Dudley Davenport, a prisoner, would

not reveal it. Davenport, a Southerner and academy classmate of Read, had stayed with the Union. At first he was suspected of complicity in the raid, but was exonerated.<sup>(88)</sup> His attitude to the raiders may have been affected by being "vigorously rebuked" over breakfast by Read for his Unionism! Browne states that although powder was aboard shot awaited loading in Portland. It seems odd that twenty sailors could not find a shot locker in a small ship, and Browne's explanation seems more plausible. Trapped, Read abandoned the cutter after firing it.<sup>(89)</sup> He and his crew were rescued and captured by their Federal pursuers. The Rebels were taken to Portland, where the citizens wanted them hung. Most captives were protected by troops, but Billups, Hunt, and an English boy called Butters were taken to Portland Jail:

And treated in the most shameful manner. Billups and Hunt enduring abuse quietly were mostly stored in cells and starved, while the English boy, who was inclined to be 'sassy' was often unmercifully flogged. An account of the treatment was written and [sic] smuggled to me. I sent a copy to General Dix in New York, who at once ordered the men to be taken out of Jail and sent to the military prison . .

.<sup>(90)</sup>

Read also wrote to Secretary Mallory for cash and clothes, as all they had was taken as souvenirs by citizens of Portland.<sup>(91)</sup>

The South learnt of cruiser successes on July 1st. The Richmond Dispatch noted "The destructive operations of rebel privateers" and quoted a New York paper's statement that "The ocean is lit up by rebel sea-

devils." Next day it had a dramatic account of Read's capture, told in cables, and published a glowing editorial tribute.<sup>(92)</sup> In England, an account of the panic in New England and an accurate account of the Portland affair was published in the Confederate periodical The Index,<sup>(93)</sup> but The Times ignored the matter. Maffitt got news of the raid on 7th. July, when he captured *Sunrise*. Leaving United States waters he craftily noted "Lieutenant Read had for some reason deflected from his original orders . . . " Which covered HIS tail!<sup>(94)</sup>

*Tacony* was the first Confederate cruiser to seriously raid New England.<sup>(95)</sup> Others followed where Read had led, and to some purpose. In October 1864 Jefferson Davis wrote to Governor Vance of North Carolina:

Our cruisers, though few in number, have almost swept the enemy's foreign commerce from the sea. Though the *Tallahassee* captured 31 vessels, her service is not measured by, nor limited to, the value of these ships and cargoes and the number of her prisoners, but it must be estimated in connection with other results; the consequent insecurity of the United States coastwise commerce, the detention and delay of vessels in port, and the augmentation of the rate of maritime insurance, by which millions were added to the expence of commerce and navigation, and the compulsory withdrawal of a portion of the blockading force from Wilmington in pursuit of her. A cruise by the *Chickamauga* and *Tallahassee* against Northern coasts and commerce would at once withdraw a fleet of fast steamers from the blockading force off Wilmington in pursuit of

them, and this result alone would render such a cruise expedient. It is the presence of these vessels in port which increases the rigour of the blockade. In case of an attack upon Wilmington they could avail nothing against the land attack and very little against the attack by vessels of war.<sup>(96)</sup>

Fair for one who "Had no understanding of the importance of sea power and consistently ignored naval policy" - and better than the professional view of Rear-Admiral Franklin Buchanan that Maffitt cited!<sup>(97)</sup> Frank Owsley has shown that cruisers drew off ten times their tonnage in hunters, including fast steamers like *Wachusett*, *Kearsage*, and *Vanderbilt*, which would have augmented the blockade; ruined Northern trade; and added to Northern war weariness. Arguing that cruisers could not win the war he stated that had the South done "One tenth as well in other areas, she would likely to have been victorious," and wondered about the results had Rebels arranged coastal raids regularly. Raiding Portland was an error, but Read had shown how to hurt the North. Owsley judged that "Reed[sic] and his men were certainly the most profitable military investment ever made by the South."<sup>(98)</sup>

