

BOOK REVIEWS

William Barr. *Arctic Hell-ship. The Voyage of the HMS Enterprise 1850-1855*. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press, www.uap.ualberta.ca, 2007. xiv + 318 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. CDN \$ 34.95, paper; ISBN-13: 978-0-88864-433-6.

The number of books spun from the dramatic failure of Sir John Franklin's 1845-1848 expedition of in search of a Northwest Passage is beginning to approach the number of biographies of Bonaparte. The long and growing catalogue of Frankliniana includes more or less straightforward general histories such as Martin Sandler's *Resolute* (2006); disaster narratives like Scott Cookman's *Ice Blink* (2001); forensic anthropology studies (Beattie and Geiger's *Frozen in Time* (1988)); literary non-fiction like Barry Lopez' *Arctic Dreams* (1987); even novels, such as Robert Edric's *The Broken Lands* (1992).

This study falls into one of the newer sub-genre of Franklin works—studies of individual commanders involved in the Franklin saga. It joins David Murphy's *Arctic Fox* (2004), on Leopold McClintock—the man who solved the Franklin mystery; and Michael Smith's *Last Man Standing* (2006), on Francis Crozier—whom one might say created it.

In the case of *Arctic Hell-Ship*, the commander is Richard Collinson, a flinty, by-most-accounts competent, British naval officer whose specialty was marine surveying. In 1850, Collinson's linear career as a better-than-average chart maker was suddenly thrown a wicked curve. The Admiralty, desperate to find out what had become of Franklin and his two ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, ordered Collinson to the

Arctic as commander of an exploring expedition consisting of HMS *Enterprise* and HMS *Investigator*; the latter commanded by Robert McClure.

Given such an important command, Collinson dithers on his way around Cape Horn, first waiting on the slower *Investigator*, and then speeding on ahead. Collinson left Hawaii before McClure could catch up with him, and then made an inexplicably wide and slow arc into the Bering Sea. For reasons the author explores in detail, Collinson then decided that his ship should locate winter quarters by 1 August, thereby losing half of his first Arctic navigating season and allowing the intrepid McClure to pass him. While McClure blazed north to Banks Island, Collinson thought it more prudent to winter in Hong Kong. The author hints broadly that McClure, being no fool and perhaps with a sufficient gleam of Collinson's character, pressed on by stretching his orders to their literal and figurative outer limits. Ultimately, McClure would claim the discovery of the Northwest Passage for himself.

The author's remit is to examine why Collinson found it necessary to hold so many of his officers in chains for large segments of his otherwise competent voyage that spanned three Arctic winters. Collinson did not learn the fate of Franklin, but was eventually able to sail along the northern coast of North America all the way to an overwintering in Cambridge Bay on Victoria Island, an impressive feat of ice navigation.

The title of this work clues the reader immediately to the author's judgment of *Enterprise's* captain. Collinson, an officer largely overmatched by his

The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord, XVII No. 2, (April 2007), 67-92

assignment, is revealed as an indecisive martinet. Yet this judgment is somewhat undermined by the author's eagerness to convict Collinson so quickly. Through the use of exclamation points and aspersions, the prosecutor sums up for the jury too early and too often. Virtually every move or missive by Collinson earns an immediate critique. A more subtle case that allowed the wonderful historical detail to speak for itself would have sufficed. The trap could then have been sprung in a blistering final chapter. Instead, poor Collinson, inept perhaps, possibly superstitious, almost certainly a zealot and a tippler, is convicted by the author before the reader has had a chance to hear all the evidence against him.

The excellent nature of the primary source scholarship mirrors the care and expense taken to add colour plates of Assistant Surgeon Edward Adams' paintings to the volume (a minor miracle in itself for a university press). Unfortunately, this work is compromised by a poor copy-edit. There are numerous misspellings as well as sentences repeated within short spaces. On p. 8 we are told that the purpose of Collinson's expedition was "to search for the missing Franklin expedition via Bering Strait" and then three sentences later that the purpose was "to search for the missing Franklin expedition via Bering Strait." Or on p. xi where we are told that this is the "first detailed account of the voyage since Collinson's own narrative," then, just two sentences later, that the book is "a detailed study (the first since publication of Collinson's own narrative in 1889)." (And no, the space between the parentheses and 'the' was not closed up.)

References to illustrations are off by two pages, suggesting that the manuscript went through a final typesetting without the pagination being given a final check. References to previous or foreshadowed events are wildly mis-numbered, and should have been left out,

since they only distract from the generally excellent flow of the text. Place names and nomenclature are given in their original spellings and rather randomly accompanied by modern spellings or English equivalents. For example, the author insists on using the Russian transliteration 'mys' without at least once translating it for the general reader as 'cape.' The modern name of Chusan Island is given (Zhoushan Dao), but the modern name of Oueehow (Niihau) is not. This is a bit strange since the author uses the names Maui, Oahu and Hawaii in the text, without first giving the archaic Sandwich Islands spellings (Mowee; Woahoo; Owhyhee)—and one guesses that 'Oueehow' and its yam fields are by far the least known of them all.

The author is an exemplary polar historian; the publisher should have seen to it that his manuscript received a copy-edit the equal of his scholarship. As for Richard Collinson, he should never have been taken away from his chart table to be put in charge of men on a desperate mission in a remote and hostile landscape.

P.J. Capelotti
Abington, Pennsylvania

Lance E. Davis and Stanley L. Engerman. *Naval Blockades in Peace and War: An Economic History Since 1750*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, www.cambeidge.org, 2006. x+ 453 pp., notes, tables, index. US \$99.95, cloth; isbn 0-521-85749-X.

By 1918 German civilians were consuming only 22 percent of their pre-war weekly diet of meat and 27 percent of the fats. Small wonder that the privations of the civilian population and shared memories of the "turnip winter" of 1917 became so deeply ingrained in the national conscience, and for the Germans, such a vivid legacy of the

Great War. The punishing shortages were also felt next door in the Netherlands, which had remained neutral: 1918 consumption of meat and fats was 29 and 53 percent of the weekly 1914 levels. Among the causes of suffering was a shortage of farm labour in Germany due to the colossal cumulative manpower requirements of fighting a two-front war. One of the key causes was the dislocation of normal trade patterns caused by the Allied naval blockade implemented in 1914. It was, in fact, maintained until the Treaty of Versailles was signed by a defeated Germany in 1919. These statistics are found on pages 209-10 of a recent study by two American economists, Lance Davis and Stanley Engerman.

Davis and Engerman set out to examine the economic implications of naval blockades in a series of case studies. Both have had distinguished academic careers and candidly write that they are not military historians. Their book is based on published secondary sources. Its usefulness for further study is limited by the lack of a bibliography. The text is interspersed with 142 detail-crammed statistical tables. Unfortunately, there are only two graphs; a diagram showing the bullion holdings by the Bank of England buttresses a discussion of how Napoleon's Continental System, aimed at choking off trade with Britain, succeeded in drawing down specie holdings by his enemy. (p.33) A welcome graph on page 267 shows tonnage sunk by German U-boats during the Second World War. If ever there was a study based on statistics which cries out for competent diagrams and graphs to underline the lessons to be extracted from masses of facts, it must be this one.

The authors draw heavily on quotations in presenting their case studies. This feature, coupled with a tendency to summarise the differing views reached in the original studies, requires the reader's close attention in order to extrapolate key

points. To be fair, Davis and Engerman, despite frequently tentative conclusions, and after weighing the opinions of various authors, do decide that the British blockade against the United States in the War of 1812, the Union Blockade of the Confederacy during the Civil War, and the Second World War American submarine and aerial mining campaign against Japan were clearly effective.

One of the attractive features of this study is its broad scope. The authors sketch in the evolution of international law governing blockades and embargoes and underline how belligerents consistently violated agreements made in peacetime. The authors write that an embargo – the decision by a government to stop or limit exports to harm an external power – is the mirror image of a blockade, which is an attempt to choke off imports by an opponent. While they do not discuss in detail the economic impact of recent embargoes, such as the one which attempted to restrict imports of oil by Rhodesia in the seventies, there is extensive coverage of a fifteen-month American embargo on exports to Britain from 1807 to 1809. This was intended to pressure Britain into ceasing seizures of American trading vessels on the high seas and the infamous impressment of American seamen by the Royal Navy. In fact, the embargo was leaky and cumulatively harmed the United States – exports fell by 75 percent in 1808 and imports by 60 percent (p. 89). Meanwhile, England experienced a damaging 60 percent increase in cotton prices, but trading patterns were adjusted and British exports to other parts of the Americas surged. Exports of American-grown cotton to Britain would be a key factor during the Civil War five decades later. The Confederacy initially embargoed exports of cotton in an attempt to coerce Britain and France into recognizing its sovereignty and disregarding the Union blockade, which was then of limited effectiveness. A year later, when the

South changed its strategy, exports resumed, but on a limited scale, since it proved impractical to export large quantities of cotton in the types of smallish, fast vessels which were successful blockade runners. These vessels were, however, able to import substantial quantities of rifles, clothing, blankets and footwear --and indeed, these imported stores kept the Confederate armies in the field for the final year of the war (p. 148). Overall, the authors conclude, the Union blockade was a significant factor in the defeat of the South. As for the interrupted cotton trade, British importers found new suppliers in other temperate areas, and while the South eventually resumed a leading role, it was never again as dominant as it had been before 1861 (p. 156).

