

Paper/Roundtable Abstracts
NASOH-NMHS 2026

Paper Abstracts

Emma Abate – Simmons University

Authority and Authorship: Approaching Sea Songs as Literature

Sea chanties have held a pertinent role in maritime culture for centuries. Despite these songs' widespread legacy in our popular imagination, they are often overlooked for their merit as literature. Chanties are often limited by the rigid definition of work songs sung at sea, as they were documented by sailors and collectors such as W.B. Whall and Stan Hugill in the 20th century. However, the manuscripts of another collection— Frederick Pease Harlow's *Chanteying Aboard American Ships*— suggest that sea songs could have had held different meanings to those who sung them. Applying Blue Humanities theory to Harlow's manuscripts and the broader tradition of sea song scholarship, this paper examines what authorship meant to chanteymen and their timeless lyrics: as well as those that had been forgotten or erased. Broadening our understanding of English language sea songs as defined by previous chantey collectors, Harlow's manuscripts examine where lines have been drawn between sea songs and literature, and who has the authority to make said distinction. This paper was written in part for the 2025 Munson Institute of American Maritime Studies at the Mystic Seaport Museum.

Molly Jean Adams – Oklahoma State University

When the WAVES Crashed Across Oklahoma's Shore: Yeomen (F) Training at Oklahoma A&M During World War II

During World War II, the community of Stillwater, Oklahoma hosted 10,783 Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Services (WAVES). The "ladies of the Navy" trained to become yeomen (F) on Oklahoma A&M's campus, and took on many different roles assisting the American war effort. The presence of the WAVES helped further develop many of the small communities they were sent to, including the town of Stillwater, Oklahoma. The training center in Stillwater was one of the largest and oldest of the specialty training schools, and the contributions of the yeomen (F) were a driving factor of the integration of the United States Armed Forces in 1948. However, the WAVES, like many women in the military, are oftentimes left out in popular historical narratives. Even though the WAVES had a large presence in Stillwater, there are no forms of commemoration dedicated to them. Utilizing the Oklahoma State University archives, this presentation addresses the ever-present archival and historical silences surrounding the WAVES.

Ray Ashley – San Diego Maritime Museum
Historic Ships and World Heritage

The material legacy of human interaction with the sea is embodied within a few remaining historic ships that transcend thousands of years of heritage. At the present, within the most esteemed and effective international system of heritage recognition, UNESCO World Heritage Sites, ships are not afforded the same level of significance as comparable terrestrial structures. This is the case despite the fact that some of them will remain forever in place as archeological sites or have been installed as permanent features of the landscape. Moreover, because the significance of these treasures is sometimes not well understood or recognized, this patrimony is at risk. This talk will propose that for the first time as architectural forms, the great historic ships be recognized collectively in the world's foremost mechanism for affording significance as embodying the role that the oceans, as ancient and ongoing pathways of exploration, communication, trade, and the projection of power, have ever played in the human story.

Kasey E. Beck – Southern Connecticut State University
"Last Cruise": The F-14 Tomcat's Final Years—Historical and Cultural Impact in the Waning Years of Service (1991-2006)

This paper investigates the Grumman F-14 Tomcat's final fifteen years of service (1991-2006) to understand modern defense spending and military procurement processes. The primary goal is to understand the complex reasons behind the aircraft's retirement and to compare them with contemporary procurement challenges facing the U.S. Navy. My research utilizes a three-pillar approach: analyzing primary operational documents, reviewing institutional policy records, and incorporating secondary historical scholarship.

I argue that the F-14's retirement was "overdetermined": no single factor explains its phase-out. Instead, a combination of factors, including technical complexity, rising maintenance and operational costs, budgetary constraints after the Cold War, shifting mission requirements, and evolving security concerns, all played significant roles. This case study reveals patterns that persist in today's military procurement: cost overruns, mission creep, inter-service rivalries, and the tension between maintaining legacy systems versus investing in next-generation platforms. By examining the F-14 program's conclusion, this research offers crucial insights into current debates over the F-35 program, naval aviation modernization, and defense acquisition reform. Understanding why the Navy retired its most iconic fighter illuminates the institutional, economic, and strategic forces shaping fleet composition decisions today.

John Beeler – University of Alabama
The Royal Navy and the end of William Walker, 1860

The fate of notorious filibuster William Walker (1824-1860) is well known: driven to seek refuge aboard a British man-of-war in early September 1860 after a disastrous landing on the Honduran coast, he was turned over to the Honduran authorities by the ship's commander, Nowell Salmon, and promptly executed. Less well known are the British government's policies and practices with regard to filibustering expeditions, policies, which led to a major shift in the Royal Navy's Caribbean operations during the 1850s, and which resulted in questions, if not outright recriminations, following Walker's execution, owing to the failure to supply Salmon with the navy's specific instructions relative to filibusters. This paper will examine the British response to the rise of filibustering, the exact circumstances leading to Walker's demise, the Admiralty's efforts to discover "who knew what, and when" in the aftermath of his death, and the implications that can be drawn from the episode regarding mid-Victorian concepts of "honor" and "gentlemanly" behavior. It is based chiefly on the papers of Alexander Milne, Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Navy's North America and West India Station 1860-1864.

Nicholas Benda – University of Connecticut
"Matanzas in the Margins: The Munson Steamship Line and the American Presence in Cuba"

In 1893, Captain Walter D. Munson of the Munson Steamship Line announced a breakthrough in the Cuban–American sugar trade: a novel way to ship Cuban molasses using reused oil tanks on the barks Matanzas and Carrie E. Long. This innovation allowed Munson's oil steamboats to unload shipments of molasses within forty-eight hours. Munson steamboats would run American oil to Cuba, pick up molasses, and return. Six years later and just after the United States installed a military government over Cuba, the Munson Steamship Line announced a major expansion of activity within the international sugar and oil industry. Tracing the Line's early days in the oil and sugar trades, this paper uses the Munson Steamship Line to analyze the role of maritime technological change in American–Cuban relations in the late-19th and early-20th century. The paper will also discuss how ambitions of annexation manifested within advertising and American interest in Cuban culture, and how we might better understand the development of maritime studies as a field by clearing the fog around our memories of institutional namesakes.

Max Chervin Bridge - Brown University

Listening Inside the Shrimp Belt: Nature, Geopolitics, and the Agency of the Snap

During WWII, the U.S Navy confronted a mysterious underwater "crackling" noise that interfered with their sonar capabilities in the Pacific. They discovered that the "fusilade" of noise was due to masses of "snapping shrimp" popping their plunger-like claws throughout their geographic range. Predicting the acoustical distribution of snapping shrimp became an important objective so as to calibrate listening equipment and even appropriate the animals as a kind of acoustic camouflage. This story offers an opportunity to reflect on old debates about the "agency" of nonhuman animals in marine and environmental history. The geography of the "shrimp belt" was delimited as much by patterns of imperial occupation as by the ecology of snapping shrimp. The sounds produced by snapping shrimp frustrated and facilitated U.S. militarism completely unbeknownst to the shrimp themselves. And snapping shrimp reshaped historical events as a collectivity rather than at the level of an individual animal. This story asks historians to rethink the limitations of methods of animal history whose categories continue to privilege only certain modes of life to the exclusion of species whose agency should neither be collapsed into a vague category of "the nonhuman" nor be articulated at the level of individual choice and action.

Sam Cavell - Southeastern Louisiana University

David Porter USN and the Challenges of Anti-Privateering Operations in the Territory of Orleans, 1810

When David Porter took command of the New Orleans station in 1808 he had little understanding of the difficulties involved in enforcing US maritime law and cracking down on the swarms of privateers who used the city as a base for smuggling. For years his efforts met with limited success, but in 1810 Porter captured three French "legalized pirates" off the mouth of the Mississippi River. When their captains failed to produce legitimate letters of marque, Porter impounded the vessels and their cargoes. His actions sparked a controversial trial, threats to Porter's life, and counter suits by the privateers and their investors that dragged on for years. Throughout the contested prize condemnation process the Navy offered little support to an officer who had risked everything in the performance of his duty. This paper addresses the details of Porter's campaign against privateers during a global war that increasingly involved American interests and emphasizes the limits of US state power in a frontier territory hostile to metropolitan control.

Cori Convertito – Key West Art & Historical Society
Suppressing Privateers in the Caribbean: Royal Navy Operations during the French Revolutionary Wars

This paper examines the role of HMS *Victorieuse* and other Royal Navy vessels in suppressing privateering activity in the Caribbean during the French Revolutionary Wars, highlighting a largely overlooked aspect of British naval strategy. While much scholarship emphasizes fleet actions and blockades, ships like *Victorieuse* spent substantial time patrolling the region to intercept French and allied privateers, protect merchant shipping, and enforce imperial authority at sea.

Drawing on ship logs, Admiralty records, and prize court documents, this study reconstructs several anti-privateer operations to show how the Royal Navy combined mobility, local knowledge, and coordination with colonial authorities to maintain maritime control. These operations played an important supporting role in British imperial strategy, contributing to the protection of commerce and the enforcement of naval dominance in contested waters. HMS *Victorieuse* and her counterparts thus serve as case studies for understanding both the operational and strategic dimensions of anti-privateer operations in the Revolutionary Caribbean.’

Chris Costello – US Naval War College
Ice Rifts: American Public-Private Cooperation and Exploration in the Early Antarctic

Enterprising Americans exploring the geographic boundaries of the Southern Ocean in the pursuit of whales and seals provoked fierce secrecy among their expeditions while also garnering growing public interest and federal support. Notably, the collusion between Stonington, Connecticut’s private and highly competitive sealing expeditions to the South Atlantic and South Pacific, and the limits of cartographic and taxonomic knowledge of the Antarctic created an opportunity to harness the early republic’s desire for utilitarian knowledge with its burgeoning maritime industries. With the United States Navy still too small in the 1820s, local and federal backers of a national naval exploring expedition then promoted a public-private venture to the Antarctic using public funding, naval charters, and citizen sailors. What followed instead was a roguish and disastrous journey to the bottom of the earth that demonstrated the limits of cooperation and the necessity of increased federal intervention and support that would catalyze the famed United States Exploring Expedition of the late 1830s.

Jessie Cragg – University of West Florida Historic Trust
Reframing the Revolution in British Florida: Maritime History and the 250th

Along the Gulf Coast, the American Revolution was experienced not as a break from British rule, but as a contest shaped by ports, ships, and imperial power. This presentation examines *Road to Revolution*, the newest exhibit at the UWF Historic Trust's Pensacola Museum of History, and its role in reframing Florida's place within the American Revolution. Centering Pensacola's strategic maritime position under British control, the exhibit highlights naval power, port activity, trade networks, and coastal defenses that shaped the region's revolutionary experience. By using different interpretive strategies to connect local British colonial history to national revolutionary themes, it became clear how maritime perspectives expand traditional narratives. *Road to Revolution* unpacks the conflict as it unfolded along the water's edge, and highlights a different perspective of the American Revolution.

