

The ironclad ram, C.S.S. Arkansas, being constructed at Yazoo City, Mississippi.

[By Scott Williams, with assistance from James McGhee.]

Missourians or Volunteers From Missouri Units on the Ironclad Arkansas

This list is incomplete, as between 50 and 60 soldiers served in the complement commanded by Capt. Samuel S. Harris according to most reports. One Missourian, Richard H. Bacot was regularly enlisted in the C.S. Navy as a Midshipman. Pilot James Brady, formerly navigated Mississippi Riverboats. The "Missouri Volunteers" as Commander Isaac Brown refers to the soldiers from Missouri units that were needed to serve as gunners aboard the ironclad. Note: A few of these men were Arkansas residents that had enlisted in Missouri units.

Capt. Samuel S. Harris, of Jackson, Missouri. He commanded the "Missouri Volunteers" aboard the C.S.S. Arkansas. Post war late nineteenth century engraving from "Conrad's Encyclopedia of MO History"



Anderson, Charles S., 2LT (St. Louis, MO)

Albert, Alexander, Sgt (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Bacot, Richard H., Lt. (Midshipman, CS Navy)

Bauman, Jeremiah M., Sgt (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Blankenship, A. J., Pvt (Killed in action)

Brady, James, Pilot

Calvert, T. C., Pvt (Green Co., AR)

Carter, John M., Pvt (St. Francois Co., MO)

Crawford, William, Pvt (Farmington, MO)

Crouch, William H. H., Pvt (Helena, AR)

Dale, William S., Pvt (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Dale, Asberry C., Pvt (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Dennis, Lawrence, Pvt (Greensboro, AR)

Dowdy, Josiah, Pvt (Stoddard Co., MO)

Evans, David E., Pvt (Greensboro, AR)

Fitzpatrick, Charles W., Cpl (St. Louis, MO)

Girard, Louis, Pvt (Ste. Genevieve, MO)

Hamilton, C. H., Pvt (New Madrid Co., MO)

Hale, Jerome, Pvt (Ste. Genevieve, MO)

Hempstead, Samuel, Pvt (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Hamilton, Joseph D., Pvt (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Harris, Samuel S., Capt (Jackson, MO)

Galvin, John C., 1LT

King, Henry, Pvt (St. Louis, MO)

LaRose, Augustus, Pvt (Ste. Genevieve, MO)

Ladd, John A., 1LT (St. Louis, MO)

McDowell, James, Pvt (Commerce, MO)

McClure, David S., Cpl (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Miles, Nicholas V., Cpl (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Minton, Smith, Pvt (Stoddard Co., MO) see Memorial Stone

Minton, Stephen, Pvt (Stoddard Co., MO) Killed in action (Decapitated) see Memorial Stone

Ohlhausen, James R., Pvt (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Paul, C. D., Cpl Wounded in action

Portman, Joseph V., Sgt (Cape Girardeau, MO)

Sevier, Thomas R., Pvt (Helena, AR) Wounded in action

Snider, John, Pvt Mortally wounded in action (Lost an arm)

Summers, William M., Pvt (Washington Co., MO)

Thomure, Felix, Pvt. (mortally wounded in action--lost leg)

Thomure, Leon, Pvt (Ste. Genevieve, MO)

Watson, Berry, Pvt. (wounded)

Biography of Capt. Samuel S. Harris:

Born in Jackson, MO, in 1836, he received his medical training at Bellevue Medical College in New York City, where he won the postgraduate prize in open competition. He returned from New York to Jackson in 1860 where he commenced practice. When a local company of mounted volunteers, the "Swamp Rangers," was organized in March, 1861, he was elected 1st Lieutenant. He then took command of the McDowell Battery and commanded it at the Battle of Fredericktown on October 21, 1861. After mustering out of the Missouri State Guard, he organized Harris' Missouri Light Artillery.

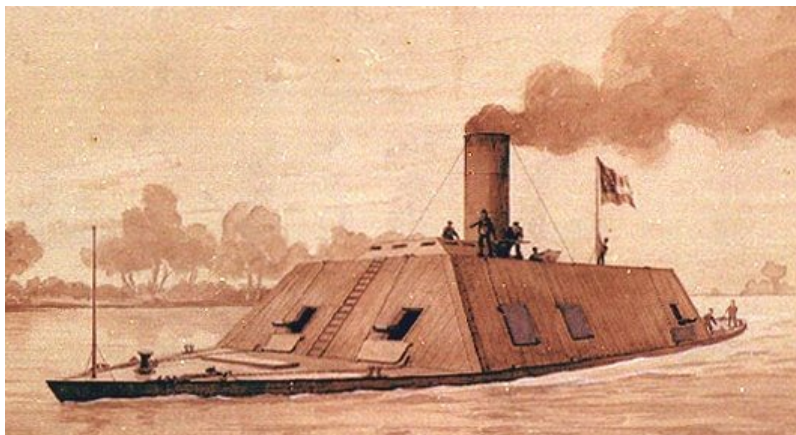
Volunteers from that battery, among others, were the men who manned the guns on the Arkansas. When his company was incorporated into the 6th MO Inf Regt, 1st MO Brigade, he resigned his commission and returned to the Trans-Mississippi Dept. He was assistant surgeon of the 8th MO Cav Regt (Jeffers') from organization until late 1863. He stayed with wounded and was taken prisoner at both Hartville and Cape Girardeau during Marmaduke's two raids into MO in early 1863. He reorganized the 13th MO Battery (Griswold's) in late 1863 or early 1864 and fought during the Camden Expedition and Greene's Operations in SE AR during the spring and early summer of 1864. His battery was assigned to Marmaduke's MO Cavalry Brigade, and accompanied the brigade during the Price Expedition into MO in the fall of 1864. Late in the war his battery was designated the 4th Missouri Field Artillery, although is always served as "horse" artillery with the cavalry. After surrendering his command at Grand

Ecore, LA, in June, 1865, Harris went to MS for a short period and then settled in Cape Girardeau, MO, where he practiced medicine until his death on December 6, 1899.