The coverage of the First World War is dominated by an analysis of the German submarine campaign. There is interesting coverage of a German study forecasting that a naval blockade would cripple Britain by interrupting imports of wheat. In fact, the study was based on flawed data and the British effectively imposed control on domestic food supplies and consumption – an early modern example of government intervention in the national economy. A new ministry, Food Control, was created which fixed consumer prices and purchased foodstuffs in bulk abroad. A new branch in the existing Board of Agriculture stimulated increased production by British farmers. By 1918, the domestic production of wheat had shot up by 60 percent and that of oats rose by 50 percent over the 1914 figures (p.184). The vital role of the United States in Britain's economic survival is underlined by the fact that by 1918 American imports had risen from 22 percent in 1914 to 42 percent. The authors underline that these war-year imports were financed by the United States. By war's end, the United States was supplying 52 percent of all wheat and flour

imports. The Canadian portion of these imports was about the same as it had been in pre-war years (22 and 25 percent), but shipments from Russia and India (due to ship shortages?) had plummeted (p.215).

At times, the emphasis on statistics obscures actual events. Thus, the shipbuilding effort by the United States starting in 1917 was truly prodigious (see tables p. 225) but by the Armistice in 1918 it had actually delivered only 470 of the 1,429 ships laid down under a program of standard designs which foreshadowed the successes achieved in the Second World War by North American yards. The shipping crisis, however, had been overcome through the convoy system and centralized control of available tonnage, including the efforts of the American Shipping Board. The new tonnage arrived too late to affect the war.

The German blockade of Britain in the Second World War occupies one-fifth of the book. Uncharacteristically, the authors focus on the U-boat campaign and Allied anti-submarine warfare rather than its economic effects or resource costs. Nothing is said about increased agricultural production in Britain, which once again mitigated the effects of the attempted German blockade. The analysis draws heavily on a narrow range of sources, such as the idiosyncratic views of Clay Blair (1996) and the official histories by Roskill (published between 1954 and 1961) and Morison (1947-1956 and 1963). Unfortunately, several technical aspects of anti-submarine warfare have been misunderstood. For example, there is a general discussion of the significance of centimetric radar in detecting U-boats on the surface, but later it is implied that only aircraft-fitted radar forced German submarines to dive where they became vulnerable to detection by ship-fitted sonars (p. 263). In fact, the widespread fitting of centimetric radar in escort warships in 1942 enabled them to detect U-boats approaching

on the surface at night. The authors do not deal with Allied resource allocation issues such as the assignment of available shipping in late 1942 to meet soaring demands that threatened vital British imports.

The statistical focus is firmly on U-boat and merchant ship construction, and ship sinkings which leads to a discussion of how many hypothetical additional German submarines would have been required to match the sinking rates achieved in early 1942 (p. 312). The result is a figure of 1,469 new boats in 1943, compared with actual construction of 279. While this computation underlines the fact that U-boat production was theoretically insufficient to maintain a previously-reached sinking rate, it is of limited value. By 1943, Allied anti-submarine warfare proficiency and resources actually deployed were both steadily improving. At the same time, the Germans improved their existing U-boats and switched production to faster boats with much greater underwater endurance (of which only a handful eventually reached front-line status). In other words, the outcome of the campaign would hinge on several factors and not just the numbers of operational U-boats versus available Allied tonnage.

Davis and Engerman write that the U.S. submarine and aerial mine blockade of Japan was eventually decisive. Their description of how the campaign was conducted is buttressed by detailed statistics showing the impact of the blockade on the Japanese economy. The authors again devote several pages to U.S. submarine operations and miss the point that the superb American radar was a major factor behind the tactical effectiveness of their ships. It is arresting to learn that in 1942 almost 30 percent of U.S. submarine captains were found wanting and relieved of their duties (p. 372).

Naval Blockades in Peace and War addresses an area of naval warfare which

has had few specific studies. Its broad scope includes useful discussions of the legal aspects of blockades and embargoes and of how these principles have been applied—or more often ignored. The book is, therefore, stimulating and its extensive statistical tables are “value added.” These are generally inserted for reference without specific discussion, however, and the lack of graphs is a real drawback in grasping their significance. Recommended as a reference for those interested in pursuing further study of this neglected area.

Jan Drent
Victoria, British Columbia

W.A.B. Douglas, Roger Sarty, and Michael Whitby, et. al. *A Blue Water Navy; the Official Operational History of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War, 1943-1945*, Volume II, Part II. St. Catharines, ON: Vanwell Publishing, sales@vanwell.com, 2007. xvii + 650 pp., maps, illustrations, photographs, glossary, appendices, bibliography, index. CDN \$60.00, cloth; ISBN 1-55125-069-1.

This volume completes the official operational history of the Royal Canadian Navy in the Second World War. As is typical of many histories prepared in governmental offices, *A Blue Water Navy* was a team effort. The volume’s bibliography identifies more than thirty scholars, in addition to the principal authors, who prepared studies that were the intellectual basis for much of the volume. Alec Douglas, a longstanding leader of Canada’s official military history program, together with Roger Sarty and Michael Whitby, the book’s other senior authors, deserve great credit for organizing and managing a complex and highly successful project.

Part 1 of the Operational History, published in 2003, ends with a discussion of

the Atlantic Convoy Conference held in Washington, D.C., in March 1943. At that time, British and American leaders agreed to establish a Canadian-controlled, anti-submarine zone known as the Canadian Northwest Atlantic Command, an action that confirmed the Dominion's maturity as an independent military power. But important as convoy protection and other anti-submarine measures were for the Royal Canadian Navy, this history shows that the Royal Navy continually urged Ottawa to deploy additional ships and men to European waters. Often these were the most effective Canadian forces available. That situation, combined with perennial problems in assuring effective training, weakened to some extent the RCN's performance in the Western Atlantic. In fact, the authors note that Canadian forces operating in that area sank no U-boats during the last eighteen months of the war with Germany. But they also observe that the goal of anti-submarine campaigns is not the destruction of U-boats. Rather it is to assure the safe arrival of merchant ships, a feat largely achieved by the RCN.

Historians often write off the German submarine campaign as posing little danger after the ruinous losses suffered by the enemy in May 1943. But Alec Douglas and his colleagues remind us that the U-boat threat did not entirely disappear. This was notably the case in the bloody month of September 1943, when there was a concentrated submarine assault on the trans-Atlantic convoys ON-202 and ONS-18. Using the newly introduced acoustic torpedo, along with radar detectors and other measures, German submarines sank or severely damaged five convoy escorts and six merchant vessels sailing in those formations. But the Germans also took heavy casualties, losing three of their U-boats and taking severe damage to two others.

Much of this volume deals with the

Canadian role in combined operations in European waters. Despite the tragic losses suffered in 1942 by Canadians in the disastrous raid on Dieppe, RCN officials were anxious to show that their service was more than an anti-submarine force. They willingly participated in the amphibious operations in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, and France. In addition to operating landing craft and ships, Canadian naval forces provided naval gunfire support, defended the beach head against enemy naval attack, and facilitated the post-landing logistical build-ups. In taking on these tasks the authors conclude that the RCN became a blue water navy as opposed to the earlier coastal-oriented force concentrating on the war against U-boats in the North Atlantic shipping lanes.

The authors argue that senior RCN officers were preoccupied during the Second World War with laying the foundation for a capable post-war fleet. Indicative of their dreams was the commissioning of the small carrier HMS *Nabob* in 1944. Although *Nabob* was a British Royal Naval ship, the majority of her crew members were Canadian. Another milestone in the development of the RCN was the acquisition of the service's first two cruisers, HMCS *Uganda* and HMCS *Ontario*. Both vessels served with the British Pacific Fleet. As the War with Japan ended, naval officials in Ottawa had ambitious plans for a Pacific Fleet (scheduled to be available in 1946) composed of three light cruisers, two light carriers embarking Canadian air groups, and nineteen destroyers.

A Blue Water Navy is written at a tactical level that usually does not detail the personal experiences of RCN personnel. But when this type of information is provided, it is very useful. A notable example is a full account of the 1943 mutiny on board HMCS *Iroquois*. Senior RCN officers investigating this matter, as

well as the authors of this history, approve of the relief of *Iroquois*' harsh commanding officer and display some sympathy for the crew, although they do not entirely excuse its lack of discipline. The authors state that there are a number of other instances of mass protests by Canadians from the lower deck, explaining that sometimes this was the only means they had to air legitimate grievances.

Another intriguing insight in the handling of personnel came near the end of the war when an election was held on board the cruiser *Uganda* in which 80% of the crew voted against continuing to participate in the Pacific war. As a result, in July 1945, *Uganda* detached from the British Pacific Fleet and returned to the West Coast. This event is described by the authors as a disaster. Observers from Britain and the United States, where the compulsory mobilization of military manpower was a central feature of their war efforts, must have been amazed by this exercise of democratic self-determination while the fighting raged. But the authors point out that *Uganda*'s resignation from the Japanese conflict reflected Canada's deep political divisions regarding the draft. Due to the sizeable opposition to compulsory military service, Canada's political leaders pledged early in the war not to use that measure. Instead, the Dominion depended entirely on volunteers.

