



**Volume 46, No. 9
September 2006**

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**Battle Cry deadline is
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Items can be given the
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Battle Cry

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P.O. BOX 254702
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President's Message:

As we approach the last few months of the year, it is time to consider the remaining tasks at hand. Our club has grown significantly in the past few years and in our midst is fresh talent. I am hopeful that some will come forth and consider serving on our board, which will presently replace some members. We also need candidates for offices and volunteers are more than appreciated. Finally, at least half of our presentations are from our own group and it is obvious that potential speakers are out there. I encourage those so inclined to come forward and let us hear from you.

November is rapidly approaching and those of us working on the conference are hopeful that many of our members will attend. If there are extenuating circumstances standing in the way, please come to one of us or call and adjustments can be made. For the continued survival of the West Coast Conference we need to support this ourselves and these speakers are among the finest in the country.

Our speaker in September comes to us through the good graces of George Foxworth who is hosting him and has provided me with additional information. He is Thomas Brown who is a familiar figure in the reenactment scene portraying either General Hood or Thomas. He happens to be the great grand nephew of George Thomas, the "Rock of Chickamauga". The topic is the "Second Day at Chickamauga" and Mr. Brown will appear in uniform. He has entertained numerous public and private audiences throughout the west, as Hood or Thomas, sharing first person recollections of the Civil War. Mr. Brown is an active participant of the American Civil War Association (ACWA) and the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW), Abraham Lincoln Camp 10 of Santa Cruz, and frequently appears at reenactments, parades, and other historical events. He is a successful painting contractor and a graduate of Monterey Peninsula College. He is currently a master's degree candidate in history at San Jose State University.

Don't miss this one. Come early for dinner and/or camaraderie.

Don Hayden

**NEXT MEETING: September 13th at 7:00PM at
the Hof Brau, El Camino & Watt Ave.
SEE UPCOMING PROGRAMS ON PAGE 3.**

Treasurer's Report

The cash balance following the August 9, 2006 meeting was \$1,795.74. Thanks to members and guests, the raffle brought in \$83.00.

George W. Foxworth, Treasurer

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
AUGUST 9, 2006
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, WATT AVE, SACRAMENTO, CA

Attendance 44

Members-40

Don Hayden, President	Charles Collins	Garda Kohlmann	John Nevins
Susan Williams, Vice-President	Ken Dalpe	Dennis Kohlmann	Ron Perisho
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Dudley Albrecht	Bob Hanley	Grace Long	Maxine Wollen
Bob Baskerville	Scottie Hayden	Sharon McGaughey	John Zasso
Sharon Bogart	Pam Hubbard	Leslie Michaels	<u>Guest-4</u>
Steve Bogart	Chuck Hubbard	Jim Middleton	Anita Dalpe
Ardith Cnota	Shelly Jones	Betty Mitchell	Nancy Hayden
Mitchell Cnota	James Juanitas	Maurice Mitchell	Scott Hayden
			Silver Williams

1. Meeting started at 7:00. President Hayden welcomed members and guest. Member John Nevins said we have a guaranteed spot at "The Gold Rush Days" in the Railroad Museum to share info on our conference in November. The annual re-enactment in Fresno, will also put out our brochures.
2. George Foxworth shared his vacation adventures- a trip to the Hunley- and an alligator in a cemetery? (He didn't elaborate). Garda Kohlmann shared the wonderful Civil War quilt she made to auction off at the November conference. I'm sure many tickets will be sold for that!
3. President Hayden was our speaker. He presented the celebrated general- Winfield Scott Hancock, all his accomplishments and friendships with old comrades on the opposing side. Slides were shown to accompany the talk. Thanks Don! That was great.
4. Raffle was held and the meeting ended at 8:45.
5. We have two more new members- Brad Friedman and Victor Le- welcome! Welcome!