When one hears of the "Battle Between the Ironclads", one often hears of the battle played out between the *U.S.S. Monitor* and *C.S.S. Virginia* ("Merrimack"). However, Confederates of the West have an even greater legend, the story of the *C.S.S. Arkansas*. Not only did she sink the Union ironclad, the *U.S.S. Carondelet*, but shot her way through a Federal fleet and broke the siege of Vicksburg. Missourians, among others, played a major role in making this happen.

The Story of the Arkansas

By George W. Gift



Above picture by R.G. Skerrett, 1904, U.S. Naval Historical Center

The 15th day of July, 1862, was a warm day, literally and figuratively, for some two hundred persons cooped up in the famous Confederate steamer Arkansas. Our good ship had been gotten up under the peculiar circumstances of haste and incompetency, which so frequently characterized our Confederate navy. What she was designed for no man probably knows. I imagine that she was intended for a powerful iron clad gun boat, with an iron beak for poking, and several heavy guns for shooting. But, before she had arrived at anything like a state of completion, the plan was altered, and she was made into an hermaphrodite iron clad. That is to say (I am speaking for the benefit of those learned in naval matters), instead of finishing the ship with an ordinary rail and bulwark all round, her sides were "built on" amidships for fifty or sixty feet in length, so as to give an apology for protection to three guns in each broadside. The sides, it must be understood, were perpendicular. The ends of this "castle," or "gun box," as Captain Brown dubbed it, were sloping or inclined, from which were thrust four more guns, two at each end. This gave us a battery of ten guns, which, by the way, were of all sizes and descriptions -- to wit: two eight inch Columbiads; one eight inch shell gun; two nine inch shells guns; one smooth bore, 32 pounder, (63 cwt.,) and four rifle guns, formerly 32 pounders, but now altered, three banded and one unbanded. Four of the carriages were mounted on railroad iron chassis; the six broadside guns were on carriages constructed at Canton, Miss., by parties who never saw or heard of such things before. The timber had not left the stump ten days when we received the carriages on board. But we are getting ahead too fast. The ship was built at Fort Pickering, a short distance below Memphis, by Captain John T. Shirley, as contractor, and Prime Emmerson, constructor. Her engines were built (or botched, rather,) at a foundry on Adams street, and the timber of which she was composed grew in our vicinity. The Confederate Congress, in the plenitude of their wisdom, appropriated \$125,000 to build two rams to defend the upper Mississippi. The Arkansas was the first constructed under the act, and was towed up the Yazoo after the fall of New Orleans. I will not take the reader through all the disappointments and crosses during the six or eight weeks preceding the fifteenth of July we started out with. It is sufficient that we had the craft, incomplete and rough as she was, with railroad bars on her hull and sides and ends of the "gunbox." We have a crew and an officer for every gun, and on the aforesaid morning we are steaming down the Yazoo river, bound to Mobile. Our orders were to pass Vicksburg shortly after dawn; proceed from thence down the river, destroying any stray vessels of the enemy in the road; coal ship at New Orleans; pass Forts Jackson and St. Philip at night, and proceed to Mobile Bay and raise the blockade! A programme as easy of accomplishment as it was superb and glorious, had not the pilot miscalculated his distance, and sunrise found us in the Yazoo river, with more than twenty ships barring our way to the goal of our hopes and ambition, instead of our being twenty miles below Vicksburg, with the batteries there driving back any foolish fellows who might think of chasing us. However, we were in for it -- yes, in for one of the most desperate fights any one ship ever sustained since ships were first made. Some time after midnight we lifted our anchor from in front of Haynes's Bluff, on the Yazoo, and steamed down the river. Just before daylight we stopped the ship and sent a boat on shore to obtain information from a plantation. Lieutenant Charles W. Read was dispatched in charge of the boat. The expedition was fruitless, as the people had taken alarm and fled on hearing a steamer in the river and a boat approaching their landing. An old negro woman alone remained to guard the house. Read made inquiry concerning the whereabouts of the people. She could not tell. "They have but just left," he insisted, "for the beds are yet warm." "Dunno 'bout dat," said the aunty, "an' if did, I wouldn't tell." "Do you take me for a Yankee? Don't you see I wear a gray coat," said the Lieutenant. "Sartin you's a Yankee. Our folks ain't got none dem gunboats." Getting no satisfaction, we proceeded; and when the sun rose we were still in the Yazoo. As it is now daylight, let me describe the scene on a man of war's deck, cleared for action, or at least that man of war, on that occasion. Many of the men had stripped off their shirts and were bare to the waists, with handkerchiefs bound round their heads, and some of the officers had removed their coats and stood in their undershirts. The decks had been thoroughly sanded to prevent slipping after the blood should become plentiful. Tourniquets were served out to division officers by the surgeons, with directions for use. The division tubs were filled with water to drink; fire buckets were in place; cutlasses and pistols strapped on; rifles loaded and bayonets fixed; spare breechings for the guns, and other implements made ready. The magazines and shell rooms forward and aft were open, and the men inspected in their places. Before getting underway, coffee (or an apology therefor) had been served to the crew, and daylight found us a grim, determined set of fellows, grouped about our guns, anxiously waiting to get sight of the enemy.

