

E. Cort Williams

Ensign USN

Williams, E. Court

Mate, 1 October 1862. Acting Ensign, 15 February 1864

Honorably discharged 15 September 1865



E. COURTLAND WILLIAMS

Ethan or as he is widely known, E. Cort Williams was born in Cincinnati, graduated from Woodward, and enlisted in the Navy at the age of 18 once the Civil War broke out. Cort participated in the battle of **Shiloh**, the **capture of Ft Pillow**, the **siege of Vicksburg**, the **battle of Port Hudson** as well as was part of the **Red River campaign**. He retired at the end of the war with the rank of ensign. His actual sword from his service in the Civil War is current on display at the Cort's historical home in Cincinnati. After the war, he recounted his naval exploits in a paper for the Loyal Legion of the United States entitled "Recollections of the Red River Expedition."

Ethan Cortlandt Williams

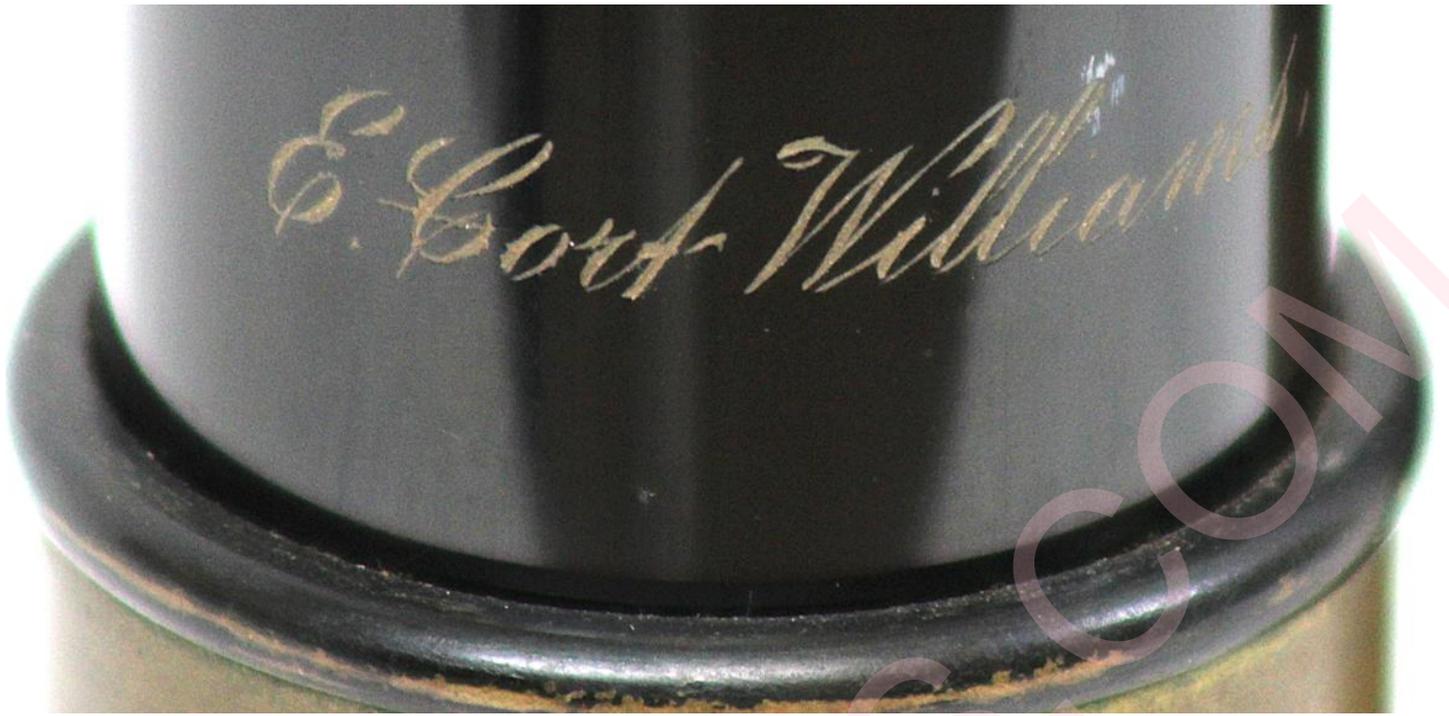
Identified Twin Telescope



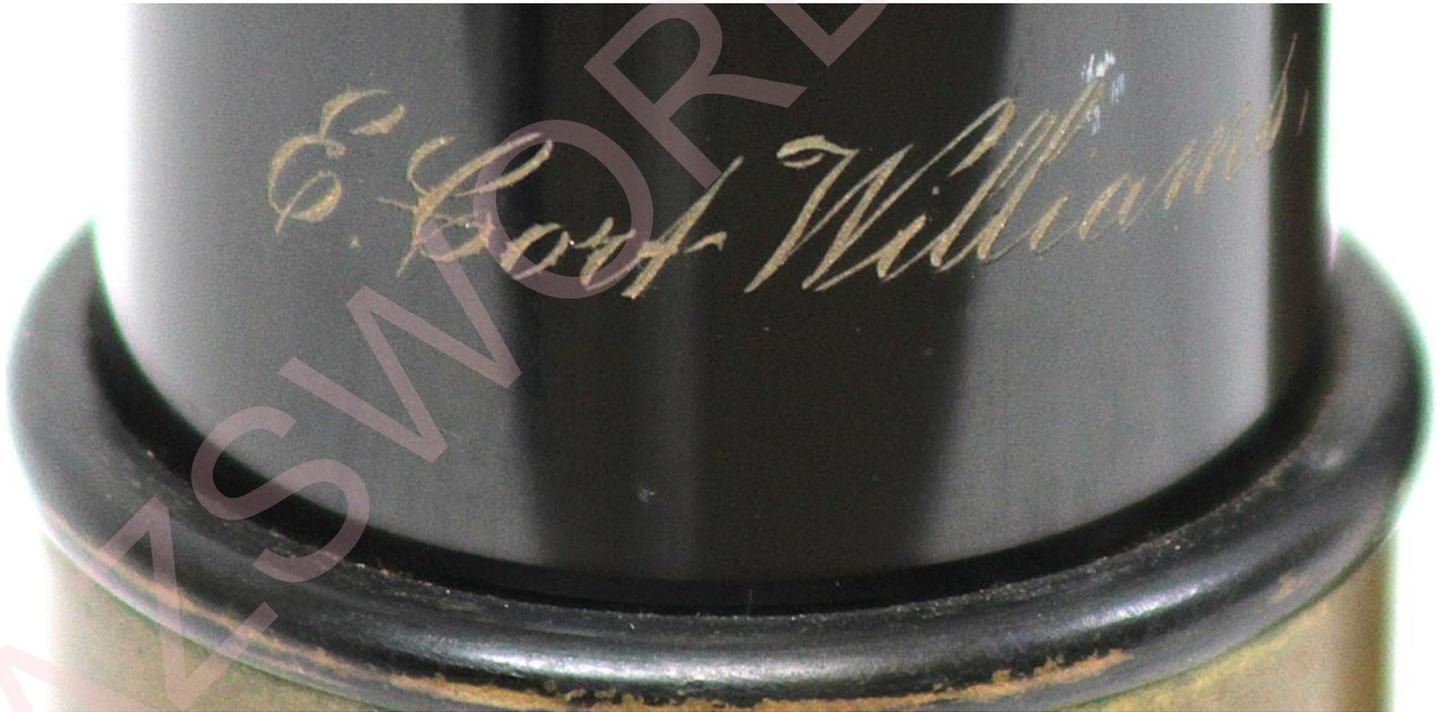
This Twin Telescope was made by "MESSRS. W. WATSON & SON'S, LTD" London: founded in 1837 for the manufacture of optic instruments. It is in amazing condition with no issued and is fully functional. It is identified to E. Cort Williams and is gold etched with is name and home town.