Read's prison life is vague. A profile in The Daily Picayune of 14th. November, 1889, written with his help says "After an ineffectual attempt to escape, Captain Read was exchanged."<sup>(99)</sup> An obituary published later tells how he got out of the fort by night, lay on wet ground, was prodded by the bayonets of passing sentries, could not steal a boat, and "Cooly walked back . . . when daylight made further escape impossible."<sup>(100)</sup>

James Morgan has a story "told" him by Read at



night in the wardroom of the *C.S.S. Patrick Henry*, and repeated by subsequent biographers. Here Read damaged his eye permanently while digging through a brick blocked chimney with a knife, reached the outside, hid under wet dunnage in the dark, kept silent when stabbed by a bayonet in the leg so severely that he limped thereafter, swam with a companion "Lt. Alexander, C.S.N." to a boat and escaped to sea. While Read slept, weak with loss of blood, his companion lost control of the sail. This was seen by a passing Union warship which recaptured them.<sup>(101)</sup> Sea swimming with a bleeding wound sounds unlikely anyway, but the officer who accompanied Lieutenant Joseph Alexander on his escape on August 19th, 1863, was Marine Lieutenant James Thurston<sup>(102)</sup> Read was exchanged in October 1864, but as early as April officers in Richmond knew that he was having "a hard time of it."<sup>(103)</sup> He was posted to the James River Squadron of Flag-Officer John K. Mitchell, whom he knew from New Orleans, to command shore batteries - first Battery Semmes then Battery Wood. His orders of October 27th. read "You . . . will take with you Master's Mate John E [James W.] Billups and J. W. Matherson . . ." *Tacony* men stuck together!<sup>(104)</sup> Prison had matured him, but not broken his spirit. He had learnt to quit, but still wanted to strike. On December 27th. a Federal intelligence report quoted George Dunnett, an English deserter from *C. S. S. Virginia*:

They are fitting out an expedition for the torpedo boats under Lieutenant Read. Thinks they are to be taken overland; thinks it possible they intend to go to Point

Lookout, as Lieutenant read was a prisoner there, and has heard some of those who are going say it was possible to take a boat there and blow up the ironclad.

Another Englishman, Thomas Longmain, told them that only "The best and most reliable men [were picked." he spoke of "Severe usage and inefficiency of crew," and ended "*Virginia* leaky, and quarters cold and uncomfortable."(105)

Confederates had three ironclads, *Fredericksburg*, *Richmond*, and *Virginia*(106) and torpedo boats on the River James, which was blocked by Federals above City Point. January rains created a "freshet," so read sent Billups and Matherson to check the barrier. He reported to Major General George E. Pickett that it was damaged, was sent to General Robert E. Lee, who sent him to Secretary Mallory. Mallory ordered an attack. Somehow Read also notified Mitchell. Mallory wrote to Mitchell on January 16th. "I regard an attack upon the enemy and the obstructions of the river at City Point, to cut off Grant's supplies as a movement of the first importance to the country."<sup>(108)</sup> Read went to test the boom but a pilot (Wood, of *Virginia*) balked so another was drawn from *Fredericksburg*. As the boom was found to be weak Mitchell advanced.

On January 23rd. read and Mitchell, who Read considered the "Coolest man under fire that I ever saw," went down and opened a gap under gunfire.<sup>(109)</sup> But time was wasted before the fleet attacked and the river level fell. *Virginia* and torpedo boats grounded and at daybreak shells were exchanged with Union vessels. The torpedo

boats *C.S.S. Drewry* and *C.S.S. Scorpion* were destroyed in this action. A second advance next night, which Read had championed in a council-of-war also fizzled; the federals had lit the boom and the pilots jibbed. Mitchell, Read, and many officers blamed the pilots,<sup>(110)</sup> but Mitchell's caution had cost a great chance. he was therefore replaced by Raphael Semmes but there were no more fleet actions so Read's own attack was put in.

