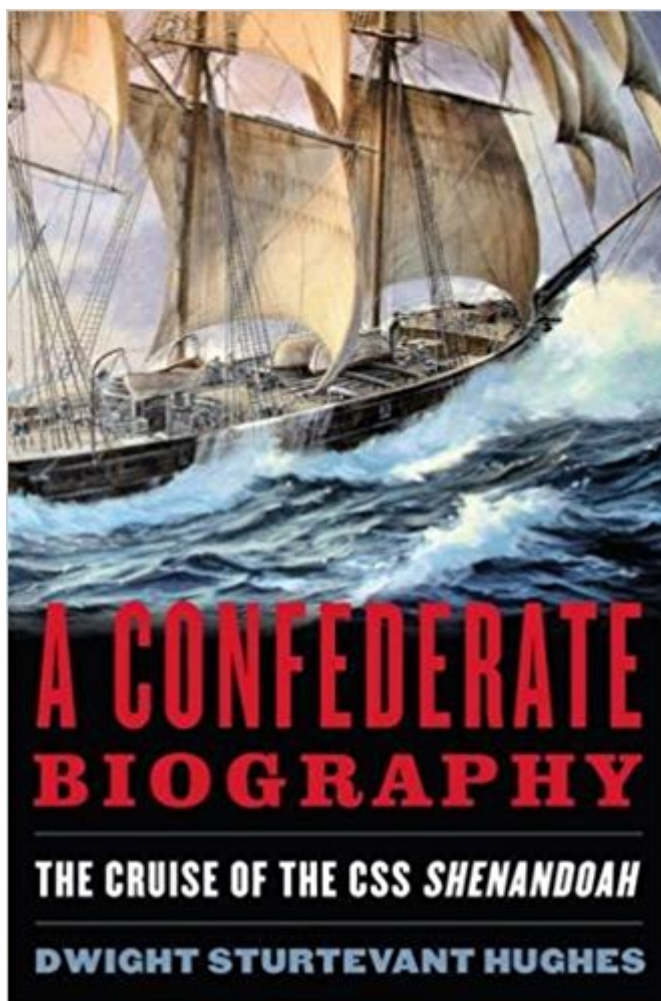


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# A Confederate Biography: The Cruise Of The CSS Shenandoah



## Synopsis

"The cruise of a ship is a biography," wrote the Confederacy's foremost sailor, Raphael Semmes. A ship can be, therefore, a central character in a life story through which we view the momentous past more clearly. From October 1864 to November 1865, the CSS Shenandoah carried the Civil War around the globe to the ends of the earth through every extreme of sea and storm. Her officers represented a cross section of the Confederacy from Old Dominion first families through the Deep South aristocracy to a middle-class Missourian: a nephew of Robert E. Lee; a grandnephew of founder George Mason; a son-in-law to Raphael Semmes; grandsons of men who fought at George Washington's side; an uncle of Theodore Roosevelt. They considered themselves Americans, Southerners, rebels, and warriors embarking on the voyage of their lives, defending their country as they understood it, and pursuing a difficult, dangerous mission in which they succeeded spectacularly after it no longer mattered. Shenandoah was a magnificent ship. Her commerce-raiding mission was a central component of U.S. Navy heritage and a watery form of asymmetric warfare in the spirit of John Mosby, Bedford Forrest, and W. T. Sherman. She contributed to the diplomatic maelstrom of the Civil War, as evidenced by a contentious visit to Melbourne, Australia. Later, at the Pacific island of Pohnpei, Southern gentlemen enjoyed a tropical holiday while their country lay dying, mingling with an exotic warrior society that was more like them than they knew. Their observations looking back from the most remote and alien surroundings imaginable, along with the viewpoints of those they encountered, provide unique perspectives of the conflict. Finally, Shenandoah invaded the north, the deep cold of the Bering Sea. She fired the last gun of the conflict and set crystal waters aglow with flaming Yankee whalers. Seven months after Appomattox, Shenandoah limped into Liverpool. Captain Waddell lowered the last Confederate banner without defeat or surrender. This is, as Admiral Semmes describes, a biography of a cruise and a microcosm of the Confederate-American experience. See [aconfederatebiography.com](http://aconfederatebiography.com)