Shortly after sunrise, the smoke from several steamers was discovered by Captain Brown, who, with

the First Lieutenant, Henry K. Stevens, (*) stood on a platform entirely exposed to the enemy's fire. This was the signal for fresh girding up, last inspections and final arrangements for battle. Lieutenant John Grimball and myself divided the honor of commanding the eight inch Columbiads. He fought the starboard and I the port gun. Midshipman Dabney M. Scales was his Lieutenant, and a youngster named John Wilson, of Baltimore, was mine. Lieutenant A.D. Wharton, of Nashville, came next on the starboard broadside, with Midshipman R.H. Bacot for his assistant. Lieutenant Charles W. Read, of Mississippi, had the two stern chasers, both rifles, to himself, and the remaining two guns on the port side were under command of Lieutenant Alphonse Barbot (recently died in New York). Each Lieutenant had two guns. Grimball and myself had each a bow chaser and a broadside gun. The two Masters, John L. Phillips and Samuel Milliken, were in charge of the two powder divisions. Stephens busied himself passing about the ship, cool and smiling, giving advice here and encouragement there. Our commander, Lieutenant Isaac Newton Brown, passed around the ship, and after making one of his sharp, pithy speeches, returned to his post with glass in hand to get the first sight of the approaching enemy. In a few moments we see three gunboats round a point in full view, steaming towards us gallantly and saucily, with colors streaming in the wind. The ironclad Carondelet, of twelve guns, commanded by Lieutenant Walke (a renegade Virginian), was on the right. The A.O. Tyler, the vessel which annoyed our troops at Shiloh, commanded by Lieutenant Gwin, (+) my classmate, was in the centre, and the unlucky river ram, Queen of the West, commanded by an army "mustang" named Hunter, was on the left. It is quite probable that they imagined we would take to our heels when we saw the odds which were against us. They were mistaken. Owing to the fact that our bow ports were quite small, we could train our guns laterally very little; and as our head was looking to the right of the enemy's line, we were compelled to allow them to begin the action, which was quite agreeable, as we had levelled all our guns with a spirit level the day before, marked the trunnions, and agreed that we would not fire until we were sure of hitting an enemy direct, without elevation. The gunnery of the enemy was excellent, and his rifle bolts soon began to ring on our iron front, digging into and warping up the bars, but not penetrating. Twice he struck near my port, and still we could not "see" him. The first blood was drawn from my division. An Irishman, with more curiosity than prudence, stuck his head out the broadside port, and was killed by a heavy rifle bolt which had missed the ship. Stevens was with me at the time; and, fearing that the sight of the mangled corpse and blood might demoralize the guns' crew, sprang forward to throw the body out of the port, and called upon the man nearest him to assist. "Oh! I can't do it, sir," the poor fellow replied, "it's my brother." The body was thrown overboard. This incident of the brother was related to me by Stevens afterwards, for by that time I had enough to do ahead. As soon as we could point straight for the enemy, with safety from grounding, the pilot steered direct for the Tyler, and I got the first shot, with an eight inch shell with five second fuse. It struck him fair and square, killing a pilot in its flight and bursting in the engine room. She reported seventeen killed and fourteen wounded, and I think this shell did the better part of the day's work on her. Unfortunately the gun recoiled off its chassis, and I was out of the action for five or ten minutes. However, Grimball made up for it. He had the best gun Captain -- Robert McCalla -- in the ship, and superb crew, and his gun seemed to be continually going out and recoiling in again. The broadside guns thus far were not engaged; but they were not to remain entirely idle. The "mustang," summoning courage, shot up as though he would poke us gently in our starboard ribs. Captain Brown divined his intent, and gave notice in time. The starboard battery was trained sharp forward, and as the Queen ranged up, Scales gave her the first shell, followed quick by Wharton and Bacot. This settled the account on that side. The Lieutenant Colonel had business down the river, and straightway went to attend to it; that is to say, to quote Gwin, he "fled ingloriously." This left us with the Tyler, now getting pretty sick, and the Carondelet to deal with. It was, I think, somewhere about this stage of the fight that a bolt entered the pilot house and mortally wounded John Hodges, Mississippi pilot, and disabled Mr. Shacklett, Yazoo river pilot, and broke the forward rim of the wheel. James Brady, the remaining Mississippi pilot, took charge, however, and by his admirable judgment and coolness kept the vessel in deep water until she got into the Mississippi, where he knew what he was about. The fight had been an advance on our part; we had never slowed the engines, but stood forward as though we held such small fry in contempt. Gwin handled and fought the Tyler with skill as long as there was any hope; but he finally took to his heels, badly crippled, and went after the "mustang." What Walke did in the Carondelet, in the first part of the engagement, I am not competent to say, as I was mounting my gun, but I think he was "hacked" quite early, and did but little. At any rate, when I came on the scene again (not more than ten minutes had elapsed from the first gun), and ran out my gun, the Carondelet was right ahead of us, distant about one hundred yards, and paddling down stream for dear life. Her armor had been pierced four times by Grimball, and we were running

after her to use our ram, having the advantage of speed. Opposite to me a man was standing outside on the port -- sill loading the stern chaser. He was so near that I could readily have recognized him had he been an acquaintance. I pointed the Columbiad for that port and pulled the lock string. I have seen nothing of the man or gun since. We were now using fifteen pound charges of powder and solid shot, which latter were hastily made in Canton, and had very little windage; so that I think we bored the fellow through and through from end to end. It was an exceedingly good thing we had. If his stern guns were not dismantled the crews had deserted them, for they were not used after my gun came into action the second time. I think I had hit four times, and our beak was nearly up to him, when Brady discovered that he was taking to shoal water with the hope of our grounding -- we drew four feet more water than she. Therefore, we sheered off, and passed so close that it would have been easy to have jumped on board. Stevens passed rapidly along the port broadside, and saw the guns depressed to their utmost, and bid us wait for a good chance and fire down through his bottom. As we lapped up alongside, and almost touching, we poured in our broadside, which went crashing and plunging through his timbers and bottom. Although his four broadside guns -- one more than we had -- were run out and ready, he did not fire them. We were running near the left or Vicksburg side of the river (we are now in what is called Old River), and, as soon as passed, we headed for the middle of the stream, which gave Read his first opportunity -- and right well did he use it. His rifles "spoke" to the purpose, for the enemy hauled down his colors. In an instant Captain Brown announced the fact from the deck, and ordered the firing to cease; but the ship still swinging, gave Wharton and the others a chance at her with the starboard guns before it was known that he had surrendered. White flags now appeared at her ports, and the news of our victory was known all over the ship in a moment. Talk about yelling and cheering; you should have heard it at the moment on the deck of the Arkansas to have appreciated it. In fifteen minutes, without being checked in our progress, we had trashed three of the enemy's vessels -- one carrying arms as good as ours and two more guns than we, and one of the others was a famous ram, whilst the third, though of but little account, gave moral support to the others. It was glorious. For it was the first and only square, fair, equal stand up and knock down fight between the two navies in which the Confederates came out first best. From the beginning our ship was handled with more pluck, decision, and judgment than theirs (the Tyler excepted); our guns were better fought and better served. Not an officer or man doubted the result from the beginning. We went in to win, and we won. We now had no time to stop to secure our prize, as the enemy would be apprised of our coming and swarm in the river like bees if we did not hurry. These fellows we had beaten were but skirmishers of a main army. Consequently, we pushed down the river, and the Carondelet sank on a sandbar on the right side. I have been very explicit in regard to this battle with the Carondelet, inasmuch as her commander afterwards stated to Lieutenant John W. Dunnington, of the Confederate navy, that he was not pierced by a single shot from the Arkansas that day; that he had no men killed or wounded, and did not strike his colors. I challenge him to print his official report of the day's proceedings from the files of the Navy Department. It was carefully suppressed during the war. And as for striking his colors, that will be sworn to by a dozen men; and that he did sink can be proven by hundreds who saw steamers at work raising the vessel.