E. Cort Williams, Cincinnati Ohio





E. Cort Williams,



Cincinnati Ohio



USS Juliet

USS Juliet was a steamer acquired by the Union Navy during the American Civil War. She was used by the Union Navy as a gunboat in support of the Union Navy blockade of Confederate waterways.

Service history

Juliet was built at Brownsville, Pennsylvania, in 1862 and purchased by the Navy at Cincinnati, Ohio, 1 November 1862. After receiving armor plate protection, she commissioned 14 December, Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Edward Shaw in command. Assigned to the Mississippi Squadron and ordered to the vicinity of **Vicksburg, Mississippi**, *Juliet* helped clear the Yazoo River of torpedoes (mines) 23 December in preparation for General William Tecumseh Sherman's valiant but unsuccessful attack on the Chickasaw Bluffs, which protected Vicksburg. She remained in the **Yazoo River** until 2 January 1863 when she followed the transports and other gunboats downstream, covering their withdrawal to the Mississippi River.

On 6 January Rear Admiral David Dixon Porter assigned *Juliet* to 1st Division of Light Draft Gunboats where she served the **Mississippi Squadron** as an escort vessel maintaining communications along the river and protecting the vital flow of shipping which sustained military and naval strength throughout the campaigns and cut the Confederacy in two with the fall of Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

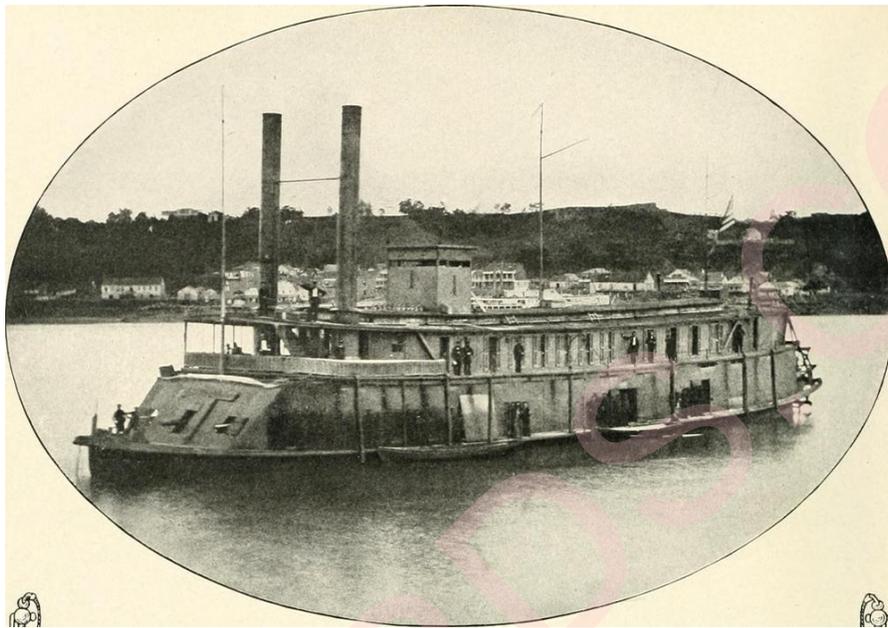
The most dangerous service during the faithful tinclads' career came during the **Red River Expedition**. Admiral Porter's gunboats, in cooperation with General Banks, had ascended the Red River in an effort to replant the United States flag on Texas soil as a check against French interference in Mexico and to encourage the re-establishment of loyal state governments in Louisiana and Arkansas. While the Union ships were at Springfield Landing making preparations to clear away the sunken hulk of an old steamer which had stopped their progress toward Shreveport, Louisiana, a messenger arrived with word that General Banks had suffered a severe defeat near Mansfield and was falling back to Grand Ecore. Reluctantly Porter ordered the gunboats to reverse course.

During the passage down, the Northern gunboats were severely punished by fire from Confederate shore batteries. On 26 and 27 April *Juliet* again and again fought off cannon and musketry, suffering 16 casualties including 2 killed and heavy damage to the ship. Skillful repair work under the most trying conditions kept the vessel afloat and finally enabled her to pass the batteries. After repairs at Cairo, Illinois, *Juliet* recommissioned 6 September and returned to duty with the Mississippi squadron, serving as an escort and patrol vessel.

After the end of the war, *Juliet* decommissioned at Mound City, Illinois, 30 June 1865, and was sold at public auction there to Philip Wallach 17 August 1865. Redocumented *Goldina* (or *Goldena*) that day, she was stranded 31 December 1865 on the White River Cutoff between the Arkansas River and the White River in Arkansas and abandoned.