As one will gather from the discussion of mutinies and *Uganda*, *A Blue Water Navy* does not shrink from addressing sensitive subjects. This volume is also impressive due to the breadth of its research, including extensive investigation of Canadian, British, American, and German records, and full use of the enormous body of published materials that has become available over more than six decades.

Alec Douglas and his colleagues perform a great service for modern history.

Due to their efforts we finally have a comprehensive operational account of one of the major navies of the Second World War. This is a volume that, together with Part I, deserves to be in major libraries as well as on the personal bookshelves of naval professionals, students of the military, and modern historians in Canada and abroad.

Dean C. Allard
Arlington, Virginia

Norbert Elias. *The Genesis of the Naval Profession*. Dublin, UK: University College Dublin Press, www.ucdp.ie, 2007. xii + 172 pp., appendix, note, index. US\$ 84.95, cloth. ISBN 978-1-904558-80-4. Distributed in North America by Dufour Editions, www.dufoureditions.com .

Here is a sociological explanation for the command structure of the Royal Navy and its competitors during the "Age of Fighting Sail." The author, Norbert Elias, a German by birth and one of the most prominent sociologists of his time, died in 1990. The author of several significant books, he also wrote articles that comprise about a quarter of the material that appears in *The Genesis of the Naval Profession*. Knowing that Elias had intended to produce a book-size treatment of the subject, the editors merged his published articles with drafts found among his papers to create the book, as part of the ongoing program at the University College Dublin to publish Elias's collected works in English.

According to Elias and his editors, tension lay at the roots of the system that eventually gave commissioned officers their indisputable status aboard English men of war. When England and its neighbours developed navies in the 1500s, the ships were sailed and commanded by "tarpaulin" masters, men who had worn cloaks of oiled

canvas all their lives as they learned the craft of sailing from the bottom up. As the strategic importance of fleets grew, command afloat became an attractive alternative for military officers who sought active service and the potential honours it offered. These were the “gentlemen” from the upper crust who received their appointments to command at sea largely through patronage, who had little or no knowledge of ships and would not lower themselves to the manual labour that was an essential aspect of the seafaring life. Not surprisingly, conflict occurred over the issue of who held supreme authority in such armed vessels, the tarpaulin commanders or the gentleman commanders. The controversy that developed between gentleman soldier Thomas Doughty and tarpaulin captain Francis Drake during the latter’s round-the-world voyage, and which led to Doughty’s conviction of insubordination and execution in 1577, is used here as a key example of the tension that existed afloat.

After a lengthy period, the resolution of the command dilemma was to introduce into the navy boys from the middle and upper class with good connections to serving officers and to have them learn the skills of seamanship. These were the volunteers and the midshipmen who made up the young gentlemen in the cockpit and were separate from the able seamen who stood a chance to rise to the rank of master after years of service. By 1800, experienced “officers and gentlemen” commanded Britain’s ships and, as one French officer remarked, “An English captain is nearly always the best seaman on board ship.” (p. 97) The role of the master (a later equivalent of the tarpaulin) in the Royal Navy is given credit, despite the previous statement, and his exclusion from the commissioned class is explained. A late chapter is devoted to showing how the failure of Holland, France and Spain to

develop the same system contributed to the inferiority of their fleets.

As N. A. M. Rodger points out in his *The Command of the Ocean* (pp. 112-18 *et passim*), the evolution of the officer class in the Royal Navy during the 1600s and afterwards was complicated and was influenced as much by the prevailing government, politics and patronage as by anything else. These matters are covered briefly in *Genesis* which is written in a dry, academic style, making it hard to follow in places. It lacks the salt in the words of someone who knows the navy, such as you will find in Christopher McKee’s *A Gentlemanly and Honorable Profession*. I was hoping for some brilliant new genealogical and social analysis of the officers of the sailing navy and their forebears, but got sociological theory instead.

At the time of writing, *Genesis* is not on the Indigo-Chapters online list, but it can be found at similar American websites where its lowest price is \$62.01 (Amazon.com) which is outrageous, especially given the brevity of this thin volume. Perhaps if opportunity had allowed Norbert Elias to devote more time, in what was a long and productive life, he would have compiled a deeper explanation of his views that was more useful to the ongoing studies of the sailing navy.

Robert Malcomson
St. Catherines, Ontario

Howard J. Fuller. *Clad in Iron: the American Civil War and the Challenge of British Naval Power*. Westport, CT: Praeger Publishers, www.praeger.com, 2008, ix + 409 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$ 34.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-313-34590-6.

This is a detailed, well-referenced, fascinating account of the development before and during the American Civil War of two new forms of warship and a complex naval arms race involving three powers. The armoured, broadside-gunned frigate was developed in France in 1859, then spread to Britain, the Union, and the Confederacy: the low-freeboard, turreted monitor was developed in the Union. The British experimented with turreted ships, but did not build monitors as such. All these forms were confusingly referred to by contemporaries as “ironclads”; all were steam driven, all were screw propelled. French, Union, and Confederate ironclads used iron armour over wooden frames; only British yards built true, wrought-iron armoured ships. The problem of developing such new technologies is central to the book. Fuller notes that what began as a “Cold War” between France and Britain evolved into a near-war between Britain and America. Union naval posturing was as much against Britain as against the Confederacy. Radical new technologies called forth massive revisions in naval geostrategy. The British saw a need for armoured frigates to protect their shipping lanes against commerce raiders, moving to the improved box-battery armoured ship in the mid-1860s. America perfected the monitor to defend its coasts, to act as a substitute for coastal fortifications, and to attack Confederate forts.

Although fascinating, the book reveals its origins as a highly focussed dissertation on a small part of America’s Civil War. The detailed evaluation of

primary documents is often daunting and the fascinating “woods” of the technical and geostrategic struggle between Britain and the Union often vanish in the thicket of “trees” about particular developments and personalities in the before Union. The last two chapters, the most interesting from the point of view of geostrategy, international relations, and technology transfer, all unstated but implicit themes in Fuller’s work, feel “tacked on,” yet they make the book.

Fuller points to four naval issues or developments during the Civil War that are central to his analysis. The first two were the *Trent* Affair of late 1861 and the Battle of Hampton Roads. Fear of possible British intervention on the side of the Confederacy using such powerful armoured frigates as *Warrior* caused the Union to back down over the *Trent* Affair. After the success of *Monitor* against the Confederate armoured frigate, *Virginia*, at Hampton Roads in the spring of 1862, however, Union attitudes to Britain hardened. Had the *Trent* Affair occurred after Hampton Roads, the outcome might have been very different, as Fuller convincingly argues. The later part of the war saw two further critical issues. The first revolved around the serious technical problems in developing the *Passaic* class monitors, substantially up-gunned from *Monitor*, the resultant slowness completing the much more powerful *Miantonomoh*-class monitors, and the failure to complete the blue-water monitor/battleship *Dictator*. A sub-theme is the Union failure to finish the one armoured frigate that could have challenged *Warrior*, *Dunderberg*. This part of Fuller’s account shows less confidence than his handling of the *Trent* Affair and *Monitor*’s development. A major theme of his book is that the Union was, after the *Trent* Affair, increasingly willing to challenge Britain’s naval power, and therefore the reasons for the failure to produce the warships that would have been

most effective in that challenge should be more fully developed. The second issue, ably covered in the penultimate chapter, was the failure of Union monitors to force Charleston in April 1863 in the face of Confederate forts, and thus the failure of that part of Union geostrategy founded on the belief that monitors, unaided, could blast their way into defended ports.

In his final chapter Fuller gives an account of the cruise of *Miantonomoh* to Europe in 1866 without suggesting any clear reasons for that cruise. He briefly mentions *Monadnock*, another *Miantonomoh*-class monitor, dispatched to San Francisco for coastal defense. Given that Union geostrategy emphasized the importance of monitors as substitutes for forts, the political reasoning behind *Monadnock's* trip would be of interest. The reason for *Miantonomoh's* trip to Europe is much clearer, though Fuller fails to develop it. CSS *Alabama* and other Confederate commerce raiders had done vast damage to Union merchant ships. Charles Sumner, Chair of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, argued that Britain should pay compensation of over two billion dollars for prolonging the war some two years. The London *Times* made very clear, once they had seen and evaluated *Miantonomoh* against vessels such as *Warrior*, that American naval power was vastly superior. Before *Miantonomoh's* voyage, Britain simply refused to consider the *Alabama* claims: after it they agreed to re-examine the operations of the British neutrality laws that had allowed *Alabama* and other Confederate raiders to depart British yards. Eventually they paid over fifteen million dollars for the ships lost.

Peter J. Hugill
College Station, Texas

Barry Gough. *Fortune's a River: The Collision of Empires in Northwest America*. Madeira Park, B.C. Canada: Harbour Publishing, www.harbourpublishing.com, 2007. 413 pp., illustrations, maps, appendices, index, bibliography. CDN \$34.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-55017-428-1.

As long as seafarers have sought a living from the sea, seafaring nations have used their navies as instruments of empire. Matters of politics, policy, and profit have often been a maritime burden. When the surveyor's lead line is hauled aboard, when the smoke from a schooner's broadside clears, when a birch bark canoe heavily laden with beaver and otter pelts beaches at a trading post, river bottoms, profit, and political policy can come together. Such is the burden of Professor Barry Gough's meticulously researched and brilliantly written *Fortune's a River: The Collision of Empires in Northwest America*.