We left the Carondelet sinking and pursued the Tyler and Queen of the West. Both were swifter vessels than the Arkansas, and in our efforts to overtake them we worked off steam too rapidly and the result was that when we entered the Mississippi river they had gained sufficiently on us to notify the fleets of Farragut and Davis of our approach, and that before we had come in sight around the point. The result was instant and rapid preparation by the squadrons for our reception. Steam was hurried up on all the river vessels, and they weighed or slipped, and took up such positions as would enable them to hit us and at the same time keep away from our powerful beak, if possible. On coming in sight of them the scene was one of intense interest. A dozen or more war vessels were steaming about in an uneasy, uncertain way, somewhat after the manner of a brood of chickens on the approach of a hawk. Tugs, transports and hospital vessels were smoking up or trying to hide. The heavy sloops of war and gunboats of Farragut's squadron were anchored in the middle of the stream with fires out, but with batteries manned and ready for battle. On the banks batteries of field artillery were run up and several thousands of soldiers prepared to shoot Minie balls into our ports. The "mustang" rams -- the same that beat our "mustang," Montgomery, in front of Memphis a short time before -- were under way also, but they did not come to the front too close, with a chap carrying guns and men who knew how to handle them. I think I do not over estimate the force of the enemy when I say he had twenty pennants flying; and we were about to attack him in an unfinished and untried vessel, with engines totally and entirely unreliable. As we stood down to them there was a decided and

painful pause. We were in range, but preferred to save our strength and ammunition for a close grapple. One of my best men was a tall, athletic young Irishman who had greatly distinguished himself for zeal and courage half an hour before. Putting his eye to the gun he peeped out ahead and saw the immense force assembled to oppose us. In an instant he was overcome, and exclaimed: "Holy mother, have mercy on us; we'll never get through there." I had been watching the changing panorama ahead with many doubts and misgivings. A half dozen I would not have minded, but two dozen were rather more than we had bargained for. But we had ventured too far to think of backing out; through we must go. 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 all to handle roughly any seagoing vessel we should see with "No. 6" on her smokestack, as that vessel was engaging the McRae, above Forts Jackson and St. Philip when Lieutenant Commander Huger was killed. Read, who was First Lieutenant under Captain Huger, and devotedly attached to him, saw the "No. 6" by the flashes of the guns, (*) and had ever since treasured the hope of getting alongside the fellow some day. This "No. 6" came out like a gamecock, steamed to the front to take the fire of a great monster from which "mustangs" and river iron clads were hiding and fleeing. 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. We were now getting close aboard "No. 6", and he sheered with his port helm and unmuzzled his eleven inch pivot gun charged with grape. It was hastily pointed, and the charge fell too low to enter our ports, for which it was intended. This broke the terrible quiet which hung over us like a spell. Every man's nerves were strung up again, and we were ready for the second battle. With a sharp touch of the starboard helm Brady showed me "No. 6" straight ahead, and I gave him a shell through and through, and as we passed he got the port broadside. He did not follow us up. These two shots opened the engagement. Soon we were a target for a hundred or more guns, which poured in an unceasing and terrible fire. Generals Breckinridge, Van Dorn and others viewed the engagement from the top of the Courthouse in Vicksburg, and were appalled at the apparent rashness of attempting the passage. The fire of the enemy was almost unceasing, nor were we idle by any means. As we have said before, every gun was fully manned, and wherever we looked, in every direction, we saw gunboats. It was only necessary to load the guns and fire and we hit. The rams were taking up a position to come out and strike us as we passed. One of them, the Lancaster, was slowly moving across our path, and I heard Brady ask Captain Brown if he should cut that boat in two. The Captain returned an affirmative answer, and the game pilot steadied our ship for the ram. I had in a five second shell, which I wished to get rid of before we got to the iron clads, and so set it in motion. It struck his mud drum, emptying the hot steam and water into the small barricaded engine room, where the crew and a company of sharp shooters were seeking protection, about a hundred of whom were killed. The poor fellows came pouring up the scuttles, tearing off their shirts and leaping overboard as soon as they reached the air. But that gave us no rest. The shot struck upon our sides as fast as sledge hammer blows. Captain Brown was twice knocked off the platform stunned, his marine glass was broken in his hand, and he received a wound on his temple; but recovering himself, he gallantly -- no, heroically -- resumed his place, and continued to direct the movements of his ship from a position entirely exposed to the fire of not only great guns, but thousands of sharp shooters, who were pattering the balls all around and about him. The man of steel never flinched, but carried us straight and clear through. I know that this great battle, and the great commander, have been ignored by the sect which ruled the navy, but when the history of our corps is written, Brown will rank first. Some one called out that the colors had been shot away. It reached the ear of Midshipman Dabney M. Scales, and in an instant the glorious fellow scrambled up the ladder past Captain Brown, and fearlessly treading the terrible path of death, which was being swept by a hurricane of shot and shell, deliberately bent on the colors again, knotted the halyards and hoisted them up, and when they were again knocked away would have replaced them had not he been forbidden by the Captain. Midshipman Clarence Tyler, aide to the Captain, was wounded at his post alongside the Captain. We were passing one of the large sloops of war when a heavy shot struck the side abreast of my bow gun, the concussion knocking over a man who was engaged in taking a shot from the rack. He rubbed his hip, which had been hurt, and said they would "hardly strike twice in a place." He was mistaken, poor fellow, for immediately a shell entered the breach made by the shot, and bedding itself in the cotton bale lining on the inside of the bulwark proper, exploded with terrible effect. I found myself standing in a dense, suffocating smoke, with my cap gone and hair and beard singed. The smoke soon cleared away, and I found but one man (Quartermaster Curtis) left. Sixteen