(UNION NAVY)

USS JULIET CAPTURES CONFEDERATE COTTON ON THE RED RIVER



USS Rattler, a gunboat that was tinclad like the USS Juliet, circa 1863

An interesting war-date manuscript L.S., 1p. 4to., 'Off Red River Landing', April 16, 1864, from U.S. Navy captain JOHN STOUGHTON WATSON, commander of the tin-clad gunboat USS JULIET, to Capt. Thomas A. Devine, commanding the sidewheel gunboat USS CHAMPION. Watson writes from aboard the Juliet at the height of the Red River Campaign, in full: 'While on the station which you are now commanding, I seized thirteen Bales of Cotton at Jacksons Point, for which Mr. Jackson deposited \$2000.00 with me, as a guaranty [sic] for the delivery of the cotton, if ordered so by the Admiral [David D. Porter]. My instructions from the Admiral is, to send it to Cairo [Illinois]. Enclosed you will find the two thousand dollars, which you will hand over to Mr. Jackson, upon the delivery of the said cotton. You will also please mark the cotton Prize Cotton U.S.S. Juliet, and forward it to Cairo - at the first opportunity.' Watson signs at the conclusion in black ink, adding a postscript at the left margin instructing Devine to get a receipt from Jackson. Shows original mailing folds with small splits thereto at the right edge, barely touching the text, and a mounting strip to the verso on the left edge, otherwise in fine condition overall. The Red River Campaign of March 10 to May 22, 1864, was a massive joint operation between Army forces under Maj. Gen. Nathaniel P. Banks and the Mississippi Flotilla under Rear Admiral David D. Porter, and was intended to capture Shreveport while cutting off Confederate forces in Louisiana and Arkansas. Banks' advance was turned back by his defeat at the Battle of Mansfield, while Confederate diversions of the river prevented Porter from advancing past Alexandria, and the campaign ended in miserable failure which likely extended the war by several months by delaying the capture of Mobile. The Juliet was heavily damaged by Confederate shore batteries during Porter's withdrawal. Of particular interest is the decision on the parts of Banks and Porter to allow cotton speculators to accompany the expedition; The 'Mr. Jackson' mentioned in the letter presented here was likely one of these.

U.S. Gun Boat Juliet
Off Red River Lag
April 16th 1864

Sir

While on the station which you are now commanding I seized thirteen Bales of Cotton at Jackson Point, for which Mr Jackson deposited \$2000.⁰⁰ with me - as a guaranty for the delivery of the cotton - if ordered so by the Admiral -

My instructions from the Admiral is, to send it to Cairo -

Enclosed you will find the two thousand dollars, which you will hand over to Mr Jackson, upon the delivery of the said cotton -

You will also please mark the Cotton Origin Cotton U.S. Juliet - and forward it to Cairo - by the first opportunity -

Respectfully Yrs
Genl. S. S.

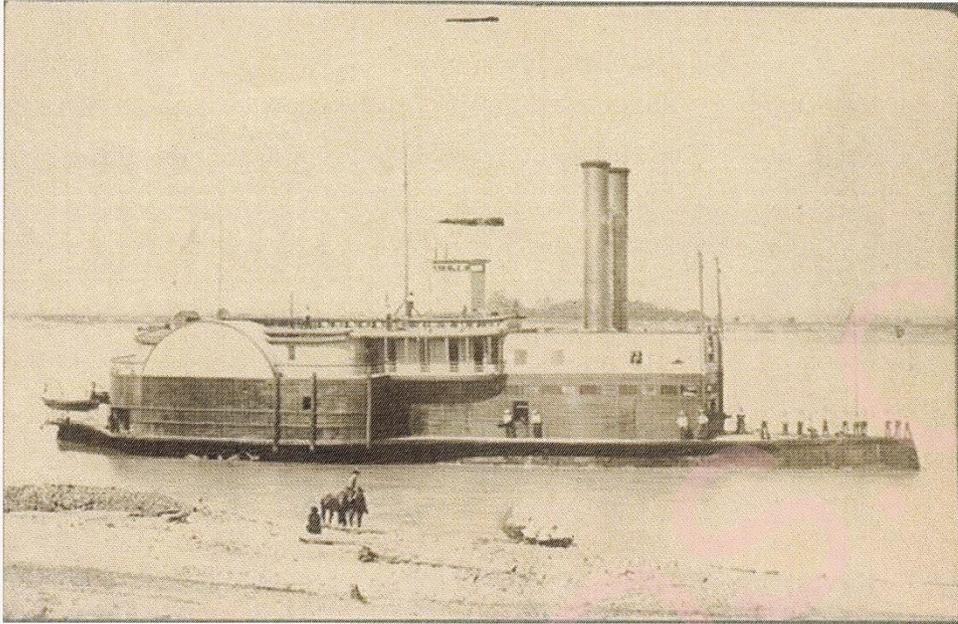
J. S. Watson

Comdr. U.S. S. Juliet

Capt Thos. A. Davis
Comdr. Champion

P.S. Please take my certificate of receipt from Mr Jackson

History of the USS Juliet Civil War Gunboat:



United States Navy Commissioned gunboat USS Juliet

Launched 1862

Acquired 1 November 1862

Commissioned 14 December 1862

Decommissioned 30 June 1865

Fate Sold, 17 August 1865

General characteristics

Tonnage 157

Length 155 ft 6 in (47.40 m)

Beam 30 ft 2 in (9.19 m)

Draft 5 ft (1.5 m)

Propulsion

- steam engine
- stern wheel-propelled

Speed 4 knots (7.4 km/h; 4.6 mph)