Gough asks how British Columbia became British, and how Oregon, Washington, and Alaska became American. He finds the answer primarily in trade carried out by the British, Canadians, Russians, Americans, and Spanish from the 1790s to 1818. From a perspective long neglected by historians, Gough gives an extensive and perceptive treatment of the Pacific Northwest First Nations on the eve of colonization. Against this backdrop appear Canadians Alexander Mackenzie, Simon Fraser, and David Thomson, who pursued profit under the Union Jack and the corporate flags of the Hudson's Bay and North West Companies. The bottom line drove Americans Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and John Jacob Astor with his Pacific Fur Company to hoist the Stars and Stripes for profit. Whatever their colours, these buckskin entrepreneurs' aims were beaver, otter, trading posts, and seaports. Let flags and scraps of paper and treaty follow.

Trade first, treaty later. The Columbia River, that 'river of fortune,' was key. As 'trade went before flag', and as the 'commercial world preceded actions of the state', the Columbia's fort at Tongue Point, a 'Gibraltar of the West', was indeed worth the trouble, for Old Oregon was a trading realm the size of Western Europe, ruled over by what Washington Irving called the 'lords of fur and forest.' Long the land of the aboriginals, it was hotly contested through sloop diplomacy by the Canadians, Americans and Old Europe's great powers. Since the late 1500s the Spanish had maintained a Pacific trade, Manila to Acapulco, on Mexico's west coast, near 15° N Lat. Her galleons, laden with silks and spices, trans-shipped their cargoes overland, thence by ship to Spain. So from the 1760s onward, near 50° N Lat., the dream was to establish a similar port, perhaps on the Columbia River, where East Indiamen could disembogue their Oriental cargoes and meet goods brought overland from Montreal and other East Coast ports. The bar at the Columbia's mouth was to prove an obstacle, and Seattle and Vancouver were eventually to take on the trans-Pacific trade.

Canadian Alexander Mackenzie early saw the profit in such enterprise. He was, Gough writes, 'a businessman of immense vision, thought in expansive global terms about how he could outflank the East India, South Sea and Hudson's Bay companies.' (p.83) He observes that American president Thomas Jefferson's continental vision, made manifest in canoes and tow barges of the Lewis and Clark Expedition that followed the Louisiana Purchase (1803), was far ahead of his contemporaries' views. Similarly, that New Yorker with long-established Canadian connections, John Jacob Astor, sought to hitch his fur fortune to the Stars and Stripes flying over his Fort Astoria on the banks of the Columbia. For both Canada and the

U.S., the theme was "go west."

From the Aleutians to Alta California, Gough argues, "the *maritime* preceded the *continental* in imperial influence and heightened the rivalry or made it more complex." (p.10) As the Rockies barred a viable commercial overland link between East and West, it was ships doubling Cape Horn that carried the cargoes. Political dominion followed the merchantmen.

Gough paints a broad canvas, then takes a small brush to portray the telling details of local habitations and names. There is the Connecticut Yankee sailor and author John Ledyard, whose pithy account of his adventures antedates the explorations of Lewis and Clark. There are the Scottish fur trader Sir Alexander Mackenzie's discoveries; the Danish captain Vitus Bering, lost in history; Russian navigator Alexi Chirikov and Russian-American Company manager Alexander Baranov; Spaniards Bruno de Hezeta, who discovered the mouth of the Columbia, and Esteban Martínez, who commanded the post at Nootka Sound.

Professor Gough begins with the American War of Independence and expansion westward after the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Old Europe and New America both sought this last frontier. War erupted in 1812, over not just the issue of impressment of seamen, but of boundaries as well. To the relief of the British, the Treaty of Ghent, signed Christmas Eve, 1814, returned conquests and boundaries to the *status quo ante bellum*, thus halting American expansion northward. But the Oregon boundary was left an open matter to be settled at some later date. Meanwhile, Americans saw their "manifest destiny" as reaching north by northwest to 54° 40' (to the southern boundary of Russian Alaska and Spain's northern claim). The British insisted on sovereignty south to the

Columbia River, near 46° N Lat. When, in the summer of 1859, just a year after Britain declared Canada a Crown Colony, an American shot a Hudson's Bay Company pig rooting in his garden in the San Juan Islands, only adroit diplomacy prevented war. Diplomacy again averted war in 1872, when after a year of arbitration in Geneva, Kaiser Wilhelm I's commission settled on the location of the western end of the 8,891 km. Canadian-U.S. border. The International Boundary Commission, established in 1794, was at last made permanent in 1925, nearly yesterday.

It is important to see Gough's achievement not as some antiquarian historical enquiry into a few outposts where the buckskin and moccasin traded pelts for rifles and whisky, and later caught and canned chinook salmon, but as an endeavour to find the commercial and imperial roots that still feed the dynamics of Canadian and U.S. enterprise, of NAFTA, of visas, passports, quotas, and jobs.

Of course any book raises quibbles. There are a few questions raised, such as the fate of Vitus Bering, and there is the contrast between the high energy in the chapters devoted to the pounding surf along the Pacific coast, the let-down as we trudge up the chapters along the muddy banks of the Missouri River, before returning to that energy when we again reach the crisp salt air of the Pacific.

Fortune's a River should be read by corporate heads, as well as academic ones, on both sides of the border. Gough's book has been long in the making, and owes much to his many previous books and their research, and no small part to his many years of sailing these waters. The scholarship is sound, the style engaging, the illustrations copious and well-reproduced. The book makes fascinating reading, and has practical value in clarifying Canadian-U.S. relations, both historic and actual, and

in reminding us that a few canoes and barges, colliers and sloops can be the true vessels that carry history forward.

J. S. Dean
Racine, Wisconsin

L. Francis Herreshoff. *The Golden Age of Yachting*. Halifax, NS: Nimbus Publishing, www.nimbus.ca, 2007. 192 pp., CDN \$35.00, paper; ISBN 978-157409-251-6.

If the true measure of the success of a book is the number of times it has been reprinted or reissued since its original publication date, then Francis Herreshoff's study of the age of America's great yachts is in a class by itself. The author was both a terrific raconteur and a designer, a sailor of great standing, who also had a passion for all aspects of his special field that he was able to communicate on many levels to his public. This new edition from Sheridan House presents Herreshoff's original text along with a number of spectacular contemporary photographs of the yachts singled out for special notice by the author.

Francis Herreshoff was one of the most important figures in yacht design in America. His designs were among the finest to ever hit the water and a few of them set records that were unequalled during his lifetime. One of the best examples of Herreshoff's craft was *Ticonderoga*, a racer of incredible durability and one of the fastest yachts ever built. He had a passion and appreciation for the history of the sport of yacht racing and like authors who have made baseball their life's passion, Herreshoff wrote about yachts. His writing was peppered with sea lingo and yet was incredibly accessible to the general reader, to whom Herreshoff often directed some gentle sarcasm.

Herreshoff begins his examination by taking the reader back about six

thousand years to the dawn of seafaring before skipping ahead rather rapidly to the turn of the last century. He systematically covers most of the major yachting competitions during the following chapters and provides a well-balanced look at everything from the Lipton Trophy to the running of the America's Cup.

Herreshoff's passion extended throughout the whole range of yacht design, with a special passion for the spectacular steam yachts built at the turn of the last century. The Vanderbilts and Astors owned large, luxurious yachts that in many cases hearkened back to the age of iron and steel hulled clipper ships in their design. They were beautiful status symbols and as much a part of the era as the great ocean liners with which they shared space in the Hudson or on the eastern seaboard. The chapters devoted to these vessels illustrate the depth of his passion and his chapter on their ultimate decline is a wonderful tribute to the end of an era. One usually is not expecting to find pithy social commentary in a book about yachts but Herreshoff cleverly uses this to explain the rise and fall of the millionaires and their yachts and looks at all of the factors contributing to changes in fashion and design in yachting circles.

When it comes to covering individual races of note, Herreshoff is able to impart a real sense of drama into his word painting that makes the reader a part of the actual event. The well chosen photographs convey a sense of tension as two vessels fight for supremacy and position. His descriptions of some of the great yachts of the era are superb, with classics such as *Britannia*, *Columbia*, *Shamrock* and the three legendary *Valkyrie* all being singled out for special praise. Herreshoff is deftly able to convey a great deal about each yacht in a brief period of time and, as stated before, the photographs he has chosen to illustrate each vessel add to the overall effect, creating a sense of

majesty and grace for the magnificent vessels of a bygone era that Herreshoff clearly treasures.

The new edition is printed handsomely with excellent reproduction of the original photography and is presented in a soft cover coffee table format. A special mention should be made of the foreword by Peter Spectre, which provides a warm introduction to Herreshoff, his life and his passion. The tone compliments Herreshoff's own style in many ways and gets the new edition off to a fine start. It would be interesting to imagine what Herreshoff's impressions of the current state of yacht design and racing would be, especially what he might think of the America's Cup being held by a Swiss consortium but still, we have this new edition to remind us of another age, Herreshoff's golden age of yachting and therefore all credit to the folks at Sheridan House for this valuable reprinting of a true classic.