A survivor, Freeman W. Jones, described the plan as read related it to him after the war:

he intended to go around Gen. Grant's army, and when fully in his rear, he expected, under cover of night, to board one or more United States transports then lying at anchor in the James River, . . . he expected to steam at once up James River and take possession, if possible by surprise, of the first gun-boat he met. 'I am sure' said he 'before they could possibly have known what was going on, I could have run alongside and boarded a gun-boat, with this gun-boat and my torpedoes, I could easily have sunk the rest of the gun-boats. Besides, at the first signal, our own gun-boats, which were lying in readiness near the Howlett House, in James River would have come immediately to my rescue. My plans were known to Gen. Lee, and approved by him, . . . and by President Davis.'<sup>(111)</sup>

With a hundred men and two torpedo boats, mounted on wheels and drawn by mules, the raid started in appalling weather on January 3rd, 1865. Four days later, as they fed their horses, they were overtaken by a courier:

Riding at full speed, he dismounted and handed Capt.[sic] Read a dispatch from Gen. Lee. This dispatch was to inform Capt.[sic] Read that, since our departure from Drury's Bluff, one of our naval officers had deserted and had informed the enemy of his (Capt. Read's) whole plan . . . I can never forget how exhausted this courier and his horse appeared. The poor horse could not stand, but reeled from side to side like a drunken man, while the rider, though exhausted, appeared much pleased at reaching us.<sup>(112)</sup>

Lt. Lewis, a northerner fighting for the South had gone to scout, deserted, and betrayed the raiders.<sup>(113)</sup> A Union regiment lay in ambush. Concealing his men Read went ahead, and verified the report. Pursued by cavalry he and his force retreated. It was a hard march, and 74 survivors were in hospital as the war ended in April.<sup>(114)</sup>

Another survivor recalls crossing the Appomattox with a guide:

My teeth chatter yet to think of that cold wade through water waist deep, covered with a thin coating of ice, but we passed it successfully, wagons and all, and then double quicked to keep from freezing; our clothes freezing stiff on us as we came out of the water.

This survivor says that Read was warned by a Southern soldier who had escaped captivity.<sup>(115)</sup> The Jones account is preferred here as one cannot see how an escapee could have found the party. Once he had recovered, read went to Louisiana.

The *Webb*, formerly *William H. Webb* was a fast

and powerful former New York tug-boat and icebreaker which was converted into a ram gunboat in 1861. Federal control of the Mississippi drove her to Shreveport, on the Red River. Read persuaded Secretary Mallory to appoint him captain to run the blockade with a cargo of cotton, capture any Union vessels that he could, and return to via Galveston. At Shreveport Read received full co-operation to ready the now neglected ship, and a crew was recruited from Lieutenant General Edmund Kirby Smith's army.

On April 23rd., 1865 she drifted down the Red River into the Mississippi on the tide, but was soon spotted. Then began a wild chase towards New Orleans. Outrunning pursuers, read landed a party to cut the telegraph, but a warning got ahead.<sup>(116)</sup> Again Read caused consternation - even Major General T. W. Sherman (the "other" General Sherman!) cabled orders to capture him, while Federal officers referred to "the infamous Tacony Read" in cables.<sup>(117)</sup>

Passing New Orleans slowly - with the Union Flag at half-mast for President Abraham Lincoln's death - *Webb* was taken for an army transport. Beyond the city a new chase began. Read tried ramming a Federal with a spar-torpedo, but luckily it broke - his target was a powder ship! Rumours swept the city that *Webb* carried Jefferson Davis, the Confederate Cabinet, and the gold of the Confederate State Treasury! Federal guns opened on the *Webb* as she passed, but only damaged buildings in Algiers - the government paid compensation after the war.<sup>(118)</sup> At a river bend he met *U.S.S. Richmond*, lying beyond a sand

bank. To reach her he would have to go under her broadside, and as this was obviously suicidal Read ordered the *Webb* to be beached and blown up. The ship's company took to the woods, but pursuit by Federal cavalry forced them back to the river, and they surrendered to a gunboat.<sup>(119)</sup>

The official list of prisoners gave his rank as First Lieutenant and he was interviewed by Allan Pinkerton.<sup>(120)</sup> Possibly Read was publicly displayed in New Orleans before going to Fort Warren, where he was released when General Kirby Smith surrendered.<sup>(121)</sup>