Megan Crutcher – Trinity College
The Kru, the Merchants, and the Navy: Reframing a Free Maritime Wage Labor Contract System in 19th-Century West Africa

During the long 19th century, a distinct maritime labor and cultural phenomenon occurred on the west coast of Africa: the emergence and ubiquity of the Kru mariner. The Kru are an Indigenous Kwa-speaking group from coastal Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire who became famous as maritime and port workers across West Africa in the employ of various European nations and in ports as far as Freetown, Accra, Liverpool, Monrovia, Simon's Town, Bioko, and others. Kru mariners have been characterized as a free wage labor diaspora built on temporary contracts aboard shipping vessels. In this piece, I argue that for a reframing of Kru maritime labor around the theories of capitalist racism and superexploitation defined best by Clarisse Burden-Stelly in her 2023 work *Black Scare/Red Scare: Theorizing Capitalist Racism in the United States*. Using novel archaeological data excavated along the Kru coast of Liberia as well as archival sources from the US and UK, I argue that the Indigenous Kru were increasingly placed in vulnerable economic, political, and social positions within the fledgling settler nation-state of Liberia, and this had a push-pull effect on their ability to obtain shipboard employment within a growing maritime capitalist state and the world system.

Catherine Osborne DeCesare – University of Rhode Island

Risk in the Anglo-Atlantic World: HMS *Driver* in US Waters during the Napoleonic Wars

During the Napoleonic Wars, the Royal Navy increased its surveillance of the US coast, effectively extending the borders of the British Empire to the doorsteps of America and into US communities. My research illustrates the continuity of British naval power in the North Atlantic by examining, in part, the maneuvers and actions of the HMS *Driver* in US territorial waters. After the American Revolution, Britain continued its dominance by strengthening naval bases in Halifax and Bermuda. While these ports increased in strategic importance, old networks and supply lines remained. The British continued to use American ports in the early 19th century particularly Sandy Hook, New Jersey and Hampton Roads, Virginia for reprovisioning and as bases to hunt US vessels. This paper tracks the cruises of the HMS *Driver*, as part of a growing North American fleet, and it illuminates the long-standing practice of American communities collaborating with the British Navy in the early 19th century, exposing fluctuating territorial borders during times of war.

Jennifer Drieves – King's College London

Resurfacing: Patenting, Open-sourcing, and Competition in the United Kingdom's Emerging Screw Propeller Industry, 1836-1914

Within the marine engineering world of the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, the screw propeller was big business. Screw propeller practitioners and businesses grappled with this theoretically difficult technology while simultaneously implementing the screw and seeking to improve their business interests. With the backdrop of an evolving patent system and an emerging engineering profession, the screw propeller industry, a critical subsection of the shipbuilding and engineering industries, owed its (temporary) existence and ultimate success at least in part to the courts' recognition of patent rights, the filing of both offensive and defensive patents, and practitioners and businessmen publicly open-sourcing their ideas and datasets. While the term open sourcing may be relatively new with origins tied to computers and software development, the emergence of the screw propeller demonstrated that the concept was not. This investigation allowed for the screw to be re-examined and revised for the 21st century, examining how these individuals and companies developed, patented, manufactured, sold, discussed, and implemented screw propeller technologies in England between 1836 and 1914.

Michael P. Dyer – Independent Scholar

“How Did Buzzards Bay Get its Name? A Cartographic Overview and New Proposal”

The navigation history of what is today named Buzzards Bay dates to the early seventeenth century but the bay was not systematically surveyed until early in the eighteenth century. In the interval the well-known history of Massachusetts and Rhode Island colonial settlement patterns emerged, with “Manomet Bay” as it was then known, serving as central waterway for trade between Dutch settlements in New York and the Plymouth colony. That all changed around mid-century as Quaker colonists settled the region bringing strongly-voiced radical ideas upsetting to the Puritan establishment who governed the Massachusetts Bay Colony. What eventually emerged after the Toleration Act of 1689 seems to be a political reaction on the part of Anglican cartographers in England to the Quaker colonists in the region, and the derisive term “buzzards” is applied to the body of water around which many Quakers settled. This paper will use PowerPoint slides of a number of charts, maps, and prints clearly outlining the chronology and providing source material in support of this hypothesis.

Callum Easton, Independent Scholar

Sailor Princes and Sailor Paupers: Worth, Merit, and Identity among Greenwich Pensioners

Between 1705 and 1869, Greenwich Hospital, a majestic palace by the Thames, served as a charitable home for old or wounded naval sailors and a potent tool of state policy. Standing at the gateway to the world’s busiest port and the imperial metropole, its residents were multinational and multi-ethnic, reflecting the full reach of Britain’s global maritime interests, and the Royal Navy’s relentless demand for wartime manpower. The resident Greenwich pensioners held a contradictory identity combining hero and pauper, prestige and stigma. Admission was competitive, with careful consideration of applicant’s merits. As such, this institution stood at the nexus of ideas about individual worthiness for charitable help (the ‘deserving maritime poor’), national interests, and the public good. Even in their dotage, the Greenwich pensioners continued to be used to further state interests. Using hospital records, popular imagery, and even a Greenwich pensioner’s handwritten poems, this paper seeks to uncover some of the hidden transcripts and micro-negotiations that made up the experience of daily life for this diverse population of veteran sailors.

Nnaemeka Enemchukwu – Southern Illinois University
Igbo Traders and the Maritime Economy of Lagos, 1970–2023

This paper investigates the role of Igbo traders in shaping the maritime economy of Lagos from 1970 to 2023. After the devastation of the Nigerian Civil War, the Igbo turned to trade and commerce as a means of recovery, with Lagos—Nigeria’s principal maritime hub—emerging as a focal point. Historically tied to the Atlantic slave trade and strengthened under British colonial rule, Lagos’s ports became vital to post-war Igbo entrepreneurship and settlement, especially in Apapa, Surulere, and Ajegunle. Igbo traders soon dominated import and distribution networks, moving goods such as automobiles, building materials, textiles, and electronics. Through cooperative finance systems like *esusu*, they developed major markets including Alaba International, Ladipo, and the Trade Fair Complex, linking Lagos’s maritime economy to the Nigerian hinterland and global supply chains in Asia and the Middle East. Their investments are significant, with estimates suggesting that Igbo capital accounts for nearly three-quarters of private investment in Lagos. Despite these contributions, Igbo traders have faced systemic challenges, including discriminatory state policies, corruption at the ports, and periodic xenophobic attacks. By examining their strategies of adaptation and resilience, this paper situates Igbo maritime enterprise within broader debates on migration, ethnicity, and urban economic transformation in postcolonial Nigeria.

Harrison G. Fender – US Naval Academy
Securing NATO’s High North: The Integration of the Marine Corps in the Northern Flank.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization’s (NATO) ability to defend Northern Europe appeared precarious in the 1970s. European forces alone could not match the might of the Soviet Union, who, if war broke out, threatened to seize this “Northern Flank” and use it as a staging point to attack NATO’s bases and shipping lanes. NATO members attempted to bolster defenses by diverting additional forces to the region. The U.S. Marine Corps would be among forces. The Marines provided much needed assistance in the form of large units, air assets, and mobility. The decision to integrate the Marines into Northern Flank defenses is often seen as either giving the Marines a purpose amidst America’s shift towards NATO or a means of stabilizing the Marine Corps in the wake of Vietnam. Closer inspection reveals that the decision to integrate the Marines had as much to do with strategic calculations than a sense of finding a mission. The strategic emphasis proved lasting, as 1980s’ naval plans, like the Maritime Strategy and Amphibious Warfare Strategy, continued to integrate Marine units into plans for Arctic and North Atlantic operations.

Howard Fuller – University of Wolverhampton

Britannia's Albatross: How the Legendary Wreck of HMS *Captain* Remains Lost to the Sea

Since 2021, the University of Wolverhampton has struggled to Find the *Captain*—the greatest Royal Navy shipwreck of the Victorian era. As this paper will briefly recount, this has been as much about trying to shine a light on the *Captain*'s abysmal place in history as upon her hidden remains off Spain's 'Costa da Morte'. Our exasperation isn't just about fundraising. No one can apparently expect a rich sponsor to back the discovery of the 'most famous British warship you've never heard of'. Part of the problem goes back to the established interpretation of what the *Captain* means, historically. And this includes the court martial's original verdict which blamed 'public opinion' for backing a technological marvel badly conceived, improperly built, and (with the Controller of the Navy's spin thrown in) handled carelessly; a perfect trifecta of poor responsibility in ship disaster terms. If nothing else, the *Captain* is now a by-word for tainted professionalism if not naval prowess. Historians would rather ignore the unfortunate episode; on social media platforms like YouTube it's a bad joke of a ship. Our hope is that finding the actual wreck will help retell her story in human terms; a tragedy better told than forgotten.

Sean Getway – The Ohio State University

A 5,000 Mile Decision: Naval Base Debates Between Hawaii and the Philippines at the Start of the Twentieth Century.

From George Dewey's victory in Manilla to the end of the first decade of the Twentieth Century, the United States debated the relative strength and importance of naval base locations between Hawaii and the Philippines. The two territories, newly acquired via separate methods in 1898, presented the United States with the ability to construct naval infrastructure in the vein of the British Royal Navy. These naval bases and their infrastructure supported fleet operations in the vast Pacific which in turn supported larger strategic aims of the United States. This paper examines the debates and eventual decision that Pearl Harbor, vice a base in the Philippines, would become the major naval support facility in the Pacific. The paper looks to clarify historiographical discrepancies regarding timelines and analyze the debates within the Navy, Army-Navy debates, and Congressional discussion and final appropriations and their interconnected nature and the links with the emerging U.S. empire.

Eleanor Goetz – Yale University

“Foraminifera as Indicators of Invasions in Highly Impacted Ecosystems: *Ammonia confertitesta* in Long Island Sound”

Introduced species are rarely documented until after they become successful invaders, leaving questions about the timing of invasion, geographic origin, vectors and pathways, and reason(s) for success. To improve understanding of invasive species and their vectors, we use records of Foraminifera to document the timing and history of the establishment of an invasive species (*Ammonia confertitesta*) from Asia, in Long Island Sound. We identified *Ammonia* to the species level using morphology (historical and current samples) and molecular methods (current only) in core samples dating from ~10,000 years before present to 2023 (surface samples). The earliest *A. confertitesta* specimen identified is from Western LIS, near New York City, from ~1820 CE, and thus likely introduced in the early 19th century, a time of increasing urbanization and ship traffic. Following a ~50-year lag, we observed a rapid proliferation in the 1970s-80s, when container ships greatly increased the discharge of ballast water.

Glenn S. Gordinier – Mystic Seaport Museum

Redemption: Surfing’s Historic Arc from Indigenous Communities Through Colonization to Global Commitment

For centuries in Hawaii, Africa, and elsewhere, Indigenous people rode waves for pleasure. Whole communities, young and old, male and female, shared the joy of surfing. By the early 20th century, those traditional activities had become dominated by people of European descent. By mid-century, that joy had spread to millions around the globe. But with that spread came the Western tendency to prioritize individual realization over cooperation. “Stay off my wave!” became the global mantra.

Over the last century, this may have been the case, but not over time. Today, inspired surfers are turning once again to the values of community over self. Drawing on 21st-century technologies and their own energy (stoke), wave riders have founded organizations that advance equal opportunity, attend to people’s physical, mental, and emotional needs, and support the health of our watery planet.

This illustrated paper will introduce these innovators and their organizations that are transforming how we take pleasure at the edges of the world’s oceans. In doing so, these surfers/founders have influenced our relationship with the sea and each other. They include the founders of SurfAid International, Surfrider Foundation, Surfers Against Sewage, Warrior Surf Foundation and the Irish woman who took surfing to Iran.