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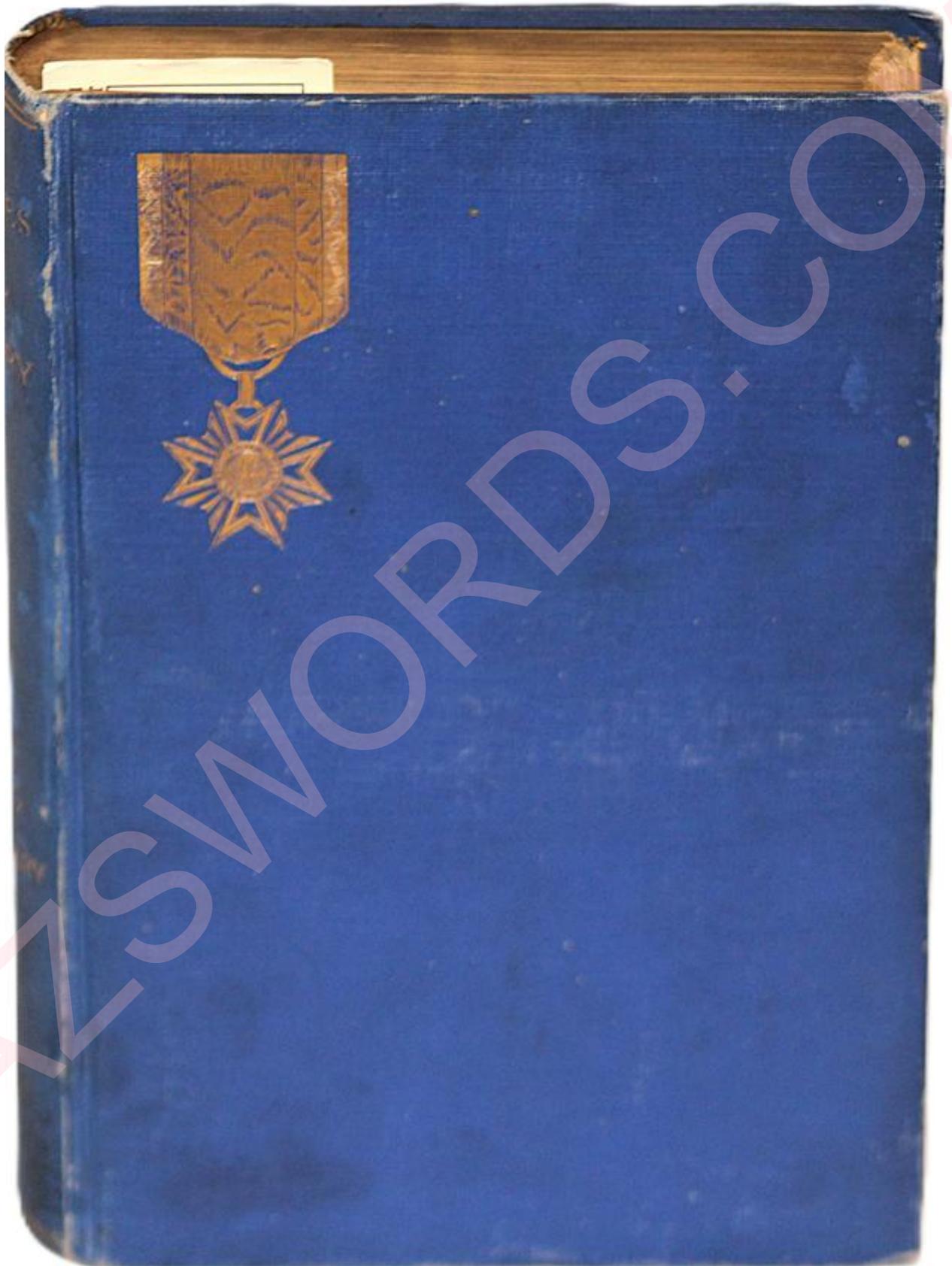
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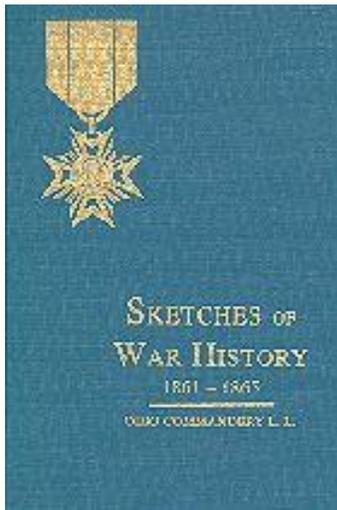
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OHIO MOLLUS
Sketches of War History
Volume Three





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- The Battle of Franklin - First Lieutenant and Adjutant, Thomas Speed.
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- Contains also a map of General Stoneman's last campaign and drawings showing positions of the Sixth Wisconsin at Gettysburg.

THE CRUISE OF "THE BLACK TERROR."

(PORTER'S DUMMY AT VICKSBURG.)

BY E. CORT WILLIAMS,

Late Acting Ensign United States Navy.

Poets have sung and historians have recorded many remarkable cruises of many remarkable vessels, both in peace and in war, but as yet no poet has sung and historians have but lightly touched upon the remarkable events of the remarkable cruise of that remarkable vessel, "The Black Terror." Although her career was short, it was brilliant; and though her existence was a mere episode in the movements against Vicksburg, in the early efforts to break the lines of the enemy, and get safe lodgment for our forces below the city, it resulted in such complete success as to sufficiently distinguish it from all other attempts up to that time.

It will be remembered that the operations against Vicksburg were commenced in 1862, and the winter was consumed in efforts to get a foothold for our army on the high grounds in the vicinity of the city, on the east bank of the Mississippi. All of them failed, with more or less of loss to the army, and more or less openly expressed impatience and dissatisfaction among the people at the North. At last, it was determined to go below Vicksburg, crossing the peninsula opposite the town with the army,

while the navy was to run the batteries, so as to co-operate with the army below. In preparation for this movement, the Queen of the West, a powerful ram, built from a remodeled side-wheel steamboat, on the night of the second of February, 1863, run past the batteries, receiving but little injury, and a day later, having fully repaired that, proceeded on down the Mississippi, destroying transport and supply vessels of the enemy, and chasing the rebel ram, John A. Webb, far up Red River; and the Mississippi was under the control of the National arms from its source to its mouth, save only the batteries at Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

The Queen, in company with her consort, the De Soto, a little rebel ferry-boat, that had been captured, barricaded with cotton bales, and turned over to her assistance, made various expeditions up and down this part of the river, and up the Red and into the Black River, when one day, after capturing the rebel boat Era, she run aground under the guns of Fort Taylor, afterward Fort De Russy, and, after a heroic but hopeless defense, was abandoned, such of her crew as survived escaping on cotton bales, in small boats, and by swimming, to the De Soto, a mile below. Reaching it, and hastily getting on board, all speed was made for the captured Era, still lower down, where a second transfer was made, and the De Soto abandoned and blown up; and all that was left of the sovereign flag of these United States on that part of the western waters was huddled together in the Era, a little stern-wheel steamer, of about one hundred tons, hurrying out of Red

River and up the Mississippi, with the rebel ram, Webb, in swift pursuit.