Eddie Keister
Secretary

Coming Programs 2006		
Month	Speaker	Topic
September 13 th	Thomas Brown	2 nd Day at Chickamauga (as General Thomas)
October 11 th	Paul Wagstaffe	Franks & Brits : Rebels & Yankees
November 10-12 th	Conference	War on the Waters
December 13 th		

These are the fourth and fifth biographies of distinguished speakers at our sponsored 22nd Annual West Coast Civil War Conference to be held November 10-12, 2006.

Kevin Foster

Mr. Foster received his M.A. in Maritime History and Underwater Archaeology from East Carolina University. Since 1992 he has headed the Maritime Heritage Program of the National Park Service, working to preserve historic ships and structures. Previously, he was Assistant Curator at the Mariner's Museum, Newport News, VA; Director Civil War Naval Museum, Columbus, GA; and Historian, US Coast Guard History Office, Washington, DC.

He is an Editorial Review Board member for *Sea History Magazine*; Advisor to the Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society and the US Life-Saving Service Heritage Association; and former vice-president of the North American Society for Oceanic History.

Mr. Foster has spoken and written extensively in the fields of preservation, archaeology, and maritime and naval history. He contributes to the Encyclopedia of the Confederacy, was a consultant and presenter on the TV series *Warship*, organizes Maritime Heritage Conferences, and is finishing a book on blockade running steamships. He is presently researching a history of US government intelligence collection, propoganda, and covert operations in Europe during the American Civil War.

James Stanbery

Mr. Stanbery earned his B.A. at Berkeley, Phi Beta Kappa, and his M.A. at Cal State Long Beach, served two years in the Peace Corps, and has taught at Los Angeles Harbor College for more than 35 years. He has been faculty president, won outstanding teaching awards, served on numerous organizations, and is a past assistant editor of *Civil War Regiments*. He is active in CWRT's of San Gabriel Valley and Orange County, the Drum Barracks Civil War Museum and the San Pedro Bay Historical Society. He has Authored *The California 2000 Campaign* and several student workbooks on American Institutions.

Jim is no stranger to the annual west coast conferences having attended all but one in twenty years. He has been on the faculty of many over the years and those of us who have had the pleasure of his tutelage can testify to his effectiveness in explaining the strategic picture. We welcome him, as well as all our superb speakers, and trust those who have not previously attended will seize this opportunity to meet them and be entertained and enlightened.

James B. Eads and the Union “City Class” Ironclads

James Buchanan Eads (1820-87) was a self-educated Riverine Engineer, who was engaged in very lucrative marine salvage operations on the Mississippi River and tributaries. He was also the owner of shipyards near St. Louis, Missouri, and Mound City, Illinois. Eads is best known today as the builder of the bridge at St. Louis which bears his name. That bridge was opened in 1874, as the first all-steel bridge across the Mississippi. It has recently been renovated, and from all indications should remain in service for another 132 years or more. (See then and now pictures on the photos page) James Eads is also remembered for the pioneering work he did in river hydraulics during 1876-78 in the Mississippi Delta. This led to solving the problems of sedimentation and sand bar development which inhibited navigation by the construction of a series of strategically placed jetties. That work permitted large deep draft ocean-going vessels to steam all the way to New Orleans for the first time. His third contribution and the theme of this article was his role in implementing the Union’s Civil War Anaconda Plan on the Mississippi River and in acquiring the necessary vessels to do the job.

In April 1861, James Eads wrote Navy Secretary Gideon Welles offering his services as an adviser on Mississippi River matters and on how to create a “brownwater” navy. He proposed that Cairo, Illinois be established as a naval base with guns and ships capable of controlling both the Upper Mississippi and the Ohio Rivers. He also offered to convert his largest salvage vessel into a warship for use by the Navy. Subsequently, this ship became the USS *Benton*, serving as Adm. D .D. Porter’s flagship. Welles was favorably impressed. He contacted the Army, under whose jurisdiction river matters were at the time, and soon thereafter sent Commander John Rodgers and Naval Architect Samuel M. Pook to advise General McClelland and later General Fremont on creating an army-run brownwater fleet.