Richard MacMichael
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Adm. (Ret.) James L. Holloway, III.
Aircraft Carriers at War. A Personal Retrospective of Korea, Vietnam, and the Soviet Confrontation. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, www.navalinstitute.org, 2007. xiii + 479 pp., illustrations, index. US \$ 34.95, cloth; ISBN 1-59114-391-8. Distributed in Canada by Vanwell Publishing Ltd.

Aircraft Carriers at War follows the development of a platform, and a naval officer, through four decades of naval battles, peacetime operations, and shifting views of naval warfare. Holloway's experience, which ranges from his early days as an ensign in the Second World War to his leadership as Chief of Naval Operations

between 1974 and 1978, contributes a rare breadth of knowledge to this memoir.

Holloway graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in the Class of 1943, proceeding quickly to become gunnery officer on the USS *Bennion*. From his position in the gun director, Holloway saw one of the last battles of naval warfare in which aircraft did not play a part. He joined the ranks of the naval aviators in 1946 with his graduation from flight training. As a naval aviator, Holloway flew bombers and then jet aircraft from carriers in the Korean War. He commanded an attack squadron that participated in the Lebanon crisis of 1958, when his squadron was ordered to put aircraft on nuclear strike alert.

Between 1965 and 1967, Holloway commanded the USS *Enterprise*, which made two combat cruises off Vietnam. He then led the Nuclear Attack Carrier Program in the Pentagon before commanding a Carrier Division and taking command of the Seventh Fleet from 1972-1972. Holloway became VCNO, and then CNO in 1974 with the admonition from President Nixon to, "get some discipline back in the Navy." (p. 338) following the divisiveness of the Vietnam War.

Holloway's work is structured along roughly chronological lines, and deals with each of the periods in Holloway's career not only from a personal perspective, but also by taking into account the Cold War, which shaped much of his forty-year career. At over 400 pages, *Aircraft Carriers at War* makes for a rather long memoir. Its twenty-one chapters and nearly innumerable sub-chapters reflect the conflict of conveying both a personal story and historical commentary within the same work, and often significantly distract the reader. More careful editing could have been helpful in solving this problem, and might have assisted in emphasizing the stronger portions of the book while cutting some of its length.

Holloway is at his strongest when he writes from his contemporary voice, particularly through fierce firefights, such as when he follows the track of his grease pencil across a chart through anti-aircraft fire and tracers into the valleys of Korea. (pp.59-60) Personal accounts remain the most compelling portion of *Aircraft Carriers at War*, even when Holloway rises to a position of leadership. From his position as commander of the USS *Enterprise*, Holloway describes his calls for tactical air assets to deploy flares over Haiphong Harbor so that surface ships *Newport News* and *Providence* can find their targets. (p.322) Holloway's tone becomes less sure in the portions of the book in which he comments on the larger perspective of the Cold War and national concerns.

Historians and lay readers alike will also appreciate the frequent appearances of familiar characters, including Admirals Rickover and Zumwalt, John Warner and Donald Rumsfeld. In each case, Holloway's personal access and connections with these individuals develops significant interest for the reader. When called at a moment's notice to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld's office, then-CNO Holloway contacts the SecDef's aide to determine what international catastrophe was taking place. Upon his arrival, however, Holloway finds Rumsfeld and two former Academy wrestling friends in a haze of cigar smoke looking to chat about the old days. (pp.363-364)

Scenes such as those described above make *Aircraft Carriers at War* a valuable contribution to the field of senior naval officer memoirs, despite the challenge of a confusing chapter structure and less compelling overarching commentary. Holloway also includes one angle that, although not an explicit objective of *Aircraft Carriers at War*, is a relevant outcome of the work. Among his personal

stories, Holloway reviews the history of technological development of the aircraft carrier, which is well and uniquely portrayed in terms of Holloway's operational experience. Developments such as jet aircraft, the angled carrier deck, implementation of new safety devices and conventions take on a new importance when Holloway addresses them in terms of how they shaped carrier operational effectiveness. Future readers may find that these observations are an unexpected and valuable product of this work.

Christine El-Zoghbi
Washington, DC

Stephen P. Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier: Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America*. Lebanon, NH: University Press of New England, www.dartmouth.edu/~upne/, 2005. xv + 307 pp., maps, illustrations, photographs, figures, notes, index. US \$60, cloth; ISBN 1-58465-426-0; US \$29.95, paper; ISBN 1-58465-427-9.

There was a time when the Atlantic Ocean was perceived by historians as a barrier to be overcome; the Atlantic was a "challenge," something to be "conquered." Those who specialized in North American colonial history emphasized how quickly the infant societies developed distinctive new identities. I myself took a graduate course back in the 1970s dedicated to the study of "North American Colonial Societies." That the course might more appropriately have been offered as a study of "North Atlantic Societies" had not yet taken firm root. Yet in hindsight, it should have been obvious that the Atlantic was less of a barrier than it seemed. Consider how quickly thousands, even tens of thousands, of Europeans began *routinely* crossing the ocean to exploit the rich fishing grounds in

the coastal waters of northeastern North America within a decade of John Cabot's demonstration that a trans-Atlantic trip within a reasonable amount of time was both possible and worthwhile. Risky, yes, but not an insurmountable barrier.

The result in recent years has been a steady output of works that highlight the importance of an "Atlantic" perspective in understanding the desire, persistence, and viability of overseas settlement. Thus, in *Fish Into Wine*, his study of settlement in seventeenth-century Newfoundland (Chapel Hill, 2004; reviewed in *TNM/LMN* in January 2005), Peter Pope showed that the fishery and settlement at Newfoundland thrived in considerable measure because Newfoundland was a commercial node in a complex network of trade that crisscrossed the Atlantic and included New England, Great Britain, southern Europe, and other parts of the Atlantic world. Similarly, in *In Search of Empire* (Cambridge, 2004; reviewed in *TNM/LMN* in October 2005), Jim Pritchard's interpretation of France's American and Caribbean empire, succeeded so masterfully in presenting the strengths and weaknesses of that empire within an Atlantic context.

Now we have Stephen Hornsby tackling the daunting task of presenting a coherent – and very readable – analysis of Great Britain's vast North American and Caribbean empire over the course of roughly 250 years in fewer than 300 pages. It is a work that owes a great debt to the many, many scholars whose particular studies have now been woven into an impressive synthesis. It is also a work written by an historical geographer, who brings his discipline's perspective to bear on the subject. It is an effective – and therefore successful – work.

Hornsby is best known for his contributions to the historical geography of nineteenth-century Cape Breton Island and, more recently, a collection of essays that he

co-edited with John Reid on the connections and interplay of the maritime provinces and the adjacent New England states. With *British Atlantic, American Frontier*, Hornsby tackles a decidedly larger theme, the development of Great Britain's New World empire in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Drawing on the ideas of Frederick Jackson Turner and Harold Innis, he argues that early modern British America should be divided into two kinds of spaces – an oceanically-oriented maritime empire that included the fur trade centred on Hudson Bay, the Newfoundland fisheries and the Caribbean sugar islands, and a territorially oriented empire of settlement along the American seaboard. Between these two spaces, a third space soon developed, one dominated by port towns and staple products which linked the continental interior with the world of overseas trade.

Hornsby organizes his analysis into six chapters, beginning with a discussion of the way in which the English Atlantic was first created between 1480 and 1630, followed by separate chapters each on the “Atlantic staple regions” (Newfoundland, the West Indies and Hudson Bay), the “continental staple regions” (coastal New England, tidewater Chesapeake and South Carolina), the “agricultural frontiers” (the New England interior, the mid-Atlantic farming regions, and the southern backcountry), and the towns of British America, before closing with a chapter that explains the fracturing of British America after 1750 in terms of the social, economic and cultural patterns of the different spaces.

Hornsby maintains that the “Atlantic staple regions” remained the commercial preserves of merchants resident in or dominated by metropolitan markets, credit systems, and investment patterns. These regions were characteristically part of “a maritime commercial empire [that was] capital intensive, hierarchical, and

familiar” (p.71), one in which the Royal Navy remained an important instrument to preserve and protect commercial investment, with the result that they remained subordinate to the political influence of Great Britain. Their societies were “drastically simplified,” where those in control maintained a temporary presence until they could return, prosperous and triumphant, to their British homeland. In contrast, the “continental staple regions” of Chapter 3 saw the establishment of more permanent societies in response to availability of land and agricultural opportunities – as early settlers and planters came to dominate local agriculture, the merchants shifted their attention to shipping and trade. Because it did not generate wealth on the same scale as, say, the trade in sugar, the export of “continental commodities” was left to the management of local merchants, thereby opening the door to the gradual emergence of local élites. The shift of coastal regions away from subordination to Great Britain was intensified by the “agricultural frontiers” of the fourth chapter, which reinforced the commercial role and growth of coastal communities. As a result, the British Atlantic became “a collection of commercial nodes” linked by shipping lanes (p.224). The growing confidence of British American society in its ability to manage its commercial affairs gave it confidence as well in its political competency and set the stage for the breakdown of the British American empire through revolution.

One can quibble with some of the finer details – no synthesis built on so sweeping a scale can escape the consequences of compressing a great many particulars (as, for instance, in Hornsby's view of the tightening Imperial embrace after 1763; see pp.229-232). Nevertheless, the work succeeds in showing not just the way in which the British Atlantic empire developed, but also in showing that the

reasons why some parts of that empire broke away in 1776 while others remained tied to the mother country cannot be explained except through an understanding of the economic, social, political and cultural evolution of the previous 250 years.