Brooke Grasberger - University of Oldenburg
The Voyage of MV *Global Mariner* and Intersections of Decay

In 1998, the International Transportation Workers Federation purchased an aging general cargo vessel, overhauled and refitted it, renamed it *Global Mariner* and sent it on an eighteen-month voyage to more than seventy ports around the world as part of an ongoing campaign against Flags of Convenience (FOCs, or open registries), giving visitors a rare view into the dangers and discomforts faced by seafarers, as well as the interior of commercial shipping vessels, while also meeting with local unions and on a few occasions intervening directly in seafarers' issues. The substandard ships targeted by the ITF's campaign operated at the intersection of irresponsible management and marine ecology, with biotic and abiotic processes of decay enabled both by lack of responsibility borne by shipowners and managers, and the physical conditions of the sea. This paper engages this historically particular voyage as it spoke to the ecological relationships of decay aboard commercial vessels and how those in turn impacted the larger marine environment and seafarers' conditions. It focuses on the intersection of what's visible and invisible, from corrosion visible on the deck of a ship to that hidden in ballast tanks, to vessels passed for inspection and their long periods of disappearance from surveillance during their time at sea to the intense visibility of decay-related disaster and the relative hiddenness of *Global Mariner's* voyage.

Heather M. Haley – Joint History Research Office
A New ERA for Women in the Navy: Zumwalt, Z-Grams, and the All-Volunteer Force

At the time Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt's watch began as the Chief of Naval Operations in 1970, the Navy's first-term reenlistment rate had plummeted to the lowest ever recorded in the service's history, 9.5%.¹ Paradoxically, Zumwalt also faced an emerging women's movement demanding equity in pay, training, and career opportunities. The reemergence of the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) and murmurs of a shift to an All-Volunteer Force prompted Zumwalt to address, if he could not entirely resolve, the social and economic problems faced by American women as potential enlistees.

"A New ERA for Women in the Navy" explores how Zumwalt's Z-grams not only operated within the seemingly rigid confines of established Navy policy, but simultaneously extended the limits of those boundaries to advance women in the service as a way to help improve enlistment rates and retention. This research—a chapter in the forthcoming edited volume, *Stormy Seas: The U.S. Navy and the End of the Vietnam War* (USNI Press)—uses oral histories conducted in 1988 and 1996 to identify the cause(s) of the Navy's retention and enlistment deficiencies and to ascertain Zumwalt's predilection for or against substantial policy changes that would advance women sailors to parity with men.

Morgan S. Hardy – University of Tennessee

“Poor Times, No Fish:” Environmental Decline and Sustainable Practice in Eighteenth-Century New England

Benjamin Bangs found himself drenched after a cold, easterly storm met him off the shore of Massachusetts’ Cape Cod in June 1747. The Bostonian fisherman, alongside other fishers, flung his hemp lines into the water and hoped for a bite. Yet, Bangs came up empty. He lamented, “We could catch no fish.” After the storm passed, Bangs cast his line again and caught only “a few cod fish.” He then recorded “poor times, no fish.” Having assessed their losses, the crew sailed home.

Throughout the 1730s and the 1740s, New Englanders recognized that the New England fishing grounds were deteriorating. Many fishers—among them the Bostonian fisherman Benjamin Bangs and the Newfoundland fisher Benjamin Lester—felt the effects of declining fishing waters. As these fishers knew well, oceanic marine life and the environment posed significant challenges to fishing voyages, including storms, shifting currents, temperature fluctuations, and fish migrations. Despite these environmental barriers, New England fishers created sustainable practices to offset declining fishing waters. Such practices included catching bait fish at specific times, hook sizes and net selection. Sustainability offers a new perspective on these overlooked eighteenth-century fishing practices and challenges the idea that early modern fishing was purely extractive or environmentally indifferent.

Ingo Heidbrink – Old Dominion University

Recent Changes in Antarctic Cruise Tourism – Who Owns the History of Antarctica?

In recent years more than 100,000 passengers per year have traveled to Antarctica by (expedition) cruise ship. Besides penguins, whales and giant icebergs, Antarctic heritage, historic monuments and sites are some of the main attractions why people are embarking on Antarctic cruises.

The proposed paper will discuss how Antarctic heritage, historic monuments and sites are used for political purposes in the context of the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) and what does it mean that they are in an area without national sovereignty.

In addition, the paper will discuss the consequences of the changing national origin of the passengers of the Antarctic cruise ships, and in particular discuss what this might mean for the public history professionals working onboard expedition cruise ships or at museums in Antarctica.

The paper will conclude with a discussion of if the current regulatory framework is sufficient to avoid abuse of historic monuments for political purpose in Antarctica, and the required qualifications to work in the field of public history in an area like Antarctica.

David Hipple - Texas Tech University

“The Brown Water Who? The understudied U.S. Brown Water Navy in Vietnam”

This paper examines an understudied aspect of the Vietnam War, the Brown Water Navy. Initial interdiction operations against enemy riverine supply lines from 1965-1969 achieved moderate success and led to a complacency that took over the Brown Water Navy, resulting in a loss of initiative. Furthermore, the Brown Water Navy failed in subsequent years to evolve and adapt to Viet Cong tactics. Utilizing sailors' memoirs, Commander of Naval Force Vietnam Reports (COMNAFORV), and other primary sources, this paper will examine why Admiral Kenneth Veth and naval leadership failed to maintain the initiative in Vietnam. Veth's dismissal and subsequent replacement by Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, provided a much-needed change in leadership and revitalization to the Brown Water Navy that saw a modification in strategy, tactics, and aggression. This revitalization serves as an excellent case study in leadership, strategy, and application to possible future conflicts where rivers and littoral zones are involved.

Jennifer Hubbard – Toronto Metropolitan University

The FAO Fisheries Division and its Agenda: A Force for Environmental or Economic Good?

Fisheries biology, it appears, is better at explaining the past than predicting the future. However, this was not apparent when the Food and Agriculture Organization was created in 1943-45, and the Fisheries Division was included due to the intervention of the Canadian Deputy Minister of Fisheries. In a burst of post-war optimism, scientifically managed fisheries were projected to help with rebuilding Europe and aiding the neo-colonial development of the fisheries of nations later labelled as belonging to the Third World. What is curious is that Donovan Bartholomew Finn attained his position as Deputy Minister of Fisheries due to his politically astute positioning of his professional expertise in the biochemistry of fish processing: his Ph.D was in fisheries biochemistry, not fisheries science per se. In other words, he was creating a scientific program that strictly speaking, lay outside of his own area of expertise. While the FAO archives do not include any files that reveal the sources of the general fisheries research program that he put in place once appointed director of the Fisheries Division of the FAO (a position he would retain until his retirement in 1964), it turns out that the entire agenda was a product of his correspondence with one of his key mentors. Dr. Archibald Gowanlock Huntsman, in the period in which Finn was conceiving and developing this branch of the FAO, but was hampered by a serious personal tragedy. Huntsman provided insights, cautions, and overall inspiration for Finn and thus shaped the agenda that dominated global fisheries science for the next quarter of a century and beyond: economic growth paired with purported environmental protection, for better or for worse.

John Odin Jensen – University of West Florida

Female Mariners and U.S. Admiralty Courts in the Great Lakes Region, 1850 – 1920

Between about 1850 and 1920 thousands of women found work as cooks and stewards aboard Great Lakes merchant cargo vessels, tugs, and other floating utility craft. While their duties afloat were the essentially same as those when working in middle-class homes, the physical, cultural, economic, and legal contexts of their labor differed substantially. Rejecting gender as a defining category for maritime labor, and classifying cooks and stewards as mariners, the U.S. federal district courts in Ohio and Michigan in the 1850s cleared the way for women employed on ships to seek legal redress through admiralty actions to secure their wages, which they did with relative frequency. These maritime women also turned to federal authorities for redress in criminal matters, including physical and sexual assault. Drawing on newspaper accounts, records of legal decisions, and manuscript case files from the U.S. Federal District Courts, this presentation examines the legal dimensions of women's employment on Great Lake commercial vessels.

Christine Keiner – Rochester Institute of Technology

Environmental Reconsiderations of the Erie Canal

The 2025 commemoration of the Erie Canal's opening included an important symbolic nod to the Haudenosaunee, upon whose land New York politicians built the waterway without permission. Sailing aboard a replica of the 1825 Seneca Chief, participants stopped at ports along the way to plant eastern white pines, known to the Haudenosaunee as the Great Tree of Peace.

These observances evoked another environmental celebration from the 1825 voyage, when New York governor DeWitt Clinton poured water from Lake Erie into New York Harbor. Today the "Wedding of the Waters" ceremony would be considered a biohazard due to knowledge of the negative effects of invasive species.

Yet Clinton paid close attention to the route's fish and birdlife while surveying it in 1810. Long before the emergence of invasion biology, he predicted that the waterway would facilitate what we now call biological exchange. However, he viewed the human-mediated movement of species as positive, a view consistent with contemporaneous initiatives to improve nature.

This presentation examines Clinton's writings on the fauna of the canal route in the context of ichthyology and natural history surveying in the early republic, and more broadly, the evolution of environmental impact assessment for large-scale infrastructural development.

Carolyn Kennedy – Texas A&M University

Philadelphia Gunboat Research Initiative (PGRI) – A Revitalized Approach to Conservation of American Revolutionary War Artifacts

One of the earliest naval engagements of the American Revolutionary War was the 1776 Battle of Valcour Bay, where General Benedict Arnold led a hastily constructed American fleet against a superior British force on Lake Champlain. Though a tactical defeat, the battle delayed the British advance and contributed to the American victory at Saratoga the following year. Among the losses was *Philadelphia*, a small gunboat built just three months earlier. The vessel remained on the lakebed until its 1935 recovery by amateur historian Colonel Lorenzo Hagglund and was later placed in the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History. Early conservation was limited, and deterioration of the hull has continued. In response, Texas A&M's Conservation Research Laboratory initiated a study of *Philadelphia*'s condition, prompting renewed investigation of its sinking context. In 2024–2025, the Philadelphia Gunboat Research Initiative surveyed the battlefield using underwater metal detectors, locating artifacts including fasteners, cut wood, mortar fragments, and a 6-lb cannonball. These findings enhance interpretation of *Philadelphia* and deepen understanding of this early American naval battlefield.

Faye M. Kert – Independent Scholar
Finding L.P.C.

In February, 1844, *The Knickerbocker* or *New York Monthly Magazine*, published the first of a five-part series entitled *Reminiscences of a Dartmoor Prisoner*. Typical of articles in many nineteenth-century magazines, the memoir was unsigned. Instead, it concluded with the initials L.P. .C., with no acknowledgement in any installments before or after of the writer's full name or credentials. Who was L.P.C.? How did he end up in Dartmoor Prison in 1815? And why did he wait nearly thirty years before writing his memoirs?' Having spent several years tracking down War of 1812 American prisoners of war in British prisons, I knew I could find him - if he really existed. Identifying L.P. .C. became an exercise in forensic history, revealing not only the name of the author, but how his life before and after captivity shaped his *Reminiscences*. Once he had a name, his voice could be heard.

David Kohnen

Our VANISHED History and Traditions

Civilian scholars worked closely with historically minded naval officers in providing discrete strategic backchannels, which anchored the development of Anglo-American naval collaboration in global maritime affairs. During the First World War, Sir Julian Corbett's "Historical Section" informed British operational planning which likewise extended to U.S. Navy Admiral William S. Sims's "London Flagship" headquarters. Building from London Flagship experience, U.S. Navy Captain Dudley W. Knox nurtured collaboration through a transnational network of likeminded historians and fellow naval officers. Alas, Knox received several Presidential Letters of Censure for his historical efforts in the 1920s. Dauntless in his historical mission, Knox penned the purposefully provocative essay "Our Vanishing History and Traditions" in 1927. An outcast working from within the Navy Department bureaucracy, Knox eventually earned a powerful patron – President Franklin D. Roosevelt – to advance the historical cause of American sea power before the Second World War. Given this past, my paper will also examine how historical education may provide means for meeting the transcendent mission of American sea power into the twenty-first century and beyond.