## Customer Reviews

"A fascinating account of one of the civil war's most formidable raiders, the CSS Shenandoah. Based on meticulous research, this is the first time that the vessel, its crew, its meaning for the Confederacy, and its symbolism around the world have been combined into a single and comprehensive narrative. An important addition to Civil War historiography." --  
Dr Amanda Foreman, FRSA. Author of A World on Fire: Britain's Crucial Role in the American Civil War  
"This biography is the definitive account of one of the most interesting naval incidents and voyages of the Civil War, told in an engaging fashion using largely first hand accounts by the

officers and crewmen involved. It is always marvelous to see a literary work produced by a great researcher and writer who deeply cares about his subject. This remarkable book belongs in the collection of everyone interested in the Civil War at sea." -- Edward T Cotham, Jr., Civil War historian and author

"This is the Shenandoah book that we have been waiting twenty years to read. Beautifully crafted with special emphasis on first-hand source material, it tells the Shenandoah's tale with aplomb and accuracy. Easy to read and always interesting.... Highly recommended for both Civil War readers as well as nautical lovers, this is the perfect book to learn about the end of the rebellion's naval war and the final Confederate flag to be furled." -- Barry Crompton, Secretary and Researcher, American Civil War Round Table of Australia

"Dwight Hughes has written a fresh and engaging account of the last of the great Civil War commerce raiders, the Confederate States Steamer Shenandoah. As the title suggests, the book's primary focus is on the motivations and attitudes of her officers and crew, and the sources of their clashes and competition. Hughes' common thread is the magnificent sea story of Shenandoah's world-wide odyssey, a tale he has brought to life in a way only a seaman could." -- Stephen Chapin Kinnaman, Author of Captain Bulloch: The Life of James Dunwoody Bulloch, Naval Agent of the Confederacy

"A finely researched and truly fascinating narrative of the CSS Shenandoah's remarkable voyage. Hughes writes with clarity and skillfully threads together the difficulties and tribulations that faced the Confederate naval officers in charge of this cruiser in far flung regions of the world, the place of the cruiser in the fading fortunes of the Southern states armed struggle, and the Union navy's efforts to hunt for this last Confederate ship afloat. This is a thoroughly enjoyable and insightful book." -- Dr. Angus Curry, Author of The Officers of the CSS Shenandoah

Hughes notes in his preface that the objective of the volume 'is to provide an entertaining and educational story not only for naval and maritime history enthusiasts but also for anyone who would enjoy a fresh perspective on the Civil War.' His work achieves this goal admirably. A Confederate Biography: The Cruise of the CSS Shenandoah is at once a pleasurable and enlightening reading experience.

Maritime Archaeological and Historical Society [A Confederate Biography] is truly a standout. Accessible to the non-expert in things maritime, it illuminates how ships of that time functioned, what it took to work them, and the variety of cultures that blended to accomplish it. The author, coming himself from a life at sea, speaks from inside the experience and his descriptive gifts for exploring the sights, sounds, and feelings of the life at sea bring you aboard and make you part of the voyage. In this respect, it has more of the intimate feel of a movie than a formal documentary, which is welcome and fulfilling from page to page, keeping you involved with the life inside while still aware of the history simultaneously going

on aboard ship and around the globe. *International Journal of Maritime History* Anyone with an interest in commerce raiding, the Confederate navy, and the American Civil War will find *A Confederate Biography* a revealing account of the ship. *Pirates and Privateers* A fascinating saga of the far-flung fringes of the Civil War, *A Confederate Biography* will captivate scholarly historians and lay readers alike, and is a choice pick for public and college library collections. *Midwest Book Review.com* Dwight Hughes, a Naval Academy graduate and a retired naval officer, has well told this compelling story of men against the sea and against tremendous odds of success. He takes his title from Adm. Raphael Semmes's assertion that "The cruise of a ship is a biography." Hughes's text is sparingly annotated, but thorough research and his use of the journals of officers and crew of the ship requires little amplification. The author recounts the highs and lows of their experiences, as well as details of their daily routines. Battling gales in the South Atlantic or North Pacific, getting stuck in Arctic ice, swooping down on unsuspecting victims, or conducting the humdrum but inherently dangerous activities of a ship under sail, the men of the *Shenandoah* put it all in writing, and Hughes has faithfully reproduced it here. The *Shenandoah*'s story has been presented in print several times before but never better than in this Naval Institute publication. *JAMP: The Journal of America's Military Past*

Dwight Hughes graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1967 and served twenty years as a Navy surface warfare officer on many oceans in ships ranging from destroyer to aircraft carrier and with river forces in Vietnam (Bronze Star for Meritorious Service, Purple Heart). Building on a lifetime of study in naval history, he lives and writes in Nokesville, Virginia. Online at <http://aconfederatebiography.com/>

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