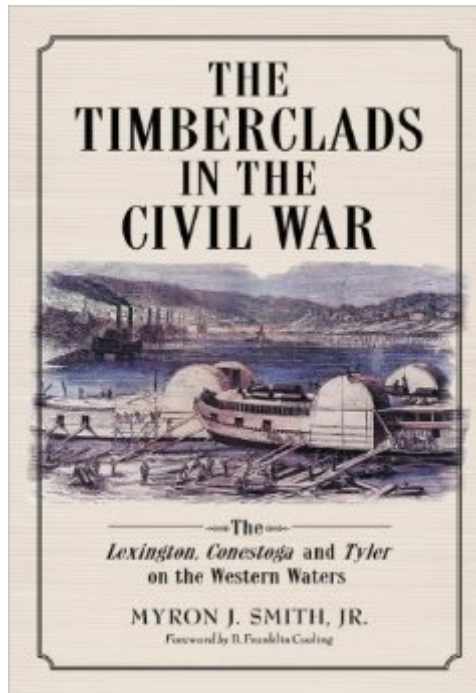


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The Timberclads In The Civil War: The Lexington, Conestoga And Tyler On The Western Waters



Synopsis

In the most detailed history ever of Union warships on the western waters of the Civil War, the author recounts the exploits of the timberclad ships Lexington, Tyler, and Conestoga. Converted to warships from commercial steamboats at the beginning of the conflict, the three formed the core of the North's Western Flotilla, later the Mississippi Squadron. The book focuses on the activities of these wooden warriors while providing context for the greater war, including accounts of their famous commanders, their roles in both large and small battles, ship-to-ship combat, and support for the armies of Gen. U.S. Grant and Gen. William T. Sherman.

Book Information

Paperback: 560 pages

Publisher: McFarland; Reprint edition (May 14, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0786477210

ISBN-13: 978-0786477210

Product Dimensions: 6.9 x 1.3 x 9.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 5.0 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (3 customer reviews)

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MYRON J. SMITH, JR.
MACFARLAND PUBLISHING, 2008
QUALITY SOFTCOVER, \$39.95, 552 PAGES, PHOTOGRAPHS, ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, ABBREVIATIONS, CHAPTER NOTES, INDEX, BIBLIOGRAPHY
When James B. Eads submitted a proposal to construct a flotilla designed to wrest control of the Mississippi River from the Confederates, he was echoing the call by General Winfield Scott to make the river a major focal point of Union strategy. Eads was a successful St. Louis businessman, and experienced in riverboat construction. The U.S. Navy was hard-pressed just to establish a blockade around the Confederate coastline, so the matter was passed to the War Department, which ran the U.S. Army. What the Navy Department could do was to send an experienced naval officer to supervise operations. In May, 1861, Commander John Rodgers, U.S. Navy and U.S. Naval engineer Samuel Pook were

sent westward with orders to work with Eads and the theater commander, General McClellan. Rodgers was allocated access to naval personnel, but everything else had to be arranged through the U.S. Army. While Rodgers and Eads discussed plans for the construction of an ironclad flotilla, Pook inspected three sidewheel steamers on the Ohio River which Rodgers had selected as potential gunboats for "naval service in these waters." Pook agreed with Rodgers selections, and on 8 June 1861, the U.S. Government duly purchased the Lexington, Tyler, and Conestoga in Cincinnati for \$62,000. Meanwhile, McClellan had been replaced by General Fremont, and the new regional commander asked for Rodgers' removal, due to local businessmen that he wasn't displaying enough largesse with naval contracts.

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