

Of particular interest, and hopefully, of use to some readers, will be the appendix which lists the obstructions on the East River, allowing for a better understanding of exactly how unsafe the river was, and how monumental a task opening it truly was. A handy overview for a complex internal improvement project, this book will sit comfortably on most any bookshelf.

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Claude Berube. *On Wide Seas: The US Navy in the Jacksonian Era*. Tuscaloosa, AB: (University of Alabama Press, www.uapress.ua.edu, 2021. xiii+248 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$54.95, cloth; ISBN 978-0-8173-2107-9. (E-book available.)

Few historians consider President Andrew Jackson a navalist. Claude Berube's *On Wide Seas* advances the argument that Jackson was indeed a navalist and his executive stewardship of the United States Navy during his administration led to significant naval growth and professionalization. Berube's critical work fills a gap in naval historiography and is the first book to solely examine the development and employment of the Navy from 1829-1837 under Jackson's aegis from 1829-1837.

The central premise of *On Wide Seas* is that the US Navy developed into a premier instrument of national power throughout the 1830s as a consequence of a burgeoning naval culture. Not only did it promote America's intellectual and social growth, it also manifested it through the creation of new policies and strategic and operational employment of the sea service. Despite Jackson's background in the army, Berube argues that Jackson keenly understood executive power and the navy's capability to promote national maritime growth globally.

Organized into six chapters, the first chapter explores the transformation of the navy during the Jacksonian era as an intellectual renaissance, enhanced by increasing literacy rates and proliferation of print media. This allowed new ideas to reach vast audiences transmitting the navy's new scientific discoveries while symbiotically influencing fiction writing and literary boosterism via works by Edgar Allen Poe, James Fenimore Cooper, and Washington Irving. A robust print discourse in military-specific journals allowed naval officers to promote new ideas and challenge staid and entrenched orthodoxy that professionalized the naval officer corps. Organizations such as the Naval Lyceum and their *Naval Magazine*, along with half a dozen others, formed new strategic thinkers and enabled communication within the service and beyond with legislators, writers, and civilians. This Jacksonian democracy in

action drew broad attention to the US Navy and to its missions.

Subsequent chapters explore Jackson's vision for the navy as a shepherd of American commerce. Through advocacy for increasing the size of the navy, expanding the overseas station concept, and improving internal naval discipline, Jackson demonstrated his previously overlooked navalist credentials. His methodical choices for his three Secretaries of the Navy upheld financial accountability, promoted fleet repairs, improved governance within the navy, oversaw the nascent construction of steam powered warships, and dispensed global naval power. Meanwhile, a 270 percent increase in the naval budget gave the navy the financial backbone to oversee its growing global commitments. Compared to previous presidents who were staunch navy supporters like the Adamses, Jackson deserves similar lauding as an executive who maintained repair funding, built the first dry docks, and oversaw the largest naval buildup since the War of 1812, notably through the construction of new schooners and steamers, while establishing the East Indies Squadron in the western Pacific.

Berube forwards the notion that Jackson's maritime strategy has been marginalized or ignored in favour of his land-based exploits. He argues that Jackson actually had a dynamic threefold strategy: to support favourable economic conditions globally, to support forward deployed squadrons, and to launch retaliatory expeditions as a last resort. Anti-piracy actions in the Mediterranean, Caribbean, off Africa, and operations in the Pacific promoted global commerce and gave a new generation of officers diplomatic and military experience. Berube perhaps over-credits Jackson's tempered consideration with regards to punitive retaliation, arguing that Jackson's strategic consideration of the Pacific islands where Americans were attacked were paramount, and attacks against Americans at far-flung outposts were not worth the effort to deploy naval forces for indemnity. Were the assertion true, Jackson should have dispatched the navy to return to Sumatra after its original 1832 retaliatory strike after subsequent attacks in 1834. That the navy did respond to an attack against the American whaleship *Mentor* in less-than-strategic Palau after public pleas to the Secretary of the Navy and Congress indicates that the responsiveness of the Jackson administration may have had less to do with strategy than with visibility and potential bad publicity. Nevertheless, Berube's broader argument of Jackson's commitment to American commercial protection in vital strategic and economic areas indeed indicates Jackson's vision of maritime manifest destiny.

The final section of the book explores the professionalization within the US Navy through improved discipline, calls for a formal naval school, the creation of a medical corps, a formal chaplain corps, and a reorganized role for the Marine Corps. In Berube's words, the navy had an "awakening" under Jackson that profoundly impacted the service and created the conditions

for its continued growth and influence in subsequent decades. Jackson's recognizance of the navy as a vital element of national power and ongoing expansion were demonstrated by the organization's revivification and his administration's efforts to actualize and employ the sea service in pursuit of American expansion.

On Wide Seas is a carefully articulated and argued book, and advocates clearly for the key role Jackson played during the Navy's transformation, and more broadly to a naval revitalization. Berube makes innovative use of complex primary source material such as court martial records to show Jackson's perspective on organizational discipline, yet also manages a wide survey of naval and executive branch documents and secondary sources throughout the work. Any treatment of this often-ignored period would have been welcomed, yet Berube has penned a truly compelling volume that sets a high standard. For those interested in a revolutionary take on Jackson, students of naval history looking to bolster their knowledge, and lay readers alike, *On Wide Seas* merits a place on the must-read list.

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John Bingeman, Paul Simpson, and David Tomalin. *The Wrecks of HM Frigates Assurance (1753) & Pomone (1811): Including the Fascinating Naval Career of Rear-Admiral Sir Robert Barrie, KCB, KCH (1774-1841)*. Oxford, UK: Oxbow Books, 2021, xiv+141 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, appendices, index. US \$65.00, hardcover; ISBN 978-1-78925-637-6. (E-book available.)

Bingeman, Simpson, and Tomalin have written four narratives into one book. The volume covers the wrecks of two frigates, some 58 years apart, in roughly the same spot, the underwater archeological exploration and recovery of artifacts from the wrecks, and a biography of Sir Robert Barrie, who commanded the second lost ship. A slim volume at 141 pages, it does pack quite the information punch.

Work on the book really began in 1969 when the wreck of HM Frigate *Assurance* was discovered, resting in the waters at the base of the Needles, a three-peaked group of rock pillars standing out of the ocean, at the western end of the Isle of Wight. Local diver, Derek Williams, decided to locate and explore the wreck of HM Frigate *Assurance*, which he found on his first dive. As the *Assurance* wreckage was explored, it became apparent a second ship (*Pomone*) was spread across the same area. During the next forty years the site of both wrecks was thoroughly surveyed and artifacts collected.