were killed and wounded by that shell, and the ship set on fire. Stevens, ever cool and thoughtful, ran to the engine room hatch, seized the hose and dragged it to the aperture. In a few moments the fire was extinguished, without an alarm having been created.

The Columbiad was fired but once after its crew was disabled. By the aid of an army Captain (whose name, I am sorry to say, I have forgotten), belonging to a Missouri battery, Curtis and myself succeeded in getting a shot down the gun, with which we struck the Benton. The ill luck which befell the crew of the bow gun was soon to be followed by a similar misfortune to the crew of my broadside gun. An eleven inch shot broke through immediately above the port, bringing with it a shower of iron and wooden splinters, which struck down every man at the gun. My Master's Mate, Mr. Wilson, was painfully wounded in the nose, and I had my left arm smashed. Curtis was the only sound man in the division when we mustered the crew at quarters, at Vicksburg. Nor did the mischief of the last shot end with my poor guns' crew. It passed across the deck, through the smokestack, and killed eight and wounded seven men at Scales's gun. Fortunately, he was untouched himself, and afterward did excellent service at Grimball's Columbiad. Stationed on the ladder leading to the berth deck was a Quartermaster named Eaton. He was assigned the duty of passing shells from the forward shell room, and also had a kind of superintendence over the boys who came for powder. Eaton was a character. He had thick, rough, red hair, an immense muscular frame, and a will and courage rarely encountered. Nothing daunted him, and the hotter the fight, the fiercer grew Eaton. From his one eye he glared furiously on all who seemed inclined to shirk, and his voice grew louder and more distinct as the shot rattled and crashed upon our mail. At one instant you would hear him pass the word down the hatch: "Nine inch shell, five second fuse -- here you are, my lad, with your rifle shell, take it and go back quick -- what's the matter that you can't get that gun out?" and, like a cat, he would spring from his place and throw his weight on the side tackle, and the gun was sure to go out. "What are you doing here, wounded? Where are you hurt? Go back to your gun, or I'll murder you on the spot -- here's your nine inch shell -- mind, shipmate (to a wounded man), the ladder is bloody, don't slip, let me help you." I have thrown in this slight sketch to show that our men were beginning to straggle, so badly were we cut up. But still the ship was not disabled; seven guns were yet hammering away, and the engines were intact. But steam was down to a terribly low ebb. The party who fitted up the boilers had neglected to line the fire front with non conducting material; the consequence was that when a heavy fire of coal was put in the whole mass of iron about the boilers became red hot and nearly roasted the firemen, who had also got a tub of ice water, of which they drank freely. The result was that we had to hoist them all out of the fire room during the action, and Grimball headed a party to supply their place. But I will not detain the reader. We got through, hammered and battered though. Our smokestack resembled an immense nutmeg grater, so often had it been struck, and the sides of the ship were as spotted as if she had been peppered. A shot had broken our cast iron ram. Another had demolished a hawse pipe. Our boats were shot away and dragging. But all this was to be expected and could be repaired. Not so on the inside. A great heap of mangled and ghastly slain lay on the gun deck, with rivulets of blood running away from them. There was a poor fellow torn asunder, another mashed flat, whilst in the "slaughter house" brains, hair and blood were all about. Down below fifty or sixty wounded were groaning and complaining, or courageously bearing their ills without a murmur. All the army stood on the hills to see us round the point. The flag had been set up on a temporary pole, and we went out to return the cheers the soldiers gave us as we passed. The Generals came on board to embrace our Captain, bloody, yet game. This ends our second battle. We must fight another before we go to sleep on that 15th of July.

Our arrival at Vicksburg was hailed with delight by all the army. The officers came on board to see the marks of the struggle, whilst squads of eager privates collected on the bank to get a near view of the wonderful craft which had just stood so much hammering. This attracted a daring band of sharpshooters to the other bank, and we were forced to open with our heavy guns to disperse them, which was easily accomplished by half a dozen discharges. The enemy below showed decided signs of demoralization. A mortar boat which had been allowed to get aground was hastily set on fire and blown up. A seagoing vessel (commanded by Craven), left to guard the transports, sprung her broadside athwart the stream to be ready for an attack.

Everything got up steam and Porter's flagboat opened with a hundred pounder Parrott gun in a spiteful, angry fashion, throwing her shot over and beyond us. If we had a smoke stack, and proper boiler fronts, and good engines, and a new crew, and many other things, how we would have made a

smash of those fellows! But as our smokestack was so riddled, the draft was destroyed, and as our engines were troublesome, faulty affairs, and our crew were nearly all killed, wounded, or used up, we had to bide where we were, and see this chance slip away from us. Read cast many longing glances down the river, and I think would have been perfectly willing to undertake the task, broken down as we were. But there is a limit to human endurance; we could do no more, and we rested. During the day the telegraph informed Captain Brown that he had been promoted to the rank of Commander, and we were thanked from Richmond for our brilliant achievement. Our dead were removed on shore for burial and our wounded were taken to an army hospital. As soon as we arrived at Vicksburg the detachment of soldiers left us to rejoin their command, which reduced our force to a very low ebb. As well as we could, we put the ship to rights, and the day wore away. As soon as dark began to set in it was evident that the enemy meant mischief.