Roshan Kulatunga – Indo-Pacific Study Centre

Rationale of Maritime Strategic Thinking for Small Island States in the Indian Ocean Region

This study examines the significance of adopting a philosophical perspective in maritime strategies for Small Island States (SIS) in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), focusing on Sri Lanka, Seychelles, the Maldives, and Mauritius as case studies. These SIS display notable shortcomings in developing maritime strategies compared to larger maritime powers. The presence of major powers like the USA, India, UK, China, Russia, and Australia offers both a significant geopolitical opportunity and a challenge for SIS. These case studies often face structural weaknesses, political instability, and economic hurdles when engaging with larger states. Although influential thinkers such as Sun Tzu, Thucydides, Chanakya, Jomini, and Admiral Mahan have provided valuable insights into warfare and maritime strategy, SIS generally underutilize this military and maritime wisdom for statecraft. Maritime strategy is crucial for national security, requiring careful consideration of underlying philosophical values, strategic ideas, principles, and guidelines. This research aims to explore the rationale for cultivating a maritime strategic mindset and underscores the need for SIS-specific maritime strategies. Using a primarily descriptive and analytical approach, with secondary sources and interviews with maritime scholars, the preliminary findings reveal a lack of cohesive functionalism in maritime strategy development. This gap increases vulnerability in the strategic competition with larger nations, directly impacting SIS security.

Silvermoon Mars LaRose – Tomaquag Museum

Adventures of a Wanderer: The Life and Lessons of Charles Lansing and the Narragansett Chief

The *Narragansett Chief*, published anonymously in 1832, has long been considered a work of fiction. Recent scholarship, however, reveals it to be an autobiography penned by Charles Lansing, a Native American mariner. Lansing's life at sea – three dozen voyages, twenty countries, five continents - presents a global maritime history from below, one that illuminates the circuitry of empire, the lived experience of black markets and borderlands, and the boundaries of race and power. From 1806 to 1831, Lansing chronicled his life of crime and adventure, and after reuniting with his father in a Spanish prison, recorded the history of his father and grandfather (the Narragansett Indian chief) to the 1760s. For a brief time, Lansing and his book were the cause célèbre of abolitionist and free thinking circles, challenging religious, social, and political orthodoxy in the Early Republic. A broader reexamination and contextualization of this narrative is currently underway as a long-silenced voice is repatriated to the canon of American literature.

Michael Laver – Rochester Institute of Technology

The Grand Canal and American Exceptionalism: The Erie Canal as a World-Historical Achievement

The Erie Canal is a triumph of American ingenuity. Early Americans were keen to contrast this American endeavor with other canals in world history, portraying the canal as a culminating triumph, from the Chinese Grand Canal to the canals in Ancient Egypt, to the Bridgewater Canal and the Canal du Midi in Europe. In this sense, the success of the American experiment was symbolized by the success of the canal, surpassing all other engineering (and political) achievements in both ancient and recent history. American pundits and politicians ostentatiously celebrated the rise of American engineering and geopolitical prowess through such homegrown figures as Benjamin Wright and Canvass White, as well as American technical innovation. American politicians and engineers framed the canal as a project that symbolized the shift in the balance of power from the old world to the new. The canal served, in a rhetorical way, to show the increasing might of a rising America, and Americans were eager to demonstrate this through both man-made endeavors such as the canal and natural wonders such as the Falls at Niagara, both of which came to be intimately linked.

Seth Stein LeJacq – CUNY-Hunter College

Hidden Crimes: Sexual Violence and Britain's Navy in the Age of Sail

This paper explores Britain's navy as a site of and vector for wartime sexual violence in the age of sail. Contemporaries often feared sailors as a sexual threat, even to comrades and “friendly” civilians. Yet historians have struggled to acknowledge and research such behavior, including in the feminist maritime historiography that flourished in the 1990s and the more recent literature on maritime masculinities. To chart this phenomenon, this paper takes inspiration from Elizabeth Heineman's call to explore abuse “behind the lines”—outside of active conflict zones. It uses Joanna Bourke's pioneering scholarship as a guide, relying in particular on her analyses of the ways in which state actors obscure sexual atrocities by their armed forces and hide archival traces of criminality. Drawing on legal records and ego documents, I explore how naval service and seafaring created opportunities for predation and structured vulnerability. Rare trials for crimes against girls and women reveal how the young, marginal, captive, racialized, and enslaved faced elevated risk. The naval justice system's refusal to police opposite-sex offenses increased vulnerability while also rendering these crimes invisible archivally; the examples of Edward Barlow and Samuel Pepys show how naval diarists covered their own tracks after admitting to abusing women. Finally, I consider one well-documented but historiographically-obscured form of predation: abuse of ships' boys. Reframing that normalized and seldom-punished practice as wartime sexual violence is necessary for finally confronting the enormity of what the naval archives document.

Weile Li, University of Hong Kong

Religion and Trade: How Islamization Influenced the Chinese Ceramic Trade in the Indian Ocean Coast, 800 - 1700 AD

We investigated how the spread of Islam shaped the long-distance trade of Chinese ceramics in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) during 800 - 1700 AD. Moving beyond established economic and historic narratives, we employ a novel quantitative framework, analyzing over 21,700 ceramic sherds from 216 sites alongside a newly constructed Islamization Index for seven WIO subregions. Spatial analysis and regression modeling reveal a significant positive correlation: regions with higher degrees of Islamization not only had access to a greater variety of Chinese ceramic classes but also displayed more similar ceramic assemblages. These results suggest that shared Islamic cultural and commercial networks fostered convergent consumption preferences and integrated trade routes, acting as a key driver of archaic globalisation. We identified four distinct phases of trade, highlighting how the synergy between Islamic expansion and Chinese production specialization peaked between 1300 - 1600AD, before European intervention reshaped the network post - 1600AD. The cultural affinity, alongside geographic logistics, was a fundamental mechanism structuring premodern maritime exchange.

Kaiwen Lin – Ocean University of China/The Ohio State University
Gifts and Reciprocity: Ecological-Economic Ethics in Chinese Maritime Folktales

This paper approaches the ocean as a geographical and cultural periphery to examine how Chinese maritime folktales construct moral economies through the narrative mechanism of the “gift.” Drawing on Marcel Mauss’s theory of reciprocity, Vladimir Propp’s narrative morphology, and recent scholarship in the environmental humanities, the study demonstrates how the recurring pattern of “gift–return–balance” articulates coastal communities’ ecological ethics in high-risk oceanic environments. Spirits, animals, and dragon maidens serve as nonhuman agents whose benevolent or punitive gifts shape the narrative outcome, thereby decentering anthropocentric and mainland-centric moral frameworks. The tales portray the sea not merely as backdrop or resource but as an active ethical force capable of sanctioning, rewarding, or withdrawing support. By foregrounding maritime margins as spaces where trade, belief, and environmental knowledge converge, this paper argues that these folktales encode a relational ecological logic that redefines how we understand agency, reciprocity, and survival at the periphery of Asia.

Sean Lynch – Georgetown University
The United States Exploring Expedition in the Samoan Islands

The United States Exploring Expedition (1838-1842) marked a significant shift in the United States government’s approach to the Pacific Ocean and can be viewed as the beginning of formal American imperialistic enterprises in the Pacific. Unfortunately, many aspects of the Ex. Ex. remain understudied, including the Ex. Ex. in the Samoan Islands. My paper examines the conduct of Ex. Ex. in the Samoan Islands with particular attention paid to how race, gender, and religion informed the actions of the Ex. Ex. in the Samoan Islands. I analyze how nineteenth century beliefs about women, Pacific Islanders, and Christianity influenced how the members of the Ex. Ex. interacted with Samoans. In addition to being the first government sponsored expedition to the Pacific Ocean, the Ex. Ex. was a formative experience for the American nation and a point of pride. Besides researching how nineteenth century beliefs influenced the conduct of the Ex. Ex., my paper also looks at how the published works of expedition members depicted Pacific Islanders. I pay specific attention to the artwork of Alfred Agate whose works featured prominently in the official publications of the Ex. Ex.

Andrew J. Lyter – Lewes Historical Society

Jeremiah Primrose: Navigating his freedom through the Royal Navy

HMS *Poictiers* arrived on the Delaware Bay in March 1813 where she would maintain a naval blockade for the following year as the flagship of Commodore Beresford's squadron. The shoal-laden Delaware had a reputation for its difficult navigability, requiring skilled pilots to ensure naval success. Recognizing this, Jeremiah Primrose, an enslaved man from nearby Mispillion Hundred, pursued his freedom through naval service. Taking a calculated risk and leveraging his maritime knowledge, he broke the bonds of enslavement by rowing across the Delaware Bay and joined the crew of the *Poictiers*. Serving as a pilot and later as an ordinary seaman, Primrose remained in the Royal Navy throughout the War of 1812 aboard the *Poictiers* and the *Victorious*. In late 1814, he was discharged in England from HMS *Prince*, now a free man. From the moment he ascended the quarterdeck, Primrose dismantled the boundaries of subservience advancing black maritime identity on both sides of the Atlantic. Jeremiah Primrose's early life and naval career provide a lens to further analyze the social history of both seafaring laborers and freedom seekers who recognized the opportunities of war and took bold risks to navigate their own freedom.

Jason Mancini – CT Humanities

Adventures of a Wanderer: The Life and Lessons of Charles Lansing and the Narragansett Chief

The *Narragansett Chief*, published anonymously in 1832, has long been considered a work of fiction. Recent scholarship, however, reveals it to be an autobiography penned by Charles Lansing, a Native American mariner. Lansing's life at sea – three dozen voyages, twenty countries, five continents - presents a global maritime history from below, one that illuminates the circuitry of empire, the lived experience of black markets and borderlands, and the boundaries of race and power. From 1806 to 1831, Lansing chronicled his life of crime and adventure, and after reuniting with his father in a Spanish prison, recorded the history of his father and grandfather (the Narragansett Indian chief) to the 1760s. For a brief time, Lansing and his book were the cause célèbre of abolitionist and free thinking circles, challenging religious, social, and political orthodoxy in the Early Republic. A broader reexamination and contextualization of this narrative is currently underway as a long-silenced voice is repatriated to the canon of American literature

Erica McAvoy – University of New Hampshire
Reconsidering “Sham Dignitaries:” Untangling Truth from Myth of Eighteenth-Century Black Elections

In the eighteenth-and early-nineteenth-centuries, Black communities in coastal New England towns and cities elected their own Kings or Governors. There are primary sources—newspaper accounts, gravestones, governmental committee reports, and diaries—that give us clues about the importance of these elections and the elected leaders. However, scholars of Black history in New England, even in the twenty-first century, have often relied more on the accounts of White, nineteenth-century antiquarians than on the primary sources themselves, resulting in an incomplete understanding of Black Elections. This paper intends to accomplish two goals: the first is to outline how nineteenth-century antiquarian accounts have perpetuated problematic narratives; the second is to begin to untangle the truth from the myths of Black Elections and their importance in Black communities. While recent scholarship has justly begun to focus on Black history in the North, little attention has been paid to Black Elections as a form of community expression, self-reliance, and agency. This paper will attempt to lay the groundwork for a more detailed examination of Black Elections and their meaning in Black coastal New England communities.

