

ESSENTIAL CIVIL WAR CURRICULUM

Unvexed Waters: The Civil War on Heartland Rivers

By Dwight S. Hughes

Resources

If you can read only one book

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Tomblin, Barbara Brooks	<i>The Civil War on the Mississippi</i> . Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2016.

Books and Articles

Author	<i>Title</i> . City: Publisher, Year.
Canney, Donald L.	<i>Lincoln's Navy: The Ships, Men and Organization, 1861-65</i> . Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1998.
Cooling, Benjamin Franklin	<i>Forts Henry and Donelson: The Key to the Confederate Heartland</i> . Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1988.
Gosnell, Harpur Allen	<i>Guns on the Western Waters: The Story of River Gunboats in the Civil War</i> . Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949.
Groom, Winston	<i>Vicksburg, 1863</i> . New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010.
McPherson, James M.	<i>War on the Waters: the Union and Confederate Navies, 1861-1865</i> . Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012, especially chap. 4.

Murray, Williamson and Wayne Wei-siang Hsieh	<i>A Savage War: A Military History of the Civil War</i> . Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016, chap. 5.
Smith, Myron J.	<i>The Timberclads in the Civil War: The Lexington, Conestoga, and Tyler on the Western Waters</i> . Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2008.
_____.	<i>Tinclads in the Civil War: Union Light-Draught Gunboat Operations on Western Waters, 1862-1865</i> . Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2010.
_____.	<i>The CSS Arkansas: A Confederate Ironclad on Western Waters</i> . Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co., 2011.
Still, Jr., William N., ed.	<i>The Confederate Navy: The Ships, Men, and Organization, 1861-65</i> . Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1997.
Symonds, Craig L.	<i>Lincoln and His Admirals: Abraham Lincoln, the U.S. Navy, and the Civil War</i> . New York: Oxford University Press, 2008.
Taaffe, Stephen R.	<i>Commanding Lincoln's Navy: Union Naval Leadership During the Civil War</i> . Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2009, chap 3.

Organizations

Organization Name	Description, Contact information including address, email
USS Cairo Gunboat and Museum	The USS <i>Cairo</i> was sunk at Vicksburg in 1862. Starting in 1972 the <i>Cairo</i> was raised and is now restored and open to the public. The museum contains displays of artifacts recovered from the <i>Cairo</i> . The ironclad and museum are located at 3201 Clay Street, Vicksburg, MS 39183. 601 636 0583 and are open from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. Monday to Saturday. Their web address is: https://www.nps.gov/vick/u-s-s-cairo-gunboat.htm

Web Resources

Other Sources

Name	Description, contact information including address, email
https://civilwarnavy.com/	<i>Civil War Navy—The Magazine</i> , published quarterly, was launched in 2012 to explore and describe in detail the naval history of the conflict and more fully underpin its military role and importance.

Scholars

Name	Email
Dwight S. Hughes	shipdriver@verizon.net

Topic Précis

The contest for the Mississippi River and its tributaries involved specialized classes of war vessels commanded and manned by naval personnel and coordinating operations with the army. In tactics and technology, however, riverine warfare was a new concept. Union waterborne assets would be required to transport and sustain major land forces, conduct amphibious expeditions and sieges, interdict enemy trade, communications, and transportation, and protect friendly commerce. Wooden and ironclad river steam-powered gunboats would confront enemy counterparts, powerful fortifications, heavy artillery, torpedoes (mines), and guerrillas. At first the Union converted existing commercial vessels into gunboats, but soon designed new vessels from the keel up. Their armor was suboptimal, maneuverability restricted. They were vulnerable to torpedoes (mines) and ramming. The union-built ironclads, timberclads and an ad hoc fleet of various smaller gunboats and river steamers were used to patrol, escort, transport, and communicate through Confederate occupied territory on the rivers. The first joint army-navy expedition saw Flag Officer Andrew Foote cooperating with Brigadier General Ulysses S. Grant to capture Fort Henry on the Tennessee River then Fort Donelson on the Cumberland River in February 1862. Breaking the long Confederate line in the west, their capture led to the abandonment of Kentucky and most of Middle Tennessee by the Confederates. In the spring of 1862 Federal forces thrust up the Mississippi from New Orleans and down it to Island No. 10. The attacks involved newly constructed mortar gunboats, which proved to be less than fully useful. Island No. 10 fell on April 8 and New Orleans was captured on

April 24. On June 6, 1862 on the Mississippi at Memphis TN, a Union force of ironclads and converted rams confronted a Confederate force of converted vessels. The Confederate force, unarmored and outgunned, was destroyed. In August 1862 during the failed first attempt by Union forces to take Vicksburg, the Confederate ironclad *Arkansas* confronted the federal fleet and with failing engines and under murderous fire was abandoned and destroyed, ending the Confederate naval presence on the Mississippi. During the winter and into the spring of 1863, Federal forces under General Grant and coordinating with Admiral Porter maneuvered to take Vicksburg, which fell July 4, 1863. Port Hudson, the last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi, fell on July 9. The combined army-navy campaigns opened the Mississippi River along its entire length, severing the Confederacy in two. “The father of waters again goes unvexed to the sea,” wrote Abraham Lincoln. The brown-water navy of the Mississippi River Squadron kept busy for two additional years fighting Rebel guerrillas, suppressing enemy trade, and protecting friendly commerce.