Eads, Rodgers and Pook made an excellent team. With advice from the others, Cmdr. Rodgers acquired three steamships which were modified by Pook to become the first gun boats on the river, the USS *Lexington*, *Tyler*, and *Conestoga*. Later known as “timberclads”, they were not ideal, but the best available on short notice, and they did provide good service subject to their limitations. Under the general direction of the navy’s Chief Naval Constructor John Lenthall, Pook then turned his attention to the design of all new ironclad warships suitable for inland rivers use. Again working closely with Eads and Rodgers, he came up with a design based on a low draft river boat mode, but avoiding the use of stern or side paddlewheel propulsion systems because of their vulnerability. Instead he devised a “center wheel” system which would be protected by the ships hull and its all-around armament (see cutaway drawing). The designs were approved by Lenthall and placed to bid by QM-General Montgomery Meigs in August 1861.

Specifications called for the construction of seven identical vessels which were to be 175 feet long, have an exceptionally wide beam of 51 feet, draft of 6 feet, carry an armament of 13 guns (3 bow, 4 each broadside, and 2 stern), and be ironclad in varying thickness. The call for bids was little more than show for two days later a contract was awarded to James B. Eads. Price per ironclad was to be \$89,000. Apparently the reasoning for the quick contracting was that Eads was the only one who could complete the work in the 9 week time period allowed, and this was quite probably correct. Four of the ships were to be built at his Carondelet shipyard near St Louis and three at Mound City. Remarkably, Eads was also converting his largest salvage ship to become the *Benton* at the same time. Production was to have been supervised on behalf of the government by Comdr Rodgers, but as the result of disputes with Fremont, he was regrettably to his colleagues reassigned, being replaced by Captain Andrew H. Foote. Foote, however, could provide greater clout against Fremont; but the latter, fortunately for all, was soon to also be replaced by Henry W. Halleck, for a variety of valid reasons not to be discussed here.

Through a number of sub-contractors Eads hired a work force of over 4,000 shipwrights and others from throughout the Midwest. Work proceeded around the clock

seven days a week. Some slowdown was experienced due to lack of timely receipt of funds and with the supply of engines, but two ships were launched on 12 October 61 and the rest over the next three weeks, an amazing accomplishment. To some the vessels had the appearance of large turtles. Hence, they became known as *Pook's Turtles*. Their true names were after cities along the Upper Mississippi and Ohio Rivers. They were officially the USS *St. Louis*, *Carondolet*, *Cairo*, *Mound City*, *Louisville*, *Cincinnati*, and *Pittsburg*. The name *St. Louis* was later changed to *Baron de Kalb* because the navy all of a sudden discovered it already had a USS *St. Louis*. (Obvious question; Why not name it *Paducah* for consistency? Answer; Paducah was held by the rebels at the time!

These seven Union river warships became collectively known as the Eads "City Class" Ironclads. They formed the backbone of the Union's inland waters navy throughout the Civil War; commanded by Admirals Foote, Charles H. Davis, and David Dixon Porter, respectively. The seven vessels were nearly identical and could not be distinguished at a distance. To do this color bands were painted on the smokestacks; as follows in order with the above names; yellow, red, gray, orange, green, blue, brown. Outfitting with guns and other equipment was completed at Cairo and the vessels were commissioned for service in January 1862. They displaced 512 tons, carried a crew of 251, and had a speed of 9 knots. Not long thereafter jurisdiction of the new western flotilla was changed from the army to the navy.

The USS *Benton* was commissioned one month later. It was very similar in appearance with the seven city class casemate ironclads, but larger at a length of 202 feet; beam 72 feet, 9 foot draft, and carrying 16 guns. But speed at 6 knots was less. Another Eads conversion was the USS *Essex* designed by Commander William David (a.k.a. "Dirty Bill") Porter, David Dixon Porters' older brother, and later captained by him. This vessel was also similar in design and appearance to the city class ironclads. ("Dirty Bill" Porter became known to many historians as the best liar in the union military, but he only slightly out distanced his brother David and Joshua Chamberlain.)