After the war read first settled in New Orleans, and entered the fruit trade. He later joined the Merchant Marine and in 1881 became Captain of a Royal Mail steamer, *City of Dallas* plying between that city and British Honduras. How he got a British Masters ticket is unclear. He married a Miss carter of Meridian, Miss.; it seems that the marriage was happy, with many children. In 1887 "Governor Nicholls appointed him one of the board of harbor masters of the port of New Orleans."<sup>(122)</sup>

Morgan has vivid tales of a cash loan to Read for a fruit trade venture that failed, a loan that was never repaid. He also tells how Read smuggled a spruced up derelict to Columbia as a gunboat for that government; how Read was hired by rebels to steal that boat - and then offered to regain it for the government again etc. Morgan affirms that read was soon broke again

and was glad of "A place as an apprentice pilot." Good Morgan yarns that should not be accepted without Columbian confirmation.<sup>(123)</sup>

Read always claimed acquaintanceship with Jefferson Davis, his Annapolis sponsor. However Davis made scant mention of him in his book Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, and chose to quote Maffitt's verdict "Daring, even beyond the point of martial prudence."<sup>(124)</sup> The calendar of the Davis papers published to date (1997) has only Read's appeal to be sent to *U.S.S. Richmond*.<sup>(125)</sup> It may be "That more people were acquainted with Jefferson Davis than Jefferson Davis was acquainted with!" But Morgan claims that before her death Mrs. Davis told him that the President "Flew into a towering Rage" when hearing of Federal plans to hang Read for piracy, and swore to hang ten high ranking federal officers in turn. He also says that "Read was a protégé and a great favourite" of Davis.<sup>(126)</sup>

1889 saw Read in poor health, suffering from Bright's Disease - a kidney ailment. He took leave to visit the Mississippi Hills, made a brief recovery, but was then stricken with "La Grippe upon which pneumonia supervened." Charles Read died on January 25th., 1889. As it proved impossible to arrange a funeral in New Orleans under "The military auspices of that city," Walthall camp No. 1 of Confederate Veterans took charge of the arrangements and he was buried at Memphis.<sup>(128)</sup>

Read was remembered by friend and foe alike until the early twentieth century, but has since been largely forgotten.<sup>(129)</sup> This partly reflects the general neglect of Confederate naval history but also the fact that his exploits were not covered in such works as Battles and Leaders of the Civil War and other major contemporary works which have defined many areas of Civil War studies. No great military lessons can be learnt from his career, and the modern world has little time for the purely heroic.

Although a product of the same United States naval training and tradition that benefited his Federal contemporaries, Read had significant personal qualities. He had an open mind that could accept and adapt to new methods and equipment, and develop new ways of using them. As a leader he could inspire his men and some followed him from command to command. In a society where bravery was the expected norm Charles Read was noted for his courage. But more remarkable was the variety of experience he packed into four years of war, experience that would surely have carried him to high rank had the Confederacy survived. He served on ships of wood and ships of iron; ships that sailed and ships that steamed; he defended his own coast and attacked that of his enemy; he ran the blockade and raided commerce; whether on inland river or open ocean he served his cause with distinction. No man knew better the Confederate ways of naval warfare than "Savez" Read.



# A Note on Sources

The most significant modern study of Charles Read is the essay in Charles L. Dufour's Nine Men in Gray (1983). Unfortunately, the quality of the writing is not matched by sound research. Mr. Dufour is an acknowledged expert on New Orleans and the Civil War. But to miss the obituary of Read in War Talks of Confederate Veterans was careless, as was his failure to find the profile of Read in The Daily Picayune - a paper for which Mr. Dufour was later a columnist! He is also overly credulous of James M. Morgan, yet does not seem to have consulted the work of his sister, Sarah Morgan A Confederate Girl's Diary, despite the fact that Morgan refers to it. Nor has he used Morgan's other book, Rebel Reefer, which also contains Read material. Strangest of all is his use of George W. Gift "The Story of the Arkansas". This excellent account appeared in four parts yet Mr. Dufour only quotes from the first part, raising the question "did he miss the other three"? Certainly he has omitted some useful Read sightings.