While these incidents were occurring, and all unmindful of them, Admiral Porter determined to send one of the heavy iron clads down past Vicksburg to assist the Queen in keeping the river open, and to protect the army transports which were to follow for Grant's use as soon as his army was ready to move. For this purpose, the *Indianola* was selected. She was one of the new iron-clads, built entirely for the government under directions of the navy constructor, and with her low deck, strong casemates, and heavy armament of two eleven-inch guns forward and two nine-inch guns aft, with a number of twelve pounders in broadside, was at once the hope and pride of our fleet. She was sluggish and heavy in her movements, as was to be expected from the weight of her armor and battery, but passed the terrible ordeal of the Vicksburg batteries without injury, confirming the wisdom of her selection for the venture, and giving promise of what was to be when she tried her hand at close quarters on the batteries from below. The admiral felt good, and, by reflection, his officers all felt good. It is the proper thing in the navy, when the admiral feels good, for all his officers to feel good also, and so they did. The admiral made the report of the success of the *Indianola* in getting below, saying: "This gives us complete control of the river, except at Vicksburg and Port Hudson. We have now below two eleven-inch guns, two nine-inch, two thirty pounder rifles, six twelve pounders, and three vessels." My own experience is not great, but I have ob-

served that, as in the army, so it was in the navy, hindsight formed a much better and far more reliable predicate for a report than foresight, as is proved in this case, for about the time this report was written, one of our three boats and that our most powerful ram, was in the hands of the rebels on the Red River, her crew trying to escape by flight on a little prize steamer; the second was burned, and the third moving down the Mississippi to she knew not what, but soon found out.

After passing the batteries, the *Indianola* stood on down the river, to put herself in communication with the *Queen of the West*, and on the third day, when at a point about eight miles below Natches, a heavy fog suddenly clearing away, she discovered the little *Era*, flying the stars and stripes, coming up the river with the rebel ram *Webb* close at her heels. In an instant the situation was explained to the *Indianola*, and, crowding all steam, she started for the *Webb*. The *Webb* needed no explanation, but taking in the situation at a glance, concluded that after all she did not want the *Era*, and, turning, started down the river, and, being very swift, soon distanced her pursuer, and found a safe retreat once more up the Red River. The *Indianola*, being too large to venture any distance up that narrow, crooked stream, turned back up the Mississippi, looking and waiting for re-inforcing boats to join her, which, unfortunately, never came, and, when some forty miles below Vicksburg, on the 24th of February, discovered the *Webb* and the *Queen of the West*, which had been thoroughly repaired and was again doing duty, but now under the rebel flag, together with two cotton-

clad boats coming up, evidently to give her battle. The *Indianola* cleared for action, rounded to, and waited the attack. It was between nine and ten o'clock at night and very dark, so that her guns could not be used to any advantage, and slow of movement and incumbered by two coal barges she had in tow alongside, partly for protection and partly for her coal supply, she was from the first almost at the mercy of the quick-moving, easily-handled, and powerful rams, and, after a spirited fight, in which she was struck some half dozen times by them, the *Queen* at last reached a vulnerable part abaft the wheel-house, disabling the wheel, opening the timbers and starting a leak in her from which she rapidly filled; but not until the water had reached the fires was the fighting stopped and the surrender made.

The rams at once came alongside, and, making fast to her, towed her over to the Mississippi side of the river, and there, in front of Jeff. Davis's plantation, she sunk in ten feet of water, and the folly of sending a boat below the batteries without proper support was made manifest; while the sovereignty of the flag from Vicksburg to Port Hudson, faded again into empty nothingness, a "barren ideality," with the best ram and the best gun-boat of our fleet in the enemies' hands—the ram as sound as ever, and the gun-boat but slightly injured, with its armament intact, and the rebels already at work raising and repairing her, with every prospect of having her ready for duty in a few days.

The first intimation our fleet had of this disaster was in seeing the *Queen* under the rebel flag, reconnoitering

from below Vicksburg. Something evidently was wrong, and it was soon known what that something was. The effect of the discovery was depressing; about as depressing as the successful running of the batteries had been exhilarating. The admiral felt bad, and, by reflection, his officers all felt bad. It is the right and proper thing in the navy, when the admiral feels bad, for all his officers to feel bad also, and they did; some even going beyond the line of absolute duty in that regard, especially those who knew the *Indianola*, and appreciated her capacity for making trouble when properly supported, as she would be with the *Queen* and *Webb* for consorts. Every precaution was taken to prevent a surprise from her, and in the effort the fleet was ever on the alert, and men and officers watchful to such an extent that it has been suggested that a claim for a pension on their part, based on the ground of loss of sleep in watchfulness against a surprise, should meet with favorable consideration at the hands of a grateful republic.

Out of this condition of things came the "Black Terror." I do not know that that was her real name, nor do I know that she ever had a real name. If she had, it is quite certain that she was never christened with the imposing ceremonies usual to such occasions. With due regard to the fitness of things we called her the "Black Terror," but could never learn what her own officers and crew called her, for officers and crew she had none.

The unprecedented high water of the Mississippi had subsided enough to permit the march of the troops across the peninsula to a point below Vicksburg, and Grant's

army was impatient to move. In order to accomplish this, it was necessary for the gun-boats and army transports to run the batteries at once, so as to assist the army in crossing the river after it had got below. It was a terrible ordeal for the heavy, sluggish turtle backs to undergo. Built hurriedly of old, worn-out ferry-boats, loaded down with the weight of heavy casemates, plated with iron, each propelled by a center wheel, small enough to be completely under the protection of the casemates, they were but little better than floating batteries, and so slow of movement, that it used to be said of them that at their best, even in going down the river under a full head of steam, they had hard work to keep up with the current. (It will be noticed that, in the operations on the Mississippi, they were not much given to retreating, and that, although their advance was slow, it was always sure.)