In addition to the nine warships described above, James Eads was also responsible for building seven additional ironclad warships for the union navy. They were: the river rams USS *Choctaw* and *Lafayette*; the turreted river monitors USS *Neosho* and *Osage*; and three of the four dual turreted monitors of the Milwaukee Class. They were the USS *Winnebago*, *Kickapoo*, and *Milwaukee*.

Choctaw and *Lafayette* were conversions of side-wheeler river boats, easily damaged, rather cumbersome, and only moderately successful as warships. Although equipped to be rams, they were ineffective due to slow speed and lack of maneuverability. On the river monitors Eads proposed to use revolving gun turrets of his own design which were almost totally steam operated. He and many others considered them to be vast improvements over both the Ericsson and Cowles (British) systems. He believed that with his turret 11-inch guns could be loaded, aimed and fired every 45 seconds, eight times as fast as the other designs. His request to use or even test his own design was denied by the navy department. Only the Ericsson-type turret would be permitted on the single turreted monitors. This was obviously due to the John Ericsson-Gustavus Fox generated "monitor fever" then prevalent in Washington, D.C. and elsewhere. However, on the dual turreted river monitors of the Milwaukee Class, Eads was permitted to place one turret each of his own design, subject to removal and replacement with an Ericsson turret at his cost if they proved unsatisfactory. They proved to be quite superior, and Assistant Navy Secretary Fox later agreed that the Eads turret was indeed the better one.

The Union river ironclads were designed as the strategic tools by which the Union could wrest control of the Mississippi River and its tributaries from the Confederates. Actions in which the Eads City Class and/or his other ironclads and river monitors participated to that end are as follows: *Forts Henry and Donelson (February 1862); *Island No. 10 (March-April 1862); *Fort Pillow and Memphis (May-June 1862); The White River Expedition (June 1862); *The Yazoo River and Vicksburg (July-August

1862); *Arkansas Post (January 1863); *Grand Gulf (March 1863); *Siege of Vicksburg (April-July 1863); Red River Campaign (March-May 1864); *Mobile Bay (August 1864); and, *Nashville (December 1864).

The ironclad “turtles” and their sister ships the *Benton* and *Essex* lacked the glamour of the USS *Monitor* and apart from a brief encounter fighting the CSS *Arkansas* around Vicksburg none saw action in a dramatic engagement with other ironclads. Even that affair was less than glamorous for the Union fleet got caught with their “steam down”; resulting in the near loss of *Carondelet*, and a humiliation for the entire Western Rivers Squadron. Notwithstanding, the ironclads on America’s western waters are considered by many historians to have been the real arbiters in the Civil War. Without their support the Union armies would have been hard pressed to advance into the Confederate held heartlands of the Western Theater.

A brief discussion of the sinking and recovery of the USS *Cairo* was included in the *Battle Cry*, Sept. 2003 edition.

References:

“Battles and Leaders” Vol. I, Pt. I “The Old Steam Navy”

