

man Trafalgar” that would end German naval ambitions for all time. His preference was to “shoot from the hip,” which led to ongoing policy clashes with his senior commanders and the Lords of the Admiralty, and made Churchill’s job more difficult.

In April 1917, Keyes was promoted to Rear Admiral and took on the ill-equipped Dover Patrol, a separate Royal Navy command based at Dover and charged with protecting the English Channel and preventing German naval vessels from entering the Atlantic Ocean. To quash the German U-boat threats in the English Channel, Keyes planned and led raids on the German submarine pens in the Belgian ports of Zeebrugge and Ostend. Though the raids were a big morale boost to the British public, and Keyes was highly decorated for his services, Crossley views the raids as ultimately unsuccessful, since German submarines continued to sink British ships.

Elected to Parliament in 1934, Keyes joined Churchill as an anti-appeaser and an ultimate critic of Neville Chamberlain’s policies. Both men hated appeasement, believing it would lead to disaster. As Crossley notes, Keyes’ parliamentary career was not successful, due to his poor public speaking and his failure to acquire the necessary political skills, which may have been related to his learning disability and its impact on his ability to write well and deliver speeches. Yet despite his unimpressive oratory skills, at one point in 1940, Keyes appeared in the House of Commons in his full Admiral’s dress uniform to attack Chamberlain’s response following Germany’s invasion of Norway. At the end of the speech, he shouted, in unison with others, “In God’s name, go!”

With the advent of the Second World War, Churchill and others considered

Keyes too old for senior naval commands (he was nearly 70), a view Keyes did not share. Instead, he became liaison to Leopold III, the King of the Belgians, who, much to British official displeasure, refused to go into exile and was later viewed as having cooperated with the German occupiers. Despite being tarnished by his association with Belgium’s king, Keyes was elevated to the peerage as Baron Keyes in 1943.

Crossley’s rather short book adds a missing element to Royal Navy literature, but it is not especially well-written or well-constructed. Written in a relaxed, non-academic style, and very much for the general reader, the book lacks notes, and the bibliography is dated. Churchill’s name in the book’s title does not reflect the book’s coverage; he is very much a side figure. The author, whose own father was a midshipman on the battleship *HMS Resolution* in 1916, can be frustratingly contradictory about Keyes. While claiming that the admiral never lived up to his potential because of his personality flaws and his confrontations with other senior commanders, Crossley also describes Keyes as well-liked and brave, making it difficult to ascertain Keyes’ rightful place in history. The author’s vacillation between praise and opprobrium for Keyes throughout the book makes his conclusion a surprise: “... his character and daring made him stand out as a beacon among naval officers of his time and as an example to future generations.” Surely this is not the last word on Keyes.

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John Darwin. *Unlocking the World: Port Cities and Globalization in the Age of Steam, 1830-1930*. London, UK: Allen Lane, [www.penguin.co.uk](http://www.penguin.co.uk), 2020. 496 pp., maps, illustrations, bibliog-

raphy, index. UK £25.00, cloth; ISBN 978-1-84614-086-0.

John Darwin is not a historian who thinks small. Over the past couple of decades he has cemented his reputation as one of the foremost annalists of imperialism, thanks to books that survey the global history of empire (*After Tamerlane*), the second era of British imperialism (*The Empire Project*), and the complexities and incoherence of Britain's imperial development (*Unfinished Empire*). His latest book offers both a shift in focus and a more subtle examination of the dynamics that drove Western imperialism by examining the influence of port cities during the century-long "age of steam" that spanned from the growing application of steam technology in the early-nineteenth century to the onset of the Great Depression in the 1930s.

These port cities, Darwin explains, played an extraordinarily important role in the process of globalization that unfolded in the nineteenth century. More than just places of commerce, ports were "gateway cities" that served as places of exchange between different economies and cultures. While gateway cities were not always ports, ports were especially suited to playing such roles and traditionally did so throughout human history. Darwin describes the network of ports that developed throughout Eurasia prior to the Columbian era, then how the addition of the Western Hemisphere disrupted this network by injecting new products and destinations into the mix. This was not a rapid process: though the Americas became a source of precious metals and plantation crops soon after their European discovery, the process of "Columbian globalization" was still incomplete when the impact of steam technology began to be felt.