The successful running of the batteries by the ram, *Queen of the West*, and the gun-boat, *Indianola*, had filled the rebels with apprehension from this new and unexpected source of danger, and, to guard against further possibilities in that direction, they had strengthened the river batteries with all the guns that could possibly be spared from other parts of their works, until the banks fairly bristled with them, and, more than this, material had been gathered along the water's edge for bonfires to light up the river should any further attempt be made by the Yankee gun-boats to run by under cover of the darkness. It is not to be wondered if Porter was filled with some misgivings in contemplating these preparations, at the thought of sending the best part of his theretofore

successful fleet to encounter these dangers, especially when it is remembered that at that time the river, approaching and leaving Vicksburg, did so in curves not unlike the letter S, so that for a distance of eight or ten miles the boats would be under the direct fire of the batteries. Nevertheless, it had to be done, and preparations were commenced for doing it, so as to be ready when the army moved.

In his report Porter says that he had noticed that in the rapidity of their firing, at the time the Queen and the Indianola passed down, the rebels had burst and dismounted several of their guns, and, thinking this might be repeated, he made an effort to provoke their fire. To this end, he dropped a mortar down within range, and shelled the town. For a time this drew their fire, with what effect is not definitely known, but it then ceased altogether. I now quote from the admiral's report: "Finding," says he, "that they could not be provoked to fire without an object, I thought of getting up an imitation Monitor. . . . An old coal barge, picked up in the river, was the foundation to build on. It was built of old boards, in twelve hours, with pork barrels on top of each other for smoke stacks, and two old canoes for quarter boats; her furnaces were built of mud, and only intended to make black smoke, and not steam. Such was the "Black Terror," as she was familiarly called, as Porter described her, and he expressed himself well pleased with the result. And, indeed, he might well have been, for she was a most creditable and altogether formidable looking vessel, quite able, in appearance at least, to successfully

cope with the *Indianola*; low in the water, a square case-mated gun-room, with sides at a deep angle, built up of old boards on her bow, the semblance of wheel-houses well back on her quarters, all looking invulnerable in a fresh coat of coal-tar, with an immense quaker gun protruding from the open port on her bow, she looked a veritable monster, and was in fact a "Black Terror." She had been carefully kept out of sight until all was ready, when, a favorable opportunity occurring, under cover of the night, she was dropped down on the 26th of February, towed out into the stream, and an hour before dawn, with smoke pouring from her pork barrels, caused by the burning of some damp oakum, and then set adrift, and so commenced her cruise with no one on board, not even the ubiquitous newspaper correspondent. She flew the stars and stripes aft, and was ornamented with the black flag, with skull and crossbones, beautifully displayed, at the fore, and casting her all on the success of her venture, she asked no quarter, and certain it is she gave none.

Slowly she got under way, caught the current, and bore down on the upper batteries. They soon saw and challenged her with a shot. Deigning no reply, she stood steadily on her course, as if challenging them to do their worst, and seemingly they accepted the challenge, and the ball opened. The concentrated fire of all the batteries was directed at her; the ball became a picnic; and soon the picnic reached the proportions of a circus with a menagerie attachment. Still no reply from the "Terror;" but, with all the speed that her mud furnaces and a five-knot current could give, she moved proudly on with majes-

tic dignity, apparently uninjured by the storm of shot and shell that followed her course. The heavens thundered and the earth shook with the noise of the cannonading as hell itself seemed to belch forth its fury. "Never," says Porter, "did the batteries of Vicksburg open with such a din; the earth fairly trembled, and the shot flew thick around the devoted craft." By this time it was dawn. Our soldiers on the west bank of the river, attracted by the terrific cannonading, lined the bank, and learning the secret of its cause, added to the din by their cheers and laughter. The laugh, however, was all on their side of the river, for with the rebels it was terribly sober earnestness.

Meanwhile, the Queen of the West, which was below at Warrenton on picket duty, hearing the heavy cannonading, came up to see what was the matter. She came up far enough, got close enough, and stayed long enough to see a monster gun-boat, as she supposed, paying not the slightest attention to the fire of the entire batteries of Vicksburg concentrated upon her, but without wavering in her course, bearing steadily down upon her, with a horrid great big gun pointed directly at her from the open port. The Queen had enough, and she knew when she had enough, so, turning on her heels, she waited to see no more, but dashed down the river as fast as her powerful machinery, aided by her own fears, could take her, with soul intent upon a single thought, and that to get out of the range of that horrible Yankee nightmare before that awful gun went off.

Just what time the Queen made in reaching the

point where the *Indianola* lay, attended by the *Webb* and the two cotton-clads that had captured her, and just what she said when she did reach them, history fails to tell us, but history does tell us that they all got under way without loss of time, not stopping even to call all of their own men on board, and leaving the *Indianola* in charge of her officers and one hundred men to her fate, steamed on down the river, and never stopped a wheel until they had all taken safe refuge in the waters of the Red River, two days' run below.

The dummy having passed safely by the batteries, when completely out of range, steered by an eddy in the current, landed on the west side of the river as naturally as if guided by the hand of a skilled pilot. The soldiers of our army, now in broad daylight, rushed down to her, and were thick about her, giving an appearance that was doubtless construed by the alarmed enemy into doubly manning and supplying her for an expedition below. As soon as they had sufficiently gratified their curiosity in the study of advanced naval architecture, as exemplified in her construction, they shoved her off to continue her cruise in the enemy's waters, little dreaming of the service she was yet destined to perform. She hung close along the western bank, else her make-up might have been discovered, and slowly drifted down to a point some two and a half miles above the point where the *Indianola* still laid. The officer in charge of that hapless vessel took one good look at the monster, and that great big horrid gun that had scared the *Queen* into a fit, and, waiting to see no more, with a promptness born of he-

roes in time of great crises, laid the two magnificent eleven inch bow guns of his vessel muzzle to muzzle and fired them, of course, ruining both, and in his hurry, taking no thought of his other guns, blew up the boat, some accounts say, under authority of orders received from Vicksburg, and, conscious of having done his whole duty, escaped with his hundred men over the hills and far into the back country, and to this day has never since been heard of, and so the river was again cleared of rebel boats from Vicksburg down. Our fleet slept soundly, and running the batteries of Vicksburg was eliminated of the troublesome and dangerous factor of a fight with the *Indianola*, supported by the rams *Queen of the West* and the *Webb*, on arriving below. The "Terror" drifted on a short distance, caught fire, and burned, as was reported, not, however, until her real character had been fully discovered by the enemy, and so ended this remarkable cruise.

