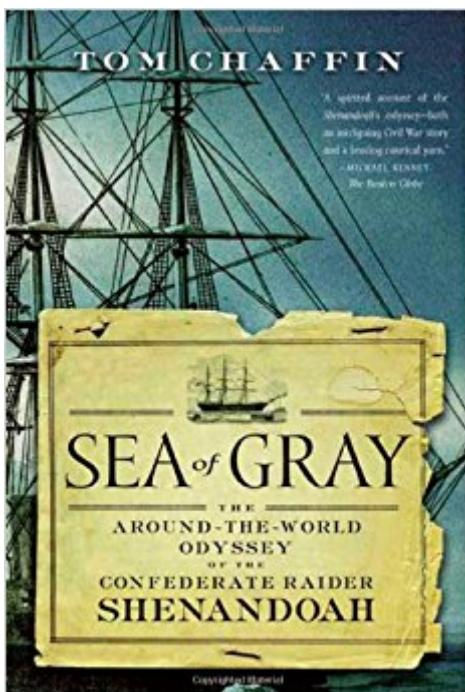


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Sea Of Gray: The Around-the-World Odyssey Of The Confederate Raider Shenandoah



Synopsis

Assembled from hundreds of original documents, including intimate shipboard journals kept by Shenandoah officers, *Sea of Gray* is a masterful narrative of men at sea. The sleek, 222-foot, black auxiliary steamer *Sea King* left London on October 8, 1864, ostensibly bound for Bombay. The subterfuge was ended off the shores of Madeira, where the ship was outfitted for war. The newly christened CSS *Shenandoah* then commenced the last, most quixotic sea story of the Civil War: the 58,000-mile, around-the-world cruise of the Confederacy's second most successful commerce raider. Before its voyage was over, thirty-two Union merchant and whaling ships and their cargoes would be destroyed. But it was only after ship and crew embarked on the last leg of their journey that the excursion took its most fearful turn. Four months after the Civil War was over, the *Shenandoah*'s Captain Waddell finally learned he was, and had been, fighting without cause or state. In the eyes of the world, he had gone from being an enemy combatant to being a pirate. A hangable offense. Now fearing capture and mutiny, with supplies quickly dwindling, Waddell elected to camouflage the ship, circumnavigate the globe, and attempt to surrender on English soil. "A superb account of how the Confederate raider *Shenandoah* brought the American Civil War to the farthest reaches of the world." -- Nathaniel Philbrick, author of *Mayflower* and *Sea of Glory*

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Customer Reviews

When the Union navy blockaded Southern ports during the Civil War, the Confederates dispatched commercial raiders to prey on private Union ships. One of these raiders was the C.S.S.

Shenandoah, a British auxiliary steamer purchased by Confederate agents and refitted as a man-of-war. Chaffin (Pathfinder; Fatal Glory) recounts the Shenandoah's round-the-world journey in a compelling narrative based upon Civil War-era logbooks, journals, letters and memoirs. Commissioned to lay waste to New England's Pacific whaling fleet, the Shenandoah sailed from Liverpool in 1864. Thirteen months and 58,000 miles later, it sailed back. Along the way, the ship survived storms, ice jams and a near mutiny while capturing 40 Union vessels, taking 1,053 prisoners and destroying cargo valued in 1865 at \$1.4 million. En route to the Bering Sea when the war ended in April 1865, the Shenandoah continued to fight until June for lack of "reliable evidence." Thereafter, it dodged capture as it raced for the safety of a British port. Sure to satisfy Civil War and nautical fans, Chaffin's history describes these adventures in gratifying detail. (Feb.)

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Chaffin chronicles the remarkable story of the Shenandoah's 58,000-mile voyage around the world during the Civil War. Along the way, it sunk 32 Union merchant and whaling ships heavily laden with cargo, including brandy, rum, and whiskey. After the vessel rounded Africa's Cape of Good Hope, it stopped in Australia and then navigated the ice floes of Siberia's Sea of Okhotsk, the Bering Sea, and the Arctic Ocean--much of it through gales, ice fields, subfreezing temperatures, fog, and rain. The ship's crew hoped to destroy the Yankees' western Arctic whaling fleet, but four months after the war ended, the Shenandoah's captain learned that he had been fighting a war "without cause or state." He had gone from being an enemy combatant to a pirate, an offense that could get him hanged. He camouflaged the vessel, circumnavigated the globe, and attempted to surrender in England. Chaffin drew on hundreds of original documents in researching this riveting narrative of one episode of the Civil War. George CohenCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

