A CONFEDERATE RAID

Being a Faithful Historical Narrative, Derived from Original Sources

(Drawings by Warren Sheppard)

Winfield M. Thompson

(Concluded)

In the stream lay the revenue cutter Caleb Cushing, a topsail schooner, with an armament consisting of a 32-pounder mounted on a pivot amidships, and a brass 12-pounder Dahlgren forward. Though the adventurers on the Archer did not know it, the captain of the cutter had that day died of heart disease, and the vessel was in charge of a young lieutenant, with a short crew, 14 men being ashore on detail or leave.

As Lieutenant Read lounged in apparently careless attitude on the deck of the Archer, scanning with his keen brown eyes the water front, the town rising in graceful outline against the flushed Western sky, and the calm harbor, guarded by heavy masonry forts, some of them still in process of construction, he turned rapidly over in his mind his plan of campaign. The supreme moment had come. Here he was in an enemy’s port, unsuspected. The town he had dreamed of destroying lay before him; weapons with which he had hoped to strike. He did not blame Mr. Brown, but resigned the idea of cutting out either of the steamers, and with characteristic initiative, fell to debating other plans. The night was so calm and still he doubted if a boat could approach the gunboats without detection by the watchmen who guarded them, while fireballs thrown on board would in the absence of wind do small damage. Giving over this project also, Lieutenant Read now turned his attention to the cutter, and formulated a plan of action. The Cushings swung to one anchor, and the chain probably could be slipped. Her bulwarks were not so high but a boarding party could go over them from boats at a single bound. It was apparent there was but one man on watch. Boats passing to and fro were not challenged. It would be easy to board the cutter, and it should be done.

After the plan was settled, and the men had been the shipping he hoped to cut out or burn was at hand, and his men were at that moment, most of them, below decks engaged in making balls of oakum, and saturating them with turpentine, against the hour when they could be pitched burning aboard the gunboats at the wharves.

The hours of that peaceful June evening were anxious ones to the young commander, for all his daring and sangfroid. With Brown, on whom he depended as a right bower, he held an anxious consultation with regard to attempting to cut out the New York steamer, or, in the morning, on her arrival, the Boston steamer Forest City. Steam was not up on the Chesapeake, and Brown doubted if he could start her engines alone, or even those of the Boston steamer. Had there been another engineer in the party, such things might be done; but the task seemed beyond the powers of the third assistant engineer of the Florida. This took from Read one of the chief given instructions, time hung heavily on the hands of the adventurers on the Archer. There was a young moon, that spread a gentle radiance over the harbor and the city. It would set about midnight, and until it went down nothing could be done. Another check was a small steamer plying back and forth between the city and Cushing’s Island, where a party was in progress at the Ottawa House. As the steamer passed on one of her trips the sound of laughter and women’s voices came across the water to the silent watchers on the fishing schooner’s deck, and carried them back to their homes, their mothers, sisters, sweethearts or wives. It had been long since they had listened to the sound of a gentle woman’s voice, and this, of all moments, was the last in which they cared to hear it. Such reminders of the softer side of existence are not the sort of thing to stimulate a man to acts that perhaps will cost him his life.
Thus reflecting, doubtless, and watching the dying moon, the men of the South waited, on the deck of the Archer, until after midnight, when the harbor lay in darkness. Then the word was passed in a whisper to carry out the commander’s instructions for boarding the cutter. The two boats were brought alongside and silently manned. Each man took off his shoes. Care was taken to avoid stepping on the oars, as the smallest sound carried far over the glassy water. With twelve men in each, including one of the prisoners for a pilot, the boats shoved off. Their tholepins had been muffled with rags and marlin, and the men rowed the short distance between the schooner and the cutter without making a splash as they carefully dipped their blades. Going slowly, they came up to the cutter from astern. The watch was forward, and by the time he hailed, the boats were close aboard. Hailing again, and getting no answer, the man ran aft, took a look at the approaching boats, and rushed down into the cabin to arouse the commanding officer, Lieutenant Dudley Davenport. The lieutenant, his eyes heavy with sleep, reached the deck to find himself confronted by four men who pointed pistols at him, and demanded his surrender. One of them was Lieutenant Read.

“Keep quiet, and we will not harm you. Make a noise and you are a dead man! You are a prisoner to the Confederate States of America.”