Another modern account, by Chester Hearn, Gray Raiders of the Sea, is far better, but it only deals with the Portland raid and no other parts of Read's career. This does add sound research to good writing.

The fullest contemporary study is by James M. Morgan in Prince and Boatswain. This is a rattling good

yarn, but owes more to the ramblings of a garrulous old salt than to the inspiration of Cleo! It is only reliable for the period when he and Read served on the *McRae*. He does sometimes claim that Read told him some of the later stories - which means no more than that Read might have been good at embroidery.

Read himself wrote an account of his earlier career "*Reminiscences of the Confederate States Navy*", published in Southern Historical Society Papers, Vol. 1, No. 5 (May 1876). This goes as far as Read's appointment to the *Florida*. Mr. Dufour makes good use of "*Manuscript narrative in the Possession of Mallory J. Read*" for Read's later adventures. Happily, this is not totally unpublished. This study has revealed a long extract covering the *Tacony* raid in The Daily Picayune, (Nov. 14th., 1889) - which matches extracts used by Mr. Dufour whenever comparison can be made. There is an extract of another part of the document in J. T. Scharf The Confederate States Navy. When reading Scharf's account of Read's later career it is impossible not to think that he had access to the Read manuscript.

Apart from Chester Hearns, James D. Hill and possibly Edgar Boykin, writers seem to ignore "*The Cruise of the Clarence-Tacony-Archer*" by an Officer of the United States Navy, with Addenda by an Officer of the Three Vessels' (Maryland Historical Society Magazine, March, 1915). This is probably because it seems anonymous and uses direct speech frequently. Hearns does note that it seems authoritative but does not show why. In fact, the

contents page of the annual bound volume of the magazine confirms that the Confederate Officer was Eugene Browne, the ONLY other officer aboard and Read's Second-in-Command. Further, the direct speech always involves him. This identification is supported by the Dictionary of American Biography in the reading list appended to Read's entry. It has therefore been taken as 'good source'.

## END NOTES

( 1) Herman Hattaway & Archer Jones, How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War. Illini Books Edition. (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1991). 32

( 2) Chester Hearn, Gray Raiders of the Sea: How Eight Confederate Warships Destroyed the Union's High Seas Commerce. (Camden ME.: International Marine Publishing, 1992)

( 3) James Morris Morgan & John P. Marquand, Prince and Boatswain. (Greenfield, Mass.: E. A. Hall & Co., 1915)

( 4) Morgan: Prince. 31

( 5) The Papers of Jefferson Davis. 8 Vols. (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana U.P., 1971-1975). 6: 656-657

( 6) "The Hero of the Webb". The Daily Picayune - New Orleans. 14th., November, 1889

( 7) "Admiral W. S. Schley to Winfield M. Thompson, no date but about 1904, copy in possession of Read's grandson,

Mallory J. Read". Quoted in Charles Dufour Nine Men in Gray. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1963; Bison Book edition 1993) 120. This quotation has been taken in part from Dufour's book, where the reference was found.

( 8) Description of Charles Read by Allen Pinkerton in Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. 31 vols. (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894-1927), Series 1, 22:152-54.

( 9) Davis Papers 6: 656-657

( 10) Charles W. Read "Reminiscences of the Confederate States Navy". Southern Historical Society Papers 1, No. 5 (May 1876) 331

( 11) Sarah Morgan Dawson, A Confederate Girls Diary. (London: Wm. Heinemann, 1913; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana U.P., 1960) 26

( 12) Morgan, Boatswain 32-33

( 13) United States Navy, Naval Historical Division. Civil War Naval Chronology 1861-1865. (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1971). 6:269

( 14) Dawson, Diary 445

( 15) Naval Chronology. 6:629

( 16) Morgan, Boatswain 34

( 17) Read, Reminiscences. 333

( 18) ORN. 16: 581

( 19) Virgil Carrington Jones, The Civil War at Sea. Vol. 1. The Blockaders. (New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston, 1960) 254