A reasonably well finished, and superbly researched, history of the last Confederate Flag that flew in Battle. And it flew understandably at Sea. The investigation for a book of this sort presumably could have taken up a man's life and more, as the records are massive. But Mr. Chaffin was indeed diligent, and did his homework. I merely have a couple of reasonably small points against the book. Firstly, though the maps were good, and I enjoyed the use of the end papers in showing the make up of a Ship of Sail, and of the CSS Shenandoah's interior, I would rather have placed the critical Map of the Voyage as one of the end papers (probably replacing the former), as opposed to existing

in the text as a two page map (this is really not a book about sailing, after all). ... The Bering Sea map might have been expanded to two pages, and perhaps introduced in the text at the chapter where the action occurred. Nonetheless, the maps as they exist -- and which are really critical for an appreciation of a voyage as great as this -- were good. Secondly, I thought his use and command of English could, at times, have been stronger. However, on the whole, I do recommend this book by Mr. Chaffin, and not only as a chronicle of the last Confederate raider, but also as journey of adventure and exploration, which at times it interestingly became. (...) As a final note, I like how the various prizes for the Shenandoah were clearly listed in an Appendix.

Sea of Gray by Tom Chaffin allowed me to look through the porthole of the Shenandoah's Odyssey from the equatorial homage paid to King Neptune to the deep freeze of the polar ice cap. This ship weathered the bloodiest storm in history, and continued sinking Northern whalers, long after the Treaty at Appomattox ended the War Between the States. Chaffin's writing is an historical narrative with strong journalistic undertones. As soon as I began Sea of Gray, Chaffin's vivid imagery pulled me right into the deep murky waters of the Confederacy. And although my Northern heart somewhat quakes at the thought, I found myself admiring the indomitable spirit and tenacity of Captain James Waddell. Tom Chaffin resurrects the Shenandoah and its ghosts, and brings us with him on a wild ride with the marauder of the seas!

Sea of Gray is simply the most complete and best written account of a Civil War event that I have read. I came away from this book feeling that I knew what day to day life on the Shenandoah was like. Mr. Chaffin's ability to reveal the minutia of the Civil War era sailor's toils and troubles is unsurpassed. It brought back many memories of my days at sea while serving in the U. S. Navy. Indeed, Mr. Chaffin is a master storyteller. I wholeheartedly recommend this book . . . a BIG 5 stars!

This book was very well written and easy to read. It was a wealth of information, full of historical facts about maritime laws and Civil War history. Once I started it was difficult to put down.

This is a great book that was written so that any one could understand what took place on the high seas during the Civil war and if you are interested at all in the civil war about confederate pirates how they captured yankee ships took there crews and all they wares and money and then burned their ships some times they just robbed every one and every thing and left them on their ship because there were too many to put on board the pirate ship. It may take days before the robbed

ship would come in contact with the federal fleet and get help from them and some times they would come upon a ship that was already burned and the crew and passengers were put off at a port to fend for themselves great book

very good

When reading any historical account of Confederate military exploits, the reader usually finds himself with Stonewall's foot soldiers in the Shenandoah Valley or at Chancellorsville, or with Longstreet's divisions during their fateful assault of Cemetery Ridge, or with Forrest's mounted legions at Brice's Crossroads. In all cases, the Confederate battle flags are borne proudly, and the sea is far distant over the horizon. In *SEA OF GRAY*, author Tom Chaffin recounts the 13-month circumnavigation of the globe by the commerce raider C.S.S. Shenandoah, during which time it sailed 58,000 miles, captured 38 vessels (and burned most), took 1,053 prisoners, and destroyed \$1.4 million of cargo. The high point of the voyage was the taking of 24 Union whalers in the Bering Sea over a seven day period in June 1865. The book is extensively researched, contains an eminently useful photo section, and includes front and end plate diagrams of the ship's interior and exterior plans respectively. Despite Chaffin's good intentions and obvious effort, it pains me to say that the narrative is more dogged than inspired. I doubt that even a reader with die-hard Southern sympathies will be sufficiently stirred to break into a rousing rendition of "Dixie" at any point. Perhaps the problem lies with the nature of the expedition itself, during which the raider skulks over the oceans under the guise of foreign flags to bedevil defenseless commerce vessels. One is almost tempted to wish for the appearance of an honest man-o-war of any nationality to put an end to the mischief. The conquests of the C.S.S. Shenandoah are not the usual stuff of which an heroic epic is made. Indeed, it's only during the last, sad 20,000 miles of the voyage (from just off southern Mexico to around Cape Horn to England), at the start of which the news of the Confederacy's surrender was confirmed by a passing English ship, causing the captain of the Shenandoah, Lt. Commander Iredell Waddell, to de-gun and decommission his command, that this reader began to admire the crew's long-suffering endurance of circumstance and uninspiringly erratic leadership. The men deserved better than their fade-off into history upon their anti-climactic return to Liverpool. Unless you're extraordinarily interested in all aspects of the American Civil War and are bored reading repetitious re-tellings of the various land battles, I wouldn't recommend *SEA OF GRAY* except as an interesting footnote to the rebellion. That said, you may love it.

This book is easy to read with an attention to detail without going overboard. The story unfolds nicely and gives you a look into the lives of the crew and officers and the times they lived in.

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