Lieutenant Davenport heard these words as two men seized his hands and put irons on them. He was powerless, for his vessel was already in the hands of the Confederate crew. They had found the main hatch open on reaching the cutter’s deck, and springing down it to where the crew lay asleep in their hammocks, in the dim light of a bulkhead lantern they had covered the men with pistols, and made them prisoners. To put them in irons and gag them was the work of but a few minutes. Lieutenant Davenport was confined in his room.

In five minutes after their arrival alongside the cutter the Confederates were in undisputed possession of the vessel, fore and aft. So silently and expeditiously had their work been done that not a sound made on board had carried across the water to the forts or the docks, or to any of the other vessels in port.

As soon as their prisoners were confined, the men from the Archer began getting the cutter underway. An attempt to slip the chain proving a failure, as a link could not be cut, and no shackle was in sight, there was nothing to do but heave up the anchor. This took half an hour, the clink of the windless sounding ominously loud to the anxious Confederates as the anchor came to the bow. In half an hour it was up, and with two boats ahead, for there was not a breath of air, the cutter was slowly towed toward Hussey’s Sound, a Northern outlet of the harbor not much used, by which the forts could be avoided.

Before the short June night had given way to the first pale pink of dawn, a soft land breeze from Northwest sprang up, as one may always be expected to do in the morning in that latitude in summer, and setting her sails, the cutter made gentle way, aided after daylight by the first of the ebb tide. At six o’clock she was about four miles off the harbor islands, and increasing her offing slowly. The land breeze grew fainter and fainter as the morning advanced, and about eight o’clock, after an interval of calm, a very light air from Southeast was met.

At eight o’clock that morning the Collector of Customs for Portland, Jedediah Jewett, was at breakfast, scanning the columns of his morning paper, when an excited messenger knocked at his front door. He brought the intelligence that the cutter Caleb Cushing had put to sea in the night, and could then be seen, from the observatory on Munjoy hill, standing to the Eastward. Lieutenant J. H. Merryman, of the revenue cutter service, had arrived that morning on the Boston boat, to take command of the Cushing, and had seen the cutter at 4 A. M. standing out.

Collector Jewett at once jumped to the conclusion that Lieutenant Davenport, who was of Southern birth, had improved the opportunity afforded by the death of the Cushing’s commander, to run away with the cutter, to turn her over to the Confederates.

Collector Jewett hastened to the custom house, and began an active campaign for the recovery of the cutter. Word was sent to the agents of the Boston and New York steamers, requesting that the boats be chartered to the government for the chase of the Caleb Cushing. Messengers were sent to Fort Preble, asking for a detachment of troops, and some guns to be put on the steamers. Another messenger went to a militia camp outside the city with a similar request. By this time the news had spread that an expedition was being formed to recapture the cutter, and citizens armed with various kinds of weapons, from swords to fowling pieces, came running to the docks to volunteer their services. The mayor of the city, Captain Jacob McClellan, requisitioned from the state armory certain pieces of ordnance, and assisted in the embarkation. As steam had to be got up on the Chesapeake, and bales of cotton arranged along her sides to protect her engines and boilers, she was not ready as soon as the Forest City. The tide was low, and as this delayed the latter in taking on a detachment of the 17th U. S. infantry at Fort Preble, it was nearly

---

*Statement of Lieutenant Dudley Davenport—Portland Advertiser.*
11 o'clock before the steamer got out of the harbor. The Chesapeake was about half an hour later in getting away. Two small tugs, the Tiger and Uncle Sam, also went out. While this flotilla was taking the sea the Cushing, in the light Southeasterly wind, was standing offshore on the port tack, making perhaps two knots on hour through the water. Lieutenant Read was below. He had breakfasted with Mr. Brown, and Lieutenant Davenport had been their guest. At breakfast Lieutenant Read, knowing Lieutenant Davenport to be a Southern man, had said: "I am sorry, Lieutenant, to meet you under these circumstances, but this is one of the fortunes of war. You, being a Southern man, ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Lieutenant Davenport replied: "You have acted humanely, sir, and in case we are taken I'll represent you favorably to the United States authorities."

All the morning the Confederates had been searching the Cushing fore and aft for ammunition to serve the guns in case of pursuit. The final throw of the dice

The Forest City carried 32 men of the 19th U. S. Infantry, Captain N. Prime, with one 6-pounder field piece, one 12-pounder, and ammunition. Munitions were furnished from Fort Preble to about 40 citizens on this steamer, which carried about 200 men in all.