No one can tell the chagrin of the rebels when they found out how they had been fooled. They fairly howled with rage. A year before they had witnessed the destruction of the *Merrimac* in Hampton Roads, by her officers, after she had single-handed and alone sunk two of our best frigates and disabled a third, the equals of any then afloat, because, forsooth, she drew too much water for them to get her up the James River, where she would have been safe from the little "Yankee Cheese-Box," and now to lose the best boat on the Mississippi River in like manner by the hands of her own officers, all because of a nightmare scare, was entirely too much. The Southern

press shrieked in helpless anger. The Jackson "Mississippian," of March 5, 1863, gave the first authentic account of the disaster, as follows:

"The destruction of the Indianola was a most unfortunate and unnecessary affair. A vessel, supposed to be a turreted monster, but which proved to be a flat-boat with sundry fixtures intended to create deception, passed Vicksburg on Tuesday night. Our officials, believing she was a turreted monster, blew up the Indianola, but her guns fell into the hands of the enemy. The Queen of the West left the Indianola in such a hurry as to forget part of her crew, who were left ashore. Taking it altogether, it was a good joke on the Partisan Rangers, who are notoriously more cunning than brave."

This dispatch was sent east and copied in the Southern papers with severe comments upon the alleged bravery and ability of the officers of their navy, who seemed to think their chief duty, on the approach of the Yankee gun-boats, was to get their vessels in a place of safety as soon as possible or blow them up. The Richmond papers just jumped up and down, and fairly screamed with rage. I quote the comments of the Richmond "Examiner," of March 7, 1863, on this dispatch, in full. The article is interesting, and too good to omit. It says:

"The telegraph brings us tidings of something which is tremblingly described as a turreted monster. Gun-boats are deemed not more dangerous than dug-outs, but when the case is altered to an interview with a turreted monster, then the brave defenders of the Father of Waters can do nothing better than make two-forty over the mount-

ains. The reported fate of the *Indianola* is even more disgraceful than farcical. Here was, perhaps, the finest iron-clad in the western waters, captured after a heroic struggle, rapidly repaired and destined to join the *Queen of the West* in a series of victories. Next we hear that she was of necessity blown up in the true *Merrimac-Malory* style, and why? laugh and hold your sides, lest you die of a surfeit of derision, oh, Yankcedom! Blown up, because, forsooth, a flat-boat or mud-scow, with a small house taken from the back garden of a plantation, put on top of it, is floated down the river before the frightened eyes of the Partisan Rangers—a turreted monster!

“A most unfortunate and unnecessary affair,” says the dispatch. Rather so. The turreted monster proved to be a flat-boat, with sundry fixtures to create deception. Think of that. She passed Vicksburg on Tuesday night, and the officers (what officers?), believing her to be a turreted monster, blew up the *Indianola*, but her guns fell into the enemies’ hands. Incredible! Malory and Tattall did better than that with the *Merrimac*.

“The *Queen of the West*,” continues the facetious dispatch, ‘left in such a hurry as to forget part of her crew, who were left on shore.’ Well done for the *Queen of the West* and her brave officers. ‘Taken altogether,’ concludes the inimitable dispatch, ‘it was a good joke on the Partisan Rangers, who are notoriously more cunning than brave.’ Truly an excellent joke; so excellent that every man connected with this affair (if any resemblance of the truth is contained in the dispatch), should be branded with the capital letters T. M., and enrolled in a

detached company, to be known by the name of 'The Turreted Monster,' henceforth and forever."

The Tri-Weekly Courier, of Charleston, in its issue of March 21, 1863, had a leader on "Yankee Craft," inspired, doubtless, in part at least, by the dispatch quoted above. I shall not add to their affliction by charging an attempt at a horrible pun in the caption of the article, "Yankee Craft," but content myself with a few extracts. "We should not forget for a moment," it says, "that, in the prosecution of this terrible contest, we are dealing with a subtle adversary. Cunning stands pre-eminent among the distinguishing qualities of the foe with whom we are contending. It is that low, mean trait, which the Yankee race possesses in larger measure than any other people, that has enabled our antagonist to compass ends which, but for its adroit and persevering exercise, he could not have obtained. Wanting in the higher powers of mind, he excels in artfulness. . . . Like the arch enemy of God and man, the people who are endeavoring to despoil us of our property and desolate our land, are more to be feared when they bring to bear against us the weapons obtained from their boundless subtlety, than when they come depending upon their mighty powers. . . .

"We have discovered during the progress of this war, that the base race, whom we are warring with, are capable of doing us more harm by the expert use of their surpassing subtlety, than by their activity, energy, and valor. We have exhibited finer generalship, superior courage, greater endurance. But we have many a time been cir-

cumvented by his stratagems, and befooled, to our injury, by his deep-laid wiles."

The rebel papers of the times afford delightful reading; but I must content myself with the articles above, quoted now in no bitterness of feeling, but in emphasis of the joke, as a fair sample of their general tone and their appreciation of the heroism and ingenuity of the Yankee navy, which compelled them to destroy their best boat on the approach of a mere semblance of a Yankee gun-boat. It shows in what esteem they held the genuine article, and the Yankee navy ought not to complain.

To the student of history, fond of speculating on what might have been, the whole history of our war furnishes no broader field for his speculations than the incident that I have so faintly portrayed. Had we failed at Vicksburg, there is strong reason to believe that the people of the North, already tired of war, would have adopted the Democratic platform, which pronounced the war a failure, and demanded the recall of our soldiers, and in the defeat of Lincoln and the election of McClelland, openly espoused the policy of "peace at any price." The surrender of Vicksburg stopped all this, and success at Vicksburg by any other plan than operations from below had been demonstrated impossible, and the operations from below could not have succeeded without transports to carry the troops across the river, and gun-boats to cover their landing, and it is very doubtful if we could have had either had the enemy kept the *Indianola*, assisted by the two rams and a fleet of smaller boats, ready to engage our

boats immediately after passing the batteries, shattered, battered, and disabled as they were sure to be.