Everything was under way, and soon the guns from the upper battery opened quick and sharp, to be replied to by the broadsides of the heavy ships coming down -- the Richmond (Alden) leading. Our plucky men were again at their quarters, and steam was ready, should we be compelled to cast off and take our chances in the stream against both fleets. About that time things looked pretty blue. It is true that we were under the batteries of Vicksburg, but practically we had as well have been a hundred miles from there. The guns were perched on the high hills; they were not provided with sights, and if ever they hit anything it was an accident or the work of one of Brooke's rifles.(*). This we well knew, and stripped this time for what we supposed would be a death struggle. The sea going fleet of Farragut was to pass down, drag out and literally mob us; whilst the iron clad squadron of Davis was to keep the batteries engaged. Down they came, steaming slowly and steadily, and seemed to be on the lookout for us. But they had miscalculated their time. The darkness which partially shrouded them from the view of the army gunners completely shut us out from their sight, inasmuch as our sides were the color of rust and we lay under a red bank; consequently, the first notice they had of our whereabouts came from our guns as they crossed our line of fire, and then it was too late to attempt to check up and undertake to grapple with us. They came by singly, each to get punished, as our men were again feeling in excellent spirits. The Hartford stood close in to the bank, and as we spit out our broadside at her, she thundered back with an immense salvo. Our bad luck had not left us. An eleven inch shot pierced our side a few inches above the water line, and passed through the engine room, killing two men outright (cutting them both in two) and wounding six or eight others. The medicines of the ship were dashed into the engine room, and the debris from the bulkheads and splinters from the side enveloped the machinery. The shot bedded itself so far in the opposite side that this position could be told by the bulging protuberance outside. On account of my disabled arm I had turned over my division to Scales, and remained with Captain Brown on the platform. To be a spectator of such a scene was intensely interesting and exciting. The great ships with their towering spars came sweeping by, pouring out broadside after broadside, whilst the batteries from the hills, the mortars from above and below, and the ironclads, kept the air alive with hurtling missiles and the darkness lighted up by burning fuses and bursting shells. On our gun deck every man and officer worked as though the fate of the nation hung on his individual efforts. Scales was very near, and I could hear his clear voice continually. He coaxed and bullied alternately, and finally, when he saw his object in line, his voice rose as clear as a bell, and his "ready! fire!" rang out like a bugle note. The last vessel which passed us was that commanded by Nichols ("Bricktop") and she got one of our shots in her outboard delivery. He pivoted his eleven inch gun to starboard, heeled his vessel to keep the leak above water, and drifted past the batteries without further damage.

We had more dead and wounded, another hole through our armor and heaps of splinters and rubbish. Three separate battles had been fought and we retired to anything but easy repose. One of our messmates in the wardroom (a pilot) had asserted at supper that he would not again pass through the ordeal of the morning for the whole world. His mangled body, collected in pieces was now on the gundeck; another had been sent away to the hospital with a mortal hurt. The steerage mess was short four or five members, whilst on the berth deck, many poor fellows would never again range themselves about the messcloth. However, amidst all this blood and damage this thought would come up: If there had been two or three more of us -- or even our consort, which was burned on the stocks -- what a difference there would have been. As sure as the sun rose on that bright July morning we would have captured every vessel opposed to us. Why were there not more? We will explain that before we get through. Our next battle occurred a week later.

The enemy now had a fleet above and below us, and though foiled and angry he made no immediate active effort to do us more harm, other than to shell us incessantly by day, and once by night, with mortar shells. Half a dozen or more thirteen inch mortars kept missiles continually in the air, directed at us. We were twice struck by fragments -- otherwise the business was very harmless. Some days after our arrival a package of letters were received at General Van Dorn's headquarters, which had been taken from a captured steamer. Those from navy officers were sent down to us, and a number were selected and sent to the Appeal, then being published at Grenada. As the files are yet preserved I am able to lay them before my readers. A very long letter from the paymaster of the Richmond to his wife, described the attack of the Arkansas, and was unsparing on Farragut and Davis, accusing them of incapacity and negligence, remarking that Porter was the only man present who had brains as well as courage. I recollect the following letters well and can vouch for their being genuine:

"U.S. St. Richmond,
Mississippi River, July 18, 1862.

My Dear Joe, -- On the morning of the 15th of July, about 7 o'clock, we were suddenly aroused, and, in my case, awakened by the sharp clicks of the rattle. The first words I heard were, "the Rebel ram Arkansas is coming down upon us." Throwing on a few clothes I hastened on deck to ascertain the state of things. Around us lay the combined power of Farragut's and Davis's fleets. Frigates, gunboats, iron plated boats, wooden rams and iron cased rams were anchored along the banks for a mile and a half. And slowly steaming along the hollow of the bend in the river, just above us, was a long, low, dull, red, floating object. She showed neither flag, (mistake), nor sign of life. A couple of gunboats were anchored ahead of us, but being the first of the large ships, we all supposed we would be the first object of attack. Her course also seemed to indicate it. Two (one) of our gunboats now fired. The Arkansas answered, taking off one man's head and wounding three others. I saw her pass the gunboats. I looked for some vessel moving to attack her. Not one stirred; only one man had steam up on his vessel. We believe he could have sunk her, (bosh!) yet he did not move a finger, because he "didn't receive orders." Slowly, steadily, gallantly, the Reel ram kept on her way, as though she belonged to us and was quietly choosing an anchorage. She was now approaching us, and, as all the rest of the crew had been at their quarters some time, I was obliged to go to mine. I sat down and "coolly" awaited the blow I knew must sink us. In a few minutes our guns were fired in quick succession. I waited, but no crash followed. I went on deck and saw the ram slowly floating below uninjured. Our solid wrought iron shot had been shattered to pieces against her sides. (He did not know as much about that as we did.) The Benton, Hartford and gunboats below poured a perfect shower of balls upon her. But she was adamant. (He was frightened.) It did not even hasten her speed, and proudly she turned a point, disappeared from sight and anchored under the batteries at Vicksburg. I doubt whether such a feat was ever before accomplished, and whoever commanded her should be known and honored. (This from the enemy.) The morning she came out, the Carondelet, a gunboat (Tyler) and a ram (Queen of the West) went up the river to reconnoiter. They suddenly met the Arkansas; one was driven ashore (what says Mr. Walke?) and the others forced to retreat down the river with heavy loss; and it was with mingled curses and admiration we saw her come chasing them down the river.