On the Chesapeake was a detachment of 27 men from Co. G, 7th Maine volunteers. Captain Henry Warren, two brass 6-pounders from the State Arsenal, and about 50 armed citizens, including several old men-of-war, and even a fighting parson, for, according to a local paper, "Rev. Mr. Waldrin, of the Park Street Church, rendered valuable service in helping to make cartridges."

Jadedish Jewett
Collector of Customs, Portland, 1863

would be made when a chase began, and its success depended on supporting it with shot from the cutter's battery. They found 400 pounds of powder, but only five shot. The first of these was discovered in a potato locker, and others in various out-of-the-way places, showing that they were not part of the regular supply of the ship. Demands had been made on Lieutenant Davenport and the crew to reveal the location of the shot locker, but they had resolutely refused to do so, to a man. All hands declared the cutter had the day before received orders to join in the pursuit of the Tecumseh, and had taken on her powder, but not her shot and shell. This story the Confederates believed, while passing over in their excited search a locker containing more than 90 solid shot for the cutter's 32-pounder.

Events following the search for ammunition are very well told in the paper by Robert Hunt, already mentioned. He says: "Our little breeze died away, and Read ordered all hands below to get what rest they could. While I was looking astern I saw what looked to be a steamer coming out, and, as I thought, heading for us. I called Read, who came on deck and, after looking at her awhile, said he guessed it was the Boston steamer bound out. He went below again, telling me to keep an eye on her. I shortly discovered another steamer astern of her, also coming out, and, on looking through the glasses, saw a crowd of soldiers on the upper deck. I immediately called our commander. On his reaching the deck, after one glance at the steamer, he called all hands to clear for action. The 32-pounder was loaded (it was located amidships), and the order given to put the helm hard down, the gunner and crew in the meantime training the gun to get a range on the nearest steamer. The cutter would not mind her helm.
"'Hard down!' shouted Read, jumping toward the helm.

'Hard down it is.' I answered.

'Oh, for a six-knot breeze and a few shot or shell!' cried Read. 'We would show them some fun!' The steamer was directly in our wake, and when Read saw we could not get an effective shot at them he said: 'We will give them a scare, anyhow!' The gun was trained as far aft as possible, and the order given to fire. When the smoke cleared away both steamers were broadside to, as if turning back, and we gave a yell, and shouted, 'load her up again!' But we had nothing to load her with. Read at once gave orders to set fire to the cutter and abandon her.

The prisoners were brought on deck, put in two boats, given the key to their irons, and turned adrift. I jumped down into the cabin and proceeded to break up the furniture and collect the bedding to set on fire. When the order was given to set fire, I struck a match, and in an instant the whole cabin seemed on fire. I rushed for the companionway, and when I reached the deck I was pretty badly scorched—eyebrows, lashes and mustache singed, and face and hands pretty well blistered. At this time all hands were in the boats, with the exception of the gunner and myself. He had gathered up a lot of scrap iron, nails, spikes, etc., with which he had loaded the gun for a parting shot. Although the steamers were dead astern and not within three or four points of the range of the gun, they both stopped when the last shot was fired.

'We pulled away from the cutter and lay on our oars, knowing that it would be useless to try to get away. Read ordered us to throw our arms overboard, and every man stood up in the boats, unbelled his belt, to which were attached his revolver and cutlass, and dropped it over the side. Read then produced a shot-bag of specie which he divided among us. Our next act was to tie a white handkerchief to our boat hook and await our fate.

The first steamer had been steering directly for us from the time we abandoned the cutter. The other stopped to pick up the crew of the cutter. We noticed that when the first steamer got near us, a detachment of soldiers on the upper deck had their muskets aimed directly at us, as if about to fire, but an officer sprang in front of them with a drawn sword and they at once came to shoulder.

'We were ordered alongside, a rope was thrown to us, and we were taken on board. One man at a time was allowed to come over the side. He was searched, and then his arms tied behind his back with a piece of rattling stuff, and he was placed under guard before another was taken on board.'

Meanwhile two boatloads of excited volunteers had started from the Forest City with the intention of boarding the cutter. The first crew expected to engage the Confederates, but on seeing the vessel in flame turned back. The second were bent on subduing the fire with buckets. By the time they got alongside, they gave up the job, contenting themselves with taking away a small boat half full of water that lay alongside. The man who got into the boat had no knife to cut the painter, and the time he took in untying it seemed an age to the others, who felt somewhat uncomfortable with red hot cinders and bits of burning sails and rigging falling on them, and the cutter's magazine likely to explode at any moment."