Olaf U. Janzen
Corner Brook, Newfoundland

Brian Lavery. *The Island Nation. A History of Britain and the Sea*. London: Conway Maritime Press, www.chrysalisbooks.co.uk, 2005. 176 pp., illustrations, maps, glossary, bibliography, index. UK £20.00, cloth; ISBN 1-84486-016-7. (Distributed in Canada by Vanwell Publishing)

Naval historian Brian Lavery has undertaken the massive task of chronicling Britain's relationship with the sea and the role it played in shaping that nation's destiny. As the title implies, the student of Britain cannot separate its history from its geography. Given the broad scope, the length of this book permits only a topical exploration for the general reader. Lavery accomplishes this purpose with a balanced, if brief, treatment of the high points of British naval history. Simultaneously, the author seeks to address a variety of related topics touching upon the British fascination with water-going vessels. The author has arranged the book's sixteen chapters both topically and chronologically, therefore succeeding in providing organization to the awesome task of telling a story that literally spans millennia. Lavery begins this text by reaching back to the formation of the island approximately 6,500 years ago and by the end of the work, he has reached into the modern age and beyond.

Commissioned as part of the National Maritime Museum's Sea Britain initiative of 2005, this work coincided with a year-long national festival to celebrate,

commemorate and officially recognize Britain's historical relationship with the sea. The rise of Britain to world power status parallels the establishment and maintenance of naval power, a historical point well-emphasized in Lavery's chronicle. Britain's history emerges from the pages of *The Island Nation* with clarity but also with brevity that will leave the truly interested reader seeking more information. Colour photography of historic sites and vessels, reprints of paintings from the collection of the National Maritime Museum, as well as artist-rendered illustrations all enhance the aesthetic appeal of this book. Also, interspersed throughout the narrative are highlights of some of Britain's most memorable and historic maritime images – including HMS *Victory*, *Endeavour*, *Cutty Sark*, HMS *Belfast*, *Titanic*, and many more. The easy-to-read narrative is compelling, taking the reader on a journey that visits not only the ocean but inland harbours and rivers as well. The author recounts various tales involving a diversity of vessels, including merchant ships of the great commercial age, slave traders, and battleships of both world wars.

Lavery also introduces the reader to the colourful personalities of Britain's seafaring past with the common familiarity of one who knows them well. Indeed, one would expect an undertaking such as this one to address the iconic figures of British history, and in this, the author does not disappoint. Admiral Nelson, Captain Cook, Sir Francis Drake and others featured in these pages come to life with exacting summaries of their individual contributions to the richness of the overall story. For his accounts, the author draws upon a vast array of secondary sources and therefore makes no new arguments or contributions to the academic examination of the British navy. The scope and ambition of the book, however, targets those with less knowledge and perhaps less appreciation of Britain's

fascinating maritime heritage. In this way, *The Island Nation* doubtlessly fills a readership void in the market for its topic. With the anticipated general audience, the author provides an extensive glossary for those unfamiliar with naval terms, as well as a gazetteer of historic naval sites throughout Great Britain. These features increase the value of the book to its expected readership.

The arrangement of the text in short topical chapters with a resulting lack of academic detail makes this work a starting point for the consumer with an interest in Britain's naval history, although the reader will find much more within its pages. Following the historical chronicle that traverses through the Middle Ages, the expansion of empire, the age of steam and immigration, Lavery also approaches a diverse range of secondary topics, including lore regarding fishing, weather, leisure boating and shipbuilding. The book concludes with an examination of the role of the Royal Navy today, in a post-Cold War environment and facing the unique challenges of an age of global terrorism. *The Island Nation* makes a fascinating and readable contribution to the study of Britain's historic, turbulent and evolving relationship with the sea.

Cheryl H. White
Shreveport, Louisiana

Eric Lawson. *The Egeria. An example of mid-nineteenth century New Brunswick ship construction*. Bowen Island, B.C.: Ship Research Services, dlawson@direct.ca, 2007. 70 pp., illustrations, tables, bibliography, index. CDN \$ 49.95, paper; ISBN 978-0-9780998-0-0.

Until two decades ago, there was a common perception among historians and wooden ship owners that hasty construction of nineteenth-century New Brunswick-built

ships resulted in short-lived vessels. The haste was due to the desire to earn a fast dollar by allowing the builders and shippers to take advantage of shortages of shipping during peaks of the economic cycles. The Atlantic Canadian Shipping project explored this myth as one of its research areas. Unfortunately, the primary published output of that effort, *Maritime Capital*, did not have the time to fully explore the technical details of how the poorly built vessels of the 1820-30s improved greatly in the following two decades. With *The Egeria*, Eric Lawson examines not only the literature of shippers and insurers and what they believed at the time, but he also examines one particular Saint John, New Brunswick wooden ship, the *Egeria*. This study is particularly important because the ship is still in existence and can thus, prove or disprove the belief in the poor construction of New Brunswick vessels. A unique case study of longevity, this is the first of two volumes. Volume 2 will look at the detailed history of the *Egeria*, her owners, and voyages.

Lawson spends the first 41 pages examining the issue of why there was a perception that Canadian-built (i.e. New Brunswick) vessels were inferior. His extensive research into ship owners' letters, testimonials to Board of Trade inquiries, and Lloyds' survey records clearly show that by the 1850s, Canadian-built vessels often were as well, if not better built, than British-launched vessels. The creation of a Lloyds' surveyor position in Saint John, New Brunswick, helped ensure that vessels met Lloyds' specifications. In fact, Lawson recounts how some shipbuilders often exceeded the minimum dimensions criteria laid out in the regulations in order to make the vessels stronger. This enabled them to achieve the highest insurance rating which reduced the rate a shipper had to charge.

Lawson does not just rely on ship

owner's documents, but goes into an analysis of vessel losses to show the change in longevity of the vessels over the decades. He also examines the remaining Lloyds' surveyor reports for *Egeria* and twelve other vessels of the same decade to show their more than adequate construction materials. He includes the detailed surveyor's comments for *Egeria* to show the day to day observations of the vessel's construction to indicate the surveyor was "on the job."

To prove that the *Egeria* was solidly constructed, Lawson spends the last half of the book showing surveyor reports, cross-section schematics, with photographs of his visits to the *Egeria*. *Egeria* is now part of a wharf structure in Stanley, the Falklands Islands. Lawson has visited the vessel numerous times (1983, 1988, and 1994) so he is able to determine the hull's rate of decay.

The last half of the book is a treasure trove of information for those interested in the construction details of a wooden sailing ship, although there is some conjecture since parts of the vessels were buried under rubble. Whereas other authors sometimes guess at vessel construction, Lawson has concrete evidence. Although the first half of the book provides excellent context, the excitement is in the remainder. As a student of shipbuilding in Albert County, New Brunswick (100 km further up the Bay of Fundy from Saint John), I found Lawson's technical shipbuilding descriptions greatly aided my knowledge of vessel construction as Albert County builders left little written evidence.

The only minor grievance is the somewhat under-utilization of available white space in the book's coil-bound, 8 ½ x 11-landscape format. Some photographs could have been much larger. That being said, the landscape layout is critical for showing the cross-sections without

interference from the folds. Coil binding also aids in seeing the cross-sections with greater clarity.

Overall, the author is to be commended for this technical study, and I can't wait to see Volume 2.

Bradley Shoebottom
Fredericton, New Brunswick

Hilda Chaulk Murray. *Of Boats On the Collar. How It Was In One Newfoundland Fishing Community*. St. John's, NL: Flanker Press, www.flankerpress.com, 2007. xii + 140 pp., illustrations, maps, glossary, bibliography, index. CDN \$ 21.95, paper; ISBN 13 - 978-1-897317-08-2.

"...The phrase "on the Collar""represents to me a firm and unchanging way of life. But alas we live in a scientific and technological age and old ways disappear" (Otto Tucker, *Foreword*, p.vii).

Hilda Chaulk Murray has produced a work which is a testimony to Newfoundland's rich culture and history shaped by the commercial cod fishery. An extensive discussion of the fishing community of Elliston, Bonavista Bay, (originally known as Bird Island Cove) as well as the subsequent neighbouring settlements it inspired, forms a highly readable commentary on that heritage. The volume, as the author notes, grew out of an undergraduate term paper when she was at Memorial University in the 1970s. It provided the motivation to expand her efforts and led to a much more extensive chronicle of a way of life that has disappeared from our collective memories.