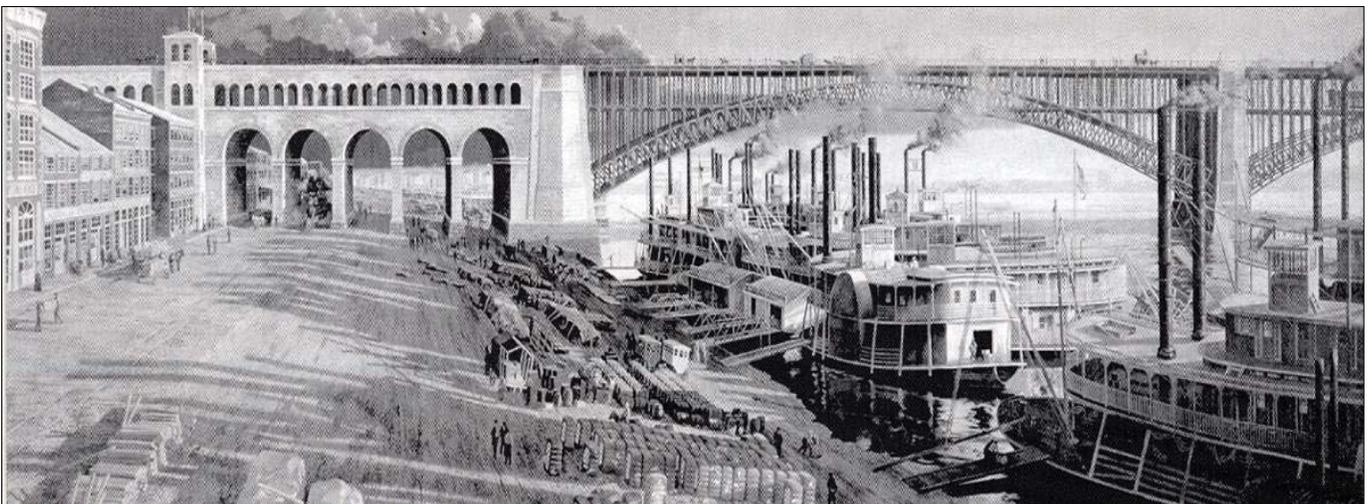
Vol. II “The Ironclads”, by D. L. Canney, 1993

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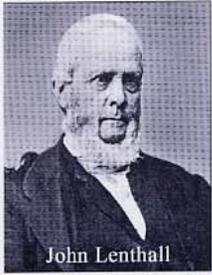
Bob Williams 8-15-06

