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hegemony during the twentieth century.

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**Eileen Reid Marcil. *The PS Royal William of Quebec: The First True Transatlantic Steamer*. Montreal: Baraka Books, [www.barakabooks.com](http://www.barakabooks.com), 2020. 132pp. illustrations, bibliography, appendices, glossary index, notes. CDN \$29.95, paper, \$24.99, pdf. ISBN 978-1-77186-229-5 paper, 978-1-77186-252-3 pdf.**

Eileen Marcil literally wrote the book on shipbuilding in Quebec with *The Charley-Man: A History of Wooden Shipbuilding in Quebec* (1995), *Tall Ships and Tankers: A History of the Davie Shipbuilders* (1997), and her 2019 *Northern Mariner/le marin du nord* article on Quebec builder John Goudie. As such, she is ideally suited to write the story of the *Royal William*, a paddle steamer designed and launched in Quebec in 1831 that became the first vessel to cross the Atlantic entirely under steam power. While other accounts of the ship have focussed almost entirely on that event, Marcil fortunately has provided a more rounded picture of the vessel and its times. The thin volume (fewer than 100 pages without the appendices) tells three linked stories: an introduction to steamship services in Canada before 1830, the history of the *Royal William* itself, and the struggle for recognition of the ship as the first to cross the Atlantic under steam power.

Even without being recognized for the first Atlantic steam passage, the *Royal William* was an important vessel in Canadian history. Steamship transportation on the St. Lawrence River and in the Gulf began in 1809 and was common by the early 1820s, when seven steamboats served the route between Montreal and Quebec. But the link between Canada and what were called the 'lower provinces' still required a sailing ship, and travel between Quebec and Halifax usually took three or more weeks. Recognizing the benefits of closer ties between the colonies and with subsidies approved by both the Quebec and Nova Scotia legislatures, a company was formed to build a steamship and provide the first regular service between the two ports. The majority of the shares were held in Montreal and Quebec, but there were also subscribers from Miramichi, New Brunswick, and Halifax, among whom were several members of the Cunard family.

Given her research history, it is not surprising that Marcil's coverage is particularly good with regard to the actual building of the vessel, which early in 1831 inaugurated service between Quebec and Halifax, touching at Miramichi, Pictou, and Charlottetown. Despite the apparent enthusiasm, the inter-colonial

passenger and freight steam trade did not turn a profit. The following year, in an effort to cut costs, the route was ended at Pictou with an overland stage to Halifax. A repeat of the low revenues the next year led to the steamer being sold in 1833. The dream of speedy intercolonial communication was deferred until 1840 when the first of the Cunard steamers, the *Unicorn*, took on the Pictou to Quebec mail service. The new owners of the *Royal William* took the ship to Boston, but no sale ensued, and they then decided to send the ship for sale in England. Leaving from Pictou, deeply laden with coal for the voyage, the ship made a relatively speedy trip of 28 days, achieved even though the vessel had to stop several times to remove encrustation from its boilers. Once in England, the *Royal William* was chartered to the Portuguese government and in 1834 was made a part of the Spanish navy and renamed the *Isabel Segunda*. The vessel was hulked in 1839, although the Canadian engines were used in a new hull.

The final section of the book deals with the hotly contested matter of the competing claims of other steam vessels – including the *Savannah*, the *Great Western*, the *Sirius* and the *Curacao* – to have been the first across the Atlantic. Marcil dispenses with these challengers and their advocates in smart order, either disqualifying them because they used their engines only for parts of the voyage or made their claims after the successful trip of the *Royal William*.

This is a very readable and beautifully produced volume and, although short, seems to include almost every piece of information about the *Royal William* that has survived. In the preface, usually almost an afterthought paid little attention by the reader, Elieen Marcil paints an impressive picture of her more than thirty years' interest in the vessel and the acknowledgements are a catalogue of determination and the lengths taken to track down models, accounts, official documents and paintings in private collections, museums and archives on several continents. The illustrations are of an outstanding quantity and quality and there are a remarkable number of models plans, drawings, views, and engravings of the ship and the port of Quebec that provide a window into the world of the *Royal William*. Although not footnoted, the volume does not lack for authentication as sources are recognized in the text and many are published at length in the eleven appendices to the volume. A glossary of nautical terms is of assistance with some of the nineteenth-century terminology and a decent bibliography is provided.

The book was awarded an Honourable Mention for the Canadian Nautical Research Society's Keith Matthews book award in 2021. It adds considerably to the information contained in Mario Béland's 2003 *Cap-aux-Diamantes* article, "Le Royal William: un vapeur légendaire de Québec", and certainly supports Béland's assertion that the ship should stand with the *Bluenose* in international maritime history as a symbol of innovation and know-how

inaugurating the era of modern navigation. Although the ship was honoured with a postage stamp in 1933 on the centenary of its crossing, the *Royal William* has, unfortunately, been generally ignored. Marcil's book may go some way in increasing the profile of this significant vessel.

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**Edward J. Marolda and Adam Tooby (illustrator). *US Seventh Fleet, Vietnam 1964-1975: American naval power in Southeast Asia*. Oxford, UK: Bloomsbury/Osprey, [www.ospreypublishing.com](http://www.ospreypublishing.com), 2023. 80 pp., illustrations, maps, tables, diagrams, reading list, index. US \$23.00, CDA \$31.00, GBP £15.99; ISBN 978-1-4728-5681-4 (soft); ISBN 978-1-4728-5680-7 (eBook); ISBN 978-1-4728-5682-1 (PDF).**

The American war in Vietnam has typically been seen as land and air campaigns fought in and above the jungle and in river deltas and riverine estuaries. The participation of the US Seventh Fleet in this undeclared war following the Gulf of Tonkin resolution increased measurably in line with the number of American combat troops sent to Vietnam. Vietnam army veteran Edward Marolda, a retired senior historian from the US Navy and published expert on the US Navy's role in the Vietnam War, pens number four of Osprey's new Fleet series, focused on the Seventh Fleet in the Vietnam conflict from the commitment of US forces in 1964 to final withdrawal in 1975. Adam Tooby, a digital artist and illustrator known for his drawing of planes and aviation, provides original commissioned artwork.

The slim book follows the series standard format of 80 pages in length with four unnumbered sections or chapters explaining the fleet's purpose, its composition and fighting power, the doctrine and operational functions governing the fleet, and the overall combat record and operations during the conflict. Photographs are captioned and shaded text boxes provide further information and commentary accompanying the text and artwork. A map/timeline covers the entire period from 1964 to 1975 with chronologically numbered placement of significant and prominent events. Three-dimensional diagrams and plots in colour show the logistic support given to the fleet from the surrounding region and the dispositions and formations of the fleet related to specific functions and for specific named operations. A list for further reading, which includes six publications by Marolda, and a basic index appear at the end like other books in the series.

The US Seventh Fleet dated from the Second World in General Douglas MacArthur's South-West Pacific area command, but shifted from Cold War