The author shows us that the success of the fishermen she knew was tied to a fellowship and camaraderie within the

local community, as opposed to later imperatives resulting in different, more economic-centered cost-benefit analyses that have resulted in larger factory trawlers supplanting the work done by individuals in communities like Elliston. Although many may not recollect this era and its importance, Harold Innis' landmark volume, *The Cod Fisheries: The Story of an International Economy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954), is an effective supplementary source for anyone trying to understand the role that fishing industries once played around the globe as an economic engine of progress. Documenting the history of the commercial fisheries in North America and abroad, Innis illustrated how the quest for cod and other species became important to the settlement and subsequent economic and early political development of North America in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Ms. Murray's goals are certainly more modest than Innis'; nevertheless, her discussion of the fishery of her youth and the role of her forbears is a remarkable achievement. The author's research comes through clearly in her many interviews over time on the various aspects of the commercial small boat fishery. Her assets for this task are formidable: she is adept at placing her own childhood memories in a highly readable, non-technical style. At the same time, however, this work is more than a stroll down memory lane. The formative sections of the book, for instance, lay out an effective discussion of the origins of the Elliston area, effectively arguing the many roles played by the sea as the source of economic survival and progress. Present circumstances and events around the massive collapse of the cod fishery in the 1990s have tended to obscure this contribution, largely because of the role played by technology and public policy in moving the fishery away its former dependence on salt fish to one based on

fresh fish and the accompanying need for large fish plants to prepare the catches for market. The author points out how the coastline evolved as settlement took hold, promoted by needs of local fishermen. They were involved in a fishery financed by the local merchants such as Slade & Company, who provided the capital and support for a system of credit and debt that kept many bound for so long and dominated the story of Newfoundland. This dependence on coastal access, due to the specific demands of fish harvesting and processing equipment of the time, produced a need for fishing rooms, receiving areas where the fish were brought ashore to be filleted and salted.

Murray's research into the evolution of the fishery throughout the twentieth century has permitted a more effective understanding of the basic labour-intensive nature of its early operation and equipment. As she notes, hook-and-line fishing (one of the early fishing methods), is now coming back into fashion in contrast to the more modern approaches that have led to the depletion of fish stocks. The subsequent considerations of seine and trap fishing also give readers insights into the intricate knowledge and expertise required for all small boat crew, and the effort that had to be invested in bringing the catch ashore to be salted.

The discussion on the fishing rooms, their deployment, erection and usage is a unique chapter that many would not otherwise have the opportunity to learn about. Again, the author's past experience combines with good historical inquiry to show just how indispensable these structures were to the overall economic success of those who struggled for prosperity in the out-port Newfoundland of the past. Coastal facilities were indispensable in a time when dry fish (yaffle) was the center of a commercial network dominated by local merchants.

They provided the capital so necessary for individual fishermen to maintain their equipment and subsequent means of survival. Each spring, the local 'splitting tee' was reassembled and rebuilt to receive the coming season's catch. Using her own recollections as a fifteen-year-old working at the tee to cut open the recently arrived catch, Murray describes the yearly processes of construction as well as the subsequent cycle of the actual fishing process whereby the catch was unloaded, salted, and stored in preparation for the final salt fillets being shipped off to the respective merchant. Once the catch was salted, the fish were spread out on fishing "flakes," large outdoor platforms where the finished product was dried. After a period, the resulting product was stored in an accompanying shed to continue the process.

The author also considers various types of small boats and their construction together with a subsequent discussion on the tools required for boatbuilding in general. This is particularly useful for anyone interested in the types of craft which were predominant among small-boat fishermen. She also notes the changes and evolution of these vessels which resembled modern-day skiffs and rowboats. By the 1920s, building by mould, the accepted mode of construction, had largely been supplanted by model. The rodney, a towboat capable of engaging in both the trap and seine fisheries, is just one example of the many designs elaborated in great detail. Mechanization also affected these vessels, introducing gas engines which were appropriately adapted to the particular needs and demands of fishermen throughout the twentieth century. When a particular boat returned from a day of work at sea, they would be moored offshore on the "collar," a section of coastal frontage where such craft were kept overnight during the active season.

The author capitalizes on her

childhood memories throughout the later chapters as she attempts to sketch the community she knew as a child. Her documentation of the genealogy of Elliston and Maberly effectively highlights the importance of the valuable coastal frontage indispensable to the creation of fishing rooms for the salt fishery. These structures would drive subsequent patterns of settlement and development throughout the coastal areas.

While Murray has produced a very commendable discussion, it would have been more effective had she given more attention to the differences which have distinguished fishing as a unique occupation where knowledge, values and expertise stand out from the present requirements of our modern society. She does note the importance of the apprenticeship and share systems that ultimately prepared sons and other crew to acquire the needed skills and capital necessary to successfully outfit and operate vessels (pp.76-77), but that is as far as the commentary goes.

Being a fisherman could not be learned in any school or formally taught; knowledge was transmitted from father to son in the practical give and take of everyday life. This was a completely different perspective from the conventional wisdom of accepted resource economics since the 1950s which has, until very recently, dismissed the relevance of fishing families like the Chaulks, Pearces, and Murrays in favor of sponsoring larger fresh fish processing and large factory freezer trawlers as the key component in the future development and sustainability of this sector. This trend has guided the thinking of public intervention and the subsequent management of fish stocks as part of a larger vision for regional economic development throughout Atlantic Canada since the Second World War. Regional economic initiatives sponsored by successive federal and provincial

governments reflected this mindset, and justified the developmental thinking which was only partially modified by the trend towards extended coastal fisheries management in the late 1970s by many countries. We only have to look at the collapse of the cod fisheries of the 1990s to realize that this premise was misguided.

When all is said and done, however, this book does merit examination: it offers insight into how work is supposed to be about people rather than the present obsession with dollars and cents. The only question left unanswered is whether we are capable of realizing that economic theory does not lead to the quality of life we all want and desire. The recent focus on environmental matters and climate change worldwide may yet give us the ability to learn this lesson, but it will require us to revisit books such as this one in order to realize that we should not downplay the values of a working community so integral to the identity of Newfoundland and, for that matter, Atlantic Canada.

William Dubinsky
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Fred Neuschel. *Lives and Legends of the Christmas Tree Ships*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, www.press.umich.edu, 2007. 264 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, notes, sources. US\$24.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-472-11623-2.

This book explores the maritime communities and social history of the Great Lakes in the period after the American Civil War. Fred Neuschel examines communities that thrived along Lake Michigan through the curious lens of a religious icon, the Christmas tree. It looks at the sad and tawdry ending of the sailing era on the Great Lakes and the paradox of the alternating necessity and greed on one side

that pushed the captains to brave the worst time of year for storms in superannuated lake boats, to fulfill a demand created by one of the holiest religious celebrations on the other.

The subjects of the book are the vessels, scows and schooners that carried the lumber, stone, hay, and a thousand and one things needed to build the cities. They were mostly 50 to 500 ton schooners, with the smallest being 17 tons with a crew of one.

In the first chapter, the author introduces the reader to the Scheunemann family and it is their story that is followed throughout the book. Neuschel also introduces the reader to a mystery, the disappearance of the schooner *Rouse Simmons* in 1912. In succeeding chapters, the reader learns this is no mystery, but an accident long overdue. Eleven strong chapters explore the social and personal histories of families of the maritime community of Ahanapee, Wisconsin. Remaining chapters describe the role of the Christmas tree in Germanic culture, and finally there is a chapter on the legacy of the Christmas tree ships.

The most insightful portion of Neuschel's book is in the chapters on social history. There are fascinating sidelights of political history, such as immigrants being of socialist tradition. A wonderful picture of settlement around the lakes is drawn along with a most vivid description of forest fires and their aftermath. He puts the Great Chicago fire of 1871 into the perspective of an ecological and personal nightmare. Neuschel pieces together a community of relationships among family members through the generations of sailors in the community of Ahanapee. He tells of the devastating effect on families of soldiers killed or disabled in the Civil War and its aftermath. The chapter entitled "Sailors in the Battle for the Harbor" is most notable since it depicts the struggle for control of

the harbour on the Ahnapee River. It also deals with the friction between native-born Americans and immigrants, mostly of northern European descent, and their relationships in a maritime town run by a xenophobic Connecticut Yankee. The description of the role of natural factors, in this case in geographic unsuitability of the town of Ahnapee to be a port, is precise and illuminating.

Three appendices consisting of vessel information, newspaper reports, and captains who engaged in the Christmas tree trade, would be of considerable interest to those familiar to the area, but not much use to the average reader. In terms of graphics, there is an indecipherable map of the Wisconsin/Lake Michigan area. A more useful graphic should include drawings and plans of the typical vessel, which would have been worth at least a thousand words. The cover photograph, however, is colourful and fires the reader's imagination about the lake and the sound of the schooner moving through the water. Newspapers and archival sources are as extensive as the Notes. Primary sources, such as city directories and church and municipal records, are utilized since the principal characters in the book left few biographical materials behind.

This book makes a significant contribution to the social history of the Great Lakes and especially the tale of the Christmas tree ships and the Scheunemann family. We learn little of the ships and boats, however. Any information about their lines, construction or sailing characteristics is scattered throughout the book. There are complex, somewhat rambling analyses of the place of the Christmas tree as a religious celebration, which would be perhaps better in a work on social or religious history.

A chapter linking the communities and vessels that traveled the lakes preceding the period of European settlement would have helped put the work into context. The

book is almost completely based on English and German language sources and has no mention of the Scandinavian peoples, especially Finns, who would have been involved in the clearing of the forest of the Upper Peninsula of Wisconsin to make way for agriculture.

Anyone wanting to know about the basic history of European settlement and trade of the period can use this book in their library, because it paints a picture of the merchant marine at the most basic level, at the level of the barges and scows used to collect the material. The marine researcher interested in ships will learn little that is new, so this work does not belong in a library dedicated to marine research. *Lives and Legends of the Christmas Tree Ships* is mis-titled, because the ships are merely the stage on which the drama is played out.