* * * * Johnnie."

Another:

"The great rebel iron clad Arkansas came down the river on the morning of the 15th and passed the whole fleet, and is now under the batteries at Vicksburg. * * We were the head ship except the hospital boat and river steamers. One of Davis's rams came around our stern to give her a butt as she passed (she was called the Lancaster), but unfortunately a shot from the rebel entered the Lancaster's boiler, and such a sight I never saw before. Not ten yards from our ship the scalded wretches threw themselves into the water. Some of them never rose to the surface again. I turned around and there was the Arkansas coming down very leisurely, when we let fly a broadside of fourteen guns loaded with solid shot, each weighing 110 pounds. For an instant we could not see anything but smoke. The next instant I looked again, and she had passed as if nothing had fired at her. All the damage done,

that I could see, was that part of her bow was knocked off. (The ram was broken.) Each vessel fired at her as she passed, not more than thirty yards distant. * * Steam was got up on all the fleet. Our ship was picked out to run into the Arkansas and board her at all hazards. The mortars opened on the town instantly. The Richmond took the lead; then came the Iroquois, Oneida (lost in Yokohama Bay in 1870), Hartford, Sumter, and two other gunboats which were to pass the city and fight the ram." I have reproduced these letters to show that the account I have already given was not exaggerated. Let us now proceed with our narrative. We were dealing with a bold and confident enemy, determined to take some desperate chances to compass our destruction. As the reader already knows our crew was fearfully used up on the 15th. Daily we sent more men to the hospital, suffering with malarious diseases, until we had not in a week more than thirty seamen, ordinary seamen and landsmen, and I think but four or five firemen. Many of the younger officers had also succumbed; those of us who were left were used up also. We slept below, with our clothes on, in an atmosphere so heated by the steam of the engines as to keep one in a constant perspiration. No more men were to be had. It was disheartening enough to see a ship which but a week before was the pride of the country now almost deserted. On the morning of the 22d of July, a week after our arrival, we were awakened early in the morning by the drum calling us to quarters. Great commotion was observed in the fleet above. Everything seemed underway again, and it was evident that we were soon to have another brush. On our decks were not men enough to man two guns, and not firemen enough to keep steam up if we were forced into the stream! Rather a doleful outlook! We were moored to the bank, head up the river, as a matter of course. The fires under the boilers were hastened, and every possible preparation made for resistance. In a few minutes we observed the iron clad steamer Essex ("Dirty Bill Porter" commanding) steaming around the point and steering for us. The upper battery opened, but she did not reply. Grimball unloosed his Columbiad, but she did not stop. I followed, hitting her fair, but still she persevered in sullen silence. Her plan was to run into and shove us aground, when her consort, the Queen of the West, was to follow and but a hole in us; and thus the dreaded ram was to be made way with. On she came like a mad bull, nothing daunted or overawed. As soon as captain Brown got a fair view of her, followed at a distance by the Queen, he divined her intent, and seeing that she was as square across the bow as a flatboat or scow, and we were as sharp as a wedge, he determined at once to foil her tactics. Slacking off the hawser which held our head to the bank, he went ahead on the starboard screw, and thus our sharp prow was turned directly for her to hit against. This disconcerted the enemy and destroyed his plan. A collision would surely cut him down and leave us uninjured. All this time we had not been idle spectators. The two Columbiads had been ringing on his front and piercing him every shot; to which he did not reply until he found that the shoving game was out of the question. Then, and when not more than fifty yards distant, he tried up his three bow port shutters and poured out his fire. A nine inch shot struck our armor a few inches forward of the unlucky forward port, and crawling along the side entered. Seven men were killed outright and six wounded. Splinters flew in all directions. In an instant the enemy was alongside, and his momentum was so great that he ran aground a short distance astern of us. As he passed we poured out our port broadside, and as soon as the stern rifles could be cleared of the splinters and broken stanchions and woodwork, which had been driven the whole length of the gun box, we went ahead on our port screw and turned our stern guns on him, and every man -- we had but seventeen left -- and officer went to them. As he passed he did not fire, nor did he whilst we were riddling him close aboard. His only effort was to get away from us. He backed hard on his engines and finally got off; but getting a shot in his machinery just as he got afloat, he was compelled to float down stream and join the lower fleet, which he accomplished without damage from the batteries on the hills. He fired only the three shots mentioned. But our troubles were not over. We had scarcely shook this fellow off before we were called to the other end of the ship -- we ran from one gun to another to get ready for a second attack. The Queen was now close to us, evidently determined to ram us. The guns had been fired and were now empty and inboard. Somehow we got them loaded and run out, and by the time she had commenced to round to, I am not sure, but I think we struck her with the Columbiads as she came down, but at all events the broadside was ready. Captain Brown adopted the plan of turning his head to her also, and thus received her blow glancing. She came into us going at an enormous speed, probably fifteen miles an hour, and I felt pretty sure that our hour had struck. I had hoped to blow her up with the thirty two pounder as she passed, but the gun being an old one, with an enlarged vent, the primer drew out without igniting the charge. One of the men, we had no regular gun's crews then, every man was expected to do ten men's duty, replaced it and struck it with a compressor lever; but too late; his boilers were past, and the shot went through his cylinder timbers without disabling him. His blow, though glancing, was a heavy one. His prow, or beak, made a hole through our side and