Kevin D. McCranie – US Naval War College
Herbert Richmond’s Use of History as a Tool to Prepare for Naval War

Herbert Richmond was unique among British naval officers at the turn of the twentieth century. He had a record in operational postings that would make the vast majority of his fellow naval officers envious to include command of the battleship HMS *Dreadnought*. After obtaining flag rank, he was commander-in-chief of the East Indies Station. In terms of staff work, he served several stints in the Admiralty including the Assistant Director of Operations at the time at the time war broke out in 1914.

Yet, today, we know Richmond most as a historian and a strategic commentator. He wrote articles, published books, and helped found *The Naval Review*. The British navy grudgingly acknowledged these accomplishments by making him director of their naval staff college (then known as the War Course) in the immediate aftermath of the First World War and later he became the first commandant of the Imperial Defence College. Richmond’s scholarly and academic endeavors were never aimed at merely being an academic: he sought education to develop his own critical thinking skills and instill these skills in others.

Richmond believed that history was especially important in his intellectual development. Yet, it boggled his mind that few of his colleagues understood how history could help prepare them for the challenges they would face. He questioned why leaders continually tried to adapt in real time rather than think ahead, for he found that history provided a powerful tool to develop the creativity and imagination essential for successful preparation. The proposed paper considers Richmond’s views on his own self-education, his historical studies, and highlights the challenges that he faced in conveying his thoughts on these subjects to the British navy.

Shebeen Mehaboob – Mahatma Gandhi University

Sailing the Sea of Shanties: Retracing the Cultural Trajectories of Mappila Lascars in the Indian Ocean

This research explores the cultural memories of the Mappila Lascars from Ponnani, Malabar, who were central to Indian Ocean maritime trade on traditional dhows (Pathemar) until the late 20th century. Since the largely illiterate Lascars left minimal written accounts, this study methodically analyzes their sea shanties—a unique cultural artifact and vital source of oral tradition and folklore. These songs, passed down through generations, function as collective memory, chronicling their navigational skills, cultural richness, and inherited experiences. The shanties were crucial for disseminating knowledge within the Malabar maritime communities before mass communication. They document the Lascars' extensive maritime routes and ports across Asia and Africa, offering valuable insights into the geography, ethnography, and cultural history of these seafaring people. By combining ethnographic observations, interviews with veteran Lascars, and meticulous shanty analysis, the research illuminates their dynamic lifeworld, historical agency, and resilience. Critically, it reconceptualizes regional history—often seen through a land-based lens—by highlighting the Lascars' experiences and incorporating previously marginalized voices through a powerful narrative rendering.

Ryan Mewett – US Naval Academy

From Parish Charity to National Philanthropy: The Stepney Feast, the Marine Society, and the Maritime Deserving Poor

A society of mariners in east London hosted an annual feast beginning in the 1670s that raised money to apprentice orphaned boys into shipbuilding trades. It was a small-scale affair that garnered little interest outside of the neighborhood and raised modest funds. In 1729, a celebrated admiral, Charles Wager, transformed the Society, bringing in powerful friends and Navy colleagues as organizers and donors, generating widespread interest among the wealthy and fashionable, and dramatically augmenting the funds raised each year. The Stepney Society under Wager formed an important bridge from an older model of charity to a new philanthropy with national ambitions—as embodied in the Marine Society, which aimed to solve the Navy's manning problems by sending vagrant boys to sea.

A significant difference between the two charities lay in their objects: whereas the Marine Society explicitly targeted “urchins,” the Stepney Society prioritized “poor orphan[s], whose parents have been of one of the [marine] trades” and who could be vouched for by a “person of reputation in the neighborhood.” This paper will explore the development of the Stepney Society, with particular attention to the insight it offers into an evolving association between the “deserving poor” and maritime work.

Joseph Moretz – Independent Scholar

The Limits of Navalism: Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, the Imperial Defence College, and the Evolution of Strategic Thought

Arguably, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond was the most significant navalist of the twentieth century. Arguably, too, Richmond can lay claim to being the first navalist to realize that understanding naval warfare was no longer sufficient, given, indeed, that a separate air service and now a Chiefs of Staff Committee joined the earlier-formed Committee of Imperial Defence as elements in the British defence establishment. Unlike those observers, such as Basil Liddell Hart, who could dream of perfect solutions, Richmond, as a serving officer, had to operate within the present milieu. Already the creator of a rich portfolio of naval history and maritime thought, Richmond in 1927 faced the daunting task of establishing the lines of modern British strategic discourse as the first commandant of the Imperial Defence College. This essay explores Richmond's tenure as commandant and argues that, for all his powers of historical understanding and reasoning, the admiral could never escape the constraints of his naval past and his naval master.

Dane Morrison – Salem State University

“Strange Looking Craft:” American Observations of Asian Vessels in the China Trade

This paper examines the ways in which American print culture--books, newspapers, and literary periodicals, often containing maps and sketches recounting American voyages to China--carried impressions of the Chinese maritime frontier to the American public, creating an imagined bridge to China. Similarly, early American travelogues and other accounts fill out the picture for modern scholars who seek to understand the Chinese maritime worlds and, especially, how maritime world influenced cross-cultural encounters. An American mariner's first direct observations of China's material culture came before ever reaching the coast, observing the seagoing junks that cruised its maritime frontier, the South China Sea, and continued along the Pearl River passage from Macau to Canton. They were in a particularly good position to observe and comment on Chinese vessels, shipyards, and anchorages because they were sailors. They knew how to “read” a boat: its features, handling, navigability, strengths, and weaknesses, and they commented frequently on foreign vessels and seamanship. Their accounts reveal more than descriptions of specific vessels or even of the overwhelming culture shock of the Pearl River estuary, however; travelogues and other early American accounts tell us how China's maritime frontier influenced Americans' first impressions of the Celestial Empire.

Abigail Mullen, US Naval Academy

“In Need of the Assistance of My Country”: Maritime Pensioners of the American Revolution

In 1818 and again in 1832, the US Congress passed a Pension Act that offered monetary support to veterans of the American Revolution. In the first act, most maritime veterans of the revolution were excluded because only Continental Navy sailors with at least 9 months of service were eligible. The rules changed in 1832 when privateers and state navies were recognized as veterans as well. But even with these more relaxed rules, maritime pensioners struggled to prove their service because of the nature of the maritime conflict. Many maritime veterans were broken by their service and imprisonment in the war, which made it impossible for them to continue to go to sea, but need was not always enough. This paper will discuss some of the hardships experienced by pensioners both during the war, before the Pension Acts and draw some conclusions about how the maritime.

Samm Newton – University of Wisconsin - Madison

Under the Auspices of the University: Industry Knowledge-Making and the Reconnaissance Survey of the Continental Margins, 1953-1954

Naomi Oreskes famously asked how military funding shaped what we do and do not know about the ocean. There is a breadth of historical scholarship that has seriously considered this question and has rightfully focused on the relationships between marine knowledge-making and military and state actors. My work extends this idea to ask an equally, if somewhat overlooked, question: how has corporate funding shaped what we do and do not know about the ocean? The Reconnaissance Survey of the Continental Margins, led by Columbia University’s Lamont Observatory and funded by major oil companies, serves as a generative case study to think through this question. Using archival correspondence and progress reports between academic researchers like Dr. Maurice Ewing and his commercial contacts, my research shows that industry funding and geoscientific expertise operated in a messy, gray area that was not purely public or fully private. Yet, this confluence, where the epistemic aims of applied and fundamental research collided, was instrumental in defining the margins of maritime sovereignty and expands the margins of maritime history to include previously obscured scientific labor and the logics of capitalistic and imperial ocean extraction and enclosure.

Hakelaho‘imaiokalani Ogden – Oklahoma State University
A Planter’s Quorum: Labor Law and Politics in Transitional Hawai‘i

Much of the Hawaii known today was built on the back of immigrant contract labor. As cash crops became more profitable and the indigenous population dwindled, Hawaiian Anglo-Saxon plantation owners needed a solid source of cheap labor. This role was first filled by the Chinese, then the Japanese, Filipinos, Portuguese, and any other foreign people who were willing to do hard labor for meager wages; however, as the planters quickly realized, this was a group their fellow Anglo-Saxon, American, or European did not fall under. When Hawaii became an official U.S. Territory at the passage of the 1900 Organic Act, laws against contract, as well as Chinese labor, extended their reach to the archipelago. This quickly became a problem as planters had backed themselves into a corner over the past decade of tumultuous transitional politics. This resulted in a desperate search for cheap and cooperative laborers that ended in Korea. But what caused the Hawaiian planters to turn to the peninsula in the first place? This historiography covers multiple fields, thus utilizing research from historians and scholars such as Edward D. Beechert, Ronald Takaki, Sally Engle Merry, Noenoe Silva, Johnathan Osorio, Wayne Patterson, and Hyung-Chan Kim.

Gary J. Ohls – Naval Postgraduate School
The Black Sea Dimensions of the Russo-Ukrainian War

This presentation will review the historical significance of the Black Sea from a geostrategic perspective and briefly outline the events surrounding the collapse of the Soviet Union. It will describe the subsequent division of the Black Sea Fleet and the maritime dynamics of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. The core element of the presentation will include a description of the war at sea with an emphasis on the impressive innovation and asymmetry that has followed. Despite Russia’s conventional naval superiority, Ukraine has demonstrated an adaptive and imaginative approach to maritime warfare, employing unmanned systems, coastal strike capabilities, and information operations to achieve sea denial without a traditional fleet. The presentation analyzes these developments at both tactical and strategic levels and assesses their implications for the future of naval warfare. In particular, it considers how lessons from the Black Sea may challenge established concepts about naval power projection and possibly inform doctrinal thinking within the United States Navy.

Isabella Pahl – University of Wisconsin – La Crosse

"So, the Boats Come Regular to Ephraim Now?": A Deeper Dive into Door County's Maritime Economy

At the turn of the twentieth century, the commercial boom that put maritime Door County, Wisconsin, on the map was poised to undergo another significant evolution that would alter local economic practices far into the future. Communities that had long relied on extracting and shipping the peninsula's natural resources now faced a new opportunity: the growing tourist industry. Local politics, economics, and identities converged at the end of the 1800s to foreshadow an intense shift as market and consumer demands of the Midwest reached small peninsula towns such as Ephraim and Sturgeon Bay. Such swift changes did not occur without cultural implications, and while visitors and historians alike have long been fascinated with Door County's history, these accounts focus on intrepid settlers and sailors on the Great Lakes. Therefore, this project has used library, archival, and newspaper collections not only to analyze the overlapping causes of economic shifts during the twentieth century, but to synthesize their effects on local identities. The results will assist in reevaluating the peninsula as a dynamic symbol of adapting maritime communities in the context of greater Midwest history, in an interdisciplinary effort to understand how the destination many know and love today came to be.