( 20) Morgan, Boatswain. 36

( 21) James Morris Morgan, Recollections of a Rebel Reefer. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1917) 55. Quoted in William N. Still, Iron Afloat. (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt University Press, 1971; Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1985) 46-47

( 22) Morgan, Boatswain 37-39

( 23) Dawson, Diary. 151

( 24) William C. Harris, Leroy Pope Walker (Tuscaloosa: Confederate Pub. Co., 1962) 'Confederate Centennial Studies, No. 20'. 85. Read Reminiscences. 336

( 25) Morgan, Rebel Reefer 69

( 26) Read Reminiscences. 339 J. Thomas Scharf, History of the Confederate States Navy from its Organization to the Surrender of its Last Vessel. (New York: Rogers and Sherwood, 1887) 246

( 27) Charles Dufour, The Night the War was Lost. (Garden City: Doubleday, 1960; Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1994 Bison Book). 227

( 28) Morgan, Rebel Reefer. 73. A similar statement appears in Boatswain, 43, and on the next page he states "Of the *McRae's* officers only Read and one little Midshipman were left. When the day broke the *McRae* was the only vessel left with the Confederate flag flying".

( 29) Morgan, Rebel Reefer 73

( 30) George W. Gift, "The Story of the Arkansas". in Southern Historical Society Papers 12: 116 (February 1884). The author states that Read saw the No. 6, but all other accounts, including Read's own, make it clear that he was below decks fighting a fire that threatened the magazine when Huger was struck. Summoned to the deck, Read took command.

( 31) Dufour, Night 278

( 32) Morgan, Rebel Reefer. 74. Morgan also states here that the exhausted crew refused to continue at the pumps.

( 33) ORN 18:697

( 34) Journal of the Congress of the Confederate States of America, 1861-1865. 7 Vols., Government Printing Office, 1904-05). 2:393

( 35) 'Duncan to Mrs. Duncan, April 24, 1862, in Duncan Papers, in possession of Mrs. Mildred Parham of New Orleans' quoted in Dufour, Night, 405, from where this citation for a quotation used on p319 is taken.

( 36) Read, Reminiscences 343

( 37) Ibid, 349

( 38) Morgan, Rebel Reefer 45-46

( 39) Read, Reminiscences 348

( 40) Ibid, 349

( 41) Ibid, 349; Gift, Arkansas 49

( 42) Read Reminiscences, 350. On p355 he states 'Had not our gunboats in the Yazoo been uselessly destroyed by Pinkney, there can be no doubt that Captain Brown could, with their assistance, have injured the enemy far more than he did with the "Arkansas" alone'. He then enumerates the advantages of the boats, and indicates how they could have been used. This was a judgement of his mature years. Gift, Arkansas 165 makes a similar point.

( 43) Ibid. 351, The trip to Vicksburg involved the sailor in long-distance cross country riding but he seems to have coped well. He must therefore have been a good horseman even if he came from a poor family.

( 44) Ibid 351

( 45) Gift, Arkansas 53

( 46) Capt. Isaac Brown, C.S.N., "The Confederate Gunboat 'Arkansas'" in Robert Underwood Johnson and Clarence Clough Buell (eds) Battles and Leaders of the Civil War (New York: Century Books Co., 1887;. [USA]: Castle, ND.) 3:574

( 47) Gift, Arkansas 53

( 48) Ibid 116. The comparison to Trafalgar comes from Brown, Gunboat 3:578

( 49) Ibid

( 50) Ibid, 163

( 51) Ibid 207. The identification of Eugene Browne comes in Rev John Johnson "Story of the Confederate Armoured Ram 'Arkansas'" in Southern Historical Society Papers 33 (105)

12. Tracing Browne's career through various records and

accounts is tricky due to the various ways his name is given. However I fully agree with the identification of Eugene Browne as engineer on *Arkansas* and *Tacony* in James D. Hill, "Charles W. Read: Confederate Von Lückner" in South Atlantic Quarterly (October 1929) 393

( 52) Brown, Gun-boat 579

( 53) Gift *Arkansas* 210. Read kept *Essex* at bay with shellfire until Stevens had completed the task of setting her alight.

