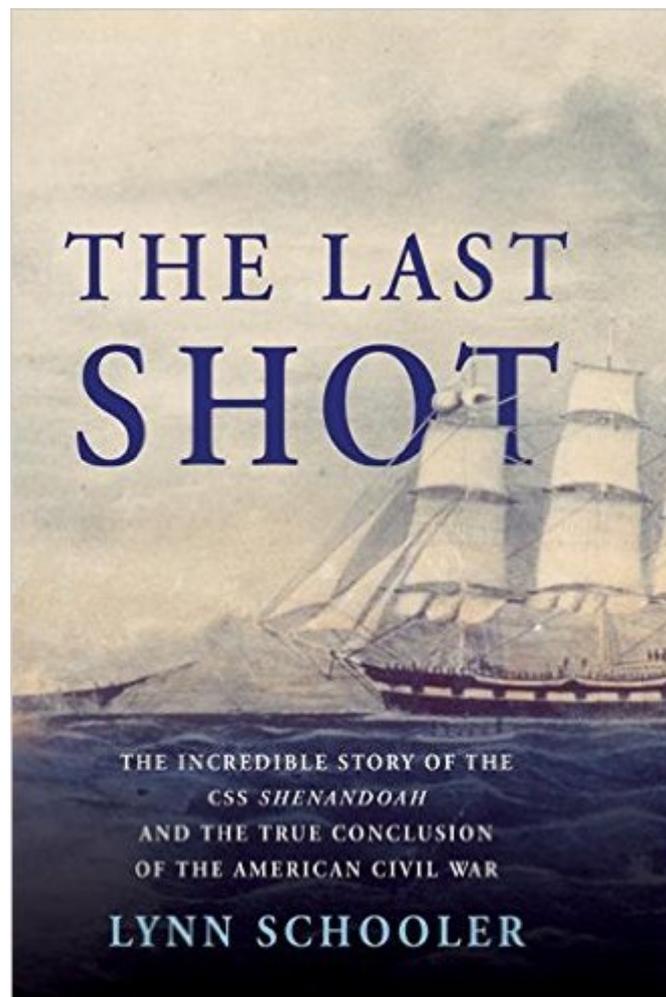


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The Last Shot: The Incredible Story Of The C.S.S. Shenandoah And The True Conclusion Of The American Civil War



Synopsis

In the autumn of 1864, at the height of the American Civil War, the Confederate raider Shenandoah received orders to "seek out and utterly destroy" the whaling fleets of New England as part of an effort to bleed the Union of its economic strength -- an undertaking that met its greatest success when the raider fell upon a fleet of whalers working the waters near Alaska's Little Diomedes Island and sank more than two dozen ships in a frenzy of destruction. Before the Shenandoah's voyage was over, the raider had captured or sunk thirty-eight ships. She also took more than a thousand prisoners and led the best warships of the Union navy on a twenty-seven-thousand-mile chase that ended with her escape to England, making her the only Confederate vessel to circumnavigate the globe. At the end of her journey -- truly one of the most remarkable in naval history -- the effects of the raider's actions reached far beyond the glow of the flames marking the sky above the Arctic ice. The inferno signaled not only the near-demise of the New England whaling industry, but also the end of America's growing hegemony over worldwide shipping for the next eighty years. These Civil War clashes also helped precipitate the establishment of international laws that remain in effect today. But more important than the tally of damage was the date the final conflagration began: June 22, the longest day of the year, and almost a full three months after General Lee lay down his sword at Appomattox. Contrary to contemporary belief, it was not on the battlefield in Virginia but high in the Arctic where the last shot of the American Civil War was fired. Blending high-seas adventure and first-rate research, Lynn Schooler's *The Last Shot* is naval history of the very first order, offering a riveting account of the last Southern military force to lay down its arms.

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Customer Reviews

The author, Lynn Schooler, has written an account of the Confederate raider Shenandoah; most published works on Confederate commerce raiders cover only the Alabama or the Florida. The text opens narrating the 1864 under-cover operation to purchase a commerce raider in Britain. The ship, named the Sea King, sailed to Madeira where it met a cargo ship, loaded guns and military gear. Its title was transferred to the Confederacy and its name changed to the CSS Shenandoah. Orders to Captain James Waddell were to "seek out and utterly destroy the whaling fleets of New England as part of an effort to bleed the Union of its economic strength...." The ship had to leave Madeira with only a fraction of the crew needed so that Waddell recruited his crew from captured Yankee ships as he sailed. Many Yankee crews joined the Shenandoah, amazingly, including a black man volunteering for duty aboard a Confederate Ship. After commissioning, the Shenandoah sailed around the Cape of Good Hope to Melbourne, Australia, encountering enroute heavy weather. The author gives an fascinating account of the Shenandoah's Australian visit where the American consul attempted to have the ship seized as being in violation of Britain's Neutrality Act. The war was running against the South, and England wanted to distance herself from the loser; nevertheless, the Shenandoah was ultimately able to leave Australian and sail to the Artic whaling grounds. In an amazing display of seamanship the Shenandoah entered the Artic, traveling north of the Aleutian Islands, ravaging the American whaling fleet until weather and ice conditions forced the Shenandoah to travel south.. Not knowing the Confederacy had collapsed, they continued to attack Union whalers.

I have been told that the only difference between a Fairy Tale and a Sea Story is that a Fairy Tale begins "Once upon a time" while a Sea Story starts off "You ain't gonna believe this shit". Lynn Schooler gives neither of these warnings before telling us of the exploits of a Confederate warship, the CSS Shenandoah. The events described in this book are unbelievable. Schooler even goes as far as refuting the known statement that no foreign powers ever recognized the Confederacy as a state. He tells us that a Pacific King who not only recognized, but allied with the Confederate States of America after negotiations with James Waddell, Captain of the Shenandoah. Well, you know what is said about Fairy Tales and Sea Stories. But, the Federated States of Micronesia commemorates this alliance with a postage stamp, bearing the likeness of the Shenandoah. The description of Fairy Tale does not fit this book. The events noted in The Last Shot are documented in other sources. With its grab and hold, Last Shot reads like an adventure novel. Perhaps, it was started with the idea of an alternate history novel with Jeff Davis escaping to Trans

Mississippi and Waddell and the Shenandoah seizing San Francisco with its mint and ransoming for the dying Confederacy. The interesting footnotes explain terms, etc., instead of indicating sources. Sources of comments and disagreements of the officers and crew are indicated by the journals, articles, and books by those present on the Shenandoah in the extensive bibliography. The Last Shot is proof that fact is better than fiction. However, the use as a reference, checking to see Schooler's account of an event, is hindered by lack of an index. Although the book is biased, it looks at all sides.

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