Bill Paine – Independent Scholar

A Double-Edged Sword: The Biography of Commodore Jesse Duncan Elliott, 1782-1845
(A Final Voyage for David Foster Long)

This proposal examines the Presenter's role in bringing David F. Long's manuscript to successful conclusion after Prof. Long's passing in 2001. The principal objective is to explain how the Presenter managed both the traditional challenges of publication, as well as the unique circumstances associated with a posthumous work. Particular emphasis is directed at the supportive roles offered by both the academic and publishing communities. Professor Long's central arguments and conclusions about the subject biography, will also be reviewed. Long offers a vivid portrayal of Elliott, illuminating lesser-known qualities that helped propel the Commodore's career forward despite significant turbulence, including feuds with Oliver Hazard Perry, Stephen Decatur, Nathan Towson and Secretary James Kirke Paulding. The evaluation of Commodore Elliott's life and career was Professor Long's final literary undertaking, after having completed four naval biographies and numerous other writings. Fortunately, Professor Long maintained his trademark focus on his subject and completed the manuscript, but it remained unpublished until Feb. 2026. A ten plus year undertaking, Long uncovers the answer to his inquiry about Elliott's rise in rank, and shares his findings with candor, clarity and conviction.

Lincoln Paine – University of Maine Law School
Towards an Indigenous Maritime History of the United States

The twenty-first century has seen a flowering of interest in the maritime history of Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and First Peoples. Historians have combed the archives and listened to indigenous knowledge keepers to understand the role indigenous mariners since European contact, which occurred from the early 1500s to late 1800s, and from the subtropical Gulf Coast to New England, California, the Pacific Northwest, and the Arctic coasts of Alaska. Involving much more than a simple indigenous/white binary, this cross-cultural history lends nuance to our understanding of modern Americans' common past.

Even more revealing is the growing understanding of how important maritime culture has been across the roughly 15,000-year occupation, exploration, and settlement of North America by the ancestors of North America's First Peoples. Archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnographers, geneticists, linguists, ecologists, as well as traditional knowledge keepers, have all contributed to our understanding of how people adapted to, harnessed, and profited from the bounty of rivers, lakes, and coastal waters across a wide range of environments. To date there has been little effort to synthesize the tantalizing evidence of the many technologies and traditions that fostered the rise of cultures as distinct as the mound builders from Florida to the Upper Midwest, Pacific Northwest and Arctic whalers, or swordfish hunters of the Gulf of Maine and the Southern California Bite. This paper considers the question of whether such a comprehensive history is overdue and what it might look like.

Theodore Pantiskas – University of Ioannina
Piracy in the Ionian and Adriatic Seas during the Late Middle Ages

This paper examines the development and evolution of piracy in the maritime space of the Adriatic and Ionian Seas during the Late Middle Ages, a field that has received limited systematic attention in international scholarship. Although piracy constituted a persistent phenomenon in the Mediterranean world, the later medieval period witnessed an intensification and transformation of piratical activity, shaped by broader political, economic, and geopolitical changes. The study highlights the strategic importance of the maritime corridor between the Italian peninsula and the Balkans as a zone of conflict and competition among regional powers. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of Italian city-states and Balkan polities, with special focus on the long-standing and dominant presence of the Republic of Venice in the Adriatic Sea, examined in comparison with other actors involved in piratical practices. Furthermore, the paper addresses the conceptual distinction between pirates and corsairs and discusses the frequent ambiguity of these terms in contemporary sources, a factor crucial for the historical interpretation of medieval piracy. Finally, the main conclusions are drawn

Keith G. Pemberton – Yale University

Resurrecting Long Wharf: AI-Driven Entity Extraction and Knowledge Graph Construction from 15,000 Pages of New Haven Maritime Records, 1727–1906

New Haven’s Long Wharf was once the longest commercial pier structure in North America, serving as a critical artery of Atlantic and coastal trade from the eighteenth through the early twentieth century. Extending physically into New Haven Harbor, it also extended economically and socially into the Caribbean, Europe, and the broader Atlantic world. The maritime records preserved at the New Haven Museum, ship logs, port clearance certificates, customs manifests, insurance filings, merchant correspondence, and cargo accounts spanning 1727 to 1906, contain an extraordinarily detailed record of the people, vessels, commodities, and commercial relationships that animated this maritime landscape. Captains, dockworkers, customs officials, insurers, and merchants appear across thousands of pages, their activities mapping a dense web of movement and exchange. Yet despite their richness, these materials remain largely inaccessible due to their scale, fragile condition, inconsistent cataloging, and the technical difficulty of deciphering early modern and nineteenth-century handwriting.

This paper introduces the Long Wharf Project, an ongoing collaboration between the CT Port Authority, QuarterMill and the New Haven Museum to process approximately 15,000 pages of these maritime records using AI-driven ensemble optical character recognition and structured entity extraction. Moving beyond traditional digitization as static transcription, the project builds a provenance-aware computational pipeline that reads both handwritten and printed documents through multiple recognition engines, compares outputs for consensus, and extracts structured entities, persons, ships, ports, dates, cargo types, and commercial relationships. Variant spellings, abbreviations, and orthographic inconsistencies are reconciled across documents to resolve identities and link records over time, enabling the construction of a relational, searchable knowledge graph that reconstructs New Haven’s maritime networks at scale.

Matthew Randolph – University of Washington
Bridging Black Maritime Geographies: Harbor Walking as Ecopoetic Praxis across Chesapeake and Samaná Bays

How might transnational maritime scholarship balance archival methods with both community and environmental engagement? What vestiges of empire and migration can we glean from portside conversations with everyday people or musings over visible vestiges of shipwrecks, crumbling wooden docks, and other ruins? As a 2023 Fulbright grant recipient, I conducted archival research in Santo Domingo and field research far from the Dominican capital. My forthcoming book manuscript, a multi-sited and interdisciplinary study, will trace reconfigurations of Black identity emerging from nineteenth-century emigrations. In the pursuit of citizenship (otherwise unimaginable in the antebellum United States), thousands of African Americans relocated to the island of Ayiti; many became intergenerational stewards of the lands and waters of the Samaná peninsula, leaving in their wake countless descendants and underappreciated maritime traditions. Drawing on encounters and connections throughout the Greater Caribbean - across the bays of Baltimore, Maryland and Santa Bárbara de Samaná - I offer ethnographic observations and insights from “harbor walking”: an innovative approach and sensibility that enriched my archivally-anchored research. This presentation encourages dialogue about ethical and creative means of doing maritime history differently, steadfastly present with/alongside those communities on the margins, who harbor the past across many registers ancestrally, spiritually, and materially.

James Risk – University of South Carolina
Missing Voices: African-Americans, Keepers, and Women in the United States Light-House Establishment

The history of the United States Light-House Establishment has focused on the government’s administration of the agency. This is not only a top-down history, it is also primarily a white man’s history. Women in the Light-House Establishment have been highlighted by Mary Louise and Candace Clifford, Patricia Majher, and Lenore Skomal, but for many their story remains unheard. Similarly, Elinor De Wire and Dennis Noble have written about lighthouse keepers, however, the voices of numerous lighthouse keepers are still missing. Sources on African-Americans in the Light- House Establishment are limited and often only vaguely referenced. Using primary sources from the Records of the United States Light-House Establishment at the National Archives, the Navesink Twins Lights, and Cape Cod Community College, “Missing Voices: African-Americans, Keepers, and Women in the United States Light-House Establishment seeks to bring some of those missing voices to light including Josiah Hardy, Joseph Lopez, Aaron Carter, and Isaac Foster’s female slave, amongst others.

Stephen N. Sanfilippo – Maine Maritime Academy

A Manley Prize: The Forgotten Ballad of a Forgotten Naval Hero; Commodore John Manley & “The Hancock”

An unknown ballad, “The Hancock,” was found in the collection of the Pembroke {Maine} Historical Society. The ballad gives a detailed account of a battle between the American frigate Hancock and a British ship. Establishing the authenticity of the ballad, the researchers delved into the ballad’s contents: it’s age; the battle described; how the ballad came to be; how the ballad reached Pembroke; and the exploits of a naval officer named “Manly.” “The Hancock” was found with the well-known ballad “Constitution & Guerriere,” and as it bore strong comparison to “The Warlike Seaman,” a British naval ballad held to be from the War of 1812, the researchers started with “The Hancock” being from that war. Subsequent research proved otherwise: the rather obscure “Manly” turned out to be a great, but forgotten hero of the American Revolution. “The Warlike Seaman,” the model for “The Hancock,” was from a war prior to the Revolution, and identical or nearly identical wordings and story-lines were traced back to ballads of the 1500s. Overall, the researchers found an important ballad of America’s first great naval hero, the Continental Navy’s first victory on the high seas, and the intricacies of ballad traditions.

Benjamin Schaffer – University of South Carolina

“Let’s Start a Riot: Franco-American Maritime Tensions in the Carolinas in the Summer of 1778”

On 17 September 1778, South Carolina Governor Rawlins Lowndes issued a proclamation, wherein he decried a “most violent riot...committed in Charlestown.” He reported that the town’s citizens were “alarmed and disturbed with the firing of cannon and small arms between the American sailors, and the sailors of foreign nations [i.e. the French], by which some lives were lost, and several persons wounded.” Aside from offering a reward for the capture of those who had encouraged the riot, he also ordered law officers to be on the lookout for “unlawful and tumultuous meetings against the public peace,” and to discourage “indecent, illiberal and national reflections” against the French. While historians throughout the last century have occasionally provided brief descriptions of this riot within the larger scope of the tumultuous early stages of the Franco-American alliance, the goal of this conference paper will be to investigate the maritime context of this deadly port-city riot, and to consider several vital questions. Why were French sailors in particular targeted? Was this a simple maritime squabble, or perhaps symptomatic of South Carolina naval forces’ traditional inability to cooperate with outside naval partners? Finally, why have we largely forgotten about this deadly event?

Daniel Grey Sexton – Oklahoma State University

Poisoning the Well: The Dissemination of Water Information in the Stop Black Fox Movement

In 1973, the Public Service Company of Oklahoma (PSO) announced the construction of a nuclear power plant in Inola, Oklahoma—Black Fox Station. Over the next nine years, citizens of Oklahoma banded together to fight against the construction of the proposed plant. One of the major issues that the Stop Black Fox Movement took with the construction of the plant was the unchecked wastewater disposal agreement that PSO had made with the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB). In that agreement, the OWRB conceded that PSO did not require any form of on-site treatment before dumping wastewater into the Verdigris River—two miles upstream of the intake for Broken Arrow, Oklahoma’s water supply. “Poisoning the Well” analyzes the way that the Stop Black Fox Movement utilized various mediums—with a major focus on the use of informational pamphlets and a record produced by the movement—to disseminate the potential ecological harm that the proposed plant could bring.

Joshua M. Smith – US Merchant Marine Academy

“Navigating Memory and History: The Heungnam Evacuation, 1950”

Utilizing the concepts of historical memory versus academic history, this paper explores the complexity of creating an exhibit about events in the Korean War that is international, inter-lingual, and even inter-generational in scope. In particular, it uses Michael Deveine’s recent work on history and memory of the Korean War in which he posits that history is rational and attempts to be objective, while memory is subjective, emotional, and selective. The Heungnam evacuation is a particularly rich and promising means to analyze history versus memory as it includes a factual account of American sea power in action, versus an emotionally charged account as a “Christmas miracle,” in which the American master of the SS Meredith Victory emerges as a candidate for sainthood in the Roman Catholic Church. In this dialectic between rational sea power as thesis and religious memory as counter-thesis, a dialectic emerges: the Heungnam evacuation is actually a story about Koreans helping Koreans.

Chuck Steele – US Air Force Academy
America has a Mahan Sized Problem

There is no more prominent figure among naval theorists than Alfred Thayer Mahan. In his lifetime, he enjoyed immense celebrity for something that usually went unheralded. He was adored by naval professionals, academics, and political leaders searching for justifications for the building and protection of empires. His writings informed and inspired followers for over a century. However, he was more propagandist than prophet and, in some regards, more deserving of comparison to P.T. Barnum than Carl von Clausewitz. History was the foundation for his claims regarding the value of navies, yet Mahan was not a careful historian. His zeal for the promotion of his service as the most important of armed forces made him the darling of industrialists and imperialists. He was the most successful salesperson for their respective interests, and he remains relevant to this day for that reason.