But with the *Indianola*, *Webb*, and *Queen of the West* out of the way, the problem was much simplified; for, once past the batteries, the boats, which it was anticipated would be more or less damaged, would have an opportunity of laying by and repairing, without the embarrassment of an immediate fight under such circumstances with so formidable a boat as the *Indianola*, aided by two such powerful and efficient rams as the *Webb* and *Queen of the West* had proved themselves to be. So, a week after the "Black Terror's" cruise, the admiral sent down the rams *Switzerland* and *Lancaster*, both swift vessels, to look after the rebel rams, keep them shut up in the Red River, and so prevent them from harassing our boats as they passed the batteries. It was a needless precaution, for the *Queen*, after the scare she had had from that awful gun-boat, never ventured out into the Mississippi again, but spent her time in bayou expeditions, seeking safety and forgetfulness of the past, and a month or two later was burned by her friends, after their usual fashion, to keep her from falling into our hands. The *Webb* was never seen again during the war. She staid in some entirely safe place way up Red River, until the close of the war, in April, 1865, when, after the surrender, true to the instincts of that chivalry of which General Floyd was so bright an exponent, she stole a load of Confederate cotton, and then stole out of the Red River and down the Mississippi, in an attempt to steal over to Savannah; but after passing several gun-boats, and even the city of New Or-

leans, was recognized below, fired into by the steamer Richmond, of Farragut's fleet, run ashore, and destroyed, of course, by her own officers.

In the attempt of the Switzerland and Lancaster to run by the batteries, the Lancaster, when about opposite the city, was struck by a shot in the boilers, rendered helpless, and soon sunk, her crew all escaping on cotton bales, which had been taken on board to barricade her boilers and machinery. The Switzerland was disabled, but floated on down past the batteries without serious injury, and in a week was repaired, ready for duty, with Admiral Farragut, who had come up from below, running the batteries at Port Hudson and Grand Gulf (which had recently been strongly fortified, to intercept our fleet, should it succeed in passing Vicksburg), with his flag ship, the Hartford, and needed a consort to assist him in repelling any such attempt on his own vessel as had proved so signally successful in the case of the unsupported Indianola.

The time was now at hand when the army could move, the river having subsided so as to permit of the march in force across the peninsula, and the order was given for the transports to prepare to run the batteries, under cover of such protection as the gun-boats could give them, and such diversion as they could create by drawing the fire of the enemy to themselves as they passed down. The transports were protected, as the rams had been, by piling cotton bales around their guards and about their boilers and machinery, and loaded with army supplies,

and carrying none but crews sufficient to barely work them. The three detailed to make the first attempt were finally ready, and, about ten o'clock on the night of April 16th, got under way, under convoy of the gun-boats Benton, Lafayette, Louisville, Carondelet, Tuscumbia, Pittsburg, and Mound City, seven in all, and all excepting two, the Lafayette and Tuscumbia, which were new, built from old ferry-boats, and, in description of their general appearance, styled turtle-backs. Slowly they moved down the stream, six of the gun-boats in the advance, followed by the three transports, the seventh gun-boat, the Tuscumbia, bringing up the rear. The orders for sailing were for the boats to keep a distance of fifty yards apart, not following each other exactly, but a little out of line, so that, if the vessel ahead was stopped, the next one could pass without materially changing her course. In this order, with all lights out, and using every precaution to delay discovery by the enemy until the latest moment possible, they were to move down until within easy range opposite the batteries, when the transports were to leave the line, and, crowding all steam, hasten on by, while the gun-boats engaged the enemy, drawing their fire to themselves, and so, under cover of the smoke, enable the transports the better to escape. But the foe was vigilant. The recent experience, as well as the editorials on Yankee craft, whether directed at the wickedness of the Yankee heart or impudence of the Yankee gun-boat, had not been lost upon them, and scarcely had the fleet got well under way, when its movement was discovered by the enemy's picket boats, and the alarm given by a discharge of mus-

ketry at the advance boat. Soon the upper battery opened on the fleet, and were answered by the boats as they rounded the point above the city, coming within range. The bonfires along the shores were lighted, and the fight was on, to the great disadvantage of the fleet from the very first.

I have already spoken of the sluggish movements of the iron-clads and their lack of power to handle themselves well. Never was it more manifest than as they rounded the point above Vicksburg on that eventful night. In striking the eddy, made by the strong current breaking from the point, they had not the power to overcome its force and were thrown out of their line into confusion, some of them spinning completely around, so that as the ball opened, our boats of a verity waltzed into the fight, most of them making a complete revolution, and one of them, the heavy staid, old Benton, all unmindful for the once of her dignity as the flag ship, made two complete revolutions, according to authentic history, while according to the apocrypha, in the exuberance of her spirits, she executed a regular pirouette, topped off with a pigeon's wing, before she consented to answer her rudder and settle to business, bow down again, which was eventually done by all of the boats, as was said by their officers, more by their own instincts in locating the foe than by the control of their machinery. As the boats severally straightened on their course, they opened fire, responding with their broadside guns to the storm of shot and shell hurled at them from the shore batteries, as they passed down.

In the midst of the confusion, two of the three transports headed up stream, but rounded to under orders from the gun-boat, and again started down, when one of them was struck by a shell, set on fire, and burned, her crew fortunately escaping in her yawl-boat; the other was disabled by a shell through her steam drum, but, with the assistance of the gun-boat, Tuscumbia, drifted down in safety until beyond the range of the batteries. The gun-boats were struck an innumerable number of times, many of them being hulled, but no serious damage was suffered by any of them, and daylight of the 17th found two army transports and seven iron-clad gun-boats without other casualty than the wounding of thirteen men, and none of them seriously, safely below Vicksburg ready to cooperate with Grant's army, the advance of which, under McClelland, was already below New Carthage.

A week later, six other transports passed down, five of them getting through in safety, and then with transportation at hand, and the gun-boats to protect his embarked troops and cover their landing, the army began that brilliant campaign of rapid marching and hard fighting, which culminated in the siege of Vicksburg, and was crowned with success in its unconditional surrender.

What would have been the result had this last attempt to flank the position, by getting below Vicksburg failed, no one can tell, but those who knew him best had an abiding confidence in the fertile mind of their leader that would admit of no ultimate failure. The story is told, on rebel authority, of the capture of one of our soldiers on the Deer Creek raid, I believe the fifth unsuc-

cessful attempt to flank Vicksburg, the prisoner was conducted to the Rebel general, who asked, "What in thunder Grant expected to do in there?" "Take Vicksburg," was the cool reply. "Well, hasn't the old fool tried this ditching and flanking five times already and failed?" "Yes," said our Yankee, "but he has thirty-seven more plans in his pocket, and one of them will get there now, you bet."

Fortunately for us, the next one did get there, and the other thirty-six were lost to history.

Read November 7, 1888.