The Eads Mississippi River Bridge at St. Louis, 1875 and 2005

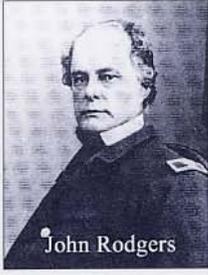


James B. Eads and the Union City Class Ironclads

Photo Page I



John Lenthall



John Rodgers



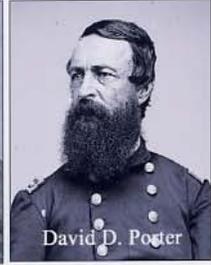
Andrew H. Foote



James B. Eads



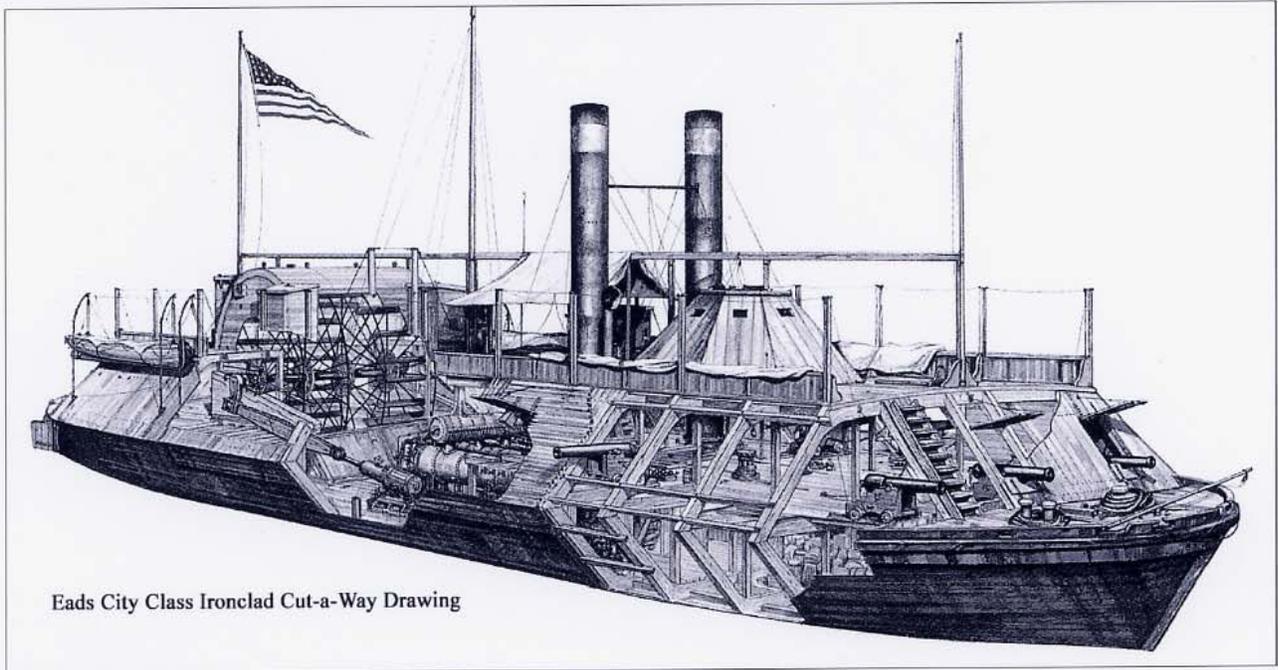
Charles H. Davis



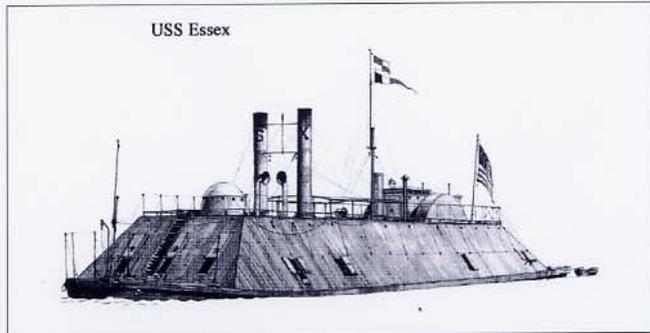
David D. Porter



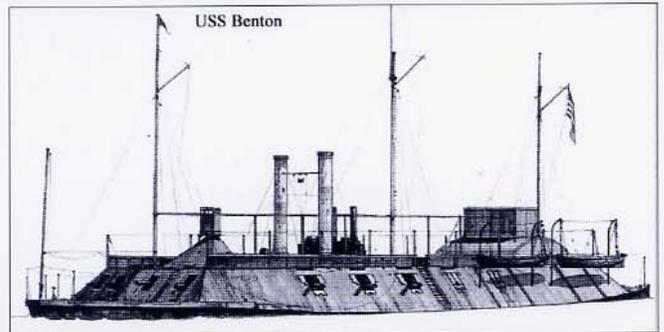
William D. Porter



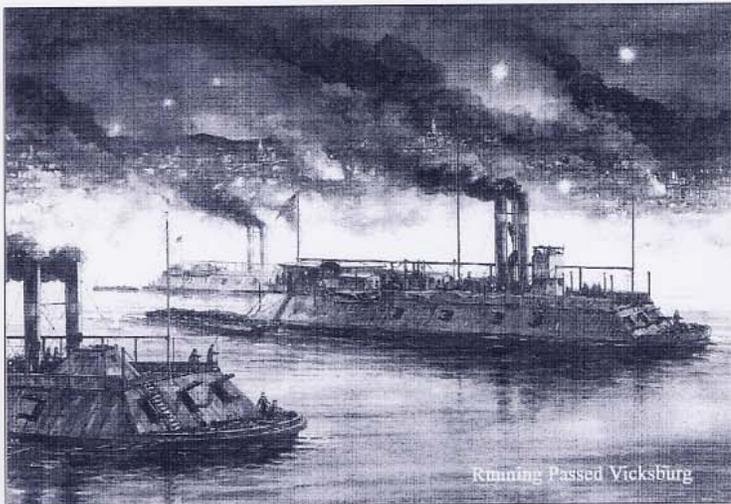
Eads City Class Ironclad Cut-a-Way Drawing