While Darwin notes that "steam glo-

balization was indelibly marked by its Columbian inheritance," (83) it was also a marked departure in many respects. Steam power was key to the growing divergence between the West (specifically northwestern Europe and the United States) and the rest of the world. And while Darwin notes the use of steam power for manufacturing, he sees its most revolutionary effects in its application to transportation. This was most immediately evident in the application of steam power to river boats, with ocean-going steamships becoming viable only with the development of more efficient engines that provided greater propulsive power with lower coal consumption. Steam-powered land transportation also played a vital role in this process, as railway routes more closely tied the economies of the agrarian hinterlands to the developing global economy, making the port cities the crucibles in which the process of assimilation took place. Though steam transport took much of the period to become the dominant form of ocean travel, once it did so, its effects were truly revolutionary, as steam power freed vessels from dependency on the patterns of winds and currents, making possible very different patterns of commerce than ever before.

Darwin details the impact by means of over a half-dozen case histories of ports during this period. Using examples from the Northern Hemisphere, he includes a mix of ports with a long history (Calcutta, Shanghai, the metropole ports of Europe) and newer ones that boomed during the period (New Orleans, Montreal, Bombay, Hong Kong). All of them provide effective evidence of the supercharged commercial and urban growth brought about by steam globalization. For most, steam power opened up rivers that had hitherto been one-way routes, while railway lines ex-

tended the reach of their commercial activities further inland than ever before. While most of these ports served as cosmopolitan “bridgeheads” of a globalized culture, Darwin notes with the case of New Orleans their effects were not always dominant, as sometimes the concerns of the hinterland won out over the cosmopolitizing influence such ports usually exerted, particularly when economic interests were involved.

This proved increasingly the case after the First World War. Whereas most port cities until then enjoyed the benefits of minimal “inland” intervention, multilateral free trade policies and the gold standard, the postwar world was one of protectionism, managed currencies, and restricted investment. As producers geared towards a global market faced declining demand for their wares, many port cities experienced a drop in traffic and its consequences: declining revenues, increasing unemployment, and a diminished influence as inland polities treated the cosmopolitanism that port cities embodied with suspicion. What recovery these economies experienced came to an end with the onset of the worldwide economic depression of the 1930s, ending an era of increasing globalization and signaling the start of a different and more uncertain world.

To describe the role that ports played in the process of steam globalization, Darwin draws upon a considerable range of scholarly literature. His command of the research is truly impressive, supporting his arguments with some of the latest work in maritime history, technological history, and the insights drawn from several other fields of study. From this emerges an impressive survey that explains complex dynamics both clearly and insightfully. Though written more for a general rather than a scholarly audience, both groups will find this book worthwhile

reading for the connections detailed and the processes described, especially given their relevance to the world in which we live today.

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Kenneth Howard Goldman. *American Yachts in Naval Service: A History from the Colonial Era to World War II*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., www.mcfarlandbooks.com, 2021. 218 pp., illustrations, notes, appendices, bibliography, index. US \$45.00, paper; ISBN 978-1-4766-8260-0.

Kenneth Goldman’s ambitious work attempts to chronicle an obscure but fascinating segment of American naval history. Goldman, a contributor to *Navis Magazine*, is quite knowledgeable about the construction, interior appointments and history of yachts and yachting in both North America and abroad. The first challenge one encounters in writing a book covering such a broad scope of nautical history is to define the vessel called a yacht, a Dutch term *jacht schepens* meaning hunting ship. William Smyth’s nineteenth-century classic *Sailor’s Word Book* declares it a vessel of state for pleasure to convey great personages, while other authoritative references add light, fast vessels of various sizes, but used for leisure, sport or competition and as a conspicuous status symbol.

The first American yacht to be used during the Revolutionary War as a combatant (a privateer) was George Crowninshield’s sloop *Jefferson*. Others followed, increasing in number during the War of 1812 as mosquito fleets; swift vessels with men largely armed with muskets and sabres used to disrupt enemy logistics, and surveil and assist in dispatching troops where needed.