Patricia Sullivan – Museum of Maritime Pets
Maritime Pets at the Margins: Voices Remembered

An overview of the roles played by animals aboard ships for companionship or work. Since its inception, the museum has referred to these sentient beings as pets rather than animals, reflecting their importance as revered and respected crew members. While many types of animals have gone aboard for millennia and in different parts of the world, most of them have been forgotten. This talk brings them back from the margins and highlights their civilian and military contributions in times of exploration, research, war and peace. The stories of these pets, many of which have been documented in journals, books and film, straddle a variety of maritime cultural landscapes spanning the globe and including naval exploration, warfare, trade routes, working waterfronts and search and rescue. This presentation would take the form of a solo power point presentation, but could also be part of a panel if other presenters have related subject matter. Sullivan first discussed this topic in the opening segment of *Animals at Sea*, an international 3-day symposium hosted in 2019 at the National Maritime Museum in Greenwich UK.

Pohling Tan – Communication University of China
“From "Margin" to "Epic": Curating Maritime Memory in the Chinese Indonesian
Diaspora”

Situated at the intersection of Dutch colonial extraction and Indonesian nation-building, Bagansiapiapi was once the world's second-largest fishing complex, yet its Chinese laborers remained doubly marginalized by colonial racial hierarchies and New Order political stigmatization. This paper challenges static views of diasporic organizations by reconceptualizing the Jakarta-based Jinjiang Hometown Association (Perkumpulan Jinjiang Indonesia) as an active "memory curator."

Drawing on twelve months of ethnography, 32 in-depth interviews, and analysis of internal commemorative archives, this study reveals how the association strategically transforms a stigmatized maritime past into a "pioneering epic" to negotiate post-Suharto belonging. Empirically, the research examines how the association "technicizes" raw labor, reframing vernacular tools like the Mang Liau (fishing platforms) and Ka Ta Tsun (pedal-boats) as tangible evidence of ancestral ingenuity rather than economic desperation. Furthermore, it analyzes the active "harmonization" of contentious labor histories, reimagining the Chinese-dominated fishing economy as a pastoral of inter-ethnic cooperation to counter stereotypes of exclusivity.

Ultimately, I argue that this "maritime memory work" functions as a mechanism of "Connection-Translation-Empowerment." By translating vernacular maritime heritage into national cultural idioms, the association converts a peripheral maritime history into central political capital that legitimizes the Chinese diaspora's place within Indonesia's modern multicultural narrative.

Lillian Taylor – College of William & Mary
Maritime Ecologies and Salvageable Value in the Plymouth Dockyard, 1689-1693

While historians have addressed the practice of salvage during the early modern period from the lens of social and economic history, there has been comparatively little attention to how salvors understood shipwrecks as ecosystems that were constructed by both human and nonhuman actors. Using the papers of naval officers stationed in the English port of Plymouth in the 1680s and 1690s as a case study, I argue that fully understanding the practice of maritime salvage and how salvaged materials were collected and reused requires an attention to the dynamism exhibited by relationships between ships and non-human actors like wind, sediment, and water in making the shipwreck ecosystem. The interactions within said ecosystems made the value of salvageable materials contested until the moment when they could be fully dried and removed to the controlled conditions of naval storehouses.

Olivia Thomas – Texas A&M University

“Whaling & Wailing...Where? A Historical and Geographical Analysis of Childbirth Onboard Nineteenth Century Whaling Ships”

The nineteenth century whaling industry was well known for the dangerous and often lengthy voyages throughout the Atlantic, Pacific, and Arctic Oceans. Despite the conservatism of the Victorian era many women, particularly those from the whaling communities of New England, sailed with their husbands and male-dominated crews for years at a time. Several diaries of whaling wives indicate the long separation from their spouse as the instigation for their going to sea. In some instances, women were at the time of departure or became pregnant during their time at sea. As the field of obstetrics developed during the course of the nineteenth century, childbirth experiences of women around the world were changing, sometimes for the better and sometimes not. This paper will present a brief history of the experiences of childbirth onboard whaling ships and a spatial analysis of patterns identified within those stories.

C. Michele Thompson – Southern Connecticut State University

Going with the Flow: A Fourteenth Century Journey Across China by Boat

In the latter part of the seventh lunar month of 1385 a diplomatic party which included the Vietnamese Buddhist monk, physician, gardener Tuệ Tĩnh and at least nineteen other Vietnamese Buddhist monks left present day Hanoi on an 'overland' journey to Nanjing. At that time Nanjing was the capital of the Chinese Empire and the royal seat of the Ming Dynasty. This is a journey of at least 1,500 miles. An interesting point about this journey is that, although such regular diplomatic travels are always described as 'overland,' in point of fact at least two thirds of the travel from the border between China and Vietnam to Nanjing was actually by water. Such journeys involved movement down rivers and canals on both rafts and boats, across some of the largest freshwater lakes in East Asia, and then down the Yangtze River-the third longest river in the world. This group of travelers almost certainly included at least 100 people from Vietnam plus Chinese attendants, guards, and servants sent by the Ming court to escort them from the border to Nanjing. This paper will focus on the ecology and logistics of this large scale freshwater transportation endeavor.

Ryan Wadle – US Naval War College
Harry Yarnell's Evolving Views of Naval Warfare, 1917-1944

Admiral Harry Yarnell, USN, had a paradoxical career. His operational commands occurred during times of peace, allowing him to become a noted developer of destroyer tactics and among the first to test theories on the use of aircraft carriers in fleet exercises. However, when the United States became embroiled in the largest conflicts in human history, Yarnell served not in the fleet but as a planner and strategist, putting him in a position to have to think about future war scenarios as war raged on the high seas. This paper examines two episodes in his career, one occurring in the middle of it and the other after he had been recalled to duty following his retirement. They demonstrate a clear progression in his thinking and methods during those decades.

This research will explore how Yarnell, who was seen in 1918 as such an integral part of the Navy's planning process that he was recalled from London before war's end to help form the planning cell in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, evolved into one who, when tasked with planning for the postwar Navy, had come to support defense unification in opposition to most other senior officers from the period. By focusing on Yarnell's critical career experiences and intellectual influences, scholars can better understand the intellectual evolution of naval officers against rapid technological change.

Ryan C. Walker – University of Portsmouth
“The Enlisted Perspective: Primary Sources in Official Military Personnel Files Persons of Exceptional Prominence”

The recently digitised Persons of Exceptional Prominence (PEP) from the National Archives contains an ever-growing list of Official Military Personnel Files (OMPFs) of many of distinguished service members from all branches. Henry Breault, the only enlisted submariner to receive the Medal of Honor, was an unknown figure with only details associated with sparse newspaper clippings, official reports, and genealogical records existed. After analysing over 500 documents, new details were revealed, but the process of learning more from a bureaucratic identity requires a microhistorical investigation, teasing clues and implications from impersonal documents. A request for reimbursement of dependents transfer reveals Breault was married, a fact that had previously been unknown. Similarly, his travel paperwork reveals the complicated process of transferring while serving in the USN. Breault's career, when offered context, allowed for a better understanding not only of military service, but of the historical period he lived in, from a perspective of the enlisted sailor. The proposed paper would discuss reading OMPFs with interior knowledge, finding small details and clues essential to a microhistorical investigation for better understanding of military personnel and their experience.

Emily Warren – Sam Houston State University
Women Civilian Casualties in the Second World War

This paper explores the profound impact of World War II on civilian populations, focusing on the immense human costs and the remarkable resilience of ordinary people. Through a detailed examination of firsthand accounts and historical narratives, the study reveals the devastating consequences of strategic bombings, forced migrations, and civilians' economic hardships. The analysis includes personal stories from diaries, letters, and oral histories, providing emotional and psychological insights into the experiences of those affected by the war. Additionally, the paper highlights bravery and defiance within resistance movements. It showcased the strength and solidarity of communities in the face of adversity. By delving into civilians' survival and adaptation strategies, the research underscores the enduring legacy of World War II on human strength. The findings emphasize the importance of remembering these stories to honor the sacrifices and heroism of ordinary people during one of history's most challenging periods. This comprehensive study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the social, economic, and emotional dimensions of civilians sacrificed during World War II.

Marina Dawn Wells – New Bedford Whaling Museum
Oil and Cotton: Antebellum Entanglements down the Atlantic Seaboard

In the antebellum period, New Bedford was said to be the wealthiest city in the world because of the whaling industry—and it was also well known for its role in abolitionism. However, many of the movement's most staunch supporters maintained significant economic ties to southern slavery. Money flowed between ports such as New Bedford, Philadelphia, Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans. A 2027 exhibition at the New Bedford Whaling Museum, tentatively entitled North/South, seeks to more deeply understand the negotiation between ethics and commercial profits in the first half of the nineteenth century. Using the collection of the New Bedford Whaling Museum—including artwork and manuscripts related to businesses such as cotton and whale oil—this paper examines the material entanglements of Black freedom seekers and activists with white abolitionists to argue that New Bedford's abolitionism was more complex than it seemed.

Evan Wilson – US Naval War College

Thinking Like a Soldier: French Naval Exercises after the Seven Years War

In the aftermath of the catastrophic Seven Years War, the French navy clearly needed new ideas. As part of a general recommitment to sea power, the duc de Choiseul transferred several French army officers into the navy. Charles-Henri, comte d'Estaing, led the way, joining the navy officially in 1762 after spending his entire career to that point in the army. In 1766, he led a squadron of three ships of the line and three frigates in a series of tactical exercises intended to test various formations and maneuvers. D'Estaing drew on a large and growing body of French Enlightenment scholarship on naval tactics, most of which historians have dismissed as so rigid and unrealistic that it contributed to France's abysmal at-sea performance. Yet d'Estaing's testing squadron reveals that French naval tactical theory was not limited to dry geometry problems but instead was part of an iterative learning process. At sea, in difficult conditions, d'Estaing tried more than a dozen maneuvers, including columns, squares, and flying Vs, and then wrote up his thoughts on them so that he could learn from the experience. This paper relies on d'Estaing's journal of the exercises, which is housed at the John Carter Brown Library in Providence and has not previously been exploited by historians. It will assess what D'Estaing hoped to accomplish with the exercises, how they fit into Christy Pichichero's framework of the Military Enlightenment, and how effective they were in preparing the French navy for the next war. D'Estaing's performance in the American Revolutionary War left much to be desired—he was thwarted at New York, Newport, and Savannah in the space of thirteen months—but his intellectual influence on the French navy deserves a reassessment.

J.P. Wilson – University of South Carolina

“Pacific New England: The Transoceanic Character of the Northeastern United States, 1790-1900”

Studies of North America's Atlantic coastal communities tend to stress their connections with other parts of the Atlantic World, specifically Europe and Africa. This piece will illustrate a more comprehensive cultural and economic globalization of the Atlantic maritime world by connecting it to the trans- and pan-Pacific trade networks that began to burgeon in the late eighteenth century. Through whaling, shipbuilding, and proselytizing, New Englanders defined the future of Pacific Islanders, especially those of Fiji and Hawai'i. Through their skills in the maritime trades, their participation in whaling and maritime commerce, and their presence in New England port towns, Pacific Islanders affected the lives and cultures of New Englanders. By engaging with the rich historiography of global trade, cultural exchange, maritime music, and spatial history, this piece will clarify and emphasize the connections between New England and the Pacific Islands, placing the region firmly with one foot in the Atlantic, and the other in the Pacific.