While these boat's crews were returning to their steamer the fire reached the cutter's magazine, at 1:48 o'clock.

There was a terrific explosion that shook the little fleet standing by, and caused a disturbance on the surface of the sea. 'The whole deck of the vessel seemed to fly upward, and a burst of flame and vast columns of smoke rose from her shattered hull. Fragments of iron, black-
ened timbers, bits of plank and spars, and innumerable

cinders flew out of them, and fell into the sea around, and,

staggering as they went, the Cushing settled by the stern

and disappeared. One of her spars, dislodged by the

explosion, came up in the whirlpool caused by her dis-
appearance, and after rising heel uppermost 15 or 20

feet, slowly disappeared, drawn down, doubtless by a

piece of rigging attaching it to the wreck.

The Cushing sank in 33 fathoms, about 10 or 12 miles

South-Southeast from the outer islands of Portland har-
bror.

From the fisherman Titcomb, who had been held a

prisoner on the Cushing, the captors of Lieutenant Read

learned that the Archer was in company, to the Eastward.

She had three men on board, including the other fisher-
man. She was towed to Portland, and with the steamers,

was received by the people with the ringing of bells,

firing of guns and other demonstrations of popular joy

over the downfall of the "rebels pirates."

When the Archer was searched chronometers, nautical

instruments, charts, books, chests and various other things

from Lieutenant Read's prizes were found on board, be-
sides the veritable 6-pounder of the Clarence—without

ammunition, all of which had been expended aboard the

Tacony—about 25 muskets, and some cutlasses. Lieu-

tenant Read's carpet bag, containing his commission,

journal, the logs of his cruise, letters and other papers,

was also found.

While the schooner was being searched an idler on

deck picked up a musket, and accidently discharged it,

mortally wounding a man on the dock (Mr. Jacob Gould,
a stevedore employed in discharging the vessel), who died

in a short time. This was the only life lost in connection

with the raid of Lieutenant Read and his men, a record

that speaks well for their humane manner of carrying

on a kind of warfare in which men have been known to

lose their regard for human life.

Thrown prisoners into the guard house at Port Preble,

Lieutenant Read and his crew were transferred in a few

weeks to Fort Warren, Boston Harbor, where they were

exchanged about 16 months after the final events in their

memorable raid.

*   *   *

COMMANDER MAFFIT.

John Newland Maffit was of Irish blood, and was born at

sea, February 22, 1819, his parents then being on route to America.

His father, a Methodist preacher, was born in Dublin. Entering

the Naval Academy in 1832, from New York, John N. Maffit

reached the rank of lieutenant in June, 1848. After seven years

of active service in that grade, he was placed on the reserved list

in September, 1855. He resigned from the Navy May 2, 1861.

In the early part of 1861 he carried a cargo of cotton to England.

Receiving an appointment to command the Florida, he took

charge of her August 7, 1862, at Nassau. Hard service and the

effects of yellow fever having broken his health, he was obliged to

relinquish his command in September, 1863. His last years

were spent in Wilmington, N. C., where he died May 15, 1866.

THE FLORIDA.

The Florida was built at Liverpool to Confederate account,

and fitted out under the direction of James D. Bullock, a com-
mmander in the Confederate Navy. She cleared from Liverpool

March 22, 1862, as the Oregon, merchantman, and arrived at

Nassau, N. P., April 8th, the voyage having been made chiefly

under sail. Work of putting on her battery began at Green
The RUDDER

Cay, August 7. The battery consisted of two 3½-inch and six 6-inch rifle guns. She entered Mobile September 4, 1864, after boldly running the blockade, flying at first, as a steamer, the British flag and pennant. Although her guns could not be used, as they were without elevating screws, primes, or rammers. She entered Mobile, therefore, without firing a shot, although the United States ships Chicola and Wissahickon, after discovering her character, subjected her to a heavy fire. One 11-inch shell struck her hull between wind and water, taking off one man's head, and wounding nine. Only her speed and a smooth sea saved her. More than three months were required for repairs. For his failure to stop her, Commander George H. Preble, U. S. N., senior officer on the blockade, was summarily dismissed from the navy by President Lincoln, but he was subsequently reinstated, and in a court of inquiry exonerated him from blame.