( 54) Dawson Diary 151-156

( 55) Read Reminiscences 361

( 56) Frank Owsley, The C.S.S. Florida: Her Building and Operations. (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1965. Tuscaloosa, Ala.: University of Alabama Press, 1987)

( 57) Dufour Nine Men. 137

( 58) ORN 1:769

( 59) Daily Picayune 14 November, 1889

( 60) ORN 6:678

( 61) Daily Picayune 14 November, 1889

( 62) Ibid

( 63) ORN 2:644

( 64) That "E.H.Brown"{sic} was Second Officer is confirmed by a list of prisoners in ORN 2:328



( 65) ORN 2:665. Daily Picayune 14 November, 1889

( 66) ORN 2:665. Owsley, *Florida*, 189. Richard S. West Mr. Lincoln's Navy. states that two, the *Isaac Webb* and the *Shatemuc* were steamers. This is not borne out by other accounts. Notably Owsley, *Florida* states that both were clipper ships.

( 67) Ibid 163

( 68) Ibid 81. Various entries in ORN Vol. 2 confirm this

( 69) ORN 2:656

( 70) Ibid 2:281

( 71) Ibid 2:307

( 72) Ibid 2:316

( 73) Ibid 2:309: Owsley *Florida* 73

( 74) Ibid 2 278

( 75) Ibid, 2: 287

( 76) Gideon Welles, Diary of Gideon Welles (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1911) Various entries. Owsley *Florida* 131-132.

( 77) Owsley, *Florida* 87

( 78) Hearn, Gray Raiders 93

( 79) ORN 2:300

( 80) Ibid 2:304-306

( 81) Ibid 2: 304

( 82) Ibid 2: 322; 2: 340

( 83) Hearn, Gray Raiders 90

( 84) Ibid

( 85) Read's own report is in ORN 2:655-857. A good modern account is in Owsley Florida 88-91.

( 86) Ibid. Jewett's account is in ORN 2:322-325. Lt. Merryman's account is in ORN 2:325. Note that Dufour Nine Men spells Merryman's name incorrectly when writing of the early Boston Steamer.

( 87) "The Cruise of the Clarence-Tacony-Archer. By an Officer of the United States Navy, with Addenda by an Officer of the Three Vessels". Maryland Historical Magazine. March, 1915. This is almost absolutely certainly by Eugene Browne - see discussion of this point in "Notes on sources" that follows the text.

( 88) ORN 2:323

( 89) Read's report is in ORN 2655-657. He states that he was "Mortified to find that all projectiles for that gun were expended" but says nothing of a shot locker. {browne} Cruise states, p52, that "shot and shell were anchored in the channed [sic] covered by a tarpaulin". As the cutter was burnt, no examination of her was possible after her capture. All statements that the locker was full come from people not on board the *Caleb Cushing* at any time. It seems incredible that twenty desperate sailors could not find a container which would have been large but placed somewhere convenient and safe. Browne's account is more likely, and supported by telling detail.

( 90) Daily Picayune 14 November, 1889

( 91) ORN 2: 654-655

( 92) Richmond Dispatch 2 July, 1862

( 93) The Index 16 July, 1862

( 94) ORN 2:653. Maffitt abandoned a planned raid against the coast on learning of the hornets nest that Read had stirred up from captured Northern newspapers. One must wonder about the effect on the blockade had he struck some of the weak vessels Welles had sent out after *Tacony*. Owsley *Florida* 160 states "In spite of his determination to hold the blockade at all costs, even Welles was compelled to relent to a degree during the coastal raids of the *Florida* and *Tacony*, and some ships were actually taken off blockade duty and sent after the raiders. No doubt Maffitt wanted to record his reason for breaking off his raid - and shed responsibility.

( 95) A Privateer, *Jeff Davis* had caused somea larm in the North in 1861, but was soon captured.

( 96) ORN 10: 801-802

( 97) Still, Iron Afloat 5.