Lisa Wojahn – University of Exeter

“Married and Alone: Women’s labor in advancing the professional success of their Royal Navy Officer Husbands”

During the long-nineteenth century, the Royal Navy (RN) officer embodied British masculinity. This paper looks how women who married these men and because of their association with the most powerful institution of the Empire acted with freedom not held most middle-class women. Building upon the argument that elite women advanced familial interests, this paper investigates the importance of middle-class labor of naval wives to officers and the navy. Officers had to be at sea to earn their full income, this absence left a significant void on land in building professional networks and maintaining social connections. Wives’ understanding of cultural capital was essential for officers to succeed and, by extension, for the RN to function. This paper introduces a new concept of “martial femininity,” explores the extent of rank transference, and documents the performance of feminine patriotism. It argues that middle-class women exercised independence to a greater extent than previously recognized and that ideology did not restrict autonomy of wives in naval couples despite ideological rhetoric. It asserts the unpaid, often unacknowledged labor of these women has been largely overlooked despite its significant contributions to the success of officers and to naval history.

Timothy S. Wolters – Iowa State University

“Corsairs, Cannons, and Correspondence: The Barbary War in a College Classroom”

This paper engages two emerging trends in historical scholarship and methodology. The scholarly trend, evident over the past several years, is a renewed interest in the so-called Barbary War (1801-05) and its wider political, diplomatic, and cultural meanings. The methodological trend involves digital historical research, a method of historical discovery supplementing, or even fully supplanting, traditional archive-based methods of historical research. What happens when a college professor marries these two trends in the senior capstone course for history majors? This paper explores the novel perspectives generated by ten undergraduate students who drew heavily from digital editions of *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers* (ed. Dudley Knox, 1939-44) to craft their senior theses. It reveals that inquiring minds, digital tools, and a venerable collection of primary sources can unearth both missing voices and overlooked stories in a conflict that has long been of interest to maritime and naval historians.

Lillian Young – University of New Hampshire
Korean People in the Early American Imagination

Historians have not previously studied early American ideas about the Korean peninsula because Americans had no direct contact with Koreans. However, that did not stop Americans from having ideas about the country. American views were shaped by accounts of international voyages of discovery such as the voyage of British ship HMS *Alceste* in 1816 and Prussian-born missionary, Charles Gutzlaff's travels in the 1830s. Americans eagerly read accounts that featured Korean attempts to repel outsiders, making isolation one of the defining features of Korea in the minds of early Americans. Americans associated that isolation with savagery, and they fit Korea into a narrative of progress where America was ahead and Korea was behind. By the mid-1820s, Korea had become part of the missionary project in Asia that centered around China, and isolation was a practical obstacle to missionary activities. This fostered a debate about whether American missionaries should break down that political and economic isolation for the sake of spreading the Gospel. Examining how the American public received and interpreted accounts of voyages to Korea can help us understand the interaction between exploration and ideas of civilization, and the way that early Americans understood their place in the world.

Michelle Zacks – Gilder Lehrman Center, Yale University
Making and Unmaking New Haven's Long Wharf: Sugar and Oysters, Enslavement and Emancipation

In this talk, I offer a brief history of the creation, extension, and decline of New Haven's Long Wharf. From seventeenth-century British colonization through the eve of the Civil War, the pier served as the economic hub of the colony and then city. Maritime flows of people, manufactured goods, forest and agricultural products, livestock and seafood through Long Wharf illustrate the transnational social relations that connected New England with Africa, the West Indies, southern North America, and Europe. William Lanson, a free Black man and accomplished marine engineer, was lauded for completing a challenging extension of the wharf in 1810. Two decades later, a Black college on New Haven's waterfront proposed by the abolitionist network of which Lanson was part was crushed by the city's White elite. Using sequential maps of Long Wharf's development and decline as a guide, the talk will explore the social networks and ideological tensions created by the West Indian trade and New England's antebellum oyster industry connections to the Chesapeake Bay. I argue that New Haven harbor is one of many maritime sites where ideas about enslavement and emancipation were forged and contested.

Ran Zhang – Durham University

“Religion and Trade: How Islamization Influenced the Chinese Ceramic Trade in the Indian Ocean Coast, 800 - 1700 AD”

We investigated how the spread of Islam shaped the long-distance trade of Chinese ceramics in the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) during 800 - 1700 AD. Moving beyond established economic and historic narratives, we employ a novel quantitative framework, analyzing over 21,700 ceramic sherds from 216 sites alongside a newly constructed Islamization Index for seven WIO subregions. Spatial analysis and regression modeling reveal a significant positive correlation: regions with higher degrees of Islamization not only had access to a greater variety of Chinese ceramic classes but also displayed more similar ceramic assemblages. These results suggest that shared Islamic cultural and commercial networks fostered convergent consumption preferences and integrated trade routes, acting as a key driver of archaic globalisation. We identified four distinct phases of trade, highlighting how the synergy between Islamic expansion and Chinese production specialization peaked between 1300 - 1600AD, before European intervention reshaped the network post - 1600AD. The cultural affinity, alongside geographic logistics, was a fundamental mechanism structuring premodern maritime exchange.

Yiqi Zhang – University of New Hampshire

The Local Cast of Global Whaling: The *Junior* Mutiny of 1857 in Boston and New Bedford Newspapers

In 1857, the New Bedford whaling industry reached its peak. However, an appalling mutiny occurred on the New Bedford whaleship *Junior* during its global whaling voyage to the Pacific Ocean. On Christmas Eve of 1857, Cyrus Plummer and his accomplices killed Captain Archibald Mellen Jr., took control of the ship, and escaped to Australia. The mutineers were captured and sent back to the United States in August 1858, and the trial lasted for months. The *Junior* mutiny of 1857 attracted heavy media coverage nationwide, with newspapers in Boston and New Bedford standing out for their sensationalized accounts and distinct representations.

This essay argues that the representation of this global whaling journey took on a decidedly local cast. Boston newspapers revealed grievances of the crew and expressed empathy for the mutineers; this sentiment was entirely absent from New Bedford’s coverage. The *Junior* Mutiny caused a deep sense of crisis among New Bedford’s local elites, who not only dominated the whaling industry but also controlled local newspapers. Concerned about declining whale hauls and the morality of the impoverished whalers they employed for global voyages, they took an unforgiving attitude toward the *Junior* mutineers, intentionally suppressing coverage of whaling masters’ exploitation of the sailors who worked on their ships.

Roundtable Abstracts

Penelope K. Hardy – University of Wisconsin – La Crosse (Moderator)

The Ocean Deep and Wide: Exploring the Breadth of Maritime Studies with *The Northern Mariner*

The "oceanic" in NASOH's name marks our geographical purview as occupying at least two thirds of the globe, but the scholarship of our members also covers a wide disciplinary range, with topics as diverse as war, commerce, exploration, science, technology, religion, animal studies, literature, gender, law, labor, politics, and more. The Clark G. Reynolds Student Paper award, established in 2008, has furthered that coverage by acknowledging emerging maritime scholars and scholarship worthy of publication in the fields of maritime history. In this roundtable, previous Reynolds winners will discuss their contributions to the Special Issue of *The Northern Mariner/Le marin du nord* published in Spring 2026, with gratitude for the journal's support, highlighting a dynamic, multi-field future for oceanic history and for our understanding of the many human relationships with the sea. TNM editor Michael Moir, along with issue editors (and former Reynolds Winners) Christina L. Bolte, Kevin Grubbs, and Penelope K. Hardy, and authors Alexander Billinis, Roger Bailey, and Derek Lee Nelson will discuss how they came to oceanic history and where they see it going, the journal as an avenue for testing new ideas and arguments, and the role of journal articles in a broader publication plan. We invite the audience to join the conversation as we explore the possibilities and potential of oceanic scholarship.

Helen M. Rozwadowski – University of Connecticut (Moderator)
Currents and Cross Currents in Ocean History

This roundtable examines historiographical traditions that have shaped our field and considers their influence on our own historical practices. Rather than a literature review or search for so-called foundations, our ambition is to think critically about the forces shaping contemporary perspectives on ocean histories. Drawing on familiar works as well as those that have been underappreciated, this panel reimagines the possibilities of oceanic history in a world shaped by new social, political, technological, and ecological uncertainties. Our panelists bring varied interests to the study of oceans and their significance. These include naval history, environmental history, literary studies, geography, political theory and legal history, maritime studies, and histories of science and technology. By reflecting on critical approaches – past and present, neglected and familiar – that are shaping their own current projects, the panelists discuss the fertile currents of oceanic histories and their influences now. Katey Anderson explores 1920s debates about the relationship of social and natural conditions to consider the long history of geographical and spatial traditions in our field. BJ Armstrong reflects on the co-evolution of naval history and political concerns with seapower during the formative years of history as a professional discipline and its influence today. Matt Crow examines the importance of intellectual history and historiography, with a focus on colonial histories in Thoreau's Cape Cod. Ali Glassie shows how tools and techniques of literary fiction, particularly the mode of magical realism, can contribute to the work of historicizing the ocean and writing multispecies histories. Chris Pastore shows how disciplinary approaches in natural history, environmental history, and Atlantic history converged to reimagine the geographies of oceans and the temporal boundaries of their histories. While these projects and interests indicate the scope of ocean histories, they do not of course represent a comprehensive picture. The panel seeks to engage the audience's own experiences and interests as well in a discussion of traditions and new directions.

Johnathan Thayer – Queen’s College, CUNY (Moderator)

Preserving Modern Maritime New York City: Engaging Public History in New York Harbor

We propose a roundtable panel session focused on our current book and editorial project *Preserving Modern Maritime New York City: Engaging Public History in New York Harbor*. The book is a collection of chapters contributed by practicing public historians and memory workers from the front lines of maritime history in NYC, representing a motley crew including historic barge, tug, and oil tanker dwellers, lighthouse keepers, champions of polluted waterways, artists, and curators at marginal museums. As preservationists, we contend that spending critical time with maritime heritage at the margins of NYC brings into especially sharp focus many of the urgent issues facing public history in general in our current era of neoliberalism, hyper-urbanization, and climate crisis. Contributors include: City Island Maritime Museum, Clearwater, Fireboat John J. Harvey, Gowanus Dredgers, Inwood Canoe Club, National Lighthouse Museum, Noble Maritime Museum, PortSide New York, Rocking the Boat, Shiplore Society, South Street Seaport Museum, Underwater New York, and the Waterfront Museum and Lehigh Valley no. 79. This roundtable panel would be introduced and moderated by the book’s editors (Thayer and Dreisbach-Williams). A select group of chapter contributors to be confirmed closer to the conference date) will deliver brief presentations and participate in a questions and answers session.

Michael Verney – Drury University (Moderator)

“Publishing Opportunities in Maritime and Naval History”

“Publish or Perish” has been a catchphrase in academia for some time. Certainly for those desiring careers as scholars, it is important to demonstrate literary proficiency to potential employers. How does one build a CV that will facilitate that foot in the door? To address this question we offer a professional development panel consisting of editors/authors of on-line and print publications. Each will spend about 5-7 minutes discussing the publication they are associated with and then will field questions from the moderator and then from the audience using a roundtable format. Comments and suggestions from the audience will be encouraged as will sea stories of success.