caused the ship to careen, and roll heavily; but we all knew in an instant that no serious damage had been done, and we redoubled our efforts to cripple him so that he could not again attempt the experiment. As did the Essex, so he ran into the bank astern of us, and got the contents of the stern battery; but being more nimble than she, was sooner off into deep water. Returning up stream he got our broadside guns again, and we saw that he had no disposition to engage us further. As he passed the line of fire of the bow guns he got it again, and I distinctly recollect the handsomest shot I ever made was the last at her. He was nearly a mile away, and I bowled at him with the gun lying level. It ricocheted four or five times before it dropped into his stern. But it dropped there. As I have before said, the Essex was drifting down stream unmanageable, and now would have been our time to have ended her in sight of both squadrons, but we had but seventeen men and they well nigh exhausted. Beating off these two vessels, under the circumstances, was the best achievement of the Arkansas. That we were under the batteries of Vicksburg did not amount to anything. I do not believe that either vessel was injured by an army gun that day. We were left to our fate, and if we had been lost it would have been no unusual or unexpected thing. The Essex used, in one of her guns that day, projectiles that were probably never used before, to wit: Marbles that boys used for playing. We picked up a hundred unbroken ones on our forecastle. There were "white allies," "chinas," and some glass marbles. I wish the naval reader to understand that the Essex did not return the fire as she lay alongside us, did not attempt to board, although he had a picked crew for that purpose, and fired but three guns in the fight, and thereafter kept her ports closed. Brown, no longer able to play the lion, assumed the role of the fox with consummate skill.

The End

source: Southern Historical Society Papers. Volume XII. Richmond, Va., January-February, 1884. Nos. 1-2.

Captain Isaac N. Brown's Casualty Report:

Report of Lieutenant Brown, C. S. Navy, commanding C. S. ram Arkansas, giving list of casualties. C. S. S. ARKANSAS. At Vicksburg, Miss., July 16, 1862. SIR: I have the sad duty to-day to furnish you with a report of the names of the brave men who fell killed and wounded in our three actions of yesterday with the enemy's fleet on the Mississippi River, to wit: Killed.--William Perry, captain of forecastle; Charles Lewis, ordinary seaman; Henry Dunn, ordinary seaman; Private John Kane, Pinkney's Louisiana Volunteers; Private Charles Madden, Clinch's Battalion Artillery; Private Henry Shields, Twenty-eighth Louisiana Volunteers, Company E; Private Antonio Florez, Twenty-eighth Louisiana Volunteers, Company G; Private Danl. Sullivan, Twenty-eighth Louisiana Volunteers, Company A; Private A. J. Blankenship, Missouri Volunteers, Company D; Private Stephen Murton, Missouri Volunteers; Edward Cusick, fireman; and William Gilmore, pilot, from Jonesville, Ky. These two last named fell in the action with the enemy's fleet as they passed us at Vicksburg after the morning conflicts. The following-named men and officers were wounded, to wit: John Kelly, seaman; James Anderson, cockswain; John Pledge, ordinary seaman; Patrick Norton, landsman; Nicholas Davis, seaman; Peter Caulfield, coal heaver; William Alexander, private, from Clinch's Battalion, Louisiana Volunteers; Edward Long, ordinary seaman; Thomas Lynch, sergeant, from Clinch's Battalion, Louisiana Volunteers; John Sullivan, private, from Clinch's Battalion, Louisiana Volunteers; Bernard Martinez, private, Twenty-eighth Louisiana Volunteers, Company E; Felix Thomure, private, Missouri Volunteers, Company B, lost a leg--since dead; John Snider, private, Missouri Volunteers, Company B, lost an arm--since dead; C. D. Paul, corporal, Missouri Volunteers, Company B; Berry Watson, private, Missouri Volunteers, Company B; Thomas Senere, private, Missouri Volunteers, Company C; Second Assistant Engineer Covert, slightly in face; Master's Mate Wilson, stunned and slightly contused; Midshipman Tyler, slightly stunned; Mr. Pilot Hodges, mortally in head; Mr. Pilot Shacklett, slightly in head; Lieutenant George W. Gift, C. S. Navy, arm and shoulder; Third Assistant Engineer Jackson, slightly bruised. Recapitulation.--Killed, 12; badly wounded, 3; wounded, 15. Total, 30. Very respectfully, I. N. BROWN, Lieutenant, Commanding Arkansas. Flag-Officer WM. F. LYNCH, Commanding, etc., Mississippi and Yazoo Rivers. ----- Report of Lieutenant Brown, C. S. Navy, commanding C. S. ram Arkansas, regarding casualties during the engagement of July 22, 1862. C. S. S. ARKANSAS, Vicksburg, July 23, 1862. SIR: I have to perform the sad duty of submitting to you a report of the names of the brave men who fell yesterday, combating for their country, in action with

the enemy's ironclad gunboat Essex, of 14 guns, assisted by a ram, name unknown, to wit: Killed.-- Francis Harter, captain hold; Samuel Heaton, officer's steward; R. Rankin, seaman; John Thorhell, fireman; William Dills, volunteer from Third Kentucky Regiment; W. Woodward, volunteer from Third Kentucky Regiment--6. Wounded.--Daniel Clifford, seaman; Charles Hardee, officer's steward; Arnold Beecher, ordinary seaman; Henry Evans, volunteer from Army; J. R. Hill, volunteer from Army; John Johnson, sergeant, Louisiana Volunteers, badly--6. I am, very respectfully, I. N. BROWN, Commander, C. S. Navy. source: Navy O.R.-- Series 1--Volume 19 [S# 19] West Gulf Blockading Squadron. From July 15, 1862, To March 14, 1863. pp. 50-101