( 98) Owsley, *Florida* 91

( 99) Daily Picayune 14 November, 1889

(100) [Obituary] Daily Picayune 26 january, 1890

(101) Morgan, Boatswain 57-60

(102) Thomas T. Moebs, Confederate Navy Research

Guide. (Williamsburg, Va.: Moebs Pub. Co., 1991) 185 & 268

(103) See letter from R.D.Minor in ORN 9:806

(104) ORN 10: 805

(105) Ibid 11:382-383

(106) Otherwise know as *Virginia II*, this was a successor to the *Merrimack/Virginia* which was scuttled in 1862

(107) Daily Picayune 14 November, 1889: ORN 11: 797

(108) ORN 11:798

(109) Read,s account of this action is reproduced in Scharf, Confederate States Navy 740. For identification of Pilot Wood, see Read's report, ORN 11:683.

(110) ORN 11:798

(111) Freeman W. Jones, "A daring Expedition" in George S. Bernard, War Talks of Confederate Veterans. (Petersburg: 1862)

(112) Ibid 233

(113) Daily Picayune 14 November, 1889

(114) W.F. Shippey, "A Leaf from my Log-book" in Southern Historical Society Papers 12 (1884). Morgan, Boatswain 63 has a story that an incident with Confederate Cavalry on the return journey led to Read being challenged to a duel, and accepting, before "authorities" quelled the matter. No confirmation has been found . . . . .

(115) Shippey, "Leaf" 419

(116) Scharf, Confederate States Navy. 365. This is still probably the best account of the incident, although a number of authors have tried! Moebs, Confederate Navy contains "Scharf Footnote Biographies". A biography of Lt. Arthur Wharton, CSN., states that he, a former commander of the *Webb* suggested to Mallory that she broke out. This does not necessarily contradict Read - any unused powerful Confederate warship would have been of interest to any able Confederate Naval Officer, and most could have made interesting suggestions for employing *Webb*. By 1865, the Confederacy was so short of active ships that the *Webb* was bound to be used somehow, and Read's effort came so near success that one has to accept that he was committed to the idea. See Moebs, Confederate Navy 296

(117) ORN 22:156

(118) Ibid 22:165

(119) Daily Picayune 14 November, 1889 ORN Ser 2, 2:798 has a letter from Stephen Mallory to James Bulloch in London stating that "Lieutenant Commanding Charles W. read, C.S. Navy is authorised to draw upon you for funds upon his cruise, at 60 days after sight, to the extent of £10,000". Some people, including Charles Dufour, have taken this to suggest that the *Webb* was to go to England. In fact, it is merely an error in the Richmond War Department. The money was for Lt. E. G. Read, of the *C.S.S. Stonewall*. The *Webb* was to go to Havana and return via Galveston. The error has been compounded by the indexing of James Bulloch's The Secret Service of the Confederate States in Europe. (London: R. Bentley & Son, 1883: New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1959) 456. Read's report to Mallory, before the voyage began, ORN 22: 169 shows that Billups was with Read AGAIN!

(120) ORN 22:153-154

(121) Shelby Foote, The Civil War, vol. 3, Red River to Appomattox ([USA: 1958]: London: Plimlico, 1992) 1026. As usual, foote gives no source, but I have seen this matter hinted at in other general works not at hand. For Pinkerton's report - and description of Read, see ORN 22:153-154.

(122) Daily Picayune 26 January, 1890

(123) Morgan, Boatswain, 68-71.

(124) Jefferson Davis, The Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government. 2 vols., (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1881)

(125) Davis, Papers. 6:656-657

(126) Morgan, Boatswain. This could be true, but Morgan is so erratic . . . .

(127) "A Daring Rebel Officer" New York Times 26 January, 1890

(128) Daily Picayune 26 January, 1890

(129) Read was recalled in George Dewey, Autobiography of George Dewey, Admiral of the Navy. (Westfield, Mass.: Dewey Pub. Co., 1898. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916) as "Savey" Read, and for "A career up and down our coast worthy of the days of Drake". 75. In New Orleans he was "The Hero of the *Webb*". Daily Picayune 26 January, 1890.

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