Florida's active career lasted until October 7, 1864, when she was captured in the harbor of Baja, Brazil, by the United States steam gun-boat, after the capture of Key West, which the Florida had tried without success to reach. She was now prize of war, and the Florida became a monitor. Her officers and men were mustered on board, and the ship was taken to the United States ports, where she arrived with the ship-hands, and was turned over to the United States government. She was placed in the harbor of Mobile, Alabama, and there remained until the close of the war. She was then sold for scrapping, and was broken up at the wharf of the Mobile Iron Works, where she was finally destroyed.

The Florida's career was brief and eventful. She was a valuable addition to the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy. She was a most efficient warship, and her officers and men were brave. She was a fine example of the power of the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy. She was a fine example of the power of the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy.

CHARLES W. READ

In a victorious cause Charles W. Read would have undying fame. His abilities were singularly like those of Paul Jones. But his achievement was more like the name of a similar nature to those of the great Scotch sailor. Unlike Jones, he was not the man of the sea afloat, though his courage was such that there can be no doubt he would have acquired himself with credit. Read was in the service in which he played an important part, between brethren of the same land, but it was perhaps as well he did not achieve greatness in battle. His abilities were of a different character, and his energy, determination, and perseverance were his keys to success. He took the fortunes of war as they came, and fought them with heart and soul. He found himself in the midst of a desperate conflict, and made a dash for the Gulf, there, if possible, to capture a vessel suitable for commerce-destruction. The Florida was prepared for her service in the Gulf, and she was captured in the night. Rough breakers were built forward, to keep the sea, and her machinery was protected by hales of cotton. She was a man of gray whiskers, and pine knots were put on board for fuel. Manly with a full complement of officers, engineers, and crews, and a crew of workmen from General E. Kirby Smith's command, the Webb left New Orleans, via the Mississippi to the Gulf, and on the 11th of April, 1863, the Florida was captured.

The Florida's career was brief and eventful. She was a valuable addition to the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy. She was a fine example of the power of the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy. She was a fine example of the power of the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy.

The Florida's career was brief and eventful. She was a valuable addition to the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy. She was a fine example of the power of the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy. She was a fine example of the power of the Union navy, and her capture was a signal victory over the Confederacy.
sent to intercept him, and preferring to become a prisoner, if at all, to
navy men, he returned to the Web, now nearly consumed, and
surrendered to the naval force by that time on the scene.
Once more a prisoner of war, Read was carried for a second
time to Fort Warren, which he reached May 20.

On the conclusion of peace he was released, and returned to
private life. He became a steamship captain, and for a number
of years ran out of New Orleans in the fruit trade. In peace he
was a genial and lovable man, and he had many friends. He died
in 1881, at the age of 53. His wife survived him and lives at
Jackson, Miss.; a son is a ship master out of New Orleans.

Having fought in a losing cause, Charles W. Read has received
scant recognition from the biographer of his native land. No
standard work of national biography at this date contains a line
regarding him. No history of the civil war accords him even
a fair degree of recognition for the brilliancy and ability he
displayed in his dashing raid. While preparing the foregoing
paper, the author addressed a few of Read's classmates in the
naval academy, with a view to getting some personal estimate of
his character. Only one reply was received, from Rear Admiral
Winfield Scott Schley, U. S. N. This proved a hearty and loyal
tribute, in which time turns backward and a midshipman speaks
in every line for a brave, departed friend. With Admiral
Schley's permission his letter is given here. It is as follows:

New Orleans, April 9th, 1894.

Mr. Deas:—I wish I was able to tell you more of the career of my
teacher and friend, Charles W. Read, at the Naval Academy, from 1861.

Read was spare in build,-active in movement, genial and loyal in
character, free in his friendships, and decided in his opinions.

The place he took in his class was in no sense the measure of his
intelligence, which, but little from him, and of a simplicity in manner
and speech, which was his especial and peculiar quality. He was
an urchin, as everyone does not possess it, that underlies success in every
calling.

If Read had had the opportunities our navy offered at that time he
would have made a greater record than was possible with the
meager chances offered by the small irregular navy of the Confederacy, although
no one can doubt that Read did a number of marvelously gallant things
with the few chances he had. He had a chance equal to that of his
classmates. But it is not often that the knights of old could be
sent into battle with the odds that our officers have been accustomed
to have all who possessed these qualities.

I am sure you will be able to find among his friends in Mississippi
abundant proof of his bravery and his personal worth during the interesting life of
this spirited and gallant American. I wish I could help you more.

Very truly yours,

W. S. SCHLEY.

WINTHROP M. TUCKER, ESQ.
ROSS, MISS.