Ian Dew
Thunder Bay, Ontario

Richard Osborne, Harry Sprong & Tom Grover. *Armed Merchant Cruisers 1878-1945*. Windsor, U.K.: World Ship Society Ltd., www.worldshipsociety.org, 2007. 328 pp., illustrations, references, appendices, index of ships. £45 plus postage, card stock; ISBN 0-9543310-8-7.

This large volume, ten years in the preparation, is a most complete history of British and Commonwealth Armed Merchant Cruisers (AMCs), from their experimental beginning in 1878 to the end of the Second World War. Every ship taken up for this role, even if never actually placed in service, is documented, from her building as a commercial passenger ship or freighter to her final scrapping, with her various owners, dates of AMC services, armament, size and utilization. As a reference tool, it should form a valuable addition to any collection. Having recently

completed a volume on Canadian-registered merchantmen that were sunk in the Second World War, I am impressed at the number of photographs the authors managed to find — not every ship to be sure, but most of them, largely in their civilian guise, but many as AMCs as well. During the lean years, the merchant shipping companies placed low priority on taking ship photographs, so this collection represents some pretty major searches.

More interesting, perhaps, is the careful coverage of the development of the Armed Merchant Cruiser. Whereas it is truism that democracies are never prepared to go to war, the number and scope of peacetime trials for the potential arming of civilian ships as auxiliaries to available warships is really quite amazing — and heartening. The date 1878 was selected because that year the Royal Navy took over a modest passenger liner being constructed at Harland & Wolff's for British Shipowners Ltd., commissioned her as HMS *Hecla*, and armed her as a trial to assess if this was a practical proposition. As with almost all AMCs for the rest of their careers, the results were debatable. There could well be requirements to have such auxiliary armed merchantmen to make up for shortages of naval cruisers, they could indeed perform certain duties reasonably; but for many reasons they could never, in the opinions of most naval officers and many ship-owners, be a satisfactory replacement for purpose-built warships. Their large open spaces — holds and engine rooms — made their survival of a torpedoing unlikely, which indeed proved too often to be the case. The tall structure of their engines, usually steam, triple expansion, and lack of any form of protection except for alongside coal bunkers in some made them more exposed to damage from surface gunfire than their naval counterparts.

All of the arguments, pro and con, are carefully discussed for three periods of

peacetime preparation — the early experimental days in the late nineteenth century, the period before the First World War, and the interwar era. An indication of how seriously the Admiralty took the potential employment of merchantmen and their crews in a possible war emergency is the expenditure of over £2 million between 1889 and 1913 in votes for “the Royal Naval Reserve of Merchant Cruisers” (p. 27). Surprisingly, as early as 1920 the Admiralty were again considering the use of AMCs and the advantages of making subvention payments to owners to have ships specially strengthened to take 6-inch and even 9-inch guns, if the future need arose, while they were being designed and built. Other problems were also carefully considered, such as the need for protected magazines, shell hoists, range finders and other requirements beyond the guns themselves. As well, as warships were scrapped in the 1920s and 1930s, a few of their guns were retained in storages around the world — in the U.K. as well as in such distant venues as Indian ports and at Esquimalt, Canada — against the possible requirement for such ships. It was really quite a prescient handling of the problem, even if there were within the various navies pretty strong doubts that these ships would be useful, and suspicions that they might be more of a drag on resources in men, armament and administration than their uses would warrant.

But necessity being the mother of invention, at least in the early stages of both wars, the AMCs were put to hard and continuous use around the world. In the First World War, the 10th Cruiser Squadron, at the cost of 14 vessels, maintained a distant though largely effective blockade of Germany, and certainly relieved the Navy of the need to employ scarce cruisers. Germany used them as merchant raiders, a completely different employment of armed merchantmen as hunters of distant ships as

compared to protectors or blockaders, is an interesting point the authors cover but briefly.

Many of the actions, both successful and those resulting in the loss of AMCs to both U-boat torpedoes and surface gunfire, are told as examples of what these ships experienced. The Appendices are detailed tables of AMC acquisition and employment – the names of all ships taken up, by year, with and without subvention payments, from 1890 to 1914; all the ships that served in the 10th Cruiser Squadron to 1917; ships stiffened for possible service during the early interwar years, and a detailed list of AMCs taken up during the Second World War. Really a most interesting and potentially useful volume – like its ships.

Fraser McKee
Toronto, Ontario

William Still. *Crisis at Sea. The United States Navy in European Waters in World War I*. Gainesville, FL: The University Press of Florida, www.upf.com, 2006. xix + 741 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$100.00, cloth; ISBN 0-8130-2987-2.

Recently, at the Royal Canadian Air Force Museum in Trenton, Ontario, and in the hamlet of Mount Morris in western New York State, gatherings were held to unveil plaques commemorating events and people associated with the First World War. In Ontario, the American Naval Attaché thanked the Canadians and dedicated a plaque to recognize their role in training U.S. Navy pilots for service overseas. South of the border, Mount Morris townfolk gathered to unveil a monument to Joseph Strauss, a native son and deceased U.S. Navy admiral who led the effort to lay a mine barrage across the North Sea to stop

the German U-boat menace. Absent from either festivity was a leading scholar of the U.S. Navy in the First World War – William N. Still, Jr.

Perhaps the organizers were not cognizant of Still's fine *Crisis at Sea*, a tome that extensively discusses U.S. naval aviation operations and includes a chapter detailing the challenge of laying 56,611 mines across the North Sea. If they were aware, they probably would not have made an extra effort to invite him. In the Canadian case, Still overlooked the role played by the Canada in training American pilots. With regard to Strauss, Still quotes the Navy's commander in England, Admiral William S. Sims, who upon hearing of Strauss's selection to lead the mining effort wrote to the Chief of Naval Operations: "the selection is not a good one . . . you have sent me the leading pessimist of the Navy." (p. 48) As for the mine barrage, Still concludes that the effort did not warrant the cost.

In his overall assessment of America's naval involvement in the European war, however, Still gives the Navy high marks even though America's shipbuilding program continued to support a war plan geared to fighting the German High Seas fleet in the mid-Atlantic when, in reality, German submarines proved to be the threat. Because America's involvement in the war that ended in November 1918 was so brief, the shipbuilding program would have little effect on the war's outcome. Nor could America's fledgling aircraft industry meet the challenge of producing the needed aircraft. America's naval aviators would have to pilot European-built aircraft. Essentially, the Navy went to war with what it had in April 1917, and Still's narrative details how the Navy deployed its ships and sailors.

Still lionizes Admiral William S. Sims as one of the Navy's greats. That his name does not roll off the tongue as readily

as do Jones, Decatur, Bainbridge, Farragut, Halsey, and Nimitz can be attributed to the fact that during the First World War, there were no great sea battles involving the U.S. Navy. Indeed, in his introduction, Still suggests that this was the reason for there being so little interest in the Navy's role in the First World War in contrast to that of the Army and Marine Corps.

Thanks to this book, which is the best comprehensive study of the Navy's role in that conflict to date, it is easy to appreciate the challenges the Navy met that are germane today in the global war against terrorism. For openers, the First World War represented America's first involvement in a major coalition war. Still contrasts how the Army and Navy took opposing approaches. General John J. Pershing insisted on an American Expeditionary Force that would fight on the Western Front as an independent army. Admiral Sims was of a quite different opinion and placed American naval units directly under the command of the British Admiralty. Cementing his reputation as an Anglophile, Sims did everything possible to promote harmonious relations. Overall, the cross-Atlantic navies worked well together and this harmonious relationship would serve both navies well during the Second World War and beyond.

Also germane today, Still grasped the importance of logistics and "the train." Naval leaders clearly understood that sustaining an overseas fleet required bases and repair facilities. In contrast to the European navies, U.S. Navy ships were much more capable of self-repair, and tender ships containing machine shops could perform larger repairs. In addition, Still dedicates a chapter to analyze the sea handling capabilities and weapons systems of American warships. Again, the U.S. Navy scores well as Still notes American destroyers fared well in heavy seas in contrast to their British counterparts. The long and sleek American "tin cans" were

harder to turn, however, and thus accounted for few U-boat kills. During the Second World War, the U.S. Navy deployed sturdier destroyer escorts to battle the U-boat threat.

Still also provides ample narrative about U.S. Navy operations in France and in the Mediterranean. For example, with battleship production slowed to address other shipbuilding needs, the Navy mounted 14-inch guns on rail cars and delivered these batteries to the Western Front.

Finally, two chapters are dedicated to the recruitment, training, and welfare of the thousands of bluejackets who served during the First World War. That Still could capture the deck plate perspective can be partially attributed to surveys of surviving veterans conducted in the 1970s by the U.S. Army's Military History Institute at Carlisle Barracks, PA. He also can be thankful that the Navy made a concerted effort to collect and catalogue correspondence and other important documents. As documented by 148 pages of notes and a 50-page bibliography, Still's research was extensive, but not exhaustive. Indeed, in his introduction he identifies additional repositories in France and Italy (not Canada) that he could not tap during his two decades of research but that hopefully future scholars can delve into. The dedications in Ontario and New York illustrate that the First World War has not been forgotten. As the centennial of the Great War approaches, this important book will be heavily referenced.

David F. Winkler
Alexandria, Virginia