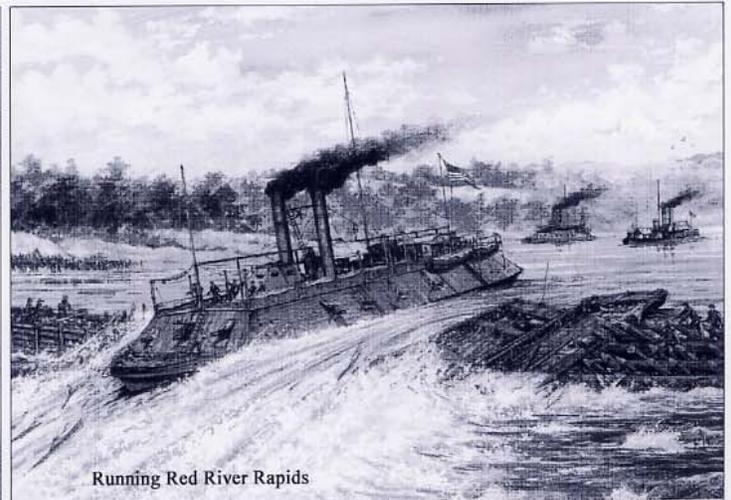
USS Essex



USS Benton



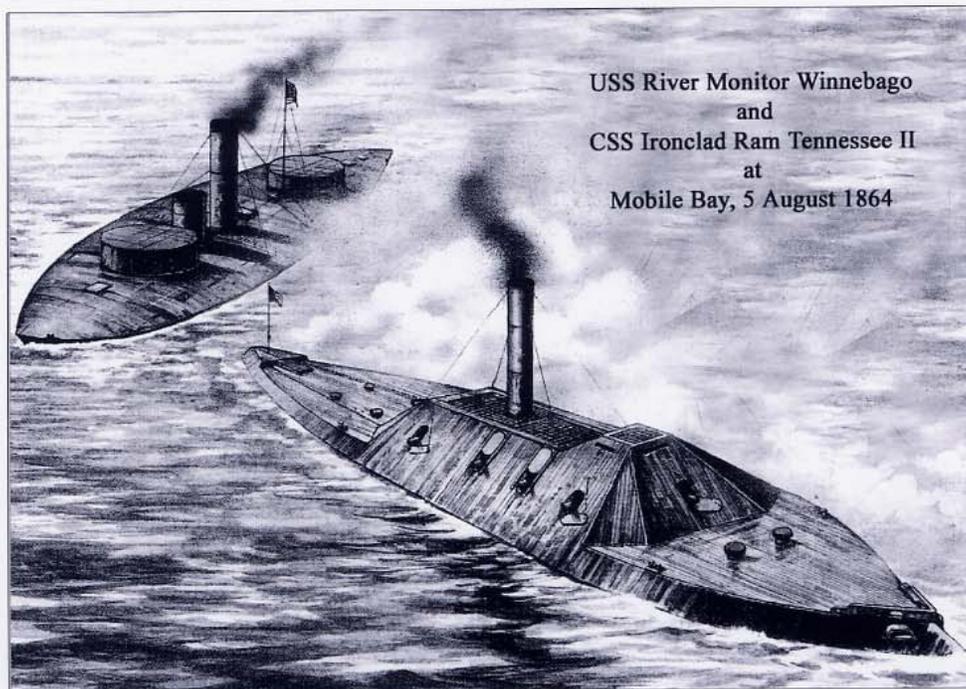
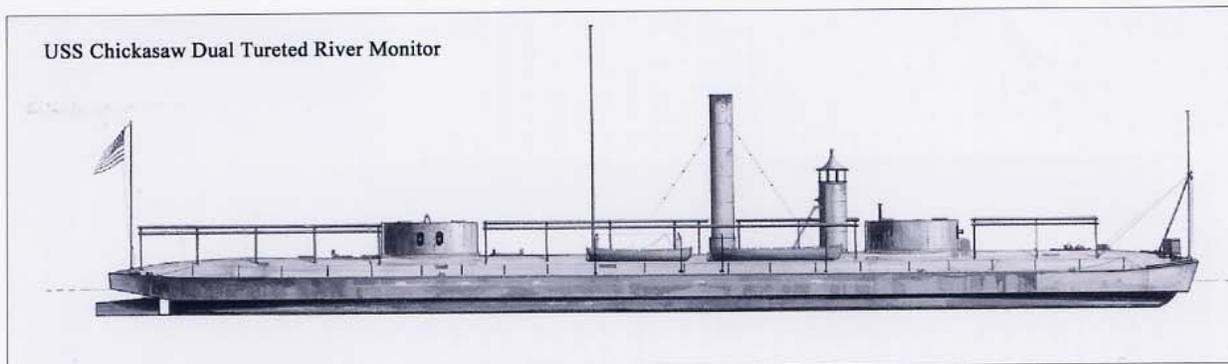
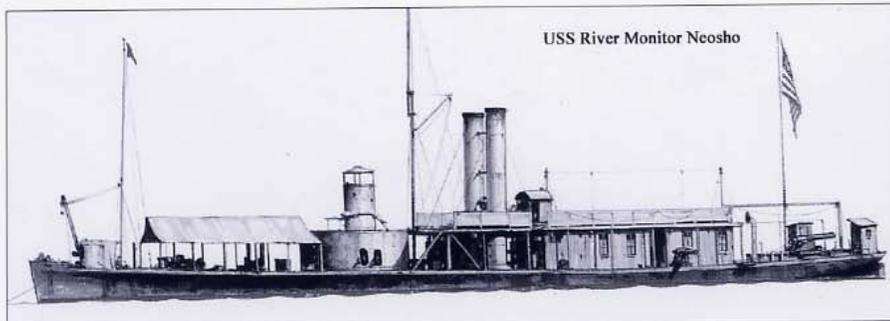
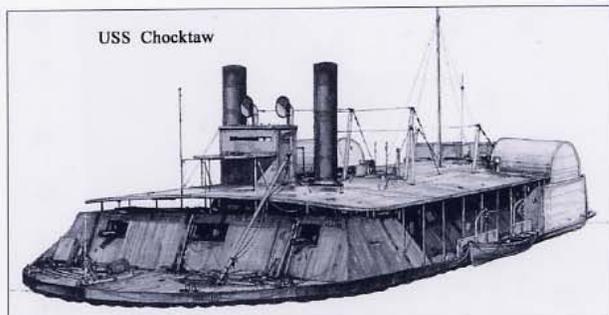
Running Passed Vicksburg



Running Red River Rapids

James B. Eads and the Union City Class Ironclads

Photo Page II



SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE PRESENTS THE 22ND ANNUAL WEST COAST CONFERENCE

ASPECTS OF THE WAR ON THE WATERS

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Name/Organization to appear on badge
1)Name: _____ Organization: _____
2)Name _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Day Phone() _____ Other Phone() _____ E-mail _____

Conference Registration Fees (per person/including meals)
\$160 until October 2 Postmark \$170 after October 2 Postmark

Meals desired for person(s) accompanying registrant **but not registered for the conference:**

These meals to be paid at the conference

Friday dinner _____ (\$25ea) Saturday lunch _____ (\$20ea) Saturday Banquet _____ (\$25ea) Sunday brunch _____ (\$20ea)

Do you have any dietary needs or special assistance? _____

Please return this form with your check for registration fee only.

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